

THE IMPACT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC ON THE WOMEN VENDORS: A CASE STUDY OF PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and subsequently led to a worldwide pandemic. In response, numerous regions implemented lockdowns, which had widespread repercussions, particularly affecting the female vendors in Pune city of Maharashtra, India. Notably, this market was shuttered for a duration of ten months. Consequently, it is essential to examine the ramifications of this closure due to the lockdown, focusing on the impact of this pandemic and the ensuing financial challenges. This study explores the adversities encountered by the women vendors of Pune during the lockdown period. It further assesses the decline in their income, the struggles faced by them, and the alternative strategies they adopted to sustain their livelihoods. Additionally, the research investigates the measures taken by the government for street vendors during Covid 19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS

Women street vendors, COVID 19 Pandemic, PMSVANidhi

INTRODUCTION

An equitable society requires that women and girls are empowered to take charge of their lives, make independent choices, and achieve success in their selected endeavors. Woman is that human being of the world which can do anything. She can do any type of work and she works harder than men. As we can see nowadays that many women are accomplishing different tasks, different jobs, business with a great performance without complaining for anything. She is balancing both household work and job/business work efficiently. When it comes about the responsibility of financial burden, she has to take one step forward to get financially independent and survive for earning bread and butter whether it is urban or rural area. Women are involved in street vending business directly or indirectly in Rural, Urban and semi-urban areas since long time in India.

For many years, women have been engaged as street vendors in Pune, and their contributions to the informal economy are acknowledged. In Pune, female street vendors typically offer a diverse range of products, which include perishable goods such as vegetables,

fruits, and flowers, alongside other items like household products, clothing, and prepared food. Some may run seasonal stalls that feature goods tailored to specific festivals or seasons. They play a crucial role in the informal sector, frequently encountering distinct challenges and vulnerabilities. Everything was going smoothly until COVID-19 lockdown period but this pandemic situation has changed everything. There was a significant decline in their earnings, resulting in increased hunger and suffering. Although numerous studies have focused on the formal sectors, there is a lack of information regarding the effects of COVID-19 on informal workers. This research will investigate the challenges faced by the women vendors in Pune, whose livelihoods are reliant on their daily income. It will also provide a range of recommendations and perspectives from their viewpoint to alleviate their hardships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

R. Vara Prasad, D. Subhashini (2019) published a research paper “Women Street Vendors, Challenges and Opportunities: A Superlative Analysis with Special Reference to Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, India” to distinguish socio-economic profile of women street vendors and awareness level of women street vendors on various government entrepreneurial policies and their rights. Here, both the methods were used by the authors i.e. primary and secondary. 115 respondents have been interviewed and same analysed by using SPSS 20, Chi-square method also used by them. The study found that women street vendors are not aware about their basic rights, various schemes, about license. So, the study concluded that there is room of improvement in financial inclusion of women street vendors. The government needs to organize some responsiveness agendas to address the prerequisite of women street vendors. (R. Vara Prasad, 2019)

Taibangnganbi RK and Sanjaykumar P. Phad (2022) published a research paper “The Impact of COVID 19 on the Women Vendors of Ima Market, Manipur” to comprehend the socio-economic impact of the COVID 19 lockdown on women street vendors of Ima Market of Manipur city. Primary data collection method used here with the sample size of 30 and secondary method also used by the authors. T-test and Chi square test were used by them for data analysis. The paper emphasizes women street vendors economic problems and their family faced shortage of food problem during lockdown. The study concluded that there was a need of important policy intervention. The study recommends that the government should implement all the policies properly so that women vendors will get to know about it and take the benefit of the same. (Phad, 2022)

Dr. D. JANAGAM (2023) issued a paper, “Issues and challenges faced by women street vendors - A case study of Salem district of Tamil Nadu” to highlights the challenges of women street vendors of Salem city as per the type and mode of the business. Constructed questionnaire was used for collecting data of 25 women vendors. Percentage Analysis, and Weighted Average Method was used for analysis of collected data. Authors found that there is shortage of literacy and income and more working hours affecting their socio-economic condition. It has concluded that despite of all the policies street vendors are not considered as public nuisance and suggested of implementation of policies and need of follow ups for the same. (Janagam, 2023)

OBJETIVES OF STUDY

1. To recognize personal and socio-economic profile of women street vendors of Pune City.
2. To identify the impact of COVID-19 on the women vendors of Pune City
3. To identify how many women vendors of Pune city have availed loans from PM SVANidhi Yojana.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Coverage of the study: Pune, Maharashtra

Sample size: 120 respondents

Data collection period: March 2024 to April 2024

Sampling Method: Convenient sampling method

Sources of data: Primary data and secondary data both

Primary data collection instrument: Structured interview questionnaire method and data collected with the help of google forms.

Presentation of data and statistical tools used: Percentage analysis, measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion.

Statistical tools used for testing of hypothesis: Friedman test.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. Time span: March 2024 to April 2024
2. The study is restricted to selective modes of stall like Vegetables & Fruits, Food & Drinks, Clothes, flowers, bouquets, cosmetics, household utensils.
3. Only women street vendors of Pune has been selected.

Table 1: Age of women street vendors

Age (in years)	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
18-30	12	10%
30-45	57	47.5%
45-60	39	32.5 %
Above 60	12	10%

Interpretation: From the above chart it is understood that 47.5% of women street vendors are aged between 30-45 years where as 32.5% are aged between 45-60 years and minimum 10% aged between 18-30 years and above 60 years.

Table 2: Educational qualification of women street vendors

Educational Qualification	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Illiterate	22	18.33%
1 st - 9 th std.	54	45%
10 th pass	28	23.3%
12 th pass	10	8.33%
Graduate	5	4.16%
Post- Graduate	1	0.83%

Interpretation: From the above chart it is understood that most of the women street vendors have done with schooling from 1st - 9th std. 45% (54 members) where as 23.3% and 8.33% completed their 10th class and 12th class respectively. 18.33% women are illiterate whereas only 0.83 % are post graduate.

Table 3: Marital status of women street vendors

Marital Status	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Married	83	69.1%
Unmarried	2	1.7%
Divorcee	33	27.5%
Widow	2	1.7%

Interpretation: From the above chart we can understand that 69.1% (83 members) of women street vendors are married whereas 27.5% and 1.7% (2 members) are divorcee and widow respectively.

Table 4: How long been into street vending

Experience (in years)	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
5-10 Years	31	25.8%
10-20 Years	56	46.6%
Above 20 years	33	27.5%

Interpretation: From the above chart we can understand that most of the women street vendors have experience of 10-20 years i.e., 46.6% (56 members) where as 27.5% (33 members) and 25.8% (31 members) have experience of more than 20 years and 5-10 years.

Table 5: Type of product women street vendor sell

Product	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Vegetables & Fruits	32	26.67

Food & Drinks	41	34.17
Clothes	10	8.33%
Other	37	30.83%

Interpretation: From the above chart we can understand that most of the women street vendors sell food and drinks 34.17% (41 members) where as 26.67% and 8.33% sell vegetables & fruits and clothes respectively. 30.83% sell other products like flowers, bouquets, cosmetics, household utensils, etc.

Table 6: Working hours

Working Hours (in hours)	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Below 6 hours	26	21.67%
6-10 hours	64	53.33%
Above 10 hours	30	25%

Interpretation: From the above chart we can understand that women street vendors most of them work for 6-10 hours i.e., 53.33% (64 members) where as others work for more than 10 hours i.e. 25% (30 members) and others work for less than 6 hours i.e. 21.67% (26 members).

Table 7: Source of capital

Source of Capital	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Own savings	63	52.5%
Loan	48	40%
Other	9	7.5%

Interpretation: From the above chart we can observe that women street vendors source of capital 52.5% (63 members) invest their own savings where as others 40% (48 members) take loan.

Table 8: Reason to choose street vending

Reason to choose street vending	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
To lead a basic life	31	25.83%
To meet the financial problems	13	10.83%
Due to Unemployment	62	51.67%
Other	14	11.67%

Interpretation: From the above chart we observed that women street vendors choose street vending 51.67% (62 members) due to unemployment, 25.83% (31 members) to lead a basic life and others to meet the financial problems i.e., 10.83% (13 members).

Table 9: Having a bank account

Having a bank account	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Yes	114	95%
No	6	5%

Interpretation: From the above chart we observed that women street vendors most of them have bank account i.e., 95% (114 members) and others 5% (6 members) doesn't have bank account.

Table 10: Avail loan in bank

Bank Loan	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Yes	46	38.33%
No	74	61.67%

Interpretation: From the above chart we observe that 114 persons are having bank account in those only 46 members avail loan i.e., (38.33%) others 74 doesn't avail loan (61.67%).

Table 11: Did you take the benefit of PM SVANidhi scheme?

PM SVANidhi scheme	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
Yes	51	42.5%
No	69	57.5%

Interpretation: From the above chart we observed that most of the women street vendors have not taken the benefit of PM SVANidhi scheme i.e. (57.5%), only 51 women have taken the benefit of PM SVANidhi scheme i.e. (42.5%).

Table 12: How much loan taken from PM SVANidhi scheme?

Loan Amount	No. of women street vendors	Percentage
₹ 10,000	35	68.63%
₹ 20,000	10	19.60%
₹ 50,000	6	11.77%

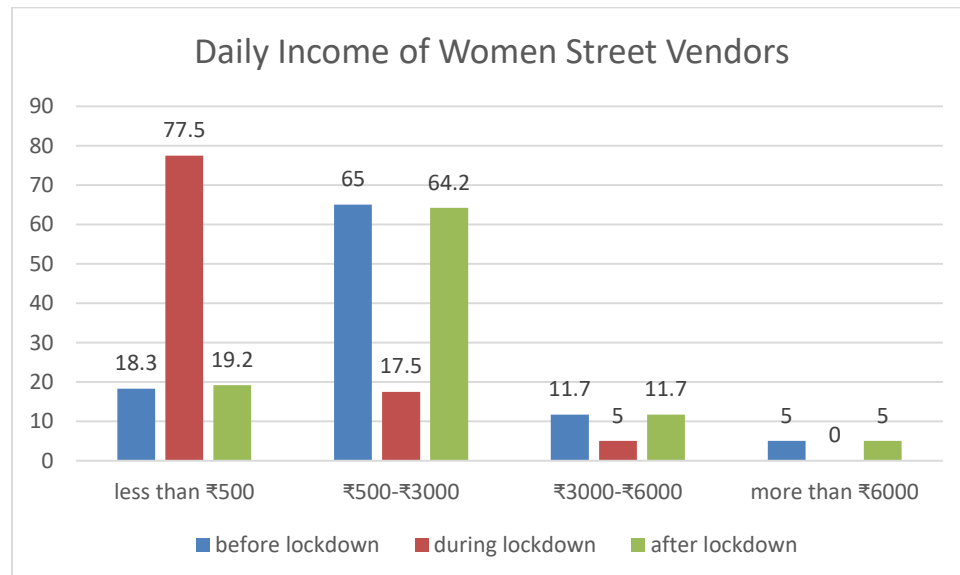
Interpretation: From the above table we can observed that 51 women street vendors have taken the advantage of PM SVANidhi scheme. Out of that 35 women has avail the loan amount of ₹ 10,000 i.e. (68.63%), whereas 19.60 % and 11.77% have avail the loan amount of ₹ 20,000 and ₹ 50,000 respectively.

HYPOTHESIS

Ho: There is no significant difference in the daily income of women street vendors while doing their business during, pre and post Covid -19.

H1: There is a significant difference in the daily income of women street vendors while doing their business during, pre and post Covid -19.

(To test this hypothesis Q. No. 13 was considered and a Friedman Test was conducted)



Statistics				
		Daily income (Before Lockdown)	Daily income (during lockdown)	Daily income (After Lockdown)
N	Valid	120	120	120
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2.03	1.27	2.03
Median		2.00	1.00	2.00
Mode		2	1	2
Std. Deviation		.709	.549	.716
Variance		.503	.302	.512
Range		3	2	3
Mean Rank		2.38	1.27	2.35

Test Statistics - Friedman Test	
N	120
Chi-square	163.718
df	2
Asymp. Sig. (P)	.000

Results:

The Friedman test is a non-parametric statistical test used to investigate whether groups of three or more repeated measurements differ from each other. Here the daily income of the women street vendors during three different stages of covid 19 i.e. pre, during and post covid 19 have been chosen and the Friedman test has been applied to find out whether there is any difference in the mean values i.e. the daily revenue of the women street vendors in the dissimilar stages of covid 19. In order to accept the null hypothesis, the 'P' or the significance value should be greater than 0.05. In the above table it can be seen that the significance value less than 0.05 which means that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence it can be said that there is a significant difference in the daily income of women street vendors while doing their business during, pre and post Covid -19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The majority of female street vendors lack formal education and require capacity building to effectively comprehend messages disseminated by the municipal commission.
2. It is essential to provide these women with knowledge regarding banking operations, available loan schemes, and the benefits associated with holding a bank account.
3. Furthermore, education on the process of obtaining a street vending license is crucial, as many of them operate without proper licensing.
4. Additionally, training on how to apply for and secure loans from financial institutions is necessary.
5. Government should enhance awareness regarding the fundamental rights and schemes available to women street vendors.

CONCLUSION

The work entitled "The Impact of COVID 19 Pandemic on the Women Vendors: A Case Study of Pune, Maharashtra" will help us know to identify the challenges faced by women street vendors and to explore potential areas for enhancing their living conditions. The primary aim of this research was to investigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on female vendors in Pune, Maharashtra. The various phases of government lockdown excluded this market, and it remained closed for nearly a year without any plans for reopening. This clearly illustrates that the lockdown measures implemented by the state were not uniformly applied. Consequently, these vendors faced a severe economic crisis, leading to significant hunger and distress. Their plight highlights the extent of their suffering and challenges. For these women, the market represents more than just a trading venue; it is a sanctuary. They provide mutual support, encouraging one another to enhance productivity, foster independence, rely on their

capabilities, and engage in collective decision-making. Prior to the pandemic, it was uncommon for them to miss a day at the market. However, the prolonged closure led to feelings of depression due to the loss of vibrant interactions and conversations with fellow vendors. The obstacles they encounter are substantial, while the available policy options are limited. This situation often results in ongoing debates regarding whether governments should prioritize economic recovery. Collectively, our findings, in conjunction with those from other studies, underscore the urgent necessity for comprehensive policy intervention.

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