

The Socio-Economic Realities of Street Food Vendors in New Delhi

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INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What are the **economic and socio-cultural factors** driving street food vending in New Delhi, and what challenges do vendors face regarding **licensing, regulatory compliance, and corruption**?

CONTRIBUTION:

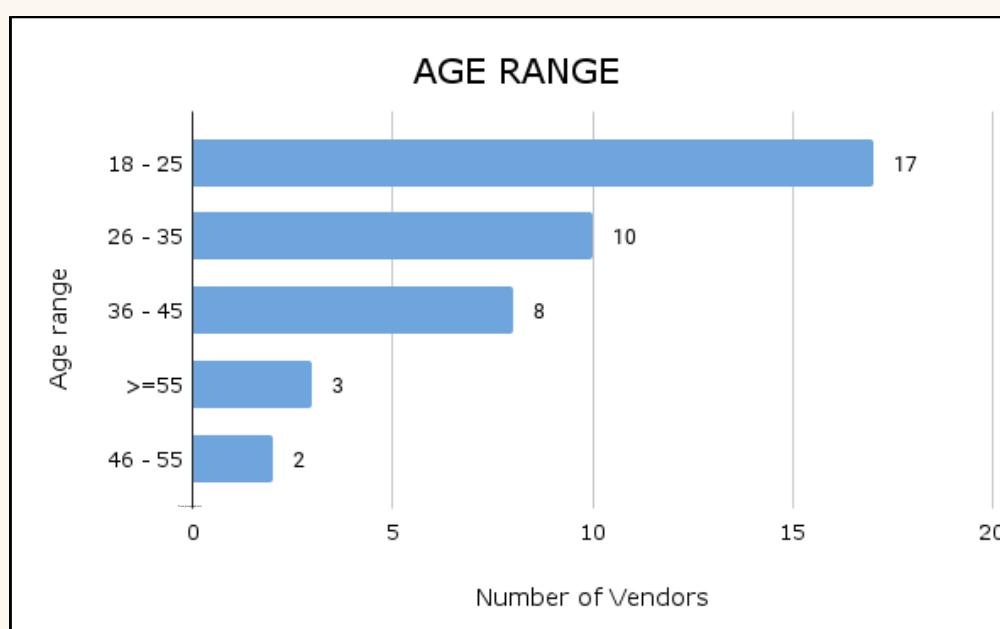
- This research aims to bridge the notable **gap in government data** regarding street vendors in New Delhi.
- Official statistics only account for licensed vendors, overlooking the large number of **unlicensed vendors** who actually constitute the majority of the street food vending sector.

SIGNIFICANCE:

- It sheds light on a crucial segment of New Delhi's informal economy, highlighting the importance of street food vending in **sustaining livelihoods**. The findings offer **insights for urban policymakers**, emphasizing the need for regulatory reform and support for small-scale vendors.

KEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

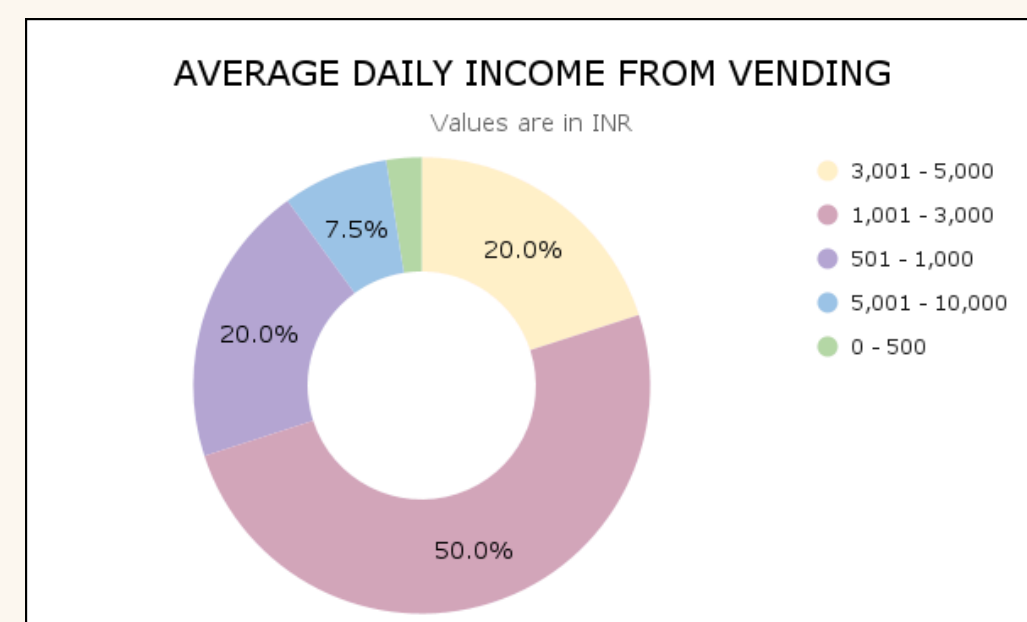
AGE AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND



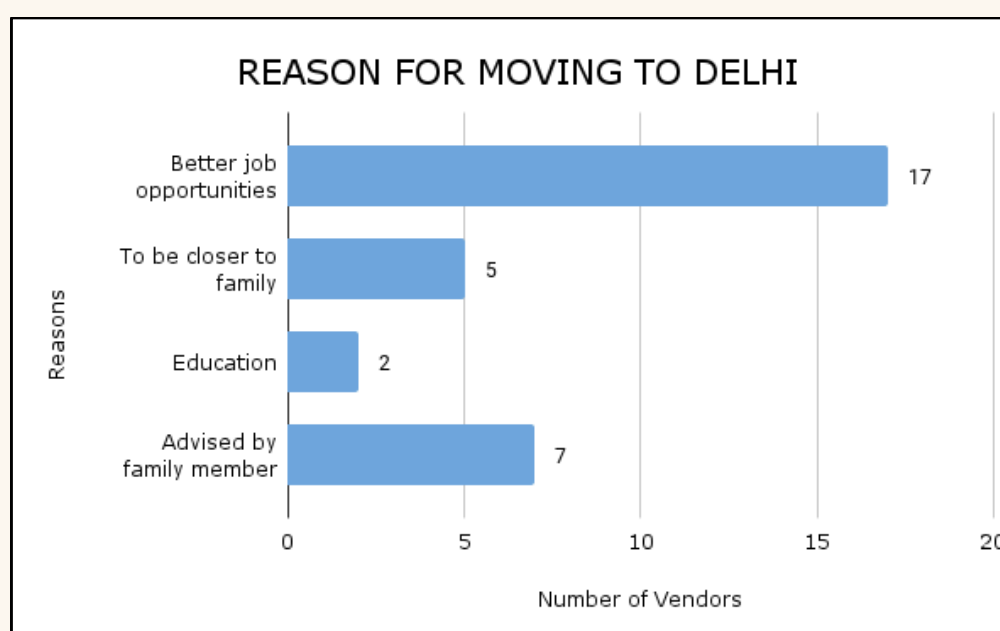
- Street vending is accessible to **younger individuals**.
- Vendors come from **diverse educational backgrounds**, including some with post-secondary qualifications.
- Individuals with **limited formal employment opportunities**.

DAILY INCOME FROM VENDING

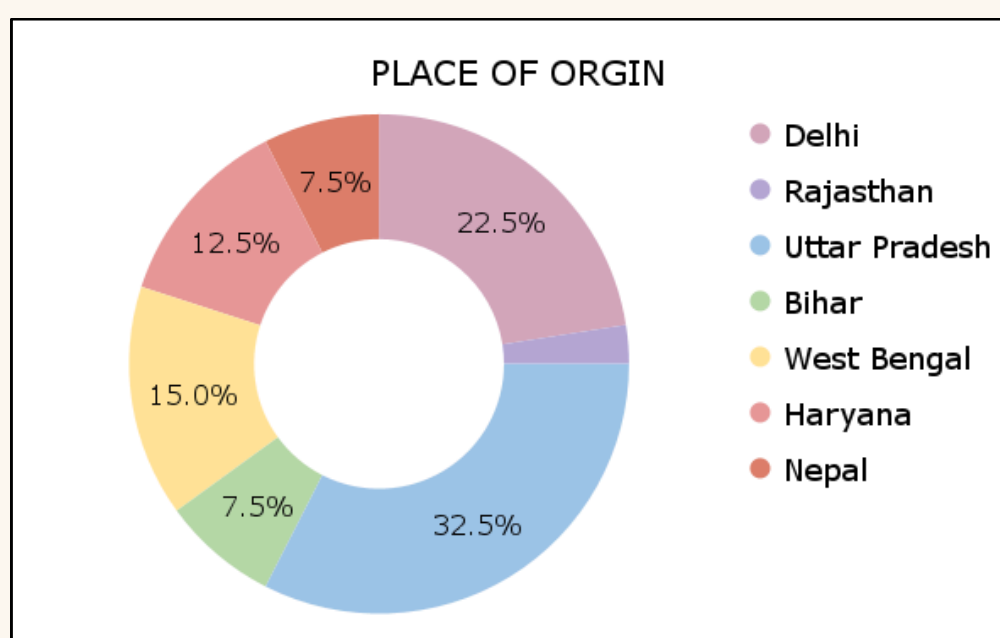
- Few vendors achieve higher earnings, suggesting **limited potential for profitability**.
- Earnings disparity** is influenced by factors like location, food popularity, and business acumen.



MIGRATION AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES



- Migration to New Delhi:** 77.5% (31 vendors) are migrants, highlighting the city's strong attraction for job seekers in the informal sector.
- Family influence:** Migration is significantly driven by familial ties and support systems, not just individual decisions.
- Youth-driven migration:** A high percentage of young migrants suggests that street vending is a common career path for early workforce entrants.



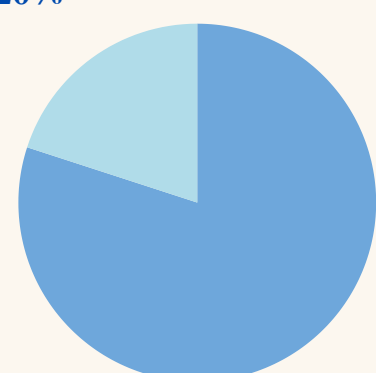
LICENSES AND BRIBERY

- Licensing:** Out of 40 vendors, only **10 had mandatory licenses** (FSSAI or MCD trade licenses). Those licensed either had over 30 years of family experience in the trade or post-secondary education.
- Bribery:** **75% (30 vendors) admitted to paying monthly bribes** to police and MCD officials. Bribes ranged from **INR 200 to INR 15,000**. 70% paid between INR 1,000 and INR 3,000; 4 vendors paid less than INR 1,000, and 5 paid between INR 3,001 and INR 15,000.

BACKGROUND

- A **street vendor** is broadly characterized as an individual who sells goods to the public **without a permanent structure**, utilizing either a temporary static setup or a mobile stall. Street food vendors make up 2 million of the total population of 10 million street vendors in India.

Street Food Vendors
20%



Other Street Vendors
80%

- There are two broad categories of challenges that street food vendors face:

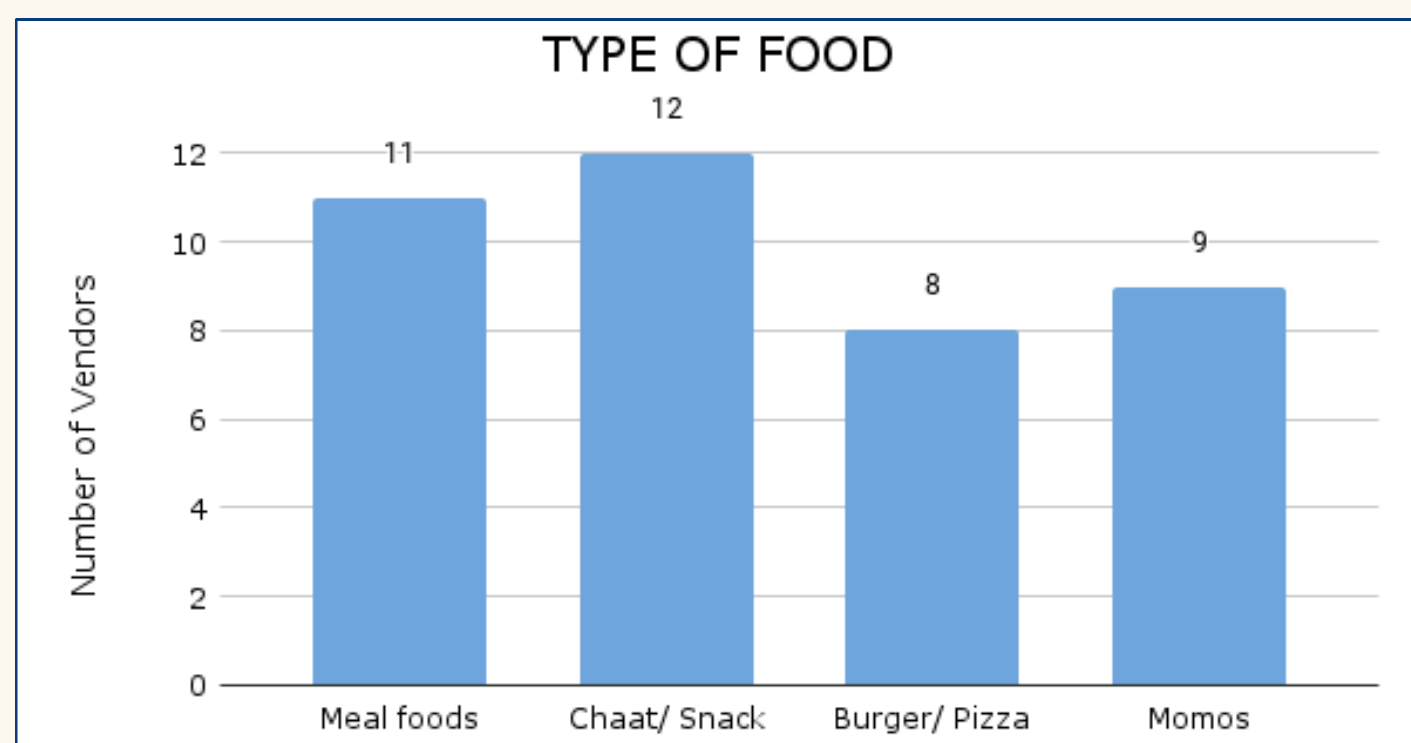


- It becomes increasingly important to explore the **intersection of migration, occupational choice, and urban survival strategies** as the informal sector continues to play a crucial role in the economic landscape of the country

METHODS

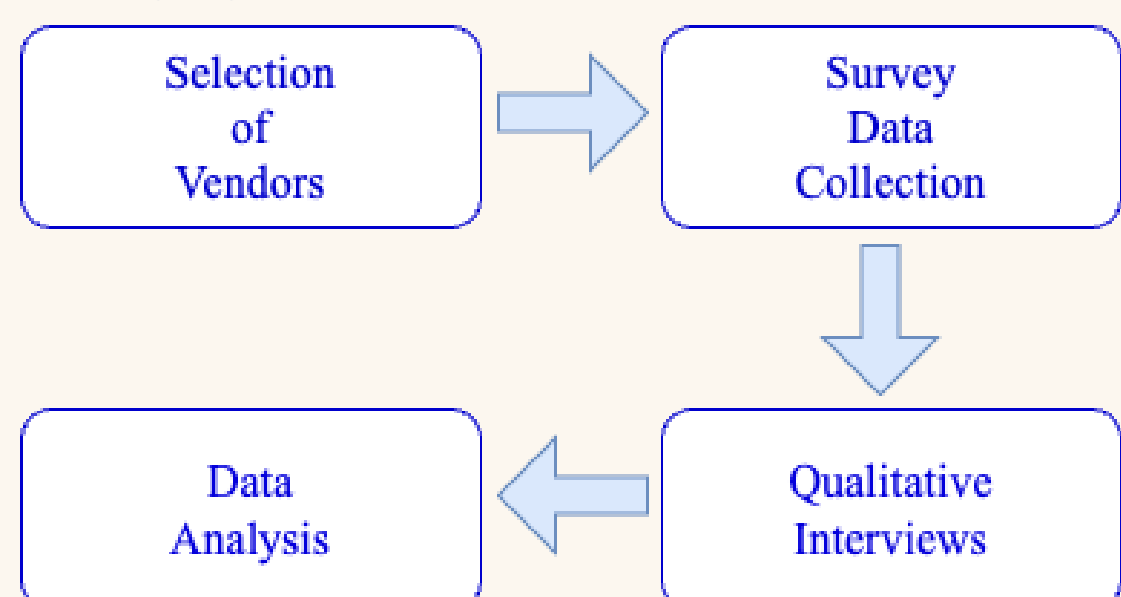
Design and Sampling:

- Surveyed **40 street food vendors** across North, West, South, and Central Delhi. Vendors represent a diverse range of food offerings: **chaat (snacks), meal foods, momos, and burger/pizza**.



Data Collection:

- Demographic Information:** Region of origin, age, education level, and duration of involvement in street vending.
- Economic Factors:** Income levels, working hours, and fees paid to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the police.
- Occupational History:** Personal and ancestral occupational background, reasons for migration, and factors influencing occupational choices.
- Skills & Capital:** Sources of knowledge and resources for managing a food stall in New Delhi.



CONCLUSION

CHALLENGES FACED BY STREET FOOD VENDORS:

- Complex regulatory environment and widespread corruption.
- Few vendors possess mandatory licenses due to educational background and bureaucratic hurdles.
- Systemic corruption forces vendors to pay bribes, adding financial strain.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF STREET FOOD VENDING:

- Vendors earn stable livelihoods by serving a large, diverse customer base.
- New Delhi's food culture and demand for affordable dining options offer opportunities for success.
- Some vendors pass businesses down through generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

- Issue permits and designate permanent areas for vendors.
- Prevent unjust eviction or bribery from municipal and police authorities.
- Facilitate transition into the formal economy with permanent shops.
- Create clear, transparent regulatory frameworks for vendor operations and space allocation.
- Resolve governance issues over public spaces as emphasized by the Supreme Court.

REFERENCES

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- Sharit, K., Bhowmik. (2015). Street Vending in Ten Cities in India. Report for NASVI (National Association of Street Vendors of India)

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