

**UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF LIVELIHOOD AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN VENDORS: A CASE STUDY OF INDO-MYANMAR BORDER TOWN MOREH**

<sup>1</sup>Khullak Meson Maring, <sup>2</sup>Donald Ricaldo Mawkhlieng

<sup>1,2</sup>International Institute for Population Sciences

**ABSTRACT**

With growing urbanization, developing countries have seen a sharp rise in women's participation in the informal sector which does not require highly skilled, educated labour. The study found that the socio-economic status of the women vendors was poor, mostly middle- aged married women from the lowest social groups (ST, SC and OBC). Many of the vendors had minimal resources to run their business and were the sole income earners in their families.

**Keywords:** socio-economic conditions, health problems, women street vendors, Moreh, autonomy.

**INTRODUCTION**

Female participation is an important indicator of social development and is strongly associated with the economy, culture and traditions of the country. The current trend of India's female labor participation is not at satisfying level as it has declined from 35.1% in 1990 to 27.2% in 2017 which is lowest among BRICS countries (ILOSTAT, 2017). However, it may also be better understood from the perspective of female literacy rate. According to the 2011 Indian Census, the female literacy rate increased from 39.3% in 1991 to 65.4% which shows that though greater proportion of women are receiving education, not all are participating in economic activities.

Economic development has propelled the growth of the informal sector and India too has experienced a sharp rise in the informal sector through the relaxation of its trade policies. Informal employment has seen a steady increase in India, and Mittal (2012) predicted that the share of its informal workers would rise from 91.8% to 93.9% by 2016-17. Rapid globalization saw the steady but not uniform increase in the participation of women in the workforce. Only small proportions of urban, middle-class, educated women were absorbed in the formal work sectors, whereas the majority of the rural migrant, low-skill, uneducated women have no other means but to find employment in the informal sector. A 2011 study in the state of Uttar Pradesh

found 94% of the working women were engaged in the informal sector, with only 20% being confined to the urban centers (Singh & Gupta, 2011). The substantially large share of women in the informal sector in India is driven by poverty and desire to attain higher standards of living as these women mostly come from low income families. Banerjee (1998) found that these women were compelled to join the labor force not because an expanding job market has given them an additional choice of jobs but due to their worsening socio economic circumstances.

Majority of the women who engage in the informal sector work to cater to their family needs are often the sole income earners of their family. In some cases, the women's earnings satisfy the survival needs of the family (Mahmud, 1997) whereby a major proportion of their earnings are used for household expenditures (Gulati, 1981). Most of these women engage in non-agricultural activities such as vendors, artisans, domestic helpers, garment workers, construction workers, salesgirls, and in other roles which require minimum skills, knowledge, and training. Overrepresented in informal work arrangements, women lack access to social protections such as pensions, employment benefits, and maternity protection which are pertinent in formal employment. Women economic participation in India has not yet benefited from the current demographic dividend in the country as majority of them are still outside the labor force. Data shows that rural women labor participation rates in India has decreased from 26.5% in 2009-10 to 25.3% in 2011-12, while that of urban women increased from 14.6% to 15.5% over the same period (Verick, 2014). An increasing number of women are also working in the urban areas, but this does not necessarily mean they are in good quality employment. Many women settle into insecure jobs in the informal sector where there is a high risk of exploitation and discrimination. Women working in the informal sector also suffer from wage irregularity, unconducive working conditions, economic vulnerabilities, discrimination, and harassment.

Among the different types of work, street vending is one of the largest sub-groups of the informal workforce and is quite visible among women (Singh & Gupta, 2011). India's street vendors were about 10 million in 2005 and their numbers have been steadily growing over time. Women vendors include those who sell vegetables, fish, fruits and other food items, household goods, clothes etc., which are produced locally. Nearly 40% of the vendors in India are women and 30% of them are sole earners of their family (Mohapatra, 2012). It is understood that economic involvement of women in India's economy is limited to the informal sector only. The relatively low participation of women in the work force is the effect of low education, strong gender affinity and lack of empowerment which are embedded in the culture, traditions and social system.

In this study, we have included three basic categories of street vendors:

(a) Stationary vendors

(b) Peripatetic vendors and

(c) Mobile vendors.

Stationary vendors are those who occupy space on the pavements or other public/private areas and carry out vending on a regular basis at a specific location either openly or in a covered area, with implicit or explicit consent of the authorities.

Peripatetic vendors are those who carry out vending on foot and include those who carry baskets on their head/ shoulders and those who sell their goods on pushcarts. They may also occupy space on a time-sharing basis, so that they remove all their wares every day on expiry of the time-sharing period allotted.

Mobile street vendors are those who move from place to place selling their goods or services on bicycle or mobile units on wheels, whether motorized or not. They also include vendors selling their wares in moving buses, local trains, etc. In this study, the term vendor incorporates all local/regional terms, such as hawker, lukmai phombi, Nga yunbi, dukandars, keithel phombi, etc.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### *Socio-economic conditions of street vendors*

A study conducted in Kokrajhar district of Assam, a state in northeast India, it was found that the majority of the women vendors were in the age group 31-50 years. More than three-fourths of them were married women, and more than half of them were married before reaching 21 years of age. Their husbands were also engaged in the informal sector. More than 70% of the women vendors were reported to have been migrants, and around 66% of them cited poverty as the main reason for their migration. It was also found that most of these women belonged to a scheduled tribe, practiced the Hindu faith and had primary-level education (Basumatary, 2013). In a similar study conducted by Saha in 2011 on vendors in Mumbai, it was found that the women vendors included in the study were largely middle-aged, married, Hindu migrants, with educational background up to the secondary level, and belonging to the socially backward castes. Their daily income ranged from Rs. 125-500 (1.61 – 6.45 EUR), and a majority of them sold vegetables, flowers, cooked food, and garments. Sarkar and Srivastava (2009), in their study titled “Women Hawkers in New Economic Environment: A Case of Navi Mumbai,” found that women vendors had a poor socio-economic status and poor literacy levels. In comparison with their male counterparts, the socio-economic condition of women vendors is a lot worse, and they are burdened with not just the long hours of business in the street, but also with household chores, including attending to their family members. In one study conducted on vegetable vendors in the streets of Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, a state located in eastern India, women

vendors were found to have a lower socio-economic status compared with their male counterparts. Women vendors have much lower earnings than the males, and low level of unionization among them makes them more vulnerable in the streets (Banerjee, 2014).

It is known that though the contribution of women vendors towards Indian economy is enormous, studies have indicated they lack proper recognition. It is commendable that in spite of their low socio-economic conditions, patriarchal society, lack of access to resources, multiple family responsibilities, low autonomy and other challenges, these women proved to be efficacious and continue to venture into vending activities and are becoming more visible in the streets. In light of the continued challenges women vendors face in India, it must be understood that the nature and severity of challenges is distinctive and differs from one region to another based on cultural traits, tradition and belief system. For this reason, it would be interesting to get the picture of the situation of women vendors in northeast India as the status of women there is comparatively better among all the other regions in India (Das, 2013). It is important to understand the impact of women vendors in close proximity to the Indo-Myanmar border on their socio-economic status.

### **Rationale of the study:**

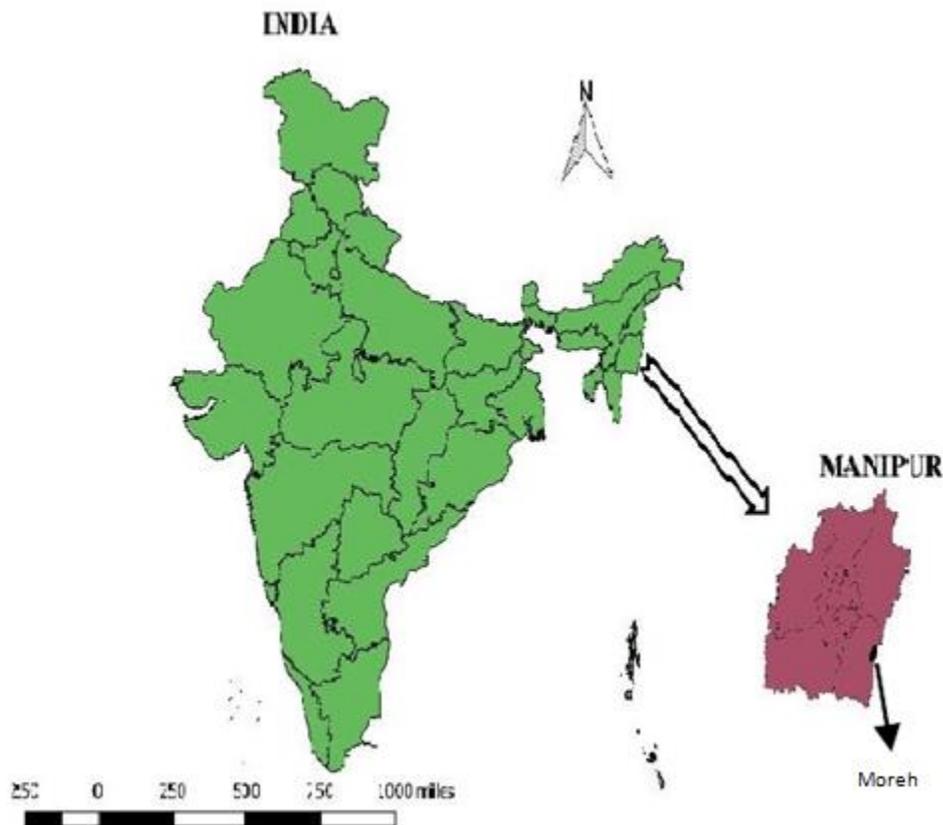
Moreh, a small town in the state of Manipur is the easternmost tip of India considered to be a trading center bridging South Asia and Southeast Asia. Tamu is another town located at the Myanmar side where most of the economic activities is linked with Moreh. Moreh-Tamu stretch is the planned target for economic integration between South Asia and Southeast Asia. Initially Moreh has been a trading hub for locally grown products between the people from both sides of the border and is now upgraded to government approved import-export center. Moreh has seen a significant rise of informal sector activities such as hawking, street vending, daily wage labor, among others as a result of the Indo-Myanmar border trade. However, the contribution of the border trade to the informal sector, particularly to the livelihood of women, remains underexplored. It is imperative to understand the effect of the border trade on the socio-economic wellbeing and autonomy of the vulnerable women vendors of Moreh. There is, however, a dearth of studies on how these women are pushed into the petty vendor trade because of poverty and unemployment. The present study aims to fill the following research gaps.

The objective of this study is to explore and analyse some major research questions and findings related to the women vendors in Moreh town emphasizing on socio-economic, demographic conditions status and livelihood.

Moreh is considered a major trading hub in the north-eastern region of India, which connects India to South-east Asian countries. According to Census 2011, around 83% of the people in

Moreh reported working in non-agricultural activities. The native of Manipur are three major ethnic communities: the Meiteis residing in the valley, the Nagas, and Kuki-chins that comprise 29 tribes inhabiting the hilly regions of Manipur. Meitei vendors are common in the plain areas, whereas Nagas and Kuki-chins are common in the hilly areas. The different ethnic communities are of the same mongoloid group and have a strong traditional and cultural affinity. Kuki-Chins are native to Moreh town; other communities such as Nepalis, Bengalis and Marwaris are also found to inhabit this place.

**Figure 1: Moreh Town**



### **Selection of respondents**

Women vendors above 15 years of age, staying in Moreh town for more than a year, and involved in vending activities for more than a year were selected as respondents for the study. The women were interviewed in the market during their working hours when there was no

customer to attend to. A total of 336 women vendors were contacted and interviewed in the study<sup>1</sup>.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

Data was collected based on purposive sampling of three major markets in Moreh which are Hongkong market (=63 samples), Super market (=117 samples) and Morning market (=156 samples). One justification for the non-probability sampling is that we assume that these major markets will represent the women vendor population in Moreh and another reason is unavailability of reliable sampling frame for Moreh markets for probability sampling. A micro-level study was conducted in the area markets through a structured interview schedule which consisted of open ended and closed ended questions prepared keeping in mind the objectives of the study. Data collected was entered in the Census and Survey Processing System 6.1 (CSPro) and later converted into STATA 12 format for statistical analysis, including the univariate, bivariate and multivariate techniques. In order to determine the associations and significant relationship among the dependent and independent variables, binary logistic regression technique (Retherford & Choe, 1993) was used. To ascertain the significant association among the socio-economic and demographics variables, chi square test was also used in the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *Demographic and socio-economic characteristics of women vendors:*

On analyzing the primary data collected in the survey, wide-ranging information was revealed. Characteristics like age, religion, education, marital status, types of vending, and occupation of the women and their household members were examined.

The average household size of women vendors is 4.8 with dependency ratio of 32.1 which means that for every working member in vendor households, there is 0.32 dependent member. Though, the vendor's households have sizeable working age population, it is cripple with unemployment as high as 47% of the family members are reportedly unemployed or in other words, on average, for every household, there is 1.7 unemployed members. Majority of the households (48%) have an average monthly income of Rs 5000-15000 (EUR 63-189) which is less than the monthly average household income in India at Rs. 16,474 (205 EUR) according to ICE 360° Survey, 2014<sup>2</sup>. In the sample households, the majority of the heads of the household were Christian

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<sup>1</sup> The respondents were interviewed using structured and semi structured schedules after getting informed written consent. The ethical clearance certificate was obtained from the Students Research Ethics Committee (SREC) at the International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, India.

<sup>2</sup> Household survey on India's Citizen Environment & Consumer Economy (ICE 360 degree Survey, 2014)

(41.7%), followed by 36% Muslim and 22.3% Hindu. It was also found that the majority of the household heads belonged to ST (39.9%), whereas 31.9% belonged to the OBC category. Less than one-fifth of the household heads belonged to the SC (14.6%) and General (13.7%) categories.

The occupation of husbands was found to vary from formal sector jobs in the public and private sectors to manual labor. Nearly half of the husbands were unemployed (44.4%)<sup>3</sup>, meaning that the women were the major bread earners of the family. Only 8.2% were in public sector jobs, while 12.4% were in private sector jobs. Around one-fourth of the husbands were self-employed (27.4%). Very few of the husbands were found to engage as vendors helping their wives (7.4%). From the data, it is understood that most women engage in vending activity as a result of necessity and not out of choice. Many women get into vending to support the family's needs as their husbands too are working in the informal sector.

One of the indicators of economic status is the household possession of arable land. Only 4.8% of the selected households have land for agricultural purposes, and the average size of the agricultural land owned was only slightly more than 2.5 acres. This indicates that women vendors in Moreh town are mostly from landless households.

Table 1 gives an idea about the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, marital status, and literacy. It also provides the percentage distribution of women vendors by age of entry in vending activities and mass media exposure. Age of entry in vending activities is important to understand the economic constraints of the household; mass media exposure is an important indicator of the level of empowerment and is assumed to have strong influence on the degree of autonomy among women. The number of women vendors in the age group 15-30 years constitutes 25.6%. The oldest vendor was 75 years old and 27.1% of the vendors are in the age group of 45 above years. The majority of the women were in the age groups of 31-45 years (47.3%).

Women vendors in Moreh are predominantly married women. After interviewing women vendors of age 15 years and above, it was found that almost three-fourths of them (72.3%) were currently married. Nearly one-fourth were either widowed, divorced, or separated (25.3%). Only 2.4% of the women were single or unmarried. It is surprising to know that women vendors in Moreh are generally literate, with 71.7% of them responded that they had attained primary, middle and secondary and above education and half of the women vendors had no exposure to any media (newspaper, radio, TV). Overall, a vast majority of the women vendors were married,

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<sup>3</sup> The reasons behind this could be seasonal unemployment in agriculture and absence of private enterprises and industries in the region. Generally, men who are self-employed, for instance those cultivating their own land, do not consider themselves employed as agricultural work does not provide income in cash.

working age group women, who had entered the trade from teen age to 30 years, and had had some formal education prior to joining the work. To understand the economic needs of the vendor's household, the vendors were asked about the number of members in their household. It was found that the average number of children per woman was 2.9. Around 72.7% of the children in the study were from currently married woman and 27.3% from other women (unmarried-1.8%, widowed-22.4%, divorced-1.7% and separated-1.3% respectively). Most of the vendors earns a meagre income as study found that 63% earns below Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) which is less than monthly average per capita income in India at Rs. 3528 (44 EUR) as per ICE 360° Survey, 2014. Study also found that only 37% earns a monthly income more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) which is somewhat proportionate with the national average monthly income.

**Table 1: Percent distribution of women by background characteristics**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15-30	86	25.6
31-45	159	47.3
Above 45	91	27.1
<b>Marital status</b>		
Currently Married	243	72.3
Others	93	27.7
<b>Literacy</b>		
Illiterate	95	28.3
Primary	96	28.6
Middle	84	25.0
SSC+	61	18.2
<b>Age of entry in vending</b>		
Before 20	81	24.1
21-30	134	39.9
After 30	53	15.8
Don't remember	68	20.2
<b>Mass media exposure</b>		
Yes	173	48.5
No	163	51.5
Total	336	100

### **Variations in income**

It is found that there is no specific relation between age and earning. Among the women who earn a monthly income of more than 3000 (38.46 EUR), majority of the women were from the middle age group of 31-45 years (41.6%) and 20% were from the age group 15-30 years and 38.4% were in the age of above 45 years. earn a monthly income which is more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR). Among those who earn less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR), 50.7% were in the age group 31-45 years, 28.9% in age group 15-30 years and 20.4% in the age group above 45 years respectively. Majority of those who earn a monthly income of more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR), are from scheduled tribe (78.4%) while 48.8% of women belonging from OBC reportedly earn an income which is less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) per month. Illiterate women vendor tend to earn more as 29.6% of them informed that they earn a monthly income of more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) and 29.4% of women with primary education earn less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR). About 55% of the peripatetic vendors earn less than 3000 while 90.4% of the stationary vendors earn more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) among different categories of income. About 80.6% of the women without BPL card earn less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) while 60% of the women with BPL card earn more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR). Among the unemployed, 53.4% come from family of vendors who earn less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) and 46.6% belong to family of women earning more than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR). When asked about women association among vendors, only 29% are members of women self-help group/savings scheme group/woman organization and among the members of such groups women with low income (less than Rs. 3000 (38.46 EUR) accounted for only 23%.

### **Working conditions**

Working conditions were assessed in terms of working hours, availability of capital, physical labor involved. All the women were asked about the number of working hours in a day to understand their working conditions and its impact on health. 34% of the women vendors had no specific or fixed time for vending activities. They came to the market whenever they had products to sell. These women include those who came in the morning and/or evening from neighboring villages like S. Moljol, New Mongjang, Chavangphai, Canon Veng, Ngamkhai Veng etc. to sell their products. One-fourth of the women vendors worked up to 5 hours in a day, while the remaining vendors, who were a majority (40.8%), worked more than 6 hours a day (excluding travel and product preparation time). 44% of the women reported that they run their business based on their own savings, 14.4% of them received financial support from their family and friends and 15.4% obtained loan from local banks. In terms of physical labor, vending activities involves huge physical effort and 50.5% of women informed that they carried their products physically by themselves, the remaining used bicycles, rickshaws vehicles etc. and

involves physical activity only while pulling and carrying the products and also while loading and unloading them.

To understand the associated factors that affect the income of women vendors, we carried out the logistic regression taking income (less than Rs.3000 coded as “0” and more than Rs.3000 as “1”) controlling the demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Table 2). The likelihood of women vendors for having income more than Rs. 3000 is less likely among women who does not work throughout the year (0.34,  $p < 0.01$ ). Women vendors who engage in vending clothes (0.30,  $p < 0.05$ ); others products like charcoal, electronic, cook meat (0.4,  $p < 0.1$ ) are less likely to earn an income of more than Rs. 3000 per month as compared to women who sells vegetables. Women vendors who travels more than a kilometre for selling their products are 2.33 times more likely to earn an income of more than Rs. 3000 as compared to those who travels less than a kilometre. Again women who carries their products using rickshaw (5.38 times) or others like bicycle, own rickshaw, vehicles (2.36 times) more likely to earn an income of Rs. 3000. Women whose financial contribution are Marup<sup>4</sup> (3.14,  $p < 0.01$ ) and who reported vending as secondary household income (8.56,  $p < 0.01$ ) are more likely to have an income of more than Rs.3000. Furthermore, women who contributed half of their income in household expenses are more likely to earn more than Rs.3000. The income of women is significantly higher among those who travels long distance in rickshaw or other means of transport for selling their products and those who borrowed money from marup and having primary income from other source other than vending.

**Table 2: Results of binary logistic regression of women vendors’ income by vendors different livelihood background characteristics**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	
15-30 yrs (ref)	
31-45 yrs	1.16
Above 45 yrs	2.48
<b>Work Regularity</b>	
Throughout year (ref)	
Others	0.34***
<b>Hours of work</b>	
Upto 5 hours (ref)	
Above 6 hours	0.67

<sup>4</sup> The precise meaning of 'MARUP' is commensurate as 'FRIENDSHIP'. It is one unique age-old informal financial system which organise small credit association or informal institution; this gives an easy and straightforward way for saving money in a convenient alternate manner from the formal financial institutions.

No Fix Time	0.88
<b>Years in vending</b>	
Less than 5 years (ref)	
5-10 years	0.49
More than 10 years	0.58
Don't remember	0.54
<b>Type of products</b>	
Vegetables (ref)	
Clothes	0.30**
Meat / Fish	0.57
Tea Stall	1.12
Others	0.4*
<b>Distance travel</b>	
Less than 1 km (ref)	
More than 1 km	2.33**
<b>Mode of transportation</b>	
On foot (ref)	
Pay Rickshaw	5.38***
Others	2.36*
<b>Financial source</b>	
Own Saving (ref)	
Family/Friends	1.55
Bank/Money Lender	1.62
Marup	3.14***
<b>Product source</b>	
Own product (ref)	
Villagers bringing to market	1.18
Market	1.71
Crossing Border	3.01
<b>Financial contribution</b>	
All of Income (ref)	
Half of Income	0.21***
Less than half	2.14
Reason for vending	
<b>Household needs (ref)</b>	
Additional household income	8.56***
Others	3.32
<b>_cons</b>	0.08**

p-values significant at  $p < 0.10$  = Significant at 10% level,  $p < 0.05$  = Significant at 5% level

\*\*,  $p < 0.01$  = Significant at 1% level

### **Expenditure on vending products**

Table 3 gives the percentage distribution of women vendor by expenditure on vending product. The women vendors are observed to have very low monthly expenditure for the products. The significant concentration is seen in the expenditure less than Rs. 1000. Nearly equal respondent's 29.2 percent and 30.4 percent are found to spend at the range of Rs. 1001-5000 and more than Rs. 5000. The price of the products depends on the individual to individual. If the vendors purchase from the same supplier, its cost can be bargain. Also, it depends on first come first basis.

**Table 3: Percentage distribution of women vendor by expenditure on vending product**

<b>Expenditure on vending products</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 1000	136	40.5
1001-5000	98	29.2
More than 5000	102	30.4
Total	336	100

### **Household Expenditure**

This section of the study is to examine the consumer expenditure behaviour among women vendors. The direct question was asked about their major expenditure behaviour. It was a multi-response question. Table 4 gives the information. Majority of the women vendors have reported spending their earning in food (97.6 percent) which is followed by clothes (66.4 percent). The least expenditure was seen in other categories (1.8 percent) which include entertainment, animal husbandry, purchasing land etc. and in travelling (14 percent). It is interesting to find that as a vendor, only 35.4 percent of the vendors reported major spending on the vending activities.

**Table 4: Percentage distribution of women vendors by household major spending**

<b>Expenditure items</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Food	328	97.6
Education	186	55.4
Clothes	223	66.4
Vending	119	35.4
Business other than vending	14	4.2
Travelling	47	14.0
Others	6	1.8

### **Profit from vending**

Getting the exact amount of profit from the vendors is difficult. A question was asked - how much profit do you earn in a month from your vending activities - in proportion to expenditure on the vending product. Majority of the women vendors (69.1 percent) have reported having a marginal profit of less than 10 percent of what they spent (Table 5). Nearly one-fifth of the respondents have a gain of 10-20 percent. Only 6.3 percent of the vendors are in higher profit more than 20 percent of their expenditure on vending products.

**Table 5: Percentage distribution of vendors by profit from expenditure**

<b>Profit from expenditure</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than 10 percent	232	69.1
10-20 percent	83	24.7
More than 20 percent	21	6.3
Total	336	100

### **Financial Contribution**

Street vending plays a significant role in the economy since it tends to generate employment at a comparatively low level of investment. However, their contribution to the national income and the society as a whole is least recognised. Acknowledging women's multiple roles in our society such as roles as mothers, wives, breadwinners etc., most women are now serving as de- facto heads of households. It had noted that in previous chapter women vendors are the primary breadwinners. In fact, without vending activities by the women, the households would suffer economic difficulties. The contribution of income is apprehended as one of the essential characteristics which help to increase/give decision-making power of an individual in the household. A study as early as 1960 found that the higher resources of the spouse, the higher will be the say in family decision making (Blood and Wolfe, 1960).

Economic contribution by the women vendors in this study is estimated by the proportion of the women's earnings contributed to the household income. To evaluate the economic contribution of women vendors to the households, a question was asked how much of their income proportion is contributed. Table 6 gives the data on economic contribution. It is found that more than half of the vendors (58.3 percent) have contributed all their earning income to meet the household expenses. Almost equal number of women have reported contributing half of their earning or less than half of their earning, i.e. 18.8 percent and 22.9 percent respectively.

A question was asked regarding their pattern of utilisation of earning in different items if they can use their earning on their own. Majority of them have reported that their economic contribution is utilised in saving and household expenditure. While collecting data, during informal discussion also found that most of their earning go to household expenditure. It is also mentioned that some women manage to pay for educational services such as school fees, school uniforms and stationeries for their children.

The finding of this study reveals that earnings gained by women vendors were used for maintaining the household expenditures.

**Table 6: Percentage distribution of women vendor by financial contribution in household**

<b>Financial Contribution</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
All of Income	196	58.3
Half	63	18.8
Less than half	77	22.9
Total	336	100

## **CONCLUSION**

Women vendors in Moreh town are generally middle-aged, married, illiterate, landless, poor. They are mostly from the disadvantaged social groups, who are driven into vending activities out of economic necessity (unemployed husband, marital disruption, etc.). A majority of the women (92%) are dissatisfied with their work and would like to stop if their economic conditions improved. Women vendors from better socio-economic background have more likelihood to have better earning and women with comparatively small earning spends more on their household needs which reflects that they are mostly the main source of livelihood earners at the household level.

The interviews were taken during working hours, which may have affected how the respondents responded to the questions. The results and interpretations of the study are based mainly on primary data collected from the field at a particular point of time, restricting the opportunity to explore the association and effect of the vending activities to only a particular season. The present study highlights self-reported morbidities and vending issues, which may have been over- or underreported. There was no confirmatory test to complement self-reported health assessments.

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