

A Study on Impact of Mobile Food Carts on Women Entrepreneurship in Coimbatore City

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Abstract—This study examines how mobile food carts support women entrepreneurship by providing an easy and affordable way for women to start their own businesses. Many women choose this work to earn money and support their families. The study was based on data from 53 women food cart operators in Coimbatore, collected through a questionnaire. The data was analysed using simple percentage, ANOVA, and Chi-square methods. The results show that even women with basic education were able to run their business and earn income. However, they faced challenges like rising costs, competition, and managing both family and work. Overall, the study finds that mobile food carts help women become financially independent and build confidence, and with better support and guidance, their businesses can grow further.

Index Terms—Mobile Food Cart, Women Entrepreneurship, Self Employment, Business Management, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women entrepreneurship helps women earn income and improve their living standards. One of the most accessible business options is mobile food carts, which require low investment, basic cooking skills, and minimal infrastructure. In cities like Coimbatore, the increasing demand for quick and affordable food has created more opportunities for women in this field. Running a mobile food cart not only provides income but also helps women develop skills like financial management, customer interaction, and decision-making, while boosting their confidence and independence. Even though government schemes and self-help groups provide support, women still struggle

with issues like lack of finance, strong competition, and managing both family and work.

II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

In Coimbatore city, many women have taken up food cart business to earn income and support their families. This requires low investment and allows women to utilize their cooking skills effectively. They are involved in day-to-day activities such as purchasing raw materials, preparing food, serving customers, and managing finances, while also fulfilling their household responsibilities. Despite their efforts, they face challenges such as limited access to finance, increasing competition, and irregular income. This study focuses on understanding the opportunities provided by mobile food carts, the way women manage their business activities, and the challenges faced by women.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study the role of mobile food carts in providing self-employment opportunities for women.
- 2) To analyze how women manage day-to-day business activities in mobile food cart operations.
- 3) To understand the challenges faced by women in sustaining and expanding their businesses.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study population consists of 53 Women Mobile food cart operators in the city of Coimbatore, which is considered adequate for this study. The inferences

collected from the respondents based on their viewpoint.

The collected data has been analyzed through:

1. Simple percentage
2. Chi-square
3. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gurupandi et al. (2025), in their study “Exploring the Strategic Approaches and Business Practices Adopted by Women Entrepreneurs in the Street Food Industry,” found that women focus on good food quality, regular customers, and understanding customer needs to run their business. Even with low money and little training, they showed strong determination and adaptability. The study suggests that proper training and financial support can help improve their business growth.

Baral et al. (2023), in their study “Women Entrepreneurs in India: A Systematic Literature Review,” found that women play an important role in economic growth and job creation. However, they face issues like lack of finance, social barriers, and limited support. The study suggests policy support, skill training, and financial help for their growth.

Muthulakshmi and Tamilselvi (2023), in their study “Problems and Prospectus of Women Street Vendors,” found that women vendors face problems like low finance, poor infrastructure, and high competition. Still, street vending gives good income opportunities. The study highlights the need for government support and better working conditions.

VI. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

Mobile Food Cart:

Mobile food carts are small and movable units used to prepare and sell food in different places. They are affordable and commonly found in busy areas like markets, bus stands, and schools. Their mobility helps vendors reach more customers and earn better income.

Types of Food Cart:

Mobile food carts can be classified into different types based on their structure, mobility, and method of operation such as Push carts, Bicycle or tricycle carts, Motorized carts, Stationary carts. These different types provide flexibility for women entrepreneurs to

choose based on their investment capacity, convenience, and business needs.

Key Features of Mobile Food Cart:

Mobile food carts are known for their simplicity and flexibility, making them suitable for small-scale entrepreneurs. Mobile food carts need low investment and are easy to manage. They are portable, require basic skills, and allow flexible working hours. They also help in earning income quickly and developing basic business skills.

Growth of Women Entrepreneurship:

Women entrepreneurship refers to women starting and running their own businesses. Over time, more women have entered business due to better education and support. Today, women are becoming financially independent, supporting their families, and contributing to economic and social development.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. Simple Percentage and Frequency Analysis:

Table 1.1 Age of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 25	11	20.8
25-35	18	34.0
36-45	14	26.4
Above 45	10	18.9
Total	53	100.0

Table 1.2 Educational Qualification of the respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
No Formal Education	8	15.1
School level	20	37.7
Diploma	4	7.5
Under Graduate	13	24.5
Post Graduate	8	15.1
Total	53	100.0

Table 1.3 Marital Status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	35	66.0
Unmarried	14	26.4
Widow	4	7.5
Total	53	100.0

Table 1.4 Types of Food items Sold in Food carts by the respondents

Types of Food items	Frequency	Percent
Snacks	4	7.5
Meals\Tiffin items	19	35.8
Beverages	4	7.5
Fast foods	11	20.8
Desserts	9	17.0
Combination of multiple categories	6	11.3
Total	53	100.0

Table 1.5 Employment Status before starting the food cart of the respondents

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Homemaker	22	41.5
Daily wage worker	13	24.5
Private employee	9	17.0
Unemployed	9	17.0
Total	53	100.0

2. Chi-Square Analysis:

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and contribution towards their major family expenses.

H1: There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and contribution towards their major family expenses.

Table 2.1 Relationship Between Age and Contribution Towards Major Family Expenses

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.243 ^a	9	.045
Likelihood Ratio	18.250	9	.032
Linear-by-Linear Association	.050	1	.824
N of Valid Cases	53		

Note: S: Significant (p value<=0.05) NS: Not Significant (p value>0.05)

Interpretation:

Most respondents aged 25–35 show a high level of contribution, while those below 25 mostly show a moderate level. The p-value (0.045) is less than 0.05,

so there is a significant relationship between age and contribution to family expenses. This means age affects how much respondents contribute. The null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant relationship between average daily income range from the cart business and working hours per day.

H1: There is a significant relationship between average daily income range from the cart business and working hours per day.

Table 2.2 Relationship Between Average Daily Income Range and Working Hours Per Day

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.915 ^a	9	.218
Likelihood Ratio	8.470	9	.488
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.030	1	.310
N of Valid Cases	53		

Note: S: Significant (p value<=0.05) NS: Not Significant (p value>0.05)

Interpretation:

The table shows most respondents earning Rs.1, 001–Rs.2, 000 and Rs.2, 001–Rs.3, 000 work between 4–8 hours per day.

The Chi-Square test gives a p-value of 0.218, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, working hours do not significantly influence the income earned from the business. The null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

3. Anova:

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference in the challenges faced among respondents with different years of experience.

H1: There is a significant difference in the challenges faced among respondents with different years of experience.

Table 3.1 Differences in Challenges Faced Across Years of Experience

Factors	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Rising cost of raw materials affects my profit	10.092	3	3.364	2.861	.046
Lack of access to loans limits my business growth.	1.600	3	.533	.494	.688
Finding a good location is difficult for my business.	2.624	3	.875	.814	.492
Competition from other vendors reduces my income.	2.246	3	.749	.753	.526
Weather conditions affect my daily sales.	2.397	3	.799	.667	.577
Family responsibilities affect business focus.	12.001	3	4.000	4.463	.008
Safety concerns affect my work confidence.	4.098	3	1.366	1.392	.256

Interpretation:

The analysis examines the difference in challenges faced across different years of experience.

For rising cost of raw materials, the p-value ($0.046 < 0.05$) indicates a significant difference, meaning respondents with different experience levels are affected differently by raw material costs. For lack of access to loans (0.688), finding a good location (0.492), competition (0.526), weather conditions (0.577), and safety concerns (0.256), the p-values are greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference among experience groups. For family responsibilities affecting business focus, the p-value ($0.008 < 0.05$) shows a highly significant difference, meaning this challenge varies notably with years of experience.

Hence, the null hypothesis is partially rejected and partially accepted.

9. The majority of the respondents (64.2%) used personal savings as their source of capital to start food cart business.
10. The majority of the respondents (37.7%) operated their carts with one helper.
11. Most of the respondents (35.8%) began their business with an investment between Rs.20,001 – Rs.1,00,000.
12. Many respondents (34%) had experience between 1-3 years.
13. The majority of the respondents (39.6%) earned middle-level income between Rs.1,001 – Rs.2,000.
14. Many respondents (45.3%) worked between 4-6 hours per day.
15. Most of the respondents (47.2%) planned to start a permanent outlet as future business growth and expansion.

VIII. FINDINGS

Simple Percentage Analysis:

1. The majority of the respondents (34%) belonged to the 25-35 years age group.
2. The majority of the respondents (37.7%) had school-level education.
3. The majority of the respondents (66%) were married women.
4. Most of the food carts (66%) were located on the roadside.
5. The majority of the respondents (60.4%) preferred personal observation to identify their business location.
6. The most commonly sold food items (35.8%) were meals/tiffin items by the respondents.
7. The majority of the respondents (41.5%) were homemaker before starting their food carts.
8. The majority of the respondents (58.5%) operated their food carts as a full-time business.

IX. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

1. There is no significant relationship between previous occupation and income improvement (compared to starting stage).
2. There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and contribution towards their major family expenses.
3. There is no significant relationship between average daily income range from the cart business and working hours per day.
4. There is a significant relationship between marital status of the respondents and contribution towards their major family expenses.

X. ANOVA

1. There is no significant difference between years of experience and business stability & growth.

2. There is no significant difference between educational level and self-employment & independence.
3. There is a partial significant difference in the challenges faced among respondents with different years of experience.

XI. CONCLUSION:

The study highlights that mobile food carts help women create their own jobs and become financially independent, even with limited resources. Many women manage their businesses on their own, make decisions, and handle family responsibilities confidently.

Despite the challenges, most women earn a steady income, and their business improves over time, regardless of their education or experience. Overall, with proper support like finance, training, and basic facilities, mobile food cart businesses can grow and help women improve their livelihoods.

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