

A Critical Study on Vegetable Vending Business in Relation to Tribal Women Empowerment in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh



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Abstract

Street vending – one of the most visible aspect of informal/unorganised employment sector is not restricted to any particular place or region rather it is a global phenomenon. Today street vending is seen as an important source of self-employment to both urban and rural population. The case of Arunachal Pradesh is also not different from other parts of the country. Women represent more than 40 percent of the global workforce and 43 percent of the agricultural workforce. In India, street vendors accounts for 3 percent of total non-agricultural employment. Generally it is seen that when women generate their own income they invest mostly for the well being of their family. They contribute not only to their well being but for their family as well as society at large. Around half of the total population of world and of India consist of female population, therefore, financial independence/economic empowerment of women in general and tribal women in particular will bring gender equality, social development, poverty eradication, inclusive growth which eventually lead to sustainable development in the society. Studies conducted on street vendors in India, revealed that among ST street vendors, percentage of female vendors is higher because of the lazy and alcoholic nature of their male counterparts. However, the women vendors in the country faces diverse constraints ranging from socio – economic, cultural, politics, operational, health and many other, that makes them to struggle hard to survive in the vending business. Therefore, in the present paper the author critically studied the vegetable vending business in relation to tribal women empowerment in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Street Vending, Tribal Women Empowerment.

Introduction

Street vending – one of the most visible aspect of informal/unorganised employment sector is not restricted to any particular place or region rather it is a global phenomenon (Jaishankar & Sujatha, 2016). Today street vending is seen as an important source of self-employment to both urban and rural population. The case of Arunachal Pradesh is also not different from other parts of the country. Around half of the total population of world and of India consist of female population, therefore, financial independence/economic empowerment of women in general and tribal women in particular will bring gender equality, social development, poverty eradication, inclusive growth and eventually sustainable development in the society. "Women hold the potential to not only transform their own economic status; they also have the power to substantially improve the lives of those around them. In their roles of mothers, caregivers, household managers, producers, consumers, employees, and employers, women are catalysts for broader development efforts that can have positive ripple effects for families, communities, and countries" (Canadian Executive Service Organisation, 2013). Therefore, strengthening women's capacity to engage in economic activity is not only concern of basic human rights but also an importance means of attaining broader economic development and poverty reduction. Women represent more than 40 percent of the global workforce and 43 percent of the agricultural workforce (Canadian Executive Service Organization, 2013). In India, street vendors accounts for 3 percent of total non-agricultural employment (Rani, 2016). However, many of the earlier studies on the

women vendors revealed that survival in vending business demands them to struggle with many diverse constraints ranging from socio – economic, cultural, politics, operational, health and other issues. Therefore, in the present paper the author has made a critical attempt to answer the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. How are the demographic and socio-economic conditions of tribal women vegetable vendors in Papumpare?
2. Is vegetable vending helps in empowering tribal women vendors in Papumpare?
3. What are the problems that tribal women vendors face in vegetable vending?

Methodology

To complete the present research paper, the author employed descriptive-cum-survey method. The sample of the present study comprised of 34 tribal women vegetable vendors from Doimukh, Nirjuli and Naharlagun daily markets, which had been selected through convenience sampling technique. Descriptive statistical technique was used for analysis purpose.

Results and Interpretation

Research question wise results and interpretation are as follows:

Research Question 1

How are the demographic and socio-economic conditions of tribal women vegetable vendors in Papumpare?

Table - 1: Age of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Status of Age	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
19 – 25 years	12	35.29
26 – 35 years	11	32.35
36 years and above	11	32.35

Source: Field work (2018)

The table - 1 indicates that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors i.e. 35.29% in Papumpare district are under the age group 19 – 25 years. 32.35% of them belong to the age group 26 – 35 years and another 32.35% belongs to the age group of 36 years and above.

Table– 2: Marital Status of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Marital status	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
Married	25	73.52
Divorced	2	5.88
Separate living	3	8.82
Widow	3	8.82
Single	1	2.94

Source: Field work (2018)

The table -2 indicates that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors i.e. 73.52% in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh are married. 8.82% of them though not divorced but living separately from husband as their husbands have polygamous marriages. Another 8.82% tribal women vegetable

vendors are widows, 5.88% of them are divorcees and 2.94% still not married.

Table – 3: Educational Status of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Educational status	No. Of tribal women vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	17	50
Under class V	4	11.76
Under class VIII	4	11.76
Under class X	3	8.82
Class 12 pass	6	17.64

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 3 reveals that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors (50%) in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh are illiterate. 17.64% of them have passed class twelve. 11.76% of them have studied up to class VIII and another 11.76% of them have studied up to class V. 8.82% of them up to class X.

Table – 4: Status of Children of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

No. of children	No. of tribal women vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
1	10	29.41
2	6	17.64
3	6	17.64
4	2	5.88
5	4	11.76
6	3	17.64

Source: Field work (2018)

Before interpretation it is important to mention here that out of 34 tribal women vegetable vendors 1 was found newly married therefore no child till date, another 1 was single and 1 didn't have child, therefore to analysis the status of children of tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area the total count of sample women had reduced to 31, and considering those 31 women interpreted the result.

The table – 4 indicates that 29.41% of tribal women vegetable vendors in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh have mothered single child. 17.64% of them mothered 2 children. Another 17.64% of tribal women vegetable vendors mothered 3 children. Again another 17.64 % of them mothered 6 children. 11.76% of them mothered 5 children and 5.88% of them mothered 4 children.

Table – 5: Status of Type of Family of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Type of Family	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
Joint family	26	76.47
Nuclear family	8	23.52

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 5 indicates that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors (76.47%) in Papumpare district have joint family system and only 23.52% of them have nuclear family system.

*Remarking An Analisation***Table – 6: Total Number of Family Members in The Family of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh**

No. of Family Member	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
2 – 4 members	10	29.41
5 – 10 members	20	58.82
11 – 15 members	4	11.76

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 6 reveals that 58.82% tribal women vegetable vendors in Papumpare district have 5 – 10 family members. 29.41% of them have 2- 4 members in their families and 11.76% of them have 11 – 15 members in the families.

Table – 7: Status of Educational Qualification of Husbands of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Educational Status of Husband	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	7	28
Post – Graduate	1	4
Under Graduate	Nil	Nil
12 pass	2	8
10 pass	3	12
Under class 10	12	48

Source: Field work (2018)

Before interpretation it is important to mention here that out of 34 tribal women vegetable vendors 2 were found as divorcee, 3 though not divorced but living separately due to polygamous marriages of their husbands, 3 were widows and 1 was single. Therefore to analyse the educational status of husbands of tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area the total count of sample women had reduced to 25, and based on those 25 women interpreted the result.

The table – 7 reveals that the majority of husbands of tribal women vegetable vendors (48%) of Papumpare district have studied up to class X. Husbands of 28% of women are illiterate. 12% tribal women vegetable vendors' husbands are class X passed. Husbands of 8% of them are class XII passed and only 1 women vendor's husband is post-graduate.

Table – 8: working Status of Husbands of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Working Status of Husband	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
Unemployed	15	60
Employed (Govt. Sect., Private Sec And Self-Employed)	10	40

Source: Field work (2018)

Before interpretation it is important to mention here that out of 34 tribal women vegetable vendors 2 were found as divorcee, 3 though not

divorced but living separately due to polygamous marriages of their husbands, 3 were widows and 1 was single. Therefore to analyse of the working status of husbands of tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area the total count of sample women had reduced to 25, and based on those 25 women interpreted the result.

The table-8 reveals that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors' husbands (60%) are unemployed and only 40% of them have husbands who are employed.

Table - 9: Distance between The Vending Place and The Tribal Women Vendors' Houses in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Distance in Km.	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
½ - 3 Kms.	25	73.52
4 – 7 Kms.	7	20.58
8 Kms. and above	2	5.88

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 9 reveals that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors' i.e. 73.52% in the study area lives at the distance of ½ - 3 kilometres away from their vending market place. 20.58% of them live at the distance of 4-7 kilometres away from their vending market place and 5.88% of them lives at the distance of 8 kilometres and above.

Research question 2

Is vegetable vending helps in empowering tribal women vendors in Papumpare?

To answer the research question 2 the investigator considered 2 points, which are as follows:

Table – 10: Status of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh Who are The Sole Bread Earner of Their Family

No. of Tribal Women Vendor Who are Sole Earner In Their Family		No. of Tribal Women Vendor Helped by Other in Earning (f)	
f	20	f	14
%	58.82	%	41.17

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 10 indicates that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors i.e. 58.82% in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh are the sole bread earner of their family and the rest 41.17 % of them are helped by other family members; husbands, sons and daughters in the families.

Table -11: Status of Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh in Relation to Autonomy to Take Decision in The Family

No. of Tribal Women Vendor Alone Takes Decision In The Family	No. of Tribal Women Vendors Takes Decision In The Family Together With Husband	No. of Tribal Women Vendor Doesn't Enjoy Autonomy To Take Decision In The Family			
f	26	f	5	f	3
%	76.47	%	14.70	%	8.82

Source: Field work (2018)

The table -11 shows that majority of tribal women vegetable vendors (76.47%) in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh take alone all the decision; children's education, financial matter, property issue, family and social relations, field works and so on in their families. 14.70% of them take the decision in the family matters together with their husbands and only 8.82% of tribal women vegetable

vendors in the district do not enjoy autonomy to take decision in the families rather in all the family matters their husbands solely take the decision and they just follow their husbands' decisions.

Research Question 3

What are the problems that tribal women vendors face in vegetable vending?

Table – 12
Problems Faced by Tribal Women Vegetable Vendors in Papumpare District of Arunachal Pradesh

Sl. No.	Problem Facing by the Tribal Women Vendors	No. of Tribal Women Vendor (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Every day early morning around 2 AM has to go to Harmuti (Assam) to buy fresh vegetables	7	20.58
2	Difficult to manage money to pay the rent, thus, frequently have to take loan	8	23.52
3	Has to do all the household work (cooking, cleaning and so on) before comes to market for vending	15	44.11
4	No one at home to take care of children	7	20.58
5	Long sitting hours during vending caused health problems; weakness, headache, backache, low vision and so on.	13	38.23
6	Mental tension due to fight with colleagues due to rush in buying of vegetables from wholesalers who come to market in the morning	7	20.58
7	Faces embarrassment sometime due to scolding of owner of the market for delay in paying the rent	3	8.82
8	Frequently physically abused by husband due to the expenses on children that were bore from first husband	1	2.94
9	Improper sleep due to early morning rush to market to buy vegetables from wholesaler	3	8.82
10	Has to bear the financial burden of relative over whom the responsibility of children are given during outstay period of vending	5	14.70
11	If fall sick no one to substitute to go for vending	3	8.82
12	Difficult in managing place for vending in the market as the entire section has already booked by others	1	2.94
13	Husband doesn't provide any help in vending	3	8.82
14	Frequently skip meal (breakfast & lunch due to rush)	4	11.76
15	Has to drop children to school before come for vending	1	2.94
16	Has to leave husband at home alone during sickness	1	2.94
17	Due to everyday engagement in vending no time to maintain social relations	1	2.94
18	Husband has to take care the children so dissatisfaction	1	2.94
19	Often verbally abused by others due to the indifferent notion of the people that women involved in business are mostly characterless, which affect conjugal relation also	3	8.82
20	During sickness has to take help from relatives to manage the vending and in return pays the engaged relative ,which affect the financial stability	2	5.88
21	During sickness and urgent hours engage children to manage vending which inflict guilty feeling	1	2.94
22	Sometime do not get tempo/auto to return home at night so it create fear of robbing and assault as has walk till reaching home	3	8.82
23	Difficulty to stay for vending due to garbage dumping place nearby to vending area	17	50
24	Has to establish link to wholesaler from different places to get the fresh vegetables, thus, sometime feeling boring	1	2.94
25	Has to depend completely to auto rickshaw driver for dropping the children to school, which inflict feeling of insecurity	1	2.94
26	During summer road blockade causes declining in number of wholesaler, thus, the price of vegetables shoot up which affect vending	2	5.88
27	Has to depend on married daughter for cooking	1	2.94
28	Income generated from vegetable vending is not sufficient to meet the family needs	34	100
29	Lack of storage facility during summer mostly vegetable rots very soon therefore incur lose in vending business	34	100

Source: Field work (2018)

The table – 12 indicates that following are the problems faced by tribal women vegetable vendors in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh:

1. 20.58% tribal women vegetable vendors stated that every day early morning at around 2 am they go to the Harmuti (Assam) to buy fresh vegetables which is very tedious for them.
2. 23.52% of them stated that they find it difficult to manage money to pay the rent, thus, frequently they have to take loan. Out of 34 sample women it is found that only 11.76% of tribal women vegetable vendors have their own trading license therefore they have to pay monthly rent of Rs. 250 only to the government for electricity bill and niche in the daily market. But the rest of them i.e. 88.23% of them do not have trading license, therefore, paying 750 rupees to 3250 rupees as monthly rent using others trading license and niche in the market inclusive of electricity bill. Further it was also told by them that their daily income ranges from 700 – 3000 rupees but after deducting money spent on buying the vegetables as they don't grow their own vegetables rather buy from other (wholesaler mostly from Harmuti (Assam), Yazali, Zero, Pasighat, Sagali, Raga, Aalo, Mengio and Palin), tempo fair, often on lunch, tea and snacks and so on, the profit from vegetable vending range from 50 – 300 rupees only. It is reported by all of them that income they generate from vegetable vending help them to live kind of life which is hands-to-mouth living standard.
3. 44.11% of them have reported that before they go for vegetable vending they have to do all the domestic chores; cooking, cleaning and so on. Thus, they are overburdened.
4. 20.58% of them do not have any one at home to take care of children during their absence period due to engagement in vending business.
5. 38.23% of tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area told that long sitting hours in vending business caused health problems; weakness, headache, backache, low vision and so on.
6. 20.58% of them told that everyday rush to buy vegetables from wholesalers who come to market in the morning leads to quarrel among them, which causes mental tension.
7. 8.82% of them reported that sometime they face embarrassment as they are scolded in front of others in the market place in case if delayed in paying the rent for using the trading license to the owner.
8. One (2.94%) of them stated that financial crisis due to expenses on children that were bore from first marriage is causing frequent bickering in between her and her husband, thus, is physically abused by the present husband frequently.
9. Lack of proper sleep time due to early morning rush to market to buy vegetables from wholesaler is another problem faced by 8.82% of tribal women vegetable vendors.
10. Another problem as stated by 14.70% of them is they have to bear the financial needs of relative over whom the responsibility of children are given by them during their engagement in vending, thus, shouldering others financial needs in exchange of their help increased their financial burden.
11. 8.82% of tribal women vegetable vendors reported that if they fall sick there is no one to substitute their vending—business. Thus, vegetables not sold out rot causing lose for them.
12. One vendor (2.94%) stated that as the entire section had already been occupied by other vendors, therefore, everyday she has to look for absentee so that she can occupy her/his place, which irritate her.
13. 8.82% of them revealed that their husbands do not provide any help to them in vending business.
14. 11.76% tribal women vegetable vendors told that due to hectic schedule they frequently skip meal specially breakfast and lunch.
15. One of them (2.94%) told that she has to drop her children to school before she go to vending, thus, has to go lately which results in failure to get good vegetables from wholesaler or sometime she don't get vegetable even. Therefore, frequently she pays high price to get the vegetable from her colleagues, which cause failure to make any profit in the business.
16. One of them (2.94%) told that she has to leave her husband alone at home even during his illness period as no one is at home to look after the husband. Thus, in such period she suffers from mental tension.
17. One of them (2.94%) reported that due to everyday engagement from early morning till evening in vending she does not get time to maintain social relations. Thus, her distance from relatives and friends are enlarging.
18. One of them i.e. 2.94% stated that during her vending period husband takes care of children which creates dissatisfaction.
19. 8.82% tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area stated that they are often verbally abused by others due to the indifferent notion of the people that women involved in business are mostly characterless, which affect their conjugal relation.
20. 5.88% of them reported that during sickness period they take help from relatives to manage the vending and in return pays the engaged relative, which affect their financial stability and create hurdle in vending business.
21. One of them (2.94%) stated that she doesn't wants her children to engage in vending business, but, during sickness and urgent hours she engage her children to manage vending which inflict guilty feeling within her.
22. 8.82% of them told that usually they go back to home by 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM. But sometime when it became late they do not get tempo/auto to return home at night so it create fear of robbing and assault as they have to walk.
23. 50% of them stated that due to location of garbage bin near to their vending place, stink

from garbage make it very difficult for them to stay for vending.

24. One of them i.e. 2.94% stated that she has to establish link with wholesaler from different places to get the fresh vegetables, thus, sometime feeling boring.
25. One of them (2.94%) told that she has to depend completely to auto rickshaw driver for dropping her children to school, which inflict feeling of insecurity within her.
26. 5.88% of them stated that during summer road blockade causes decrease number of wholesaler, thus, the price of vegetables shoot up which affect their financial stability.
27. One of them (2.94%) told that she has to depend on married daughter for cooking.
28. All the sample tribal women vegetable vendors (100%) in the study area reported that income generated through vending is not enough to meet their family needs and lack of storage facility, during summer vegetables rots frequently which cause heavy lose in vending business.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study shows that in Papumpare district of Arunachal Pradesh, the tribal women involved in vegetable vending are under the age group of 19 to 36 years and above and majority of them are illiterate. Though it has been observed that different categories of tribal women such as married, divorcee, some though not divorced but separately living from husbands and widows are found mostly involved in vegetable vending business in the study area but surprisingly some of the single/unmarried women are also found involved. Majority of tribal women vegetable vendors in the study area though are single child parent but due to joint family system and unemployed husbands, the income generated from vegetable vending is not enough for them to fulfil their basic needs even. Undeniably, vegetable vending helped them become financially independent which further resulted in gaining power to take decision in all the important as well as petty family matters or in other words empowered women. But majority of them stated that empowerment brought to them by vegetable vending business has brought more responsibilities being the sole bread earners in their families. Because, besides playing the role of income generator and decision maker, all the domestic chores like cleaning, cooking, child rearing and so on has to be done by them only. Thus, it is concluded that though vegetable vending business helped in empowering tribal women in the study area but at the same time it also increased their responsibilities. In fact, they are struggling with

diverse problems; personal, operational, social, marital, health, family and financial to sustain their family and business. Therefore, to improve their condition, some of the suggestions are as follows:

1. Government should provide two times transportation facility i.e. morning and night time for vegetable vendors to pick up in the morning and to drop at night time charging subsidised fair.
2. Establish canteen near to vending markets by the government providing breakfast, lunch, tea and snacks at subsidised price.
3. Step should be taken to change the mindset of tribal people who considered that vegetable vending is a feminine task and make them understand that vegetable vending can be done both by men and women.
4. Government should take step to stop market people from dumping their garbage near to vegetable vending places.

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