

A Study on The Socio-Economic Status of Street Vegetable Vendors in Sambalpur City

ABSTRACT

Aims: Street vending is an essential activity in informal/unorganized sectors in most underdeveloped and developing countries. Street vendors play a vital role in the urban informal economy. In most of the cities in India, generally, poor people prefer street vending as their occupation because this occupation does not require any specific skill. Various studies have been conducted on the socioeconomic condition of vegetable vendors in different regions. No such studies have been conducted on the vegetable vendors of the Sambalpur city. The present research paper aims to study the socioeconomic status and working patterns of the street vegetable vendors of Sambalpur City.

Methodology: The study investigates the socio-economic condition and working patterns of street vegetable vendors in Sambalpur city. The Census method is used to collect data from 385 respondents using structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed and interpreted using graphs, charts, pie diagrams, and percentage calculations.

Results: Male vegetable vendors outnumber female vegetable vendors and they are found to be poor in economic conditions. The socioeconomic condition of the street vegetable vendors is low.

Conclusion: The economic condition of the vegetable vendors is not sound. Their daily income and expenditure are very minimal. Both males and females are engaged in this occupation. Many people prefer to opt for this occupation regardless of religion and caste. Very few Government programs and policies are available for them. More programs and policies may be formulated to strengthen their skills in this occupation. The government may provide subsidies to the street vegetable vendors for purchasing essential commodities for street vending.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, street vegetable vendors, urban policies, unorganized sectors

1. INTRODUCTION

International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unorganized sector as “the informal sector is broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in producing goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labor and capital as

factors of production and on a small scale. Labor relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees." In 1973, Hart coined the term "informal sector". He defined the informal sector as employment opportunities beyond large-scale commercial enterprises, factories, or government services (Mondal & Chakraborty, 2022). More than 60 percent of the world's working population makes their livelihoods in the informal sector (ILO, 2018). It is estimated that 1.8 billion people worldwide are engaged in different informal economic activities (Zhang et al., 2022). Statistics on the informal economy are unreliable subjects, yet they can provide a tentative picture of its relevance. For example, informal employment makes up 58.7% of non-agricultural employment in the Middle East - North Africa, 64.6% in Latin America, 79.4% in Asia, and 80.4% in sub-Saharan Africa. If agricultural employment is included, the percentages rise, in some countries like India and many sub-Saharan African countries beyond 90%. Estimates for developed countries are around 15%. In recent surveys, the informal economy in many regions has declined over the past 20 years to 2014. In Africa, the share of the informal economy has decreased to an estimate of around 40% of the economy. In developing countries, the largest part of informal work, around 70%, is self-employed (Wikipedia, Informal sector).

Street vending is a very essential activity of informal/unorganized sectors in all underdeveloped and developing countries (Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016). Street vendors play a vital role in the urban informal economy. Street vendors occupy a significant place in the employment of the informal sector, despite that street vendors face a lot of challenges and biases from local government and are also deprived of urban policies and regulations (Chakraborty & Koley, 2018). Urban poor generally prefer street vending to earn their livelihood, as it requires very little capital and minimum skills though the income is too low (Banerjee, 2014). Street vendors play a vital role in the economy of many developing countries, providing affordable goods to low-income consumers and contributing to the informal sector's growth (Dharejo et al., 2023).

A lot of studies have been done on the socio-economic status of the vendors in different regions of national as well as international level. Most of the vendors hail from lower socio-economic strata of the society. The majority of the sample respondents of different research papers based on the socioeconomic status of the vendors are found to be illiterate (Bhubanswari & Venkatachalam, 2019; Varghese, 2016). They do not possess the required educational qualifications to enable them to find better-paid jobs in the formal sector (Vaghese, 2016). In one of the articles, it is found that the socioeconomic status of female street vendors is not as good as male street vendors (Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016). Female street vendors face more problems than male street vendors (Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; Banerjee, 2014; Chakraborty & Koley, 2018). It is also revealed that the income of women street vendors is lower than that of male vendors because most of the women vegetable vendors belong to poor ST families. They choose this job because of poverty (Banerjee, 2014). It is also found that the health condition of street vendors is being deteriorated by long working hours (Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaram, 2014; Banerjee, 2014)

The pattern of subsistence in the daily market was not comfortable for street vendors, and most of the street vendors were not fit on the street daily market although they had better options for

living their lives. Previously street vendors were often considered small-scale businesses and identical to the urban poor group but nowadays street vendors come from highly educated circles, with big capital, big earnings, and modern business means like motorcycles and cars (Hemawati et.al, 2017). It is found that the majority of the street vendors are male (Kansara & Gill, 2019; Pappeswari & Rajalaxmi, 2011). Most of the street vendors belong to the young age group (20-40) and 65 percent of the respondents live in a nuclear family system (Pappeswari & Rajalaxmi, 2011). As most of the vendors face many problems in their workplace, it is suggested that there is a need to take care of their health, and job and to provide them job security and better working conditions (Kansara & Gill, 2019). Informal workers in Pakistan's Sindh Province, which includes street vendors, domestic workers, home-based workers, construction workers, garment workers, smallholder farmers, and transport workers, often experience unfavorable working conditions, low wages, job insecurity, and limited access to social protection (Darejo et al., 2023).

In Sambalpur City, street vending plays a dominant role in catering daily needs of the inhabitants. Street vendors having different socio-economic backgrounds are engaged in this occupation. Very few studies have been conducted on the socioeconomic condition of the vegetable vendors of adjacent areas of Sambalpur district. No studies have been found in this regard in Sambalpur city. In this study, an attempt has been made to know about the socioeconomic status and working patterns of the street vegetable vendors of Sambalpur City. The main objectives of the study are

1. To study the socio-economic status of the vegetable vendors in Sambalpur city.
2. To study the working pattern of the vegetable vendors.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

2.1 Study Area

The present study area is Sambalpur. "It is located at 21°.27' North Latitude and 83°.58' East Longitude in the western part of Odisha and is one of the largest and oldest cities in the state. The average elevation is 150.75 meters (494.6 ft) above the mean sea level. Sambalpur falls under the Zone-3 seismic number, which shows the possibility of an earthquake. Sambalpur city is also the biggest administrative, commercial, and educational hub in western Odisha. According to the 2011 census, the city has a total geographical area of 50.75 km², with an urban/metropolitan population of 269,565, of whom 138,826 are males and 130,749 are females. This includes Burla and Hiraikud, with a population density of 5300/km² and a literacy rate of 85.69%; male literacy is 90.30 and female literacy is 80.92 percent. The economy of Sambalpur city is dependent on trade. Most of the residents are either salaried or self-employed and forest products play an important role in the contribution to revenue and domestic product."

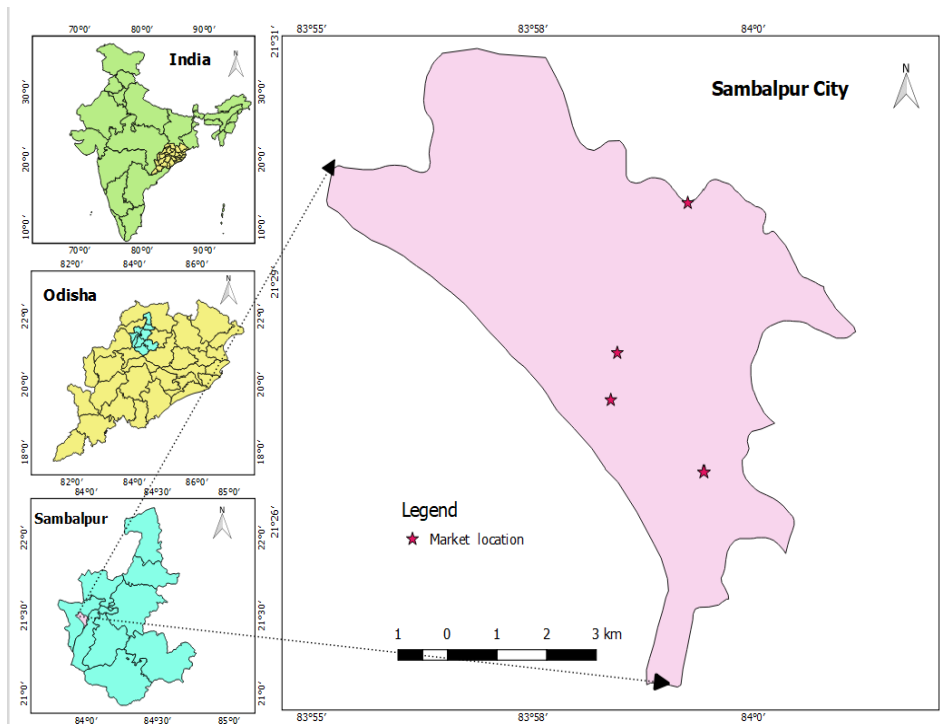


Fig 1: Location map of Sambalpur City

2.2 Methodology

For the present study, primary data have been collected from the street vegetable vendors through a structured interview schedule. The researcher collected data about the socio-economic status of the vendors as well as their working patterns. As the universe of population is very small census method was used to collect the data. Primary data have been collected from 385 vegetable vendors from four major market areas of Sambalpur city. The sample size is calculated using the Cochran's formula.

“The Cochran formula is:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

- e is the desired level of precision (i.e., the margin of error),
- p is the (estimated) proportion of the population that has the attribute in question,
- q is 1 – p.

The Z value would be obtained from the Z table.”

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

$$= ((1.96)^2 (0.5) (0.5)) / (0.5)^2$$

$$=385$$

The market area includes Ainthapali, Lakshmi Talkies Chowk to Swimming pool area, Municipality Chowk, and Dhanupali and Govindtola area. The interview schedule is divided into two parts. The first part includes questions related to the socio-economic status of the vegetable vendors like age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, religion, caste, place of residence, type of house, agricultural land, daily income, monthly income of the family, daily expenditure on a household, daily expenditure on transport, family size, number of working populations, etc. The second part includes questions related to the working pattern of the vendors like market functioning time, business hours, peak period of selling, return time from market, etc.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Socio-economic status of vegetable vendors

3.1.1 Gender

Out of the total 385 sampled vegetable vendors of Sambalpur City half of the respondents are male/ (50.1%) and half of the respondents are female (49.9%). It implies that there is a minimal difference found between male and female respondents. Studies by Sharma & Dahal, 2023; Essays & Mulugeta, 2020; Sugathan & Vyas, 2020; and Varghese, 2016 found that more male members are involved in street vending activities than female members. Very few studies show the involvement of more females in street vending activities.

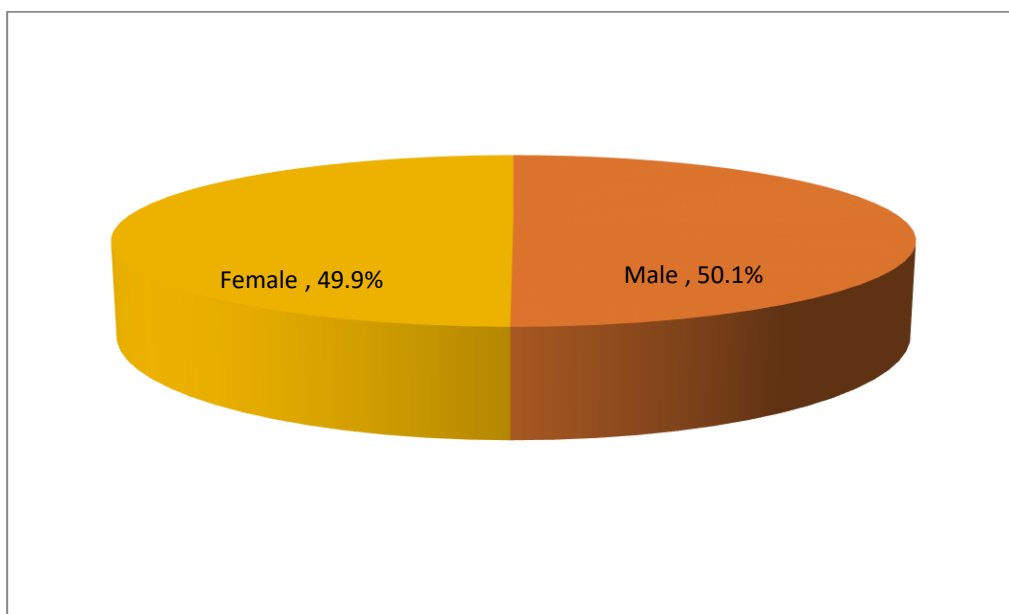


Figure: 2 Distribution of Respondents as per Gender

3.1.2 Age

The social status of the vendors explains that the majority of the respondents are in the age group between 30-60 years. Out of 385 respondents, 39% of the respondents fall in the age group of 31-45 years and a sizable proportion of the respondents are in the age group of 46-60 years. 15 % of the respondents come under the age group of 15-30 years and 8.6% of the respondents are in the age group of 61-75. The reason for the old population engaging in street vending activities is that some of them prefer to do the work as they are healthy and fit enough for the work and others are compelled to do that work as they belong to very poor backgrounds. Due to a lack of job opportunities in the formal sector, young age group people are involved in the informal sector mainly in street vending activities (Chakraborty & Koley, 2018, Essays & Mulugeta, 2020, Sugathan & Vyas, 2020, Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019, Varghese, 2016).

3.1.3 Place of residence

From the study, it is found that the majority of the respondents (57.1%) belong to the urban area and less than half of the respondents (42.9%) belong to the rural area. It is observed that though in urban areas various work opportunities prevail people are interested in street vending. In the studies of Pushpalatha & Punnavanam, 2020 and Pradeesh, 2020 most of the street vendors are from urban areas. Urban areas provide job opportunities to rural people and it leads to rural-urban migration.

3.1.4 Religion

In the case of the religious background of the street vendors, only 2.9% of the respondents are Muslim and the rest of the respondents (97.1%) are Hindu. No other religion is found in the market areas of Sambalpur city. This occupation is dominated by the Hindu people of Sambalpur city. More Hindu Street vendors were found in the studies of Sharma & Aye, 2023; Sugathan & Vyas, 2020; Kansra & Gill, 2019; and Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016 than other religious people.

3.1.5 Category

If we look into the caste of the vendors, it is revealed that half of the respondents (50.6%) belong to the SC category. 12.5 % of the respondents belong to the ST category. 23.1% of the respondents are from the OBC category. The rest of the respondents (13.8%) come under the Non-SC/ST/OBC category. In the studies like Sharma et.al, 2023; Kansra & Gill, 2019; Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014; Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; most of the street vendors belong to the general category or OBC category. This indicates that street vending as an informal work is pursued by every category irrespective of social status for their survival. However, in our study, most of the street vendors belong to the SC category.

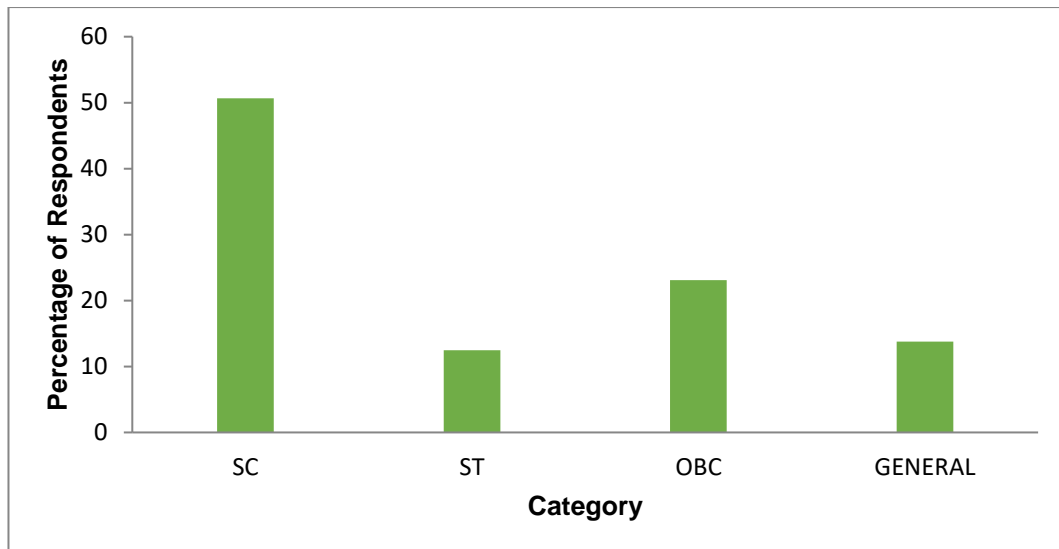


Figure :3 Distribution of Respondents as per Category

3.1.6 Marital status

From the study, it was found that the majority of the respondents (76.5%) are married. Only 11.5% of the respondents are unmarried. Within the market, it is found that 11% of the respondents are widows and only 1 % of the respondents are separated women. Most street vendors are found to be married as they had to earn their livelihood and provide basic needs to their families through street vending (Sharma et al., 2023; Chakraborty & Koley, 2018; Sugathan & Vyas, 2020; Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019; Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; Pradeesh, 2020; Kansra & Gill, 2019; Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014).

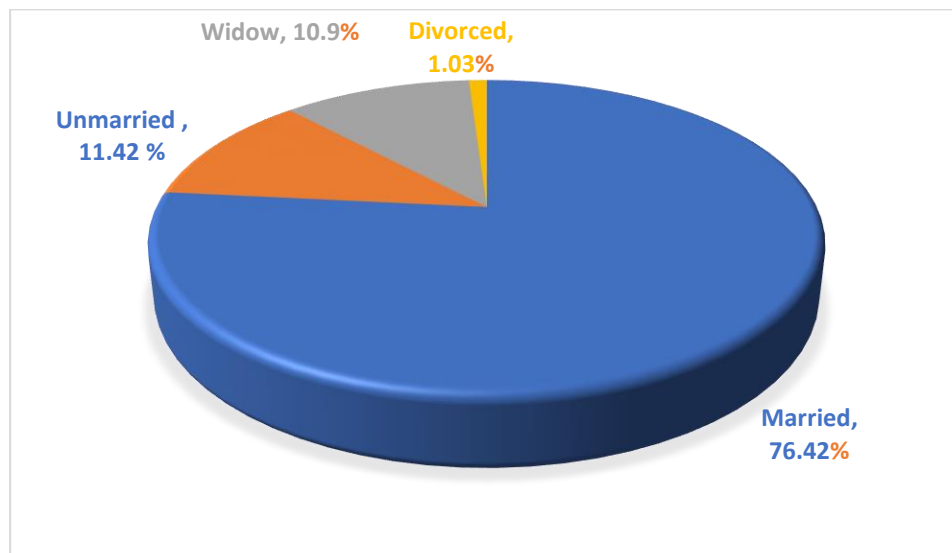


Figure: 4 Distribution of Respondents as per Marital Status

3.1.7 Educational qualifications

This study identifies that most of the respondents (40.5%) are illiterate. 28.3% of respondents have studied up to the primary level. In the next category i.e. up to the secondary level the percentage of respondents is only 23.4%. Very few respondents (5.2%) have studied up to a higher secondary level and only 2.6% of the respondents have studied a degree and above. Most street vendors in the studies are found illiterate or acquired up to the primary level of education or can only write their names (Sharma et al., 2023; Chakraborty & Koley, 2018; Sugathan & Vyas, 2020; Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019; Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; Pradeesh, 2020; Kansra & Gill, 2019; Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014; Esayas & Mulugeta, 2020). The study also found that most female vegetable vendors are illiterate (67.2%). The share of female vegetable vendors in primary education, and secondary is less than male vegetable vendors. The Female vegetable vendors do not possess higher secondary, degrees, and above qualifications. It implies that they may not get scope after secondary education.

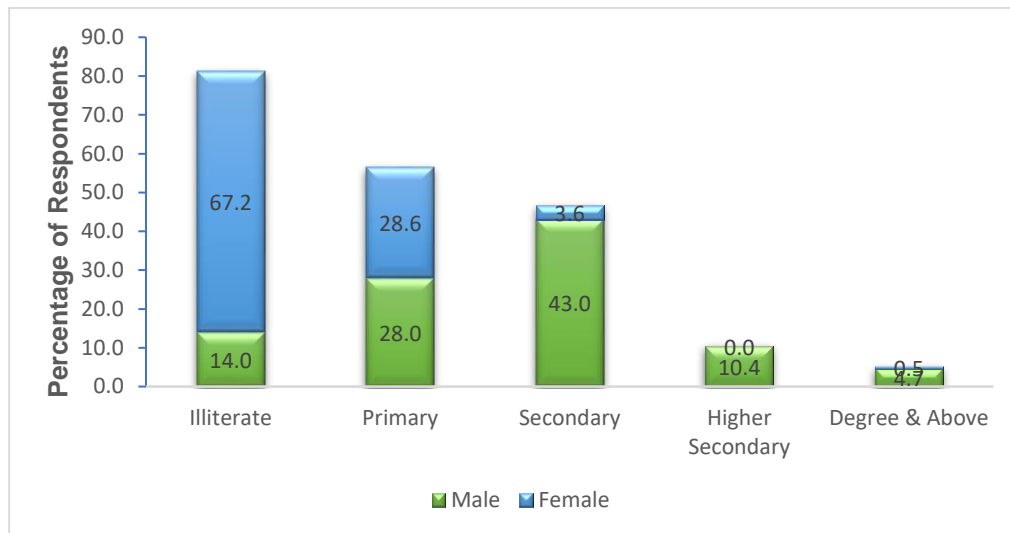


Figure: 5 Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualifications

3.1.8 Type of family

As many people migrated from rural to urban areas for business, they lived in nuclear families. The present study reveals that the vast majority (71.4%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear family and 28.5 % belong to the joint family. The results make it clear that having a small family is favored because it is easier to maintain financially. (Sharma et al., 2023; Sugathan & Vyas, 2020; Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019; Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; Kansra & Gill, 2019; Pushpalatha & Punnavanam, 2020; Selvakumar et al, 2014). In the studies of Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014 most respondents live in a joint family.

3.1.9 Family size

Family size indicates the total number of members in the family. From the study, it is found that nearly half of the respondents (49.4%) have a family size of 1-4 people. A large proportion of the population (44.9%) have a family size of 5-8 people and only 5.7% of the respondents have family

members of 9 and above. Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019; Pradeesh, 2020 in their article found that the majority of the respondents have small families. However, in the study of Kansra & Gill, 2019 it was found that most of the respondents have 6-7 family members in their family.

3.1.10 Number of children

The majority of the respondents (68.6%) have below four children. As 11.5 % are unmarried, 13.5 % of respondents have no children. The rest of the respondents (17.4%) have 4 and above 4 children. In the study of Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014, it was found that half of the respondents have two children. It indicates that most of the respondents prefer small family sizes.

3.1.11 House ownership

More than 75% of the respondents have their own house. Another 24.41% are living in rented houses. Pushpalatha & Punnavanam, 2020; Kansra & Gill, 2019; Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014, in their studies also found that most of the respondents have their own houses and very few live in rented houses. However, in the studies of Varghese, 2016, the majority of the respondents live in rented houses, and only 35% have their own house.

3.1.12 Type of house

The data shows that the majority of the respondents (42.9%) live in a kachcha house. 33.2% have semi-pucca houses, and a smaller number (23.9%) have pucca houses.

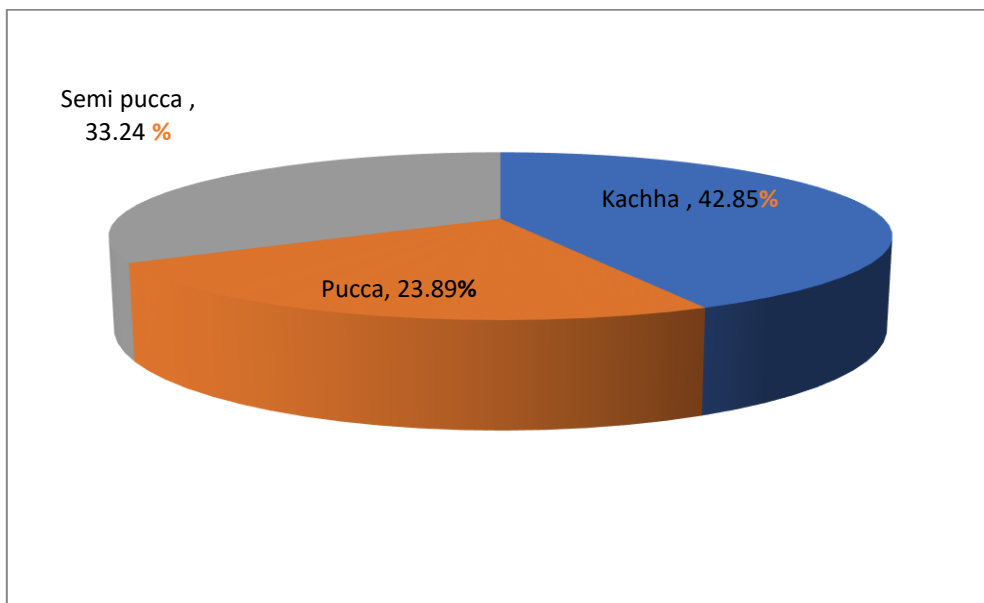


Figure: 6 Distribution of Respondents by Type of House

3.1.13 The daily income of vendors

Taking all the responsibilities of the family, a street vegetable vendor wishes to earn more money to the best of his/her ability. But some vendors (86.2%) can earn a maximum of 500 rupees per day and some others (13.8%) can earn more than 500 rupees per day. Chakraborty & Koley,

2018; Valli & Subhamangala, 2020; Baliyan & Srivastava, 2016; in their article found that most of the respondents' daily income is less than 500. It shows that street vendors have low economic status. The study also indicates that female vegetable vendors earn less than 500 rupees daily and male vegetable vendors earn more than 500 rupees daily.

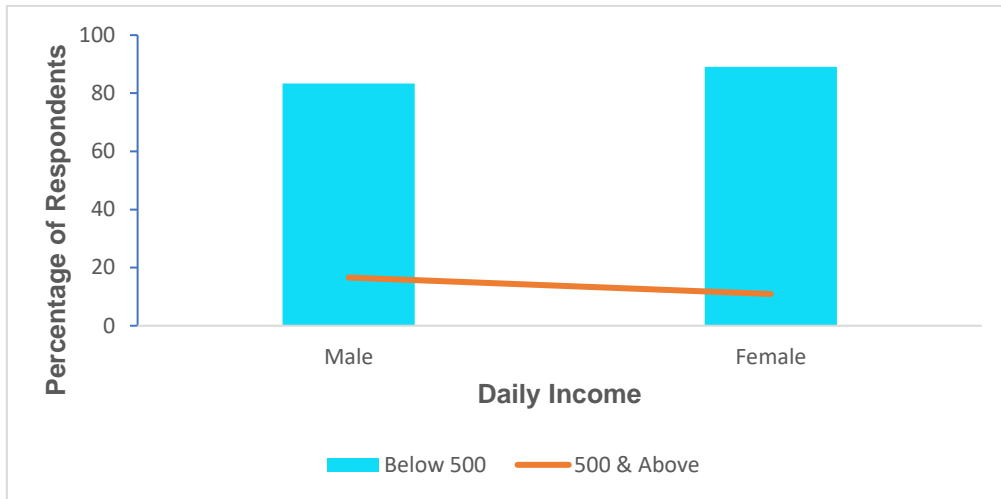


Figure: 7 Distribution of Respondents as per their daily Income

3.1.14 The monthly income of the family

The respondent's family income indicates that 9% of respondents earn less than 5000 rupees. 46.2% of respondent's family can earn between Rs. 5000-10000. Next to it, 21.8% of the respondents are earning between Rs. 10000-15000. Only 2.6% of the respondent's family can earn more than 15000 rupees. It is found that the average income of the respondents is vary meagre which is 10000 rupees per month. Karthikeyan & Mangaleswaran, 2014; Pradeesh, 2020, Pushpalatha & Punnavanam, 2020, Bhuvanewari & Venkatachalam, 2019; in their article, it is found that most of the respondent's monthly family income is less than 10,000 rupees.

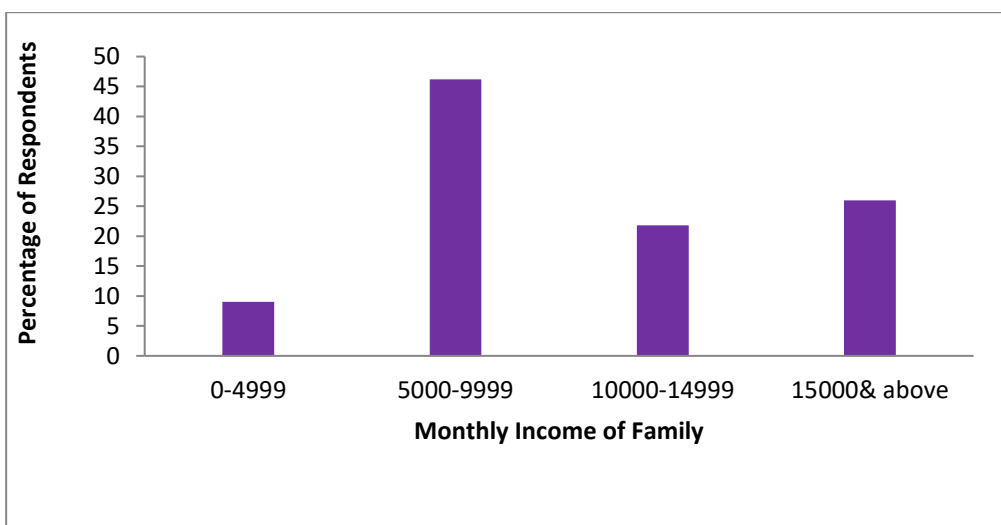


Figure: 8 Distribution of Respondents as per their Monthly Income

3.1.15 Daily expenditure on transport

Vendors come to the market every day to sell his/her product. They use different modes of transport. 60% of the respondents spent less than 100 rupees every day. 28.3% of respondents spend Rs.100-199 regularly. The range of Rs. 200-299 is spent by 7.2% of the respondents and only 4.4% of respondents spend more than 300 rupees on transport.

3.1.16 Daily expenditure on household

As the incomes of the vendors are very low their expenditure on household is also less. More than 50% of the respondents have Rs. 100-199 as their daily expenditure. Next to it, 32.2% of the respondents have a daily expenditure of Rs.200-299. 10.1% of the respondents spent Rs.300 and above on household. Only 4.4% of the respondents spend less than 100 rupees daily in their household. Female vegetable vendors spend 100-200 rupees daily on their household as they are taking the responsibilities of household chores. In comparison to female vegetable vendors the male vegetable vendors spend 100-300 rupees as their daily expenses.

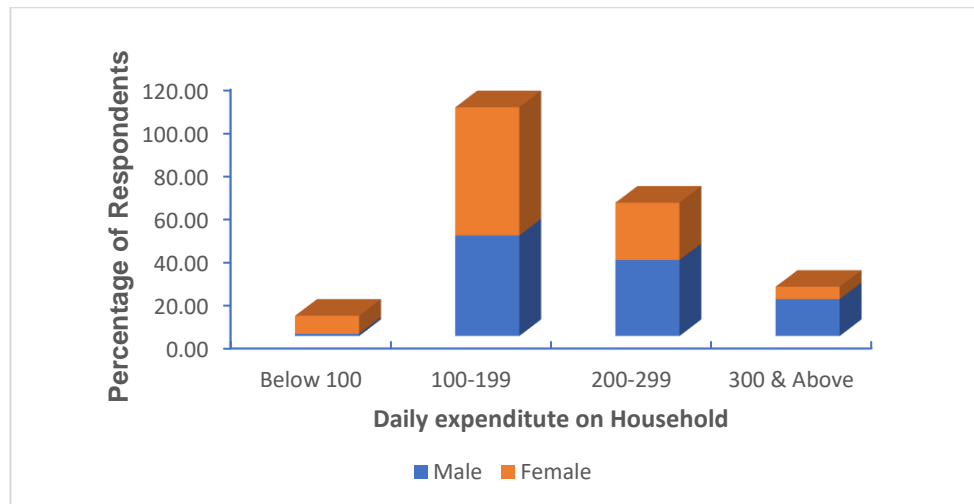


Figure: 9 Distribution of Respondents as per their daily Expenditure on Household

3.1.17 Land ownership

The study reveals that 86.2% of the respondents do not own agricultural land. 13.8% of the respondents have agricultural land and the size of their land is very small. It is found that most of the vegetable vendors are agricultural land less. Most respondents have less than 3 acres of land. Kansra & Gill, 2019 in their article found that 89.8% of respondents do not have their agricultural land.

3.1.18 Head of the family

More than 50% of the respondents are the head of the family, and they have all the family's responsibilities. 43.6% of the respondents are other family members, and they are not the head of the family.

3.1.19 Number of the working populations in the family

53.5% of the respondents are the only working person in their family. 46.5% of the respondents have 2 and more than 2 working population in their family.

3.1.20 Number of dependent populations in the family

In most of the respondents (60%) family the number of dependent populations is less than 3. This indicates that they have a small family. In the family of 36.4% of the respondents, the number of dependent populations is 4-7 people. A very small percentage (3.6%) of the respondents have 8 and more than 8 dependent people.

3.2 Working Pattern of the Respondents

3.2.1 Period of market

The production of vegetables depends on seasonal changes. So, the vendors do not focus only on the vegetable market but also prefer to follow other activities. In the city, the majority of the respondents (96.88%) come to the market throughout the year for their business. Only 3.11% of respondents come to the market in a particular season of the year.

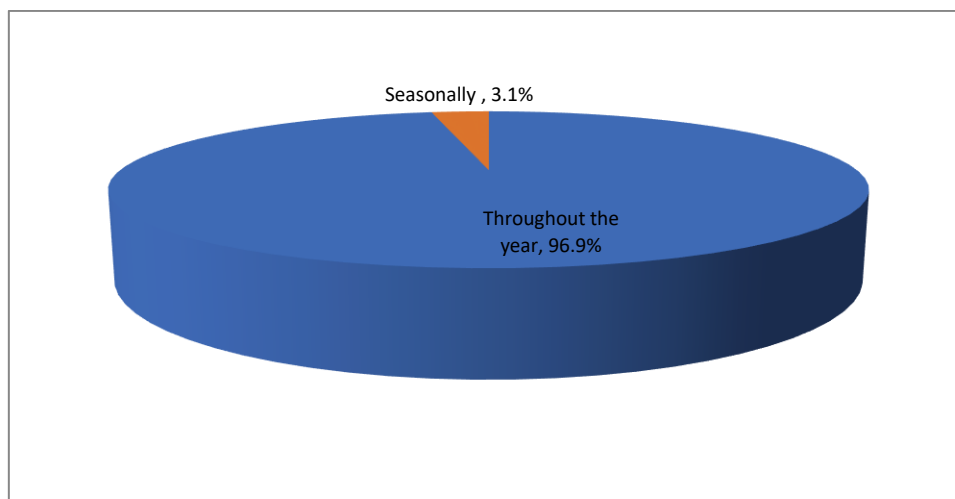


Figure: 10 Distribution of Respondents as per Period of Market

3.2.2 Functioning time of vendors

The market of Sambalpur city functions from morning to night. The vendors' working hours vary according to their convenience. The study shows that 70.6% of respondents come to the market in the morning because customers generally prefer to buy fresh vegetables during this period. Only 0.5% of vendors come in the evening. They may have other business activities during the morning. Nearly 30% of respondents like to sell their products both in the morning and evening to get maximum profit.

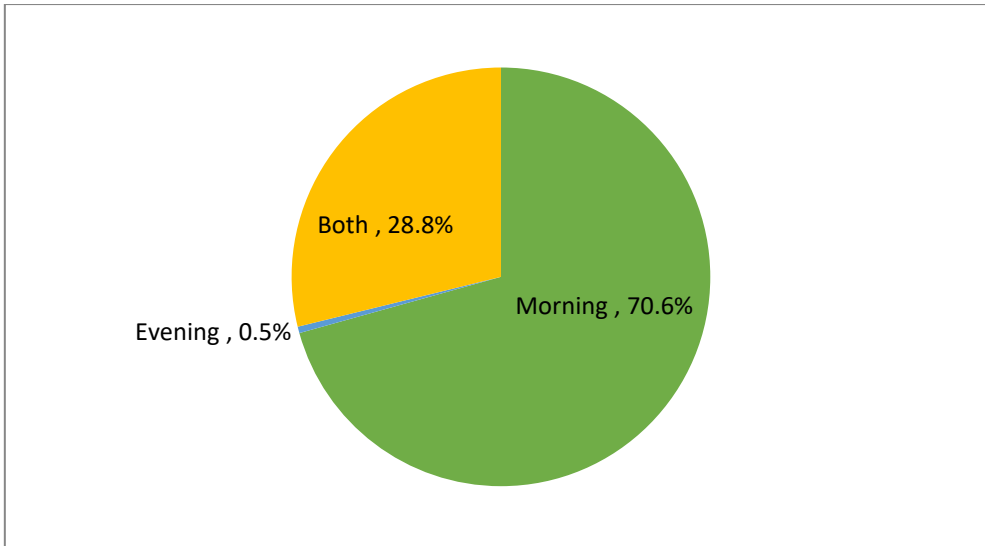


Figure: 11 Distribution of Respondents as per their Market Functioning Time

3.3.3 Business hours of the vendors

Vendors must spend the maximum amount of time in the market to maximize their profits. 62.1% of respondents spend 7-10 hours per day. In both the 15-18 hours and 3-6 hours per day categories, 11.2% of vendors spend time in the market.

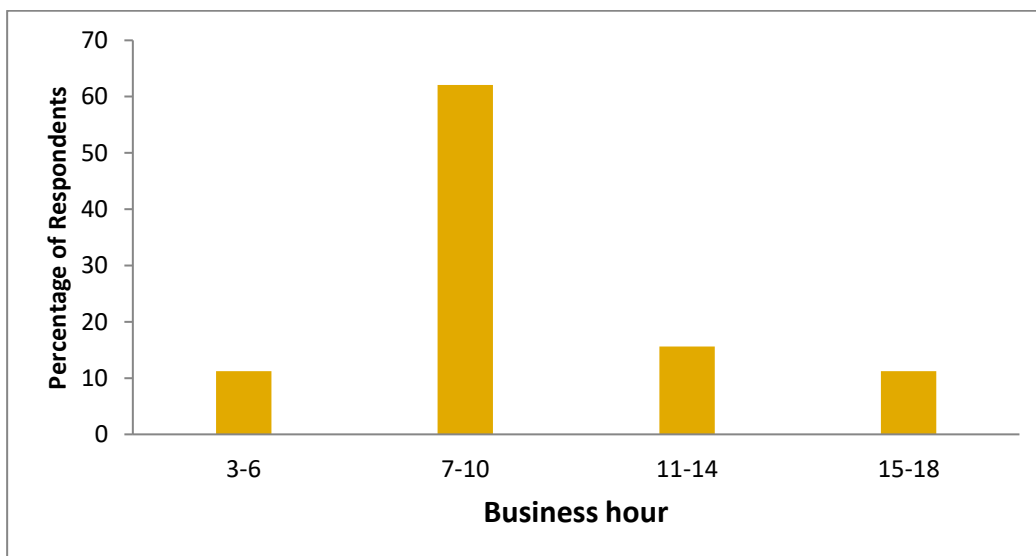


Figure: 12 Distribution of Respondents as per their working hour

3.3.4 The peak period of selling

For the majority of the respondents (85.19%) of the market, their peak period of selling time is in the morning i.e. between 5 am and 10 am. Next to it, 13.5% of the highest selling period is between 10 am-1 pm. Only 1.03% of respondent's peak period of selling is between 4 pm-8 pm.

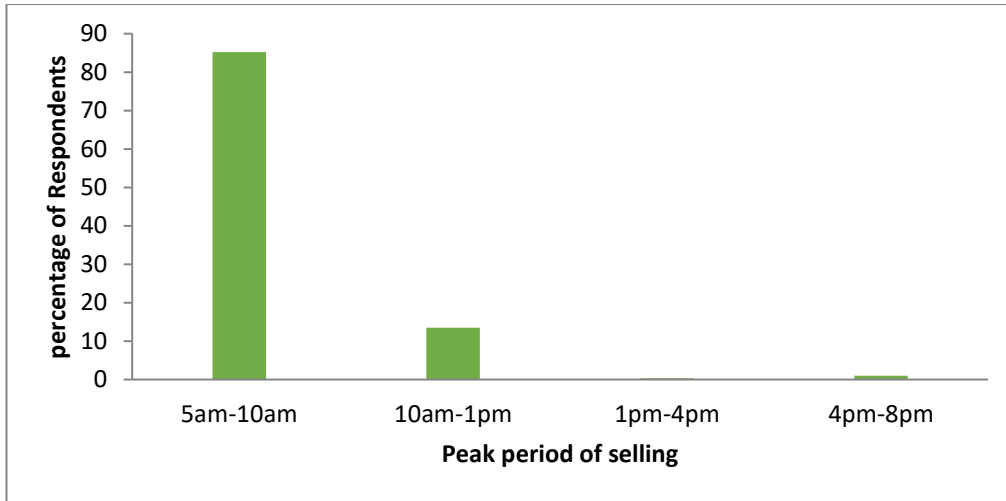


Figure: 13 Distribution of Respondents as per their peak period of Selling

3.3.5 Return time from the market

As most of the city's respondents do their business in the morning, they return from the market earlier, i.e., between 11 am and 2 pm. Next, 13.2% of respondents return between 8 pm and 11 pm as they work both mornings and evenings. 12.2% of respondents returned from the market between 5 pm and 8 pm, and 10.38% of respondents returned from the market between 2 pm and 5 pm.

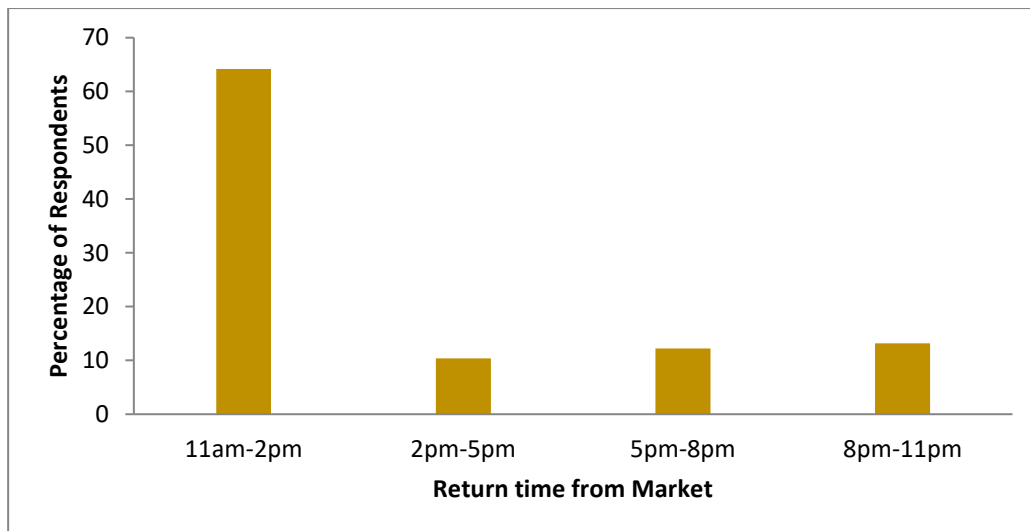


Figure: 14 Distribution of Respondents as per Return Time from Market

3.3.6 Working experience

Most of the respondents (57.1%) of the market have less than 15 years of working experience. 27.8% of respondents have working experience of 15-29 years. 13.8% of respondents have 30-44 years of experience. Only 1.3% of respondents have more than 45 years of working experience as a street vegetable vendor.

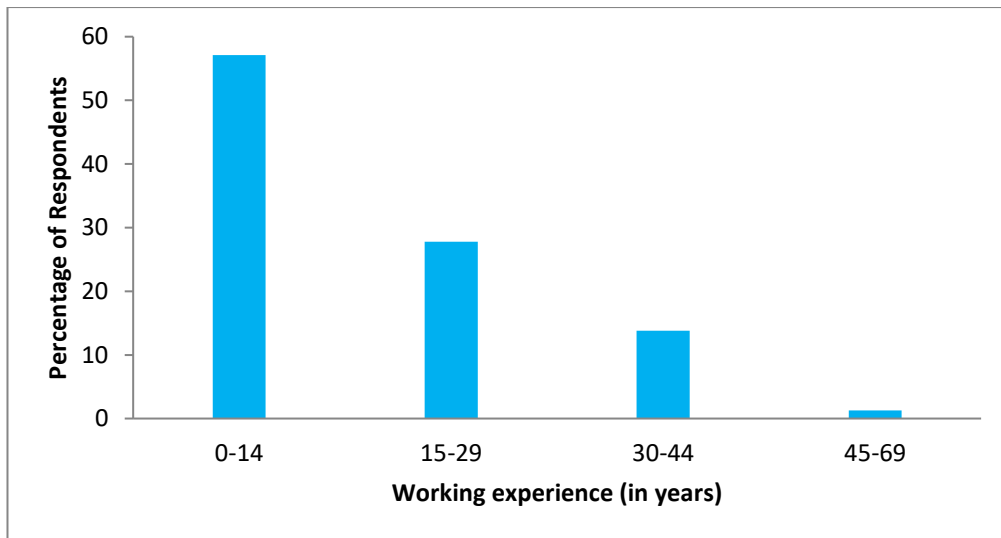


Figure: 15 Distribution of Respondents as per their working experience

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study focuses on the socioeconomic status and working patterns of the street vegetable vendors of Sambalpur city. From the study, it is found that the socioeconomic condition of the street vegetable vendors is not so encouraging. Both males and females are engaged in this occupation. Many people prefer to opt for this occupation regardless of religion and caste. Their monthly income is very low so, they spend less on their daily expenditure. Female members have less daily income as well as less daily expenditure as compared to males. Most of them are married and they have the responsibility to feed their family. They work almost throughout the year and their peak working hour is in the morning time. Some policies are formulated for the vendors by district administrators but they are not getting enough opportunities to mitigate their poor socioeconomic condition. The government may frame some more policies exclusively for them to strengthen and upgrade their skills in their existing occupation. This study will help with various policy implications at the district level, state level, and national level as well.

5. LIMITATION OF STUDY

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. As the location is not fixed it is not possible to collect the required information from the vegetable vendors.
2. While providing the data they were not interested as they were not getting enough benefits from government programs and policies.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. Street vending policies may be formulated across different regions to ensure consistent and fair implementation.
2. Harassment and bribery by local authorities can be prevented by implementing strict rules and regulations.
3. The financial needs of the street vendors might be mitigated by providing facilities to access microloans, savings accounts, and other financial services.
4. Local authorities may provide designated vending zones with appropriate infrastructure, such as stalls, sanitation, waste disposal, and lighting.
5. Regular research and data collection may be conducted to understand the needs, challenges, and contributions of street vendors.

The study may further extend to the government program and policies for street vegetable vendors.

Disclaimer (Artificial intelligence)

We hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the writing or editing of this manuscript.

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