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## A Case Study on Tender Coconut Vendor in Bangalore with Reference to Green Entrepreneurship

Dr. Paramashivaiah

Dean, Tumkur University, Tumkur- 572 103

Dr. Raviraj Hegde

Associate Professor, Acharya Bangalore B-School, Bangalore - 91

Prof. Anil Kumar

Assistant Professor, Acharya Bangalore B-School, Bangalore - 91

### PRELUDE

Street vendors are people who sell goods or services in public space. This includes the full gamut of goods and services, traded on a whole sale or retail bases in streets and other public spaces including sidewalks, alleyways and medians. Street vendors may have fixed stalls such as kiosks, semi-fixed stalls like folding tables; mobile vendors walk or bicycle through the streets as they sell.

Street vendors are part of urban economies around the world. These street vendors are the distributors of affordable goods and services; they provide a class of consumers with convenient and accessible retail options and become a vital part of the social and economic life of country. Street selling as an occupation has been part of our society for hundreds of years and is considered as a historical and cultural heritage in some places.

The streets of every city in the country are not only home to tens of thousands of working poor and destitute men and women, they are also vibrant hubs of livelihood for impoverished people; and reliable sites for cheap and affordable retail. On city pavements, women and men energetically hawk an extraordinary variety of goods, including cooked food, fruit and vegetables, clothing, toys, books, household utilities and decorations.

### INTRODUCTION

An estimated ten million people live in India by street vending. To impoverished migrants, as also

laid-off workers, street vending affords low-end but steady employment. It is the only sale outlet available to many small producers of garments or cottage products. It allows working people and even middle class consumers to purchase their needs at convenient sites and cheaper prices than in any store. Street markets are in many ways invaluable spokes in the wheels of urban economy. They also enrich the distinct cultural life of every city.

Street vendors, however, typically lead a very hard life. A survey conducted by Sharit Bhowmik with the National Alliance of Street Vendors of India in seven cities, found their working conditions abysmal; their average working day stretches ten to 12 hours. There is no protection from the rigours of climate, any health services or social security. Their earnings typically fall well below statutory minimum wages; these ranged in 2002 from Rs 50 to Rs 100 for men and Rs 35 to Rs 40 for women. Credit for working capital is available only from private moneylenders, who charge exorbitant interest.

But the greatest stress and insecurity of this vocation is created by a hostile state. Street vendors are condemned to fight daily undeclared battles against the police and municipal authorities. The seven-city study confirmed that in all the cities street vendors are forced to pay daily and weekly bribes to police and municipal authorities, as well as huge fines, but even this does not free them from the perennial dread of sudden, violent eviction. The study estimates that

at least 20 per cent of their income is lost to rent-seeking by public officials. "Bribery is the only way most street vendors can survive in their trade".

Official extortion and insecurity arise from an oppressive and opaque license regime, which effectively illegalises almost the entire profession of street vending. An arbitrary, ridiculously low ceiling is placed on the number of licenses in a city, and this is only a small fraction of the actual numbers who vend in the city. In Mumbai, for instance, an estimated 2 lakh hawkers operate, but the municipal corporation arbitrarily fixed a ceiling of only 14,000 licenses, and even these were not issued for many years. Therefore most vendors were illegal and there is huge rent-seeking in the grant of licenses. The situation was worse in Kolkata, in which all street vending was barred by law, and hawking was a cognisable and non-bailable offence.

Since the 1990s, the declared official policy was to free private business enterprise from the stranglehold of the license permit raj. Government efforts focused on deregulating and easing norms for setting up businesses in the organised sector, and in licensing, taxation, regulation and credit. Recently, norms have been eased for foreign direct investment in large multi-brand retail stores. Land acquisition laws are being amended, with a declared objective of facilitating access of private industry to land.

However, no such efforts have been made for easing up the livelihoods of poor producers and service-providers, such as street vendors and rickshaw pullers, which remain choked in unjust licensing systems. Far from being eased, these have only become more stringent and unforgiving in recent decades.

In India, street vendors represent approximately 3 percent of total non-agricultural employment. According to official statistics this translates to more than 3.1 million street traders countrywide (Unni 2011). Unofficial estimates suggest the numbers could be closer to 10 million.

Millions of street vendors in India are treated as a nuisance and affected by middlemen and are doing business without any rights. Yet this people provide invaluable services in cities inspite of earning less income. Their standard of living is very low and they even suffer from less market knowledge.

### **THE MAIN CAUSES FOR THE GROWTH OF STREET VENDING**

Firstly, lack of gainful employment coupled with poverty in rural areas has pushed people out of their villages in search of a better existence in the cities. These migrants do not possess the skills or the education to enable them to act better paid, secure employment in the formal sector and they have to settle for work in the informal sector.

### **A CASE STUDY ON RAMMANAA TENDER COCONUT VENDOR**

Ramanna is a Tender Coconut Vendor in Bangalore North region. Originally he hails from one of the remote village from Mysore where he used to do farming in other's land on contract basis, as the income was not sufficient he came to Bangalore and started vending. On the advice of some of his villagers that it is better for him, he decided that he will be moving to bangalore, he came to Bangalore 2 years back. Deciding to take up vending he bought a cart for Rs 3500/-. Presently, he stays with his family in a rented house paying Rs.1000/- monthlyrent excluding electricity charges. Though drinking water is available at his house he has to use a common toilet shared by four other households.

He buys Tender Coconuts for an agent who is associated with Tender Coconut Union who inturn get the coconuts from market located in Mandya. He starts vending at around 8'o clock in the morning and continue till 7'o clock in the night. He takes rest during lunch break for 30 minutes. Though he is capable to do additional business depending on season but due to capital problem he is unable to do that. He is an illiterate and has problem in managing money as he is 32 year old now and depends on 'credit on interest' from local

loan providers for tender coconut purchases. He generates an income ranging from Rs.200/- to Rs. 250/-per day through vending and sends a part of this amount to his village monthly. He visits his village annually for a month. During such visits he locks his cart in a nearby house. Very often, he is harassed by authorities and he has to pacify them by giving bribe.

#### **PROBLEMS FACED BY TENDER COCONUT VENDORS WITH REFERENCE TO RAMANNA**

**Lack of proper supply:** Supply depends on the middlemen; street vendors like Ramanna should depend completely on those people who are connected to the small Unions.

**Influence of middlemen:** Middlemen play a vital role in connecting tender coconut producers and vendors. Many times the vendors should depend on middlemen for the supplies as there is no regulated market.

**Influence of Union Leaders:** The Union Leader will take decision on the selling cost and there are some advantages by union for the vendors. If there is any wastage due to less demand, unions will become a helping hand. But disadvantages are more as it makes Tender Coconut vendors to be more dependent on these Unions for supplies and even sometimes for microloans for more interest.

**Lack of proper place to sell:** Vendors normally are abused by public and authorities as they don't get right place to sell Tender coconut. As these vendors sell on pavements, on roadsides complaints and ill-treatment by authorities are more.

#### **Lack of proper security and exposure to extreme heat and rain:**

Street vendors have poor social protection and their working conditions on the streets expose them to a variety of safety and health issues. The SNTD – ILO study on Mumbai found that around 85 per cent of the street vendors complained of stress related diseases – migraine, hyper acidity, hyper tension and high blood pressure. In general, there are more men vendors than women vendors in India. Women vendors earn less, on average,

than men vendors: their earnings range from 40 to 60 rupees per day. The lack of toilets has an adverse effect on women's health. Many suffer from urinary tract infections and kidney ailments. The mobile women street vendors also face security issues.

Vendors are often regarded as public nuisance. They are accused of depriving pedestrians of their space, causing traffic jams and having links with anti-social activities. The municipal authorities and housing societies, aided by the media, have targeted vendors at frequent intervals. "The lack of recognition of the role of street vendors culminates in a multitude of problems faced by them: obtaining license, insecurity of earnings, insecurity of place of hawking, gratifying officers and musclemen, constant eviction threat, fines and harassment by traffic policemen."

#### **Less Income:**

The average earnings of street vendors are low - ranging between 150 and 250 rupees per day. They work under grueling conditions for long hours and are frequently harassed by the municipal authorities and the police. A large part of the vendors' income goes in bribes and 'protection money'. Street vendors pay between 10 to 20% of their earnings as rent.

#### **Wastage Problem:**

Waste Management has been a problem for the street vendors from ages. As these men have less knowledge on the reuse of the Coconut Shells. Proper training should be provided for them so that their awareness increases with respect to making income even with wastages also.

#### **Lack of technology in chopping or drilling coconut:**

Tender coconut vendors have been practicing manual process to drill hole in Tender Coconuts, hence forth there is a need to improvise the process they have been using. Customized machine can help them in drilling hole in Tender coconuts which will reduce wastages and manual fatigue.

**PROPOSED GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SOLUTION:**

Serving Tender Coconut in Reusable Bamboo Glasses: Placing Coconut Vending Machines in Institutions, Malls and Companies as an alternative to Coffee/Tea vending machines would be a better move. Vendors can use Vending Machine and install it in office premises and earn better income and also provide health drink for people within their reach. Coconut shells can be sold to handicraft industries by pooling empty shells from other tender coconut vendors as an extra income.

**Making homemade Coconut Vinegar: Vinegar is a natural food ingredient** for many food preparations for enhancing their tastes and quality. Besides, it is also used in canned and packed food products like pickle, meat products etc. The vinegar available at present is mainly synthetic origin. So by using technology from Coconut Board, Mysore one can think of preparing homemade Coconut Vinegar.

**Making Coconut Barfi, Yoghurt, Paneer, Coconut cookies etc using tender coconut enables Vendors to earn better income.** By this way a Tender coconut vendor can earn better income by selecting new market and with the help of MSME, this business can be enhanced further through funds and technology. Starting a Business of serving Natural drinks like tender Coconut, Sugarcane juice etc in a reusable bamboo glasses to the employees of Companies in Bangalore as an alternative to soft drinks, tea, coffee etc under the guidance and support of a specialized Non-Government Organization that can support these people with technical and marketing support.

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