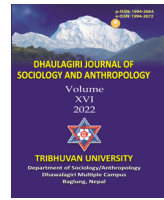


Gold Open AccessFull contents are available in NepJOL (<http://www.nepjol.info/index.php/DSAJ>)[DOAJ\(https://doaj.org/toc/1994-2672\)](https://doaj.org/toc/1994-2672)**Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology****Striving for Urban Space: A Case of Street Vendors of Pokhara, Nepal***Namrata Khawas***Article Info**

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/dsaj.v16i01.50933>**Abstract**

Street vending is an important component of the informal economy of a city. It forms the major base of livelihood for a significant proportion of the urban poor. Embedded with the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological realm of urban anthropology and right to the city, this article assesses vendors' striving for subsistence livelihoods amidst the increased rigidity of local authorities towards them in Pokhara. Based on qualitative data collected through the ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City, this article documents struggle of women street vendors against challenges posed by metropolis authority and their police, customers, and shopkeepers. As captured in stories, they strive against these challenges to support their livelihood. Their ceaseless striving for urban space for undertaking vending practices continues. The tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by different agencies is an indication that they have been claiming certain kinds of rights over urban space in Pokhara City.

Keywords: livelihood, street vending, urban poor, right to the city, urban anthropology

Background

Occupation primarily shapes the livelihood of people. Street vending or trade is one of the several livelihood strategies adopted in a city that is a part of an informal economy. Graaff and Ha (2015) that "In everyday language, the practice of street vending goes by many different local names" (p. 2). Similarly, Shrestha (2013) posits that "Street vending is a means of survival for individuals who lack sufficient capital, skill, and knowledge" (p. 727). Street vendors include all those selling goods or services in public spaces by making a temporary built-up structure or by moving across the market carrying goods in cycles, motorcycles, or baskets for selling. "In developing countries, millions of people depend on street vendors for their daily requirements as the goods are more economical than those available in the formal sector" (Indira, 2014, p.5). In any city, estimating the exact number of people employed as street vendors is complicated due to their high mobility, and the marked seasonal variation in work.

Different people tend to give different reasons for the question of why people tend to engage in street vending. Scholars also tend to present diverse ideas on this question.

Lack of gainful employment coupled with poverty in rural areas has pushed people out of their villages in search of a better existence in the cities. These migrants do not possess the skills or the education to enable them to find better paid, secure employment in the formal sector and they have to settle for work in the informal sector (Bhowmik, 2005, p. 2256).

Increasing population pressure at the household level, increasing socio-economic disparities between people and communities, disparities between urban and rural areas, increasing unemployment, unequal land ownership, difficult rural life in general, and conflict in particular, have resulted in livelihood vulnerability, in the rural areas of Nepal (Timalsina, 2007, p. 120).



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Like other cities of Nepal and across the globe, people are pursuing internal migration as a way of survival strategy to create livelihoods in the urban informal sectors of Pokhara City. Here, the street vendors are engaged economy such as selling fruits, vegetables, kitchen items, carpets, and ready-made clothing. In the process of selling their stuff, they remain engaged in different kinds of strivings posed by different actors such as the metropolis authority, other shopkeepers, customers, etc.

Urban anthropology has already pioneered in the study of dynamics of urban social, cultural, and economic lives. Eddy (1968), Fox (1972, 1977), Gulick (1973, 1975, 1979), Southall, (1973), Basham (1978) Hannerz (1980), Gmelch and Zenner (1996), Kemper and Rollwagen (1996), Low (1999), Jaffe and Koning (2016) and many others have already led urban anthropology to a distinct height.

Within the discipline of anthropology, urban anthropology is of recent origin. According to Prato and Prado (2013) urban anthropology is a relatively recent new field of study within socio-cultural anthropology. However, as Eames and Goode (1997) claim it "is presently one of the most rapidly growing areas within the discipline" (p. 28). "Urban anthropology is the specialized field of anthropology which is primarily concerned with the study and analysis of urban life, urban planning, and other urban dynamics" (Bhandari, 2016, p.430).

Bhandari (2010) highlights the scope of urban anthropology in the contemporary urban issues as;

Contemporary urban anthropology has become much more inclusive and integrated whereby it has been characterizing the holistic nature of Anthropology when applied to the urban sphere. Its domain is so widened and evolved that now urban anthropologists have been able to raise their insights into a broad range of human issues from cities. They are not only confined to local and isolated communities as their active engagement is in the study of cross-cultural comparison of communities at regional, national and international levels. (p. 10)

This article is an outcome of a study undertaken by embedding within the thematic notions of urban anthropology conceptually, theoretically and methodologically. In addition, the study was guided by the concepts like livelihood, informal sector, and urban space. Right to the city has been used as the main theoretical guideline in the article. Lefebvre (1968/1996) elaborates his idea of the 'Right to the City' as "the right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: the right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit (p. 174). Harvey (2003) argues that the right to the city is not simply the right to what already exists in the city; it is also the right to transform the city into something radically different. As analyzed by Borja (2003), the city is a political space where the expression of a collective will is possible. It is a space for solidarity but also for conflict. The right to the city represents the

possibility of building a city in which people can live with dignity, where they are recognized as part of its structure, and where equal distribution of all kinds of resources is possible, such as labour, health, education, and housing, as well as symbolic resources such as participation and access to information (Mathivet, 2010). The right to the city is the right of everyone to create cities that meet human needs. All people should have equal rights to build the types of cities they want.

As an academic undertaking, this article has endeavored to highlight and analyze those strivings of women street vendors from 'emic' perspective. There have been a number of researches on street vendors in Nepal; however, most of them are quantitative and studies that have analyzed the issue of women street vendors qualitatively are missing. I expect this article to fulfill that lacuna to some extent.

The Problem

The informal sector is one of the survival strategies that urban poor practice in response to insufficient job opportunities. In addition to this, it holds a very strong significance in local and national economies for a number of reasons such as "it provides goods and services at a low price; it plays the role of a reservoir of the industrial reserve army that holds down wages for the formal sector of the urban economy" (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005, p. 77). Similarly, it also provides opportunities for earning income for the poor in-migrants of the city. As observed in the city of Pokhara too, street vending is a source of employment, income, and survival especially, for the middle and low-income earners and street vendors are useful for some sections of Pokhara City as they provide goods, including food, at affordable prices.

Despite the important service street vendors provide to the general public, their contributions are not recognized by the local authorities; rather, they treat street vending as an illegal activity. We frequently witness street vendors, especially those in the primary market areas of Pokhara, being subject to raids and evictions by metropolitan policing. However, this is not unique to Pokhara only, as Bhowmik (2005) puts forward that street vendors in almost all Asian countries have no legal status to conduct their business and the authorities are constantly harassing them.

Mengistu and Jibat (2015) maintain that for cities to be inclusive, they must enable the urban poor to access some strategic spaces. However, this is not the case in Pokhara. I could not find many scholarly studies analyzing the issue of Pokhara's street vendors and the dynamics of their striving for livelihood in this rapidly urbanizing city. The studies on the street vending in Nepal have largely been based on the studies carried out in Kathmandu Valley. In addition to that, most of those studies are quantitative. Street vending has already proved to be a fruitful subject for qualitative researchers. There appears to be an absence of qualitative anthropological orientation while looking at

street vending in the Nepali context. This study may be able to fulfill this lacuna to some extent.

This article is centered around three key research questions: How is street vending contributing to their livelihood securities? How do women street vendors strive to get subsistence livelihoods in the context of tough local authorities towards them? and Why they continue to engage in vending despite tough metropolitan regulations and repeated harassment by the metropolitan police. Centering on these three questions, the main goal of this article is to elaborate on the dynamics of strivings that women street vendors have been making to sustain their livelihood in the urban context of Pokhara.

Research Methods

This article is based on research carried out in the main market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City, namely Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga, Prithivi Chowk, and Bus Park. All of the women street vendors in Pokhara formed the research participants of the study and I selected 11 women street vendors as the main participants by adopting a purposive and chain sampling procedure. During the preliminary field study, I discovered that not all women vendors were 'doke'. Since my focus was on fruit selling 'doke' women vendors selling fruits, I first engaged in informal talks with each of the women vendors I met by becoming a customer. I could select the first informant only after a regular field visit and interactions made for a week in Mahendrapool Chowk. The same process also selected other informants. While selecting informants, I had given priority to those vendors who have been vending here for the last seven years. Since data saturation was achieved after taking 11 in-depth interviews, I stopped taking further in-depth interviews. In this way, for the qualitative research, I selected 11 women street vendors as the main informants of this study by adopting a purposive sampling procedure. Before the interviews, each woman was explained the purpose of the research and their consent was taken.

Basically, this research was based on qualitative data collected from ethnographic fieldwork that started on 10th January 2018 and ended on 8 August through in-depth interviews with the informant, key-informants interviews and participant observation. Some important secondary data were also gathered from published and unpublished documents available in libraries and official records of the Pokhara Metropolitan City Office. Data analysis followed a cyclical pattern of collection, recording, analyzing, and returning to the field to collect more data. During data analysis, at first, I transcribed all of the recorded data in Nepali then to English. Data coding was done in English to generate themes and categories. Finally, those themes and categories were analyzed descriptively and analytically. During this process, the street vendor women who have been directly quoted in the text and those included in case

studies have been kept anonymous.

Findings and Discussion

This research article is an outcome of the research that was carried out with the main objective of assessing the living condition of women street vendors of Pokhara Metropolitan City and the contribution of street vending in making their livelihood. In this article, I have assessed the striving of women street vendors in Pokhara that they have been making in order to get subsistence livelihoods in the context of the increased rigidity of local authorities towards them.

Relationship of Street Vendors with Local Authorities

The relationship between street vendors and metropolis authority is shaped by strict metropolis policy of the to curb vending practices in the streets of the city. In this context, one of the informants revealed that their relationship with the metropolis is very complicated as the metropolis authority frequently becomes too coercive towards them. However, the metropolis authority has its own stand regarding this. One of the key-informants associated with Pokhara Metropolitan City Office was of the opinion that the footpath is for pedestrians so no one can encroach on it and it is the fundamental duty of the metropolis authority to guarantee an obstruction-free mobility of the people along the footpath. Moreover, by referring to the Economic Act of Pokhara Metropolitan City, he was adamant that any business can be run only after formal registration and street vending is an illegal and punishable activity.

Before 2068 B.S. (2011/12 A.D.), street business including vending was common and familiar practice in the main market centers of Pokhara. Footpaths, which are made for pedestrians used to remain completely occupied by the vendors. As revealed by the Chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office, at that time there were 1046 enlisted street business persons/vendors. In Chipledhunga, not only the footpath, but more than half of the street was occupied by the vendors. These vendors were organized under the political wings of major political parties due to which they had made the life of the administrators and other business person and their associations like Pokhara Chambers of Commerce and Industry more difficult. There was not enough space for the pedestrians to walk along the footpath. However, as revealed by the chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan city officer, the breakthrough was made in 2068 B.S. by the collective efforts of all stakeholders including the Pokhara Metropolitan City (then Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City) Office, local political parties, Pokhara Chambers of Commerce and Industry and different associations of street businesspersons/vendors. The outcome of this collective effort was that the street businesspersons/vendors were shifted to different locations within the city for operating their businesses in a more or

less systematic and legal manner.

Out of 11 informants whom I had interviewed in-depth, only one vendor was a newer as she had been vending for the last two years. Rest ten vendors had experience of vending from before 2068 B.S. It means that the re-appropriation strategy made in 2068 B.S. had not been able to manage all street vendors adequately as it could not provide proper space for these street vendors. As a result, they were left on the street. However, Pokhara Metropolitan authority had announced Pokhara being free from street vending practices.

Relationship of Street Vendors with Metropolitan Police

“Here is a situation of doing or die because of Nagar Prahari (municipal police). If I don’t do vending, my children will die of hunger. If I do it, I feel like I am going to die due to their mistreatment.” This statement was made by Gita Thapa Magar (name changed), who mostly vends in the Prithvi Chowk area.

I found the relationship between metropolitan police and vendor similar to that of two of the popular cartoon characters, *Tom and Jerry*. Resembling the roles of *Tom* (cat) and *Jerry* (mouse), they play the hide and seek game in which metropolitan police act like *Tom* who always chases and tries to catch street vendors, who act as *Jerry*. However, the difference is that *Tom* tries to beat *Jerry* when he finds it out but metropolis only grabs the vendor’s stuff. Sometimes metropolitan police uses various tricks and traps in order to capture the things of the vendors just like *Tom*, who use various traps for catching *Jerry*. On the other hand, street vendors can’t do anything except running or hiding away from metropolitan police just like *Jerry*, who uses his best possible tricks to dodge *Tom* out.

Case study 1

“Doke hunaka lagi ramro sanga daudina saknu parchha”

(One has to be a very good runner if he/she wishes to become a street vendor)

My name is Maushara Bishwokarma (name changed). I am 42 years old and a mother of five children and a grandmother of another five grandchildren. It has been 26 years since I came from Syangja to Pokhara with my husband. Since there were not enough opportunities for income generation in our village, we thought to do something in Pokhara and moved here in Sukumbasi area near Buspark. Initially, I assisted my husband in his occupation for making some earnings because my husband’s income was not sufficient to fulfill our needs. I didn’t get a chance to study, so I had no chance to get proper job. Working in others house was an option available but I thought that this might be burdensome and full of hardship. So, I decided to do street vending. At first, I started selling vegetables but felt it very hard as I had to

move from door to door to find customers. Understanding my hardships, one of my friends suggested me to sell fruits. After that I started street vending.

It was easy, free and income was also good in the past. However, after Nagarpalika transferred vendors to Hongkong Bazaar and other markets and illegalized street vending, it has been very difficult. My name wasn’t in the list of the vendors being transferred to Hongkong Bazaar. I was happy with that as I wasn’t interested to spend my money for that place. Consequently, I always carried a small amount of fruits and got daily profit of about Rs. 300.00-400.00. Now, vending is only source of income of my family as my husband has fallen to bed due to sickness from last 6 months. We have already invested about four to five lakh rupees in his treatment. Now, the youngest son and the youngest daughter stay with us while other children have started to live in their own family.

Every day I have to struggle with Nagarpalika and it is very difficult. They chase us and follow even if we go to the top floor of a building. I always have to be a ‘quick runner’ otherwise they snatch away my stuffs. Last year, they broke my co-vender’s backbone during physical tussle, who haven’t got any medical treatment. Nagarpalika always lays eyes on us. What should I do? I haven’t collected any property. I do vending only to satisfy my hand to mouth need. I don’t know why government does this with us!

The above case presents a typical example of how street vendors of Pokhara strive for selling their stuff amidst various adversities. However, this is not the story of only one vendor only, as I observed other vendors also facing the same treatment from metropolitan police and striving in the same way in order to find some space in the street for getting their daily needs fulfilled.

On the afternoon of 10th February 2018, I had been to Prithvi Chowk to undertake a scheduled interview with a vendor named Maya Lama (name changed). Before I could start her interview, I witnessed an example of how metropolitan police treat street vendors. One metropolitan policeman got down from his van all of a sudden and grabbed the *doko* (a kind of wicker basket) of a vendor woman, who was selling pomegranates but she resisted that. During the struggle between the two, all of her fruits fell down from her *doko* and dispersed along the road. Pedestrians and other people around including me witnessed the entire event as mere spectators. Then, the metropolitan police collected all the pomegranates and put them inside their van. I wanted to take a photograph using my mobile phone but other police personnel threatened me not to take the photograph. About a month later, on 15th March 2018, I witnessed another incident in Chilpedhunga in which metropolitan police came out of their van, got divided into different sides to surround the vendors, and caught one of the vendors.

One of the street vendors from Chipledhunga area revealed that the metropolitan police sometimes use foul

language with her. Yet another vendor from Prithvi Chowk disclosed that she was arrested and taken to a police station when she and her friend had a heated verbal confrontation with metropolitan police, while another vendor from Mahendrapool revealed that one of the co-vendors was very badly injured when she was trying to escape away from police. She further added that one *chatpatey* (Spicy snack) vendor died in an accident that he met when he was being chased away by the metropolitan police.

However, one key-informant who is also the Chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office denied any kind of wrongdoings by them toward street vendors. According to him, the office has given his division the duty to clear the footpath for unobstructed movements of the people walking along the streets. So, metropolitan police act only to fulfill its allocated duty and never punishes the vendors physically.

Relationships with Other Shopkeepers

Mahendrapool, Chipledunga, Prithvi Chowk are the major market centers of Pokhara, which remain crowded with people during the daytime mainly from 11 am to 4 pm. For vendors, this is the best time to sell fruits. However, the vending environment doesn't always remain hospitable. As I observed during my fieldwork, shopkeepers tend to feel annoyed with the presence of vendors around their shops as they fear that the presence of too many vendors around the shops distracts their potential customers.

On the other hand, vendors feel that other shopkeepers often misbehave with them. As shared by one of the vendors from Mahendrapool, she always makes sure that she doesn't sell in front of only one shop everyday because she had faced misbehavior from a shopkeeper who had thrown water into her. Another informant from Chipledhunga also shared that, once she was hiding from metropolitan police at the side of a shop but the shopkeeper saw her, caught her by her neck, and handed her over to the metropolitan police. Another informant from Buspark, Prithvi Chowk remarked "the Hongkong bazaar businessmen pressurized Nagarpalika (municipal council) for removing us from the street as they felt that we are threatening their business and if Nagarpalika does not remove us, then they will also come to the road to sell their stuff."

I have an experience regarding this. During my early stage of fieldwork, some vendors also thought that I was one of the spies from the Metropolitan City office so they avoided me and did not want to talk. One vendor from Prithvi Chowk even scolded me. However, after doing daily conversation, I was able to build rapport thereby winning their trust as a result they started talking openly. While doing field observation in the Bus Park area of Prithvi Chowk, I got a chance to witness a conflict between a fruit-selling shopkeeper and a vendor. They had a heated exchange of words for a while. After the situation calmed, I asked the fruit-selling shopkeeper about the reason behind

that incident. According to him, the fruit vendor was trying to allure his regular customers. However, when I inquired about the vendor woman about that incident, she told me that she was offering the fruit to the customer in a lower rate than him leading to the conflict.

Since both the fruit shopkeepers and street vendors sell similar items, there occurs competition between them about attracting the customers. Due to this, they lack cordial or hospitable relationships. Besides fruit shopkeepers, other shopkeepers also get annoyed by the presence of street vendors, as they feel that their presence distracts their potential customers away from their shops. To put it in another way, the street vendors have already created a market space for themselves in the public space in the city i.e., the streets. Both, vendors as well as shopkeepers, tend to assert their rights over the same public space resulting in a kind of inhospitable relationship between them.

Customer's Behavior Towards Street Vendors

In terms of dealing with customers, street vending is generally a challenging task as a vendor has to encounter customers of different types. In this context, one of the informants from Prithvi Chowk told that some of her customers were courteous and friendly. However, most of her customers directly engage in bargaining in order to lower the price of the fruits. She feels that most of the customers think we vendors give a significantly high discount if they bargain more.

During my fieldwork in Prithvi Chowk, on 17th February 2018, I was finalizing an interview date with a vendor. I saw one young man coming closer to another vendor near to us in an angry mood. In fact, he had come back to return the grapes which he had bought from that vendor woman by accusing her of cheating him on the weight of the grapes. The woman tried to convince him by adding more grapes but he didn't accept that and wanted his money back. At that time, there occurred a little confrontation between them. When the young man left, she said that sometimes the vendors might make mistakes but not always as they had to sell fruits not only for one day. Regarding customers' behavior, another informant from Chipledhunga revealed,

Not all customers are troublesome. Some of them are kind and supportive but some engage in excessive bargaining and if we do not agree to sell the fruits in the rate they say, they threaten us by taking the name of *Nagarpalika*.

From the above illustrations, it can be put that customers' behavior also poses a significant challenge to the women street vendors while practicing vending. From field observations, I have found that women vendors themselves tend to provide chances to customers to behave in one or other way. Sometimes, they try to underweight the fruits deliberately, while on some occasions they try to allure customers by offering lower rates when they are engaged in bargaining with other vendors.

Ways of Negotiations/bargaining with Customers: Chatting and Cheating

Bargaining remains the main method for fixing the price of an item in vending. Customizers' bargaining regarding the cost of the items is found to be a tricky issue for vendors as they cannot afford to invest more time to deal with one customer due to the fear of metropolitan police. As a result, they often get compelled to compromise with the price. Moreover, from my own field observation, I have discovered that the customers don't want to give a good price because they think that the fruits sold by the vendors are of low quality and they don't need to pay any kind of rent or taxes.

In this context, one of the vendors from Chipledhunga told,

Some customers are good and quite easy to deal with while finalizing the rate of the fruits. However, some are very difficult to handle though I deal with them by reading their mentality. Here, I also use my own experience of vending.

Similarly, another informant from Buspark, Prithvi Chowk also revealed:

even though they shout, become angry and greedy with me, I must have to be very soft, speak sweetly and should not be angry because they are my buyers. When they become happy and satisfied, they would buy my fruits and I would be able to earn more.

During my fieldwork, I discovered that some of the vendors were very smart to cheat the customers using their spring balance. One day during my fieldwork in the Buspark area, when I was sipping tea with one of the informant vendors in a tea stall, one man came to buy an orange and started bargaining for lowering the price. She started chatting with him in a soft tone and interestingly, she sold oranges at the rate that the man was wanting. After the man went, I asked her about if she didn't incur a loss by doing that. She disclosed that she never loses like that as she smartly cheated with the spring balance and fooled him so that the loss from lowering the price was covered by the loss in weight that she created.

Reasons for not Giving up Vending: Contribution of Vending to Livelihood

From my observations made during the fieldwork, I have found the life of a vendor being full of struggles and strivings. Now the vending environment has been more hostile for them as the metropolis has labeled street vending as an illegal act and has deployed metropolitan police in order to curb it. However, there are still a significant number of people in Pokhara, who are not being able to give up this practice. I was interested to know the reasons due to which they are engaged in the vending activity. One of the most significant inferences that I got in this regard was that they have no appropriate alternative for making a livelihood.

In this context, one of the informants from

Mahendrapool disclosed that she could never think about giving up vending as she is familiar with this business and it is the main source of income for her family. Another informant from Chipledhunga also revealed that once she had given up street vending for opening her own fruits shop. However, she suffered a huge loss from that shop; she searched for other options but could not find any. This ultimately brought her back to the street vending again.

Regarding the matter of giving up street vending, yet another informant from Chipledhunga shared that she wanted to leave vending and do work in another sector. However, she found it difficult to work under others' pressure. She felt that she gets more freedom in vending and can make own schedule. Another informant from Prithvi Chowk shared that she really wanted to leave vending and open her own shop. However, her economic condition was not good to make enough investment for that shop leading to vending. Once I was doing observation in the Mahendrapool area, I saw one street vendor running away to protect her stuff from metropolitan police and got injured in the process. After the police went away, I talked to her asking about the reason for being involved in such a practice which is quite risky for her. She said that she has been doing street vending for the last ten years and is fully habituated to it.

The following case presents the story of striving and vending's contribution in the livelihood of yet another vendor.

Case Study 2

"Toilet ma lukera jyan jogaunu parchha"

(Have to save myself by hiding even inside a toilet)

My name is Sunita Bhurtel (name changed). I am 32 years old single woman and a mother of 10 years old daughter. Right now, I am living in a rented room in Nagdhunga. I did inter-caste love marriage when I was in my teen age. However, my marital life did not work out well. My husband left me and married to another woman after having a daughter. At that time, I was all but alone as no one was there to look after me in such a critical time. I started working in others' house just after one month of delivering my baby. I have passed class four only, so I didn't get any kind of proper job. I badly needed a supporting income source to fulfill the needs in this expensive city, that's why I chose street vending. Now, I have been vending for the last 15 years.

Every day, I wake up early morning at 5 am to go to the job of housekeeping. After that, I go to the Mandi (wholesale market for buying fruits & vegetables) for bringing fruits and sell them until finished, which usually takes me almost 8-9 hours. Then I go back again to my job of housekeeping, where I work till 9 pm. Due to the earthquake and other reasons, the number of the vendors has increased and the situation has turned very competitive

day by day for getting customers. Specially, there is very challenging environment as the metropolis has turned tough against us greatly. Every day, I have to cope with metropolis police for protecting my stuffs.

I remember, one incident, which is the most fearful day of my life. I was hiding in the toilet of one building while escaping away from metropolitan police. My friend requested me to hide her stuffs too but her stuffs could not be accommodated as the toilet was very small. Unfortunately, the owner of the building saw us and called metropolitan police, who grabbed all of my stuffs. There was a tugging and fighting between us but I had to surrender my stuff otherwise they would put me into the lock-up. Another time, during protecting my friend's doko, metropolitan police forcefully dragged her doko and put into the van. For getting it back, I tried to climb the van but they saw me. After that incident, they always turned coercive whenever they met me so I stopped vending for one year. After one year, I again started doing vending business as I could not get appropriate alternative and the situation went from bad to worse.

Those who have been trying to remove us don't know how hard our life is. The salary from my job salary is not enough and the owner doesn't provide salary in time. So vending is a must for sustaining my daily life. There is no safe environment in the street. I do not have a proper time to eat food, take a rest, and care my daughter properly. However, I need to struggle in this society because there is no one to support me. I hope the government will provide peaceful and permanent place for us to do vending as it keeps us alive by contributing in our livelihood.

In this way, what I learned is that the street vendors have been continuing vending because of the lack of appropriate alternatives to make their living. Moreover, a very important insight that I gained is that these vendors are indirectly claiming their share in urban space. Metropolis authority tries its best to prevent them from appearing on the streets but they do not give up. Their incessant striving for some of the urban space for undertaking vending practices has been going on and on. Such tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by the local authority, local entrepreneurs, businesspersons and their associations also give an unspoken or indirect message that the vendors have been claiming their right over urban space amid coercion of metropolis authority.

I have expected that this study would provide the readers with information on various issues related to the urban informal economy of Pokhara, and the striving of street vendors for making their livelihood. It may also provide future researchers concerned with similar issues with theoretical and methodological inputs to some extent. Besides, the findings of this study might be useful to different types of formal and informal organizations working in the fields related to urban policy, urban planning, urban informal economy, self-employment,

and street vendors. Despite these implications, this study was bounded by different types of limitations. Since it is a qualitative research article, it has not made any kind of numerical and statistical data analysis on the street vendors of Pokhara city. Though different types of street vendors are there in Pokhara, this study is based only on the study of those women vendors who sell fruits carrying in *doko*. Though such vendors are available all over Pokhara City, this study was undertaken only among those women vendors who were concentrated in main market centers of Pokhara i.e. Mahendrapool, Chilpledhunga, Prithvi Chowk and Buspark.

Conclusion

Street vending continues to be an important part of the informal economy of Pokhara, though Pokhara Metropolitan City has declared it illegal. The intervention made in 2068 B.S. regarding street business including vending ensured more or less durable places other than the streets for business to the existing street business persons and vendors. However, despite that intervention, some of the vendors, who were left out on the roads have been continuing vending citing the lack of appropriate alternative sources of regular income. It has been serving as the main/supportive source of income for fulfilling the livelihood needs of a number of families.

The striving of women street vendors is multidimensional. The metropolis authority is much strict regarding vending. So, it deploys *Nagar Prahari* (metropolitan police) to curb vending practices within the main market centers. Due to this, the women street vendors have to confront metropolitan police. Similarly, shopkeepers get annoyed with the presence of street vendors around their shops and misbehave with the vendors in some occasions. Thus, the vendors have to strive against such behaviors. Most of the customers think that they get a significantly higher discount if they bargain more with the vendors. Such bargaining represents another dimension of the striving of the women street vendors. During such bargaining, some of the vendors even cheat their customers in the weight of the items being sold.

Before 2068 B.S., street business persons and vendors were organized under a number of associations backed up by political parties. These reasons compelled the concerned authorities to guarantee a definite space away from the streets in the city where they could run the same business in a more or less durable manner. Now, the street vendors are quite less in number as compared to the past. There exists no such organized endeavor among them, and are not being backed up by any political force like in the past. These are the main reasons why they are not being able to pressurize the concerned authorities to address their issues. Though, their activity has been illegal, the street vendors are not giving up their main source of livelihood. They are engaged in struggles in the streets with a number

of parties ranging from metropolitan police, and fruit shopkeepers and their own customers. However, these street vendor women have not been able to spell out their claims over the right to the space in the city effectively and systematically as a result their grievances have largely remained unaddressed.

In this way, what I conclude is that when there is a lack of appropriate alternatives, people become ready not only to sacrifice their choices and freedom but also to accept any kind of adverse condition. The livelihood security of these street vendors has always remained a challenging and complicated. Their incessant striving for some of the urban space for undertaking vending practices has been going on and on. Such tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by the local authority also gives an unspoken or indirect message that the vendors have been claiming their right over urban space amid coercion of metropolis authority or a 'struggle for existence'.

Declarations

Ethical Conduct

I declare that this study has been conducted ethically.

Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data are available on request.

Competing Interests

I declare that I have no conflict of interest with any individual and agency.

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