

## **A Study on the Women Vegetable Vendors in Tinsukia District of Assam**

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### **Abstract:**

Vegetable vending is one of the common sources of income for the uneducated and unskilled women. Women vegetable vendors are playing an important role and they are considered as very important part of the informal sector in the country. The area of the study is Tinsukia district of Assam. The objective of the study is to understand the socio-economic condition of women vegetable vendor and the problem they have faced. The findings of the study reveals that women are started business basically due to financial need and to be self achievement. The study also reveals that they have faced some problems such as financial problem, marketing problem and family problem.

**Key words:** Vegetable vendor, women, socio-economic condition,

### **1. Introduction:**

The rise of female participation in the informal sector is more due to economic compulsion. Vending is an important source of employment for large number poor women as it requires low skills and small financial inputs. Vegetable vending is one of the common sources of income for the uneducated and unskilled women. Certain sections of the women in the society are in deplorable condition as such they opt for vegetable vending under certain compulsion. Women vegetable vendors are playing an important role though informally in selling a wide variety of vegetables on the street, in daily market or weekly market. Now a day, women vegetable vendors are considered as very important part of the informal sector in the country. They are not only a source of self employment but also a means to provide 'affordable' as well as convenient services to a majority of the urban population. They are not just 'vegetable sellers', but play a significant role in the economic activity of the society. Women take active part in vending locally produced vegetables along with green vegetables collected from forest. In the semi urban areas local food items are sold by women to meet their own need of earning as an income and also make possible for the urban dwellers to have access to local food ingredients. They meet an indispensable need of urban life. Vegetable vending is considered as one of the important avenues of employment especially for women.

## **2. Objectives of the Study:**

The objective of the study is to -

- i. To study the socio economic conditions of women vegetable vendors.
- ii. To find out the problems faced by them during their business hours.

## **3. The study area:**

The study area is the Tinsukia district of Assam. Tinsukia is the uppermost district of Assam in India, situated on the upper valley of the Brahmaputra River. As per aadhar uidai.gov.in estimates population in Tinsukia District in 2021 is 1,457,728. The district has a total area of 3,790 sq kilometer. 61.5 sq kilometer is urban and 3728.58 sq kilometer is rural. There are 7 development blocks and 9 towns in the district. People living in Tinsukia District depend on multiple skills, such as workers, Cultivators, entrepreneurs, services etc.

## **4. Methodology:**

The target population for the study is confined to the women vegetable vendors in Tinsukia district of Assam. Most of the women vegetable vendors are found as street vendors and in weekly market. For the purpose of this study the required information of women vegetable vendors have been collected from the sample women vegetable vendors from both types of vegetable vendors i.e. women street vendors and from weekly markets. The cluster sampling method is used to derive the sample from population of women vegetable vendors. 75 women vegetable vendors are taken as sample from both urban and rural areas. For selecting the sample from each area convenient sampling method is used. Secondary data have been collected from books, journals and websites for the study.

## **Analysis of data:**

Socio-economic profile of women vegetable vendors:

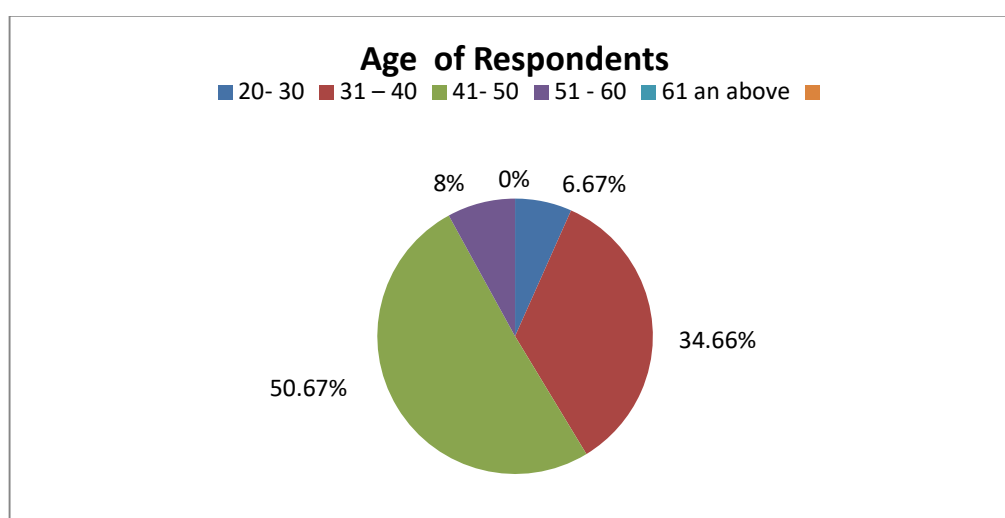
Socio-economic profile is made from socio-economic factor. It helps to understand the socio-economic status of the family. It is a combination of age, education, occupation and other related factors.

## 1. Age:

**Table – 1**  
**Age of Respondents**

Age group	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20- 30	5	6.67%
31 – 40	26	34.66%
41- 50	38	50.67%
51 - 60	6	8.00%
61 an above	0	0
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Survey



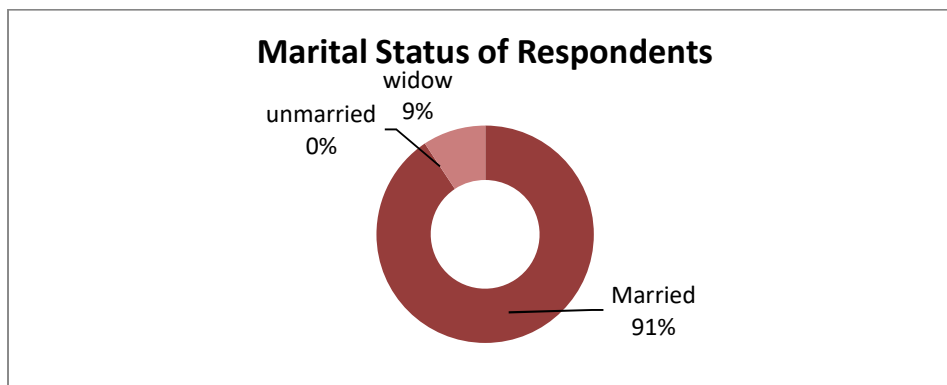
The Table 1 shows that majority of women vegetable vendors are under the age group of 41-50, followed by 34.66% women vegetable vendors who are comes under the age group of 31 -40. Only 6.67% of women vegetable vendors are from the age group of 20 to 30 years and 8% from the 51-60 years.

## 2. Marital Status:

**Table- 2**  
**Marital Status of Respondents**

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Married	68	90.67%
unmarried	0	0%
widow	7	9.33%
	75	100%

Source: Field Survey



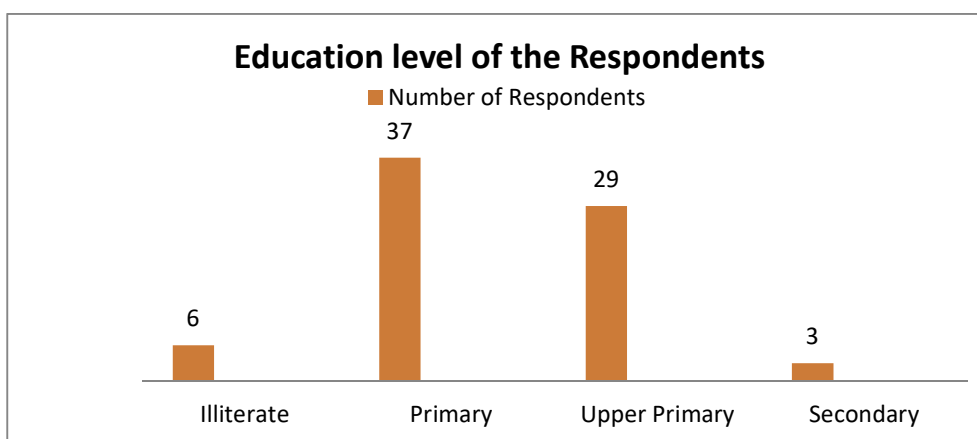
The Table 3 illustrates that all the women vegetable vendors are married and no one is unmarried and 7 of them are widowed.

### 3. Education level:

**Table- 3**  
**Education Level of Respondents**

Educational Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	6	8%
Primary	37	49.33%
Upper Primary	29	38.67%
Secondary	3	4%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Survey



The Table – 3 provides that 8% women vegetable vendors are illiterate and remaining 92% are literate. The percentage of women vegetable vendors with primary education is approximately 49% and near about 39% of are studied up to the upper primary level. But there is negligible

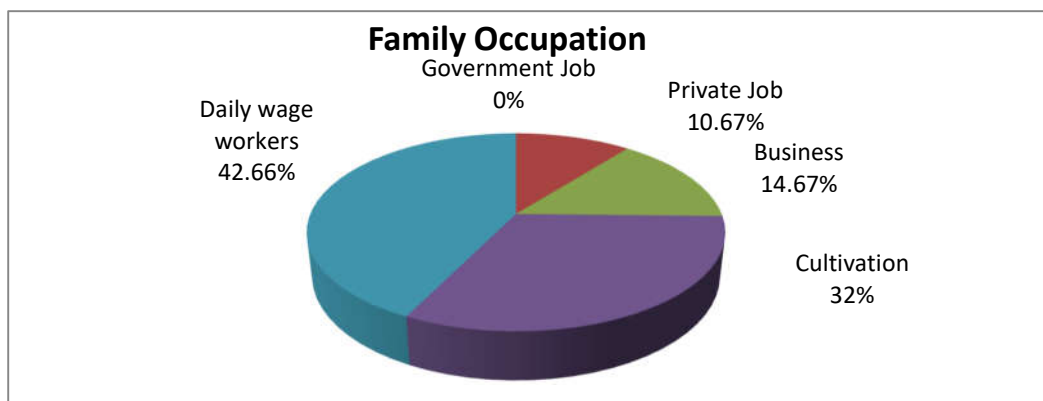
portion of women vegetable vendors have studied up to secondary level. No women vegetable vendors have studied more than secondary level.

#### 4. Family Occupation:

**Table: 4**  
**Family Occupation**

Occupation	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Government Job	0	0%
Private Job	8	10.67%
Business	11	14.67%
Cultivation	24	32%
Daily wage workers	32	42.66%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Survey



The Table shows that majority of respondents family occupation is daily wages. That means their parents or husband are daily wage earners. 32% of the respondent's family income is cultivation and 14.67 % of the respondent's family occupation is business. Only 10.67 % of the respondent's parent or husband is engaged in private job and there is not a single women vegetable vendor whose male member of the family engaged in government job.

#### 5. Family type

**Table: 5**  
**Types of Family**

Type of family	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Joint family	13	17.33%
Nuclear family	62	82.67%
Total	75	100%

Source: Field Survey

The Table shows that 82.67% of the respondents live in nuclear families and remaining 17.33% of them live in joint family. They also stated that all of them are coming from rural area.

#### 6. Reasons for starting business:

The women street vendors were asked to describe the reasons why they were engaged themselves as vegetable vendor. The following Table illustrated the reasons as follows:

**Table: 6**  
**Reasons for starting business:**

Sl.No	Parameter	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Financial need	39	52%
2	Lack of other employment opportunity	5	6.7%
3	Sense of self achievement	29	38.7%
4	To continue family occupation	2	2.6%
	Total	75	100%

Source: Field Survey

The Table- 6 shows the reason behind why they started business. The table shows that more than half respondents started business due to financial need. Followed by 38.7% respondent started vegetable business due to self achievement. Only 6.7% started business due to lack of other employment opportunity and 2.6% engaged to continue their family occupation.

#### Problems of Women vegetable vendors:

The study paid a lot of attention to find out problems faced by the women vegetable vendors. The information collected from the respondents it is observed that they faced many problems. Out of the problems they have faced, the major problems are- 1. Financial problem, 2. Marketing problem and 3. Family problem. The Table shows the distribution of major problems faced by women vegetable vendors.

Sl. No	Problems	No. of Respondents	percentage	Ranks
1	Financial problem	67	89.33%	2
2	Marketing problem	70	93.33%	1
3	Family problem	62	82.67%	3
Total Respondents - 75				

Source: Field Survey

Out of 75 respondents, near about 90% respondents stated that they have faced financial problem. 93.33% respondents stated that they have faced marketing problem and 82.67% stated that the family problem is one of the major problem they have faced.

**Findings and discussion:**

The analysis of the socio-economic profile of sample women vegetable vendor shows that the largest concentration of women vegetable vendors is in the age group of 31 to 50. This indicates that majority of women vegetable vendor ( $34.66\% + 50.67\% = 85.33\%$ ) are engaged in vegetable vending in mid age of their life. It may be in this age almost all of them have married and for maintaining their coupled life they need greater income in order to be able to meet different social responsibility. Regarding marriage it is observed from the collected data that all the women vegetable vendors are married and 7 of them are widowed.

Regarding education profile of the respondents it is observed that most of them poor educational background. Near about 50% of the respondents belonged to the category of primary level and about 39% belonged to the category of upper primary level. Out of total respondent 8% are illiterate and only 4% of them having secondary level education. From the education profile it is observed that majority of selected women have low level of education. From the result it is clear that they have not achieved required educational qualification for any government or private job.

Regarding family occupation majority of them have daily wage worker followed by cultivation. Only few of them have private job and no one have government job. Therefore, it is observed that the most of the male member of their family have no regular income. Therefore, women of the family also required to move to fulfill their financial need. It is also observed that majority of the respondents are from nuclear family. Therefore, husband only the earner member of the family.

Regarding the reason for engaged themselves as vegetable vendors; it is observed that financial need is the major reason why they are engaged themselves as vegetable vendor or in other words why they started business. Secondly, they mentioned that sense of self achievement is the another major reason to start business. Now a days women are considered themselves equivalent to men in all respect. Now they are not confined themselves within the four wall of kitchen. They want to do something, earn something which directly or indirectly assists the male member of the family to solve financial problem.

From the study it is found that women vegetable vendor have faced financial problem due to their low family income. They also stated that some of them have no knowledge of taking loan from bank and some of them stated that although they have know about loan facilities available,

they are not interested to be indebted with bank. Marketing problem is another problem for them. It is because of lack of permanent place of market. For selling their goods they have to move different places. Therefore, to maintain their dual responsibility such as household as well as business activities, they need assistance from other members of the family. But due to nuclear family they have limited family member to assist them or sometime other family members does not support or assist them in this respect.

### **Conclusion:**

Women's participation in business play an significant role in economic development of a country. Rural women now seeking gainful participation in several fields due to fast changes in society, technology, modernization and globalization. Now women in rural area also want to do something and becoming economically independent. Therefore, it can be concluded that if need based assistance from family and society then they will incrementally enter in to business activities and bring a positive impact on their family and society, and contribute to the economy of the nation.

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