

CONDITIONS OF 'DECENT WORKING LIFE' OF STREET VENDORS IN MUMBAI

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This paper intends to understand the condition of 'working life' of the street vendors in Mumbai within the framework of 'decent work' and also highlights the role of the member based organisations/unions to provide them decent working life by regulating the concept of the decent work. The study is based on 200 sample respondents. This study is explorative in nature, showing that the street vendors depend on the money lenders for their economic activity as well as for social security purposes. Interestingly, the result shows that they are forced to borrow mainly for social security purposes at exorbitant rate of interest (amounting to 5-10% per month) rather than economic activities which in turn cause to lead them to fall into a 'debt-trap' situation. This study also reveals that there is an excessive hour of work (around 14-18 hours per day) for their economic activity. Moreover, there is no safety and security at the work place. In addition, these retailers face constant harassment from local authority such as local police and Municipal Corporation. This study shows that there are different stakeholders such as trade unions or member based associations who are trying to organize them by providing social security and credit and others but the problem is they are very few. Hence, it can be concluded by saying that there is a 'decent work deficit' in the 'working life' of 'street vendors' in Mumbai.

Keywords: Decent Work, Informal Sectors, Street Vendors
JEL Classification: E26, J81, J83, K31

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I. INTRODUCTION:

The ‘decent work’¹ can be defined as protective work wherein rights are protected specifically employment, income and social protection of the workers, which can be achieved without compromising workers’ rights and social standards. This would thereby ensure poverty reduction by increasing work opportunities, rights actualisation at work, social protection and greater voice of the workers which in turn associated would result in improvement of workers’ capabilities and their overall well-being (ILO 1999; Rodgers 2001; Chen et al. 2004; Takala 2005). One of the hearts of the notion of the ‘decent work’ is to promote “opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity” (ILO 1999: p. 3). The major four pillars (ILO 1999) of the ‘decent work’ are the opportunities for employment and income, the respect for rights at work, the social protection and the strong social dialogue which are the fundamental dimensions of the ‘quality of work’ in development thinking and economic policy (ILO 1999).

In the era of globalisation, the retail sector is the fast growing emerging sector after agriculture in India by providing employment. However, besides formal retail chain, small retailing including street vending has been one of the easiest ways to survive for working poor and is wide spread in the urban informal sector. Nonetheless, it is noticed that there has been a phenomenal increase in the number of street vendors leading to an increase in the number of workers in the informal sector in India and Mumbai has witnessed for containing highest street vendors among all major cities in India. According to National Commission on Labour, street vendors are identified as self-employed workers in the informal sector² who offer their labour for selling goods and services on the street without having any permanent built-up structure (Bhowmik 2001). However, literatures (Bhowmik 2001; Anjaria 2006) have stated many problems of street vendors regarding their social protection, working condition, credit accessibility, and their public space utilisation. Even National Policy

¹ The concept of the ‘decent work’ was launched in 1999 in the Report of the Director-General to the International Labour Conference meeting in its 87th Session.

² According to the heterogeneity characteristics of the informal sector, the workers have been broadly divided into three groups of workers, namely, wage workers in the informal sector, self-employed in the informal sector, unprotected wage workers in the formal sector (Chen et al., 2002; NCEUS 2007).

on Urban Street Vendors (2004) has also pointed out the major problems and recommended policies on their livelihood conditions, social protection, economic activity, organisations or associations for collective bargaining.

Hence, this paper intends to understand the 'working life' of street vendors in keeping with their financial accessibility; social security, occupational wellbeing, the working condition in Mumbai within the framework of 'decent work'. Moreover, this study has also focused how the member based organisations regulates the decent work indicators to provide them a 'decent working life' and 'decent working environment'.

The present paper has been organised into the following sections. Section-I dealt with the introductory section. Section-II illustrates an overview of the informal sector in Indian context. The role of the street vendors in the urban informal sector in India has been discussed in this section. Section-III discusses on the 'decent work' and its indicators. The objectives of the study have been described in Section-IV. Methodology and data sources of the present study have been discussed in section-V. This study is mainly based on the primary data. Therefore, the socio-demographic and economic profiles of 200 street vendors based on primary survey have been discussed in section-VI. Section-VII focuses on the financial accessibility of street vendors. Condition of the social security has been explored in section VIII. Indebtedness of the street vendors has been analysed in Sections IX. Working conditions of the street vendors based on primary data has been highlighted in the Section- X. Section- XI discusses about the concluding remark of the present paper.

II. INFORMAL SECTOR AND INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

In India, the terms 'unorganized sector' and 'informal sector' are being used interchangeably (NCEUS 2007: p.2). According to NCEUS report (2007), the unorganized sector in Indian context is defined as a sector which '*consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis with less than ten workers which is characterized by a high incidence of casual labour mostly doing intermittent jobs at low wage rate at low investment rate*' (NCEUS 2007: p.3). In current Indian labour market scenario, a huge magnitude of labour force comprising around 92 percent derive their livelihood from

the 'informal sector'³ that has occupied more than 60 percent share to the Net Domestic Product (NDP) at current prices (NSSO, 2004-05). In addition, the contribution of the informal sector in the Indian economy has been very much significant in contribution to NDP, saving and capital formation but it is noted that conditions of the work and workers in the informal sector are very poor and miserable (NCEUS⁴ 2007). The informal sector workforce in India is estimated about 422 million workers, representing nearly 92 percent of the total workforce about 457 million (NSSO, 2004-05). According to National Commission on Labour, there are 106 categories of workers including agricultural workers, agarbatti makers, beedi rollers, construction workers, home-based workers, rickshaw pullers, and street vendors and so on. Around 10 million vendors in India and about 250000 vendors in Mumbai are surviving their livelihood from this profession (GOI 2004⁵).

Role of Street Vendors in the Urban Informal Sector in India

As street vendors are identified as self-employed workers in the urban informal sector, this sub section mainly focuses on the role of the street vendors in the urban India. According to the level of income, NCEUS (2007) has also categorised workers in the unorganised sector. Interestingly, NCEUS has found around 75 percent self-employed workers belong to poor and vulnerable group in the unorganised sector in India and only around 25 percent belong to high income group. On the other hand, NCEUS has also categorised different types of workers within self-employed workers based on income. Hence, according to NCEUS, street vendors are located in the low income self-employed group of workers those who are poor and vulnerable.

Street vendors play very important role in urban India by providing employment and income and other aspects. They sell different kinds of goods such as

³The term 'informal sector' is broadly being used to mean economic activities of firms and individuals that are not registered for the purpose of taxation or regulation by the state because the products produced by them may be legal but the process through which they sold may not be fully legal (Lund 1998; Chen et al. 2002). The concept of 'informal sector' was officially first used in ILO-UNDP documents with reference to Kenya Employment Mission in 1972. Then the term 'informal sector' was first used by Keith Hart (1973) in his analysis of people in Ghana employing self-employed sector, outside of the formal labour market who were unable to search jobs in the formal sector.

⁴ NCEUS stands for National Commission for Enterprises for the Unorganized Sector.

⁵ See <http://nceus.gov.in/Street%20Vendors%20policy.pdf>.

clothes and hosiery, lather, moulded plastic goods and different kinds of household necessary goods, which are manufactured in small scale or home based industries where large numbers of workers are employed (Bhowmik 2001). The manufacturers could have hardly marketed for their products. Apart from non-agricultural product, street vendors also sell vegetable and fruits also. Thus, urban poor, namely street vendors are providing the market for home-based manufacturing product and as well as agricultural products. In this way, street vendors help sustain employment in these home-based and small-scale industries and traditional sector. Therefore, it can be said that several sectors and labour are linked with street vendors in terms of products they sold.

Besides the employment context, street vendors also support urban rich and urban poor. Street vendors prop up urban rich to provide daily requirements as available on their doorsteps because some street vendors built up their profession in front of housing complexes (Tiwari, 2000). Urban youth prefer to purchase clothes and other accessories from them because products sold by them are typically cheaper than those found in formal retail outlets.

On the other side, lower income group people are also benefited and spend a higher portion of their income on purchase from street vendors because their goods are cheap and affordable. It was estimated around 30 percent of Mumbai workforce have at least one meal a day from vendors (Bhowmik, 2001). Thus, they are in fact the solution to some of the problems of the urban woe-stricken people.

III. DECENT WORK AND ITS INDICATORS:

The primary goal of the ILO is to promote opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work, in condition of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, especially for the informal sector workers (ILO 1999; Trebilcock 2004). This 'decent work' agenda is not only for formal sector workers but also for unregulated wage workers, self-employed workers and home-based workers those who work in the informal sector (ILO 1999; Ghai 2003; Trebilcock 2005). The employment component is one of the important objectives of the 'decent work'. Productive employment and decent living standards can improve social and economic

development which also enhances the ‘quality of life’ which leads to human development (ILO 1999; Ahmed 2003; Bescond et al. 2003).

The rights at work component refer to freedom from child labour, forced labour, discrimination in employment and freedom of association and collective bargaining where as discrimination at work is based on sex, language, political opinion or social origin (ILO 1999; Bescond et al. 2003; Ghai 2003).

Indicators on social protection include proportion of workers covered against main contingencies and receiving benefits in respect of sickness, unemployment, old age, maternity, disability etc; adequacy of benefits received under these heads; public social security expenditure as proportion of GDP; public expenditure on needs-based cash income support as proportion of GDP; and levels of deprivation in specific areas such as nutrition, health, education and poverty among vulnerable groups (ILO 1999; Bescond et al. 2003; Ghai 2003).

Indicators on social dialogue include freedom of association and collective bargaining; proportion of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements; participation in workplace decision-making; and participation by workers, employers and civil society organizations in national policy-making bodies (ILO 1999; Bescond et al. 2003; Ghai 2003).

Of the ‘decent work’ indicators mentioned above, the present study considers the following:

- (a) **Employment opportunities** considering indicators namely, level of income, working hour, employment security, security at workplace, financial accessibility;
- (b) **Social security** taking into consideration indicators such as maternity benefits, medical facility, children’s education, accident;
- (c) **Social dialogue** considering the role of member based organisations towards their social security, financial accessibility, for their voice and their collective bargaining.

Rationale for the Study:

The main reason to select this study is that there is no even single study based on the aspect of 'decent work' in the context of street vendors. Thus, this study attempts to explore the conditions work within the new frame of 'decent work' by taking into consideration all the mentioned indicators. However, it is interesting to look into the working conditions in terms of income level, working hours, safety at work place, bribe payment to exist in the market, leisure time in the current scenario, especially in this global era. As stated by Bhowmik (2007), the street vendors have scarce resources for their trade and need to obtain credit, this study becomes prime important as it attempts to explore how the financial accessibility is being operated among street vendors and this study will definitely throw light on this aspect of street vending. Access to social security for the street vendors is another major problem that has been stated by author and national policy (National Policy on Urban Street Vendors 2004; Bhowmik 2007). However, there is no particular study on social security for this group of workers in Mumbai. Thus, this study is the benchmark study on social security for street vendors in Mumbai. Moreover, National Policy on Urban Street Vendors (2004) suggests that associations should come forward to organise them. Hence, this study seeks whether member based organisations are regulating the concept of the 'decent work' or not.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Based on the above discussion, the broad objective of the study is to understand the condition of 'working life' of street vendors in terms of working condition, their financial accessibility, social protection, and also to look into the role of organisations to provide them the decent working life.

The specific objectives of the research paper are:

1. To understand the financial accessibility of their economic activity including institutional credit and other purposes and role of the organisations towards their financial accessibility.

2. To explore how do the street vendors accomplish their social security in terms of maternity benefits, medical facility, and children's education of street vendors, especially in absence of government assisted social security and role of member based organisations towards it.
3. To explore the occupational wellbeing of street vendors, taking into consideration, income level, working hours, safety at workplace, bribe payment, dignity at workplace and role of organisations towards their occupational wellbeing to improve their 'working life' and to provide them a better 'working environment'.

V. METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES:

This study is based on primary data to look into the present situation of street vendors in Mumbai. Three-Stage Sampling⁶ method, like multi-stage sampling which uses the combinations of various sampling techniques (Agresti and Finlay 1997), has been used to draw sample from Mumbai. The survey was conducted during May, 2008 to November, 2008. The unit of analysis as well as primary stakeholder of the study is street vendors in Mumbai. However, trade union members of the organisations are the secondary stake-holders since they are also interviewed to look into the role of the organisations to provide the decent work indicators to them.

Sampling Design:

Mumbai has been selected according to its rapid urbanisation, best commercial part of India, its geographical location and other certain characteristics such as employment status and wide spread formal retail chain and street trading among all major cities in India. Since the present research paper is mainly primary data based, three stage (3-Stage) sampling method has been designed to draw sample.

1st Stage Unit:

When population is scattered over the region and complete lists of the total population is not available, 'cluster' helps to obtain easily for sampling (Murthy 1967:

⁶ Murthy, M.N. (1967). *Sampling: Theory and Methods*.

p 293). In 1st Stage Unit, Mumbai has been divided into five parts (Cluster), such as, Dharavi, Jogeswari, Kandivali, Powai, and Ville Parle in terms of volume of street vendors due to unavailable list of street vendors in Mumbai. These clusters are selected at random by using Mumbai Map.

2nd Stage Unit:

Sampling error can be reduced either increasing sample size or to make homogeneity group (Babbie 2001). Since street vending profession is heterogeneity in nature, *stratification* method helps to make homogeneous group in that group of workers (Babbie 2001). In each cluster, street vendors have been divided into seven ‘stratum’ such as vegetables vendors, fruits vendors, garment vendors, and others; according to their employment patterns.

3rd Stage Unit:

In 3rd Stage Unit, according to the heterogeneity number of street vendors in each part, ‘quota’ has been fixed to draw sample from each *stratum* since population was unknown (Babbie 2001; Ahuja 2006). This quota depends on the volume of street vendors of each part and street vendors have been selected at random within each ‘quota’ from each ‘cluster’.

Total Sample Size:

This study covers 200 samples from the five places in Mumbai. The samples selected from each study area have been shown in the table 1 which as follows:

Table 1: Total Sample Chosen from each Study Area

Name of the Places	Total Sample Chosen
Dharavi	33
Jogeswari	40
Kandivali	45
Powai	22
Ville parle	60
Total (n)	200

Data Collection Tools:

Questionnaire:

Structured Questionnaire has been used to directly associate with the survey based on the objectives of this study (Ahuja 2001). *Closed ended* and *open ended* question have been asked to the respondent. Since some of the research questions are explorative in nature, open ended questions helped to explore the current situations (Ahuja 2006).

Interview Methods:

Personal interview and *group interview* methods have been conducted for the method of interview (Ahuja 2006). Personal interview of 200 individual street vendors and 5 key respondents have been conducted during survey. These five key respondents are basically active members from member based organisations to know the role of these member based organisations for the street vendors in Mumbai.

VI. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE STREET VENDORS:

The following all sections show the possible outcomes of the present study and corresponding percentages of the outcomes which are represented by values within parenthesis. In this section, socio-demographic and economic profiles of the vendors based on primary data have been explained.

Demographic and Social Profile:

Street vending profession is mainly male oriented occupation in Mumbai (Bhowmik 2001) and the result of this study also shows that. The sex composition of the street vendors in the study area demonstrates that there are around 77 percent of the vendors is men vendors and about 23 percent is women (Table 2). In context of religion, there are about 59 percent Hindu vendors of the total, around 33 percent are Muslims, 7 percent of total is Christian and about 9 percent vendors are Sikh (Table 2). In the case of caste composition, about 60 percent of the total belongs to general caste, 25 percent vendors belong to the SC categories, and 6 and 9 percent belong to ST and OBC categories respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Profile

Indicators	Possible Outcomes	Total no. of cases (percentage)
Sex	Male	154 (77)
	Female	46 (23)
	Total (n)	200 (100)
Religion	Hindu	118 (59.0)
	Muslim	66 (33.0)
	Christian	7 (3.5)
	Sikh	9 (4.5)
	Hindu	118 (59.0)
	Total (n)	200 (100)
Caste	General	121 (60.5)
	SC	49 (24.5)
	ST	12 (6.0)
	OBCs	18 (9.0)
	Total (n)	200 (100)
Educational Level	Illiterate	34 (17.0)
	Can sign Only	17 (8.5)
	Primary Education	17 (8.5)
	Upper Primary Education	65 (32.5)
	Secondary Education	48 (24.0)
	Higher Secondary Education	16 (8.0)
	Graduate	3 (1.5)
	Total (n)	200 (100)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n= 200

Educational Profile:

The educational level among street vendors is generally low which has been shown in table 2. Out of total covered, around 17 percent vendors are illiterate, about 8.5 percent of total vendors can sign only, and about 8.5 percent have only primary level of education. Some of vendors having graduation, about 1.5 percent of total vendors (table 2), came from the rural areas in search of better-paid job in the formal sectors in Mumbai but street vending is one of the easiest means of earning for livelihood as it requires minor financial input. Hence, they became street vendors.

Level of Income:

The earning of street vendors depends on the products they sell, and it deviates from trade to trade, location to location, the volume of trade and terms of trade. Table 3 shows that around 23 percent vendors' per month income are between Rs. 3000 and Rs. 4500 while 13.5 percent vendors' per month income fall into Rs. 6000 and so on.

It is seen that there are few of the vendors' income is quite high according to their business types, age of the business, location and product they sold. Interestingly, it is noticed from the data that income of garment vendors, vendors those who are selling fruits, electronics items deviates from vegetable vendors and small enterprises. But the profit margin of the vendors those who sold raw materials, namely, vegetable vendors, fruit vendors, food vendors is quite impressive than others category of vendors. These vendors earn about 50 to 60 percent profit of their daily sales.

Table 3: Earning Status (Monthly)

Income Interval (Monthly)	Total No. Of Vendors (Percentage)
3000-4500	46 (23.0)
4501-6000	27 (13.5)
6001-7500	20 (10.0)
7501-9000	31 (15.5)
9001-11000	22 (11.0)
11001-12500	19 (9.5)
12501-14000	9 (4.5)
14001-15500	12 (6.0)
15501-17000	6 (3.0)
17001-Above	8 (4.0)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n= 200

VII. FINANCIAL ACCESSIBILITY OF STREET VENDORS AND THE ROLE OF THE MEMBER BASED ORGANISATIONS IN MUMBAI:

Financial accessibility of street vendors depends on the volume of trade and types of the product they sold. Street vending profession is heterogeneity in character and this study considers only seven types of the occupations (Table 4). Interestingly, it is observed that most of the women vendors are vegetable vendors since it requires very low investment comparing other activities. In contrast, more financial supports are required for the vendors those who sold garments, electronic items.

Table 4: Types of the Occupational Distribution

Types of Occupation	Total No. Of Vendors (Percentage)
Vegetables	66 (33.0)
Fruits	40 (20.0)
Electronics Items	8 (4.0)
Household Utensils and Stationary	13 (6.5)
Garments	41 (20.5)

Lather Items	10 (5.0)
Food	22 (11.0)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n=200.

Financial Sources of the Vendors:

Access to capital is an important economic linkage that ties street trade to the economy which affects the vendors' economic activities, profits, and potential business growth. Capital is needed for initiating the business and, later, for running and expanding the business through buying new merchandise. Seven sources of capital have been identified which are (1) personal savings, (2) family or friends (without interest), (3) money lenders, (4) banks or co-operatives, (5) organisations, (6) local traders or retailers and (7) wholesalers.

The first two sources are mainly used for getting a business started; while the later all the sources are used for keeping it running or expanding the activity. Since street vending is considered as an illegal profession, they don't have access to institutional credit but it is interestingly noted that around 61 percent vendors starting their business with their personal savings and they save in the banks, namely corporation bank, IDBI, State Bank of India, Maharashtra Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Boroda, Union Bank of India, United Bank of India. Broadly, street vendors access capital for their economic activity, to build housing, deposit for their house rent and especially for the social security purposes.

Financial Transaction:

In the theoretical framework, Granovetter and et. al. (2001) developed the concept '*structural economic sociology*' based on the basic common principles such as (a) economic action is a form of social action, (b) economic action is socially situated or embedded, and (c) economic institutions are social constructions; which are the common principles of classic writers like Weber, Marx, Durkheim and Simmel. He also (2001) specifies that economic sociology emphasises the search for approval, status, sociability and power cannot be separated from economic actions. Economic action is 'embedded' in ongoing networks of personal relationships rather than being carried out by atomized actors, more specifically 'network' is set of contacts or social connections among individuals or groups since individual never isolated from society (Granovetter 1985). Moreover, Granovetter explains in "*a social*

embeddedness approach” (1985) that economic transactions become embedded in social relations that differentially affect the allocation and valuation of resources and financial markets. Broadly social embeddedness is defined as the degree to which commercial transactions take place through social relations and networks of relations that use exchange protocols associated with social, non commercial attachments to govern business dealings (Granovetter 1985; Uzzi 1997).

Now in the present context, the business activity of the street vendors is on daily turnover basis and they build ‘trust’ and ‘good reputation’ with their capital sources such as wholesalers, local traders and retailers. It is perceived that age of business, language and origin of the vendors matter to build ‘trust’ and ‘reputation’ even those who are borrowing at high rate of interest. It is noticed that vendors get hold of capital or they can borrow easily from the money lenders, wholesalers and local traders provided they belong to the same community and places. However, it takes time to build ‘trust’ and ‘reputation’ to access the capital those who are not belong to the same places and community. Hence, ‘network’ among community plays a vital role to build ‘trust’ and ‘reputation’ rather than caste and class communities. After good ‘reputation’ and ‘trust’, vendors even can borrow money from the wholesalers for other purposes namely social protection.

Organising towards Credit Accessibility for Street Vendors:

Some of member based organisations force to state government to open the co-operative for economic activity. Co-operative credit society has been registered under the state government in Kandivali to provide loan for different purposes such as personal loan, educational loan and loan for their economic activity. Mumbai district co-operative bank help to provide loan to the co-operative. Co-operative gives loan to the member based organisation. There are many norms to be a part of the co-operative. Firstly, vendor should be a member of the union to get the benefit of co-operative. According to the rules and norms, one vendor can acquire maximum Rs. 30000 and s/he has to repay the amount within 36 months with reducible 14 percent rate of interest. Each vendor in the organisation gives money to the organisation according to volume of trade (it starts from Rs. 10 per day) and organisation accumulates money whereas this money plays as ‘working capital’ within members of organisations. Interestingly, each member of the organisation under this co-operative

is share holder of Rs. 10 of that co-operative. According to union member, this kind of co-operative is very successful. But interestingly, it is seen from the study that there are only around 2500 vendors are under this co-operative system those who are being benefited of co-operative as well as social security where as Mumbai contain 250000 street vendors (GOI 2004). According to union member, most of the vendors try to avoid all the rules and norms and hence they prefer private money lenders at high rate of interest.

VIII. CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE ROLE OF MEMBER BASED ORGANISATIONS TO ORGANISE IT:

Social security covers medicare, sickness, maternity benefits, employment injury, inability and survivor's benefits, old age pension etc (Jhabvala 2000; ILO 2000). Social protection policies in developing countries like India will almost certainly be concerned with reducing vulnerability and unacceptable levels of deprivation. Dreze and Sen (1991) try to distinguish two aspects of social security, where they describe the use of social means to prevent deprivation and vulnerability to deprivation. The centre of attention of the social security is to enhance and protect people's capabilities to be adequately nurtured, to avoid escapable morbidity and preventable mortality. The role of social security policies in developing countries must be extended to 'prevention' against increases in deprivation and the 'promotion' of better chances of individual development (Guhan, 1994). The social security programme in India can be segmented into two parts: one is protective social security measures, largely for the formal sector workers covering medical care and benefits consisting sickness, maternity, old age and so on so forth. On the other segment, promotional social security consists security towards self-employment, wage employment and provision for basic needs such as food, health and education, especially for unorganised sector workers. Thus, it should aim at the protection and promotion of both human and physical capital. If we see that ILO estimation, half of the world's population has no social security coverage and only one-quarter of world's population has adequate social security coverage (Ginneken 2003). In contrast, there are only around 8 percent of total workers covered in India. This is because about 92 percent of total workforce is employed informally. Nevertheless, vending profession is full of insecurity and uncertainty since they occupy road side

and accidents occur at any time (Anjaria 2006). Since they do not have access any government assisted social security, they manage themselves. However, it is seen that around 88 percent street vendors don't know even the term 'social security'.

Around 62.5 percent vendors of total vendors manage by saving in banks, co-operatives where as 36 percent vendors they manage their social protection by borrowing from different sources at exorbitant rate of interest around 3-10 percent per month (table 5). Furthermore, some of the vendors are paying rate of interest on their indebtedness over the decade who borrowed for their social protection purposes. Impressively, it is perceived that 27 vendors (about 13.5 percent of the total) have life insurance policy.

Table 5: Access to Social Security

Access to Social Security	Total No. Of Vendors (Percentage)
Saving in Bank and Co-operatives	125 (62.5)
Insurance	27 (13.5)
Borrowing	72 (36.0)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n= 200

IX. INDEBTEDNESS OF STREET VENDORS:

It is revealed from this present study that the purpose of borrowing is not only for their economic activities but they also borrow for their social security purposes. Thus, this section has pointed out that street vendors fall into debt trap due to high indebtedness. They have scarce resources, namely credit, for their trade and need to obtain credit since they have no access to credit from the formal financial institutions particularly for their economic activities (Bhowmik 2001; Jhabvala 2000). But this vending process works on a daily turnover basis and they are surviving successfully. They borrow money from different sources. Out of total sample (N=200), 161 vendors borrow money from different sources for different purposes namely, for their economic activity, housing, for their house rent and especially for the social security purposes. Around 44.72 percent of vendors (72 vendors out of 161 vendors) borrow money for their social protection purposes in terms of health care, medicine, maternity, accidents, child educations and so on where as 34.16 percent vendors borrow money for their economic activities. About 9 percent vendors borrow money for house rent as a deposit (Table 6).

Table 6: Purposes Served by Borrowing:

Purposes Served by Borrowing	Total No. Of Vendors (Percentage)
Business	55 (34.16)
Housing	8 (4.97)
House Rent (Deposit)	15 (9.32)
Send Money to Village	11 (6.83)
Social Security	72 (44.72)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n=161

Around 51 percent of total vendors borrow money up to Rs. 1000 for their economic activities while 25.45 percent of total vendors borrow money in between 10001 to 20000 for their business and so on (table 7). There are two vendors out of 55 vendors, who borrow money for their economic activities from the wholesalers and money lenders at high rate of interest. Most of the cases, vendors borrow money for their activity from the wholesalers while wholesalers do not charge any rate of interest but they charge extra amount on the product and it is calculated that those vendors pay around 25-35 percent extra over the product of Rs. 100. Thus, most of the vendors prefer their transaction with the product suppliers in cash.

Table 7: Amount of Borrowing and Debt-Trap:

Business		Social Security	
Amount of Borrowing	Total Sample (Percentage)	Amount of Borrowing	Total Sample (Percentage)
0-10000	28 (50.91)	1000- 20000	37 (51.39)
10001- 20000	14 (25.45)	20001- 40000	6 (8.33)
20001- 30000	1 (1.82)	40001- 60000	15 (20.83)
30001- 40000	5 (9.09)	60001- 80000	1 (1.39)
40001- 50000	3 (5.45)	80001- 100000	6 (8.33)
50001- 60000	2 (3.64)	100001- 120000	4 (5.56)
90001- 100000	1 (1.82)	120001 and Above	3 (4.17)
100001 and Above	1 (1.82)		
Total	55 (100)	Total	72 (100)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data

The main purposes of the social security are family healthcare and medicine, maternity benefits, child education, daughter marriage, accident that have been considered (see table 8). They encourage their children to continue their education. Most of the vendors borrow money for education fees, for computer purchase for their children because they prefer to send their children to english medium. Hence, they

borrow money every year from wholesalers or relatives or friends at high rate of interest.

Table 8: Social Security Purposes Served by Borrowing:

Social Security Purposes	Total No. of Vendors (Percentage)
Family Healthcare and Medicine	22 (30.56)
Maternity Benefits	5 (6.94)
Child Education	18 (25.00)
Daughter Marriage	7 (9.72)
Accident	16 (22.22)
Insurance	4 (5.56)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n=72

Around 51 percent of total vendors borrow money between Rs. 1000 to Rs. 20000 for their medicine, insurance purposes while about 21 percent of total vendors borrow money in between 40001 to 60000 for their children's education. Moreover, table 8 shows that around 4 percent vendors' amount of borrowing is in between Rs. 150000 and Rs. 300000. These vendors borrow money either for accident or major operation purposes, namely cancer.

If we see the table 7, it is seen that the amount of borrowing for the purposes of social security is much higher and miserable than amount of borrowing of the purposes of their economic activities. Most of vendors (about 51 percent) borrow money for their economic activities up to Rs. 10000. Nonetheless, there are around 13 street vendors those who borrow money above Rs. 100000 (table 7) for their social security purposes while there are only 2 vendors (table 7) who borrow money about Rs. 100000 for the purpose of business.

It is seen from table 9 that around 36 percent of the vendors has already paid one time of their amount of borrowing. However, we can see that this amount of the interest paid is only for their social security purposes. Moreover, it is importantly perceived that one of the vendors borrowed Rs. 10000 to purchase medicine 10 years ago and he has been paying 5 percent rate of interest since last 10 years. Thus, it is estimated that he has paid around 14 times of total amount of borrowing.

Table 9: Total Interest Paid as a Multiple of the Principal Amount

Multiple of the Principal Amount	Total No. Of Vendors (Percentage)
1-Time	26 (36.11)
2-Times	28 (38.89)
3-Times	11 (15.28)
4-Times	4 (5.56)
6-Times	2 (2.78)
14-Times	1 (1.39)

Source: Computed by author based on primary data where n= 72

Similarly, about 39 percent and 15 percent of the vendors pay 2-times and 3-times of the amount of indebtedness respectively while around 6 percent and 3 percent pay 4 and 6 times of the with their rate of interest. Apart from loan for their economic activity, vendors borrow money from the wholesalers for their social security purposes also and they charge 2 to 5 percent rate of interest per month comparing less than other source of the borrowing. Thus, it can be said that these vendors (72 out of total 200) fall into debt trap due to not borrowing for their economic activity but also for their social security purposes while it is the duty of the state to protect them.

Organising Social Security by Organisations:

Active member based organisations force to adopt a social security scheme that gives multiple benefits to the members those who are unionised. For instance, social security scheme namely Janeshri Vima Yojana provided by Life Insurance Corporation of India (LICI) is very prolific in Kandivali. The scheme includes insurance coverage on health, house and property, accidental and natural death, and coverage for permanent and partial disability. This scheme is in the form of group insurance having with minimum 25 numbers of organisations. According to this scheme, members give annual premium. The annual premium of individual vendor is Rs. 50 which is very affordable even for poorest street vendors. Under this scheme, each vendor can get hold of Rs. 15000 to Rs. 75000 for accidental purposes and vendor's family will get Rs. 75000 after his/her death. Moreover, this scheme covers scholarship for children education of vendor. According to this scheme, maximum two children of each vendor can be benefited and each child can get Rs. 1200 per year as scholarship. One member based organisation in Kandivali help to manage money for one vendor's son to pursue his higher study. But, this study also reveals that there

are few vendors those who are benefited from this scheme because very few number of street vendors are unionised in Mumbai.

X. WORKING CONDITIONS OF STREET VENDORS:

The majority of urban informal workers live in poor areas, lack of basic health and welfare services and social protection and work in an unhealthy and unsafe working environment. This group of workers also stay at slum area in Mumbai and they don't have adequate space for living. Vulnerability to diseases and poor health result from a combination of undesirable living and working conditions. Working condition in terms of working hour is very miserable. It is discussed in previous section that vendors those who sold raw material namely vegetable vendors, fruit vendors have good profit margin. But their working condition is miserable. They start their activity from 5 am in the morning to till around 12 o'clock at night and they work around 365 days in a year and most of the vegetable vendors are women.

Security of Work:

The basic problem of street vendors is that the right to existence in urban informal sector because this vending profession is considered as illegal although it is estimated that around 2.5 percent of the total urban poor survive and succeed by working in this occupation in India (GOI, 2004). As per as Article 19(1) (g) of the constitution stated that street vendors are recognised as workers. The Supreme Court in the *Sodhan Singh versus NDMC (1989)*⁷ case ruled that: *“If properly regulated according to the exigency of the circumstances, the small traders on the sidewalks can considerably add to the comfort and convenience of the general public, by making available ordinary articles of everyday use for a comparatively lesser price. An ordinary person, not very affluent, while hurrying towards his home after a day's work can pick up these articles without going out of his way to find a regular market. The right to carry on trade or business mentioned in Article 19(1)g of the Constitution, on street pavements, if properly regulated cannot be denied on the ground that the streets are meant exclusively for passing or re-passing and no other use”*. But they are typically treated as encroachers of public space. Licensing intends

⁷ See <http://nceus.gov.in/Street%20Vendors%20policy.pdf> (pp 3-4).

to reduce harassment, and evictions by local authorities and local police. But this study explores that all vendors are unlicensed. Hence, their job is uncertain and insecure.

Safety at Work Place:

Street Vendors are not trying only to earn a livelihood but also provide valuable services to the urban population. Thus, it is the duty of the State to protect the right of this segment of population to earn their livelihood since article 39 (a) of constitution stated that '*any citizens, men and women, have equal right to an adequate means of livelihood*'⁸. Thus, the 'decent work' is the fundamental rights of any workers or citizens. But ground reality is different. They are considered as unlawful and eye sore entities. As a consequence, they face constant harassment by local Police and Municipal Authorities at work place. However, they are forced to bear some additional burden of harassment and bribes and other various elements. It is calculated from this study that each street vendor pays 15 to 20 percent of their daily income as bribes to local police and BMC.

Role of member based organisations:

These unions are mainly localized bodies and most of these unions or associations are member based organizations. There are very less number of member based organisations in Mumbai. Moreover, there are very few active hawkers' union out of it. Since the street vendors have no legal permission to survive, the main role of these organizations is to negotiate with local authorities such as municipal corporations, local police stations for occupying public space to sustain their activities. These organizations also help to set up welfare board and labour commission for their social security and co-operatives for their access to credit for their economic activities and loans namely, personal loans, and educational loans. Organisations try to provide licence to legalise them. Thus, they approach to the authority for licensing for the street vendors. Organisation acts as intermediaries between individual street trader and local authority. But, the number of hawkers' union in Mumbai is very less.

XI. CONCLUDING REMARKS:

⁸ See <http://nceus.gov.in/Street%20Vendors%20policy.pdf> (p 10).

The coinage “street vendors” have become an indispensable organ of and synonymous to urban culture. It has influenced the psyche of the “urban culture” *per se*. But street vendors face some constraints such as lack of access to credit, adequate infrastructure, sufficient social security coverage and many other resources as other activities within the informal sector though they play very important actors in the urban informal economy by generating employment and supporting urban poor as well rich. The study reveals that the street vendors depend on the money lenders for credit accessibility as well as for social security purposes. Interestingly, the result shows that the street vendors are also forced to borrow at exorbitant rate of interest more so for the social security purposes that lead them to fall into a debt-trap situation, which is a matter of a deep concern. This study also reveals that around 100 percent vendors need social protection. All vendors are surviving either by their savings or by borrowing from other at high rate of interest. Thus, it can be said that social security is the basic needs. The study also reveals poor working condition in terms of excessive working hours in a day in addition to unhealthy and unsafe conditions at work place. However, National Policy (2004) has initiated and recommended many issues. But the problem is not with policy recognition because this policy already has highlighted the important problems and provided very specific recommendations. Thus, the problem is that after three years of policy notification, these recommendations remained on the paper and are not implemented so far. As their importance of urban informal sector, different NGOs, SHGs, Co-operatives through SEWA and NASVI are coming forward by providing social security and many other basic requirements but the numbers are very few. It is also can be said that some of the associations directly and some of them are indirectly regulating the concept of the ‘decent work’ by providing them decent working life and decent working environment. Thus, it can be concluded from the result that ‘decent work deficit’ in terms of access to formal financial institution, social protection and occupational wellbeing in this group of workers in Mumbai. This ‘deficit’ can be reduced by providing social security, better occupational environments in terms of safety and healthy work place; work security; accessing formal credit institutions; and through strong social dialogue by unions or any other member based organisations.

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