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Socio-economic study of water ball vendors: A study in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Rupandehi

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Abstract: *The present study aims to correlate the socioeconomic characteristics of street fulki vendors and their opportunities and challenges. The study followed a mixed method approach along with 38 vendors taken for rapid questionnaire survey and 5 in-depth interviews. The study was empirically based on Pani Puri vendors in Butwal sub-metropolitan city of Rupandehi district, Nepal. A total of 38 respondents were endorsed for a rapid questionnaire survey while there were five in-depth interviews to triangulate the findings. The study confirmed that the majority of vendors were male and from an economically active age. The business was established with a small investment however there were different motivations for initiating the business. The informal nature of economic transactions, lack of official registration, and professional training are found as the major challenges though the low investment, higher return, greater satisfaction and lower risk of loss are significant opportunities. The study recommends that food hygiene is an important concept to prevent food-borne illnesses and outbreaks which to be addressed while promoting the Pani Puri business in the long run. Moreover, government policies on quality food and hygiene can play an important role.*

Key words: *Pani Puri, street vendors, informal economy, Nepal*

Introduction

Most of the studies in economics and sociological research reveal that livelihood and informal economic activities are inherently interconnected. The informal economy is the diverse set of economic activities characterized by non-formal enterprises, jobs, and workers that are not regulated or protected by the state or its authoritative agency. An informal economy belongs to the informal sector which is also called the grey economy. It is such a part of the economy that is neither taxed nor monitored or has any kind of formal registration in any form of government. The informal sector makes up an unavoidable component of national economies in least developed and developing countries (Charmes, 2012).

However, it is sometimes stigmatized as troublesome and unmanageable in many areas, including markets and business centers. Livelihood strategies and income-generating activities in the informal sector provide critical economic opportunities and benefits for the poor. In Nepal, informal economic activities have been expanding rapidly since the 1990s with the adoption of liberal economic policies (Adhikari, 2018). Vendor business is becoming a popular trend in the informal economy. It includes the trading of vegetables, fruits, casual fancy items, fast foods, water balls (Pani Puri), etc. In Nepal, it is estimated that more than 60 percent of the economically active population is involved in the informal economy. Due to changing patterns of employment and growing livelihood diversification, the informal economy in general and street vendors in particular are rapidly expanding. Half of the business enterprises in Nepal are unregistered, unmonitored, and untaxed. The economic census report 2018 shows that out of the total of 923,027 business establishments operating in Nepal, 49.9 percent or 460,422 firms are not registered, and are counted as informal enterprises. According to the report, out of the 3.22 million persons employed in the country, 25.8 percent or 832,187 persons are employed in the informal sector (CBS, 2019).

Street food is defined in a wider range; mostly as ready-to-eat foods sold and sometimes prepared in public places, notably streets (Palat Narayanan, 2023). Pani puri (water ball) is an informal business activity that is very popular among many street food items. It is not only a cheap commodity accessible on the side of the road, the product is widely available and appeals to people from its unique taste and flavor. However, the socio-economic status of the Pani Puri vendors has been rarely studied in academic research. Therefore, the study aims to analyze the livelihood condition of Pani Puri street vendors of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, including their status, opportunities and challenges, and degree of satisfaction.

Method and Material

The study was conducted in Butwal Sub-metropolitan city. It is one of the local units out of the total 753 in Nepal restructured as per the provision of the federal system adhered with the promulgation of the present Constitution in 2015. It lies at the core area of Rupandehi district of Lumbini province which has been a hub of Hill-Tarai and rural-urban migration covering the peripheral regions/ districts. Butwal has been developed as an economic market that is linked to other huge populated urban centers and market areas. The municipality is divided into 19 wards. As per the National Population and Housing Census, 2021, Butwal Sub-metropolitan city has a total population of 194335 with 50,565 HHs and a 91.3 percent literacy rate (CBS, 2023).

The bank of Tinau River situated on the lap of foothills, adjacent location to Gautam Buddha International Airport, and close proximate to the Nepal-India border are some of the geo-economic characteristics of Butwal. Yet, there is a dominance of the informal economy in many forms. A mixed method approach was followed, though it was a quantitative dominant research design. A total of 38 Pani Puri vendors were selected by snowball sampling where 2 vendors from each of the 19 wards of the municipality were represented purposively. They were endorsed for a

close-ended rapid questionnaire survey at the place of their business stall. To triangulate the findings of these survey methods, 5 purposive in-depth interviews were also conducted as a part of the qualitative method along with an unstructured questionnaire tool. This study was conducted from second week of February to second week of March, 2023 (around one month).

Findings and Discussion

Small economics of Pani Puri and critical research gaps

Pani puri has been developed as a street food without having a permanent built-up structure. The vendors of Pani Puri trade often offer goods for sale to the temporary static structure or mobile stall so that they can easily move from place to place carrying their wares and goods. In this study, it is observed that they use different kinds of stalls, either in cycles, casual pots, or food carts. FAO stated that approximately 25 million people eat street food daily in the world, but there is no scientific estimation for Pani Puri users in Nepal. The cost of this dish is not the same in all areas, somewhere less and somewhere quite high depending on the area and region. Pani puri also has a funny name called Gup Chup in some parts of India (Odisha, and Bihar). It is because while eating the Pani Puri, the whole mouth is filled up, flooding it with bitter and sour water and the eater becomes unable to speak for a while.

Pani Puri business guarantees the economic security of many low-income households and ensures their livelihood. To some extent, it is a source of employment for less skilled and less educated people. This kind of food is prepared on the streets and ready to eat, or partially prepared at home and sold on the streets after further preparation. Though Pani Puri is always appreciated for its unique flavors and convenience eating, street foods are criticized for food security and safety perspective. In addition, it also represents a sector with poor working conditions and an absence of social security. However, its medical and clinical dimension has been much studied rather than socio-economic and cultural dimension. Some representative studies about the microbiological context of Pani Puri in India include Das et al., 2012; Lalita et al., 2017; and Tomar et al., 2018. In Nepal, such studies include Khadka et al., 2018; and Yadav et al., 2019. The studies about the sociocultural impacts are evident with Kundu and Dutta (2020); Mondal and Rajpal (2022) and Thippeswamy (2016).

Mythological story about the origin

There are different mythological stories about the origin and development of Pani Puri. These are not documented in scientific database. According to legends, Draupadi invented Pani Puri in the Mahabharata. When Pandava's brothers Draupadi and mother Kunti, who lost the Kingdom in a game of dice, went into exile, Kunti challenged Draupadi. However, another commonly believed origin of the Pani Puri is from the Mahabharata. Her newly married in-law Kunti had put Draupadi on a course to make food that would satisfy her five sons' hunger. They believe that this was when the new bride came up with Pani Puri. From a historical point of view, Pani

Puri is regarded as an evolutionary event caused by the phulki that was created in the old Kingdom of Magadha (now a part of Bihar) in India from where it entered Nepal along with southern Tarai borders. This street food further became popular in Nepal and extended to the major cities and towns of the hilly districts. As of now, Panipuri is one of the most famous snacks in the country. It is also known by many other names, such as Golgappa, Phuchka, Phulki, etc.

Sample characteristics

A total of 38 Pani Puri vendors were studied in-depth where the majority were male and few were female. It reveals that females have less access to this kind of informal income activities. It might be the cause that females could have just a supportive role in performing this business which is shaped by discriminatory gender roles. Contrary to this, however, most of the respondents (31 out of 38) shared that their customers used to be female while only 7 respondents said that they had male customers as well. This indicates the popularity of Pani Puri among women and girls which might be hormonal attachment to the taste of Pani Puri (spicy, hot, and sour).

While analyzing the age structure, most of the vendors belong to the age group 31-40 years followed by 21-30 years and 41-50 years. This shows a rare engagement was observed for the younger age group under 20 years as well as the elderly age above 51 years. Similarly, out of the total 38 respondents, nearly 98 percent of them were married and only 3 respondents were unmarried. The cases of divorced, separated and widow were not recorded. One reflection of this kind of marital status is that married vendors could have easy and efficient working support to conduct the Pani Puri business. Most of the respondents revealed that they had got school-level attainment followed by the basic level attenders. Interesting is that 12 respondents were illiterate. Though the profession pani puri is not an education-related high-skilled job, it is reflected that still there is some kind of involvement by the non-illiterate vendors who cannot write and read formally. Table 1 summarizes the key statistical findings about the age-sex structure and educational attainment of the sample respondents.

Table 1: Age-sex structure and educational attainment of the sample respondents

Age str.	Male	Female	N	Educational status	N
Under 20	1	-	1	Illiterate (don't read and write)	12
21-30	8	2	10	Basic (primary level)	8
31-40	15	2	17	School level (lower secondary and secondary up to 10 class)	17
41-50	5	3	8	College level (up to intermediate)	1
51 above	1	1	2	Bachelor and above	-
Total	30	8	38	Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Out of the total respondents, the majority (i.e.15) belong to the Madhesi caste groups which include Gupta, Baniya, Yadav, Das, and Shaha. It followed with the respondents who be-

long to Hill upper caste groups including Brahmin and Chettri. 7 vendors were from the Tharu Tarai Janajati group while there were a few Hill Janajatis (1 Magar and 1 Rai). Interestingly, rare respondents were Indians as findings reveal one respondent was found who came from Bengal. All others (37 out of 38) were Nepali nationals. The Bengali vendor had married with Nepalese woman, so she had Nepali citizenship but her husband did not have the citizenship. However, no formal documents are required to establish the Pani Puri business elsewhere, including citizenship, personal account number card, bank details, migration card, marriage certificate, and so on. Table 2 reflects the key findings in relation to the caste/ ethnicity and land ownership of the respondents.

Table 2: Caste/ ethnic structure and literacy status of the sample respondents

Caste/ ethnic groups	N	Land ownership	N
Hill upper caste groups	13	Landless	9
Hill jajajati (Magar, Rai)	2	Less than 1 kattha	20
Tarai janajati (Tharu)	7	1-10 kattha	7
Madhesi	15	11 kattha-1 bigha	2
Indian/ Bangali	1	More than 1 bigha	-
Total	38	Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Taste and processing of making Pani Puri

The most notable feature of Pani Puri is that people are willing to compromise sanitation and wait for hours to receive a taste. The taste of phulki can be a little bit changed as per the necessity of interests and age group of the customers, basically for kids and people who don't like acidic and spicy tastes. The delivery time is relatively short, and on average, 3-4 clients are served at once, with an average dish containing six pieces. When customers put pulki inside their mouth, the ball just bursts and gives them a lip-smacking taste. Indeed, the taste of this water ball is so yummy that one can hardly wait for a longer while.

Box 1: Process of making Panipuri

- First of all, put maida or flour in the mixer machine (as required)
- After that, turn on the machine and add a little bit of water
- Now, let the flour and water that you put inside the machine mix well.
- When the dough is well kneaded, take it out.
- Make sure that the kneaded dough is not too wet and not watered further
- Pour the dough into the Panipuri making machine to make Panipuri.
- From this machine, the Panipuri will come out in a round shape like a Puri.
- After that, fry the Puri in oil and later take it out. In this way, the puris are prepared and are ready to be sold in the market
- How to make water: Pani Puri water can be made mint-coriander pani, garlic (lashun) pani, gud-imli pani, hajma hajam pani, hing pani, and jeera/ dhaniya pani.

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Indeed, a question is recurring: What makes Pani Puri so tasty? The tangy and spicy tamarind water and the coriander and mint flavored water are responsible for making Pani Puri a tasty dish. As presented in Box 1, the process of making Pani Puri is almost the same everywhere the ingredients may vary according to the tradition and skill of the vendors. The mixing of ingredients makes this product a chatpata chaat within a single minute. In recent years, the activity of making and serving Pani Puri chatpata and its consumption with a smiling face has been viral on different kinds of social media including TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube. The average eating time for Pani Puri is 10 minutes for a person, while it can take more time with additional plates and other combo snacks like chatpate.

Areas of Vender business

The findings of the study reveal that the selection of the trading spot is diverse and strategic. This researcher explored at least two such strategic sites in each of the 19 wards. The major areas of such vender spots for Pani Puri include: Ward 1 (Nim chok, Samirdevi tole); Ward 2 (Layans chowk, Fulbari gate); Ward 3 (Pulchowk, Dugamandir side); Ward 4 (Laxminagar, Adarshanagar); Ward 5 (Haat bazar, Amarpath); Ward 6 (Shantipath, Buddhapath); Ward 7 (Hilpark, Deepnagar); Ward 8 (Shanti chowk, Sukkhanagar); Ward 9 (Buspark, Tinkune); Ward 10 (Basecamp, Kalikanagar); Ward 11 (Devinagar, Buddhanagar); Ward 12 (Dhabaha, Nayagaun); Ward 13 (Jholungepool chowk, Belbash); Ward 14 (Belbariya, Tamanagar); Ward 15 (Semlar); Ward 16 (Naranapur); Ward 17 (Motipur chowk); Ward 18 (Dubauli chowk); and Ward 19 (Naharpur-putthargung). Most of the respondents (i.e. 35 out of 38) have a single shop Pani Puri business, while a rare have more than one shop in different places. Similarly, 33 respondents have a single ownership in their business though 5 vendors have a kind of partnership with relatives and friends. It means that there is dominance of single ownership in this business. This may be due to different causes, including a small-scale investment in the Pani Puri business and its temporary nature of establishment. To reflect a viewpoint from water ball vendors in Buspark area:

Before setting up a business like Pani Puri, I need not do many things. This a simple process that I followed. You may go to the market and open a business independently. You may even install a little stall on it in small money and then you will start to earn money. This is not a lengthy and complex process (*Based on personal conversation, 25 February 2023*).

The study has endorsed a question about the factors associated with choosing the places of business, i.e. the reasons that motivated the vendors to set their stalls in a particular locality. As evident in Table 3, most of them shared that they had selected the place for business due to easy access. Following this, 11 respondents shared that they had finalized the place just with the expectation of good business/ profit. It is further evident that 7 respondents had selected the place due to a crowd and high population density. Interestingly, very few, i.e. 3 respondents selected the

business site as the not liable place for paying rent and tax. However, the decision of selecting a place for business is mostly made by the vendors themselves, but sometimes it could be affected by features of the locality and the suggestions of family and relatives as well. Regarding this one of the respondent claim that:

You must visit such a location before deciding to open a store. People eat more and more where there is a larger crowd. I often prefer popular places, such as bus stops, haat bazaar, film halls, exhibition sites, chowks, or the time of leisure in school and college. These locations have a higher chance of visiting people, who are potential customers of Pani Puri (*Based on the personal conversation, 28 February 2023*).

Table 3: Reasons for selecting and deciding the business stalls

	N
Easily available/ accessible	17
High population density	7
The place of having free rent and tax	3
Expectation of good business/ profit	11
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Business history

Pani puri seems the most dominant income-generating sector in the households of the respondents. While 22 of them took it as a primary income source, agriculture was the major income source for 9 respondents, and other business activities for 5 respondents. When asked to the depth, 30 respondents shared that they did not have any kind of working experience or profession other than the Pani Puri. However, 8 vendors had had other kinds of experiences including small fancy, furniture, grocery shops, seasonal wage labor, and mobile repairing shops. Different kinds of economic losses, lockdowns due to the pandemic of COVID-19 and family-related reasons, the respondents continued these activities and now established the Pani Puri business. They had also changed their previous business due to poverty, debt, and lack of investment.

The study further reveals that the Pani Puri business has a long tradition ranging from installing it just for one year to a maximum continuity of 31 years and above. Most of them, i.e. 11 respondents continued their business for 2-5 years, while 8 respondents had established it in the last year. Following this 7 people had continued it in 16-20 years; 6 respondents in 6-10 years and so on. The working pattern of the vendors found that it is often full-time work which continues in all seven days of the week. However, morning time is used for the preparation of spicy water and fulki at home/ living place, and then the business is formally installed in the afternoon time, mostly after lunch hours. Table 4 presents results taking the responses of major income sources at the household level and the continuity of the Pani Puri business with the range of 10 years duration.

Table 4: Major income sources of home and continuity of Pani Puri business

Sectors	N	Continuity of Pani Puri	N
Pani puri business	22	New one (1 yr.)	8
Agriculture	9	2-10 yr	17
Other business activities	5	11-20 yr	8
Services	2	21-30 yr	4
Traditional property	-	31 and above	1
Total	37	Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

While analyzing the influencing factors that have affected the establishment of Pani Puri business, this research finds some interesting reflections. The most obvious cause was less investment (for 17 respondents) followed by the factor of self-motivation and interest (for 13 respondents) and family tradition (for 7 respondents). Only one respondent also shared that the business of Pani Puri was established in a forced condition which might be due to debt or other unavoidable conditions. Table 5 summarizes the study findings in this regard.

Table 5: Influencing and motivating factors for installing Pani Puri business

	N
Less investment	17
Family tradition	7
Self-motivation and interest	13
Forced compulsion	1
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The respondents have shared that they have Pani Puri as a common item of street food. However, some of them have also offered other kinds of fast food services along with Pani Puri. For example, while 22 respondents offered only Pani Puri, 11 respondents offered Pani Puri with other light snacks, such as samosa, nimkin, chaat, tikiya, pakaudi, etc. It is also evident that 5 respondents used to sell Pani Puri as well as other heavy snacks including Momo, chowmin, roti-tarkari, chana, and egg. This shows a diversification of the water ball business which can also attract different kinds of customers and generate income at the expected level. However, it further requires a larger investment, engaged human resources, and some additional infrastructures including larger places for stalls and furniture. Table 6 summarizes findings of the results to illustrate the Pani Puri business and its extension services.

Table 6: Pani Puri business and its extension services

	N
Only pani puri	22
Pani puri with other light snacks	11
Pani puri with other heavy snacks	5
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Investment, income and saving

As the discussion of the above section reveals, Pani Puri business needs a limited investment and infrastructure. Most of the respondents (23 out of 33) had established their stall with an investment ranging from five to twenty thousand. While 6 respondents invested very little (below five thousand), the same number also invested between twenty to fifty thousand. Only two vendors invested fifty thousand to one lakh rupees while one respondent remarked that the business was stalled with massive investment (more than one lakh). As evident in Table 7, Pani Puri business can function smoothly and profitably with a small investment. It has become a low-investment business that can earn a small amount of money. Therefore, if someone wants to start a business with a small amount of money, this seems to be a good option.

Table 7: Investment amount during the installing the Pani Puri business (NPR)

	N
Below 5000	6
5-10'000	12
10-20'000	11
20-50'000	6
50-100'000	2
Above 100'000	1
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The researcher further employed some questions about the sources of investment, i.e. how could the respondents manage investment to initiate their Pani Puri business. Most of them (27 out of 33) shared that they have collected the money by themselves including their previous savings and home property. Following this, seven respondents had borrowed money for investment from relatives and friends; and a few respondents (4) took loans from financial institutions like co-operatives and commercial banks.

While analyzing the daily savings of the business, it is evident (in Table 8) that the majority of the respondents (i.e. 20 out of 33) used to earn within the range of one to two thousand each day. It means they have an earnings of 60,000 at the mean level. Following this, 11 respondents have a daily income of less than 1000 with an average monthly income below 30000. Interest-

ingly, 7 respondents also used to earn more than two thousand per day which means there is an income of at least 60000 per month. This indicates that there is a huge saving and income in the Pani Puri business though it requires very less amount of investment.

Table 8: Daily income estimated by the Pani Puri vendors (NPR)

	N
Less than 1000	11
1-2'000	20
More than 2000	7
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The respondents shared that they could have at least a 25 percent margin on the daily turnover. It indicates that Pani Puri is a high-potential profession of street foods. They could have additional turnover and more income while they are invited to provide catering services for different celebrations, including parties of marriage and birthdays, etc. Almost all the respondents opined that their profit is decreasing in these years due to the high inflation rate. For them, the profit or income is just for subsistence. No more income they could expect so as to buy a home or land in Butwal or its nearby areas. It is difficult to pay the fees of their children and set a standard life even living with rent.

The study employed a Likert scale for understanding the perception of satisfaction in the Pani Puri business (Table 9). Most of the respondents seemed to be satisfied with their business, while seven respondents were highly satisfied. Neutral responses were given by 4 respondents who seemed neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. However, a few (i.e. 3 respondents) were not satisfied with their business. No one was highly dissatisfied. It indicates that the scaling of satisfaction was much (31) against the non-satisfaction (4) taking the mean average 0.8 versus 0.10, respectively.

Table 9: Satisfaction from Pani Puri business

	N
Highly satisfied	7
Satisfied	24
Neutral	4
Not satisfied	3
Highly dissatisfied	-
Total	38

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Hygiene and sanitation of foods

Hygiene and sanitation are the most important prerequisites for food habits. This is however severely criticized in the context of Pani Puri business. As this business is not established professionally, there are some health issues to be standardized. As shown in Table 10, a multiple choice question was asked to the respondents about the different kinds of safety measures they followed. 131 respondents were received by 38 respondents. A majority of responses came to confirm that food items are covered properly (27.71%) followed by washing and drying the hands during work (22%). Another common sanitation measure is keeping and using dustbins which is practiced by 20.61 percent of respondents. Cleaning utensil and equipment was also followed by 16.03 percent of respondents. Similarly, 7.6 percent of responses were evident for avoiding the use of stale and leftover things followed by 6.10 percent using gloves and aprons during work time.

Indeed, street food vendors have limited opportunities for professional training and awareness regarding food safety and hygiene practices. They sell Panipuri/fulki in almost all the popular public places which may be dirty, crowded, and unhealthy. Many studies have shown that the water ball business is excessively handled by food vendors and sold in very dirty surroundings that make them prone to contamination and frequently cause food poisoning and diarrheal diseases. It has been a serious issue of Pani Puri in the worldwide context as well (Khairuzzaman et al., 2014; Krishnasree, et al., 2018; Von Holy & Makhoane, 2006).

Table 10: Safety and sanitation measures during Pani Puri business

	N	%
Washing and drying hands	30	22
Covering foods	35	26.71
Cleaning utensils and equipment	21	16.03
Avoid using stale and leftover things	10	7.63
Using gloves and apron	8	6.10
Keeping and using dustbins	27	20.61
Total	131	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

During the interviews, the respondents shared that in most of the cases they used to have normal hand pump water/ tap water which is also used by many people at their homes. A few of the respondents also used purified jar water in some stances, however, no respondents claimed that they used unhealthy water. They perceive that the customers are being aware of the quality of water in recent years. As one respondent shared, "They [the customers] look here and there at first, and then sometimes give their suggestions as well". When this researcher also talked with customers, they shared that health quality and taste are equally important to them. They feel that

the quality is being improved. However, the irregularity of hand washing and the habits of the vendors using gutkha, tobacco, and smoking have affected the psychology of customers. The customers don't like to compromise with the issues of hygiene and cleanliness.

Challenges and opportunities

Despite being an easy and efficient job, the business of Pani Puri is not often registered. Only two of them are registered in tax-paying government bodies. It means that 36 stalls are not paying tax and they are out of the tax systems. They have placed their stalls in the most common public places and need not pay any rent. However, a few respondents claimed that they had the business placed on rent and used to pay some monthly fares to the land owners. One respondent also lamented that people generally talk about the income of Pani Puri traders but not about the expenses that the vendors need to make for rearing their families on rent in different places.

Another interesting thing is that only one respondent was found to have professional training in Pani Puri and other street foods. They shared that they have learned this skill from their elder family members, relatives, and friends. However, there is a need to have a provision of licensee and professional training about the safety measures and health/ nutritional standards to be maintained while conducting this business. It could increase the professional service, health and hygiene, and monitoring of the business. The research employed the perception-related inquiry of whether the Pani Puri vendors got any supportive role from the local police and administration or not. 30 respondents shared that they were treated in a polite and helpful way while the remaining 8 respondents felt that there were some kinds of threat and domination by the local administration including the police. One respondent complained to this researcher that policepersons on many occasions took Pani Puri for free, without giving money. Some respondents also shared that government officers including police and other job holders, and reputed business persons used to come in their stalls for Pani Puri. However, the majority of the customers belong to college students and household ladies/ girls in most cases.

As reflected in Table 11, it is evident that the most important opportunities for Pani Puri business as per the ranks of the respondents include no obligation of tax payment, low investment, an opportunity for self-employment, easily accessible business spot, good behavior of administration and police (ward and municipal level) and good behavior of the public. It indicates that economic issues are mostly taken as the prime opportunities for the vendors. On the other side, it is also evident that the challenges are multiple and they are mixed in nature. For example, in subsequent raking, the challenges include the availability of credit systems, lack of toilet and public dustbins, safety and security of the business, inappropriate place, lack of capital for investment and service extension, and shortage of water.

Table 11: Opportunities and challenges of the Pani Puri business

Opportunities	Rank	Challenges	Rank
Low investment	2	Lack of capital	5
No liability of tax	1	Inappropriate place	4
Self-employment	3	Problem of credit	1
Accessible spot	4	Safety and security	3
Good behavior of public	6	Toilet and public dustbins	2
Good behavior of administration and police	5	Shortage of water	6
Others	7	Others	7

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The majority of poor people in developing countries, including Nepal obtain food from informal markets but these are often neglected by food safety authorities and little is known about their impacts on public health. This has been developed as a city culture, which is not exceptional to Butwal. Street food vendors are mostly uninformed of good hygiene practices brings foodborne illness and contributes to the spread of diarrheal diseases as they suffer from different transferable diseases which can be an important cause of death in developing countries.

To minimize the challenges and explore more and more opportunities, the local authority (local government of Butwal sub-metropolitan city), the provincial government of Lumbini, and stakeholders such as the Butwal Trade and Commerce Association can do many things. The informal economy can be regulated and monitored. A specific zone or public space can be allocated for fast food services. The municipality needs to prohibit this kind of business from running stalls on the road and corner areas where the mass of the public move here and there. Moreover, they need to be registered and then ensured within the regular mechanism of the tax system. In turn, this could enhance the sustainability of the business and also proper monitoring of the quality standards, including health and hygiene. For this, the municipality can also devise a specific business policy. Moreover, while talking about the health of the people, food consumption is quite related to the issue of environmental safety and harmony. The dust and poor sanitation of Butwal has, directly and indirectly, affected the street food business. This can be improved along with timely construction of the roads and their quality upgrading. However, the municipality seems reluctant to this issue.

Conclusion

Street food has been a characteristic of urbanization, which seems popular in major cities of Nepal including Butwal. Pani Puri business has increased rapidly in the last 10 years as a street food culture. The study concludes that this business not only serves as a source of livelihood for vendors but also different tastes for the customers. This is the major source of income for the vendors. Everybody's mouth waters upon hearing the name of this spicy food. Trading of Pani

Puri can be started with minimum capital, and profit can be made in a short time. Street food business guarantees the economic security of many low-income families and ensures their livelihood. Often, these types of vendors are poor and have little or no knowledge about food safety, the risk of contamination, the importance of sanitation, and hygiene. Therefore, the quality issues are important along with the provision of registration, taxation, training, and motivation.

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