

**WOMEN IN URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A STUDY OF WOMEN
VEGETABLE VENDORS IN AIZAWL**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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**WOMEN IN URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A STUDY OF WOMEN
VEGETABLE VENDORS IN AIZAWL**

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Submitted

**In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Sociology of Mizoram University, Aizawl**



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Certificate

This is to certify that **Lalfamkima**, a bonafide research scholar having enrolment No: MZU/Ph. D/1934 of 26.08.2021 attached to the Department of Sociology has completed his work for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Sociology under my supervision and guidance on a research topic entitled '**Women in Urban Informal Sector: A Study of Women Vegetable Vendors in Aizawl,**' for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, Mizoram University, Aizawl. The work embodies a record of original investigation and no part of it has been submitted for any other degree in other universities.

On evaluation of all the formalities, I am pleased to forward the thesis for evaluation and further necessary action.

(Prof. R.K. MOHANTY)

Supervisor

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DECLARATION
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
NOVEMBER, 2025

I **LALFAMKIMA**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**.

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Dated: 6th November, 2025

(LALFAMKIMA)

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Department of Sociology

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page no
Table 2.1 Overview of the Review of Literature	56
Table 3.1 Sectoral distribution of workers, Aizawl city, 1981-2011	64
Table 3.2 Composition of ethnic population, Aizawl city, 1981-2011	65
Table 3.3 General socio-economic characteristics of Aizawl city	65
Table 4.1 Age Composition	81
Table 4.2 Marital Status	83
Table 4.3 Types of family	85
Table 4.4 Types of Ration card	87
Table 4.5 No. of adult male member	88
Table 4.6 Number of dependents	90
Table 4.7 Alcoholic husband	90
Table 4.8 Resides in a rented house	92
Table 4.9 Types of houses	93
Table 4.10 Household Assets	94
Table 4.11 Place of residence	99
Table 4.12 Religion	100
Table 4.13 Religious Denomination	103
Table 4.14 Educational Qualification	105
Table 4.15 Vegetable vending as a main occupation of the family	107
Table 4.16 Experience: Year in vending business	108
Table 4.17 Status of work experience in other occupations	109
Table 4.18 Income	109
Table 4.19 Saving Account	111
Table 4.20 Monthly savings	111
Table 4.21 Amount of the Monthly Savings	112
Table 4.22 Status of availing loan	113
Table 4.23 Difficulty availing a loan	114
Table 4.24 Daily deposit	115
Table 4.25 Land possession	116
Table 4.26 Seat Rent per month	118

Table 4.27 Migration status	119
Table 4.28 Reason for migration	120
Table 4.29 Migrated with whom	121
Table 4.30 Status of health problems	122
Table 4.31 Attending church service	123
Table 5.1 Vending Place	135
Table 5.2 Status of paying vending rent	140
Table 5.3 initial investments	142
Table 5.4 Storage of Products	147
Table 5.5 Respondent's previous occupation	151
Table 5.6 Reason for vending	154
Table 5.7 Benefits of being a vendor	156
Table 5.8 Main sources of vegetables	159
Table 5.9 Collection of vegetables	160
Table 5.10 Means of collecting vegetables	162
Table 5.11 Monthly Expenditure for collecting vegetables	165
Table 5.12 Distance between place of living and workplace	167
Table 5.13 Commute for work-place	169
Table 5.14 Monthly expenditure for taxi fare/ petrol to reach the work place	172
Table 5.15 Vending context	176
Table 5.16 Working hours	177
Table 5.17 Type of Illness	180
Table 5.18 Managing the difficulty	185
Table 5.19 Type of support needed from the government and non-gov	191
Table 5.20 Nature of Problem faced at the workplace	195
Table 5.21 Problem faced in vending location	198
Table 5.22 Physical risk	203
Table 5.21 Problem faced as a migrant vendor	196
Table 5.23 Factors for declining monthly income	207
Table 5.24 Harasser	209

Table 5.25 Nature of Harassment	210
Table 5.26 Type of harassment	211
Table 5.27 Reaction to the abuse	212
Table 6.1 Complain from children about the occupation	257
Table 6.2 Decision maker	272
Table 6.3 Financial decision of the family	274
Table 6.4 Decision for kid's school	276
Table 7.1 Theoretical Framework Model	314

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1 Segmentation of the informal economy	13
Fig. 2.1 The Gender Hierarchy	30
Fig. 2.2 Segmentation of earnings by Sex	32
Fig. 3.1 Map of India, Mizoram and Aizawl City	67
Fig. 3.2 Sample at a glance	73
Fig. 7.1 Integrated Model of Decent work, Women Vegetable Vendor Work-life balance and Empowerment.	334

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Certificate

Declaration of the Candidate

Acknowledgement

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Chapter I: Introduction **1-24**

- 1.1 General Outline
- 1.2 Informal sector and Street Vending: concept
- 1.3 Characteristics of Informal sector
- 1.4 Role of informal sector in Urbanisation process:
- 1.5 Socio-economic importance of Informal sector.
- 1.6 Women work participation in Informal Sector:
- 1.7 Formal and Informal Sector Linkages:
- 1.8 Indian Scenario
- 1.9 North East Scenario
- 1.10 Mizoram Scenario
- 1.11 Significance of the study

Chapter II Review of Literature **25-58**

- 2.0 Literature Review
- 2.1 Theoretical Perspectives
 - 2.1.1 Dualist View
 - 2.1.2 The Structuralist View
 - 2.1.3 Legalist View
 - 2.1.4 Gender division of labour
 - 2.1.4.1 Hegemonic masculinity
 - 2.1.4.2 Intersectionality

2.1.4.3	Labour market segmentation theory	
2.1.5	Empowerment theory	
2.1.6	Misfit theory of entrepreneurship	
2.1.7	Work-life balance theories	
2.1.7.1	Spill-Over Theory	
2.1.7.2	Instrumental theory	
2.1.7.3	Inter-role Conflict Theory	
2.1.8	Overview	
2.2	Review of Methodology in Studies	
2.2.1	Overview	
2.3	Thematic review	
2.3.1	Socio-economic status	
2.3.2	Urban Informal Sector	
2.3.3	Migration	
2.3.4	Street Vending	
2.3.5	Self Employed Women and the Family relationship	
2.3.6	Women in informal sector	
2.3.7	Work situation and Working condition	
2.3.8	Income	
2.3.9	Women Self-Employment and Empowerment	
2.3.10	Vulnerability	
2.3.11	Regional variations of women work in India	
2.3.12	Women entrepreneurship	
2.3.13	Policy	
2.3.14	Overview	
2.4	RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY	

Chapter III Research Methodology

59- 77

3.0	Introduction
3.1	Objectives of the study

3.2	Research Design of the study
3.3	Universe and Sample
3.3.1	Historicity and the Present
3.3.2	The Explanation of the Sample
3.3.3	Principle of Inclusion and Exclusion
3.5	Sources of data
3.6	The Pilot Study
3.7	The Interview Schedule
3.8	Operationalisation of Concepts
3.9	Research Experience
3.10	Analysis of the Data
3.11	Problems in Data Collection
3.12	Research Ethics
3.13	Limitations of the study

Chapter IV Socio-economic background of vegetable vendors

78-131

4.0	Introduction
4.1	Personal characteristics: age
4.2	Marital status
4.3	Type of Family
4.3.1	Types of Ration card
4.3.2	Number of adult male member
4.3.3	Dependent family members
4.3.4	Alcoholic husband
4.4	Housing
4.4.1	Types of houses
4.4.2	Household assets
4.4.3	Places of residence
4.5	Religious and tribal background
4.5.1	Religious Denomination

4.6 Educational Qualification

4.7 Occupation of the family

4.8 Experience

4.9 Income

4.9.1 Financial

4.10 Land possession

4.11 Types of vendors

4.11.1 Seat rent

4.12 Migration

4.13 Health

Overview

Chapter V Job Entry, Work Culture and Problem Faced (Decent work) 132-229

5.0 Introduction

5.1 The establishment

5.2 Professional history

5.3 Causes of Job entry and Benefits

5.4 Acquisition of vegetables

5.5 Transportation and Distance between resident and the workplace

5.6 Period of vending

5.7 Medical and health issue

5.8 Financial accessibility

5.9 Vendors association

5.10 Support and training from the government

5.11 Workplace security and problem faced

5.12 Harassment

5.13 Job satisfaction

5.14 Case Study: AMC and Vendors dispute report

5.15 An Overview

Chapter VI Work-Life Balance and Empowerment **230-298**

- 6.0 Introduction
- 6.1 Family Support in the Work-Life of Women Vendors
- 6.2 Childcare challenges
 - 6.2.1 Childcare provision
 - 6.2.2 Childcare giver
- 6.3 Managing Home and Work
 - 6.3.1 Home caretaker while working
 - 6.3.2 Household chores responsibility
- 6.4 Day-offs and Family Engagement
- 6.5 Work-Family Conflict
 - 6.5.1 Children's complaints on mother's work
 - 6.5.2 Husband/Family complaints
- 6.6 Church Obligations
- 6.7 Absentism, Drop-out and Substance Abuse by children
- 6.8 Ownership and Acquisitions
- 6.9 Decision making
 - 6.9.1 Financial Management
 - 6.9.2 Children's Education
 - 6.9.3 Health Care and Daily Needs
 - 6.9.4 Decision making power to visit the family and relatives
 - 6.9.5 Women's Reconciliation
- 6.10 Vegetable Vending as agency of Status and Empowerment
- 6.11 Awareness of Woman and Vendor rights
- 6.12 Some case studies
- 6.13 Overview

Chapter VII Summary and Conclusion **299- 340**

- 7.0 Introduction

7.1	Socio-economic profile	
7.2	Job entry, Work Culture and problem faced.	
7.3	Work-family balance and Empowerment	
7.4	Sociological implications of the study	
7.5	Policy recommendations	
7.6	Future areas for research	
	Appendix I: Research Diary	341-364
	Appendix II: Interview Schedule	365-381
	References	382-416
	Bio-Data of the Candidate	417-418
	Particulars of the Candidate	419

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 General Outline**
- 1.2 Informal sector and Street Vending: concept**
- 1.3 Characteristics of Informal sector**
- 1.4 Role of informal sector in Urbanisation process:**
- 1.5 Socio-economic importance of Informal sector.**
- 1.6 Women work participation in Informal Sector:**
- 1.7 Formal and Informal Sector Linkages:**
- 1.8 Indian Scenario**
- 1.9 North East Scenario**
- 1.10 Mizoram Scenario**
- 1.11 Significance of the study**

1.1 General outline:

The prevalence of the development of the informal sector among urban dwellers is based on some economic and social considerations that revolve around the advantage that this sector claims over the formal sector with respect to its overall functions in general and employment generations in particular (Chen, 2012; Hart, 1973). Therefore, it is argued that the informal sector provides employment to thousands of urban dwellers and migrants, though it is poorly remunerated and insecure (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). It acts as the main provider of needs and necessities for the urban population.

The people in this sector catered to our daily needs: the milkman, the domestic workers, the cobbler, the tailor, and many other activities (Saha, 2011). The vegetables we eat every day also come from the informal sector. Vegetable vendors are the food providers for the urban population; they make life easy and also act as a ‘keeper of culture’ (Bhowmik, 2005). Each society has their own special vegetables, which are found only in that particular region. The vegetable vendors are the ones who keep the light on the culture. Studies show that the informal sector comprises a wide range of agents of production: self-employed workers, unpaid family workers, household industries, employees of small, unregulated establishments, and manual labour employed on a day-to-day basis (ILO, 2018; Chen, 2012).

Though this sector provides employment to thousands of the urban poor and plays an important social role, its real functioning is not properly investigated. The majority of the studies on this sector are mainly done from an economic and geographic perspective (Bromley, 1978; Bhowmik, 2005). So, it is necessary to investigate this sector from a sociological perspective with the following questions in mind: What kind of people are engaged in such activities? What is their socio-economic condition? What is their monthly income? Where do they come from? Is the occupation secure enough? What kind of problem do they face? Whose gender engages more women or

men? What kind of management and balance do they have between their work and their family life? Does this work empower them? What brought them to the city? These are the few questions that bother sociologists. Answers to these questions are to be found out by the sociologists.

1.2 Informal sector and Street Vending: concept

The concept of urban informal sector is not popularly used in the realms of sociology unlike other disciplines such as economics, commerce and geography. Keith hart (1973) coined the concept Informal sector in the study of Ghana by the ILO, Geneva and was later used in the ILO/UNDP Employment Mission Report (Peattie 1987, Sethuraman 1976). At the initial stage, the concept was used to address the self-employment and casual labour in third world cities. But the concept came to be used with reference to societies like Britain, Asia, Africa and Latin America to define the nature, content and potential of urban informal sector. The basic reason for introducing the concept in the study of third world cities were as below:

- a) “Employment problem” in third world countries have been the major subject and policy concern of the ILO’s World Employment Programme since 1971. Employment problem have been a part of urban manifestation of the whole complex of third world poverty and underdevelopment. Here, the interest of the ILO is to explore the possibilities of using urban infrastructure development as an employment policy instrument and to investigate the potential of urban informal sector in generating employment and distribution of income in the urban employment picture (Sethuraman, 1976).
- b) Identifying the “target group” is another reason for introducing the concept. The poorest among the poor urban population will identify and development will focus on that specific target population.
- c) ILO’s need for a ‘conceptual scheme’ to identify the variety of income generating activities, besides promoting employment and income distribution, that could lead to a more efficient allocation of resources (sethuraman,1976:69)
- d) Urban informal sector is developed out of “structural dualism” of urban economy. The socio-economic functions of the developing countries are seen as an economic dualism – the organized formal and the unorganized informal sectors. Mc

Gee (1973) sees the third world countries as consisting of two systems of production – capitalist forms of production and the peasant forms of production. Geertz (1963) divided into ‘firm-centred economy’ and the ‘bazar type economy’. While Milton describes as the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ circuits. Mazumdar (1975) describes Urban Informal sector as ‘unprotected’ sector since there is no governing rules and regulations of the enterprise, no social security, low wage, bad job conditions and problem in labour mobility. It can be seen from the above labelling the distinction is made based on the production pattern, while traditional and modern dichotomy is based on the nature of the technology used. Fiege (2016) describes the concept from economic perspective based on non-compliant behaviors and named it as ‘unobserved economy’. He further explained into 3 definitions ‘unreported economy’ as when the noncompliance consists in the avoidance of the fiscal code through tax evasion, ‘unrecorded economy’ when the increased informal value-added results from infractions of the laws of national income accounting and ‘illegal economy’ as the violation of regulations controlling the manufacture and distribution of forbidden products and services.

Regardless of all the different labelling given to the concept, the credit goes to Keith Hart (1973) for introducing the formal and informal dichotomy. Since then, the concept has gained interest in the hearts of literature, researchers, policy makers and employment policy in particular. Because of this growing interest in this concept many researchers started undertaking research study in this field. At the same time, a good deal of confusion has risen as to what this concept really means.

There have been numerous controversies over the concept of informal sector which is seen in almost all the literature related to this concept. It has been accepted that the urban system relies on two subsystems informal and formal, they could not appear without the other. From the nature of organization (organised and unorganized), the technology used (traditional and modern), the mode of production (capitalist and subsistence) state recognition of the economic activities (registered and unregistered) and state regulation of the products and labour market (regulated and unregulated) are taken as lines to distinguished the formal and informal sectors. Aziz (1984) proposed two sets of criteria to prove the dichotomy: activity level and enterprise level. Activity

level is the source of employment of the urban poor and enterprise level is the economic unit engaged in the production of goods and services whether it employs one person or more, whether it uses fixed capital or not, whether or not it has got fixed location for conducting business (Sethuraman, 1976). So, a self-employed construction worker and a self-employed service worker are treated as constituting individual enterprise though they do not have employee or fixed business locations and no capital.

So, it can be seen that the informal sector concept has been much debated as it does not have a precise definition that could make a clear-cut division between the formal and informal sector in all the cases. From the above, conceptual exercise on structural dualism it can be understand the contrasting nature of the formal and informal sector before attempting the systematic explanation of the definition and characteristics of Urban informal sector (Souza and Tokman, 1976:359; Bogaert, 1977:308)

1.2.1 Street Vending

It is crucial to understand the definition of a "street vendor" and their location within the unorganized sector. The retail industry is the one that is growing the fastest in the globalization period in terms of employment prospects, second only to India's agriculture. Approximately 10% of India's GDP comes from this industry (Gaiha and Thapa 2007). The retail industry can be largely divided into two categories: traditional low-cost retail, operated by unorganized or informal retailers and organized retail or formal operated by registered and licensed shops. The former require little financial resources (Guruswami et al., 2005). In recent times, many global retail chains have entered Indian market due to market liberalisation.

In addition to this industry, the number of small-scale retailers in India is rising. These retailers, who make up the majority of the unorganised retail market, include grocery vendors, stationary and mobile sellers, and neighbourhood small shops "*dawrte*." Nonetheless, the small-scale retail industry contributes significantly to the urban poor's employment in India's urban economy. For the working poor, one of the simplest means of subsistence has been small-scale retail, including street vending. Due of the low prices at which the shopkeepers sell their goods, it is also very common

in India's urban informal sector. Examining their identity and significance within the urban informal sector is necessary before giving street vending priority.

"Self-employed workers in the urban informal sector who offer their labour for selling goods and services on the street without having any permanent built-up structure" is the broad definition of street vendors given in the national policy on urban street vendors (NPUSV) (NCEUS 2006: 11). There are three basic categories of street vendors: stationary, peripatetic and mobile (National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009). First, vendors are those who regularly do their vending in a designated area. Second, vendors are those who engage in selling irregularly and without a fixed place; an example of this would be vendors that participate in weekly bazaars and offer things. Street sellers on wheels make up the third category of merchants. As a result, street vendors are either stationary because they set up shop on sidewalks or in other public areas, or they can be mobile because they travel from one location to another while carrying their goods in baskets, cycles, push carts, or moving buses, trains, and other vehicles (NCEUS 2008 and MoHUPA 2009). Street vending provides affordable and convenient access to goods and services to the urban dweller including the poor. In India, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM) was implemented under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to address the urban street vendors by promoting access to vending spaces, improved skills, institutional credit and social security linkages. Policies and regulations were implemented for the sake of following the formalities but in reality, it was not properly carried out as the population under this sector were illiterate and awareness was not properly broadcasted. They faced many problems and issues regarding saturated and stagnant markets, inadequate access to credit and savings services, weak technical skills, inadequate information, and poor infrastructure. In view of these situations, in 2012 StreetNet International who backed putting together street vendors all throughout the world to address their normal requirements and difficulties, observed 14th November as International Street Vendors Day since 2012.

The Street Vendors Act of 2014 serves as a legal protection for individuals working as street vendors (Government of India, 2014). The Act is to protect the livelihood and regulating street vendor's commercial activities. This legislation solidifies the

constitutional provisions which is outlined in Article 14, Article 19 (1) (g) pertains which deals with the right to equality, right to start any business or carry out any occupation/profession (Constitution of India, 1950, Art. 14; Art. 19(1)(g)). The primary purpose of this legislation is to govern and oversee street vending activities. Engaging in a profession in a manner that does not impede public access or cause congestion of urban infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, pavements, railway platforms, and markets. Play areas located outdoors, adjacent to shopping centres and public squares (Government of India, 2014). Additionally, this legislation facilitates the preservation of rights and secures the street vendors covered by the social security system. The major feature of this act gives importance for the Town Vending Committee by all the government will defend the vending rights (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs [MoHUA], 2019). The state government forms a committee with a chairman and members to regulate and make recommendations to districts, corporations, and town panchayats. The committee is chaired by the Municipal Commissioner and includes government-nominated members from planning, medical, police, trade, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Street vendors elect members from their community, including 1/3 representation for women, including schedule castes and tribes (Government of India, 2014, Section 22). The town vending committee has a 10% representative that can be selected by NGOs and civic society. The government decides the allowances for members and the chairman.

1.3 Characteristics of Informal sector

The characteristics of the informal sector as mentioned in the above definition are listed as below:

1. **Entry process:** The entry to the informal sector is relatively easy as compared to the formal sector as it does not require any specific qualifications or skills in order to enter in this economic activity. The job opportunities in the informal sector are unlimited in nature and no formalities like registration and licensing are required.
2. **Dependence on resources:** The resources needed in the formal sector could be variety according to the specialization, but the resources in the informal sector relies on indigenous sources like traditional tools and instruments which could be found within the household.

3. **Ownership:** The informal sector is largely owned by family and home based in nature. They do not have any formal regulations and organizational structured unlike the formal sector. Even a single self-employed can constitute an enterprise in the informal sector.
4. **Small scale in operation:** Unlike the formal sector, the informal sector enterprise is operated in small scale with low capital investment and labour employed.
5. **Technology:** The informal sector relies on labour and manual work, so it is labour intensive in nature as compared to formal sector which is capital intensive.
6. **Qualification:** This is an important characteristic of informal sector and one of the important determining factors that people enter this sector. Since, there is no specific qualifications needed for this sector, majority of the people engaged in this sector are illiterate and low educational qualification.
7. **Stratification:** There is no sharp organizational structured in the informal sector unlike the formal sector where hierarchy presents. Everyone works for their livelihood without position or status.
8. **Recognition:** The informal sector enterprises are unregistered, unprotected, unobserved, unrecognized, unregulated and unorganized.
9. **Age and sex composition:** unlike the formal sector, the informal sector does not have any age limit or guidelines for entering the sector. So, people of all ages entered in this cheap source of labour power. Over time, there has been an increase in the number of women working in the unorganized sector, and in most cases, their working conditions are far worse than those of men (Chen, Vanek and Carr 2004, Chen 2007). Compared to males, women typically engage in distinct kinds of activities that are linked to varying income levels.
10. **Job security:** The main problem faced in this sector is the job security. Since, there is no specific rules for recruitment, proper pay scale and promotion, the people engaged in this activity were put themselves in vulnerable state. They earn their daily living; no work no pays no food.
11. **Finance:** informal sectors have no access to institutional finance and credit, even if it is available, it is at a high rate of interest and under rigid conditions (Samal, 1990; Meher and Samal, 1992).

12. **Social network:** The informal economy is greatly impacted by social networks (Bremas, 1980). The "ease of entry" (Hart, 1973) into the informal sector, which heavily relies on social networks (Bremas, 1980), is one of its primary characteristics. When labor ties do exist, it has been noted that they are more often founded in kinship, casual employment, or personal or social relationships than in legally binding contracts with formal assurances (Harriss-White 2004 and Chen 2002). Large portions of the labor force in developing nations lack the necessary capital and have lower levels of education. They can therefore easily infiltrate the unofficial economy. One of the most significant ways people enter and stay in this industry is through social networks.

From the above characteristics, a definition of the informal sector could be arrived at. The informal sector refers to an economic activity or enterprise which is taken up by low educational qualification urban poor due to its easy entry and low capital investment. It has characterized by dependence on indigenous resources, unprotected, unregulated, unenumerated, unobserved, owned by family, a competitive market system and manually operated activity.

In recent years, Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising (WIEGO) have worked with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to broaden the the earlier concept and definition of the 'informal sector' to incorporate certain types of informal employment that were not included in the earlier concept and definition (including the official international statistical definition) (WIEGO & ILO, 2013). They seek to include the whole of informality, as it is manifested in industrialized, transition and developing economies and the real world dynamics in labour markets today, particularly the employment arrangements of the working poor. These observers want to extend the focus to include not only enterprises that are not legally regulated but also employment relationships that are not legally regulated or protected. In brief, the new definition of the 'informal economy' focuses on the nature of employment in addition to the characteristics of enterprises. It also includes informal employment both within and outside agriculture. Under this new definition, the informal economy is comprised of all forms of 'informal employment' that is, employment without labour or social protection—both inside and outside informal

enterprises, including both self-employment in small unregistered enterprises and wage employment in unprotected jobs.

1.4 Role of informal sector in Urbanisation process:

Urbanization is the process of population concentration in the urban areas. The natural growth of population in the urban areas by migration of population from rural to urban areas. As compared to 1991 census of the percentages of urban population i.e., 25.72%, in 2011 census 31.16% lived in urban areas (Census of India 2011), there is a gradual increase in the number of populations living in the urban areas. From the sociological perspective, the factors for the growth of the urban areas, the culture and lifestyles are the concern of the sociologist.

One of the determining factors for the growth of urban areas is the urban wage employment. It can be argued that capitalist development is associated with increase in wage employment. Joshi, Lubell and Mouly argues that the informal sector plays double role in the economic development of the country by absorbing rural manpower and by using capital saving labour technique to produce goods and services. The used of informal sector for the economic development does not imply the abandonment of technical progress. But it will evolve into a part of the modern sector “transitional sector” as a part of economy development (1975:298).

Another factors that shaping the urban labour segmentation is the process of immigration (Lubell, 1979; Kannappan, 1977). In today’s globalized world, migration is an easy process for everyone. They are the ones who engaged in the low-paid and least desired jobs. However, this fragmentation in the labour space leads to the ethnic dimension which is considerable significance for determining the employment policy. Since, the immigrants and the natives were differed by language and nationality therefor important in deciding for whom jobs are to be created.

Bose (1980) argue that the clearance of the slum area as a part of the planned urban development strategy in India. Since, majority of the population engaged in the informal sector are concentrated in backward class. If the development is seen among the backward areas, it means the removal of the informal sector. This means the replacement of the lowest rung in the informal sector activity by a more formal sector one.

It can be concluded from the above discussion that there is a relationship between urbanization and informal sector with advantages and disadvantages. With the growth in urbanization, the informal sector also sees development and vice versa. While migration responds negatively leads to decline in the urban economy at the same time positive covering improvements in it. With the growth in population, the formal sector alone could not cater all the employment needs by the country, there is a diversification of the informal sector activities which cater the urban wage employment need of the society.

1.5 Socio-economic importance of Informal sector.

The urban society cannot function smoothly without the presence of the informal sector activities. The informal sector is important in the development of the society as it generates income and employment to the poorer section of the population. The benefit of the general development scheme does not reach the poorest section of the population especially in developing countries. Informal sector activities are important in urban life and processes which include modern informal manufacturing sector such as garage, workshop, machine shops and other small-scale unit; others include traditional informal sector such as basket making, vegetable vending, pottery (Samal, 1990)

Another advantage of informal sector for developing country is the capital saving nature, since developing countries suffers from capital constraints. The capital-labour ratio of the informal sector is much lower than the formal sector. Since, in informal sector the given amount of capital invested created more employment than the same amount invested in the formal sector.

The importance of the informal sector is that the workers or the vendors does not go to any specific training for their skills or registering in any vocational schools. The informal sector imparts the knowledge of the skills through on-the-job training at zero public cost and this help them to be innovative through trial and error of exercise. Another important contribution of the informal sector is providing cheap goods and services to the poor urban dweller but also it is convenient for the urban dweller in general.

1.6 Women work participation in Urban Informal Sector:

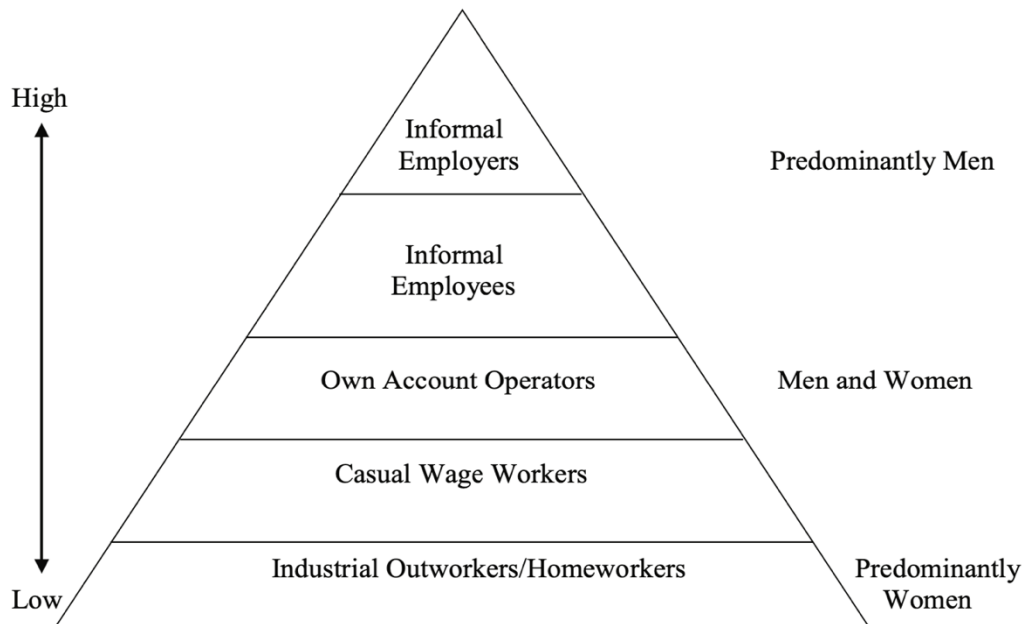
There is no single global figure for the number of women street vendors, but it is estimated to be millions, with women comprising a significant portion of the street vending workforce, particularly in developing countries. Women street vendors are a large part of the informal economy, especially in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. In some countries, women make up over half of all street vendors, including Ghana (83%), Peru (68%), El Salvador (67%), and Mexico (56%) (WIEGO, 2024). In other countries, like India, women are a significant proportion, accounting for about 40% of the total street vendor population. Women played a huge role in the informal sector occupations and occupied half of the total world's employed populations (ILO, 2008). Chen (2007) classified the informal economy into various segments based on informal enterprises and informal job. It is also segmented based on sex.

- i) **Self-employment in informal enterprises:** these are workers who engaged in small unregistered enterprises which include employers, own account operators and unpaid family workers.
- ii) **Wage employment in informal job:** these are workers who work for themselves without social protection and work benefits which comprise of casual labourers, domestic workers, employees of informal enterprises, unregistered workers and part time workers.
- iii) **Segmentation by sex:** The working poor especially women are concentrated in the informal economy and they rely on this sector to earn their livelihood. Among men and women in the informal sector, men were over-represented in the top segment of the pyramid of the informal sector while women overpopulate the bottom segment. Men usually sell goods which are non-perishable while women sell products which are perishable. Women were expected to take care of the household chores and looking after the children, for them informal economy is the most flexible and versatile occupations for their busy schedule

Fig 1. Segmentation of the informal economy

Average Earnings

Segmentation by Sex



Note: The informal economy may also be segmented by race, ethnicity, caste, or religion.

From the above figure, it can be seen that the overall effect is gender gap in earnings in the informal economy, with women earning less than males on average. The figure does not show that there are additional segmentation and earning gaps within these broad status categories. Women tend to engaged in different sorts of economic activities and earn different wages than males, resulting in lower earnings even within specific segments of the informal economy. Some of this difference can be explained by the fact that males tend to embody more human capital as a result of educational discrimination against girls, particularly in some places(for example, North India and Pakistan). This disparity can also be explained by the fact that males tend to have better tools of the trade, work from better locations/spaces, and have more access to productive assets and financial capital. In addition, or as a result, males frequently create or sell a greater quantity or a broader range of goods and services. For example, in some nations, men are more likely to sell non-perishables than women. Furthermore, men are more likely to sell from pushcarts or bicycles, but women are more likely to sell from baskets or even from a cloth placed on the ground (Chen, 2007)

In India, the expression "unorganised" is regularly used to address the large numbers of workers occupied with agri-business, industry, household and service sectors as either casual or temporary workers. In most Indian cities the urban poor survives by working in the informal sector. The majority of the population were engaged in the informal sector mainly because of a lack of education which required better jobs and low skills (Bhowmik, 2000). Under this unorganised sector, the street vendors/hawkers occupied a large segment at the bottom of the pyramid of the informal economy in cities.

1.7 Formal and Informal Sector Linkages:

The formal and informal sector have a complex set of interrelationships between them. They cannot operate alone without the other sector. There is a long debate on the linkages between the informal economy and formal economy which crystalized into three school of thoughts: dualism, structuralism and legalism. The dualist view that the informal sector or economy do link with the formal sector but the linkage is few rather it operates as a distinct sector of the economy. On the other hand, this perspective views the informal sector consist of less-advantaged workers (Sethuraman, 1976; Tokman, 1978). From the structuralist perspectives, there is a strong intertwined between the formal and informal economy. To boost competitiveness, capitalist enterprises in the formal sector are perceived to cut input costs, including labor expenses, by developing informal production and employment relationships with subordinated economic units and workers. According to structuralists, both informal enterprises and informal wage workers serve the goals of capitalist growth by supplying low-cost goods and services (Moser, 1978; Portes, Castells, and Benton, 1989). Legalists are concerned with the link between informal entrepreneurs/enterprises and the formal regulatory framework, rather than formal corporations. However, they agree that capitalist interests—what Hernando de Soto refers to as 'mercantilist' interests—collude with government to establish the bureaucratic 'rules of the game' (de Soto 1989).

According to Mehta, the linkages between the formal and informal sector is classified into direct and indirect. The direct linkages refer to the resources inputs from formal to informal sector while the indirect linkages correspond to the consumer whose

income is rely on the formal sector. On direct linkages, Benefield (1975) argues that these linkages between the formal and informal sector is exploitative for the informal sector which shows the relatively involuntary nature of this sector. Though the informal sector is underdeveloped and backward, it plays an important role for the development of the formal sector. Thus, the relationship between the two sectors is expressed in terms of the dependence and subordination of the former on the latter. This view was substantiated by research conducted among the petty producers in Dakar by Gerry (1974). The relationship between the two sectors is viewed as an exploitative is nature, since the informal sector can exist only when they can get opportunity of offering themselves to be exploited by the formal sectors (1978, 63). Lozano (1983) highlights that labour in the informal sector were exploited by the capital in the formal sector.

The linkages between the two sectors are observed as an exploitation out of dependency which is advocated by some researchers, but there is a functional aspect of this linkages which cannot be denied. The formal sector and the informal sector are closely interdependent in regard to resource inputs, skill acquisition, technology employment, products and markets. In this regard, the linkages are not always about exploitation through dependency, the exploitation part is just one character of the story about direct linkages. Every case of dependency is not a case of exploitation. Hart (1973) studied the informal sector in Ghana to find out whether the urban informal sector constitute a passive exploited group or a group whose activities possess an autonomous capacity for generating development for the urban poor. He further claims that the informal sector provides income to the urban poor which helps in making up the chronic imbalance between wage income and consumption expenditure (Hart 1973:88). In this regard, it can be concluded, the informal sector provides employment opportunity and income to the urban poor where the formal sector alone could not be able to provide independently (Peattie 1975).

Papola (1977) concluded that though the informal sector provided employment, goods and services to the urban economy, its growth depends on the fortunes of the formal sector.

The indirect linkages as mentioned earlier correspond to the consumer whose income is rely on the formal sector. Thus, it can be concluded that the informal sector is not independent and exclusive circuit. It is deeply linked with the formal sector therefore, the growth and development of the informal sector depends on the nature and types of linkages that is operated in reality (Mehta, 1985). Although the relationship and linkages between the two sectors are labelled as exploitative from the formal sector on to the informal sector. The need for further investigation to identify the nature of linkages, technology and the wide variety of social relations of production are still needed.

1.8 Indian scenario

The great majority of jobs in the Indian economy are informal or unorganised. In 2022-23, 65 million informal sector enterprises employed 110 million people, with a gross value added (GVA) of 15.4 lakh crore. Despite adding 11.7 million workers between October 2022 and September 2023, this figure remains lower than it was before the epidemic began. The bulk of non-agricultural unincorporated sector workers are informal, whereas 74% of non-farm workers work in proprietorships and partnerships, which are also classified as informal sector enterprises. According to the research, 82% of employed workers in the informal and non-agricultural sectors work without a signed job contract, and just 23% receive paid time off. Informal sector employment frequently lack security, overtime, paid leave, holidays, and sick leave, and employees may be fired without cause. They also do not provide social security benefits (Report on Employment in Informal sector and conditions, 2022-23). A large number of socially and economically disadvantaged people participate in informal economic activity. The Indian economy's rapid rise during the last two decades has been accompanied by increased informalisation. There are signs of increased linkages between informal and formal economic activity. The informal economy has experienced increased vitality in terms of output, employment and incomes. As a result, quicker and more equitable growth requires specific attention to the informal economy. Sustaining high levels of development is also linked to increasing domestic demand for individuals working in the informal economy and meeting the sector's demands in terms of finance, skills, technology, marketing and infrastructure

(NCEUS, 2008). Among the informal sector activities, The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act of 2014 establishes a limit of 2.5 percent of a city's population as street vendors. According to the 2011 National Census, there were 377 million people living in urban areas.

Street vendors have been around since prehistoric times. In all civilizations, ancient and medieval, there exist records of traveling merchants who not only sold their commodities in town by walking from house to house, but also traded with surrounding countries. Perhaps ancient and medieval civilizations tolerated these traveling traders, which is why they thrived. Today, street vendors are rarely treated with the same dignity and compassion. They are targeted by municipalities and police in the urban areas as illegal traders; the urban middle class complains constantly on how these vendors make urban life a living hell as they block pavements, create traffic problems, and also engage in anti-social activities (though more often than not, the same representatives of the middle class prefer to buy from street vendors because the goods they sell are cheaper, though the quality is as good as those in the overpriced departments).

For the majority of street vendors, trading from the pavements is fraught with uncertainty. The authorities continuously harass them. Local governments run eviction drives to rid the pavements of these encroachers, and in most cases confiscate their belongings. A municipal raid is similar to a cat and mouse game, with municipal workers pursuing street sellers away while they attempt to flee and hide from these marauders. Confiscation of their items carries significant fines for recovery. In most situations, this implies that the seller must obtain loans from private sources (at excessive interest rates) in order to either reclaim any remaining stolen products or relaunch his business. Aside from these abrupt raids, street sellers are usually forced to bribe officials on a regular basis in order to conduct business on the streets. All of this means that a significant portion of the money made by street hawking goes to shady officials or private money lenders. In fact, most street vendors, despite being service providers, must thrive in hostile environments.

1.8.1 Status of Women street vendor in India

In India, market traders and street vendors together comprise 16.5 million workers. Out of which 6.9 million of them are women. A significant portion of women street vendors are in their mid-to-late working years (35-40), as younger women may have other options, and older women may leave due to physical limitations. The National Policy on Urban Street Vendors was adopted to provide a framework for the registration of vendors and the creation of vending zones. The Street Vendors Act, 2014, also known as the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, is an Indian law that aims to protect the rights of urban street vendors and regulate their activities. Key provisions include legalizing vending rights, preventing eviction without following the Act's process, and creating Town Vending Committees (TVCs) to manage vending zones, issue vending certificates, and handle grievances. In 2020, the government launched the PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) scheme to provide working capital loans to street vendors to help them recover financially.

Women street sellers make up one-third of the unorganized sector among 10 million vendors. They mostly support their families by working on roadways, platforms, and sidewalks. Women street vendors endure severe vulnerability owing to social problems such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, poor health, and living circumstances. Women sometimes play numerous responsibilities in their families, including daughter, wife, sister, and mother. They are also more susceptible than male street vendors. Women often struggle to earn enough money to cover their daily expenses due to a lack of credit support. They borrow little amounts from money lenders due to a lack of investment in their firm and difficulty repaying loans based on daily operations. Despite facing challenges, many female vendors support their families on a regular basis. They are regarded a shame in cities and towns where their occupation is not recognized. Women sellers are classified according on their products, including food, vegetables, fruits, electronics, toys for children, flowers, broom sticks, vessels, crockery, chairs, beads, ornaments, fish and poultry activities (Ali, Mohd Akhter, Kamraju, 2023:147). Some seasonal workers labor for 1 to 2 months, primarily selling mangoes, crackers, sugarcane, idols, and rangoli powder during holiday seasons. Earnings range from Rs.100 to Rs.500 per day for a minimum

of 2 to 8 hours of work, with 82 percent selling fruits and vegetables. Monthly income varies by geographical location, with an average of Rs.4,000. In actuality, their workplaces are unsanitary, lack bathrooms, and they encounter social issues with local government, police, and thugs. Female vendors encounter more hurdles than men vendors in running their businesses. Women vendors face financial challenges, lack of education, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to healthcare. Policies and programs should prioritize gender equality and empower female merchants (McKay, Fiona H., & Richard H. Osborne, 2021, p. 460).

1.9 North East Scenario

The tribal population in the Northeast has a relatively low economic development as compared to other states in India. Their mobility in the economic ladder is restricted, suggesting their precarity and vulnerability (Kumar and Baraik, 2020). This led to the over populated in the informal economic activity due to its easy entry and low finance. Women street vendors in Northeast India are predominantly women, forming the backbone of the informal economy, but they face significant challenges including poor working conditions, long hours, low and unstable income, lack of access to credit, harassment, and threats of eviction. The causes of the majority of women may be varied according to their society and cultural lifestyle. Many felt that women's position in the North East region was comparatively high, especially when contrasted to the Indian Sati Savitri paradigm, which measures a woman's virtue by her devotion to her husband (Singh, 2021). Despite these hardships, they demonstrate strength, resilience, and entrepreneurship, with unique market spaces like Manipur's Ima Keithels serving as powerful examples of female economic empowerment. Women vendors in the Northeast exhibit a strong culture of independence, dignity, and pride through their work. Among the North Eastern States, Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Meghalaya joined National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI).

Naik (2009) compared the growth rate of informal sector worker in India between NSSO 55th (1999-2000) and 61st (2004-2005) it was found out that the highest growth rate in informal sector workers is record in Assam (7.17 percent), Haryana (6.82 percent), Other North Eastern states (5.83 percent) and Rajasthan (5.51 percent). Among the worker of the informal sector, majority of the women were engaged in this

sector. The causes of the majority of women may be varied according to their society and cultural lifestyle. Many felt that women's position in the North East region was comparatively high, especially when contrasted to the Indian Sati Savitri paradigm, which measures a woman's virtue by her devotion to her husband (Singh, 2021). Among the North Eastern States, Manipur is renowned for its “Women Market”, although the other states were also having majority of women in the informal sector. From time immemorial women were engaged in the work of vendors which primarily consists of vegetables, fish, junk food, fruits, and toys, etc. The markets were owned and operated by the married and elderly women and still today it follows the legacy of the culture willingly and largely. North Eastern women vendors usually run and manage the family not just entirely rely on the bread earned by the husband or male members of the family. Men on the contrary, from the early period onwards, didn't involve in street/ mobile vending and this stereotype persists till current days. Men can be said to more or less refrain from these activities and account for almost nil in the state except by the increasing numbers of male street vendors from the mainland parts of the country. The activities of vendors and markets become a means of livelihood and way of life which contributed to the economy of the state (Singh, 2021)

1.10 Mizoram Scenario

According to NASVI, it is estimated to be 8500 street vendors in Mizoram. (NASVI, 2019). In Mizoram, women form the majority of vegetable vendors. The state where few employment opportunities available, vegetable vending provides employment opportunities to many women. In Mizoram, there is one unique vegetable vendor which is gender free, it is called ‘Nghahloh dawr’ (shops without shopkeepers). The stall was performed on the principle of trust (Agrawal, 2020).

Aizawl had a population of only 4780 in 1941, and there was a significant rural-urban movement to Aizawl following India's independence in 1947. The end of the strict migration control policy of the British India after Independence, the Rambuai or the 20 years of armed struggle to attain Independence during 1966 - 1986, which resulted in large-scale migration into the relatively safer Aizawl town, and the unprecedented increase in job opportunities in the government sector with the attainment of Union Territory in 1972 were considered the main reasons behind the large-scale migration

into Aizawl city (Saitluanga, 2017). With recent slowdown in the expansion of government positions and limited opportunities in other employment sectors, urban poverty has increased significantly. It is estimated that 6.5% of the city's urban households fall below the poverty line (Zothanmawia, 2017). Many disadvantaged households were absorbed into the informal sector. According to GoI (2011), street vendors alone account for 1.29 percent of the city's population, which is significantly higher than the average percentages for Mizoram (0.92%) and India (0.65%). Aside from the permanent vendors, there are non-resident weekly street vendors, the majority of whom are cultivators from neighboring villages who have come to the city to sell their agricultural products at the Saturday and Friday markets. After the Parliament of India passed the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, the state of Mizoram notified the Mizoram Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Rules, 2017. The state government delegated responsibility for the execution of the Street Vendors Rules, 2017, including the formation of the Town Vending Committee, to the AMC. Among the major markets in Aizawl, Bazarpui, popularly known as Bara Bazar is the primary business district, where various sorts of economic activities were conducted. The bulk of the shopkeepers in this market were women, with men accounting for one-fourth of the total number of street vendors and shops. In this market, all types of informal sector were present which comprise of garment sellers, shoe store, repairing shop, meat shop, tea stall, second-hand clothes seller and utensils seller. There are around 10 trade union for different economic activity. In Mizoram, women form the majority of vegetable vendors. The state where few employment opportunities available, vegetable vending provides employment opportunities to many women. In the beginning, trading was done through 'barter system'. Mizo's grew their food and cotton in the past and they traded with the plains for salt and rice. It was only from 1891 that the British introduced Indian currency in the Lushai Hills. Due to the development in transport and communication, products from the outside states were imported at a cheaper price capturing the local markets. Basic food crops like rice and vegetables are sold at a lower price than the local produce. So, the local trade was dominated by outside traders but the local products were still sold by the

local who are mainly women. However, it is the duty of the state and the people to safeguard the occupation as no other employment opportunities exist. Also, sustaining these spaces will protect the local vegetables from endangered.

In Mizoram, there is one unique vegetable vendor which is gender free, it is called 'Nghahloh dawr' (shops without shopkeepers) which was usually set up on the major highway. In this shop, vegetables and fruits for sale were displayed and selling prices were mentioned. Usually, travellers will pick up what they need and put the money in the box which was placed on the stall. The stall was performed on the principle of trust (Agrawal, 2020) Vending of local produce is an important economic activity of the Mizo women. Some of the women who are in this field were a single mother and they are the breadwinner for the family. Some married women bring along their children at their vending place as their husbands were alcohol-dependent and there is no one to look for them.

1.14 Significance for the study

The Mizo informal sector in general is already touched and investigated by numerous research scholar from economics, geography and commerce. But the study on this area from sociological perspectives is nearly nil. In Mizo society, like the other sisters of North East states, majority of the vendors were women. Women run and manage the street vending especially the vegetable vending, while men do not interfere in this kind of economic activity. Men are refrain from engaging in this activity but, it does not mean that no men were engaged in vegetable vending. There are few men who engaged in vegetable vending but these men were mostly wholesaler, who sold only in bulk. Mizo society is still a traditional and conservative society, the gender division of labour which was practiced in the olden Mizo days were strongly internalised in the mind of the Mizo people. This gender division of labour strongly separate what Mizo women should do and her responsibilities as well as Mizo men tasks and responsibilities. These are the assumptions that needs to be found out from the sociological perspectives. Due to urbanisation, modernisation and globalisation, there is a drastic change in the life of the Mizo people. The homogenous nature of the people is becoming heterogenous, which blurred the gender division of labour. This is one of

the main factors which signify the needs for the study on Mizo women vegetable vendors.

On the other hand, the contribution of the informal sector for economic development by providing employment to the urban poor who have low educational qualifications is enormous. However, they were not recognised by the government and they were taken for granted. It is the obligation of the researcher to be the voice of the unrecognised that will result in understanding the in-depth nature of the activity and for the way forward of the activity. Street vendors have been excluded in the development process for a long time. With the introduction of The Street Vendors Act, 2014 which has paved the way for proper regulation of street vending in India, it is crucial to understand the nature and characteristics of street vending which may vary from one place to another.

Cities throughout the world are working to improve the quality of life of their citizens. The terms 'liveable city', 'inclusive city', and 'smart city' are becoming catchphrases for urban development initiatives. While countries, states, and urban local governments compete to make their cities more liveable in order to stimulate economic growth, discussions on urban liveability have tended to obscure the "wider diversity of people who live and work in any given city" by excluding "the lives of more socio-economically marginal members of urban populations" (Bunnell & Kathiravelu, 2016:203). Enhancing the liveability of marginalised workers like street vendors is crucial for more inclusive growth of cities. In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations has also included provisions to "ensure healthy lives, decent work, empowered women and girl and promote well-being for all at all ages" and to "make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable" (United Nations, 2015: 24). One of the most important objectives of The Street Vendors Act, 2014 was to foster a congenial environment of the urban street vendors to obtain their livelihood activities without insecurity. Furthermore, the legislation grants the state government the authority to delegate aspects of support plans for street vendors to local authorities. In this sense, it seeks to redress past injustice by preserving street vendor's livelihood rights in order to improve their viability in selling locations. Furthermore, the legislation grants the state government the authority to delegate aspects of support

plans for street vendors to local authorities. In this sense, it seeks to redress past injustice by preserving street vendor's livelihood rights in order to improve their viability in selling locations. Thus, it is important to understand the role of the state in enhancing the liveability of street vendors. Street vending is not only an economic activity but also a sociological phenomenon as it takes place in a society. However, sociological studies on street vending have been rather scanty in comparison to other disciplines like anthropology, economics and geography.

Aizawl is the largest city in Mizoram. Many people migrated to Aizawl from rural areas and neighbouring states in search of jobs and better living condition. Due to limited employment opportunities in the public sector, the less educated and unskilled labourers have to create their own employment in order to earn their daily needs. Vegetable vending provides an easy avenue for the urban poor women to eke out their living as it does not require education, skills and capital. It is therefore crucial to understand the socio-economic characteristics and livelihood practices of the Mizo women vegetable vendors as well as their quality of life in the streets of Aizawl City. An in-depth examination of the condition and subjective quality of life of the Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl City will not only expand the scope of sociological studies on quality of life but also contribute to better understanding of the real condition of street vending in the Global South.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

2.1.1 Dualist View

2.1.2 The Structuralist View

2.1.3 Legalist View

2.1.4 Gender related theories

2.1.5 Empowerment theory

2.1.6 Misfit theory of entrepreneurship

2.1.7 Work-life balance theories

2.2 Review of Methodology in Studies

2.3 Thematic review

2.3.1 Socio-economic status

2.3.2 Urban Informal Sector

2.3.3 Migration

2.3.4 Street Vending

2.3.5 Self Employed Women and the Family relationship

2.3.6 Women in informal sector

2.3.7 Work situation and Working condition

2.3.8 Income

2.3.9 Women Self-Employment and Empowerment

2.3.10 Vulnerability

2.3.11 Regional variations of women work in India

2.3.12 Women entrepreneurship

2.3.13 Policy

2.3.14 Overview

2.4 RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW:

A literature review is a survey of scholarly resources in order to situate a research topic in relation to existing knowledge. This chapter is an attempt to make the state-of-the-art review of informal sector in general and vegetable vending as a part of informal sector activity. This exercise shall not only help us to locate the gaps in available knowledge but also to sharply focus our priorities in this study. The literature review will be classified into three heads: Theoretical perspectives, Methodological Review of Studies and Thematic Review.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

A theoretical perspective is a lens through which we look and serves to organise our thoughts and ideas and make them clear to others. The theoretical perspectives include Dualist view, Structuralist view, Legalist view, Hegemonic Masculinity, Intersectionality, Gender division of labour, Empowerment theory, Misfit theory of entrepreneurship and under work-life balance theory: 3 theories were reviewed namely Spill-over theory, Instrumental theory and inter-role conflict theory.

2.1.1 Dualist View

In 1971, Keith Hart studied Ghana and identified important features in the commodity and the labour markets in the city of Accra. He found that many villagers from nearby villages gathered in the city to sell their wares and services to earn an income in a particular location. They are unskilled and illiterate who were not able to get job in the formal sector. He asserts that the commodity market was chaotic while the vegetable and fruit markets sold non-standard goods. This experience was unusual for someone like Keith Hart who is from a developed nation like England. The transaction in these markets were informal and thus he termed it as “informal sector”. Hart’s concept of informal signify the income opportunities rather than the sector, he defines the informality as ‘self-employment’.

The term 'informal sector' was first used formally in ILO-UNDP publications in 1972, with reference to the Kenya Employment Mission. The team focused on the regulation of informal merchants. The mission adopted the term 'informal sector' rather than 'traditional sector' and acknowledged that the traditional or subsistence sector had not only survived, but had grown to include lucrative and efficient firms (ILO 1972). Hart

and the ILO indicated that the continued existence of informal activity was owing to a lack of contemporary work options to absorb excess labor. This was caused by a combination of weak economic development and rapid population expansion. They regarded the two sectors as separate, with the informal sector disappearing or shrinking significantly as the official sector grew. This is known as the dualist method (ILO 1972, Hart 1973, Sethuraman 1976, & Tokman 1978).

Accordingly, informal operations are independent, cost-effective, and offer comparative advantages over equivalent activities produced in the official sector. According to the Dualists, the relationship between informal firms and government laws is insignificant since informal and formal operations function "as a distinct separate sector of the economy" (Chen, 2012, p.5). The macroeconomic root of the informal sector is determined by the disparity between the growth rate of labor demand for modern (formal) occupations and the greater growth rate of the urban workforce, which is aided in emerging nations by rising population and urban migration. The mismatch in the labor market is exacerbated by the disparity between the excess of low-skilled urban jobless and the demand for contemporary work prospects.

2.1.2 The Structuralist View

Moser (1978) conducted study on petty commodity production in the late 1970s and discovered 'the basically dependent character 3 of the informal sector'. Later, in the late 1980s, Castells and Portes endorsed Moser's viewpoint. This theoretical approach became known as the structuralist view. According to this viewpoint, the formal and informal sectors are interconnected, linked, and interdependent in terms of labor. Workers have been forced out of the official sector, where they had previously had job security and into the informal sector, where there is no security. This is because businesses strive to lower input and labor costs in order to boost competitiveness and maximize profits (Moser 1978; Castells and Portes 1989). This school has numerous characteristics with Tokman's (1978) "exploitative integration" inside the "subordination approach". Indeed, both viewpoints consider the informal sector as well interwoven into the formal economy, and unlike the dualists, they argue that the

informal sector's survival and expansion are determined by "the nature of capitalist development (rather than a lack of growth)" (Chen et al., 2004, p.17).

2.1.3 Legalist View

The Legalist view was propounded by Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto (1989). According to him, informality is a response to bureaucratic impediments. The informal sector comprises micro-entrepreneurs who prefer to operate informally to avoid the significant costs, time, and effort associated with official registration under governmental laws (de Soto 1989). He said that development agencies have recommended the promotion of small businesses and informal economic activity as a method for promoting economic growth in developing nations and delivering money to the poor (ibid). He also indicated that as long as government laws and procedures are complex, micro-entrepreneurs will continue to create unofficially. According to Chen (2012, p. 5), informal activities are "'plucky' micro-entrepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the costs, time, and effort of formal registration". Unlike the dualist and structuralist schools, the legalists contend that informal activities were neither a result of poverty nor a structural need of late capitalism. Instead, informality is a choice taken by rational individuals confronted with a legal system that impedes commercial activity (Bonnet & Venkatesh, 2016). According to de Soto, informal entrepreneurs are efficient market forces that develop in response to overregulation and government persecution (Biles, 2009). According to , (2012, pp. 5-6), in terms of policy implications, the legal school recommends simplifying "bureaucratic procedures to encourage informal enterprises to register and extend legal property rights for the assets held by informal operators in order to unleash their productive potential and convert their assets into real capital."

2.1.4 Gender division of labour

The way work is split between men and women according to their gender roles is referred to as "gender division of labour." It does not only concern with paid employment, but it also includes all the work, tasks and responsibilities that are assigned to women and men in their daily lives, and which may, in their turn, also determine certain patterns in the labour market (, 2000)

It is assumed that gender division of labour is a result of biological traits. However, it is perceived in some societies that women do tasks and jobs which are traditionally considered as men's jobs, and vice versa. So, the division of labour varies with what each society (ILO,2008).

2.1.4.1 Hegemonic masculinity

Connell (1987, 2001, 2005) studied 'gender order' in societies by questioning herself an important research problem 'Why do some people become male and female role model? What characteristics and actions do role models display and how do those characteristics and actions come to be widely seen as desirable?'. So, she propounded a theory of the 'gender hierarchy'.

Connell further emphasized that there are plenty ways of expressing masculinity and femininity. However, these contrasting expressions are ordered in a hierarchy at the level of society which is slanted around one defining premises- the domination of men over women. She uses the word 'ideal types' to signify the ideal masculinity and ideal femininity.

In the gender hierarchy, **hegemonic masculinity** dominates over all other masculinities and femininities in society. Here the word 'hegemonic' is derived from Gramsci hegemony which refers to the social dominance of certain group not through brute force but through cultural dynamic which extends into private life and social realms. So, hegemony is established through the channel of media, education, ideology, music and sports in the society.

The first and foremost characteristic of the hegemonic masculinity is heterosexuality and marriage at the same time paid work, strength, authority and toughness. However, hegemonic masculinity is able to achieve and can live up to by only a few men in the society. But, a large number of men took advantage of being a part of masculinity and gain dominant position in the patriarchal order. Connell refers to this as '**patriarchal dividend**' and she embodied these men who got benefit by being a man as '**complicit masculinity**'. Below this, there is subordinated masculinities and femininities. Among the **subordinated masculinities**, the most important is that of homosexual masculinity, they are seen as the opposite of the 'real man' and they are embodied as 'cast off' traits. Homosexual masculinity is stigmatised and rank at the bottom of the

gender hierarchy of men. Connell argues that femininities of all form are subordinated to hegemonic masculinity. One important femininity which complement hegemonic masculinity is '**emphasized femininity**'. It is oriented to accommodating the interest and desire of men; characterised by compliance, nurturance and empathy. It can be understood as sexual receptivity among young women and motherhood nature among older women. Finally, there are subordinated femininities, which reject the version of emphasized femininity. These women are referring as '**resistant femininity**'.

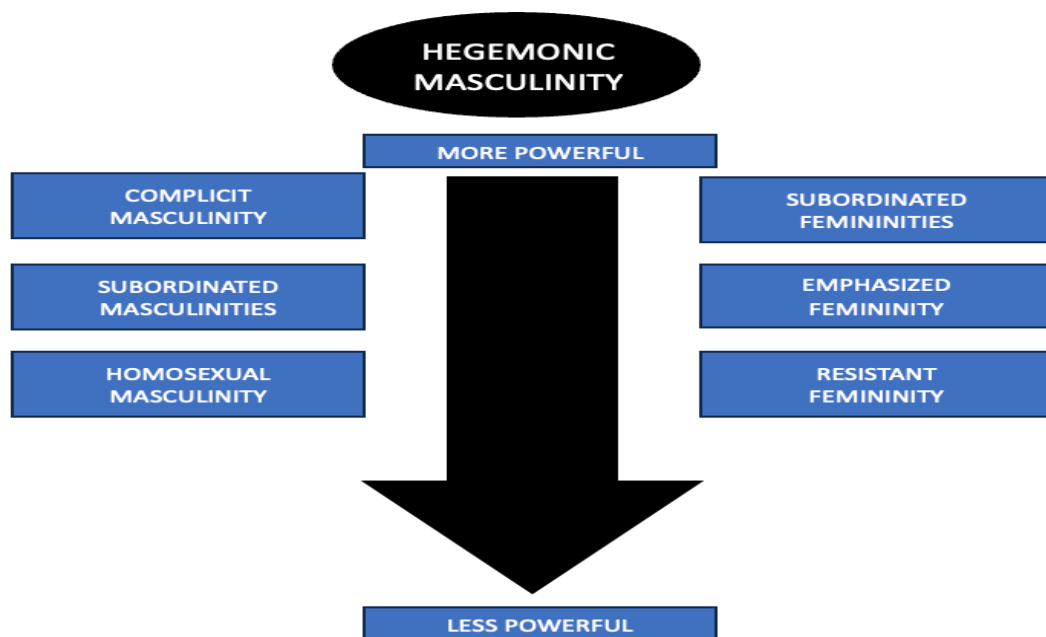


Fig 2.1. The Gender Hierarchy
(source: Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton (2017) 'Sociology'. 8th Edition, Atlantic Publishers & Distributor. pp. 631)

Several critics have argued that Connell does not present a satisfactory account of it, as she does not specify the 'counter hegemonic' which challenge the hegemonic masculinity. From the social psychologist perspective, they concern about the complicit masculinities who do not live up to the ideal masculinity, what does this failure mean to them psychologically? Finally, Connell theorise the gender order at the global level (Giddens and Sutton, 2017)

2.1.4.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to a sociological theory that outlines how an individual may face multiple types of overlapping discrimination depending on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, physical ability, class or any other characteristics that might place them in a minority class. In 1989, on University of Chicago Level Forum Black Feminist

offered the concept 'Intersectionality' as a metaphor in her seminal paper "Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics". In 1991, she refined this concept to explain the approaches that separate the system of oppression and to focus on highlighting the overlapping of oppression and discrimination which was faced by women at a time. She further emphasised that the experience of being black and of being a woman is considered independently, but must include the interactions, which frequently overlap each other. Crenshaw provides threefold of intersectionality: Structural intersectionality, Political intersectionality, and Representational intersectionality (Crenshaw,1991).

Davis (2008) argue that Intersectionality presents a theoretical and political answer to the challenge that contemporary feminism faces, namely, the long and painful legacy of exclusion. Feminist theory asserts that women's lives are shaped by various oppressive systems that interact. That is to say, oppression is a confluence of several interconnected oppression systems, rather than a single process. Collins (2003) states that Intersectionality can be utilised to analyse micro, meso, and macro-level social phenomena, according to. She emphasised that intersectionality reveals "the workings of power at all levels of social relations, which is understood as both pervasive and oppressive."

2.1.4.3 Labour market segmentation theory

Labour market segmentation theory is the outcome of segmentation process. It emphasised that the political and economic forces encourage the division of the labour market into segments, which is distinguished by different labour market characteristics and behavioural rules. (Reich et.al., 1973). Segments may cut horizontally and vertically across the occupational hierarchy.

The present labour market conditions can be understood as the outcome of two segmentation processes-primary and secondary segments. These two segments are differentiated by stability characteristics. In primary segment, jobs required skills and develop stable working habits, wages are relatively high, and job ladders exist while, in the secondary segment, jobs do not require skills and often discourage stable working habits; wages are low, turnover is high, and job ladders are few (Reich et.al, 1973). Among these integrated approaches, the "multi-segmented model of informal

employment" created by Women in Informal work: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) approach abandons the lofty objective of developing a comprehensive theory of informality and instead defines informality in terms of job status. This concept, which is based on two essential aspects, namely economic risk (losing a job) and authority (over the establishment and other workers), is particularly useful for policy reasons (Chen, 2012).

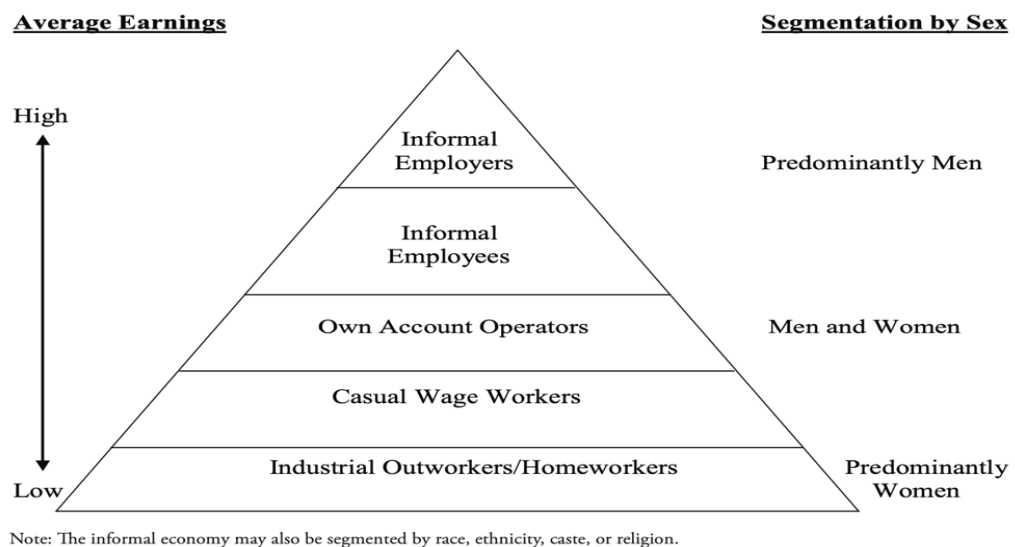


Fig. 2.2 Segmentation of earnings by Sex

(Source: Chen, Martha (2012) The Informal Economy: Definitions, Theories and Policies. WIEGO Working paper)

2.1.5 Empowerment theory

Individual and societal empowerment is defined as the degree of autonomy and self-determination. This enables an individual to act independently and responsibly represent their own interests. It assists the individual in taking charge of their lives and asserting their rights. People's empowerment and professional help are both referred to as empowerment as action. It allows individuals to overcome their feelings of impotence and ineffectiveness.

Empowerment is a term that comes from American community psychology and is linked to social scientist Julian Rappaport (1981). Empowerment theory, on the other hand, has historical roots and is tied to Marxist sociology theory. Neo-Marxist Theory helped to develop and enhance these sociological theories (also known as Critical Theory).

Zimmerman (2000) proposed one of the most commonly accepted empowerment ideas. In this context, he defined empowerment as the control of one's own life by two or more people, allowing for effective involvement in which people, communities, and organisations acquire control over their affairs.

Gender empowerment refers to women's empowerment in terms of development and economics from a gender viewpoint. In a political or social context, it also refers to uplifting other oppressed genders. Feminism inspired this approach to empowerment, which used legal empowerment based on international human rights. For the global development agenda, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5) emphasise gender equality and women's empowerment (United Nations, 2017).

2.1.6 Misfit theory of entrepreneurship

Hofstede et al. (2004) indicates that misfit individuals are those individuals who do not share the dominant cultural values and attempt to start new journey. It is belief that misfit individuals are more likely to engaged in entrepreneurial activity as alternatives because they are dissatisfied with their job prospects.

The misfit theory of entrepreneurship was used to explain why majority of immigrants were engaged in entrepreneurial career than native born populations. Immigrants' credentials were usually disrespected, considered invalid and undervalued in their new home countries. This makes it to integrate and find it more difficult to find lucrative employment (Kahn et al., 2017).

In short, all these imperfect information and education coupled with lingual and cultural differences make it more difficult to enter the workforce as salaried employees. This results in an alternative occupation like entrepreneurship. (Kahn et al., 2017).

2.1.7 Work-life balance theories:

It refers to a well-integrated work-family life relationship and a scenario in which the individual is actively involved in both spheres (Frone,2003). Three theories will be highlighted for the purposes of the research:

2.1.10.1 Spill-Over. theory: This theory asserts that work and family life are inextricably linked and impact one another. As a result, both great and bad

professional experiences can translate into positive or negative home experiences, and vice versa (Hill et.al, 2003).

2.1.10.2 Instrumental theory: According to this theory, people choose to behave in one field in order to influence the other field. For example, an employee may decide to work harder at their job in order to earn more money so that they may save more money so that they can afford a fridge or television (Gimmon and Levie, 2014)

2.1.10.3 Inter-role Conflict Theory: Holahan and Gilbert (1979) established the Inter-role Conflict Theory, which focuses on the issues that might result from opposing interests in various domains. It is proposed that these competing interests cause individual role conflict, affecting the individual in both fields. A late arrival at work, for example, may coincide with a family birthday celebration, resulting in a role conflict between work and home life.

2.1.11 Overview of theories

The review of theoretical perspectives shows certain views regarding the informal sector, gender, empowerment, migration, and work-life balance. This review provides insight into the theoretical understanding of the informal sector and its associated consequences. The dualist, structuralist, and legalist views touched on the informal sector by highlighting why the informal sector is prevalent in the urban area and the reason behind the selection of these occupations by the urban poor. Gender division of labor, intersectionality, hegemonic masculinity, labor market segmentation theory, and empowerment theory touched on the gender-related problems and issues. This also included women's empowerment in terms of economic development from a gender perspective. The misfit theory of entrepreneurship deals with the problem faced by the immigrants when an individual is engaged in entrepreneurial activity as an alternative because they are dissatisfied with the job prospects. There are three theories under work-life balance theory that touch on the linkage between work and family life, how more earnings in the work influence their house appliances, and how conflict occurs when there is opposing interest in various domains between the spouse.

Yet, these theories need to be contextualized in order to analyze and scrutinize the conditions of Mizo women vegetable vendors and to locate the level of relevance of

theories for the proposed study. The theories stated above suggest the diversities of perspectives from which this complex informal sector activity can be viewed. Relevance of a theory depends on the empirical facts, which continue to go on to support them. Further, contextualization will be done with the help of data collected through primary sources. Next section deals with methodological review.

2.2 Review of Methodology of Studies

Methodological review provides a review of framework of research, approaches, data collection and analysis techniques found in the literature. Here are some of the accounts of methodology which were employed by the previous researchers in conducting their study.

Samarpitha (2019) used an interview schedule to research "Fruit and Vegetable Street Vendors in the Urban Informal Sector in Hyderabad, India." In order to acquire information from the selected street vendors, the personal interview approach was used with the assistance of a pre-tested complete interview plan.

Pawar (2016) obtained the data using interview schedule and observation in studying the self-employment and social empowerment of women vegetable vendors in Kolhapur city. A sample of 100 women vegetable vendors were selected as a respondent using convenience sampling technique.

Nath (2019) conducted a study on income, vulnerability and empowerment of women street vendors in Haflong town of Assam using interview schedule and observation. The respondents were selected purposively from the daily market of Haflong town. Interview Schedule is the most common technique used in studying vegetable vendors as most of them were illiterate and it was convenient for getting the data in spite of their busy schedule. Observation helps in understanding the real conditions of the vegetable vending as the researcher experience the real-life situations of the vendors. Doibale et al. (2019) investigated the socio-demographic profile and factors that influence street vending in Aurangabad, Maharashtra. The poll was conducted using a pre-tested questionnaire, and it included all street sellers in Shahagunj.

In Yogyakarta, Indonesia, Brata (2010) used a survey to investigate the vulnerability of the urban informal sector: street vendors. The survey included 122 street sellers from various streets, and it was discovered that the majority of street vendors in

Yogyakarta are vulnerable on a medium level. Survey alone was not usually used as a method; it was accompanied by questionnaires. These techniques were associated with the quantitative methods and the finding were analysed using quantitative tools like SPSS and Microsoft excel.

Patil et.al. (2019) conducted a study on street vendors in Central Market area of Yeola, Maharashtra, India and their integration in market architecture adopting questionnaire and field work for collection of data, 85 vendors from various locations were selected randomly for the study.

2.2.1 Overview

Vendors usually have a low level of education, and the occupations are temporary in nature. So, from the above methodological review, it reveals that the previous researchers mostly used a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods. For the collection of data, they usually employed interview schedules and observations, which are thought to be the most relevant tools for collecting data as most of the vendors are illiterate and have a low educational background. For the sampling, the majority of the researchers employed purposive and convenient sampling for the collection of respondents. The review also shows that the study was usually street vendors and the informal sector in general. The study was held in different states in India and internationally, which calls for the study on Mizo women vegetable vendors.

2.3 Thematic review

Thematic review focus on examining themes within a topic by identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within the research topic. Varieties of aspects have been covered under Urban Informal Sector since early 1970's. By now the concept is found to have been studied across the globe. The substantive aspects covered by these studies include: Socio-economic status, Urban Informal sector, Migration, Street Vending, Self-employment women and Family relationship, Aged and Women in Informal Sector, Work situation and work condition, Income Women Self-Employment and Empowerment, Vulnerability, Regional Variation Women Entrepreneurship and Policy

2.3.1 Socio-economic status

Ray and Mishra (2011) viewed vendors as a significant part of the informal sector and it gives employment opportunities to poor migrants as well as the lower-income groups. They also stated that even though the vendors offered affordable prices of goods to the urban poor; they were treated as lawbreakers and the selling space were not regularised according to their requirement.

Khan and Khan (2009) highlights that having more adult male members in the family reduces the amount of contribution by women and eases the strain on women. Unemployed spouses in the informal economy frequently rely on their wives. They also do not make an effort to get work and hence remain unemployed. They take their wife's employment as a substitute. the children age reflected the participation of women in the workforce. The infant, the school-age and prime-age affects the participation of the mother in the workforce. The infant need caring and nurturing so the mother cannot fully participate in the workforce; school-age children need less care and attention so; the mother has more time to participate in the workforce. Prime age children were more grown-up they can even help their mother at her work.

Naqvi and Shahnaz (2002) assessed that more educated women are bound to take part in the labour force. Gonzalez (2004) highlights that married women were more devoted to work than unmarried.

La Ferra (2002) argues that there is a negative association between age and the amount of time women devote to work. He went on to say that while women's salaries grow with age and work experience, their returns decrease.

Mazhambe (2017) found out that vending activities play an important socio-economic role for large numbers of urban poor households. Through their profit from the street vendors, their standard of living also improved. The study suggested that the regulatory authorities and government should put in place legislation and policies that recognise street vendors as key players in the country's national economy. However, the vendors need to register and pay for their hawker's licence to legalise their activities.

Lockshin, et al (2000) have uncovered that the mother's group of 26-35 years are bound to be economically dynamic when contrasted with the other age groups. Formal sector employees attain their highest wages between the ages of 35 and 45, whereas

informal sector employees reach their maximum earnings between the ages of 35 and 54.

Khan and Khan (2009) found out that the degree of a woman's contribution to the family budget is influenced by her personal traits. Education is seen to be the most important component that will impact women's engagement. It has a two-fold effect on contributions: if education increased her productivity in home tasks, she would choose to stay at home; yet, if the opportunity cost of being at home is higher, she would devote time in the market to earn and contribute to the household budget.

Jones, et al. (2003) have highlighted that married and single women have different approaches to work hours and income rates. We hypothesised that women contributing to the family budget in the urban informal sector would have a distinct pattern in terms of marital status. Women in this class rarely work before marriage, and if they do, they take a casual approach to their jobs. They usually assist their mothers with household projects and home-based contract employment. They do, in fact, occasionally go out for factory employment if they are skilled. All of this is done in order to obtain the dowry. They are not obligated to work, but their circumstances force them to search for job after marriage to support their expanding family.

Ray (2000) concluded that female-headed families are really poorer in South Africa; but, in Pakistan, in the presence of economies of family size and adult/child consumption relativities, female-headed households are less fortunate than others, but not in terms of per-capita income. Female heads are identified as signs of family dissolution. Life is challenging for them due to societal stigma and the need to support their family. They are more widespread in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean, where widows, divorcees, and single mothers are more likely to be integrated into extended family units. In Pakistan, traditional traditions prevent female second marriages, although family frequently care for widows and abandoned women, even if their economic conditions are not ideal.

2.3.2 Urban Informal Sector:

Bhowmik (2000) states that there are two reasons for increasing hawking: the large-scale layoffs in the organised industry in the city. Hawking can easily establish with low investment and no requirement of special skills, which can be easily set up

especially for the low-skilled migrants and urban poor. The second reason is that it provides cheap commodities to the retrenched workers in the city. These people can easily procure their needs at a low price from the hawkers. Hawkers were seen as victims of the law because they were viewed as the main obstructers to urban governance. Bhowmik concluded his study by banning hawking is not the solution but legalising or regulating it is the solution. 'Hawkers exist only because the consumers want them to exist.'

Khan and Khan (2009) concluded that women as the head of the family had a positive effect on their contributions and the burden of the family was shared by these informally employed women. Age of the women relates with the contributions i.e., older the age lesser their contributions. Informally employed women, married women, and women living in nuclear families pay more to the home budget, implying that the fewer adult male members in the household, the greater the burden on women.

Indon (2002) argues that the urban informal sector serves as a nursery for the poor and jobless, providing social protection and employment to those on the margins of society. This sector gives opportunities to those societies where the formal sector has failed to provide employment opportunities, so it plays an important role in the development and upliftment of the poor. However, it is wrong to see it as a 'panacea- a cure to the ills of urban poverty, rather it is the duty of the government and the private sector to rethink its economic contributions to the country's economy and to prepare them for their entry into the modern economic sector.

According to Kalpagam (1984), there are two views on the emergence of the informal sector: the first view for the development of this area was emerging out of extreme controls in the formal sector and is credited to arrangements of the public authority. Secondly, the informal sector was identified as 'petty commodity production, results in an incomplete transition to capitalist development.

Ulyssea (2018) investigated the informal sector in Brazil and presented three perspectives to explain the reasons of informality. The first viewpoint contends that the informal sector is a pool of potentially productive entrepreneurs who are kept out of formality because to high regulatory costs, particularly entrance restriction. The second classifies informal forms as "parasitic forms" that are productive enough to

exist in the formal sector but opt to stay informal in order to profit from the cost savings of not paying taxes and regulations. The third contends that informality is a survival strategy for low-skilled workers who are too unproductive to become formal. According to the findings, the first perspective accounts for 9.3 percent of all informal forms, while the second accounts for 41.9 percent. The remaining kinds represent low-skilled entrepreneurs who are too inefficient to ever become formal. The author contends that informal forms are largely "parasitic," and that eliminating them (for example, by stricter enforcement) might have a beneficial economic impact

Truong (2018) examined the impact of street selling on poverty alleviation in Hanoi, Vietnam. The study included a sample of 67 street sellers. For this, a systematic stratified sampling approach was used. The qualitative research involved semi-structured interviews with street sellers at four Hanoi tourist attractions. We interviewed both mobile and stationary street sellers. The researcher identified several factors that contribute to street vending, including low farm productivity, restricted farmland, drop in non-farm jobs, and family concerns such as the loss of a husband and home fires for female sellers. The government's restriction on street hawking on tourist locations was a significant burden for street sellers, resulting in lower income. Police personnel were sent to patrol tourist destinations. However, the prohibition was not effective since sellers were able to circumvent the security team by learning about patrol times. The researcher concluded that street vending raised people's incomes over the international poverty level, citing many examples from respondents.

2.3.3 Migration

Oberoi and Singh (1984) argue that migration is considered as the major source of surplus labour in town, which contributes to the rise of unemployment, underemployment in the low productivity informal sector that decline the overall quality of urban life. Therefore, many countries have tried to slow down the growth of urban population by restricting rural urban migration. On the other hand, some believe that these problems are due to failure in urban planning.

Peek and Standing (1979) explained the rural urban migration and government policies in low-income countries while Oberoi (1977) examined migration, employment and the urban labour market in Sudan. Portes and Koob (1987) highlights

that the US Informal economy is an outcome of the survival strategies of the recent immigration and their subsequent attempts to make it in America. While Bellampalli and Kaushik (2018) argues that migration is a rural phenomenon and the main factor for rural urban migration in India are lack of basic amenities and low status of the rural people. Islam et.al (2011) concluded that the main reason for rural urban migration at household and individual level are for employment, migration due to new job and for pursuing education (Islam et.al., 2014). Kumari (2014) studied the rural urban migration pattern due to the rapid increase in internal migration in 2011 census. She found out that not only the economic factor pushes the increase rate of rural urban migration but the social factors like similar language which operate mutually both at origin and destination places, distance between the places, the mindset and aspirations of migrants were also the compliment factor which leads to increase in the rate of rural urban migration (Kumari, 2014).

2.3.4 Street Vending

In India, roughly 49.48 lakh street vendors have been discovered, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest figure (8.49 lakh), followed by Madhya Pradesh (7.04 lakh). In contrast, Delhi has over 72,457 recognized street vendors, whilst none have been identified in Sikkim (The Tribune, 2024). The Street sellers (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 is an Act of the Indian Parliament that regulates and protects the rights of street sellers in public places. Kumari Selja, the then-Union Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, presented it in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of India's Parliament) on September 6, 2012. The Bill was approved in the Lok Sabha on September 6, 2013, and in the Rajya Sabha (upper house) on February 19, 2014. The President of India assented to the law on March 4, 2014. The Act entered into force on May 1, 2014 (Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 2014).

Dimitrov (2024) highlights that according to several initiatives, around 41% of women street sellers offer a minimal subsistence. While these plans were implemented during the epidemic to protect livelihoods, they must ultimately enable individuals to become self-sufficient and improve their socioeconomic status. Many street sellers are unaware of their rights under the Street sellers Act and do not participate in decision-

making through municipal organizations or town vending committees. Women play a crucial role in developing the informal sector and advocating for social equality in patriarchal societies that often discriminate against them due to their gender. Furthermore, individuals face discrimination based on their gender and from family members when performing home responsibilities. The concerns they address include lack of legal support, harassment by local authorities and police, occupational discrimination based on gender, health issues, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of skills and training. Addressing socio-economic difficulties through the Street Vendors Act and PM Savinidi plan can promote economic justice and social equality (Dimitrov, 2024).

2.3.5 Self Employed Women and the Family relationship

Wharton and Erickson (1995) found out that married women's involvement in emotional work does result in lower job-related well-being, which stems from the family emotion work women perform rather than from their performance of emotional labour on the job. On the other hand, women's job-related well-being is not as much at risk from women's performance of emotional labour at work.

Craig et al. (2012) argues that among the self-employed male and females, females give more time for the family and childcare as compared to males. Male self-employment is more likely to involve full-time work hours while female self-employed are more likely to facilitate maximum time for childcare. They further emphasised that the self-employment of both husband and wife tends to reinforce traditional gender roles.

Gurley-Calvez et al. (2009) found out that self-employed women spend more time providing childcare and spend less time in work as compared to employed women. In Europe, aside from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, Hildebrand and Williams (2003) report that self-employed women spend more time at work and less time caring for children than employed women. This shows that mothers' use of self-employment for child care is more salient in some countries than others.

Hundley (2000) argue that self-employed women's wages decreased with marriage, family size, and household hours, but self-employed men's earnings grew with marriage and family size. Self-employed women focused more on housekeeping and

childcare, whereas self-employed males focused on market labour. Traditional gender segregation of labour was strengthened when both partners were self-employed.

Crompton and Lyonette (2008) revealed from their research that households with children induced higher family demands that results in higher levels of conflict, particularly for women. Martinengo et al. (2010) also highlighted those younger children are the predictors of family-to-work conflict as they demand more time for caring. Arnold and Evangelia (2007); Schieman et.al., (2009) argues that paid work is beneficial to mental as people aged towards midlife.

2.3.6 Aged and Women in informal sector

Canter (1980) and Monk (1980) argues that after retirement the aged prefer to take up some job either to keep them active or work out of economic necessity. They further emphasised that aged engage in occupations of low prestige in the unorganised sector when family in the lower segments of society no longer acts as a support system to them.

According to UN Women (2017) women account for a disproportionate share of informal sector jobs, including street vendors, domestic workers, subsistence farmers, and seasonal agriculture workers. In South Asia, more than 80% of women in non-agricultural jobs are informal; in Sub-Saharan Africa, 74%; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 54%. Working in the informal or grey economy, as it is frequently referred as, often leaves women without the protection of labor laws, social benefits such as pensions, health insurance, or paid sick leave. They frequently labor for lesser salaries and in hazardous conditions, including the threat of sexual harassment. The lack of social safeguards has long-term consequences for women. For example, fewer women get pensions across the world, resulting in an increase in the number of older women living in poverty. Even in sophisticated economies like France, Germany, Greece, and Italy, women's average pension is more than 30% lower than men's.

Alfers and Sevilla (2022) argues that globally, older people are more likely to work in informal settings. Similarly, throughout Southeast Asia, informality is greater among senior persons (65 and older), notably in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam. Informality affects older women in the area more than older males, with rates exceeding 95% in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Vietnam. According to the ILO

(2019), this is an indication of vulnerability since it demonstrates older individuals, particularly women, having problems getting formal occupations owing to their age, while the absence of old-age income security leads them into informal employment arrangements.

Samuels et al., (2018) highlights the several motivators for older women to continue working which include economic need, personal desire, societal standards, and greater gendered disparities. According to the most recent UN report on the human rights of older women, employment in old age offers both advantages and problems for older women.

Mahler (2021) contends that on the plus side, labor may promote financial independence, create a sense of fulfilment and higher status within a home, and offer cognitive benefits. However, it can have a severe impact on the physical and mental health of older women owing to poor working conditions, exposure to discrimination and abuse, and increased stress from various duties at work and at home.

Samuels et al., (2018) argues that the older workers are barred from accessing credit schemes, restricting their ability to expand their firms and locking them in low-wage jobs. Because most retraining and redeployment programs are geared at younger workers, older workers have little possibilities to upgrade their skills and educational level in later life

Chen (2001) highlights that though women engaged enormously in the informal sector, their work is not recognised in the country's economic development. Informal activities like home-based sector and other house based work were not recognised in official statistics. If recognised and visible, the women work force would have been increased.

2.3.7 Work situation and Working condition

Thippaiah (1985) argues that the working hours of the informal sector are longer than the statutory hours of work results in the working condition to a hopelessly bad situation. The over work situation results in bad health condition to the worker. Breman (1979) concluded that in informal sector there is no distinction between working days and free days (Sunday and holiday) 'extra work' which is paid has little or no significance for most workers in informal sector. Papola (1978) argues that the

condition of work in the informal sector in terms of working hours are generally poor. No weekly off days are applicable and the conditions of work relating to space, sanitation, and hygiene is far below the norms.

Roever (2014) highlights that surviving as a street vendor needs a certain number of skills. Competition is the main issue among the street vendors over space and access to customer in many cities. Also, the vendors have to negotiate with the wholesalers and customers. She further emphasized that though the vending provides livelihood, earnings is low and risk are high for vendors who sell fresh fruits and vegetables (Roever, 2014).

Ambati (2015) studied the working conditions of the street vendors of Ahmedabad and found out that the working condition is bad which involves an extensive workload with low sales and profits, no security and even fall ill no other individual to depend on for continuing the business (Ambati, 2015).

Kumar and Sharma (2019) studied the working condition of street vendors of J&K, he highlights that though the government implement Street Vendor Act 2014, most of the respondents faced bribing problem, storage problem, local authorities and toilet facilities especially for the female vendors (Kumar and Sharma, 2019).

Saha (2011) concluded from his studied about the working life of street vendors in Mumbai that the working life of Mumbai is not good, the street vendors borrow money from the lender at an exorbitant rate of interest which led them to a debt trap situation. But they need the money not only for their occupation but for their safety at the workplace from local authorities who asked them for bribe. This causes a deteriorating working environment (Saha, 2011).

Martinez, Short, and Estrada (2017) studied 527 street sellers in Cali, Colombia, using a random sampling method. Street sellers in Cali have lower education levels, longer working hours, and are more likely to be handicapped or from indigenous backward societies compared to the general population. More than two-thirds of vendors are household heads, indicating that street selling plays a significant role in a home's internal economy. The study indicated significant levels of satisfaction among street sellers in Cali. 93% of street sellers did not want to sell their company. Street vending coexists with conventional retail and commercial operations. Street sellers and formal

storefronts provide buyers several shopping options based on price and quality, resulting in a complicated retail landscape. Both official and informal merchants share and transfer goods and services, including expertise. Street merchants were seen acquiring products from the official sector. There was an economic nexus between street merchants and the official sector (Martinez, Short, & Estrada, 2017).

2.3.8 Income

Bhattarai and Pathak (2020) highlights in his studies that the average monthly net income of street vendors in Kathmandu was Rs.22,500. Factors like Educational level, experience, sales and working hours per day influenced the income of street vendors. The results were calculated using consumption approach.

According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), the average daily income of a street vendor in India ranges from Rs. 200 to Rs. 1000. Barman (2020) finds that the majority of the vendors have very low income level and only 22.67 % of the respondents earn a monthly income above Rs. 15,000

Mazhambe (2017) examined the impact of street vending on the living standards of street sellers in Harare, Zimbabwe. A cross-sectional study was done with 166 street sellers. 86.6% of street sellers rely only on street vending for revenue. Street vending is mostly driven by a lack of alternative work possibilities, a need for household food security, and a desire to augment other revenue sources. The survey indicated that 45.36% of respondents had been street selling for over six years, indicating that it was a stable source of income for them. 69% of respondents reported a daily profit of less than \$10. Similarly, 26% of respondents made a daily profit between \$10 and \$20, while 5% made between \$21 and \$40. The study found that street vending improves the living conditions of sellers. Researchers advise designating some regions as vending zones.

Chauke, Munzhelele, and Tagwi (2015) examined how street traders in South Africa's Vhembe neighborhood might earn more than the poverty line. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 132 street sellers randomly selected from four local municipalities in the Vhembe area. The analysis was carried by utilizing logistic regression. Researchers discovered that investing in stock purchases, monthly

revenue, and profit increased income over the poverty line, whereas street sellers' problems and business activity had a negative influence.

McKay, Fiona H., & Richard H. Osborne (2021) highlights that some seasonal workers labor for 1 to 2 months, primarily selling mangoes, crackers, sugarcane, idols, and rangoli powder during holiday seasons. profits range from Rs.100 to Rs.500 per day, with a minimum labor time of 2 to 8 hours. 82 percent of profits come from selling fruits and vegetables. Income varies by geographical location and averages around Rs.4,000 per month. In actuality, their work environments are unsanitary, lack bathrooms, and they encounter social issues with local officials, police, and thugs. Female sellers encounter more hurdles than men vendors in running their businesses. Women vendors have financial challenges, limited access to education, infrastructure, and healthcare. Policies and programs should prioritize gender equality and empower female merchants .

2.3.9 Women Self-Employment and Empowerment

Datta (2003) argues that although SEWA (Self-Employed Women Association) makes so much difference to poor families and women, the real development for the associations is to get government assistance for the strengthening of the grassroots activities. Pawar (2016) revealed from the study that the women vegetable vendors definitely increased their social status and they are socially empowered because of their engaging in self-employment.

Singh (2007) found out that the condition of women in India; especially in the rural areas are deplorable but their participation has increased in the informal sector. The rural woman is now with the help of self-efforts being uplifted by coming out of their houses and working and earning a livelihood for their families specifically in the informal sector. There should be efforts of empowering women, especially in the rural areas. Many government laws and schemes are strong support for the women workers to come out of their houses and make their own identity among the society. But still, their implementation and administration are questionable. But on the other side of the coin, women empowerment is there through the informal sector.

Palaneeswari and Sasikala (2012) argues that women have been increasingly engaged in self-employment and entrepreneurship which leads to property rights, political

representation, social equality, personal right, family development, market development, community development and at last nation development.

Nath (2019) found out that the decision-making power at the household independently among the Haflong women street vendors was highly satisfactory. Some recommendations were made by the researcher that the government needs to engage in tackling the problem and issue faced by the women vegetable vendors and development of the market infrastructure is highly necessary.

Taniguchi (2002) finds that having sufficient work experience and being married both significantly increase the rate for entering into self-employment while the educational qualifications do not correlate with it. She also found out that having small children slow down the entry of women into self-employment as compared to women having young children.

Craig et al. (2012) highlights that self-employment is useful for managing the 'time economy' of the family by scheduling available time for a family relationship but the results suggest that self-employment of both husband and wife tends to reinforce traditional gender roles, which means gender inequality was maximised.

According to Hundley (2000), women and men have distinct motivations for going into self-employment; women go into self-employment to help with household production and to spend more time with their families, whereas males go into self-employment to make more money. When both the couples were engaged in self-employment the gender division of labour was reinforced and maximised which leads to maximising gender inequality. The earning differences between males and females in self-employment is one of the factors that result in gender inequality. Since self-employed women earn decline with family and marriage while self-employed men earn more with family and marriage. The relatively large male/female earnings gap among the self-employed could be due to large differences between self-employed couples' commitments to household and market work.

Sankaran Kamala and Roopa Madhav (2011) argues that the livelihood of unorganized sector workers is quite difficult. Social workers and educators have long been interested with women's empowerment and have made significant contributions to raising public awareness of the relevance of numerous issues that must be addressed

in order for women to fully develop. The supremacy of males is represented in all family behaviors, but women's autonomy is critical to correcting this imbalance and achieving gender equality. Workers in the unorganized sector are legally protected in terms of job security, salaries, and working conditions.

In 2005, the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) commissioned a research titled 'Understanding the Levels of Women's Empowerment in the Workplace', which found that women make up just 6% of the overall workforce in corporate firms. The proportion of women in top executive positions is alarmingly low. Only 7% of the labor force is in the organized sector, while 93% work in the unorganized or informal sector. Women are disproportionately employed in the informal sector due to poorer negotiating power, lower earnings, and lack of unionization.

2.3.10 Vulnerability

Brata (2010) found out that among the street vendor from his universe, the vulnerability was highly experienced by the food seller (fruits, vegetables, drinks and snacks). He also argues that vulnerability varies across the location of vending.

Becker (2004) contends that efforts to reduce poverty will fail if vulnerable people in the informal economy and their employment needs are not addressed. Furthermore, the vulnerability of the poor is linked to changes in global functioning. With a high incidence of vulnerability, street vendors capacity to maintain their survival ability would dwindle.

Nath (2009) highlighted in his study that the women vegetable vendors are highly vulnerable on the ground of carrying or head loading their vegetables especially in the hilly regions of the North East India region.

Bullying, according to Dabir-Alai (2004), is the most susceptible aspect of vendors, accounting for almost 73% of respondents. Meanwhile, just 1% of sellers have relationships with suppliers or creditors, indicating that the majority of street vendors self-fund their businesses.

According to Vijaya (2016), the primary concerns of women street sellers are insecurity and ambiguity because their business is unlawful. Because they are women street vendors, they are victims of crimes such as eve-teasing, sexual harassment, transportation, financial concerns, and spatial issues.

2.3.11 Regional variations of Women work in India

Krishnan (1990) emphasizes in his research of the involvement of working women at the district level in specific states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra that these states were chosen because they had the largest number of men and women workers. He discovered that the absence of strict taboos against female participation in work, primitive subsistence farming that requires the maximum number of family members, and the establishment of various industrial plants all contribute to women's high participation rates.

Chandra (1964), the states with the lowest female labor force participation in India include Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa. The primary causes include a significant bias against female engagement outside the house and societal taboos that restrict women from engaging in economic activity. According to Neetha (1996), female participation in the labor force improves women's status, which increases the social value of a girl child; participation in remunerative occupations increases the return on investment in girls; and the status of the girl child rises if she is economically independent. Lalhriatpuii (2011) contends that social elements like as education, employment, access to earned money, and decision-making would boost women's engagement in economic activities, hence expanding their potential, achieving empowerment, and gender equality.

King and Hill (1993) discovered that female education is thought to be more important than male education for various outcomes such as fertility, child health, and infant death. These components might be more successful in educating girls by making them aware of these concerns.

Natarajan and Nayak (2019) discovered that per capita income and female LFPR are inversely associated, giving empirical support for the household income effects hypothesis. The geographic research revealed that the Southern and Western States outperformed the Northern and Eastern States. The dominance of patriarchal institutions, along with a lack of job availability and accessibility, discouraged female employment involvement in the North and East. High involvement in the MGNREGA initiative, as well as greater literacy levels, were responsible for the South and West's

considerably higher female LFPR. After researching labor legislation in several states and examining the factors that influence women's labor force participation, the report makes policy suggestions on four major aspects. It proposes the application of nudge theory to stimulate behavioral change, improved employment creation through financial support services, stronger legal rights for women across states, and the expansion of public transportation infrastructure.

An International Labour Organization (ILO) report lays out 4 key reasons for the decline in female workforce participation in India- 1) rising educational enrolment of young women; 2) lack of employment opportunities; 3) effect of household income on participation; and 4) measurement. Klasen and Pieters (2012) low-educated women enter the labor force due to desperate economic circumstances, whereas highly educated women are motivated by job prospects and decent earnings.

Sorsa P et.al (2015) according to an OECD research titled 'Determinants of the poor Female Labour Force Participation in India', cultural and religious factors may contribute to poor female labor force participation in Northern states. In the South and West, caste is a more significant socioeconomic element. Women from higher castes are less likely to work, followed by those from other backward groups, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes (ST). Sociologists define 'Sanskritization' as an upward mobility strategy where lower-income individuals replicate the norm of remaining at home, which is associated with affluence and better social status.

2.3.12 Women entrepreneurship

Agrawal (2018) revealed that women entrepreneurship faced multifarious constraints and challenges faced during their entrepreneurial journey. In the current study she tried to classify these constraints into four broad categories: Socio-Cultural Issues; Economic Issues; Psychological Issues and Managerial Issues.

According to Majumdar and Khumukcham (2021), the norms and customs of an indigenous society may allow "only female members" to participate in particular entrepreneurial activities and make money. This study also emphasises the cultural orientation perspective in comprehending the interaction between family and the female entrepreneur.

Duque et.al. (2022) argues that there is evidence indicating that informal entrepreneurship has contributed to the increased ability of women to make decisions regarding resource allocation and time management. However, these decisions are not made strategically and are often limited to circumstances with limited options. Various structural constraints restrict the exercise of agency, thereby limiting empowerment to an individual process that is contingent on specific circumstances rather than a collective process that would bring about changes in women's social conditions.

According to studies (Bhatt 2006; Charmes 2009; Nelson 1997), informal women entrepreneurs typically face harassment from local authorities and lack official space. According to studies by Bhatt (2000) and Charmes (2009), women entrepreneurs typically sell flowers at temples or baskets of fruits. Additionally, caring for children limits their ability to travel to better regions.

2.3.13 Policy

Tholkappian (2014) argue that the unorganised sector workers are the backbone of the country which needs further initiatives for the welfare of the unorganised sector. Though the government implement certain schemes and acts for the protection and upliftment of the Unorganised sector workers, the government need to take further initiatives for the welfare. He points out that the merciless exploitation of women without being adequately rewarded for their services is likely to escalate with the expansion of globalisation. Due to globalisation, the unorganised sector was vulnerable and should concern about their issues like food security, health, job, wages security and accident security through a well-planned comprehensive strategy.

Bhowmik (2001) and Anjaria (2006) argues that even though the government's has started making laws to improve the lives of street vendors, it is not properly implemented result in tardy and inefficient for the street vendors. Bhowmik and Anjaria identified challenges with street sellers, including social protection, employment conditions, credit accessibility, and public space usage in their studies.

Mazhambe (2017) emphasised that even though the informal sector mainly street vendors contribute a lot to the Zimbabwe economy the government and the authority do not constitute regulations and policies for the street vendors.

Roever and Skinner (2016) analyzed literature and data on urban policies and local government practices affecting street vending. The research examines the quantity, nature, and impact of street vending, as well as media coverage of exclusionary rules and practices. Street vending creates demand for services provided by informal workers, such as transport workers, tea sellers, and market porters, as well as formal sector actors such as transportation and suppliers.

2.3.14 Overview:

For the purpose of the study, secondary sources like articles and books were reviewed and research gaps were identified. The thematic reviewed were divided into thirteen heads related to the objectives of the study. The first theme, socio-economic status, viewed vending as a significant part of the informal sector, which provides employment opportunity to the urban poor. It also offered reasonable goods for the urban dweller, where the majority of women engaged in this activity. It has also highlighted that having more adult male members in the family reduces the amount of contribution by women and eases the strain on women. The age of the vendors children, the marital status, the level of education, and the age of the vendors played an important part in the engagement of the women vendors in this economic activity. This theme gives important concern to the regulatory authorities for the upliftment of vendors, as they played a key player in the country's economy. All the studies were not touched on the Mizoram context; the study was conducted in different parts of the world, including India. So, it is highly necessary to study the socio-economic conditions of Mizo women vendors in a Mizoram context.

The review on the urban informal sector highlights the reasons why people were engaging in this activity: the large layoffs in the formal sector, low investment, high cost of tax in the formal sector, freedom from paying taxes, and survival strategy for the low-skilled workers were highlighted from the review. Migration is seen as the major source of surplus labor in town, which contributes to the rise of unemployment. It has also highlighted that the main reason for the rural urban migration is the lack of basic amenities and low status of the rural people. It has also been found out that not only the economic factor pushes the rate of rural urban migration, but the social factor also influences the migration. So, the condition for the rural-urban migration condition

in Mizoram is needed to study in the context of Mizo women vegetable vendors. Reviewed street vending indicated that 49.48 lakhs of street vendors are present in India, with Uttar Pradesh having the highest figure (8.49 lakhs). The Indian Parliament implemented the Street Sellers (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, that regulates and protects the rights of street sellers in public places. Many street sellers are unaware of their rights under the Street Sellers Act and do not participate in decision-making through municipal organizations or town vending committees. Women play a crucial role in developing the informal sector and advocating for social equality in patriarchal societies that often discriminate against them due to their gender. It is highly necessary to give priority to the women vendors who are in bad conditions but provide good economic development for the nation. The self-employed women give more time for the family as compared to the self-employed men, which results in men earning more than women. It was also highlighted that women with younger children have family-to-work conflict as they demand more time for caring for them. The literature on older women shows that the elderly prefer to take up some job either to keep them active or work out of economic necessity. This is an indication of vulnerability since it demonstrates older individuals, particularly women, having problems getting formal occupations owing to their age, while the absence of old-age income security leads them into informal employment arrangements. The working situation of the informal sector does not have proper timing; they usually work for a longer hour, which results in bad health conditions for the worker. Competition is the main issue among the street vendors over space and access to customers in many cities. Earnings are low compared to the working hours, and risk is high for vendors who sell fresh fruits and vegetables. Other problems include bribing problem, storage problems, financial loan issues, local authorities, and toilet facilities, especially for the female vendors. From the previous studies, it can be seen that the average monthly net income of street vendors was between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 22,500. Factors like educational level, experience, sales, and working hours per day influenced the income of street vendors. It can also be as low as Rs. 4000 per month. Policies and programs should prioritize gender equality and empower female vendors.

The women vegetable vendors definitely increased their social status, which leads to property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights, family development, market development, community development, and at last, nation development. They are socially empowered because their engaging in self-employment and decision-making power at the household independently among the women street vendors was highly satisfactory. Regional variation was seen among women workers in India; the primary causes of regional variations include a significant bias against female engagement outside the house and societal taboos that restrict women from engaging in economic activity. The absence of strict taboos against female participation in work contributes to women's high participation rates. Social elements like education, employment, access to earned money, and decision-making would boost women's engagement in economic activities, hence expanding their potential, achieving empowerment, and gender equality.

Women entrepreneurs faced multifarious constraints and challenges during their entrepreneurial journey. In the current study, the author tried to classify these constraints into four broad categories: Socio-cultural Issues; Economic Issues; Psychological Issues; and Managerial Issues. There is evidence indicating that informal entrepreneurship has contributed to the increased ability of women to make decisions regarding resource allocation and time management. The unorganized sector workers are the backbone of the country, which needs further initiatives for the welfare of the unorganized sector. Though the government implements certain schemes and acts for the protection and upliftment of the unorganized sector workers, the government needs to take further initiatives for the welfare. The merciless exploitation of women without being adequately rewarded for their services is likely to escalate with the expansion of globalization. Due to globalization, the unorganized sector was vulnerable and should be concerned about their issues like food security, health, job security, wage security, and accident security through a well-planned, comprehensive strategy.

Table 2.1 Overview of the Review of Literature

Sl.no	Heading	No. of Literature	Prominent authors
1	Theoretical	10	Keith Hart, Moser, Hernando de Soto, Chen, Bhasin, Connell, Kimberle Crenshaw, Julian Rappaport, Hofstede, Frone
2	Methodology	6	Samarpitha, Pawar, Nath, Doibale, Brata, Patil
3	Thematic	188	Bhowmik, Khan and Khan, Kalpagam, Roever and Skinner, Mazhambe, Anjaria, Tholkappian, Bhatt, Agrawal, Klasen and Pieters, International Labour Organization, Natarajan and Nayak, King and Hill, Lalhriatpuii, Neetha, Krishnan, Vijaya, Chen, Becker, Sankaran Kamala and Roopa Madhav, Hundley, Taniguchi, Palaneeswari and Sasikala, Datta, Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA), National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), Kumar and Sharma, Papola, Mahler, Alfes and Sevilla, Hundley, Dimitrov, Oberoi

2.4 RESEARCH GAP AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY:

From the above review of literature on the informal sector in urban labour, it is revealed that the informal sector is mostly seen in the third world countries. And for the investigation, major cities in different countries were selected. The main focus on those studies is of the economic area of the labour market, formal-informal linkages, various segment of urban informal sector, productivity and market dynamics.

1. Most previous studies dealt with the economics of scale, the contribution of informal economy to the national development. In the early research, studies on the cost of employment generation, labour absorption and income potential were highly touched from the economic perspectives. The imperfection of the previous research

on informal sector is that the ‘social’ aspect has not been given importance in the study. Since the previous research on urban informal sector usually touched on the macro level research rather than the micro level, it does not touch the specific characteristic and changes in the small-scale informal sector activity like vegetable vending. Also, previous studies were mainly studied the informal sector in general not the women in specific, where the major contribution of the informal sector were women.

2. Numerous scholars have conducted studies on women street vendors in various regions of the world. Generally, the studies emphasized the difficult work condition which needed attention. But the conditions of the Mizo Women Vegetable Vendors are different from the previous studies. Instead, majority of vegetable vendors in Mizo society were female. Therefore, a study on the causes of the entry into vegetable vending and the work situations of Mizo women vegetable vendors is needed.

3. The previous studies were conducted in different countries and other states in India. Mizo society having the culture and way of living being different, requires contextualization. In the context of Mizo society, few studies were conducted in Mizoram from economic perspectives which highlighted their economic conditions. The study is to analyse from sociological perspective, which enriched the study on vending for future researchers who are interested in this field. The specific study on Mizo women vegetable vendors in relation to their family and work balance is nil and most of the previous studies on this relationship was mainly related to self-employed women in general. As a result, an in-depth study of the link between Mizo women vegetable sellers and the management of their job and family life is strongly desired.

4. Mizoram is a landlocked state which shares its border with the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar. Numerous migrant workers from Myanmar settled in Aizawl and engaged in vegetable vending as it was easily accessible. The study on the conditions of migrant vegetable vendors is very rare. Therefore, an in-depth study on the causes and problems faced by the migrant women vegetable vendors needs consideration. The need for the study of women vegetable vendors is highly crucial as it will bring to light the sections of society who have been voiceless, largely invisible in society and whom we have taken for granted.

5. It has been observed from the review of literature that the government of India is implementing the Street Vendor Act 2014, but the study on its implications and the benefits that the Mizo women vegetable vendor enjoyed was not studied and the study on the awareness related to this act was nearly nil on the context of Mizoram. So, the study on the policy and implementation of the Act is highly required, which will highlight the ground reality of the problem faced by Mizo women vegetable vendors in relations to the policy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

- 3.0 Introduction**
- 3.1 Objectives of the study**
- 3.2 Research Design of the study**
- 3.3 Universe and Sample**
 - 3.3.1 Historicity and the Present**
 - 3.3.2 The Explanation of the Sample**
 - 3.3.3 Principle of Inclusion and Exclusion**
- 3.5 Sources of data**
- 3.6 The Pilot Study**
- 3.7 The Interview Schedule**
- 3.8 Operationalisation of Concepts**
- 3.9 Research Experience**
- 3.10 Analysis of the Data**
- 3.11 Problems in Data Collection**
- 3.12 Research Ethics**
- 3.13 Limitations of the study**

3.0 Introduction

The overview section of the previous chapter on the review of literature highlighted the research gaps in the ongoing research and included the rationale for the present study. This chapter deals with the research methodology and framework, including the objectives of the study. Research methodology is an outline which shows how a given piece of research is carried out. It analyses the information regarding a specific research topic and explains the procedure and techniques that are used to identify it.

3.1 Objectives of the study:

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of women vegetable vendors
2. To analyse the causes of taking up the vegetable vending by natives and migrants
3. To study the management and balance of their work and their family life.
4. To understand the social empowerment of women vegetable vendors by assessing various indicators of empowerment.
5. To find out the problems faced by women vegetable vendors and to make recommendations as necessary

3.2. Research design

The present study will utilise an exploratory research design that incorporates a mixed method approach. Exploratory research is a methodological approach which investigates research problems that have no past data or only a few studies for reference. It serves as a tool for initial research that gives a theoretical idea of the research problem. This research is conducted in order to form the nature of the study and to develop a better understanding of the problem. Exploratory research is flexible, unstructured and informal in nature. It requires the researcher to investigate different sources such as published secondary data, data from surveys and observation of research items. The main core of the study is to investigate the social phenomenon with care and to analyse the existing material related to the phenomenon under enquiry so as to gain new information about the phenomenon. In the case of this study, the majority of the previous studies on the urban informal sector particularly touched on the study of street vendors in general, which includes both genders; the study on the

women's section in particular and vegetable vendors in specific is hardly found and nearly nil. This is the reason in which exploratory research design is employed. Since secondary sources for the specific study are hardly found and unmanageable, the study falls under the category of exploratory research design.

Mixed-method research includes both the quantitative and qualitative strands in a single study. In single research, it entails gathering, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data. This method is used to enrich the findings, as only one method alone will not be sufficient to have a reliable and valid finding. The use of mixed methods helps in better understanding and broader perspectives, as the strength of one method can help mitigate the weakness of the other. The main purpose of the study is to know the working conditions of the Mizo women vegetable vendors in the urban informal sector along with the causes of their entry into this economic activity.

3.3 Universe and Sample

In the context of research, the 'universe' is used in the sampling, which constitutes all the related individuals, events, documents and observations under study, and it covers all the related data of the particular study. A rigorous characterisation of the universe and observations, as well as the significant link between them, is the cornerstone of planned representativeness (Goode & Hatt, 1981).

The universe of the study covers all the women vegetable vendors in Aizawl city, the capital city of Mizoram. Aizawl city being the capital of Mizoram, around 45% of the total population resides in the city, which attracts most farmers to invest their products in the city. This results in having the highest number of vegetable markets among the districts within the state. The rationale of the study has already been mentioned in the last section of the preceding chapter. Priority is given to covering as many of the women vendors as possible. In the initial stage, the attempt was made to seek records of the women vendors from Aizawl Municipal Council; unfortunately, due to the temporary nature of the work conditions, the data failed to yield any worthwhile information. The researcher went to the field to get the data from the vendors directly. Most of the market have their own associations, while the peripatetic vendors do not have proper associations. With the help of the Association leader, data were collected

accordingly, while peripatetic vendors were collected based on the AMC wards. In the process, 18 markets were identified which will represent the stationary vendors in Aizawl city, namely: (1) Aizawl New Market, (2) Vaivakawn Bazar, (3) Chanmari Bazar, (4) Bawngkawn Bazar, (5) Ramhlun South Bazar, (6) Ngaizel Bazar, (7) Venghlui Bazar, (8) Thuampui Bazar, (9) Armed Veng Bazar, (10) Dawrpui Bazar, (11) Armed Veng South Bazar, (12) ITI Bazar, (13) Tennis Court Bazar, (14) Khatla Bazar, (15) Zonuam Bazar, (16) Ramrikawn Bazar, (17) Chawlhmun Bazar and (18) Tuikual South Bazar and will be selected to represent the stationary vendors. For the peripatetic vendors, 5 vendors each from the Locality market (Kawn Bazar), Saturday morning bazaar and Friday market from 19 AMC wards will be selected using purposive sampling. The growing city of Aizawl serves as an appropriate place of study because it has the largest vegetable market, with the majority of the keepers being female.

A sample of **200 vendors** is selected by **purposive sampling** for the study. For stationary vendors, 100 vendors were selected from 18 markets as mentioned earlier, and the same 100 vendors were collected for the purpose of peripatetic vendors from 19 AMC wards. 6 respondents were taken for a case study: 2 vendors each from stationary, peripatetic and migrant vegetable vendors. The sample for peripatetic vendors will be collected in all wards of Aizawl municipality in order to maintain the fair distribution of the sample.

3.3.1 Historicity and the Present:

Aizawl is the capital city of Mizoram, located in the north eastern part of India. Founded in 1894, it is a rapidly rising hill city in India. Mizoram, known geographically as the Lushai Hills, is India's second smallest state. The city's name is a mixture of two Mizo words: 'Ai', signifying Aidu (*Amomum dealbatum*), and 'zawl', meaning 'flat'. It might refer to a flat plot of ground where Aidu grows. It is a regular practice in Mizoram to use 'zawl' as a suffix when naming sites where flatlands or tiny mounds are located in the middle of hills. The location from which Aizawl takes its name is now occupied by Raj Bhavan, the official home of the Governor of Mizoram and its neighbouring districts. According to the 2011 Census of India, the city has 293,416 residents, accounting for 26.89% of Mizoram's total population.

Aizawl City is managed by the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC). The city is organised into 19 municipal wards and 83 local councils (Thangluah and Saitluanga, 2021).

The development of hill towns and settlements in the eastern Indian Himalayas was intimately linked to the region's colonial colonisation (Giri 2006). The colonial East India Company (known as Kumpinu by the Mizos) erected 'Fort Aijal' as a military installation in 1890 after invading and occupying the Mizo lands. The Aijal (or Aizawl) outpost comprises a military barracks and a few residences. It was strengthened to accommodate just around 200 military soldiers. As people migrated from the surrounding locations, the outpost was progressively encircled by civilian residential areas. According to the Indian Census, the population of Aizawl rose fast after the British rule, rising from 325 to 2890 between 1901 and 1911. Aizawl had a population of 4780 in 1941 and experienced significant rural-urban movement following India's independence in 1947. The Rambuai, a 20-year armed struggle for independence from 1966 to 1986, and increased job opportunities in the government sector with the attainment of Union Territory in 1972 all contributed to the large-scale migration into Aizawl city (Saitluanga). Urban poverty has significantly increased due to stagnant government job growth and restricted work opportunities. Zothanmawia (2017) estimates that 6.5% of the city's urban households fall below the poverty line. Many disadvantaged households were incorporated into the informal sector.

Regional growth and development in the urban area are the main criteria for determining the development of the state. But the developmental scheme is one-sided and strongly favours the city of Aizawl, which causes an imbalance of development within the state of Mizoram. This results in serious repercussions in the political economy of the state (Saitluanga, 2010).

From table 3.1, it can be seen that there is a major shift in the occupational structure that can be considered as the measure of development. It can be observed from the table that the urbanisation effect is seen on the percentage shares of both cultivator and agricultural labour, which are declining consistently during 1981-2011. At the same time, workers engaging in trade and commerce, teaching, government jobs,

transport, factory, plantation and construction have increased from 80.97% to 91.79% (Saitluanga, 2017).

Table 3.1 Sectoral distribution of workers, Aizawl city, 1981-2011

Year	Main workers to total population (%)	Cultivator to total workers (%)	Agricultural labourer (%)	Household industry worker (%)	Other workers (%)	WPR ^a (main + marginal)	Female WPR (main + marginal)
1981	32.03	9.52	6.20	3.29	80.97	32.91	18.47
1991	36.94	9.02	4.26	1.02	83.57	45.40	37.57
2001	33.77	3.57	2.16	1.89	92.53	44.15	38.46
2011	34.80	2.96	2.20	1.83	91.79	40.78	31.37

Source District Census Handbook, Aizawl District, 1961-2011, Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram

^aWPR refers to work participation rate

The rise of the market economy and the fall of the traditional economy, which includes workers in agriculture and domestic industries, clearly show how the economies of cities and regions work. In the northeast, industries that make things are falling behind. In Aizawl City, this was also clear in the "other workers" sector, which is where most of the city's administrative, educational, and commercial hubs are located. The table above shows that the work participation rate (WPR) and the female WPR went up a lot between 1981 and 1991, but they went down a lot between 2001 and 2011. This shows that unemployment is one of the state's biggest problems. But young people from all over the state who were looking for work moved to the city. Many of them are educated people looking for official jobs, in addition to skilled and semi-skilled job seekers who try to make a living in low-paying government jobs, construction projects, and small businesses.

The main reason for Aizawl City's rapid growth is that a lot of people are moving from rural areas to urban areas. The city gets a lot of manual labourers from nearby states. Most of these people who move from one state to another and don't live there work as porters, construction workers, sellers, and in other unofficial economic activities in the service and informal sectors. The city couldn't help people looking for work because there wasn't a lot of big businesses there. The lack of widespread industrialisation, on the other hand, helps the process of racial and ethnic homogenisation (Saitluanga, 2017). The city has people from other states who have moved there, but the Mizo tribe is the largest group of people. Most of these migrants come from outside of Mizoram and are members of the Mizo-Kuki-Chin community.

But they do speak different dialects. These migrants show sociospatial assimilation, which means they are becoming part of the Mizo mainstream. These migrants have both temporary and permanent jobs and careers.

Table 3.2 Composition of ethnic population, Aizawl city, 1981-2011

Year	Scheduled Tribe population (%)	Scheduled Caste population (%)	General population (%)
1981	88.68	–	11.32
1991	91.42	–	8.58
2001	91.95	0.06	7.98
2011	91.83	0.18	7.99

Source District Census Handbook, Aizawl District, 1961–2011, Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram

The state is located in a landlocked region that is isolated from the rest of the country, which helps maintain ethnic homogeneity. Economic isolation and ethnic homogeneity are seen due to the remoteness of the state in terms of location and distance. The colonial provision of protecting the local tribal from assimilation by the neighbouring Vai, the govt still carried out the ‘Inner Line Permit’ that bars the non-local people from entering the state and obtaining land, is strictly enforced. From the table above, 3.2, it has been observed that the proportion of the Scheduled Tribe population (mainly consisting of the local tribe) has increased from 88.68 to 91.83%, while the proportions of the Scheduled Castes and the ‘General’ people have been decreasing during 1981–2011.

Year	Total population	Household size	Sex ratio	Literacy rate (%)	Female literacy rate (%)
1981	74,493	5.91	895	76.45	–
1991	1,55,240	5.49	926	95.41	94.6
2001	2,28,280	5.09	968	97.35	97.39
2011	2,93,416	4.83	975	98.36	98.2

Source District Census Handbook, Aizawl District, 1961–2011, Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram

Table. 3.3 General socio-economic characteristics of Aizawl city, 1981-2011

In terms of social development measures, literacy rate is relatively high as compared to the other states of the country. It has increased from 76.45% in 1981 (Table 3.3) to 98.36% in 2011. The mean household size decreased from 5.91 to 4.83 during 1981–

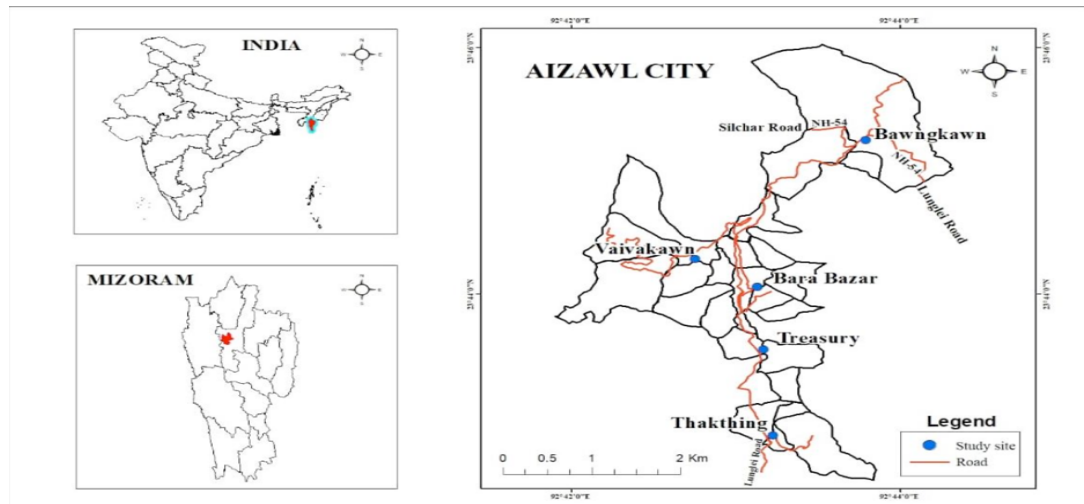
2011, which in turn led to increasing demand for housing, and it also implies the decline of the traditional lifestyle where large family size was equated with honour and prestige.

Females have a vital role in the Mizo society. The female literacy rate is about equivalent to the male literacy rate. The sex ratio is likewise rather high, with 975 females per 1000 males. The difference between female and overall labour participation rates is also closing. Except for the transportation and allied areas, women work in practically every industry. On the other hand, they control trade and commerce. All of these are good indications of minimal or non-existent gender discrimination. Religion is a very important component of civilisation. Religions influence political systems and policies, form environmental values, influence economic growth, and are regularly exploited by politicians to incite conflict and warfare (Weightman 2011). According to the 2011 Census of India, Aizawl's Christian population was 93.63%. Christianity in Mizoram is divided into several denominations. The Presbyterian Church and the Baptist Church of Mizoram are the two biggest denominations in Mizoram, dominating the northern and southern sections, respectively. Aizawl is located in northern Mizoram, and the Presbyterian Church is the most prevalent denomination in the city. Non-local inhabitants are either Hindus or Muslims, while some have converted to Christianity.

According to GoI (2011), street sellers account for 1.29 per cent of the city's population, significantly higher than the averages for Mizoram (0.92%) and India (0.65%).

Non-resident weekly street vendors, often from neighbouring villages, sell agricultural items at the Saturday market alongside permanent merchants. The Parliament of India passed the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, and the state of Mizoram notified the Mizoram Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Rules, 2017. The AMC oversees the execution of the 2017 Street Vendors Rules, which includes the development of a Town Vending Committee.

Fig. 3.1 Map of India, Mizoram and Aizawl city.



3.4 Principle of Inclusion and Exclusion

For the purpose of the study, the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) area will be the universe, and the rest of the districts and localities will be excluded for convenience's sake. For the stationary vendors, only the selected 6 markets, namely Aizawl New Market, Vaivakawn, Chanmari, Bawngkawn, Thakthing and Tennis Court Bazar, will be included, as they contribute the highest number of vegetable vendors and are the hotspots for vegetable vending. All the other markets with stationary vendors will be excluded from the study, as they do not have enough vendors to represent the research need. In the case of peripatetic vendors, only the selected 5 vendors each from 19 AMC (Aizawl Municipal Corporation) wards will be included for the study, in which all the remaining peripatetic vendors from these wards fall under the criteria of exclusion. Therefore, the research will include only the selected 200 women vegetable vendors from the mentioned locality markets and wards. Moreover, for the purpose of review of literature, international and national journal publications were included since they were accessible and available. Since publications on the context of Mizoram were limited, it has been excluded for the purpose of review.

3.5 Sources of data

Secondary sources shall include published and unpublished theses, books, articles, journals, newspapers, census reports, etc. Primary sources are to be collected from the field using the method of the interview schedule, Key Informant Interview (KII), observation and case study. Questions in the interview are mainly based on the

problems and context as mentioned in the objectives. Key Informant Interviews (KII) will be utilised to get insight from the Association leaders, NGOs and government officials.

3.6 The Pilot Study

When a researcher conducted a preliminary study of the universe on a small scale to understand the universe before conducting large-scale research. The technique is crucial for framing an apt schedule. Goode and Hatt (1981) argue that “no amount of thinking, no matter how logical the mind or brilliant the insight, is likely to take the place of careful empirical checking”.

At the initial stage, a total of 20 vendors were approached for the pilot study from different markets and roadside vendors from different localities. Before finalising the interview schedule, the pilot study helps in framing the question. A preliminary survey was done on the socio-economic profile, and working conditions, causes of their entry and problems faced were asked in the pilot study. Observations were employed by sitting in the vending areas to experience the working environment and the relationship between vendor and customers and among the co-vendors. They were asked to add the questions they have in mind for the richness and reliability of the research study. If this preliminary study was not conducted, many significant insights and inputs from the vendors would not have been gained. Also, after finishing the question framing, pre-testing of the questions framed was conducted, which helps in including relevant inputs related to the research regarding their problem faced, working environment, causes of their entry and family relationships. For the purpose of pre-testing of the interview schedule, 20 respondents were included, including the Vendor's Association President and the vendors themselves from different localities and markets.

3.7 The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule refers to the list of questions which are asked and answered to be filled in by the investigator or the researcher himself after interviewing the informants. The investigator framed and finalised the interview schedule for the present study after completing the pilot study.

At first, with the help of a review of literature and a pilot study, various aspects related to the objectives were taken out from the thematic review, which will give insights into framing the questions. A list of aspects was created under each objective to guide the framing of questions accordingly.

The next step was to formulate the actual set of questions, including the number of questions related to a given aspect, the language and sequence of the questions, and the structuring of responses. The questions were framed under each objective in relation to the aspects selected from the review of literature.

After framing the first draft of questions, pre-testing was carried out in the field among the vendors. It was felt necessary to change some questions, and, in some cases, questions were discarded as they were found irrelevant. The language and the style of asking were also changed accordingly in some questions. Likewise, the interview schedule has been draughted 9 times to give it a final shape. The main question highlights all the changes made.

The interview schedule of the present study consists of 126 questions in total, comprising 4 tables, 5 open-ended and 121 structured questions. Structured questions were commonly used in the framing of questions so as to make the schedule computer-worthy. Open-ended questions generally relate to opinions sought on any particular problem or suggestions invited. The answers to these 5 open-ended questions are long and varied and cannot be pre-categorised.

3.8 Operationalisation of Concepts:

The process of turning abstract concepts into measurable observations is called Operationalisation of concepts. For the purpose of the study, seven (7) concepts will be operationalised namely Informal Sector, Women Vegetable Vendors, Gender, Entrepreneurship, Empowerment, Work-life balance and Migrant workers.

1. Informal Sector:

'Informal sector' is a term coined by Keith Hart, a British anthropologist, in 1972 while studying the economic activities of rural migrants engaged in informal activities and having the autonomous capacity for generating incomes in Accra, Ghana (Hart, Keith. 1973). The informal economy corresponds with an indicator like low levels of

organisation, small-scale production, casual employment, and lack of protection without any job security or health insurance.

Limited employment opportunities in the formal economy result in many people seeking alternative employment in the informal economy. The informal sector has a gender bias, with women being more likely than men to be involved in the informal economy but much more likely than men to work as informal workers in the formal sector.

2. Women Vegetable Vendors:

In the informal sector, vendors are recognised as self-employed employees. According to the National Policy of Urban Street Vendors (2004), a street vendor is "a person who distributes products or services to the public without having a permanent seat/structure but with a temporary static structure/seats." Street vendors can be fixed or mobile. It can be operationalised with two indicators: stationary vendors and peripatetic vendors. Stationary vendors occupy space on pavements or other public locations, whilst mobile vendors travel from place to place, bringing their products on pushcarts, bikes, or baskets on their heads." Under this vendor, women vegetable vendors are those women who sell vegetables in the market and on the street. The vegetables are locally grown, and some are taken from the neighbouring states like Assam. In Mizoram, we have stationary vendors and peripatetic vendors. Stationary vendors are those who were registered under the state government and hold licences, while peripatetic vendors are those vendors who are temporary and do not occupy permanent space. They are usually comprised of villagers and migrants from nearby towns and states.

3. Gender

It refers to behaviours, personal traits, and social positions that society attributes as female or male. It is a social and legal status and a set of expectations from society about behaviour, characteristics and thoughts. Each culture has their own sets of norms about the way that people should behave based on their gender.

Gender includes gender roles, which are societal expectations about how men and women should act based on their assigned sex. For instance, women are expected to be polite, accommodating, and nurturing, whereas men are generally expected to be

strong, aggressive, and bold. In the field of occupation, there is a general consensus in managerial and sociological research that certain occupations are gendered. For instance, public relations, nursing and teaching are considered “female-gendered occupations”, whereas stock trading, engineering and construction are considered “male-gendered occupations”.

4. Entrepreneurship

It refers to the process of creating a business enterprise along with its uncertainties to make a profit. The level of uncertainties faced by the entrepreneur varies depending on the chosen business activity. Especially for the vegetable vendors, they sell perishable goods, and no refrigerated container was installed for them to store their leftovers. This results in lessening their profit and facing uncertainties in their business activities.

5. Empowerment

Empowerment is an act of empowering someone or the granting of the power, right or authority to perform various acts or duties. Women's empowerment may be characterised in the context of women as supporting women's feeling of self-worth, their capacity to make their own choices, and their right to influence societal change for themselves and others. Women have been increasingly engaged in self-employment and entrepreneurship, which leads to property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights, family development, market development, community development and, at last, nation development. Engagement in the vegetable vending somehow impacted their status in the family, as they earned some money, which led to the empowerment of the women.

6. Work-family life balance

It describes a well-integrated relationship between work and family life, where individuals are actively engaged in both areas. The balanced nature of work and home life leads to effective socialisation for children. It is seen that among the self-employed women and men, women spend more time with their children than their spouse; they give more time to their children. It can be implemented based on the characteristics mentioned above.

7. Migrant workers

A person migrates from one country to another, hoping to secure employment beyond their own means. Due to the military coup in Myanmar, and even before the military coup, numbers of migrant workers from Myanmar settled in Mizoram. The most easily available and accessible occupation for the women is vegetable vending. So, they engaged in this field and faced problems and issues with the local vendors sometimes.

3.9 Data analysis and interpretations:

The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques for the analytical framework. A mixed method was used to get more complete and reliable data by utilising the complete data and not separating the quantitative and qualitative data during analysis. For the data analysis, the interview schedule questions were checked to examine the completeness and interviewing quality. The raw data collected during the interview were edited, which is known as central editing. After all these processes were done, data were codified. All the answers were assigned a separate code, and each response was fed to the computer. These coded data were categorised accordingly, and for quantitative data analysis, SPSS software is used. The software calculates the frequency, percentage, central tendency and pie chart of the responses. However, the open-ended question responses were separately analysed.

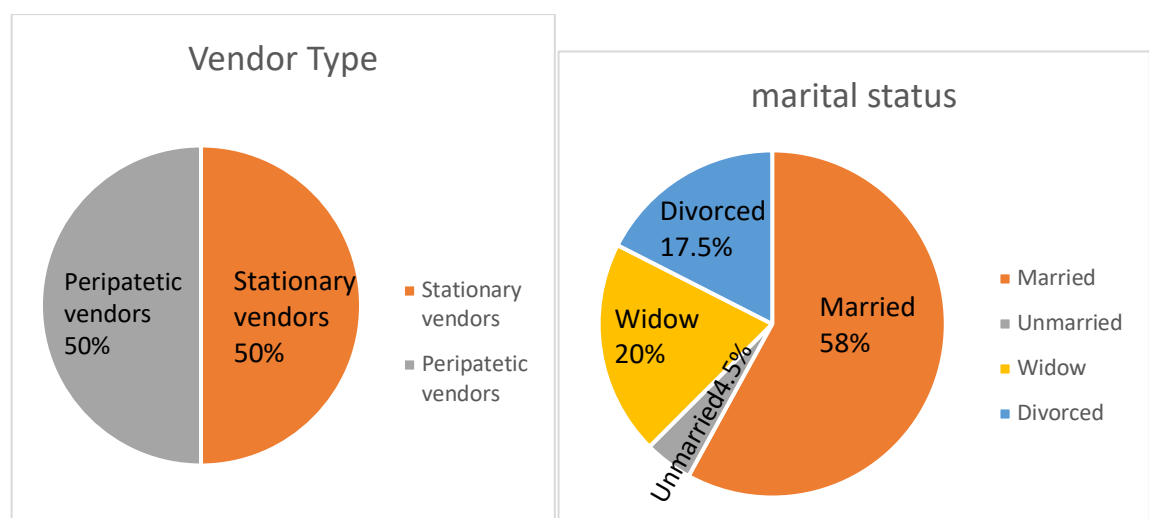
For qualitative data analysis, the method of the case study about their daily lived experience has been used. Indeed, this methodology allows for the unearthing of phenomena from the perspective of how people interpret and attribute meaning to their existence. This includes their daily routine right from their morning routine till they lay down to sleep after a hectic day, their family relationship and problems faced. The opinions of key informants are being triangulated for the development of the research. A gist of the interviews of key informants is also presented in the same form. The interviews of the respondents were carefully listened to, and a summary of each case was prepared. Certain portions of the discussion were deleted which were not found relevant to the present scope of inquiry. Then the coded data was fed to a computer in order to compute descriptive statistics. Statistical results such as frequency tables and cross tabulation were obtained.

3.10 The Explanation of the Sample

Figure 3.2 represents the entire sample at a glance. The survey of the bazaars and AMC wards reveals that the majority of women engaged in vegetable vending as the first step in entering economic activity because of its easy entry and low capital investment. The women vegetable vendors scattered across the city along the pavement and marketplaces.

The vendors were categorised under two groups on the basis of their vending nature, i.e., stationary vendors (50%) and peripatetic vendors (50%). For the purpose of the study, stationary vendors are those vendors who have a permanent location and seats in the designated market place where they pay fees for the rent and form a formal association. Peripatetic vendors are those vendors who do not have a permanent place for vending their vegetables; they shift from one place to another on the basis of the availability of spaces for vending. The age composition of the respondents reveals that women above the age of 60 years were identified, comprising 12%, and 3.5% of the respondents were under 15-30 years, while those aged between 31-45 years and 46-60 years comprised 41.5% and 43%, respectively. So, the age group between 31 and 60 years occupies the highest age range among the collected respondents.

The marital status of the respondents has been categorised under four heads: married, unmarried, widowed, and divorced. 58% of the respondents are under the married category, and they occupy the highest percentage, whereas 20% of the respondents are widows, 17.5% are divorced and unmarried, and they are the least in number at 4.5%.



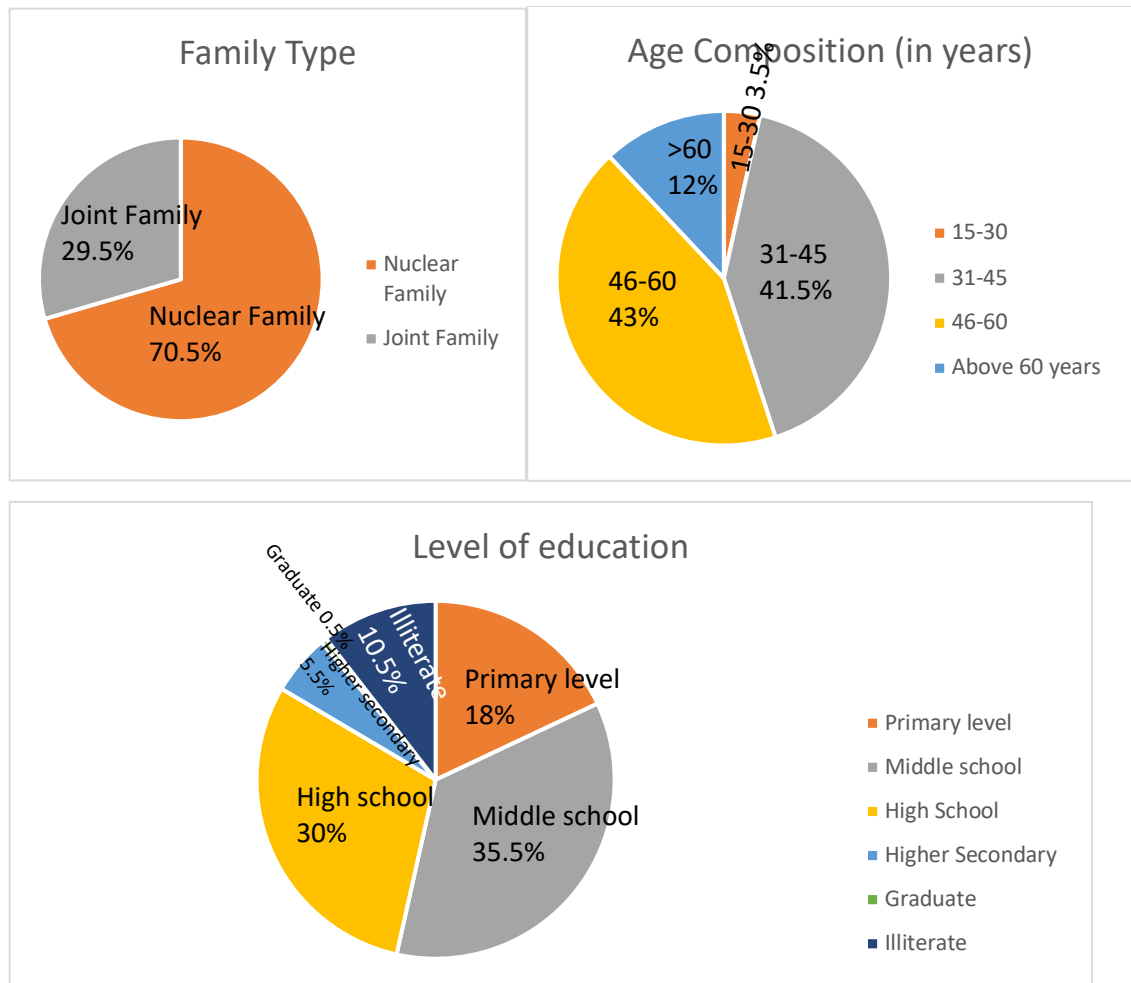


Fig. 3.2 Sample at a glance

The level of educational qualifications is categorised under six headings: primary, middle school, high school, higher secondary, graduate, and illiterate. Primary level was taken as those who were educated till Class IV (18%). Middle School was taken as those who were educated till Class VIII (35.5%). 30% of the respondents attain education till the high school level, while the higher secondary level, graduate and illiterate comprise a low percentage of 5.5%, 0.5% and 10.5%, respectively. So, in the level of education, the respondents are most populous in the middle school level and high school level, while least populated in the graduate level.

The family type among the sample respondents indicates that nuclear families are more common than other types. About 70.5% of the respondents live within the nuclear family system, which results in the rise of vegetable vending, while the other 29.5% of the sample respondents have opted for the joint family system.

3.11 Classification and tabulation:

The main tools for collecting data are thorough interviews, case studies and observations. From these tools, raw data was collected. After the collection of data was completed, scrutinising and cross-checking of all the schedules followed. Necessary coding was done as the data were collected based on the five objectives of the study.

The coded data was fed to a computer in order to compute descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS software. Statistical results such as frequency tables, cross tabulation and correlation were obtained.

The qualitative data obtained from the informal interview open-ended questions were transcribed, and observations have been examined and dealt with manually. The report is based largely on the analysis of qualitative data obtained through the schedule. The other kinds of information have been used mainly to explain or substantiate the results.

3.12 Problems in data collection:

1. The UD&PA concern person for vendors was contacted for a list of vendors, but the enrolment included the vendors who were vending at the nearby AMC office only, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they lost many enrolments, and they started re-enrolling the vendors. So, the vendors were selected purposively according to the need of the study.
2. The universe of the study was piloted by bike before the interviews were started. It was found out that some localities do not have proper peripatetic vendors. The locality that has proper peripatetic vendors was chosen for the study at the initial stage, but some wards do not have proper vendors, while some localities have both vegetable markets and peripatetic vendors. So, it was selected according to the availability of the vendors in the locality where vendors are available.
3. Since the majority of the vendors do not understand the value of the research, they were reluctant to help in the process. It needed a lot of time to establish rapport with the respondents. However, their unwillingness could be overcome by persuasion through personal contact and rapport.

4. Various meanings were attached to the researcher when they first approached the respondents, as they have been cheated and exploited by others, like an agent of the government and NGOs. They were very suspicious and treated the researcher as an intruder. So, it was overcome by convincing the respondents about the purpose of the visit and the detail of the research.

5. An interview usually takes 25 to 35 minutes to finish with one respondent, which is a little bit long for the vendors, as they are usually busy in their working hours. So, the researcher usually met and interviewed them in the afternoon when they were free and had time for the researcher. Nevertheless, most of the respondents responded very enthusiastically and extended their fullest cooperation to this enquiry.

3.13 Research Ethics to be followed:

The research ethics will be based on the research ethics norms that have been observed and followed in most Social Science Research.

1. The suggested study will be conducted solely for academic objectives, and the researcher will do his or her best to adhere to it.
2. The respondents shall not be coerced into providing information against their will in any way. All responders will be forced to answer willingly and will be treated with the highest care.
3. Prior to being questioned, respondents will be fully informed of the aim of the interview, and their agreement will be obtained.
4. The researcher would welcome the respondents with humility and respect.
5. The interview session, namely the date, time, and location of the responders, shall be scheduled at their convenience.
6. Following each interview session, respondents will be acknowledged for their participation.
7. The respondents will be made aware of the need for confidentiality throughout the study and fieldwork process, and their privacy will be scrupulously protected.
8. During the interview sessions, the researcher will maintain strong discipline, be prompt, and endeavour to keep a caring approach. Transparency and honesty shall be upheld at all times.

9. The researcher will always recognise the work of writers and academics whose work will be used in this research.
10. While collecting primary data, the researcher will aim to avoid any type of misleading or erroneous information, as well as any type of prejudice.
11. The researcher will attempt not to exaggerate the goals and objectives of this research investigation.

3.2.14 Limitations:

1. Although a full-scale study of the informal urban sector activities in Aizawl City is long overdue, it has not been possible to do so. This study pertains to only the women vegetable vendors of Aizawl city as a part of the urban informal sector; the findings cannot reflect the entire population of vegetable vendors.
2. Knowledge of the exact numbers of vendors is impossible. Lack of an official census on the universe in question led the researcher to opt for a purposive technique for the selection of the respondents.
3. Time, manpower and resource constraints prevent covering the total population of women vegetable vendors in Aizawl City.
4. Adequate literature could not be found to contextualise the study of female vegetable vendors in Aizawl. Unavailability of adequate historical literature on this particular activity has put the researcher at a lot of disadvantages. There might be some historical material somewhere that remains untraced.
5. Due to the pandemic, close contact is to be used under state guidelines.

CHAPTER 4
SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF VEGETABLE VENDORS

- 4.0 Introduction**
- 4.1 Personal characteristics: age**
- 4.2 Marital status**
- 4.3 Type of Family**
 - 4.3.1 Types of Ration card**
 - 4.3.2 Number of adult male member**
 - 4.3.3 Dependent family members**
 - 4.3.4 Alcoholic husband**
- 4.4 Housing**
 - 4.4.1 Types of houses**
 - 4.4.2 Household assets**
 - 4.4.3 Places of residence**
- 4.5 Religious and tribal background**
 - 4.5.1 Religious Denomination**
- 4.6 Educational Qualification**
- 4.7 Occupation of the family**
- 4.8 Experience**
- 4.9 Income**
 - 4.9.1 Financial**
- 4.10 Land possession**
- 4.11 Types of vendors**
 - 4.11.1 Seat rent**
- 4.12 Migration**
- 4.13 Health**
 - Overview**

4.0 Introduction

The last chapter describes the study's methods, goals, sample size, and techniques. This chapter on the socio-economic profile of the respondents will enable a better perception of the population. Therefore, we use certain socio-economic background variables to provide sociological differentiation among the respondents. An individual or group within a hierarchical social structure's socioeconomic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Sociologists often use socio-economic factors to predict behaviour. Socioeconomic status plays a significant role in shaping human personality. Karl Mannheim remarked, "The opinions, statements, propositions, and systems of ideas are not taken at their face value but are interpreted in the light of the life situation of the one who expresses them" (Mannheim, 1936). A study of the socio-economic background, therefore, is necessary for an adequate understanding of an individual's behaviour pattern and lifestyle and the conditions in which he/she has been brought up. The mobility of a person's very nature appears to closely link with their socio-economic status. In India, urban poor women who hardly have any educational qualifications or skills to get jobs in the formal sector get observed in the informal sector mostly as self-employed to survive themselves and their dependents. Martha Alter Chen (2001) highlights the prominence of women street vendors in developing countries like Benin, Chad, India and Indonesia. In countries where there are restrictions on the mobility of women outside their homes, women constitute 50 to 90 per cent of street vendors. They take vending as self-employed, for it is an easier option, perhaps the most promising avenue for the poor. Considering the background of the study, the researcher set out to study the socio-economic condition of women street vendors of Aizawl city in Northeast India.

This chapter deals with certain personal and socio-economic characteristics of the Mizo women vegetable vendors of Aizawl city. The socio-economic parameter helps us to indicate and understand the differences that exist among the respondents in terms of their access to different amenities in society, ranging from power and prestige (Warner et al., 1949; Davis & Moore, 1945). Socio-economic status is an indicator of understanding the differences among the respondents in terms of their access to power,

property, privilege and psychic gratifications (Weber, 1922/1978). For systematic and better understanding of the respondents, it is important to know their socio-economic status that may help in locating their appropriateness and have a better understanding of their condition (Hauser & Warren, 1997). Different socioeconomic categories pertain to difficulties, needs and priorities that are required to be identified. The investigation of respondents' socioeconomic backgrounds is crucial in any social science research since it enables comprehension of their social and economic situations and aids in the study of their personality patterns (Kerbo, 2012). Although all the vendors are not women, this research will examine and analyse only the Mizo women vendors, as the majority of the vendors are women (Vanlalchhawna, 2015). On the basis of vendors, we find two types of vendors: Stationary vendors: vendors having a permanent location to sell their goods. Peripatetic vendors: vendors having no permanent place to sell their goods. These vendors have been defined in detail in the previous chapter. The peripatetic vendors are also mobile vendors as well when they do not have a proper place to sell their vegetables. Thus, the specific focus of this chapter under the socio-economic background has been on the characteristics like age, denomination, education, migration, marital status, housing, land possessed, and occupation. An attempt has also been made to contextualise the interrelation between these variables vis-à-vis women vendors' condition. Under socio-economic profile, the following factors have been analysed –

4.1 Personal characteristics: Sex and Age Composition:

Although male participation is a significant characteristic of the informal sector activity, the respondents in the vegetable vending community were exclusively women. We only included women vendors in the study because they made up the majority of vegetable vendors in Aizawl. Mizo men do not interfere in vegetable vending activity, even if they do not have other jobs. On finding the majority of women in this activity, we were curious to know, 'Why only women? and the causes of their entry into vegetable vending?' A quick response from one of the vendors revealed:

“Chawhmeh zawrh te chu hmeichhe thawh chi ania, mipa tan zawrh ve a mawi hleinem, bakah a chhe duh sia khawih thar ve reng angai a. Mipa in an peih ve lo”

“Selling vegetables is a woman’s job, it is not right for men to interfere in this kind of activity. Also, vegetables are easily spoiled and needs to retouched it frequently, which men will not be able to bear”

In Mizo society, gender division of labour is strong, where activities related to the kitchen are considered women’s work, and men are seen as the providers and protectors of the family (Chhakchhuak, 2014). However, things have changed; many Mizo men are now found being engaged in household duties; they are not the breadwinners of the family anymore. So, in order to support the family, women started the vegetable vending for their livelihood. Therefore, the study focuses on women vegetable vendors, as they are the majority in number. The socio-economic profile analysis will start with the age of the respondents.

Age simply refers to how long a person has lived on our planet, from birth to death, or how long they have existed. A person's age is typically classified into five groups: childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, and old age. Age is a significant biological attribute of the human species that no culture can disregard. It is a determinant that constrains social interpretations of 'position' and 'role'. The extensive variety in age grading throughout human communities attests to its importance. Age constitutes a continuum rather than a dichotomy; it serves as a fundamental and essential aspect in every career or occupation. Below a specific age threshold, an individual is deemed insufficiently mature and experienced for the objective, and above a given age limit (Parsons, 1942). As one ages, they gain maturity and outlook, acquiring both occupational experience and life experiences, making age equivalent to the life they lead. The respondents' age group has been further separated into 16-30, 31-45, those between 46 and 60 and those above 60 years. The age composition of the respondents is shown in the table below:

Table 4.1 Age Composition

Age	Frequency	Percentage
16-30 years	7	3.5

31-45 years	83	41.5
46-60 years	86	43.0
Above 60 years	24	12.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table reveals that only 7 respondents, or 3.5%, fall into the 16–30 year age group. One respondent is 16 years old, but the rest are in the 20-30 years category; therefore, there is only one child domestic vegetable vendor below 18 years of age. The respondents were least in this age range, as they were usually engaged in other jobs or education, which resulted in a smaller number of vendors. Also, they usually depend on their family for their livelihood. While it is evident that four-fifths of the vendors are aged between 31 and 60 years, representing 84.5% for the age group, which is 169 vendors. This is because vegetable vending demands great physical fitness, and 31 to 60 years is the age group in which people generally enjoy maximum physical fitness. Women between 25 and 55 years are more likely to participate in the labour force (Besamusca J et al., 2015). The other probable factors behind the presence of a larger number of vendors within this age group are failure to get access into the formal sector, the urge to be self-dependent, death of husband, migration from rural areas, incapacity to do wage labour, etc. However, 12% of the respondents are above 60 years old and are still engaging in this activity; this is because there is nothing like the age of retirement or superannuation. One of the respondents Pi Zovi who is 73 years old said,

“Chawhmeh hi zuar tawh lo ila chuan ka damlo ang, hetia rilru la peng tur lo awm hi ka la hrisel phah zawk, hlawh vang ai mah in hriselna atan ka la inpho ve anih hi. Ka fate pheii chuan in zuar tawh suh a zahthlak I tar tawh si min tia, mahse awm awl ka thiam lo a, ka inzuar lui a nih hi”

“If I am not engaged in vending, I might be very ill, I’m still engaged in this activity to occupied my time and mind, rather than for profit I engaged for my health. My children used to tell me ‘You are too old, to

sell and it's too embarrassing for us' but I could not idly stay at home so I still engaged in vending”

Therefore, it can be concluded that the average age of Mizo women vegetable vendors is between 38 and 53 years. There is an assumption that the majority of women vendors are married and that their families solely depend on them for their family livelihood. Therefore, the next profile will analyse the marital status of the vendors to see if the assumption is true.

4.2 Marital Status

Marital status refers to a person's connection with a significant other. Marriage is an institution that facilitates the integration of men and women into family life. It is a stable partnership in which a man and a woman are socially authorized to procreate; the entitlement to procreation entails the entitlement to engage in sexual interactions (Goode, 1963). Marital status is defined as being married, single, divorced, or widowed.

Marriage carries several repercussions for individuals. It is a status-indicating device (Bossard, 1944). Married individuals engage in fulfilling the fundamental aspects of married life, namely personal satisfaction and the discharge of societal responsibilities (Kapadia, 1966). Understanding the respondent's issues necessitates knowledge about their marital status. The table below clearly presents the statistics on marital status.

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	116	58.0
Unmarried	9	4.5
Widow	40	20.0
Divorced	35	17.5
Total	200	100.0

Table 4.2 Marital Status

The table shows that most respondents are married, even if some are widowed or divorced. The married respondents are as many as 58% of the total respondents. This is because marriage comes with the responsibility of taking care of the family, which

resulted in engaging in the informal sector for the survival of the family. The spouse earning alone would not be sufficient for the whole family to depend on. So, married women who have dependants saw the potential of vegetable vending for economic development, as it is easily accessible and low capital is needed. Widows consist of 20% of the respondents, while divorced respondents are 17.5%. This revealed that vegetable vending acts as the **‘provider for the poor’** who do not have anyone to depend on and jump into the realm of vegetable vending for their livelihood.

One of the respondent’s name Pi Zami from Dintar Veng, 45 years widow told that,

“Kum 2021 khan ka pasal in min boralsan thut a, chuvang chuan kan khawsak a harsa chho a loh theihlohna vangin chawhmeh ka zawrh ve angai ta a ni, thiam neilo tan chuan a lo awlsam ber bawk a. Kan pa damlai te chuan zirtirtu ania kan khawsak pawh a pangai ve a, fapa 2 ka nei a, an sikul kalna nen a hautak lutuk a tihian kan inbulah hian chawhmeh hi ka zuar nitin ve ta nih hi, kawngpui an ah kan lo awm hlahuh bawk nen”

“In 2021, my husband died suddenly, because of that our live was hard and miserable unfortunately I need to start engaging in vegetable vending for our livelihood as it does not require any skills and accessible is easy. My husband was a teacher, our life had been best back then, but we have been struggling since I have 2 sons their education cost is a bit high for me. Since, we are living on the roadside of the street, it is convenient for me to start selling vegetables”

Unmarried vendors were the fewest respondents, only 4.5% of the total. The marital status and the age are closely related, especially in the case of unmarried respondents; these respondents are usually young as compared to the married respondents. They are in low numbers because they still have the potential to recruit themselves in the formal sector, and they are not as desperate as the married respondents in having earnings for the family. So, from the above findings, the person's marital status is an important factor in the cause of women engaging in the vegetable vendor business for their livelihood. It has revealed that the majority of women vegetable vendors are married; marriage produces family, and it comes with responsibility and dependents.

The next profile will analyse the type of family, the number of dependent family members they have and the number of adult male members in the family. As these factors will produce reliable and interesting facts which help in understanding the real nature of women vegetable vendors' conditions.

4.3 Type of family:

The family has held a central position among the primary social institutions, both historically and currently. It entails a social and cultural system, a set of norms for individual behaviour; and a network of social roles for human activity. The family is a universal institution. Nevertheless, it has been structured in an extraordinary array of manners. Its functions and forms have evolved over time and space. However, there are no societies in which it is not acknowledged, respected, or implemented (Murdock, 1949). The family is the principal agency for socialisation and social regulation. Consequently, it is imperative to address the familial background of the women street vendors. Despite the fact that the Indian family is undergoing structural and functional changes, it remains the sole significant institutional support system for the people. The undivided joint family was the standard pattern of Hindu families (Kapadia, 1966). However, in contemporary society, the joint family has significantly diminished in many respects and has recently begun to resemble the nuclear family. Consequently, combined families are undergoing a transformation. The essence of the communities from which the women street vendors originate is clearly illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table.4.3 Types of family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear Family	141	70.5
Joint Family	59	29.5
Total	200	100.0

A glance at the above table reveals the predominance of nuclear families among the respondents. About 70.5% of the respondents live in nuclear families, which can be said to have so carefully nurtured the epic rise of women vegetable vendors in the city of Aizawl, while only 29.5% of the sample respondents had opted for joint families. The nuclear family for the purpose of the study consisted of the ego, her husband and

her unmarried children. Joint family in the present work has been taken to mean a group of people under one roof who share the food cooked in a common kitchen and have common property, thus creating a common culture in the family.

It can be seen that 70.5% of women vendors live in a nuclear family; this is because urbanisation led many families to migrate to urban areas in search of jobs and occupational opportunities, leaving their joint family. In a nuclear family, there is no excuse for a woman to stay at home, as her husband's alone income is not sufficient for the family to survive. Only a small portion of men is able to enter into a formal job where they can provide for the whole family without women interfering in the economic activity. The status of women has seen much improvement in nuclear families and is more favourable for women. While 29.5% of women vendors still live in a joint family. This shows that the earnings of the male members of the joint family were not sufficient for the whole family to sustain, which led the women to engage in vegetable vending. In the past, the joint family used to be the main form of family; the greater the number of family members, the higher the status of the family.

It can be concluded that the majority of the sample vendors lived in a nuclear family, where women's status was more favourable and their engagement in the economic activity was quite necessary for the livelihood of the nuclear family. It also shows that the male member of the family's earnings were not sufficient for their family living, which leads to women engaged in vegetable vending. Based on the family economic status, the government provides rations accordingly. So, the next profile will examine the nature of ration cards they hold among the women vegetable vendors' families.

4.3.1 Types of ration card:

In India, households are dependent on ration cards to guarantee access to food and receive financial support. A variety of ration cards, including APL, BPL, AAY, and PHH, are available to accommodate the economic requirements of families. These cards allow households to purchase subsidised food cereals through the Public Distribution System, thereby assisting in the prevention of malnutrition and starvation (Government of India, 2013). Ration cards also function as official identification documents, enabling families to access government welfare programmes and services.

Ration cards foster equity by allocating resources to those who require them most. In general, the implementation of a variety of ration cards in India is a critical measure in the pursuit of food security and the enhancement of the financial stability of impoverished households.

Priority Household (PHH) ration card entitles the household to receive five kilograms of food grains per person per month at subsidised prices. The current prices set by the central government are Rs.3 for 1 kg of rice, Rs.2 for 1 kg of wheat, and Rs.1 for 1 kg of coarse grains.

Antyodaya (AAY) ration cards entitle the household to receive 35 kilograms of food grains, with 20 kilograms of rice and 15 kilograms of wheat. The prices charged are Rs.3 per kilogram for rice and Rs.2 per kilogram for wheat. APL Ration Card families qualify for a government initiative aimed at assisting those living above the poverty threshold set by the state government. Under this program, eligible APL families receive a monthly allocation of 10 kg to 20 kg of food grains per family. Families holding BPL (Below Poverty Line) cards are those identified by the state government as living below the established poverty line. BPL families are entitled to receive a monthly allocation of 10 kg to 20 kg of food grains per family (Department of Food & Public Distribution, 2023). For this study, the sample vendors were asked their ration card and here is the outcome which is shown in Table 4.3.1

Table 4.4 Types of Ration card

Response	Frequency	Percentage
APL	30	15.0
AAY	19	9.5
PHH	143	71.5
BPL	4	2.0
No ration Card	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0

The table depicts that among the sample vendors, 71% were holding PHH ration cards, 15% of vendors were under APL, 9.5% of vendors were holding AAY, and 2% of vendors were under BPL, while 2% of the vendors have not held any ration card. It

reveals the economic status of the sample vendors, where the majority of the vendors are in the low economic status of the population criteria, where they claim ration cards like AAY, BPL and PHH. Only 15% were APL (Above Poverty Line), which shows that the vegetable vending economic activity is an occupation for the poor urban dweller for their economic development. So, the majority of the vendors are holding Priority Household (PHH) ration cards.

4.3.2 Number of adult male member

The number of adult male members in a family can influence women's economic participation through factors such as gender norms, family characteristics, and cooperative membership, with some studies indicating that male involvement can either support or hinder women's economic roles depending on the context (Agarwal, 1994; Kabeer, 2012). Having more adult male members in the family reduces the amount of contribution by women and eases the strain on women. Unemployed spouses in the informal economy frequently rely on their wives. They also do not make an effort to get work and hence remain unemployed. They take their wife's employment as a substitute (Khan and Khan, 2009). The children's age reflected the participation of women in the workforce. The infant, the school-age and the prime-age affect the participation of the mother in the workforce. The infant needs caring and nurturing, so the mother cannot fully participate in the workforce; school-age children need less care and attention, so the mother has more time to participate in the workforce. Prime-age children were more grown-up; they can even help their mother at her work (Khan and Khan, 2009). So, the previous studies on the relationship of numbers of adult male member and women economic participation will be analyse using the table below from the respective respondents. :

Table4.5 No. of adult male member

Response	Frequency	Percentage
0	24	12.0
1	89	44.5
2	53	26.5
3	26	13.0
4 and above	8	4.0

Total	200	100.0
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Source: Field data

The above table indicates the status of adult male members in the women's vendors' families; 44.5% of the respondents' families have a single adult male member, 26.5% have two adult male members, and 12% do not have any adult male members in the family. From these 3 data points, it has been revealed that the majority of the vendors have a smaller number of adult male members in the family whom they can rely on for their livelihood. There could be many factors, but in the case of Mizoram, the death rate of men is alarming as compared to women; factors like alcohol and drug abuse are the two common causes of the high death rate among men. While 13% of respondents have 3 adult male members, only 4% of respondents have more than 4 adult male members in the family. From the data it can be concluded that the majority, 88%, of the respondents have an adult male member in the family. However, the earnings of the adult male member alone could not be able to suffice the needs of the family, which resulted in women engaged in vegetable vending. This profile will be one of the important factors which will justify the reason the majority of vendors are women. The other factors could be the number of dependants they have to work for. The next profile will touch on the dependent family members they have.

4.3.3 Dependent family member:

A dependent family member is a person who relies financially on another person, such as a spouse, parent, child, or sibling. The "number of dependents" is a crucial social factor as it directly affects an individual's financial obligations and can influence their lifestyle, housing requirements, and overall wellbeing, especially when a substantial number of dependents are involved, which is often linked to lower income levels and potential social difficulties. An increased number of dependents results in additional individuals to support and expenditures to manage, which may cause financial hardship, particularly if the primary income earner has a constrained income (Sen, 1999). In social science research, "number of dependents" frequently serves as a variable to examine aspects such as poverty, housing requirements, and healthcare accessibility across various groups. The number of dependent family members, particularly young children, negatively impacts women's economic participation,

while the presence of elderly family members can have a positive effect (Vicens & Reyes, 2015). The table below shows the number of dependent that the women vendors have:

Table 4.6 Number of dependents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
0	6	3.0
1	28	14.0
2	49	24.5
3	67	33.5
4 and above	50	25.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table indicates that only 3% of the total 200 respondents do not have dependents; 14% have a single dependent, 24.5% have two dependents, 33.5% have three dependents, and 25% have more than four dependents. This shows that the majority, 97%, of the women vendors have one or more dependents, which will result in showing the high percentage of women working in the informal sector according to their ability and capability.

4.3.4 Alcoholic husband

The death rate of Mizo men is quite alarming; from 2011 to 2021, 63.42% of deaths in Mizoram were men. There are many factors that caused the death of a Mizo man; one of the factors is alcohol (Vanlalruata, 2023). Having an alcoholic husband affects the social and economic status of women vegetable vendors. Vegetable street vending witnesses a high percentage of women. Poverty is the main reason for entering into the vending business for them. It may be due to non-employed male members or spending earned money on liquor by the male member. The study suggests that husbands' alcohol consumption is associated with increased risks of domestic violence, hypertension, and mental stress among women (M.K., J., & Kuruvilla, M. 2024). The data below indicates the status of having alcoholic husband:

Table 4.7 Alcoholic husband

Response	Frequency	Percentage
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Yes	53	26.5
No	64	32.0
Not applicable	83	41.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table shows that among the married vendors, 26.5% have alcoholic husbands, while 32% opted for having non-alcoholic husbands. But in reality, while conducting interviews with the respondents, the majority of the non-alcoholic husbands were also once alcoholic, and they are sober at the moment. At the same time, 41% of the respondents were not applicable for this question as they do not have husbands due to death or divorce. It has revealed that the majority of the vendors have alcoholic husbands, which can be one of the factors that leads them to engage in this economic activity. One of the respondents Pi Sangi told that

Kan pa te chuan a hlawh ve ang ang chu zu in nan a hmang zel alawm, chhungkua an ngaihtuah tak tak lo, zu lei nan bak an thawhchhuah an hmang lo”

“My husband’s used all his earnings on alcohol, he does not give priority to the family rather he used his income for buying alcohol”

It can be concluded that among the respondents, the majority of them are nuclear families who hold the ration card of PHH, where a smaller number of adult male members were seen and have one or more dependents. The majority of the married women have alcoholic husbands; this could be considered as one of the factors that causes women to engage in vegetable vending. These families need accommodation for shelter and protection. The next profile will analyse the housing conditions of the respondents to know the in-depth nature of the socio-economic profile of the Mizo women vegetable vendors.

4.4 Housing:

Housing pertains to the utilisation and potential construction of shelters as living environments, either individually or collectively. Housing is a fundamental human necessity and a human right, significantly influencing the quality of life for people, families, and communities (Sada, 1975; Khan et al., 2023; Karlsson et al., 2020).

Consequently, it is the primary concern of housing organisations and policy. Housing provides individuals with various types of physical structures for residing, such as apartments, homes, temporary shelters, and emergency lodgings. Access to secure, inexpensive, and stable housing is crucial for an individual's health, safety, and overall well-being. Housing may significantly affect an individual's economic, social, and cultural prospects by determining their access to school, employment, healthcare, and social networks. Numerous nations have established housing laws and initiatives to tackle concerns of cost, quality, and availability, ensuring equitable access to adequate housing for all individuals. Some possess one or many housing authorities, commonly referred to as a housing ministry or housing department. For the study, the housing category was divided into two resides in rented house and types of houses.

Table 4.8 Resides in a rented house

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	138	69.0
No	62	31.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The table depicts that the women vendors who are residing in a rented house were 69% of the respondents. This is because they are in a low class and could not afford to build their own house. In Mizo society, the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming wider as compared to the olden days, which puts the poor people at a disadvantage and discriminates against them. The majority of the vendors have also migrated from rural areas, which gives them a hard time owning land and building their own home. The rental fee is also quite high according to the locality; that resulted in residing in a low rental locality. The rental of the house is in the range of 2500-3500, which is very low in a city like Aizawl. While only 31% of the women vendors reside in their own home. Among these vendors, many of them reside in their relative's home rent-free, not that they own their home. Only a few vendors reside in their own constructed home; this is possible when their husbands have a good job and also when the house is inherited from their parents and relatives.

4.4.1 Types of houses

Sada (1975) examined the salient features of urban poverty in Lagos and discussed the housing situation with a view to using them as an indicator of the level, degree, and diversification of poverty in that part of the country. In this study, the vendors' homes were used to show their poverty and economic status in Aizawl city. So, it was divided in 3 types of houses: Kutcha, Semi-pucca and Pucca.

Table 4.9 Types of houses

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Kutcha	8	4.0
Semi-pucca	79	39.5
Pucca	113	56.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table shows that 56% of the sample vendors resided in a pucca house; this is because their rented house is usually a pucca house since 69% of the vendors do not reside in their own home. The location and size of the house were not favourable. 39.5% of the sample vendors reside in a semi-pucca house, while only 4% do not have a proper house to reside in; they live in a kutcha house. This is because some of the vendors are coming from the nearby village where living is very hard for them, and they are unable to live in a well-constructed house.

4.4.2 Household Assets:

Asset scores are widely used as the preferred method of measuring socio-economic well-being in households in developing countries. Household assets used to construct a socio-economic profile generally encompass owned housing (type and condition), vehicles, major appliances, electronic devices, land ownership, livestock (if relevant), furniture, access to utilities such as electricity and running water, and personal items like jewellery in essence, any durable goods that signify a household's material wealth and standard of living. Since directly measuring the income is difficult, asset ownership serves as a proxy for estimating a household's economic situation (Khan MM et al., 2023). To better comprehend the socioeconomic spectrum, we frequently classify assets by their value or need (Karlsson et al., 2020). For the purposes of the study, assets like mobile handsets, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines, LPG

gas connections, computers, microwave ovens, and vehicles were used to measure the well-being of the respondents.

Table No 4.10 Household Assets

Household Assets	Frequency (%)		Total
	Yes	No	
Mobile handset	198 (99.0)	2 (1.0)	200 (100.0)
Television	174 (87.0)	26 (13.0)	200 (100.0)
Refrigerator	178 (89.0)	22 (11.0)	200 (100.0)
Washing machine	164 (82.0)	36 (18.0)	200 (100.0)
LPG Gas connection	169 (84.5)	31 (15.5)	200 (100.0)
Computer	11 (5.5)	189 (94.5)	200 (100.0)
Microwave oven	4 (2.0)	196 (98.0)	200 (100.0)
Vehicle	99 (49.5)	101 (50.5)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field data

In today's world, with the development in technology, mobile handsets are owned by the majority of the people. A survey conducted in India in 2023 discovered that 78% of the male adult population had a phone, while only 64% of the female population did. The greatest disparity was between male and female smartphone owners: 51 percent of Indian adult men owned smartphones, while only 35 percent of Indian adult women did. While China has the most smartphone users in the world (Sun, 2025). The table below shows the data on owning mobile handsets among the respondents:

The above table indicates that 99% of the respondents owned a mobile handset, while only 1% do not have a mobile handset. The majority of the respondents have mobile handsets not because they are rich or can afford them but because they are a part of the essential needs. Numerous brands have come out with a variety of price lists according to the buyers' financial conditions. Mobile handsets also help them in their occupations since all the vendor-related work is done through mobile handsets. With the introduction of Unified Payment Interface (UPI) pay, the vendors need to have mobile handsets if they want to sell their goods. At the same time, it somehow makes the life of the vendor easy. The 2 respondents do not have mobile handsets because they are aged, and they do not know how to use a mobile phone.

Television is a substantial apparatus featuring a display that receives electrical signals and converts them into dynamic images and audio. It is an asset in socio-economic contexts due to its capacity to deliver information, education, entertainment, and a platform for social mobilisation, especially in communities with restricted access to alternative media. Nonetheless, its impact can differ markedly based on socioeconomic status and the nature of the content consumed; excessive television consumption may also yield adverse socioeconomic consequences, particularly for lower-income demographics. Two-thirds of Indian households owned a television in 2024. This translates to a little more than 200 million Indian households with a TV in their homes. The data on owning a television is shown below:

Out of the total respondents, 87% own a television at their home, while 13% do not have a television. Television being a part of basic necessities, the majority of the vendors own a television if they can afford it. While 26 vendors do not have televisions due to poverty. So, the television data reveals the economic status of the vendors by highlighting their economic conditions.

A refrigerator, often referred to as a fridge, is an appliance used in commercial and residential settings, comprising a thermally insulated compartment and a heat pump (mechanical, electronic, or chemical) that expels heat from its interior to the external environment, thereby maintaining an internal temperature below that of the surrounding air. Refrigerators are important for vendors, as they need them for storing the leftover vegetables. Recent data indicates that approximately 33% of Indian households possess a refrigerator, underscoring a substantial disparity in ownership, especially in rural regions where the penetration rate is markedly lower than in urban areas; thus, the majority of Indian households lack a refrigerator. The above table highlights the data collected to identify the owning of a refrigerator.

A total of 178 vendors, i.e., 89% of the respondents, have refrigerators since they need to store the leftover vegetables in order to gain more profit. Compared to the previous asset, television, refrigerator owners have increased by 2 respondents, which shows the importance of refrigerators for vendors as storage for the leftover vegetables.

The word "washing machine" refers to a machine that uses water to clean clothes. The washing machine is a part of household assets which saves time and energy for a

person who is in charge of laundry. Especially in a patriarchal society, washing and cooking are considered women's tasks; in the case of women vendors, the helpful nature of washing machines could not be ignored. The role it played in maintaining the schedule for the vendors, as they are double burdened at the vending place and at home. So, the washing machine plays an important role as an indicator for the socio-economic status of women vendors. The table shown below is the data collected for owning the washing machine among the respondents.

Due to the capabilities and scheduled maintenance nature of washing machines, 82% of the respondents own washing machines. Vendors are usually busy from the morning till they go to bed, so the washing machine helps them in maintaining the tight schedule and relieving them from the stress. These are the factors that result in a high rate of owning washing machines among the vendors. While 18% do not own a washing machine due to poverty, they do need it, but they have other priorities to be given, like food to eat, monthly rentals, and capital for vegetables.

An LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) connection is the service enabling a family or company to utilise LPG, a combustible amalgamation of hydrocarbon gases such as propane and butane, for cooking and heating, generally via a cylinder and stove apparatus. In India, in order to get this LPG connection, a person needs to register himself in the nearest agency with an Indian citizen identity card, like an Aadhaar card, voter's ID or driving licence. Failing to provide this identity card, they were not eligible to have the gas connection. In this study, gas connection is important because it will identify the migrant's data from the nearby country and the socio-economic profile of the women vendors. Gas connection is a part of the daily essentials without which food could not be cooked. People buy from the black market if they do not have a proper gas connection; this data will also be seen from the data collected. So, the nature of the LPG gas connection is shown on the table below:

The above table shows that 84.5% of all vendors have LPG connections, while 15.5% do not. This is because the LPG gas connection is one of our basic necessities, but many vendors don't have it because they're migrants from nearby countries like Myanmar, where they don't have IDs, or from nearby villages where they don't think

transferring the gas connection is necessary because they're temporarily settled in Aizawl.

A computer is a device that utilises electronic components to input, process, store, and output data. Data comprises information, including numerical values, textual elements, and enumerations. Data input refers to the process of acquiring information from a keyboard, a storage medium such as a hard drive, or a sensor. The computer is used as a part of household assets to see the socio-economic status of the vendors. However, in the case of vendors, the importance of computers for their occupation is very low, but looking at the initiatives taken by the Indian government, it is necessary to know the data on computer ownership by the vendors' households. The Government of India, via the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), advocates for computer literacy through initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan (PMGDISHA) and the National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM), with the objective of achieving digital literacy for six crore individuals in rural regions. So, the data on owning a computer by the vendor's household was shown in the table below:

The table above indicates that 94.5% of the total vendors do not have computers, whereas only 5.5% do. Most vendors lack computer knowledge, which prevented them from seeing how important computers are for their jobs. Simultaneously, a computer serves as a secondary necessity for a family's survival; additionally, poverty is a contributing factor, as vendors often lack a stable income, thereby preventing them from purchasing a computer set.

A microwave oven, also referred to as a microwave, is an electric appliance that warms and cooks food by subjecting it to electromagnetic radiation within the microwave frequency spectrum. Although the microwave is a household asset, its primary purpose is to enhance convenience and save time. So, knowing who owned the microwave will highlight the socio-economic status of the vendors, as it is not a cheap appliance. The table below is the microwave-owning status of the respondents:

The above table indicates that only 2% have owned a microwave oven, while 98% do not have it. This is because the majority of the vendors do not even know what a microwave oven is; it is a luxury appliance for them. A microwave oven is not a cheap

appliance that everyone can afford. Vendors struggle to make ends meet with their meagre income, so purchasing secondary needs is not a priority for them.

A vehicle can be defined as a method or medium via which an individual travels or an object is transported: a means of conveyance or transport: a motor vehicle or spacecraft. a vehicle operating on wheels, runners, tracks, or similar mechanisms, such as a cart, sled, automobile, or tractor. Vehicles are critical for transportation, facilitating the efficient movement of individuals and commodities, bolstering economic activity, and granting access to vital services and opportunities, while also fostering social progress and personal autonomy. For the vendor, vehicles are essential for the effective delivery of goods, client outreach, and corporate expansion, providing time-saving advantages and enhanced mobility. So, the table below is the data on owning a vehicle by the respondents:

The table shows that 49.5% have a vehicle, while 50.5% do not have it. This is because in a hilly place like Aizawl, commuting from one place to another is very tiresome, and the fare is expensive. So, if a vendor could afford it, they bought a vehicle, mostly a two-wheeler due to its convenience, for their occupation to carry vegetables and for delivering items from one place to another. However, the other 49.5% do not own vehicles due to poverty, as they do not have the capital to buy them.

From the analysis of the above data of household assets, it can be seen that the vendors bought the household assets according to the convenience for their household. This can be clear from the data that the majority of the vendors owned household assets like mobile handsets, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines and LPG gas connections. They owned these assets for entertainment, storage facilities, washing and making food, as they are the basic needs. Assets like microwave ovens and vehicles are secondary needs; they can survive without them.

4.4.3 Places of residence:

Place of residence is the location where a person lives or resides. It can also refer to the act of living in a place. A person's place of residence is highly important in determining their socioeconomic status because it directly influences factors like access to quality education, healthcare, employment opportunities, and overall neighbourhood conditions, which significantly impact their economic standing and

social mobility; essentially, where someone lives can greatly affect their ability to achieve a higher socioeconomic status due to the disparities in resources available in different neighbourhoods. (United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-Habitat], 2020; World Bank, 2022). For this study, the place of residence is questioned in two options: resides within the city and semi-urban.

Table. 4.11 Place of residence

Habitation	Frequency	Percentage
Comes from the village to sell	22	11.0
Resides within the city	175	87.5
Semi Urban Fringe	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The data shows that among the vendors, 87.5% reside within the city, which reveals the economic status of the urban area, where many people are out of jobs and engaged in informal sectors like vegetable vending for their livelihood. It also reveals that this job is a job for poor urban dwellers. 11% of the vendors come from the village to the city for vegetable vending; this shows the economic status of the rural areas where the village people come all the way from their village to sell their vegetables. It also reveals that the urban area is a hub for job opportunities, for which economic activity is much easier as compared to rural areas. These vendors usually came to the city on Friday night with their vegetables for *Inrinni Bazar* (Saturday Market). Even though only 1.5% of the vendors were coming from the semi-urban area, this reveals that the urban area acts as a place for occupation and opportunity for all kinds of people. One of the vendor Pi Thangi from Sialsuk who comes to Aizawl for Saturday Bazar told that,

“tihian inrinni bazar tur hian zirtawp zanlaiah kan rawn chhuak a, Aizawl ah dar 3 velah te kan rawn thleng a chawhmeh inpho leh siamrem chhung in khua a var a, tihian nilengin chawhmeh zawh hma chu kan haw ngailo, kan zawh hma leh kan haw hma animai, pickup te kan in thawh tawm thin”

“Usually on Saturday night, we left the village at midnight and reached Aizawl in the morning around 3AM. While organizing and preparing

the vegetables, the sun comes up. We sell the vegetables all day, we went home only after finishing what we brought, if we sold up fast, then we can go home early. We usually hired pickup together with the co-vendors from our village”

It can be concluded that the majority of the vendors in Aizawl city usually resided in the city itself, while some of the vendors came from rural areas to sell their vegetables at the Saturday market. This shows the economic status of the city as well as the economic opportunity for the urban dwellers. The urbanisation is one of the pull factors for the rural people to come all the way from their location to the city for selling their vegetables.

4.5 Religion and tribal background:

The next characteristic was the religious and tribal composition of the respondents. Religion is present in every community; from a social perspective, the fundamental group values are linked to the perceived reality of religion. From an individual perspective, religion provides explicit guidelines for behaviour, which contributes to social organisation. Religion offers individuals a mechanism to compensate for their frustrations, worries, and insecurities stemming from their failures in this life (Durkheim, 1912/2008). “As a conventional force, religion often seeks to reconcile individuals with their circumstances, while simultaneously serving as a catalyst for motivating them to construct a more fulfilling world.” (Weber, 1905/2002) Religion is most pertinent during the moments of utmost strain and tension in human existence (Durkheim, 1912/2008). The table below is the data collected for the case of religion:

Table 4.12 Religion

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	200	100
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The data revealed that 100% of the respondent vendors followed Christianity. The fact that Christianity is the only religion present among the respondents is particularly striking. Since the majority of the Mizo population are Christian. According to the 2011 census, 87% of the population are Christian, and the Presbyterian Church is the

dominant denomination in Mizoram (Census of India, 2011). Christianity arrived in Mizoram after the British military expedition of 1871, known as the Lushai Expedition. The annexation of the Lushai Hills to the British Empire allowed for British Christian missions to evangelise the Mizo people. Christianity has been a part of Mizoram's culture for over a century (Lalthangliana, 2001; Lalthuanliana, 2013). Christianity plays an important role in empowering women to engage in work.

Before the advent of Christianity in Mizo society, women were oppressed and discriminated against, and they did not have a say in the decision-making (Lalthuanliana, 2013). Especially the widow faced extreme discrimination by not being to live in the central area of the village, and her children were identified as "*hmeithai fa*", i.e., widow's children. Her world is within the house, and her public sphere is the water point near her village, where all the village women come together to fetch water for the family. They had a discussion about their life and living among themselves; that too was very far from their home due to some spirit that had lived in nearby water points, which caused sickness to those who ignored the spirit's presence. However, with the coming of Christian missionaries and the introduction of education to women, Mizo women started engaging in all parts of life and economic activity, but there is a strong gender division of labour in Mizo society (Lianzela, 2016; Pachau, 2014).

So, Mizoram is one of the top states in India for women's empowerment in decision-making, although there is a long way to go to reach the destination of equality. This is because many women work in the informal sector and act as the main breadwinner of the family, which results in empowering women in decision-making in the family (National Family Health Survey [NFHS-5], 2021). At the same time, Mizoram is a tribal state, located in the Northeast region of the country. The table below shows the data on the caste composition of the respondents.

The respondents were tribal, i.e., they are under the Scheduled Tribe of the Indian Constitution. The Mizoram state is a tribal state where all the respondents are also under the category of Scheduled Tribe (ST). The Mizoram people are protected under the Indian constitution as a Scheduled Tribe. Article 366 (25) of the Indian Constitution defines Scheduled Tribes as 'for the purposes of this [Indian]

Constitution, such tribes or tribal communities, or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities, are considered Scheduled Tribes under Article 342' (Constitution of India, 1950).

The Mizo people first settled in the Chin Hills on the Indo-Burmese border in the early 14th century. They built villages with names like Seipui, Saihmun, and Bochung. The Mizo tribes migrated from the Chin Hills to present-day Mizoram for various reasons, including better land for cultivation, fear of insecurity, and inter-tribal disputes (Zama, 2017). The British annexed the region in the early 1890s after punitive military expeditions in 1871 and 1889. The region was initially administered as the North Lushai Hills and the South Lushai Hills but was united as the Lushai Hills District of Assam in 1898. In 1972, the Lushai Hills District was declared a union territory and renamed Mizoram.

The name Mizoram literally means "land of the hill people". Mizoram became a full-fledged state of India on February 20, 1987, through the 53rd Constitutional Amendment of 1986 (Government of India, 1986; Zama, 2017). The tribal people have their own particular taste buds according to the environment and their socio-economic conditions in which they lived. So, they have their own particular vegetables like *phuihnam*, *khanghu*, *zawngtah*, *thingthupui* and many more which could hardly be found in other parts of the country. This made the vegetable vendors "keepers of Mizo culture" by selling the vegetables, which are a part of Mizo identity (Lalrindiki, 2022). So, it is revealed that religion and tribe have relations and connections with the Mizo women vegetable vendors. In Mizo society, religious denomination plays a crucial role in the minds of Christianity. Religious denominations profoundly affect societal views, including gender norms and political tolerance. Denominations can foster subcultures that endorse certain social norms, resulting in divergent attitudes on problems like civil freedoms and pro-family concerns. Ellison, C. (1993).

4.5.1 Religious Denomination:

A religious denomination is a subdivision of a religion that shares a common name, tradition, and identity. Religion is the belief and worship of a strong supernatural being, such as God or gods. This is a specific system of faith and worship. It can also refer to a passionate pursuit of a certain topic. Religion has a significant impact on the

lives of individuals, particularly those in Mizo society. This study systematically enquires and documents the respondents' religious denominations. As Mizo society is composed of Christianity. All the respondents are also Christian, affiliated to various denominations. Various denominations were formed among Mizo society because each denomination followed different styles of conducting church service, different doctrine, baptism, sacrament and different structures of church organisation. The respondents are asked whether they are Presbyterian, United Pentecostal Church (UPC), Salvation Army, Kohhran Thianghlim, Baptist or Seventh Day Adventist denomination or any other religious denomination. The table below indicated the denomination of the vendors interviewed.

Table 4.13 Religious Denomination

Denominations	Frequency	Percentage
Roman Catholic	1	.5
Presbyterian	136	68.0
Baptist	15	7.5
Kohhran Thianghlim	10	5.0
Salvation Army	16	8.0
United Pentecostal Church	19	9.5
Seventh Day Adventist	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The table above clearly shows that among the respondents, the Presbyterian denomination accounts for 136 individuals, representing 68% of the vendors' religious affiliations. This is because the Presbyterian Church of India is strongly influencing the city of Aizawl. The Presbyterian Church is the leading Christian denomination. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church was founded by a Welsh missionary named Rev. D.E. Jones and is one of the formed organisations of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India, with its headquarters in Shillong, Meghalaya (India). The management of the Presbyterian Church is very centralised. The synod, headquartered in Aizawl, is the church's highest decision-making body with significant

influence. The Synod Headquarters has direct or indirect responsibility over the church's finances, personnel (including missionary selection), administration, management, and operations. While the next denomination, the United Pentecostal Church, consists of 19 respondents (9.5%) only, the United Pentecostal Church of North East India (UPC-NEI) is a religious denomination of Christian belief based on the doctrine of the Oneness of God and a salvation through the Baptism of Water and the Holy Spirit. Then it is followed by the Salvation Army, in which 16 respondents (8%) were identified. Baptist Church of India followed the list with 15 respondents (7.5%). There is always a strong influence of Baptists in almost all parts of Mizoram. The Baptist denomination is very widespread in the southern part of Mizoram. There are as many as 10 respondents (5%) who belong to the denomination of Kohhran Thianghlim. Kohhran Thianghlim was established in 1984. Unlike other denominations, it's simply a congregation of those who have attained spiritual blessings. The spread of the message of God is their primary objective. There are only 3 respondents (1.5%) who followed the Seventh Day Adventist denomination, while only 1 respondent followed the Roman Catholic denomination.

The findings are not surprising, as the majority of the Mizo people, especially in Aizawl city, were dominated by the Presbyterian Church of India denomination, while the Baptist denomination has been firmly rooted in the South of Mizoram and is the majority in number. Christianity also played an important role regarding women's education. With the coming of Christian missionaries and the introduction of education to women, Mizo women started engaging in all parts of life and economic activity. So, the next section will touch on the educational qualifications of the respondents.

4.6 Educational Qualification

In simple terms, education here can best be defined as the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction either at schools, colleges or universities. Education is the body of knowledge that one receives while being educated. It is considered an important factor in the mobility process. There are two types of education, which are formal and informal education. Formal education refers to the number of teachings received at formal institutions, while informal education includes all those teachings and instructions given to us by our parents, elders or friends anywhere. In

contemporary industrial society, there is a discernible trend necessitating a higher degree of education for entrance into responsible positions and occupations. Education is increasingly integrated with employment, rendering it a component of the economic underpinning of society (Burton & Donald, 1962). In knowing the education level of the respondents, it is easier to identify whether the uneducated or the better educated people faced more problems in society with regard to their working condition. It is also important to know how they are used and what importance they had. In the interview schedule prepared in this study, the respondents are asked about the extent of formal education that they have attended or received at institutions like primary, middle, and high school and graduate and illiterate. Also, the interview schedule is employed, as many of them are illiterate and have low educational qualifications. The table shows the level of education of the respondents:

Table 4.14 Educational Qualification

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Primary level	36	18.0
Middle school	71	35.5
High School	60	30.0
Higher Secondary	11	5.5
Graduate and above	1	.5
Illiterate	21	10.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

Table 4.14 presents the educational qualifications of the respondents. Among the total respondents, 21 individuals (10.5%) are illiterate, while only 1 respondent holds a graduate degree, indicating that vegetable vending is accessible to both illiterate and educated individuals. The vendors are usually from rural backgrounds or migrated from rural areas where education was not given importance over their daily survival. Most of them engaged in agricultural farming as soon as they were able to perform, which resulted in a low educational background. The main reason for not pursuing the education is poverty; they are coming from a poor family who could not give importance to education since there are so many other important things for their

livelihood. In the olden Mizo society, the big family was seen as the great family since they had more members to work on the family farm, which resulted in wealthy living among the village members. Among the respondents, the educational qualifications of middle school and high school were almost the same, 35.5% and 30%, respectively, in which the total of these two comes to 65.5%. This reveals that more than half of the vendors had usually passed their high school. While the percentage of primary level was lower than the middle and high school level, the percentage of the graduate and above level is still lower than the primary level. Although the majority of the vendors are educated, the level of educational qualification among the vendors is low. In a survey of street sellers along Vashi and Belapur Road in Navi Mumbai, Sarkar and Srivastava (2009) identified a low literacy level. In a 2001 survey of female vegetable sellers in Baroda City, G. Shreekanth discovered that they were educated only to the elementary level. One of the respondents Pi Mawii 54 years old Class IX passed told that,

“Chawhmeh zawrh hi nuam ka tia, ka tui bawk a, keini ang zirsanglo tan chuan a tha tawh khawp mai, nitin eitur te kan lo neih ve phah a”

“I really enjoy and love selling vegetables, especially a low educated person like me, selling vegetable is the enough for me as it provides food to eat everyday”

The number of graduates is very low because vegetable vending is the last choice for the educated unemployed population. Even though it is easily accessible and earnings are good enough, many of them still opt to work in stores, schools and private companies rather than selling vegetables. The status that the vegetable vendors got from the society reveals here that only low educational qualifications engaged in this economic activity. The person engaged in this economic activity gives priority to wealth rather than status due to poverty and responsibility. The educational qualification influences the person's ability to learn from her experience that contributes to the financial success of vending. Educational qualifications and experiences are critical factors influencing job performance and profit income.

4.7 Occupation:

Getting employed and finding a suitable occupation is difficult in a state like Mizoram due to the insufficient number of posts and the ineligibility of the required educational qualification. The occupation among the tribe is not inherited as it is in other cultures in India. The vegetable vendors were also entered in this economic activity due to personal reasons; it may not be their first choice, but vegetable vending provides them their daily needs. In the present work, the respondents were asked about the present occupation, i.e., vegetable vending as the main occupation of the family, in order to know the economic conditions and the status of women in the family relating to economic distribution for the family.

Table 4.15 Vegetable vending as a main occupation of the family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	149	74.5
No	51	25.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

Out of the total sample taken, 149 women vendors used vegetable vending as their main family occupation. This is because the employment opportunity in the formal sector is very weak, and the educational qualifications of these women are not high enough to apply for a job in the formal sector. In Mizo society, the gender division of labour is so strong that all the jobs or tasks related to the kitchen households were kept in the hands of women. So, Mizo men do not interfere in vegetable vending, but they do work as daily wage labourers on construction sites according to the availability of jobs. This is the reason why the family's main occupation is vegetable vending, as the income of the husband or the men in the family is not reliable. While for the rest of the 51 vendors' families, their main occupations are their husbands' or their sons' or their fathers' occupations. Many vendors are working as vendors since their spouse's earnings are not enough for the whole family to survive, as the cost of living is higher each year.

4.8 Experience:

Experience in street vending is essential, as it enables vendors to cultivate vital skills in customer engagement, market comprehension, price optimisation, product quality

management, operational efficiency, and compliance with local regulations that ultimately result in enhanced sales, customer loyalty, and a more sustainable enterprise, particularly for those dependent on street vending as their main source of income. Experience among vendors is pivotal in establishing trust, enhancing consumer satisfaction, and fostering effective cooperation. It influences consumer intentions and behaviours, making it a critical factor for both online and retail vendors (Stouthuysen et al., 2018). The table below gives a clear picture of the experience of the vendors.

Table 4.16 Experience: Year in vending business

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	17	8.5
1-5 years	59	29.5
5-10 years	97	48.5
10 years and above	27	13.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

Among the sample vendors, 97 vendors (48%) had engaged in vegetable vending for 5-10 years. This indicates that vegetable vending provides a reasonable income for the unskilled and low-educational-qualification women that holds them for quite a considerable time. While 29% of vendors engaged in vegetable vending only for a period of 1-5 years and 8.5% engaged in vending for less than a year. During the pandemic the economic condition was very bad, which called for easily accessible occupations; this resulted in many women starting to engage in vegetable farming for their economic improvement to support their families. Among the sample vendors, it has been revealed that 13.5% of vendors engaged in this economic activity as their main occupation for more than 10 years; this indicates that vegetable vending is their main source of income, suggesting long-term involvement in the activity. The duration of business operations among vegetable vendors can vary widely based on several factors, including economic conditions, personal circumstances, and market demand. This is because the majority of them have their own permanent seat, which pulls them to engage in vegetable vending for a long time. Also, the employment opportunity is

very low in Mizo society, which pulls many married women to engage in vegetable vending for their economic development. Although the majority of the women vendors have sold the vegetables for more than 5 years, they do have work experience in other occupations like rearing pigs and chickens, agricultural labour, tailoring and other domestic activity. So, the data on the status of work experience in other occupations are shown in the table below:

Table 4.17 Status of work experience in other occupations

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	11.0
No	178	89.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

From the above table, it can be seen that only 11% of the vendors have experience in other occupations, like rearing chickens and pigs, agricultural labour and tailoring. This is because the earnings from the vending alone are not sufficient for a family, so they engaged in this kind of activity along with the vegetable vending. This shows the double work of the women vendors.

4.9 Income:

Income often denotes the total monetary, property, and other valuable transfers obtained during a certain duration in return for services or goods. These studies indicate that the income of street vendors is substantially affected by variables such as initial capital, business location, marketing strategies, and quality of the vegetables, while the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacted their earnings, and post-pandemic conditions have resulted in an income increase. The interview schedule for the income per month was categorised under 4 ranges: below Rs 10,000, Rs 10,000-below 20,000, Rs 20,000-below 30,000 and above 30,000. The data collected is shown as below:

Table 4.18 Income

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs 10000	39	19.5
Rs 10000-Below 20000	93	46.5
Rs 20000-below 30000	62	31.0

above 30000	6	3.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table shows that 93 vendors, i.e., 46.5%, earn Rs 10000–20,000 per month, which shows that the average earnings of the vendors were not high considering the long working hours. From the data collected, it has revealed that the average working hours is 12 hours. These earnings are excluding the cost price; only the profit was calculated. The vendors who have earned between Rs. 20000 and 30000 are 62, i.e., 31%, and the vendors who have earned above 30000 are 6, i.e., 3%. This is possible because these vendors are not selling in retail, but they are wholesalers who act as the middle person for trading vegetables from the farmers to the retail sellers. They fully paid for the vegetables in bulk from the farmer and sold them to the local vendors. These vendors have also employed other vegetable sellers where they give the vegetables without collecting the cost price, but they pay them back according to their daily sales in the evening. 39 vendors, i.e., 19.5%, earn below Rs. 10000 due to the location of the vending area, the financial instability of the government and the increased number of vendors after the pandemic, which were the main reasons for low earnings. It was evident that though there was not a day a vendor was nil in selling vegetables, they did have days without gaining any profit.

4.9.1 Financial Inclusion

The government of India gives importance to the financial inclusion of its citizens. Financial inclusion refers to the accessibility and equity of chances to get financial services. The accessibility, availability, affordability, and use of financial services are important factors that determine financial inclusion, which has a substantial impact on street vendors' financial well-being and economic empowerment. Financial literacy and the existence of financial institutions in the vendors' locations are also important factors (Irakunda and Bergeijk, 2020). Under financial inclusion, the vendor's status on having a savings account, availing of loans and daily deposits will be analysed with the data collected.

Saving Account:

One type of deposit account that you may open with a bank is a savings account. It enables you to earn interest on the amount while safely storing money. By facilitating greater savings, investment, and resistance to financial shocks, access to savings accounts has a significant influence on the financial stability and business growth of market and street vendors, especially women (Dupas and Robinson, 2009). For suppliers, utilising savings accounts can result in lower expenses, less debt, and more eco-efficiency (Pomeranz and Kast, 2022). So, the table below shows the data collected for the status of vendors having savings account:

Table 4.19 Saving Account

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	169	84.5
No	31	15.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table shows that 169 vendors, i.e., 84.5%, registered themselves in the bank and obtained savings accounts. The government of India launched a programme called Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) in August 2014 by the Prime Minister of India that aims to provide affordable access to banking services, insurance and pension schemes to all Indian households, which resulted in a high rate of vendors having savings accounts. While 15.5% of the vendors still do not have savings accounts, as they were not aware of the importance of savings accounts for personal benefit. However, all the vendors who have savings accounts do not necessarily deposit money in their accounts. The table below shows the status of monthly savings by the vendors:

Table 4.20 Monthly savings

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	63	31.5
No	137	68.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

From the above table, it can be seen that in spite of 84% of vendors having savings accounts, only 31.5% of vendors are able to deposit money on a monthly basis. This

phenomenon is because the majority of the vendors do not have extra money to deposit in their savings accounts, as their monthly income is meagre. The other reason is a lack of awareness about the importance of saving and the benefits of having one. Moreover, a significant number of vendors possess inadequate educational qualifications, leading to a negative self-perception that hinders their ability to interact with bankers and make monthly deposits.

Table 4.21 Amount of the Monthly Savings

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs 5000	31	15.5
Rs 5000-Below 10000	50	25.0
Rs 10000-Below 15000	6	3.0
Above 20000	5	2.5
Not Saving	137	54.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

More than half of the respondents (54%) reported not saving any money from their monthly income. This indicates a high level of financial vulnerability and suggests that most women's earnings are just enough to meet daily household and business needs. Among those who do save, 40.5% (15.5% + 25% of total respondents) manage to save less than ₹10,000 per month. This shows that savings potential is limited, possibly due to low profit margins and high household expenditures. Only 4.5% (3.0% + 2.5%) of respondents reported saving above ₹10,000 per month. This small segment may represent women with more stable vending locations, larger customer bases, or diversified income sources. The data reflects the precarious economic position of most Mizo women vegetable vendors. Despite their significant contribution to the informal economy, limited savings hinder their financial security, resilience against emergencies, and capacity for business expansion.

The findings indicate that most Mizo women vegetable vendors face challenges in saving, underscoring economic instability in this informal sector. Initiatives aimed at enhancing financial well-being may encompass programs for income enhancement,

access to microfinance, training in financial literacy, and supportive policies designed to stabilise the business environment.

Loan:

Any amount of money borrowed by one or more people or businesses from banks or other financial organisations to handle unforeseen or scheduled expenses is known as a loan. By doing this, the borrower creates a debt that he must repay within a certain time frame and with interest. Flexible microcredit loans can increase short-term profits for small businesses by 7-15% compared to standard term loans (Aragon et al., 2020). Informal lending adds investment to businesses, helps with discretion and is perceived as reliable due to its ease of access and affordability (Santos, 2019). Street vendors in Cali, Colombia, face significant indebtedness due to predatory interest rates from the moneylenders, limiting their access to banking services (Martinez et al., 2019). Here is the data on availing loans from banks and private moneylenders.

Table 4.22 Status of availing loan

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	26.5
No	147	73.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table reveals that 26.5% of the vendors avail of loans from the bank, while 73.5% of the vendors do not avail of them. This is because the majority of them come from a poor family with a low level of education, which gives them a hard time in applying for a loan from the proper bank. The bank follows a proper procedure to avail the loan, which caused a problem for the women vendors, as the majority do not understand English, and they are afraid of making mistakes. For those who availed of the loan also applied for the Self-Help Group Loan and the Bandhan Bank Loan, as the amount is small and no property is seized for the loan.

One of the vendors, Pi Chhingi says,

“Keini saptawng thiam bawk silo tan chuan a buaithlak loan dil ve pawh
bakah ba neihloh hram hram ka duh, kan hlawh a chhe sia”

“For us availing loan is problematic as I do not understand English at the same time, I do not want borrow any money as our monthly income is meager and it hardly provide”

Table 4.23 Difficulty availing a loan

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	103	51.5
No	70	35.0
Not applicable	27	13.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

51.5% of respondents indicated challenges in securing loans. More than half of women vegetable vendors face challenges in obtaining financial support from both formal and informal credit sources. Difficulties may stem from insufficient collateral, inconsistent income, or lack of formal business registration. Approximately 35% of respondents indicated that they encountered no difficulties in securing loans. This group may consist of vendors with established credibility among local lenders, affiliation with self-help groups (SHGs), or access to microfinance institutions. Approximately 13.5% of respondents indicated that the question was not applicable, implying they have not attempted to apply for a loan. This may result from a fear of indebtedness, a lack of awareness regarding loan facilities, or contentment with their existing income level. The results indicate a disparity in financial access for Mizo women engaged in vegetable vending. Restricted access to credit may impede business development, diminish resilience to financial disturbances, and sustain economic dependency. In the absence of sufficient financial inclusion, these women may depend on high-interest informal lenders, exacerbating their financial vulnerability.

The analysis reveals that most Mizo women vegetable vendors encounter difficulties in accessing loans, highlighting systemic barriers to financial inclusion in the informal sector. Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted interventions, including improved access to microcredit, educational programs on financial schemes, and

supportive policies aimed at formalising and economically empowering women vendors.

Daily deposit:

People who earn money every day might benefit from a savings plan called a daily deposit scheme. This plan allows them to put away a small amount every day and have an authorised representative come and collect it at their door. Women street vendors are economically vulnerable and need greater access to education, better work and living conditions and better financial management options (Mc Kay et al., 2021). The interest rate for daily deposit is only 2% per annum, while the recurring deposit interest rate is 6%. The data on vendors daily deposits is shown below the table:

Table 4.24 Daily deposit

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	22.0
No	156	78.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The table above reveals that only 22% of the vendors used daily deposits. The percentage is low because the collector is not present or available in all the locations of the vending area. The other reason is that the vendors are unaware of the importance of the daily deposit and lack sufficient income for daily deposits. The minimum amount for daily deposit is 50 rupees, and the common duration is one year. The Apex bank is the only bank that carried out the daily deposit scheme. The interest is low as compared to recurring deposit, but they are unaware, and they have no time to deposit the small amount of their income to the bank regularly.

From the three heads, namely saving accounts, loans and daily deposits, it can be seen that the majority of the vendors open saving accounts in the bank, but the rate of savings or investing in the bank by the vendors is very low. The reasons include low daily income and unawareness of the importance of savings. The financial condition is related to the property they hold. One of the main factors for analysing the socio-economic factor is possession of land. This can upgrade the status of the vendors as

well, as it gives privileges. The next head will touch on the data relating to possession of land by the vendors.

4.10 Land possession:

Land ownership refers to the regions of land over which an individual holds legal or customary rights as the proprietor (FAO, 2002). The majority of land in Mizoram is communally owned and administered by local councils. Currently, the official registration accurately documents land ownership by individuals (Lalrinthanga, 2013). If not officially documented, several disagreements may arise, allowing other individuals to assert claims to the unrecorded land (Zomuana, 2017). This project enquires about the respondents' land ownership area. This is crucial, as it assists in determining the property they owned or whether they held any land at all. The recorded enquiries involve asking respondents about their land possession and are recorded accordingly. Since Mizo society is a patriarchal society, the ownership of land was usually under the name of the male head of the family; if the family was wealthy enough, the share of the land was divided among the children. Whereas if the land possession is small, only the male members of the family were given inheritance (Lalrinthanga, 2013; Zomuana, 2017).

Table.4.25 Land Possession

Land possession	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	40.0
No	120	60.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

In this study, the data gives information that 60% of women street vendors have no family land ownership, while 40% of women have family land. Among these, only 11% of women vendors have land under their name which they inherit from their parents (table 4), while 89% of women vendors do not have any land under their name which they inherited from their parents, which is shown in the table below. This reveals the patriarchal Mizo society where men were favoured over women in the society. Women are not entitled to any inheritance of the family or ancestral property, as per customary law. Even in the absence of a male child, a daughter was unable to

claim the property as a matter of right. In such instances, the family property would typically be transferred to the nearest male relative. This is perceived as an extreme instance of women's deprivation (Lalthansangi 2005: 39). Also, women suffer most when they are poor, since the family's important possessions were given to the male member of the family.

4.11 Types of Vendor:

Street vendors can be broadly classified into 3 types: stationary, peripatetic, and mobile vendors (Bhowmik, 2005). Two types of vendors were collected and analysed for the study: stationary and peripatetic. The mobile vendors were not collected separately because they are also from the peripatetic vendors, as the separation could potentially compromise the data's reliability. Stationary vendors are those vendors who have a permanent location in the designated market to sell their vegetables, while peripatetic vendors are those vendors who do not have a permanent location to sell their vegetables. Peripatetic vendors are more vulnerable and prone to abuse and other related unhealthy working conditions (Roever & Skinner, 2016). The study included 200 vendors, of which 100 were stationary and 100 were peripatetic.

Based on the types of vendors, the seat rent is also varied; the stationary vendors paid a small amount of rent per day or per month according to the market where they sell. On the other hand, peripatetic vendors did not pay rent when they sat in undesignated areas like the pavement or roadside. But they were seen as deviant and as a person who congested the pavement and the city. Vendors' goods were sometimes confiscated by the local council or by the authority (Bhowmik, 2010). Due to the temporary and informal nature of the activity and the lack of proper guidelines and policies, vendors faced numerous challenges (Roever & Skinner, 2016).

4.12 Seat Rent:

The vendor pays the market owner a sum of money known as seat rent in exchange for their seating fee. Depending on the market location, they either paid it in daily or monthly installments. The monthly rental costs for vendors renting space for their businesses in Aizawl, Mizoram can differ significantly based on factors such as location, size, and type of space. However, the cost typically ranges from ₹2,000 to ₹20,000 or more (Lalrinsangi, 2022). Rental Cost Influencers: Location: Rents will be

more expensive in Aizawl's prime locations, such as the primary market areas or areas with high foot traffic. Space Size: Naturally, the rental costs of larger kiosks or establishments will be higher. Space Type: The rental rates for rented space that is used by food vendors, retail stores, or other categories of businesses will vary. Negotiation: Rent amounts are frequently subject to negotiation, particularly for long-term leases or larger spaces. General Price Range: Low-End: Small kiosks or spaces in less desirable areas may be available for as little as ₹2,000 to ₹5,000 per month. Mid-Range: Average-sized stores or stalls in moderately active areas could cost between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 per month. Premium: The monthly cost of large stores or prominent location spaces can easily range from ₹10,000 to ₹20,000 or more.

Table 4.26 Seat Rent per month

Response	Frequency	Percentage
rent free	62	31.0
100-500	98	49.0
501-1000	30	15.0
1001-1500	6	3.0
1501-2000	3	1.5
2001-2500	1	.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

It can be seen from the above table that 62 vendors, or 31% of the total, were not paying any rental for their seats. This is because they sat on the undesignated marketplace and pavement where vending was not allowed. While 98 women vendors (49%) were paying 100-500 rupees per month for their vending seat. This is possible because vendors who have a permanent seat in a designated marketplace pay 20 rupees per day for the seat fee. For the purpose of this study, 100 vendors were taken from stationary vendors and peripatetic vendors each. 30 vendors (15%) pay 501-1000 rupees per month for their seat. Since many peripatetic vendors seek places in undesignated places where they pay high fees for their rent. While 4 vendors pay 1501-2500 rupees for their vending seat, this much amount has been paid because they rent a proper shop for selling vegetables.

4.13 Migration:

The migration status and patterns are crucial elements in the socio-economic assessment of a street vending community. Migration is succinctly described as the process of individual relocation from one region to another. Migration constitutes a significant factor in urban economics. The absence of economic opportunities and jobs in rural regions and small towns compels many individuals to migrate to urban areas in search of sustenance. These individuals typically exhibit a limited degree of education and skills necessary for higher-paying employment in the formal sector. Furthermore, permanent positions in the organizational sector are diminishing. In the absence of employment opportunities in both the governmental and private sectors, individuals are compelled to establish their own enterprises to sustain their livelihoods. This has resulted in the swift expansion of the informal sector in several cities of emerging nations (Timalsina, 2011).

The post-independence era in Aizawl witnessed a heightened migration of migrants from adjacent states and other regions of the country seeking economic opportunities. The high migration pace significantly boosted the population of Aizawl following independence. The substantial population growth in Aizawl following Independence has resulted in a severe unemployment issue in the region. Government employment opportunities are already saturated, while the population of educated individuals has surged significantly (Lalrinsangi, 2022). This stimulated the expansion of several informal sector employment opportunities in Aizawl.

Table 4.27 Migration status

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Migrated	134	67.0
Not migrated	66	33.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

The above table shows that 67% from the total vendors were migrated from rural areas to Aizawl city in search of job opportunity, health issue and education concern. While 33% vendors were originally from Aizawl city and not migrated. The below table shows the reason for their migration.

Table 4.28 Reason for migration

Response	Frequency	Percentage
In search of better job	81	40.5
family occupation	24	12.0
marriage	22	11.0
Health issue	7	3.5
Not Migrated	66	33.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

According to the above table, the main reason for migration is searching for a better job in Aizawl city, which was opted for by 81 vendors (40.5%). This is because living in the rural areas of Mizoram is difficult, as they solely depend on farming for their occupation, which hardly provides them their daily sustenance. Problems like bad roads, damage to crops by pests and negligence by the government were the main issues which led to the giving up of the farming activity by the farmers, who migrated to Aizawl city. The other reason for migration is due to family occupations, which was decided by 24 vendors (12%). Due to urbanisation in Aizawl city, half of the total population was staying in Aizawl city, which made the employment opportunity much easier as compared to rural areas due to the populations; this pulled many rural people to migrate to the city. The family occupation signifies the husband's or the father's occupation where all the family migrated to an urban area. Marriage was chosen by 22 women vendors (11%) who migrated alone to Aizawl due to marriage. Only 7 women vendors migrated to Aizawl due to health issues, as the medical facilities were not properly set up in rural areas and the specialised doctors were not available in all the villages, which pushed the villagers to migrate to Aizawl city if the relatives had a chronic illness which needed regular medical checkups. So, taking this opportunity, the women started engaging in this vegetable vending activity and contributing for their families. One of the respondents from Chanmari west Pi Thuami 58 years told that

“Kan pa hi cancer ania, thla tin in checkup angai thin sia, Sawleng atanga rawn zin ziah a hautak bakah amah a chak bawk silo a, kan fate lekhazir

in an awm sa tho nen kan rawn fin a, tihian chawhmeh zuar pah in Aizawl ah kan rawn insawn thla, inenkawl man a hautak bawk nen.”

“My husband is a cancer patient; he needs regular medical checkup every month. So, it is very hard for us to come frequently from Sawleng and he is very weak. We joined our children as they have already rent a house in Aizawl. I took this opportunity to sell the vegetables as the livelihood is very hard for us. That is why we migrated to Aizawl”

From the total sample, 66 women vendors (33%) were not migrated as they were born and brought up in the Aizawl itself. Among the migrant, the table below shows whom they migrated with to the city.

Table 4.29 Migrated with whom

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Family members	88	44.0
Migrated alone	46	23.0
Not migrated	66	33.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

From the above table, it can be seen that the majority of the vendors (88) migrated with family members, while 46 migrated alone to the city of Aizawl due to their personal importance and occupations. So, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors are migrants from all the villages in Mizoram. The reasons for migrating to Aizawl city include better job opportunities, education, health facilities and marriage.

4.14 Health.

A person's health is a comprehensive concept that extends beyond the mere absence of disease and is influenced by various factors, such as heredity, environment, and lifestyle choices. It encompasses their physical, mental, and social well-being. Poor working conditions, limited access to healthcare, and negative psychosocial impacts are among the significant health risks and challenges that informal street vendors and those involved in health services encounter. However, interventions such as strategic vendor selection, improved management models, and better training can improve their health outcomes and service quality (Sepadi and Nkosi, 2023).

The table below shows the data on the status of health among the respondents:

Table 4.30 Status of health problems

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	122	61.0
No	78	39.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

It is evident from the above table that the majority, i.e., 61%, of the total vendors have health problems. This is because vending needs physical activity, which causes health issues like ulcers, nerve problems and diabetes. They were not taking their meal at the proper timing, sitting for a long period, and a proper diet could not be maintained. This result is a matter of concern for the government to give importance to in implementing awareness of vendors' health. While 39% of the total vendors do not have health problems. They are not fully free from health issues, but they do not think their condition is chronic or serious as compared to the other vendors who have health problems.

So, the majority of the vendors have health problems due to the unhealthy working nature of the vendors, as most of the time they are busy and are not able to have their tiffin at a proper time. This resulted in having chronic health problems like diabetes, nerve problems and ulcers; they need proper awareness of their health. As long as the customers are available, they do not care about their hunger.

4.15 Religiosity

In sociology, the term "religiosity" is employed to denote the character of an individual's religious beliefs and experiences, as well as the contribution of religion to society (Stark & Glock, 1968). It has been compared to spirituality, orthodoxy, piety, and religious devotion (Cornwall et al., 1986). Weberian arguments suggest that India is a place of otherworldliness, with a ritual law that can lead to ritual degradation for every change in occupation or work technique (Weber, 1905/2002). The result suggests that economic and technical revolution cannot be achieved within India, as a comparison between the Weberian position and ground reality reveals no convergence (Weber, 1905/2002; Madan, 1987). In the context of this study, religiosity is used as

a criterion for knowing the status of the active participation of the vendors by using the attendance of the church service as a measurement. In Mizo society, church service and church obligations are seen as a part of social capital; by knowing the status of the vendor's church activity, one can know the vendor's social capital in the Mizo society (Lalsangkima Pachuau, 2014).

Table 4.31 Attending church service

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	13.0
No	4	2.0
Only on Sunday	170	85.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field data

Among the vendors, 85% attended the church service only on Sunday, since they do not have time for other activity than their work on working days. They were free only on Sunday, as all the markets were closed on Sunday in Mizo society. So, they could not be regularly active in the church service. The working hours are long and hectic; no energy is left when reaching home. While, despite their busy and hectic schedule, 13% of the vendors were able to attend the church service regularly. In Mizo society, there are 8 church services: youth fellowship on Monday, women's fellowship on Tuesday, and regular church services on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday morning, afternoon and night. Mizos are religious in general, as they were brought up in a Christian family where Sunday school was given importance. Due to 'salvation anxiety', they tried their best to be an active church member, as it has social capital in Mizo society. At the same time, only 2% of the vendors were not attending the church service on any day since they want their free Sunday for relaxation and cleaning. It can be concluded that despite their busy and exhausting work culture, the Mizo women vendors are religious.

Overview:

The socioeconomic profile of the respondent is essential for research since it influences their behaviour, views, attitudes, and developmental chances. Researchers may devise effective policies and treatments to address these issues by understanding

their mechanisms. Understanding socio-economic profiles in research is crucial as it aids in identifying patterns, trends, and discrepancies, hence informing targeted actions and policies for social and economic advancement. This study examined 15 socio-economic factors, including personal characteristics, marital status, family type, housing, religious and tribal background, educational qualifications, family occupation, experience, income, financial status and savings, land ownership, vendor types, migration, and health data, which were collected, analysed, and interpreted. All responders are female, as the predominant vegetable merchants in the Aizawl market are women. Consequently, the research exclusively examines female sellers.

In Mizo society, a patriarchal structure that rigorously enforces gendered labour segregation, women predominantly occupy vending roles. Tasks associated with the kitchen, including dishwashing, water collection, gardening, and cleaning, are deemed the purview of women, whereas activities like as hunting, safeguarding the community and family from adversaries, and decision-making are regarded as the domain of males. An ancient tale illustrates the pronounced gender division of labour among the Mizos: 'A guy sat by the fireside with some dishes boiling and spilt; despite being near the spilt dishes, he instructed his wife to come and supervise them.' The narrative illustrates that males refrain from engaging in activities deemed as women's job. Additionally, there exists a term for a husband who assists his wife with child-rearing and domestic responsibilities, referred to as a "family man"; such individuals are designated as "thaibawih." In Mizo society, there is an expectation for males to embody masculinity and refrain from engaging in tasks associated with women, accompanied by specific limitations and derision directed at those who deviate from established gender standards. The pronounced gender separation was ingrained in the collective consciousness, distinctly delineating tasks with precision. Moreover, in Mizo society, an individual was accorded the designation of "Pasaltha.". In Mizo culture, "pasaltha" denotes a "brave individual" or "hero." It denotes a someone who is valiant, robust, and frequently an accomplished hunter or combatant. He embodies bravery and possesses an exemplary character, as illustrated by the principle of "tlawmngaihna," which underscores the importance of selflessness and dedication to community service. Historically, society held Pasaltha in high regard; every individual

sought to mirror his qualities, and he emerged as the esteemed accolade of the village chief. The notion of 'Pasaltha' has profoundly influenced the psyche of the Mizo community; men aspire to achieve this esteemed status, while women desire their partners to embody such qualities. Individuals held the Pasaltha's character in high regard, perceiving them as a quintessential representation of masculinity. The Mizo community has profoundly assimilated this notion of masculinity, which persists in shaping their thoughts. In the pursuit of an exemplary form of masculinity, Mizo men draw inspiration from the Pasaltha, a revered archetype of the warrior tradition. Consequently, the sale of vegetables is perceived as a vocation predominantly suited for women within Mizo society, and men generally refrain from engaging in this enterprise, despite the potential for substantial financial gain.

1. **Age:** Out of the respondents, 7 individuals (3.5%) fall within the age range of 16-30 years, including 1 respondent who is 16 years old. A total of 83 respondents, representing 41.5%, fall within the age range of 31-45 years. Additionally, 86 respondents, or 43%, belong to the age group of 46-60 years, while 24 respondents, accounting for 12%, are aged above 60 years. The majority of respondents fall within the age range of 38 to 53 years. Besamusca also found that women aged 25-55 are more likely to participate in the labour force (Besamusca J et al., 2015). Upadhyay's study on women street vendors in Varanasi city reveals similar findings, indicating that the majority of vendors fall within the age group of 31-50 years (Upadhyay, 2021). In their study conducted across ten cities, Sharit Bhowmik and Debdulal Saha identified that the productive age group ranges from 25 to 55 years. Several likely factors contributing to the higher number of vendors in these age groups include challenges in accessing the formal sector, a desire for self-sufficiency, the loss of a spouse, migration from rural regions, and an inability to engage in wage labour, among others. The presence of individuals over 60 years indicates that concepts such as retirement or superannuation do not apply in this context.

2. **Marital Status:** The majority of respondents are married, although some are widowed or divorced. Of the respondents, 116 (58%) are married. Widows comprise 40 respondents (20%), divorced individuals account for 35 respondents (17.5%), and unmarried individuals represent 9 respondents (4.5%). This indicates that marriage

entails the responsibility of family care, which often leads to participation in the informal sector for family survival. The income generated by a single spouse is inadequate for the entire family's reliance. Married women with dependents recognise the potential of vegetable vending for economic development due to its accessibility and minimal capital requirements. This indicates that vegetable vending serves as a source of income for the impoverished, who lack alternative support, thereby engaging in this activity for their sustenance. This research parallels the work of Debdulal Saha, who noted that the majority of street vendors in ten Indian cities are married (Saha, 2017). Similar results were observed in Upadhyay's study on women vendors in Varanasi, where a majority (82%) of women street vendors were found to be married (Upadhyay, 2021). The rates of divorce and widowhood among respondents in Aizawl are notably higher than those in other states of India. The study by Nidhi Saroop on street vendors in Chandigarh and Ludhiana indicates that only 4% of vendors in Chandigarh were divorced or widowed, while none were reported in Ludhiana. In Upadhyay's study on Varanasi street vendors, only 15% of respondents were divorced or widowed. Debulal's study on street vendors across 10 cities revealed that the average percentage of respondents who are widowed or divorced is 7.8%.

3. **Family:** Of the respondents, 141 (70.5%) reside in nuclear families, whereas 59 (29.5%) have chosen joint families. A similar finding is reported in Upadhyay's study on Varanasi women street vendors, indicating that the majority of them live in non-nuclear families (Upadhyay, 2021). Duraisingam's study on street vendors in the Madurai district revealed that the majority of these vendors belonged to nuclear families (Duraisingam, 2007). Nidhi Saroop found that a majority (88%) of the respondents belong to nuclear families (Saroop, 2024). The majority of women vendors reside in nuclear families, a trend attributed to urbanisation, which has prompted many families to migrate to urban areas in search of employment and occupational opportunities, resulting in the dissolution of joint family structures. In a nuclear family, it is untenable for women to remain at home when the husband's income alone is inadequate for the family's survival. The status of women within nuclear families has significantly improved, resulting in more favourable conditions for women. The government allocates rations based on the family's economic status.

The majority of vendors possess PHH ration cards. Thirty respondents (15%) hold an APL card, nineteen respondents (9.5%) hold an AAY card, one hundred forty-three respondents (71.5%) hold a PHH card, and four respondents (2%) hold a BPL card. Additionally, four respondents (2%) do not possess any ration card as their families are relocating from their village to the city. 44.5% (89) of respondents have a family with a single adult male member, 26.5% (53) have two adult male members, and 12% (24) do not have any adult male members in the family. The data indicates that most vendors have a limited number of adult male family members upon whom they can depend for their livelihood. Sixty-seven respondents (33.5%) have three dependents, forty-nine respondents (24.5%) have two dependents, fifty respondents (25%) have more than four dependents, twenty-eight vendors (14%) have one dependent, and six respondents (3%) do not have any dependents. The majority of women vendors have one or more dependents, resulting in significant responsibilities that compel them to work for their families. Fifty-three respondents (26.5%) reported having alcoholic husbands, while sixty-four respondents (32%) indicated that their husbands were free from alcohol. Additionally, eighty-three respondents (41.5%) reported not having husbands. Although the majority of married women do not have alcoholic husbands, the gap remains minimal. Twenty-six percent of the respondents have alcoholic husbands, which may be considered a contributing factor to women's engagement in vegetable vending, as these husbands are often unreliable and irresponsible in family care.

4. **Housing:** Of the respondents, 138 (69%) resided in rented accommodations, whereas 62 (31%) did not. The majority of respondents reside in rented accommodations with a rental range of 2500 to 3500. Among the respondents, 8 (4%) reside in Kutcha houses, 79 (39.5%) in semi-pucca houses, and 113 (56.5%) in pucca houses. The majority resided in pucca houses, while only 8 respondents (4%) lived in kutcha houses. Among the vendor's respondents, 198 (99%) possess mobile handsets, 174 (87%) own televisions, 178 (89%) have refrigerators, 164 (82%) utilise washing machines and 169 (84.5%) have LPG gas connections. Only 11 respondents (5.5%) possess computer sets, 4 respondents (2%) own microwave ovens, and 99 respondents (49.5%) have vehicles. The vendors acquired household assets based on their

convenience. This can be clear from the data that majority of the vendors owned household assets like mobile handsets, television, refrigerator, washing machine and LPG gas connection. Their ownership of these assets served purposes related to entertainment, storage, washing, and food preparation, as these are fundamental needs. Microwave ovens and vehicles are classified as secondary needs, as individuals can function without them. Among the respondents, 22 (11%) originate from a village to sell their vegetables, 175 (87.5%) reside within the city, and 3 (1.5%) are from a semi-urban region. The majority of vendors in Aizawl city typically reside within the city, while some vendors travel from rural areas to sell their vegetables at the Saturday market.

5. **Religion and Tribal Background:** Every participant adheres to the Christian faith and belongs to the Scheduled Tribal classification. Among the respondents, 1 (0.5%) identifies as Roman Catholic, 136 (68%) adhere to Presbyterianism, 15 (7.5%) belong to the Baptist Church, 10 (5%) are affiliated with Kohhran Thianghlim, 16 (8%) follow the Salvation Army, 19 (9.5%) are part of UPC, and 3 (1.5%) subscribe to the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The predominant religious affiliation among the Mizo population, particularly in Aizawl city, is with the Presbyterian Church of India, whereas the Baptist denomination has established a significant presence in the southern regions of Mizoram, where it enjoys a majority status. Christianity also played a significant role in the realm of women's education.

6. **Education:** 36 respondents (18%) had completed primary school, 71 respondents (35.5%) had completed middle school, 60 respondents (3.5%) had completed high school, 11 respondents (5.5%) had completed higher secondary, only one respondent had a graduate degree, and 21 respondents (10.5%) were illiterate. Only one respondent has graduated, and 21 (10.5%) of the respondents are illiterate, indicating a low level of educational attainment. This demonstrates that anyone of any age may participate in vegetable selling and that no educational background is necessary. The majority of respondents (55.2%) in the Nidhi Saroop research on Chandigarh and Ludhiana street vendors are illiterate or only have an elementary school education, which also showed comparable results (Saroop, 2024). In contrast to Aizawl merchants, the vendors' illiteracy percentage is typically higher in other

research. Additionally, 68.3% of Varanasi merchants were illiterate, according to a survey by Garima Upadhyay (Upadhyay, 2021).

7. **Occupation:** 149 (74.5%) of women sellers engaged in vegetable vending as their primary household occupation. This is due to the limited employment prospects in the formal sector, coupled with these women's inadequate educational qualifications for formal sector positions. The gender division of work in Mizo society is so pronounced that women have traditionally managed all employment and domestic responsibilities related to the kitchen. Consequently, Mizo males refrain from engaging in vegetable sales; nonetheless, they participate in construction sites as daily wage labourers contingent upon available employment opportunities. Due to the instability of the husband's or men's salary, the family's principal source of earnings is vegetable selling. The principal occupations of the remaining 51 (25.5%) vendor households are those of their fathers, husbands, or sons. Due to the annual increase in the expense of living, several vendors engage in their trade since their spouse's salary is inadequate to sustain the complete family.

8. **Experience:** Forty-eight percent of vendors, totalling 97, had been involved in vegetable vending for a duration of 5 to 10 years. A total of 59 vendors (29.5%) participated in vegetable vending for a duration of 1 to 5 years, while 8.5% had been engaged in vending for less than one year. 13.5% of vendors have participated in this economic activity as their primary occupation for over 10 years, indicating that vegetable vending serves as their main source of income and suggesting long-term engagement in this activity, given the absence of superannuation in this profession. Of the respondents, 22 (11%) vendors possess prior work experience before entering vegetable vending, whereas 178 (89%) vendors lack any previous work experience in this field. The majority of respondents have engaged in vegetable vending for 5 to 10 years, and most lack prior work experience before entering this economic activity.

9. **Income:** 93 vendors (46.5%) earn between Rs 10,000 and Rs 20,000 per month, while 39 respondents (19.5%) earn below Rs 10,000. A total of 62 vendors (31%) earn between 20,000 and 30,000, while 6 vendors (3%) earn above 30,000. Of the respondents, 169 (84.5%) vendors possess a savings account, while 31 (15.5%) do not have any savings account. Only 63 vendors (31.5%) are able to retain monthly savings

from their earnings, whereas 137 vendors (68.5%) are unable to save any amount monthly. Garima Upadhyay's study on Varanasi street vendors revealed that most vendors do not save money from their earnings (Upadhyay, 2021). Among the respondents who maintained monthly savings, 31 (15.5%) vendors saved below Rs. 5000 per month, 50 (25%) vendors saved between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 10,000, 6 (3%) vendors saved between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 15,000, and only 5 (2.5%) vendors saved above Rs. 20,000 per month. Additionally, 53 (26.5%) vendors obtained loans from the bank, while 147 (73.5%) did not. When asked if they encountered any difficulties in obtaining a loan, the responses varied. 103 respondents (51.5%) reported difficulties in obtaining loans, while 70 respondents (35%) indicated no issues. Additionally, 27 respondents (13.5%) selected 'not applicable.' The lengthy procedure, absence of a mortgage, and requirement for a guarantor hinder the acquisition of a bank loan. Consequently, 44 vendors (22%) engaged in daily deposits, whereas 156 vendors (78%) did not. The majority of respondents possess savings accounts, whereas only one-third (31.5%) engage in monthly savings. The majority of respondents do not obtain loans due to the lengthy procedures, and 78% lack daily deposits.

10. **Land possession:** Of the respondents, 80 (40%) vendors possess land, while 120 (60%) do not possess any land. Only 22 (11%) of vendors possess land under their names, while 178 (89%) do not own any land. The land owned by the vendors is inherited from their parents. The majority of vendors lack land possession and inheritance from their parents, indicating that women in Mizo society do not possess adequate rights.

11. **Types of vendors:** Half of the vendors are peripatetic, which means they sell their vegetables on the pavement of an undesignated market area since they don't have a fixed site to sell. However, 50% of vendors are stationary and have a decent location to sell their veggies.

12. **Seat rent:** Among the vendors, 62 (31%) do not pay any rent for their seats, while 98 (49%) pay a monthly fee of Rs 100-500. Additionally, 30 (15%) vendors pay Rs 500-1000, 6 (3%) pay Rs 1000-1500, 3 (1.5%) pay Rs 1500-2000, and only 1 vendor pays Rs 2000-2500 for seat rent. Fifty percent of the respondents pay a

monthly seat rent ranging from 100 to 500, whereas only one respondent pays between 2001 and 2500.

13. **Migration:** Of the vendors, 134 (67%) migrated from rural areas to Aizawl city, whereas 66 (33%) did not migrate. The reasons for migration are diverse: 81 (40.5%) vendors relocated to the city in pursuit of improved employment opportunities due to unemployment or low wages, 24 (12%) migrated for family occupations, 22 (11%) moved because of marriage, 7 (3.5%) did so for health reasons, and 66 (33%) vendors did not migrate at all. Nidhi Saroop similarly reported that a significant majority (86.4%) of the respondents/vendors are migrants, with the primary motivation for their migration being poverty or unemployment in pursuit of employment opportunities in the city (Saroop, 2024). Baljit Kaur identified that a significant proportion (64.6%) of street vendors in urban Punjab are migrants, with the majority (53.3%) citing poverty or unemployment as their reason for migration (Kaur, 2015). Of the migrated vendors, 88 (44%) relocated with family members, while 46 (23%) migrated independently. The majority of respondents have migrated from adjacent villages. The primary motivation for migration is job opportunity, while other factors include family occupations, education, marriage, and health issues.

14. **Health:** Out of the respondents, 122 (61%) vendors reported having health issues, whereas 78 (39%) vendors indicated that they do not experience any significant health problems. The majority of respondents reported health issues, with nerve problems, ulcers, and diabetes being the most common conditions observed. This situation primarily arises from a detrimental work environment characterised by irregular meal times and extended working hours.

15. **Religiosity:** In terms of religious participation, 26 (13%) vendors attend church regularly, while 170 (85%) vendors attend only on Sundays, and 4 (2%) vendors do not attend church at all during the week. The majority of respondents did not actively participate in church activities due to long working hours; however, most attended church services only on Sundays, as that is their day off.

CHAPTER 5

Job Entry, Work Culture and Problem Faced (Decent work)

- 5.0 Introduction**
- 5.1 The establishment**
- 5.2 Professional history**
- 5.3 Causes of Job entry and Benefits**
- 5.4 Acquisition of vegetables**
- 5.5 Transportation and Distance between resident and the workplace**
- 5.6 Period of vending**
- 5.7 Medical and health issue**
- 5.8 Financial accessibility**
- 5.9 Vendors association**
- 5.10 Support and training from the government**
- 5.11 Workplace security and problem faced**
- 5.12 Harassment**
- 5.13 Job satisfaction**
- 5.14 Case Study: AMC and Vendors dispute report**
- 5.15 An Overview**

5.0 Introduction:

The previous chapter touched on the socio-economic profile of the vendors, in which basic information about the respondents is known. It helps in identifying the influence on other aspects of life and in the working environment. This chapter will focus on the work culture and working conditions of the vegetable vendors. In several Indian cities, the urban poor sustain themselves through employment in the informal sector. Poverty and insufficient employment opportunities in rural regions and smaller towns compel a significant number of individuals to migrate to urban areas for labour and sustenance (Bhowmik, 2005; ILO, 2018). These individuals typically possess inadequate skills and lack the educational qualifications necessary for higher-paying positions in the organised sector. Moreover, permanent protected positions in the organised sector are diminishing, resulting in skilled individuals being unable to get appropriate work (NCEUS, 2007). For some individuals, employment in the informal sector constitutes their sole source of subsistence. This has resulted in the swift expansion of the informal sector in many major urban areas (Chen, 2012).

Factors contributing to women's engagement in street vending include broken families, divorce or separation from spouses, inadequate spousal income, poverty, and pressure from in-laws to seek employment (Bhowmik, 2012). Their employment quality is substandard due to a lack of skills and access. The journey of the female vegetable vendors originated from the poverty that compels them to earn a living for themselves and their families. In the vending industry, they have far greater challenges than males. They are typically impacted by offences such as eve teasing, sexual harassment, and rape (Kumar & Singh, 2018). Street vending presents significant challenges for women. They must fulfil the simultaneous roles of employee, homemaker, and mother. The absence of capital and assets, inconsistent and minimal income compounded by recurrent accidents, illnesses, and other unforeseen events, inadequate working and living conditions, diminished bargaining power, and a deficiency in external connections and opportunities for skill enhancement – these

interconnected factors ensnare these women in deprivation, perpetuating a vicious cycle of poverty (Chen, 2016; WIEGO, 2020).

Mizo women vendors exist and operate under several limitations. She is part of the economically disadvantaged family in the hamlet or town. She also belongs to a low-class group. As a woman, she would possess a diminished standing within her family. Her family possessed few assets and had scant chances for improved employment, with any existing assets or opportunities allocated only to the male members of the family, excluding her. She is frequently a widow or resides alone with her children. She endures an overwhelming workload for income, sustenance, and other obligations. The circumstances of female vendors are exceedingly inadequate. This chapter aims to examine the circumstances of women street vendors in their workplaces around the city. The research identifies and analyses the challenges encountered by women vegetable vendors routinely. The obtained data are categorised and organised into tables. The tables are elucidated scientifically and accompanied by relevant analysis with statements and interpretations (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; Roy et al., 2020).

5.1 The Establishment:

Public space, historically known as "open space", includes streets, parks, and outdoor spaces owned and managed by public authorities. Social space includes natural and social objects, networks, and pathways for information exchange (Lefebvre, 1991). Urban space accumulates masses, acts, symbols, and products in markets. It represents a central concept that remains relevant regardless of existing or potential conditions. In 2000, Drummond defined urban public spaces as locations provided by public authorities for the use of all, regardless of personal, social, or cultural differences (Drummond, 2000). Street vendors play a significant role in the urban economy and public space (Bhowmik, 2005; ILO, 2018).

In Aizawl city, the public space is used heavily by the street vendors, as they provide goods and foods for the urban population. Due to its hilly nature, convenience is important, which results in the heavy occupation of the footpath and the pavement of the city (Lalrindiki, 2017). As they provide easily accessible goods for the urban dwellers. In Aizawl city, the vendors do have designated places to sell their

vegetables; at the same time, these markets are not able to accommodate all the vendors who are willing to sell their goods (Zomuana, 2019). For this reason, many vendors sell their goods on the pavement, footpath and undesignated marketplace. Since the occupation is temporary, many women come and go in these occupations (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013). Under the establishment head, amenities like place of vending, vending place rent, vending place conditions, types of customers and safety are highlighted.

5.1.1 Vending place:

Street vending is still an important way for many Mizo women to make a living in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. This is especially true for selling vegetables (Lalrindiki, 2017; Lalmalsawmi, 2021). The vending places where these women operate vary widely from formal designated markets to informal spaces such as footpaths and undesignated street corners. These locations not only influence their daily earnings and working conditions but also reflect the broader socio-economic and urban planning dynamics of the city (Roy et al., 2020). While some vendors benefit from access to organised markets, a large number continue to rely on informal and often insecure spaces to carry out their trade. Understanding the distribution and type of vending places provides valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities that shape the working lives of Mizo women vendors in Aizawl (Bhowmik, 2012; WIEGO, 2020). So, the below table shows the data on the vending place of the vendors.

Table 5.1: Vending place

Vending place		
Options	Frequency	Percent
Designated marketplace	87	43.5
Undesignated marketplace	19	9.5
Footpath	91	45.5
Own shop	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

From the above table, it has been revealed that only 87 vendors, i.e., 43.5%, occupied the designated marketplace where they have a permanent seat under the supervision of the state government. These markets have proper vegetable vendor associations

with clear guidelines and regulations. They pay a small amount of monthly rent with proper amenities. However, securing a seat in these permanent markets can be challenging, often requiring political fitness. One of the respondent who do not have seat in designated marketplace states that:

“Bazar a thutna nei tur chuan pawisa ngah angai khul tur chuan tin, thutna pangai taka chang tur chuan, minister hmelhriat tha neih te angai a, tih namai anilo”

“To have a permanent seat in the main market, ones need to have plenty of money to claim it. Also, in order to secure a permanent seat ones need to have connections with the minister, its not an easy tasks to have seat in the main market”

The majority of vendors in these designated markets are experienced in selling vegetables. The state government constructed these marketplaces under the supervision of the Trade and Commerce Department and recently the Aizawl Municipal Corporation. The vendors also enrolled themselves under this department. If a vendor plans to leave their occupation, the owner will transfer them to a new one. The vending place was commissioned at a very high price. Pi Zuali, 45 years from Ramhlun North, stated that

“Vawi khat ka zawt ve chhin a, an commission to lutuk a ka khul ngamlo, bazar sak thar hi ka beisei ve a, mahse kan chang angem ka hrelo”

“I asked them once, but the commissioned was too high for me that I am unable to claimed it. I do have hope in new bazar building, but I am not sure if I can get it”

The location of the marketplace is crucial for attracting vendors. Their main objective is to draw customers interested in purchasing vegetables. Even if the government builds a well-designed marketplace, if the location fails to attract sufficient customers, vendors may prefer to set up on the pavement or roadside instead of occupying a covered marketplace. This caused a problem for the authority, like the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC), who maintain the city's beautification. There is a need to have mutual understanding on both sides in order to have a good relationship

between the two. Pi Hnemi from Sesawng, seated in the AMC market in Tuikual, stated that,

“Tuna AMC in thu tura min tihna ah hi chuan kan nil lo a tih nimai a hlawh mang pawh kan nei theilo, kan thutna thin lah motor park nan an hmang daih bawk sia, tuna kan thutna ah hi chuan mihring an tlem lutuk, inhralh a harsa, kawngkam ang kha ni lo. Inrinni ah chiah kan thu bawk si, a hreawm tak zet a ni”

“The location that the AMC gave us is too hidden that we were nearly nil, the previous location was used as a garage and our new location do not attract customers. So, selling is hard in our new location as compared to the pavement. It’s very problematic as we were selling only on Saturday bazar”

Recently, on 21st June 2025, there was a clash between the Saturday vendors and the AMC on the spatial issue; the state government constituted a working committee to see and take actions accordingly. Among the vendors, 19 (9.5%) vendors were located in an undesignated marketplace. These spaces might offer more freedom but less protection and organisation. The state government did not recognise or construct undesignated marketplaces. The local council usually controls them. To provide convenience, these undesignated markets were established in locations that are far from the main markets. The locations are mostly associated with ‘Kawn’, an intersection point in a locality. Since the designated marketplace could not accommodate all the vendors, many vendors sold their goods in the undesignated market. Pi Liani from Chhinga Veng stated that:

“Mihring hian awlsam hi kan lo duh lutuk a, chumi zar chu kan lo zo ani ber, tihian kan veng te pawhin bazar hnaih viau mah ila, kan eikhawp hi chu kan hlawh chhuak ve reng a, chawhmeh zawrh chu hlawk lua nilo mahse nitin ei tur kan hlawh chhuak ringawt pawh hi keini ang mi rethei tan chuan a hlu”

“We human beings appreciate convenience; we vendors rely on its benefits for our livelihoods. Although our locality is very close to the main market, we manage to earn some profit for our daily needs. Selling vegetables does

not generate a significant income, but it does provide us with essential vegetables that are incredibly valuable to us, especially when resources are limited.”

Since they are new to this economic activity and have no seats in the designated marketplace, 91 vendors (45.5%) were seated and selling their vegetables on the pavement and footpath. This reflects a high dependence on informal public spaces, which are typically prone to eviction, weather-related disruptions, and lack of basic amenities like shelter, sanitation, and storage. It indicates the vulnerability and precarity of many women’s vending environments. Also, the majority of the vendors who come from nearby villages do not have a permanent location, but they sell their vegetables on the pavement at the Friday and Saturday Bazar. Pi Hruaii from Darlawng stated that:

“Kan khua hi a hma chuan zu zuar in kan lar thin a, mahse kan khawtlang hruaitute thahnemngaihna in tunah chuan zu zuar kan awm tawh lo a, mi tam tak tan zu zawrh loh chuan eizawna te a lo vang a, chu chu kan sorkar pawn hria in Bawngkawn ah hian inrinni atan thut min phalsak a kan vannei lutuk”

“Our village used to be known as local liquor retailer, however due to our devoted village councillors, we are now free alcohol village. Still, for many of us do not have proper occupations as our main occupations was ditched by us, in knowing our situations, the state government permitted us to sit in the Bawngkawn locality only on Saturday to sell our vegetables for our livelihood, we are really grateful and lucky”

This accounts for the high rate of vendors sitting on the pavement. The majority of these vendors are peripatetic vendors who do not have stationary places to sell their vegetables. These vendors are highly vulnerable, as they do not have proper structure to sit on; they are usually seated on the roadside without proper shading or a roof. The vendors had only a temporary structure, such as an umbrella or a plastic sheet covering, to protect them and their goods. The respondents also mentioned that the high temperatures during the summer season make it difficult to spend extended periods of time vending. Consequently, they primarily conduct their business in the

evenings and mornings. Additionally, the business is rendered unviable during the monsoon season as a result of the absence of a suitable structure to safeguard their products and the intense rainfall. One of the vendors, Pi Nuni 43 years who occupied the roadside of Dawrpui Vengthar stated that,

“Nipui lai phei chuan chhunah thut a hreawm thei lutuk a, chawhmeh a vuai duh avangin khuh vek zel angai a, inhralh a harp hah thin. tin, fur laiin a hreawm leh em em bawk a, tui hawk a tam phei chuan kan chawhmeh a len chang a awm thin a buai ana duh tak zet, kan eibel ber ani si a kan ti lo thei silo a”

“It is very troublesome to sit, especially during summer. The vegetables are easily spoiled by the sun, so we usually cover them with cloth, but it resulted in low sales. During monsoon, if the flood is intense, it washes away our vegetables. But we could do anything since it’s our main income for the family.”

Only 3 vendors (1.5%) are able to sell their vegetables in their own location, underscoring the severely limited availability of permanent, safe commercial spaces. This study underscores economic barriers or lack of capital investment capacity among most women vendors. Most vendors are from the lower class and can't afford a place, so almost none sell their produce there.

Half of the vendors were in a designated marketplace, while the other half were on the pavement and footpath due to the temporary nature of their economic activity, which affects their livelihood security and protection under urban policies. Expansion of accessible, designated vending spaces and legal recognition of informal vendors could greatly improve their working conditions. Investment in footpath vending zones with basic amenities would benefit the largest group of vendors. Very low shop ownership suggests restricted upward mobility and calls for support schemes like low-interest loans or cooperative shop models. This pattern clearly indicates that while some women have access to structured markets, the majority remain in informal settings, often at the margins of urban planning and regulation.

5.1.2 Status of paying vending rent:

The vending place was occupied with a monthly rental at the range between 500 and 1000 per month (table). The issue of vending rent plays a crucial role in shaping the economic stability and daily earnings of women vegetable vendors. These women, who often operate in informal or semi-formal markets, face varying rent structures depending on their place of vending, ranging from fixed stalls in designated markets to temporary spaces on footpaths (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013). For many, rent payments represent a significant portion of their daily income, directly impacting their profit margins and financial security (Chen, 2016; ILO, 2018). Understanding the status of vending rent helps highlight the broader challenges of affordability, fairness, and regulation in the informal economy and reveals the extent to which women vendors are financially burdened or supported within their vending environments (Bromley, 2000; Roy et al., 2020). The next table shows the status of vending rent the vendors paid. Since all vendors do not pay for their seats.

Table 5.2: Status of paying vending rent

Status of paying vending rent		
Status	Frequency	Percent
Free access	63	31.5
Access by paying rent	137	68.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The table above reveals that the majority of the vendors, 137 (68%), paid for the seats and locations per month. This indicates that for most women vendors, vending is not entirely informal or free; there is a financial cost attached to the space they occupy. This rent is paid to municipal authorities, market committees, private landlords, local councils or even informal collectors. The burden of rent can significantly reduce their net earnings, especially when combined with other daily expenses like transportation, unsold produce, and personal needs. It also points to the semi-formal nature of many vending spaces, where women operate under local systems that demand payment but may not always offer corresponding rights or facilities. In Table 4.2, it has already revealed the average monthly rent, i.e., 500-1000 per month. Depending on their location in the market, the vendors make their payments either daily or monthly. However, from the interview, it was observed that paying monthly rental was not a

problem for the vendors as long as they have a vending place to sit. Pi Nghaki from Chanmari West opined that

*“Thutna man te chu kan pek tur a lawm, thutna neihloh lai reng khan
thutna kan duh a, chuvang chuan ana ka ti lo kan thutna man hi chu, kan
chawhmeh zawrh vangin eiturte kan neih phah a”*

“Paying monthly rent is not a problem for me, it is our duty to pay for the rent if we have a proper seat. Having no permanent seat is more problematic and stressful. So, giving monthly rent for a proper seat is our duty. Because of this occupation, we have food to eat”

Whereas a total of 63 (31.55%) vendors were accessing the vending place free of rent. This occurs because they occupied undesignated areas such as pavements, footpaths, and spaces in front of shops with the consent of the shop owners. These locations were not recognised as places of vending by the local council or state government for selling vegetables. While this reduces daily expenditure, it also increases vulnerability to eviction, harassment, and weather conditions due to the lack of legal protection or infrastructure. However, due to poverty, they do not have any other choice but to risk these locations for their livelihood. Pi Hnemi from Chawhlmun stated that

*“Thlamuanguin kan thu thin lo, market checker ho hlau chung chungin kan
thu thin, eizwn kan ngai sia kan thawh loh chuan eitur kan fate’n an nei
dawn silo a, hlau leh khur chungin kan in pho ani ber mai”*

“We do not sell in a peace mind, we were afraid of the market checker. But we do not have other choice than to sell vegetables, as we need to feed our kids at home. We are selling in fear”

A new form of vending appears on the streets of Aizawl city; a vehicle was used to sell their vegetables in which they park on the parking lot of the city. They used the trunk part of the vehicle and transformed it into a spot for selling vegetables. They moved from one place to another, and they usually sell at a lower price than the local vendors. One of the vendors, Pi Biaki, complains about this new form of vendors:

*“An duhna lai lai ah an rawn in park a, kan zawrhna aia tlawm in an rawn
zuar bawh a, kan sumdawnna an rawn ti chhia. Han hauh vak anuam bawh
silo a. a buaithlak khawp mai.”*

“They park near to our location, and they sell it lower than us. They hampered our vending business; rebuking them is not an effortless task.

We cannot do much about it; they are extremely troublesome.”

Most vendors pay for their seat daily or monthly, depending on their marketplace. The fact that nearly 7 in 10 women vendors pay rent underscores a significant financial obligation tied to vending. The divide between rent payers and those with free access reflects the diversity of vending environments from completely informal to semi-regulated spaces. To make street vending fair and long-lasting, it's important to make sure that vendors who pay rent also get basic services and protection. Tailored interventions, such as subsidised rent schemes or the legal recognition of informal vendors, could help reduce the economic strain and improve working conditions for these women. This analysis highlights that vending rent is not just a financial issue but also a reflection of deeper structural inequalities in access to urban space and livelihoods. The next table will touch on the initial investment for starting vegetable vending. The majority of the previous research on vending concluded that the investment is low for starting vegetable vending.

5.1.3 Initial investment:

Starting a vegetable vending business, though considered a low-capital livelihood, still requires a certain level of initial investment to get established. For women vegetable vendors, this investment typically includes costs for purchasing the first stock of vegetables, transportation, basic tools like baskets or weighing scales, and sometimes renting a space or stall (Bhowmik, 2012; Roever & Skinner, 2016). The amount of initial capital can vary based on the scale of operation, place of vending, and individual financial capacity. Many women rely on personal savings, informal loans, or help from family and friends to cover these initial expenses (Chen, 2016; Roy et al., 2020). Understanding the nature and size of this initial investment is essential for assessing the accessibility of vending as a livelihood option and identifying the financial challenges that women vendors face at the start of their entrepreneurial journey.

Table 5.3: Initial investment for starting vegetable vending

Amount	Frequency	Percent
less than 1000	68	34.0
1000-5000	90	45.0

5000-10000	38	19.0
10000-15000	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

Among the vendors mentioned, it has been revealed that 68 vendors (34%) used less than Rs. 1000 to start their vegetable vending business; this is because those who begin their vending operations, especially from the main market (New Market Sabji Bazar), do not need any initial capital for starting vegetable vending. They got vegetables from the wholesaler without paying and sold them at a nearby market with commission. In the evening, they pay the amount for the vegetables they sold to the wholesaler; they get profit from the vegetables they sell.

Pi Zeli, 39 years who sale her vegetables in New Market stated that

“Tihian zingah kan la a, tlaiah kan hralh ang ang man leh a bang zawng kan pe lut leh a, chuta tang chuan hlawh min pe thin capital e mem ngai lo in, polythene man a ni maikan chawi ve chu”

“In the morning, I collect the vegetables from the wholesaler, and return the left over and the cash to them in the evening and they give me the profit from my selling. We do starts our vegetable vending without capital, we used our money only for carry bags”

However, not all vendors did the same process, 90 vendors (45%) invested Rs 1000-5000 for starting the vegetable vending, this shows that compared to other occupations vegetable vending provide low investment occupation to many unskilled Mizo women. Starting a business with Rs.1000-5000 is quite affordable to many women.

“Chawhmeh kan zawrh tanna hi a rei tawh khawp a, kan tan hunlai kha chuan cheng 2000 in ka inla ve tan rawih kha nia, mahse tunah chuan thil man hi a to ve tawh ang reng a”

“It’s been a long time, that I started vegetable vending. During my initial startup, I paid Rs. 2000 for collecting vegetables but things are expensive now”

At the same time, depending on the vendors economic status, the initial investment is varied. 38 vendors (19%) invested Rs 5000-10000 for starting vegetable vending, while only 4 respondents (2%) invested Rs.10000-15000. Compared to the previous

investment, it seems high but investing this much amount for starting an occupation is still affordable and low for urban poor.

“Thil man a to tawh sia, ka bul tan nan khan cheng 7000 bawr vel ka hmang in ka hria, ka lo inkhawl ve ang ang khan ka la ve kha nia”

“Things are expensive, so around Rs 7000 I’ve started my vegetable vending from my savings”

Thereby, it can be concluded that vegetable vending represents a low-capital livelihood opportunity for Mizo women in Aizawl; however, the initial investment is contingent upon individual economic status, geographic location, and personal networks. 34% of women started with less than ₹1,000, with 45% investing between ₹1,000 and ₹5,000. Investments ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹10,000 indicate a higher financial capacity or the potential for larger-scale operations. Analysing these investment patterns is essential for policymakers and NGOs that promote women's economic empowerment through microenterprise initiatives. Vegetable vending offers flexibility and economic inclusivity, enabling women from various financial backgrounds to participate in the workforce.

5.1.4 Registered vendors:

Vendor registration serves as a crucial step toward formal recognition and protection of street vendors under urban governance frameworks. In the context the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 provides a legal foundation for such registration (Government of India, 2014). For Mizo women vegetable vendors, registration offers potential benefits such as legal vending rights, access to designated vending zones, and inclusion in government support schemes (Lalmalsawmi, 2021). However, in many cases, the process of registration remains limited or inaccessible due to lack of awareness, bureaucratic hurdles, or the informal nature of their work (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; WIEGO, 2020). Exploring the status of registration among Mizo women vendors sheds light on the extent to which they are integrated into formal systems and protected under relevant laws and policies. It also highlights the need for more inclusive and supportive measures to ensure that women vendors can secure their livelihoods with dignity and stability (ILO, 2018). The field data shows that 112 vendors, i.e., 56%, are registered

vendors. This provide certain advantages such as: Legal right to vend in designated areas, protection from eviction or harassment and potential access to welfare schemes, subsidies, or loans. This level of registration suggests a moderate reach of formalisation efforts among women vendors in the Aizawl city by AMC. Pi Siami 57 years from New Market stated that,

“Keini bazarpuia thu ho hi chu Trade and Commerce a in register vek kan nia chu bakah chuan association ah member kan ni vek bawk, hamthatna neuh neuh chu awm ang mahse chutiang in ka hre chuanglo, seat nghet kan nei hi nimai ang chu ka ti”

“All the vendors in Bazarpui were registered ourselves in Trade and Commerce also we are a member of Vendors Association. There must be a benefit of being a registered vendors, but I don’t know the exact advantage of registered vendors, maybe having the permanent location to sale”

One of the vendors who is seated in Bawngkawn area on Saturday bazar from Darlawng stated that,

“AMC khan ID min rawn siam sak a, hei hian AMC in a phalna hmun ah chuan in thu thei a, tuman an sawi buai theilo an tia cheng 50 in min siam sak a, mahse midang ID neilo pawh an thu ve vek tho sia hamthatna a awm awm pawh ka hre chuanglo, ka siam thar tawh lemlo a. chuan loan hi an pe chhuak ve bawk a, mahse keini lehkhia thiamlo tan chuan va buaipui vel hi ka thiamlo a, hun ka nei bawk silo a, ka la lemlo”

“AMC made us an ID and they demonstrated the benefits of the ID as it allows us to sit in any place which recommended by the AMC. I gave them Rs. 50 for ID. However, even those who do not have ID can also sit any place where they like. So, I don’t think there is a specific benefit for the ID holder. Also, they give out loan in small amount by the AMC, but due to time constraint and low educational qualification, I do not claimed it”

While 88 vendors (44%) are not registered. Unregistered vendors often face greater challenges, including: insecurity of vending space, vulnerability to fines or removal and lack of access to support services or infrastructure. Reasons for non-registration may include lack of awareness, complex procedures, limited outreach by authorities, or informal nature of their vending location. Pi Nuni 41 years from Armed Veng when asking “Are you registered vendors?” she stated that

“Engmah in register lo e, chutiang a awm ami, ka hre lo hrim hrim”

“No, I don’t know anything about registration”

The above statement highlights the necessity of increasing awareness regarding the importance of registration, vendor ID, and the Vendors Act. They have the right to know their act, and also it is the duty of the Town Vending Committee to give awareness on this.

Vendors with proper vendor associations, AMC ID cards, and trade and commerce registration are considered registered. The majority of the vendors who were seated in a designated marketplace joined vendor associations, but not all vendors were seated in a designated marketplace, as is mentioned in the table. The Aizawl Municipal Corporation is making an identity card for vendors who are sitting on the pavement and who do not have a proper place to sit; they charge Rs. 50 for obtaining the ID card. The AMC workers visited the vendors at their vending location, took their photos, and gave them a proper ID card, but this task is in process; only vendors who are nearby the AMC office and who are in the city centre have the ID card. The local council prohibited vendors in ITI Bazar from forming vendor associations, one of the vendors says that

“Association siam hi chu kan dil thin a, tun thleng in an la phallo, an thu kan awihloh an hlau anih hmel association anga kan awm chuan”

“We were asking the Local Council to permit us to form an association, but till now they have not allowed us to form one. It seems they were afraid that we would not obey their rules if we formed an association.”

So, it can be concluded majority of the vendors are registered vendors. The near 50-50 split between registered and unregistered vendors indicates that while progress has been made, a substantial portion of women vendors still operate without formal

recognition. Simplifying registration processes and conducting awareness campaigns can help bring more vendors under the legal framework. Ensuring that registration translates into tangible benefits such as secure vending zones and access to services which can improve the livelihood security of women vendors. This analysis shows that although many women vendors have taken steps toward formalisation, there is still a critical need to bridge the gap for those left behind.

5.1.5 Storage of products:

Proper storage is a critical aspect of vegetable vending, directly affecting the freshness, quality, and profitability of the produce sold. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, especially those operating in informal settings across Aizawl city, lack of adequate storage facilities remains a persistent challenge (Lalrindiki, 2017). Many vendors are forced to store their unsold vegetables at home or leave them in unsafe or unsuitable conditions overnight, leading to spoilage and financial loss. The absence of cold storage, secure stalls, or designated market storage areas not only increases their workload but also limits their ability to scale or sustain their business efficiently (Roy et al., 2020; WIEGO, 2020). Examining the storage practices and constraints faced by these women highlights the need for better infrastructure and support systems to enhance the sustainability of their livelihoods. The next table will show data on how the vendors store their vegetables.

Table 5.4: Storage of Products

Storage of products		
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Takes back to home	46	23.0
Vending place	150	75.0
With rent	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

Since the vegetable vendor depends on perishable goods to earn a living, a proper storage facility is crucial for gaining maximum profit. So, 46 vendors (23%) take back home the leftover vegetables, as they do not have proper storage facilities at the vending place, which adds a physical and logistical burden on the vendor. It has a

possible impact on family space and time, especially for women juggling both domestic and economic responsibilities. The respondent Pi Ziki from Falkland commented when asked “How do you store your vegetables?”

“Kawngsir a thu kan nih vangin, kan hralh ban chu kan hawn mai thin, chawhmeh pawh kan la tam ngam ngailo, kan hralh ban chu a chang chuan kan ei mai thin”.

“Since, we are sitting on the pavement with no storage, all the leftover vegetables were taken home. We sometimes eat the leftover, because of this we usually collect less vegetables”

150 vendors (75%) store their goods at the vending place even though they do not have proper storage facilities. It is troublesome to take home every vegetable, as they need to sell it on a daily basis, it saves transportation expenses. However, these spaces may lack proper storage conditions (e.g., protection from heat, pests, or rain), leading to spoilage and loss of product freshness, especially for perishable vegetables. The majority of the vendors faced being robbed by thieves, so, in New Market, they contributed to installing CCTV to observe the market, and they also installed a proper gate. Pi Hriati from Bawngkawn Bazar stated that,

“Kan zawrh ban chu kan dawhkanah hian tihian kan khuh a chuan kan dawhkan hnuaiah parcel ah kan riah thin bawh, ahran a han dahna tha chu kan nei lem chuanglo”

“We kept the left over vegetables on the vending table and covered it and the others vegetables were also kept under the table in parcel, we do not have a separate storage facility”

While only 4 vendors (2%) rent a go-down to store their vegetables, this is low since the majority of the vendors do not earn enough income to rent a proper storage facility.

“Kawngsira in zuar kan ni sia, hawn zel a buaithlak bawh sia, kudam kan luah tawm a, 1000 theuh in mi 4 in kan inluah tawm”

“Since, we are vending on the pavement, taking home every day is problematic. So, me and other 3 vendors jointly rented a storage and we pay 1000 each a month”

So, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors store their vegetables at the vending place. High reliance on vending site storage reflects informal arrangements and a lack of designated storage facilities in public markets. Home storage results in a daily burden for vendors and may compromise the condition of perishable items. Also, the minimal use of rented storage suggests a gap in accessible, affordable, and secure storage services for small-scale women vegetable vendors. This analysis highlights the urgent need for better infrastructure, such as community cold storage units, lockable stalls, or cooperative storage spaces, to reduce post-harvest losses and improve the working conditions of women vegetable vendors.

5.2 Professional History:

Understanding the professional history and previous occupations of women vegetable vendors provides invaluable information about their journey toward self-employment in the informal economy. Many of these women have entered vegetable vending after working various low-income or unstable jobs, such as domestic work, daily wage labour, or small-scale farming (NCEUS, 2007; Chen, 2012). Others may have been unemployed or engaged in unpaid household work before taking up vending to contribute to the family income or gain financial independence (Bhowmik, 2005; Lalmalsawmi, 2021). Investigating their previous employment experiences elucidates the socio-economic conditions that prompted their entry into vending, the competencies they possess, and the obstacles encountered during their transition to this mode of livelihood. It also highlights the resilience and adaptability of these women as they navigate changing roles in both the economic and social spheres (Roy et al., 2020).

5.2.1 Status of engagement in other jobs before vegetable vending:

The status of engagement in other jobs prior to entering vegetable vending provides important context about the economic background and livelihood transitions of women vendors. Many women turn to vegetable vending after experiencing limited or irregular opportunities in other forms of employment, such as domestic work, agricultural labour, or petty trading (Bhowmik, 2012; NCEUS, 2007). Others may have had no prior income-generating activity, entering vending as their first step toward financial independence (Roy et al., 2020). Understanding whether and where

women were engaged before vending helps highlight the factors such as poverty, job insecurity, or family responsibilities that influence their shift to vending (Chen, 2016; Lalmalsawmi, 2021). It also sheds light on the role of vegetable vending as a livelihood option for women with diverse and often challenging work histories. Out of the total vendors, 124 were engaged in other jobs before entering the vegetable vending business. The occupations include tea stall owner, tailoring, owning a piggery, agricultural labour, clothing shop and many other informal occupations. Among the vendors, only one vendor's previous occupation was in the formal sector; she used to be a govt. school teacher but on a contract basis. She quit her job and engaged in vegetable vending at Bethlehem locality on the pavement. She is the president of the Bethlehem Chawhmeh Zuar Association. They started engaging in this occupation because of debt, the pandemic, migration and health issues, which led to the downfall of their previous professions. Opening the vegetable vending requires a lesser amount of capital and is easily accessible. When asked the respondents “Do you have an engagement in any other jobs before vegetable vending?” one of the respondents stated that,

“Thingpui dawr Vaivakawnah kan nei thin a, kan sumdawnna pawh a tha viau a, mahse hripui vang khan kan chhonzawm thei ta silo a, khanglai khan chawhmeh kha a kal viau a, chuvang chuan ka zuar ve ta a, a bult anna tea lo tlawm a, tin, a bang kha kan ei mai zel a chawhmeh a”

“I used to have restaurant in Vaivakawn before the pandemic, my occupation was also bloom but due to pandemic I could not be able to continue and started selling vegetables as it is highly demanded during that time and less capital is needed. The left-over was used as our meal”

While 76 vendors (38%) do not have previous occupations, this occupation is their first occupation for earning income, majority of the vendors started this occupation after getting married when the responsibilities are more. The question was asked and Pi Siami demonstrated that,

“Pasal ka neih hma pawn eng hna mah ka thawk lo, pasal ka neih hnu ka pasal in min thihsan hnu khan he hna hi ka thawk ve tan, kan chhungkaw tan leh ka fate zirna atan. Ka pasal damlai chuan govt school zirtirtu nia,

*kan khawsak pawh anpangai viau a, mahse tunah chuan loh theihlohna
vang zawk in chawhmeh zawrh angai ta a”*

“Before marriage I was not engaging in any other job but after my husband died I started this occupation for the livelihood of my family, my children’s education. While my husband was there he is a govt. school teacher, our life was good back then but I don’t have any other choice other than engaging in vegetable vending”

So, it can be concluded that the majority 62% of women vegetable vendors had previous informal jobs before transitioning to this profession. The shift was driven by financial instability, health issues, migration, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Vendors cited low capital requirements and consistent demand for vegetables as key reasons. 38% reported this as their first income-generating occupation, often after marriage or loss of a spouse. Vegetable vending serves as a fallback option for those displaced from previous livelihoods and a first-time employment opportunity for women, offering economic inclusion and a lifeline during times of crisis.

5.2.2 Respondent Previous Occupation:

Exploring the types of previous occupations held by women vegetable vendors offers invaluable information about their employment background and the diverse paths that led them to vending. These women often come from a range of informal or low-paying job sectors, such as domestic work, daily wage labour, agriculture, petty trade, or even unpaid household duties. (ILO, 2018; Roever & Skinner, 2016). Some may have shifted from unstable or seasonal employment, while others began vending after facing limited opportunities in the formal workforce. Understanding these past occupations helps in assessing their skills, economic vulnerability, and the socio-economic circumstances that influenced their decision to enter the vegetable vending trade (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; Chen, 2012). It also highlights the role of vending as a flexible and accessible livelihood for women from varied professional and personal backgrounds.

Table 5.5: Respondent Previous Occupation		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	72	36.0
Agricultural Labour	62	31.0

Non-Agricultural Labour	60	30.0
Student	5	2.5
Formal sector	1	.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

As per the table, it can be seen that 72 vendors (36%) are unemployed and 5 vendors (2.5%) are students before engaging in these occupations. While 62 vendors (31%) and 60 vendors (30%) are engaging in agricultural labour and non-agricultural labour, respectively. This is because the majority of the vendors are engaging in vegetable vending due to the downfall of their previous occupations, since the entry into vegetable vending is easy and affordable due to its low investment and the setup is not difficult. The other factor is the 2020 Covid pandemic; many women who used to have other occupations, like clothing store and tea stall owners, were in debt and withdrew from their occupations, as they did not have money to pay for their monthly rent, which led to an increase in the number of vendors engaging in vegetable vending after the pandemic. Pi Hmuaki 43 years from Vaivakawn says that

“A hma te chuan Vaivakawn ah hian thingpui dawr ka nei thin a, mahse covid hripui vang khan dawr kan hawng thei ta silo a, dawr luahman pek reng tur ka nei baw k silo a, kan titawp a tihian a awlsam ber leh covid laia sum hmuhnan a kan hman chawhmeh zawrh hian khawsak kan zawng chhunzawm ta anih hi”

“I used to run a tea stall at Vaivakawn but we could not able to opened due to Covid 19 pandemic lockdown, I do not have the capital for rent to pay for our tea stall. So, I shut down the tea stall and continue selling vegetables which I used as a main source of income during pandemic.

The study shows that most women worked in other informal jobs before selling vegetables. Since women have to juggle between household chores and work from dawn to dusk, vegetable vending has given them a better alternative to manage both responsibilities by giving them a choice to set their own hours of work, as they are their own boss, and also enabling them to earn better when compared to other jobs.

The research indicates that many female vegetable sellers in Aizawl, particularly those who were jobless or had previous employment, entered the profession after setbacks

in their previous jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic led to many women ceasing their businesses due to financial constraints and lockdowns. This shift highlights the feasibility of vegetable vending for women, who can balance work and family responsibilities, offering flexible hours and financial autonomy.

5.3 Causes and benefits:

Street vending is an expanding phenomenon not only in India but globally. Urban working poor consider street selling one of the most accessible methods for generating income (Bromley, 2000). Nonetheless, their access to this profession is contingent upon other conditions. This vocation is complex, considering several dimensions, including economic, legal, institutional, social, and cultural aspects linked with the activity (Roever & Skinner, 2016).

A significant proportion of street vendors in metropolitan locales consists of low-skilled individuals who have come from rural regions or small towns in pursuit of economic opportunities (NCEUS, 2007; Bhowmik, 2005). Individuals resort to street vending when alternative sources of income are unavailable. Despite the low income associated with this career, the investment is also little, and individuals do not necessitate specialised skills or training (Bhowmik, 2012). Consequently, for these individuals, both men and women, street vending represents the most accessible means of earning a livelihood (Chen, 2016).

Vegetable vending is a laborious occupation fraught with challenges, including harassment from law enforcement and local authorities (Roy et al., 2020). This requires braving the sun, cold waves and rain; standing long hours without rest; and surviving the dirt, filth and stench of unclean (in many areas) streets. One ponders the motivations for individuals selecting street hawking as a vocation. The justifications offered by the respondents for engaging in vending were discovered to be varied. Several of them are listed below.:

1. The setting up of the occupation requires minimum investment which appeals the urban poor women.
2. The occupation does not need any special skills or specific training therefore it attracts the urban poor women.

3. Due to inadequate employment opportunity and irresponsibility of the spouse, many women choose this occupation to contribute for the family sustenance
4. The rest of the vendors were taken up this profession due to death of the husband, flexibility of the occupation, lack of education to get involved in formal sector, unemployment (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; Lalrindiki, 2017).

Table 5.6 Reason for vegetable vending

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Minimum investment	65	32.5
Need not specialisation	43	21.5
Insufficient of the spouse earning	78	39.0
others	14	7.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The data reveals that 65 (32.5%) women choose vending due to its minimum investment since the table shows that the majority of women invested a small amount or nothing in their initial stage of entering vegetable vending. This nature of low investment attracted many poor urban dwellers as well as the rural people to start engaging in vending as compared to other occupations which require high investment.

It can be cleared from the statement given by Pi Sawmi 44 years from Zuangtui:

“Chawhmeh zawrh chu sum a ngai tam lo a, chuvang chu ni ber ka luhna chhan chu, a tirah chuan kan inkawt ah ka ti mai mai thin a, tunah chuan kawn ah ka in zuar ve tawh anih hi”

“Vegetable vending requires less capital to start up, so I entered this occupation as it can be easily set up, at first I started on the porch of my house then I moved to the main road (kawn)”

43 vendors (21.5%) opted vegetable vending due to it accommodating nature of low skilled or unskilled people, many women will low skilled or unskilled opted this occupation as it does not require a specialized skills to start a business. This nature increases the level of women entering into the vegetable business. Pi Nemi 61 years cleared the questions of “what is the reason of choosing vegetable vending?” she stated that,

“Thiam neilo leh lehkhathiamlo keini ang tan chuan chawhmeh zawrh thuk a inhmeh ka neilo. Hnadang thiam ka neilo, chawhmeh zawrh chiah nimai. Ka tui bawk a, nuam ka tibawk”

“An unskilled and low educated person like us, there is no other job which suits us best. I don’t know any other work, only vegetable vending. I am good at it and I enjoyed a lot”

Among the vendors, 78 women (39%) entered into vegetable vending due to the insufficient earnings of the spouse. Mizoram has a high level of unemployment, and among youth the rate is 11.3%, which is higher than the average national rate. This problem can be seen in the case of women entering into vegetable vendors. The majority of the spouses of the women respondents do not have proper and reliable jobs to provide for the family, which leads to women engaging in economic activity to contribute to the livelihood of the family. Pi Diki whose husband is daily labourer stated her reason for entering vending as:

“Kan pa hi nitin inhlawh ve mai ania, ani chauh chuan min chawm zo lo hrim hrim a, chuvang chuan kan chhungkaw khawsak a ziawm nan ka thiam chhun ania ka zuanglut ve tawp, a nuam ka ti chauhthlak thin mahse”

“My husband is daily labourer, how could he provide us all, so I entered this job to contribute the livelihood of our family and I really enjoyed being a vendor though its tiresome sometime”

While 14 women (7%) entered in vegetable vending due to other factors like poverty, easily accessible, low investment and demand of the vegetables in the locality. So, it can be concluded that based on the persons conditions and environment women enter into vegetable vending. but the main reason is poverty. The next table will show the data on the benefits of being a vegetable vendor.

“Keini ang mi rethei tan chuan chawhmeh zawrh hi chu malsawmna ani ringawt nitin eitur te kan neih phah a, ka thlan chhan ber pawh kan retheih em vang in a nia. Tin, chubakah hna danga luh a harsa bawk si a”

“A poor family like us, the vegetable vending is a blessing for us, as it provides us our daily needs, the main reason for choosing this vending is due to our poverty, entering into other occupation is hard”

The vegetable vending profession is primarily driven by economic constraints and personal circumstances, with the majority of women (32.5%) citing low initial investment as their primary reason. This makes it an accessible livelihood for poor urban and rural women, especially those with limited work experience. The occupation is also suitable for low-skilled or unskilled individuals because it doesn't require specialised training or formal education. Economic necessity within the household, particularly in Mizoram, is another major driver, with 39% of vendors motivated by insufficient income from their spouses. The profession's flexibility, low barriers to entry, and steady income make it an essential source of livelihood for many women in Mizoram.

5.3.1 Benefits of being a Vegetable vendor:

Despite the challenges associated with informal work, many women find vegetable vending to be a meaningful and empowering source of livelihood. The benefits of being a vegetable vendor extend beyond daily income—they include flexibility in working hours, autonomy in decision-making, and the ability to balance earning with household responsibilities (Roy et al., 2020; Chen, 2016). For many women, vending provides a sense of independence and dignity, especially for those who previously had no personal income (Lalmalsawmi, 2021). It also enables them to contribute to their family's financial needs, support their children's education, and maintain a visible role in the community. Exploring the perceived benefits helps us understand why vegetable vending continues to be a preferred occupation for many women, even in the absence of formal employment opportunities.

Table 5.7: Benefits of being a Vegetable vendor		
Response	Frequency	Percentage
Improved the family livelihood	70	35.0
It creates employment opportunity	70	35.0
It provides food for daily consumption	56	28.0
Improved the status of women	4	2.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

As per the data provided above, it indicates that 35% of the respondents believed that the vegetable vending improved their family livelihood, as they earned income and contributed to the family's economic growth. When asking the question of "What is the benefit of being a vegetable vendor?" Pi Awmi 47 states that,

"Chawhmeh ka zawrh hnu leh thawhchhuah ka neih hnu hian, kan chhungkua ah chuan hmasawna a hmuh tur a tam khawp mai, ka fate zirna te an chhonzawm thei a. keimah chauh eizawngtu ka ni bawk sia. Kan pa nen a kan inthen hnu ah he hna hi ka thawk tan chauh a ni"

"After entering vegetable vending and earning income, my family saw many improvements in our livelihood, I can continue our children's education as I am the only earner in the family, I entered in this occupation after I got divorce with my husband"

Another 35% of the respondents opted that vegetable vending creates employment opportunity for them as majority are unskilled and low educational qualification where they do not have place in the organised or formal sector. Pi Chhuani 54 years stated that,

"Chawhmeh zawrh hlawkna chu hna te ka neih phaha, keini ang zir na hniam, thiam nei bawk silo tan chuan chawhmeh zawrh hian hna in pe a tin chhungkaw tan eitur min pe bawk a"

"The benefit of being a vendor is that it gives me an occupation, a person like me who do not have skills and low education, vending provides me a job and food to eat for my family"

56% of the respondents said that vegetable vending provides food for their daily consumption because they usually have leftover vegetables that they use for their own meals. From the observations, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors, even when they do not have profit in cash, consider the leftover vegetables as their profit.

This can be cleared from Pi Vani 57 years statement:

"Sum ang zawng chuan hlawkna tam tak chu anilo, mahse nitin eitur te chawhmeh te kan lo neih phaha, chawhmeh man a to chho kumtin si a,

chawhmeh zuar ka nih vang chauh in kan ei phakloh te kan ei ve theih phah a”

“Money wise, I do not get any benefit much, but the only benefit of being a vendor is having a vegetable for meal, since the vegetables are becoming costly each year. We can eat vegetables which we will not afford if I am not a vendor”

Only 2% of the respondents considered the vegetable vending improved their status as a woman. The rate is low since majority of the vendors do not engage in this vending to uplift the status as a woman but for the improvement of their livelihood.

“Ka ngaihdan ah chuan ka dinhmun a ti zia khawp mai kan chhungkua ah chuan, kan inneih tirh khan hna ka nei bik silo a, ka chhungte lakah khan a nuam lo ve thin lutuk a, hetia hlawh te kan neih ve a, lakluh te kan neih hnu hi chuan ka dinhmun chu ahma ai chuan zia tak a ni”

“I think it somehow improved my status in the family. My in-laws used to bully me because I was not working when we married. So, I entered this occupation after entering this occupation, I have some importance in the family to an extent.”

Vegetable vending offers women economic and personal empowerment, with 35% reporting it improved their family’s livelihood by generating income and supporting household needs and children's education. 35% also highlighted employment opportunities, especially for women with low education or no formal skills. A majority (56%) noted that it helps meet daily food needs, especially as food costs rise. However, only 2% felt it improved their status as women, suggesting that most vendors see their work as a means of survival and household support. While earning an income has led to greater recognition and respect, its role in transforming gender status remains limited.

5.4 Acquisition of vegetables:

The acquisition of vegetables is a fundamental aspect of the daily operations of women vegetable vendors, directly influencing their profit margins, product quality, and overall business sustainability. Women vendors source their vegetables through various channels such as wholesale markets, local farmers, middlemen, or self-

cultivation (Bhowmik, 2012; Roever & Skinner, 2016). The choice of source often depends on factors like pricing, availability, transportation, and existing relationships with suppliers (Roy et al., 2020). Understanding how and where vendors acquire their stock offers vital information about the supply chain dynamics, cost structures, and challenges faced in maintaining a consistent and affordable inventory. It also sheds light on the level of autonomy and bargaining power women vendors hold within the informal market system (WIEGO, 2020).

Table 5.8: Main sources of good are acquired from		
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Wholesaler (mandis)	118	59.0
Direct purchase from farmer	64	32.0
Local farms	18	9.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The present table shows the main sources of vegetables the vendors are acquiring. The study indicates that a large 59% of the sample have reported acquiring the vegetables from the commissioners at the main bazaar. The result indicates a desire for centralised and dependable supply lines that provide a diverse assortment of veggies. Acquiring goods via mandis is frequently time-efficient and may ensure regular supply; however, it may entail greater expenses relative to direct farm purchases. This reliance also signifies restricted direct access to agricultural operations or farming networks for several businesses. Pi Hlui 44 years stated that,

“A tlangpuiin Bazarpui atangin ka la thin a, ka tan a awlsam bakah, tam thamin ka la ngai lo a, nitin in ka la a. chahwmeh thar ka neih phah thin a”

“I usually taken from the wholesaler located in the Bazarpui, it is easy for us to take from them because I do not need in bulk as I collected daily.

This way I can provide fresh vegetables to my customers everyday”

While 32% reported acquiring from the farmer themselves. Approximately one-third of the sellers get their veggies straight from growers. This strategy could include more haggling and local connections while probably enabling fresher products at a possible lower price. This category might include suppliers that work in more rural regions or who have developed close links with farming communities, which could facilitate

more environmentally friendly procurement methods. Pi Sangi 59 years replied the question of “What is your main source of vegetables?”

“Lakna thin hriat sa ka nei nual a thingtlang ah, sumo in an rawn thawn a, mutia ka hman than te’n min han lamsak mai thin. A awlsam in a thar bik bawk si”

“I have connections in many villages, they send me through sumo and I have mutia. So, it is easy for me and it is fresh as well”

18% reported selling their own vegetables. A tiny percentage of vendors source their veggies from nearby farms, which may indicate small-scale farm-to-market operations or self-harvesting. This low number can be a result of restrictions on the sellers' ability to directly farm, land ownership, or accessibility to nearby farms.

“Kan thlai thar ka zuar tlangpui a kan lo ami, mahse neihloh chuan kan thenawm nei ho hnen atang te pawh ka la khawm ve thin”

"I sell vegetables only on Saturday, all the vegetables are from our fields.

However, if I do not have vegetables to sell, I also collected from my neighbours as well.”

According to the sourcing pattern, the majority of Mizo women vegetable vendors depend on well-established wholesale channels, although a sizable portion are sourcing directly from farmers, which may be more economical. Improved access to nearby farms and stronger vendor-farmer ties might increase economic sustainability, lessen reliance on intermediaries, and increase profit margins for female sellers. The data indicates that most vendors obtained their vegetables from the Main Bazaar-based wholesaler. The next table will show the status of how frequently they collect vegetables for selling.

Table 5.9: Collection of vegetables		
Options	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday	92	46.0
Once a week	29	14.5
Twice a week	40	20.0
Thrice a week	39	19.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

It can be found from the table above that 46% of the sample reported collecting vegetables every day. This is due to the high demand in their selling location, and they do not collect vegetables in bulk because they are closer to the supply source and prefer to offer fresh produce. Nearly 50% of those surveyed gather vegetables daily. This implies that many sellers place a high value on freshness and provide perishable goods that need to be restocked often. Additionally, daily collecting could be a sign of a reduced storage capacity, a lack of funds for large purchases, or a close proximity to the supply source (such local markets or mandis). But this might also result in more time and money spent on commuting.

“Nitin ka la thin, tlem te te in. chuan chawhmeh pawh a thar zawk a, a chhe duh lutuk a thlai hring hi, a dahna tha kan mamawh khawp mai”

“I collected everyday but I usually collected in small amount, so that I could maintain freshness, as vegetables are easily perished and spoiled.

We really need some good storage facility”

Whereas 14.5% reported collecting vegetables once a week as they vending only on Saturday in Inrinni Bazar. It could also represent the distance to suppliers or limitations like time, money, or transportation.

“Inrinni ah chauh ka inpho thin avang in, kartluan in chawhmeh inrinni a zawrh tur ka la khawm thin”

“As I am selling vegetables only on Saturday, so I collected the vegetables whole week for Saturday bazar”

20% of the vendors reported collecting vegetables twice a week, one-fifth of the merchants gather veggies. These suppliers could have marginally superior storage facilities or strike a balance between affordability and freshness. Vendors with steady demand and a moderate consumer flow frequently experience this regularity. Among the respondents who collected twice a week, Pi Siami 57 years statement is highlighted below:

“Ka thutna hmun a fuh lutuk loh avang hian karkhatah vawi 2 chiah ka la thin”

“Since my location is not good, I can only collected twice a week”

19.5% of the respondents reported collecting vegetables thrice a week. The frequency of collecting vegetables depends on factors like location, demand, quantity, and

vending days. A comparable proportion of merchants gather veggies three times a week, suggesting a persistent attempt to preserve stock freshness while perhaps controlling expenses and transportation timetables. Vendors in high-traffic locations that require more regular stock replenishments than once or twice a week may also fall into this category.

“Nitin chu chawhmeh ka la theilo na chu, karkhatah hian vawi 3 chu ka la ve, inhralhna vang thin lutuk a kar laklawhah hi chuan, zirtawp ah tam tham deuhin ka la ve chauh thin, nidangah chuan tlem te te in”

“Though I could not be able to collected vegetables every day, I usually collected thrice a day due to the demand was low during week days. Only on Friday I collected in bulk other days I collected in small amount”

According to the research, the majority of Mizo female vegetable sellers depend on regular product collection, which is consistent with a business strategy that emphasises daily client care and freshness. The variety in collection patterns, however, also reflects differing degrees of infrastructure and resource accessibility. Small-scale cold storage, group buying plans, and better transportation are a few examples of targeted interventions that might help them streamline their operations and lessen logistical strain. Thereby, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors collect the vegetables on a daily basis from the wholesaler (mandis). The next table will show the data on modes of collecting vegetables.

Table 5.10: Means of collecting vegetables

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Contribute taxi with co-vendors	78	39.0
Delivered at the vending place	64	32.0
2-wheeler taxi	13	6.5
4-wheeler taxi	14	7.0
Own vehicle	19	9.5
By foot	12	6.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above table indicates that 78 vendors (39%) contributes taxi with co-vendors for collecting vegetables from the wholesale market. This illustrates cost-cutting and community cooperation, particularly among merchants who are unable to pay for

individual transportation. It lowers commuting expenses and is a useful option for people without own automobiles.

“Thlai lak nan chuan atlangpuiin ka thian te ho ne taxi kan in contri mai zel kar laklawhah chuan kan la tam hlawm lemlo bawk a, mahse zirtawp leh inrinni ah erawh chuan taxi in kan la thin kan inla am ve deuh a”

“For collecting vegetables, me and my co-vendors usually contribute taxi for collecting during week days when our vegetables are in less quantity but on Friday and Saturday we usually hire taxi by ourself”

Whereas 64 vendors (32%) vegetables were delivered at the vending place by the farmers from the village through sumo and mutia where the delivery charge was paid by them. This implies the existence of structured supply chains or agreements between farmers and wholesalers who handle the actual transportation of the commodities. This approach lessens the workload for women vendors, especially those who might not have access to cars or have time restrictions.

“Ka lakna te hian a tlangpuiin sumo ah an rawn thawn a chuan mutia in a rawn phur thleng mai zel, hna ati awlsam in hun a ti daihzai khawp mai, keimah han kal a buaipui turin tumah min en sak tu tur ka nei bawk silo a”

“My supplier mostly send me through sumo and the coolie delivered to my place, it is time saving and convenient for me as I do not have any one to look after my place”

13 vendors (6.5%) hire two-wheeler taxi for collecting vegetables this option represents flexible but constrained carrying capacity and can be utilised for shorter routes or lighter weights. Vendors who operate close or sell fewer goods could select it.

“A tlangpuiin thlai zawrh tur ka lak tam ngailoh avangin, scooty taxi rawn awm hnu ah pheii chuan, 2 wheeler taxi hlir ka hmang a, a chang pheii chuan anmahni ka lam tir mai zel, keimah kallo in”

“Since, I do not collect vegetables in bulk, so after introducing the two wheeler taxi, I usually collected the vegetables with two wheeler taxi.

Sometime, I asked the driver to pickup my vegetables for me without myself going to pick up.”

14 vendors (7%) hired four-wheeler taxi for collecting vegetables depending on the quantity and the quality of the vegetable stock available on the market. This could be more suited for vendors working in high-volume or remote supply locations, or for bigger quantities of items. It implies a modest transportation investment, perhaps for larger companies.

*“Taxi hi ka hmang ber thin thlai lak nan chuan, a chhan chu karkhata vawi
3 thlai ka la thin a, ka vawikhat lak hi a tam deuh a”*

“I have regularly used taxi for collecting vegetables, as I collected vegetables thrice a week, it usually in bulk”

While 19 vendors (9.5%) used their own vehicle suggesting a marginally improved financial standing and logistical autonomy. Despite the initial cost of owning a car, these suppliers probably have greater control over their collection schedules and might save money on transportation over time.

*“A tlangpuiin, kan car in chawhmeh chu kan lam khawm thin, car a
remchan loh in taxi chu kan hire veleh mai a”*

“We usually used our car to collect vegetables, only if our vehicle is not available, we hire taxi for collecting”

12 vendors (6%) collected the vegetables by their own foot in order to save money as they are nearer to the wholesale market. It most usually denotes extreme budgetary restrictions or proximity to their source. These sellers could work at the most local level, sourcing from marketplaces or farms in the area.

“Bazarpui kan hnaih vangin, ka va phur mai zel, awlsam lutuk”

“Bazarpui is only a walking distance from our vending site. So, I usually collected goods by head loading. I took it as a kind of exercise”

Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors used vehicles for collecting vegetables, and depending on the quantity and quality of the stock available, they used a 2-wheeler or 4-wheeler taxi accordingly. The methods used by Mizo women vendors to gather vegetables demonstrate a range of resource accessibility. Only a tiny percentage have access to individual or independent modes

of transport, while many rely on shared and delivery-based networks. These results point to the need for improved transportation infrastructure, collaborative transportation methods, and even financial or logistical assistance to increase productivity and lessen the workload for women vegetable vendors. The next table shows the data on the monthly expenditure for collecting vegetables.

Table 5.11: Monthly expenditure for collecting vegetables

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Rs 10000-25000	14	7.0
Rs 25000-50000	73	36.5
Rs 50000-75000	35	17.5
Rs 75000-100000	71	35.5
Rs 100000 above	7	3.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

73 vendors (36.5%) reported spending between Rs 25,000 and Rs 50,000 per month to collect veggies. The majority of responders falling under this spending category shows that a considerable percentage of women run medium-sized vending operations that need regular and significant vegetable purchase. These vendors are likely to sell a diverse range of products in large quantities, maybe targeting high-traffic markets or loyal client groups.

While 71 vendors (35.5%) reported spending between Rs 75,000 and 100,000. These are most likely larger-scale vendors, maybe with more established enterprises or better settings, such as major marketplaces or roadside stations. This category may also include merchants that employ private transportation (e.g., own or rent 4-wheeler taxis) and source from various or remote places.

“Thlakhata kan sum sen hi ka tum aiin a sang thin, chawhmeh man a to ta lutuk a, singnga te chu awlsam te in a tling mai”

“My monthly expenditure is usually high than I expected since the cost price of the veggies are increasing, it easily reached 50,000 a month”

35 vendors (17.5%) spend between Rs 50,000 and 75,000. A lesser but still significant proportion of vendors spend in the mid- to high-end bracket. These suppliers are most likely expanding their business or operating in crowded areas.

They may not have surpassed the highest-spending group's capabilities, but they are nonetheless making significant investments in procurement.

Only a tiny proportion of respondents, 14 vendors (7%) spend between Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000, indicating modest-scale enterprises. These vendors may sell fewer things, operate part-time, or specialise in niche/local produce. They are also more inclined to take shared cabs or walk, as seen in the preceding table. This tiny group of 7 vendors (3.5%) most likely reflects large-scale sellers with a high volume of more than Rs 100,000, who may also engage in semi-wholesale trading or bulk redistribution to smaller vendors. They are most likely well-established, with vehicles and employees.

According to the research, 71% of vendors (Rs 25,000-100,000) spend significant amounts on vegetable collecting each month, demonstrating the trade's cost-intensiveness, particularly for those dealing in large volumes or traversing lengthy supply chains. Only 7% have a monthly spend of less than Rs 25,000, demonstrating that small-scale selling is less prevalent or viable in metropolitan marketplaces like Aizawl. The existence of a minority (3.5%) spending more than Rs 1 lakh indicates that entrepreneurial sellers are moving beyond subsistence vending and into commercial-level activities. Pi Ziri from Bazarpui states that

“Thlakhatah hian nuai 1 chu ka hmang tling a chhan chu be chi ho ka zuar a, a lakna ato tlat a, heng vang te pawh hi niang be lam chi zuar hi kan tlem”

“I spend more than one lakh in month because I sell dried beans like rajma, butter beans and varieties of beans which needs huge amount for the cost price. Maybe because of the high investment, we are also less in number who sell beans”

The expenditure pattern demonstrates that the majority of Mizo women vegetable sellers invest considerable amounts of money on a monthly basis to support their companies, showing the economic importance and size of selling as a source of income. While small-scale vendors do exist, the majority operate on a mid- to high-investment basis, implying not just financial risk but also the requirement for efficient

supply chains, improved transportation access, and potential loan or subsidy assistance to sustain and develop their operations.

5.5 Transportation

Transportation significantly influences the daily livelihoods of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl, impacting their market access, timely goods delivery, and overall income (Lalrindiki, 2017; Lalmalsawmi, 2021). The hilly terrain, narrow roads, and traffic congestion in Aizawl present distinct logistical challenges for vendors, many of whom must traverse long distances while transporting heavy loads of perishable vegetables from wholesale points to vending locations.

Many female vendors depend on public transportation or taxi services, which tend to be expensive and inconsistent, thereby reducing their already constrained profits (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013). The absence of designated loading and unloading zones, combined with early market hours and restricted vehicle access in congested areas, exacerbates the physically demanding nature of their work. Vendors sometimes must traverse considerable distances with heavy baskets because direct transport routes to their vending locations are unavailable. Transportation issues adversely affect earnings and compromise the quality and freshness of produce, thereby influencing customer satisfaction and sales (Roy et al., 2020; WIEGO, 2020). Analysing the transportation challenges faced by Mizo women vegetable vendors is crucial for developing infrastructure and policies that promote mobility, efficiency, and economic security for these informal workers.

Table 5.12: Distance between place of living and work place

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1km	74	37.0
1-4 km	79	32.5
4-8 km	19	13.5
More than 8km	25	12.5
Not Applicable	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above table reveals that 74 respondents (37%) live nearby the vending place which is less than 1 km from the place of living. A substantial percentage of responders reside near to their employment. This closeness provides various benefits,

including lower or no transportation costs, shorter trip times, and better flexibility in balancing family and commercial operations. Vendors in this group are likely to be found at or around their local neighbourhood markets or on surrounding roadsides.

“khilai chhak lawkah khian kan cheng, a hnai bakah ka tan awlsam a, fapa thla 3 mi lek nei ka nia ka kal hla theilo”

“We live just up there, it’s nearby and convenient for me as my son is only 3months I cannot go far”

79 respondents (39.5%) lived within the range of 1-4 km from the vending place. These vendors may demand little mobility (e.g., shared cabs or two-wheelers) while maintaining a decent work-life balance. However, distance begins to provide practical issues, particularly for people who do not have personal transportation. While within the range of 4-8 km from the vending place, 19 respondents (9.5%) resided. A smaller group commutes across considerably greater distances. This group is likely to rely more heavily on public or hired transport, which increases their monthly expenses and daily workload. Vendors in this category may have selected remote vending locations because of higher consumer traffic or a lack of space near their residences.

“Tlem chuan hla ve det, km 5 vel aniang a, scooter hian ka kal mai thin a, mahse ka vui lemlo seat te kan nei hlauh a Bazarpuai angah te”

“It is a bit far for me, I think it is around 5km from my locality to this place. So, I usually rode a scooter, but having a permanent seat in the Bazarpuai is a blessing, I could not complain”

25 (12.5%) respondents live beyond 8 km from the vending; these vendors are from nearby villages who came on Friday night and Thursday night for Saturday Bazaar and Friday Bazaar, respectively. These vendors face greater challenges, including higher transport costs, longer hours, and fatigue. This may also affect their ability to manage household responsibilities and reduce their rest time. 3 respondents have vending places at their own homes.

“Ka rin dan chuan km 30 vel ani ang a, Sumo kan in hman tawm mai zel a, zanlai ah zirtawp zanah rawn chhuak in zing dar 3:30 ah Aizawl akn rawn thleng a, kan in zuar chhonzawm a, kan chawmhleh rawn ken ang a zawh hma loh chu kan haw ngailo, a zawh veleh kan let veleh mai zel”

“I think it is around 30 kms from Aizawl, we usually used Sumo with our co-vendor to reached here at midnight on Friday and we reached Aizawl around 3:30 in the morning, we continue selling the vegetables the whole day, we went back only after we finished selling our veggies.”

The data reveals that most vendors are located close to their vending locations. Since in Mizo society, most of the locality have their own ‘Kawn’, an intersection point where they get their needs, this makes the distance between the place of living and the place of work nearer and convenient for the peripatetic vendors. For vendors who have permanent seats in the New Market Sabji Bazar, the distance between the place of living and the place of work is usually far. The results show that, while the majority of Mizo women vegetable vendors work near to their homes, promoting work-life balance and lowering transportation constraints, a sizable proportion journey medium to long distances. These vendors confront more difficult working circumstances, and their predicament needs specific assistance in transportation infrastructure, vendor zone planning, and maybe access to neighbouring vending areas to improve their working environment and general well-being. The next table shows how they commute to their workplace.

Table 5.13: Commute for work place

Response	Frequency	Percent
By walking	90	45.0
By shared taxi	68	34.0
By own vehicle	27	13.5
By 2-wheeler taxi	9	4.5
By bus	3	1.5
Not Applicable	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above table depicts that 90 vendors (45%) commute to their workplace by walking. This indicates that a considerable percentage of sellers reside near their vending locations, which is corroborated by previous statistics on distance to workplace. Walking means no transportation costs, making it economically favourable. However, it may be physically strenuous, particularly for elderly ladies

or those carrying big things. It can be cleared from the statement given by Pi Ziri, 56 years old from Vaivakawn:

“A tlangpuiin ke in ka kal mai thin, kan hnaih tho a. tin, ka hriselna tan pawh alo tha a, exer a hranin ka la thei bawk silo a, nilengin kan thu bawk nen. Mahse chawhmeh ken tel angaih hian hahthlak ve thin”

“I usually walk from my home to this place, it is near and it is also good for my health. I do not have time for exercise. So, it is somehow convenient for me, as me sit the whole day. However, when I have vegetables to carry, it is tiresome”

68 vendors (34%) utilised shared taxis to commute to their workplace. This indicates a modest commute distance and the necessity for economical transit. Shared taxis are a common choice for sellers who cannot afford their own automobiles but want transportation for themselves and their wares. This strategy exemplifies a community-orientated, cost-sharing concept. Pi Seli gave a statement on this:

“Kan ven hi a hlat ve avang hian taxi ka la mai thin. Kan veng atanga bazar kal ve tho tur chawhmeh zuar dangte nen kan inthural mai zel. A tlangpuiin cheng 30 ka pe thin kan in atang chuan”

“Since, my locality is bit I used to take shared taxi. There are also other vendors who also go to the market, so, we shared it together. I usually pay Rs 30 from our locality to the working place”.

27 vendors (13.5%) have their own vehicle for commuting. This group represents suppliers with more financial resources or extensive commutes. Owning a personal car or scooter promotes flexibility and efficiency, but it incurs fuel and maintenance costs. Pi Nuni 38 years gives comment on this:

“Scooty ka lei a hna kal nan, a tangkai khawp mai, pawisa pawh ka save in ka hria. Kan veng hi hla ve a taxi zingtin hmang tur chuan”

“I bought scooty for my work, it is convenient for me. and I save money also as my locality is bit far to used taxi every morning”

9 vendors (4.5%) use a 2-wheeler taxi for reaching their place of work. This group is most likely made up of vendors who commute modest distances but carry light cargo,

making a two-wheeler taxi viable. It is a more flexible but more expensive alternative to walking or using a shared cab. Pi Thuami 61 years states that,

“2wheeler taxi a rawn awm hnu kha chuan 2 wheeler taxi hlirin ka kal tawh a awlsam in hun a save ka tia. He thil hi chu an ti lo ang tih ka hlau thin”

“After the introduction of 2 wheeler taxi, I usually used it as it is convenient and time saving. I am grateful that they introduced this system”

Only 3 vendors (1.5%) used bus. Buses may be rigid in terms of scheduling and space. 3 vendors (1.5%) need no transport as they sell the vegetables at their own house. Pi Hlui 55 years from Khatla demonstrates that,

“Bus stand hi kan hnaih a, ka kal mai zel, pawisa a hek bawk silo a. mahse tlai lamah chuan taxi ka hmang mai thin”

“Bus Stand is not far from my place. So, I used it often, as it saves money. But in the evening, I usually used shared taxi or two wheeler taxi”

The majority (79%) walk or take shared cabs, demonstrating a reliance on low- or no-cost commuting options. This situation reflects both economic restrictions and a preference to sell near to home. The usage of personal automobiles (13.5%) and 2-wheeler taxis (4.5%) indicates a small number of particularly well-resourced sellers who may sell further away from home or transport greater volumes. The limited usage of buses suggests that public transit is not a viable or preferred route for most sellers, probably due to logistical constraints associated with carrying vegetables.

Therefore, it reveals that the majority of the vendors go to their vending place by walking, as they are nearer to it and want to save money. While one-third of the vendors used shared taxis, as it saves money and time. The commute habits of Mizo women vegetable sellers show that the majority work within walkable or short commuting distances, lowering transportation expenditures. However, this also demonstrates the physical stress put on women who must walk with their wares on a regular basis. Shared taxis are an important mode of transportation, particularly for individuals who do not own a car. Improved last-mile transportation infrastructure, subsidised vendor transportation programmes, and the establishment of local vending zones might all improve commute circumstances and overall productivity for female

vendors. The table below illustrates the monthly transportation expenses incurred by the vendors.

Table 5.14: Monthly expenditure for taxi fare/ petrol to reach the work place

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Rs 1000-2500	63	31.5
Rs 2500-5000	22	11.0
Rs 5000-7500	20	10.0
Rs 7500 above	2	1.0
not applicable	93	46.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

Among the vendors, there are 93 (46.5%) respondents who reported not applicable. This likely includes vendors who walk to their workplace (as supported by previous data showing 45% walk) or those who live and vend at the same location. It reflects a cost-saving advantage but also highlights potential physical strain, especially for women who carry their goods over short distances daily. 63 vendors (31.5%) used vehicles for commuting to their workplace and spent Rs 1000-2500 per month. This is the greatest segment of individuals who spend on transportation. These vendors are likely to employ shared cabs or two-wheelers, which provide a reasonable commuting distance and a cost-effective transportation option. It demonstrates that for over one-third of vendors, transport is a regular and reasonable portion of their monthly budget. When the question “How much money do you spend on your monthly expenditure for taxi fare/petrol to reach the work place?” one of the respondents commented as,

“Ka rin dan chuan cheng 1000-1500 ven thla khatah ka hman ka ring hna kal nan”

“I think I spend around 1000-1500 per month for my transportation expenditure”

22 vendors (11%) spend between Rs 2500-5000 per month. These vendors have comparatively greater transportation expenditures, most likely due to lengthier commutes, the usage of private automobiles, or the frequent use of hired taxis. This group may encounter increased financial strain as a result of high gasoline costs or frequent journeys. 20 vendors (10%) used Rs 5000-7500. Vendors in this group are usually larger-scale operations or those who transport large quantities of produce over

long distances. They may also own cars or rely on more expensive taxi services. This level of expenditure accounts for a significant percentage of many vendors' monthly income. Pi Nemi 44 years also states that,

“Lirthei chu hmang nitin lo mah ila, thingtlang atanga rawn kal ka nih vangin, sum chu kan hmang hnem lirthei hman nan. Zirtawp zan leh inrinni zana kan hmnag thin bungraw phurh nan”

“Even though I am not using vehicle every day, since I came from village. I spend more in vehicle. I used it mostly on Friday night and Saturday night with the goods.”

Two vendors have incurred transportation expenses exceeding Rs 7500. This relatively tiny group has very high monthly transportation expenditures, indicating large-scale vending companies that may include bulk purchases or long supply chains. Vendors may also operate in high-traffic areas, necessitating lengthy commutes or expensive parking. The expenditure spent on transportation to the workplace varied based on the distance between the place of work and place of residence.

Nearly half (46.5%) of vendors have no transportation expenditures, which helps lower overall company expenses but may be countered by physical labour and time. Approximately 32% of sellers manage transit between Rs 1000 and Rs 2500, indicating that this is a frequent and realistic cost range for many low-income individuals in the informal sector. Around 22% spend more than Rs 2500 each month, indicating a greater financial strain, especially when paired with additional operational expenditures such as purchasing veggies, renting premises, or paying care fees. If their enterprises service bigger populations or create jobs, the small group (1%) that spends more than Rs 7500 may be eligible for targeted help or tax/transport subsidies. So, it can be concluded that among the vendors who used transportation, the majority of them spend Rs 1000-2500 per month, while there are 2 vendors who exceed Rs 7500 for transportation. Transportation costs for Mizo women vegetable sellers vary greatly and are directly related to their proximity to vending places as well as their economic level. While almost half have no transportation expenditures, emphasising the relevance of walkable or nearby vending zones, a sizable fraction have moderate to

high monthly expenses, hurting their economic stability. Policy initiatives such as subsidised transportation, cooperative car usage, and improved access to neighbouring vending places might alleviate these expenses and enhance overall working conditions. As per the field data, when asked about the problem faced in obtaining transportation, it was glad to know that 173 vendors (86.5%) do not face problems in finding the transport. This is because in every locality the availability of the shared taxi and the introduction of the 2-wheeler taxi make it possible and convenient for the vendors to move easily from one place to another, even though the fare is quite high. This suggests that most women find the existing transit networks to be generally accessible, dependable, and manageable for their requirements. It may also represent the fact that many sellers live close to their selling location or walk to work, as seen by previous statistics indicating that 45% walk to work. Pi Awmi 48 years told us that

“Aih, buai lo e, taxi service te chu tam lutuk, buaina ber zawk chu pawisa hi nimai”

“No, there are lots of taxi service in the market area. The only problem is money”

Only 24 vendors (12%) reported experiencing difficulties in securing transportation. These might include a lack of transport options in the early morning hours. Overcrowding and delays with shared taxis. Taxi rates are expensive, especially for individuals who travel great distances. Discomfort and safety concerns, particularly among older or ill sellers. These issues may have an influence on their timeliness, sales volume, and physical well-being, all of which contribute to workplace stress. Pi Hnemi 37 years told that,

“Thingtlang atanga rawn kal kan nih vang hian, inrinni zan haw lehna tur hi kan buai thin hman than chu nei tho mah ila, kan chawhmeh ken ang nag ka zawh hma chu ka haw thei silo a, chuvang chuan inrinni zan hi kan buaina ni ber thin”

“As we came from village, it is very hard to find vehicle on Saturday night to dropped us back, though we have regularly used vehicle, I can go home only after finishing my veggies. So, Saturday night is the problem for me”

However, 3 vendors reported not applicable. These respondents most likely do not commute at all, either because their vending site is at or near their house, or they have ceased selling for whatever reason.

Therefore, it can be argued that most vendors are located within 1-3 km of their vending locations; as a result, many of them walk to work, which helps them save money. Among the vendors who used vehicles, the majority of them spend Rs 1000-2500 per month for the transportation, and the expenditure varies according to the distance between place of work and place of residence. It was found that the majority of the vendors do not have a problem in finding the transport for reaching their workplace, but they complain that the fare is quite high. The findings show that most vendors had a generally pleasant transit experience, which is a strength in their work environment. However, the 12% enduring difficulties should not be neglected. For a labour-intensive, low-margin industry like vegetable selling, transportation issues can have a direct impact on income and productivity. Most people may not have transit concerns because they have adapted to local transport norms, employ shared cabs, or live close to vending places. Although most Mizo women vegetable vendors do not encounter transportation constraints, the 12% who do constitute a vulnerable demographic that might benefit from specialised interventions. Enhanced early-morning transportation availability, safer transit alternatives, and transportation subsidies might alleviate these challenges. Facilitating efficient, secure, and economical transportation is crucial for improving the overall livelihood security and occupational sustainability of these female sellers.

5.7 Period of vending:

Extended working hours and hostile working environments characterise the informal sector, particularly street vendors. They are susceptible to diseases that are transmitted through air and noise pollution, and roadside vending increases their risk of accidents (Bhowmik, 2012; ILO, 2018). Women are more susceptible to vulnerability due to the fact that their working hours encompass not only the time they spend at their vending stalls but also the time necessary to complete household responsibilities (Roever & Skinner, 2016; Chen, 2016). Extended working hours are a clear indication of the substantial work deficit, and the reality is that they do not necessarily result in an

increase in income. These hours are not solely dedicated to selling but also to the procurement of materials, the establishment of a stall, and the commute to the workplace from home (Roy et al., 2020). Additionally, the increased competition has made it challenging for vendors to sell their products quickly, requiring them to remain at their stalls for extended periods in order to generate adequate sales (Bromley, 2000; Bhowmik & Saha, 2013). The first table under period of vending will highlight the vending context of the vendors:

Table 5.15: Vending context

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Monday to Saturday	159	79.5
Tuesday to Saturday	9	4.5
Saturday only	15	7.5
Friday only	10	5.0
Seasonally	7	3.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The table reveals that 159 vendors, accounting for 79.5 percent of the total, operate from Monday to Saturday, a practice common in Mizo society. This indicates a strong level of regular engagement and economic dependence on the trade, suggesting that vending is a primary livelihood activity for most. Also, Sunday is sacred and observed as a holiday for attending church service and other activities related to their religion.

“Kartluanin kan inhawng a, Sunday chiah ka chawl”

“I opened for the whole week; I have day off only on Sunday”

Nine vendors (4.5%) open their shops from Tuesday to Saturday because Saturday is designated for customers to stock up on vegetables; demand is low on Monday, and since vegetables are typically in low supply, they take a holiday on that day. 15 vendors (7.5%) and 10 vendors (5%) opened only on Saturday and Friday, respectively, as they came from the nearby villages to sell their own grown vegetables only on these days.

“Inrinni chiah ka inpho a, kartluanin chawhmeh ka zawng khawm thin zawrh tur. Thingtlang atanga rawn kal kan nih vangin, nitin in hawng thei pawh ka ni chiah lo”

“I sell only on Saturday but I used the whole week for collecting veggies for Saturday vending. I am from the village nearby; I do not have time to come everyday”

Only 7 vendors sell the vegetables seasonally meaning they do not sell vegetables on a regular basis as they rely on seasonal produce.

“Huanah thlai thar ka neih chauh in, ka inpho thin keichu”

“Only if I have produced in my garden, I came here for vending”

The data unequivocally indicates that vegetable selling is a constant, week-long activity for the majority of Mizo women sellers, underscoring its importance in their daily economic activities. Nonetheless, the existence of part-time and seasonal vendors illustrates the adaptability of the profession, catering to women with diverse availability and requirements. Support mechanisms must account for both full-time and part-time vending environments when devising interventions. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of the vendors sell the vegetables between Monday and Saturday, while 25 vendors sell only on Friday and Saturday, coming from nearby villages. In Aizawl, Saturday is observed as the day for stocking up on groceries and the main day of the bazaar. The table below depicts the working hours of the vendors.

Table 5.16: Working Hours

Time	Frequency	Percentage
10 hours	26	13.0
11 hours	9	4.5
12 hours	140	70.0
More than 12 hours	25	12.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

It can be seen from the table above that 140 vendors (70%) work for 12 hours, they usually open at 5:30-6:00 AM in the morning and closed at 5:30-6:00 in the evening. This highlights the demanding nature of vegetable vending, which often involves early morning procurement, transportation, setting up stalls, and selling throughout the day.

“Hna hi chu kan thawk rei, zing dar 5 velah chawhmeh bazarpui tang ka han la a, ka let hnuah thutna te remfel in, dar 6-7 inkar velah ka haw thei chauh thin”

“I usually work for long hours, in the morning, I collect vegetables from the Bazarpui around 5 AM and setup my location after coming back and I usually go home around 6-7 pm”

Only 9 (4.5%) vendors work for 11 hours, while 26 (13%) vendors open their stall after having breakfast at home. A small segment of the vendors works for 10 or 11 hours. These may include part-time vendors, older women, or those with other household responsibilities limiting their time in the market. 25 vendors (12.5%) work for more than 12 hours, as they came from nearby villages at midnight and work until all their vegetables are finished. A notable portion works more than 12 hours per day, indicating high physical and mental strain. These vendors are likely those managing transportation from distant locations, preparing unsold goods, or vending in high-traffic areas for longer durations. But this segment does not sell vegetables every day but only on Saturday.

“Kan thali dinhmun a zir nimai, kan zawh hma leh kan haw hma a. mahse a tlangpui chuan darker 12 aia tam hi chu kan awm tlangpui, inrinni chauh kan in hawng thung a”

“It depends on our veggies, if we finished early, then we can go home early. But, mostly we are here in the location for more than 12 hours as we open only on Saturday”

The research indicates that vegetable selling is a labour-intensive profession, with over 80% of vendors working 12 hours or more daily. This demonstrates their commitment and diligence, as well as the requirement to work extended hours to achieve a viable wage. The extended working hours generate apprehensions regarding occupational weariness, work-life equilibrium, and the necessity for support services, including rest areas, healthcare accessibility, and financial stability for women in the informal sector. Compared to the formal sector, the majority of vendors work for 12 hours, which is a significantly extended workday.

5.8 Health issue:

Due to their employment conditions, vegetable vendors frequently encounter substantial health challenges, such as exposure to environmental hazards and physical strain. Musculoskeletal problems, respiratory infections, diabetes, gastrointestinal

issues, hypertension and exposure to contaminants are among the numerous health issues that can result from these conditions (Charmes, 2002; Widiyastuti, 2013). Furthermore, these health issues may be further exacerbated by financial constraints and restricted access to healthcare (Chen, 2012; Lalmalsawmi, 2021). Musculoskeletal issues and fatigue may result from the physically taxing nature of their work, which includes the transportation of products and the extended hours they work. In the table, it has already shown the status of the health conditions of women vendors and the type of health issue they faced was already highlighted in the previous chapter.

The field data reveals that out of the 122 women vendors with health issues, 90 (45%) have sought medical advice. This indicates a fair level of awareness and access to basic healthcare services among nearly half of the respondents. While 32 vendors (16%) do not consult the doctor due to financial problems, time constraints, reliance on home remedies and the anxiety of diagnosing chronic illness, they do not consult a doctor if it is still bearable. Pi Siami 45 years old stated that,

“Doctor inentir hi ka hlau a, chuvang chuan damdawi chu keimahin ka ei mai zel, ka fate hi google a zawnng tur ten ka ti mai thin. A na viau te nih lem loh chuan ka inentir meuh lo”

“I am afraid of consulting a doctor, so I rather took medicine on my own and sometimes, I ask my children to google it for me. only in serious case I went and see the doctor”

Not only because of fear of consulting a doctor but also due to financial problem many women vendors do not consult a doctor. Pi Ziki 66 years commented on this condition:

“Inentir turin pawisa ka nei lo a, OPD a kal turin hun ka nei bawk silo a, ka inentir meuhlo, kan veng damdawi zuartute ka zawt mai zel damdawi eitur chu ka nawmsam loh deuh pawn”

“I do not have money to consult a doctor, also in order to consult a doctor from OPD it takes time, I don’t have time also. So, I ended up not consulting a doctor, I just asked the pharmacist to prescribe me a medicine when I am not feeling well”

A significant portion (39%) indicated "Not applicable," possibly including women who reported no recent health difficulties or do not consider their health concerns severe enough to necessitate medical treatment. This shows the need for awareness on health education and awareness programmes for the vendors. Providing vendors with access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene education can help reduce the risk of various illnesses. Although over half of the vendors get medical assistance when necessary, the aggregate 55% who either refrain from doing so or deem it inapplicable indicates a potential area for public health action. Outreach initiatives, health awareness campaigns, and inexpensive, accessible healthcare services might enhance the well-being of women in the informal vending sector.

Table 5.17: Type of Illness

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Hypertension	27	13.5
Ulcer	30	15.0
Nerve problem	26	13.0
Diabetes	32	16.0
Others	7	3.5
Not Applicable	78	39.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above table shows that among 200 responders, 122 (61%) indicated experiencing some type of sickness. This suggests that most vendors encounter health issues, perhaps associated with extended working hours, insufficient relaxation, or inadequate diet and healthcare. The kind of illness the vendors suffer: it was found that 27 vendors (13.5%) had hypertension problems, which are likely linked to stress associated with the working conditions. While 32 vendors (16%) had diabetes, a high prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among street vendors possibly was due to a combination of factors like diet, stress, and lack of exercise. This indicates a considerable risk of non-communicable illnesses, potentially attributable to lifestyle and stress factors. 30 vendors (15%) suffer from ulcers due to a lack of proper sanitation and hygiene practices, which can lead to the spread of foodborne illnesses like diarrhoea, vomiting, and stomach aches. These outcomes may be ascribed to erratic eating patterns, inadequate cleanliness, or food insecurity while vending.

Insufficient food safety practices in preparation and storage can also cause gastrointestinal problems. Pi Zairemi 39 years states that,

“Aw, ka pum hi tha lo a, a chhan a ka rin chu kan chaw ei dan mumal lo hi nih ka ring. A chang chuan zing chaw hi tlai ah te ka ei hman chauh thin, buai ana thin lutuk a”

“I do have stomach problem, maybe because I do not have proper timing for having meal. Sometime, I had my breakfast in the evening, if I am busy”

26 vendors (13%) had nerve problem as vendors who work long hours sitting can develop muscle aches, back pain, numbness and joint problems. Also, carrying and handling heavy items can also contribute to nerve issues.

“Kan thut rei thin lutuk vang nge, nerve lama harsatna ka nei a ka kawng leh ke ah hian, a za mem mem thin a. Doctor ka rawn a, nerve damdawi min pe a, mahse ka ei loh chuan a rawn lang leh zel bawk sia, buaithlak ang reng”

“Maybe because I sit for long hours, I have nerve problem on my back and leg, it’s tingling and numb on my back and feet, I consulted a doctor, he gave me some nerve medicine, but as soon as I stopped taking it appears again”

The other illness was also had by 7 vendors (3.5%). Thereby, it can be concluded that vegetable vendors in Aizawl, Mizoram, face various health issues due to their work environment, lifestyle, and the nature of their profession. These include hypertension, diabetes and gastrointestinal problems, musculoskeletal issues, and mental health challenges. The study underscores a troubling prevalence of lifestyle-related and occupational health issues among Mizo women vegetable sellers. The prevalence of non-communicable illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, together with gastrointestinal and musculoskeletal disorders, highlights the necessity for workplace health treatments, including rest areas and health camps. Enhanced accessibility to healthcare. This includes providing nutritional education and assistance, as well as instruction on ergonomic techniques. These strategies might improve the overall

well-being and productivity of these vendors while mitigating long-term health hazards.

Among the 122 vendors who had health issue, 99 (49.5%) of them had taken medication for their illness, while only 90 (45%) vendors of them had consulted a doctor. This shows that 9 (4.5%) vendors were not taken medicine properly. This is due to low awareness on health education and cost-savings.

“Doctor min chawh ang tak chuan treatment chu ka chhonzawm lemlo, a to ve a damdawi te kha, tlem a ka zia kha chuan ka ei zawm lemlo”

“It’s too expensive for me to continue the treatment the doctor’s prescribed. So, I could not continue after I am fine”

23 (11.5%) vendors do not take regular medication, but they take medicine in emergencies and lack proper treatment.

The study reveals that the majority of the women vendors have chronic health conditions like hypertension, ulcers, nerve problems, diabetes and other illnesses. The majority of them consulted a doctor for treatment and medication. Among the vendors who do not consult a doctor, some also take medicine by relying on their experience and diagnosis. This shows the need for health education and awareness among the vendors as they are working in unhygienic conditions and a polluted environment. Due to the busy schedule of the working conditions, proper timing of meals could not be followed; less exercise, carrying heavy weights and poor diet are the factors which cause health problems among the women vendors.

5.8 Financial Difficulty

The volume of trade and the type of products sold by vegetable vendors are the primary factors that determine the availability of finance. As a result, the majority of vendors approach lenders for capital, as vending is based on daily turnover (NCEUS, 2007; Bhowmik, 2012). Vendors borrow money from various sources to establish and operate their businesses. Access to capital is an economic linkage that connects vegetable vending to the economy, thereby influencing the profits and potential growth of vendors (Roever & Skinner, 2016; WIEGO, 2020). Capital is a critical component of the business, both when it is first established and later expanded. To survive, vegetable vendors borrow money from a variety of other sources. The data

on the status of the money borrowed reveals that 35 vendors (17.5%) borrow money from moneylender which indicates restricted access to formal financial institutions or a preference for rapid, informal financing notwithstanding its expense.

“Aw, puk ve e, a tirah chuan puk pawh ka tum lem lo, mahse ka fanu a damloh khan pawisa mamawhna a sang lutuk a. a puk tirtu kha inrinni tin a rawn kal thin a, ka thiannu hian a puk avangin, pawisa a rawn lam thin a. kan harsat lai tak lo ni nen, pawisa chu ka puk ve ta tawp a, alo awlsam bawh nen, a pung tur zat pawh kha ka ngaihtuah hmanlo, ka mamawh ema vang khan. Tunah pawh hian ka la rul ve zel inrinni piangin”

“Yes, I borrowed it from a moneylender. At first, I was not planning to borrow, but due to my daughter's illness, I was in urgent need of money. The lender used to come here every Saturday to get her money from my friend. So, due to circumstances I faced, I started borrowing money from her because it is easy to borrow, and the lender came to our location. I could not think about the interest rate either since I was in desperate need of money. I do still pay for the money every Saturday.”

Engaging with moneylenders sometimes entails elevated interest rates and informal, unsecured agreements, exposing borrowers to the dangers of debt cycles or abuse. The lack of borrowing from official sources (banks, microfinance institutions, SHGs) may signify insufficient paperwork or financial knowledge. The unavailability of credit products designed for informal merchants, distrust or lack of knowledge with institutional lenders. While 165 vendors (82.5%) do not borrow, as the interest is high from moneylenders and the procedure is difficult and there is an absence of a mortgage if applying from a government/private bank. This data does not include vendors who avail loans from a government-recognised bank. The main problem faced by these vendors is financial issues. Since vending is seen as a temporary occupation, they were not recognised by the institutional credit; therefore, availing loans from the bank is difficult. It has also identified that the process of taking loans from the bank takes time, and the procedure is difficult, as most of the forms are written in English, which is a hard task for vendors to avail loans, whereas the process is easy and simple when borrowing from the private money lender, but the interest is high. The majority of

Mizo women vegetable vendors do not engage in borrowing; nevertheless, the 17.5% who do depend only on moneylenders, a behaviour that may exacerbate financial instability. This indicates a necessity for enhanced access to formal, secure, and cheap credit institutions to safeguard and empower these women in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

The vendors are so poor that they must borrow from private lenders. The data shows that among the vendors who borrowed money, 25 vendors (12.5%) borrowed at the interest rate of 5-10%, which is quite high for a vendor to clear the money from their meagre income. While 4 vendors' interest rate is nil, as they borrowed from their family and relatives with time constraints. 165 vendors (82.5%) do not borrow money from a private money lender or family relatives. The research suggests that among the vendors who borrowed from private money lenders, a sizable majority of respondents pay interest rates more than 10%, which leads to them becoming trapped in a never-ending cycle of debt because of the high interest rates. According to the report, there is an entirely unofficial and unrecognised short-term borrowing system in the market. The local moneylender looks after this. The amount made available through this short-term loan is contingent upon the vendor's individual ability to repay. Additionally, moneylenders have greater faith in female vendors than in their male counterparts since women are more likely to make timely repayments. These vendors take out loans for a variety of reasons, including their business activities, medical care, prescription drugs, pregnancy costs, accidents, children's schooling, and more. Vegetable vendors cannot obtain loans from official financial institutions since they are part of the informal sector. The data indicates that although the majority of Mizo women vegetable vendors refrain from borrowing, those who do often incur interest rates of 5–10%, presumably from informal moneylenders. A limited percentage possess access to interest-free credit. This underscores the necessity of broadening access to equitable and safe financial services, particularly for informal women entrepreneurs, to diminish reliance on potentially hazardous lending sources and promote sustainable livelihoods.

The vendors were asked whether they faced situations where they were unable to clear the borrowed money, table. Shows that only 7 vendors (3.5%) reported clearing the

borrowed money, whereas 22 vendors (11%) reported facing a problem in clearing the borrowed money on time. This indicates that financial strain is a common experience among the vendors who borrowed money. The rate of interest and the amount they earn do not match, which resulted in facing a difficulty in clearing the amount on time. This causes stress to vendors, as this money is not only used in vending but also for other financial expenses like medications, children's education and maternity expenses. These findings underscore an urgent necessity for financial literacy initiatives, debt management assistance, and alternative, low-risk credit frameworks. The evidence indicates that borrowing without adequate financial infrastructure results in economic strain, particularly for informal female workers. A substantial majority of Mizo women vegetable merchants who incur debt struggle to repay it, indicating a cycle of financial instability. Given that over 60% of borrowers have difficulties in repayment, there is a distinct need for more accessible and inexpensive financial services, including microloans with flexible repayment terms, financial counselling, and the enhancement of women-led savings organisations to mitigate dependence on high-risk lending. The next data highlights how they manage the situation when faced difficulty in clearing the borrowed money on time.

Table 5.18: Managing the Difficulty

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Take help from friends	7	3.5
Take help from family members	11	5.5
Sell valuable items	4	2.0
Not applicable	172	86.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

Table 5.26 shows how the vendors manage the situation when they are unable to clear the borrowed money. 3.5% of respondents seek help from their friends; 11 vendors (5.5%) reported they take help from family members, while 2% of the respondents sell their valuable items for clearing the money. This shows that due to its high interest, the vendors faced difficulty in paying back the borrowed money, and they sought help from their loved ones.

So, it can be concluded that due to the temporary nature of their work, they are seen as engaging in an illegal profession, which results in difficulty in accessing the institutional credit. Therefore, 17.5% of vendors borrowed money from private money lenders and relatives with high interest of 5-10%, which resulted in a debt trap for the local money lenders. This resulted in facing difficulty in paying back the borrowed amount on time. They used money not only for their occupations but also for other financial expenses like medications, children's education and maternity expenses. This led to seeking help from family and relatives; in serious cases, they even sell their valuable items like gold rings, necklaces and appliances to pay the borrowed money.

5.9 Status and Functionality of Registered Vegetable Vendors' Associations or Agencies

The establishment and formalisation of vegetable vendors' associations or agencies is essential for consolidating informal workers, enhancing their representation, and promoting their rights (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013; Roy et al., 2020). Collective platforms are crucial for Mizo women vegetable vendors in tackling shared issues concerning vending spaces, income security, legal recognition, and access to government schemes (Lalmalsawmi, 2021).

A registered association offers organisational strength and representation while also enabling training, welfare support, and negotiations with local authorities (Lalrindiki, 2017). The status of associations among Mizo women vendors is constrained, as many continue to operate informally or lack awareness of the advantages of formal registration. Assessing the extent of registration and the functionality of such associations is crucial for evaluating institutional support, empowerment, and self-organization within this workforce, as well as identifying opportunities to enhance their collective agency.

This field data illustrates the level of organisation and institutional support accessible to Mizo women's vegetable vendors via formal associations or agencies, serving as a significant indicator of their working conditions and collective empowerment. A slight majority of respondents, specifically 109 out of 200 (54.5%), indicated that they are not members of a registered vegetable vendors' association or agency. This suggests that over fifty percent of the vendors function autonomously, lacking the support, representation, or collective bargaining power that a formal group could provide. This

isolation diminishes their ability to negotiate with authorities, access government programs, or advocate for improved working conditions. This highlights the precarious and unprotected status of informal vending in Aizawl. Among the designated marketplaces, Chawlhmun Bazaar does not have a proper association, as they are too small to form one.

Pi Hmuni from Ropaiabawk Bazar stated that:

“Sawrkarin Bazar hmun pangai min sak sak tho na chu, customer an tlem avang hian thu hi kan tam lo a, kawngsira inpho an thlang zawk tlat a, chuvang chuan association anga han ding tur pawn tihngaihna vak a awm chuanglo”

“Even though the government constructed a proper marketplace, due to less customers most of the vendors from this locality prefer selling their vegetables on the roadside then vending in a marketplace. So, we could not form a proper association due to less number of vendors”

Conversely, 91 vendors (45.5%) indicated membership in a registered association or agency. This indicates an increasing trend towards organisation among approximately 50 percent of the vendors. Membership in a formal organisation provides various advantages, including representation in decision-making, access to shared resources, legal assistance, and information regarding rights and welfare programmes. This also suggests a potential basis for collective empowerment; however, the proportion indicates a necessity for broader inclusion.

The data indicates a varied level of organisation among Mizo women's vegetable vendors in Aizawl. Approximately 50% are affiliated with registered associations, yet a slight majority continues to function without formal support or representation. This restricts their capacity to obtain improved working conditions, advocate for their rights, and access institutional benefits. Enhancing and broadening the influence of vendors' associations or agencies is crucial for advancing the livelihood security, dignity, and bargaining power of women vendors in urban areas.

5.9.1 Effectiveness of the Vegetable Vendors' Association in Supporting Women Vendors

Vegetable Vendor's Associations establish themselves to support and represent the collective interests of vendors, particularly those operating in informal environments (Roever & Skinner, 2016). For Mizo women vegetable vendors, such associations serve as a vital support system, providing assistance during crises, safeguarding their rights, negotiating with authorities, and enhancing working conditions (Lalmalsawmi, 2021).

Evaluating the utility of these associations offers insights into their effectiveness, accessibility, and relevance for women vendors. This also indicates whether the association is effectively performing its intended function or is merely symbolic. This evaluation aids in comprehending the actual effects of collective organisation and its meaningful contribution to the empowerment and well-being of Mizo women vegetable vendors.

This field data reflects the effectiveness and relevance of Vegetable Vendor Associations in meeting the needs of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. The responses elucidate the extent to which these associations have enhanced the working conditions of vendors. A majority of respondents, specifically 109 out of 200 (54.5%), indicated that the response was "Not Applicable." This suggests that more than fifty percent of women vendors lack affiliation with any vendor association, or that such associations are either inactive or unrecognised in their respective regions. This indicates a minimal degree of institutional engagement, leading to numerous vendors lacking collective support or representation, thereby highlighting the sector's fragmented and unstructured characteristics. Only 60 vendors (30%) indicated that the association has been beneficial at some point, suggesting that associations, when operational, offer a certain level of support or advantage—such as dispute resolution, mutual aid, eviction protection, or access to shared resources. This indicates that associations may positively affect working conditions; however, their influence is constrained by factors such as scope, capacity, or coverage. Additionally, 31 vendors (15.5%) indicated that the association has not been beneficial, suggesting potential dysfunction, lack of responsiveness, or deficiencies in communication and leadership within certain associations. This highlights deficiencies in effectiveness and suggests

that mere association is insufficient; the quality of operation and inclusivity are also critical factors.

The data indicates that although Vegetable Vendor Associations can provide support, their influence and effectiveness are constrained. Over half of the vendors indicating that the question is not applicable highlights a significant deficiency in formal organisation and collective support, thereby diminishing their capacity to tackle shared challenges. It is essential to enhance and fortify vendor associations, ensuring inclusivity and active participation, while also providing necessary resources and recognition. This approach aims to significantly improve the working conditions and empowerment of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl city.

5.10 Support from the government and non-government organisation

Mizo women vegetable vendors significantly contribute to the local economy by supplying fresh produce and supporting their families through their vending activities. However, instability, inadequate income, and insufficient social protection often characterise their labour (Bhowmik, 2012; Roy et al., 2020). In this context, support from governmental and non-government organisations is crucial for improving livelihoods and fostering overall empowerment (Chen, 2016; WIEGO, 2020).

Government initiatives designed to enhance women's economic participation, access to credit, training, and market infrastructure can markedly improve their working conditions. NGOs provide support through capacity building, awareness programmes, legal assistance, and health initiatives, aiding women in overcoming social and economic barriers (Lalrindiki, 2017). The extent and efficacy of this support demonstrate institutional commitment to enhancing the conditions of informal workers and promoting inclusive development. Assessing this support aids in recognising deficiencies and prospects for enhancing the economic contributions of Mizo women vendors.

So, the field data reveals that a total of 65 vendors reported that they got support from the government and non-government organisations. This indicates the existence of some interventions; however, the low percentage implies limitations in coverage, accessibility, or effectiveness of these initiatives. The report also prompts enquiries regarding awareness, outreach, and the inclusivity of existing programmes aimed at

women in the informal sector. From the fieldwork observations and interviews, it was heard that during the pandemic many NGOs and the government helped the vegetable vendors with cash or in kind. Other than this, the Congress government supported the vendors under the NLUP scheme with the amount of 2 lakhs, and under the MNF government, they were supported under the SEDP scheme and got the amount of 80000-1 lakh for the 1st instalment. Other than these, they do not have much to mention when asked about the support they got from the government and non-government organisations. While the majority, 135 vendors (67.5%), do not get any support from the government and non-government organisations. This underscores a significant deficiency in social protection and livelihood support for informal workers. Although women vendors make substantial contributions to the local economy, they largely remain outside formal support systems, including financial assistance, training programmes, infrastructure development, and welfare initiatives. The absence of support significantly impacts their working conditions, compelling them to function without sufficient infrastructure, health benefits, access to credit, or legal protection. This also heightens their susceptibility to income instability, exploitation, and occupational hazards.

The table clearly shows that the majority of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl function without institutional support, resulting in precarious and unsustainable working conditions. The lack of support from governmental and non-governmental organisations renders them vulnerable to economic and social risks. There is a pressing requirement for inclusive policies, targeted interventions, and enhanced institutional engagement to enhance the working conditions and livelihoods of these women.

5.10.1 Types of support needed from the government and non-government organisation.

Mizo women vegetable vendors encounter various challenges in their daily livelihoods, such as restricted access to capital, unstable vending locations, inadequate market infrastructure, and insufficient social protection (Lalmalsawmi, 2021). Despite the assistance provided by governmental and non-governmental organisations, numerous needs persist unaddressed, impacting economic stability and empowerment.

Essential support encompasses financial assistance, including low-interest loans or microcredit; training programs focused on business skills, hygiene, and pricing; improved vending infrastructure such as sheds, storage facilities, and clean water; and legal protection against harassment or eviction (Bhowmik & Saha, 2013). Furthermore, social welfare support such as health insurance, childcare services, and participation in public schemes can markedly enhance their quality of life. Identifying specific needs is essential for designing targeted interventions that enhance income and promote dignity and long-term empowerment in the profession (Chen, 2012; ILO, 2018).

Table 5.19: Type of support needed from the government and non-government organisation.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Credit facility	125	62.5
Permanent seat in the market	72	36.0
Training on entrepreneurship	3	1.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

Out of the total 200 vendors, 125 (62.5%) reported that a credit facility is the kind of support they need from government or non-government organisations. This suggests that limited access to affordable credit or capital constitutes a significant obstacle to their capacity to acquire goods, invest in storage, or grow their business. Numerous vendors depend on daily or weekly earnings without substantial financial reserves, rendering them susceptible to income shocks, price volatility, and emergencies. The demand for credit support underscores the necessity for inclusive financial services and microfinance specifically designed for informal women workers. This shows the level of their financial need and financial assistance for upgrading their sales and the socioeconomic status of these women vegetable vendors. While 72 vendors (36%) articulated the necessity for a permanent market position, highlighting the unstable conditions of their existing vending agreements. Many female vendors function in temporary or roadside settings lacking legal protection and adequate infrastructure, rendering them vulnerable to eviction, theft, adverse weather conditions, and disputes with other vendors. A designated permanent space would enhance security, stability, and dignity in the work environment, thereby significantly improving working conditions. Only 3 vendors demonstrated a requirement for entrepreneurship

training. The low percentage may indicate a lack of awareness regarding the benefits of such training, or it could suggest that immediate practical needs, such as financial support and secure vending space, are prioritised over capacity-building efforts. This highlights the necessity for improved promotion and accessibility of skill development programmes for vendors.

The table indicates that the working conditions of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl are influenced by financial insecurity and spatial instability. The significant demand for credit facilities and permanent vending spaces indicates the structural deficiencies present. Meeting these needs via inclusive financial services, market infrastructure, and legal recognition would significantly enhance their livelihoods. Entrepreneurship training, though often deprioritised, serves as a long-term empowerment tool when accompanied by support for basic needs.

5.10.2 Entrepreneurship training

Entrepreneurship training is essential for converting informal workers into self-sufficient and empowered individuals (Roy et al., 2020). Training for women involved in vegetable vending equips them with essential skills, knowledge, and confidence to enhance their business management capabilities. This encompasses critical domains such as financial literacy, pricing strategies, inventory management, customer relations, and market expansion, all of which are vital for enhancing income and sustainability.

Entrepreneurship training for Mizo women vegetable vendors improves business practices and fosters enhanced decision-making power and economic independence. This approach facilitates a transition from survival-based vending to strategic, growth-oriented entrepreneurship (Lalmalsawmi, 2021; Lalrindiki, 2017). The evaluation of training availability and its impact indicates the degree to which these women are prepared to succeed in a competitive market and identifies areas requiring additional support for their sustained empowerment.

The field data illustrates the availability and access to entrepreneurship training for Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl, which is a crucial element for enhancing livelihood sustainability and economic empowerment. Among 200 respondents, 199 vendors (99.5%) indicated that they had not received any entrepreneurship training. The lack, inaccessibility, or inadequate execution of entrepreneurial

capacity-building programmes for women vendors in the city is evident. This gap substantially impacts their working conditions, as these women lack training in essential business domains, including pricing strategies, inventory management, customer relations, marketing, and financial planning. Without training, vendors are unable to optimise profits, respond to market fluctuations, or expand their operations, which results in a continuous cycle of low income and restricted growth. Only one vendor (0.5%) indicated that they had received entrepreneurship training. This minimal figure indicates significant under-representation in skill development initiatives, underscoring a lost opportunity for enhancing vendor's productivity and resilience.

The data indicates that entrepreneurship training, crucial for improving business skills and empowering informal workers, is largely lacking among Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. This indicates a significant deficiency in support systems and implies that both government and non-government organisations have not successfully targeted or engaged this vulnerable group. Addressing this gap through inclusive and accessible training programmes, specifically designed for the context of informal vending, is essential for enhancing working conditions, fostering self-reliance, and facilitating the long-term economic empowerment of women vendors.

5.11 Problem faced in the workplace:

Street vending is the most visible aspect of the informal sector and an essential phenomenon of the Indian economy. It is a significant source of self-employment for impoverished women in urban and rural areas (Panwar, 2015). Women vegetable vendors encounter numerous challenges due to their vulnerability, which is not shielded by the government, NGOs, trade unions, or labor laws. They encounter numerous workplace obstacles, despite their significant contributions to society. On the one hand, they are subjected to aggressive and boorish customer behavior due to their low socio-economic status, while on the other hand, they are harassed by police officials for occupying significant traffic junctions (Karthikeyan, R., & Mangaleswaran, R., 2013).

"The lack of recognition of the role of street vendors culminates in a multitude of problems faced by them, such as obtaining licenses, insecurity of earnings, insecurity

of place of hawking, gratifying officers and muscle-men, constant eviction threats, fines, and harassment by traffic policemen," states the "Report on the Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods" by the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector. Vendors are frequently perceived as a public nuisance.

They are alleged to be involved in anti-social activities, causing traffic congestion, and denying pedestrians their space. Municipal authorities, police, and housing societies frequently target vendors, with the assistance of the media (Bromley, 2000; Bhowmik, 2012).

The current chapter focuses on the challenges faced by women street vendors, including the nature of the problem at the workplace, the nature of the threat and harassment they experience, the issues related to their eviction and confiscation of goods, their access to finance, the amount of bribe they must pay to sustain themselves in the market, and the facilities available at vending locations. Vegetable vending in urban areas is marked by its accessibility, small-scale operations conducted within temporary setups, and the flexibility of location, lacking a permanent place or store (Panwar, 2015). Vendors offer their products without adhering to any set hours for vending in the unregulated and competitive market landscape (Charmes, 2002; Widiyastuti, 2013). Frequently, vending operates in violation of government regulations, relying instead on informal sources for its credit requirements (Panwar, 2015).

Numerous issues are linked to street vending, including the absence of designated vending areas, health concerns, insufficient infrastructure, lack of legal safeguards, substandard working conditions, and unstable income, among others. They are required to engage in extended hours of work without breaks and face a deficiency in public amenities. The climate exacerbates their difficulties with rain, intense heat, and the biting winds of winter (Jacques Charmes, 2002; Widiyastuti, D., 2013). The majority of issues stem from the lack of consideration for street vendors in the planning of urban streets or land-use strategies. As per Section 283 of the Indian Constitution, creating a danger or obstruction to the public is subject to a penalty, which may reach a maximum of two hundred rupees. Consequently, street vendors

encounter increasing challenges in their work environment from the public, law enforcement, politicians, and local troublemakers.

This study aims to investigate if the sample respondents encounter any challenges in their workplace environment. In addressing this question, table 5.32 illustrates that, hindered by safety concerns and various other issues, all respondents indicated that they encounter challenges during the procurement and sale of products in the workplace. So, the table below shows the nature of problem faced by the women vegetable vendors at the workplace.

Table 5.20: Nature of Problem faced at the workplace

Sl. No.	Nature of Problem faced at the workplace	Frequency (%)		Total
		Yes	No	
1.	Theft	122 (61.0)	78 (39.0)	200 (100.0)
2.	Non-sales	130 (65.0)	70 (35.0)	200 (100.0)
3.	Unhygienic workplace	61 (30.5)	139 (69.5)	200 (100.0)
4.	No permanent location	108 (54.0)	92 (46.0)	200 (100.0)
5.	Sun and rain	117 (58.5)	83 (41.5)	200 (100.0)
6.	Flood issue	90 (45.0)	110 (55.0)	200 (100.0)
7.	Spatial issue	134 (67.0)	66 (33.0)	200 (100.0)
8.	Competition with co-worker	148 (74.0)	63 (31.5)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field survey

Despite being a significant part of our economy's trade and commerce, the vegetable vending industry faces numerous challenges. Significant challenges faced in the workplace include deficiencies in infrastructure, absence of designated vending areas, harassment from law enforcement and municipal authorities, abrupt evictions from vending locations, lack of governmental acknowledgement of their business, and unsanitary conditions. An attempt is made to study the problem faced by women vegetable vendors in Aizawl city. The above table shows the nature of the problem faced by women vendors at the workplace. The major issue identified from the data is competition among colleagues (74%), which is the most commonly reported issue. This indicates market saturation, a constrained consumer base, and overlapping

vending territories, resulting in conflict or diminished revenue. Spatial challenges (67%) and non-sales factors (65%) are also significant, reflecting restricted space availability, disorganised market configurations, and erratic client traffic. Theft (61%) and exposure to sun and rain (58.5%) indicate the security and environmental concerns encountered in informal and open vending circumstances. While the moderately reported problem of no permanent location (54%) indicates that over half of the vendors experience volatility in their vending spaces, perhaps owing to eviction threats, municipal relocations, or insufficient licensing. Less frequently reported issues are flooding (45%) and unsanitary workplaces (30.5%), which are somewhat underreported; however, they remain serious. These may be challenges that are seasonal or peculiar to certain locations, impacting merchants unevenly. 122 vendors (61%) reported theft at the workplace, and 130 vendors (65%) stated poor product sales. An impression has been gathered during the course of fieldwork that the increased number of vendors after the pandemic and late payment of wages by the government are the two main factors which cause low product sales. 61 vendors (30.5%) reported vending in an unhygienic workplace, and 108 vendors (54%) reported not having a permanent location for their business, shifting from one place to another as the designated market could not accommodate all the vendors, as this occupation is temporary and people come and go. 117 vendors (58%) reported working under an extreme climate of sun and rain without proper infrastructure. These vendors could not be able to sell their vegetables in the morning shift during summer due to high heat, as they need to cover their vegetables from spoiling by the sun and rain during monsoon. This resulted in poor product sales. 90 vendors (45%) faced problems because of floods during the monsoon due to the improper infrastructure of their vending area; these vendors could not be able to sell their vegetables during the monsoon due to heavy rain and floods. 134 vendors (67%) faced problems with spatial issues; this is one of the main problems faced by vendors who do not have a permanent location in a designated marketplace, as there is no proper demarcation that divides the vendors equally, which resulted in disputes among the co-vendors. 143 vendors (74%) reported facing competition with co-vendors in getting the customers, which led to verbal abuse amongst themselves.

Mizo women vegetable vendors encounter several job problems, with competitiveness, geographical constraints, and theft being the most significant. These challenges are intricately linked to the informal characteristics of their profession, insufficient infrastructure support, and inadequate urban market planning. Targeted initiatives by local authorities, non-governmental organisations, and urban planners are crucial to provide safer, more stable, and economically sustainable working circumstances for these women. The findings indicate that most respondents do not have a designated location for vending, leading to a deficiency in security, stability, and social standing, which are crucial for the growth and advancement of their business. In this context, establishing a designated area for hawking should be prioritised above all else. In addition to this, respondents reported various risk factors, including the threat of eviction, working in extreme temperatures, handling non-perishable goods, theft, unsanitary workplace conditions, and prolonged separation from family. Therefore, it is essential for those in positions of authority to recognise and tackle the challenges encountered by women vendors.

5.11.1 Problem faced in vending location

Mizo women vegetable vendors significantly contribute to the informal economy by supporting their families through daily sales in markets and roadside locations (Bhowmik, 2010; ILO, 2018; Roy & Ghosh, 2021). The vending locations in which they operate frequently lack safety, regulation, and adequate equipment, thereby presenting considerable challenges to their livelihood and well-being. These women encounter various challenges, including the absence of permanent vending locations, insufficient infrastructure, vulnerability to theft and accidents, and a lack of essential amenities such as clean restrooms and secure storage facilities.

Numerous vendors are compelled to sell their goods on pavements, lacking protection from environmental elements and vehicular traffic, which heightens their susceptibility to theft, accidents, and harassment. The lack of cold storage results in elevated spoilage rates, diminishing income and exacerbating economic insecurity. Additionally, conflicts regarding space, concerns about losing vending locations during illness, and insufficient hygiene facilities particularly significant for women contribute to the ongoing challenges faced daily. The issues presented illustrate the

overarching problem of institutional neglect towards informal workers, underscoring the critical necessity for improved policies and infrastructure to support and safeguard Mizo women vegetable vendors at their vending locations.

Sl. no	Table 5.21: Problem faced in vending location			
	Options	Frequency		
		Yes	No	
1.	Safe vending place	70 (35.0)	130 (65.0)	200 (100.0)
2.	Vegetable perishes due to non-sales	126 (63.0)	74 (37.0)	200 (100.0)
3.	Chance of losing the business if sick more than one week	85 (42.5)	115 (57.5)	200 (100.0)
4.	Chance of losing the customer, if not maintained cleanliness	179 (89.5)	21 (10.5)	200 (100.0)
5.	Toilet facility	108 (54.0)	92 (46.0)	200 (100.0)
6.	Disputes with fellow vendors	134 (67.0)	66 (33.0)	200 (100.0)
7.	Use of vulgar words against co vendor	117 (58.5)	83 (41.5)	200 (100.0)
8.	Proper Storage facility	44 (22.0)	156 (78.0)	200 (100.0)
9.	Confiscated by the authority	4 (2.0)	196 (98.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field survey

From the data it can be seen that the predominant issues are cleanliness and customer retention, accounting for 89.5%. Almost all sellers believe that neglecting hygiene results in client attrition. This underscores the essential importance of cleanliness for their business sustainability. Conflicts with other vendors (67%) and the spoilage of vegetables (63%) are significant issues, highlighting fierce rivalry and the susceptibility of perishable commodities in unsold stock. The prevalence of vulgar language (58.5%) indicates significant interpersonal friction or stress in vending areas. Moderate issues are the absence of toilet facilities (54%); over fifty per cent of vendors lack access to fundamental sanitation, adversely impacting women's health, dignity, and productivity. The likelihood of business loss due to illness (42.5%) highlights the precarious nature of their self-employment, as a brief illness could result in revenue loss or a shift in clientele. Infrequently documented issues are insufficient secure vending areas (35%): Although fewer sellers explicitly mention this, the 35% still constitutes a substantial segment confronting safety issues, such as theft or eviction threats. Lack of storage facility (22%) signifies inadequate infrastructure for retaining

unsold inventory, resulting in waste and financial detriment. Confiscation by authorities (2%) indicates a level of municipal enforcement or harassment, which may be related to vending in prohibited zones.

Concerns around hygiene, safety, storage, and sanitation highlight the absence of established infrastructure for vending. Elevated interpersonal conflicts (disagreements, profane language) and the risk of business loss due to illness or unsold inventory necessitate support structures, including vendor cooperatives, grievance redressal methods, and vendor insurance or backup plans. Insufficient access to sanitation facilities, coupled with adverse weather conditions or illness, subjects women to unsanitary and unsafe working environments. Fundamental infrastructure, including restrooms, storage facilities, shaded and secure vending areas, and the availability of short-term replacement programs for ill vendors can markedly diminish susceptibility. Seventy vendors (35%) reported feeling safe in their vending locations because they have permanent seats in the designated market, where they install proper iron grills with secure locking systems. Among the designated marketplaces, New Market installed CCTV using funds contributed by the vendors to monitor the area for theft. In contrast, the majority of 130 vendors (65%) reported that they are vending in unsafe locations where they are prone to accidents and robberies. This is due to the unavailability of a properly built structure where they could install a proper locking system. They sell their vegetables on the pavement, where they need to seek permission from nearby stores for storing their goods. Occasionally they even left their vegetables at the vending location where they were robbed by the thief. In Aizawl, where roads are steep and narrow, it's dangerous for them to be hit by a car since they sit on the pavement.

126 vendors (63%) reported perishing the vegetables due to poor sale of the product. The vegetable vendors relied on the occupation where the goods are easily perishable; this lowered the profit of the vendors if they did not sell fast. This condition is due to poor storage facilities and the unavailability of cold storage; sometimes they need to carry it home for storage. 85 vendors (42.5%) have a chance of losing the vending location if she is sick for more than one week; this shows the vulnerable status of the vendors and how temporary the nature of vegetable vending is. So, even if they feel

unwell and have health issues, they must keep the vending location open. Vendors fear losing their locations, even though the loss may not be permanent. Since the vegetable vendors sell food to consume, they need to maintain the location tidy and clean as well as freshen the vegetables to look appealing for the customers. It has found out that 179 vendors (89.5%) reported a chance of losing the customer if they do not maintain cleanliness at the vending locations. This study shows that cleanliness is important for the vendors, as they depend on selling food for survival.

The vegetable vendors are women, and having access to toilet facilities with proper water connections is important for their personal hygiene during their menstrual cycles. It has been found that 108 vendors (54%) reported having a toilet facility, but these toilets are in poor condition because they lack proper water connections and doors for privacy. They used their cloth for covering themselves while using the toilet. They rent a toilet nearby for 10 rupees for urine and 20 rupees for passing stool. Ninety-two vendors (46%) reported lacking a proper toilet facility because they do not have a permanent vending location, so they borrow a nearby toilet for personal use and sometimes pay the fee to use it. The government needs to take action to provide proper amenities, including water connections for hygiene, which will help reduce health issues faced by women vendors. One of the vendors says that

“Zunin mumal kan nei silo a, pawisa chawi na chuan a uiawm sia, bucket te kan nei a kan zung mai zel chuan tuihawk luankawr ah kan va paih leh mai thin, mahse period kan neih hian a buaithlak thin a chang chuan ka chawl mai thin a tam lai chuan, zunin mumal neihloh chu a hreawm khawp mai”

“Since, we do not have proper toilet facility, instead of paying money for urine, I bought small bucket and used it for urine, after finishing I poured it on the side drain. But it is very difficult when the menstrual period is intense, sometimes I took leave when the menstrual bleeding is heavy as we do not proper toilet. It is problematic for us without the proper toilet facility.

A total of 134 vendors (67%) reported disputes with fellow vendors because the vending location lacks proper demarcation to separate the areas. Due to spatial issues,

the majority of the disputes between co-vendors occur. The other factor which triggers the disputes is getting the customers, as they do not have proper ethics and regulations in dealing with the customers and the open space of their vending location; they were fighting over getting the customers. It was reported by 117 vendors (58.5%) using vulgar words against co-vendors; this is like a normal thing for women vendors, since due to the environment in which they sell, they need to be strong-headed and protective, as they are using one location with other co-vendors without a proper divider. This makes them have an attitude where there is a saying, “Women vendors have an attitude.” Their defence mechanism is so strong due to the environment in which they socialised. *The survival of the fittest* is seen among these women, which causes them to easily use vulgar words with their co-vendors. One of the vendors says

“Tihian tawngkam na tak tak ten kan han inhau buan buan a, kan inkawm leh vek tho a, nileng a han thut ho chuan chawhmeh zuar theuh theuh inhralh duh vek chu, han inhauh chang chu awmlo theilo, chhungkua ang kan nia a kan in pawh phah zawk kan inhauh ngam hian”

“We used to have disputes and sometimes used vulgar words against each other, but we get along together again, since we sit all day, selling the same vegetables, wanting to sell more, disputes is a must. But in the end, we are all family this will happen but these things bring us more closure and the bonding is more strong”

44 vendors (22%) reported having proper storage facilities, while 156 vendors (78%) reported lacking them. Vegetable vendors are women who sell perishable goods and who are in high need of a good storage facility. Due to the lower profit and low income, they could not afford to build proper storage or rent a storage unit since the rent is high. So, many vendors were robbed because of poor storage facilities, and many vegetables perished due to the unavailability of storage facilities. These vendors need to sell at a low price, lower than their cost price, without any profit due to the unavailability of storage units. The vendors who opted for having proper storage facilities also rent a storage unit with a high rental fee. If the government gives priority to these problems, they could get more profit than before, and their work could be meaningful.

Compared to other states, the vendors in Aizawl city do not face much confiscation from the authority; only 4 vendors (2%) reported confiscation of the goods by the authority. These vendors are from the New Market area, where market checkers are available; they claim their goods by giving bribes to the checkers in cash. This led to the prevalence of getting confiscated by the market checker. They are not aware of complaining about the situations to the police. They just accepted the situations, as they considered themselves illegal occupants. The situation of Mizo women vegetable vendors highlights various structural and social challenges that jeopardise their safety, income, and dignity. A minority of vendors (35%) operate in secure vending environments equipped with infrastructure and CCTV surveillance (e.g., New Market), whereas the majority (65%) face unsafe conditions characterised by risks of accidents, theft, and inadequate storage facilities. Vendors frequently utilise public pavements for their operations, relying on adjacent shops for temporary storage. In certain instances, they leave goods unattended, resulting in a high incidence of theft and an increased risk of spoilage for perishable items.

A notable proportion (63%) indicates experiencing financial losses attributed to unsold perishable goods, primarily resulting from inadequate cold storage facilities. Health-related absences pose an additional risk to their income, as 42.5% express concern over losing vending space if they take time off due to illness, underscoring the informal and precarious nature of their employment. Maintaining cleanliness is essential for customer retention, as 89.5% of individuals recognise that inadequate hygiene at vending locations leads to a loss of business. Maintaining hygiene presents significant challenges, particularly in contexts with restricted access to adequate toilet facilities. While 54% indicated access to toilets, the majority are in inadequate condition, lacking privacy and water connections, which compels vendors to resort to improvised solutions. Forty-six percent depend on pay-per-use public toilets or borrowed facilities, which raises concerns regarding dignity and menstrual hygiene.

Interpersonal conflict represents an additional concern. Sixty-seven percent of vendors reported conflicts with peers regarding space and customer access, attributed to the lack of clear boundaries in vending areas. Approximately 58.5% reported using

vulgar language during conflicts, indicating the high-stress, competitive nature of the environment and the absence of regulation in open vending areas. Despite these tensions, some vendors observe that such disputes frequently result in enhanced relationships among them. Storage continues to be a significant concern, as 78% of individuals do not have access to adequate facilities. Inadequate secure storage exposes vendors to potential financial losses due to spoilage and theft, while those utilising rental storage units incur elevated fees that diminish already limited profit margins. Government intervention in this domain has the potential to enhance financial outcomes substantially. In contrast to numerous other Indian cities, merely 2% of vendors in Aizawl indicated that their goods were confiscated by authorities. This phenomenon is primarily confined to regions such as New Market, where vendors must engage in informal payments to retrieve their goods, reflecting a lack of awareness regarding legal rights and the informal nature of their vending operations.

Mizo women vegetable vendors function under precarious conditions, encountering deficiencies in safety, infrastructure, hygiene facilities, and legal support. In spite of these challenges, they exhibit resilience and a robust sense of solidarity. Government intervention and structural support are essential to improve security, dignity, and economic sustainability. Mizo women vegetable vendors face multiple challenges at their vending locations, ranging from interpersonal conflicts and hygiene concerns to infrastructure and safety issues. The data clearly reveals an urgent need for structured market spaces, improved vendor welfare policies, and capacity-building support to ensure sustainable and dignified livelihoods for these women.

Table 5.22: Physical risk

Options	Frequency		
	Yes	No	
Worked in clean environment	87 (43.5)	113 (56.5)	200 (100.0)
Operates near open drainage	38 (19.0)	162 (81.0)	200 (100.0)
Worked in noise polluted area	67 (33.5)	133 (66.5)	200 (100.0)
Exposed to sunlight	101 (50.5)	99 (49.5)	200 (100.0)
Goes for defecation in the open space during vending time	7 (3.5)	193 (96.5)	200 (100.0)

Operates near construction site	9 (4.5)	191 (95.5)	200 (100.0)
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Source: Field survey

The above tables show that the significant physical risks identified include exposure to sunlight (50.5%); half of the vendors operate under direct sunlight without adequate protection. This poses health hazards, including heat stress, dehydration, exhaustion, and chronic dermatological issues. Insufficient clean work environment (56.5%) indicates that the majority of the vendors operate in unsanitary conditions, indicative of inadequate sanitation and waste management at vending locations, and noise pollution (33.5%); one-third experience noise-related discomfort, which can impact mental well-being and communication with clients. Moderate to low physical risks include closeness to open drainage (19%); this nonetheless presents considerable health hazards for those impacted, including exposure to unpleasant odours, insects, and waterborne illnesses. Proximity to construction sites (4.5%) and open defecation (3.5%): these factors are infrequent yet signify significant risks encountered by a limited number of vendors, especially for sanitation and locational safety.

The data suggests that the vendors faced occupational health hazards due to exposure to sunshine, environmental pollution, and noise, which exacerbated occupational health stress, particularly for women engaged in prolonged outdoor vending. Urgent requirement for infrastructure enhancement as vendors necessitate fundamental infrastructure, including shaded vending stalls, designated clean vending zones, public restrooms, safe sanitation facilities, and urban planning to circumvent hazardous or unsanitary regions. Gender-sensitive urban planning is needed, as the 3.5% engaged in open defecation indicates that women's sanitation requirements are inadequately addressed, compromising their health and dignity. Sanitation and health must be prioritised in the formulation of vending policies. Protection against construction hazards Despite the limited number of vendors near construction sites, the risk of accidents or injuries raises concerns for municipal control.

The physical working conditions of Mizo women vegetable sellers are characterised by exposure to heat, unsanitary environments, and noise, with a minority experiencing significant issues related to open drainage and inadequate sanitation. These conditions not only jeopardise health but also signify the marginal and informal

characteristics of their employment. Municipal involvement, inclusive urban design, and women-centred vending rules are strongly warranted to mitigate health hazards and enhance workplace dignity and safety.

5.11.2 Problem faced by migrant vendors:

Migrant women vegetable vendors often face unique and compounded challenges as they navigate life and livelihood in unfamiliar urban environments. In cities like Aizawl, these women many of whom migrate from rural areas or other parts of the state seek vending as a means of survival and economic independence. However, being outsiders to the local community and systems, they often encounter discrimination, lack of social support, language barriers, and limited access to secure vending spaces (Bhowmik, 2012; Chen, 2016; Debnath, 2020). Additionally, the absence of proper identification or legal recognition can make it difficult for them to access vendor registration, welfare schemes, or even protection from harassment. Understanding the problems faced by migrant vendors is crucial to addressing their vulnerabilities and ensuring that urban vending policies are inclusive, just, and supportive of all women, regardless of their origin.

The data reveals that among the migrant vendors, 86 vendors (43%) faced problems as migrant vendors, while 48 vendors (24%) did not face any problems as migrant vendors. Most migrant vendors encountered problems due to spatial issues, as the vending area lacked clear demarcation to define individual locations. This causes spatial problems among the vendors; the senior vendors who have already occupied the locations try to dominate the area by extending their vending territory. Therefore, the majority of migrant vendors face challenges not only as new entrants to the vending market but also as newcomers to the profession. Pi Ziri 62 years from Chanmari West mentioned that

“Aizawl kan rawn insawn tirh, ka thut tirh chuan a buaithlak thei lutuk, ka bula mi te hian an duhthawh thin sia kan hmun hi min nek chep vak zel, mahse tunah chuan tihdan ka thiam tawh a kan inphona tur tawh chu hmun ka nei ve tawh e”

“During my initial days of settling in Aizawl I’ve started vegetable vending. It was problematic at first as my e co-vendors took most of the space but gradually I have my own space now”

The study underscores the obstacles encountered by migrant vegetable merchants in Aizawl, with 43% indicating issues in their work environment. A major problem arises from spatial conflicts resulting from the lack of well delineated vending areas. Newcomers, especially migrant vendors, frequently encounter territorial hegemony exerted by established vendors who expand their vending areas, resulting in a competitive and adversarial atmosphere. These geographical problems hinder migrant’s ability to establish themselves, as they contend not only with adapting to a new profession but also with obtaining a steady vending site. This is shown by the story of Pi Ziri, a 62-year-old seller from Chanmari West, who said that while initially encountering considerable challenges owing to spatial conflicts, she ultimately secured her own location and achieved acceptability over time. This highlights the overarching problem of informal spatial regulation within the vending community and the resilience necessary for migrant vendors to maintain their livelihoods.

5.11.3 Factors for declining monthly income

The economic and social challenges increasingly threaten the livelihoods of Mizo women vegetable vendors, who are essential to the informal economy. Many vendors, despite their diligent efforts and consistent presence in markets, report a decrease in monthly income, which adversely affects their household welfare and financial stability. Analysing the factors contributing to this decline is crucial for evaluating economic empowerment and formulating effective interventions.

Factors contributing to declining income may encompass market saturation, heightened competition, escalating costs of vegetables and transportation, seasonal variations, and insufficient storage or preservation facilities (Jha, 2018; National Hawker Federation, 2020; Roy et al., 2023). Moreover, external factors including evolving consumer behaviours, limited vending locations, weather-related interruptions, and restricted access to financial resources exacerbate their revenue challenges. Recognising and resolving these issues is essential for the long-term sustainability of livelihoods and for improving empowerment via economic resilience.

Table 5.23: Factors for declining monthly income

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Financial problem of the government	110	55.0
Increase number of vendors	58	29.0
Storage facilities	23	11.5
Price fluctuation due to seasonal variation	9	4.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above data demonstrates that 110 vendors (55%) stated that the main factor for declining monthly income is due to the financial problem of the government. These trends may indicate delays or reductions in public support programmes, insufficient subsidies, inadequate infrastructure development, or ineffective market regulation. This indicates a systemic problem in which vendors experience difficulties stemming from inadequate policy enforcement and economic limitations at the state level. When the government's financial conditions are low, this results in a constraint of the flow of money among the citizens, which leads to a decrease in monthly income and decreased economic growth that leads to low profit and low income for the women vegetable vendors. While a total of 58 vendors (29%) attribute the decline in income to the increasing number of vendors. This signifies market saturation and heightened competition, leading to diminished individual sales and profits. The unregulated proliferation of vending, without a corresponding increase in space and customer base, exacerbates the already constrained market capacity in the congested streets of Aizawl. This led to the low demand, as each locality has its own vending place. Due to the unemployment problem, many women started engaging in vegetable vending due to its low capital investment, flexibility, easy access, easy income-earning capability and acceptance of unskilled labour, which pulls in many Mizo women who are unskilled and have low educational qualifications. 23 vendors (11.5%) point to poor storage facilities as a contributing factor to income loss. Inadequate storage conditions lead to the spoilage of perishable vegetables, compelling vendors to either reduce prices or incur financial losses. This indicates inadequate infrastructure and support systems for informal workers, which impacts income and food security. Due to improper storage facilities, especially the peripatetic vendors faced robbery, which lowers their monthly profit. Since they do not have a proper vending location, they

store their goods at the vending place without proper security, which led to them getting robbed by the theft. Only 9 vendors (4.5%) identified seasonal price fluctuations as a contributing factor. This market phenomenon is natural; however, its lower ranking indicates that structural and systemic issues, such as government support and market overcrowding, are more significant concerns for vendors in Aizawl. This problem is prevalent among the vendors who came from nearby villages with their own grown vegetables. Due to seasonal variations, there is a scarce supply of vegetables, which led to an increase in the price, as there is demand. This led to low selling of vegetables.

The data indicates that external and structural factors, particularly those associated with governmental inefficiencies and unregulated market expansion, are the main contributors to the income decline experienced by Mizo women vegetable vendors. Inadequate infrastructure, such as storage facilities, along with environmental factors, including seasonal variation, contribute to the issue, albeit to a lesser degree. The findings highlight the necessity for policy intervention, enhanced market planning, improved infrastructure, and financial inclusion to promote a stable and sustainable livelihood for women vendors in Aizawl city.

5.12 Harassment:

Women vendors experienced numerous forms of abuse, such as economic, physical, and verbal abuse (Pick, Ross, & Dada, 2002; Maziak & Asfar, 2003; Chen, 2012). Socio-economic vulnerabilities and inadequate legal protections frequently exacerbate these forms of abuse. To mitigate these obstacles, it is necessary to implement comprehensive advocacy interventions and policy reforms that will empower and safeguard women vendors in the informal economy. Women street vendors frequently encounter verbal and physical abuse. In Johannesburg, South Africa, approximately one in four women reported experiencing some form of abuse, with 7% reporting sexual harassment (Pick, Ross & Dada, 2002). Many women vendors operate in low-income settings, which exacerbates their vulnerability to abuse. In Aleppo, Syria, physical abuse was prevalent among low-income women, with education identified as a key modifiable factor (Maziak & Asfar, 2003). The table below shows the data on the nature of abuse faced by women vendor at the work place.

As per the data, 162 women (81%) encountered abuses at the workplace, while only 38 women (19%) were free from abuse. The rate of facing abuse is high among women vendors because of the nature of their occupations. Vegetable vending is considered a low economic activity where only poor urban dwellers interfere, and the community is also uneducated or has low educational qualifications. This leads to a low societal status for women vendors, making them more susceptible to harm and vulnerability. Women did not necessarily opt for vegetable vending as their main profession at first, but due to its easy accessibility and low investment, many women entered this occupation. The next table will show data on the type of abuse faced by the 162 women vendors.

Table 5.24: harasser

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Customer	33	16.5
Market Checker	5	2.5
Passer-by	26	13.0
Local council	13	6.5
Co-vendor	85	42.5
Not applicable	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The data above indicates that 33 women vendors (16.5%) experienced abuse from customers when vegetable prices were high due to seasonal variations, as upset customers verbally confronted the vendors about these prices. Only 5 vendors (2.5%) were abused by the market checker; the rate is low because the respondents are taken from all localities and the market checkers were available only in New Market. So, the rate is low in this data. The number of vendors who were abused by the passer-by is 26 vendors, i.e., 13%. This is because the vendors who do not have proper seats sell their vegetables on the pavement or footpath, which causes a problem for the pedestrian, as the city is a bit congested, especially a hilly region like Aizawl. This resulted in getting verbal abuse from the passer-by. The vendors abused by the Local Council are 13 (6.5%); this is because most of the locality pavement bazaar was under the supervision of the Local Council. When the vendors did not follow the order of

the Local Council, they were threatened by them. But one vendors mentioned the misuse of authority by the Local Council

“vawikhat chu hetia kan chawhmeh zawrhna ah ka thu lai hi, ka dawhkan hma ah tak hian kan local council member pakhat hian a bike arawn park a, ka pu min dahsawn sak thei angem? Kalna a dal a ka tia. Ani chuan ka duh chuan ka thut tir lo thei che sin, chutiang te.a min tih ngam a, a tia ka zak ngawih ngawih a tih vak ngaihna ka hre bawk silo a, ka sawi zawng pawh hian engtin emaw ka la awm thei”

"One day, while I was sitting here selling vegetables, a local council member parked his bike right in front of my stall. I politely asked him to move it, as it was blocking access. However, he became angry and threatened me, saying that he could have me removed from this spot. I felt embarrassed and struggled to articulate my feelings. Even now, I still get chills when I recall the incident."

Therefore, the data shows that 85 vendors (42.5%) were abused by their co-vendors. This situation arises because vendors compete for territory, and those without a designated vending space often face this problem. Even those vendors with designated spaces in a marketplace face challenges in attracting customers, leading to conflicts and mutual abuse. Consequently, it can be concluded that most abusers are the vendors themselves, fighting over space and customers. This behaviour has given rise to the saying that ‘women vendors have attitude.’ They operate in a battleground-like environment, needing to remain vigilant about their territory and customer base. Therefore, they adopt this attitude to deter other vendors and individuals from encroaching on or abusing them. The next table shows the nature of harassment.

Table 5.25: Nature of Harassment

Response	Frequency (%)		
	Yes	No	
Harassed to pay a bribe	27 (13.5)	173 (86.5)	200 (100.0)
Threatened from organized sector	44 (22.0)	156 (78.0)	200 (100.0)
Dispute over spatial issue with co-vendor	113 (56.5)	87 (43.5)	200 (100.0)
Dispute over getting a customer with co-vendor	76 (38.0)	124 (62.0)	200 (100.0)
Harassment from govt.authority (AMC,	24 (12.0)	176 (88.0)	200 (100.0)

LC)			
Sexual harassment	7 (3.5)	193 (96.5)	200 (100.0)
Abused for blocking the footpath	21(10.5)	179(89.5)	200 (100.0)
Abused for the price of the vegetables	96 (48.0)	104 (52.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field survey

The data present in the table supra shows the nature of harassment faced by the respondents. Out of the total vendors, 27 vendors (13.5%) reported paying a bribe. The majority of the bribes happened in the main market (New Market), where market checkers were bribed by the vendors to allow them to sit in the undesignated area outside the main market. 44 vendors (22%) were threatened by the organised sector because of the location, as they block the shop entrance; 113 (56.5%) reported having disputes with the co-vendors over spatial issues, as there is no proper demarcation which divides the vending space; and 76 vendors (38%) reported having disputes over getting a customer with co-vendors, as they compete with each other in getting the same customer. 24 vendors (12%) reported being harassed by the government authority due to vending in the undesignated area; fortunately, only 7 vendors (3.5%) reported sexual harassment by passers-by, 21 vendors (10.5%) reported that they were abused for blocking the path, and another 36 vendors (18%) reported being abused by the customer for the price of the vegetables. The findings indicate that a significant number of respondents experience regular harassment from passers-by, municipal authorities, organised sector customers, and occasionally, fellow business associates. Women vendors experience ongoing anxiety, as many are illiterate and lack identity documents, which significantly hinders their capacity to access and secure essential services. The problem of abuses is frequently exacerbated by the reality that vendors are migrants who have moved from rural regions to urban centres in pursuit of employment opportunities and find themselves unable to return. They must endure and withstand the persecution. The next data shows the type of harassment they faced.

Table 5.26: Type of harassment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal Abuse	154	80.5
Sexual harassment	7	3.5
Physical (fighting)	1	0.5

Not applicable	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

As per the data provided above, 161 women (80.5%) faced verbal abuse, while 38 women did not face any abuse or discrimination at the workplace. 7 women vendors (3.5%) were sexually harassed by the passer-by. Only 1 woman faced physical abuse; that is, she fought with her co-vendor over a spatial issue. She mentioned that

“Inrinni bazar tur kan khua atangin ka tlai a, kan motor a chhiat avangin, ka thiannu thutna min hausak ah midang an lo thu a, chawhmeh tihral tur ka ngah nen, kan hauh tawh thu leh kalsawn turin kan hrilh a, an kal sawn duh silo a, kan insual ta lawm. Mahse min rawn thelh vat a, zah pawh a zahthlak ka ngaihtuah let hian”

“I was late for the Saturday bazaar that day due to the breakdown of the hired vehicle. I asked my friend to reserve a seat for me, but when I reached the location, it was occupied by some other vendors. Furthermore, I was furious and got into a fight with her over the vending space. Since I carried lots of vegetables from the village, which needed to be finished that day. But someone intervened in the fight immediately. Thinking back, it's still embarrassing.”

The majority of the vendors faced verbal abuse, while only 1 vendor got into a fight with the co-vendors over spatial issues. Also, it is fortunate to know that the sexual abuse was not seen among the respondents. Since in many states women faced sexual abuse in the working space.

The next table will show the data on the reaction to the abuse.

Table 5.41: Reaction to the abuse

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Ashamed	5	2.5
Angry	28	14.0
Hurt	107	53.5
Lost confidence	8	4.0
Accept it	14	7.0
Not applicable	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field Data

From the table above, it has been revealed that among the vendors who were verbally abused, they react in various ways: among the respondents, 5 respondents (2.5%) feel ashamed when they are abused, while 28 respondents (14%) become angry. 107 respondents (53.5%) from the verbally abused respondents got hurt, while 8 respondents (4%) lost their self-confidence, and 14 respondents (7%) accepted the verbal abuse they got. Due to the status of being vegetable vendors, they already have low self-esteem, and when they get verbally abused, especially by the others other than their co-vendor, they can easily get hurt and feel vulnerable.

So, it can be concluded that the majority of the women vendors faced verbal abuse from their customers, passers-by, local council and mostly from their co-vendors over spatial issues. When they are verbally abused, they get angry, ashamed, and lose confidence and mostly get hurt.

5.13 Job satisfaction

The issue of job satisfaction among female vegetable sellers is intricate and multidimensional, influenced by both socioeconomic and personal variables. These women can earn money, gain independence, and acquire a sense of purpose by selling vegetables, but there are drawbacks as well, such as long hours, physical hardship, unstable employment, and restricted access to official support networks. Because of the liberty it offers, the opportunity to provide for their family, and the everyday interactions within their communities, many women feel fulfilment in their employment despite these challenges (Gurtoo & Williams, 2009; Patel & Mehta, 2020). Earnings, relationships with customers, working circumstances, and family support are some of the aspects that frequently affect their level of pleasure. Examining how satisfied women vegetable sellers are with their jobs offers important insight into their real-life experiences and emphasises the need of acknowledging and enhancing the unorganised labour market, where many women contribute significantly to the economy.

A significant 84% (168 women) reported being satisfied with their job. This indicates that despite the challenges associated with informal vending work, most women find their occupation rewarding possibly due to the economic independence, flexibility, or

community engagement it provides. Only 10.5% (21 women) expressed dissatisfaction. This group may be experiencing issues such as low income, lack of stability, physical demands, or lack of family support, which could negatively affect their perception of the job. 5.5% (11 women) selected "Can't say," suggesting a level of ambivalence or uncertainty—perhaps due to fluctuating conditions in income, health, or work-family balance.

Overall, the data reveals that a large majority of women vegetable vendors in Mizoram are satisfied with their work, highlighting the positive aspects of vending as a livelihood option. However, the presence of dissatisfied and uncertain respondents indicates a need to address specific challenges to improve the overall well-being and job quality of these women.

The data reveals that a large majority of women vegetable vendors in Mizoram are satisfied with their work, pointing to the positive aspects of vending as a livelihood, such as financial independence, flexible working hours, and the ability to contribute to household income. This high level of satisfaction suggests that despite operating within the informal sector, many women find value and purpose in their occupation. However, the presence of dissatisfied and uncertain respondents indicates that not all experiences are positive. Some women face ongoing challenges such as low and inconsistent earnings, physical strain, lack of support, or poor working conditions. These issues can significantly impact their well-being, motivation, and long-term sustainability in the occupation.

While vegetable vending offers a meaningful source of livelihood for many women in Mizoram, there is a clear need to improve job quality and support systems. Targeted efforts such as access to credit, better infrastructure, health services, and family support can help address the concerns of those who are dissatisfied and ensure that all women in this sector can work with dignity, safety, and satisfaction.

5.14 AMC and Vegetable Vendors:

Field report:

On June 21, 2025 (Saturday), the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) confiscated vegetables from vendors selling near the Aizawl Tennis Court and Horticulture Directorate, inciting protests from the vendors, who subsequently blocked the road.

However, by around 5pm that evening, they resumed selling their goods. On 27 March 2025, the AMC issued a notification prohibiting the vending of any goods near the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, Main Post Office, FCSCA Directorate, Horticulture Directorate, Agriculture Office, and the nearby Tennis Court. This notification instructed vendors in these areas to relocate immediately to the AMC Multi-Complex Building in Tuikual South. Furthermore, on 8 May 2025, the AMC amended the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007, specifically Section 308, to enforce a ban on all types of vending near the Mizoram Legislative Assembly. The law would impose a penalty of Rs 5,000 and confiscate goods from anyone who did not comply. For a period, no vending occurred in the areas where the AMC had restricted sales. However, a small number of vendors began selling vegetables again on the morning of 21 June, between the Aizawl Tennis Court and the Horticulture Directorate office, where they were subsequently evicted by the AMC with assistance from the Mizoram Police.

In response, the vendors began protesting at 9:30am near the traffic point by the Aizawl Tennis Court, which led to road blockages and resulted in significant traffic congestion throughout Aizawl city. These street vendors viewed AMC's actions as "oppression against the poor". They asserted that they had engaged in several negotiations with the AMC, yet they continued to insist that vendors refrain from selling. Consequently, the vendors demanded the dissolution of the AMC. Later that evening, around 5pm, the vendors began selling their goods once more without any interference. They expressed that "the building constructed by the AMC could not accommodate all of us; due to congestion, we needed to sit on the stairs, which impeded customer mobility. The AMC promised to make new adjustments, but we have already waited for 2 to 3 months. Yet, no adjustments have been made. Furthermore, the bazaar building's most accessible and spacious areas serve as garages, significantly hindering our ability to earn a living." They also cited the spatial issues and congestion in the AMC market as reasons compelling them to return to the restricted area for vending. "We do not plan to sit in this area daily; we also lack the courage to hope for that. However, on Saturday, since it is a government holiday, we

hope that AMC allows us to sell." As they are the primary breadwinners for their families, they urged the government to take immediate action to resolve the situation. On 28th June, the same issue arose again between the AMC and the vendors. However, around 9 am that morning, the vendors commenced selling their vegetables as usual. The vegetable vendors expressed that they spend the entire week sourcing goods to sell on Saturdays and often do not have a proper meal. They attempted to acquire as many vegetables as possible. "We do not have a monthly income like them; we have children to feed. We have done our utmost for our kids, but if we cannot sell in this area, we will not back down," stated the vendors. Meanwhile, the AMC remains firm in its position; however, they are scheduled to hold a meeting on 1st July 2025.

Analysis: The occurrences on June 21 and June 28, 2025, illustrate the escalating tensions between the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) and local vegetable vendors, a significant number of whom are women serving as primary breadwinners for their households. This conflict transcends spatial concerns, highlighting fundamental issues in urban planning, vendor rights, and the protection of livelihoods in Aizawl city.

Enforcement and Livelihood: The AMC's rigorous implementation of the March 27 notification, which prohibits all vending activities near significant government locations such as the Mizoram Legislative Assembly and Horticulture Directorate, has encountered opposition. The eviction of vendors and the confiscation of their goods on June 21, supported by police, resulted in public protests and road blockades, highlighting the vendors' feelings of desperation and injustice. The AMC references legal provisions, specifically the amended Section 308 of the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007, to support its actions; however, vendors perceive this as a form of oppression towards the economically disadvantaged, given that vending constitutes their sole means of livelihood. The Rs. 5,000 penalty and confiscation of goods are considered excessively punitive and disproportionate for informal sector workers.

Insufficient Alternatives and Deficient Market Infrastructure: The AMC has instructed vendors to move to the Tuikual South Multi-Complex Market; however, vendors contend that the facility is inadequate in size, congested, and poorly designed. Numerous individuals report occupying stairways, obstructing customer movement,

or being relegated to less accessible, low-traffic areas such as garage zones. The prevailing conditions make vending economically unfeasible, compelling vendors to revert to their previous locations despite potential legal repercussions. Their ongoing requests for modifications in the market space, which have gone unanswered for months, further diminish trust between vendors and municipal authorities. The vendors' re-entry into restricted areas on Saturdays, coinciding with the closure of government offices, indicates a practical survival strategy rather than an act of defiance. This indicates a misalignment between urban policy and actual economic requirements.

Expressions of Defiance and Honour: The protests by vendors, particularly those led by women balancing physical labour, familial duties, and economic challenges, underscore their resilience and agency. Their statements highlight both economic necessity and a request for dignity and recognition. “We do not possess a monthly income as they do; we have children to support,” one vendor remarked, highlighting the socioeconomic disparity between informal workers and the governmental bodies overseeing them.

Consequences for Urban Administration

This conflict illustrates wider issues in urban governance. Top-down enforcement, lacking participatory planning, marginalises vulnerable groups. The absence of inclusive market infrastructure exacerbates the conditions of informal workers. Urban policies that overlook actual conditions frequently result in non-compliance, protests, and public disorder.

Conclusion

The conflict between the AMC and Mizo vegetable vendors highlights the necessity for a balanced, humane, and participatory method in regulating urban vending. Policies should extend beyond legal enforcement to account for the livelihood realities, spatial constraints, and socioeconomic vulnerabilities faced by informal workers. The upcoming meeting on July 1, 2025, offers a significant opportunity for AMC to restore trust, evaluate market policies, and collaboratively develop solutions with vendors that promote livelihood security, urban order, and social justice.

Overview:

The establishment:

Half of the vendors were in a designated market, and the other half were on the sidewalk and concrete because their business was only temporary, which makes it harder for urban laws to protect their way of life and their ability to make a living. This trend makes it clear that most women still shop in unofficial places, often on the edges of city planning and rules, even though some can go to public markets. Depending on the market, most sellers pay for their space every day or every month. A big financial responsibility that comes with selling is shown by the fact that almost seven out of ten women sellers pay rent. The difference between people who pay rent and people who can go in for free shows how different vending settings are, from ones that are totally unregulated to ones that are only partly so. For street vending to be fair and last, it's important to make sure that sellers who pay rent also get basic comforts and safety. This study shows that vending rent is not only a money problem, but also a sign of greater structural inequality in how people can get into cities and make a living. Mizo women in Aizawl can make a low-cost living by selling vegetables, but the amount of money they need to start out depends on their personal finances, where they live, and their personal networks. A third of women started with less than ₹1,000, and another fifth put in between ₹1,000 and ₹5,000. Investments between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000 show that the business has more money or the ability to run on a bigger scale. It is important for lawmakers and NGOs that support women's economic empowerment through microenterprise programs to look at these investment trends. As a flexible and economically inclusive job, vegetable selling lets women from a range of financial backgrounds join the workforce. Most of the sellers are registered sellers. The nearly even split between recognised and unregistered vendors shows that, even though progress has been made, a lot of women sellers are still working without being officially recognised. Making sure that women who register get real benefits like safe places to sell things and access to services that can help them make a living can help ensure their financial security. This study shows that even though a lot of women sellers have taken steps towards becoming more official, there is still a huge need to help those who are still not there. Most of the sellers keep their veggies at the vending area, which is on the ground level of a storage facility. The fact that a lot of storage is

done at selling sites shows that there aren't many official storage areas in public markets. While home storage made it harder for vendors to make ends meet every day, and it could hurt the state of perishable things. Also, the fact that rented storage isn't used much says that small-scale women veggie vendors need more safe, easy-to-reach storage options that are also cheap. This study shows how badly we need better storage facilities, like community cold storage units, lockable stalls, or joint storage spaces, to cut down on post-harvest losses and make working conditions better for women who sell vegetables.

Professional history:

The majority before entering this field, 62% of female vegetable sellers held part-time work. Financial instability, health problems, migration, and the COVID-19 pandemic were the main causes of the change. The main justifications given by vendors were the steady demand for veggies and the minimal capital needs. 38% of respondents said this was their first source of income, frequently following marriage or the death of a spouse. Vegetable vending offers economic inclusion and a lifeline in times of crisis, acting as a backup plan for people who have lost their prior sources of income and as a first-time job opportunity for women. The survey makes clear that before starting to sell vegetables, the majority of the women held a variety of other professions in the unorganised sector. Women have to balance work from dawn to dusk and household chores, so vegetable vending has given them a better way to manage both. It allows them to set their own hours because they are their own bosses, and it also allows them to make more money than other jobs.

Economic limitations and individual circumstances are the main drivers of the vegetable vending industry; minimal initial investment is cited by the majority of women (32.5%) as the main motivator. For impoverished urban and rural women, particularly those with little job experience, this makes it an accessible source of income. Because it doesn't require formal schooling or specialised training, the career is also appropriate for unskilled or low-skilled people. Another significant factor is household economic need, especially in Mizoram, where 39% of sellers are driven by their husbands' inadequate income. For many women in Mizoram, the occupation is a vital source of income because to its flexibility, minimal entrance hurdles, and

consistent income. With 35% of respondents saying it enhanced their family's standard of living by producing cash and funding household expenses and children's education, vegetable selling gives women both economic and personal empowerment. Additionally, 35% emphasised job openings, particularly for women with little formal education or skills. According to the majority (56%) it helps satisfy daily food demands, particularly when food prices rise. Only 2% of respondents said it enhanced their status as women, indicating that the majority of vendors saw their profession as a way to feed their households and survive. Although having a job has increased respect and recognition, it hasn't had a significant impact on changing gender roles.

Acquisition of vegetables:

The sourcing pattern indicates that most Mizo women vegetable vendors rely on established wholesale channels, while a significant number source directly from farmers, potentially offering greater economic benefits. Enhanced access to local farms and strengthened vendor-farmer relationships may enhance economic sustainability, reduce dependence on intermediaries, and improve profit margins for female sellers. The data indicates that the majority of vendors sourced their vegetables from wholesalers located in Main Bazar. The research indicates that most Mizo women vegetable sellers rely on regular product collection, aligning with a business strategy that prioritises daily customer service and product freshness. The diversity in collection patterns reflects varying levels of infrastructure and resource accessibility. Examples of targeted interventions that could enhance operational efficiency and reduce logistical strain include small-scale cold storage, group buying plans, and improved transportation. The majority of vendors utilised vehicles for vegetable collection, selecting either two-wheeled or four-wheeled taxis based on the quantity and quality of the available stock. The approaches employed by Mizo women vendors to procure vegetables illustrate various levels of resource accessibility. A minimal proportion of individuals possess access to personal or independent transport modes, whereas a significant number depend on shared and delivery-based systems.

The findings indicate a necessity for enhanced transportation infrastructure, collaborative transportation strategies, and potential financial or logistical support to boost productivity and reduce the burden on women vegetable vendors. The

expenditure pattern indicates that most Mizo women vegetable sellers allocate significant monthly funds to sustain their businesses, highlighting the economic significance and scale of selling as a source of income. The prevalence of mid- to high-investment vendors suggests significant financial risk, necessitating efficient supply chains, enhanced transportation access, and potential loan or subsidy support for operational sustainability and development.

Transportation:

The data indicates that most vendors are located near their vending sites. In Mizo society, most localities have their own 'Kawn,' an intersection point that facilitates access to essential needs. This arrangement reduces the distance between residential areas and workplaces, thereby enhancing convenience for peripatetic vendors. Vendors with permanent stalls in the New Market Sabji Bazar typically reside at a considerable distance from their workplace. The findings indicate that most Mizo women vegetable vendors operate close to their residences, facilitating work-life balance and reducing transportation challenges; however, a significant number travel medium to long distances. These vendors face challenging working conditions that require targeted support in transportation infrastructure, vendor zone planning, and potentially access to adjacent vending areas to enhance their working environment and overall well-being. The majority of vendors walk to their vending locations due to proximity and cost-saving considerations. One-third of the vendors utilised shared taxis due to their cost and time efficiency. The commuting patterns of Mizo women vegetable sellers indicate that most operate within walkable or short distances, thereby reducing transportation costs. This illustrates the physical stress experienced by women who regularly transport their goods on foot. Shared taxis serve as a significant transportation option, especially for those lacking personal vehicles. Enhancements in last-mile transportation infrastructure, subsidised vendor transportation programs, and the creation of local vending zones could enhance commuting conditions and overall productivity for female vendors.

Approximately 46.5% of vendors report no transportation expenditures, contributing to reduced overall company expenses; however, this may be offset by increased physical labour and time commitments. About 32% of sellers handle transit costs

ranging from Rs 1000 to Rs 2500, suggesting that this range is common and feasible for numerous low-income individuals in the informal sector. Approximately 22% allocate over Rs 2500 monthly, suggesting increased financial pressure, particularly when combined with other operational costs such as vegetable purchases, rental expenses, or care fees. Enterprises that serve larger populations or generate employment may allow the small group (1%) spending over Rs 7500 to qualify for targeted assistance or tax/transport subsidies. It can be concluded that the majority of vendors utilising transportation spend between Rs 1000 and 2500 per month, while two vendors exceed Rs 7500 in transportation costs. The transportation costs incurred by Mizo women vegetable sellers exhibit significant variation, directly correlating with their proximity to vending locations and their economic status. Nearly half of individuals incur no transportation costs, highlighting the importance of accessible or proximate retail areas. However, a significant portion faces moderate to high monthly expenses, which adversely affects their economic stability. The majority of vendors do not encounter difficulties in securing transportation to their workplace; however, they express concerns regarding the high fare costs. The findings indicate that the majority of vendors experienced a positive transit experience, highlighting a strength in their work environment. The 12% of persistent difficulties warrants attention. In a labour-intensive, low-margin industry such as vegetable selling, transportation challenges can directly affect income and productivity. Many individuals may not experience transit issues due to their adaptation to local transportation practices, utilisation of shared taxis, or proximity to retail locations.

Period of vending

The data clearly demonstrates that vegetable vending is a persistent, week-long endeavour for most Mizo women sellers, highlighting its significance in their daily economic activities. Nevertheless, the presence of part-time and seasonal vendors demonstrates the profession's versatility, accommodating women with varying availability and needs. Support mechanisms must include both full-time and part-time vending contexts while formulating solutions. It can be determined that the bulk of vendors sell veggies from Monday to Saturday, whereas 25 merchants only sell on Friday and Saturday, originating from adjacent villages. In Aizawl, Saturday is

designated as the day for replenishing grocery supplies and serves as the primary market day. The study reveals that vegetable vending is a labour-intensive occupation, with more than 80% of vendors working 12 hours or more per day. This illustrates their dedication and industriousness, alongside the necessity of working prolonged hours to provide a sustainable income. The prolonged working hours raise concerns about occupational fatigue, work-life balance, and the need for support services such as rest places, healthcare access, and financial security for women in the informal sector. The majority of vendors work for 12 hours, which is far longer than the hours typical in the official sector.

Health issue:

A substantial percentage (39%) responded with "Not applicable," perhaps encompassing women who reported no recent health issues or do not perceive their health concerns as severe enough to warrant medical intervention. This underscores the necessity for health education and awareness programs for suppliers. Granting vendors access to potable water, sanitary amenities, and hygiene instruction helps mitigate the incidence of several diseases. While more than half of the vendors seek medical treatment when required, the total of 55% who either abstain from it or consider it irrelevant suggests a possible opportunity for public health intervention. Outreach programs, health awareness campaigns, and affordable, accessible healthcare services might improve the well-being of women in the informal vending sector. Vegetable sellers in Aizawl, Mizoram, have several health challenges attributable to their work environment, lifestyle, and the characteristics of their occupation. These encompass hypertension, diabetes, gastrointestinal disorders, musculoskeletal complications, and mental health difficulties. The study highlights a concerning incidence of lifestyle-related and occupational health problems among Mizo women vegetable vendors. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, gastrointestinal, and musculoskeletal ailments, underscores the need for workplace health interventions, such as rest rooms and health camps. Improved access to healthcare services. Nutritional education and support, guidance on ergonomic practices. These techniques may enhance the overall well-being and productivity of these vendors while alleviating long-term health risks.

The survey indicates that the majority of female vendors suffer from chronic health concerns such as hypertension, ulcers, neurological disorders, diabetes, and other ailments. The majority sought medical consultation for therapy and drugs. Some vendors administer medication based only on their experience and self-diagnosis, without consulting a physician. This underscores the necessity for health education and awareness among vendors, as they operate in unsanitary circumstances and a polluted atmosphere. The demanding work schedule, irregular meal timing, insufficient exercise, hard lifting, and inadequate diet contribute to health issues among female sellers.

Financial difficulty:

Working with moneylenders can include high interest rates and unofficial, unsecured contracts, which puts debtors at risk of debt abuse or cycles. Lack of borrowing from formal sources (banks, SHGs, and microfinance organisations) might indicate a lack of documentation or financial literacy. The absence of loan options intended for unofficial retailers and mistrust or ignorance of institutional lenders. However, 165 merchants (82.5%) do not borrow since the moneylenders charge high interest, the process is complicated, and there is no mortgage if they apply via a government or commercial bank. Vendors who take out loans from banks approved by the government are not included in these statistics. These merchants' primary challenge is a financial one. It is challenging to obtain bank loans since vending is viewed as a transient employment and is not recognised by institutional lending. It has also revealed that the Bank's loan application process is time-consuming and challenging because the majority of the forms are written in English, making it challenging for vendors to obtain a loan. In contrast, the private money lender's loan application process is straightforward and easy, but the interest rate is high. Though 17.5% of Mizo women vegetable vendors rely only on moneylenders, the majority do not borrow, which might make their financial instability worse. This suggests that in order to protect and empower these women in their business activities, there is a need for improved access to official, safe, and affordable financial institutions.

The market has a completely unauthorised and unacknowledged short-term borrowing mechanism. This is handled by the neighbourhood moneylender. The amount made

accessible by this short-term loan is dependent on each vendor's capacity to pay back the loan. For a number of reasons, such as their business operations, medical expenses, prescription medication, pregnancy expenses, mishaps, children's education, and more, these vendors take out loans. Since they operate in the unorganised sector, vegetable sellers are unable to secure loans from government financial institutions. According to the research, while most Mizo women vegetable vendors do not borrow, those who do frequently pay interest rates ranging from 5 to 10%, most likely from unofficial moneylenders. Only a small portion have access to interest-free credit. This emphasises how important it is to provide access to secure and fair financial services, especially for women informal sellers, in order to reduce dependence on potentially risky loan sources and support sustainable livelihoods. The information about these supplier's difficulties repaying the loans is displayed below.

A cycle of financial instability is evident in the fact that the vast majority of Mizo women vegetable dealers who take on debt find it difficult to pay it back. There is a clear need for more affordable and easily accessible financial services, such as microloans with adjustable payback terms, financial counselling, and the development of women-led savings organisations to reduce reliance on high-risk lending, since more than 60% of borrowers struggle to make their payments.

They are perceived as practicing an illegal profession because of their transitory employment, which made it impossible for them to obtain institutional credit. As a result, 17.5% of vendors took out loans from family and private money lenders, paying exorbitant interest rates of 5–10%, which put the local money lenders in a debt trap. As a result, it became difficult to repay the loan on schedule. They spent money on things like prescription drugs, their children's schooling, and maternity care in addition to their jobs. As a result, they turned to their family and friends for assistance; in extreme situations, they even sold expensive goods like appliances, jewellery, and gold rings to cover the loan balance.

Vendors association

According to the research, Mizo women vegetable merchants in Aizawl exhibit varying degrees of organisation. About half belong to recognised associations, although a small majority still operate without official assistance or representation.

This limits their ability to receive institutional benefits, fight for their rights, and get better working circumstances. The advancement of the livelihood stability, dignity, and bargaining power of women vendors in urban areas depends on strengthening and expanding the influence of vendors' groups or agencies. According to the research, Vegetable Vendor Associations can offer assistance, but their efficacy and impact are limited. The fact that more than half of the vendors said the topic was irrelevant shows a serious lack of formal organisation and group support, which reduces their ability to address common issues. Enhancing and strengthening vendor associations is crucial in order to guarantee inclusion and active involvement, as well as to provide the required resources and recognition.

Support:

Most of the Mizo women who sell vegetables in Aizawl do so without any help from the government, which makes their jobs dangerous and unstable. They are open to economic and social risks because they don't get any help from government or non-government groups. To improve these women's working conditions and ways of making a living, we urgently need policies that include everyone, focused interventions, and more institutional involvement. Mizo women who sell vegetables in Aizawl have to deal with unstable housing and uncertain finances, which can make their jobs harder. The high demand for credit facilities and fixed vending places shows that there are problems with the way things are set up. Meeting these needs through formal status, financial services that are open to everyone, and market infrastructure would make their lives a lot better. Even though it's not always a top priority, entrepreneurship training can give people long-term power when combined with basic needs help. The numbers show that most of the Mizo women who sell vegetables in Aizawl don't get the marketing training that is needed to improve their business skills and give power to unorganised workers. This shows that there aren't enough support systems and that neither the government nor non-government groups have been able to effectively target or engage this vulnerable group. This gap needs to be filled with open and easy-to-reach training programs that are meant to work with casual vending. This will improve working conditions, help women become more independent, and help them gain long-term economic power.

Problem faced:

The biggest problems that Mizo women who sell vegetables face on the job are theft, competition, and being in an inconvenient location. These problems are closely connected to the fact that their job isn't very official, there isn't enough funding for infrastructure, and urban market planning isn't very good. Local governments, non-governmental groups, and urban planners need to work together to make sure that these women have better, more stable, and financially stable places to work. The results show that most of the people who answered the survey don't have a set place where they sell things. This means that they lack security, steadiness, and social standing, all of which are important for the growth and development of their business. Setting up a specific place for hawking should be the most important thing to do in this situation. In addition, respondents listed a number of risk factors, such as the danger of being evicted, working in high temperatures, handling non-perishable goods, theft, dirty working conditions, and being away from family for a long time. Because of this, it is important for people in charge to understand and deal with the problems that women sellers face.

Mizo women who sell vegetables do so in dangerous situations because there aren't enough safety features, roads, bathrooms, or legal help. Even with these problems, they show strength and a strong sense of community. To improve safety, respect, and the long-term health of the economy, the government must step in and provide institutional support. At the places where they sell vegetables, Mizo women face many problems, such as problems with other sellers, poor cleanliness, and problems with the equipment and safety. The statistics makes it clear that these women need structured market places, better vendor welfare policies, and help building their skills right away so they can make a living in a way that is both sustainable and respectable.

Mizo women who sell vegetables have to deal with heat, dirty surroundings, and noise at work. Some of them have serious problems because of open drains and poor sanitation. Not only do these situations put people's health at risk, but they also show how fringe and unofficial their jobs are. To reduce health risks and improve job safety and respect, it is strongly recommended that cities get involved, cities be designed to be more welcoming, and vending rules be centred on women.

The study shows how hard it is for migrant veggie sellers in Aizawl. For example, 43% of them said they had problems at work. A big problem is that there aren't enough clearly marked vending places, which leads to space issues. Established vendors who spread their selling areas often exercise territorial control over newcomers, especially migrant vendors. This creates a hostile and competitive environment. Since migrants have to deal with both learning a new job and finding a stable place to sell their goods, these regional issues make it harder for them to settle down. The data shows that external and internal factors, especially those related to government inefficiency and uncontrolled market growth, are the main reasons why Mizo women who sell vegetables are making less money. Some of the problems are caused by bad infrastructure, like not having enough store space, and weather factors, like changes in the seasons. The results show that policymakers need to step in and improve market planning, infrastructure, and financial inclusion in order to help women sellers in Aizawl city make a safe and long-term living.

Harassment:

Vegetable vending is perceived as a low economic activity primarily engaged in by impoverished urban residents, often characterised by a lack of education or low educational qualifications within the community. This leads to a low societal status, rendering individuals susceptible to harm and vulnerability. Initially, women did not choose vegetable vending as their primary profession; however, its accessibility and minimal investment requirements led many to pursue this occupation. Data indicate that 85 vendors, representing 42.5%, experienced abuse from their co-vendors. This issue occurs due to competition among vendors for territory, leading to challenges for those lacking a designated vending space. Vendors with designated spaces in a marketplace encounter difficulty in attracting customers, resulting in conflicts and mutual abuse. It can be concluded that the primary abusers are the vendors, competing for space and customers. This behaviour has led to the adage that 'women vendors possess attitude.' They function in a competitive environment, requiring constant awareness of their market and clientele. Consequently, they adopt this stance to prevent other vendors and individuals from infringing upon or exploiting them.

The findings reveal that a considerable proportion of respondents regularly encounter harassment from pedestrians, municipal authorities, organised sector clients, and, at times, fellow business associates. Women vendors face persistent anxiety due to high illiteracy rates and the absence of identity documents, which severely restrict their ability to access and obtain essential services. Abuses are often intensified by the fact that vendors are migrants who have relocated from rural areas to urban centres in search of employment opportunities and are unable to return. They must endure and resist the persecution. The majority of vendors experienced verbal abuse, while only one vendor engaged in a physical altercation with co-vendors regarding spatial issues. It is noteworthy that sexual abuse was not reported among the respondents. In numerous states, women encounter sexual abuse in the workplace. The majority of women vendors experienced verbal abuse from customers, passersby, local council members, and predominantly from fellow vendors regarding spatial issues. Verbal abuse results in anger, shame, diminished confidence, and emotional pain.

Job satisfaction:

Overall, the data shows that most of the women who sell vegetables in Mizoram are happy with their jobs. This shows that selling vegetables is a good way to make a living. But the fact that some respondents were unhappy or unsure shows that certain problems need to be fixed to improve these women's general health and job quality. The data shows that most of the women who sell vegetables in Mizoram are happy with their jobs. This is because they like the benefits of selling as a way to make a living, like being able to make money on their own and help their families. This high level of happiness shows that many women find meaning and purpose in their work, even if they work in the informal sector. The business of selling vegetables is a good way for many women in Mizoram to make a living, but the jobs and support systems need to be improved. Targeted efforts, like giving people access to loans, better infrastructure, health services, and family support, can help those who are unhappy and make sure that all women working in this field can do their jobs with safety, respect, and happiness.

CHAPTER - 6

Work-Life Balance and Empowerment

- 6.0 Introduction**
- 6.1 Family Support in the Work-Life of Women Vendors**
- 6.2 Childcare challenges**
 - 6.2.1 Childcare provision**
 - 6.2.2 Childcare giver**
- 6.3 Managing Home and Work**
 - 6.3.1 Home caretaker while working**
 - 6.3.2 Household chores responsibility**
- 6.4 Day-offs and Family Engagement**
- 6.5 Work-Family Conflict**
 - 6.5.1 Children's complaints on mother's work**
 - 6.5.2 Husband/Family complaints**
- 6.6 Church Obligations**
- 6.7 Absentism, Drop-out and Substance Abuse by children**
- 6.8 Ownership and Acquisitions**
- 6.9 Decision making**
 - 6.9.1 Financial Management**
 - 6.9.2 Children's Education**
 - 6.9.3 Health Care and Daily Needs**
 - 6.9.4 Decision making power to visit the family and relatives**
 - 6.9.5 Women's Reconciliation**
- 6.10 Vegetable Vending as agency of Status and Empowerment**
- 6.11 Awareness of Woman and Vendor rights**
- 6.12 Overview**

6.0 Introduction:

The previous chapter deals with the work culture and causes of entry into the vegetable vending business by Mizo women vendors. It shows the nature of their working environment, the problems faced and the reasons for entering into this economic activity by the Mizo women vegetable vendors. While, in this chapter, further analysis will be taken on the work-life balance and empowerment criteria of the Mizo women vegetable vendors by examining the data taken on the criteria like the support they got, day-offs, social obligations, family gatherings, conflict, childcare, decision-making and awareness of rights. It is divided into two sections, where the former section is on the work-life balance, while the latter section touches on the analysis of the empowerment of the Mizo women vegetable vendors. The term "work-life balance" refers to the process of ensuring that employees are able to maintain a healthy equilibrium between their personal lives and their professional lives (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Guest, 2002; Clark, 2000). Due to urbanisation, industrialisation, the entry of women into paid employment, and changes in the definition and adjustments of work, work-family balance has emerged as a clearly defined field of study (Frone, 2003; Voydanoff, 2005). The objective is to strike a suitable balance for a specific person or family, not to attain equal amounts of time spent at home and at work. Individual and family well-being suffers when these two areas are not in harmony, yet a perfect balance is difficult. Having adequate control and autonomy over the work and family spheres is known as work-family balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Clark, 2000; Guest, 2002). People have different preferences when it comes to juggling work and family; some choose higher-paying jobs with less time spent at home, while others ensure that their jobs don't conflict with their family life. Nonetheless, job and family may function in combination and enhance one another, with the benefits of both boosting the family's overall well-being (Clark, 2001 & Voydanoff, 2005). Many different things can have an effect on the work-life balance. The work-life balance varies from person to person based on several different factors. Greenhaus & Powell (2006) argue that experiences in one role can improve people's quality of life and well-being in other jobs. Since work and family are both essential components of people's daily lives, academics and companies now recognise the advantages of combining the

two. According to some academics, striking a healthy balance between job and family is a major issue in today's culture (Milkie & Peltola, 1999). Work-family difficulties are different in different nations because they are impacted by different macro- and micro-causes. The macro-level variances include the social, economic, legal, and technical systems. These elements have specific consequences for workers who try to balance their personal and professional lives (Joplin et al., 2003; Sheridan & Conway, 2001). Developed nations are more likely than developing ones to have family-friendly work rules and a variety of job opportunities (Lewis & Ayudhya, 2006). Similarly, thanks to technological advancements, working from home has become commonplace in Western nations. However, this trend may not be applicable to nations outside the West (Joplin et al., 2003). Working longer hours becomes necessary in underdeveloped nations because it is hard to survive on a daily basis. People will therefore inevitably experience some form of imbalance or conflict in such a setting. There are sociocultural components in every community that might affect how individuals perceive work-family balance. For instance, joint or extended families were frequent in Asian nations where people lived near to one another, but Western countries preferred to have nuclear and distant family structures (Spector et al., 2004). As a result, various family arrangements have distinct needs in the family domain and varied levels of support (Joplin et al., 2003). Different nations have different infrastructure and community resources, which makes it easier to successfully balance work and family obligations. For example, in certain nations, the government takes the initiative to help its employees with child care and elder care, but such circumstances may not be the case in other nations (Hammer et al., 2005). In addition to these macro-level variances, there are regional variations at the micro level as well (Poelmans, 2003). The variances in the individual variables, such as the roles that people assume, are referred to as micro-level disparities. Although the factors that contribute to work-family conflict are comparable in both Western and non-Western nations, people's reactions to these demands vary and are often influenced by their cultural norms (Lewis & Ayudhya, 2006). These macro- and micro-variances lead to disparities in family and work life across nations. Principal obstacles in attaining work-life balance include dual responsibilities, as women often juggle career

obligations and domestic tasks, resulting in heightened stress and less personal time (Roy et al., 2025). Integration of technology, such as the use of mobile phones and other technologies, obscures the distinctions between professional and personal life, leading to stress and imbalance (Deshmukh, 2020). Societal conventions and familial expectations can impose additional pressure on women to adhere to conventional domestic responsibilities, notwithstanding their job pursuits (Mowpia et al., 2023). Repercussions of disparity due to inadequate work-life balance may lead to elevated stress levels, emotional exhaustion, domestic discord, and adverse effects on both physical and mental well-being. Street vendors, particularly women vegetable vendors, frequently experience substantial obstacles in attaining a satisfactory work-life balance due to the nature of informal labour, like the absence of defined boundaries, and the expectations of society as a woman. It is possible that these difficulties will have a detrimental effect on their overall well-being, which includes their mental and physical health as well as their capacity to participate in social and leisure interactions. The work-life balance of a worker is a critical aspect of a modern livelihood, especially for women in the informal sector. Among this informal sector, women's vegetable vendors occupy a crucial position in the economic development of the state, but they are often overlooked. These women provide improvement in the local economy and make the urban dwellers' lives easy by supplying fresh vegetables. However, they are operating under challenging conditions: long working hours, limited social security, and unstable incomes. Furthermore, without a proper structured support system, balancing the professional responsibilities with personal and family obligations becomes a continuous struggle for women vegetable vendors. As women, they played the dual role of breadwinners and carers, which added layers of physical, emotional and mental stress, impacting their overall well-being and quality of life (Sundaresan 2014). Women's empowerment is a key focus in modern sociological and developmental discussions, particularly in the informal economy, where women represent a substantial segment of the workforce. Empowerment is the process through which individuals or groups attain control over their lives, obtain resources, and engage in decision-making (Kabeer, 1999). The experiences of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl illustrate the intersection of economic

participation with gender, culture, and informal labour dynamics. The contributions of these women, who primarily operate in local markets and roadside stalls, are significant to household income and urban food distribution; however, their labour is frequently undervalued and precarious. Despite challenges such as low capital investment, unstable income, and insufficient institutional protection, Mizo women vendors demonstrate agency and resilience in negotiating their livelihood opportunities. Their daily participation in vending activities sustains their families economically and redefines traditional gender roles within Mizo society, which is frequently influenced by patriarchal norms and Christian moral values. The vending process allows these women to attain economic independence, self-confidence, and social recognition, consistent with Julian Rappaport's (1987) empowerment theory, which discusses the importance of individuals gaining control over their situations and achieving self-efficacy through community involvement and action.

This chapter explores the work-life balance and empowerment of Mizo women's vegetable vendors by analysing and examining the interplay between their economic activities and domestic responsibilities as a woman, mother, wife, sister, daughter, grand-mother and in-law. This could be understood with the help of data on their daily routines, in-house and in-business support systems, off-days, family obligations and gatherings, decision-making and coping mechanisms. This chapter aims to shed light on the broader work-life balance challenges they face and identify opportunities for intervention and support from the government and NGO's if needed.

6.1 Family Support in the Work-Life of Women Vendors

The work-life balance of female vendors, who frequently balance several obligations at home and in the marketplace, is greatly influenced by family support. In addition to making a substantial financial contribution to the home, these women are primarily if not simply additionally responsible for childcare and household duties. Their physical health, mental stability, and general productivity can all be significantly impacted by the presence or lack of family support in such a demanding setting. This help, whether from a supportive spouse, understanding children, or other family members, may lessen their everyday hardships, lower their stress levels, and help them better maintain their livelihoods. In conclusion, a key component of women vendors'

work-life balance is family support. While a lack of support can pose serious obstacles and impede their capacity to succeed both emotionally and professionally, positive family support can result in less work-family friction, enhanced well-being, and better business outcomes (Leung, 2019). Analysing the type and degree of family assistance provides valuable information about how female vendors manage their two roles and emphasises the necessity of shared household duties to advance gender parity and financial security (Rajadhyaksha & Smita, 2004). Under this head, two aspects will be analysed: support they got from the family and the physical help they got from the spouse, children and the other family members.

Type of support received from the family was also covered in this empirical study. Support from the family could range from emotional encouragement and financial assistance to direct involvement in assisting business operations. Vegetable vending is time-consuming in preparing and handling the vegetable properly. When vegetables are taken from the wholesaler, the products are in bulk, which need to be processed, cleaned and prepared for sale. In order to attract the customers, the presentation and stacking also take time, which cannot be done by the vendor alone, especially on a Saturday market (Inrinni bazar). Families play a crucial role in providing a strong foundation for women vendors' business development by helping the vendors in managing the stress and achieving the work-life balance (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Nguyen & Sawang, 2016; Patel & Thatcher, 2014; Shelton, 2006). Therefore, there is a need for cooperation and support from the family. Therefore, the data will highlight the status of the vendors, whether they got support from their family or not.

The data from this study reveals that 159 vendors (79%) received support from their families. This large proportion implies that the majority of women gain from a supportive home environment, which might include assistance at the vending site, emotional support, or aid with domestic duties. Support from family may greatly reduce the strain of juggling work and life, enabling women to be more effective and content in their careers. While 42 vendors (21%) got no support from the family. This suggests that a sizable portion of the population is having difficulty juggling job and household duties, maybe as a result of disagreement, misunderstanding, or opposition from family members. In addition to causing stress and burnout, this lack of support

may also make it more difficult for their vending business to succeed and endure. The findings confirm positive data, indicating that the majority of vendors receive support from their families, with 74.5% of respondents being the primary breadwinners. This financial power means that dependents must support the main breadwinner. Families demonstrate their support by assisting with vending activities, providing financial help, and relieving them of household chores. Pi Nunpuii, 43 years old, who sat in Bawngkawn Market, says that

“Ka chhungte hian min support tha lutuk, in a kan haw te hian tui te min lo lum a, inchhung sek rek phei chu ka khawih meuh lo, kan hna kan haw meuh hi chuan chauh alo nav e thin a, ka fate hian min awl hneh lutuk. An theih ang ang in min duat a, tin ka mamawh anih phawt chuan min puih an hreh lo. School kal lai te an ni zawk a an hman renglo mai pawh a”

“My family supports me in every way. Every time I come home, they prepare warm water for me to take a bath, and my children do not allow me to do any household chores. When I return home, I am usually exhausted and lack the energy for additional tasks. They take care of me to the best of their ability. If I ask for their help, they are always willing, but they are still students and do not have enough time to assist me with vending activities.”

It can be concluded that most vendors receive support from their families because they are the primary breadwinners, and their dependents rely on them for financial stability, which is often associated with power. Since the majority of the vendors are married and have children whom they can rely on for taking care of the household domestic chores. This also helps them in giving time and relaxing for themselves at night after work is done. However, a sizeable percentage nonetheless face difficulties. This highlights how important family support is to women's empowerment in the informal sector and raises the possibility that community participation and awareness campaigns might promote more encouraging home settings for working women. The next topic will touch on the status of physical help the vendors got from her family during their free time or holiday.

The above conclusion relates to the fact that most vendors received support from their families. However, the reality of the nature of their supportiveness needs to be highlighted by knowing the physical help they got from the family members in their free time or holiday. Vegetable vending requires a lot of work and help, as the vegetables need to be sorted and cleaned to make it price worthy. The data below will show the status of help they got from the family members.

The data on the status of help they got from the family members reveals that 48% (96) of vendors got help from the family members in their free time and holidays. This suggests that for many women, vegetable vending remains a sole responsibility, adding to the physical and emotional burden of their work. The children and other family members help them in these activities, especially in the Inrinni Bazar, where they prepared the vegetables the night before for sale. Also, the vendors were supported by the family by dropping and lifting them in the workplace. They also gave them tiffin from their home with home-cooked food. While 104 vendors (52%) were not getting help from the family in their free time. This could reflect traditional gender roles, lack of interest, or indifference toward the woman's work, and it contributes to the ongoing work-life imbalance many women face. From the observations during fieldwork, another factor includes that the other family members are also working in other economic activities, as the majority of the vendor families come from low-class families where they need to engage in economic activity according to their ability for sustenance, which resulted in working alone without getting proper physical help from the family. However, the family supported them through moral support and financial support. But family is family; they do help each other in need.

So, it can be concluded that while nearly half of the women vegetable vendors in Mizoram receive occasional help from their family, a majority are left to manage their work alone, even when support could be available. This highlights a need for greater awareness and encouragement of shared family responsibility so that women in informal sectors are not overburdened and can sustain their livelihoods with dignity and better health. The data tends to highlight the crucial role of family support in the lives of women vegetable vendors, especially in the context of Mizoram. A significant

number of these women are primary breadwinners in their households. Their role brings a certain level of authority and recognition within the family, often resulting in support from dependants. Many married vendors receive help from their children, particularly in handling household chores, which eases their burden and allows them time to rest and recuperate after a long day of work. This support system not only improves their well-being but also contributes to their ability to sustain their livelihood.

However, some instances were found where a considerable portion of women vendors did not receive help, even when potential family members were available to render it, implying lack of care and empathy. Nearly half are left to manage both work and home responsibilities onto themselves, indicating helpless ongoing gender imbalances in household roles and accomplishments. These women face greater stress and exhaustion due to sprained work-life balance, making it difficult to maintain a healthy life and living. Thus, while family support enhances job satisfaction and resilience, its absence highlights the urgent need for greater empathy, shared responsibilities, and community engagement. Promoting such support systems is essential for empowering women in the informal sector and fostering a more equitable and sustainable work environment both at home and work. The next theme will engage with the childcare challenges women vendors faced.

6.2 Childcare Challenges

A large percentage of the informal sector is made up of women vendors, who are essential to the livelihoods of their families and communities. However, striking a balance between work and caregiving obligations is extremely difficult, particularly when it comes to childcare. In contrast to employees in the formal sector, women vendors sometimes do not have access to organised support networks like paid time off, flexible scheduling, or reasonably priced childcare (Alfers, 2016; Chen, 2012; Chant & Pedwell, 2008). Because of this, parents are usually compelled to take their kids to workplaces, such as marketplaces, roadside stands, or mobile vending stations, where the atmosphere is frequently hazardous and unsuitable for a child's growth. These childcare issues have an influence on the women's productivity, financial security, and mental health in addition to the safety and well-being of their

kids (Carr & Chen, 2004; Hunt & Samman, 2016). In low-income urban and rural areas, addressing this issue is crucial to advancing gender justice, economic resilience, and children's holistic development. Childcare Challenges point to the nature of Childcare provision and type of Child care-givers amidst accessibility and affordability.

Childcare provision refers to the arrangements made for the care and supervision of children, particularly when parents are unavailable (UNICEF, 2019). It encompasses various forms of care, including day-care facilities, childminders, and care provided by extended family. This study will focus on formal childcare provisions, such as day care and childminders, as the primary criteria for analysis. In Mizo society, prior to the establishment of private day care and preschool institutions, the government operated anganwadis in many localities of Aizawl. Due to limited operating hours, numerous private day-cares emerged to meet the needs of working parents, particularly mothers. However, these private preschools and day-cares can be costly for individuals, such as women vegetable vendors. The status of women who enrol their children in these preschools or anganwadis, illustrates the type of child care used. Out of the 63 vendors with children, only 8 vendors (4%) avail available childcare provisions. This indicates very limited reach or availability of these facilities to the target group. The available ones are expensive, and the affordable ones have short periods of opening which do not suffice the needs of the vendors. So, they send their kids to anganwadi and preschool according to their earnings. In contrast, 55 vendors (27.5%) cannot afford to offer childcare due to financial constraints. This suggests a significant gap in service delivery or awareness. The government must prioritise low-income working women by providing accessible, affordable childcare options with extended hours. This support will help ensure that children from this demographic have brighter future opportunities, positively impacting their health and mental development. A large portion of the respondents, 68.5%, opted for Not Applicable. This tends to mean they do not have young children requiring care, their children are old enough to be independent, and they may not live with their children, possibly due to migration or family arrangements.

The findings suggest that the low percentage of vendors who afford childcare provision reflects a shortfall in accessible and usable childcare infrastructure, such as anganwadis and pre-schools for working women vendors. The significant portion of the vendor that does not afford childcare provision suggests that many of those who need such services do not have access, which can severely impact women's ability to work consistently and without stress. While the majority of the respondents opted for the “Not applicable” response, it implies that the respondents do not have any children who are in need of childcare, while some respondents do not have any children yet. The subsequent subject will address the situation of childcare providers.

Among the 200 respondents, 63 vendors have children needing child care, while 137 do not have young children requiring special attention either due to children passed child care age or unmarried or child-less. A child carer is someone who provides care and supervision for children, either in their homes or in a childcare facility like a daycare (ILO, 2018) or at work place. Vegetable vendors typically work in crowded areas, on the pavement or undesignated marketplaces with limited space, making it difficult and polluted-unhealthy for them to carry their children at the workplace. The child caring among women vendors is ubiquitous no matter where they are or where they work, as societal expectations require them to care for and raise their children (Alfers, 2016). Therefore, if made available or not, they need to rely on family support to continue their work as vegetable vendors (Budlender, 2010; Alfers & Moussié, 2019). The data focuses that the childcare needs of 63 vendors who have children, could not afford much of private day-care services.

Among those 63 women (31.5%), who need childcare, siblings and mothers-in-law are the most common carers comprising (9%) and (7%) respectively. Around 6% were engaged in Self- care which suggests that some women vendors manage work and childcare concurrently as a helpless reality. Other care givers included husband (4%) in-laws (3.5%) and Maternal mothers (2%) who provide some level of support, however, remaining relatively limited. Extended family support, especially from siblings and mothers-in-law, plays a crucial role in helping women vendors manage childcare. Only 4% of husbands actively contribute, suggesting traditional gender roles still dominate in caregiving responsibilities. Self-reliant childcare (6%) could indicate

a burden on the mothers, potentially affecting both work efficiency and child wellbeing. The low involvement of maternal mothers and in-laws could be due to distance, customary constraints, age or health.

The data also demonstrates that 8 (4%) vendors' children were taken care of by their father; it shows that the man in the family is a *stay-at-home father (pa in a awm)*- a concept coined from the field. However, for the children's socialisation, it is still better to have their ablest father by their side. One of the respondents, Pi Puii, 27 years old from Luangmual, said that

“tunah hian fa thla 3 mi ka kalsan tawp a, eizawn angai si a, mahse kan in hi a hla lo a, tihian a pa in alo awm a, hnute tui a mamawh hunah min rawn ko a ka han pe lawk a, chuan ka chhuk leh mai zel. Ka chak ber chu ka fapa hi nileng a enkawl ka chak thin, ka ngai thei lutuk. Kan pa lah hna rum han thawk turin a hrisel silo a, chawhmeh zawrh chu ati mi bawk silo a, a buaithlak ve thei khawp mai. Naute ka khawngaih thin ber mai.”

Due to my vending business, I have to leave my 3-month-old infant at home. Fortunately, my home is close to my vending location, so my husband watches him and calls me when the baby is hungry. After I feed him, I return to the vending place. I truly wish I could stay with my baby all day because my husband has health issues that prevent him from working effectively, and he doesn't know how to manage vegetable vending. This situation is quite challenging for me, as I also have an infant to care for.”

18 vendors (9%) had their siblings care for their children, showing that they have no other relatives to care for them after school. This shows that they are vulnerable to abuse and crime. While 12 vendors (6%) carry the children at their workplace, as they do not have any other relatives to take care of the children while working. It is a bit problematic for the vendors, as the vending places usually have limited space, and the environment is not suitable for the children's socialisation and health conditions. Pi Ziki, 59 years old from Tuikual North, who sat on the pavement of the tennis court and carried her grandson at the workplace, mentioned that

“Tihian kan chhungkua in hna kan thawk vek sia, a nu hi mi inah a inhlawh bawk sia, keiin chawhmeh zawrhna ah ka hruai tawp a nih hi, a chhang chhiat theih khawp mai. Motor tam sia, an lo harh ve bawk sia ven reng angai ve tawh nen buai a ti zual. Duh aia hma a haw angai thin nau nen chuan in zawrh rei theih pawh a ni lo”

“Since all of us are working and his mother is a domestic worker, I brought him to my workplace there was really no other choice, which is quite problematic. His playful nature now requires constant supervision, especially with the heavy traffic. Because of him, I haven't been able to keep the vending open for long hours and have had to close early.”

Whereas 14 vendors (7%) had children who were taken care of by the mother-in-law, 4 respondents (2%) had children who were taken care of by the vendor's mother. There are also cases where 7 respondents (3.5%) children were taken care of by the in-laws. According to Pi Hruaii, a 27-year-old resident of Kulikawn,

“Ka fapa hi tunah kum 3 ania, in lamah ka nu (kan pa nu) in alo awm thin, ka ngai thei reuh lutuk, Sunday hi nuam ati thin lutuk a, ‘anu nitin hi Sunday ni se, ka bulah awmziah la’ ati thin. Eizawn angai bawk sia, fate duh ang taka ina awm a enkawl ka chak thin an la tet deuh lai pheii chuan”

“My son is 3 years old now, he was taken care by my mother-in-law, I really missed him. He really enjoys Sunday because I am with him. He also stated that, ‘mommy I wish every day is Sunday, so that you can stay home with me’. But I need to earn a living, otherwise I wanted to stay at home and take care my little ones especially while they are still young”

The most nurturing environment for children is typically one that is both supportive and structured, provided by their parents. Such care involves fostering healthy relationships, providing clear boundaries, and offering opportunities for growth and development (NCBI, 2022). Therefore, if parents do not regularly foster their children, it can lead to both positive and negative outcomes in their development. Positive effects include strengthening social skills, emotional development, and learning about family values and traditions. However, negative effects can arise from inconsistent parenting styles and exposure to negative behaviours, possibly leading to social

comparison issues (ScienceDirect, 2023). The analysis shows that most of the vendors' children were cared for by a relative because of the mother's job. The vendor left the children to her relatives, which can harm the children due to inconsistent parenting styles, exposure to negative behaviour, and social comparison issues. However, because of the poor conditions of their family economy, the vendors have no choice but to leave their children in the care of relatives.

The findings shed light on the significant childcare challenges faced by women vegetable vendors in Mizoram. A major concern highlighted is the lack of accessible and affordable childcare services, such as anganwadis and preschools, for working mothers. Only a small percentage of vendors could afford any form of childcare provision, indicating a critical gap in infrastructure and support services. Many vendors who require these services are unable to access them, which directly impacts their ability to work consistently, productively, and without stress. Furthermore, a majority of respondents selected "Not applicable", suggesting either that they do not have children or their children do not currently need childcare, but for those who do, the burden is considerable. In cases where childcare is needed, most vendors resort to leaving their children with relatives during work hours. While this may seem a practical solution, it can lead to inconsistent caregiving, exposure to negative influences, and emotional strain on the children. The reliance on relatives for childcare is often not by choice but driven by economic hardship and lack of alternatives.

These insights highlight a pressing need for accessible, reliable, and affordable childcare services for women in the informal sector. Addressing these challenges is not only crucial for the well-being of their children but also for the economic empowerment, peace of mind, and productivity of working women vendors. Policies and community support systems must be strengthened to fill this gap and ensure a more secure and supportive environment for both mothers and their children. The succeeding topic shows who do the household chores at the vendor's home.

6.3 Managing Home and Work Who cares for the home when women work?

And Who does the household chores when you get back home from work?

The issue of who runs the household when women leave the labour force is becoming more and more significant, particularly in informal sectors like street vending. It might

be difficult for women vendors to strike a balance between their everyday household duties and income-generating occupations. Even though their profession is crucial to the family's survival and advancement, they sometimes bear the whole load of household duties (Benería, 2003; Chen et al., 2004; Kabeer, 2012). Lack of assistance from spouses or other family members frequently makes their task worse, resulting in stress on both a physical and emotional level (Mukhopadhyay & Meer, 2004; Mehrotra & Biggeri, 2007). The dynamics of household management among working women vendors are examined in this section, providing insight into who handles family chores while these women are busy making a living. Thus, this section on 'Managing Home and Work' attempts to answer two questions: Who cares for the home when women work? and Who does the household chores when she gets back home from work?

Society expects women to stay at home and take care of their families. However, women who work as vegetable vendors cannot stay at home due to their jobs (Chen, 2012; Elson, 1999; Kabeer, 1994). Although vegetable vending is often considered a flexible occupation, it actually demands a significant amount of work and attention, leaving these women with little time for their families. As mothers, their absence is undoubtedly felt within the household (Benería, 2003; Roy & Alfes, 2022).

The data demonstrates that among the married vendors, 43 vendors (21.5%) were taken care of by their husbands while working. This indicates that the spouses of these vendors are not employed in regular jobs, and the reasons for their staying at home may vary. Since, in a patriarchal society, men are expected to be the main breadwinner of the family, but in the case of 43 vendors' families, the vendors themselves are the breadwinners of the family. In 76 vendors' families, the children are the home takers while the vendors are out working. Children are of great help for the women vendors, as they relieve the vendors' burden of taking care of the household work after finishing their daily work. The previous data also shows that 95.5% of the respondents have children. This helps in lowering the double burden for the women vendors. The vendor's family was taken care of by their in-laws for 34 respondent families (17%), as some of the families still follow a joint family system where they have other family members to take care of the home. While 18 vendors (9%) were taken care of by the

maternal mother from another home since all the family members were out for work and school. While 29 vendors' homes (14.5%) were left unattended as all the family members were out for work, if they have young children, they usually carry them along with them at their workplace, and the children used to join them after school as well.

Pi Thuami 49 years from Dawrpui Vengthar mentioned that

“Kan chhungin hnathawk in kan chhuak thin sia, tlaiah a haw hmasa sa in rawng an lo bawl mai thin, buai chu ana duh thin khawp mai, zan lam hi chu rawng kan bawl tlai thin avangin chaw pawh kan ei tlai, ei khama han intih fel meuh hi chuan mut alo hun der thin, zing thawh hma angai thin sia.”

Since everyone in our household works, the first person to come home early is responsible for preparing dinner. This often takes a long time, and as a result, we end up eating dinner quite late. After finishing our meal and freshening up, it's already time for bed, especially since I need to wake up early for work in the morning.

The data shows that when the mother of the family is at work, there is a problem in the family in taking care of the home. Most homes were taken care of by the relatives of the vendors, like husbands, children, in-laws, and maternal mothers. 14.5% of vendors do not have anyone to take care of their home while they are gone for work, as all the members are also working. The first person to come home early is responsible for preparing the family dinner. The next topic will demonstrate the person who looked after the vendor's children while she was away at the workplace.

Again, society often expects women to manage all household chores within the family. With the feminisation of the labour force, more women have begun participating in the workforce, challenging traditional gender roles and the division of labour, as females are now earning income (Kabeer, 2012; United Nations, 2020). Consequently, understanding who is responsible for household chores when women are working is crucial for analysing the complexities of labour divisions (Benería, 2003; Hochschild & Machung, 2012; Reskin & Padavic, 2002).

According to the data from the field, 65 vendors (32.5%) perform household chores after a long day of work, which confirms that women vegetable vendors experience a double burden or double shift. After working long hours in a vending environment with inadequate space, they remain vigilant to competition among co-vendors. The women engage in household chores as societal expectations dictate, even after working in income-earning roles. This situation adversely affects their mental and physical health. Pi Hnemi, 44 years old single parent stated that,

“Hmeichhe awmchhun ka ni sia, hna banah inchhung sekrek bakah rawngbawl zawnz zawnz ka tih leh vek angai thin, mahse ka fapate hian a senghawi leh silfai hi chu an ti ve thin. A chang chuan fanu neih hi ka chak ve thin, inchhung sekrek a min chhawk tu atan”

“As I am the only woman in the house, I did all the household chores and cooking after coming back from work. But my boys have done the dish washing and clearing the kitchen after meals. Sometime I wish I have daughter who will help me in household chores”

Here, it also shows how the gender division of labour resulted in a burden for women in the family. The respondent, even though she has sons, wishes to have a daughter who could help her in domestic work. She considers her son's help with dishwashing and clearing the kitchen to be more than sufficient support. This situation illustrates the double burden faced by working women among Mizo vegetable vendors, as they are expected to fulfil their roles both as mothers and as members of society.

In 13 vendor families (6.5%), household chores are performed by the husband, indicating a supportive partner; however, in the context of Mizo society, such husbands may be viewed as “*thaibawih*”, meaning wife slave. These vendors' families do not have grown-up adult children, and they have the alcoholic husband's health issues and the irregularity of his occupations. Pi Siami 42 years who lived in Vaivakawn migrated from Myanmar stated that,

“Kan pa hi a hrisel loh avangin hna rum a thawk theilo a, chuvang chuan in lamah puan tah pah in a awm thin a, ka awmlah hlan hian ani in in lam alo enkawl thin, fa 3 kan nei a, duh angin an la rintlak chiahlo bawh nen. Kan pa inah awm in keiin chawhmeh ka zuar thung a ni”

“My husband has health issue; he could not work a hard job. So, he weaves at home and do all the household chores while I’m away at the vending place. We have 3 children who are not reliable for cooking. So, my husband stays at home and weave while I do vend here”

In Mizo society, the gender division of labour and strict adherence to traditional gender roles closely relate to the concept of masculinity. Those who deviate from these norms often face ridicule from their community. Men are expected to be responsible and serve as the family's breadwinner, and failure to meet these societal expectations can lead to public scorn. Compared to other members of the family as the household caretaker, the rate of the husband as the main household chores caretaker is low. In 94 vendor families, children contribute to household chores, allowing their mothers some rest. Most household tasks are performed by the children, as many respondents are married and serve as the primary providers for their families. This behaviour demonstrates the children’s support for their mothers. Pi Diki 65 years old stated that,

“Chawhmeh zuar zo ka haw hi chuan inlam thil chu engmah ka ti meuhlo, ka fate’n engkim an khawih vek thin, ka fapa phei chuan ‘ka nu kan tan pawh a zahthlak tiang ang kuma hna ila thawk hi, kan chawm zo che nia, awm hahdam ve rawh’ te pawh min ti thin a, mahse, chawhmeh zawrh hi nuam ka tia, keimah pawh hi ka zangkhai phah in ka hrisel phah zawk”

“After coming back from the workplace, I didn’t do any household chores, everything was done by my children. They also tried to stopped me from vending, my son used to tell me that ‘it’s embarrassing for us, if you still work at this age, stay at home and take rest, we can provide you’ but I love selling vegetables, it makes me active and healthy”

Among vendors living in joint family households, 21 families (10.5%) have household chores managed by in-laws. However, not all vendors from joint families are exempt from household duties, as these chores are traditionally viewed as women’s responsibilities, and they are expected to assist their in-laws even if they work the whole day. Pi Ruati 28 years from Armed Veng stated that,

“Keini chu kan la indang lo a, ka bazar nitin angai thin sia, ka fanu chu a pi te bulah a awm a, chuan keiin chawhmeh ka zuar mai thin, inchhung sekrek tam zawk chu an lo khawih vek a, mahse mo nih chuan awl vek kha a theih bikloh a, in a haw chuan ka khawih pui veleh vek zel tho, chauh pawh hi kan sawihman meuhlo a ni”

“We still lived as a joint family, since I need to go to the workplace every day, my baby was taken care by my mother-in-law. And they did most of the household chores but if you are the bride of the family who lived in patrilocal, there is an expectation. So, I help them in every work as soon as I get home. I’m really exhausted”.

Only 7 vendor families receive assistance from the maternal mothers with household tasks. Given that Mizo society is patriarchal and follows a patrilocal system, maternal support typically comes from outside the household. The data indicates that there may be no one available at home to assist with household chores, highlighting the mother’s love and dedication to her children. So, from the above analysis, the majority of the vendors do not engage in household work, but they do help the family members, as the society expects them to be responsible in the domestic work. Because of this nature, the women faced a double burden; at the same time, there is no family-work life balance from this perspective.

The data reveals the significant domestic challenges faced by women vegetable vendors in Mizoram as they strive to balance their work and home responsibilities. When these women are away for work, the management of household tasks often falls to other family members, such as husbands, children, in-laws, or their mothers. This form of support helps maintain the household, but it is not universal; around 14.5% of vendors have no one to look after their home while they are away, as all family members are also engaged in work. In such cases, whoever returns home first typically assumes the responsibility of preparing meals, showing an adaptive but inconsistent approach to household duties.

Despite receiving some level of help, the analysis also indicates that most women vendors do not actively engage in household work during working hours, yet they are still expected to contribute due to prevailing social norms. This cultural expectation

imposes a double burden, demanding that women succeed both as economic providers and as domestic caretakers. As a result, family and work life are often imbalanced, leading to physical exhaustion and emotional stress.

These insights underline the urgent need to recognise and redistribute domestic responsibilities within families. Promoting shared household duties and challenging gendered expectations are crucial steps toward achieving work-life balance and reducing the double burden on women in the informal sector. Community awareness and gender-sensitive policies can play a vital role in creating a more equitable environment for women vendors.

6.4 Day-offs and Family Engagement

Finding time for leisure and family time may be extremely difficult for women vegetable vendors, whose jobs sometimes require long hours, early mornings, and physically taxing duties. In contrast to workers in the formal sector, these women seldom ever take advantage of planned holidays or days off. Since their daily income is what sustains them, even a single day off might result in a loss of revenue (Bhowmik, 2005; Chen, 2012; Williams & Gurtoo, 2012). Family still plays a major role in their life, and many of them make an effort to spend time together, plan family get-togethers, and take care of domestic duties. The challenges people encounter in striking a balance between their financial needs and their social and emotional commitments are reflected in their ability, or lack thereof, to take time off for personal well-being and family time (Alfers, 2016; Parvin & Rahman, 2021). Knowing how women vendors handle their days off and family time provides important information about their priorities, resiliency, and the support networks or lack thereof that influence their day-to-day existence.

6.4.1 Status of day-off

Previous research indicates that flexibility is a key characteristic of vegetable vending and vending in general. This factor is also one of the reasons for entry into the vegetable vending by women (Bhowmik, 2005; Roever & Skinner, 2016; Williams & Gurtoo, 2012). Women have lots of roles to play in the family as a wife, mother and in-laws. Due to these expectations, they do need a day off for attending to their children's educational importance, health issues of the family and attending social

activities like funeral ceremonies, weddings and other important activities. It is tempting for them to work as self-employed for its flexibility due to their reproductive ability and the expectation by the society (Chant & Pedwell, 2008; Kabeer, 2012).

So, in this section, the status of having day-off by the women vegetable vendors will be highlighted.

The field data reveals that all vendors take a day off from their work. This is mainly because in Mizo society, Sunday is day-off sacred, and the majority of the shops are closed. As a Christian practice, Sunday is observed as a day for attending the church service and relational priorities. Sunday school is also held for the community in each denomination. Mizo society organised 3 church services on Sunday, namely morning, afternoon and night services, which usually took 1 hr for each service. This day off is on a regular recurring basis; other than this, the women vegetable vendors took a day off because of their children's health, family problems and attending social services like the courtesy visits and occasional wedding and funeral of their relatives and near ones. They also took a day off when the vegetable vendors' associations organised their meetings, a picnic or excursion to relieve their stress.

Pi Ziki 62 years old opined that,

“Chawlhni leh chhungkaw chhiat that ah te chuan chawl ve thin a, chawhmehzawrh a nawmna te pawh a ni ve a, kan thu ve em lawm”

“Every Sunday and family function, I do have day off, it's the beauty of being a vegetable vendor, we are our own boss”

This is how much they give importance to the Sunday, also being a Christian they also considered being an active church goers is a luck charm in which Pi Hriati 56 years old who is an active church goer stated that,

“Kohhran a ka inhman that chuan kawng hrang hrang a chawisan in ka awm thin, tawngtai leh Bible chhiar ka man that chuan ka lakluh pawh a tam phah thin in ka hria, ka vanneihna thuruk niin ka hria”

“My regular engagement in church really uplifts me in many ways, if I pray regularly and reads bible regularly, my stress decreases, income increases and it is like my lucky charm.”

The above statement illustrates the deep connection between Christianity and Mizo society, as they associate their blessed upcoming endeavour with active participation in the church. So, among the respondents, all of the respondents were having a day off due to many reasons. The high percentage of women taking a day off reflects a positive trend toward work-life management in consonance with long cherished community norms, as Mizos are Christian, and they take Sunday as sacred, which terminates in off from vegetable vending. A regular day off is crucial for passionate sentimental well-being, recovery from work related stress, family time, and mental well-being, especially in labour-intensive and low-security jobs like street vending. This points to the work-life balance among the vendors in proper perspective.

To have a perfect work-life balance, spending quality time with your family is essential for strong bonding, relationships, and communication. However, women vegetable vendors often find it challenging to spare time for their families because their work culture requires long hours at the workplace (Bhowmik, 2005; Roever & Skinner, 2016; Parvin & Rahman, 2021). When they arrive home, they typically feel drained and exhausted and go to bed early, as they must wake up promptly in the morning to begin their vending. Most women vendors hail from impoverished households, relying solely on their daily earnings from the vending activity to support their livelihood (Alfers, 2016; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

The data indicates that only 32 vendors (16.5%) engage in family time, such as having meals together, watching television, and supervising their children's studies at night. Very few women are able to carve out time for family life despite their busy schedules. These women may have better family support, flexible schedules, or more manageable workloads. Pi Ziki stated that,

“Buai viau mah ila, chhungkua a chaw ei ho hi ka ngaipawimawh a, kan innghak thin tlai chaw ei bik hi chu, ril erawh a tam duh thin khawp mai, ka fate hi hnathawk vek tho an nia, chhungkua anga chaw eirual dawn chuan zan dar 7 leh 7:30 inkarah chaw kan ei hman chauh thin, chaw eikham hi chuan mut a hun chu ni der thin, thawhmma angai thin sia, chauh nen ka meng thei thin lo”

“Though, I am busy in my vegetable vending, I give priority in having dinner together in the evening with the whole family. I want to have family dinner so, we waited each other, but I was starving. As all the children are also working, we can have dinner around 7-7:30pm. After having dinner, its already time for sleeping, as I need to get up early in the morning for work. Also, I am exhausted even to open my eyes.”

Other outdoor activities are not regularly held due to financial constraints and time limitations. In contrast, the majority of vendors, 168 (84%), do not have the opportunity for quality family time at home. This reflects a significant work-life imbalance, where the demands of vending often involved early mornings, long hours, and physically demanding tasks, which resulted in leaving little or no time for family interaction or bonding. This analysis could be confirmed with one of the respondents Pi Remi 44 years old from Thuampui opined that,

“Kartluana mahni hna theuh thawh chuan hun a awmlo chhungkua a thil han ti ho tur chuan. Kan haw hun a inang bawk silo a, eng nge maw changa TV han enho ang hi nimai Icon leh Idol ang te. Tin, sum kan neilo hrim hrim a hran a chhungkaw tan anga hun han hmang tur pawn.”

“We work the whole week as a family, went home at different timing which is exhausted enough. But we do watch TV together if some events were organised by the Service provider like Icon and Idol. To have another time for family is hard for a family like us due to low financial status and time constraint.”

Vending requires long hours, which exhausts the vendors. They return home late at night; after dinner, they typically go to bed to prepare for an early start the next day. Additionally, due to the family's low socio-economic status, most family members must participate in economic activities, leaving little time for meaningful family interactions.

This data clearly highlights the social cost of informal employment for women, especially in vending. The lack of family time can affect their personal relationships, parenting, and overall well-being, and may also lead to feelings of guilt, stress, or

isolation. It also underscores how unpaid domestic expectations continue to burden women even when they are fully engaged in earning livelihoods.

The findings point to a critical need for family-friendly interventions, such as promoting shared household responsibilities, augmenting childcare access, and coping contingent family dynamics. Without addressing these issues, women vendors will continue to face emotional burnout and wornout, undermining both their productivity and quality of life.

In the context of Mizo society, family gatherings include picnics, family feasts, and family outings. As Mizo society is a close-knit society, a single family alone usually does not organise a family picnic, but they contribute together with the relatives in organising a picnic (Lalzirliani, 2019; Vanchiau, 2017; Vanlalchhuanawma, 2016). This family gathering unites the family and helps in knowing the far-off relatives, and a feeling of oneness builds among them (Malsawmdawngliana & Tolentino, 2013). In order to have a work-life balance, one needs to give priority to the work as well as the personal life of oneself at the same time (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

It has been revealed that only 45 vendors (22.5%) have organised a family gathering, suggesting that less than one-fourth of women take an active role in organising such events. While a vast majority of 155 vendors (77.5%) were not able to organise a family gathering. This is because of time constraints and workload, lack of finances, gender role reversal and ignorance of the importance of having family gatherings.

This data highlights the limited social engagement of women vegetable vendors in terms of organising family events, which can be attributed to several factors:

Time constraints and workload, as vegetable vending is time-consuming and physically demanding. Many women start early in the morning and work late into the evening, leaving little time or energy for planning and organising social or family events.

Financial limitations, as organising family gatherings often involves expenses related to food, gifts, or hosting, which may not be affordable for women engaged in low-income, informal work. This economic barrier restricts their participation in such activities. Gender role reversal or shift traditionally, as women are expected to foster family bonding through gatherings. However, the increasing economic role of women

in these households may result in a shift of priorities, where income generation takes precedence over social customs.

Pi Duhi 33 years from Tuithiang stated that

“a hran a chhungkua ang chuan kan neilo, pawisa awmlo. Chawhmeh zuar anga kan picnic hi nimai ka picnic ve thin chu”

“No, we do not have any type of picnic with the family as we have no money to organised. The only picnic I went to is the picnic organised by the Vendors Associations”

Among the 45 vendors majority of them able to organised a family picnic once a year.

Pi Siamthari 56 years old from Dawrpui stated that,

“Kum tin hi chuan vawi khat chu chhungkaw picnic hi chu kan nei thin, chubakah chuan lui a chhungkua bil a han kal te pawh kan nei thin tho, a nuam ve thin khawp mai, mahse hun neih kim hi harsa ve thin e a, tih ve rawih hi angai”

“We used to have a family picnic once a year and if we have time, we went out for a family picnic on the riverbank as well. We really enjoyed but the hardest part is availability of all the members, we just need to plan it and organised it accordingly”

The findings suggest that the majority of women vegetable vendors in Mizoram are unable to engage in organising family gatherings, primarily due to economic hardship, time poverty, and overwhelming responsibilities. This reflects how their work in the informal sector reshapes traditional social and cultural roles, potentially affecting familial bonds and social cohesion. Addressing this issue may require greater support at the family and community level, as well as policies that recognise and reduce the burdens carried by women in informal labour.

The work-life balance of women vegetable vendors in Mizoram reflects a complex interplay between cultural norms, economic necessity, and gendered expectations. On one hand, the near-universal observance of a day off—with Sunday as a sacred rest day due to Christian practices—represents a positive aspect of work-life balance. This cultural norm allows women vendors a crucial opportunity for physical rest, spiritual

renewal, and potential family engagement, which is particularly important in the context of their physically demanding and insecure occupation.

However, this balance is largely superficial when examined more deeply. Despite having a designated day off, the overwhelming lack of family time (reported by 84% of respondents) reveals the hidden emotional and social costs of their informal employment. These women often shoulder the double burden of paid work and unpaid domestic labour, leaving them exhausted and socially isolated, with little time to nurture personal relationships or care for their children effectively. The stress associated with this imbalance not only affects their mental health but also has long-term implications on family dynamics and child development.

Moreover, the data also shows that 77.5% of the women do not organise family gatherings, which traditionally play a key role in maintaining social and familial cohesion in Mizo society. This absence is a reflection of time poverty, financial constraints, and overwhelming responsibilities, which prevent women from engaging in cultural and communal life. Such limitations signal a shift in traditional gender roles but also a loss of vital social support networks that strengthen families and communities.

While the practice of observing a day off offers some relief, the broader picture reveals that women vegetable vendors in Mizoram continue to face significant work-life imbalance. Their roles as income earners, caretakers, and cultural anchors are being stretched, often without adequate support. To truly improve their quality of life, there is an urgent need for family-friendly policies, equitable sharing of domestic duties, access to childcare, and community-level initiatives that acknowledge and alleviate the burdens borne by these women. Only then can work-life balance be meaningfully achieved in both structure and spirit.

6.5 Work-Family Conflict

Women vegetable vendors sometimes struggle with work-life conflict as they attempt to strike a balance between the demands of their livelihood and their domestic duties. Contrary to conventional work environments, vegetable vending entails long hours, unpredictable scheduling, and physical labour, frequently leaving little time for family or personal needs (Bhowmik, 2005; Parvin & Rahman, 2021). In addition to

managing domestic duties, taking care of children, and meeting social commitments, these women are usually expected to make a consistent living from their vending operations. This conflict is made worse by cultural expectations, a lack of family support, and restricted access to resources. Recognising the resilience of female vegetable vendors and tackling the societal and structural obstacles that impede their economic empowerment and general well-being requires an understanding of their work-life challenges (Kabeer, 2012; Alfery, 2016; Voydanoff, 2005).

Women who sell vegetables frequently deal with serious work-life conflict, especially when their attempts to make a living cause friction in the home. Due to their long work hours and regular absences from home, many of these women claim that their husbands and kids feel neglected. Husbands may object to the time spent outdoors or doubt the woman's ability to run the home, while children may complain about not receiving enough attention, assistance with schooling, or involvement in everyday activities. Women find it more difficult to strike a balance between job and family as a result of these grievances, which can increase mental stress and cause emotions of guilt and dissatisfaction. The gendered expectations that are put on women are brought to light by this constant struggle, which also emphasises the need for improved understanding within the family structure and shared household duties (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Parvin & Rahman, 2021).

6.5.1 Children complaining about the occupation

The factor which shows the life-work balance is to know the status of conflict between the work life and the family life (Rout & Lewis, 1999; Parvin & Rahman, 2021). A woman vendor with children has no choice but to work and be away from them for their livelihood, even though her thoughts are with her children due to her family's socio-economic conditions. The children, on the other hand, wanted their mother to be with them, especially when they were at a young age, but they also had no choice other than to let her go and accepted the loneliness and tried to live with it (Alfers, 2016; Voydanoff, 2005). However, there are cases when the children complain about their mother's work out of loneliness and the longing for their mother's love. There is no harm in this, but this shows the insight of the work-life balance and work-life conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Bhowmik, 2005). So, the table below highlights

the status of children complaining about their mother's working culture, as she has no time for them because of her vending.

Table 6.1 Complain from children about the occupation

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	15.0
No	77	38.5
Sometimes	72	36.0
Not applicable	21	10.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The above table demonstrates that 30 vendor's (15%) children complained their mother occupation, the nature or the context they complain is varied according to the children's age. If the mother is old, the children complained as they want her to take rest and embarrassing for the children as well, since it may look bad on them, allowing the old mother to work. One of the respondents, Pi Ziri 73 years old from Vaivakawn stated that,

“Ka fate hi an ohun ve thin ka hna avang hian, chawl tawh se min duh a. tin, an tan a zahthlak an ti thin a, mahse chawhmeh zawrh hi nuam ka ti sia, ka hrisel phah in ka harh vang. Nilo se chuan tunah hian damawiin ah ka awm ka ring thawk lo ila chuan. Min ti hlim heng hna ka thawh hian”

“My children complained about my work as they wanted me to take rest at home and its embarrassing for them. However, for me I love selling vegetable as I keeps me active and healthy, otherwise I will be in hospital bed, if I am not working, it gives me joy working as a vendor”

Whereas, if the children are young, they long for their mother's love and often express dissatisfaction with her work. One of the respondents, Pi Puii 27 years old from Dinthar who has 2 years old boy stated that,

“Ka fapa hian min ngen thin a, anu midang nu te chu inah an awm thin a, awm ve la nang pawh min ti thin, rilru chu a hreawm ve duh thin”

“My son cried for me and said mom stay at home like other's mother, which really pains me”

while a total of 77 vendors (38.5%) children do not complain about the mother's occupation. From the observations and interview schedule, there can be two reasons, when the mother used to be away from the children right from the young age, they're getting used to it by the children. Pi Ruati 38 years from Thuampui stated that,

"An phun lemlo ka hna avang chuan, bakah an tet lai atang tawh in ka awm tam hmanlo a, api hi keimah ai pawh hian an ngai zawk ani hian a awm nasa a"

"They did not complain about my work, since I am usually away from home even while they were very young, they miss their grandmother more than me as she is the one you took care my children"

On the other hand, the children know the need of the mother's engaging in the economic activity due to the socio-economic conditions of the family. this can be confirm using the quotation given by Pi Sangi 43 years from Armed Veng South,

"Ka fate chu an phun ve dawn pawh hian, eitur neihloh in duh mi, nuam tih vanga hnathawk ka nilo ania, in tan anih hi ka tia, an phun ngai lemlo"

"Whenever they try to complain me working every day, I told them, I did not work because I love working, I work because I need to provide you food, after that they do not complain it anymore"

So, there are two reasons why the children do not complain about their mother's occupations and mostly stay away from them. Conversely, the children of 72 vendors occasionally voice complaints about their mother's occupations. This depends on the health conditions of the children and the holiday of the children's school. These can be affirmed with the statement given by Pi Siami 35 years from Chite Veng stated that

"Phun ve zeuh zeuh thin a bikin an damloh hian ina awm tur hian min duh thin a, inrinni ang anih phei hi chuan chawlh hi uiawm ve a, kan krismas ang hi ani ve a"

"Yes, sometime they do complain about my work, especially when they are sick. On Saturday, it's hard for me to take leave as it is our kind of Christmas since the demand is high"

Also, the other respondent also commented on these questions by Pi Rinhlui 44 years from Falkland stated that

“School an chawlh hian an phun ve thin, han lenchhuah te hi an chak ve thin a, ka fapa pawn ‘anu chu nitin chhuah I ngaia len hote a chakawm thin a sin’ ati tawh”

“During their holidays, they wanted to go out as a family, my son once told me that ‘mommy you need to sell vegetables every day, I want you to go out with us’.”

Among the respondents, 21 vendors do not have children. Most of the vendor’s kids complained about their mother’s jobs out of love and longing for their care. But due to the poverty and low socio-economic status, they need to engage in economic activity for the survival of the family. This shows there is work-life conflict among the Mizo women vegetable vendors' families.

6.5.2 Conflict with family/husband due to vegetable vending

For women from low- and middle-income families, vegetable vending is not only seen as a source of household income but also as a space where women’s roles, aspirations, and negotiating power within the family are sharpened (Agarwal, 1997; Singh & Sapra, 2007). Many women with limited formal education or land ownership entered vegetable vending activity in response to their economic necessity. However, their economic activity outside home triggers tension and conflicts at home (Parvin & Rahman, 2021; Roy & Singh, 2020). Since traditional gender norms still dictate the mind of the society by seeing women’s primary obligations lie in domestic sphere childcare, cooking, and household management, leaving little room for their personal time, physical labour, and mobility, which is required for sourcing, transporting, and selling fresh produce (Carr & Chen, 2004; Bhowmik, 2005). When a woman chooses to earn more and spend most of her time at the vending place, she may be perceived as neglecting her duties at home. Husbands or other family members concerned about household order, familial reputation, or the perceived impropriety of a woman working in a public space may confront or restrict her participation in vegetable vending (Meagher, 2010).

The data from the field shows that 9 vendors (4.5%) reported consistent conflict with the husband or family, this represents these vendors experienced ongoing familial tension or disapproval related to their livelihood.

One respondent Pi Zari 71 years opined that

“Aw inhauh phah thin e, chawhmeh zawrh vanga kan buaina ber chu ka fate hian chawl tawh se inah awm tawh se min ti thin a, lung thalo nei ka nia, phaiah te kan inentir thin a, mahse keimah hian ka dam phah zawk a ka hriat vangin ka la kal lui anih hi”

“Yes, we have conflict because of my occupations, since I have heart problem and got check-up in other state, my children are worried and wants me to be at home and rest. But I enjoyed working as I thought it keeps me active”

While the other respondents, Pi Hnemi 55 years had conflict with her husband who is in government service opined that,

“Kan pa hian chawl a ina awm turin min duh thin a, chu chu kan inhauh phah ziahna nia, keiin keima mamawh leina tur te, kan pa dil ngailo a lo thawhchhuah hi nuam ka ti sia”

“My husband used to scold me as he wants me to stay at home, but I want to work and earn some so that I need not to asked my husband for my secondary needs”

While the other family had conflict because their son was a drug addict. So, Pi Awmpuii 60 years from Tanhril Bazar stated that,

“Kan pa leh ka fate’n min hauhna ber chu ka hna vang hian ania, kan fapa home a awm hi a rawn chhuak a, chu chu ina awm a enkawl turin min duh a, hei vang hian ka rilru pawh hi a buai ve thin. Ka chawlh san chuan ka seat hi ka ui bawk si, ka fate lah tuman an chhunzawm duh bawk silo, heng lai seat chu khawiah mah kan chang tawh dawn silo”

“The main reason for conflict between me and my family is that our son is a drug addict who sneak out from the rehabilitation centre. They want me to stay at home and look after him. This really make me confused because if I left the job, my location in the market will also be lost and I don’t think I will never be able to get it back. Also, my children do not want to continue this occupation. This put me in a dilemma”

While majority (83.5%) of respondents reported no conflict with their family or husband due to their vegetable vending occupation which represents a generally supportive or neutral environment at home regarding their work. This can be supported with one of the respondent statement, Pi Hrili 56 years from New Market Bazarpui opined that,

“Chutianga ka hna vanga inhauh buai phah emaw buaina lam chu awmlo, kan eibel ber ania, zirtawp zanah te pheh chuan min pui thin inrinni kan buai theih em vangin, ka hna kal leh haw min hruai ziah bawh thin, inah pawh engmah ka khawihpui lemlo, min awl hneh lutuk, eizawngtu ber ka nia”

“No, I don’t face any problem or conflict from my husband or family because of my job, since vegetable vending is our main job, they really supported me. especially on Friday night, they help me in preparing the vegetables for Saturday bazar as I was usually busy on that day. Even at home, they do not allow me to touched any household chores since I am the breadwinner of the family.”

The above statement indicates that the income earned by the family breadwinner led to a respected status for the woman vegetable vendor within her family due to her contributions.

However, 24 vendors (12%) reported occasional conflict due to vending with the husband or family. This could stem from specific issues such as time demands, financial stress, decision-making or traditional gender role expectations.

Some vendors faced conflict due to time demands from their husbands here is the statement given by Pi Siami 54 years from Maubawh stated that,

“Ka pasal fanau tan hun ka neihloh ema vang hian, inhauh chang hi chu awm veleh thin, mahse pawisa te han thawhchhuah hi chuan a dai veleh mai zel a”

“Since, I don’t have time for my husband and family, some conflict arises but it gradually over when I earn good money from vending”

While others faced conflict due to financial stress of the family, one of the respondents gave statement on this, Pi Chhuangi 45 years from Durtlang stated that,

“Kan pa hian ka remti lo chung loan in motor ala ve ringawt a, a tum angin a tluang silo a, hei vang hian ka lakluh hmang hian loan a rul a, chuvang chuan kan in hau ve thin, chahwmeh zawrh ngawt atang chuan hlawh tam har si”

“My husband takes motor with loan, but it is not profitable as he thinks, so he started paying the loan from my earnings, that’s why we had conflict, since getting good earning is hard from vending alone”

Also, conflict arises due to decision making and gender role expectations from the family and the husband, one of the respondents, Pi Kungi, 43 years stated that,

“kan pa zurui hian min hauh hi a ching a, in lam hna I thawk hman lo, chhungkua I ngaihtuah lo, I hna hi bansan rawh, min ti thin”

“Whenever my husband got drunk, he asked me to quit the job, as he complained that I was not taking enough care of the family and himself due to my job”

So, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents were not facing conflict with the husband or family because vegetable vending is socially accepted within the families. Moreover, these women contributed significantly to the household income leading to more familial respect and also due to the involvement or dependent on the vending business by the family members. However, a small portion of 16.5% vendors do face conflict with their spouse or family because of their vegetable vending.

The work-family conflict experienced by women vegetable vendors in Mizoram reflects both the emotional strain of balancing economic necessity with familial expectations and the changing dynamics within household relationships.

Firstly, while 21 respondents did not have children, the majority of those with children reported complaints from their children regarding their work. These complaints often stem from a desire for attention, care and emotional connection, needs that go unmet due to the demanding nature of the vendors’ work. Despite their children's emotional needs, many of these women continue working out of economic necessity, driven by poverty and the need to sustain their families. This tension between caregiving and breadwinning illustrates a clear work-life conflict, where the well-being of the family both financially and emotionally is at odds with each other.

On the other hand, most respondents reported no conflict with their husbands or extended families regarding their occupation. This indicates that vegetable vending is socially and culturally accepted within Mizo families, especially when women's earnings contribute significantly to the household income. In many cases, family members even depend on or assist with the vending activity, reinforcing a sense of shared responsibility and reducing internal conflict. However, it is important to note that a minority (16.5%) still face tension with their spouses or families due to their work. This group likely experiences traditional resistance to women's economic independence or discomfort with shifting gender roles.

The data reveals a mixed picture of work-family conflict among women vegetable vendors. While their work is largely accepted and even respected within many families, emotional conflicts particularly with children remain significant, reflecting the hidden sacrifices of working women in the informal sector. To address this, there is a need for community support systems, parenting resources, and public recognition of women's dual roles, so that economic survival does not come at the cost of emotional well-being and family harmony.

6.6 Church Obligation

Mizo society follows Christianity and the first baptism occurred in 1899 (Zorema, 2011; Lalsangkima Pachuau, 2002). Christianity gradually spread among the Mizo people, by the mid-20th century, majority of Mizo's had embraced Christianity and it is now the dominant religion in Mizoram (Lalchungnunga, 2007). In the life of the Mizo, actively engaging in the church service and having church obligations is a part of social capital. However, in order to assigned an obligation, one needs to actively participated in church activity (Putnam, 2000; Thanmawia, 2016). Even among the vendors, who are busy in their daily schedule and long working hours, they try to manage of having a time for church service particularly on Sunday (Lalbiakzuali, 2019). So, among the vendors, the status of having church obligations will be shown in the table below:

As per the data from the field, it can be seen that 35 vendors (17.5%) have church obligations, this can be cleared from one of the respondents Pi Ziki, 67 years,

“Pathian khawngaihna vangin tunah hian kohhran hmeichhe group bik ah group finance secretary ka ni mek a, tin, kohhran ah tantu ka ni bawk”

“By the grace of God, under *Kohhran Hmeichhie* (Church women fellowship) group I hold the Group Finance Secretary and also, in the main church service I hold the position of ‘Tantu’ (scripture reader)”

And one of the respondents, talked about how she manages her time for the church.

Pi Zovi, 59 years stated that,

“Kan hna ah buai viau pawh ni ila, inkhawm zan anih hi chuan ka haw hma mai zel, keichu inkhawm hi nuam ka tia, ka dam chuan inkhawm zel ka duh”

“Even if I am busy at work, I usually went home early on a church service night, I enjoyed going to church if I am healthy”

while 165 vendors (82.5%) do not have any church obligations this is due to their long working hours, limited day-off and less time for themselves. when asked “Do you have any church obligations?” Pi Siami, 45 years, from Maubawk stated that,

“Neilo e, keini te chu inkhawm tam ve hmanlo, chawlhni chawhma hi kan inkhawm tawka ni, chauh ana, thei lutuk a”

“No, I don’t have time to go to church, I attended only the Sunday School since I am exhausted”

Most of the respondents replied as not having any church obligations.

It can be concluded that majority of the vendors do not have time for upgrading their social capital by attending the church regularly due to the demand of long hours by their work while only a few vendors could able to attain church obligation despite their busy schedule. Therefore, due to long working hours there is a conflict in work-life balance of the women vegetable vendors.

In Mizo society, Christianity holds a central place, with the first baptism taking place in 1899 and the majority of the population embracing the faith by the mid-20th century (Lalsangkima Pachuau, 2002; Lalchungnunga, 2007; Zorema, 2011). Participation in church services and fulfilling church-related obligations is not only a matter of spiritual practice but also a key component of social capital within the community. Actively engaging in church life such as attending services, joining fellowships, and

taking on responsibilities is considered a sign of moral commitment, community belonging, and social respect.

However, for women vegetable vendors, this aspect of life is often challenged by their demanding work schedules. These women work long hours often starting early in the morning and finishing late in the evening which leaves them with little time or energy to consistently participate in church activities. Although many make an effort to attend Sunday services, regular involvement necessary for attaining church obligations or leadership roles is often not feasible for most. Only a small number of vendors manage to fulfill church obligations, reflecting a disparity between religious ideals and the realities of informal labour. This disconnect highlights an important dimension of work-life conflict, where the spiritual and social aspirations of women vendors are limited by the economic demands placed upon them.

The case of church obligations illustrates how economic survival in the informal sector can restrict participation in important cultural and religious institutions. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, this creates a subtle yet significant form of social exclusion, limiting their ability to build and maintain social capital. Addressing this issue requires community awareness and flexible support structures that acknowledge the contributions of working women while ensuring they are not marginalized from the spiritual and communal life that defines Mizo identity.

6.7 Challenges of School Retention and Drug Use among children

Children of women vegetable vendors frequently encounter a variety of socio-economic obstacles that impede their educational path and expose them to negative influences like drug addiction. These children might not receive enough supervision, academic assistance, or a stable home environment all of which are essential for school retention and personal growth because of their moms' unstable finances and extended work hours (Alfers, 2016; Nahar & Ramaswamy, 2020). Many are compelled to leave school in order to help out around the family or work as vending machines, which feeds the poverty cycle even more (Bhowmik, 2005; International Labour Organization, 2018). Unsupervised adolescents in vulnerable urban or semi-urban environments are more likely to engage in substance misuse, which not only jeopardizes their health and future but also puts further financial and emotional strain

on already overburdened moms (Chakraborty & Choudhury, 2022; UNICEF, 2021). In order to eliminate the intergenerational cycle of poverty and establish a more secure and encouraging atmosphere for women sellers and their kids, these problems must be addressed.

6.7.1 School dropout children

School dropout among the children of female vegetable vendors is a pressing socio-economic issue that reflects the broader challenges faced by marginalised communities. These women, often engaged in informal and low-income occupations, struggle to balance the demands of earning a livelihood with ensuring consistent educational opportunities for their children (Alfers, 2016; Nahar & Ramaswamy, 2020). Their children are particularly vulnerable to dropping out due to multiple factors, including poverty, unstable living conditions, lack of parental support for education, and the need to contribute to the household income through labour (Mukherjee, 2019; Ananga, 2011). Limited access to quality education, inadequate government support, and social stigma further compound the problem (UNESCO, 2020; Sahoo & Klasen, 2021). Understanding the circumstances and barriers that lead to school dropouts in this specific demographic is key to creating targeted interventions that can break the cycle of poverty and promote inclusive, equitable education for all (UNICEF, 2019). So, the table below highlights the data on school dropout children among the respondents.

The data indicates that 138 vendors (69%) reported that their children have not dropped out of school which shows a strong inclination or effort to keep children in school despite possible economic hardships. However, 52 vendors (26%) do have school dropout children, which is significant. This implies that more than 1 in 4 women vendors are dealing with the issue of their children leaving school early, potentially due to financial pressures, need for labour or lack of access for continued education.

“My children were not good in learning, so they dropout from school. We cannot afford to support our children due to poverty as well.”
they were drop out from school since we were poor and one of my sons is alcoholic.

my children were dropout from school because we were divorced and things were difficult during those time also, we were poor.

due to family problem, they could not continue. During those time me and my husband had relationship issue and we even got divorced.

“They dropout from school because due to poverty, my husband was sick we had no money. They even cry and request us to continue their education. It was very hard for us too. But we could not do anything.”

they could not continue their studies because my husband didn't allow them during those time. We have fight in the family and the family atmosphere is unhealthy. They had complex because of their low educational qualifications.

The 10 respondents marked "Not Applicable" possibly because: They do not have children or their children are too young for school or their children have completed education or are beyond school age.

While most women vegetable vendors report that their children are staying in school, a significant portion still faces challenges that lead to school dropouts. Interventions aimed at addressing financial, social, and educational barriers could help reduce the dropout rate further and support these families in securing better futures through education.

6.7.2 Drug abused children

Substance abuse is a growing concern in many socio-economically vulnerable communities (UNODC, 2021; WHO, 2023). For women vegetable vendors who often face long working hours, low income, and limited access to social services ensuring their children's well-being and protection from harmful influences can be particularly challenging (Alfers, 2016). The prevalence of drug abuse among their children may reflect deeper social, economic, and environmental issues, including lack of supervision, peer pressure, and the absence of support systems (Chakraborty & Choudhury, 2022; Nayak & Sinha, 2020). Understanding the scope of this issue is crucial for designing effective intervention programmes (UNICEF, 2021). The following table presents the responses of women vegetable vendors when asked whether they have children who are involved in drug abuse.

86% of the women vegetable vendors stated that their children are not involved in drug abuse. This is a positive indicator, suggesting that, despite economic hardship, most of them are managing to keep their children away from substance use. 9% reported having children who are drug abusers. Although the number may seem small, it is concerning nearly 1 in every 11 women vendors in this group faces the serious issue of child substance abuse. Given the setting, this likely reflects a lack of supervision due to work commitments, peer influence in high-risk neighbourhoods and limited access to counselling or rehabilitation resources. As with the earlier question, these may be women without children, with children too young for the issue to apply, or whose children are no longer dependent.

While most women vegetable vendors do not report drug abuse among their children, the presence of even a 9% rate is a red flag. It points to the need for community-based support systems, youth engagement programmes, and awareness campaigns aimed at preventing drug abuse. Furthermore, these findings emphasise the need to continue addressing the broader socio-economic challenges faced by these families to ensure a safe and healthy environment for their children. The children of women who sell vegetables in Mizoram are at risk of many educational and social problems that are common in the informal sector. While the majority of vendors report that their children are attending school, a significant number still experience school dropouts, often driven by financial hardship, unstable home environments, or a lack of academic support. These challenges disrupt children's education and limit their long-term opportunities for upward mobility and economic independence.

In addition to educational concerns, the data reveals that 9% of the respondents reported drug abuse among their children. While this is not a majority, it represents a serious warning sign. Even a small percentage indicates the presence of underlying social issues, including peer pressure, lack of supervision, emotional neglect, or exposure to risky environments, all of which are more likely to affect families struggling with poverty and work-life imbalance.

These results show that women who sell vegetables face two kinds of pressure: to support their families financially and to protect their children's future. Addressing school dropout and drug abuse requires targeted interventions, including financial aid,

after-school support programmes, youth counselling, and community engagement efforts. It also points to the need for holistic family-focused policies that reduce the burden on working mothers and create a safer, more stable environment for their children—ultimately breaking cycles of poverty and social vulnerability.

6.8 Sources of acquisition of possession

The manner in which women get property, whether through inheritance or self-sufficiency, provides important information about their degree of empowerment. Owning property, homes, stalls, or vending machines via hard-won means is a powerful symbol of financial independence, self-sufficiency, and personal success for female vegetable vendors. It displays their capacity for financial decision-making, resource accumulation, and contribution recognition (Agarwal, 1994; Kabeer, 1999). On the other hand, items inherited from a spouse or family may indicate a traditional reliance on them, with differing levels of autonomy and authority (Deere & Doss, 2006; Roy & Singh, 2020; Doss et al., 2008). Determining whether assets are inherited or self-acquired helps gauge the degree to which women have surmounted challenges, demonstrated initiative, and cultivated a sense of agency over their lives and livelihoods (UN Women, 2018; Agarwal, 1997). As a result, the source of ownership is a significant indicator of women's agency, empowerment, and social status rather than only being about financial prosperity.

The data illustrates that among the respondents, 12% (24) inherited possessions from their parents; these women may have had a little edge in terms of beginning cash, land, home, or other inherited advantages, which might serve as a basis for economic stability or entrepreneurial activity. However, the majority, 88% (176), did not inherit any possessions from their family. This result shows that most women vendors have had to forge their own businesses, frequently without the support of family income or assets. It shows a low rate of intergenerational asset transfer, which might limit prospects for financial stability, business investment, and property ownership. Patriarchy and the feminisation of poverty also contribute to this situation. The position of women in a family can change based on the family's economic and social situation. In wealthier families, daughters may be allocated a share of possessions; conversely, in poorer families, possessions tend to be limited, and boys are typically

prioritised. The data indicates that the majority of the vendors' families experience poverty, resulting in a low inheritance rate among the respondents. Among the respondents, Pi Ziki 56 years from Chawlhmun stated that

“Rochun nei turin, kan chhungkua kha mi hausa kan ni lo a, kan nau mipa te ber te chhungkua hi kan inpuiah an awm ani mai”

“Since, my family was not wealthy, I do not inherit any possession, it’s just that our main home was inherited by my youngest brother and his family”

The vast majority of women vendors lack inherited assets, reflecting a larger issue of restricted economic empowerment through familial channels. These conditions might represent gendered inheritance patterns, poverty, or family dynamics that harm women. Given a lack of hereditary assistance, these women’s capacity to support themselves through vending demonstrates their tenacity, self-reliance, and entrepreneurial spirit. Their empowerment is derived not from inherited money, but from their own efforts, decisions, and survival methods. These findings show that supporting measures, such as access to microcredit, skills training, or legal awareness on property rights, might assist in bridging the empowerment gap for women who do not inherit wealth. The statistics indicate that inheritance is not a typical source of empowerment for women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. Their economic engagement is mostly self-earned, highlighting the need for institutions that recognise and support their independence while simultaneously addressing structural concerns related to gendered access to property and inheritance.

The second table shows the acquisition of property and goods through self-earnings; this includes household furniture, appliances, and vehicles. Acquisition of goods and possessions is deemed to be an important criterion for empowerment. Among the respondents, 84% (168) of them acquired possessions from their earnings. This shows how their engagement in the occupations upgrades their purchasing power and independent nature. This is a strong indicator of economic empowerment, as it shows the women's control over their income, ability to make financial decisions and ownership of assets earned through personal labour. These women are more likely to have higher levels of self-esteem, confidence, and autonomy, all of which are essential

components of empowerment. From the fieldwork, it is observed that the majority of the respondents bought household appliances mostly on EMI, like washing machines, refrigerators, scooters and other household needs. While 16% (32) of them do not acquire from their earnings, which shows that this might be attributed to lower income levels, financial reliance on wives or other family members, and participation in vending as a secondary rather than major source of revenue. This group may have restricted financial decision-making capacity and less control over resources, which affects their total empowerment. These women may be newcomers to the activity, or their income is not enough to buy new appliances and goods for the family.

Self-employment is one of the most direct demonstrations of economic and social empowerment. The opportunity to spend earnings on acquiring belongings such as home items, equipment, land, or animals increases women's security, negotiating power, and future stability. These findings show that for many women, vegetable vending is more than simply a survival activity; it is also a road to asset building and independence. From the data it can be concluded that the majority of women vegetable vendors in Aizawl are self-sufficient and economically empowered, with 84% purchasing items with their own money. This demonstrates a significant potential for financial independence, ownership, and agency, all of which are essential components of women's empowerment. Interventions such as savings clubs, financial literacy programmes, and asset-building schemes can help to strengthen their economic resilience and decision-making capacity.

6.9 Decision-making:

Making decisions is a crucial sign of empowerment, particularly for women working in informal sectors like vegetable vending (Kabeer, 1999; Malhotra et al., 2002). Women vegetable vendor's degree of autonomy and control over their lives is reflected in their capacity to make decisions on their own about their jobs, money, time, and family obligations (Agarwal, 1997; Roy & Singh, 2020). This component of empowerment emphasizes the degree to which women may impact important facets of their livelihood and personal well-being, going beyond simple economic involvement. Women vendors frequently have societal and cultural limitations that restrict their ability to make decisions. However, their engagement in vending

frequently results in slow changes to conventional gender roles, giving women more influence over issues pertaining to the home and the market (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; UN Women, 2018). Thus, examining their decision-making process offers important insights on their path to increased independence, self-assurance, and social acceptance.

Table 6.2 Decision maker

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Self	91	45.5
Husband	70	35.0
Children	13	6.5
Relative	18	9.0
Both self and husband	8	4.0
Total	200	100.0

(source: Field data)

The above table indicates that among the respondents, 91 vendors (45.5%) make decisions by themselves for the family, which shows the empowerment of earning income. At the same time, this shows the change in traditional gender roles where women were not included in the decision-making. This suggests that over half of the women have a high level of personal empowerment since they can make their own decisions without being influenced by others. This autonomy is associated with improved confidence, self-reliance, and a better position within the home and community. Other factors include the absence of an adult male in the family, like widow and divorce respondents. There are 70 respondents (35%) from families where the decision was made by the husband or man in the family; this means that among the 116 married respondents, 60% of these families were headed by the husband, and the final decision was made by the husband in the family. Even though the respondent works all day to earn for the family, she has no voice in the family, where the final decision was made by the husband. This follows the traditional patriarchal ideology and male dominance in the family. This shows that conventional gender roles remain widespread in a large number of homes, potentially restricting women's decision-making ability and indicating lower levels of empowerment in these circumstances.

There are 13 (6.5%) respondents' families where the children or the son in the family make the decision; this also shows the patriarchal ideology where the man in the family is the sole owner of the authority in the family. In 18 respondents' families (9%), the decision was made by the other relative member, like the brother of the respondents, the father's brother of the respondents, or the father's sister of the respondent. This shows the low status of vendors in the family; though she earned a living for the family, her voice was not taken into consideration when making decisions. This distribution of decision-making authority may imply a lack of control by the women themselves, maybe owing to economic reliance, age, or social rank. Among the respondents, only 4% (8) of families have the equilibrium of engaging both husband and wife in the decision-making; this shows the strong relationship of the couple and their respect for each other. While the percentage is a modest proportion, shared decision-making may be a positive sign of cooperation and mutual respect in the home, promoting empowerment via collaboration.

The data presents a mixed picture of empowerment among women vegetable vendors. While almost half of them have complete autonomy over their decisions, a sizable number still rely on or submit to their spouses or other family members. This suggests that, while progress is visible, societal and familial institutions continue to determine the level of empowerment. Increasing women's decision-making ability via information, financial independence, and community support can boost their agency and empowerment.

6.9.1 Role of Financial Management in Women Vendor's Families as a Measure of Empowerment

Household financial management is a strong predictor of a woman's empowerment, particularly for those who work in small-scale occupations like vegetable vending (Agarwal, 1997; Kabeer, 2001). Women's agency is increased and conventional power relations are altered when they take on the position of primary family financial manager, managing income, budgeting, saving, and making important financial decisions (Swain & Wallentin, 2009; Duflo, 2012). As a direct result of their economic contribution, women vegetable vendors frequently gain control over their income and financial planning. Their status in the home is strengthened by this

function, which also increases their self-assurance and ability to make decisions. Women's importance and authority in the family structure are further reinforced when they are able to prioritise expenses like children's education, healthcare, and domestic necessities through effective money management (Roy & Singh, 2020; Chant, 2016). Consequently, determining who makes financial decisions for the household offers important information about the degree of control and empowerment that women vendors possess in both the home and the economy.

Table 6.3 Financial decision of the family

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Self	152	76.0
Husband	16	8.0
Both Self and Husband	14	7.0
Relative	18	9.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

A substantial majority (76%) of the women vendors reported that they make the financial decisions for the family, which is a strong indicator of the economic empowerment of the Mizo women vendors. This is because their daily economic activity and earnings improved their status in the family, which resulted in gaining financial decisions and autonomy over income and expenses. Trust and acknowledgement of financial capabilities among family members. Financial decision-making is one of the most important types of power in a household, suggesting a high degree of economic and social agency. Among the respondent's family, only 8% of financial decisions were made by the husband or spouse in the family. This suggests a relatively low amount of male-dominated financial control, implying a cultural or economic change in roles, potentially due to women's revenue contribution from vending. In Mizo society, there is a practice of handing women the charge of managing income and budgeting for the family; this can be the other factor for a smaller number of men as the financial decision-maker of the family among the respondents. There is a combination of both spouses engaging in financial decisions of 7%, which shows a good relationship and mutual respect for each other's decisions.

This indicates collaborative home dynamics. While not complete autonomy, this demonstrates a level of mutual respect and communication, which may be empowering. While 9% of the respondent's financial decisions were made by the relatives, which include the son, in-laws and father of the family. This may imply extended family influence or interference, a lack of independence, especially among widowed, unmarried, or dependent women. This group most likely has little financial autonomy and might benefit from focused assistance with independent living or income control. This shows the low status of vendors in the family and her low decision-making capability in the family.

Financial decision-making authority is an essential component of empowerment. The fact that three-fourths of Mizo women vegetable vendors manage family money demonstrates their importance as economic contributors and household leaders. These data suggest that vending is not simply a source of revenue but also a means of elevating women's standing in the household.

According to the study, Mizo women vegetable vendors are highly empowered, with 76% making key financial decisions in their homes. This represents a good movement towards female autonomy and control over economic resources, emphasising the importance of vending as a transforming livelihood. Continued assistance in the form of financial awareness, loan availability, and recognition of women's financial duties can help to improve their empowerment.

6.9.2 Decision-Making for Children's Education

A woman's influence on her children's education is a potent symbol of her social and domestic empowerment (Kabeer, 1999; Singh & Pattanaik, 2019). Participating in choices about school enrolment, continuation, and educational investment shows more than just parental concern for women vegetable vendors, who frequently confront several socio-economic obstacles; it also demonstrates their power, awareness, and long-term outlook for their family's future (Agarwal, 1997; Malhotra et al., 2002). It shows that women prioritise growth and upward mobility and have control over important parts of family life when they are empowered to make decisions about their children's education (Desai & Banerji, 2008; Roy & Singh, 2020). This decision-making authority intimately links financial freedom,

understanding, and social respect, all essential elements of empowerment. Thus, determining who decides how children should be educated offers important information regarding the degree of women's authority, accountability, and voice in the home, particularly when it comes to unpaid labourers like vegetable vendors.

Table 6.4 Decision for kid's school

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Self	118	59.0
Husband	10	5.0
Relative	22	11.0
Children	29	14.5
Not applicable	21	10.5
Total	200	100.0

Source: Field survey

The data shows that most of the vendors (59%) make decisions about their children's schooling. This shows that women vendors are very empowered and put their children's education first. The result suggests that a lot of women vendors have the power to make important family decisions, especially about their children's education. It means that making money by vending might make them more important in the family. During fieldwork, it was found that most women sold things to pay for their children's education, which couldn't be done with just one family member's income. They are also involved in their children's school choice because they put their education first. Only 5% of the vendors' husbands get involved in making decisions about their children's schooling. This is because society expects women to be the main carers and raise children in the family. This information shows that women who work as vendors care more about their children's education than men do. The answers also show times when authority was shared or passed on, which could mean that mothers don't have enough power or a small role in school matters. 11% of the vendors' children had their school choices made by family members. This happens a lot when parents don't know much about schools and aren't very educated, so they ask trusted family members for advice. This shows that the parents of the vendors' children don't have a lot of education. 14.5% of vendor kids picked their own schools because their

parents were too busy to help them. Also, the kids chose their own schools because their parents didn't know enough about the school system. Also, 10.5% of the vendors chose "Not Applicable" because their kids couldn't choose a school. There may be mothers in this group who don't have school-age children, children who aren't in school, or other unusual situations. This number could show that more students are dropping out of school or not getting involved in the learning process, which is worrying.

6.9.3 Decision-Making Power on Health Care, Household Products, and Daily Needs

One important indicator of women's empowerment in the family is their capacity to make decisions about daily necessities, household purchases, and healthcare (Kabeer, 1999; Jejeebhoy, 2000). For women vegetable vendors, their ability to influence these crucial facets of everyday life demonstrates their independence, power, and command over the welfare of their families (Agarwal, 1997; Roy & Singh, 2020). Women have a crucial role in maintaining and running the home when they individually or collaboratively make decisions about things like family medical care, buying household goods, and handling daily needs (Malhotra et al., 2002; Duflo, 2012). This level of engagement strongly correlates with their degree of financial contribution, self-assurance, and the respect they receive within the family. Assessing this decision-making authority offers important information about how empowered women are to control their living circumstances and protect their families' stability and well-being, which is a crucial component of real, functional empowerment.

The data for three areas of decision-making power: health care, buying household products, and daily needs. The data demonstrates that in these three areas, the majority (97.3%) of the vendors have the power of deciding their family medical care, buying household goods and their daily needs. This marks a strong indicator of women's empowerment. This could be attained due to their engagement in the vegetable vending and earning income. This economic activity gives them a status of respect from the family member and autonomy, as they do not depend on others' family member earnings. Their degree of financial contribution, self-assurance, and the respect they get within the family are all strongly correlated with this level of

engagement. However, 2.6% of the vendors still do not have the power in deciding the family health care, household products and daily needs. This could be due to living in a joint family and not having authority in the household.

These findings demonstrate that vending not only provides individuals with the ability to make their own financial decisions, but it also provides them with more power to make decisions, particularly for matters that have a direct impact on the well-being of the family and how it functions.

6.9.4 Decision making power to visit the family and relatives

A subtle but potent sign of a woman's strength, especially in traditional and patriarchal settings, is the ability to choose who and when to interact with family and relations (Agarwal, 1997; Jejeebhoy, 2000). The freedom to make such personal choices for female vegetable sellers is a reflection of their independence, social mobility, and command over their own schedules and interpersonal connections (Kabeer, 1999; Mahmud et al., 2012). This type of decision-making authority demonstrates that women are socially independent and economically engaged, with the freedom to sustain the networks and ties that are essential for social support and mental health (Malhotra et al., 2002; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). The ability of women to express agency, exert control over their own lives, and defy societal pressure all essential elements of true empowerment and gender equality can be gauged by measuring this facet of empowerment.

The data demonstrates that 94% of the vendors have the power in deciding to visit their family, which indicates a high level of social empowerment, implying that these women are not constrained by home or cultural conventions in terms of maintaining personal connections or completing family commitments. This could be due to their earning income and having gained respect among the family. While only 1% do not have the power to decide on visiting her family, indicating that societal or familial influence on women's movement is limited in this group. Among them, there are 5% vendors who do not need to take permission to visit their family. This subgroup may encompass women lacking living relatives, experiencing strained family relationships, or those who do not consider visits from relatives as pertinent.

The findings indicate a significant degree of empowerment among Mizo women vegetable vendors regarding mobility and social autonomy. The decision to visit family and relatives illustrates freedom of movement, agency in social interactions, and a departure from patriarchal limitations, thereby enhancing the empowerment of these women in both personal and communal contexts.

6.9.5 Women's Opinion

One important indicator of a woman's empowerment is whether or not her family values and acknowledges her opinions (Kabeer, 1999; Jejeebhoy, 2000). Being heard and acknowledged in family concerns represents a change in gender norms and decision-making dynamics for women vegetable sellers, whose efforts frequently go beyond generating cash to include managing the home and providing care (Agarwal, 1997; Malhotra et al., 2002). Women's increasing power and equality in the home is demonstrated when they are consulted and their opinions are valued, whether in financial considerations, child education, or domestic issues (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015; Singh & Pattanaik, 2019). The degree of respect, authority, and inclusion a woman encounters in her immediate surroundings is directly addressed by the inquiry, "Does your opinion matter in your family?" Assessing this component of empowerment aids in determining her social position, and economic involvement within the family.

The majority of vendors, 193 (96.5%), reported that their opinion matters in their family; this is a powerful indicator of social and familial empowerment. Due to their activity in earning income for the family, respect and recognition were earned from family members. Their opinion and viewpoint were taken into consideration when making decisions for the family. This resulted in a sense of belonging and authority within the household. This also indicates that these women serve as both economic contributors and significant participants in domestic matters. While 3 vendors (1.5%) opted for "no" when asked the question "Does your opinion matter in the family?", which highlights a marginalised or disempowered status in their families. Women may encounter obstacles including traditional gender roles, insufficient confidence or education, and financial dependence or familial hierarchy. Only 4 vendors opted for sometimes, signifying limited or context-dependent participation in decision-making.

Voice and agency in familial contexts are essential elements of comprehensive empowerment. When women perceive that their voices are acknowledged, their engagement in decision-making related to health, education, finances, and social interactions increases, thereby enhancing their self-esteem and leadership capabilities. The significant proportion of women asserting that their opinions are valued indicates a cultural transformation and potentially the empowering influence of income generation via vending.

The data indicates a significant degree of social and familial empowerment among Mizo women vegetable vendors, with 96.5% reporting that their opinions are respected within the family. This illustrates economic independence as well as respect, influence, and agency within the household, thereby reinforcing the significant social role these women occupy in their families and communities. Additional assistance in leadership, education, and rights awareness can enhance and solidify this empowerment.

6.10 Impact of Vegetable Vending in Gaining Status and Empowerment

For many women, especially in marginalised communities, vegetable vending has become a major source of empowerment, despite frequently being a component of the informal economy (Kabeer, 1999). Women who work in this field not only support their families financially, but they also develop a feeling of self, independence, and social acceptance (Kantor, 2003; Chen, 2007). Making a living on their own frequently changes their position in the family and community, changing attitudes and giving them a new reputation as capable and accountable members of the community (Hillenkamp et al., 2021; Mitra & Mukopadhyay, 2021). Therefore, vending has an influence that goes beyond only producing money; it also increases self-esteem, negotiating abilities, and decision-making authority. This kind of income gives women vendors a forum to stand up for their rights, have a say in family choices, and be recognised for their hard work and tenacity. Vegetable selling is therefore essential to altering gender norms and promoting empowerment via increased self-worth and social standing.

The data demonstrates that the majority, 186 vendors (93%), reported that the vegetable vending has a positive impact on their status and empowerment. This is a

strong indicator of women vendors' empowerment. This is because women earned an income which uplifted their status in the family; respect and recognition were gained by the vendors in the family. Their role as earners contributes not only to their families' survival but also to their identity as capable, independent women. While a total of 14 vendors (7%) do not see any positive impact after engaging in the field of vegetable vending. This could be due to low or unstable pay, social shame attached to doing unpaid work, not getting enough help or still relying on male family members and a lot of work to do without any relative reward.

Vegetable vending is an important source of empowerment for Mizo women since it allows them to manage their income, make decisions for themselves and their families, and create networks and social recognition. The research also shows that women may gain dignity, visibility, and empowerment in informal sectors if their work is consistent, recognised, and self-managed. However, the minority that do not feel empowered may require specific interventions such as skill development, market access, legal and social protection, and acknowledgement of informal employment rights.

So, it can be concluded that vegetable vending has been a substantial source of empowerment for Mizo women, with 93% stating that their status has improved as a result of their profession. It indicates that vending is more than just a source of cash; it is also a means of achieving dignity, voice, and independence. To increase the effect, it is critical to address the problems encountered by the other 7% and guarantee that all women in this industry have equal access to opportunities, rights, and recognition.

6.10.1 Changes in life after earning an income

The change from being financially reliant to making a living is a major life turning point for women vegetable vendors. In addition to giving them a means of subsistence, employment as a vending machine transforms many facets of their everyday lives. Women who get monthly income frequently report feeling more confident, independent, and in charge of their personal and domestic choices. Better living circumstances, easier access to healthcare and education for their kids, and more respect within the family and community can all result from this financial

independence. Additionally, the capacity to make a financial contribution changes their social identity from dependents or housewives to active earners and decision-makers (Agarwal, 2018; Chen, 2012; Kabeer, 1999; Roy, S., & Niranjana, S., 2023; Singh, R., & Gupta, P., 2021). Together, these developments demonstrate the empowering potential of economic engagement and show how even occupations in the unorganised sector, such as selling vegetables, may significantly enhance women's social, economic, and personal life.

The data indicates that the majority of the vendors, 192 (96%), reported that their life has changed after earning an income. This is a strong reflection of empowerment through economic activity. This is because the majority of the vendors enter into the vegetable vending because of the poor economic condition. After entering, though their monthly income is meagre, they have the capital to manage their daily food, easier access to education for their kids, healthcare and emergency funds. For a woman with low skills and low educational qualifications, they do not have other choices than engaging in the vegetable vending activity. Changes and improved quality of life include financial freedom, increased self-esteem and confidence, expanded decision-making ability within the household, social recognition, and higher respect in the family and community. While 8 vendors (4%) reported that they do not experience any change in lifestyle after earning an income, this could be due to continued dependency or control by other family members (e.g., spouse, in-laws), limited income or lack of savings, being a newcomer to the activity, an intense workload with little increase in well-being, and cultural or societal restrictions that limit their sense of empowerment.

The data indicates that economic engagement is a significant factor in the empowerment of Mizo women. Income generation empowers women by facilitating survival, enabling independent decision-making, and allowing significant contributions to their families and communities. A minority that has not undergone change indicates the necessity for supportive policies, including financial literacy programmes, access to credit or savings, community-based support groups, and awareness of women's rights and entitlements. The results demonstrate that vegetable vending and income generation have significantly impacted the lives of Mizo women,

with 96% reporting positive changes. The significant percentage indicates that economic participation is a crucial factor in women's empowerment, resulting in enhanced autonomy, confidence, and social status. Targeted interventions can facilitate inclusive empowerment for all women in the informal sector, particularly for those who have not yet benefited.

6.11 Awareness on woman rights

Since it shows that a woman is aware of her legal, social, and financial rights, awareness of women's rights is a crucial sign of empowerment (Batliwala, S., 2007; Kabeer, 2005). Understanding their rights is the first step in combating inequality and claiming their position in society for women vegetable vendors, many of whom work in unofficial and sometimes marginalised environments (Nair, 2020; UN 2018). They are better able to access government programmes, demand equitable treatment, oppose exploitation, and take part more confidently in decision-making processes at work and at home because of this understanding (Das, P., et al., 2022). Women are more inclined to defend themselves against discrimination and push for change in their communities when they are aware of their rights regarding work, healthcare, education, property, and safety. As a result, evaluating women's rights knowledge is an important indicator of their empowerment and shows how ready they are to interact with and change the social structures in their environment.

A large majority (137 vendors, or 68.5%) stated that they are aware of women's rights. This suggests a comparatively high degree of social and legal consciousness and empowerment. Women must be aware of their rights in order to stand up for themselves, make wise decisions, and oppose any kind of exploitation or discrimination. This result is quite surprising because from the socio-economic conditions of women vendors, they have low educational qualifications and low skills with a low rate of awareness programmes, in which it was assumed that they will not be aware of their rights as women. But this data shows the other way, confirming that these women are empowered not only economically but also socially and personally. While 63 vendors (31.5%) opted for not knowing the woman's rights. This disparity points to a crucial area for action since ignorance might prevent women from fully

participating in social and economic decision-making, claiming their rights, or accessing resources.

The fact that more than two-thirds of women vendors are aware of their rights suggests that formal education, community-based awareness campaigns, or empowerment initiatives may be working. However, the one-third who are not aware highlights the necessity of focused awareness-raising efforts and educational initiatives. It is impossible to attain complete empowerment until all women, particularly those working in unorganised areas like vegetable vendors, are aware of their legal rights and safeguards. Although Mizo women vegetable merchants have a promising degree of understanding about women's rights, more work is required to close the awareness gap. Enhancing this aspect of empowerment might help them feel more confident, have more negotiating power, and be in a better socio-economic position overall.

6.11.1 Awareness on vendor's right

One important aspect of empowerment for women involved in street vending and informal sector is knowledge of vendor rights. Understanding their legal position, rights, and safeguards under laws like the Street vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, has a direct impact on women vegetable vendor's capacity to conduct their business in a dignified and secure manner. Understanding vendor rights gives women the ability to assert their rights to space, get permits, and receive social benefits, as well as to overcome obstacles like harassment, eviction, or exploitation by authorities or market forces (Bhowmik, 2010; Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs [MoHUA], 2014). This understanding improves their involvement in vendor groups or collectives, their negotiating power, and their voice in public (Roever & Skinner, 2016; Sharma & Dhakal, 2021). Thus, assessing women's knowledge of their rights as vendors provides important information about their socio-economic empowerment and ability to promote a more equitable and inclusive workplace (ILO, 2018; Nair, 2020).

The research indicates the level of understanding of vendor's rights among Mizo women vegetable vendors, a specific and pragmatic facet of empowerment associated with their profession and legal safeguards. Merely 24% of the participants indicated awareness of their rights as vendors. This indicates that a limited minority have

knowledge of or access to the legal protections, entitlements, and institutional assistance afforded by legislation such as the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.

A significant majority, 76%, indicated that they are unaware of their vendor's rights. This signifies a substantial deficiency of empowerment about their livelihood. In the absence of such information, women vendors are increasingly susceptible to harassment, displacement, inequitable treatment, and limited access to benefits or institutional support systems. Some of the statements given by vendors when asking whether they know about Vendors' Act are stated below:

“ka hre ngai miah lo” “I don't have any clue about it”

“hre ngailo, tihian kan zuar ve tawp animai” “No, I have never heard of it, we were just selling out goods, that's it”

“chutiang te a awm elaw?” “there's a vendor's act?”

While having KII, it was noticed that among the peripatetic vendors (vendor's who do not have permanent seat) majority of the them were not registered in Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) and not having a license. While on the other hand, when asking about the benefit of being a license holder, the vendors themselves do not have much to say. One of the vendors stated that,

“Engmah hlawkna awmlo pawisa 50 kan chawi a, thla an rawn la a, license min rawn pe leh a ka renew tawh lemlo, ala nung em pawh la hre lo”

“There is no benefit in having license, I gave 50 rupees, they took a photo of me and gave me a license, I haven't renewed it again, I don't know whether it is still valid or not”

Even though the AMC implemented licensing and registration, an inadequate number of staff prevented them from functioning properly. This resulted in a mixing of licensed and unlicensed vendors sitting together in one place, which caused the vendors not to get and give importance to registering themselves under AMC. Only if the licensed vendors were given preferences will other vendors know the importance of having a licence. Awareness was not given much to the vendors' rights by the AMC or other NGOs, since the Town Vending Committee was not properly active in the

state. This could be due to the majority of the vendors being women and having low status in the society, which results in the negligence of this community by the state. The insufficient understanding of vendor rights significantly undermines the vocational empowerment of Mizo women vegetable vendors. Despite widespread awareness of broad women's rights, the lack of understanding of specific vendor-related safeguards diminishes their capacity to express themselves in public places, access designated vending areas, or negotiate with authorities and local entities. The insufficient awareness highlights an urgent necessity for education, legal literacy, and outreach initiatives centred on the rights of street vendors. Empowerment in informal employment is insufficient without providing women with the knowledge and resources to safeguard their means of subsistence. Rectifying this deficiency would markedly improve their economic stability and social standing.

6.12 Some case studies:

Case Study Number 6.1

Name: Lalchhandami

Gender: Female

Age: 65 years old

Marital Status: Married

Religion: Christianity

Type of vendor: Peripatetic vendor

Pi Lalchhandami is 65 years old and resides in Chanmari West, Aizawl. She is married with two children (male and female) and has little more than 4 years of education. She has a vending place in Chanmari West, Kawipui Thlang.

Number of family members and their profiles

1. Pu. Lalnunzira. He is the head of the family and husband of Pi Chhandami. He is 73 years old and does not engage in any work. He is a cancer patient. He holds an HSLC degree.
2. Lalrintluanga. He is 22 years old and the son of Pi Chhandami. He is still in the college studying 3rd year BA in Hrangbana College.

3. Lalrinmawii. She is 20 years old and is the daughter of Pi Chhandami. She is pursuing her B.Sc. Agri. in Assam.

Like roughly half of the vendors in our sample, she migrated from a village in Mizoram, coming to Aizawl 2 years ago due to her husband's health issue, as they need to have regular medical check-ups (he is a cancer patient). Pi Dami has 1 year of experience in her job and works 11-12 hours each day. She obtained her job through someone she knew and has never looked for a formal sector position (although she would like such a job). She makes about Rs. 15,000 per month (the range for her peers goes from Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000). She is more satisfied than dissatisfied with her position, and she says that

"I have not encountered issues related to being a woman or a vendor. However, I did experience verbal abuse stemming from spatial disputes and competition for customers with my fellow vendors, as I was new to this vending area."

Pi Dami believes her current job situation is an improvement compared to five years ago. When asked for further details, she explains that farming in the village was manageable until her husband's medical expenses for chemotherapy became overwhelming. She stated,

"Only because of my husband's health issues, we migrate to Aizawl and engage in vegetable vending."

Yesterday, after waking up and attending to her personal grooming, Pi Dami carried out her household chores and prepared a meal for her family. Her daily responsibilities include cooking in the morning, as her son is currently in college and her younger daughter is studying for her B.Sc. in Agriculture in Assam. On weekdays, her working day begins at 7:30 am, while on weekends, it starts at 5:00 am. At work, Pi Dami first visits the main market to purchase the vegetables she sells, a task she undertakes three times a week. She has her meals at her workplace and continues working through the evening. Unfortunately, she found it necessary to raise a complaint about her co-vendors, as they were arguing over space.

“My main problem at my workplace is the location problem. They tried to squeeze my place, but I can bear it as I am a newcomer here in our area. I hope things will become better soon. If I am not working, we will not have anything to eat. Taking care of the cancer patient is hectic, and lots of money is needed.”

Around 6-7 pm, she returned home, aided by her son in closing the vending place. Upon arriving, she washed and engaged in conversation with family and friends. After having dinner with her family, she watched television before retiring for the night. Although Pi Dami felt rushed during parts of the morning and evening—particularly concerning work and household chores—her evening hours were calm and enjoyable. Overall, throughout the day, positive emotions predominated over negative ones, with less than 20 per cent of her day being unpleasant.

Case Study Number 6.2

Name: Lalmuanawmi

Gender: Female

Age: 41 years old

Marital Status: Married

Religion: Christianity

Type of vendor: Peripatetic vendor

Number of family members and their profiles

1. Pu. Paukhupa. He is the head of the family and husband of Pi Mamuani. He is 43 years old and a weaver. He has nerve problem. He attended the school till class 4.
2. Tlanghmingthangi. She is 22 years old and the daughter of Pi Mamuani. She is a widow with a year old daughter. Her educational qualification is Class 10. She helps her mother in her free time.
3. Laldintluanga. He is 20 years old and is the son of Pi Mamuani. He is studying 2nd year BA in Aizawl West College.
4. Lalremruati. She is 1 year old and the daughter of Pi Thangi and granddaughter of Pi Mamuani.

Pi Mamuani is a mother of 2 kids with one granddaughter living in Vaivakawn with her family. She and her family migrated from Myanmar in 2017 in search of better job opportunities in Aizawl. She is the main breadwinner, as her husband has health issues. He is a weaver and weaves at home. Before Covid she used to be a mobile vendor. Her daughter moves in with them due to the death of her husband; they are 5 family members now. Pi Dami has 4 years of experience in her job and works 11-12 hours each day. She vends on the porch of a private compound in Vaivakawn. She faced a problem at the initial stage of her vending; there was a spatial issue between the vendors. At first, she sat with the other vendors on the pavement of Vaivakawn; however, she faced discrimination and verbal abuse. So, she left the place.

'ka tawng a pai vang in min hmusit a ni ber in ka hria, ka awm na lai apiang an rawn sawi sel a, mahse tunah chuan thutna tha ka nei ve tawh e'

'I believe that my poor Mizo language skills cause others to look down on me and complain about my presence wherever I sit; however, I now have a good place to sit.'

She obtained her new location by requesting the owner of the building to set up a shop at the porch of the house. She makes about Rs. 8000-10,000 per month. She is more satisfied than dissatisfied with her position. Her daily routine starts at 6:00 am in the morning; she opens her shop at 6:30 am, and if it is the day for collecting vegetables, she goes to the main market to acquire the veggies. She spends all day at the vending place. She came back from the site at 6:30 pm in the evening. Most of the householdwork was done by her daughter. So, after coming back, she does not engage much in the household work. However, she mentioned that,

'My main problem is the lack of space and financial constraints; as I am the sole earner in the family, we struggle to get by on my income alone. Although my husband weaves, it takes a considerable amount of time to finish even one piece of cloth. During the summer, the heat is so intense that I need to cover up during the day. In the monsoon, the rain prevents me from opening up properly. I hope that one day I can secure a stall in the main market.'

However, though she has problems with finance and space, she still works and engages in vegetable vending, as there is no other job that is suitable for her and her qualifications at this age. Therefore, she showed her resilience and worked hard as a vegetable vendor for survival.

6.13 An overview:

Family Support in the Work-Life of Women Vendors

The majority of vendors received help from their families, as they are often the primary breadwinners. Their position confers power and prestige within the family, sometimes leading to support from dependents. Numerous married vendors obtain assistance from their offspring, especially in managing domestic tasks, which alleviates their load and affords them time to rest and recoup following a lengthy workday. This support structure enhances their well-being and aids in sustaining their livelihood. The bulk of the sellers are married and have children upon whom they may rely for managing the domestic responsibilities. This also assists them in allocating time to unwind for themselves at night after completing work. A significant proportion still encounters challenges. This underscores the significance of familial support for women's empowerment in the informal sector and suggests that community engagement and awareness initiatives might foster more supportive home environments for working women. The research indicates that although over half of the female vegetable sellers in Mizoram receive sporadic assistance from their families, the rest are compelled to handle their profession independently, despite the potential availability of support. This underscores the necessity for enhanced understanding and promotion of collective family responsibility, ensuring that women in informal sectors are not excessively burdened and can maintain their livelihoods with dignity and improved health. Nevertheless, the statistics indicate that a significant number of women sellers do not receive assistance, even when their family members are there. Almost fifty percent are compelled to juggle both professional and domestic duties independently, signifying persistent gender disparities in family obligations. These women experience heightened stress and fatigue, hindering their ability to sustain a good work-life equilibrium.

Childcare Challenges:

The findings indicate that the limited number of vendors providing childcare services highlights a deficiency in accessible and functional childcare facilities, such as anganwadis and pre-schools, for working women vendors. The substantial lack of childcare provision by the vendor indicates that many individuals in need of such services lack access, which can profoundly affect women's capacity to work regularly and without stress. The predominant choice of "Not applicable" among respondents indicates that they either do not have children requiring daycare or do not have children at all. The results show the considerable childcare difficulties encountered by female vegetable merchants in Mizoram. A significant issue identified is the absence of accessible and inexpensive childcare services, including anganwadis and preschools, for working moms. A minuscule fraction of vendors could finance any childcare services, highlighting a significant deficiency in infrastructure and support systems. Numerous vendors in need of these services are unable to obtain them, thus affecting their capacity to operate regularly, profitably, and without stress. In instances requiring childcare, the majority of vendors opt to leave their children with relatives during working hours. Although this may appear to be a pragmatic answer, it might result in uneven caring, exposure to detrimental influences, and emotional distress for the children. The dependence on family members for childcare frequently arises not from preference but due to financial constraints and a scarcity of options. It is evident that when the mother is employed, the family encounters difficulties in managing household responsibilities. The majority of domestic duties are performed by relatives of the vendors, such as husbands, children, in-laws, and maternal mothers. Meanwhile, 14.5% of vendors lack anyone to oversee their homes during their absence, as all household members are also engaged in work. The one who arrives home first is tasked with cooking the family meal. The research highlights the considerable domestic obstacles encountered by women vegetable sellers in Mizoram as they try to reconcile their professional and household obligations. When these women are engaged in employment, the responsibility for home responsibilities frequently shifts to other family members, including husbands, children, in-laws, or their own moms. This type of assistance sustains the household; nonetheless, it is not ubiquitous, as around 14.5% of vendors lack someone to oversee their home while their absence, given that all family members are similarly occupied with

employment. In these instances, the one who arrives home first generally takes on the obligation of dinner preparation, demonstrating a flexible yet erratic attitude to domestic responsibilities. Although some assistance is provided, the data reveals that the majority of women vendors do not participate in domestic tasks during working hours, yet societal norms nonetheless impose expectations for their contribution. This societal expectation places a dual burden on women, requiring them to excel as both economic providers and household carers. Consequently, there is frequently an absence of equilibrium between familial and professional responsibilities, resulting in physical fatigue and emotional strain.

Day-offs and Family Engagement

The results show that most of the women vegetable vendors in Mizoram can't plan family parties because they are too busy with work, money problems, and too many responsibilities. Because they work in the private sector, their jobs change traditional social and cultural roles, which could hurt family ties and social harmony. To solve this problem, we might need more help from families and communities, as well as laws that recognise and lessen the loads women in informal work carry. The work-life mix of Mizoram women who sell vegetables is complicated by traditional norms, the need to make money, and gendered standards. On the one hand, the fact that almost everyone takes the day off—Sunday is a holy day of rest for Christians—is a good thing about work-life balance. This cultural norm gives women sellers an important chance to rest, grow spiritually, and possibly spend time with their families. This is especially important for them because their job is dangerous and physically demanding.

But when you look more closely, this balance is mostly just on the surface. Even though they had a day off, 84% of respondents said they didn't have enough time with their families. This shows the mental and social costs of their unofficial work. There are times when these women work full-time and do housework for free, which leaves them tired and socially isolated, with little time to care for their children or build relationships. The stress that comes with this imbalance not only hurts their mental health, but it also changes the way their family works and how their child grows.

Also, the numbers show that 77.5% of the women don't plan family gatherings, which are usually a big part of keeping Mizo culture and families together. This lack is due to women not having enough time, money, or responsibility, which keeps them from participating in culture and community life. These kinds of restrictions show a change in the traditional roles of men and women, but they also mean that families and towns lose important social support networks.

Even though taking a day off can help, the bigger picture shows that women vegetable sellers in Mizoram still have a hard time balancing their work and personal lives. As carers, earners, and societal pillars, their roles are being pushed, and they don't always get the help they need. For their quality of life to really get better, we need family-friendly laws, fair division of housework, access to child care, and community-level programs that recognise and ease the loads these women carry. That's the only way to achieve work-life balance in both organisation and spirit.

Work-Family Conflict

Women vegetable vendors in Mizoram have problems balancing their work and family responsibilities. This is because of the mental stress of meeting both financial and family obligations, as well as the changing nature of family bonds.

To begin, 21 of the respondents did not have children, but most of those who did said that their kids were complaining about their work. A lot of the time, these issues come from people who want attention, care, and an emotional bond but can't get them because their work is so hard. Even though their kids need mental support, many of these women keep working because they have to. They are poor and need to support their families. Giving care and making money at the same time shows a clear work-life conflict, where the family's mental and financial well-being are at odds with each other.

On the other hand, most of the people who answered said that their job did not cause any problems with their husbands or extended families. This shows that selling vegetables is socially and culturally okay in Mizo families, especially when the women's earnings add a lot to the family's income. A lot of the time, family members count on or help with the vending, which builds a sense of shared duty and lowers tension within the family. On the other hand, it's important to remember that 16.5%

of people still have problems with their families or wives because of their jobs. This group probably faces traditional opposition to women becoming financially independent or feels uncomfortable with changing gender roles.

The numbers show a mixed picture of how women who sell vegetables deal with problems between work and home. Many families accept and even value their work, but they still have a lot of mental problems, especially with their kids. This shows the secret sacrifices that working women in the informal sector make. In order to fix this, we need community support systems, parenting tools, and public recognition of women's dual roles. This way, family harmony and mental health won't have to be sacrificed in order to make money.

Church obligation

Christianity is very important in Mizo culture. The first baptism happened in 1899, and by the middle of the 20th century, most of the people had become Christians. Going to church meetings and taking care of church-related duties is not only a spiritual practice, but it's also a big part of building social capital in the community. People see going to services, joining groups, and taking on duties as important parts of church life that show moral commitment, community membership, and social respect.

But for women who sell vegetables, this part of life is often hard because they have busy work plans. These women work long hours, often from early in the morning until late at night. Because of this, they don't have much time or energy to regularly attend church events. Many people try to go to church on Sundays, but most can't commit to the regular participation that's needed to meet their church responsibilities or take on leadership roles. There is a gap between religious goals and the facts of informal work, as shown by the small number of vendors who are able to meet church responsibilities. This disconnect brings up an important aspect of work-life conflict: the fact that women sellers' moral and social goals are limited by the need to make money.

The example of church duties shows how having to work in the private sector to make money can make it hard to join important religious and cultural groups. This makes it harder for Mizo women who sell vegetables to build and keep social capital. It's a minor but important form of social isolation. To solve this problem, the community

needs to be aware of it and there needs to be a flexible support system that recognises the efforts of working women while making sure they don't miss out on the spiritual and social life that makes up Mizo identity.

Challenges of School Retention and Drug Use among children

In Mizoram, the children of women who sell vegetables are at risk in a number of ways that affect their schooling and social lives. These problems are typical of people who work in the informal sector. Most sellers say that their kids are going to school, but a lot of them still have kids who drop out. This is usually because of problems with money, unstable home life, or not having enough help with schoolwork. These problems not only make it hard for kids to learn, but they also make it harder for them to move up in life and become financially independent in the future. In addition to worries about school, the data shows that 9% of those who answered said their children were abusing drugs. This is not a majority, but it is a very strong danger sign. It only takes a small number to show that there are underlying social problems. These could be peer pressure, not having enough guidance, mental neglect, or being exposed to dangerous environments. All of these problems are more likely to affect families who are dealing with poverty and work-life balance.

These results show that women who sell vegetables are under a lot of pressure to both make money for their families and protect their children's future. Targeted measures, such as financial help, after-school support programs, youth counselling, and community involvement efforts, are needed to deal with dropping out of school and drug abuse. It also shows the need for policies that focus on the whole family, making life easier for working moms and making the world a better, more stable place for their kids, so that poverty and social insecurity don't keep happening.

Sources of acquisition of possession

Being able to work for yourself is one of the clearest signs of economic and social freedom. Women's safety, purchasing power, and future stability all improve when they can use their salary to buy things like furniture, tools, land, or animals. These results show that vegetable selling is more than just a way for many women to make money; it's also a way for them to build their assets and become independent. According to the data, most of the women who sell vegetables in Aizawl are self-

sufficient and financially strong, as 84% of them pay for their goods with their own money. There is a big chance for women to become financially independent, take ownership of their lives, and have control over their lives, all of which are important parts of empowering women. Interventions like asset-building programs, savings clubs, and programs that teach people about money can help them make better decisions and be more economically stable.

Decision-making:

The research reveals a nuanced portrayal of empowerment among female vegetable vendors. Although nearly fifty percent possess full autonomy in their decision-making, a significant portion continues to depend on or acquiesce to their spouses or other relatives. This indicates that, although progress is evident, societal and familial structures still dictate the degree of empowerment. Enhancing women's decision-making capacity through information, financial autonomy, and societal support may elevate their agency and empowerment. The authority to make financial decisions is a crucial aspect of empowerment. Three-fourths of Mizo women vegetable merchants manage family finances, underscoring their significance as economic contributors and household leaders. The statistics indicate that vending serves not just as a cash source but also as a mechanism for enhancing women's status within the home. The study indicates that Mizo women vegetable traders exhibit significant empowerment, with 76% responsible for crucial financial choices within their households. This signifies a positive advancement in female autonomy and control over economic resources, highlighting the significance of vending as a transformative livelihood. Ongoing support via financial literacy, access to loans, and acknowledgement of women's financial responsibilities can enhance their empowerment. The study indicates that the majority of vendors (59%) determine their children's educational choices. This indicates that women merchants are highly empowered and prioritise their children's education. The findings indicate that numerous female vendors possess the authority to make significant familial decisions, particularly regarding their children's schooling. Generating income through vending may enhance their significance within the family. Fieldwork revealed that the majority of women engaged in commerce to finance their children's education, as a single family member's salary was insufficient.

They participate in their children's school selection due to prioritising their education. Vending not only empowers individuals to make their own money choices but also enhances their capacity to make decisions, especially about issues that directly affect family welfare and functionality. A considerable level of empowerment exists among Mizo women vegetable merchants concerning mobility and social liberty. The choice to visit family and relatives exemplifies freedom of mobility, autonomy in social relationships, and a break from patriarchal constraints, so augmenting the empowerment of these women in both personal and communal spheres. The research reveals a substantial level of social and familial empowerment among Mizo women vegetable traders, with 96.5% indicating that their opinions are valued within the family. This exemplifies economic autonomy, alongside respect, influence, and agency inside the home, so supporting the substantial social role these women possess in their families and communities. Supplementary support in leadership, education, and rights awareness may strengthen and reinforce this empowerment.

Impact of Vegetable Vending in Gaining Status and Empowerment

The sale of vegetables has significantly empowered Mizo women, with 93% reporting an enhancement in their status due to their occupation. It signifies that vending beyond just financial gain; it also serves as a conduit for dignity, agency, and autonomy. To enhance the impact, it is imperative to resolve the issues faced by the remaining 7% and ensure that all women in this sector have equitable access to opportunities, rights, and recognition. The research demonstrates that economic participation is a crucial element in the empowerment of Mizo women. Income production empowers women by ensuring survival, fostering autonomous decision-making, and permitting substantial contributions to their families and communities. A stagnant minority underscores the need for supporting measures, such as financial literacy initiatives, access to credit or savings, community support groups, and understanding of women's rights and entitlements. The findings indicate that vegetable selling and revenue creation have profoundly affected the lives of Mizo women, with 96% reporting favourable improvements. The substantial number signifies that economic engagement is a vital element in women's empowerment, leading to increased autonomy, confidence, and social standing. Targeted interventions can promote

inclusive empowerment for all women in the informal sector, especially for those who have yet to benefit.

Awareness on woman rights and vendor's rights

The understanding of rights among almost two-thirds of women sellers indicates the effectiveness of formal education, community awareness efforts, or empowerment activities. The one-third who remain uninformed underscores the need for targeted awareness-raising campaigns and instructional programs. Complete empowerment cannot be achieved unless all women, especially those in unorganised sectors such as vegetable vending, are cognisant of their legal rights and protections. Despite Mizo women vegetable traders possessing a commendable grasp of women's rights, further efforts are necessary to bridge the awareness gap. Enhancing this aspect of empowerment might help them feel more confident, have more negotiating power, and be in a better socio-economic position overall.

The inadequate comprehension of vendor rights severely diminishes the professional empowerment of Mizo women vegetable merchants. Despite extensive awareness of general women's rights, the insufficient comprehension of specific vendor-related protections undermines their ability to articulate themselves in public spaces, access designated vending zones, or engage with authorities and local organisations. The lack of understanding underscores an important need for education, legal literacy, and outreach programs focused on the rights of street sellers. Empowerment in informal work is inadequate without equipping women with the knowledge and resources to protect their livelihoods. Addressing this shortcoming will significantly enhance their economic stability and social status.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- 7.0 Introduction
- 7.1 Socio-economic profile
- 7.2 Job entry, Work Culture and problem faced.
- 7.3 Work-family balance and Empowerment
- 7.4 Implications of the study
- 7.5 Policy recommendations
- 7.6 Future areas for research

CHAPTER-VII

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

7.0 Introduction

Street vendors, despite their visible presence on the roadside and pavement in our daily lives, we often overlook and underestimate them. Though they make the lives of the urban dweller simple and convenient, their voices were kept silent, and their problems were not taken care of and given priority. Knowing their condition, the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014 was enacted to protect the rights of urban street vendors. Key provisions include the establishment of Town Vending Committees for participatory planning and the implementation of vending certificates to safeguard vendors from eviction and harassment. In the Mizoram context, the majority of the vendors are women; as a result, an in-depth study on women vegetable vendors was taken up to know the status, conditions of working and the reason for the majority of vendors being women. The knowledge of Mizo vendors is to be enriched by a study from the sociological perspective, as there is a shortage of literature on the subject, and the available sources are primarily from the fields of geography, economics, and commerce. Therefore, the examination of vendors, with a particular focus on Mizo women vegetable vendors, will serve as an intermediary for fostering a society with greater diversity. The study analysed their socio-economic profile, working conditions, problems they faced, empowerment, and work-life balance (Lalfamkima, 2023). This study helps create opportunities for Mizo women vendors to raise awareness about the importance of their occupation to the state and addresses their challenges in properly regulating and adhering to the Act. It also highlights the reason for their majority in number and their job entry. This study will foster a thorough knowledge of the notion of women vegetable vendors while also addressing the misunderstandings and unfavourable attitudes that urban dwellers have towards these vendors. The study is divided into seven chapters, which include a review of the literature, research methodology, socio-

economic profile, working conditions and problems faced, work-life balance, and a summary. A thorough review of literature and fieldwork was done, and the chapters end with a summary outlining various expectations and recommendations for their development and progress.

Chapter I included the Introduction, while Chapter II provided an in-depth Review of Literature. Chapter III detailed the Research Methodology of the study, while Chapter IV provided an in-depth analysis of the Socio-Economic profile of Mizo women vegetable vendors. Chapter V focused on the job entry, working conditions, and problems encountered by Mizo women vegetable vendors. Chapter VI thoroughly explored the Work-Life Balance and Empowerment of Mizo Women Vegetable Vendors, while Chapter VII provided a comprehensive summary of the findings leading to a conclusion (Lalfamkima, 2023).

A general outline on Women in Urban Informal Sector has been highlighted in Chapter 1 of the Introduction. This chapter has been discussed under 11 (eleven) sections. The chapter started with the general outline of the informal sector followed by defining the concept “informal Sector” and ‘Street Vending’ with its characteristics. How informal sector concept came into being, its definition and its characteristics includes: entry process, dependence on resources, ownership, small scale in operation, technology, qualification, stratification, recognition, age and sex composition, job security, finance and social network were highlighted in the first 3 sections. In the fourth section, the role of informal sector in Urbanisation process was highlighted as there is a gradual increase in the number of populations living in the urban areas which eventually increase the rate of informal sector. In the 5 and 6 sections, the socio-economic importance and women work participation in informal sector were discussed. In Section 7, the importance of formal and informal sector linkages was discussed. Following sections of 8 to 10 the Indian North East and Mizoram Scenario were discussed and the chapter ended with the significance of the study. Aizawl had a population of only 4780 people in 1941, and following India's independence in 1947, there was a large rural-urban migration to Aizawl. The end of British India's strict migration control policy after Independence, the Rambuai or the 20 years of armed struggle for independence from 1966 to 1986, which resulted in

large-scale migration into the relatively safer Aizawl town, and the unprecedented increase in job opportunities in the government sector with the attainment of Union Territory in 1972 were cited as the main reasons for the large-scale migration into Aizawl city (Saitluanga, 2017). Due to the stagnation in the growth of government jobs and limited opportunities in other economic sector, urban poverty has grown significantly. 6.5% of the city's urban households are expected to fall below the poverty line (BPL) (Zothanmawia, 2017). Street vending in general act as the most popular type of informal activity in Aizawl city, within this vegetable vending was considered as the popular and easily accessible economic activity. The total number of street vendors in Aizawl city according to Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 was 3609 which was 1.29 percent of the city's population. The vegetable vending not only consist of permanent or stationary vendors but it also constitutes non-resident vendors from the nearby village, who came to sell their vegetables on Saturday market. The Mizoram state government delegated responsibility for executing the *Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Rules, 2017*, including the formation of the Town Vending Committee to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC). Bazarpui, the primary business district, houses various types of informal sector businesses, including garment, shoe, repairing, meat, tea stall, vegetable vendors and utensil sellers. Aizawl Bazarpui was not built in a specific year though Aizawl was established in 1890, but rather it is a centuries old market that developed over time as a traditional trading hub in the heart of the city, with no precise foundation date recorded in readily available information (Lalfamkima, 2023). Unlike the other states in India, in Aizawl city, majority of the vegetable vendors are women and there is highly in need to analyse the reason of their entry, working conditions, work-life balance and empowerment seen in the state. An in-depth examination of the condition and subjective quality of life of the Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl will not only expand the scope of sociological studies on quality of life but also contribute to better understanding of the real condition of street vending in the Global South (Lalfamkima, 2023; Saitluanga, 2017; Zothanmawia, 2017).

Chapter II relates to the Review of Literature on Informal Sector and Street vending, particularly on women street vendors (Lalfamkima, 2023). The content of review of literature is divided into three heads namely: Theoretical framework, thematic review and methodological review. Under theoretical framework various kinds of theoretical perspectives were reviewed which includes: dualist view, structuralist view, legalist view, gender division of labour, hegemonic masculinity, intersectionality, labour market segmentation theory, empowerment theory, misfit theory of entrepreneurship and work-life balance theories which includes: spill-over theory, instrumental theory and inter-role conflict theory (Lalfamkima, 2023). The intention of reviewing multiple theories for the study is to provide a greater sense on the meaning of Informal sector and to understand and explain the research problem with the compatible theory.

The first three perspectives highlighted how informal sector is perceived by people from a theoretical perspective. The dualist view is based on Keith Hart (1973) 'informal sector' 1972. The dualist view pointed out that there are two type of sectors formal and informal. The macroeconomic root of the informal sector is determined by the disparity between the growth rate of labour demand for modern (formal) occupations and the greater growth rate of the urban workforce, which is aided in emerging nations by rising population and urban migration. The mismatch in the labour market is exacerbated by the disparity between the excess of low-skilled urban jobless and the demand for contemporary work prospects (Hart, 1973). The structuralist view that the formal and informal sectors are interconnected, linked, and interdependent in terms of labour. They argue that the informal sector's survival and expansion are determined by "the nature of capitalist development (rather than a lack of growth)" (Castells & Portes, 1989). The legalist view was propounded by Hernando de Soto in 1989. According to this view, informality is a response to bureaucratic impediments. The informal sector comprises micro-entrepreneurs who prefer to operate informally to avoid the significant costs, time, and effort associated with official registration under governmental laws (de Soto, 1989). Gender division of labour pointed out how the work and task are split between men and women according to our gender roles which is socially constructed (Oakley, 1972). Hegemonic masculinity was coined by R.W. Connell in 1987. Hegemonic masculinity is a part of

gender hierarchy which dominates over all other masculinities and femininities in society. This masculinity hegemonized over the mind of the society as they considered it as the ideal type or role model of the society (Connell, 1987). Intersectionality was propounded by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. It refers to a sociological theory that outlines how an individual may face multiple types of overlapping discrimination depending on their race, gender, age, ethnicity, physical ability, class or any other characteristics that might place them in a minority class (Crenshaw, 1989). Labour market segmentation theory pointed out that there are a political and economic forces that encourage the division of the labour market into segments where the upper segment in informal sector with high income is usually dominated by men while the lower segment with lower income is dominated by women (Doeringer & Piore, 1971). Empowerment theory is defined as the degree of autonomy and self-determination which enables an individual to act independently (Zimmerman, 2000). So, these five concepts highlight the gender perspectives in analysing the women vegetable vendors conditions on the ground of discrimination, division of labour and empowerment. For the study of migrant vendors, misfit theory of entrepreneurship was discussed. This theory indicates that misfit individuals are those individuals who do not share the dominant cultural values and attempt to start new journey. It is belief that misfit individuals are more likely to engaged in entrepreneurial activity as alternatives because they are dissatisfied with their job prospects (Shapero, 1975). The work-life balance theory highlighted 3 theories in which spill over theory asserts that work and family life are inextricably linked and impact one another. As a result, both great and bad professional experiences can translate into positive or negative home experiences, and vice versa (Staines, 1980). Instrumental theory views that people choose to behave in one field in order to influence the other field (Lambert, 1990). While inter-role conflict theory focuses on the issues that might result from opposing interests in various domains. It is proposed that these competing interests cause individual role conflict, affecting the individual in both fields (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The theoretical perspectives of informal sector and women street vendors are crucial as they provide the backbone of the research with the theoretical framework. It helps

in building a strong foundation for the research work and the literature which helps in bringing clarity to the overall context (Lalfamkima, 2023).

The thematic review section is further sub-divided into 13 sub-headings which are Socio-economic status, Urban Informal sector, Migration, Street Vending, Self-employed women and Family relationship, Aged and Women in Informal Sector, Work situation and work condition, Income, Women Self-Employment and Empowerment, Vulnerability, Regional Variation Women Entrepreneurship and Policy. The thematic review has shown that the various challenges faced by women street vendors. The working environment in which they work, their income and whether they are empowered through engaging in the economic activity. It also touched on the management of family and work as majority of the street vendors are married. The various themes and topics reviewed in this section offer an insight into the lives of women street vendors, migrant vendors and self-employed women thereby, help in paving the ways for new strategies in contributing to overall development through various policy and suggestions.

The classification of literature into various themes is helpful in providing an in-depth analysis of their job entry, socio-economic status, working conditions, empowerment and work-life balance of the street vendors. This help in critically analyse the conditions of women vendors and assess the possibilities of their recognition in the society and for their development.

The chapter II section concludes with the methodological review. The methodological review section of the literature is significant as it provided the researcher with a profound understanding of the strategies employed by prior researchers addressing analogous issues. The review can also assist the researcher plan the interview schedule and figure out what further needs to be done in their research. The evaluation encompasses the research instruments utilised by the researchers, including interviews, Key Informant Interviews (KII), case studies, and observations, all of which are applied to collect essential and pertinent data for their study. The qualitative and quantitative methodologies employed by various experts are examined, pertinent to the study of women vendors.

From the literature, it was found out that there are plenty of study on street vendors in general and women vendors is also quite good. But the specific study on women vegetable vendors is less or nearly nil and particularly in the context of Mizoram is limited. Also, majority of the researches were studied on the basis of economics or geography. This negligence leaves a huge demand to provide an in-depth study on Mizo women vegetable vendors from sociological point of view in order to understand the job entry, working conditions and problem faced. This will help in better understanding of the community who make the lives of the urban dweller convenient and easy. Also, the review of literature helps us in understanding the importance of in-depth analysis of vendor's associations and the Act for the upliftment of women vendors (Lalfamkima, 2023). Thus, it will provide universal access for these women vendors an important place in the study.

Chapter III details out the research context and framework adopted and procedures followed during the study. As such, it starts from conceptualisation of the research problem to the analysis of procedures adopted to arrive at the conclusion and the outcome of the study.

Based on the need for the study, this study started with the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic conditions of women vegetable vendors
2. To analyse the causes of taking up the vegetable vending by natives and migrants
3. To study the management and balance of their work and their family life.
4. To understand the social empowerment of women vegetable vendors by assessing various indicators of empowerment.
5. To find out the problems faced by women vegetable vendors and to make recommendations as necessary.

The present study follows an exploratory research design and Aizawl city is the universe for the purpose of this study. The sampling frame used in this study is purposive sampling in which 200 vendors were selected through this sampling. The total number of samples collected are located from 18 markets and 19 Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) Wards and the type of vendors collected comprised of stationary, peripatetic and Saturday market vendors. Among the 11 KII respondents

selected purposively, 6 of them are the President of the vendor's associations, 2 respondents from AMC and Trade and Commerce, 2 of them are members of Local Council and 1 respondent is a shop-owner. The sources of data are drawn from a secondary sources like journals, census and books while the primary sources are collected through observation, interview, case study and KII. Key Informant Interview are largely unstructured questions in which the functions of the vendor's associations, implementation of Street Vendors Act 2014 and vendor's license and the working conditions were asked to the respondents. Through pilot study, framing the basic structure of the study was done. Data collection followed and concluded on 24th April 2024. The assembled data include the filled-in interview schedules used by the researcher during the field survey which have been answered and suggestive information provided by the respondents, case notes and inputs from the key informants. Upon the completion of the fieldwork, all the schedules were scrutinised and crosscheck. Coding was done and the data were disaggregated under 5 major heads namely socio-economic profile, job-entry, work-life balance, empowerment and problem faced. Sub-heads under each major head were also conceptualised. The analytical framework used in this study has been a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data were coded for the quantitative analysis. A different code was given to each question and answer that was transmitted to the computer. The categorising strategy was used to sort the coded data into groups. SPSS software is utilised for quantitative analysis. For qualitative data analysis, with case studies, observations, and narratives, the 'lived experiences' methodology, grounded in phenomenological and anthropological traditions, has been employed. Interviews with significant informants are likewise presented in the same format. The interviews of the respondents were meticulously attended to, and a summary of each case was compiled. Finally, the chapter concluded with the operationalisation of concepts, limitation of the study and research ethics which were followed during the course of the study.

7.1 Socio-economic profile

Chapter IV provides a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic profile of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. It uses socio-economic status as a gauge to

highlight disparities among these vendors regarding their access to power, property, and privileges. The assessment includes several variables such as age, marital status, religion, educational attainment, occupational status, place of residence, family and household dynamics, family income, land ownership, type of vendors, and financial inclusivity (Lalfamkima, 2024).

The study's majority of respondents, who range in age from 31 to 60, emphasise a number of variables that influence their work in the formal sector, including a desire for independence, the loss of a spouse, relocation from rural to urban areas, and an inability to perform wage labour. The fact that there are replies over 60 indicates that there are no official age restrictions, such as retirement. Besamusca et al. (2015) revealed similar results, showing that women between the ages of 25 and 55 are more likely to participate in the labour market. According to a Varanasi research, Upadhyay (2021) discovered that the majority of female street sellers are between the ages of 31 and 50. Furthermore, Bhowmik and Saha (2012) investigated eleven cities and determined that the 25–55 age range was the most productive.

Despite the fact that some of the responders are already widowed or divorced, the bulk of them are married. This demonstrates that marriage has caregiving responsibilities, which led to the family turning to the unorganised sector in order to survive. The entire family would not be able to rely on the spouse's income alone. Due to its accessibility, lack of credentials, and minimal financial requirements, married women with dependents saw the potential of vegetable vending for economic development. This demonstrated that vegetable vending serves as the "provider for the poor," since those without dependents turn to vegetable vending as a source of income. This result is comparable to that of Debdulal Saha's study, which found that the majority of street sellers in ten Indian cities are married (Saha, 2017). The majority (82%) of women street sellers in Varanasi are married, according to an Upadhyay research on women vendors in the city (Upadhyay, 2021). In contrast to other Indian states, the divorce and widow rate among respondents in Aizawl is rather high (37.5%). According to a research on street sellers in Chandigarh and Ludhiana by Nidhi Saroop (2024), just 4% of the vendors in Chandigarh and 0% in Ludhiana were divorced or widowed. Additionally, only 15% of respondents in the Upadhyay research on street sellers in

Varanasi were widowed or divorced. The average percentage of widowed or divorced respondents is 7.8%, according to a debriefing research on street sellers in ten cities (Saha, 2017).

Due to urbanisation, which caused many families to travel to metropolitan regions in quest of employment and occupational opportunities, the majority of women vendors live in nuclear households. Since her husband's income is insufficient to support the family, women in nuclear families have no justification for staying at home. In nuclear families, women's status has significantly improved and is now more favourable. The government provides rations based on the economic position of the family. The majority of Varanasi women street vendors live in non-nuclear families, according to a similar conclusion from a research conducted by Upadhyay in 2021. In his research on street sellers in the Madurai district, Duraisingam also discovered that most of them belonged to nuclear families (Duraisingam, 2007). The majority of respondents (88%) belong to a nuclear family, according to Nidhi Saroop's findings (Saroop, 2024). It is evident that the majority of sellers possess PHH ration cards, however the families of four (2%) respondents, who are immigrants from Myanmar, do not possess any ration cards. A single adult male member makes up the majority of respondents' families, whereas 12% (24) had no adult male family members. The majority of the sellers have fewer adult male family members who they may depend on for their livelihood, according to the research. Because most female vendors have one or more dependents, they are under a lot of duty and are compelled to labour for their families. Of the married respondents, 64 (32%), indicated that their husbands were alcohol-free, while 53 (26.5%) reported having an alcoholic husband. The gap is small even though the majority of married women do not have an alcoholic husband. Because their husbands were unreliable and irresponsible in providing for the family, 26% of the respondents had an alcoholic husband, which may be another reason why women engaged in vegetable vending (Lalfamkima, 2024).

Most respondents live in rented Pucca houses with rents between 2500 and 3500. Vendors acquire essential household assets like mobile phones, televisions, refrigerators, washing machines, and LPG gas connections, while items such as microwaves and vehicles are seen as secondary necessities. Many vendors reside in

Aizawl city, though some commute from rural areas to sell at the Saturday market. All respondents are Christians, predominantly affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of India, and belong to the Scheduled Tribal category. Christianity also significantly influences women's education. Majority of respondents in the study have completed middle or high school, with only 10.5% being illiterate and 1 graduate vendor. The educational qualifications are relatively higher compared to vendors in other states, indicating that vegetable vending does not necessitate formal education and is accessible to various age groups. Similar findings were observed in studies by Nidhi Saroop on street vendors in Chandigarh and Ludhiana, where 55.2% were illiterate or had education up to primary level, and Garima Upadhyay's research on Varanasi vendors showed a higher illiteracy rate of 68.3%.

In Mizo society, a majority of women vendors primarily engage in vegetable vending as their family occupation due to limited formal job opportunities and inadequate educational backgrounds for applying for such positions. The severe gender division of labor results in women managing both employment and domestic tasks related to food preparation, while men typically work as daily wage laborers in construction when opportunities arise. With the men's income often being unstable, vegetable vending becomes the family's main source of revenue, especially as rising living costs make it necessary for many vendors to supplement their spouse's insufficient income. Majority of vegetable vendors have engaged in this activity for 5-10 years, with 13.5% working in it for over 10 years, indicating that it is their primary source of income. Most respondents lack prior work experience before entering vegetable vending (Lalfamkima, 2024). Majority of vendors earn Rs 10,000-20,000 monthly, with 19.5% earning below Rs 10,000. Most have savings accounts, but only 31.5% manage to save monthly, as noted in Garima Upadhyay's study on Varanasi Street vendors. Among those who save, 15.5% save less than Rs 5,000, while only 2.5% save over Rs 20,000. Additionally, only 26.5% have accessed bank loans, primarily due to procedural difficulties and lack of collateral. Consequently, 22% opt for daily deposits, and low income limits savings for most, resulting in only one-third managing to save monthly. In terms of land possession, majority of the vendors do not have land possession and inheritance from the parents, these shows the status of women in Mizo society where

women were not given preferences in the inheritance of possession. However, only 11% vendors have land possession under their name which was inherited by their parents.

Half of the vendors are peripatetic, selling vegetables in non-designated market areas, while the other half are stationary vendors with established selling locations. Most vendors pay a monthly seat rent of Rs 100-500. The majority are migrants from various parts of Mizoram, primarily seeking better job opportunities due to unemployment or low wages. Similar findings by Nidhi Saroop and Baljit Kaur indicate that significant portions of street vendors in urban locations are migrants, largely driven by poverty and unemployment. Most of these vendors migrate with family members from nearby villages, with job opportunities being the primary motive for migration, alongside reasons like family occupations and education.

Most respondents reported health issues such as nerve problems, ulcers, and diabetes, attributed to an unhealthy work culture characterized by irregular meal times and long working hours. Regarding religiosity, most attendees go to church only on Sundays, with only 2% of vendors not attending at all, primarily due to the long working hours, as Sunday is their day off.

7.2 Job entry, Work Culture and Problem faced.

Chapter V focuses on the entry, working conditions, and challenges of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. It is organized into 14 sections addressing various aspects including the establishment of their work, professional history, and the reasons for their involvement in this trade. Key areas discussed include the acquisition of vegetables, transportation dynamics, health issues, financial access, the vendors association, support from governmental and non-governmental organizations, workplace challenges, and job satisfaction, culminating in a case study. Approximately 50% of vendors operate in designated markets, while the other half utilize pavements, indicating the temporary and insecure nature of their economic activities, which complicates their protection under urban policies. A significant number of vendors (about 70%) incur daily or monthly rental fees for their vending spaces, shedding light on the financial burdens they face. The contrast between those paying rent and those accessing spaces for free illustrates the varied nature of vending

environments, which range from informal to semi-regulated, and underscores crucial issues of equity and sustainability in urban street vending. The chapter notes that while vegetable vending is a low-capital livelihoods avenue for Mizo women, the initial investment varies significantly based on individual economic circumstances, geographical positioning, and social networks. Notably, 34% of women begin with investments under ₹1,000, while 45% invest between ₹1,000 and ₹5,000, suggesting that larger investments (between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000) reflect either greater financial means or aspirations for larger-scale operations. Ultimately, vegetable vending empowers women from diverse financial backgrounds, fostering flexibility and inclusivity in the work-force.

Majority of vendors are registered, indicating progress, but nearly half remain unregistered, highlighting a significant gap in formal recognition among women vendors. Registration must lead to benefits like secure vending zones and improved services for better livelihood security. The Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017 mandates a vendor's license through local councils and the AMC, yet the Town Vending Committee's ineffectiveness hampers street vending development in Aizawl. Many vendors rely on on-site storage for vegetables, indicating insufficient designated facilities, while home storage burdens vendors and affects perishable items. The lack of rented storage highlights an absence of accessible, affordable options for women vegetable vendors, stressing the urgent need for improved infrastructure such as community cold storage, lockable stalls, and cooperative spaces to mitigate post-harvest losses and enhance working conditions.

Majority of the women vegetable vendors, 62%, had prior informal employment before entering this trade, motivated by factors such as financial instability, health problems, migration, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key advantages of vegetable vending include low capital requirements and steady demand for produce. Notably, 38% of these vendors view this as their first income-generating role, often following marriage or the loss of a spouse. This profession acts as a fallback for those who have lost previous sources of income and offers a first-time opportunity for many women, contributing to their economic inclusion, especially during crises. The study highlights that vegetable vending provides a flexible work schedule, allowing women

to balance household responsibilities while earning better than in prior jobs, as they have the autonomy to set their working hours and be their own bosses.

The vegetable vending profession is significantly influenced by economic pressures and personal circumstances, with 32.5% of women identifying low initial investment as the main incentive, making it an accessible option for economically disadvantaged urban and rural women, particularly those with limited work experience. The occupation is ideal for low-skilled individuals, requiring no specialized training or formal education. Economic necessity, especially in Mizoram, drives 39% of vendors due to inadequate income from spouses. The field's flexibility and low entry barriers provide a reliable income source, contributing to women's economic and personal empowerment; 35% of vendors reported improved family livelihoods, aiding household needs and children's education. Additionally, 35% acknowledged new employment opportunities for women lacking formal skills and education. Most participants (56%) maintained that the profession helps satisfy daily food necessities, particularly in the context of rising food prices. Nonetheless, only 2% perceived an enhancement in their status, indicating that many view vending primarily as a survival mechanism and support system for their households. While greater income has resulted in increased recognition and respect, its impact on altering gender status appears to be minimal.

According to the sourcing pattern, most Mizo women vegetable vendors rely on established wholesale channels, with some sourcing directly from farmers, potentially increasing profit margins. The data indicates that many vendors acquire vegetables from wholesalers in Main Bazar and prioritize daily product collection to ensure freshness. Variations in collection patterns reflect differing levels of infrastructure and resource access. Many vendors use vehicles for transport, including two or four-wheel taxis, although a few have independent transport options. The results highlight the need for better transportation infrastructure and collaborative methods to enhance productivity and reduce workload for female vendors. Additionally, Mizo women vegetable sellers make significant monthly investments, emphasizing the economic importance of their businesses, while mid- to high-investment operations call for

improved supply chains, transportation access, and potential financial assistance for sustainability and growth.

On the transportation front, data indicates that most vendors operate near their vending sites in Mizo society, where local 'Kawn' serves as a central intersection point for daily needs, facilitating closer distances between homes and workplaces for mobile vendors. However, those vendors stationed at the New Market Sabji Bazar typically face longer commutes from their residences to their work locations. The findings reveal that while many Mizo women vegetable vendors benefit from convenient commuting, supporting work-life balance and reducing transportation burdens, a significant number still travel medium to long distances, facing challenging working conditions. These vendors require targeted assistance in areas such as transportation infrastructure and vendor zone planning to enhance their work environment and overall well-being. Most vendors walk to their selling locations to minimize costs, while approximately one-third utilize shared taxis for savings in both time and money. The commuting patterns of Mizo women vendors demonstrate that many work within short distances, leading to lower transportation expenses, although this frequent walking can impose significant physical stress. Shared taxis emerge as a crucial transportation alternative for those without car ownership. Enhancements in last-mile transportation infrastructure, subsidized transport programs for vendors, and the creation of local vending zones could significantly improve commuting conditions and productivity for women vendors.

Nearly half (46.5%) of vendors report no transportation expenditures, which helps reduce overall company costs but is offset by increased physical labour and time investment. Approximately 32% of sellers incur transportation costs between Rs 1000 and Rs 2500 monthly, a common range for low-income individuals in the informal sector. About 22% spend over Rs 2500, indicating a substantial financial burden, particularly in conjunction with other operational costs like purchasing vegetables or rent. A small group (1%) that spends more than Rs 7500 may qualify for specific support or subsidies if their businesses serve larger populations or create jobs. Most vendors incur transportation costs typically ranging from Rs 1000 to Rs 2500, while only two vendors exceed Rs 7500. Transportation expenses for Mizo women vegetable

sellers vary significantly based on their distance to vending locations and economic status. While almost half of the vendors do not have transportation costs, which underscores the importance of accessible vending locations, many still face moderate to high expenses that affect their financial stability. Most vendors do not struggle to find transportation but express concerns over high fares. Generally, vendors report a positive transit experience, although it is crucial to address the 12% experiencing challenges, as transportation issues can significantly influence income and productivity in the low-margin vegetable selling industry. Adaptation to local transportation norms, shared cabs, or proximity to vending sites may explain why many vendors do not encounter transit problems.

The study indicates that vegetable vending is a significant, week-long occupation for most Mizo women vendors, highlighting its crucial role in their economic engagement. Part-time and seasonal vendors demonstrate the profession's flexibility, accommodating varying schedules and needs. The majority sell vegetables from Monday to Saturday, with 25 vendors operating only on Fridays and Saturdays, primarily from nearby villages. In Aizawl, Saturday serves as a key grocery stocking day and a primary bazaar day. The research reveals that vegetable selling is labour-intensive, with over 80% of vendors working 12 hours or more daily, reflecting their dedication and the necessity for extended hours to secure a liveable wage. However, long working hours raise concerns about occupational fatigue, work-life balance, and the need for support services such as rest areas and access to healthcare. The majority of vendors reportedly experience chronic health issues, including hypertension, ulcers, nerve problems, and diabetes, with many seeking medical advice for treatment. Some vendors rely on personal experience for self-diagnosis and treatment. This situation underscores the urgent need for health education and awareness, particularly since vendors operate in unsanitary and polluted environments. Their demanding schedules lead to inadequate meal timing, reduced exercise, and poor dietary habits, contributing to their health challenges.

Engaging with informal moneylenders exposes Mizo women vegetable vendors to high interest rates and unsecured debt agreements, fostering potential debt cycles. Many vendors face challenges in securing bank loans due to the perceived temporary

nature of their occupation and the cumbersome application process, often complicated by language barriers. While most Mizo women refrain from borrowing, 17.5% rely on moneylenders, often facing interest rates ranging from 5-10%. This situation breeds financial instability as many struggle with debt repayment, underscoring the need for improved access to formal, affordable credit options and enhanced support systems. Despite about 50% of vendors being part of registered associations, many still operate without formal backing, limiting their ability to improve their working conditions and advocate for their rights. Strengthening vendor associations is essential to empower these women, enhance their bargaining power, and ensure they receive the recognition and resources necessary to tackle common challenges effectively. Overall, there is a clear need for accessible financial services, financial counselling, microloans with flexible terms, and better organizational structure among vendors to promote economic stability and security.

Majority of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl operate without institutional support, leading to precarious working conditions and vulnerabilities to economic and social risks. There is a critical need for inclusive policies, targeted interventions, and improved institutional engagement to enhance their livelihoods. Financial insecurity and spatial instability impact their work, highlighting the demand for credit facilities and permanent vending spaces. Addressing these needs with inclusive financial services, market infrastructure, and legal recognition can significantly improve their circumstances. Additionally, providing entrepreneurship training is essential for empowering these women, yet it remains largely unavailable, signaling a gap in support systems. Tailored training programs are necessary to improve working conditions, foster self-reliance, and promote long-term economic empowerment.

Mizo women vegetable vendors face significant challenges, including competitiveness, geographical constraints, and theft, which stem from the informal nature of their work, poor infrastructure, and urban market planning (Bhowmik & Saha, 2012; Saha, 2017). Many lack designated vending locations, resulting in insecurity and hindering business growth (Upadhyay, 2021; Saroop, 2024). Despite these adversities, these vendors demonstrate resilience and solidarity. Government and structural support are crucial for enhancing their working conditions, dignity, and

economic sustainability, particularly through structured market spaces and welfare policies to ensure dignified livelihoods.

The study examines the hurdles faced by migrant vegetable vendors in Aizawl, noting that 43% of them encounter significant issues in their work environment, primarily due to poorly defined vending areas leading to spatial conflicts (Lalfamkima, 2024). New migrant vendors often face territorial control by established vendors, creating a competitive and adversarial environment that complicates their ability to secure stable vending sites. Structural factors, such as government inefficiencies and unregulated market growth, significantly contribute to income reductions among Mizo women vegetable vendors. Inadequate infrastructure and seasonal variations also affect their livelihoods but to a lesser degree (Upadhyay, 2021). The need for policy interventions, market enhancements, improved infrastructure, and financial inclusion is crucial for supporting stable and sustainable livelihoods for these vendors (Bhowmik & Saha, 2012). Vegetable vending is perceived as a low-status economic activity, attracting primarily uneducated and poor urban dwellers (Upadhyay, 2021; Saroop, 2024). Many women enter this field not as a primary choice but for its accessibility and low initial investment (Lalfamkima, 2024). A notable 42.5% report experiencing abuse from fellow vendors due to competition for territory, often leading to conflicts even among vendors with designated spaces (Lalfamkima, 2024). This adversarial competition has fostered a tough demeanour among women vendors, who must remain vigilant against encroachments on their space and customer base. The findings reveal that many vendors suffer from regular harassment from passers-by, municipal authorities, organized sector customers, and occasionally, fellow vendors. Women, in particular, face added anxiety due to illiteracy and lack of identity documents, which impede their access to essential services. Though most reported verbal abuse, with only one instance of physical altercation over space, sexual abuse was notably absent. This highlights a unique aspect of their challenges in comparison to women vendors in other regions, where such issues are more prevalent. Despite the harsh environment, these vendors strive to maintain their dignity amid continuous challenges related to spatial ownership and customer interactions, impacting their emotional well-being (Lalfamkima, 2024).

Overall, a significant majority of women vegetable vendors in Mizoram express satisfaction with their work, noting benefits such as financial independence and flexible hours. However, the presence of dissatisfied vendors underscores the need to tackle specific challenges to enhance job quality and overall well-being. Improvements could include access to credit, better infrastructure, health services, and family support, ensuring that all women in this sector can work with dignity and satisfaction (Saroop, 2024; Upadhyay, 2021).

7.3 Work-family balance and Empowerment

Majority of vendors are supported by their families, often being the primary breadwinners, which enhances their authority and recognition at home. Married vendors, particularly, receive assistance from their children with household chores, allowing them to rest after work and improving their overall well-being. Despite this support system, a significant number still face challenges, indicating the critical role family support plays in empowering women in the informal sector. Findings from Mizoram show that while nearly half of female vegetable vendors receive occasional help, many manage their responsibilities alone, reflecting gender imbalances in household roles and the need for shared family responsibilities to ensure women's sustainability and health. Additionally, a lack of accessible and affordable childcare services, like anganwadis and preschools, exacerbates the difficulties faced by working mothers, with most vendors unable to afford childcare, leading them to rely on relatives for help. This reliance often results from economic hardship and limits families' caregiving quality. Notably, 14.5% of vendors lack any support at home while they work, highlighting significant infrastructure gaps affecting their productivity and well-being.

The data highlights the domestic challenges faced by women vegetable vendors in Mizoram, who struggle to balance work and home responsibilities. While some family members assist with household tasks when the vendors are away, about 14.5% lack such support, forcing whoever returns home first to prepare meals. This reliance shows an adaptive but inconsistent approach to household duties, as women are expected to contribute despite often being absent during working hours due to societal norms. Consequently, these expectations create a double burden, compelling them to fulfill

roles as both economic providers and domestic caretakers, leading to physical exhaustion and emotional stress. The majority of women vendors report being unable to organize family gatherings due to economic hardship and overwhelming responsibilities, indicating that their informal work significantly reshapes traditional social roles and affects familial bonds. The work-life balance of these women is influenced by cultural norms and economic necessities, with Sunday designated as a sacred rest day providing time for physical rest and family engagement. Yet, despite this designated day off, 84% of respondents report a lack of family time, exposing emotional and social costs of their employment. These women often endure a dual burden of paid and unpaid labor, which results in exhaustion and social isolation, negatively impacting their mental health, family dynamics, and child development. The data reveals that 77.5% of women in Mizoram do not organize family gatherings, traditionally important for social cohesion, largely due to time poverty, financial constraints, and overwhelming responsibilities. This indicates a shift in gender roles and a loss of essential social support networks, highlighting a significant work-life imbalance faced by women vegetable vendors. These women, acting as income earners and caretakers, often lack support systems that could help ease their burdens. The need for family-friendly policies, equitable sharing of domestic duties, and childcare access is urgent to improve their quality of life and achieve genuine work-life balance. Moreover, the work-family conflict is characterized by emotional strain, as many mothers reported complaints from their children due to unmet emotional needs stemming from the demands of their work. Despite these challenges, the occupation of vegetable vending is socially accepted in Mizo culture, with most women reporting no conflict with their husbands or extended families, suggesting a cultural adaptation to women's economic contributions. However, 16.5% of respondents experienced tension with their families, likely due to resistance to women's independence and shifting gender roles. This underscores the nuances of acceptance and conflict within the familial context regarding women's work in this community. The study examines work-family conflict among women vegetable vendors in Mizoram, emphasizing the emotional sacrifices these women make, particularly regarding their children. Although their work is respected within families, it creates significant emotional

strains. To mitigate this, community support systems and public acknowledgment of women's dual roles are essential to balance economic survival and emotional well-being.

In Mizo society, where Christianity plays a vital role, participation in church life is a critical aspect of social capital. However, the demanding work schedules of women vendors often impede their involvement in religious activities, illustrating a gap between spiritual aspirations and economic realities. Many women struggle to fulfill church obligations, indicating a form of social exclusion that limits their social capital and community engagement. Moreover, the children of these vendors face educational vulnerabilities, with dropouts often caused by financial instability and a lack of support. Although most children attend school, issues such as drug abuse—reported by 9% of respondents—highlight serious underlying social challenges. These findings point to the dual pressures on women vendors to provide economically while protecting their children's future. Addressing educational dropouts and drug abuse calls for targeted interventions, including financial aid and after-school programs. There is a pressing need for holistic family-focused policies that alleviate burdens on working mothers and ensure a safer environment for their children, ultimately breaking the cycle of poverty and social vulnerability.

Self-employment, particularly in vegetable vending, plays a crucial role in the economic and social empowerment of women, with a notable percentage achieving financial independence and purchasing with their own funds. In Aizawl, 84% of women vegetable vendors demonstrate this self-sufficiency. While many have complete autonomy, a considerable portion still relies on family influences, indicating that societal norms impact empowerment levels. Empowerment is bolstered through financial decision-making, as 76% of these women handle family finances, elevating their status within households. This economic engagement extends to educational decisions for their children, with 59% involved in schooling choices. Vending fosters both financial and social power, allowing women greater mobility and agency, as evidenced by 96.5% respecting their opinions within family dynamics. To further these advancements, increased support through financial literacy, loan access, and leadership training is necessary to solidify their agency and elevate their societal roles.

Vegetable vending has greatly empowered Mizo women, with 93% reporting improved status through their profession, indicating that it not only provides income but also dignity, voice, and independence. To maximize this empowerment, it is essential to address the concerns of the remaining 7%, ensuring equal access to opportunities and recognition for all women in the industry. Economic engagement is pivotal, as income generation enhances women's survival, decision-making capabilities, and contributions to their families and communities. Policies such as financial literacy, access to credit, community support, and awareness of women's rights are crucial for those who have not felt these benefits. The data shows that 96% of women vendors experienced positive changes, underscoring economic participation as vital for autonomy and social status.

Awareness of rights among vendors suggests that education and awareness campaigns are effective, though one-third of women remain unaware, indicating a need for focused educational efforts. Complete empowerment cannot be achieved without all women, especially those in informal sectors like vegetable vending, understanding their legal rights. While many Mizo women vendors are informed about rights, efforts must continue to close the awareness gap, boosting their confidence and socio-economic position. The lack of understanding of specific vendor rights undermines their vocational empowerment, impacting their ability to negotiate and access resources. Therefore, education and outreach initiatives focused on vendor rights are critical, as empowering these women with knowledge will significantly enhance their economic stability and social standing.

7.4 Sociological Implications of the study

This section of the thesis explores the sociological implications of the study by analysing the experiences of Mizo women vegetable vendors through various theoretical lenses, including empowerment theory, marginalisation theory, resilience theory, labour market segmentation theory, a dualist perspective, spill-over theory, and feminist economics. This approach aims to provide a more profound understanding of the Mizo women vegetable vendor's circumstances in Aizawl. The study reveals a connection between their entry into vegetable vending and their socio-economic status, working conditions and marginalisation, and overall engagement in

economic activities, all of which contribute to their empowerment. Consequently, the sociological implications of Mizo women vegetable vendors extend beyond their economic contributions; they also encompass how their everyday practices reshape social relations, challenge gender norms, and affirm women's rights to work and occupy public spaces. Their lived experiences profoundly illustrate how marginalised groups can resist exclusion and forge alternative paths to empowerment within the constraints of the informal economy.

Keith Hart's (1973) dualist conception of the economy distinguishes between the formal sector, characterised by regulated, wage-based, and bureaucratically managed employment, and the informal sector, composed of small-scale, self-employed, and unregulated activities. In Mizoram, the activities of women vegetable vendors fit squarely within this informal sector. They are self-employed, rely on personal initiative, and function outside formal institutional support systems. Their vending is marked by daily income fluctuations, lack of social protection, and vulnerability to market and municipal pressures. Nevertheless, this informality also enables flexibility, autonomy, and economic participation for women who would otherwise be excluded from wage employment due to limited education, childcare responsibilities, and gender norms.

Hart's dualist framework gains additional sociological depth when combined with feminist economic perspectives. Lourdes Benería (1987, 2003) argued that the informal economy cannot be understood in isolation from the sexual division of labour and the structural inequalities that confine women to precarious forms of employment. She emphasised that women's participation in informal sectors is both a response to economic necessity and a reflection of gendered labour hierarchies in capitalist and patriarchal systems. For Mizo women who sell vegetables, vegetable vending offers an entry point into economic activity, but one shaped by structural constraints. The majority of the respondents are facing a lack of access to credit, formal education, and skill training, which pushed them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. Their workday extends beyond the market, encompassing unpaid domestic labour, illustrating what Benería (1992) describes as the "blurring of boundaries between productive and reproductive labour." This dual burden exposes

how gender roles and social expectations shape women's position in both the economy and the household.

The characteristics of the Mizo women vegetable vendors are in align with the Labour Market Segmentation Theory, advanced by scholars such as Michael J. Piore (1979) and Doeringer and Piore (1971) and later expanded by Reich, Gordon, and Edwards (1973). The theory argues that labour markets are divided into distinct segments, primarily the primary (formal), which offers stable employment, high wages, benefits, and prospects for advancement, and the secondary (informal), characterised by low wages, instability, lack of benefits, and minimal chances for upward mobility, each governed by different employment conditions, rewards, and mobility opportunities. Within this framework, Mizo women vegetable vendors occupy the secondary or informal segment of the labour market; likewise, in the dualist view. Their work is marked by self-employment, lack of formal contracts, absence of social protection, and daily income fluctuations. Labour Market Segmentation Theory elucidates how gender influences economic structures, leading to occupational segregation and restricted mobility. Mizo women vegetable vendors exemplify this, experiencing limited access to formal jobs due to inadequate education and skills, alongside barriers like lack of credit and training. Consequently, vending becomes a necessity for self-employment, reinforcing their position in the informal sector, where their work is undervalued. Despite these disadvantages, they display agency and resilience, managing work schedules and significantly contributing to household income. While they remain in the secondary labour segment, their efforts highlight a negotiated empowerment within structural constraints.

The economic participation of Mizo women vegetable vendors can be meaningfully analysed through the Misfit Theory of Entrepreneurship, which suggests that individuals often turn to entrepreneurial or self-employed activities when they are unable to "fit" into the formal or conventional labour market (Campbell, 1992; Shapero, 1982). This perspective highlights entrepreneurship not merely as a product of innovation or risk-taking, but as a response to structural exclusion, social marginalisation, and limited formal employment opportunities.

From a sociological standpoint, this theory helps to explain the vegetable vending activities of Mizo women vegetable vendors as an adaptive strategy to navigate the intersection of gender, class, and cultural constraints in Mizoram's urban economy. In the context of Mizoram, Mizo women vegetable vendors epitomise this condition of "economic misfit". The majority of the respondents come from lower or middle socio-economic backgrounds with limited formal education, which restricts access to salaried employment. The informal vending sector thus becomes a refuge for economic survival and social participation, allowing them to carve out livelihood spaces in an economy where formal inclusion is limited.

With the help of spill-over theory, a work-life balance can be explained and analysed. The theory posits that the experiences, attitudes, and emotions an individual encounters in one sphere of life "spill over" into another, producing either positive or negative effects (Staines, 1980; Crouter, 1984). In sociological terms, this theory reveals how work and family are not separate but mutually influential systems shaped by larger social and economic structures (Voydanoff, 2002). For Mizo women who sell vegetables, the spill-over between their economic and domestic lives is a central aspect of their lived experience. Their work is not only an income-generating activity but also a social and emotional space deeply connected to family sustenance, gender roles, and community relations.

From an economic standpoint, Mizo women's vending activities create positive spill-over as they earn income which directly contributes to daily household expenses, children's education, and health care. The sociological implication is that women's participation in vending is not merely economic but also empowering, as financial independence enhances self-esteem and recognition in both the family and society. From the findings, the majority of the respondents have taken an active part in decision-making in the family, as they have earned an income for the family's survival. The vending space, though informal, becomes a platform for social interaction, solidarity, and collective identity among women vendors, fostering what Bourdieu (1986) would term social capital. However, the dual role of being both a worker and a homemaker often leads to negative spill-over. The majority of the Mizo women vendors work long hours, sometimes 10 to 12 hours a day, leaving limited time for

rest or family interaction. This imbalance can result in physical exhaustion, emotional strain, and tension within family relationships.

The theory of marginalisation provides a clear framework for understanding why Mizo women with low socio-economic status and limited support systems often turn to vegetable vending as a means of survival. According to this theory, marginalisation occurs when certain groups because of factors like poverty, gender, lack of education, and limited access to resources, are pushed to the edges of society and excluded from participation in the mainstream economic and social systems. The finding suggests that many women vendors belong to economically weaker sections with multiple layers of marginalisation. They have little formal education, no steady source of income, and no social or familial support to depend on. In such circumstances, vegetable vending becomes a survival strategy. It is one of the few livelihood options accessible to women who lack capital, property, or formal skills. The informal vending sector does not demand high qualifications or investment, and it allows these women to earn a daily income to meet basic needs such as food, rent, and children's education. Among the respondents there are widowed, divorced, or single women who may have no one to rely on; vending represents not only an economic necessity but also a way to maintain self-reliance and dignity.

Thus, the theory of marginalisation explains that Mizo women's engagement in vegetable vending is not merely a personal choice but a structural outcome of socio-economic exclusion. Their low socio-economic background, coupled with the absence of institutional and familial support, forces them into vegetable vending as a means of survival within a system that offers few alternatives. Yet, through this marginalised occupation, many women demonstrate resilience and agency, transforming vending into a way to sustain themselves and contribute to their households despite systemic disadvantage.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1990) concepts of habitus, capital, and social space deepen the understanding of these women's marginal positions. Bourdieu defines habitus as the internalised dispositions and practices shaped by one's social background, while capital – economic, social, cultural, and symbolic – determines one's position within the social hierarchy. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, the habitus of self-reliance

and resilience is rooted in Mizo cultural and economic traditions, where women have historically engaged in small-scale trade and market activity. However, their limited economic capital (low income and lack of savings), cultural capital (limited formal education or training), and symbolic capital (social recognition) confine them to the lower strata of the urban economic field. Their exclusion from formal business spaces reinforces what Bourdieu (1984) calls social reproduction: the continuation of inequality through structural barriers.

In terms of empowerment, Naila Kabeer (1999, 2005) defines empowerment as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women's decision-making power and autonomy. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, vending represents not just an income source but also an assertion of agency and independence within the limits of structural marginalisation. Through their earnings, they contribute to household sustenance, education of children, and community welfare. This economic participation often translates into enhanced decision-making power within families and increased social visibility in public spaces. The findings also suggest that the majority of the respondents actively participated in decision-making and managing finances. However, empowerment remains partial and conditional, as their informal status leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, eviction, and lack of social recognition. Kabeer's (1994) notion of resources, agency, and achievements provides a useful framework here. Mizo women vendors have limited resources (education, capital, and institutional support), yet they demonstrate strong agency (entrepreneurial skills, resilience, and cooperation) and achievements (income generation, self-reliance, and family welfare). Thus, their lived experiences illustrate empowerment as a process within constraints not full liberation but gradual negotiation within the structure of informality.

Resilience theory, in sociology and psychology, emphasizes individuals' or groups' ability to adapt, recover, and thrive despite facing adversity, stress, or socio-economic challenges (Masten, 2001). It does not simply refer to endurance, but also to the capacity for positive adaptation within contexts of significant hardship. In the case of

Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl, this theory helps explain how women in the informal economy sustain their livelihoods and maintain a strong competitive spirit despite unstable market conditions, economic insecurity, and limited institutional support.

Operating in Aizawl’s informal markets, these women encounter numerous obstacles fluctuating prices, lack of formal credit, limited infrastructure and gendered social expectations. Yet, instead of succumbing to these pressures, they develop coping mechanisms such as forming vendor networks, diversifying products and adjusting selling strategies to daily consumer demands. This adaptability reflects “everyday resilience”, a key concept within resilience theory (Ungar, 2008). Their competitive attitude seen in their willingness to work long hours, secure loyal customers, and innovate within limited means illustrates what resilience theorists call “adaptive capacity.” Through collective learning, informal cooperation, and individual determination, they convert vulnerability into agency. Even in the absence of formal empowerment structures, these women display psychological resilience that enables them to persist and compete effectively in a demanding urban economy.

From a sociological perspective, resilience among Mizo women vendors is not merely personal strength but a socially embedded process. Their resilience emerges through interactions with peers, family, and community networks that provide emotional and practical support. It also reflects the cultural ethos of Mizo society, where hard work, self-reliance, and community solidarity (*tlawmngaihna*) are deeply valued. These social values reinforce their competitive spirit and strengthen their ability to withstand market pressures. Thus, through the lens of resilience theory, the competitive attitude of Mizo women vegetable vendors represents both an individual adaptive strategy and a collective survival mechanism within structural limitations. Their success in navigating informal market dynamics demonstrates resilience not as a passive endurance of hardship but as an active, transformative process leading toward empowerment and economic agency.

Table 7.1. Theoretical Framework Model

Theory	Theorist	Postulates	Study Context
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The Dualist Framework	Keith Hart (1973)	1). Distinguished the economy into formal sector and informal sector. 2). the formal sector, characterized by regulated, wage-based, and bureaucratically managed employment 3). the informal sector, composed of small-scale, self-employed, and unregulated activities	Mizo women vegetable vendors are also coming under informal sector as they are self-employed, rely on personal initiative, and function outside formal institutional support systems. Their vending is marked by daily income fluctuations, lack of social protection, and vulnerability to market and municipal pressures.
The Labour Market Segmentation Theory	Michael J. Piore (1979), Doeringer and Piore (1971), Reich, Gordon, & Edwards (1973), Rubery (1978)	1). Labour markets are divided into distinct segments, primary (formal) and secondary (informal) sectors, each governed by different employment conditions, rewards, and mobility opportunities. 2). It also helps explain how gender intersects with economic structures to produce and maintain occupational segregation 3). Segmentation is not only economic but also social and gendered, women are systematically concentrated in low-paying, flexible, and insecure occupations.	Mizo women vegetable vendors operate in the informal labour market (secondary), Women significantly contribute to urban food systems and household economies but face marginalization due to a lack of labour protections, credit, and policy recognition. Limited education and skills further hinder their competitiveness in a job market dominated by men or educated individuals, resulting in their placement in lower labour market segments. Vending serves as a crucial yet insecure employment option, with barriers to education, credit, training, and social capital obstructing their mobility to more stable jobs.

Feminist Economic Perspectives	Lourdes Beneria (1987,2003)	1). The informal economy cannot be understood in isolation from the sexual division of labour. 2). women's participation in informal sectors is both a response to economic necessity and a reflection of gendered labour hierarchies in capitalist and patriarchal systems. 3) "blurring of boundaries between productive and reproductive labour."	For Mizo women vendors, vegetable vending offers an entry point into economic activity, but one shaped by structural constraints. Most of these women vendor's lack access to financial, higher education, and skill training, pushing them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. Yet, their working hours is long enough, it extends beyond the market, encompassing unpaid domestic labour. This dual burden exposes how gender roles and social expectations shape women's position in both the economy and the household.
Misfit theory of Entrepreneurship	Campbell, (1992), Shapero, (1982)	1). It suggests that individuals often turn to entrepreneurial or self-employed activities when they are unable to "fit" into the formal or conventional labor market. 2) This perspective highlights entrepreneurship as a response to structural exclusion social marginalization, and limited formal employment opportunities.	Mizo women vegetable vendors epitomize this condition of "economic misfit." Most come from lower or middle-income backgrounds with limited formal education, which restricts access to salaried employment. The informal vending sector thus becomes a refuge for economic survival and social participation, allowing them to carve out livelihood spaces in an economy where formal inclusion is limited. The vending economy

			fills this gap by absorbing those unable to access the formal labor market due to gender norms, educational limitations, or family obligations.
Spill-over theory	Staines (1980) Crouter (1984) Voydanoff, (2002)	1). The experiences, attitudes, and emotions an individual encounters in one sphere of life “spill over” into another, producing either positive or negative effects 2) In sociological terms, this theory reveals how work and family are not separate but mutually influential systems shaped by larger social and economic structures.	For Mizo women vegetable vendors, the intertwining of economic and domestic lives is key to their experience. Their work serves not only as a source of income but also as a social and emotional space that supports family, gender roles, and community relationships. Economically, their vending contributes positively to household expenses, children's education, and healthcare, enhancing their bargaining power and decision-making within families. Conversely, the demands of long working hours (10 to 12 daily) often lead to exhaustion and emotional strain, negatively affecting family interactions and relationships.
Theory of marginalisation	Marion Young (1990) Silver (1994) Sen (1999)	1)It explores how certain groups are systematically excluded from full participation in society’s economic, social, and political structures. 2) It represents one of the	Mizo women vegetable vendors play a crucial role in the informal economy and urban food distribution but face exclusion from institutional recognition and protection. Their

		“five faces of oppression,” encompassing exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. 3)gendered subordination.	situation highlights how gender, class, and informality intersect to create structural marginality. Vulnerable to evictions and lacking social security, these vendors exemplify how structural inequalities perpetuate economic marginality. The marginalization is particularly gendered, as although they serve as primary breadwinners, their work is often viewed as supplementary within the patriarchal Mizo society. Additionally, limited access to education, entrepreneurship training, and capital further enforces gendered exclusion.
Empowerment theory	Naila Kabeer (1999, 2005)	1). Empowerment as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. 2). Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women’s decision-making power and autonomy. 3) resources, agency, and achievements	Mizo women vegetable vendors view vending as a source of income and independence, despite facing structural marginalization. Their earnings contribute to household needs and community welfare, enhancing their decision-making power and visibility. However, their informal status subjects them to exploitation and limits social recognition. Despite resource constraints, they display agency and entrepreneurial

		provide a useful framework.	abilities, achieving self-reliance. Their experiences illustrate empowerment as a gradual negotiation process rather than complete liberation.
Resilience theory	(Masten, 2001). (Ungar, 2008).	It emphasizes individual's or group's ability to adapt, recover, and thrive despite facing adversity, stress, or socio-economic challenges (Masten, 2001). It does not simply refer to endurance, but also to the capacity for positive adaptation within contexts of significant hardship.	Women operating in Aizawl's informal markets face challenges such as fluctuating prices, lack of formal credit, and gendered social expectations. Rather than yielding to these pressures, they create coping strategies like forming networks, diversifying products, and adapting their sales techniques. This adaptability exemplifies "everyday resilience," a central concept in resilience theory. Their competitive nature, shown through long working hours, customer loyalty, and innovation, signifies "adaptive capacity." Sociologically, resilience in Mizo women vendors is a socially embedded process arising from their interactions with peers, family, and community networks that provide essential support.

The sociological analysis of Mizo women's vegetable vendors reveals that their engagement in informal vending is deeply rooted in structural inequalities, gendered

labour divisions, and economic marginalisation. Drawing from the theoretical perspectives of empowerment theory, marginalisation theory, labour market segmentation theory, the dualist view, spill-over theory, feminist economics, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus and capital, it becomes clear that women's participation in the informal economy is both a necessity and a form of agency. Their entry into vegetable vending is not a mere economic choice but a response to exclusion, poverty, and lack of institutional support.

Despite their low socio-economic background, limited education, and the absence of formal employment opportunities, Mizo women vendors demonstrate remarkable resilience, adaptability, and social agency. The vending occupation allows them to transform structural constraints into spaces of survival, solidarity, and empowerment. They navigate between domestic responsibilities and public economic activities, thereby challenging traditional gender roles and redefining the boundary between productive and reproductive labour.

However, their empowerment remains situated within structural limits; their informal status exposes them to economic vulnerability, social insecurity, and policy neglect. Nevertheless, through everyday acts of endurance and enterprise, these women assert their right to work, to occupy public spaces, and to participate meaningfully in Mizoram's urban economy.

In conclusion, the sociological implications of Mizo women vegetable vendors extend beyond livelihood and income generation. Their lived experiences illuminate broader processes of gendered marginalisation, class inequality, and negotiated empowerment in the informal economy. They exemplify how women at the margins create alternative pathways of survival, self-reliance, and social participation, reshaping both the economic and social fabric of their communities in the process.

To show this, the study has critically tried to analyse the Mizo women vegetable vendors' working conditions, work-life balance, and empowerment status using various criteria and indicators based on the study objectives. Under the working conditions criteria, financial accessibility, income, workplace security, health issues, and vendor associations were analysed. Under work-life balance indicators like gender-specific challenges, working time, daybreak, double burden and family care

and support were analysed. While under empowerment status, indicators like decision-making, resources, land ownership, legal challenges and regulation issues were examined. To evaluate these indicators and criteria, a sample size of 200 Mizo women vegetable vendors were interviewed and analysed.

The finding is that the objectives, working conditions and work-life balance were identified as the indicators in Sustainable Development Goal 8, ‘Decent work and economic growth’. While the empowerment status objective is under the Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Gender equality and empower all women and girls”. So, all these criteria for analysing the Mizo women vegetable vendors are integrated and form an integrated model of decent work and empowerment, as shown in fig. 7.1.



Fig 7.1 Integrated Model of Decent work, Women Vegetable Vendor Work-life balance and Empowerment.

Figure 7.1 shows that the centre of the model is occupied by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: "Decent Work," under which two indicators—working conditions and work-life balance—are highlighted in the first ring of the circle. At the top of the ring, working conditions are accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, financial accessibility, income, workplace security, health issues and vendor’s association. At the bottom of the ring, work-life balance is accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, gender-specific

challenges, working time, day break, double burden and family care and support. On the last ring of the circle, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 5, “Empowerment”, is accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, resources, legal challenges, agency and regulation issues. All these indicators are integrated, as they are under the single goal, i.e., Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

After analysing the data on each criterion and its indicators related to working conditions, it was determined that the working conditions for Mizo women vegetable vendors are poor due to issues such as financial inaccessibility stemming from a lack of awareness and lengthy banking procedures. The lack of a proper vending place with adequate structure compromises workplace security, leading to theft, robbery, and exposure to harsh sunlight and rain. Most Mizo women vegetable vendors suffer from chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, nerve issues, and ulcers, which are caused by long working hours, inadequate vending locations, and irregular meal times. They do have vendor’s associations; however, they are not strong enough to fight against the eviction and confiscation, as they are considered illegal and temporary occupations without proper licensing. The theory of marginalisation posits that certain groups are systematically excluded from full participation in society’s economic, social, and political structures (Young, 1990). It represents one of the “five faces of oppression”, encompassing exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence, including gendered subordination (Young, 1990; hooks, 2000). For instance, Mizo women vegetable vendors, who are both women and belong to a lower socio-economic class, encounter significant discrimination and oppression. The state and society often overlook them, leading to poor working conditions. This neglect exacerbates their economic hardships and limits their access to essential resources and opportunities for empowerment. Yet, Mizo women vendors demonstrate remarkable resilience, adaptability, and social agency (Lalfam Kima, 2024). Most of these women vendors lack access to financial resources, higher education, and skill training, pushing them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. As a result, addressing these intersecting challenges is critical to promoting social equity and improving the lives of those affected.

Regarding work-life balance, the long working hours prevent Mizo women vegetable vendors from having time for themselves and their families; however, because they are the primary earners, they possess some authority within the family, which leads to reduced conflict related to their occupations. However, the children felt less love and care from their mother, as she spent most of her time at the vending location. In terms of gender-specific challenges, as a mother, sometimes they need to bring their kids to the vending site, as there are no proper childcare provisions for them; Anganwadi hours are too few for them. In terms of working time and daybreak, Mizo women vegetable vendors have long hours of working with only one weekday off; this leads to work-life imbalance. As a woman in the family, though she was helped and supported by her family, she needed to do the household work after she worked at the vending place all day, which resulted in a double burden for her. In terms of family care and support, the majority of the Mizo women vegetable vendors were supported by the family; however, physical help was less, as the members of the vendor's family were engaged in other works like studying and other economic activities or were too young to help her. Thus, despite receiving support from her family, she carried out all the tasks independently. Spill-over theory states that a person's work impacts the family, either negatively or positively (Staines, 1980; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). This influence can manifest in various ways, such as changes in mood, stress levels, or even financial stability (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). Consequently, the dynamics within the family unit may evolve, reflecting the broader effects of an individual's professional life. Mizo women vegetable vendors felt they had less time for their family due to long working hours and fewer days off, which resulted in feeling less loved by their children. We can view this situation as negatively impacting their well-being and causing a lack of work-life balance. This imbalance affects their emotional health and hinders their ability to nurture relationships within the family. However, economically, their vending contributes positively to household expenses, children's education, and healthcare, enhancing their bargaining power and decision-making within families. Addressing these challenges is key to creating a supportive environment that allows both personal and professional growth. Therefore,

based on the findings regarding working conditions and work-life balance, it can be concluded that there is a lack of decent work' for Mizo women vegetable vendors. In terms of empowerment, it was analysed under four criteria: resources, legal challenges, agency, and regulation issues. The analysis of resources revealed that most Mizo women vegetable vendors do not own any possessions or land in their names, including property. However, they do buy properties, like appliances and household furniture, in installments with interest and pay tuition fees for their kids. Regarding legal challenges, most vendors were unaware of their rights under the Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017 and women's rights. This shows the lack of organising awareness drives among the vendors by the govt organisation and non-govt organisations. Under agency criteria, decision-making is an important factor. Most vegetable vendors in Aizawl lack suitable vending locations, highlighting the urgent need for regulations and effective implementation of the Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017, along with the proper establishment and active functioning of the town vending committee. Empowerment theory is the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women's decision-making power and autonomy. In the context of the study, the majority of the Mizo women vegetable vendors were empowered to make family decisions, as they were the sole earners. The majority of them manage the finances of the family, and they have power in the decisions about getting household products, health care, and children's schools. For Mizo women's vegetable vendors, vending represents not just an income source but also an assertion of agency and independence within the limits of structural marginalisation. Kabeer's (1994) notion of resources, agency, and achievements provides a useful framework here. Mizo women vendors have limited resources (education, capital, and institutional support), yet they demonstrate strong agency (entrepreneurial skills, resilience, and cooperation) and achievements (income generation, self-reliance, and family welfare). Thus, their lived experiences illustrate empowerment as a process within constraints – not full liberation but gradual negotiation within the structure of informality.

The findings from the integrated model of decent work, work-life balance, and empowerment indicate that resilience among workers under conditions characterised by long hours, low income, adverse weather, inadequate facilities, and poor work-life balance is primarily driven by a survival mechanism. Due to their low socio-economic status, they have no alternatives aside from participating in vegetable vending. Their entry into this occupation was motivated not by a desire for empowerment or status enhancement as women, but solely for survival purposes. However, their engagement in the vegetable vending economy resulted in empowering women as they earned income and contributed to the family livelihood. This led to the inclusion of the Mizo women vendors in the decision-making of the family. Yet full empowerment is needed to achieve this through inclusive policy and schemes for the Mizo women vegetable vendors.

7.5 Problem dimensions and suggestion/recommendations

In the light of the above conclusion of the study, problem dimensions and suggestions/recommendations are sorted which could be of some help for the policy planners, Government and Municipal Authorities of the Aizawl city. These recommendations are:

Indicator	Problem dimension	Suggestions
1. Productive Resources	a) Shortage of funds b) Inadequate infrastructure (peripatetic vendors)	a) Banks to provide concessional finance and procedures for availing finance must be easy b) Institutional finance to be supported by the consumption loans, working capital loans be provided.
2. Income and socio-economic status	a) No savings b) Degradation of standard of living and deterioration of socio-economic status c) Poverty	a) Flexible, small-amount savings options b) Giving due official recognition, detailed census and genealogical study by independent research team c) Productive activity and appropriate utilisation of time
3. Marketing	a) Middlemen's exploitation b) Competition	a) Governmental intervention b) Regulated but inclusive market space and strengthening vendor associations
4. Credit	a) Lack of access to or non-availability of credit facility b) Informal borrowing and high interest rates c) Indebtedness	a) Identification of 'need' through base line research b) Credit facilities through banks and co-operative societies. c) Financial literacy focused on debt management and access to affordable institutional credit.
5. Organisation	a) Poor organisation b) Town Vending committee	a) Encourage vendor collectives and associations b) Forming more than one Town Vending Committee
6. Education and skill	a) Low education and lack of development of proper skill b) Low awareness	a) Functional literacy and numeracy programs b) Doorstep and market based awareness and use of local language and simple communication.
7. Facilities	a) Longer hours of work b) Absence of social security benefits c) Child-care provision d) Storage facilities	a) Gender sensitive interventions and income stabilisation and fair earnings b) Universal registration and inclusion in existing social security schemes. c) Market-based childcare centres d) Common storage units near market and collective ownership and management
8. Health and hygiene	a) Health problems b) Insanitation and unhygienic conditions c) Lack of proper toilet facilities	a) Free health care and awareness on health. b) Basic market infrastructure and waste management system c) Gender-segregated and safe facilities

1. Productive Resources

Mizo women vegetable vendors largely operate with very limited financial and physical resources. Most face an acute shortage of funds, making it difficult to purchase vegetables in bulk or invest in better vending arrangements. Since many are peripatetic vendors (moving from place to place), they also lack proper infrastructure such as permanent stalls, storage, or shelter.

Suggested measures emphasize the need for concessional bank finance, simplified loan procedures, and a mix of consumption and working capital loans so that vendors can sustain both their livelihoods and household needs.

2. Income and Socio-Economic Status

Irregular earnings mean that most women vendors have no savings, which pushes them into vulnerability during emergencies. This leads to a decline in their standard of living and perpetuates poverty.

The table suggests flexible micro-savings schemes, official recognition through census and genealogical studies, and encouraging productive use of time so their economic activities translate into sustainable income and improved socio-economic status.

3. Marketing

Women vendors are often exposed to exploitation by middlemen, who control prices and reduce profit margins. At the same time, intense competition among vendors further weakens their bargaining power.

To address this, the table recommends government intervention, creation of regulated yet inclusive market spaces, and strengthening vendor associations so women can negotiate collectively and protect their interests.

4. Credit

A major constraint is the lack of access to formal credit, forcing many women to depend on informal moneylenders who charge high interest rates, leading to chronic indebtedness.

The suggested solutions focus on baseline research to assess real credit needs, expanding access to loans through banks and cooperative societies, and providing financial literacy so women can manage debt and use institutional credit effectively.

5. Organisation

Poor organisation among vendors limits their ability to demand rights and access welfare schemes. Although Town Vending Committees exist, they are often inadequate or ineffective.

The table highlights the importance of encouraging vendor collectives, strengthening associations, and forming multiple Town Vending Committees to ensure better representation and governance.

6. Education and Skill

Low levels of education and lack of skill development restrict women vendors' capacity to manage finances, understand regulations, or diversify livelihoods. Awareness about rights and schemes is also low.

Proposed interventions include functional literacy and numeracy programmes, along with doorstep and market-based awareness campaigns using simple language and local dialects to ensure better understanding and participation.

7. Facilities

Women vendors work long hours under difficult conditions and lack social security benefits, child-care facilities, and proper storage for vegetables. These issues disproportionately affect women due to their dual work burden.

The table suggests gender-sensitive interventions, universal registration for social security schemes, market-based childcare centres, and common storage facilities managed collectively to ease daily hardships.

8. Health and Hygiene

Continuous exposure to harsh working conditions leads to health problems among women vendors. Poor sanitation, unhygienic market conditions, and lack of safe toilet facilities further aggravate their vulnerability.

Recommended measures include free healthcare and health awareness programmes, improved market infrastructure and waste management, and provision of gender-segregated, safe sanitation facilities.

The table shows that the problems faced by Mizo women vegetable vendors are interlinked—economic, social, institutional, and gender-specific. The suggested solutions stress the need for a holistic policy approach, combining financial inclusion, institutional support, infrastructure development, education, health, and gender-sensitive welfare measures to improve their livelihoods and dignity.

7.6 Future areas for research

These are the areas of research which should be taken up by future researcher in studying the Mizo women vegetable vendors:

1. A comparative analysis between stationary and peripatetic vendors should be taken up in order to know their working conditions.
2. To widened the research universe by including all districts in Mizoram where vegetable vendors are available.
3. A comparative study of vegetable vendors in Mizoram and other states in India should be studied to see and compare their differences.
4. An in-depth analysis on the implementation of Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017 should be taken up in order to know the functions and ground reality.

APPENDIX-1

Research Diary

25.8.2021

Ph.D admission was done.

The topic of Women in Urban Informal Sector: A study on Women vegetable vendors in Aizawl was selected.

3.9.2021

ICT Ph.D. orientation was held through online.

Information on the usage of portal was instructed and password were given.

1-7.10.2021

Workshop on Research Ethics was conducted by the HRDC and I attended the workshop as this is one of the papers in the Ph.D. coursework.

Confidentiality should be maintained

Research ethics be properly followed

Publication be made only in UGC care list and Scopus

Quality of publication be maintained instead of quantity

At least 2 publications are required

Methodology be given high importance

Qualitative and quantitative can be used separately while mix methodology is also in vogue, in modern times

Literatures be clubbed and contextualize in relation to the findings of the study

Certificate was given to us after completing the course.

1.11.2021

Ph.D Course work has started, first class was taken by the HOD on Research methodology.

He gave lectures on Research philosophies which he named as Research Onion.

In this he talked about Epistemology, ontology and axiology were discussed.

Research experiences be written

Research diary be summarized

Quotable statements be noted down during fieldwork

Coursework continued till 4th December 2021.

6.11.2021

Literature review was commenced in which topics related to the study area was browsed.

Relevant articles were downloaded and choose according to the theme of the review.

Also, Jstor is really helpful in getting articles.

11.11.2021

Today, the themes for review were divided into 6

Socio-economic status

Urban Informal Sector

Migration

Street Vending

Self Employed Women and the Family relationship

Women in informal sector

15.11.2021

Articles and other materials were collected and downloaded based on the different themes.

Proper keyword is highly necessary for browsing the related articles.

30.11.2021

A good number of related articles and data was collected.

Separate folders were maintained for each theme.

Reviewed folder and unreviewed folder were also allocated which makes it easy for identifying the material which are reviewed and unreviewed.

4.12.2021

Last class for Coursework.

Class on thesis writing was taken by Prof RK Mohanty, my supervisor.

Writing gives more pain than pleasure

2 principles he mentioned were:

SPES (Situation, Problem study, Evaluation and Solution).

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound)

Informative and practical.

7.12.2021

I met the Vendor's Association President, New Market Chawhmeh Zuar Pawl Association.

It was informative and enlightening for my study.

10.12.2021

SPSS class was taken by Prof. Zokaitluangi

How to download and install the free version.

Coding and data entry was also taught.

For the study, frequency and percentage was needed.

12.12.2021

Went to the UD&PA for obtaining the lists of Hawkers

I was asked to write a letter to the co-Ordinator DAY-NULM.

13.12.2021

I went to the office again however, Pi Seni the concerned person was absent and I took her mobile no.

It was hard to get information on Hawkers as they were taken care by the AMC and UD&PA.

15.12.2021

Assignment on the topic of Covid 19 from the Ulrich Beck 'Risk Society' perspective was submitted.

14.12.2021

From the materials collected, the relevant materials were selected for reviewed. Also, the related literature which was already reviewed in the materials collected was also included and rephrased.

9.2.2022

Themes were started identifying in relation to my study objectives.

4 themes were selected for the first go.

Work situation and Working condition

Income

Women Self-Employment and Empowerment

Vulnerability

17.2.2022

Another 3 themes were added.

Regional variations of women work in India

Women entrepreneurship

Policy

So, a total of 13 themes were identified and confirmed in relation to my study.

Collecting and downloading of data was still continued. Around 2/3 articles were downloaded every day.

1.3.2022

Met my supervisor, I was asked to squeeze down my introduction part and to delete the sub topic.

We were preparing for the upcoming synopsis presentation for our PhD topic approval.

9.3.2022

14 materials were collected for Self Employed Women and the Family relationship

17 materials were collected for Socio-economic status

12 materials were collected for Street Vending

11 materials were collected for Urban Informal Sector

9 materials were collected for Women entrepreneurship

16 materials were collected for Regional variations of women work in India

4 materials were collected for Policy

9 materials were collected for Migration

10 materials were collected for Work situation and Working condition

17 materials were collected for abuse

9 materials were collected for vulnerabilities

12 materials were collected for women in Informal sector

10 materials were collected for employment and training

Till now a total of 150 materials were collected

14.3.2022

I was asked to start the Research gap and rationale of the study

I have reviewed most of the articles now but reviewing articles will continue till my Phd done. It is an ongoing process.

17.3.2022

Date of DRC was announced and we were asked to meet our supervisor before DRC

It will be held on 25 march 2022.

21.3.2022

I was asked to slim down my synopsis as it was too bulky.

Also, to give definition of each heading before coming to the main points.

23.3.2022

PPT was prepared for the DRC presentation.

A total of 11 slides were made.

25.3.2022

Today we had our DRC. Some of the comments are:

To make changes in the research gap as there was no connections with the objectives.

To add photographs so as to give impact on the study.

To add social mapping for the methodology.

30.3.2022

Nghahloh dawr was added in the introduction part as this is the unique feature of the Mizo society.

Social mapping is very new to me, so I am going to meet Prof. Devendiran.

1.4.2022

Migrants were added in the 2nd objectives, as many vendors are migrants from nearby villages and nearby states.

So, the 2nd objective will be like this: to analyse the causes of taking up the vegetable vending by natives and migrants.

4.4.2022

Synopsis was ready and printed for BOS.

Social mapping was asked to employ in the study.

8.4.2022

Social mapping as a sub head is added in the research methodology part below universe and sample. However, I put it under data analysis.

21.4.2022

The result of the Coursework was out and I secured 7 CGPA.

22.4.2022

The sample size was revised and confirm to have 200 samples collected from 19 AMC wards 5 vendors each from each ward and to collect data through case study and KII.

27.4.2022

Review on Research methodology was added
To finish before the school board.

4.5.2022

Under theoretical framework: 4 theories were added:
Work-life balance theory
Misfit theory of entrepreneurship
Labour theory
Empowerment theory

7.5.2022

Plagiarism was checked and it was 11% similarity.
The normal accepted range is till 20%.

25.5.2022

School Board accepted the synopsis
It will be again put up in the Academic Council for final approval

26.6.2022

Materials for review of literature was consolidated based on used and unused literature for easy identification.
Separate folders were allocated for each articles according to their themes.

8.6.2022

Started working on the 2nd chapter which is the review of literature.

Under this, 3 heads namely: theoretical framework, review of methodology and thematic review.

4.7.2022

Listing out the parameters based on the research objectives for framing the questionnaire/interview schedule.

Informal sector, age, marital status, work-life balance, job entry, income, previous occupation, religion, health issue, financial accessibility, resources, decision making, job satisfaction.

6.7.2022

Rearranging the themes accordingly and make a separate file for each theme.

Consolidate it accordingly

Review of literature is still continued and added accordingly.

11.7.2022

My supervisor asked me to write my experience, problem faced and my struggle on achieving PhD admission and my synopsis for progress report.

18.7.2022

Today we had our first progress report, I was anxious and it gives me anxiety.

However, by the grace of God I can give good presentation.

4.8.2022

Determinant of street vending (neoliberal perspective, post structuralist perspective and structuralist perspective), women and development, women and informal sector and how women contributed for the development through their participation in informal activity were reviewed

27.8.2022

Rest for a week as I had typhoid

Started working again, almost done the review of literature.

Socio-economic status= 9 literatures were reviewed

Urban Informal Sector= 8 literatures were reviewed

Migration=5 literatures were reviewed

Street Vending=6 literatures were reviewed

Self Employed Women and the Family relationship=7 literatures were reviewed

Women in informal sector=8 literatures were reviewed

30.8.2022

Paraphrasing is a bit hard for me

However, I found out an app called Grammarly and quillbot which really helps.

13.9.2022

Google meet was held. These are the discussions:

To write overview of each theme

To highlight all the keywords/parameters from the review

To give definition of all the parameters identified

To form interview schedule questions

To go for pilot study and make changes accordingly.

Next progress to be held on 6th December 2022.

23.9.2022

Instruction on making pre-submission PPT was conducted by our HoD.

Informative and important.

24.9.2022

I accompany my family in my mother's check-up to Kolkata.

Planning to finish the review of literature by then.

I was granted leave for 1 week for my mother's health check-up

1.10.2022

I gave my 4th time NET/JRF test in Kolkata.

I did bad, what I need to learn: reasoning, thinkers and their works, research methods, calculations and maths.

10.10.2022

Done with the 1st draft of review of literature:

Work-life balance theory: 2 literatures were reviewed

Misfit theory of entrepreneurship: 2 literatures were reviewed

Labour theory: 2 literatures were reviewed

Empowerment theory: 3 literatures were reviewed

11.10.2022

Started the overview of the Review of literature.

I was asked to write the references of the chapter 2 review of literature.

14.10.2022

Started working on the Methodological overview.

Browsing new theory for the study.

Voluntray perspectives on informal activity and three dimensions of women empowerment was found.

19.10.2022

Supervisor asked me to finished my overview and to clubbed some themes together if they can be connected and related. Rather than having many themes.

25.10.2022

Overview was completed with the help from Takolong and Diki. Grateful to them.

27.10.2022

I was asked to start working on the key concepts.

Give definitions and used as a guide for framing the questions.

28.10.2022

I had discussion with LSPA and Tako on how to connect the overview with one another and used the study objectives as a base or foundation for the study.

1.11.2022

Started my work on the key concepts:

Read all the review

Highlight the concept which I think is important

Based on different objectives; different highlighter colours were used.

Socio-economic-yellow

Causes of entry-green

Management-magenta

Empowerment-blue

Problem-grey.

12.11.2022

I roughly finished identifying key concepts.

A total of 20 key concepts were identified from the literature for the 1st objective.

21 key concepts for the 2nd objective

19 key concepts for the 3rd objective

4 key concepts for the 4th objective

18 key concepts for 5th objectives were identified.

26.11.2022

Started working on defining the key concepts which was identified before.

Around 11 pm I finished defining all the key concepts. What a relief!

Questions will frame from those key concepts.

29.11.2022

How I frame my questions

First, I wrote down all the questions that comes to my mind.

After that I used the key concept as a guide for framing the questions

After draining all the ideas, I look up to the questions which was already used by the previous researchers

Identify the questions which was not included but seem important were added again.

Done with the first draft of the questionnaire.

125 questions were framed.

1.12.2022

Comments from my supervisor:

To give serial number only to closed ended questions

To give alphabetical serial to open ended questions

I was asked to send the question to Grace as she is good with SPSS.

5.12.2022

I was asked to pretest the questions by pilot study.

10.12.2022

Pretesting the questions:

Respondent was Pi Remmawii from Chhangurkawm

Some changes were made. The first draft was used as a master copy in which changes were made on it.

20.2.2023

Today, I started my first fieldwork.

I interviewed one vendor from Ropaiabawk.

Some changes were made in the question again.

1.3.2023

Diki helped me in my fieldwork today.

We interviewed 5 vendors from Bazarpui.

It took me 45 mins to finish one vendor.

Also, I met the president of I Block 3rd Floor Chawhmehzuar Association. It was helpful for my study.

7.3.2023

I interviewed two vendors from Zonuam and Vaivakawn.

From interviewing these two vendors, I added another question on loan/moneylender. As I heard from them that they borrowed money from these private moneylenders at an exorbitant interest.

Every time, I had interviewed with these vendors, I had some questions to add and some to delete.

8.3.2023

Today I went to Chaltlang Dawrkawn and interviewed 5 vendors.

One of the respondents told me that her husband ran away with all her hard earn money and she was left to paid all the loan that she took for their pick-up motor, which was also sold by her husband.

13.3.2023

Every day I have interviewed 2-3 vendors a day from different localities.

Entering the quotations/statements of the vendors is quite hectic.

However, it helps me in recalling and enriching the research study with these quotations.

17.3.2023

Till now I have interviewed 30 vendors

Today after interviewing 5 vendors from MZU gate.

More options were added under type of vending as unregistered peripatetic and registered peripatetic.

28.3.2023

Today 2 vendors from Kulikawn were interviewed.

From what I have observed so far, it was seen that among the vendors there are plenty of divorcee and widow.

3.4.2023

After interviewing 2 vendors from Ramhlun.

I added one question: do you have any day where you do not have any profit?

6.4.2023

Today I collected 50 respondents.

One of the respondents refused to have interview as she mentioned that, this kind of interview was done nothing for her.

After interviewing the vendors, I usually bought some vegetables from them.

20.4.2023

Today the result of UGC-NET/JRF was out and I got my JRF after 7 attempts. I was grateful and thank to Almighty God.

27.4.2023

Mapli helped me in preparing excel sheet for data entry.

Coding is necessary for SPSS data analysis.

11.5.2023

I had interviewed 7 vendors from different locations.

Due to my grandmother hospitalized, I am not able to make good progress.

15.5.2023

Today on my way to the MZU I interviewed 2 vendors.

What I had observed till now is that these women do not know about their rights as a woman and as a vendor. Everything that happened to them were taken as normal.

Something which is there and not giving any question about it.

21.6.2023

The interview continues every day, at least 2-3 vendors were interviewed.

Today I met an old lady who is 75 years old, I was amazed that she still earned at that age.

She told me that if I was not selling vegetables, I might already be dead. This activity gives me health and something to live for.

24.6.2023

Today I interviewed 5 vendors from Khatla Bazar.

One of the vendors had heart problem, she could not carry heavy loads, where she was helped by her grand-daughter. She was asked to stay at home but she refused it and sell vegetables. I admire her hard-working nature and determination at the age of 67.

11.7.2023

I took interview with the Burma Mizo immigrant from Myanmar. She sold her vegetables at the Armed veng bazar. She was selling her veggies at the outside of the bazar. She seems left out, but she was not open enough but I had good conversation with her. I filled up some questions of interview schedule based on my observations as well.

15.8.2023

These days due to heavy rainfall/monsoon, many vendors faced problem with the weather, they could not be able to sell their veggies regularly. This is one of the problems faced by these vendors.

26.8.2023

Today, I met 16 years old vendors from Sawleng village, she is the youngest vendors I interviewed, she helped her mother as her mother was having health problem. She was still in school; she only sells vegetables on Saturday bazar.

11.9.2023

Today is my last day for collecting the data from the field.

Till now I collected 200 respondents.

I was grateful for finishing the collection.

15.9.2023

I was asked by my supervisor to give a detail information on how I collected 200 vendors.

I send him my write up at midnight.

19.9.2023

I was asked to rewrite again and divide the area into 4 zones. East, west, north and south Aizawl.

8.10.2023

Today I started uploading the data in excel sheet for SPSS.

For entering one respondent data, it took me 10 mins.

So, every time I had free time, I uploaded the data one at a time.

The first row was filled up with the questions which was converted into statement format.

From the next row the respondents' answers were given in yes or no and the option given to those questions.

22.10.2023

While uploading the respondent's data, I identify some interesting information which will be used as a case study.

KII interview was also still there to cover.

8.11.2023

Today, I started writing for paper presentation which will be held on 8-9 January 2024 by TISS.

13.11.2023

The preparation for paper presentation continues, I wrote the abstract for the paper. The title will be on the 'Livelihood and working condition of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Bazarpui, Mizoram'.

14.11.2023

Another notification for paper presentation was out which will be held on February in Nagaland. This time I am planning to present on the title of 'Income, Empowerment, Vulnerability of the Mizo women vegetable vendors in Bazarpui, Mizoram'.

19.11.2023

Tonight around 9 PM, I send the abstract to TISS Mumbai. Hope that they will accept my paper. This is my first time; it gives me some anxiety...

21.11.2023

Tonight, I send the abstract to St. Joseph University, Nagaland. I hope they will accept my paper.

25.11.2023

I got email from St Joseph University that my paper was accepted for presentation.

27.11.2023

I got another good news from TISS that my paper was accepted for presentation. However, they want full paper before 31st December.

30.11.2023

Today I wrote down interview guide for the case study

6 vendors were identified for case study

Parents name

Family occupation

Early life

Education

Relationship with the family

Working environment

Daily routine

Discrimination faced

Future plan.

Societal perspectives on vendors.

7.12.2023

Progress report was given. It went well, Sir Sam asked me to go deep into their daily life of the vendors in case study

8.1.2024

I gave presentation in “National Conference on Social Work Research: Methodologies of the Peripheralised” organized by TISS, Mumbai. The paper title ‘‘Livelihood and working condition of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Bazarpui, Mizoram’ was presented.

It was great experience. I had lot to learn. Some questions were hard to clarify. It gives me idea on what too add more on the study like the history of vending among Mizo.

22.2.2024

Today, I presented a paper at the ‘National Seminar on Tribal Politics in NE India: Navigating Identity, Autonomy and Development’ organised by St Joseph University, Nagaland. The paper titled, ‘Income, Empowerment, Vulnerability of the Mizo women vegetable vendors in Bazarpui, Mizoram’ was presented. The comments and discussions were fruitful.

12.3.2024

Today I found out how to crack the SPSS software on Macbook.

I downloaded and installed it.

25.3.2024

Mapli taught me how to use SPSS. She taught me how to give coding, entering and analysing the data.

8.4.2024

I started entering the data.

First the answer like yes and no were given code as 1 for yes 2 for no for each response.

So, I change all the answers in number or code.

All the 200 respondent's response were converted into code and after that the code were feed into the SPSS software.

29.4.2024

From my experience and observation, it is felt that Mizo women gives more priority to their family rather than their husbands. This can be seen from the study that majority of the respondents were breadwinner while their husbands were alcoholic or expired. Majority of the vendors were satisfied with their work as they have low capital and low qualifications.

21.5.2024

I had ear problem which caused extreme vertigo, which did not allow me to continue my work for a very long time. I had medical checkup and it was found out that I had menières. I took treatment in Delhi. But continue my research on SPSS and coding in Delhi.

17.6.2024

I have finished entering and giving code to the response.
The next step is to enter all the code to the SPSS software.

19.6.2024

Today, I entered all the code to the software, but I shows 122 missing system.
It gives me anxiety that I made huge mistakes.
But it was found out that I make some mistakes while pasting the code to the software.
I left the first 122 rows blank which resulted in missing system.
After identifying the problem, it was a relief for me.

12.7.2024

I started writing on chapter 3 that is methodology chapter.
So, the data was entered and the table with frequency and percentage was ready for analysis.
While I was in Delhi I continue writing on chapter 3.

29.7.2024

I send my chapter 3 to my supervisor.
He asked me to continue writing on my 4th chapter i.e., the socio-economic profile of the vendors.

31.8,2024

The content under socio-economic include:

Personal characteristics: age

Marital status

Type of Family

Types of Ration card

Number of adult male member

Dependent family members

Alcoholic husband

Housing

Types of houses

Household assets

Places of residence

Religious and tribal background

Religious Denomination

Educational Qualification

Occupation of the family

Experience

Income

Financial

Land possession

Types of vendors

Seat rent

Migration

Health

All these aspects were analysed and examined in the chapter along with the frequency table and statement from the respondents.

13.9.2024

Till now I have finished 5 heads.

Found 3 good research thesis from shodganga:

Socio-economic analysis of street vending in Urban Punjab

Workplace challenges of women street vendors in Puducherry

Women street vendors: a sociological study of Varanasi.

18.12.2024

I have finished the chapter 4 after a long struggle, as it was my first chapter from the objective it was quite challenging.

My supervisor asked me to continue with my chapter 5.

26.2.2025

Today, I continue writing the 5th chapter the working condition of the vendors. I asked my supervisor to include the problem faced in this chapter so that the tentative chapter will become less. He accepted and I combine 2 objectives job entry, working conditions and problem faced in this chapter.

19.3.2025

I have finished my 5th chapter.

Supervisor asked me to work on my publications.

It was mandatory to have at least 2 publications

I was also asked to continued chapter 6th. This will be my last chapter which will followed by chapter 7 as a concluding chapter.

1.5.2025

Today I showed my first draft of chapter 6th to my supervisor,

He asked me to combine the work-life balance and the empowerment together as the data on empowerment is too less to make a separate chapter.

So, he asked me to add overview in all the chapters and to contextualized with the work which was already pursue by the previous researcher on same findings.

3.5.2025

My chapterisation after changes will be like this:

Introduction

Review of literature

Methodology

Socio-economic profile

Job entry, work culture and problem faced

Work-life balance and empowerment.

Conclusion

22.6.2025

The article on the 'Women in urban informal sector: A study of women vegetable vendors in Aizawl: A synopsis' was send for publications in ATSK, with the help from my supervisor.

24.8.2025

Today I have finished my 6th chapter, some changes were made after showing to my supervisor.

He asked me to start working on the conclusion chapter.

15.9.2025

I was asked to work on the sociological implications.

It was identitfy that the paramenter used for working conditions, work-life balance and empowerment is match with the SDG goal. So, a model was formed with diagram, the integrated model of decent work, vegetable vendor work-life balance and empowerment. These were under SDG goal 5 and 8

For sociological implications all the theory in chapter 2 theoretical framework was employees as it can match all the theories. It was shown in table form for easy explanation.

20.9.2025

Editing and corrections were made. Supervisor asked me to ready my pre-submission PPT, so that the date of the pre-submission can be fixed.

29.9.2025

Today, the article on the 'Socio-economic status of Mizo women vegetable vendors' was sent for publications in ATSK, with the help from my supervisor. I feel relax now after completing the 2 publications.

3.10.2025

I was asked to redo the sociological implications as it was not good enough how I relate the theory. I was asked to used theory of marginalization as a main theory.

However, the spill over theory has a potential as it was overarching theory for the study.

APPENDIX-II

**WOMEN IN URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A STUDY OF WOMEN
VEGETABLE VENDORS IN AIZAWL
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE
(Purely for Academic Purpose)**

Schedule No. _____

Date: _____

Time taken for Interview: _____

Interviewer: _____

AMC ward No: _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WOMEN VEGETABLE VENDORS:

A. Name: _____

B. Age: _____

C. Permanent place of residence/Locality: _____

D. Temporary place of residence/locality: _____

1. Type of ration card

a) APL (white) c) AAY (pink) e) PHH (green)

b) BPL (yellow) d) Not applicable

Specify: _____

2. Category:

a) Gen c) ST

b) SC d) d) OBC

3. Type of vendor:

a) unregistered Stationary vendor c) unregistered Peripatetic vendor

b) registered Stationary vendor d) registered Peripatetic vendor

4. Marital Status

a) Married c) Widow

b) Unmarried d) Divorced

5. Religion

a) Christianity d) Muslim

b) Hinduism e) Buddhism

c) Others (specify)

6. If Christian, which denomination do you belong to?

a) Roman Catholic e) Salvation Army

b) Presbyterian f) United Penticostal Church

c) Baptist g) Seventh Day Adventist

d) Others (specify)

7. Place of residence
 a) daily comes from the village
 b) resides within the city
 c) Semi-urban
8. Educational Qualification:
 a) Primary e) Pre-University/10+2
 b) Upper primary/Middle school f) Graduate and above
 c) High School g) Illiterate
 d) Can sign only
9. Are there any siblings who has attended higher education?
 a) Yes
 b) No
- 9A. If 'yes' which member and qualification? _____

E. Family table

Sl. No	Name	Relationship	Qualification	occupation	income	age

Objective No: 1

To study the socio-economic conditions of women vegetable vendors

10. Is this occupation your family main source of income?
 a) Yes
 b) No
 If no, please specify _____
11. Who is the main breadwinner of the family?
 a) Self c) both
 b) Husband d) others specify _____
12. Types of customers
 a) Children c) mostly Men
 b) Mostly Women d) mixed
13. Is your husband alcoholic?
 a) Yes c) Occasionally
 b) No d) not applicable
14. No. of Adult Male member
 a) 1. c) 3
 b) 2 d) 4 and above

15. Type of family:

- a) Nuclear Family
- b) Joint Family

16. No. of dependent(s) in business activities?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) 4 and above

17. Do you possess a land?

- a) Yes
- b) No

14. A. If yes, what is the area? _____

18. Type of house:

- a) Kutchha
- b) Semi Pucca
- c) pucca
- d) homeless

19. Years of business as vegetable vendor (in years)

- a) Less than 1 year
- b) 1-5 years
- c) 5-10 years
- d) 10 years and above

20. Status of vending place:

- a) Free access
- b) Access by paying fees
- c) Area prohibited for vending

21. How much do you pay for your seat per month?

- a) 0-500
- b) 500-1000
- c) Not Applicable
- d) 1000-1500
- e) 1500-2000

22. How old were you when you first worked as a vegetable vendor?

- a) 35-45
- b) 25-35
- c) 15-25
- d) Younger than 15 years

23. How much do you invest for starting vegetable vending?

- a) less than 1000
- b) 1000-5000
- c) 5000-10000
- d) 10000-15000
- e) 15000 above

24. Are you staying in a rented house?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

22A. If yes, how much do you pay? _____

25. Do you own a mobile handset?

- a) Yes
- b) No

26. Household Assets owned

assets	Yes	No
Television		
Refrigerator		
Washing Machine		
LPG Connection		
Computer		
Black LPG Connection		
Microwave oven		

27. Do you own any vehicle?

- a) Yes
- b) No

25.A. If yes, specify _____

28. Is there any day you did not earn any profit?

- a) yes
- b) no

26A. if yes, specify

29. How much is your earning per month in rupees?

- a) Below Rs. 10000
- b) Rs. 10000- Below 20000
- c) 20000- Below 30000
- d) above 30000

30. Do you have any saving account in the bank?

- a) Yes
- b) No

28A. If yes, Specify _____

31. Are you able to have a monthly savings on your earnings?

- a) Yes
- b) No

32. Do you have daily savings on your earnings?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, specify _____

33. How much can you save monthly?

- a) Below Rs. 5000
- b) Above Rs. 5000 – Below Rs. 10000
- c) Above Rs. 10000 – Below Rs. 15000
- c) Above Rs. 15000 – Below Rs. 20000
- d) above 20000
- e) Not savings

34. Monthly total household expenditure: _____

35. Do you borrow money?

- a) Yes
- b) No

32A if yes, from whom _____

36. Have you ever faced any difficulty in terms of borrowing money?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

34.A. If yes, can you tell me the problems faced? _____

37. Do you avail any Loan?

- a) Yes
- b) No

35.A. If yes, from where and what type: _____

38. Migration status:

- a) migrated
- b) Not migrated

36.A. If migrated, from where? _____

36.B. When did you first come to Aizawl? _____

39. Is there any other family member who is in the same type of work?

- a) Yes
- b) No

40.A. If yes, please specify the relative doing the same type of work?

40. If migrated the reasons for migration

- a) Lack of job opportunity
- b) Natural calamities
- c) In search of better job
- d) Military junta
- e) Education
- f) others specify _____

41. Migrated with whom?

- a) Family members
- b) Relatives
- c) Friends
- d) Migrated alone
- e) Not applicable

42. Did you migrate to work only as a vegetable vendor?

- a) Yes
- b) No

- c) Can't say
- d) Not applicable

39.A. If yes, please elaborate

39.B. If no, please elaborate

Objective No: 2

To analyse the causes of taking up the vegetable vending by natives and migrants

43. Did you engage in any other jobs before vegetable vending?

- a) Yes
- b) No

44. Respondent previous occupation

- a) Unemployed
- b) Agricultural labour
- c) Non-agricultural labour
- d) Student
- e) Others
- f) not applicable

specify _____

45. Do you have any work experience in any other occupations other than vending?

- a) Yes
- b) No

43.A. If yes, please specify _____

46. Why do you choose vegetable vending as your job?

- a) Due to poverty
- b) Unavailability of job
- c) Flexibility in working
- d) High demand of vegetables
- e) Insufficient of the spouse earning
- f) Easy accessibility
- g) suitable for me
- h) Others Specify _____

47. Have you ever thought of indulging in easy money (smuggling) activity due to poverty?

- a) Yes
- b) No

48. Benefits of being a Vegetable vendor

- a) Occurrence of daily profitmaking
- c) Improved the family livelihood

- b) It creates employment opportunity d) Has improved the status as a woman
- e) Others Specify

46.A. What is your opinion on majority of vegetable vendors being women?

Objective :3

To study the management and balance of their work and their family life.

49. Do you sell vegetable at night?

- a) Yes
- b) No

46A. If yes, specify _____

50. At what time do you start working?

- a) 4:00-5:00 AM
- b) 6:00 AM – 7:00 AM
- c) 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM
- d) 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
- e) Others specify

51. Are you afraid if you start working early in the morning?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Please specify _____

52. What time do you usually close your vendor?

- a) 5:00 PM
- b) 6:00 PM
- c) 7:00 PM
- d) Others. Specify _____

53. Does your children and your family support you?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) they did not care about my job

54. Does your family help you in their free time or holiday?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

55. Who looks after your home when you work?

- a) My husband
- b) My children
- d) My in-law
- e) No one

- c) My maternal mother f) my mother-in-law
56. Who looks after your children when you work?
- a) My husband e) my mother-in-law
b) Siblings f) Not applicable
c) No one g) others (specify)
d) My maternal mother h) in-law
57. Are you provided with any child-care provisions while you work?
- a) Yes
b) No
c) Not applicable
- 54.A If yes, can you specify? _____
58. Who does the household chores when you get back home from work?
- a) Self d) Children
b) Husband e) maternal mother
c) Mother-in-law f) Not applicable
59. Do you have any day-off?
- a) Yes c) Can't say
b) No d) Not applicable
- 56.A. If yes, what day is your day-off? _____
60. Does your occupation as a vegetable vendor gives you autonomy?
- a) Yes
b) No
- 57.A. If yes, please specify _____
61. Does engaging in vegetable vending gives you time for you and your family?
- a) Yes
b) No
62. Does your family organized any type of family gathering?
- a) Yes
b) No
- 61A if yes, please specify _____
63. Do your children have any complain about your occupation?
- a) Yes c) Sometimes
b) No d) Not applicable
64. Do you have conflict with your family/husband because of your occupation?
- a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes
- 58A specify your answer: _____

65. Do you have time to go to church service?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Sometimes
d) Only on Sunday
e) Not applicable

66. Do you have any church obligation?

- a) Yes
b) No

60.A. If yes, please specify _____

67. Are you an active member of MHIP?

- a) Yes
b) No
c) Not applicable

68. Do you have any children who drop out from school?

- a) Yes
b) No

61A. If yes, specify? _____

69. Do you have any children who indulge in any kind of addiction?

- a) Yes
b) No

62.A. If yes, how many and what kind of addiction? _____

Objective: 4

To understand the social empowerment of women vegetable vendors by assessing various indicators of empowerment.

70. Are you registered with any Vegetable Vendor's Association / Agency?

- a) Yes
b) No

64.A. If yes, please specify? _____

71. Has Vegetable Vendor's Association been of any help anytime?

- a) Yes
b) No
c) Not applicable

65.A. If yes, please narrate the instance _____

72. Are you satisfied with your job?

- a) Yes
b) No
c) Can't say

66.A. If yes, please elaborate why?

66.B. If no, please elaborate why?

73. Do you inherit any property from your parents?

- a) Yes
- b) No

67.A. If yes, please specify _____

74. Do you have any property in your name?

- a) Yes
- b) No

68.A. If yes, specify _____

75. Have you bought any property from your vegetable vending earning?

- a) Yes
- b) No

69.A. If yes, specify _____

76. Who made the most decision in your family?

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| a) Self | d) Relative |
| b) Husband | e) Both self and husband |
| c) Children | f) Others. (Specify) |

77. Who manage finances in your family?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| a) Self | d) Relative |
| b) Husband | e) Others specify _____ |
| c) Both self and husband | |

78. Does your opinion matter in your family?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Sometimes

71.A. If no, please elaborate _____

79. Does your engagement in the vegetable vending gives you status or empower you?

- a) Yes
- b) No

72.A. If yes, narrate your instance _____

80. Is there any change before and after having a job/ or earn an income?

- a) Yes

b) No

73.A. If yes, narrate your experience _____

81. Are you aware of your right as a woman?

a) Yes

b) No

74.A. If no, what will be the reason _____

82. Are you aware of your right as a vendor?

a) Yes

b) No

75.A. If no, what will be the reason _____

83. Who decides the school for the kids?

a) Self

d) Children

b) Husband

e) Others. (specify)

c) Relative

f) Not applicable

84. Do you have decision making power on your health care?

a) Yes

b) No

77.A. If no, who has it? _____

85. Do you have decision making power on purchasing major household products?

a) Yes

b) No

78.A. If no, who has it? _____

86. Do you have decision making power on purchasing of daily needs?

a) Yes

b) No

79.A. If no, who has it? _____

87. Do you have decision making power to visit your family and relatives?

a) Yes

b) No

80.A. If no, what is the reason _____

Objective: 5

To find out the problems faced by women vegetable vendors and to make recommendations as necessary

88. Vending context

a) Monday to Saturday

c) seasonally

b) Saturday only

d) Others (specify)

- 90.

91. Main sources of good are acquired from

a) Make or grow by themselves	d) Buys from co-street vendors
b) Acquire free of cost	e) Others (specify)
c) Acquire from supplier to sell on commission	

93. What means do you employ to collect your vegetables?
- a) Two-wheeler taxi d) By Foot
- b) Four-wheeler taxi e) Contribute taxi with co-vendors
- c) Own vehicle f) delivered at the vending place

- 378

b) No

103. Do you face any of the following Physical risks

Sl. No.	Physical Risks	Y (1)	N (2)
1.	Worked in clean environment		
2.	Operates near open drainage		
3.	Worked in noise polluted area		
4.	Exposed to sunlight		
5.	Goes for defecation in the open space during vending time		
6.	Operates near construction site		

104. Is your vending place safe.

a) Yes

b) No

97A if no, specify_____

105. Do you have to change your vending place frequently due to group of competitive street vendors?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not applicable

106. Is there a chance of losing the business if sick for more than one week?

a) Yes

b) No

107. Is there a chance of losing the customer, if not maintained cleanliness in the vending area?

a) Yes

b) No

108. Is there a competition from other vendors?

a) Yes

b) No

109. Do you have a good toilet facility in the vending area?

a) Yes

b) No

98.A. If no, how do you cope with it _____

110. Do you have any disputes with your fellow vendors?

a) Yes

b) No

99.A. If yes, on what ground _____

111. Do you at any instance use vulgar words against fellow vendors?

a) yes

b) no

103 A If yes, on what ground _____

112. Do you have proper storage facilities for your vegetables?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Specify your answer _____

113. Storage of products

a) Takes back to home

b) Vending place

c) With rent

d) Others (specify)

114. Do you ever get confiscated by the authority?

a) Yes

b) No

103.A. If yes, on what ground _____

115. Do you ever get any problem from the local community where you are sitting?

a) Yes

b) No

106 A if yes, on what ground _____

116. Have you attended any entrepreneurship training?

a) Yes

b) No

117. Have you ever been treated badly or abused because of your work?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Not applicable

118. What type of abuse did you face?

a) Verbal abuse

b) Physical abuse

c) Sexual abuse

d) Mental torture

- e) Others (specify)
- f) Not applicable

119. Who is the abuser?

- a) Customer
- b) Market checker
- c) Passer-by
- d) Local council
- e) Others (specify)
- f) Not applicable
- g) co-vendor
- h) AMC

120. How do you react to the abuse?

- a) Ashamed
- b) Angry
- c) Hurt
- d) Can't say
- d) Lost confidence
- e) accept it
- f) Revengeful
- g) Not applicable

121. Do you have any health problems?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Can't say

110.A. If yes, what are your health problems? Please mention. _____

122. Have you consulted a doctor for your illness?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

123. Are you taking any medications for your illness?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Not applicable

112.A. If yes, please specify the medications and for what illness medications are taken _____

124. Do you get any support from the government and non-government organisation?

- a) Yes
- b) No

113.A. If yes, please specify _____

125. Type of support that you need from government and non-government organisation.

- a) Do not need support
- b) Training on entrepreneurship
- c) Support of knowledge on how to improve their business
- d) Credit facility
- e)

Formulating

favorable rules and regulations and giving training on legislation

118A What is the main problem you faced as a women vegetable vendor?

119 A. what is your best experience as a vegetable vendor

119.B. what is your worst experience as a vegetable vendor

120 A Do you have any suggestion for the overall improvement of your business?

126. If there is another option for your occupation, are you willing to quit your vending?

a) Yes

b) No

118 A. If yes, why?

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ABSTRACT

WOMEN IN URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A STUDY OF WOMEN VEGETABLE VENDORS IN AIZAWL

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**WOMEN IN URBAN INFORMAL SECTOR: A STUDY OF WOMEN
VEGETABLE VENDORS IN AIZAWL**

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Submitted

**In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Sociology of Mizoram University, Aizawl**

This thesis investigates the working conditions, work-life balance, empowerment, and associated challenges faced by Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl. Despite their significant role in urban life, street vendors are often overlooked and underestimated, leading to their voices being silenced and problems unaddressed. The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014 was established to safeguard the rights of urban street vendors, introducing key provisions such as Town Vending Committees for participatory planning and vending certificates to protect against eviction and harassment. Given that the majority of these vendors are women, a focused study was conducted to explore their status, working conditions, and reasons for their predominance in this profession.

This research aims to enhance the understanding of Mizo vendors from a sociological perspective, addressing a noted gap in literature predominantly informed by geography, economics, and commerce. By analyzing the socio-economic profiles, working conditions, challenges, empowerment experiences, and work-life balance of these women, the study aims to create awareness about their significant contributions to the urban economy while highlighting the necessity for effective regulation in line with the Act. The increased understanding aims to challenge the prevailing misunderstandings and negative perceptions towards these vendors in urban society.

The thesis comprises seven chapters, detailing a review of relevant literature, research methodology, socio-economic profiles, the working conditions and problems encountered, work-life balance, and a concluding summary. Each chapter culminates with a synthesis of findings and recommendations aimed at the development and progress of Mizo women vegetable vendors, thereby fostering a more diverse and inclusive society.

Chapter I included the Introduction, while Chapter II provided an in-depth Review of Literature. Chapter III detailed the research methodology of the study, while Chapter IV provided an in-depth analysis of the socio-economic profile of Mizo women vegetable vendors. Chapter V focused on the job entry, working conditions, and problems encountered by Mizo women vegetable vendors. Chapter VI thoroughly explored the work-life balance and empowerment of Mizo women vegetable vendors,

while Chapter VII provided a comprehensive summary of the findings leading to a conclusion.

A comprehensive outline regarding women in the urban informal sector is presented in Chapter 1. This chapter is divided into eleven sections, commencing with an overview of the informal sector and definitions of key concepts such as ‘informal sector’ and ‘street vending’, including characteristics associated with it. The first three sections delve into the origins of the informal sector concept, its characteristics which include the entry process, resource dependency, ownership, small-scale operations, technology use, required qualifications, stratification, recognition, age and sex composition, job security, finance, and social networks. The fourth section discusses the informal sector's role in urbanization, highlighting the increasing urban population and its correlation with the growth of informal activities. Sections five and six detail the socio-economic significance of the informal sector and the participation of women within it. Section seven speaks to the importance of connections between the formal and informal sectors.

Sections eight to ten focus on the context within the Indian Northeast and Mizoram, finishing with an analysis of the significance of this study. Historical data reveals that Aizawl had a populace of just 4,780 in 1941. Post-India's independence in 1947, significant rural-to-urban migration swelled the city's population. The easing of migration controls after Independence allowed for increased movement to Aizawl, alongside a surge in job opportunities in the government sector following its status as a Union Territory in 1972. However, stagnation in government job growth and limited opportunities in various economic sectors have exacerbated urban poverty—estimating that 6.5% of urban households fall below the poverty line.

Street vending, recognized as a prominent informal sector activity in Aizawl, features vegetable vending as a particularly accessible economic option. The Socio-Economic and Caste Census of 2011 recorded 3,609 street vendors in Aizawl, constituting 1.29% of the city's population, which includes both permanent and non-resident vendors who sell at local markets. The Mizoram state government assigned the implementation of the Street Vendors Rules, 2017, and the establishment of a Town Vending Committee to the Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC). The primary commercial district, Bazarpui, accommodates diverse informal sector businesses such as garments, shoes,

repairs, meat stalls, tea stalls, vegetable vendors, and utensil sellers. This market is traditionally recognized as a trading nucleus, evolving over centuries without a defined founding date, as Aizawl itself was established in 1890. Notably, in Aizawl, the majority of vegetable vendors are women, indicating a necessity to analyze their motivations for entry, working conditions, work-life balance, and empowerment within the sector. An in-depth study of the quality of life for Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl will broaden sociological assessments and enhance understanding of street vending challenges in the Global South.

Chapter II focuses on the extensive review of literature relating to the informal sector and street vending, emphasizing the experiences and challenges of women street vendors. This review is organized into three primary sections: theoretical framework, thematic review, and methodological review.

In the theoretical framework, several perspectives are discussed, including the dualist view which distinguishes between formal and informal sectors, emphasizing disparities in labor demand and urban migration. The structuralist view focuses on the interdependence of formal and informal sectors shaped by capitalist development, while the legalist view attributes informality to bureaucratic barriers. Gender-related theories, such as the gender division of labor and hegemonic masculinity, are also considered, analyzing how societal norms dictate the roles of men and women. Moreover, intersectionality reveals how various forms of discrimination based on race, gender, and other identities overlap, further complicating women's experiences in the informal sector.

The chapter discusses labor market segmentation theory, asserting that economic forces divide the labor market, often leading to women being confined to lower-income segments. Empowerment theory underscores the autonomy of individuals, particularly women, in the informal sector. The misfit theory of entrepreneurship is explored in relation to migrant vendors, suggesting that those feeling alienated from mainstream culture may turn to entrepreneurship. Additionally, work-life balance theories are reviewed, detailing how professional experiences can impact familial responsibilities and vice versa.

The thematic review section is articulated through thirteen subheadings covering key issues such as socio-economic status, migration, street vending conditions, and empowerment. This segment reveals the multi-faceted challenges women street vendors face, including work conditions, income levels, and the intricate balance between family and work responsibilities. It highlights the potential for policy development to improve conditions for women vendors and encourages further exploration into this demographic's socioeconomic dynamics.

The methodological review emphasizes the importance of understanding previous research strategies, including qualitative methodologies like interviews and case studies, which contribute to gathering relevant data on women vendors. It reflects on the current body of literature, pointing out a significant gap in studies specifically focused on women vegetable vendors and a lack of sociological perspectives in the context of Mizoram. The chapter concludes by asserting the necessity for more in-depth research into the lives of Mizo women vegetable vendors, aiming to address their working conditions and related socio-economic issues while advocating for better recognition and support structures for these women within society.

Chapter III outlines the research context, the adopted framework, and the procedures followed during the study. As such, it starts from the conceptualisation of the research problem to the analysis of procedures adopted to arrive at the conclusion and the outcome of the study.

Based on the need for the study, this study started with the following objectives:

To study the socio-economic conditions of women vegetable vendors

To analyse the causes of taking up the vegetable vending by natives and migrants

To study the management and balance of their work and their family life.

To understand the social empowerment of women vegetable vendors by assessing various indicators of empowerment.

To find out the problems faced by women vegetable vendors and to make recommendations as necessary.

The present study follows an exploratory research design, and Aizawl city is the universe for the purpose of this study. The sampling frame used in this study is purposive sampling, in which 200 vendors were selected through this sampling. The

total number of samples collected are located in 18 markets and 19 Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) wards, and the types of vendors collected comprised stationary, peripatetic and Saturday market vendors. Among the 11 KII respondents selected purposively, 6 of them are the presidents of the vendor's associations, 2 respondents are from AMC and Trade and Commerce, 2 of them are members of the local council, and 1 respondent is a shop owner. The sources of data are drawn from secondary sources like journals, censuses and books, while the primary sources are collected through observation, interviews, case studies and KII. Key informant interviews are largely unstructured questions in which the functions of the vendor's associations, the implementation of the Street Vendors Act 2014, the vendor's license and the working conditions were asked of the respondents. Through a pilot study, framing the basic structure of the study was done. Data collection followed and concluded on 24th April 2024. The assembled data include the filled-in interview schedules used by the researcher during the field survey which have been answered and suggestive information provided by the respondents, case notes and inputs from the key informants. Upon the completion of the fieldwork, all the schedules were scrutinised and cross-checked. Coding was done, and the data were disaggregated under 5 major heads, namely socio-economic profile, job entry, work-life balance, empowerment and problems faced. Sub-heads under each major head were also conceptualised. The analytical framework used in this study has been a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The data were coded for the quantitative analysis. A different code was given to each question and answer that was transmitted to the computer. The categorising strategy was used to sort the coded data into groups. SPSS software is utilised for quantitative analysis. For qualitative data analysis, with case studies, observations, and narratives, the 'lived experiences' methodology, grounded in phenomenological and anthropological traditions, has been employed. Interviews with significant informants are likewise presented in the same format. The interviews of the respondents were meticulously attended to, and a summary of each case was compiled. Finally, the chapter concluded with the operationalisation of concepts, the limitation of the study and the research ethics which were followed during the course of the study.

Socio-economic profile

Chapter IV analyzes the socio-economic profile of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl, using factors like age, marital status, education, and income to identify disparities in power, property, and privileges. Most respondents, aged 31-60, engage in vegetable vending largely due to limited access to formal employment and the need for self-sufficiency. While the majority are married, a significant portion are widowed or divorced, influencing their economic choices and responsibilities. Living in nuclear families, many vendors rent homes and possess essential household assets but have minimal savings, with average monthly earnings ranging from Rs 10,000 to 20,000. Despite their long-term engagement in vending, only a small percentage have access to loans or land inheritance, reflecting the challenges faced by women in Mizo society. Many vendors are migrants seeking better opportunities, with health issues prevalent due to the demanding nature of their work, and the majority practice Christianity, regularly attending church services.

Job entry, Work Culture and Problem faced.

The experiences of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl are covered in Chapter V, which also describes their obstacles, working conditions, and motives for entering the market. In spite of vegetable vending's minimal capital requirements, it highlights 14 factors, such as vendor registration, financial strains from renting fees, and the requirement for a sizable investment. In order to improve their livelihoods through safe vending areas and service accessibility, it is necessary to close the gap between the majority of registered vendors and the numerous unsupported informal operators. The chapter discusses the two different ways that vegetables are sourced; some people buy directly from farmers to cut prices, while others rely on wholesalers. Notably, transport becomes a major issue that affects their financial stability and operational effectiveness. Due to a lack of official credit, vendors frequently have health problems, long work hours, and financial troubles, which leads to their reliance on high-interest moneylenders.

The women also point to inexpensive start up costs as a reason for going into vending, although many still face long-term health problems and unwelcoming workplaces. Their vulnerability is further increased by the lack of institutional backing, since unofficial market circumstances result in competitiveness and sporadic harassment from colleagues and consumers.

Many sellers express employment happiness in spite of these difficulties, appreciating the financial autonomy and flexible work schedule that vending offers. To address these women's issues and advance sustainability and dignity in their livelihoods, however, there is an immediate need for better health care, infrastructure, and organisational assistance.

Work-family balance and Empowerment

The document explores the multifaceted challenges and empowerment experienced by women vegetable vendors in Mizoram, focusing on their family support dynamics, work-life balance, and socio-cultural roles. Many vendors rely on family support for domestic responsibilities, easing their burdens and enhancing their well-being; however, significant numbers still face difficulties alone, indicating a still-prevalent gender imbalance in household roles. The lack of accessible childcare services exacerbates the challenges these women encounter, highlighting a pressing need for family-friendly policies and community support to promote shared domestic responsibilities.

While vendors maintain a degree of economic independence, as illustrated by their autonomous financial decisions and contributions to household income, they also experience a work-family conflict that strains emotional connections with their children. Although the majority of women vendors participate in decision-making regarding their children's education and family finances, underlying tensions due to traditional gender expectations persist, with some vendors facing resistance from family members regarding their work.

The document points out the detrimental impact of long working hours on vendors' participation in community life, particularly in religious institutions, which are central to their cultural identity. This disconnect limits their social capital and sense of belonging. Additionally, the educational vulnerabilities faced by their children, compounded by the economic realities of informal work, illustrate the far-reaching implications of the vendors' circumstances on familial and societal cohesion.

Despite these challenges, a substantial percentage of women vendors report an improvement in their status alongside their profession, signifying that vegetable vending serves as a pathway to empowerment, enabling financial independence and agency. However, approximately one-third remain unaware of their specific rights as

vendors, underscoring the necessity for targeted educational interventions to enhance their negotiating power and safeguard their livelihoods. These findings highlight the integral role of policy-driven support in fortifying women's empowerment within the informal sector, advocating for equitable sharing of domestic duties, childcare accessibility, and rights awareness initiatives to facilitate holistic community wellbeing.

Sociological Implications of the study

This section of the thesis explores the sociological implications of the study by analysing the experiences of Mizo women vegetable vendors through various theoretical lenses, including empowerment theory, marginalisation theory, labour market segmentation theory, a dualist perspective, spill-over theory, and feminist economics. This approach aims to provide a more profound understanding of the Mizo women vegetable vendor's circumstances in Aizawl. The study reveals a connection between their entry into vegetable vending and their socio-economic status, working conditions and marginalisation, and overall engagement in economic activities, all of which contribute to their empowerment. Consequently, the sociological implications of Mizo women vegetable vendors extend beyond their economic contributions; they also encompass how their everyday practices reshape social relations, challenge gender norms, and affirm women's rights to work and occupy public spaces. Their lived experiences profoundly illustrate how marginalised groups can resist exclusion and forge alternative paths to empowerment within the constraints of the informal economy.

Keith Hart's (1973) dualist conception of the economy distinguishes between the formal sector, characterised by regulated, wage-based, and bureaucratically managed employment, and the informal sector, composed of small-scale, self-employed, and unregulated activities. In Mizoram, the activities of women vegetable vendors fit squarely within this informal sector. They are self-employed, rely on personal initiative, and function outside formal institutional support systems. Their vending is marked by daily income fluctuations, lack of social protection, and vulnerability to market and municipal pressures. Nevertheless, this informality also enables flexibility, autonomy, and economic participation for women who would otherwise be excluded

from wage employment due to limited education, childcare responsibilities, and gender norms.

Hart's dualist framework gains additional sociological depth when combined with feminist economic perspectives. Lourdes Benería (1987, 2003) argued that the informal economy cannot be understood in isolation from the sexual division of labour and the structural inequalities that confine women to precarious forms of employment. She emphasised that women's participation in informal sectors is both a response to economic necessity and a reflection of gendered labour hierarchies in capitalist and patriarchal systems. For Mizo women who sell vegetables, vegetable vending offers an entry point into economic activity, but one shaped by structural constraints. The majority of the respondents are facing a lack of access to credit, formal education, and skill training, which pushed them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. Their workday extends beyond the market, encompassing unpaid domestic labour, illustrating what Benería (1992) describes as the "blurring of boundaries between productive and reproductive labour." This dual burden exposes how gender roles and social expectations shape women's position in both the economy and the household.

The characteristics of the Mizo women vegetable vendors are in align with the Labour Market Segmentation Theory, advanced by scholars such as Michael J. Piore (1979) and Doeringer and Piore (1971) and later expanded by Reich, Gordon, and Edwards (1973). The theory argues that labour markets are divided into distinct segments, primarily the primary (formal), which offers stable employment, high wages, benefits, and prospects for advancement, and the secondary (informal), characterised by low wages, instability, lack of benefits, and minimal chances for upward mobility, each governed by different employment conditions, rewards, and mobility opportunities. Within this framework, Mizo women vegetable vendors occupy the secondary or informal segment of the labour market; likewise, in the dualist view. Their work is marked by self-employment, lack of formal contracts, absence of social protection, and daily income fluctuations. Labour Market Segmentation Theory elucidates how gender influences economic structures, leading to occupational segregation and restricted mobility. Mizo women vegetable vendors exemplify this, experiencing limited access to formal jobs due to inadequate education and skills, alongside barriers

like lack of credit and training. Consequently, vending becomes a necessity for self-employment, reinforcing their position in the informal sector, where their work is undervalued. Despite these disadvantages, they display agency and resilience, managing work schedules and significantly contributing to household income. While they remain in the secondary labour segment, their efforts highlight a negotiated empowerment within structural constraints.

The economic participation of Mizo women vegetable vendors can be meaningfully analysed through the Misfit Theory of Entrepreneurship, which suggests that individuals often turn to entrepreneurial or self-employed activities when they are unable to “fit” into the formal or conventional labour market (Campbell, 1992; Shapero, 1982). This perspective highlights entrepreneurship not merely as a product of innovation or risk-taking, but as a response to structural exclusion, social marginalisation, and limited formal employment opportunities.

From a sociological standpoint, this theory helps to explain the vegetable vending activities of Mizo women vegetable vendors as an adaptive strategy to navigate the intersection of gender, class, and cultural constraints in Mizoram’s urban economy. In the context of Mizoram, Mizo women vegetable vendors epitomise this condition of “economic misfit”. The majority of the respondents come from lower or middle socio-economic backgrounds with limited formal education, which restricts access to salaried employment. The informal vending sector thus becomes a refuge for economic survival and social participation, allowing them to carve out livelihood spaces in an economy where formal inclusion is limited.

With the help of spill-over theory, a work-life balance can be explained and analysed. The theory posits that the experiences, attitudes, and emotions an individual encounters in one sphere of life “spill over” into another, producing either positive or negative effects (Staines, 1980; Crouter, 1984). In sociological terms, this theory reveals how work and family are not separate but mutually influential systems shaped by larger social and economic structures (Voydanoff, 2002). For Mizo women who sell vegetables, the spill-over between their economic and domestic lives is a central aspect of their lived experience. Their work is not only an income-generating activity

but also a social and emotional space deeply connected to family sustenance, gender roles, and community relations.

From an economic standpoint, Mizo women's vending activities create positive spill-over as they earn income which directly contributes to daily household expenses, children's education, and health care. The sociological implication is that women's participation in vending is not merely economic but also empowering, as financial independence enhances self-esteem and recognition in both the family and society. From the findings, the majority of the respondents have taken an active part in decision-making in the family, as they have earned an income for the family's survival. The vending space, though informal, becomes a platform for social interaction, solidarity, and collective identity among women vendors, fostering what Bourdieu (1986) would term social capital. However, the dual role of being both a worker and a homemaker often leads to negative spill-over. The majority of the Mizo women vendors work long hours, sometimes 10 to 12 hours a day, leaving limited time for rest or family interaction. This imbalance can result in physical exhaustion, emotional strain, and tension within family relationships.

The theory of marginalisation provides a clear framework for understanding why Mizo women with low socio-economic status and limited support systems often turn to vegetable vending as a means of survival. According to this theory, marginalisation occurs when certain groups because of factors like poverty, gender, lack of education, and limited access to resources, are pushed to the edges of society and excluded from participation in the mainstream economic and social systems. The finding suggests that many women vendors belong to economically weaker sections with multiple layers of marginalisation. They have little formal education, no steady source of income, and no social or familial support to depend on. In such circumstances, vegetable vending becomes a survival strategy. It is one of the few livelihood options accessible to women who lack capital, property, or formal skills. The informal vending sector does not demand high qualifications or investment, and it allows these women to earn a daily income to meet basic needs such as food, rent, and children's education. Among the respondents there are widowed, divorced, or single women who may have

no one to rely on; vending represents not only an economic necessity but also a way to maintain self-reliance and dignity.

Thus, the theory of marginalisation explains that Mizo women's engagement in vegetable vending is not merely a personal choice but a structural outcome of socio-economic exclusion. Their low socio-economic background, coupled with the absence of institutional and familial support, forces them into vegetable vending as a means of survival within a system that offers few alternatives. Yet, through this marginalised occupation, many women demonstrate resilience and agency, transforming vending into a way to sustain themselves and contribute to their households despite systemic disadvantage.

Pierre Bourdieu's (1984, 1990) concepts of habitus, capital, and social space deepen the understanding of these women's marginal positions. Bourdieu defines habitus as the internalised dispositions and practices shaped by one's social background, while capital – economic, social, cultural, and symbolic – determines one's position within the social hierarchy. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, the habitus of self-reliance and resilience is rooted in Mizo cultural and economic traditions, where women have historically engaged in small-scale trade and market activity. However, their limited economic capital (low income and lack of savings), cultural capital (limited formal education or training), and symbolic capital (social recognition) confine them to the lower strata of the urban economic field. Their exclusion from formal business spaces reinforces what Bourdieu (1984) calls social reproduction: the continuation of inequality through structural barriers.

In terms of empowerment, Naila Kabeer (1999, 2005) defines empowerment as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women's decision-making power and autonomy. For Mizo women vegetable vendors, vending represents not just an income source but also an assertion of agency and independence within the limits of structural marginalisation. Through their earnings, they contribute to household sustenance, education of children, and community

welfare. This economic participation often translates into enhanced decision-making power within families and increased social visibility in public spaces. The findings also suggest that the majority of the respondents actively participated in decision-making and managing finances. However, empowerment remains partial and conditional, as their informal status leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, eviction, and lack of social recognition. Kabeer's (1994) notion of resources, agency, and achievements provides a useful framework here. Mizo women vendors have limited resources (education, capital, and institutional support), yet they demonstrate strong agency (entrepreneurial skills, resilience, and cooperation) and achievements (income generation, self-reliance, and family welfare). Thus, their lived experiences illustrate empowerment as a process within constraints not full liberation but gradual negotiation within the structure of informality.

Resilience theory, in sociology and psychology, emphasizes individuals' or groups' ability to adapt, recover, and thrive despite facing adversity, stress, or socio-economic challenges (Masten, 2001). It does not simply refer to endurance, but also to the capacity for positive adaptation within contexts of significant hardship. In the case of Mizo women vegetable vendors in Aizawl, this theory helps explain how women in the informal economy sustain their livelihoods and maintain a strong competitive spirit despite unstable market conditions, economic insecurity, and limited institutional support.

Operating in Aizawl's informal markets, these women encounter numerous obstacles fluctuating prices, lack of formal credit, limited infrastructure and gendered social expectations. Yet, instead of succumbing to these pressures, they develop coping mechanisms such as forming vendor networks, diversifying products and adjusting selling strategies to daily consumer demands. This adaptability reflects "everyday resilience", a key concept within resilience theory (Ungar, 2008). Their competitive attitude seen in their willingness to work long hours, secure loyal customers, and innovate within limited means illustrates what resilience theorists call "adaptive capacity." Through collective learning, informal cooperation, and individual determination, they convert vulnerability into agency. Even in the absence of formal

empowerment structures, these women display psychological resilience that enables them to persist and compete effectively in a demanding urban economy.

From a sociological perspective, resilience among Mizo women vendors is not merely personal strength but a socially embedded process. Their resilience emerges through interactions with peers, family, and community networks that provide emotional and practical support. It also reflects the cultural ethos of Mizo society, where hard work, self-reliance, and community solidarity (*tlawmngaihna*) are deeply valued. These social values reinforce their competitive spirit and strengthen their ability to withstand market pressures. Thus, through the lens of resilience theory, the competitive attitude of Mizo women vegetable vendors represents both an individual adaptive strategy and a collective survival mechanism within structural limitations. Their success in navigating informal market dynamics demonstrates resilience not as a passive endurance of hardship but as an active, transformative process leading toward empowerment and economic agency.

Theory	Theorist	Postulates	Study Context
The Dualist Framework	Keith Hart (1973)	1). Distinguished the economy into formal sector and informal sector. 2). the formal sector, characterized by regulated, wage-based, and bureaucratically managed employment 3). the informal sector, composed of small-scale, self-employed, and unregulated activities	Mizo women vegetable vendors are also coming under informal sector as they are self-employed, rely on personal initiative, and function outside formal institutional support systems. Their vending is marked by daily income fluctuations, lack of social protection, and vulnerability to market and municipal pressures.

The Labour Market Segmentation Theory	Michael J. Piore (1979), Doeringer and Piore (1971), Reich, Gordon, & Edwards (1973), Rubery (1978)	1). Labour markets are divided into distinct segments, primary (formal) and secondary (informal) sectors, each governed by different employment conditions, rewards, and mobility opportunities. 2). It also helps explain how gender intersects with economic structures to produce and maintain occupational segregation 3). Segmentation is not only economic but also social and gendered, women are systematically concentrated in low-paying, flexible, and insecure occupations.	Mizo women vegetable vendors operate in the informal labour market (secondary), Women significantly contribute to urban food systems and household economies but face marginalization due to a lack of labour protections, credit, and policy recognition. Limited education and skills further hinder their competitiveness in a job market dominated by men or educated individuals, resulting in their placement in lower labour market segments. Vending serves as a crucial yet insecure employment option, with barriers to education, credit, training, and social capital obstructing their mobility to more stable jobs.
Feminist Economic Perspectives	Lourdes Beneri (1987,2003)	1). The informal economy cannot be understood in isolation from the sexual division of labour.	For Mizo women vendors, vegetable vending offers an entry point into economic activity, but one shaped by structural

		2). women's participation in informal sectors is both a response to economic necessity and a reflection of gendered labour hierarchies in capitalist and patriarchal systems. 3) "blurring of boundaries between productive and reproductive labour."	constraints. Most of these women vendors lack access to financial, higher education, and skill training, pushing them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. Yet, their working hours is long enough, it extends beyond the market, encompassing unpaid domestic labour. This dual burden exposes how gender roles and social expectations shape women's position in both the economy and the household.
Misfit theory of Entrepreneurship	Campbell, (1992) Shapiro, (1982)	1). It suggests that individuals often turn to entrepreneurial or self-employed activities when they are unable to "fit" into the formal or conventional labor market. 2) This perspective highlights entrepreneurship as a response to structural exclusion social marginalization, and	Mizo women vegetable vendors epitomize this condition of "economic misfit." Most come from lower or middle-income backgrounds with limited formal education, which restricts access to salaried employment. The informal vending sector thus becomes a refuge for economic survival and social participation,

		limited formal employment opportunities.	allowing them to carve out livelihood spaces in an economy where formal inclusion is limited. The vending economy fills this gap by absorbing those unable to access the formal labor market due to gender norms, educational limitations, or family obligations.
Spill-over theory	Staines (1980) Crouter (1984) Voydanoff, (2002)	1). The experiences, attitudes, and emotions an individual encounters in one sphere of life “spill over” into another, producing either positive or negative effects 2) In sociological terms, this theory reveals how work and family are not separate but mutually influential systems shaped by larger social and economic structures.	For Mizo women vegetable vendors, the intertwining of economic and domestic lives is key to their experience. Their work serves not only as a source of income but also as a social and emotional space that supports family, gender roles, and community relationships. Economically, their vending contributes positively to household expenses, children's education, and healthcare, enhancing their bargaining power and decision-making within families. Conversely, the

			demands of long working hours (10 to 12 daily) often lead to exhaustion and emotional strain, negatively affecting family interactions and relationships.
Theory of marginalisation	Marion Young (1990) Silver (1994) Sen (1999)	1)It explores how certain groups are systematically excluded from full participation in society's economic, social, and political structures. 2) It represents one of the "five faces of oppression," encompassing exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. 3)gendered subordination.	Mizo women vegetable vendors occupy a paradoxical position they are vital to the city's informal economy and urban food distribution, yet remain excluded from institutional recognition and protection. Their situation illustrates how gender, class, and informality interact to produce a state of structural marginality. Their vulnerability to municipal evictions and lack of social security demonstrates how structural inequalities reproduce economic marginality. The marginalisation of Mizo women vegetable vendors is deeply gendered.

			Though they are the mainly the breadwinner of the family under study, within the patriarchal context of Mizo society, women's work in the informal economy is often perceived as supplementary rather than central to household survival. Their lack of access to education, entrepreneurship training, and capital reinforces systemic gendered exclusion
Empowerment theory	Naila Kabee (1999, 2005)	1). Empowerment as the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. 2). Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women's decision-making power and autonomy. 3)	Mizo women vegetable vendors experience vending as a means of income and a claim to independence despite structural marginalization. Their earnings support household needs, child education, and community welfare, enhancing their decision-making power and visibility in public. However, their informal status exposes them to exploitation and limits

		resources, agency, and achievements provide a useful framework.	their social recognition. Despite facing resource constraints, they exhibit strong agency and entrepreneurial skills, achieving income generation and self-reliance. Their experiences reflect empowerment as a constrained process, characterized by gradual negotiation rather than complete liberation.
Resilience theory	(Masten, 2001) (Ungar, 2008).	It emphasizes individual's or group's ability to adapt, recover, and thrive despite facing adversity, stress, or socio-economic challenges (Masten, 2001). It does not simply refer to endurance, but also to the capacity for positive adaptation within contexts of significant hardship.	Operating in Aizawl's informal markets, these women encounter numerous obstacles fluctuating prices, lack of formal credit, limited infrastructure and gendered social expectations. Yet, instead of succumbing to these pressures, they develop coping mechanisms such as forming vendor networks, diversifying products and adjusting selling strategies to daily consumer demands. This

			adaptability reflects “everyday resilience”, a key concept within resilience theory. Their competitive attitude seen in their willingness to work long hours, secure loyal customers, and innovate within limited means illustrates what resilience theorists call “adaptive capacity.” From a sociological perspective, resilience among Mizo women vendors is not merely personal strength but a socially embedded process. Their resilience emerges through interactions with peers, family, and community networks that provide emotional and practical support.
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The sociological analysis of Mizo women's vegetable vendors reveals that their engagement in informal vending is deeply rooted in structural inequalities, gendered labour divisions, and economic marginalisation. Drawing from the theoretical perspectives of empowerment theory, marginalisation theory, labour market segmentation theory, the dualist view, spill-over theory, feminist economics, and Bourdieu’s concept of habitus and capital, it becomes clear that women’s participation

in the informal economy is both a necessity and a form of agency. Their entry into vegetable vending is not a mere economic choice but a response to exclusion, poverty, and lack of institutional support.

Despite their low socio-economic background, limited education, and the absence of formal employment opportunities, Mizo women vendors demonstrate remarkable resilience, adaptability, and social agency. The vending occupation allows them to transform structural constraints into spaces of survival, solidarity, and empowerment. They navigate between domestic responsibilities and public economic activities, thereby challenging traditional gender roles and redefining the boundary between productive and reproductive labour.

However, their empowerment remains situated within structural limits; their informal status exposes them to economic vulnerability, social insecurity, and policy neglect. Nevertheless, through everyday acts of endurance and enterprise, these women assert their right to work, to occupy public spaces, and to participate meaningfully in Mizoram's urban economy.

In conclusion, the sociological implications of Mizo women vegetable vendors extend beyond livelihood and income generation. Their lived experiences illuminate broader processes of gendered marginalisation, class inequality, and negotiated empowerment in the informal economy. They exemplify how women at the margins create alternative pathways of survival, self-reliance, and social participation, reshaping both the economic and social fabric of their communities in the process.

To show this, the study has critically tried to analyse the Mizo women vegetable vendors' working conditions, work-life balance, and empowerment status using various criteria and indicators based on the study objectives. Under the working conditions criteria, financial accessibility, income, workplace security, health issues, and vendor associations were analysed. Under work-life balance indicators like gender-specific challenges, working time, daybreak, double burden and family care and support were analysed. While under empowerment status, indicators like decision-making, resources, land ownership, legal challenges and regulation issues

were examined. To evaluate these indicators and criteria, a sample size of 200 Mizo women vegetable vendors were interviewed and analysed.

The finding is that the objectives, working conditions and work-life balance were identified as the indicators in Sustainable Development Goal 8, ‘Decent work and economic growth’. While the empowerment status objective is under the Sustainable Development Goal 5, “Gender equality and empower all women and girls”. So, all these criteria for analysing the Mizo women vegetable vendors are integrated and form an integrated model of decent work and empowerment, as shown in fig. 7.1.

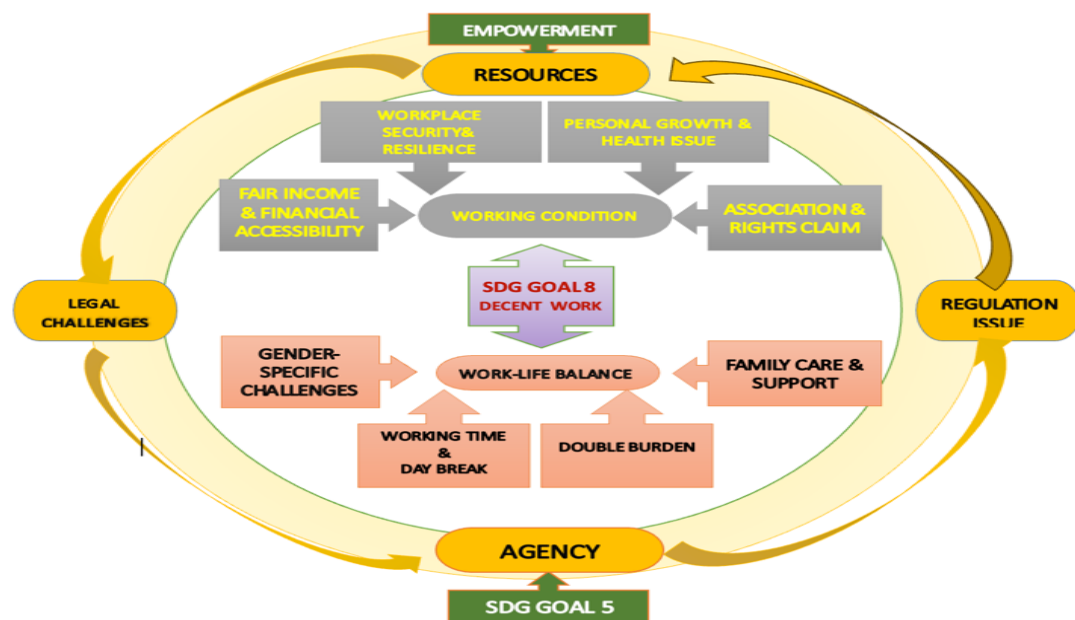


Fig 7.1 Integrated Model of Decent work, Women Vegetable Vendor Work-life balance and Empowerment.

Figure 7.1 shows that the centre of the model is occupied by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8: "Decent Work," under which two indicators—working conditions and work-life balance—are highlighted in the first ring of the circle. At the top of the ring, working conditions are accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, financial accessibility, income, workplace security, health issues and vendor’s association. At the bottom of the ring, work-life balance is accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, gender-specific challenges, working time, day break, double burden and family care and support. On the last ring of the circle, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 5, “Empowerment”, is accompanied by 4 criteria, namely, resources, legal challenges,

agency and regulation issues. All these indicators are integrated, as they are under the single goal, i.e., Sustainable Development Goal (SDG).

After analysing the data on each criterion and its indicators related to working conditions, it was determined that the working conditions for Mizo women vegetable vendors are poor due to issues such as financial inaccessibility stemming from a lack of awareness and lengthy banking procedures. The lack of a proper vending place with adequate structure compromises workplace security, leading to theft, robbery, and exposure to harsh sunlight and rain. Most Mizo women vegetable vendors suffer from chronic health conditions, such as high blood pressure, nerve issues, and ulcers, which are caused by long working hours, inadequate vending locations, and irregular meal times. They do have vendors' associations; however, they are not strong enough to fight against the eviction and confiscation, as they are considered illegal and temporary occupations without proper licensing. The theory of marginalisation posits that certain groups are systematically excluded from full participation in society's economic, social, and political structures. It represents one of the "five faces of oppression", encompassing exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence, including gendered subordination. For instance, Mizo women vegetable vendors, who are both women and belong to a lower socio-economic class, encounter significant discrimination and oppression. The state and society often overlook them, leading to poor working conditions. This neglect exacerbates their economic hardships and limits their access to essential resources and opportunities for empowerment. Yet, Mizo women vendors demonstrate remarkable resilience, adaptability, and social agency. Most of these women vendors lack access to financial resources, higher education, and skill training, pushing them into self-employment as a matter of survival rather than choice. As a result, addressing these intersecting challenges is critical to promoting social equity and improving the lives of those affected.

Regarding work-life balance, the long working hours prevent Mizo women vegetable vendors from having time for themselves and their families; however, because they are the primary earners, they possess some authority within the family, which leads to reduced conflict related to their occupations. However, the children felt less love and care from their mother, as she spent most of her time at the vending location. In terms

of gender-specific challenges, as a mother, sometimes they need to bring their kids to the vending site, as there are no proper childcare provisions for them; Anganwadi hours are too few for them. In terms of working time and daybreak, Mizo women vegetable vendors have long hours of working with only one weekday off; this leads to work-life imbalance. As a woman in the family, though she was helped and supported by her family, she needed to do the household work after she worked at the vending place all day, which resulted in a double burden for her. In terms of family care and support, the majority of the Mizo women vegetable vendors were supported by the family; however, physical help was less, as the members of the vendor's family were engaged in other works like studying and other economic activities or were too young to help her. Thus, despite receiving support from her family, she carried out all the tasks independently. Spillover theory states that a person's work impacts the family, either negatively or positively. This influence can manifest in various ways, such as changes in mood, stress levels, or even financial stability. Consequently, the dynamics within the family unit may evolve, reflecting the broader effects of an individual's professional life. Mizo women vegetable vendors felt they had less time for their family due to long working hours and fewer days off, which resulted in feeling less loved by their children. We can view this situation as negatively impacting their well-being and causing a lack of work-life balance. This imbalance affects their emotional health and hinders their ability to nurture relationships within the family. However, economically, their vending contributes positively to household expenses, children's education, and healthcare, enhancing their bargaining power and decision-making within families. Addressing these challenges is key to creating a supportive environment that allows both personal and professional growth. Therefore, based on the findings regarding working conditions and work-life balance, it can be concluded that there is a lack of decent work' for Mizo women vegetable vendors.

In terms of empowerment, it was analysed under four criteria: resources, legal challenges, agency, and regulation issues. The analysis of resources revealed that most Mizo women vegetable vendors do not own any possessions or land in their names, including property. However, they do buy properties, like appliances and household furniture, in installments with interest and pay tuition fees for their kids. Regarding

legal challenges, most vendors were unaware of their rights under the Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017 and women's rights. This shows the lack of organising awareness drives among the vendors by the govt organisation and non-govt organisations. Under agency criteria, decision-making is an important factor. Most vegetable vendors in Aizawl lack suitable vending locations, highlighting the urgent need for regulations and effective implementation of the Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017, along with the proper establishment and active functioning of the town vending committee. Empowerment theory is the process through which women gain the ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied. Within this framework, economic participation is both a means and an outcome of empowerment, provided it expands women's decision-making power and autonomy. In the context of the study, the majority of the Mizo women vegetable vendors were empowered to make family decisions, as they were the sole earners. The majority of them manage the finances of the family, and they have power in the decisions about getting household products, health care, and children's schools. For Mizo women's vegetable vendors, vending represents not just an income source but also an assertion of agency and independence within the limits of structural marginalisation. Kabeer's (1994) notion of resources, agency, and achievements provides a useful framework here. Mizo women vendors have limited resources (education, capital, and institutional support), yet they demonstrate strong agency (entrepreneurial skills, resilience, and cooperation) and achievements (income generation, self-reliance, and family welfare). Thus, their lived experiences illustrate empowerment as a process within constraints – not full liberation but gradual negotiation within the structure of informality.

The findings from the integrated model of decent work, work-life balance, and empowerment indicate that resilience among workers under conditions characterised by long hours, low income, adverse weather, inadequate facilities, and poor work-life balance is primarily driven by a survival mechanism. Due to their low socio-economic status, they have no alternatives aside from participating in vegetable vending. Their entry into this occupation was motivated not by a desire for empowerment or status enhancement as women, but solely for survival purposes. However, their engagement in the vegetable vending economy resulted in empowering women as they earned

income and contributed to the family livelihood. This led to the inclusion of the Mizo women vendors in the decision-making of the family. Yet full empowerment is needed to achieve this through inclusive policy and schemes for the Mizo women vegetable vendors.

Problem dimensions and suggestions/recommendations

In the light of the above conclusion of the study, few recommendations are sorted which could be of some help for the policy planners, Government and Municipal Authorities of the Aizawl city. These recommendations are:

Indicator	Problem dimension	Suggestions
1. Productive Resources	a) Shortage of funds b) Inadequate infrastructure (peripatetic vendors)	a) Banks to provide concessional finance and procedures for availing finance must be easy b) Institutional finance to be supported by the consumption loans, working capital loans be provided.
2. Income and socio-economic status	a) No savings b) Degradation of standard of living and deterioration of socio-economic status c) Poverty	a) Flexible, small-amount savings options b) Giving due official recognition detailed census and genealogical study by independent research team c) Productive activity and appropriate utilisation of time
3. Marketing	a) Middlemen's exploitation b) Competition	a) Governmental intervention b) Regulated but inclusive market space and strengthening vendor associations
4. Credit	a) Lack of access to or non-availability of credit facility b) Informal borrowing and high interest rates c) Indebtedness	a) Identification of 'need' through base line research b) Credit facilities through banks and co-operative societies. c) Financial literacy focused on debt management and access to affordable institutional credit.
5. Organisation	a) Poor organisation b) Town Vending committee	a) Encourage vendor collectives and associations b) Forming more than one Town Vending Committee
6. Education and skill	a) Low education and lack of development of proper skill b) Low awareness	a) Functional literacy and numeracy programs b) Doorstep and market based awareness and use of local language and simple communication.
7. Facilities	a) Longer hours of work b) Absence of social security benefits c) Child-care provision d) Storage facilities	a) Gender sensitive interventions and income stabilisation and fair earnings b) Universal registration and inclusion in existing social security schemes. c) Market-based childcare centres d) Common storage units near market and collective ownership and management
8. Health and hygiene	a) Health problems b) Insanitation and unhygienic conditions c) Lack of proper toilet facilities	a) Free health care and awareness on health. b) Basic market infrastructure and waste management system c) Gender-segregated and safe facilities

Future areas for research

These are the areas of research which should be taken up by future researcher in studying the Mizo women vegetable vendors:

1. A comparative analysis between stationary and peripatetic vendors should be taken up in order to know their working conditions.
2. To widened the research universe by including all districts in Mizoram where vegetable vendors are available.
3. A comparative study of vegetable vendors in Mizoram and other states in India should be studied to see and compare their differences.
4. An in-depth analysis on the implementation of Mizoram Street Vendors Rules 2017 should be taken up in order to know the functions and ground reality.

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