



## A Study on Quality of Life of Street Vendors of Mumbai City

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### ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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### ABSTRACT

Street vendors are among the poorest members of the unorganised sector, or self-employed individuals, in the city of Mumbai. This paper aims to depict the living conditions and working conditions of Mumbai street vendors. The study is exploratory in nature, and a quantitative method is used to explain the occurrences. Purposive sampling was utilised by the researchers to collect data for this study from fifty participants. The study's conclusions address the effects of working circumstances and socioeconomic variables on the standard of living of street vendors. The results also address how respondents spend quality time with their families and the working lives of vendors, which are discussed in terms of their access to financing and the kind of vending they undertake. The psychological effects of the epidemic on street vendors, how they overcome feelings of fear, depression, anxiety, and unstable mental states, problems with vending machines, and the fact that street sellers are among the poorest families in Mumbai. The ramifications of the results are also covered in this publication.

### KEY WORDS

Mumbai City, Street Sellers, Quality of Life.

### INTRODUCTION

Most urban poor people in India work in the unorganised sector. The term "informal sector" was first used by W. Arthur Lewis to describe the working culture of a certain group. People who work in the unorganised sector are being forced out of society by urbanisation and industrialization (Robert L. And Tignor., Arthur Lewis, 2005). Highly competent candidates will be hired for white-collar jobs. roles as

a result of growing urbanisation, but those who lack the necessary skills and qualifications will have to look for self-employment in the unorganised sector, which includes street hawking. “Anyone involved in the sale of articles, goods, wares, food items, merchandise or everyday use or providing services to the public, whether on a sidewalk, lane, side walk, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, or from a temporary built-up structure or by moving from place to place,” is defined by the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. Additionally, this Act (Bare Act, 2014) establishes who is allowed to sell goods on the street. All street vendors, as listed in the survey conducted in accordance with sub-section (1) of The Town Vending Committee shall issue a certificate of vending to any person who has reached the age of fourteen or any other age as may be prescribed by the appropriate Government, in accordance with the terms and conditions and within the timeframe specified in the scheme, including the restrictions specified in the plan for a certificate of vending, as per Section 4(1) of the Act. “An individual’s view of their place in life in relation to their goals, aspirations, standards, and concerns in the context of the culture and value system in which they live” is the definition of quality of life given by the World Health Organisation (World Health Organisation, 1997). This description highlights the fact that the phrase covers a broad variety of elements, such as a person’s interaction with important aspects of their surroundings as well as their physical and mental well-being, degree of independence, social connections, and personal convictions. Due to poverty and a lack of opportunities for productive employment, most street sellers are immigrants from rural areas who have been compelled to move to the city in search of better opportunities. Because street selling requires very little in the way of talent and a minimal initial financial investment, it is therefore the most important and easiest way for the impoverished in rural areas to make a living. Lack of social security is one of the main problems that all workers in the unorganised sector deal with (NCEUS). Being a street seller entails risky work because it is a component of the larger informal economy. and ambiguity. They do not, however, receive any social security benefits from the state. (Saha, Deborahl, 2012) India’s major cities experienced issues in the 1990s that were common to many cities worldwide: increasing urbanisation, traffic, a dearth of legitimate job opportunities, and a significant growth in the unofficial sector. Numerous small-scale street vendor associations emerged to oppose the widespread evictions of street vendors that occurred in some cities, as well as other nations, as a result of the urban elites’ pursuit of “world class city” designation (Shalini Sinha and Sally Roever, 2011). The main targets of these protests were local Governments and finding solutions to problems with street sellers using public areas.

Further investigation indicates that there are now more street vendors in large Indian cities. notably within the previous couple decades. With over 250,000 street vendors, Mumbai has the most, followed by Kolkata with over 150,000. There are about 80,000 street vendors in Ahmedabad and Patna, and about 30,000 in Indore, Bengaluru, and Bhubaneshwar. (Quoted in Sharit K. Bhowmik, Urban Responses to Street Trading: India, 2003). The rights of street vendors are also frequently violated in several Indian cities, as is widely known. Conversely, the Supreme Court has adopted an alternative position. For instance, Sodhan Singh, a regular street vendor who sold clothes on Janpath in New Delhi, was evicted by the New Delhi Municipal Corporation over ten years ago. He said in a Public Interest Litigation he filed with the Supreme Court that His fundamental rights were violated by the act, most notably his ability to engage in commerce or business as guaranteed by Article 19(1)(g) of the Indian Constitution. This important Supreme Court ruling highlights the value of using public space and street vending. The upside is that, as the Sodhan Singh v. N.D.M.C. and ors, 1989 case amply demonstrates, street vending provides many essential commodities at a lesser cost. The most important thing to keep in mind is that street vendors should be properly regulated rather than outlawed because they are simply expressing their fundamental freedom to engage in business. The typical problems that street vendors face imply that national action is the only way to solve them, as opposed to random local efforts. Consequently, there a national institution that could assist in coordinating and projecting the activities of street vendor associations across the country was required. A significant part of the 1998 Bellagio Declaration came from SEWA. The National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) was

established in Ahmedabad, India, in September 1998 as a combination of independent groups and labour unions that serve street vendors throughout the Indian subcontinent with the goal of bringing attention to the declaration's goals. It mainly defends the rights of vendors on the streets. Street vendors have a single platform to come together and voice their rights and concerns thanks to NASVI. Currently, 22 states and more than 350 groups that deal with street vendors are members of the Alliance. It draws attention to the advantages of hawkers and sellers, as well as their issues and circumstances, so that authorities and city planners will be unable to ignore them (Sharit K. Bhowmik, 2003). The Government has started to pass laws to safeguard street vendors, but the process is slow and ineffective. Studies by Bhowmik (2001) and Anjaria (2006) have highlighted the problems of street vendors, which are mostly related to issues of social protection, employment conditions, credit accessibility, and public space usage. Additionally, a study titled "Hawkers and the Urban Informal Sector - A Study of Street Vending in Seven Cities" carried out in Imphal, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Patna, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, and Bengaluru by Bhowmik (2001) shows that street vendors have little resources for their profession and are frequently obliged to purchase products with credit. Because it looks into how street vendors handle their money access, this research is important. He also brought up the important topic of street vendors' access to social security. Studies show that a sizable portion of vendors polled had dealt with harassment, goods confiscation, fines, or eviction. Nearly half had been violently evicted, causing more injuries in the process. Therefore, the goal of the current study is to ascertain whether the working conditions or standard of living of street vendors have changed in any way.

## Research Designation

1. Research goal number one: to find out how aware respondents were of Mumbai's high standard of living.
2. To find out how the participants spend meaningful time with their family.
3. Carry out studies to ascertain the socioeconomic standing of Mumbai's street vendors in light of COVID-19.

## Research Objective

This is an exploratory study that examines how people view their quality of life, how much they know about administration and Government, what services are offered during COVID, what they need for entertainment, and how they feel about Mumbai's way of life.

## Universe

The entire Mumbai population who works as a street vendor makes up the universe of our research project.

## Sample Size

Fifty Mumbai residents make up the sample size for this research project. During the data collecting period, the researcher contacted 50 respondents. After checking the raw data for errors and omissions, the sample size for the study was reduced to 50. The participants People like as hawkers, pheriwallas, vegetable vendors, sidewalk vendors, dukandars, and others are included in this study.

## Design of Samples

In order to ensure that every Mumbai resident was fairly and adequately represented in the research study, a purposeful selection process was used to pick the respondents. Intentional Sampling Using the non-probability sampling strategy known as "purposeful sampling," researchers employ their judgement to choose a sample that will be most helpful to their goals. It frequently occurs in qualitative research when the goal is to learn in-depth information about a particular occurrence instead of drawing conclusions from statistics. An efficient purposive sample necessitates well-defined inclusion criteria and reasoning.

## Data Collection

Time Frame for gathering data the information was gathered from August to January in 2021–2022.

## Data Collection Tool

Open-ended and closed-ended questions were both included in the Google Form questionnaire that was created with the intention of gathering data.

Results In this investigation, the researcher found that: - 10% (5) of the respondents are older than 51, 14% (7) are between 15 and 30, 44% (22) are between 41 and 50, and 32% (16) are between 31 and 40.

- From the above data, it can be inferred that 39% of respondents were male and 22% were female.
- Six out of 12 responders are illiterate, whereas Twenty percent (10) have completed a standard 12 or less, eight percent (4) have graduated, and four percent (2) have completed an ITI course. Of these, fifty-six percent (28) have completed an H.S.C. or less. Not a single person has finished their postgraduate work. master's
- Of the population, 22% (11) live in rented housing, while 78% (39) live in their own home.
- Of the respondents, fifty percent (25), had been employed for more than ten years, thirty percent (15) for six to ten years, sixteen percent (8) for one to five years, and only ten percent (2) for a few months. Stated differently, less than a year.
- Of the respondents, 4% (2) have more than six family members, followed by 2% who don't have any family members, 14% who do, 7% who have two, 26% who have three or four, and 20% (10) who have five family members total, including themselves.
- Of the responders, 22% (11) had 10,000 rupees in total. or less than that sum of money each month, with only 2% (1) making more than 50,000 Rs. and 28% (56) making between 20,000 and 30,000 Rs. 10% make between Rs. 30,000 and Rs. 50,000 every year.
- Of the respondents, 10% (5) have more than two children, 42% (21) have one child, 34% (17) have two, and 14% (7) have no children at all.
- Of the total responses, 12 percent are positive, 24 percent are negative, and they might be replies for 28% of the sample. In other words, they weren't constantly unable to provide for the family's requirements.
- Of those surveyed, 48 or 96% practise excellent hygiene when serving customers in public. 92% of respondents (46) are not aware of Government programmes involving street sellers, whereas 4% (2) of respondents do not maintain proper personal hygiene while serving in public. On the other hand, 4%, or 8%, of respondents were not aware of Government programmes pertaining to street vendors.
- Nineteen percent of respondents assessed VMC's services as satisfactory. In contrast, 14% (or 28% of respondents) expressed dissatisfaction with the VMC services they obtained. Of those surveyed, another 54% (27) are unsure of their response.
- Of 92%, 46% do not receive any financial aid from the Government. among the participants. Four out of the eight responders receive financial incentives from the Government while the country is under lockdown.
- Of those surveyed, 28% strongly believe that they have had financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic (14). Aside from that, 28% of respondents, or 56%, agree with the statement, and 8% had no opinion at all. Every respondent agreed with this statement.
- Of the respondents, 66 percent (33) were able to earn enough money to cover all of their requirements and those of their families; 14 percent (7) were unable to do so, and 20 percent (11) were unclear whether to accept or reject the offer.
- Of the responders, 26% or 52% are hooked to any kind of unhealthy behaviour, while 48% of people are not hooked to any kind of unhealthy behaviour.

- Of the respondents, 86 percent (43), have no significant health conditions; 10% have serious diseases; and 4% are unsure of their current state of health.
- Of the respondents, 46% (23%) are very concerned about their health, 16% (8) are not at all bothered, and 19% are occasionally careless about their health.
- Of the respondents' family relatives, 22% (or 56 percent) were unaffected by COVID-19, while 44% (or 22 percent) were.

36 percent (18) of respondents lost someone close to them during the Covid epidemic, while 32 percent of respondents did not experience this.

- Of the respondents, 85.7 percent (42) think that a smart city is one where people live fearlessly and cheerfully. Smart cities, according to 85.7 (42) respondents, are those where people can easily find everything they need, and 83.7 (83.7) percent think that cleanliness is a common feature of all parts of the city. Given that 34 out of 69 respondents feel that metros are available, the city is referred to as a smart city. While just 2% (1) of respondents think that smart cities lead to fewer crimes, 77.4 percent (38) of respondents think otherwise.
  - Of the respondents, 56% (28%) think that spending quality time and enjoying oneself is best done at home, while 39% (78%) of The best place for respondents to spend quality time and enjoy themselves is their village, followed by their garden (21%), their lakeside (18%), their theatre (15%), and their village (18%).
  - Of the respondents, sixty percent (27), said their kids prefer street food, forty percent (40) said they prefer home cooking.
  - Of the respondents, 41.7 percent (20) like chatting up their family in their free time, 77.1 percent (37) prefer watching TV and spending time with them, and 39.6 percent (19) would rather spend time outside with their family. 33.3 percent (16) of respondents said they would rather spend time with their family, while 2.1 percent (1) said they would rather clean the house.
- Only 24% of respondents do not use smart phones, compared to 76% of respondents who do (38).
- Of those surveyed, 38% had air conditioning, 36% had refrigerators, 12% had televisions, and 24% did not have any of these items.

The report makes the following recommendations:

- A platform to increase public awareness of Government initiatives among street sellers at the local level is required. At VMC, a number of facilities for street vendors need to be expanded.
- The Government ought to give street merchants some monitoring benefits or a tax break during the lockout.
- Many street vendors struggle to make ends meet, particularly when They look for another source of money, but they can't find one. Therefore, my suggestion would be to increase the variety of income streams.
- Since many street vendors have unhealthy habits, the Government should spread awareness about this practice and take the appropriate action to guarantee that everyone leads a healthy life.
- Since many people don't give their health much thought, the Government needs to emphasise the significance of maintaining good health. Since a person in good health takes care of his family and leads a happy life. A happy life is one that is free from illness.
- According to this study, people prefer to spend more time in their own homes, towns, gardens, lakes, and theatres. Thus, I suggest that the state construct.
- There are some accessible, affordable places where people may spend time with their families, loved ones, and children.
- Although non-Governmental groups and Governments are now in charge of the weaker segments of society, they occasionally misuse their authority. Some suggestions for raising street sellers' standard of

living are provided by this study. Official identification cards for street vendors should be issued by the Government. Street sellers should be able to set up shop on well-known streets if the Government provides them with commercial buildings at a moderate monthly rental cost. People who mistreat them in their daily life should face consequences from the Government (particularly police personnel). Their work schedules pose a serious risk to their health because of the weather. Consequently, the Government ought to implement specific health, welfare, and livelihood initiatives.

## For Street Sellers

Police officers and local Government representatives ought to get training on how to support street sellers in running their businesses without getting in the way of people's daily routines. They ought to make saving a habit if they want to improve their financial circumstances. The general people can offer helpful tips and ideas to assist companies enhance their products. They seem to have taken care of their physical and mental health, and they have expanded their social and environmental spheres to enhance their quality of life.

## CONCLUSION

Street vendors are an integral part of human culture. The street vendor study's findings demonstrated precarious living and working conditions, such as high workloads, meagre profits, and no assurances of security or safety. When street sellers are sick or crippled, they are forced to depend on others to maintain their business. It is important to recognise that enhancing the working conditions of street sellers is essential to raising their standard of living. In order to avoid harassment from police and local authorities, the researchers found that street vendors must become members of a variety of trade unions, associations, national and international groups, as well as national and international organisations. It is imperative that people possess a fundamental comprehension of the law and have availability to legal counsel. In accordance with The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, they must also register as street vendors. Thus, the quality of life can be enhanced and working circumstances of every single street seller. Communities, organisations, and individuals bear responsibility for street vendors. Their daily lives are not safe, even if they work in this industry. The Government ought to take the initiative to carry out the policies it has passed in an effective manner. Therefore, the Government ought to look into the difficulties that street vendors encounter in all facets of their existence. As licenced social workers, it is our duty and a commitment to promote the welfare of street sellers.

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