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Women Street Vendors in Smart Cities

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Abstract: ***People from other geographic areas are drawn to ever-expanding urban amalgamations as desirable places to work. Most of these migrants struggle to find employment in the formal, organised sector due to a lack of education, skills, or both. Additionally, a large number of people in highly populated cities struggle with unemployment for a variety of reasons. A few of these motives inspire both men and women to start street vending. Street vending has always been a part of our customs and culture.More recently, food items, fruits and vegetables, toys, clothing, wool carpets, and even electronics have been sold on the streets. An essential part of our sociocultural and economic lives are street vendors. It is estimated that street vendors make up around 2 percent of the inhabitants of a town and have a substantial economic impact. Nevertheless, it is challenging to quantify the number of street vendors and their economic contribution. In India, street hawking is a major source of income for millions of people, particularly women. The street vending industry is beset by a number of problems that keep women from reaching their full potential. These problems include inadequate infrastructure, harassment by the government, discrimination based on gender, lack of legal recognition, restricted access to financing, and worries about occupational health and safety.***

This study looks at the socio-economic characteristics of women street vendors and challenges women street vendors' encounter in smart cities. The paper goes into great detail about these problems, emphasizing the need for an all-encompassing strategy that includes infrastructure and service investments, education and training for women street vendors, and changes to laws and policies. The study also stresses how critical it is to acknowledge the value that female street vendors bring to society and the economy and to safeguard their rights and dignity. We can enable women street vendors to achieve independence and enjoy satisfying lives by tackling these issues.

Keywords: Smart city, Street vendors, women street vendors, problems of women street vendors

I. INTRODUCTION

Cities all around the world have recently seen a rapid makeover sparked by the idea of smart cities. Smart city is buzzword while talking about city life. The question that how smart city is different from normal city can be answered as there is more connected objects, streamlined transportation, engaged citizens, optimal budget planning and most of all environment friendly.Smart cities make use of cutting-edge technologies and data-driven strategies to improve the sustainability, efficiency, and quality of life in urban settings.There are numerous definitions available to define the term 'Smart City'. Some authors have even used various terms like 'intelligent', 'digital' etc. to define the concept of smart city. The term 'smart city' was first used in the year 1990 as this was the period when new information and communicative techniques and contemporary infrastructures were introduced in the cities.

II. DEFINITIONS OF SMART CITY

Smart city is that city which administers usage of high rate of technology and is that innovative city that links individuals with information and further the rest two with city using new phases of techniques so that eco-friendly city can be constructed which further makes an advanced, viable and original ground for undertaking commercial activities, and provides an improved life quality. (Bakıcı et al. 2012)

The city to demarcate as smart performs reasonable in enhancing the economy, quality of life of people, good governance, higher mobility, conducive environment and an area which is worth liveable. It is built by a conscious effort of determined and decisive citizens to let the performance of activities be held in the city. In the smart city normally new and bright solutions are explored and identified which allows these cities to enhance the quality of the goods and services delivered to citizens **(Giffinger et.al.2007).**

III. PRIMARY GOALS OF SMART CITY

Smart city's primary goals include:

1) Sustainable Development
2) Quality life
3) Economic Competitiveness

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4) Engagement and Participation of Citizens
5) Sustainable Infrastructure
6) Innovative Technology

The integration of several elements is required for the transformation of a city into a smart city, including:

a) Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
b) Data analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
c) Internet of Things (IOT)

In India the Smart Cities Mission was introduced by the present Prime Minister ShriNarendraModi in the year 2015 with funding of 98,000 crores which envisions converting 100 cities of the country into smart cities by 2030 by an area development plan. To provide for the aspirations and needs of the citizens, urban planners ideally aim at developing the entire urban eco-system, which is represented by the four pillars of comprehensive development-institutional, physical, social and economic infrastructure.Maria Thomas (2018) in her paper "India's smart cities can't be built without street vendors and waste pickers" discuss that in the ambitious plan for smart cities, the Indian Government is ignoring the informal workers which actually is an ineffective way to make cities less productive and sustainable.

India is in the core of a crisis of safe options of occupations and the informal economy has for long been the only option for millions. In several Indian cities, where the difference between rich and poor is only budding extensive, informal workers account for an astoundingly high share of total employment. But with the handful of street vendor-friendly policies, smart cities in India and other developing economies are often hostile to street vendors. They are most lived under the continuous threat of harassment and exclusion, besides having limited access to basic public services such as electricity and sanitation. With the advent of smart city, the law of Street Vendors'Act 2014 has also constructed for better work conditions of these street vendors.

IV. WHO ARE STREET VENDORS?

A street vendor is generally defined as an individual who sale off his/her goods or services to the public at large though s/he does not have a permanent built up structure from where s/he can sell. Street vendors may be fixed in the sense that they occupy space on the pathways of roads or other public/private spaces, or, they may be moveable in the sense that move from place to place by carrying their trading goods on push wagons or in baskets on their heads.A street vendor constitutes a vital section of urban population and an essential element of urban economies. These people are those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of their low level of education and skills. National Policy for Urban Street Vendors (NPUSV, 2004), defines a street vendor as "one who deals in selling of goods and services to the local people without having a stable built up arrangement but with a impermanent still structure or portable stall or head load."Generally speaking street vendor is a person involved in vending of products, goods, and food items etc. of mundane use or contributes to provision of services to the normal people in the lanes of the street, footpath, roadways, and public parks or any other public place or private areas or from temporary built up structure. Street vendors are also known as 'Hawkers' and 'Peddlers'.

Due to liberalization and globalization policies, markets in India get flooded with multinational companies products, which caused shut down of small-scale industries which generally hire unskilled labour. Hence these persons have to lose out their employment and ultimately sheltering in these street vending activities to survive. Therefore it becomes two edged sword as it opens up opportunities for the people and also exerting negative impacts. In case of street vendors, globalization is acting as an obstruction in entering blue-collar jobs and hence they have to opt the occupation of street vending to earn a livelihood.

V. ANOTHER NAMES OF STREET VENDORS

In the wake of Independence, the term 'Hawker' came in regular use. In postcolonial period i.e. in 1970, even the term Hawker was not common for them. They were actually known with their trade names i.e. Phalwala {Fruit seller}, Maachwala (Fish seller), Basanwala (Utensil seller) etc. In 1984, Radha Prasad Gupta wrote book "The Cries of the Ferriwallah and Other street sounds in Calcutta" depicted the word Pheriwala (pheriwali in case of female), in the description of work closer to the state of street vendors.

VI. WOMEN STREET VENDORS

Women also, for some reason, take to vending on streets. The reasons could be Lack of education, financial need, Family pressure or a combination of all these and many more. Being in an unorganized sector, lack of policies, law and regulations lead to certain difficulties during working. Women in particular, might face a set of consequences during work.Women street vendors are contributing a good amount to our society.

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These women have chosen street vending as the source of their livelihood as they wanted to contribute their family financially. Apart from this the entry and exit barrier in this trade is also negligible and the amount of capital and skill required is also very less. These women work very hard to earn their livelihood. But they have to face several challenges every day in order to sustain in this trade. These women have poor social protection and their working condition on the streets expose them to a variety of health and safety issues. According to a study done by ILO it is found that about 85% of these street vendors have to face health hazards. These hazards include diseases like migraine, acidity problem, increased depression, high blood pressure, increased blood sugar and alike. Apart from these health problems women street vendors also have to face problems related to sanitation. The women street vendors also complain about the inadequacy of space, threat of eviction and the problem of security. The respondents were expecting government to take action and provide them hygienic, well organized and secure market place.

VII.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present paper few case studies have been taken by the women in the street vending activities in the smart cities of Ludhiana and Chandigarh. They are interviewed with the help of interview schedule and for extracting their personal information few questions were asked on the spot in unstructured interview manner.

VIII. DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of data is done on the basis of responses collected from the questionnaire. The first portion of the questionnaire contained questions related to respondent's demographic factors. The second portion contained questions related to respondent's work related challenges and their expected solutions.

1) (a) Age:- Majority of respondents were in the age group 40 years to 55 years. As these women are free from their family responsibilities of looking after their children and want to be productive in financial terms for their families and hence they joined street vending.

(b) Marital status: - It is observed that most of the respondents were married. Very few are widowed.

(c) Work experience: - In response to total work experience it was found that majority of respondents had a work experience of more than 5 years.

2) (a) Types of street vending: - After collecting the data it was found that all ofthe women as street vendors are usually a stationary vendors and use to sell items like toys, hair accessories, artificial jewellery, bed sheets, kids clothes, undergarments, paintings, craft works etc.

(b) Demand of their products: - When these women were asked whether their products have demand in the market, so majority of them have shown that they do have market of their products. But the women selling toys, paintings or craftwork were in dilly dally about their products demand.

(c) Access to workplace amenities such as toilet facility, availability of water, storage and alike. A majority of respondents said they do not have such facilities, while some of them said they have some of these facilities

(d) Protection of the rights and interests of women street vendors: - The majority of respondents agree that the government protected the rights and interests of women street vendors. Some of the respondents said government strongly protected their interests. The other few said government protects their interest most of the times. Some of the respondents were confused and had no idea. The other few of them said government never protects their interests, while some of them said government protects their interest only some of the times.

(e) Harassed or abused by the concerned city authorities: - Most of the respondents answered that no they are not being harassed by the concerned city authorities but some reported harassment by the customers or neighbour street vendors.

(f) Safe and secure while working late: - Majority of the respondents replied that they feel safe and secure while working late hours in the market as someone from their family reaches to the vending spot for helping her and protecting her.

(g) Health Disorders: - The respondents answered this question can be summed up into three major categories first: most of them said that yes they are suffering from one or the other occupation related health disorders. Around some of the respondents answered that they do not have any idea, as they have not undergone through any health check-ups. While the other few respondents told that they do not have any health related problem.

(h) Remedial steps to improve the condition of women street vendors: -The respondents said that their condition can be improved by the help of government,NGOs and only through their associations. The trio can access their conditions and make necessary arrangements for the survival of women in the street vending activities.

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IX. CONCLUSION

It can be summed up that majority of them were of more than 40 years of age. Most of the respondents had a total work experience of more than 5 years. Amongst whom a majority were engaged in selling women accessories and under garments. In addition the major challenges faced by them were lack of basic amenities. And threat to their market existence that is decreased demand for their goods. These street vendors also faced challenges related to the inadequacy of space, sanitation and work place security. However these respondents also stated that they receive some form of help from the government. They also stated that they have faith on their government and they are keenly looking forward for their support and guidance.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Government should provide these street vendors an appropriate permanent place for their business.
2) They should be provided with basic amenities for the market place.
3) Proper training for running their business smoothly should be provided.
4) Women street vendors association should be formed.

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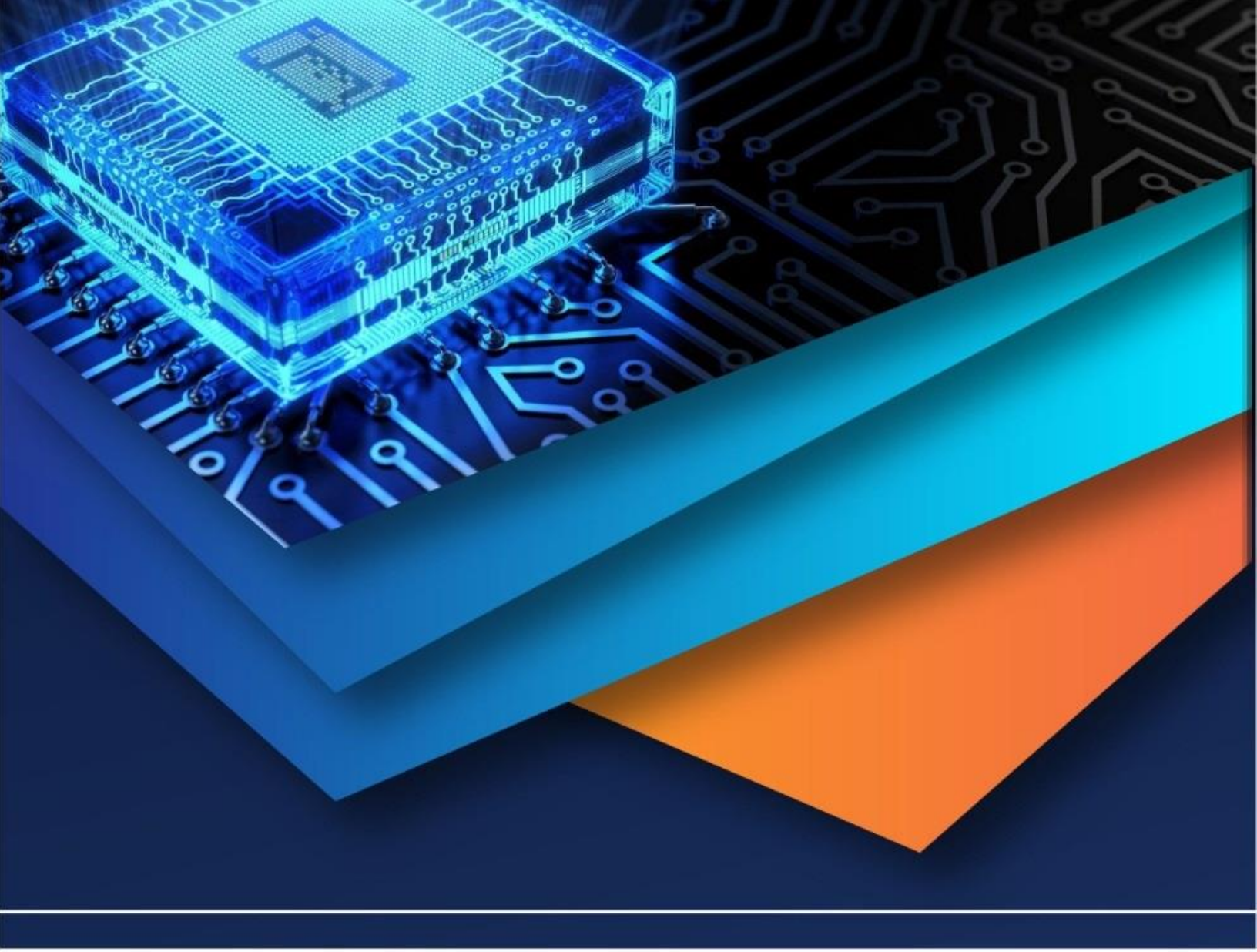

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