

# A STUDY ON THE BUSINESS PRACTICES OF STREET FOOD VENDORS IN GUWAHATI CITY

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## ABSTRACT

In a diverse country like India, where there exist people of various classes, street food plays a very crucial role. Unlike the other cities, Guwahati city is also having many fast food stalls and restaurants. Street food is ready to eat food or drink sold in a street by a hawker or vendor. Street food is an integral part of society in all countries. As such the maintenance of standard hygiene is a very vital matter. Street food vending serves two important functions. First, it is a source of employment for many people who cannot otherwise be absorbed into the skilled, formal sector of the economy. Secondly, street food vendors perform the task of providing ready- to-eat food to a large cross-section of local people. However, there exist many unseen aspects of the street food vendors. This paper highlights a study which is carried out in Guwahati city of Assam to determine the business practices of street food vendors and to study the problem faced by the street food vendors.

**Keywords:** *Business Practices, Street Food Vending, Standard Hygiene*

## INTRODUCTION

Street food are described as ready to eat foods and beverages prepared and sold by vendors especially in street and another similar public place. According to the Draft National Policy for street vendors, a street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with temporary static structure or mobile stalls. The street vendor comprises one of the most marginalized sections of the urban poor. They play a very dynamic role in the urban economy, providing necessary items, which are both durable and cost effective, to average income earning households at cheap and affordable rates. The sale of street foods also makes a sizeable contribution to the economies of developing countries.

Urbanization has resulted many rural people moved to urban centre in search of jobs. Poverty and gainful employment in the rural areas and in the smaller towns drive large number of people to the cities for work and livelihood. These people generally possess low skills and lack the level of education required for the better paid jobs in the organized sectors. This has led to the rapid growth of the informal sector in most of the larger cities. For the urban poor, street vending has become one of the major means of earning a livelihood, as it requires minor low initial investment and efforts in searching for a job and the skills involved are low.

However, street food business has also become most common business for that informal sector in Guwahati

city. The study deals with street food vending as an enterprise, its importance and significance in the urban economy of Guwahati city. Street food vending serves two important functions. First, it is a source of employment for many people who cannot otherwise be absorbed into the skilled, formal sector of the economy. Secondly, street food vendors perform the task of providing ready-to-eat food to a large cross-section of local people as also to those who come to Guwahati.

The prevalence of street food has gone hand in hand with the growth of a cosmopolitan population coming from different parts of the country. There is also no tradition of street food in Assamese culture. It is only in the last three to four decades that street food vending has come to be prevalent in Guwahati. This is primarily because of migration of different ethnic groups associated with urbanization and industrialization.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies done by different researchers and scholars have empirically analyzed in regard with the innovation in banking services. An earnest attempt has been made to delve into the relevant researchers done on the theme, presented henceforth as follows:

- Bajaj, Mathur & Sharma, (2002) highlighted on safety of Street foods sold in a food plaza in Delhi. Each stall was assessed and scored for a range of facilities and food handling practices, including layout, water supply, equipment, and utensils, waste

disposal facilities, storage, preparation and dish washing. Samples of foods sold, and water used at the outlets were analyzed for microbiological quality. Coli forms were found in 41.7 percent of food samples analyzed; but were not detected in any tap water or stored water. Recommendations are made for improving food safety at the stalls.

- Bhowmick, (2005) asserted that the number of street food vendors is growing in all countries of Asia. In India, the number increased after the economic liberalization policy was initiated in 1991. The government refused to recognize street vending as a legal activity and view these as irritants to city's development.
- Saha (2011) tried to portray the 'working life' of street vendors in Mumbai. The working life of vendors is explained in terms of their financial conditions and the extent of indebtedness, the number of bribes they must pay in order to sustain themselves in the market, their working hours, the issues of public space utilization, and the legal aspect of their activity. The study shows that the street vendors borrow from moneylenders at an exorbitant rate of interest. It has been further found that they have extremely long working hours, which have been continuously increasing over the years.
- Mahanta *et al.*, (2011) highlighted the socio-economic conditions of the vendors and it was observed that majority of street food vendors were mobile food vendors (54%) with the remaining being owners of small restaurants and food handlers. Majority of the food vendors were local that is from Guwahati city (93%). 37% vendors were aware of hygienic practice of street food.
- Mazumdar & Goswami (2016) in their study concentrated on the food safety aspects and practices of street food vendors in Guwahati city. The pertaining knowledge of the vendors indicated that they had very minimal knowledge regarding food safety aspects, with respect to their work units, utensils and personal hygiene. Based on the findings of the survey, fifteen days training intervention programmed was carried out on various areas viz, food hygiene, nutrition and health, personal hygiene, work unit and environmental hygiene.

**Significant of the Study**

Following are the significant of the study

1. The study is very significant as the research will provide adequate measures and suggestions for the street food vendors to overcome the problem they generally faced in context of the study.

2. The study is significant because it documents the activity in the informal sector to analyze the participation of men and women in this work.
3. The study will also help to identify the various pros and cons of a street food business, in relation to their income, profitability, how they have raised capital for financing this business, what strategies they use to combat the competition among them etc.

**Objective of the Study**

Following are the objective of the study

1. To study the motivational drive among the street food vendors to start up the street food business.
2. To determine the income level and profitability from the business.
3. To know whether they have undertaken any kind of strategies to combat the competition.
4. To study the problems faced by the street food vendors.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section consists of research of data collection, the sampling technique, statistical tool used for analysis, data representation technique, etc.

- Sources of data

The data for research has been collected from two sources-

- A. Primary sources.    B. Secondary sources.

These are as follows:

**A. Primary Source**

The data which is collected for the first time are called primary source of data. Primary data are collected from primary sources. Here the primary data are collected through observation, direct communication with the respondent and finally by asking them the questions included in the semi structured questionnaire.

**B. Secondary Source**

Secondary source of data is those which have already been collected by someone else and have already been passed through statistical process. Here the secondary sources of data are collected through the internet.

- Survey Area - For purpose of survey, the research is conducted in the main parts of Guwahati city viz; Rajgarh road, Bhangagarh, and Zoo Road area.
- Research design- The research study conducted is of descriptive type. Descriptive research includes

survey and facts findings of different kinds. The major purpose of such research is description of the research as it exists at present.

- Research Instrument- The primary data collected is original in nature. Here a semi structure questionnaire cum schedule has been prepared and arranged an interview with 30 no. of vendors.
- Sampling Technique and Design- A sample is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population. Sampling technique refers to the technique or the procedure the research adopts in selecting items for the sample. Sample design is determined before data are collected.

There are essential two types of sampling design- Probability sampling & Non probability sampling. For the purpose of this study, non-probability method of sampling is used in which samples are obtained with the help of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is based on all the convenience of the research (Garg & Kothari, 2016). However, convenience does not refer personal convenience of the researcher. It is easy to use as there is no scientific rule to be applied.

**Sample Size**

- The survey is based on a sample of 30 street food vendors which have been taken from the main parts of Guwahati city.

**Data Representation Tools**

- The collected data have been classified, tabulated and represented through pie charts and column charts.

**RESULTS**

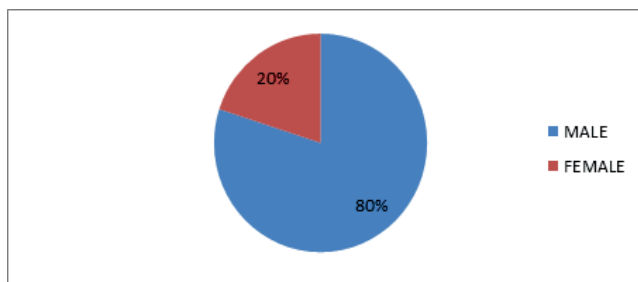
**Gender Classifications in Vendors**

*Table 1: Showing Gender Classification in Vendors*

GENDER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
MALE	24	80%
FEMALE	6	20%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

*Figure 1: Gender Classifications in Vendors*



**Interpretation**

From the table 1 and figure 1 it was found that 80% of the street food vendors are male and remaining 20% of the street food vendors involving in such type of business are female.

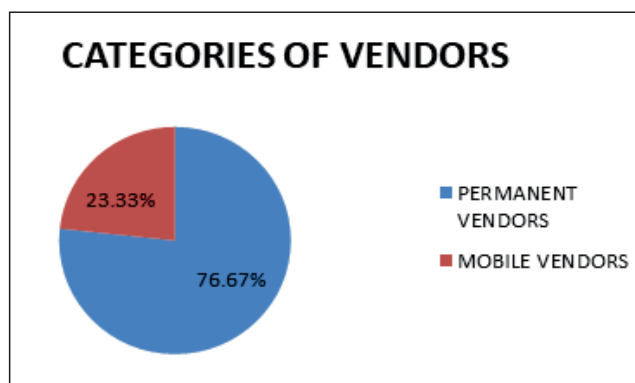
**Categories of Vendors**

*Table 2: Categories of Vendors*

CATEGORIES OF VENDORS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
PERMANENT VENDORS	23	76.67%
MOBILE VENDORS	7	23.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

*Figure 2: Categories of Vendors*



**Interpretation**

Among the 30 respondents, table 2 and figure 2 shows that maximum number of street food vendors are permanent i.e. 76.67% who do not move from one place to another. Remaining 23.33% are mobile vendors who do not carry out vending on regular basis with a specific location.

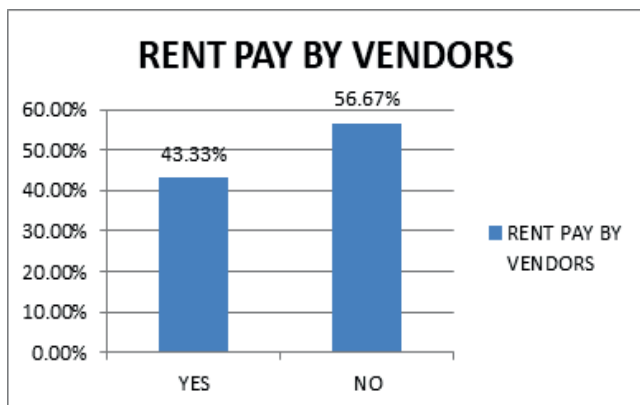
**Rent Pay by Vendors**

*Table 3: Rent Pay by Vendors*

RENT PAY BY VENDORS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	13	43.33%
NO	17	56.67%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

Figure 3: Rent Pay by Vendors



**Interpretation**

From table 3 and figure 3, it was found that 43.33% of the vendors have to pay rent which range between 1000-2000 and the remaining 56.67% enjoy without paying any rent for their business.

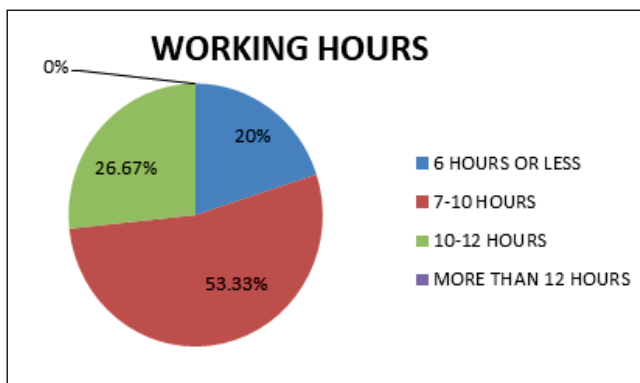
**Working Hours**

Table 4: Working Hours of the Vendors

WORKING HOUR	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
6 HOURS OR LESS	6	20%
7-10 HOURS	16	53.33%
10-12 HOURS	8	26.67%
MORE THAN 12 HOURS	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

Figure 4: Working Hours



**Interpretation**

Among 30 respondents, the table 4 and figure 4 shows that 53.33% of the street food vendors spend 7 to 10 hours daily in their business including their preparation hours. 26.67% of them spend 10 to 12 hours per day in

their business and only 20% of them spend nearly 6 hours per day in their business.

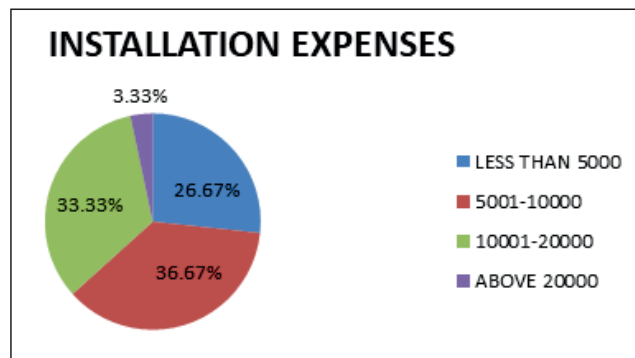
**Installation Expenses of the Vendors**

Table 5: Installation Expenses of the Vendors

INSTALLATION EXPENSES	NO. OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
LESS THAN 5000	8	26.67%
5001-10000	11	36.67%
10001-20000	10	33.33%
ABOVE 20000	1	3.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

Figure 5: Installation Expenses of the Vendors



**Interpretation**

From the table 5 and figure 5, it has been found that 26.67% of the vendors had an installation expense of rupees 5000 or less. 36.67% i.e. the maximum of the vendors at the time of establishment of their business had an installation expenses between the range of 5001-10000 and 33.33% of the vendors between the range of 10001-20000 and only 3.33% among the total respondents had their installation expense above 20000.

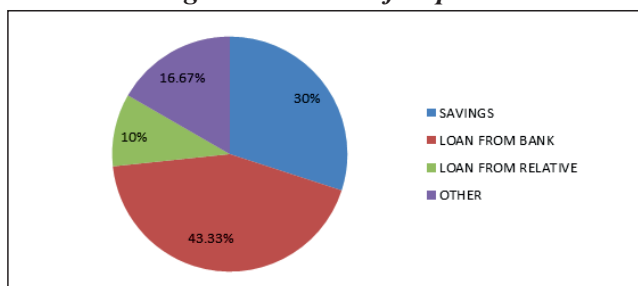
**Source of Capital**

Table 6: Source of Capital

SOURCE OF CAPITAL	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
SAVINGS	9	30%
LOAN FROM BANK	13	43.33%
LOAN FROM RELATIVE	3	10%
OTHER	5	16.67%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

**Figure 6: Source of Capital**



**Interpretation**

Among the 30 respondents, the table 6 and figure 6 shows 43.33% of the street food vendors raise their capital or borrow money from the banks and 10% of them borrow money from their relatives and 30% raise their capital from their savings and others 16.67% raise their capital from other sources such as local societies.

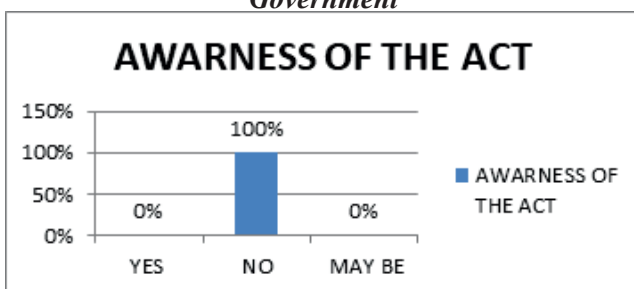
**Awareness of the Act Passed by the Government**

**Table 7: Awareness of the Act Passed by the Government**

PARAMETER	NO OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	0	0%
NO	30	100%
MAY BE	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

**Figure 7: Awareness of the Act Passed by the Government**



**Table 9: Reasons Chosen by the Street Food Vendors for Such Vocation**

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE		MIDLY AGREE		NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE		MIDLY DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE	
	NO.	(%)	NO.	(%)	NO.	(%)	NO.	(%)	NO.	(%)
1. It gives me a regular source of income.	20	66.67	10	33.33	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. As my ancestors were in this vocation, I chose to follow.	0	0	4	13.33	7	23.33	4	13.33	15	50

**Interpretation**

From table 7 and figure 7, among the 30 respondents, none of them are aware of the act passed by the government to protect the rights and interest of the street food vendors.

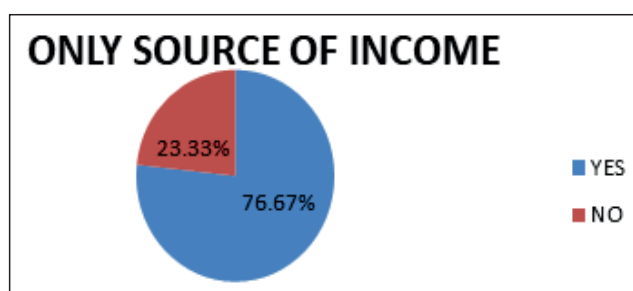
**Whether the Current Business is the Only Source of Income**

**Table 8: The Current Business is the Only Source of Income**

VARIABLES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
YES	23	76.67%
NO	7	23.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

**Figure 8: The Current Business is the Only Source of Income**



**Interpretation**

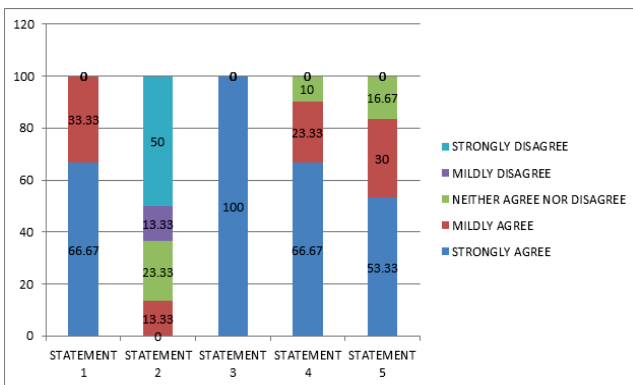
From table 8 and figure 8, it has been found that 76.67% of the street food vendors said that the current business is their only source of income and others i.e. 23.33% responded negatively.

**Reasons for Choosing Street Food Business as their Vocation**

3.	This type of business requires less capital.	30	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4.	It is easy to handle street food business.	20	66.67	7	23.33	3	10	0	0	0	0
5.	As there is lack of employment opportunities, I chose this business.	16	53.33	9	30	5	16.67	0	0	0	0

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

Figure 9: Reasons for Choosing Street Food Business as their Vocation



**Interpretation**

Table 9 and figure 9 shows the opinion of the respondents on the following statements relating to reason for choosing such vocation.

In first statement, 66.67% of the respondents strongly agree and 33.33% of them somewhat agree with the statement that it gives them a regular source of income.

In second statement, the maximum number of vendor's i.e. 50% of them strongly disagrees, 13.33% mildly disagree, 23.33% neither agree nor disagree and 13.33% of them mildly agree that they entered this business as an ancestral.

In statement 3, 100% of the vendors strongly agree that this business requires less capital.

In the statement 4, "it is easy to handle street food business", 66.67% of them strongly agree, 23.33% and 10% of them somewhat agree and neither agree nor disagree with the statements.

In statement 5, 53.33% of the vendors strongly agree, 30% of them somewhat agree and 16.67% of them neither agree nor disagree that because of lack of employment opportunity they must choose such business as their vocation.

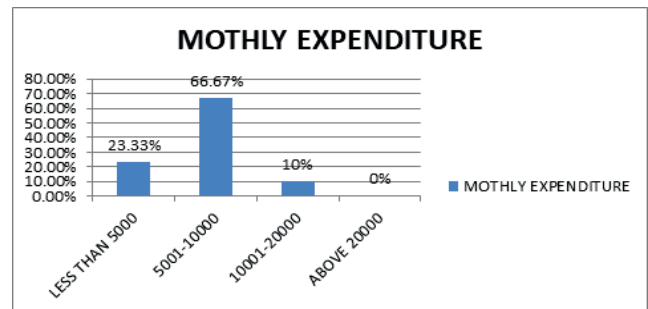
**Monthly Expenditure of the Vendors**

Table 10: Monthly Expenditure of the Vendors

MONTHLY EXPENDITURE	NO. OF REpondENTS	PERCENTAGE
LESS THAN 5000	7	23.33%
5001-10000	20	66.67%
10001-20000	3	10%
ABOVE 20000	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

Figure 10: Monthly Expenditure of the Vendors



**Interpretation**

From table 10 and figure 10, it has been found that out of the total respondents 23.33% have a monthly expense of less than 5000, 66.67% incurs monthly expenditure in between the range of 5001-10000 and 10% of the total respondents incurs monthly expenditure between the range of 10001-20000.

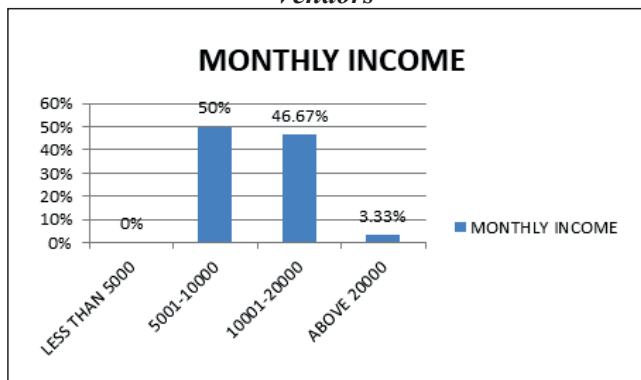
**Monthly Income of the Vendors**

Table 11: Monthly Income of the Vendors

PARAMETER	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
LESS THAN 5000	0	0%
5001-10000	15	50%
10001-20000	14	46.67%
ABOVE 20000	1	3.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

**Figure 11: Monthly Income of the Street Food Vendors**



**Interpretation**

From table 11 and figure 11, it has found that out of total respondents, 50% of them earn income between the ranges of 5001-10000, and 46.67% of them earn 10001-20000 per month and 3.33% earn above 20000.

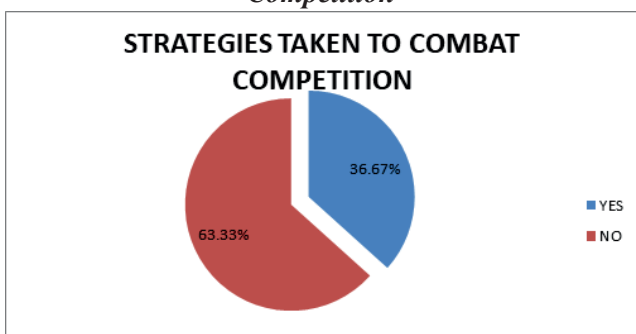
**Strategies Taken to Combat the Competition**

**Table 12: Strategies Taken to Combat the Competition**

STRATEGIES TAKEN TO COMBAT COMPETITION	NO. OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
YES	11	36.67%
NO	19	63.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: Primary data collected through schedule

**Figure 12 Strategies Taken to Combat the Competition**



**Interpretation**

The table 12 and figure 12 shows that, 36.67% have taken some strategies to combat against the competition and the rest 63.33% have not taken any strategies to combat the competition.

**DISCUSSION**

The present study confirmed the findings which were

collected by using primary data through schedule, observation and direct communication with the respondent. From the study, it can be found out that most of the street food vendors are male and sell fast food like momo, roll, chowmien, chat etc. and are permanent in nature. Very few are mobile vendors. The maximum of the vendors at the time of establishment of their business had an installation expenses between the range of rupees 10,000 to 20,000 and most of them used their savings and borrow from bank as their source of capital (Pappeswari, & Rajalakshmi, 2014). From the study none of them are aware of the Act passed by the government. They should be made aware regarding the act which protects the interest of the vendors. Most of the vendors have strongly agreed that their current business gives them a regular source of income with very less amount of investment to start vending and all of them have enter this vocation as an entrepreneur and not as an ancestral, they have also added that it is easy to handle (Malasan, 2019). Again, majority of them have strongly agreed that lack of employment opportunities have forced them to choose street food business. Based on the primary data it can be found that they spent 5000 to 10000 rupees per monthly and in return they earn 10,000 or sometimes 10000-20000 per month as their income. The income raises high during festive seasons. They also try to combat their competition by maintaining proper hygiene factors viz. keeping the area clean, treat their customer with good behavior and sometimes providing the regular customer at certain low price with good quality (Gadaga, Ntsike & Ntuli, 2014). Also, they try to add new food items. The mobile van vendor has tried an innovative idea to sell the food in a van and as a result succeeded in attracting more customers. Some of the problems can also be seen viz. harassment by police official, uncertainty of income, unnecessary strikes, rainfall damages goods and artificial flood affects vending, competition from co-vendors and new entrants, long hours of work without rest, customer's misbehaviour, absence of shades to protect from various weather condition, pollution and increase traffic, road widening project (Njaya, 2014). There is a need for proper collaboration with the local government by providing training, infrastructure and legislation so that the problems associated with them can be minimized.

**CONCLUSION**

In the concluded part of the research, the researcher is confident to say that the study has given an opportunity to analyze various factors regarding the street food vendors in Guwahati city. It can be summarized that

street food vendors interact with different segment of urban population and have a specific role in urban society and space, that their primary role consists of providing livelihood and employment to especially the poor classes. Nevertheless, street food vending also plays a very socio- economic role. Now a day, the youth are very much attracted to street food as they are cheaper than others. The vendors should take into consideration the various hygiene factors such as using gloves, using dustbin for disposal, using paper plates etc. for further development and to increase their sale. They should try to follow all the rules and regulations provided by the government to protect their rights and interest as per the Act. The street food vendors should try to combat the competition by taking up more new strategies. In conclusion, this study calls upon all concerned to legitimize this vital service to support it through proper planning to make street food vending healthy, convenient and desirable.

### RECOMMENDATION

Considering the findings of this research, the following specific recommendation can be drawn with a view of improvement of this business in the Guwahati city.

1. The percentage of the female street food vendors are less as compared to male street food vendors so it should be encouraged to be increased.
2. Every street food vendor or the food handler should undergo a basic training in food hygiene, food laws and the financial matters. This is to ensure that they follow the required rules for proper hygiene and sanitation.
3. Credit facilities should be made available to make initial investment and for further investment.
4. None of the street food vendors is aware of the act passed by the government to protect the rights and interest of them and so they should be made aware of such act and in this regard awareness campaign should be carried out through radio, television, poster etc.
5. The vendors should extend their business to those areas where people can easily get it and the vendors can boost up their income.

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