

Living Conditions of Workers in Informal Sector: A Case Study of Street Vendors of District Srinagar

*Shabir Ahmad Najar, Research Scholar, Centre of Central Asian Study, University of Kashmir, Srinagar – India

**Imtiyaz Ahmad Shah, Research Scholar, Centre of Central Asian Study, University of Kashmir, Srinagar – India

***Ms. Shaista Qayum, Assistant Professor, Government Degree College Baramulla, Kashmir- India

Abstract:

Street vendors are found throughout Jammu and Kashmir engaged in different economic activities. Street vending is one of the sectors of informal sector. Most of the people not only in the state of Jammu and Kashmir but also all over India are working in informal sector. Due to various reasons people enter into this profession in order to earn not only for themselves but also for their family members. Majority of the vendors are found in urban areas where there is movement of people. Buying from vendors is easy for any one, as vendors are found at all places. Present paper is an attempt to study the various life aspects of street vendors in District Srinagar, one of the District of Jammu and Kashmir. Research has been carried out in order to study the economic conditions of street vendors and various issues related to this occupation. The research is an empirical study based on a sample of 100 respondents. Simple random sampling method is used to collect data. Interview scheduled is used in order to collect data from the respondents. The present research is quantitative in nature. From the study it has come forth that street vendors in District Srinagar are socially and economically backward due to less earnings. Further the research has revealed that strikes badly affect the life of street vendors. Above all the research has revealed that for street vendors there is no social security provision from government side.

Key words: *Street vendors, Srinagar, Strikes, Social Security*

Introduction

Street vending is one of the occupation of informal sector where self-employed workers sell different types of goods on streets. Due to lack of permanent place these vendors occupy free space on the road side and sell their goods or products. It is a matter of fact that street vendors comprises one of the economically backward section of the society. Vendors offer a variety of services in urban areas mostly and also in rural areas. Most of the goods vendors sell are of affordable rate. Vendors not only earn for themselves but also help small factories in promoting their products. Vending helps in providing employment opportunities to those who are illiterate and also for those who do not get employment in formal sector. Thus street vending apart from providing services to the society also provide employment opportunities to many. (Saha, D., 2011). Most of the studies conducted on informal sector have focused on economic, political and social obstacles, spatial implications have been neglected. In the beginning it was perceived that as the society develops, the informal sector will be absorbed in the formal sector. But the reality is that informal sector has increased like anything in all the countries which includes both developing and developed countries. Due to the existence of large number of vendors, the concept of informal sector came into being. It can be said that street vendors are not only an important part of informal economy, it also forms a vital part of urban economy. It is perceived that to be in vending occupation requires a low skill and least investment for getting entry into this occupation. Entering into this occupation is very affordable and easy for migrants and also for economically weaker people who live in urban areas for time being. Due to increase in urban population, there is increase in the number of poor people as well. Poor people have easily become the customers of the street vendors. Poor people cannot afford to buy daily products from departmental stores, for them buying from street vendors is the best option available. No doubt street vendors are providing variety of services to the society but their contribution is never acknowledged by the urban authorities. Most of authorities consider vending as unlawful activity, because of this reason street vendors are considered as violators of law. In modern era street vendors does not possess any legal status in order to continue their occupation. Street vendors are continuously being harassed by the authorities. In spite of all difficulties vendors face, they continuously offer their valuable services to the society. Most of the services which vendors provide at times those services are not provided by the famous departmental stores. While

looking towards urban areas, street vendors are found in abundance and offer variety of services which includes selling of fruits, vegetables, clothes, utensils and many others things. Vendors in order to sell their products try to reach to the customers at their residence, for buying those goods otherwise customers have to travel a lot of distance. Vendors not only save their time but also save their lot of money, as goods purchased from vendors are usually of low cost. Most of the lower and middle class families of the society purchase a lot goods from vendors. So for the National Classification of Occupation 1968 is considered, they define street vendor as *hawker, peddler, street vendor, pheriwalawhosell* goods of daily use and general merchandise such as vegetables, sweets, clothes, utensils and toys, mostly on footpaths or visiting door to door. Vendors purchase goods from a whole seller depending on their need and the availability of money. After collecting goods, vendors put them in a basket, or on a push cart, or on tricycle etc and then moves in the selected locations as per their choice. Vendors usually cry loudly on the streets about goods on sale in order to attract the customers. In some cases vendors occupy space on foot paths and display goods there for sale. Vendors work on commission basis or on salary basis as well. **(Ray, C.N. and Mishra, A., 2011)**. Street vending is important for that person who is on move and this is the main reason why street vendors are mostly found near bus stands and railway stations. Almost 25 percent of the workers around the globe are working in informal sector. Due to rapid urbanization people migrate from rural to urban areas, because of this factor the pressure on formal sector has increased. Due to non-availability of job option in the formal sector, people start working in informal sector. Not only is this due to urbanization there a shift from agriculture to manufacturing sector. It is estimated that 30 percent to 80 percent of the workers in the urban centers of the developing nations are working in informal sector. As urbanization increases, the prices of goods increases very fast and in order to meet the daily the requirements of life people prefer to buy low priced products which are supplied by the informal sector. It is proper to mention here that street vending plays an important role in solving the problem of unemployment by providing employment opportunities informally both in urban and semi urban areas in Indian subcontinent and contributes 50 percent of the country's savings and 63 percent of the gross domestic product. As per the report of the National policy for metropolitan Street Vendors, 2009, street vendors forms up to 2 percent of the population in most of the cities in India. But their work is badly affected by regular threat of eviction,

demolition, harassment by authorities including the police, absence of legal protection, insurance benefits and lacking the efficiency of capital use. (Sindhu, A. R. Somasundaram, V. and Ali, M. S., 2015).

Review of literature

John, B. Forkuor, Kofi, O. Akuoko, and Eric. H. Y.(2017) have conducted research on “Negotiation and Management Strategies of Street Vendors in Developing Countries: A Narrative Review”. In this paper the authors have mentioned that Street vending acts as an important means of employment and income for city residents all over the world, mostly in developing countries. Street vendors either work on permanent basis by occupying place in public area or they may be on move, carry their goods to customers where movement of general public is very high. Being present in almost all the developing countries, street vendors have been in conflict with the authorities over space for business, lack of proper working conditions and licensing. The interest of the street vendors and the regulating authorities often contradict with each other. Because of this difference in ideologies there is often a negotiation between street vendors and the authorities. For different reasons negotiation happens between the authorities and the street vendors. Negotiation takes place on issues pertaining to public space, for economic opportunity, and may involve the general public, shopowners, and urban regulators. Among street vendors, regulators, and the general public, negotiations take place on matters regarding what can be considered as acceptable and unacceptable use of space, as well as what can be considered rights of the vendors to operate and earn a living from public spaces. **Begari, P.(2017)** has written on research paper on “Education Level of Street Vendors and Its Impact on Performance of the Activity: A Case Study of Hyderabad Telangana”. In this paper the author has mentioned that in developing nations of the world major section of the workforce is working in informal sector. While looking towards India were more than 92 percent of workforce and less than 7 percent of the workforce is working in formal sector. Though there are many sectors of informal economy, one of the sectors of informal economy is street vending and this sector contributes greatly towards informal sector. Due to lack of jobs in the formal sector, people in search of employment migrate from rural to urban areas. In order to sustain, majority of people find refuge in informal sector. Further the author has mentioned that due to rapid increase in urban population has put a lot of pressure on lower income families and in search of food, shelter

and income they start working in informal sector. This situation has put greater demand on informal products which are provided by the street vendors. In this paper the author has mentioned that vendors sell a lot products like cloths, utensils, toys etc. Most of these products are home based products or manufactured in small scale industries. In India the percentage of street vendors is estimated to be about 2 to 2.5 percent of the total population of major metropolitan cities in India. The authors has mentioned that the total number of street vendors all over India are about 10 million. Form the research it has come forth that most of the street vendors are illiterates who belong to scheduled caste and scheduled tribes as compared to other lower castes. The research has revealed that most of women street vendors are illiterate. The literacy level of non-migrant vendors is little bit high as compared to migrant vendors. The authors has mentioned that there is positive relation between educational attainment and income generation. More an individual is educated, more he or she can earn more. As in the case of street vendors there is no guaranty of permanent job and social security. In the last author has mentioned that indebtedness is found more among vendors. **Manoj, A. R. Panwar, V. and Garg. (2015)** have written a research paper on “issues and challenges faced by vendors on urban streets: A case of sonipat city India”. In this paper the authors have discussed the various aspects related to street vendors like the issues of street vendors, the preference of customers to buy from big malls as against from road side street vendors. Many vendors are stressed dueto less number of people visiting them in recent times due to large number of shops and malls. The research has revealed that the government is taking too many development steps for urban areas without paying any attention towards the aspirations of street vendors. Street vendors because of being in continuous threat of being evicted from their places live a life full of problems and miseries. Because of this threat street vendors keep on looking for new places were they can continue their business. Shifting to a new place for business purpose means that street vendors have to adjust themselves with new environment, people and authorities. More ever they have to look for new regular customers. Form the research it has come forth that before going for road widening, the government should take some steps for providing a separate place to street vendors were they can do their business without any difficulty. The authors have mentioned that concerns of street vendors should be taken into consideration, when such a project is being planned for a city. These vendors have been part of the history and culture of the city that should be given

due importance as much as any other resident of the city. **Jaishankar, V. and Sujatha, L. (2016)** have written a research paper on street vendors namely “A Study on Problems Faced by the Street Vendors in Tiruchirappalli City Street vendors”. In this paper the authors have mentioned that due to lack of education and skill, most of the people did not get job in the formal sector and try to find a job in the informal sector. In order to solve problems of livelihood they start business on very low cost which they can afford. Street vendors are the main source of providing variety of products which are utilized on daily basis like fruits, vegetables, toys, newspapers and so on. Street vendors if eradicated from the urban centers will create crises for farmer’s engaged with the production of fruits and vegetables. The research has revealed that the importance of street vendors cannot be over looked, as the government is not in a position to provide employment to all unemployed people in India. The authors have mentioned that in India even the corporate sector is not in a position to provide employment to all, this sector has proved successful in providing employment to a small number of people as compared to the growing workforce. There is a decline in employment opportunities in the formal sector. This clearly shows that majority of the people in order to live have to start some small scale business on their own.

Methodology

The present research is an empirical research carried out in District Srinagar. Universe of the present study is District Srinagar, as universe is the place where the research is carried out. The data has been collected from 100 respondents. On the basis of stratified random sampling. District Srinagar was divided to five strata’s namely Hazrathbal, Soura, Khanyar, Lalchowck and Dalgate. Twenty respondents from each area were selected randomly. The data was collected with the help on interview scheduled, apart from interview scheduled observation method was also used. The research design is exploratory and descriptive in nature. Exploratory in nature because on this particular topic least research has been carried out. It can be said that the problem is totally unexplored. Data collected from the respondents was tabulated and analyzed.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of sampled street vendors in District Srinagar
2. To study the impact of strikes on the occupation of street vendors

3. To formulate a set of recommendations

Tabulation of data

Tabulation of collected data is a very serious job, as this demands a lot serious attention from the researcher. It is on the basis of tabulated data that final inferences are drawn regarding the concerned research problem. The tabulation of the present problem is mentioned below.

Table: 01 Age and Education of Respondents

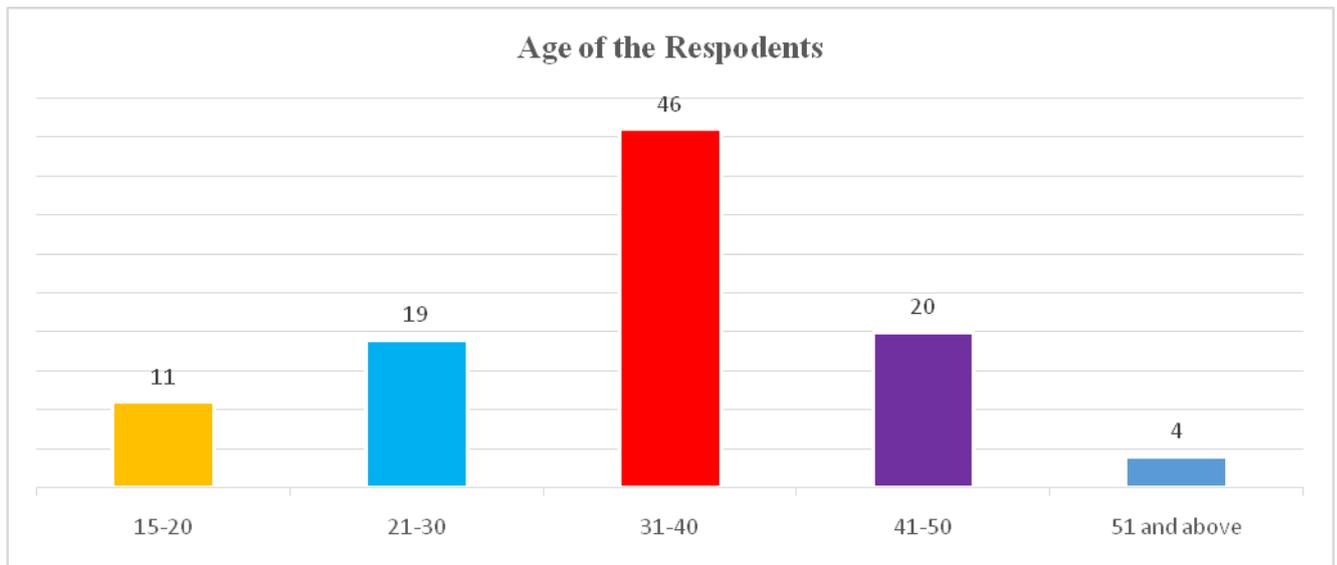
Age of the Respondents		Educational level of the Respondents	
Class	Response	Class	Response
15 – 20	11	Illiterates	26
21 – 30	19	Up to primary	47
31 – 40	46	Up to 10th	17
41 – 50	20	Up to 12th	07
51 and above	04	Graduation	03
Total	100	Total	100

Source: field work carried out in different areas of District Srinagar 2018

Table (1) as mentioned above is about the age and education of the respondents. Participants were asked to be honest while giving the information. They were assured that their names will not be mentioned any were. The current study is an empirical study and the data has been collected from the field. The data was collected from 100 street vendors working in different areas of District Srinagar. All the participants of this study are males. The table reveals that out of 100 respondents, 11 respondents are in between the age group of 11 to 20 years of age, 19 respondents are in between age group of 21-30 years, 46 respondents are in between age group of 31-40 years, 20 respondents are in between the age group of 41-50 and only 04 respondents are more than 51 years of age. So far the educational attainment of the respondents is concerned, the above table (table 1) as mentioned above makes it clear that amongst the respondents, 26 respondents are illiterate, 47 respondents have studied up to

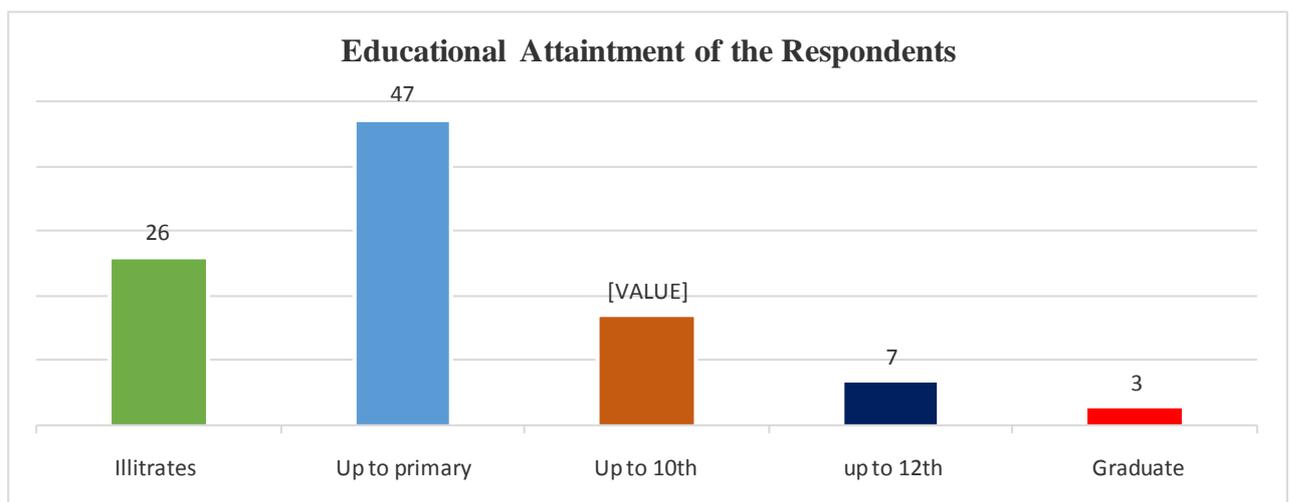
primary level, 17 respondents have studied up to 10th level, 07 respondents have studied up to 12th level and only 4 respondents have studied up to graduation level.

Figure: 01



Bar chart (figure: 01) as mentioned above is about the age of the respondents. From the figure it has become clear that most of the respondents that is 46 respondents out of 100 are in between the age group of 31 to 40 years of age.

Figure: 02



Bar chart (figure: 02) as mentioned above shows clearly that majority of the respondents that is 47 respondents out of 100 are illiterates.

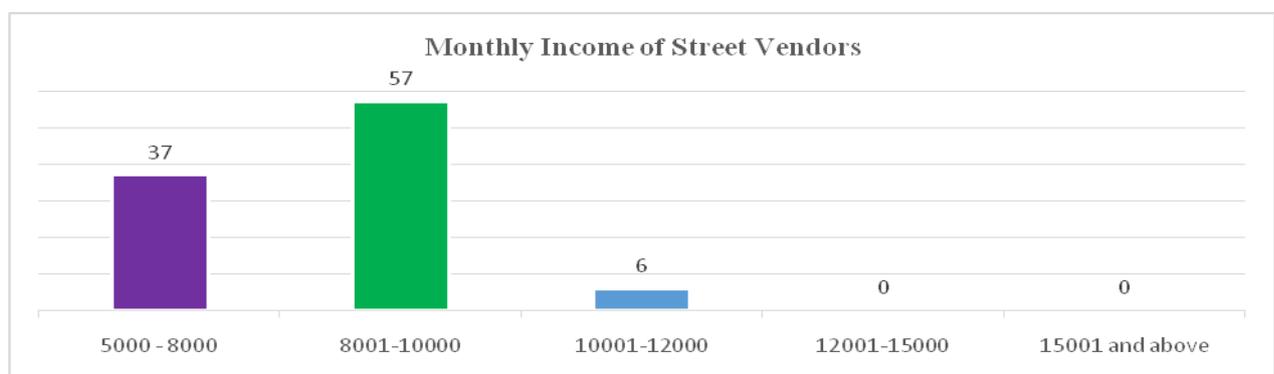
Table: 02 Income of the Respondents

Monthly income of the Respondents		
S.no	Class	Response
1.	3000 – 5000	37
2.	5001 – 8000	57
3.	8001 – 10000	06
4.	10001 – 12000	00
	12000 and above	00
Total		100

Source: field work carried out in different areas of District Srinagar 2018

Table (02) as mentioned above reveals that 37 respondents out of 100 are earning 3000 to 5000 per month, 57 respondents out of 100 are earning 5001 to 8000 per month. The research has revealed that out of total 100 respondents only 06 respondents are earning 8001 to 10000 per month. Out of total 100 respondents, as the above table reveals no one is earning from 10001 to 12000 and above per month.

Figure: 03



Bar chart (figure: 03) as mentioned above shows that majority of the respondents that is 57 out of 100 are earning 8001 to 10000 per month.

Table: 03 Products Street Vendors Sell

S.no	Class	Response	Total
1.	Vegetables	29	100
2.	Household Utensils	20	
3.	Garments	18	
4.	Electronics	10	
5.	Fruits	23	

Source: field work carried out in different areas of District Srinagar 2018

The above table (03) as mentioned above clearly that out total hundred respondents, 29 respondents are selling vegetable, 20 respondents are selling household utensil, 18 respondents are selling garments, 10 respondents are selling electronics and the remaining 23 respondents are selling fruits. The table shows that street vendors are engaged with selling of different products and their monthly earnings also varies. While analyzing monthly income of the respondents as mentioned in table (02) discussed above, it has come forth that there is variation with respect to monthly earnings of respondents engaged with different categories of street vending. The highest monthly earnings is of vegetable sellers and fruits sellers. Their monthly earning is 80001 to 10000. After this category, the highest monthly earning is of garment and household utensil sellers and their monthly earning is 5000 to 8000. While analyzing the data it has come forth that the least monthly earning is of electronic sellers. Monthly earnings of the respondents is calculated by categorizing street vendors as per their occupation and the average monthly earning of the each category of the street vendors was calculated after adding the monthly earnings of each category.

Figure: 04



Bar chart (figure: 04) as discussed above shows clearly that majority of the respondents are engaged with selling of vegetables followed by fruit sellers.

Table: 04 Harassment faced by Street Vendors at Work Place

Harassment by Police / Municipal Authorizes		
S.no	Class	Response
1.	Yes	92
2.	No	08
Total	100	

Source: field work carried out in different areas of District Srinagar 2018

The above table (04) reveals that most of the respondents are facing lot harassment from police and municipal authorities, only eight respondents mentioned that they did not face any problem from police and municipal authorities. The respondents revealed that most of the times police and municipal authorities forces us to vacate from the place of working by saying that we have illegally occupied the place and our business is creating too many problems for public transport and general public. Further from the research it has also come forth that street vendors most of the times remain in constant threat of being evicted from their place by the authorities. Some of the respondents also mentioned that we are forced to pay bribes to the authorities for running business. The respondents mentioned that our earnings are not too high that we can afford to pay bribes to the authorities. Harassment is adding more problem to our business and life as well.

Table: 05 Impact of Strikes on Street Vendors

Does strikes affect your business		
S.no	Class	Response
1.	Yes	100
2.	No	00
Total	100	

Source: field work carried out in different areas of District Srinagar 2018

The above table (05) reveals that all the 100 respondents mentioned that strikes affect our business. The respondents revealed that firstly we do not possess a permeant place were we can run our business and secondly due to strikes we are not allowed to sell anything, especially when the conditions are beyond the control of authorities, under these severe

conditions we become the victim of the authorities and they unleash their anger on us. All the respondents mentioned that strike not only affect our daily earnings but also affect badly our family members too.

While asking the question of social security to the respondents, firstly they did not understand, after that the researcher make them aware what does social security mean. Replying to this question all the respondents mentioned that we do not possess any social security provision from government. The respondents mentioned that government both central as well as state have never taken any step for our welfare.

Summary and Conclusion

Street vending is one of the sector of informal economy and most of the people who work in this sector are socially, economically and educationally backward. It can be said that due to lack of education and employment opportunities for weaker sections of the society, they work in different sector of informal economy and street vending is one of them. Under this category individual on the basis of his/her economic capability start a business venture in public place and most of them do not possess their own shop where they can run their business, so in order to earn they occupy streets. So far the findings of the research are concerned, from the research it has come forth that most of the street vendors working in different areas of District Srinagar are illiterates and even those who have studied to some level are also working in different sectors of street vending because of having no other option. It has also come forth that the monthly earnings of the street vendors are less, especially for those vendors who sell electronic items. Due to less earning they are not in a position to save money which they can use for other purposes. Apart from what has been mentioned above, most important problem of street vendors in District Srinagar is that they face a lot of problems from the hands of police and other authorities because they are not allowed to run their business on road sides. The other problem of street vendors is that they face lot of problems due to continue strikes. Strikes affect their life badly. Further the research has revealed that street vendors in District Srinagar does not possess any permanent place where they can sell their products without any disturbance. The government of Jammu and Kashmir has not identified any suitable place for street vendors. No social security provision is available to street vendors in District Srinagar which can prove fruit full for them during emergency. Need of the hour is that informal workers should be protected and

encouraged and in order to solve the growing problem of unemployment not only in District Srinagar but also all over India, government needs to take some concrete steps for the welfare of different sectors of informal economy. Like other sectors of informal economy, street vendors are also playing significant role toward the development of the society, especially in urban areas. Though both the government and general public consider street vendors as stigma on society as they occupy street sides but did not look towards the services they offer to the society. The crucial issue which the street vendors face is their existence in the urban informal sector where their occupation is considered as unlawful. Due to this reason they are not living their life with dignity and does not possess right of decent work. It is therefore the duty of government to provide them space where they can run their business without any harassment and without any threat of eviction. Certain rules should be formed by the government on the basis of which street vendors can run their business. Street vendors have become an important part of urban informal sector. Street vendors again and again are asking for protection both from the civil society and the government, so that they can earn well and live their life with full dignity. In India the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation laid down national policy goals and made various suggestions in 2006 (NPUSV, 2006). The prime objective of the policy is to enhance a friendly and safe working environment to the huge number of urban street vendors. It was also discussed that their occupation should not lead to overcrowding in public places. The main aim of the national policy are: to provide legal status by formulating appropriate laws and providing legitimate hawking zones in urban development, to provide facilities for the appropriate use of identified space, including the creation of hawking zones in the urban development plans, to ensure that street vendors are made a special component of the urban development plan by treating them as an integral and legitimate part of the urban distribution system, to promote facilitative organizations for street vendors such as unions, cooperatives or associations and other forms of organization to facilitate their empowerment, to provide comprehensive social security to buffer ruinous health expenditure for general ailments, reproductive, child health and geriatric ailments, to promote access to such services as credit, housing and upgradation of their skills through the promotion of Self-help Groups (SHGs), co-operatives, and micro-finance institutions. The national policy on urban street vendors was revised again by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, in 2009 (NPUSV,

2009), though the new policy is much the same as the old one. The Government has already highlighted the important problems and provided very specific recommendations for street vendors, but the problem is that these recommendations still remain on paper only therefore, it is incumbent on the state governments to take the initiative to fully implement the national policy, especially in all states of India. According to the local authorities, street vendors occupy public space illegally. The national policy (2006) suggested that Town Vending Committees (TVCs) should be made responsible for providing working space to the street vendors. As per the national policy (2006) on street vendors, the TVCs has following functions: registering the street vendor and ensuring the issuance of an identity card to the vendor after it has been prepared by the municipal authority, monitoring the facilities to be provided to the street vendors by the municipal authority, identifying areas for vending with no restriction. There are problems associated with street vendors all over the country in general and also in District Srinagar too. Therefore keeping in view the various issues of street vendors in District Srinagar, the state government should come forward for the protection of street vendors. All necessary steps should be taken for the welfare of street vendors, as they are an integral part of our society and are playing vital role by providing various services to the society. The steps taken by the central government for the welfare of street vendors all over the country should be strictly implement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir as well .Government should keep a vigil eye on those government authorities who are miss using their position by collecting bribes from street vendors.

Karl Mark has said that in capitalist societies rich are becoming richer and poor are becoming poorer, while applying Marxian theory on contemporary India, one can easily say that what Karl Mark has said long before, is still applicable to India. In India only a small chunk of population who are capitalists who are controlling the life of millions who are in majority and they are forced to work as the cogs of a machine. Their destiny lies in the hands of these capitalists.

References

1. Saha, D. (2011). Working life of street vendors in Mumbai. *The Indian Journal of Labor Economics, Vol. 54, No. 2, 2011* Ray, C.N. and Mishra, A. (2011). *Vendors and Informal Sector: A Case-Study of Street Vendors of Surat City*. Centre for Urban Equity (An NRC

for Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India) CEPT University

2. Sindhu, A. R. Somasundaram, V. and Ali, M. S. (2015). Access to finance-street vendors: Delima in two towns of south India. *International Journal of Managing Public Sector Information and Communication Technologies (IJMP ICT)*, Vol. 6, No. 4
3. John, B. Forkuor, Kofi, O. Akuoko, and Eric H. Y. (2017). Negotiation and Management Strategies of Street Vendors in Developing Countries: A Narrative Review *SAGE Open* January-March 2017: 1 –13, DOI: 10.1177/2158244017691563 online available at: journals.sagepub.com/home/sgo
4. Begari1, P. (2017). Education Level of Street Vendors and Its Impact on Performance of the Activity: A Case Study of Hyderabad, Telangana. *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS)* Available online at: <http://euroasiapub.org> Vol. 7 Issue 7, July- 2017, pp. 436~443
5. Manoj, A. R. Panwar, V. Garg. (2015). Issues and challenges faced by vendors on urban streets: A case study of Sonipat city, India. *International Journal of Engineering Technology, Management and Applied Sciences Volume 3 Issue 2*,
6. Jaishankar, V. Sujatha, L. (2016). A Study on Problems Faced by the Street Vendors in Tiruchirappalli City. *SSRG International Journal of Economics and Management Studies (SSRG-IJEMS) – volume3 issue9*