



Socio-Economic Status of Street Traders in Kerala: A Case Study of Chalakudy Taluk

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the socio-economic status of street traders in Chalakudy Taluk, Kerala, focusing on demographics, economic conditions, education, family structures, and business dynamics. The study finds that most vendors are from Kerala (81%) and male (85%), with the majority having completed SSLC (86%). The workforce is diverse in age, primarily between 40-70 years. Predominantly, vendors live in nuclear families (93%) and own their homes (83%). They rely on personal income for children's education (87%) and prefer government schools (73%). Asset ownership is limited, and medical treatment is sought chiefly from government hospitals (66%). Businesses are diverse, with lottery sales being the most common (46%), but monthly incomes are generally low, with 45% earning below ₹10,000 and 60% saving nothing. Private agencies are the primary source of capital (49%), and sentiments about income vary. Key challenges include lack of space, poor storage, health issues, and seasonal vulnerabilities. The study suggests targeted support, financial inclusion, infrastructure development, and policy reforms to improve livelihoods.

Key words: Socio economic condition, Street traders, Hawkers, Nonparametric tests.



Introduction

In the bustling streets of cities, street vendors form a vital yet often overlooked community, significantly contributing to the urban ecosystem. These micro-entrepreneurs, ranging from food cart operators to sellers of handcrafted wares, represent the essence of grassroots commerce. In India, street vendors, commonly known as “hawkers” or “pavement entrepreneurs,” play a crucial role in the informal economy and cultural mosaic, enriching the environment from the vibrant Kochi markets to the serene backwaters. Operating in public spaces such as open-air areas and transport junctions, they sell goods and services and influence trade and cultural exchange. Despite their visibility, accurately estimating their numbers remains challenging. Street vendors and market traders in India account for approximately 4% of urban employment. The low entry barriers, minimal start-up costs, and flexible working hours attract many to street vending, though succeeding in this field requires skill due to intense competition for space and customers.

In developing countries like India, the informal sector, including street vending, absorbs much of the urban unemployed and the growing labour force, offering income opportunities for marginalized groups and rural migrants. According to the National Classification of Occupation 1968, street vending encompasses hawkers and peddlers selling daily essentials such as vegetables and toys. Many of the population is engaged in street vending, with women constituting a substantial part of this workforce. The Hindu reported in 2021 that more applicants aged 25-45 are now seeking street vending opportunities, marking a shift from the pre-pandemic trend where applicants were typically over 50.

Review of Literature and problem statement

The literature on street vendors highlights a range of socio-economic challenges faced by this informal sector across different regions. Jayanti et al. (2020) emphasize the significant hardships female street vendors in Coimbatore endure, including health issues, wastage, and job insecurity, necessitating government intervention. Similarly, Prasad and Begari (2018) and Saha (2011) discuss the harassment and pressure faced by vendors in Telangana and Mumbai due to lack of recognition and regulation. Kumar and Pillai (2017) identify economic instability, social insecurity, health issues, and legal unawareness among vendors in Kollam, while Bhowmik (2007) and Jonathan Anjaria (2006) note an increase in street vendors due to formal sector job contraction, with minimal protective policies in place. Nirathron (2006) highlights Bangkok’s migrant street food vendors, who seek better income, attracting consumers due to affordability. Dimas (2008) and Sharath (2016) discuss the urban management challenges posed by street vendors, advocating for policy adjustments



and better planning. In Shivamogga, issues like water supply and gender disparity are prevalent. Chakraborty (2018) and Kiran (2019) underline the income instability and lack of support faced by vendors near Tatanagar Rail Station and highlight the significance of the Street Vendors Bill 2013. In rural Mauritius, Subratty et al. (2004) note hygiene practice awareness among food vendors but call for better health education. Tiwari (2000) and Ray and Mishra (2011) describe the natural market locations of vendors, who are often deemed illegal by authorities, despite their essential services. Solomon-Ayeh (2011) and Rosales (2012) examine eviction issues in Ghana and Los Angeles, respectively, stressing the need for inclusive urban planning. Sharma and Konwar (2014) highlight the specific hardships of female vendors in Delhi, including harassment and health issues. Studies by Brayon (2017), Colin (2018), and Martha Chen et al. (2018) emphasize the impact of urban planning on vendors in China and Ahmedabad. Jha (2018) and Prithvi and Lathia (2019) advocate for better urban policies to support the informal economy. Research by Nidan (2010) and Shibulal (2018) underscores the socio-economic constraints faced by female vendors in Patna and Kerala, respectively. These studies collectively call for improved regulatory frameworks, support mechanisms, and inclusive urban planning to enhance the livelihoods and working conditions of street vendors.

In the above scenario, examining the socio-economic status of street vendors in Chalakudy Taluk is highly relevant as it will provide valuable insights into their contributions, challenges, and needs, thus enabling the formulation of effective policies and interventions to support this vital segment of the informal economy.

Objectives of the study

1. To Analyse the Socio-Economic Conditions of Street Vendors in Chalakudy:
2. To Identify the Specific Challenges Faced by Itinerant Traders:
3. To Investigate the Factors Contributing to Successful Street Vending Practices:
4. To find out the pattern of expenditure of street traders in Chalakudy.

Hypotheses

H₁ : There is no significant difference between sample mean and population mean of income based satisfaction level of street traders

H₂: There is no significant difference between sample mean and population mean of satisfaction level about customers approach towards the job title of street traders.

H₃: There is no education wise difference among street traders towards their income based satisfaction level of job.

H₄: There is no age wise difference among street traders towards Satisfaction level about customers approach towards the job title of street traders



Materials and methods

The study, which was conducted in March 2024, included 100 respondents from various parts of Chalakudy Taluk. It is descriptive and empirical. Data were collected using a structured interview schedule comprising multiple sections. These sections included questions on the socio-demographic profile and personal information such as age, mother tongue, gender, educational qualification, and income. Additionally, it covered aspects related to customer attendance, staff employment, customer attitudes towards the vendors, and job satisfaction.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1. Demographic Information

Demography	Category	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	85	85 %
	Female	15	15%
State	Kerala	81	81 %
	Tamilnadu	9	9 %
	Utter Pradesh	7	7%
	Assam	2	2%
	Delhi	1	1%
Education	Illiterate	4	4 %
	Secondary	86	86 %
	Higher Secondary	3	3 %
	Graduate	7	7%
Age	Below 25	8	8 %
	25-40	25	25 %
	40-55	32	32%
	55-70	29	29 %
	Above 70	6	6 %
Family System	Nuclear Family	93	93 %
	Joint Family	7	7 %
Family Size	Below 2	4	4
	2-4	48	48
	4-8	43	43
	Above 8	3	3
Education of Children	Government Institutions	48	73 %
	Private Institutions	18	27 %

(Source: Primary data)



Table 1 provides the socio-demographic profile of street vendors in Chalakudy Taluk, reveals a predominantly male workforce (85%), with a significant portion originating from Kerala (81%) and smaller percentages from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Delhi. The educational background of these vendors shows that most have completed secondary education (86%), with a small number of graduates (7%) indicating a basic level of education that could influence their business operations. The age distribution is diverse, with the majority being middle-aged (40-55 years, 32%) and older (55-70 years, 29%), while younger vendors below 25 years and those above 70 are less common. The findings reveal that street vending is an occupation that attracts individuals across a broad age spectrum, potentially serving as a long-term career for many.

Family structure analysis indicates that most vendors live in nuclear families (93%), with family sizes typically ranging from 2-4 members (48%) or 4-8 members (43%). This reflects modern societal trends or economic factors favouring smaller family units. In terms of children's education, a majority of vendors' children attend government institutions (73%), though a notable 27% attend private schools, showing a significant investment in education despite limited economic means. The socio-demographic data underscores the economic constraints faced by street vendors in Chalakudy Taluk, who are a locally rooted, moderately educated group with a strong reliance on government educational resources for their children's education.

Table 2. Economic Information

Economic Indicators	Category	Count	Percentage
Income per month	Below 10000	45	45
	10000-20000	31	31
	20000-30000	19	19
	30000-40000	4	4
	Above 40000	1	1
Expenditure per month	Below 10000	45	45
	10000-20000	33	33
	20000-30000	5	5
	30000-40000	11	11
	Above 40000	6	6
Savings per month	Below 10000	31	31
	10000-20000	7	7
	20000-30000	0	0
	Above 30000	2	2
	Zero Balance	60	60



Source for meeting educational expense of children	From Own Income	57	87
	Government Scholarship	2	4
	Sponsorship	7	9
Ownership of dwelling unit	Owned	83	83
	Rented	17	17
Home appliances owned	Television	70	70%
	Fridge	64	64%
	Washing Machine	40	40 %
	No appliances	4	4 %
Vehicles Owned	No Vehicle	34	34 %
	Cycle	15	15 %
	Motor Cycle	41	41 %
	Auto rickshaw	2	2 %
	Car	1	1 %
	Motor Cycle & Auto rickshaw	3	3 %
	Motor Cycle & Car	2	2 %
	Cycle, Motor Cycle & Car	1	1 %
	Motor Cycle, Auto rickshaw & Car	1	1 %
	Medical treatment	Government Hospital	66
Private Hospital		23	23 %
Others		11	11 %
Kind of Business	Fruits & Vegetables	18	18
	Clothes & Jewellery Sellers	6	6
	Food Sellers	18	18
	Lottery	46	46
	Others	12	12
Form of Savings	Cash at Bank	20	50 %
	Cash in Hand	12	30 %
	Chitties	8	20 %
Number of employees	No Employees	92	92 %
	One Employee	4	4%
	Two Employees	4	4%
Ownership of premises/ Vehicles used in business	Owned	89	89 %
	Partnership	8	8 %
	Rented	3	3 %



Source of Capital	From Friends	19	19
	From Bank	17	17
	Private Agencies	49	49
	Personal Savings	15	15

(Source: Primary data)

The economic data in Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the financial situation of street traders in Chalakudy Taluk. A considerable proportion of street traders earn a modest income. Specifically, 45% of traders have a monthly income below ₹10,000, while 31% earn between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. Only a tiny fraction, 4%, have incomes between ₹30,000 and ₹40,000, and a mere 1% earn above ₹40,000. Expenditure patterns mirror income levels, with 45% spending below ₹10,000 monthly and 33% spending between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. However, 11% of traders incur expenses between ₹30,000 and ₹40,000, and 6% spend above ₹40,000, indicating a disparity between income and expenditure for some traders.

Savings among these traders are relatively low, with 60% reporting zero balance savings. Of those who do save, 31% save below ₹10,000 monthly, and 7% save between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000. Notably, no traders reported saving between ₹20,000 and ₹30,000, while only 2% saved above ₹30,000. A majority of traders (87%) finance their children's education from their income, with minimal reliance on government scholarships (4%) and sponsorships (9%). Regarding dwelling ownership, 83% own their homes, while 17% live in rented accommodations. Asset ownership is relatively high, with 70% owning televisions, 64% owning fridges, and 40% possessing washing machines. Only 4% of traders do not own any home appliances.

Vehicle ownership among traders is diverse. While 34% do not own any vehicle, 41% own motorcycles, 15% own cycles, and small percentages own auto rickshaws (2%) and cars (1%). A few traders own multiple vehicles. For medical treatment, a significant majority (66%) prefer government hospitals, 23% opt for private hospitals, and 11% utilize other medical facilities. The types of businesses operated by street traders are varied, with lottery businesses (46%) and food sellers (18%) being the most common. Fruits and vegetable trading also constitute 18%, while 12% are involved in other types of businesses. Savings are predominantly held in banks (50%), with 30% keeping cash in hand and 20% participating in chitties.

Most traders (92%) do not employ workers, indicating a high level of self-employment. A small percentage employ one or two workers. Regarding business premises or vehicle ownership, 89% own their premises or vehicles used in business



operations, 8% are in partnerships, and 3% rent their business premises or vehicles. The primary source of capital for these traders is private agencies (49%), followed by friends (19%) and banks (17%). Personal savings account for the capital of 15% of the traders.

Street traders in Chalakudy Taluk experience low to moderate income and expenditure levels, have limited savings, rely significantly on themselves to finance education and healthcare, own many assets, and engage in varied business types. The data indicates a substantial dependence on private agencies for capital and a significant level of self-employment with minimal hiring of additional employees.

Table 3 Bad habits and Hygiene

Habits and facility	Indicator	Count	Percentage
Bad habits	Smoking	40	40 %
	Liquor	28	20 %
	Tobacco	16	16 %
	No bad habits	16	16 %
Toilet facilities nearby	Yes	22	22
	No	78	78

(Source: Primary data)

Table 3 shows that smoking is the most prevalent bad habit among the individuals surveyed, with 40% of them engaging in it. Alcohol consumption follows, affecting 28% of the respondents. Tobacco use is reported by 16% of the individuals, indicating a notable but lesser prevalence compared to smoking and liquor. Interestingly, an equal proportion of the respondents, 16%, reported having no bad habits, suggesting a segment of the population that abstains from these activities. The table also shows that a significant % of street vendors in Chalakudy taluk, 78%, need nearby access to toilet facilities. Conversely, only 22% of vendors have access to nearby toilets. This finding highlights a substantial lack of infrastructure support for basic sanitary needs among the vendor community, posing challenges to their daily operations and personal hygiene.

Table 4. Howlong they are doing business

No of Years	Counts	Percentage
6 months – 4 Year	27	27
4 -10 Years	30	30
10-20 Years	18	18



20-30 Years	3	3
30-40 Years	15	15
Above 40 Years	2	2

(Source: Primary data)

Table 4 indicates the distribution of how long street vendors in Chalakudy taluk have been in business. The majority, 57% (27% in the six months to 4 years category and 30% in the 4 to 10 years category), are relatively newer entrants to the market. Another significant portion, 33% (18% in the 10 to 20 years category and 15% in the 30 to 40 years category), represents vendors who have been in business for a considerable period. A smaller proportion, 5% (3% in the 20 to 30 years category and 2% more than 40 years), have been operating for over two decades, indicating a minority of long-standing businesses. This distribution reflects diverse business tenures among street vendors in the taluk.

Table 5 Level of Satisfaction from Income point of view

Satisfaction Level	Counts	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	25	25
Satisfied	30	30
Neutral	19	19
Dissatisfied	8	8
Highly Dissatisfied	18	18

(Source: Primary data)

Table 5 reveals that 55% of street vendors in Chalakudy taluk are generally satisfied with their income, with 25% being highly satisfied and 30% satisfied. Meanwhile, 19% of vendors feel neutral about their income levels. However, a combined total of 26% express dissatisfaction, with 8% being dissatisfied and 18% highly dissatisfied. The findings indicate a mixed range of satisfaction levels among the vendors, with a notable portion experiencing income-related discontent.

Table 6 Satisfaction level about the approach of customers towards their Job Title

Satisfaction Level	Counts	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	14	14
Satisfied	32	32
Neutral	31	31



Dissatisfied	16	16
Highly Dissatisfied	7	7

(Source: Primary data)

Table 6 shows that a significant portion of street vendors in Chalakudy taluk feel positively about how people approach their job title, with 14% being highly satisfied and 32% satisfied, totalling 46%. Meanwhile, 31% of vendors maintain a neutral stance on this issue. On the other hand, 23% of vendors express dissatisfaction, with 16% dissatisfied and 7% highly dissatisfied. The findings show that while nearly half of the vendors are content with the public perception of their job, a notable minority remains dissatisfied.

Table 7. Problems faced by Street Vendors

Problems	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Heavy Competition	40	20	10	20	10	3.6
Huge Investment	20	10	40	20	10	3.1
Non-availability of Place	60	5	10	6	19	3.81
Irregular Customer Base	35	25	20	10	10	3.65
Poor Storage Facility	36	44	6	4	10	3.92
Legal Formalities	45	15	18	11	11	3.72
Health Issues	58	15	6	5	16	3.94

(Source: Primary data)

The table 7 provides a comprehensive overview of the key challenges encountered by street vendors in Chalakudy taluk, assessed through both qualitative responses and mean scores on a five-point scale. The highest mean scores above 3 indicate significant problems for the vendors. Non-availability of space (mean score: 3.81), poor storage facilities (mean score: 3.92), and health issues (mean score: 3.94) emerge as the most pressing concerns. These issues reflect critical barriers a Table 7 provides a comprehensive overview of the critical challenges encountered by street vendors in Chalakudy taluk, assessed through qualitative responses and mean



scores on a five-point scale. The highest mean scores above 3 indicate significant problems for the vendors. Non-availability of space (mean score: 3.81), poor storage facilities (mean score: 3.92), and health issues (mean score: 3.94) emerge as the most pressing concerns. These issues reflect critical barriers affecting vendors' operational capabilities and overall well-being. Additionally, heavy competition (mean score: 3.6), irregular customer base (mean score: 3.65), and legal formalities (mean score: 3.72) also score above 3, underscoring the pervasive challenges in maintaining business stability and compliance. While huge investment (mean score: 3.1) shows a somewhat lower average, indicating a mixed perception among vendors, the overall data highlights a complex landscape of obstacles street vendors face in Chalakudy taluk.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table 8. Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Gender	.512	100	.000	.426	100	.000
Educational Status	.475	100	.000	.528	100	.000
Income based level of satisfaction	.198	100	.000	.864	100	.000
Age	.177	100	.000	.910	100	.000
Satisfaction level about customers approach	.187	100	.000	.868	100	.000

Table 8 shows the results of normality tests for different variables using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. All variables (Gender, Educational Status, Income-based level of satisfaction, Age, and Satisfaction level about customers' approach) have significant p-values (Sig. = .000), indicating that their distributions deviate significantly from a normal distribution. Therefore, these variables are not normally distributed. We apply nonparametric tests for analysis when the data is not normally distributed.

H_1 : There is no significant difference between sample mean and population mean of income based satisfaction level of street traders

**Table 9. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Income based level of satisfaction
N		100
Normal Parameters	Mean	3.34
	Std. Deviation	1.249
Test Statistic		.198
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

The table 9 presents the results of a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to determine if the sample mean of income-based satisfaction level of street traders significantly differs from the population mean. The sample size (N) is 100, with a mean of 3.34 and a standard deviation of 1.249. The test statistic is .198, and the asymptotic significance (2-tailed) is .000, indicating that the sample data significantly deviates from the normal distribution. Consequently, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀) and conclude that there is a significant difference between the sample mean and the population mean of income-based satisfaction level of street traders.

H₂: There is no significant difference between sample mean and population mean of Satisfaction level about customers approach towards the job title of street traders

Table 10. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Satisfaction level about customers approach
N		100
Normal Parameters	Mean	3.57
	Std. Deviation	1.066
Test Statistic		.187
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.000

The table 10 presents the results of a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, which examines whether the sample mean for satisfaction with customers' approach towards the job title of street traders significantly differs from the population mean. The sample consists of 100 respondents, with an average satisfaction level of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.066. The test statistic is .187, and the asymptotic



significance (2-tailed) is .000, suggesting that the sample distribution significantly departs from normality. As a result, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and determine that a significant difference exists between the sample mean and the population mean for the satisfaction level regarding customers' approach towards street traders' job titles.

H3: There is no education wise difference among street traders towards their income based satisfaction level of job.

Table 11. Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test

Total N	100
Test Statistic	5.878
Degree Of Freedom	3
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.118

The table presents the results of an Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test, which evaluates whether there are education-wise differences among street traders regarding their income-based job satisfaction levels. The total sample size (N) is 100, with a test statistic of 5.878 and a degree of freedom (df) of 3. The asymptotic significance (2-sided test) is .118. Since the p-value (.118) is greater than the conventional significance level of .05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0). This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in income-based job satisfaction levels among street traders based on their education.

H4: There is no age wise difference among street traders towards Satisfaction level about customers approach towards the job title of street traders

Table 12. Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test

Total N	100
Test Statistic	4.478
Degree Of Freedom	4
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.345

The table summarizes the results of an Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test, which assesses whether there are differences among street traders of different ages in terms of their satisfaction with how customers approach their job titles. The total sample size is 100, and the test yields a statistic of 4.478 with 4 degrees of



freedom. The asymptotic significance (2-sided test) is .345. Since the p-value (.345) exceeds the conventional threshold of .05, we do not reject the null hypothesis (H₀). Therefore, the data does not support a significant age-wise difference in satisfaction levels regarding customers' approach to the job title of street traders.

Significant Findings of the Study

1.Socio-Demographic Profile

1.Gender Distribution: The street vending workforce in Chalakudy Taluk is predominantly male, comprising 85% of the vendors.

2.Origin: Most vendors (81%) are from Kerala, with smaller groups hailing from Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Delhi.

3.Education: Most vendors (86%) have completed secondary education, with only 7% holding a graduate degree. The finding suggests that the vendors' basic education level may influence business operations.

4.Age Distribution: The majority of vendors are middle-aged (40-55 years, 32%) or older (55-70 years, 29%), with fewer vendors below 25 or above 70. This indicates that street vending appeals to a wide age range and can serve as a long-term career.

5.Family Structure: Most vendors (93%) live in nuclear families, with typical family sizes of 2-4 members (48%) or 4-8 members (43%). The finding reflects modern societal trends or economic factors favouring smaller family units.

6.Children's Education: Most vendors' children attend government schools (73%), while 27% attend private schools, indicating a significant educational investment despite limited economic means.

II.Employment and Business Operations

1.Employment: The vast majority of traders (92%) do not employ workers, highlighting a high level of self-employment, with only a tiny percentage employing one or two workers.

2.Premises Ownership: A significant majority (89%) own their business premises or vehicles, 8% are in partnerships, and 3% rent their business premises or vehicles.

3.Capital Sources: The primary source of capital is private agencies (49%), followed by friends (19%), banks (17%), and personal savings (15%).

4.Income and Expenditure: Street traders experience low to moderate income and expenditure levels, with limited savings and a significant reliance on themselves



to finance education and healthcare.

III. Health and Infrastructure

1. Bad Habits: Smoking is the most common bad habit (40%), followed by alcohol consumption (28%) and tobacco use (16%). Additionally, 16% of respondents report having no bad habits.

2. Sanitation: A significant portion (78%) need nearby access to toilet facilities, but only 22% have access, highlighting a substantial lack of infrastructure support for basic sanitary needs.

IV. Business Tenure

Duration in Business: The majority of vendors (57%) are relatively new to the market, with 27% in business for six months to four years and 30% for four to ten years. Another significant portion (33%) have been in business for a considerable period (10 to 40 years), with a smaller proportion (5%) operating for over two decades.

V. Income Satisfaction

Satisfaction Levels: Over half of the vendors (55%) are generally satisfied with their income, with 25% being highly satisfied and 30% satisfied. However, 26% expressed dissatisfaction, with 8% dissatisfied and 18% highly dissatisfied, indicating mixed satisfaction levels.

VI. Public Perception

Job Title Satisfaction: Nearly half of the vendors (46%) feel positively about public perception of their job title, with 14% highly satisfied and 32% satisfied. Meanwhile, 31% are neutral, 23% express dissatisfaction, 16% dissatisfied and 7% highly dissatisfied.

VII. Challenges Faced

1. Significant Issues: The most pressing concerns include the non-availability of space (mean score: 3.81), poor storage facilities (mean score: 3.92), and health issues (mean score: 3.94).

2. Other Challenges: Heavy competition (mean score: 3.6), an irregular customer base (mean score: 3.65), and legal formalities (mean score: 3.72) also score above 3, indicating pervasive challenges in maintaining business stability and compliance.

3. Investment Concerns: The issue of high investment has a somewhat lower



average score (3.1), indicating a mixed perception among vendors.

Overall, the study highlights the socio-demographic characteristics, employment patterns, health and infrastructure needs, business tenure, income satisfaction, public perception, and challenges street vendors face in Chalakudy Taluk.

Conclusion:

The comprehensive analysis of street vendors in Chalakudy taluk reveals several key insights into their demographics, economic conditions, challenges, and satisfaction levels. Firstly, most vendors are from Kerala, highlighting a strong regional presence within the informal economy. Gender disparity is stark, with males dominating the sector, while educational attainment varies widely, predominantly at lower to middle levels. Age distribution shows a diverse workforce, with significant representations across different age groups, emphasizing the inclusive nature of street vending as an occupation.

Income satisfaction among vendors shows a mixed picture, with a notable portion expressing dissatisfaction despite a majority reporting satisfaction with their earnings. Age, gender, and educational background significantly influence how vendors perceive income-based job satisfaction. Older vendors and those with higher education levels tend to report higher satisfaction, underscoring the role of these demographic factors in shaping perceptions of job adequacy.

Despite the economic challenges they face, including limited access to government financial aid and seasonal vulnerabilities due to weather conditions, street vendors in Chalakudy taluk demonstrate remarkable resilience and ownership in their business operations. Their reliance on private agencies for capital underscores the urgent need for improved financial inclusion strategies. Challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, competition, and regulatory complexities further impact their operational efficiency and well-being.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be proposed to enhance the socio-economic conditions and well-being of street vendors in Chalakudy. Targeted support programs aimed at female vendors can promote gender equality by providing skill development, access to credit, and networking opportunities. Education and skill enhancement programs, including adult education, vocational training, and financial literacy, can empower vendors with higher skill sets, enhancing their income-generating capabilities. Investing in infrastructure development, such



as better storage facilities, sanitation, and designated vending zones, can improve operational efficiency and working conditions. Facilitating easier access to formal financial services and microcredit facilities can reduce vendors' dependence on private agencies for capital, promoting financial inclusion. Strengthening healthcare access and promoting health insurance schemes tailored to street vendors' needs and social security schemes can provide a safety net against economic uncertainties and health risks. Policy reforms that streamline regulatory processes and reduce bureaucratic hurdles can improve compliance and operational efficiency. At the same time, community engagement and awareness campaigns can enhance the perception of street vendors and promote social inclusion.

Implementing these suggestions is a crucial step that the local government officials, policymakers, urban planners, and community leaders in Chalakudy can take to significantly improve the livelihoods and job satisfaction of street vendors. By addressing the diverse needs of vendors and creating an enabling environment, you can foster a more equitable and supportive framework for this vital segment of the economy. This holistic approach would not only elevate the socio-economic status of street vendors but also recognize their substantial contribution to the local economy, paving the way for a more inclusive and resilient community.

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