

From Margins to Mainstream: Uncovering Urban Informality of Street Vending in Kirtipur

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Abstract

Street vending is crucial in fostering economic growth and providing livelihood opportunities, particularly for urban migrants with limited formal employment prospects. This study examines the drivers, financial performance, and challenges street vendors face in Kirtipur municipality, Nepal. Findings reveal that street vending is primarily driven by necessity, with 53.33% of respondents citing the inability to secure formal sector jobs and 51.67% pointing to a lack of alternative skills. Respondents reveal that the sector is profitable, with 98.33% of vendors reporting profits and 55% achieving monthly savings between NPR 15,000 and NPR 30,000. Despite financial literacy and access to banking for 75% of respondents, initial investments predominantly came from informal sources, reflecting limited access to formal credit. Key challenges include weather conditions (80%), municipal interventions (65%), and inadequate infrastructure, such as drinking water (48.33%) and sanitation facilities (41.67%). The study highlights the need for local governments to implement skill development programs, formalize the sector, and invest in infrastructure to enhance the sector's viability. Inclusive policies and financial support mechanisms are essential to mitigate risks and foster sustainability. Future research could adopt longitudinal methods or broader coverage to provide deeper insights into the dynamics of street vending across diverse contexts.

Keywords: Street vending, Informal sector, Street vendor

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Introduction

Street vending business is not a new phenomenon. Lack of gainful employment coupled with poverty in rural areas has pushed people out of their villages to seek a better survival strategy in the cities. These migrants do not possess the skills or the education to enable them to find good pay and secure employment in the formal sector. So, they have no choice but to settle for work in the informal sector. Conflict-affected people generally migrated to urban centres during the political upheaval for safe living and secure subsistence livelihoods, and the trend is not slowing even in normal times. Low-skilled rural migrants live in all countries of Asia, but they are more prevalent in poorer countries such as Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Vietnam (Bhowmik, 2005).

Street vending is an important sector in promoting economic growth, employment creation, and on-the-job training or skills development. It can potentially alleviate poverty through income generation from the sector (ESCAP, 1995). In other words, it is a means of survival and confers financial independence. Street vending creates economic resources to sustain vendors' livelihoods and those who benefit from their services, especially low-income families (Tripp, 1997). In all these cases, the profit margins from street trading activities depend on the size and location of the business, the tax burden, the level of education, the initial investment into the business, gender and the type of commodities sold. However, given the poor conditions of street vendors, most traders make minimal but reasonable profits (Adhikari, 2011; Bell & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014).

Income generated contributes to daily expenditure for family livelihood needs. Furthermore, the income earned from this business can be spent on commodities that are not related to the current business operation such as buying agricultural land supporting children's education, paying medical fees and medical insurance (Turner & Schoenberger, 2011).

In Nepal, urban centres are the attractions for the unemployed and under-employed population. Due to the lack of resources and opportunities in the rural areas, and in the situation of post-conflict in the country, there is a massive influx of population, largely to most of the Terai urban centres and to Kathmandu. With a lower competence level absorbed in the formal economic sector, these migrants get attracted to informal economic activities. Street vending is one survival option for these migrants to get attracted to informal economic activities. These informal activities are reflected in informal markets: in streets and open sector have become part of the city culture in Asia including Nepal (Acharya, 2008; ILO, 2022).

Within Kathmandu Metropolis, excluding a few modern commercial and residential areas, the footpaths are lined up with vendors ranging from cobblers, vendors of fruits and vegetables to cloth, bags, readymade cloths, retail items, prepared food, books/magazines, shoes/belt, undergarments and others (Adhikari, 2011; Bhattarai & Pathak, 2020), such informal occupations lead to precarity in terms of wage Parajuli (2014), household capital formation Thapa-Parajuli et al. (2020), and many others..

Kirtipur and many other urban parts of Nepal have been experiencing rapid population growth. In cities and towns, most people find it difficult to get jobs in the formal economic sectors due to their limited education and lack of skills for formal employment. In their quest to make a living, many of these people have limited choices other than taking to the streets by engaging in street vending activities. Street vending, however, has not yet been integrated as a component of urban economies in Nepal. Although the sector has not been accommodated within the city and national policies, it provides employment opportunities as a means of income generation for the urban poor, especially for those who migrate from rural areas. It also provides consumers with convenient and accessible retail options and forms a vital part of the social and economic life of a city.

The importance of this sector has, therefore, been underestimated, neglected, and usually seen more as a liability rather than a potential resource of employment creation and source of national income generation (Kusakabe, 2006). The result is that the obstacles that the operators of the sector face and the contribution to their socio-economic well-being are less understood and less recognised (Bromley, 1998; Muiruri, 2010; Teltscher, 1994) reported a lack of research and accurate data on the subject matter, while other informal activities, such as production and manufacturing, have received more research attention. It is, therefore, difficult to obtain accurate and reliable information on the street vending sector, resulting in a lack of initiation and implementation of appropriate and timely policy interventions, unlike in other informal activities such as manufacturing.

Street vendors are exposed to different risks and conflicts of varied forms and nature, which have led to arrests and confiscation of goods, as local authorities deem these activities to be an affront to the full realisation of aesthetic, social and economic standards for modern cities. In addition, policies, regulations, and institutional support programs are not available or designed for street vending activity. This is the case in Kirtipur, where street vending, a part of the informal economy, does not feature substantially in many government policies. The conditions in which street vendors operate are, therefore, not favourable, resulting in many problems while running their activities, even though they play an important role in the country's socioeconomic development.

Street vending in Kirtipur is a growing sector that deserves careful and research attention like any other economic activity. However, there is limited information and little research on street vending in Kirtipur today. This study, therefore, seeks to fill in the gap by analysing the contribution of street vending to household income in Kirtipur municipality. In this context, this paper aims to identify the factors that have led individuals to engage in street vending, assess their financial performance, and account for the challenges they encounter in running their day-to-day business. The findings might help local governments and other stakeholders understand the importance of informal businesses and their role in facilitating them when needed. This section serves as an introduction, with the subsequent one summarising the related literature. The third section elaborates on the methodology, followed by the presentation of results and discussion. Finally, we conclude with pertinent references at the end.

Street vending in Nepal and abroad: Brief review

This chapter reviews the literature related to street vending by focusing on the literature associated with the research topic. The purpose is to explore what other authors and scholars have written and be able to identify factors for analysing the situation in Kirtipur.

The thematic review examined theoretical concepts and fresh subjects of literature. A thematic literature study of research publications has been conducted to establish the level of the informal sector. This section includes street vending practices from both developed and developing countries.

Different scholars and organisations have given several definitions of the informal sector and street vending. The informal sector is made up of businesses that produce goods or services with the primary goal of providing jobs and income to the people involved. The informal sector is a subset of unincorporated businesses that are not established as separate legal entities their owners (OECD, 2019). The informal sector has been defined as involving the production and sale of goods and services that are not registered with the government or are hidden from the government for tax and welfare reasons but are otherwise legal (Williams, 2011).

Informal employment has been defined as the entire number of informal jobs, whether carried out in formal sector firms, informal sector enterprises, or households, or the total number of individuals engaged in informal occupations within a certain reference period (CBS/GoN, 2019).

From the above definitions, street vending, like another informal sector, is unregistered, unprotected, underground and unknown economic activities in goods and services are produced to avoid tax payments to the government and avoid social security contributions. It is also stated that the informal sector avoids having to comply with some legal labour market criteria such as minimum wages, maximum working hours and safety measures in the workplace. The most noticeable indication of the informal sector is street vending, due to low employment opportunities, less education and less skilled and mainly found in urban public areas all around the world.

Street vendors help many small-scale industries to flourish by marketing the products that they manufacture (Bhowmik, 2005). Bhowmik estimated that around 30 per cent of the Mumbai workforce buys at least one meal a day from street vendors. Vendors need to obtain credit for their economic activities, but they are part of the informal economy; they have no access to credit from formal financial institutions. So, they borrow money from various other sources at exorbitant rates for social protection purposes to meet the costs entailed for healthcare, medications, maternity expenses, accidents, children's education and so on. Street vendors occupy the urban space for their livelihood and the eviction and nuisance start because they are considered as illegal encroachers upon public space.

Destombes (2010) conducted a study on street vendors, their livelihood and influences on the social capital in Cebu city. Street vendors have desired goals. They want to expand their business and carry on within the same framework they are acting in. Their main goal is to improve their business and expand their business and revenues to improve their livelihood. He concluded the microbusiness of street vending is more than a sponge for less fortune's dwellers, it can be career for people coming from poor backgrounds, and it can be a life achievement and desired goal as well. Their voice is now heard at policy level due to effort of their organization CCUVA. Through their stimulating efforts in creating and maintaining street vendor's organization an equal division is made of street vendors activities throughout old downtown.

Saha (2011) showed that street vendors can play a very important role in the urban informal economy by generating employment and by supporting both the urban poor as well as rich. Street vendors depend on moneylenders and wholesalers for access to credit for their business as well as for social security purposes. The vendors are often forced to pay exorbitant rates of interest to borrow money, which in turn pushes them into a debt trap. The reasons for borrowing are social security and investment in business. The excessive long working hours, poor safety and security conditions at the workplace, and illegal compensation to local authorities are contributing towards a deterioration in their working environment as well as acute deprivation among these workers.

Kachere (2011) carried out a study to investigate the impact of informal trade on poverty reduction in Zimbabwe. The findings show that informal cross-border trade contributes positively to poverty-to-poverty reduction. The contribution has been noticed through the improvement in the socioeconomic well-being of traders, traders to acquire assets, and improved food security. This calls for the government to develop policies and regulations for effective informal business operations, hence contributing to national development. In sub-Saharan countries where formal employment is little and the level of education of many youths is minimal, informal business could serve as an alternative source of employment.

Uwitije (2016), in the research titled "Contribution of Street Vending on Livelihood of Urban Low-Income Households in the City of Kigali, Rwanda", studied street vending using a non-experiment design, a purposive sampling method and participant observations to collect data. 90 street vendors were sampled with both closed and open-ended questions. The study found that street vending is an alternative source of livelihood for a significant number of urban poor people. With the necessary institutional and infrastructure support, the sector can be environmentally sensitive and economically viable. It significantly helps in reducing unemployment and increasing the incomes of the vendors even though street vending is not legally recognized. Moreover, the researchers are

looking forward to legalizing SV and planning for an appropriate location, registering SV organizations, licensing, formulating SV policy and strengthening stakeholder relationships.

Roever and Skinner (2016) conducted research on the size, composition and contribution of street vending along with the exclusionary policies and practices in India, Lima and Peru. They found out that collective action among vendors has resulted in more innovative policies. Furthermore, a lack of transparency and due process has enforced high costs on vendors. Street Vendor's Act in India recognized street vending as a legitimate livelihood, which put in place basic livelihood protections.

Chille (2020) studied "The Influence of Street Vending Business on Household Characteristics in Dar es Salaam and Coast Region in Tanzania" by using a survey method for data collection. Study reveals that there is a positive relationship between the small household and the person involved in the business. There is also a positive relationship between street vendor's income and household size. The larger household size has a very small business value (income). Moreover, the author recommended there is a need to develop plans in support of the fast-growing informal sectors through training and giving them better business opportunities such as credit and saving facilities.

Timalsina (2012) has analysed the livelihood of street vendors in the urban area of Kathmandu metropolitan city, Nepal. He has compared the livelihood of migrant street vendors with their access to assets in the origin and destination. He found street vendors in Kathmandu have been able to get more access and enhanced their capital assets as compared to agricultural works. They have increased their financial and human capital assets by getting better access to physical and political capital assets. In the context of rural Nepal, there is a lack of physical and political capital, and people have not been able to achieve strong financial and human capital; however, they are living by creating livelihoods based on natural and social capital. He concluded that communities in different contexts vary in accessing assets for their livelihoods, and the situation of livelihoods varies according to the availability of access to assets.

Parajuli (2013) described livelihood opportunities of street vendors: a study of Ason, Indra Chowk and Khulla Munch of Kathmandu metropolitan city by using primary as well as secondary information. The study found that street vending has been providing employment opportunities to a significant number of the population. It was found that the income level of street vendors was gradually increasing, and their well-being also increased as they were able to send their children to schools. However, lack of proper plans and programs of the government has made the vending profession always at the higher side of risk. Government agencies/authorities were not able to give permanent solutions to the issues related with street vendors. On the other perspective increasing number of the street vendors started to become another challenge in the present context. There has been no space available now at the major business areas of Kathmandu district which has created additional problem of the space to the new vendors. It was observed many cases, street vendors were not seen to obey rule of such as traffic rules, security issues etc. Moreover, researcher out forwards the various suggestions for further managing street vending like government should make policy of registration for vendors and demarcation of city spaces. Street vending can be brought under the legality, and if the taxes can be collected street vending also contribute towards GDP.

Shrestha (2013) analysed "A study on the street vendors of Kathmandu municipality" based on field observation and collection of data through questionnaire. Fifteen questions in the schedule, including information on demographic background, factors leading to engagement in street vending, sources of inspiration and health-related problems. The study found that the number of street vendors is increasing day by day. Migrants from rural areas arriving in the city for gainful employment and who do not possess the skills, knowledge and education to qualify for a better-paid job in the formal sector were found to settle for street vending. Among women, street vending is the secondary work, whereas, among men, it is the primary work. The main expenditure of vendors is on fulfilling the basic needs of the family. Income earned through street vending has increased the financial independence and decision-making power of women within the household. Street vendors seem to suffer from different health problems. Among the most common are gastritis, headache, backbone pain and cold or fever. In addition, the author recommends the government provide proper management of street vendors, and this includes providing a safe and suitable location away from busy roads for them to operate their business. To ensure that the human rights of street vendors are not violated, street vending should be legalized. Proper laws and regulations should be formulated to this end.

Adhikari (2018) diagnosed income generation in the informal sector of the street vendors of Kathmandu metropolitan city using a concerned, structured questionnaire for primary data collection and secondary data from office records, books and bulletins, and periodic and annual reports of different government agencies. The study found that street vendor's income increases with the increase in investment, education and labor supply. This study also found that a

large number of the population is involved in trade in the street to earn that livelihood; even though the level of income and profit in this sector's activities are lower than from other businesses, more people are involved in the vending business. In addition, author argued if street vending can be brought under the legality, and if taxes can be collected it will groom as one of the best forms of entrepreneurship that make sizeable contribution to the economy.

Sharma and Pradhan (2017) studied the petty street vendors and their livelihoods of the Kathmandu valley using standard observation protocol sheet, GPS, informal discussions with the vendors based on checklist and available existing documents. By observing the historical evolution of street vendors in Kathmandu valley, study found that petty vendors are mostly migrants with single source of petty trading as they are in the economically deprived situation. Further, paper explored that convenient is one of the most essential factors to determine the variation in spatial location pattern of the petty street vendors in the Kathmandu valley.

Karna and Shrestha (2019) studied the effect of street vending on the lives of vendors and on urban space, using structured questionnaire for primary data collection from two areas of Kathmandu valley. The study explored positive and negative effects of street vending activities on the lives of street vendors and on urban space was found out using mixed research method. Positive effects were seen to be more prominent as compared to negative effects. The negative effects can be minimized to a greater extent with provision of space allocation for them.

Bhattarai and Pathak (2020) analyzed the business income of street vendors, factors influencing street vendors net business income, and the poverty implication of street vending in the Kathmandu valley using primary cross sectional data from randomly selected 450 street vendors of five locations Balaju, Lagankhel, Kalanki, Ratnapark and Suryabinayak. Based on the result from structured questionnaire, study found that average net business income per month of street vendors was Rs. 22,500 which is influenced by educational level, experience, sales and working hours per day. Further, the study found 54 percent of street vendors to have consumption above the poverty line which was covered by their net business income. Moreover, authors argued that street vending should not be viewed just as problem of the street, proper management of this could contribute to the livelihood of thousands of people and provides goods and services at affordable price to low-income consumer

The given review of literature shows that there are only a few studies related to the street vending. In addition some were related to specific issues of street vending only. Hence, the present study aims at fulfilling this gap by taking the household level data from Kirtipur Municipality of Kathmandu district to explore the status of street vendors in the study area.

Sampling and Data

This study is primarily based on field surveys, where we administered a pre-tested structured questionnaire to interview 60 randomly selected street vendors in Kirtipur. The interviews captured the vendors' socio-economic and financial status, as well as their levels of satisfaction. Additionally, we interviewed key informants and conducted four focus group discussions to cross-validate the data and further explore the potential severity and precarity of the street vending business. Primarily, descriptive analysis was performed, and the information was triangulated when necessary to ensure accuracy.

Results

Street vending: Livelihood option vs deliberate occupational choice

We asked each respondent why they chose this business. They were allowed to select more than one option if they wished, and their responses are summarized in Table 4.1 below, arranged in descending order. Street vending looks more like a livelihood necessity than a deliberate occupational choice.

Table 1: Reason for choosing street vending business (Multiple responses)

SN	Factors that led to Street vending	Number	%
1	Unable to join the formal sector or formal jobs	32	53.33
2	Lack of other skills to go beyond street venting	31	51.67
3	Street vending is a secondary source of income	27	45.00
4	Street vending helps improve income level	14	23.33
5	Street vending continues as a family business	11	18.33
6	Street vending has opportunities to earn	11	18.33
7	Street vending is an easy-to-run business	9	15.00
8	High level of unemployment and no jobs available	8	13.33

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Based on the data in Table 1, the main reasons respondents chose street vending as a business include being unable to join the formal sector (53.33%) and having inadequate skills suitable for other businesses than street vending (51.67%), like driving and typing or office support skills and so on. This indicates that many vendors are driven by limited opportunities elsewhere, followed by limited skills they possess compared to other alternatives. A significant portion (45%) view street vending as a secondary source of income, while 23.33% see it as a way to improve their income levels. The first profession or occupation hardly covers the total expenses in the peri-urban areas of Nepal. Thus, people seek alternative means of income generation, as the people in our sample are revealed. Additionally, 18.33% entered the business due to family involvement or perceived opportunities. Fewer respondents (15%) found it easy to run, and a small percentage (13.33%) cited high unemployment as a motivating factor.

Financial aspects of the street vending business

Variables which provide overall information related to the economic status of street vendors are included below.

Table 2: General financial aspects of street vending

Profitability of street vending	Profit	Loss	Total
	59.00	1.00	60.00
	(98.33%)	(1.67%)	(100%)
Sources of financing for the street vending	Loan	No Loan	Total
	16.00	44.00	60.00
	(26.67%)	(73.33%)	(100%)
Source of loan for the vending business	Informal	Formal	Total
	12.00	4.00	16.00
	(75%)	(25%)	(100%)
The sources of collateral for the loan	Gold	Land	Total
	1.00	3.00	4.00
	(25%)	(75%)	(100%)
Respondents with bank account	Yes	No	Total
	45.00	15.00	60.00
	(75%)	(25%)	(100%)

All street vendors are making a profit operating their street vending business, which is 98.33 percent of the total respondents who revealed it. 26.67 % of respondents take loans, and 73.33% have not taken any loans. About 75% take loans from family and friends, and 25% from financial institutions. For the collateral, 75% put land and 25% gold.

Table 3: Income, Saving and Initial Investment (NRS)

Monthly Income	Frequency (%)	Monthly Saving	Frequency (%)	Initial Investment	Frequency (%)
Below 15000	2.00 (3.33)	Below 5000	3.00 (5.00)	Below 20000	28.00 (46.67)
15000-30000	27.00 (45.00)	5000-15000	22.00 (36.67)	20000-35000	2.00 (3.33)
30000-45000	23.00 (38.33)	15000-30000	33.00 (55.00)	35000-50000	14.00 (23.33)
45000 Above	8.00 (13.33)	30000 Above	2.00 (3.33)	50000 Above	16.00 (26.67)
Total (%)	60.00 (100.00)		60.00 (100.00)		60.00 (100.00)

Table 3 shows that 3% of street vendors earned an income below Rs. 15000, whereas 45% of respondents earned income in the range of Rs.15001-30000. Similarly, 38.33% earned between Rs. 30001-45000 per month, and 8 respondents, that is 13.33%, earned above Rs. 45000. This is graphically represented as follows. The above table shows that 55% vendors monthly saving range in between 15001-30000.

Among all respondents 36.67% vendors save 5001-15000 that. Likewise 5% saves below 5000, 3.33% respondents save above 30000 respectively. We can express furthermore by following pie-chart. Out of a total of 60 respondents, 75% (45 individuals) reported having a bank account, while 25% (15 individuals) indicated they do not. This shows a

majority of respondents have access to formal banking services. However, a significant minority remains unbanked, highlighting potential barriers or preferences for alternative financial systems. Out 60 respondents 11.67% vendor's initial investment is below 5000, where 35 respondents invest in between 5001-20000 as initial investment. Similarly 3.33% vendors invest range in between 20001-35000. 23.33% respondents invest 35001-50000 as initial investment. 16 respondents invest maximum amount which is 50000 above that is 26.67%.

Table 4: Source of Investment

SN	Source of investment	Frequency (%)
1	Informal borrowing from family, friends and others	42 (78.00%)
2	Selling gold, land and other durable property sale	14 (23.33%)
3	Formal financial institutions, including cooperatives	4 (6.67%)
5	Pearson Chi-square value with (df=2, Pr = 0.000)	23.9414

Above table shows that most of respondents collect initial investment from their family member or friends that is 70%. 23.33% respondents start their business by selling their own property. Only few that is 3 respondents take loan from financial institutions to run street vending business that is 5%. We can present this result with the help of following pie-chart.

Risk associated with the street vending at the study area

Table 5: Challenges Faced by Street vendors (Multiple responses)

SN	Perceived risk for street vending	Respondents	%
1	Weather induced discomforts	48	80.00
2	Municipalities intervention	39	65.00
3	Drinking water	29	48.33
4	Toilet and other sanitation-related	25	41.67
5	Conflict among street vendors	24	40.00
6	Bribery to local governments	3	5.00
7	Other (Storage related discomfort(1), Racial discrimination (1) and Formal shopkeeper's unnecessary intervention (1), which sums up to 3.)	3	5.00

Most of street vendors take a weather as a prime risk factor in the business. Among 60 respondents 80% respondents face a weather as a main challenge. Where 65% take government intervention at second major risk for them. Likewise drinking water, toilet, conflict among street vendors, bribery that is 48.33%, 41.67%, 40%, and 5% respectively. 5% respondents also face storage facility, racial discrimination and shopkeeper intervention as a risk in this business.

Discussion

The study's primary goal is to study socio-economic status of street vending in Kirtipur municipality. The study's findings demonstrate that most respondents are involved in street vending due to being unable to join the formal sector. In Table 5, the multiple responses are included. About 53.33% of respondents engaged due to being unable to join the formal sector. Due to lack of skill 51.67% involved likewise secondary source of income (45%) for improvement in income level (23.33%), family business (18.33%), seeing opportunities (18.33%), easy to operate (15%) and high level of unemployment (13.33%).

The study by Uwitije (2016) concluded that most people engage in street vending in search of employment. The second most influential factor in attracting people to street vending is dissatisfaction with previous employment (27.78%). There are similarities between the factors leading to street vending. The main contradictory part is that the results of the variables are totally different. This may occur due to the study area, socio-demographic background, etc.

Street vending is adopted by many people in the study area. Adaptation includes not only street vendors but also the public, who always connect with vendors as customers. Study shows all street vendors get profit from business. Street vendors are financially literate. They had bank accounts where they performed regular transactions as per their need. To start their business, 70% of respondents manage initial investment from family and friends, whereas 23.33% start with the sale of their own property (self-managed). Only 5% arrange from loan. According to the initial investment table, most of the respondents start with Rs. 5001-20000 with 35%, and 26.67% is the second highest among respondents where they invest more than 50000.

The maximum amount of earnings per month ranged between 25001- 30000, 30001-45000, and above 45000, which is 45%, 38.33%, and 13.33%, respectively. The lowest earning range was below 5000, which is 3.33%. Parajuli (2013) concluded that the highest respondents' earning per month was below 5000, which is 44%. There is a difference in income range among respondents. The study area, competition among vendors, and the number of street vendors in the study area are major factors of contrast.

Most vendors face many challenges. A study found that 80% of respondents associate weather with business. The second-most common risk faced by respondents is government intervention, at 65%. Drinking water facilities, toilets, conflict among vendors, and bribery, at 48.33%, 41.67%, 40%, and 5%, are other difficulties faced by vendors. In a similar vein, Karna and Shrestha (2019) reveal that 48% of vendors suffer from municipal intervention, and the second challenge is sanitation, which is 18.7%. In Kirtipur, there is low traffic as compared to Kathmandu metropolitan, that why government authority does not attack as much as in Kathmandu metropolitan. The result may differ with Karna and Shrestha (2019), it's because of study area. Kirtipur is growing city with less crowd and traffic of vendors and customer. Ignored livelihood aspect of street vending in particular and informality in general had other socio-economic and policy dimensions to consider. During unforeseen natural disaster, it can help reduce vulnerability (Bhandary et al., 2020), local development and sustainability implications (Khatri et al., 2018), and policy interventions like Green Intervention (Bhujju et al., 2014) . It has the cost of production dimension and consumption implications also (Paudel et al., 2020). Keeping these points in mind and the fact-based analysis in this paper, we conclude the paper with some doable policy suggestions in the following section.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study on street vending in Kirtipur municipality reveals that the primary drivers for engaging in this occupation are necessity rather than deliberate choice. Among respondents, 53.33% cited an inability to secure formal sector jobs as the main reason, while 51.67% attributed their involvement to a lack of alternative skills. Additionally, 45% engaged in street vending as a secondary income source, and 23.33% viewed it as a means to improve their earnings. Family business continuation and perceived opportunities accounted for 18.33%, while only 15% considered it an easy-to-operate business. Notably, a minority (13.33%) pointed to high unemployment as a factor, underlining street vending as a survival strategy for many in the area.

The financial analysis highlights profitability as a consistent feature of street vending, with 98.33% of respondents reporting profits. Most vendors (73.33%) did not rely on loans for their business, and among those who did, informal sources such as family and friends accounted for 75% of borrowings. Initial investment patterns varied, with 46.67% of respondents starting their businesses with less than NPR 20,000, while 26.67% invested over NPR 50,000. Monthly incomes predominantly ranged from NPR 15,000 to NPR 45,000, with 55% reporting monthly savings between NPR 15,000 and NPR 30,000. Despite financial literacy and access to banking for 75% of respondents, initial investments largely came from informal sources or property sales, reflecting limited access to formal financial institutions.

Street vendors in Kirtipur face significant challenges, with 80% identifying weather conditions as the primary risk and 65% citing municipal interventions. Other difficulties include lack of drinking water (48.33%), sanitation issues (41.67%), conflicts among vendors (40%), and occasional bribery (5%). Compared to other urban areas like Kathmandu, where traffic and government oversight are more stringent, Kirtipur presents a relatively less restrictive environment for vendors. These findings underscore the precarious nature of street vending as a livelihood, shaped by financial constraints, limited alternative opportunities, and contextual challenges specific to Kirtipur.

To foster the viability and sustainability of street vending as a livelihood in Kirtipur, local government initiatives should focus on creating an enabling environment while addressing the challenges faced by vendors. Since 53.33% of respondents entered street vending due to the inability to join the formal sector and 51.67% cited limited skills, municipal programs could include skill development training and pathways to formalize the industry through accessible licensing processes. Additionally, investments in infrastructure such as weather-resistant vending zones, drinking water facilities (48.33%), and proper sanitation (41.67%) would mitigate key risks identified by vendors. To reduce the 65% incidence of municipal interventions, the local government can design inclusive policies that recognize street vending as a legitimate economic activity while facilitating dialogue between vendors and authorities to address conflicts (40%) and reduce the need for bribery (5%). Financial support through microcredit schemes and partnerships with formal financial institutions can improve access to affordable loans, helping to diversify sources of initial investments, which are currently reliant on informal means (78%). Future studies could expand on this research by adopting longitudinal methods or covering a broader geographic scope to explore the evolving dynamics of street vending in other urban and peri-urban areas.

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