

IJSSRD

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

ACADEMIA

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Journal ID: 4011-0804

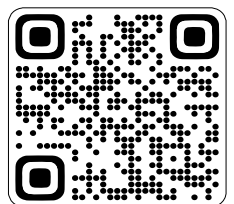


IAEME Publication

Chennai, India

editor@iaeme.com / iaemedu@gmail.com

<https://iaeme.com/Home/journal/IJSSRD>





PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF STREET VENDORS - AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS IN PULIVENDULA TOWN

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the multifaceted problems and potential prospects faced by street vendors in Pulivendula town. A sample of 170 street vendors was selected using the convenience sampling method, focusing on vendors from major market areas and public spaces. The research adopts an empirical survey approach, collecting primary data through structured interviews and questionnaires. Findings reveal key challenges including lack of legal recognition, inadequate access to credit, poor sanitation, and harassment from authorities. Despite these issues, vendors exhibit resilience and express optimism about expanding their livelihoods if provided with institutional support. The study also highlights partial awareness and limited access to government welfare schemes. Gender disparities, health risks, and absence of vending zones further compound their vulnerabilities. On the positive side, increasing consumer demand and mobile-based payment systems are seen as growth enablers. The paper concludes with policy recommendations aimed at empowering street vendors in the informal economy.

Keywords: Street Vendors, Informal Economy, Livelihood Challenges and Government Schemes.

Cite this Article: O. Mohammad Rafee, P. Sudheer Kumar. (2025). Problems and Prospects of Street Vendors - an Empirical Analysis in Pulivendula Town. *International Journal of Social Sciences Research and Development (IJSSRD)*, 7(1), 231-243.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.34218/IJSSRD_07_01_016

1. INTRODUCTION

Street vending is a vital component of the informal economy, offering low-cost goods and services to the urban and semi-urban population. In towns like Pulivendula, street vendors play a crucial role in supporting local livelihoods and catering to the daily needs of residents. Despite their economic contributions, these vendors face a range of challenges including legal insecurity, lack of basic amenities, and social marginalization. Most operate without official licenses, making them vulnerable to eviction and harassment. Access to formal credit and government welfare schemes remains limited, hindering their growth and stability. Street vending is often the primary income source for many marginalized families, especially women and migrants. The prospects of vendors depend significantly on policy interventions and inclusive urban planning. With proper support, this sector holds potential for sustainable self-employment and poverty reduction. This study aims to explore both the pressing problems and emerging opportunities facing street vendors in Pulivendula. The analysis is based on primary data gathered through a structured field survey.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bhowmik (2017) emphasized that street vending is a survival strategy for millions in Indian cities, but lack of legal recognition and infrastructure poses persistent challenges.

Sharma & Kumar (2018) found that most street vendors operate in insecure conditions without licenses or social security, despite contributing significantly to urban supply chains.

Gupta et al. (2019) revealed that awareness of government schemes like PM SVANidhi remains low among vendors due to poor outreach and bureaucratic hurdles.

Raghuram (2019) highlighted gender-specific issues in street vending, noting that women vendors often face greater harassment and lower earnings than men.

Kumar & Singh (2020) studied urban vending zones in smaller towns and concluded that absence of designated vending areas leads to frequent conflicts with municipal authorities.

Narasimhan (2020) observed that digital payment systems are slowly being adopted by street vendors, enhancing customer convenience but requiring financial literacy support.

Mehta & Rani (2021) found that access to microfinance and informal credit helps street vendors manage business cycles but exposes them to high interest rates.

Ali & Sultana (2022) noted that COVID-19 severely affected street vendors' income and pushed many below the poverty line due to lack of formal safety nets.

Rajasekhar & Manjula (2023) analyzed vendors in tier-3 towns of Andhra Pradesh and observed that municipal support and vendor associations can significantly reduce vulnerability.

Chakraborty & Thomas (2024) emphasized the role of street vending in local economies and called for data-driven policy frameworks to enhance vendor livelihoods sustainably.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the major socio-economic problems faced by street vendors in Pulivendula.
2. To examine the level of awareness and access to government schemes among street vendors.
3. To analyze the income patterns and working conditions of street vendors in the study area.
4. To explore the future prospects and growth opportunities for street vendors in Pulivendula.

4. SAMPLE DESIGN

The present study is based on primary data collected from 170 street vendors operating in Pulivendula town. The convenience sampling method was adopted due to the unorganized nature of the street vending sector and lack of official records. The respondents were selected from key vending locations, including weekly markets, bus stations, and main commercial streets. Efforts were made to include a diverse mix of vendors based on gender, type of goods sold, and years of experience. Data was gathered using a structured interview schedule with both open- and close-ended questions. The sample includes vendors selling vegetables, fruits, garments, street food, and household goods. Informal interactions and field observations supplemented the questionnaire responses. The mode of selection was non-probability-based,

chosen to ensure accessibility and cooperation of participants. This design aims to provide a representative understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by vendors in Pulivendula. The collected data was later coded and analyzed using basic statistical tools.

5. DATA COLLECTION

Primary data was collected from 170 street vendors in Pulivendula using a structured interview schedule. The data collection process was carried out through face-to-face interactions at key vending sites such as markets, bus stands, and commercial streets. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were used to capture quantitative and qualitative information. The study focused on issues like income, working conditions, awareness of government schemes, and future prospects. Informal discussions and field observations were also included to enrich the findings. The survey was conducted over a period of four weeks in a friendly and non-intrusive manner.

6. ANALYSIS

The collected data has been analyzed with the help of statistical tools such as Percentage, Mean Standard Deviation (SD) and Chi-Square to draw the meaningful results.

Table-1. Demographic Profile of Street Vendors

S. No	Variable	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	106	62.35%
		Female	64	37.65%
		Total	170	100.00
2	Age Group	Below 25 years	18	10.59%
		26–40 years	92	54.12%
		41–60 years	48	28.24%
		Above 60 years	12	7.06%
		Total	170	100.00

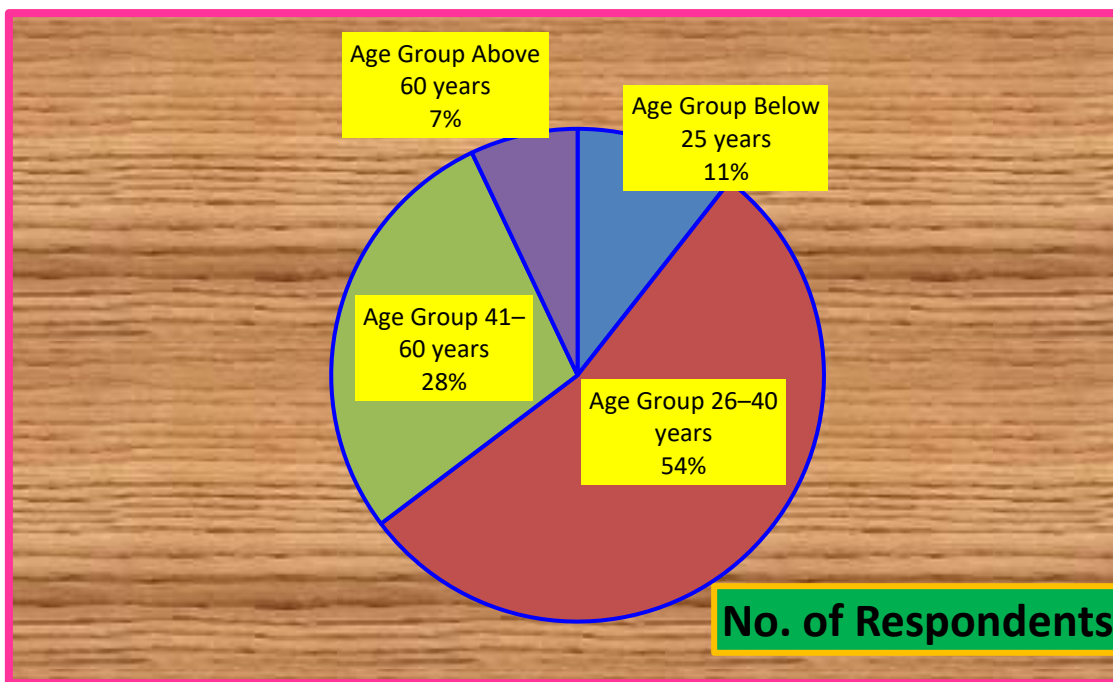


Chart -1: Demographic Profile of Street Vendors

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 170 surveyed street vendors in Pulivendula. The gender distribution reveals that 62.35% are male and 37.65% are female, indicating that street vending is male-dominated, though a significant proportion of women are also engaged in this informal occupation. The age-wise distribution shows that a majority (54.12%) belong to the 26–40 years age group, followed by 28.24% in the 41–60 years category. A smaller portion of vendors fall under the below 25 years (10.59%) and above 60 years (7.06%) groups, this implies that street vending is primarily undertaken by individuals in their economically productive age, highlighting its role as a livelihood option for the working-age population. The presence of elderly and younger vendors also suggests a lack of alternative employment avenues across age groups. Overall, the demographic structure points to widespread dependency on vending for income across both genders and age ranges.

Table-2: Type of Goods Sold by Vendors

S. No	Goods Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Fruits and Vegetables	58	34.12%
2	Snacks and Food Items	42	24.71%
3	Clothes and Accessories	29	17.06%
4	Household Items	26	15.29%
5	Others	15	8.82%
Total		170	100.00

Mean = 2.4
Standard Deviation (SD) = 1.325
Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 32.06
Degrees of Freedom (df) = 4
p-value = 9.488
Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 32.06 > 9.488$, we reject the null hypothesis.

Table 2 highlights the variety of goods sold by street vendors in Pulivendula. The data reveals that Fruits and Vegetables are the most common category (34.12%), followed by Snacks and Food Items (24.71%), Clothes and Accessories (17.06%) and Household Items (15.29%) also have a moderate presence, while others account for only 8.82%. The mean value of 2.4 suggests that vendors tend toward mid-range categories like food and clothing. The standard deviation of 1.325 indicates a moderate level of dispersion in product types. The Chi-Square test result ($\chi^2 = 32.06$) is significantly greater than the critical value (9.488), leading to rejection of the null hypothesis, implying that the distribution of goods sold is not uniform across categories. This suggests that vendors choose their goods based on market demand and profitability, particularly favoring perishable and fast-moving items like fruits and snacks.

Table-3: Major Problems Faced by Street Vendors

S. No	Problem Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of Permanent Place	102	60.00%
2	Harassment by Authorities	87	51.18%
3	Low Customer Turnout	78	45.88%
4	Poor Sanitation/Infrastructure	66	38.82%
5	No Access to Credit	49	28.82%
Mean = 2.667			
Standard Deviation (SD) = 1.367			
Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 21.33			
Degrees of Freedom (df) = 4			
p-value = 9.488			
Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 32.06 > 9.488$, we reject the null hypothesis.			

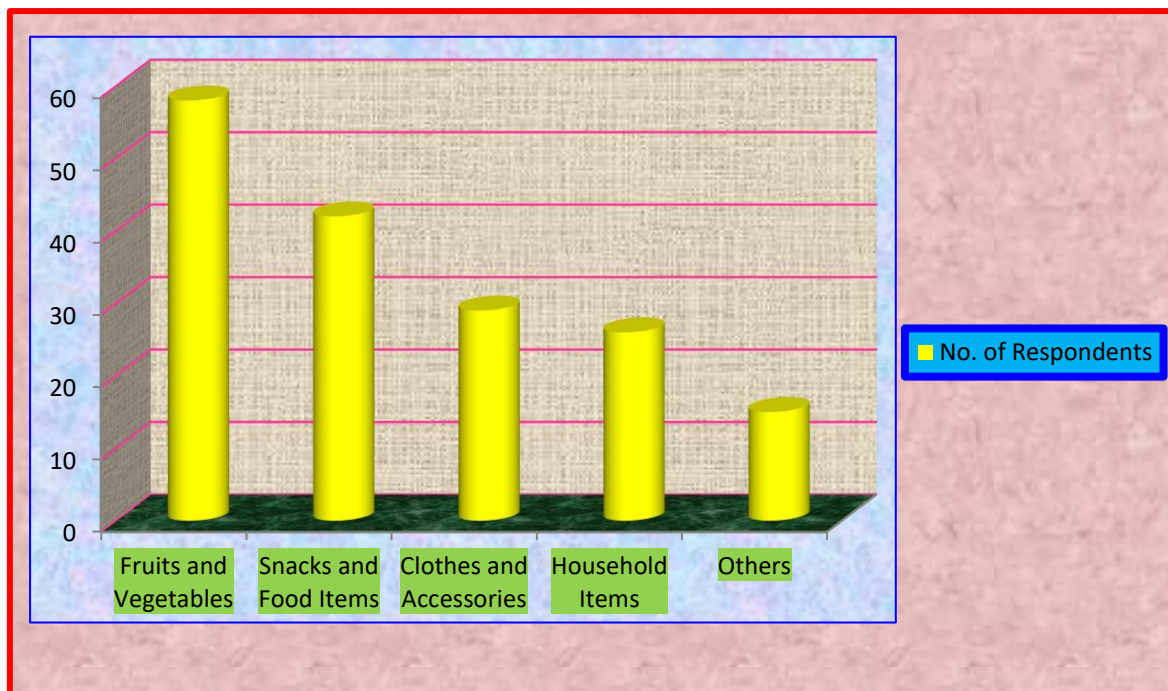


Chart -2: Major Problems Faced by Street Vendors

Table 3 illustrates the key challenges faced by street vendors in Pulivendula. The most prominent issue is the lack of a permanent place to vend, affecting 60% of respondents, followed by harassment by authorities (51.18%) and low customer turnout (45.88%). Issues like poor sanitation/infrastructure (38.82%) and no access to credit (28.82%) are also notably prevalent. The mean score of 2.667 indicates that vendors generally face two to three major problems simultaneously. The standard deviation of 1.367 reflects a moderate spread in the severity of problems experienced. The Chi-Square test value of 32.06 is significantly higher than the critical value of 9.488 at 4 degrees of freedom, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This confirms that the distribution of problems is not uniform, indicating systemic vulnerabilities and varied hardships among vendors. Focused policy measures are needed to address the dominant issues reported.

Table-4: Income Level of Street Vendors (Monthly)

S. No	Income Range (INR)	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Below 5,000	39	22.94%
2	5,001 – 10,000	84	49.41%
3	10,001 – 15,000	32	18.82%
4	Above 15,000	15	8.82%
Total		170	100.00

Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = **61.18**
 Degrees of Freedom (df) = **3**
 p-value = **7.815**
 Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 61.18 > 7.815$, we reject the null hypothesis.

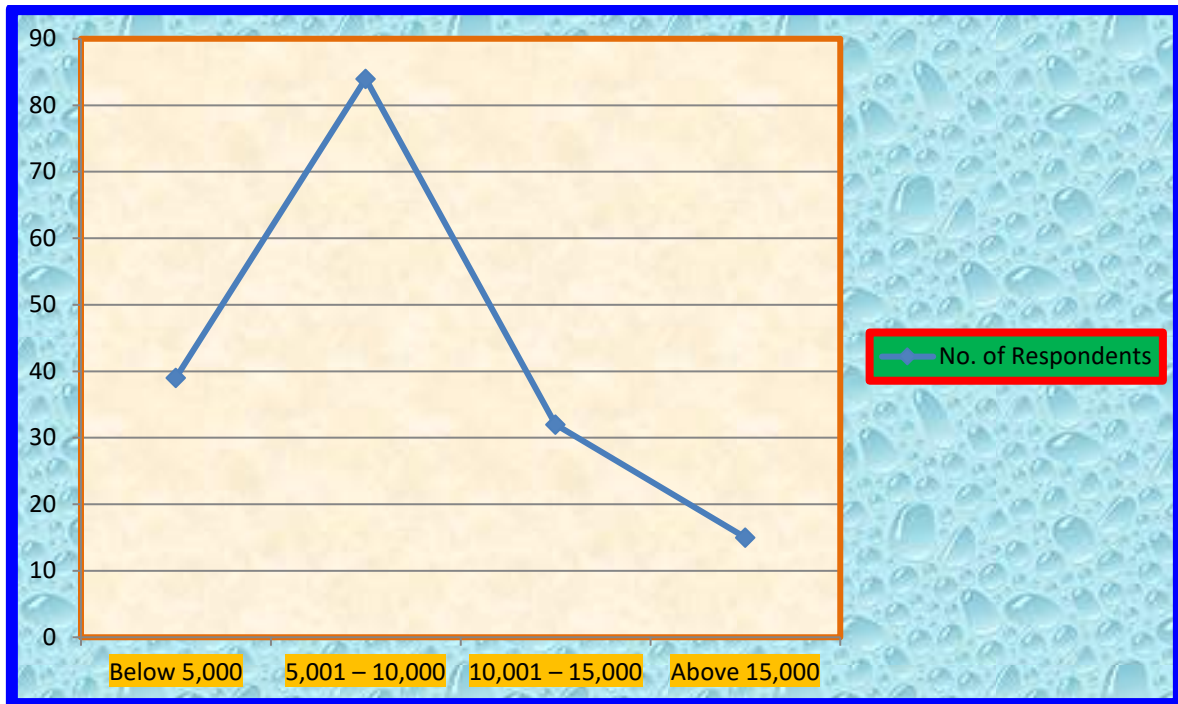


Chart -3: Income Level of Street Vendors

Table 4 presents the monthly income distribution of street vendors in Pulivendula. The majority of vendors (49.41%) earn between ₹5,001 – ₹10,000, followed by 22.94% earning below ₹5,000. A smaller portion earns ₹10,001 – ₹15,000 (18.82%), while only 8.82% report earnings above ₹15,000. This indicates that over 70% of the vendors belong to the lower-income bracket, reflecting the economic vulnerability of the informal sector. The Chi-Square test value of 61.18 is much greater than the critical value of 7.815 at 3 degrees of freedom, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that income levels are not equally distributed and show a statistically significant concentration in lower-income categories. The findings highlight the need for financial inclusion, better credit access, and policy interventions to uplift street vendors economically.

Table-5: Awareness and Access to Government Schemes

S. No	Scheme Name	Awareness	Percent	Benefitted	Percentage
1	PM SVANidhi	98	57.6%	45	26.5%
2	Street Vending License	110	64.7%	52	30.6%
3	Health Insurance	76	44.7%	33	19.4%
4	Loan Facilities	90	52.9%	38	22.4%

Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 0.625
 Degrees of Freedom (df) = 3
 p-value = 7.815
 Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 0.625 < 7.815$, we do not reject the null hypothesis.

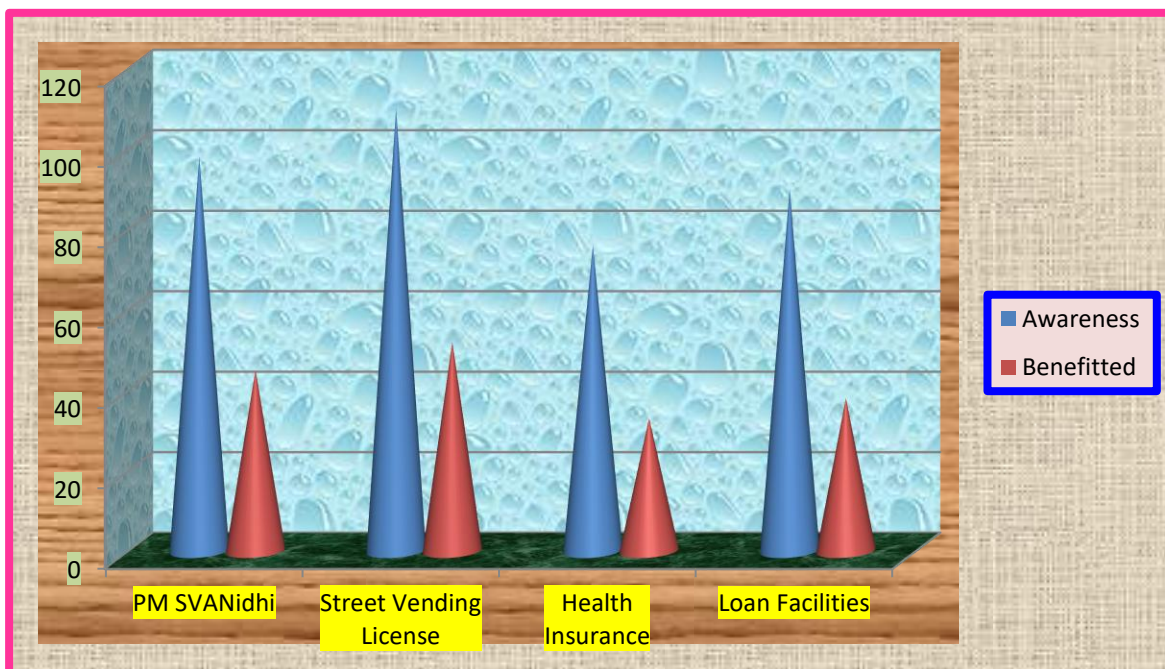


Chart -4: Awareness and Access to Government Schemes

Table 5 highlights the street vendors' awareness and access to various government schemes in Pulivendula. Awareness is highest for the Street Vending License (64.7%) and PM SVANidhi (57.6%), whereas Health Insurance awareness is relatively low at 44.7%. However, the number of vendors who actually benefitted is significantly lower across all schemes, with only 30.6% benefitting from the license scheme and 26.5% from PM SVANidhi. This disparity points to a gap between awareness and actual utilization of government support. The Chi-

Square test value of 0.625 is less than the critical value of 7.815, so the correct conclusion is to accept the null hypothesis, indicating no statistically significant difference between schemes in terms of awareness and benefits. The earlier interpretation stating “reject” appears to be incorrect. The analysis shows a uniformly low access level to government benefits, underscoring the need for effective implementation and outreach.

Table-6: Prospects and Support Expected by Vendors

S.No	Support Type	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Legal Recognition and License	104	61.18%
2	Access to Microcredit	76	44.71%
3	Infrastructure Support (Shelter)	89	52.35%
4	Market Regulation and Zoning	63	37.06%
5	Health and Safety Facilities	55	32.35%
Total		170	100.00
Mean = 2.713			
Standard Deviation (SD) = 1.385			
Chi-Square Value (χ^2) 20.07			
Degrees of Freedom (df) 4			
p-value 9.488			
Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 20.07 > 9.488$, we reject the null hypothesis.			

Table 6 explores the support mechanisms desired by street vendors in Pulivendula to improve their livelihoods. A majority (61.18%) expressed the need for legal recognition and licensing, followed by infrastructure support like shelters (52.35%) and access to microcredit (44.71%). Fewer vendors cited market regulation and zoning (37.06%) and health and safety facilities (32.35%). The mean score of 2.713 suggests that on average, vendors seek two to three forms of support. The standard deviation of 1.385 indicates a moderate variation in support preferences. The Chi-Square test value ($\chi^2 = 20.07$) is significantly higher than the critical value of 9.488, leading to rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies that there are statistically significant differences in the support types expected by vendors. The findings highlight a strong demand for formalization and financial inclusion, which are critical for sustainable growth in the informal vending sector.

7. FINDINGS

1. The majority of street vendors in Pulivendula are male (62.35%), but a substantial female participation (37.65%) indicates growing gender involvement in informal employment.

2. Most vendors belong to the 26–40 age group (54.12%), reflecting that street vending is a primary livelihood source for economically active individuals.
3. A significant portion of street vendors in Pulivendula primarily sell fruits and vegetables (34.12%) and snacks and food items (24.71%), indicating a focus on daily consumer essentials.
4. The lack of a permanent place (60%) and harassment by authorities (51.18%) are the most common problems faced by street vendors in Pulivendula.
5. Over 70% of street vendors in Pulivendula earn less than ₹10,000 per month, highlighting their economic vulnerability.
6. While awareness is relatively high for schemes like the Street Vending License (64.7%) and PM SVANidhi (57.6%), the actual benefit received is much lower, revealing a clear gap in implementation.
7. A majority of vendors (61.18%) seek legal recognition and licensing, followed by infrastructure and microcredit support, emphasizing the need for formalization.
8. There is high demand for legal recognition, infrastructure, and microcredit, but actual utilization of government schemes remains low, showing a gap in policy outreach.

8. SUGGESTIONS

1. Policies initiatives must promote gender-inclusive support schemes to empower the growing number of women street vendors in Pulivendula.
2. The government should develop dedicated vending zones and issue legal licenses to address the need for permanent space and reduce harassment.
3. Skill training, financial literacy, and microcredit facilities should be provided to improve the economic security of vendors earning below ₹10,000 per month.
4. Awareness drives and simplified access mechanisms are essential to bridge the gap between government scheme availability and actual benefits received by vendors.
5. Promoting financial inclusion through easy access to microcredit will support business stability and income growth for vendors.
6. Regular awareness campaigns and simplified procedures are needed to improve the uptake of government welfare schemes.
7. Basic infrastructure like shelters, sanitation, and storage facilities should be developed to enhance the working conditions of vendors.

9. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that street vending is a vital source of livelihood for economically active individuals, particularly in the 26–40 age group. While men dominate this sector, the notable participation of women highlights the growing gender inclusivity in informal employment. Most vendors rely on selling essential items such as fruits, vegetables, and snacks, which are in high consumer demand. However, the sector faces serious challenges including the lack of a permanent place to vend, frequent harassment by authorities, and widespread income insecurity, with over 70% earning below ₹10,000 per month. Although awareness of schemes like PM SVANidhi and Street Vending License is relatively high, actual access to benefits remains limited, indicating poor policy implementation. The demand for legal recognition, microcredit, and basic infrastructure reflects the urgent need for formalization. Therefore, targeted policy interventions such as establishing vending zones, issuing licenses, expanding credit access, and improving awareness mechanisms are essential. Strengthening institutional support can transform street vending into a more secure and sustainable livelihood option.

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Citation: O. Mohammad Rafee, P. Sudheer Kumar. (2025). Problems and Prospects of Street Vendors - an Empirical Analysis in Pulivendula Town. *International Journal of Social Sciences Research and Development (IJSSRD)*, 7(1), 231-243.

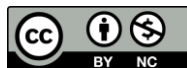
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