

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN VEGETABLE VENDORS

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ABSTRACT

Vegetables constitute an essential part of the daily diet in India and are in great demand round the year from most section of the population. The commercial value of the vegetables in terms of direct consumption, processing as well as trade has risen substantially in recent years. Business of vegetable vending is very tiny, requires low investment and quick rewarding. In every corners of India, women are dominating the business of vegetables vending. Hence, it assumes due importance to study the social and economic Status of women associated with this tiny but multidimensional activity. Keeping this in view, the present study is carried out to examine the social and economic Status of women vegetable vendors. This study was confined to four districts viz. Junagadh, Gir Somnath, Porbandar and Amreli. The sample size was of 80 women vegetables vendors comprised of 20 from each district. The primary data were collected through the well prepared questionnaires. The study revealed that, OBCs category dominating the vegetable vending business. Women adopt this business after marriage because it is their family business. Though, literacy level is very low in women vegetable vendors, they are able to earn more than prevailing minimum wages in Gujarat for unskilled labours. Even though kachchaa, they are having their own house. However, very few of them are having luxurious amenities like freeze, vehicles, gas connections, vehicles or mobile except TV. They avoid regular saving or borrowing money from financial institutions may be due to unawareness or illiteracy and always felt shortage of funds. Thus, women vegetable vendors are very important part of the informal sector in the country as they are not only a source of self-employment but also provide affordable and convenient service to the society.

Keywords : women, vegetable vendors, social status, economic status

INTRODUCTION

The progressive development of the nation is the ultimate goal of any country that can be derived through the economic, social, and cultural development of people (Vinaya et al., 2017). In India, agriculture is the livelihood occupation for the majority of the people. Women are largely involved in vegetable marketing and generate additional income to support their families. Hence, the economic and social development of women is of great importance in any developmental strategy. But, then also women's socio-economic status remains poor.

Vegetables constitute an essential part of the daily diet in India and are in great demand around the year from the most section of the population. The commercial value of the vegetables in terms of direct consumption, processing as well as trade has risen substantially in recent years. The business of vegetable vending is very tiny, requires low investment

and quickly rewarding. In every corner of India, women are dominating the business of vegetables vending. Hence, it assumes due importance to study the socio-economic aspects, economics, and marketing aspects of this tiny but multidimensional activity. Keeping this in view, the present study is carried out with the following specified objectives.

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To study the social status of women vegetable vendors
- (2) To study the economic status of women vegetable vendors

METHODOLOGY

The present study was confined to four districts viz. Junagadh, Gir Somnath, Porbandar and Amreli. The sample size was 80 women vegetable vendors comprised of 20 from each district. Four vegetable markets of district place i.e.

Junagadh, Porbandar, Gir Somnath and Amreli city were selected for the survey. The primary data related to the social and economic Status of women vegetable vendors were collected through the well-prepared questionnaires.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Status of Women Vegetables Vendors

The details of the social status of women vegetable vendors is presented in Table 1.

(n=80)

Table 1 : Social status of women vegetables vendors

Sr. No.	Indicator	Junagadh	Gir Somnath	Porbandar	Amreli	All
1	Age of the women Vegetable Vendors in Years					
i	Young Age - Up to 35	04 (20)	11 (55)	03 (15)	0 (0)	18 (22.50)
ii	Middle Age - 36 to 50	12 (60)	03 (15)	07 (35)	06 (30)	28 (35)
iii	Old Age - Above 50	04 (20)	06 (30)	10 (50)	14 (70)	34 (42.50)
2	Marital status of the women					
i	Married	18 (90)	13 (65)	14 (70)	10 (50)	55 (68.75)
ii	Unmarried	01 (5)	03 (15)	01 (5)	0 (0)	05 (6.25)
iii	Widow	01 (5)	04 (20)	05 (25)	10 (50)	20 (25)
3	Category of the women					
i	General	0 (0)	0 (0)	01 (5)	0 (0)	01 (1.25)
ii	OBCs	19 (95)	19 (95)	19 (95)	20 (100)	77 (96.25)
iii	SCs	01 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	01 (1.25)
iv	STs	00 (0)	01 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	01 (1.25)
4	Education of the women					
i	Illiterate	12 (60)	09 (45)	17 (85)	18 (90)	56 (70)
ii	Up to Primary	07 (35)	06 (30)	02 (10)	02 (10)	17 (21.25)
iii	Up to Secondary	01 (5)	05 (25)	01 (5)	0 (0)	07 (8.75)
5	Size of family					
i	Men	27 (23.48)	26 (20.63)	35 (26.52)	22 (18.33)	110 (22.31)
ii	Women	27 (23.48)	40 (31.75)	40 (30.30)	28 (23.33)	135 (27.38)
iii	Boys	33 (28.70)	33 (26.19)	33 (25)	38 (31.67)	137 (27.79)
iv	Girls	28 (24.35)	27 (21.43)	24 (18.18)	32 (26.67)	111 (22.52)
v	Total	115 (100)	126 (100)	132 (100)	120 (100)	493 (100)
vi	Average Size	5.75	6.30	6.60	6.00	6.16
6	Type of family					
i	Joint family	10 (50)	18 (90)	14 (70)	14 (70)	56 (70)
ii	Nucleolus Family	10 (50)	02 (10)	06 (30)	06 (30)	24 (30)
7	Selling Experience in Years	12.90	15.45	28.70	21.80	19.71
8	No. of persons involved in the same business	02.00	01.50	02.05	01.40	01.74
9	Distance From Home in KM	02.03	02.05	08.58	02.30	03.74

Note: Value inside parentheses indicates percentage)

(1) Age

In all, the age of women vegetable vendors was between 19 and 80 years. The analysis of age groups indicates human resources at different stages of vegetable vending. It is seen from the table that the maximum proportion (42.50 %) comes under the old age group, i.e. above 50 years, followed by middle age group, 36-50 years, (35 %) and young age group, (22.50 %) up to 35 years (22.50%). Across the

markets, the highest percentage of young (55%), middle-age (60%) and old (70%) were found in Gir Somnath, Junagadh and Amreli markets, respectively.

(2) Marital status

The marital status of the women shows that 68.75 per cent respondents were married and 25 per cent were widows. Among the respondents, only 5 women (6.25 %) were unmarried.

(3) Category

The details regarding the category of selected respondents revealed that all the markets have shown uniform results. Overall, 96.25 per cent of the women belong to Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and only one respondent belongs to general castes, one belongs to Scheduled Caste (SC) category and one belongs to the categories of Scheduled Tribes (STs). Thus, OBC caste dominates in vegetables vending. This may be due to a low level of financial requirement and immediate return features of the business of vegetables vending.

(4) Education

Literacy is considered as an indicator of development. The government is taking concerted efforts to increase the literacy level of people especially the marginalized. The data revealed that the literacy level in the selected region of the study was 30 per cent only. This is much lower than the female literacy rates both at the national level (65.46%) and state level (70.73 %). Across the districts, Gir Somnath’s literacy level is the highest (55 %), followed by Junagadh and Porbandar. The lowest literacy rate is observed in Amreli district (10 %). Regarding the level of literacy, 21.25 per cent of the respondents had only less than 8 years of formal education and only 8.5 per cent received up to 12 years of education.

(5) Family details

The overall average family size is 6.19 members. Porbandar district has the highest average family size of 6.30 members and the lowest in Junagadh district with 5.75 members. Out of the 493 members, 22.52 per cent, 27.79 per cent, 27.38 per cent and 22.31 per cent were girls, boys, women and men, respectively. Among children, the percentage of girls is lower than boys in all the districts.

Economic status of women vegetables vendors

The information regarding the economic status is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 : Economic status of women vegetables vendors

(n = 80)

Indicator	Junagadh	Gir Somnath	Porbandar	Amreli	All
House					
Own	10 (50)	19 (95)	16 (80)	18 (90)	63 (78.75)
Rented	10 (50)	01 (5)	4 (20)	02 (10)	17 (21.25)
Pakkaa / Kachchaa					
Pakkaa	10 (50)	18 (90)	9 (45)	08 (40)	45 (56.25)
Kachchaa	10 (50)	02 (10)	11 (55)	12 (60)	35 (43.75)
Mobile					
Yes	13 (65)	04 (20)	04 (20)	0 (0)	21 (26.25)
No	07 (35)	16 (80)	16 (80)	20 (100)	59 (73.75)

The percentage of women living in a joint family is higher than the nucleus family in all the districts except Junagadh district (50:50). Overall, 70 per cent of the women live in a joint family and only 30 % of respondents live in the nucleus family. The results clearly show that higher the development level of the district lesser will be the tendency of living in a joint family.

(6) Selling experience

Regarding the experience of vegetable vending of the selected respondents revealed that overall average experience of women is 19.71 years. Porbandar district has the highest average experience of 28.70 years and the lowest in Junagadh district with 12.90 years. This means that this district vegetable vendors are shifting earlier from this business than others.

(8) Persons involved in the same business

The details regarding the persons involved in the same business among the family of the selected respondents indicated that on an average 1.74 members were involved in the same business. Porbandar district has the highest average involvement of family members with 2.05 and the lowest in Amreli district with 1.40 members. The tendency of retaining the same business may be due to lesser business options or family business tradition or profitability of this business.

(9) Distance from home

The overall average distance of the market place from the resident of women respondents is 3.74 km. Porbandar district has the highest average distance of 8.58 km. and all other Gir Somnath and Junagadh districts have an average distance of 2.05 and 20.3 km. respectively.

Indicator	Junagadh	Gir Somnath	Porbandar	Amreli	All
Freeze					
Yes	03 (15)	02 (10)	04 (20)	04 (20)	13 (16.25)
No	17 (85)	18 (90)	16 (80)	16 (80)	67 (83.75)
TV					
Yes	14 (70)	20 (100)	17 (85)	12 (60)	63 (78.75)
No	06 (30)	0 (0)	03 (15)	08 (40)	17 (21.25)
Gas connection					
Yes	11 (55)	13 (65)	13 (65)	6 (30)	43 (53.75)
No	09 (45)	07 (35)	07 (35)	14 (70)	37 (46.25)
Vehicle					
Yes	05 (25)	05 (25)	08 (40)	02 (10)	20 (25.00)
No	15 (75)	15 (75)	12 (60)	18 (90)	60 (75.00)
Types of savings					
Institutional Saving	09 (45)	05 (25)	07 (35)	06 (30)	27 (33.75)
Uninstitutional Saving	11 (55)	15 (75)	13 (65)	14 (70)	53 (66.25)
Reasons for savings					
Education of Children	03 (33.33)	03 (60.00)	02 (28.57)	04 (66.67)	12 (44.44)
Daily Expenses	06 (66.67)	0 (0.00)	05 (71.43)	0 (0.00)	11 (40.74)
Old Age	02 (22.22)	0 (0.00)	05 (71.43)	02 (33.33)	09 (33.33)
Buying House	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	01 (14.29)	0 (0.00)	01 (3.70)
Marriage of Child	05 (55.56)	02 (40.00)	02 (28.57)	0 (0.00)	09 (33.33)

Note: Value inside parentheses indicates percentage

(1) House

House is one of the essential needs of mankind. Yet many are devoid of this basic need. The details regarding the ownership of the house expressed that 78.75 per cent respondents live in their own house and 21.25 per cent have rented house. Among the respondents, 56.25 per cent live in pakkaa house while 43.75 per cent in kachchaa house. The proportion of own house was found high in relatively underdeveloped cities.

(2) Other amenities

The details regarding the use of mobile, freeze, TV, gas connection, vehicles revealed that on an average, 78.75 per cent of respondents have TV, 53.75 per cent have a gas connection, 26.25 per cent have mobile, 25 per cent possesses vehicles and 16.25 per cent having freeze. The proportion of these amenities varies across the districts.

(3) Savings

Regarding the saving habits of selected women vegetable vendors, it is found that on an average tendency of institutional saving was observed relatively poor (33.75%) as compared to un institutional saving. Institutional saving

tendency found relatively better in Junagadh and Porbandar districts. The reasons for saving indicate that education of children given priority in all districts. Overall 44.44 per cent respondents gave priority to education for their children. The saving for daily expenses was favoured by 40.74 per cent respondents. On average, about 33 per cent respondents preferred saving for their old age and marriage of their children. On the whole, most of the women vegetable vendors preferred to save for the education of their children and daily expenses. The saving habit varied widely across the districts.

CONCLUSION

In India, women constitute around 50 % of its population. So, the development of women is inevitable for the development of India. From the study, it is concluded that OBCs category dominating the vegetable vending business. Women adopt this business after marriage because it is their family business. Though literacy level is very low in women vegetable vendors, they are able to earn more than prevailing minimum wages in Gujarat for unskilled labours. Even though kachchaa, they are having their own house. However, very few of them are having luxurious amenities like freeze, vehicles, gas connections, vehicles, or mobile except TV. They avoid regular savings or borrowing money from

financial institutions may be due to unawareness or illiteracy and always felt a shortage of funds. Thus, women vegetable vendors are a very important part of the informal sector in the country as they are not only a source of self-employment but also provide affordable and convenient service to society.

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