



Monthly Household Income and Socio-Economic Parameters of Women Street Vendors in Manipur: An Empirical Study

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ABSTRACT

Street vending plays a vital role in sustaining urban livelihoods, especially in developing regions, yet street vendors continue to struggle economically due to various adverse socio-economic vulnerabilities. This paper examines the determinants of monthly income among 483 street vendors using primary data collected through simple random sampling. A pilot study was conducted to estimate the required sample size using standard statistical procedures, resulting in a sample size of 483. The research evaluates income variations across various market situations, age factors, and family sizes using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The findings of the study reveal significant income fluctuations across normal, festive, pandemic, and conflict situations ($p < .01$). Income also varies significantly with age ($p < .01$) and family size ($p < .01$). Festival periods provide the highest earnings, whereas during pandemics and conflicts situations there is steep decline in income of the vendors. The street vendors who are older, more experienced earn substantially higher compared to younger vendors. The larger the family sizes higher the income levels, it may be attributed to collective labour contributions from more members of the family. The study concludes with policy recommendations aimed promoting sustainable income growth to improve the socio-economic well-being of street vendors of the state.



1. Introduction

Street vending constitutes one of the most visible and significant components of the informal sector in developing economies. It provides affordable goods to consumers and sustains the livelihoods of millions who lack access to formal employment opportunities on account of illiteracy or less or no skill. Scholars argue that the informal sector acts as a safety net during periods of economic stress, absorbing unemployed or low-skilled workers (Hasan et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). However, despite its economic value, street vending remains highly vulnerable to market fluctuations, municipal regulations, seasonal demand shifts, and unexpected shocks such as pandemics, political conflicts, and natural disasters.

In the Indian context, women constitute a considerable proportion of street vendors, particularly in the northeastern states where formal employment opportunities remain limited. Manipur presents a unique socio-economic setting: the state continues to experience prolonged instability, bandhs and blockade, ongoing conflicts, and pandemic-induced economic distress. Within this landscape, **Khwairamband Keithel (Ima Keithel)** stands out as Asia's largest all-women market, symbolizing both economic empowerment and resilience since time immemorial. Yet, women vendors remain exposed to volatility in income, lack of institutional support, and fluctuating market access making them live in misery.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines the monthly household income of street vendors in Manipur with a focus on three major determinants: **situational contexts**, **age**, and **family size**. The research contributes to the limited empirical literature on income dynamics among women informal workers in conflict-prone regions. It further offers policy insights for strengthening livelihood security and promoting sustainable informal sector development in Manipur.

2. Review of Literature

Street vending has drawn increasing scholarly attention, particularly regarding income patterns, vulnerabilities, and the socio-economic determinants of livelihood outcomes. Several studies highlight that income among street vendors is highly sensitive to situational contexts such as festivals, disasters, and economic downturns. Hasan et al. (2023) found that seasonal and festive periods considerably boost sales, while pandemics and natural calamities severely restrict earnings. Similarly, Chowdhury et al. (2023) observed a clear shift in consumer behaviour during crises, resulting in reduced footfall and inconsistent income.



Research on socio-economic characteristics also indicates that demographic variables significantly influence income outcomes. Singh et al. (2023) demonstrated that age and experience positively correlate with vendor earnings, as older vendors possess established customer networks and better negotiation skills. Patel and Kumar (2022) further reported that income inequality among street vendors stems partly from disparities in education, experience, and market exposure. Sharma and Roy (2021) emphasized the role of market location in determining earning stability, arguing that vendors operating in larger or more permanent markets earn more consistently.

Studies specific to informal household dynamics underline the importance of family size in income determination. Khatun and Alam (2023) found that joint family structures provide labour support and risk-sharing advantages, leading to relatively higher household incomes in informal occupations.

In the Indian context, research by Raj and Thomas (2022) emphasizes the influence of municipal policies and enforcement drives on income instability. Recurrent eviction threats, regulation uncertainties, and lack of designated vending zones continue to undermine vendors' earnings.

Within the northeastern region of India, scholarly literature remains limited. However, existing works consistently highlight that vendors in conflict-prone areas face disproportionately higher livelihood risks. Dlamini et al. (2023) argue that socio-political instability interrupts supply chains, reduces consumer mobility, and consequently leads to significant income declines.

The present study builds on this body of research by examining income variations among women vendors of **Khwairamband Keithel** which is a globally known market for its historical and cultural significance but understudied in income based empirical literature.

3.Objectives of the study

- To study the pattern of monthly household income of women street vendors in Manipur.
- To analyse the variation in monthly income of women street vendors of the state across different situational contexts

4.Methodology

4.1 Research Design

A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted. Primary data were collected using a structured schedule covering socio-economic characteristics, market conditions, and income patterns.



4.2 Sample Size Determination

A pilot survey was conducted with 25 randomly selected street vendors. The pilot data produced a:

- **Mean income (\bar{X}) = ₹31,920**
- **Standard deviation (σ) = ₹17,538**

The required sample size was determined using the formula:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \sigma^2}{e^2}$$

Where:

- **Z = 1.96** (95% confidence level)
- **e = 5%** of the mean (₹1,596)

Substituting values:

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 (17,538)^2}{(1,596)^2} = 483$$

Thus, **n = 483** was finalized as the sample size.

4.3 Sampling Procedure

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select vendors from major vending clusters of Khwairamband Keithel. The sample was distributed proportionately across different categories of vendors classified from the types of goods they sold.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using:

- Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, CI)
- One-way ANOVA
- Statistical significance set at **p < .01**



5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Monthly Income Across Different Situations

Table 4.1. Variation in Monthly Income Across Situational Contexts

Situation	Mean	SD	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Normal	26,202.90	16,511.67	24,726.66	27,679.14
Festival	34,416.15	20,121.53	32,617.16	36,215.13
Pandemic/Natural Catastrophe	12,877.59	11,086.36	11,885.37	13,869.81
Conflict/War-like	13,975.16	12,146.21	12,889.21	15,061.10
Total	21,872.60	17,792.18	21,078.54	22,666.67

ANOVA: F = 216.801, p = .000

Source:Primary data

The Table – 4.1 presents a detailed examination of the variation in mean monthly income of street vendors under various circumstances, highlighting the significant impact that situational factors have on their earnings. Income rises sharply during festivals but declines drastically during pandemics and conflict situations. This confirms findings by Hasan et al. (2023), who noted the vulnerability of informal workers to external shocks. This finding also aligns with previous research that highlights how economic instability, natural disasters, and social conflicts can drastically impact the livelihoods of informal workers, including street vendors

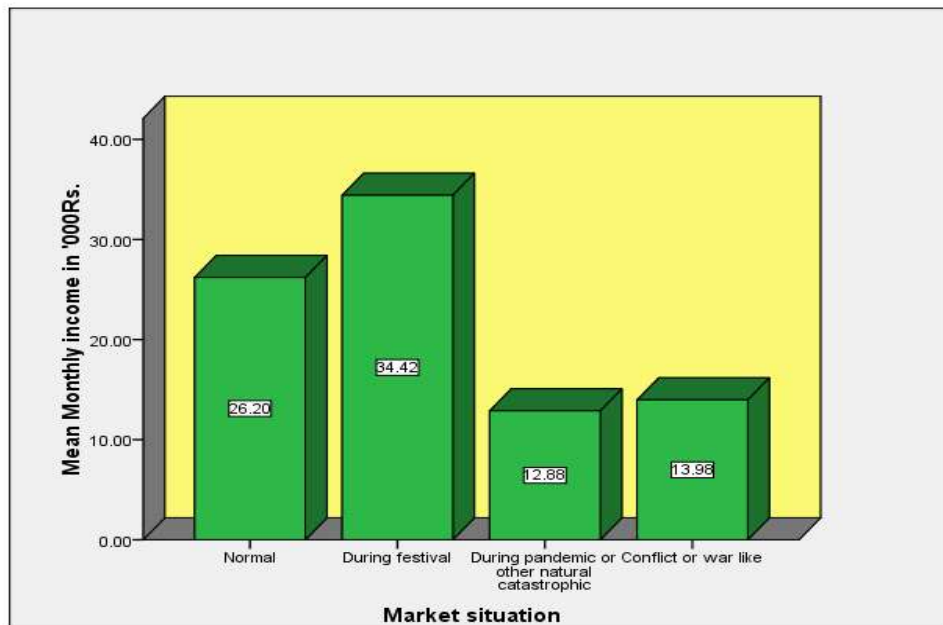


Figure – 4.1: Bar Chart showing the monthly income during different market situation



5.2 Monthly Income and Age of Vendor

Table 4.2. Income Variation by Age Group

Age Group	N	Mean	SD	95% CI Lower	Upper
<30	7	15,285.71	2,984.09	12,525.90	18,045.53
30–40	47	17,468.09	9,098.14	14,796.77	20,139.40
40–50	119	26,336.13	18,656.25	22,949.44	29,722.83
50–60	174	25,793.10	15,623.19	23,455.39	28,130.82
60–70	111	29,135.14	15,833.50	26,156.84	32,113.43
70+	25	34,880.00	19,776.50	26,716.66	43,043.34

ANOVA: F = 5.602, p = .000

Source: Primary data

The Table – 4.2 provides a comprehensive analysis of how age affects the mean monthly family income of street vendors, revealing significant variations across different age brackets. Income increases with age, peaking among vendors above 70 years. The statistical analysis reveals an F-value of 5.602 and a p-value of 0.000, which highlights a statistically significant difference in income levels across age categories ($p < 0.01$). This reinforces the conclusion that age significantly influences vendors' earnings. The strong relationship between age, experience, and income aligns with findings of the study done by Singh et al. (2023). Addressing these disparities is crucial for fostering a more equitable economic environment for all street vendors, ensuring they can thrive regardless of age.

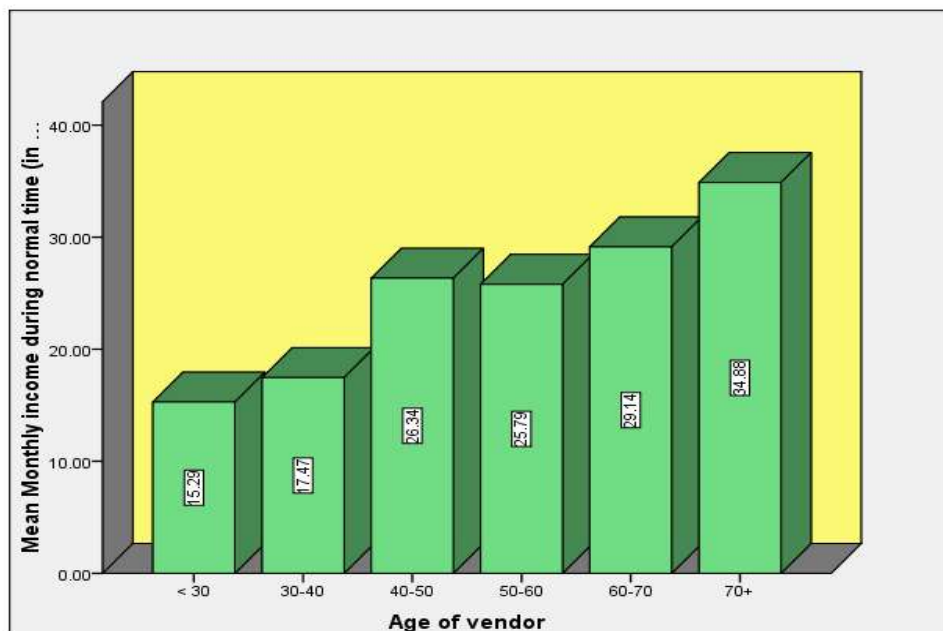


Figure – 4.2: Bar Chart showing the monthly income during normal time w. r. t age of vendor

5.3 Monthly Income and Family Size

Table 4.3. Income Variation by Family Size

Family Size	N	Mean	SD	95% CI Lower	Upper
<4	54	23,240.74	15,946.77	18,888.11	27,593.37
4–5	239	25,271.97	15,150.41	23,341.39	27,202.55
6–7	117	25,752.14	16,096.11	22,804.80	28,699.48
8–9	44	28,022.73	14,138.01	23,724.38	32,321.07
10+	29	38,448.28	26,359.58	28,421.63	48,474.92
Total	483	26,202.90	16,511.67	24,726.66	27,679.14

ANOVA: $F = 4.923$, $p = .001$

Source: Primary data

It is detailed examination of how the mean monthly family income of street vendors varies according to family size, revealing notable trends and insights (Table - 3). Vendors are categorized into several groups based on the number of family members they support. Statistical analysis indicates an F-value of 4.923 and a p-value of 0.001, which points to a statistically significant difference in incomes across family size categories ($p < 0.01$). This emphasizes that family size plays a crucial role in determining the economic outcomes for street vendors supporting Khatun and Alam (2023), who found joint family structures beneficial in informal economies.

6. Policy Implications

Based on the above findings, the following policies are recommended for the betterment of the street vendors:

1. Income Stabilisation Schemes where in emergency credit and micro-insurance can be provided at minimal rate to protect vendors from pandemic-like shocks.
2. Designated Vending Zones can help regulate traffic and secure their place so that they can sell peacefully without worrying for the law enforcing agencies.
3. Skill and Financial Literacy trainings are to be imparted so that younger and less-experienced vendors increase earnings.



4. In a state like Manipur where vendors are women there should be provision for child care facility; proper sanitary and toilet facilities should also be given.

5. Conflict-Sensitive Urban Planning where temporary/emergency vending zones should be provided near relief camps.

7. Conclusion

This study is a modest attempt to find the complex interplay of factors affecting income and indicate that future studies could benefit from examining a broader set of variables for example work experience, type of merchandise sold, or market location which might have some substantial influence on income variation among these vendors to better understand income determinants among the vendors. The findings further underscore the need for comprehensive policy interventions aimed at strengthening income security and resilience among street vendors. Integrating informal vendors into urban planning frameworks is crucial for inclusive economic development. The government might consider measures such as access to financial support, training programs, and the establishment of social safety nets specifically tailored for informal workers. By addressing these vulnerabilities, we can help ensure that street vendors can sustain their livelihoods despite the fluctuating circumstances they face.

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