

# Safety and Mobility Concerns of Women Street Vegetable Vendors in Ranchi City



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## Executive Summary

This study is placed in Ranchi, Jharkhand. As a city undergoing rapid urbanisation, many women informal workers – from both tribal and non-tribal communities - have migrated to Ranchi to find work. However, they often face barriers such as threats of sexual and physical violence and unavailability of proper infrastructural facilities, social services and access to capital – which hinder their work and reinforce narratives of violence, poverty and marginalisation.

After the passage of ILO's Convention C190 on Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the world of work, a number of studies have focused on collecting data and generating evidence on how women experience violence and harassment in workplaces. In India, 90% of the women work in the informal sector and are highly vulnerable to the risk of violence. However, informal work such as street vending, where public markets become workplaces, there is a shortage of literature on how women negotiate their portions of “male-dominated” public spaces and what forms of physical or sexual harassment are used against them to control their access to these spaces. This study attempts to bridge this gap and critically analyse issues faced by women vegetable street vendors. The objectives of this study were therefore to understand issues of women vegetable vendors' safety, their experiences of violence and their mobility patterns.

Data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative tools such as a survey, In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and Safety Audits. Analysis was done across key themes such as mobility patterns, structural barriers to women's safety, workplace violence and harassment and access to support mechanisms. Key trends across the sample size of 201 women vendors surveyed indicate that women's entry into the vegetable vending business was facilitated by reliance on social networks (of other women in the sector), low requirement of capital and higher cultural acceptance of women as vegetable vendors as compared to other types of vending. However, the same factors act as a social barrier for their upward mobility. Lack of access to an independent income and resources was the main driver for women in vegetable vending, while a few others entered to supplement their husband's income or due to widowhood or separation and found the work to be easier than other forms of laborious informal work.

61% women vendors were locally situated in the city of Ranchi, i.e. they either belonged to the city or had moved to the city for livelihood purposes and were living in rented accommodation. They were present in all kinds of markets and stayed at a distance ranging from 500m-5km from the market. Sharing local autos and trains were the most preferred modes of transport for women vendors travelling from outside Ranchi city – both to reach markets and to transport their vegetables. Out of the 24% women who travelled from villages in Ranchi district, 91% travelled by shared autos. Out of the 15% women who travelled to Ranchi from neighbouring districts, 90% travelled by train.

Women vegetable vendors shared their experiences of facing a range of safety issues while traveling - encompassing lack of transportation at night, unavailability of transport connectivity from the railway station, harassment by the ticket collector for money and sexual harassment by male passengers. Mobile vendors faced additional challenges while walking around the city for sales. They shared that they were stalked and verbally abused by male road users and customers. Even at their workplace, 42% women vegetable vendors reported some form of harassment – with over half of them reporting that this harassment was sexual harassment.

In-depth interviews revealed that respondents' perception of security was related to vending space security which was in turn sanctioned through her social relationships in the market. If a woman felt secure about her space, she maintained a right over it through her social relations in the market even if it meant bearing sexist remarks or harassment. Respondents considered this to be an ordinary part of their trade and that they had to be strong to deal with these issues.

When respondents were asked whether they knew about any women's helpline, most said that they did not. Further, it was noted that women travelling from villages did not have a phone of their own. This can be correlated to lack of access to VAW support when required and to time-poverty, an area that can be valuable to explore beyond the analysis of this study. There was no information on Local Committees constituted under the POSH Act 2013, in Ranchi. Sexual harassment redress has still not been implemented formally and matters of sexual harassment have to either borne by women silently or dealt with individually.

Finally, it was found that the infrastructure in informal (street) vegetable markets was highly unfavourable for women vendors, compromised their safety and affected their capability to work - this was especially true for those who had to combine their child-care and vending activities. 50% of the markets surveyed did not have a functioning public toilet and women reported facing harassment while going to the toilet in the open. Even the vegetable markets in government vending zones had poorly cleaned and maintained toilets, with no provisions for persons with disabilities. Even after provisions under the Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017, these markets did not have breastfeeding and resting areas, and drinking water was unavailable.

These areas of analysis will be further explored and analysed in the study- based on which a series of recommendations were formulated for various stakeholders in the short, medium and long-term – relating to violence redress mechanisms, more inclusive infrastructure, better transport services and connectivity, skill development and collection of disaggregated data for informal sector workers.

# Chapter 1 – Introduction

## Context for the Study

There is a growing focus on generating evidence on violence against informal women workers across the world. Research thus far has noted that structural inequalities impede their right to decent work. These include the burden of domestic and care responsibilities on women, lack of access to assets and financial resources, low levels of education, and socio-cultural norms constraining their mobility<sup>1</sup>. Thus, their work has mostly been found to be an extension of their existing gender roles and they take up work that can provide them with flexibility to manage both paid and unpaid work.

In India, over 90% of total employed women are in the informal sector.<sup>2</sup> According to recent estimates, there are around 1.2 million women street vendors in India, of which around 60% are present in urban cities.<sup>3</sup> Studies on women street vendors have so far noted that they are concentrated in selling low-investment and low-income perishable goods on the streets as opposed to male vendors who sell higher income non-perishable products on bicycle or push carts<sup>4 5 6</sup> They are at a higher risk of violence as they are situated at the intersection of unequal gender and power relations and informal nature of their work, i.e. lacking social and legal protection. In the non-agricultural sector, they are majorly concentrated in home-based work, domestic work, street vending, and construction work.<sup>7</sup>

The experiences of violence faced by women informal workers were exacerbated during the pandemic – with many out of work for extended periods of time and women in domestic and home-based work having to face elevated levels of mental and physical harassment and double burdens of care work. The experiences of violence in domestic and home-based work settings in India have been captured by a few studies across the country by organisations like WIEGO, ISST and HomeNet South Asia. In 2021, at the peak of the second wave of the pandemic, Jagori also conducted a short survey with 25 women domestic workers on their economic well-being and it was found that many were stuck in cycles of debt.

That being said, when it comes to other forms of informal work such as street vending, where public markets become workplaces, there is a dearth of literature and research on how women negotiate their place in largely male-dominated spaces and the safety issues and forms of violence that affect their mobility patterns and affect their access to these spaces.

This study makes an attempt at bridging this gap by examining women street vendors' experiences of accessing the public spaces for work in the city of Ranchi, Jharkhand. Jharkhand has a very skewed rate of urbanisation, with four major districts (Bokaro, Dhanbad, Ranchi, and

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1 [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms\\_618166.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_618166.pdf)

2 [https://www.indiaspend.com/uploads/2021/03/26/file\\_upload-446784.pdf](https://www.indiaspend.com/uploads/2021/03/26/file_upload-446784.pdf)

3 Raveendran, G, Vanek, J (2020), "Informal Workers in India: A Statistical Profile", Statistical Brief N 24, WIEGO

4 Gautam, A, Waghmare BS, (2021), "Plight of street vendors in India: failure of urban governance and Development". EPW Vol 45&46.

5 ISST (2020) , "Impact of Covid-19 National lockdown on women street vendors in Delhi"

6 ibid 1

7 ibid.

East Singhbhum) having urbanisation comparable to the most urbanised districts in the country, while the least urbanised districts are comparable to the least urbanised districts in the country.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, highly urban areas like Ranchi provide opportunities to rural populations, who migrate to these cities in search of work – so is the case with women vegetable vendors. Being the capital of Jharkhand, Ranchi is one of the fast growing cities and has been included in the Smart City Mission (2015) by the Government of India.

### **Violence and Women Street Vendors**

Street vending is closely related to the development and regulation of urban public spaces. Street vendors are often viewed as pollutants in the city, impeding its development. This makes them vulnerable to structural violence and developmental inequalities and hinders their access to entitlements and violence-redress. Women street vendors are disproportionately impacted as they face added marginalisation and threats of physical and sexual violence.<sup>9</sup> This is exacerbated by unavailability of proper infrastructural facilities<sup>10</sup>, social services, and unavailability of access to finance and assets. The pandemic further worsened the situation as women lost all sources of income, and care responsibilities rose tremendously within the household. They reported adopting negative coping mechanisms to fulfil basic needs, like taking loans at high interest rates and falling into a debt trap<sup>11</sup>.

Gender-based violence (GBV), both in its visible and structural forms, limits their access to resources, lowering their participation in the public spaces, and damaging their overall health and well-being. Hence, GBV is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality which manifests itself in a range of women's everyday experiences, from domestic violence at homes to violence at the workplace and in the public spaces. Socio-economic deprivation makes them more susceptible to violence due to lower earnings, dangerous working conditions, or unavailability of adequate housing conditions, amongst other things.

Various international instruments by the United Nations and ILO have recognised violence against informal workers in the workplaces, and provide policy and legal frameworks to address the same at national levels.

**United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979** which is committed to equality in employment between men and women, and recognises that violence against women occurs in public and private spaces, and all arenas of human interactions, including the public spaces and workplaces.<sup>12</sup>

**The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995**, recognises sexual harassment as a form of violence against women and calls for governments, employers, trade unions, community and youth organisations and non-governmental organisations to “develop programmes and procedures to eliminate sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in all educational institutions, workplaces and elsewhere” (UN, 1995, para. 126).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ethicaltribune.com/index.php/volume-5/mv5i2/urbanisation-migration-and-poverty-in-jharkhand-problems-and-prospects>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.shram.org/blogs/?p=846>

<sup>10</sup> Gautam, A, Waghmare BS, (2021), "Plight of street vendors in India: failure of urban governance and Development". EPW Vol 45&46.

<sup>11</sup> Chakraborty, S, Ahuja, G. 2021. "Emerging from Lockdown: Insights from women street vendors' lives in Delhi". Indian Institute of Social Studies.

<sup>12</sup> General Recommendation 35

**The Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)** provides that States should ensure that an integrated policy framework to facilitate the transition to the formal economy addresses the promotion of equality and the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence, including gender-based violence, at the workplace (ILO, 2015b, No. 204, para.11 (f)). The recent **ILO Convention C190 (2019) on Elimination of Violence and harassment in the world of work**<sup>13</sup> is the first international treaty to address the issue of violence in the workplace and recognise it as a human rights violation. According to the Convention,

*“the term “violence and harassment” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment”*

It adopts a wide-ranging definition of ‘workers’ encompassing formal and informal workers, as well as ‘workplace’, including, but not limited to, private and public spaces, digital technologies, and commuting to and from work.

In India, provisions in many articles of the State Constitution (Article 15(1), 15 (3), 16(2), 23(1), 39(a), 39(d), 39(e), 42) emphasise non-discrimination, fair pay, and adequate means of livelihood for women. ***The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) or POSH Act (2013)*** is an exclusive act on prevention of workplace related violence recognising women’s right to safe working environment. The act includes the unorganised sector, and has created a grievance redressal system for complaints regarding harassment against workers that can be registered at Local Committees (LC) that are constituted at the district level.

However, its implementation in the districts is inadequate and many districts in have not constituted Local Committees. In Ranchi, there was no information on the constitution of Local Committees.

### **Policies Affecting Street Vendors in India**

In response to regular evictions and police harassment, various vendors’ unions and organisations were formed in the 80s and 90s to advocate for their right to work. Up until then, public discourse on street vending in India had been dismissive of their contributions in the economy<sup>14</sup>. India signed the Bellagio International Declaration of Street vendors in 1995<sup>15</sup>, which sought to legalise vending in the country. Post that, in 1998, street vendors and related organisations came together to form National Association of Street Vending in India (NASVI)<sup>16</sup>. NASVI’s detailed study on street vendors (2001) in seven cities of India (Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneshwar, Patna, Imphal, and Calcutta) on three aspects - socio-economic survey, municipal laws and guidelines, and inclusion in urban plans<sup>17</sup>. This document

13 India has not ratified the convention yet.

14 Gautam, A, Waghmare BS, (2021), "Plight of street vendors in India: failure of urban governance and Development". EPW Vol 45&46.

15 [https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Sinha\\_WIEGO\\_PB2.pdf](https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/files/Sinha_WIEGO_PB2.pdf)

16 ibid.

17 Bhowmik, SK (2001) "Hawkers and the urban informal sector: A study of street vending in seven cities". NASVI

became the basis for the adoption and implementation of National Policy on Street Vendors 2009, which laid down clear objectives on providing a legal status to the street vendors, their inclusion in spatial planning norms, and a transparent regulation system, among others.

This was later used to draft **The Street Vendors' Act (2014)** which recognised the economic contributions of the street vendors, and called the states to conduct vendor surveys every five years to provide vendor certifications and constitute a town vending committee with 40% representation of street vendors (of which 1/3rd should be women) for undertaking regulatory activities. It also calls the states to include vending zones in their cities' urban plans and designs, and provide vendors with linkages to skill development and social security schemes.

In August 2021, India's Parliamentary Standing Committee on Urban Development noted improper implementation of the act across the country. The committee provided several recommendations that included - (i) integration of the act with smart city missions through representation of the vendor community in the committee formulating the master plan of the city; (ii) constitution of grievance redressal committee (GRC) for transparency of processes; (iii) inclusion of Street Vendors Act 2014 in training modules of police officers to end police harassment against the vendors.<sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup>

However, despite almost 8 years since the enactment of the Street Vendors Act, the literature is largely missing on how women vendors are impacted by its implementation in different cities across India. A few states like UP (in Noida)<sup>20</sup> and Uttarakhand (in Haridwar)<sup>21</sup> have created 'pink vending zones' for women. Some news articles have reported loss in livelihoods to women vendors as these are set up at poor locations and do not provide storage facilities<sup>22</sup>.

Additionally, during the pandemic, Government of India (GOI) announced a credit scheme for street vendors called the Prime Minister SVANidhi Scheme 2020, which aimed to extend credit to hawkers without any collateral. According to government data, out of the total 27.36 lakh beneficiaries, 59% are male and 41% are female<sup>23</sup>. Data is unavailable on state-wise access, and so is the information on how this credit money was actually used by both male and female vendors.

### Women Street Vendors in Ranchi

According to Ranchi Municipal Corporation's (RMC) official website, 5735 vendors have been verified<sup>24</sup>, and around 936 vendors have been shifted from the Hawkers' hub to two new vending areas<sup>25</sup>, distinguished on the basis of the nature of products - food (vegetable and

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.wiego.org/blog/indias-street-vendor-protection-act-good-paper-it-working>

<sup>19</sup> [https://prsinIndia.org/files/policy/policy\\_committee\\_reports/Report%20summary\\_Street%20Vendors.pdf](https://prsinIndia.org/files/policy/policy_committee_reports/Report%20summary_Street%20Vendors.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/noida/50-pink-vending-zones-launched-under-mission-shakti-in-noida/articleshow/88676083.cms#:~:text=%E2%80%9CUnder%20the%20'Mission%20Shakti',Maheshwari%2C%20CEO%2C%20Noida%20Authority>

<sup>21</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/pink-vending-zone-for-women-street-vendors-in-haridwar/articleshow/86178625.cms>

<sup>22</sup> <https://knnindia.co.in/news/newsdetails/state/pink-vending-zone-business-yet-to-pick-up-in-noida>

<sup>23</sup> <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2021/dec/doc2021122431.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ranchimunicipal.com/Departments.aspx?wid=16&gid=pg>

<sup>25</sup> Three-storey market at Naga Baba Khatal and four-storey market at Atal Smriti vendor's market

fruits) and non-food items.<sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> Since, the data collected by RMC was not gender-disaggregated<sup>28</sup>, total number of recognised women vendors is not available. While the Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017 states that preference should be given to women, such that 33% of the total certificate holders are women, including - 1.5% women with disabilities, 2% elderly women, and 5% to single and widowed women - it is difficult to assess its implementation.

Recognising the lack of any gender-disaggregated data, safety audits were conducted by All India Women's Hawkers' Federation in association with Jagori in 2021, and included women vendors in the participatory process of auditing five major chowks (streets) of Ranchi on women's safety, including Lalpur chowk where presence of women in markets was the highest. The report found major infrastructural issues such as unavailability of clean toilets, drinking water, poor lighting on the streets and unavailability of night shelters for women.

The audits also revealed that there was a lack of safe public transportation in the city, and so, women often resorted to private taxis and autos for commuting, which were costlier and unavailable at night. There seemed to be no change in the situation since 2016, when Jagori conducted a study in collaboration with ITDP<sup>29</sup> on safe transportation in the city and found that despite being afraid of traveling by cycle or shared autos, around 90% of women depended on these modes of transport to reach work or college, as there was an absence of public transport infrastructure.

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26 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/hawkers-hub-in-ranchi-to-become-no-vending-zone/story-9aOGchqbm8VBJzrRIDgWtI.html>

27 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ranchi/veg-market-to-start-ops-in-a-fortnight/articleshow/89838381.cms>

28 List of street vendors from Kutchery to Sarjana Chowk, containing 752 entries. It is the only publicly available document on street vendor surveys in Ranchi that is published by RMC. It lacks a gender-column. See - [https://www.ranchimunicipal.com/Downloads/532019181538794\\_DownloadFiles.pdf](https://www.ranchimunicipal.com/Downloads/532019181538794_DownloadFiles.pdf)

29 <http://www.jagori.org/itdp-presents-transport-assessment-findings-ranchi>

# **Chapter 2 – Objectives and Methodology**

This study was planned with women vegetable vendors after consultations with local networks and stakeholders working with women street vendors. This constituency was chosen as vegetable vending is a low-investment and low-return area of vending and there was a dearth of gender-disaggregated research. Focusing on the safety, VAW and mobility aspects of women street vendors' experiences also aligns with Jagori's work on safe and inclusive public spaces.

## **Research Objectives**

The main objective of the research was to understand issues of safety and mobility patterns of women vegetable vendors in Ranchi by generating evidence in four focus areas:

- 1) Mobility patterns of women street vendors in Ranchi, those traveling from within and outside the city to vending areas every day.
- 2) Safety and violence issues faced by women vegetable vendors while traveling and undertaking vending activities, and coping mechanisms adopted by them.
- 3) Women's knowledge of and access to formal support systems and resources in cases of sexual harassment and violence
- 4) Infrastructural factors that lead to poor working conditions for women and deny them the right to carry out their work with dignity.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***2.1. Preliminary Visits***

Preliminary visits were undertaken to a few markets in the city (such as Lalpur Market, Daily Market, Solanki Market, Shalimar Market, Birsa Chowk Market, and Lowadih Market) that enabled the team to form an understanding of the nature and composition of different kinds of markets, identify key areas where women's presence was significant and note important travel patterns amongst women vendors in the city. In this phase, a few informal conversations were also carried out with the members from local organisations working on the rights of street hawkers to get an overview of the distribution of women vendors across the city as well as key social and political events that have shaped the vendors' movement in Ranchi.

Based on the field observations and informal conversations with women vendors and members of the organisation, it was decided that the study would focus majorly on women vegetable vendors as they constituted the majority amongst the women vendors, at approximately 50-70%.

### ***2.2. Study Design***

The study adopted a mixed-method approach to meet the research objectives. These consisted of both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as survey, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, women's safety audits and field observations. The entire process of data collection was completed in a period of more than 2 months.

The following table provides a snapshot of the primary data collection methods -

Data Collection Method	Participants	Sample Size	Key Areas Covered
Survey (Google Forms)	Women Vegetable Street Vendors	201	Demographic details, information on vending activities, mobility patterns, key challenges during travel and while vending, perceptions of safety, forms of violence faced, access to the SVAnidhi Scheme
In-depth interviews (Semi-structured interviews)	Women vegetable Street Vendors	30	Lived experiences of women street vendors - safety concerns while working on the streets, care-related concerns with children, experiences of infrastructural barriers, experiences of interaction with other street vendors/customers, conversations on violence and sexual harassment, available support systems and violence redress mechanisms
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	i) Transport service providers -Lalpur Market with auto drivers from Hundru ii) Male family members of women vendors - Getalsud village in Ranchi district iii) Male vegetable vendors - at Lalpur Market	3 FGDs with a total of around 20 respondents	i) Transport provisions in their villages, basic infrastructural conditions, and their perception of infrastructure-related safety. ii) Work undertaken by them during the day, their perception of work done by their women partners/mothers/daughters iii) Motivation for entry, support in entry, conflicts in the market, perception of work, and perception of safety

Safety Audits (Checklist)	Government Vending Zones of Atal Smriti, Khadgarha, and Naga Baba Khatal	2 vegetable markets and 1 'dry' market	Analysis of infrastructural provisions for women in newly constructed vending zones.
Field Observation	-	-	- Interactions of street vendors in the market with consumers, government representatives and union members.

*Figure 1*

### **2.3. Sampling Techniques**

For the purposes of data collection, twelve markets were chosen using purposive sampling. Diverse markets were chosen to ensure representation and inclusivity across the research sample, with consideration of the unique characteristics of these markets. The categories of these markets are as follows –

- (i) Local City Markets (or Neighbourhood markets as categorised by the National Institute of Urban Affairs) – Lowadih Market, Harmu Market, Dangra Toli, and Booty More
- (ii) Wholesale or Retail Markets – Lalpur Market, Daily Bazar/Kali Mandir Chowk
- (iii) Weekly Haat Market – Shalimar Market - organised on Tuesdays and Fridays on the Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited (HECL) grounds.
- (iv) Markets around the railway station – Birsa Chowk Market, Solanki Market, and Argora Chowk Market
- (v) Government constructed vendors' markets – Khadgarha and Naga Baba Khatal.

The participants from these markets were selected using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Some of the women vegetable vendors, especially the leaders of AIWHF women's committees, were introduced to the team by volunteers from AIWHF. The rest of the survey respondents were referred to the team by a combination of references. For IDIs, 12 respondents were identified from the survey and the rest were randomly approached in markets.

#### **2.3.1. Sample Size**

Ranchi has an estimated 26,734 street vendors. Of these, women vendors are estimated to be at 2,914 (according to the estimated proportion of women vendors in urban India provided by WIEGO Statistical profile).

As women were majorly employed as vegetable vendors, assuming a range of anywhere between 50-70%<sup>30</sup>, and calculating at the highest estimated proportion, women vegetable vendors would account for approximately 2040. Thus, a representative sample of 10%, or 200 vendors, was chosen for the survey based on these calculations. 15% of this survey number

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<sup>30</sup> This was assumed based on the conversations with local organisations working with women street vendors in Ranchi since the last 15 years.

was chosen for IDIs (30). KIIs, FGDs and safety audits were done to supplement survey and IDI findings and provide more complete data from a wider perspective of multiple stakeholders and actors.

This sample of 200 was divided into following categories based on their place of residence as modes of transport available would change accordingly.

- Type 1: Those staying within the city and travelling to the markets within the city.
- Type 2: Those staying within Ranchi district and travelling to the city markets for vending
- Type 3: Those staying outside Ranchi district and travelling to the city markets for vending.

The following table represents the total number of surveys and in-depth interviews undertaken in each market.

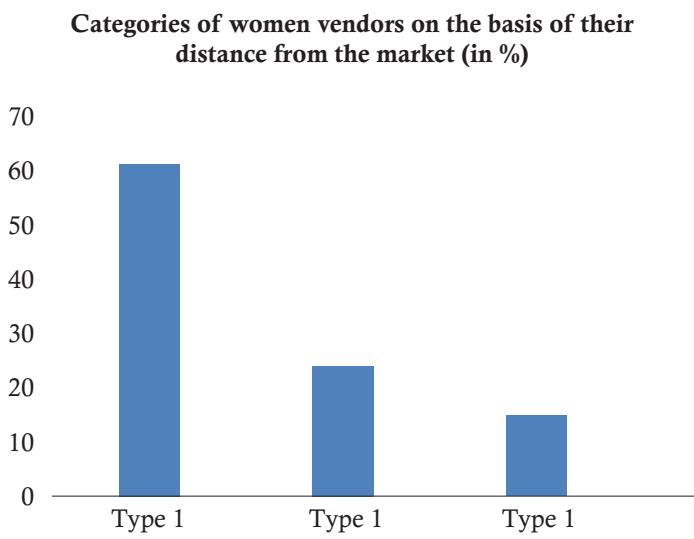
Type of Market	Markets Covered	Formality Status	Operation Time	Total Survey Respondents	Total In-depth Interviews
Neighbourhood Markets	Butimod	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Evening)	10	2
	Lowadiah Bazar	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Evening)	11	2
	Dangra Toli	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Evening)	9	3
	Harmu Market	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Evening)	5	0
Specialised Markets	Lalpur Bazar	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	26	3
	Naga Baba Market	In Government allotted vending Zone	Every day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	33	4
	Khadgarha Market	In Government allotted vending Zone	Every day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	11	2
	Kali Mandir/ Daily market	Street/local Market	Everyday (Morning)	15	2
	Solanki Bazar	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	20	3

Street Market	Birsa Chowk	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Evening)	31	3
	Arghora Chowk	Street/local Market	Every day (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	12	2
	Shalimar Market	Street/local Market	Tuesday & Friday (Morning, Afternoon, Evening)	18	3

**Figure 2**

- (i) Four Neighbourhood Markets – these were small local markets in the city with vendors living in the neighbourhood. A total of 35 vendors were surveyed from these.
- (ii) Five Specialised markets – these were mostly markets selling only vegetables. 105 vendors were surveyed from these.
- (iii) Three Street Markets – these were mixed markets located at major chowks and streets. 61 vendors were surveyed from these.

They were divided into three categories, based on their location of stay and travel to the city.



**Figure 3**

For the purposes of in-depth interviews, AIWHF women's committee leaders associated with AIWHF were chosen, as well as some respondents identified during the survey process - based on their willingness to talk further in-depth about their experiences while keeping in mind the size of the market and diversity of their experiences of mobility.

## Limitations

The study should be seen as contextual to Ranchi city and differences may emerge in the nature of mobility and vending activities across different cities, based on existing cultural norms regarding women's work and poverty levels in the state. This study's short duration of 90 days limited the scope of travel to villages with women vegetable vendors to their residence and procurement sources in trains and autos for data collection purposes – this would have generated a more nuanced understanding about safety conditions in village procurement markets, trip chaining behaviours and issues, and care related mobility constraints.

Other constraints included participants not always having the time due to busy days. This also affected rapport-building and some respondents were hesitant to even give their names to the researchers. The study was conducted during monsoon season so vendors travelling from outside Ranchi city did not often come to the markets.

# Chapter 3: Key Findings from the study

The workplaces of women vegetable vendors consist of a range of public spaces that they used to procure, transport, and sell their products. In Ranchi, it was found that women travel extremely long distances, sometimes over 100 km, to travel to markets for selling vegetables. This chapter presents key findings of the study on the themes of safety, mobility, experiences of violence, structural and infrastructural barriers and access to support and entitlements.

## Demographic Profile: Results from the Survey

### *Age*

The median age of women street vendors was 45 years. This is consistent with different studies on street vendors stating that women usually entered this work post getting married and having kids – with a total of 98% women being married (81% still married and 17% widowed). A majority of women vendors interviewed – 41% - had between 11 and 20 years of experience.

Age of vendors (expressed in %)

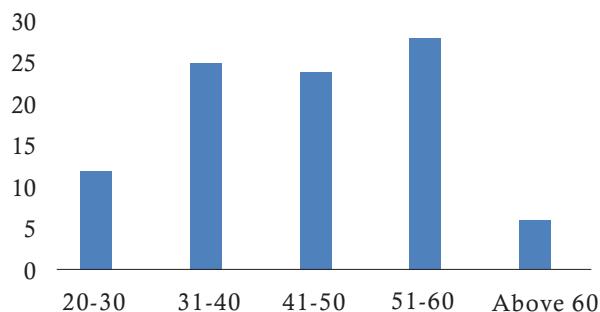


Figure 4

Total years of vending (expressed in %)

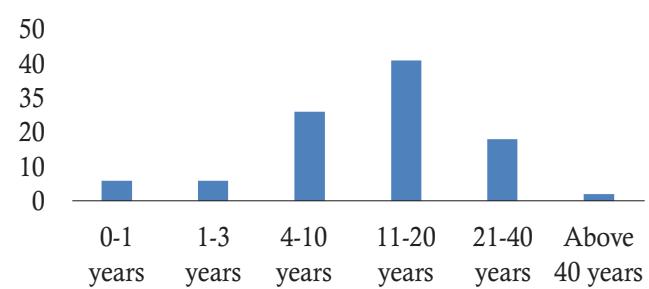


Figure 5

Marital Status of women (expressed in %)

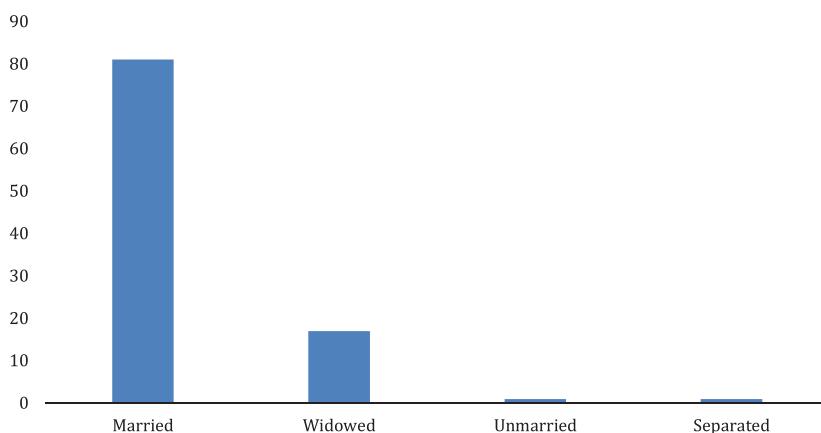
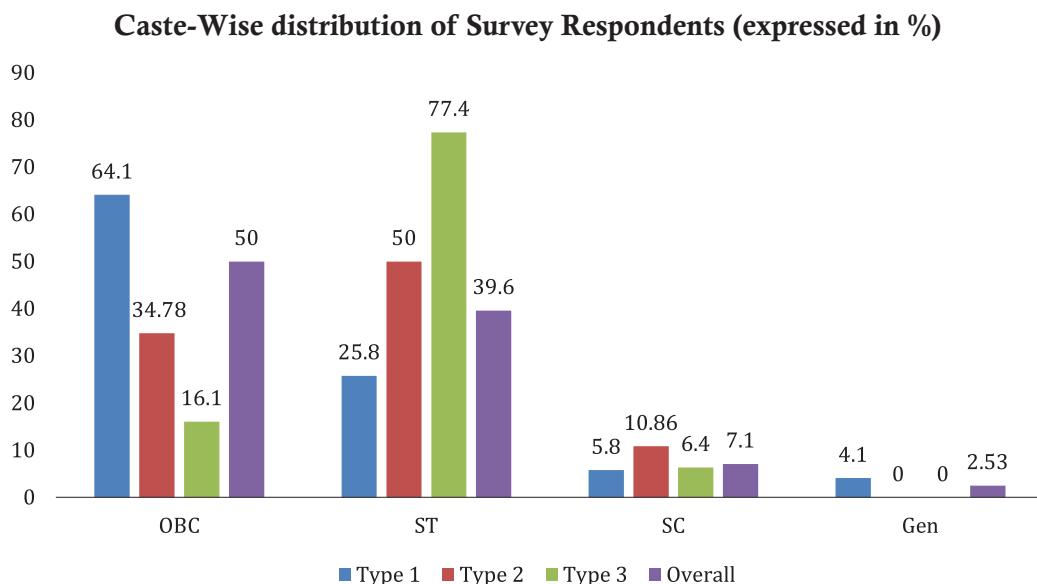


Figure 6

### *Caste/Tribe*

A majority of the women engaged in selling vegetables were from either Scheduled Tribes (ST) or OBC communities. Most of the women who travelled from outside Ranchi city were from the ST community.

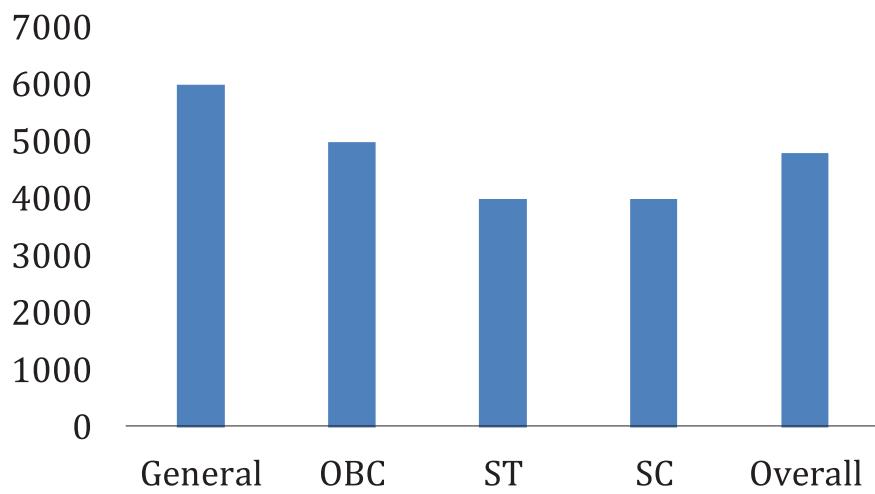


**Figure 7**

#### **Monthly Income**

The overall monthly median income was Rs. 4800. This differed according to caste identities and the distance they lived at from the city. The median income was lowest for the tribal and SC communities, while the General Category had the highest median income. Vendors from the general category earned 50% more than the vendors from SC and ST categories.

#### **Median income across castes (in rupees)**



**Figure 8**

#### **Facilitators to Women's Entry in Vegetable Vending**

Findings indicated that women entered into street vending out of compulsion. This is in line with other studies on women street vendors in India<sup>31</sup>. A majority of respondents indicated in IDIs that they had alcoholic and abusive husbands who withheld money from them, even for basic household needs. Some of these men were engaged in paid work – as agricultural labourers, farmers, or construction workers, but hardly any percentage of their income was

<sup>31</sup> Fiona H. McKay & Richard H. Osborne (2022) Exploring the daily lives of women street vendors in India, *Development in Practice*, 32:4, 460-467, DOI: 10.1080/09614524.2021.1998377

given to the women in their homes. Women from tribal communities also narrated that they dealt with alcoholic husbands who worked as labourers on a few days a week and used up all the money on alcohol and gambling. This forced them to enter vegetable vending to earn to provide for the basic needs for themselves and their children.

About 18% of the women surveyed were single (widowed or separated) and therefore primary breadwinners. They found vending to be a better alternative to other forms of informal work such as a construction or domestic work.

The rest of the survey respondents had simply entered to supplement their husband's income as their expenditures had risen after having children. It is interesting to note that even this category of women had chosen vegetable vending over other kinds of products available.

There seemed to be a wider cultural acceptance of women in vegetable vending because it involved the least amount of money. Moreover, it was enabled due to easy knowledge transfer from one woman to another – an informal network that made it possible for them to get financial and skill-development support.

The team observed that there also seemed to be an accepted perception that women vegetable vendors were '*bechari*' (helpless victims). This means that she was in the market due to the absence of 'man' in the house, rather than for business. And so, bare minimum earnings were enough for her to look after her family. This perception was shared by both men and women – a few women shared in IDIs their woes with 'not clever' or 'incapable' husbands who couldn't provide, and so they had to step in.

Women's presence as vegetable vendors was largely accepted in the markets as this work required bargaining with the customers for small sums of money, and it was perceived that only women in dire need of finances could patiently undertake this activity.

However, this acceptance in a low-paying activity acted as an invisible barrier to their upward mobility in vending activities and to them switching to better paying products even if they wanted to. One of the male vendors and TVC member, who participated in the FGD shared,

*"I observed that the profits in garments was higher, so I slowly built a relationship with the garment sellers and started traveling with them to Kolkata to procure garments for sale here. I switched from selling vegetables to garments in a matter of a few years. They also helped me with Rs. 50,000 when I was robbed, and it enabled me to start again and return the money to them."*

In another FGD conducted with male members in women's household, it was found that men from the tribal communities work as wholesale suppliers of their field produce to a few village (haats) markets. However, their women partners were mostly working as part-time vendors and part-time on the agricultural fields.

This showed that men are able to gather greater support and capital to make a switch to better paying products and it was easier for them to bounce back after a setback due to easier availability of money.

### ***Support in Entering the Marketplace***

In a majority of the interviews with women who were working as vegetable vendors, they said that they had received support in entering the marketplace from other women vendors (mothers, mothers-in-law, sisters, neighbours/friends, aunts) who sold vegetables. In a few other cases, women either took help from their husband or his network or just learnt it on their own by observing others. Around one-fourth of the vendors interviewed had also received small amounts of monetary help (between Rs. 100-500) to start the business.

The support enabled them to learn the tricks of the trade – procurement, weighing, bargaining - and also helped them make the choice of which market to vend in. While network connections in the world of informal work are not uncommon,, the extension of financial and emotional support - especially by unrelated women - could also be seen as a marker of women's solidarity and support.

### ***Challenges in Getting Vending Space***

In the In-depth interviews conducted with women traveling from outside the city, they elucidated massive problems in making their space for vending. According to most of the non-local women interviewed, they had frequent conflicts with the local male and female vendors as well as shopkeepers for space. Most of the non-local women reported that they were verbally abused, their vegetables were thrown, and in a few cases, they had to pay some money to local residents to sit in front of their houses. Some local women vendors were able to make note of days and timings of when non-local women vendors sat there, and they occupied that space in their absence. This depicted some tension and conflict between local and non-local vendors in the market place.

The vendors who lived locally usually had better connections with other vendors and shopkeepers in the market as they entered the trade through support from older vendors who had already built good social relations in the market. This enabled them to maintain control over their vending spaces and made it difficult for new vendors to enter.

### **Mobility Patterns of Women Vendors**

As per the results of the survey, 61% of the women vegetable vendors in Ranchi were local, i.e. they were either from Ranchi or staying there in rented accommodation. 24% travelled from villages within the Ranchi district, while 15% were travelling to the market from outside the district of Ranchi. Around 2/3rd of local women vendors (Type 1) were regular vendors, i.e. they came to the market daily, while only 1/3rd of the total vendors travelling to the markets from villages from outside the city (Type 2 and Type 3) were regular vendors.

### ***Main Mode of Transport Used by the Vendors***

Local vendors were present in all the twelve markets evenly, and they mostly belonged to the neighbouring areas of that market.

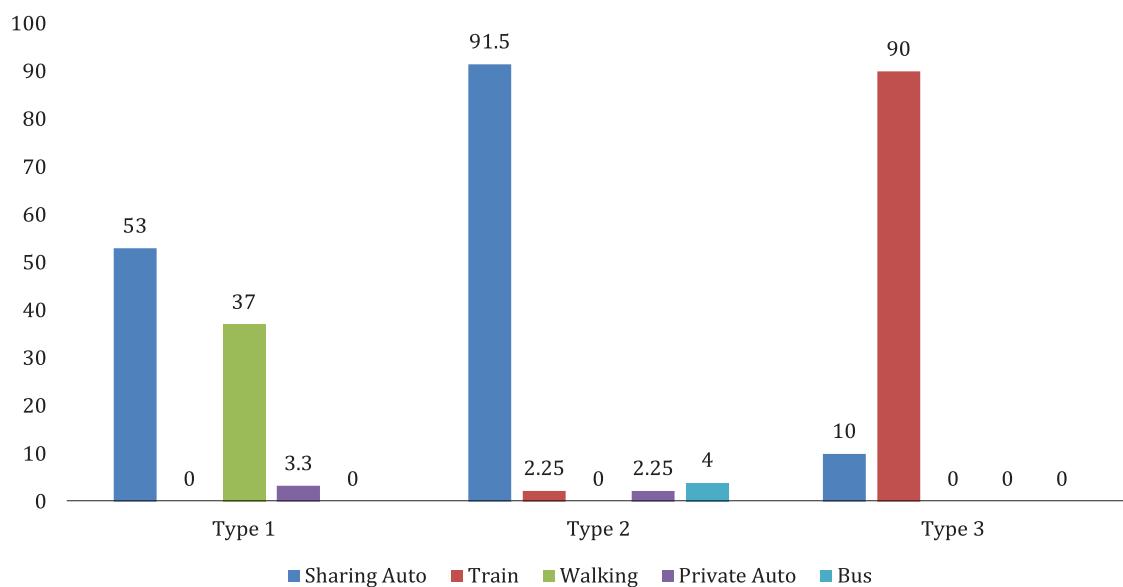
As shown in the figure, around 53% of the type 1 vendors travelled by sharing autos, while 37% walked to the markets. For type 2 vendors, the main mode of transport was sharing autos, with 91.5% using them to reach the markets. Only 4% of these used buses. This can

be due to unavailability of alternate transport services connecting their villages to the city. One of the auto drivers from Hundru (an administrative block located at around 70 km from Ranchi city) shared,

*"There used to be a private bus service long ago but they got caught in some case of timber smuggling. So currently, there is no other way of transport available."*

90% of the women travelling from other districts (type 3) travelled by train, while 10% used shared autos or jeeps.

### Most Preferred Modes of Travel by women vendors (expressed in %)



**Figure 9**

In small city markets (or neighbourhood markets), all the vendors were local (type 1), and over 60% of them travelled to the vending areas on foot as they stayed at an average distance of 1-1.5 km from the market.

On the other hand, other markets - wholesale cum retail markets, markets around the railway station, and government-constructed vendor markets were occupied by both local vendors as well as those traveling from villages within Ranchi or other districts- though the proportion of people from outside who got space in Khadgarha market was negligible, many of whom sat outside the constructed infrastructure.



**Figure 10**

## Procurement

- Local Vendors (Type 1)

Most of the vendors travelled to the markets early in the morning, at around 5am. Local vendors sold off their remaining produce from the previous day in the morning markets and went to procure more vegetables in the afternoon. If they weren't left with any produce, they would travel to procure in the morning itself.

Procurement Source for local Type 1 vendors (expressed in %)

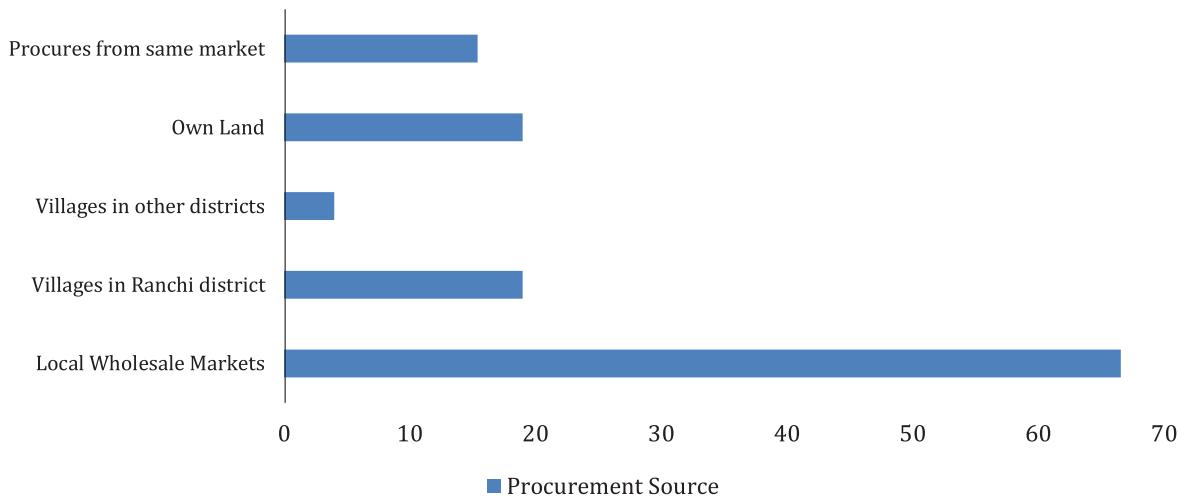


Figure 11

Women vendors procured from various markets, based on the best available option and situation on any given day. A majority of women procured their vegetables from local markets at least a few days in a week. A few responded that they go to different markets in the villages as well.

The following figure shows that the Daily market was the highest preferred local wholesale market, followed by Lalpur Bazar, Naga Baba Khatal, and Weekly Haat markets (Shalimar, Satranji, and Sector markets for procurement). Data from the survey showed that 19% of the local vendors brought vegetables from their own fields on the outskirts of the city as well, along with buying from the markets.

Around 19% of the vendors also travelled to village markets in Ranchi district, such as Bero, Itki, Getalsud, Pithoria, Ormanjhi, Madar, Bijupada, Namkum, Gondli Pokhar, Tatiasilwai, etc. 4% of the vendors procured from villages from other districts across Jharkhand or even from Jhalda city in Purulia district in West Bengal.

As represented in the following graph, around 2/3rd women preferred transporting their vegetables by shared autos, while around 17% used private autos.

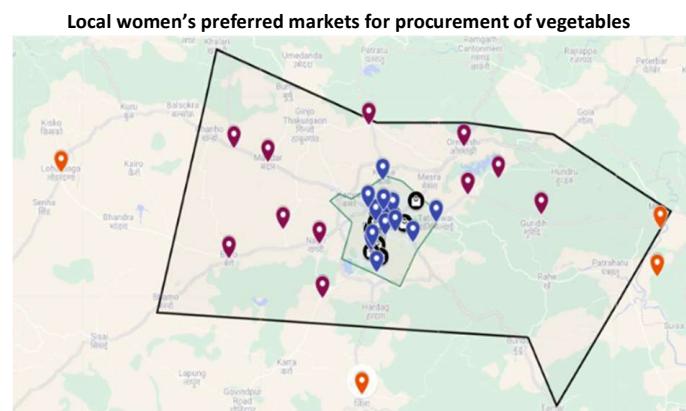
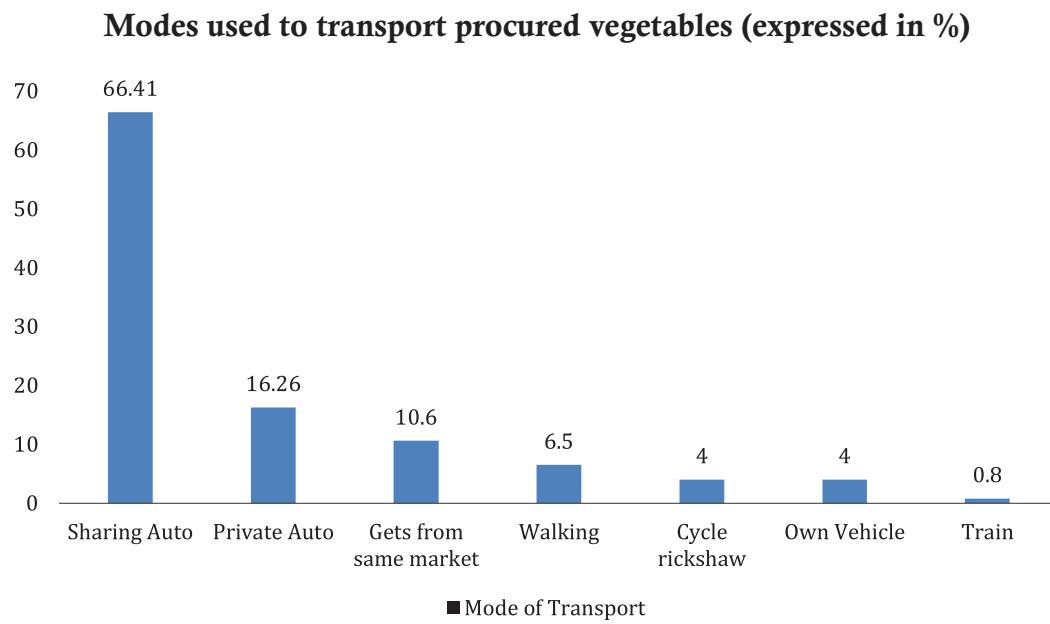


Figure 12



**Figure 13**

Around 16% of the survey respondents said that they always travelled with a male family member (mostly sons and husbands), while 19% sometimes travelled with their husbands, children, or other women vendors. In IDIs, 2-3 women from the neighbourhood markets shared that if it got too late at night, they would call their husbands or sons to pick them up from the market.

#### Vendors Traveling from Villages within Ranchi District (Type 2)

Most women vendors in this category brought vegetables either from their own fields or from local markets in and around their villages. They also used various ways to procure vegetables, as some of them mixed their existing produce with the vegetables that they bought from the market. Some of them also buy vegetables from haat markets en-route to Ranchi city, for e.g. Getalsud market is en-route Hundru to Ranchi and Bero/Itki are en-route Nagri to Ranchi. Around 8% of women vendors said that they bought their produce from the local Daily Bazar.

Procurement Market	Proportion of Vendors
Own land	51%
Local village markets	36%
Local markets en-route	13%
Gets them from the same market	13%
Market in Ranchi city	8%

Most vendors travelled in shared autos that were driven by men from their village itself. These drivers also helped women in procuring vegetables from markets that were distant from their villages.

*“The vegetable market is set up in the village only. We stand there with the auto, women buy their own vegetables and load them in the auto. Sometimes, they also need to go to another market which is 7-8km away, so then I take them to buy the vegetables and then drop them here at Lalpur.” (Auto driver, Getalsud to Lalpur Market)*

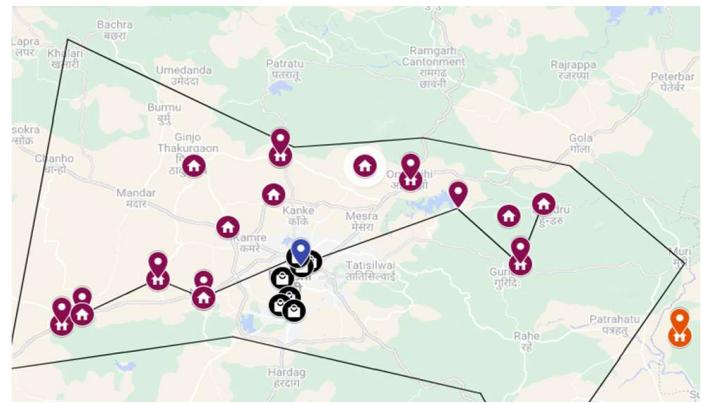


Figure 14

Unlike local women, they tend to travel more with other women vendors. 54% reported that they always travel with women vendors while only a small proportion, 4% reported always traveling with male family member. Most of these women belong to the same village and are able to share the cost of travel, as well as felt safer traveling with known people.

### i) Vendors Traveling from Villages Outside Ranchi District (Type 3)

15% vendors travelled from adjoining districts of Ranchi district, and 90% of these vendors travelled by train. 94% of these women procured vegetables from their local markets, and only a few of them also brought vegetables from their own land. As the woman from Solanki Market said, “I go door-to-door in my village to buy fruits and vegetables and then come here to sell.”

Procurement Market	Proportion of Vendors
Own land/forest	29%
Local village markets	64.5%
Local markets en-route	3%
Market in Ranchi city	3%

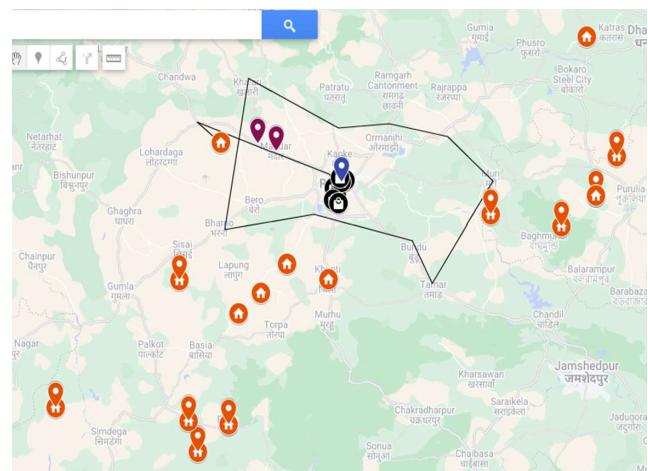


Figure 15

74% of these vendors always travelled with other women vendors, as opposed to only 13%, who always travelled alone. 32% of vendors travelling by train shared that they do not always return on the same day to their homes as they are left with additional vegetables at the end of the day that they sell on the next day. All of these women reported staying back at the railway station. It is noteworthy that none of the women vendors stayed at the government’s night shelter that has been constructed near the Khadgarha bus station. This can be either due to unavailability of information about the night shelter or unavailability of transportation facilities.

### **Mobility Related Concerns**

In an assessment conducted by ITDP in 2015<sup>32</sup>, they found that more than 90% women in the city who were surveyed reported feeling unsafe in shared autos. In the interviews conducted with local women vendors, it was found that though some felt unsafe during travel by sharing autos with both male and female passengers, they felt it was the best choice they had. In fact, one woman reported that she felt afraid of travelling alone in an auto after dark, and presence of either male or a female passenger made her feel safer.

Local women coped with these problems by travelling with one or two other women vendors, especially while travelling for procuring vegetables. Many of them also booked private autos if the quantity of vegetables was more. They said that this was expensive, but that they couldn't think of any other alternative.

### **ii) Transportation Cost**

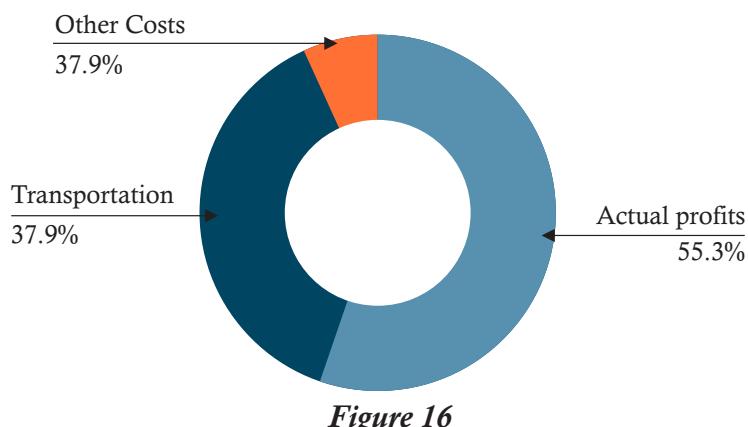
More than half of the women vendors agreed that their current mode of travel was expensive. In interviews, women also shared that it was one of their heaviest costs in the process. Table 3 shows category wise percentage of women affected by expensive transport.

Category	Proportion of Women
Type 1 (local )	54%
Type 2 (travelling from within Ranchi district)	47%
Type 3 (travelling from outside Ranchi district)	71%
Overall	54%

Table 3: Women who find their current mode of travel expensive

One of the probable reasons for higher proportion of women perceiving expensive transport could be because they mostly brought lesser quantities to sell (due to lack of adequate storage and limited vending hours) and had to take multiple connecting means to and from the railway station.

**Women vendor's expenditure on transportation as proportion of Gross profits  
(Median Value)**



**Figure 16**

Calculating women's transport expenditure as a proportion of their gross profits (assuming that there aren't any more costs than reported by them in the survey), i.e. their total revenue minus cost of goods, the average comes out to be close to 38%. This means that women are forgoing a major proportion of their potential income in paying transportation costs.

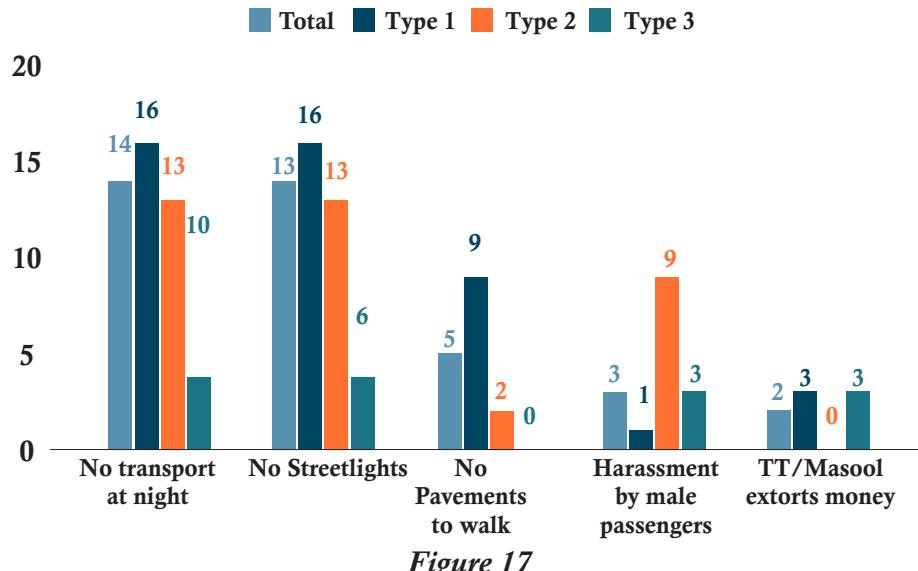
<sup>32</sup> <https://www.itdp.in/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Ranchi-Mobility-for-All-final-150726-Copy.pdf>

### iii) Safety Concerns of Women Vendors

It is well established that unavailability of streetlights, empty roads, and uneven pavements induce feeling of fear amongst more women compared to men. This was confirmed by the findings of the survey (figure). It is interesting to note that the highest levels of harassment by male passengers was reported by women vendors travelling from villages within the Ranchi district.

In interviews conducted with women vendors, many agreed that there is fear of harassment, especially at night time. They usually travel in groups, or if they are locals, male family members come to pick them up at night. A few women even reported leaving the market before it got dark for reasons of safety.

**Safety concerns of women vendors while commuting (expressed in %)**



**Figure 17**

*“Dar toh bahut lagta tha jab jaate the. Raat mein 9 baj jata tha kabhi kabhi, aur ham auto se aate the. Chhedkhani wagera bahut hota tha yahan tab, toh darr toh tha hi. Kabhi kabhi jaldi hi aa jate the.” (“I used to feel scared while going back. Sometimes it was as late as 9pm and I used to take an auto. There was a lot of harassment here then, so I was scared. Sometimes I used to come earlier to avoid this”) -Vendor, Lowadih Market*

A few vendors, especially mobile vendors, reported incidents of harassment, such as stalking, and verbal harassment by male road users.

*“When I go around the city, I face problems with drunk and high men. They tease me and ask me to give them things for free. Even today, a drunk man walked behind me for 5-10 minutes asking me for datun<sup>33</sup>. There are many boys high on drugs roaming around here.”*

**-Mobile Vendor, Argora Chowk**

<sup>33</sup> “What I go around the city, I face problems with drunk and high men. They tease me and ask me to give them things for free. Even today, a drunk man walked behind me for 5-10 minutes asking me for datun. There are many boys high on drugs roaming around here.” (Mobile Vendor, Argora Chowk)

Women vendors who stayed back at the station to sell off their remaining produce in the morning shared that they felt afraid at night while sleeping in the common area, even when there were other women around them. One of them reported witnessing harassment, and so, decided to never stay back.

*"The environment in the day is different, and it is completely different in the night. I have seen women being teased and harassed at the station. Men offer money to women to go with them. I have stopped staying at the railway station at night. Sometimes, when I miss my train, I stay at a relative's place."* -Vendor, Argora Chowk

It is noteworthy that unavailability of safe spaces to stay at night for women vendors who travelled from outside led to losses for them as they sold their vegetables at lower rates to finish it off and catch their trains on time. It also disabled them from rationalising their sale timings for maximum profits from sales.

Women who travelled from different districts in trains shared that they faced additional challenges in getting connecting vehicles to the station, and difficulties in loading/unloading the produce from the train as it stopped for a very short period of time at local stations. Most of them hired a coolie for loading and unloading purposes.

*"Kabhi kabhi late pahochti hun train se, jaise 8.30-9 baje, aur koi lene nahi aa pata toh station par hi ruk jaati hun. Road par andhera rehta hai aur paidal wapas ghar jaane mein darr lagta hai."* ("Sometimes when I take the train, I reach late, at 8.30-9pm and no one can pick me up. So I stay at the station only. The road is dark and I feel scared to go home.")  
-Women Vendor, Birsa Chowk Market

Women vendors also faced other issues while commuting. Some of them shared that the Travel Ticket Examiner took extra money from them for transporting vegetables in addition to the cost of the ticket.

*"Kabhi kabhi hadkata hai TT bhi paise ke liye, par ham nahi dete ab"* (Solanki Market Vendor travelling from Khunti district)

*"I travel to Jhalda to get vegetables with my brother and sister-in-law who also live there. While bringing the vegetables in the train, the TT also takes an extra 50 or 11 rupees from us sometimes"*  
-Vendor who procures from Jhalda, Lalpur Market

However, vendors travelling from villages in Ranchi district itself travelled majorly in shared autos driven by men in their village. These men are either vendors themselves, or they go back after dropping women vendors in the market and come back to pick them up in the evening. Most of these women shared in the interviews that they felt safe because they knew the auto drivers. Moreover, many autos came from their village, and they all only took women, so it was safer.

*“Ye bhaiya mere gaon se hain, jab bhi dikkat hoti hai, fatt se phone laga deti hun inhe, koi bhi samay ho, auto leke aa jate hain.” (“This driver is from my village. Whenever I am facing any problems, I give him a call and he comes to pick me up”)* -Women vendor, Lalpur Chowk, introducing the interviewer to an auto driver in Getalsud village market auto-stand

#### iv. Impact of Care Burden on Women’s Mobility and Choice

The double-burden of economic and domestic responsibilities impacts women’s freedom of movement and this is even more pronounced for women who work in the informal sector as they are additionally burdened by poverty. The average age of women’s entry into vending was 30 years (as per the survey results), and most of them got married at an earlier age between 16-18 years (as per the interviews and previous studies on child and early marriages in Jharkhand). So, in IDIs, they shared that they entered this work only after marriage and often with grown children to take care of household chores when they were away.

The findings of the study show that most women vendors interviewed faced challenges due to domestic and care work responsibilities, especially younger women who were travelling from villages (Type 2, 3). For older women, it was easier to manage responsibilities as they already had grown up children or daughters-in-law to take care of work at home- though they also shared that it used to be very challenging for them when their children were young, especially if there was no other woman to look after them in the house. As their children grew up and were able to take on more household responsibilities, it became easier for them to focus on vending related activities.

Some women vendors shared their experiences,

*“When my son was born, I started coming to work 6 months after the delivery, and when my daughter was born, I started coming after just 2 months only. I used to tie them up on my back and travel to the markets to buy vegetables. It was very difficult to change their napkins or handle them when they cried in the middle of work. My husband would not have been able to take care of them like that.”* -Vendor, Butimod Market

*“My husband was an alcoholic and very abusive. Even my mother-in-law wasn’t very helpful. When I started vending, I would have one child tied on my back, the other one holding my left hand, and a vegetable bag in my right hand.”* -Vendor, Dangratoli

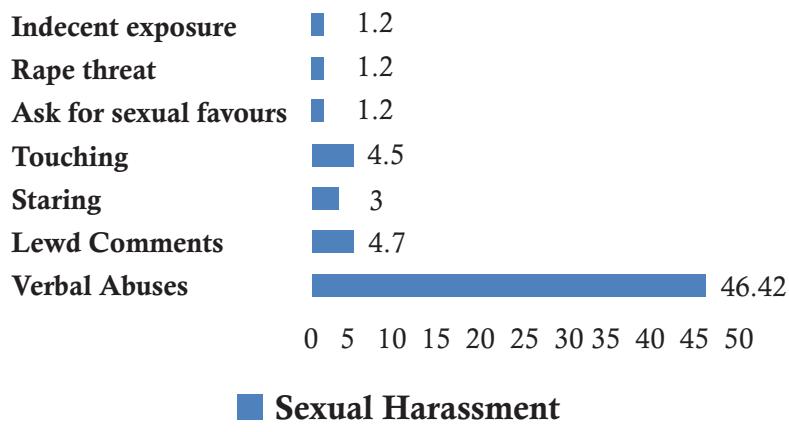
Some respondents shared that they were only able to vend a few days in a week because they had multiple other responsibilities at home – like farming, gathering, domestic and care work. None of them mentioned getting support from their husbands, however, many shared that they got support from their mothers, mothers-in-laws, daughters (sometimes, sons), and other women neighbours.

In FGDs with the male family members of women vendors (who were not the ones surveyed or interviewed), it was found that they worked for only a few days in a week, while women were regular earning members in the household. Some women worked in the fields if they were not going to the market, and children accompanied them for this work. They said that children get paid as much as adults in the fields because they are more energetic and efficient.

### **Women Vendors' Experiences of Harassment in the Market**

In the survey conducted with women vendors, 42% reported facing some form of harassment - out of which 58% reported experiences of sexual harassment while 64% reported facing harassment regarding vending space. In the following graphs, incidence of harassment as a percentage of total reporting on harassment is represented.

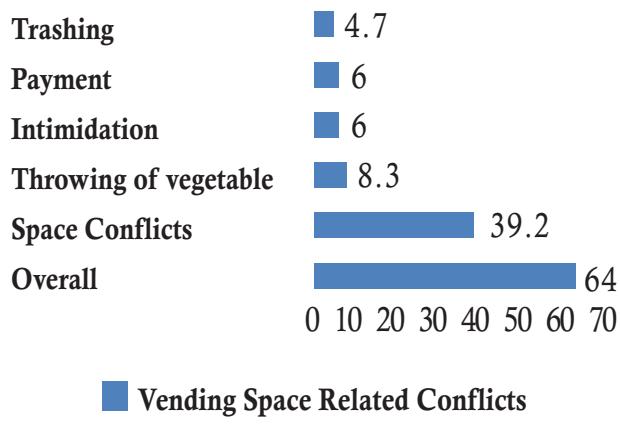
#### **Sexual Harassment (expressed in %)**



**■ Sexual Harassment**

**Figure 18**

#### **Vending Space Related Conflicts (expressed in %)**



**■ Vending Space Related Conflicts**

**Figure 19**

The most reported form of sexual harassment was verbal abuses, followed by lewd comments and inappropriate physical touches. Other forms of sexual harassment experienced by vendors included staring, rape threats, asking for sexual favours and indecent exposure. In the

in-depth interviews, women vendors shared that this kind of harassment was normalised and perceived as a part of everyday life, therefore reporting of this remains low.

Women were the most disadvantaged in the vendor community said that they faced conflicts with all existing stakeholders in the market - local women vendors, male vendors, and shopkeepers. This compelled them to frequently shift their place of vending, which often led to loss in sales and revenues. The findings also reveal that as the distance of women's residence increases, the cases of vending-space related harassment increases. Within the 19.4% of space conflicts bracket, 27% of the total type 1, 50% of type 2, and 57% of the total type 3 women reported facing conflicts related to space. Around 6% Type 2 and 24% Type 3 respondents also reported paying for their vending space, as opposed to none from Type 1. Thus, women travelling from outside the city faced higher challenges in making their space in the market.

In Shalimar market, all vendors reported paying Rs. 30 for sitting at the vending space. This was because the market was organised by HEC Ltd. (Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd.). However, the receipt received by them was only for Rs. 19. One male vendor said that he paid only Rs. 19, as mentioned in the receipt, but many women vendors were paying more either due to their inability to read the figure on their slip, or they were afraid of denying the money to the male collectors.



One vendor shared,

*"I don't know who these people are and why they are taking money. I think it's just dadagiri (bullying). If we don't pay them, they won't let us sit here. If it was legitimate, then they would have assigned us spaces to sit in return."*

#### ***Women's Informal Networks and Perception of Security in the Market:***

In the interviews conducted with women vegetable vendors in the market, women's perception of security was related to vending space security which was sanctioned through her social relationships in the market. If a woman felt secure about her space, she maintained a right over it through her social relations in the marketplace.

*"Han toh? Ye meri jagah hai. Kabhi kabhi mazak mein ye dukaandaar ko kehte hain ki hamne registry karai hai is jagah ki. Hum kisi ko nahi baithne dete hain, aur koi agar hamari gairhazri mein baith bhi jata hai, toh ye dukaandar keh dete hai ki wo ayegi abhi"*  
*("This is my space in the market. Sometimes I tell the shop-keeper here jokingly that I have registered for this space. I do not let anyone else sit here and if someone does sit here in my absence, the shop-keeper tells them that I will come and sit here shortly.")*

**- Senior experienced vendor, Dangratoli**

These relations in the market are built in several ways. They are either – (i) generational, or through another acquaintance of a good social standing who got her there; (ii) through local women in that area; (iii) transactional – they give vegetables, fruits in exchange of space; (iv) due to participation in unions; (v) seniority – if they are oldest vendors in that market.

For men, forming such relationships was easier compared to women, especially those who were brought into this work by an acquaintance. Even those who did not have any known person in the market, were able to approach male shopkeepers and vendors to form a good relationship and get access to some vending space. It was observed that this was because the other actors in the market - shopkeepers, security guards at society gates, or tea/juice/ paan sellers, were mostly men, and displayed camaraderie towards other male workers.

Thus, a larger safety and support system was perceived among the social group of vendors and while it afforded space-related security to women, it also discouraged women vendors from reporting sexual harassment as they were afraid of exclusion from the group - and getting tagged as the 'bad woman', as expressed by few. So, they didn't usually talk about it in the market.

*"Yahan na log bahut tarah se baat karta hai, aur sab jhelna padta hai. Apne ko kaam ko uppar rakhna hai, har kisi ko toh ethi nahi kar sakte hain, khud sahi rahenge to kuch nahi hogा.")*  
*"Here, people talk in many ways to us and we have to bear everything. We have to give priority to our work. If we don't do anything bad, nothing will happen to us.")* -Vendor, Lowadih

Even within their social network, women vendors often played along with unfavourable and sexist comments as a way to survive in a highly competitive market. This social system within the market is patriarchal in nature. At Birsa Chowk, when a senior, experienced female vendor asked a male cart vendor to move away to let another woman vendor sit, he went to talk to a shopkeeper at the back of this stall, who acted as a mediator for the conflict and made both of the vendors sit there. However, a few minutes previous to this, the same shopkeeper had been the one standing near the woman vendor and had passed some unpleasant comments about her which had made her visibly uncomfortable. However, after he acted as mediator, she claimed that the shopkeeper was a good man.

In the KII with a male TVC member from Atal Smriti Vendors' Market, he said,

*"If there are four male vendors and one female vendor at one place, then their eyes are always on the woman. When a woman vendor wears something nice, male vendors will pass comments on their looks and clothes. But the women cannot say something. They just listen and leave."*

*"When any conflict arises, first the women groups go to resolve it. If they aren't able to settle it, then the men go." -AIWHF Women's Committee leader, Lalpur market*

During interviews, many women shared their experiences of harassment and admitted being bothered by them – but they considered them to be a normal part of their trade. Women

vendors also shared that they had become thick-skinned to survive in the market and that they dealt with instances of harassment themselves. None of the vendors said that they had lodged any formal complaint or reported the incident with a TVC or union member in the market. The decision to not file a formal complaint could be due to lack of a supportive and non-judgemental environment, unavailability of formal channels to file a complaint, lack of awareness or it being a time-taking activity.

Vendors shared,

*"Once, I was buying potatoes a few years ago and another man kept his hand on mine. I shouted at him, abused him, and told him that I'd beat him up with my chappal (slipper). Then again on another day, when I was buying vegetables, a man stood right behind me and he was standing very close. I shouted at him too and people gathered there, so he looked at me, spat and went away."* -Vendor, Lalpur Market

*"People know me now, but long back the environment was quite bad. My husband died 9 years ago and my child was young, so men used to pass lewd comments and ask me to go with them.*

*When someone does that now, I beat them up."* -Vendor, Dangra Toli

One young woman vendor from Shalimar market said that she deals with,

*"wrongly intentioned men" by "calling them uncle , brother or any other relative. This way they automatically start seeing you as a daughter. It's on you and your behaviour with them, if your behaviour is correct, then they will also be fine with you.*

A few of the women who shared stories of harassment were asked about their knowledge of VAW helpline number, but none of them were aware of any such helpline. Those who had mobile phones said that they would dial 100 in case of an emergency.

It is also noteworthy that only 32% of women vendors owned a mobile phone and 10% borrowed it from their family members sometimes. 77% women traveling from villages of Ranchi district (type 2) did not have a phone at all. Women with lower access to phones have lower access to helplines in case of emergencies. One vendor shared an incident of harassment where she wanted to call her auto driver but did not have any phone balance to make the call.

The other kind of harassment women vendors who were 'outsiders' (Type 2,3) or did not have secure vending spaces was from multiple stakeholders - vendors, male road users, shopkeepers, and wholesalers. They often had to put in extra time to make their space in the market and sometimes it affected their earnings, as they used to lose out on selling during the peak hours.

*"I started vending outside the market, in front of the society gate. I used to wake up early every morning for 2-3 days, and I put mitti (dirt) there to make it firm to sit, but I was abused by the local women from dominant caste groups who took Rs. 1000 from me for doing that and sitting there." -Vendor, Khadgarha market*

*"Bazar mein baithne mein dikat karta tha local log. Fir kuch samay mein mujhe keval 1 ghanta baithne bola ek mahila iss side (opposite side of the road). Toh main ghum ghum ke bechti hun station ki taraf chalte huye, aur wahi se ghar nikal jaati hun" ("I couldnot sit in the market because the locals used to not let me sit there. Then they told me to sit for just one hour on the opposite side of the road. Now I just sell vegetables while walking towards the train station and then go home from there itself") -Mobile Vendor, Argora Chowk*

*"This family (pointing towards a house in front of her vending area) and that man (pointing at a man sitting 2 spaces on her right), they throw their waste here (where she sat) and the man pees here every day even after I ask him not to do that. I have to clean it every day when I come to the market." -Vendor, Solanki Market*

Women vendors said that they felt a lack of support from local stakeholders in case of any incident of harassment (both related to vending space and sexual harassment). They usually stayed in their community groups (caste and village groups) to deal with these problems. Those who were alone keep shifting unless they found someone who let them adjust in little spaces. Some vendors also said that they paid the shopkeepers/residents in vegetables or money to let them sit there.

#### ***Formal Systems to Deal with Grievances and Sexual Harassment***

Most market conflicts and cases of harassment were dealt with informally amongst the vendors. While many markets had members from the federations, very few vendors from outside said that they were aware of these committees or received any kind of support from them. Respondents were aware of TVCs as mechanisms to resolve vending space conflicts. Locals knew about this and were receiving support – but these were mostly Type 1 vendors.

For the purposes of redressal of grievances and dispute resolution, the Street Vendors' Act 2014 provides for a formal grievance redressal mechanism. However, such a committee did not exist in Ranchi. According to a National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM officer) (from the KIIIs), "We are required to constitute a grievance redressal system under the Act, but we need a retired Civil Court Judge and no one wants to apply."

For cases of sexual harassment, the formal mechanism under the POSH Act 2013 is the Local Committee for informal sector workers. However, no information regarding this committee was available in Ranchi. There is also a lack of provisions for redressal of sexual harassment in the Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017. Most of the officials with whom KIIIs were conducted interviewed felt that it could be integrated under the Act because it was a criminal offence and did not fall under their ambit. As one of the official stated,

*"Harassment comes under criminal law, so it has to be a complaint. But otherwise too, if some vendor comes to me with some complaint like that, which I am open to, I will informally make sure he's threatened."* -**Asst. Municipal Commissioner**

Even within the Hawkers' Federation, leaders shared that they had never received any complaints of sexual harassment.

*"If a woman is harassed during an eviction drive or protests by authorities or police, we beat up those who did it. Apart from that, we haven't received any other kind of reports of sexual harassment at any level as of now. In the last 50 years, I haven't come across any issue of sexual harassment against a women hawker by a male hawker. They see each other differently, especially within the union. I haven't even heard of any love stories or marriages happening between two hawkers anywhere across the country."* -**Senior Leader, National Hawkers' Federation**

It was also shared that they did not have any women's committee because they did not want to divide the hawkers. Thus, it shows that matters of sexual harassment were formally (or in the unions, informally) deprioritised and invisibilised.

### **Lack of Gender-Responsive Infrastructure in Markets**

The major infrastructural challenges reported by women vendors during interviews were related to unavailability of shade and broken pavements on the side of the road, making it extremely difficult for them to sit there in the heat and rain. Some of those who didn't have money to buy an umbrella bore losses during rains.

A few women vendors said that they had used some mud and clay to even out the pavements so that they could vend. Some of them had also used plastic and tarpaulin to make shade for themselves. However, after a ban on plastic was imposed, the authorities reportedly removed these temporary shades put by women.

Unavailability of toilets was another major issue reported by the vendors. Around 50% of the markets covered in the study did not have toilets. The rest that did were pay-per-use toilets and the poorest women vendors reported never using them due to cost concerns.

For local women vendors, it was easier to go to their homes a few times a day. In some cases, women vendors had already negotiated with the attendant at pay-per-use toilets/or members of nearby houses and paid them with vegetables sometimes to use toilets. For example, a few senior vendors in Dangra Toli had created good transactional relationships with local households that let them use the toilet in return for some free vegetables. In another example, in Butimod, women vendors gave vegetables to the toilet attendant every week rather than paying per use.

In safety audit FGDs and interviews, women vendors shared experiences of harassment and feeling unsafe when they tried to go to the toilet. Women vendors stated that public toilet closes at 7pm and they are afraid to go for open defecation in the evening after that as there is

a gathering of “anti-social elements” at times. (FGD, safety audit, Khadgarha)

*“Sab hi log peeche khule maidan mein jhaadi mein jaate hain. Kuch mahine pehle ek aadmi gande gande ishaare karta tha door se jab bhi ham jate wahan. Usne aisa kaafiyon ke saath kiya, to ham 2-3 milkar jane lage” (“Everyone defecates out in the open or behind bushes. Some months ago, when I went, a man kept gesturing at me indecently. He did this with other women as well, so now we go in groups.” – Vendor, Lalpur Chowk*

Issues like lack of availability of or access to toilets aren’t just infrastructural issues, they constitute structural violence- which can affect women’s health, income and workforce participation. A TVC member from Lalpur market shared that none of the women there wear underwear, even during periods, because it saves time while peeing in a hurry. They tie pads or cloths with a string which can just shift the pad or cloth while sitting. Many women vendors also reported that they didn’t change their pad for the entire day or didn’t wash their vaginal area while changing pads. Women with babies reported challenges in changing the pads or sanitary napkins in front of their child.

Only one female TVC member from Purulia road market, who is a vendor of fancy items, shared that she had raised the issue of toilets in one of the TVC meetings. However she said that these issues weren’t considered important in the regular meetings of the TVC since TVC agendas are mostly set by the government and only a minority of vendors themselves bring up this issue. Another female TVC member stated,

*“I haven’t ever spoken in a meeting. They usually discuss issues related to vendor surveys and certificates, on vending zone and no-vending zones, or creation of shops in the market.”*

#### ***Assessment of Infrastructure-related Safety Concerns in Government-constructed Vending Zones***

Ranchi Municipal Corporation has so far constructed three vending zones in the city – Khadgarha Vegetable Market in 2011, Atal Smriti Vendors’ Market (dry market) in 2021 and Naga Baba Khatal Vegetable Market in 2022. Some findings of the Safety Audits conducted during the study are as follows –

- (i) Sanitation facilities for women and people with disabilities: Toilets were unavailable in Khadgarha Market whereas in Naga Baba Khatal, a toilet was available but it was unclean and unusable for women. This toilet also wasn’t disability friendly, and did not have dustbins to throw menstrual waste. It also lacked soap or hand wash. Women in Naga Baba Khatal also stated that they didn’t know how to use a toilet. In comparison, toilets at Atal Smriti Market were cleaner but lacked soap or changing-areas for babies.
- (ii) Availability of breastfeeding areas/crèches – None of the markets had a separate breastfeeding room for lactating mothers or a separate crèche area for children of women vendors.
- (iii) Facilities for women with disabilities – None of the markets were disability-friendly. In Naga Baba Khatal market, one woman vendor with a motor disability shared that the

slopes in the market were made for only pushcarts and not wheelchairs as they was very sharp. None of the markets had separate wheelchair ramps or braille signage for those with vision disabilities.

- (iv) Resting and storage facilities – Only Atal Smriti Market had storage facilities for vendors, it was unavailable in the other two markets. Since perishable products are sold at Naga Baba Khatal and Khadgarha Markets, they ideally require cool storage facilities. Many women vendors reported that due to dampness in their vending spaces (especially in the basement at Naga Baba Khatal), they often came back to stale vegetables the next day.
- (v) Drinking Water facilities – Drinking water was not available in any market. In Khadgarha, a water tank was available but it had not been cleaned, and therefore had contaminated water which was unfit for drinking. Vendors in all these markets had to buy water for drinking – which was an added expense.
- (vi) Lighting – The lighting was very good at Naga Baba Khatal and Atal Smriti Markets. In Khadgarha Market, there was a private supplier of electricity who charged vendors Rs. 15 for electricity provision through batteries every day.
- (vii) Security Provisions – All markets had provision for security guards, though none of them had a female security guard. Women vendors were not aware about emergency helpline numbers, and they were not displayed anywhere in the vending areas. Women vendors at Atal Smriti Market also shared that they close their shops early and leave because they road outside got very dark. CCTV cameras are installed in Atal Smriti and Naga Baba Khatal markets but they were not functional at Naga Baba Khatal on the day of the audit.

It is evident that the markets constructed by the government were not gender-responsive. This was also a reflection on the priorities of the government while constructing these markets. As articulated by NULM officials,

*“The priority is to get women (including vendors) a space first, so they are protected from eviction. Rest of the things will keep happening. Though, there is a provision for breastfeeding area in the Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017, but the implementation has not been done right by the Ranchi Municipal Corporation.”*

### Economic Security of Women Vendors and their Control over Income and Assets

Most vendors who participated in the study felt proud to have done so well through vending - as they had earned decent money to support their families and provide a good education for their children. One woman vendor also shared that since she started vending, she had become independent and didn't need to ask for money from the men in her house anymore. This sentiment was echoed by some local vendors who had been vending for a long time. A few of these women reported that the money earned by them remained in their hands, or major expenditure decisions were taken together with a male family member.

However, a few of them also reported that monetary decisions were taken by their sons or husbands. The rest had alcoholic husbands and sons who took money from their hands and used it on drinking and gambling. In fact, it was noticed by the researchers that during one of

the FGDs with male family members at 11am, a few had already consumed alcohol and were roaming around in the village.

Vendors shared,

*"I have such bad luck, that I have to earn and give it to my husband only to drink. If I don't give him money, he'll sell rice and buy alcohol. But I keep some money aside for household expenditures."* -Vendor, Naga Baba Khatal

*"Mera beta juan khelta hai, jabardasti paise le jata hai mujhse."* ("My son gambles and takes money from me forcefully.") -Vendor, lane behind Naga Baba Khatal

*"Whatever I earn, I give it to my husband. He takes all the major monetary decisions, I just sell vegetables. I have never faced issues related to money at home. If I need money to buy new clothes, I take it from him. He never says that I have enough clothes and I cannot buy more."*  
-Vendor, Butimod

Most women vendors did not have any assets on their name as their money was either invested in their children's education and marriage, or went into constructing houses whose deeds were in their in-laws' names. A few older women were able to buy land in their own name and build houses for themselves.

In interviews, a few women vendors shared that they end up paying for autos or bikes to be used and driven by the male members of the family. Even if these vehicles were registered in their names, they were prevented by socio-cultural norms to use them independently.

An interesting finding was that a few women vendors reported some health-related issues but said that they couldn't prioritise their treatment over the needs of the family. They shared,

*"I can't see properly. My eyesight has gotten very weak. But I don't go to the doctor for my health problems because most of my earnings get spent at home or on the education of my children."*  
-Vendor, Dangra Toli

*"I have cataract. I am blind in one eye. I went to a public hospital but doctor said that the operation cannot be done as I have high sugar. What do I do? I don't have money to take medicine to control my sugar. My husband is paralysed, he also takes medicines when I have money to give him medicines."* -Elderly vendor, Shalimar Market

## **Women's Perception of their Work**

A large number of women had taken up this work out of compulsion, but they did not always have a negative outlook towards vegetable vending or themselves as vendors. However, they still considered it viable work only for the uneducated because the world viewed their work that way and there were regular eviction drives that made them feel humiliated. Thus, they associated their work with low dignity and respect.

*"Even if I am ok with my daughter doing this, people don't view it as work with dignity, her own mother wouldn't." (Vendor with daughters from her husband's second wife)*

A few vendors also said that it required "street smartness" and patience to do vegetable vending, especially when it came to dealing with customers, and it was difficult for the educated generation to tolerate rude customers on a daily basis.

Some senior vendors felt that the market was better before, when there was lower expenditure on transport and other facilities, and it was now wasteful to put more money in a precarious business like this. On the contrary, a very few young vendors, mostly local ones, felt that vegetable vending still had scope of generating good money, especially if one had land or other assets. A young vendor from Shalimar market shared that she was able to increase her earnings from 250 per day to 800 per day by investing in a scooter through a loan. Now she plans on expanding it by diversifying her vegetables and investing in an auto.

It is noteworthy that while women's presence in street vending was high, vegetable wholesalers were mostly men. Two big wholesale markets in Ranchi – New Daily Market and Khadgarha Market had high numbers of male wholesalers who supplied vegetables at particular hours in the morning, but they rarely engaged in vending. This could be due to differences in women's access or ownership of autos or mini trucks, or restrictive socio-cultural norms against women drivers.

*"Sometimes I think about moving to dry selling, but I won't be able to do it alone. I'll need to involve my husband or my son in that. It's hard to do it with another person outside close relations as there are always trust issues when an outsider is involved." -Vendor, Birsa Chowk*

## **Impact of COVID-19**

80% of the women vendors who used to travel to the city from villages (Type 2 and 3) did not vend during lockdowns (during both pandemic waves) at all as transport services were discontinued and they also reported fear of contracting the disease. However, 45% of the local vendors responded that they vended either during the first wave, or during the second wave, or both.

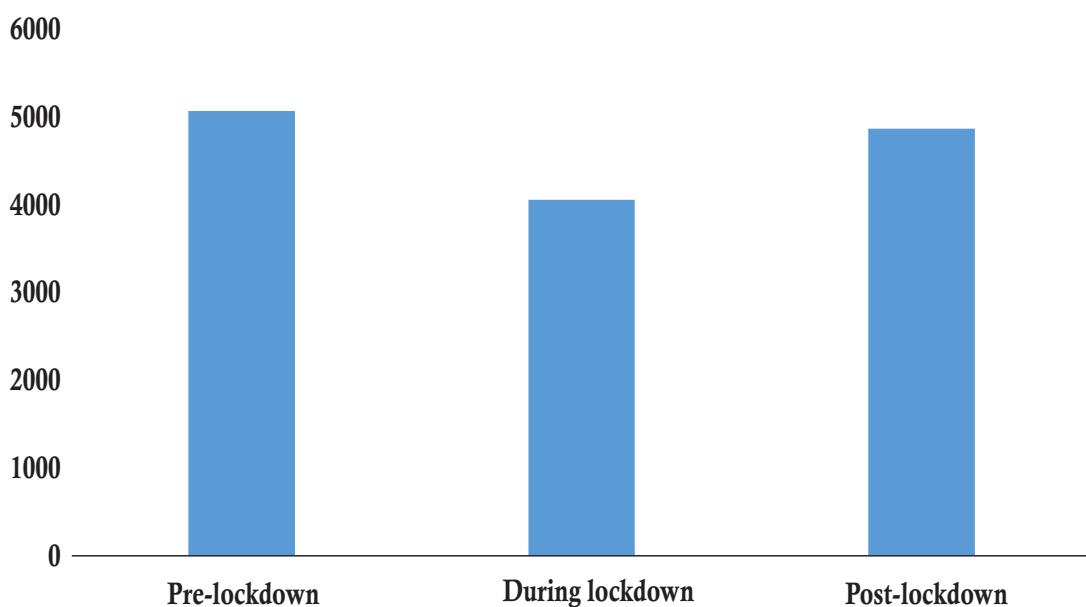
As the number of vendors had reduced in the market, some women with personal vehicles or access to personal vehicles had reported extremely high incomes during the pandemic.

Other vendors who procured locally through wholesalers who brought vegetables to the market earned considerably lower than what they earned before lockdowns, as there were time restrictions for vending. A few women in Khadgarha market reported increased physical harassment by police during lockdowns.

Compared to the pre-lockdown periods, the median income of women who were vending during lockdown was Rs. 1000 lower.

A large proportion of women vendors who experienced a halt in their vending activities during lockdown had reported a dip in their savings during that period, a few reporting complete exhaustion of savings.

### Median Income of Street vendors who vended during lockdown



*Figure 20*

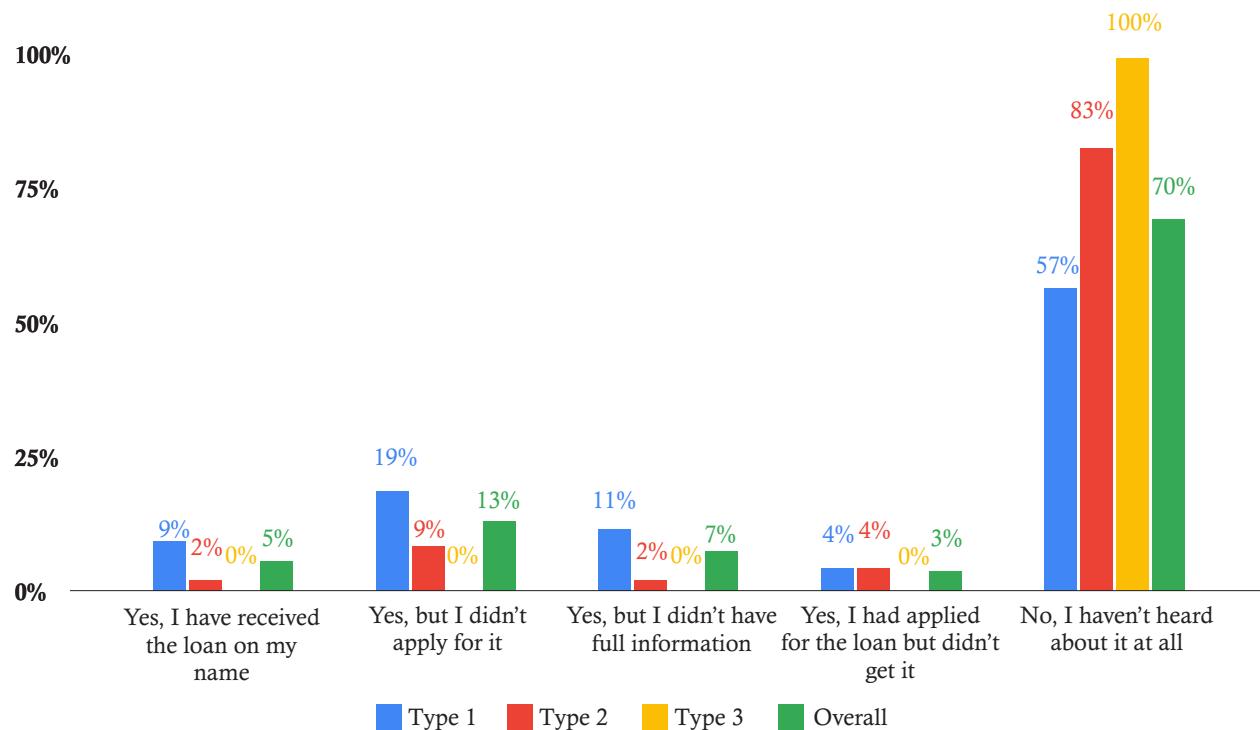
New entrants in the market, mostly women who worked as construction or domestic labourers previously, reported that they lost work due to the pandemic. But when they tried vegetable vending, they realised that it's easier than their previous work and that the returns were also higher.

### Access to Credit Schemes

The Government of India launched a micro-credit scheme for street vendors called SVANidhi under the AtmaNirbhar package in June 2020. It aims to support vendors in dealing with pandemic shocks and restart their business. Along with that, it also keeps a credit score of the street vendors so as to enable them to take higher amounts of loans in the future.

Only 5.4% of the total vendors surveyed reported getting loans in their name under the scheme. Of these, 8% were local vendors, while 2% were those traveling to the city from within Ranchi district (Type 2). Women vendors from outside the Ranchi district (Type 3) reported never hearing about the scheme at all.

## Women vegetable vendors' access to PM Svanidhi credit scheme (expressed in %)



**Figure 21**

Around 13% women vendors in the survey had reported not applying for the SVAnidhi loan. In interviews, most women vendors shared that they were scared of taking the risk of a loan as their earnings were already low and they perceived it as an additional stress point if they couldn't repay it.

A few women vendors during IDIs also weren't fully aware of the terms of loans, and said that according to the information provided by the bank officials, the loan interest was extremely high. One woman vendor from Lowadiah market claimed that the bank official told her that the interest amount would be Rs. 4000 for a sum of Rs. 10,000, and thus, she was being foolish in taking a small loan like this. This was confirmed by another vendor in the same market, who claimed that when she asked about the balance in her account, she realised that she had paid a sum of Rs. 17,000(principal plus interest) for a loan of Rs. 10,000. She said she would discontinue with the second instalment of Rs. 20,000 of the loan.

### **Impact of Membership of Women's Association on Women Vendors**

In Ranchi, owing to the presence of a female employee from the National Hawkers' Federation, women vendors have been organised in many markets under the banner of All India Womens' Hawkers' Federation (AIWHF). In each market, committees of women hawkers were formed and specific attention was given towards their leadership development.

A few members of the federation stated that union membership had given them the strength to deal with difficult situations with government authorities and the police. It also gave them

exposure as they travelled with the union to different states and met leaders from other parts of the country. They also gained self-confidence and a sense of support as the leaders of the federation emphasise on collective power.

A member from Lalpur Market shared,

*"When the federation leaders first came to us and called us for the meeting, we were quiet and just listened. Later, when they asked us to go with them to Kolkata, local people warned me against it. But when I finally went there, I felt so good and empowered. The union taught us how to fight for our rights together."*

However, many women vendors said during the survey that they pay Rs. 5 every day or Rs. 15 every week to someone in the market, but didn't really understand the concept of a membership-based union or federation and the rationale behind paying that money to private individuals there. Union members also expressed that non-local women do not prefer to directly participate in union activities and are the first ones to run in case of evictions. They will fight in the market for space with other vendors but when it comes to fighting with the authorities to save the space, they do not join at all. (Federation Worker)

Though Federation leaders have actively tried to preserve the rights of all vendors, there was visible friction between local and non-local vendors and de-prioritisation of the issues of women vendors traveling from outside Ranchi due to their low presence and visibility in union activities.

While recognising and recruiting these non-local women vendors under the union can be a herculean task, especially those who come once or twice a week, it is also critical to acknowledge specific barriers faced by these women who travel long distances to reach the market. Inclusion of their voices is important for inclusion of their needs in the larger vendor rights movement in the city.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of the study show that women vegetable vendors' experiences of violence are wide-ranging, and extend to their travel times between their homes and their workplaces. They access public spaces for most part of their day, and these consist of expansive geographies (within and outside Ranchi district), requiring heavy dependence on travelling for procurement and vending purposes, and actively negotiating public spaces for earning their livelihoods.

Many women are pushed into vending due to lack of independent income and access to resources and violence inside their homes – all of which are intensified structural inequities such as poverty and lack of opportunities in their villages. Their vulnerabilities extend to their experiences as informal sector workers, where marginalisation is deepened by lack of gender-inclusive infrastructure, incidences of sexual harassment, lack of safety and access to support mechanisms, exploitation and constraints on mobility (both practical and social). Women vendors reported facing harassment – both sexual and otherwise - from male road users, male vendors, ticket collectors in trains, men at railway stations, wholesalers and even members of their family.

The burden of care responsibilities specifically affects younger women and curtails them from regularly vending in the market. Lack of gender-sensitive infrastructure and behavioural conflicts due to the 'outsider' dynamic, also created unsafe working conditions for women vendors travelling from outside Ranchi city – especially tribal women. The primary modes of transportation used by women vendors for travel and procurement of goods are sharing autos and trains and they bear a significant cost burden in transportation due to unavailability of cheaper alternatives or connecting modes at train stations. Moreover, unavailability of credit, and skill support and unpaid care and domestic work all contribute to keeping them in low-paying roles within the street vendor universe.

Thus, one is able to see an interesting relationship between women's safe mobility and livelihoods as they bore monetary losses due to physical and structural violence at multiple levels.

Ultimately, we also see that women negotiate their presence in the markets by internalising the burden of harassment for themselves and other women, and focus on changing themselves to fit in the market and earn their livelihoods. With lack of support from the system and minimal social protections, they remain extremely vulnerable to violence.

### ***Key Recommendations***

The starting point for inclusion is to recognise that street vendors are integral to cities as they provide subsidised goods to the urban poor and middle classes and create socially vibrant city spaces. As seen in the study, even within the informal activity of vending, women are delegated to activities that are not very profitable, and structural factors deny women opportunities for upward mobility – they are therefore often stuck in cycles of poverty and continue to experience violence. They are neither prioritised in urban planning, awareness campaigns, rights

education programmes skill development etc., nor are their concerns addressed by relevant stakeholders. Therefore, they remain precariously perched on the lower-most rungs of the economic and social ladder.

By adopting a rights-based approach to their needs, cities can be reimagined to provide equal and safe spaces and opportunities of growth for women street vendors.

### **Short-term Recommendations (0-3 years)**

#### ***Ranchi Municipal Corporation***

- Ensuring collection of gender, caste/tribe, religion, and disability disaggregated data in the vendor survey, with a proper classification of goods sold by each of them. The participation of AIWHF and women's market committees are key in the collection and organisation of diverse data on street vendors.
- The Corporation is in the process of introducing a 300-bus strong fleet of buses in the city - the routes and timings of the buses should be compatible with women vendor's mobility, especially women traveling from rural blocks. These buses can also introduce proper spaces for women to keep their produce at the rear of the vehicle, as well as have appropriately placed panic buttons in case of any incident of harassment.
- Within the city, RMC can provide subsidised transport services for women vendors in some wholesale markets (like Daily Market, Lalpur bazar, and Khadgarha vending area as these have highest footfall for procurement) connected to different vending markets. These should be operational in women's peak procurement hours of the day (morning and afternoon).

#### ***Department of Women, Child Development and Social Security, Jharkhand***

- Local Committees constituted under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act (2013) should be activated, monitored and awareness about these Committees should be disseminated to women street vendors and other women informal workers.
- For women street vendors, a provision can be incorporated under the Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017 wherein a sub-committee within the TVC can be constituted, with 3/4th representation of women. They will be responsible for handling complaints on issues of harassment faced by women in the markets and at home, and send regular reports on these cases to the Jharkhand State Women's Commission and Department of Women, Child Development and Social Security (Jharkhand Women Development Society).

#### **Lessons from Delhi Street Vendors' Scheme (2019)**

Delhi's state scheme on street vendors (2019) states that the town vending committee is required to create a sub-committee with a majority of women members. This will be responsible for undertaking redressal and awareness activities on sexual harassment. They are required to send regular reports on the cases to the Delhi Women's Commission.

- Annual training programs on the provisions under the POSH Act should be conducted with the sub-committees in partnership with women's non-governmental organisations. These should be accompanied by regular awareness activities on the act in the markets by the sub-committee and the NGO. (*Requires inter-departmental convergence between the Departments of Urban Development and Women Development*)

#### ***DAY-NULM***

- Night shelters for women, like the one at Khadgarha bus station need reparations and cleaning to render them of any use to women. They need to be safe spaces that can be used by women street vendors. There is a need to connect these to markers and vending areas through public buses routes, and they need to be advertised using creative mass campaigns that reach women vendors from far flung areas who don't know how to read and write.

#### **Medium-term Recommendations (5-10 years)**

##### ***Ranchi Municipal Corporation***

- There should be rigorous assessment of the existing vending infrastructure in the city, and basic necessities such as toilets, breastfeeding areas, separate resting areas for women, and storage facilities for perishable products should be made available. This should be complemented with an active grievance redressal system as indicated in the Street Vendors' Act 2014, and emergency helpline numbers should be clearly advertised in these areas.

While these provisions are provided in Jharkhand Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation) Scheme, 2017, there are gaps in its implementation in both government constructed markets such as Naga Baba Khatal and Khadgarha market. Provisions for creches in these government constructed vending areas can also be made.

- The findings in the report point towards two major issues in development of new vending areas –
  - (i) While the government aims to develop twelve major vending zones in the city, there is a dearth of public land to build new vendor markets, as indicated by the local officials and vendor organisations.
  - (ii) Current vegetable vendor markets have also reduced incomes of vendors, and left them with no choice but to shift to the road again and experience increased harassment by the government officials. This was because markets were experiencing low footfall as people preferred to buy from markets located directly on the road or street.

These issues can be mitigated by adopting the model of 'complete streets'<sup>34</sup>, as also suggested by National Hawkers Federation in their contextual report on 'Proposal for Hawkers' Resettlement and Rehabilitation for Ranchi City'. They have identified a few low traffic street pavements which can be redesigned to include vendors, particularly women vegetable vendors, as studies have shown that their presence in the market creates perception of safety for women

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<sup>34</sup> <https://smartnet.niua.org/sites/default/files/resources/4-complete-streets-design-workbook.pdf>

vendors, customers and other road users. These streets in the markets around the railway station can have some dedicated slots for women vendors who travel from remote villages, or other districts to the markets and they can sit there on day and time sharing basis.

#### ***All India Women's Hawkers' Federation***

- The All Indian Women's Hawkers' Federation has played a significant role in advancing women's participation and leadership in the markets. More efforts can be made to build leadership of non-local and tribal women by creating specific unions of women who are traveling from outside Ranchi. It is also imperative to have representation from that group in the TVC.
- At the level of All India Women's Hawkers Federation, market-wise committees of women vendors have been created but they need regular training on building an understanding on issues related to violence against women, and supporting women vendors in filing complaints with the TVC.
- TVC members need to be given gender-sensitisation and VAW training in order to raise these issues in their meetings as well.

#### ***Village Panchayats***

- Panchayats need to play an active role in ensuring safe mobility of women vendors by incorporating funds dedicated to providing infrastructural facilities like toilets, street lighting and subsidies to women who use auto-rickshaws to transport their produce. Funds also need to be allocated at this level to provide services to address VAW at the village level.

#### **Long-term Recommendations (10 years-15 years)**

##### ***Ranchi Municipal Corporation and DAY-NULM***

- Women expressed their desire to expand their business and move to dry selling, but they lack capital and technical know-how to make that switch. As conceptualised under DAY-NULM, a few dedicated programs can be designed with the help of the Federation to help them in acquiring skill development and access to credit, and facilitate upward mobility for them.

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