

Women Fruit Vendors in Dharwad City - An Economic Overview

The women vendors play a significant role by providing fruits at a reasonable price. In spite of their long hours of work, they are not getting adequate income for their livelihood. Hence, a survey was conducted to assess their socio economic conditions.

It is revealed from the Table - 1 that majority of the women fruit vendors belong to the middle age i.e., from 26 to 55. As the profession requires long hours of work and patience, most of the women vendors are of middle age group.

Most of the women vendors (93%) are found to be illiterate and remaining seven percent have only primary education. It is observed by the study that in spite of their illiteracy they are efficiently managing their business and illiteracy has not come in the way of their business. It is surprising to note that most of the women fruit vendors belong to the urban areas with 55 percent being urban-based and 45 percent being rural based.

About 63 percent of women vendors are wholly managing the family and 37 percent are supporting the family. The reasons for wholly managing the family are carelessness and irresponsibility of husbands, drunkard husbands and death of husbands. In spite of low level of income, most of the women have chosen this profession because of the freedom, absence and non interference of the employer in this work.

The pitiable economic conditions of

women fruit vendors can be seen with 63 percent of women vendors getting an income upto Rs. 1000 per month, while 37 percent have to struggle hard to get two meals per day as their income is less than Rs. 500 per month.

Middlemen play an important role in getting the fruits for vending by women fruit vendors. It is revealed from the table-1 that 85 percent of women fruit vendors get their fruits from middlemen and only 15 percent of women vendors are dependent upon the producers for fruits. It is very interesting to know that these women fruit vendors carry on their business without any initial capital. Everyday they get the fruits on credit basis. They sell the fruits throughout the day, return the amount to the middlemen and retain the profits. In real sense these women vendors are acting as mediators between middlemen and consumers.

It was observed during the investigation that 80 to 90 percent of the women vendors depend upon the food brought from home for lunch. The economic conditions of women vendors do not permit them to get food from hotels. If they fail to bring food from home they have to pull on the day only with tea.

One of the important problems of women vendors is the proper use of fruits which remain unsold. It follows from the table - 2 that 55 percent of women vendors sell the unsold fruits at a cheap rate. About 10 percent of women vendors give the fruits

Table I. Socio-economic status of women fruit vendors

Particulars of Socio-economic status	Frequency	Percentage
1. Age		
Less than 25	3	8
26 to 55	30	75
More than 55	7	17
2. Literacy		
Literate	3	7
Illiterate	37	93
3. Background Details		
Rural	18	45
Urban	22	55
4. Status in managing the family		
Supporting	15	37
Wholly managing	25	63
5. Income/Month		
Upto 500	15	37
501 to 1000	25	63
6. Source of produce		
Middlemen	34	85
Producer	6	15

free to passers by. Another three percent of women vendors, sell their unsold fruits to hotels and get at least minimum profits. Because of the absence of storage facilities, if they fail to sell the whole produce they will be put to losses.

The main purpose of this study is to throw light on the various problems of women fruit vendors. Table - 3 reflects the different problems faced by the women vendors. Most of the women vendors suffer from lack of

proper place to sell a variety of fruits. Particularly selling becomes very difficult in the rainy season. Moreover, these poor women have to face the atrocities of policemen and disturbance by shop owners.

It is clear from the study that the provision of a proper and permanent place for selling the fruits will put an end for many problems of the women fruit vendors. Further, there is a necessity of constructing a market yard especially to sell the fruits so

Table 2. Disposal of Unsold Fruits

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	-
1. Selling to hotels	1	3	-
2. Selling at low rate	22	55	-
3. Giving free	4	10	-
4. Throwing	10	25	-
5. No problem of wastage	-	-	-
6. Feeding to animals	3	7	-
Total	40	100	-

Table 3. The problems faced by women fruit vendors

Problems	No.of vendors	Percentage	-
1. Proper place in the market	31	77	-
2. Problem of Hamalis	3	8	—
3. Disturbance by Police and Shopkeepers	6	15	—
4. Place problem only during rainy season	-	-	—
Total	40	100	—

as to give protection to women vendors against hot sun and heavy rains. So it is inferred from this study that provision of proper place along with storage facilities helps to improve the economic conditions of women fruit vendors.

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