ACCESSING DECENT WORK CONDITIONS:
A STUDY OF WOMEN STREET VENDORS IN DELHI, INDIA

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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July 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis titled 'Accessing Decent Work Conditions: A study of women street vendors in Delhi, India' is my original work. All quoted sources have been duly indicated, attributed and acknowledged through references, and this thesis has not been previously submitted for the application of any degree.

Shweta Sharma

ABSTRACT

The informal economy is characterised by severe 'decent work' deficits that disproportionately impact women. These deficits can potentially be reduced when workers are able to access resources that improve their work conditions (ILO, 2002a, 2013c). This research draws on New Labour Market Segmentation (NLMS) approach to propose a gendered explanation for the greater difficulties women face in accessing formal jobs and resources required for decent work conditions. The study identifies multiple dimensions of gendered segmentation within the street vending sector in Delhi arising from an interplay of structural factors experienced differently by women across the life course.

Analysis of 110 semi-structured interviews with vendors and officials of the National Hawker Federation (NHF) in Delhi highlights the role of patriarchal norms in public and private spheres in structuring women's entry into street vending. Structural constraints arising from the patriarchal norms and traditions, intersectional discrimination and transitions in roles and status across the life cycle of women lead to the segmentation of labour within street vending. Key issues to access jobs and resources to attain decent work conditions include the familial restrictions on women's access to education, their ability to work and the type of work they engage in; the discrimination and harassment of women at their workplace; and the greater burden of social reproduction women face in the home which leads them to prefer more flexible forms of work. In addition, the study faults the incompetence of the state agencies for their ineffectiveness in addressing these issues through existing laws and programmes.

This study makes essential practical and policy-level recommendations for the provision of infrastructure for women in markets by the municipal authorities, suggesting appropriate policies to deal with workplace corruption and advocating social dialogue through tripartite links with law enforcement agencies and CSOs.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND SYMBOLS

AIWHF	All India Women Hawker Federation
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief
CITU	Centre for Indian Trade Unions
CMO	Chief Minister's Office
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CoV	Certificate of Vending
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governanc
DfID	Department for International Development
DRPKHU	Delhi Rehri Patri Khomcha Hawkers Union (Delhi Street Vendors and Hawkers Union)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HCAB	Health Care Access Barriers
HSF	Hawkers Suraksha Foundation (Hawkers Protection Foundation)
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-PREALC	International Labour Organization-Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean
IPT	Intermediate Public Transport
ITI	Indian Technical Institute
KENASVIT	Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders
LCT	Life Course Theory

MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NASVI	National Association of Street Vendors of India
NCT	National Capital Territory
NDMC	New Delhi Municipal Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHF	National Hawker Federation
NITI	National Institution for Transforming India (Planning Commission)
NLMS	New Labour Market Segmentation
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PCA	Police Complaint Authority
PKL	Pedagang Kaki Lima (Food and drinks vendors)
PT	Public Transport
RPFVEM	Rehri Patri Footpath Vikreta Ekta Manch
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SEWU	Self Employed Women's Union
SL	Sustainable Livelihoods
SRF	Social Reproduction Feminists
TA	Template Analysis
TVC	Town Vending Committee
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United National Development Programme
WEP	World Employment Programme
WPR	Work Participation Rate
₹	Indian Rupee
£	British Pound Sterling

INDIGENOUS TERMS (HINDI LANGUAGE)

Aadhar card	Unique identification number issued by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to the residents and passport holders of India.
Anganwadi	Courtyard shelter.
Aribharat	Highly ornamental form of embroidery which is produced in the Kutch region of Gujarat.
Beldar	Construction workers who excavate and carry mud, bricks and sand to construction sites.
Challan	Receipts issued by municipal authorities to the street vendors for confiscation of their merchandise.
Gadia Lohar	Nomadic community of Rajasthan involved in the manufacturing and sale of iron utensils and tools.
Godown	Warehouse or a place for storing goods.
Gujarati	Language and the people of Gujarat, a state in India.
Hafta	Money illegally collected periodically by gangsters and corrupt policemen.
Jhuggi Jhopri	A slum dwelling typically made of mud and corrugated iron.
Kanbi	Community of Saurashtra specialising in embroidery using large mirrors framed in metal for a bold effect.
Kathi	Community of Saurashtra specialising in a form of embroidery, which is popularly known as Kathi embroidery.
Mandi	Market place where farmers sell their produce to the buyers.

Mehendi	Also known as henna, is a form of body art and temporary skin decoration common in the Indian Subcontinent.
Mochi	Community of shoemakers in India.
Pradhan	President.
Rabari	Community of Gujarat specialising in embroidery using vibrantly coloured threads and mirrors on black fabric and other dark-coloured surfaces.
Rajasthani	Language and people of Rajasthan, a state in India.
Tehbazari	License for street vending within municipal areas of Delhi.
Tempo	A three-wheeled Light Commercial Vehicle (LCV).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the first chapter is to introduce this thesis by providing a general overview of the informal economy. This chapter also outlines the rationale for conducting this research, and its significance, aim, objectives and research questions. The chapter concludes by explaining the structure of this thesis.

1.2 Research background

The ILO (2002b) defines the informal economy as encompassing economic work done by workers or economic entities, legally or outside the formal arrangements. The concept of *employment in the informal economy* has progressively developed over time. The Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (15th ICLS) suggested a global definition of employment in the informal sector in 1993. *Employment in the informal sector* comprises all temporary, contractual or part-time work in informal enterprises. The term enterprise refers to a unit that either employs workers or is owned or operated by an individual working for their account to produce goods or services for sale (ILO, 2013a). Informal sector enterprises comprise the individual or household enterprises for which inadequate financial accounts are available, which may undertake production activities either inside or outside their home, on identifiable premises (such as home-based workers) or without a fixed place (such as taxi-drivers and street vendors) (ILO, 1993). Thus, the 15th ICLS Resolution has defined the informal sector as the enterprises where production activities take place (enterprise approach) rather than the characteristics of the individuals involved (labour approach). Thus, according to the concept of informal sector employment, only people working in the informal sector enterprises are considered employed in the informal sector. However, this definition is problematic. It makes it difficult to measure people whose economic activities are between

the categories of own-account workers and paid employees, such as people who are paid employees and free-lancers simultaneously (ILO, 2002b).

In 2003, the Labour Statisticians and the Delhi Expert Group at the Seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (17th ICLS) expanded the definition of informal economy by combining the concepts of *employment in the informal sector* and *informal employment* (ILO, 2002b). *Informal employment* includes specific categories of work. These categories include informal entity employers and workers; employees with informal jobs; family members of informal enterprise employers; own-account workers producing goods for consumption; and own-account workers hired by informal sector enterprises (Hussmanns, 2004). Therefore, *informal employment* includes all casual work in formal or informal enterprises. The term 'informal sector' does not capture informality's dynamic and heterogeneous aspects. Therefore, it was replaced by the term 'informal economy', which comprises a varied group of informally operating workforce and enterprises (ILO, 2002a) and includes both 'employment in the informal sector' and 'informal employment'. Both concepts represent different dimensions of 'informalisation' and thus are complementary to each other (ILO, 2013a). For example, street vending as an informal economy activity includes not only street vendors as entrepreneurs but also family members of these vendors who contribute to the business and other helpers hired by these own-account workers to help them on their stall. Moreover, street vendors as enterprises are a diverse group, including stall owners on the one hand and service providers such as cobblers and roadside barbers on the other. Informality is prevalent in all countries of the world irrespective of their level of development, although it is more widespread in developing

countries[1]. According to a report published by Bonnet, Leung and Chacaltana (2018) on behalf of the ILO, 69 per cent of the working population in emerging and developing countries are in informal employment compared to only 18.3 per cent of the working population in developed countries. As per the report published by the ILO in 2018, around 2 billion people work informally, with Africa (85.8 per cent), the Arab world (68.6 per cent) and Asia (68.2 per cent) having the highest proportion of their population employed in the informal economy (Bonnet *et al.*, 2018). Despite the informal economy being legally non-compliant with employment and business regulations and associated with exploitation and marginality, it substantially contributes to developing countries' economies (Darbi *et al.*, 2018).

1.3   Rationale and significance of the study

Cross (2000) argues that street vending is one of the informal economy's most evident forms of work. A street vendor is an individual who sells merchandise or food items or offers

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[1] The term 'developing countries' here has been borrowed from the country classification systems in IMF (emerging and developing countries), UNDP (developing countries) and World Bank (low- and middle-income countries alternatively referred to as developing countries) (Nielsen, 2011). Initially, the term developing countries was used roughly to relate to the process of transforming toward economic growth, specifically, an expansion in production, per capita consumption, and income (Nkusi, 2018). Although the term is used in this thesis, it is important to recognise that it is a contested term. For some scholars, the term implies that developing countries' are inferior to 'developed countries' and that the 'developing countries' should follow the 'Western' model of economic development (which some 'developing countries', such as Cuba and Bhutan have refused to do) (Song, 2014). For Kessi *et al.* (2022) the developed-developing countries denote coloniser-colonised relationships and a way for the rich developing countries to exploit the poor developing countries. Furthermore, Rosling (2013) contests the bifurcation of the world into developed and developing countries because there are many countries, such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Cuba, that do not fit neatly into either category. Because of such criticisms, the World Bank discontinued the use of the terms 'developing and developed countries' in 2018 and instead, now refers to them as the 'low and middle-income countries' and 'upper middle-income economies', respectively (Nkusi, 2018). However, the term 'developing world' is not disliked by all Indian scholars. For example, Dipa Sinha, an economist and researcher at the Center for Equity Studies in New Delhi supports the usage of the term in the Indian context because she argues that the country lags behind on many human development indicators, which suggests that the country can be placed in the category of a 'developing' country (Silver, 2015). However, there is no consensus on the use of these terms. If geographical labelling such as 'global south' is used to represent poor countries in the Southern Hemisphere, then that term is also contested because some countries in the 'global North' (for example, Haiti) are impoverished and many rich countries such as Australia, New Zealand etc. are in the south (Silver, 2021)..

services to the public on a footpath, street or any public or private area, either from a temporary built-up structure or by roaming from one place to another (Government of India, 2009). The importance of street vending in India can be gauged from the fact that the country has a National Policy for Urban Street Vendors and the Protection of Livelihood and the Regulation of Street Vending Act (commonly referred to as the Street Vendors Act). These documents confirm that the Government of India accepts street vending as a significant livelihood source (Government of India, 2009b, 2014). India has more than ten million street vendors, and street vending has been recognised as a critical source of employment for the urban poor (Government of India, 2004). The Indian government acknowledges that workers in the informal sector and informally employed workers are tremendously vulnerable to exclusion from decent work (Mander, 2014). Among the informally employed, the street vendors suffer from conspicuous decent work deficits (Saha, 2009).

According to the ILO (2008), decent work refers to 'productive work' that provides adequate incomes to workers, protects their rights, offers social protection, and gives them the freedom to show their concerns and unite and participate in decision-making. In 2002, the International Labour Conference recognised that informality globally covers a range of decent work deficits (ILO, 2002a). These decent work deficits are reflected in exposure to dangerous working conditions or lack of access to social security schemes and other labour protection regulations (ILO, 2014). In most developing countries, a significant proportion of street vendors are women who suffer from decent work deficits (ILO, 2013c). For example, studies of street vendors have emphasised that women earn less than men and are also more prone to harassment from police officials and public authorities internationally (Agnello and Moller, 2006; Saha, 2009; Narayan, 2011; Bhowmik and Saha, 2012; Chirau, 2012; Sharma, 2014; Mosammam *et al.*, 2018).

Decent work deficits are visible not only in lower incomes and lack of social dialogue but also in access to resources required for decent work conditions in their present occupation. For example, Baliyan and Srivastava (2016), in their paper on street vendors of Lucknow, a city in India, found that the earnings of women vendors were significantly less than the male vendors' restricted access to finance to start their business. While the primary source of credit for women vendors to start their business was their close relatives, the male vendors had several options, such as borrowing from money lenders or taking loans from banks. Similarly, Sharma (2015), in a study of the travel patterns of street vendors in Delhi, found that women vendors' choice of the workplace was severely restricted by the lack of safety associated with specific modes of transport. Women travelled to their workplace primarily by bus as it was considered a 'safe' mode of transport compared to autos. In contrast, male vendors had access to various modes of transportation besides public transport, such as motorcycles, bicycles and automobiles. Similarly, women feared walking alone to their house at night, which was not the case for male vendors.

The ILO (2002a) has emphasised that decent work deficits in the informal economy cannot be addressed through legalisation alone. Emphasis also needs to be placed on making resources, such as markets and infrastructure, accessible to casual workers. Access to infrastructure and essential services increases the power and agency of women vendors, lessens their workload, and increases the extent of time they can devote to productive activities (ILO, 2013c; UN Women, 2015). For example, women are generally expected to work in substandard jobs in the informal economy because they give them the flexibility to prioritise their care responsibilities over their paid work. Thus the provision of public care services can ensure that women can take up job opportunities available in the formal economy (ILO, 2018a).

1.4   Aim, objectives and research questions

This thesis examines the barriers that prevent women from accessing formal jobs and the resources required for decent work conditions. A comprehensive framework of access proposed by Penchansky and Thomas (1981) and later modified by Saurman (2016) is used to identify the barriers faced by vendors along five dimensions of access, namely affordability, availability, accommodation, awareness, acceptability and geographic accessibility. Three objectives were formulated to achieve the broader aim of this research:

a) To analyse the barriers women face in exercising their agency to access jobs in the formal sector.

b) To evaluate theoretical explanations for women's motives to commence street vending.

c) To consider the extent to which gender inequality theories can explain why street vendors lack access to resources required for decent work conditions.

This thesis posed the following questions to achieve these objectives:

a) What barriers prevent women from accessing formal work?

b) What are the motives for women to commence street vending?

c) Which resources are relevant to attain decent work conditions for women vendors?

d) What barriers prevent women from accessing resources for decent work?

1.5   Structure of the thesis

The thesis comprises seven chapters. *Chapter One: Introduction* sets the contextual background of this research. It explains the rationale and contribution of this research besides setting out the aim, objectives and research questions. *Chapter Two: Literature Review* discusses the relevant literature on the informal economy, decent work and access framework. The chapter concludes with a critical analysis of women's access to resources in the context of decent work. *Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology* discusses the

methodological framework adopted for this research. It explains and rationalises the philosophical assumptions and research strategy underpinning the study, the research design and the methods used for data collection, the procedures for data analysis and the ethical issues addressed before, during and after data collection. *Chapter Four: Barriers to accessing jobs in the formal sector* discusses the factors obstructing women's access to formal work. *Chapter Five: Motives for street vending* explores vendors' motives for engaging in this work. *Chapter Six: Barriers to accessing resources* focuses on the barriers that restrict vendors' access to five types of resources: institutional, social, physical, human and financial. The barriers to accessing resources have been analysed through an access framework borrowed from the public health literature. *Chapter Seven: Discussion and conclusion* discuss this research's theoretical and conceptual contributions and the policy and practical implications for the national and state governments, civil society organisations and municipal authorities. It also discusses the limitations of this research and possible directions for further investigation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review is presented under five broad themes. While the *first theme* explores the concept of the informal economy, the *second theme* discusses the various theories explaining gender inequality in the labour and employment market. The *third* and the *fourth* themes deliberate on the concept of decent work and concepts of resources, access and barriers to access. The *final section* discusses gendered access to resources and decent work. The chapter concludes by identifying gaps in the current literature, specifically regarding access to resources that can improve women's working conditions in the informal economy.

2.2 Conceptualising the informal economy

There has been an ongoing debate regarding the reasons for the evolution of the informal economy from the 1970s until the present day. This debate can be divided into four dominant schools of thought: the Dualist, Structuralist, Legalist, and Voluntarist. However, Perry *et al.* (2007) have argued that explanations offered by any one school of thought are insufficient to explain the rationale for the existence of the informal economy. Instead, there is a need for a holistic approach which can account for the origin and perpetuation of different types of informality.

Although Hart (1973) used the term 'informal sector' for the first time, its foundation can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s. During the 1950s, social scientists and policymakers believed that impoverished traditional economies represented by small traders and a whole spectrum of casual jobs would transform into modern formal market economies, in developing countries, through an optimal combination of economic policies and resources. This perspective was supported by the successful rebuilding of European and Japanese economies after World War II and the expanded demand and job creation due to industrial

development in Europe and North America (Chen *et al.*, 2004). Development experts expected that the informal economy would disappear with the increasing industrialisation and modernisation (formalisation) of national economies because the modern capitalist sector would subsume the traditional sector.

By the late 1960s, it had become apparent that the developing world was suffering from a substantial unemployment problem that was not responding to economic development endeavours of specialised agencies of the UN such as the ILO, UNESCO OR UNIDO. In 1969, the ILO launched the World Employment Programme (WEP), which sent seven comprehensive employment missions from 1970 to 1976 that thoroughly analysed employment challenges in these countries (Jolly *et al.*, 2004).

During one such comprehensive mission to Kenya, Keith Hart, a British anthropologist, introduced the expression 'informal sector'. Hart (1973) saw casual workers as a 'reserve army'[2] drawn from redundant and underemployed workers in towns. These workers lacked the skills required by the formal sector. For Hart, informality was synonymous with self-employment. Hart's use of the term 'informal sector' laid the foundation for the Dualist school of thought, which is closely linked to Modernisation theory (Williams and Gurtoo, 2012). Dualists view the informal sector as separate and distinct from the formal sector, providing income for the poor and a safety net in times of crisis (ILO, 1972; Hart, 1973; Sethuraman, 1976; Tokman, 1978). Dualists argue that work in the informal sector would eventually disappear with the expansion of industrialisation[3]. According to the Dualists, the economic system comprises two distinct sectors: the 'modern' formal sector and the

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[2] A term coined by Engels (1845) and later used by Marx (1867) refers to the jobless population of workers. This reserve army of the unemployed is maintained by the high population growth rate, displacement of workers by technology and the consistent tendency for large firms to outperform small firms (forcing owners of these small firms to become workers).

[3] Most economists during the 1950s and 1960s argued that economic growth and industrialisation would lead to increase in labour demand and subsequent integration of all informal economic activity into the modern or formal sector (Chen, 2005).

'traditional' informal sector. The formal and informal sectors have also been referred to as the firm-centred' economy and the 'bazaar' economy (Geertz, 1963), two different production systems evolving from the capitalist and the peasant system, respectively (McGee, 1973), dynamic and non-dynamic sectors (Weeks, 1975), protected and unprotected sectors (Mazumdar, 1976) and the 'upper circuit' and 'lower circuit' of the economy (Santos, 1979). Dualists view the informal sector as an income provider to the poor and a source of security during economic slowdown (Hart, 1973; Tokman, 1978), which is ultimately absorbed by the formal sector during industrial growth and modernization (Becker, 2004).

By the 1980s, it had become clear that, contrary to the predictions of the Dualists, the informal sector was not vanishing with increasing industrialisation in poorer countries. Therefore, researchers sought to explain the perpetuation of informality worldwide. Two parallel perspectives were identified by Rakowski (1994a) as plausible explanations for the perpetuation of the informal economy, especially in developing economies. These perspectives were jointly referred to as the Structuralist school. The first perspective within the Structuralist school is the ILO-PREALC (International Labour Organisation-Programa Regional del Empleo para America Latina y el Caribe) perspective. The ILO-PREALC perspective regards informalisation as a survival strategy for either perpetually poor households or people who become redundant due to economic downturns or structural adjustment policies (Mezzera, 1987; Tokman, 1987; Tokman, 1992). The second perspective, termed the underground economy perspective, is rooted in Marxist political economy and emphasises the role of international competition in exacerbating informalisation through extensive sub-contracting and piece-workers (Portes and Sassen-Koob, 1987; Berger, 1989). According to this perspective, it is primarily women who are engaged in these types of subcontracting and piece-working environments (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Castells and Portes, 1989). The associations between workers engaged in formal and informal enterprises

were analysed in the economies of Bogota (De Pardo *et al.*, 1989), Guadalajara (Roberts, Bryan, 1989), Uruguay (Fortuna and Prates, 1989) and South Africa (Meagher, 1995) in terms of mechanisms for subordinating labour whereby large firms subcontract out some economic activities to the informal sector, producing class cleavages.

Both the ILO-PREALC and the underground economy perspectives consider informality to be an outcome of economic restructuring and crisis and accept the heterogeneous nature of the informal economy (Peattie, 1987; Portes and Sassen-Koob, 1987; Castells and Portes, 1989). Another similarity between the 'ILO-PREALC' and 'underground economy' perspectives is their view on the linkages between informality and worker poverty (Castells and Portes, 1989). Both perspectives consider informal economies as 'growth' economies. These economies thrive under conditions of technical progression (e.g., informal entrepreneurs in Central Italy transforming into a grid of small-scale firms specializing in high-tech, high-fashion products) and international trade alignment (e.g., a network of small informal producers in Hong Kong promoting their merchandise through dedicated import-export houses) (Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989).

The Legalist school, closely associated with neoliberal economic theory, also gained prominence during the 1980s. Its most widely known exponent is the Peruvian economist, Hernando De Soto. De Soto contended that government procedures and regulations are the underlying cause of informality, particularly in Latin American countries (De Soto 1989). Taking the example of his native Peru, he explained how rural migrants to Lima became informal workers due to legal barriers preventing them from participating in the mainstream economy. To understand the complexity of the legal obstacles, De Soto set up a small garment factory in the early 1980s with two sewing machines in a shantytown. He found that it took him approximately ten months and a substantially higher cost than the average monthly minimum wage before he could procure a factory license (De Soto, 1989). He

concluded that giving access to private property rights and minimal state intervention would allow small-scale entrepreneurs to register and grow to their maximum productive potential (De Soto, 1989, 2000). In other words, the Legalists contend that burdensome and complex government procedures and costs compel micro-enterprises to avoid formal registration and instead operate informally. In addition, working in the informal economy gives firms the benefits of reducing the influence of labour unions and cutting labour costs, thereby increasing their ability to compete. These firms aim to avoid or limit the impact of state regulation (Chen, 2012).

In the early 2000s, an alternative approach to explaining the persistence of the informal economy, known as the voluntarist school, emerged. It was inspired by post-Structuralist and post-Capitalist thought and went beyond arguments that viewed the existence of the informal sector in purely economic and financial terms (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Bourdieu, 2008). According to Voluntarists, people enter the informal sector to access broader social ties and networks, to supplement income earned through formal employment (Williams and Round, 2009), to avoid the manipulation and exploitation of the formal economy (Adom and Williams, 2014) and to re-discover their self-identity (Snyder, 2004). Thus, workers prefer to work informally, not merely due to economic or financial gains, but after evaluating informality's socio-economic benefits and costs compared to formality (Maloney, 2004).

The four schools of thought differ in their explanations for the underlying causes of informality, as mentioned above, and the way they view the role of government. Structuralists view government intervention as essential for the provision of social safety to informal workers, and Legalists campaign for the elimination of all forms of state interference in the economy (aside from the provision of private property rights) as the market can optimally allocate resources to all workers (Williams, 2013). The Legalist school argues that if the state regulates work, informal workers will keep working informally to avoid the expensive and

time-consuming legal procedures of registering their enterprises and procuring a license to operate legally (De Soto, 1989; Chen, 2012). Thus, Legalist theory argues that microenterprises choose to function informally to avoid the cost and time burdens of the formal sector (De Soto, 1989; Macias and Cazzavillan, 2009). There is also a difference in how the four schools perceive the relationship between the formal and informal sectors. The Dualists see few connections between the formal and informal economy and perceive the informal sector as a discrete segment of the economy. In contrast, Structuralists perceive the formal economy as essentially connected to the informal economy, with informal economy workers providing discounted products and services to the formal economy. Although the Legalists acknowledge the relationship between the formal and informal economy, this relationship is considered exploitative, with the formal sector allying with the government to formulate cumbersome bureaucratic rules and subsequently excluding workers from the formal economy (De Soto, 1989). Voluntarists contend that informal enterprises generate unfair competition for formal enterprises by evading regulations and taxes. (Chen, 2012)

Chen (2012) argues that the four schools of thought cannot be applied to all segments of the informal economy. Researchers need to specify the segment of the informal economy they are discussing. The relevance of Chen's argument can be demonstrated by referring to the example of vending activities in India. Many Indian street vendors are migrants to the cities and are low-skilled. They have no choice but to take up street vending as a means to earn money as they lack the skills to obtain a job in the formal sector (Bhowmik, 2006). Thus, the Dualist school seems to be an appropriate explanation for this section of the street vending population since there is a mismatch between the skills of workers and the economic opportunities available to them in the formal sector. However, another group of street vendors were once employed in textile mills in the metropolitan cities of Mumbai, Ahmedabad or engineering firms in Kolkata city and are therefore skilled workers. Due to the

closure of industries in these cities, the freshly unemployed population had to resort to street vending as a survival strategy for themselves and their families (Bhowmik and Saha, 2012). Thus, the existence of this section of the street vending population can be explained by the Structuralist perspective, where de-industrialisation and job losses pushed many people into the informal economy. In their study of Bangalore's street entrepreneurs, Williams and Gurtoo (2012) found that no single theoretical explanation was entirely applicable to all the surveyed entrepreneurs. Three-quarters of the surveyed vendors reported that they had chosen to become a vendor to improve their earnings or work-life balance, as the Voluntarist school would suggest. One-quarter were forced to be vendors due to the unavailability of other livelihood options, as the Structuralist school would recommend, or opted to continue their ancestral work, as the Dualist school would suggest.

Chen (2012) argues that there is, therefore, a need for a unified approach that can identify the specific features of the four schools most appropriate for each segment of workers in informal employment. In recent years, holistic models have been developed to explain the composition of, and reasons for, the informal economy. The World Bank developed an all-inclusive model of informality composed of three sets of economic actors: labour, micro-firms and firms (Perry *et al.*, 2007). All the economic actors either look to 'exit' from the formal system to avoid bureaucratic procedures and evade taxes or 'enter' the informal economy to counter the forces of 'exclusion' from the formal economy, preventing workers from getting formal jobs and preventing enterprises from formalizing. Exit and exclusion mechanisms include opportunistic defensive and passive evasion and exclusion. Opportunistic evasion and exclusion primarily refer to the workers who were either excluded from the formal sector due to labour market segmentation or who quit formal sector jobs to start their micro-business and avoid paying social protection taxes. Defensive evasion and exclusion pertain to micro-firms that enter the informal economy to escape burdensome entry

procedures to establish a firm in the formal sector and access their inputs from the informal sector. Passive evasion and exclusion apply to firms that pay taxes but register only part of their workers or sales due to excessive regulatory control. This holistic model is offered as an explanation of the underlying reasons for the informality of each economic agent (workers, micro-firms and firms).

Kanbur (2009) proposed another holistic model of informality distinguishing between four kinds of economic reactions to regulation, categorised from 'A' to 'D'. Category 'A' consists of formal enterprises that stay inside the domain of law and conform to it. Categories 'B', 'C' and 'D' are various levels of informality. Kanbur (2009) states that the enterprises in category 'B' are informal-illegal: within the regulatory domain. Still, they do not conform to the rules due to the imperfect enforcement of regulation. For example, Papola, Mehta and Abraham (2008), in their study of labour inspectors in India, found that labour inspectors only inspect workplaces in easily accessible geographical locations. As a consequence, the employers operating workplaces that are not easily accessible break the law and pay wages below the statutory minimum as they do not have a fear of inspection. Category 'C' enterprises adjust their work to escape regulations by deliberately reducing the enterprise's size below the minimum threshold required for regulation. Category' D' enterprises are completely outside the purview of regulations. Kanbur (2009) argues that instead of using the broad labels of 'informal' and 'formal', it is better to analyse these four categories at a disaggregated level to understand the level of informality

Chen (2012) argues that besides exit and exclusion explanations, there are other factors accountable for the existence of informality. These factors include the social norms and traditions, which any previous theories or informality models have not captured. For example, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) suggests that gender norms often provide a more robust explanation for why many women are

employed as home-based producers or unpaid family members. At the same time, men tend to be informal employers. Thus, several factors drive various segments of informal employment.

All of the schools mentioned above and their underlying theories apply to some sections of the informal economy. Thus, the most pragmatic way to understand informality would be to use the theories concurrently and contextually rather than disparately. No single theory can describe all the segments of the informal economy.

It is also important to acknowledge that the causes of informality differ across countries and global regions due to the divergent economic, social, and political systems within these settings. For example, market reforms and privatisation are the two main reasons for increases in the informal economy in countries of the Global North, such as the United States and the United Kingdom (Potts, 2007). Economic informality in these countries is marked by immigrants' operation and ownership of street vending and home-based enterprises. They have a greater predisposition to develop as entrepreneurs than the native population because the legislative-institutional terrain of the country they are migrating to is generally permissive to the setting up of enterprises by the immigrant (Moyo, 2014; Theodore *et al.*, 2015). In contrast, the causes of economic informality in the Global South[4] are heterogeneous (Hammer, 2019). For instance, the informal economy in the Global South is spread across numerous sectors, such as agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing and the service sector, including transport, tourism and construction (Diallo *et al.*, 2017; Martínez *et al.*, 2017; Radchenko, 2017). In addition, the types and locations of informal economic activity in the Global South are also diverse and manifold. The most prevalent informal economic activities in the Global South range from enterprises, such as street trading and

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[4] Global South" refers to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It denote regions outside Europe and North America, which are mostly low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized (Dados and Connell, 2012).

home-based enterprises, to service provisions, such as hairdressers and street barbers (Rogerson, 2000). However, the most common types of economic informality are street trading and home-based enterprises, both in the Global North and South (Thulare *et al.*, 2021). The Global South is distinctly marked by a considerable segment of street vendors within the informal sector, where vending is a vital livelihood option primarily for poor and marginalized domestic rural migrants (Turner and Schoenberger, 2012; Roever, 2014; Swider, 2015; Onodugo *et al.*, 2016; Roever and Skinner, 2016). Similarly, street entrepreneurs constitute a significant segment of the informal economy in the Global North, even though the informal sector is a much smaller proportion of the economy in this hemisphere. For example, migrants from Latin America constitute a significant proportion of street vendors in North America (Bhimji, 2010; Martin, 2014) and a majority of street vendors in Europe are migrants from North African and South-East Asian countries (Harney, 2004; L'Hote and Gasta, 2007; DeLuca, 2012).

While street vending is a principal economic survival activity in both the Global North and Global South due to the absence of alternative livelihood options, as proposed by the Structuralist school (Raijman, 2001; Bromley and Mackie, 2009; Boels, 2014), it also an activity chosen voluntarily by many workers, especially women, to achieve a certain degree of flexibility and independence in their work (Crossa, 2009; Williams and Gurtoo, 2012) that allows them to balance income-generating activities with caring responsibilities. Thus, a review of the literature suggests that no single theory can adequately explain the growth of the informal economy, in general, and street vending, in particular. This is because there are varied economic, social and institutional factors (Agarwala, 2013; Williams *et al.*, 2015; Recchi, 2020) responsible for the manifestation of informality in specific contexts of the Global North and the Global South.

Whether informal employment is in the informal sector, the formal sector or the household sector, 61.2 per cent of global employment is informal (Bonnet *et al.*, 2018). According to a recent ILO report, informal employment is a more prominent source of employment for men (63 per cent) than women (58.1 per cent) globally (Bonnet *et al.*, 2018). However, this global picture hides the significant disparities in the gender dimension of inequality between the Global North and the Global South. The ILO (2018b) report has highlighted that although more men (63%) are informally employed than women (58%) globally, more women are employed in the informal sector. Moreover, women are more prevalent in the most vulnerable positions as unpaid contributing family workers, domestic workers or home-based workers in the Global South comprising low and low-middle income countries such as India. Because there is a substantial proportion of women working in the informal sector in the Global South and their engagement in the most vulnerable work within the informal economy, it is essential to understand the literature on the underlying reasons for this gendered segmentation of the informal economy. Thus, the following section discusses the gender inequality theories in the labour market context.

2.3   Gender inequality theories

Gender inequality is defined as a distinct difference between men and women in participation levels, access to resources and achievement of development goals (UNICEF, 2017). Gender inequality in the formal labour market usually manifests through differences in the participation of men and women in the labour market (or in certain segments of the market), or through significant wage differences between men and women having similar professional skills working in jobs that are the same or very similar within a particular occupation (Paul and Dort, 2014). In their report on informal employment, Chen et al. (2005) suggest that gender inequality in the informal economy has several dimensions. These

dimensions include a concentration of women in more precarious work with lower average earnings; a persistent gender gap in informal wage employment as well as informal self-employment; and labour force segmentation in the informal economy where women are confined to own-account or home-based work due to an enormous burden of unpaid household work. Occupational segregation by gender deserves particular attention because it not only excludes women from most livelihood options but also affects how women perceive themselves, affecting their income and status (Anker, 1997). For example, the gendered division of household responsibilities and the patriarchal ordering of society influence women to withdraw from the labour force prematurely or temporarily.

These insights strongly imply that an analysis of gender inequality in the informal economy must consider multiple forces within households, firms, labour markets and wider society and that together shape the opportunities available to women. One important analytical approach that explicitly addresses the multi-dimensional character of gender inequality is the 'new labour market segmentation' approach, as proposed by Grimshaw *et al.*(2017). New Labour Market Segmentation (NLMS) approach analyses the causes of labour market inequalities in the broader context of gender relations, regulatory systems and production structures (Grimshaw *et al.*, 2017). NLMS approach is based on insights drawn from three theoretical traditions: the traditional labour market segmentation approach, feminist socio-economic analysis and comparative institutional theory providing the most comprehensive and holistic explanation for gender inequality in work and employment.

The first theoretical tradition of labour market segmentation theory was developed in the 1970s and early 1980s. It considers labour markets to be segmented in specific ways. The approach claims that labour markets are segmented by employers and broader economic conditions, which make it challenging for workers to shift between the segments of labour markets (Rubery, 1978; Ryan, 1981; Wilkinson, 1981; Craig *et al.*, 1982). Such labour

market segments have been referred to as the primary and secondary sectors (Doeringer and Piore, 1970), formal and informal sectors (ILO, 1972), or static and progressive jobs (Standing, 1989). While employment in the primary sector offers better pay, security, progress in the promotion and better working conditions, secondary sector jobs are marked by low remuneration, lower job security, precarious working conditions and few promotion chances. Labour market segmentation in this approach is characterised by women workers being over-represented in the secondary sector and male workers being preferentially hired in the primary sector. The women confined to the secondary sector include those who leave employment at a relatively young age due to marriage and women who 'choose' flexible and part-time jobs to help them combine paid and unpaid (i.e. domestic) work. The domestic and care responsibilities of working mothers encourage employers to offer them lower wages, which subsequently benefits the employers. Thus, labour market segmentation according to gender is an outcome of the hiring tactics of employers aiming to lower their employment cost and unequal distribution of domestic labour between men and women. This approach shifted the focus from differences in human capital or workers' productivity potential (Becker, 1993) as explanations for divisions in the labour market in favour of a focus on demand-side factors. Workers 'join' the primary or secondary sectors not randomly but according to their bargaining power and the structure of constraints they face (Rubery and Piasna, 2017). These theorists argued that inequalities in the labour market are shaped both by employers and broader economic conditions. These inequalities range from differential access to work and training opportunities (Doeringer and Piore, 1970), minimal investment by employers in labour skills and technological up-gradation leading to low-wage-low-skill cycles (Wilkinson, 1983) and the use of 'divide and rule' strategies to counter potential and actual worker resistance to management control of the labour process (Reich *et al.*, 1973). These practices reproduce inequalities in the labour market based on individual attributes

such as gender, race, age, social class etc. Therefore, labour market inequalities are promoted through society's rules and conventions on the supply side and institutionalised policies and practices on the demand side (Grimshaw *et al.*, 2017).

The second theoretical tradition contributing to 'new' labour market segmentation theory is feminist socio-economics, which brings an explicit analytical focus on gender inequalities. This approach addresses some early labour market segmentation shortfalls and enhances our understanding of broader societal processes generating inequality in the labour market. Feminist socio-economics highlights that women's opportunities are limited in the labour market. Moreover, their opportunities are shaped by gender discrimination, gender disparities in the division of household labour (where women are primarily responsible for taking care of their family members besides performing other household duties) and the interaction of domestic and workplace power relations (Folbre, 1994). The productive value of jobs performed primarily by women is usually underrated because women have traditionally been unsuccessful in establishing high status for those jobs (Walsh, 1990). Thus, feminised jobs are often 'bad jobs' not due to workers' lower skills or commitment to perform them but because it is not difficult for employers to hire women to do these jobs for a relatively low wage (Craig *et al.*, 1985). 'Bad jobs' are filled primarily by women, young people and minority workers (Lamotte and Zubiri-Rey, 2008; Kumaş *et al.*, 2014). Women in such positions are generally treated as secondary earners by employers, policy-makers and men and this gender profiling, in turn, affects the exercise of autonomy by women both within the household[5] and at work (Tavora and Rubery, 2013; Cooke and Xiao, 2014; Merluzzi and Dobrev, 2015; Bhattacharya, 2017; Ferguson, 2020). For example, due to

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[5] This leads to dual disadvantage for women, according to the dichotomous patriarchy theory of Walby (1990). According to this theory, a woman's labour is expropriated within the household by the private patriarch who puts restrictions on her to enter the labour market (private patriarchy). Even if a woman enters the labour market, she has to face the employers' discrimination in terms of wage-gap differentials or glass ceilings in her job promotion and career advancement (public patriarchy).

domestic responsibilities, more women than men globally 'choose' to curb their career ambitions for the sake of their families (Crompton *et al.*, 2003). Gender profiling of jobs also leads to the undervaluation of work done by women. The probable explanation for such undervaluation is the employers' 'value association' between unpaid household work performed by women and similar work performed in the wage economy where such paid work is judged as 'unskilled' (England, 2005). Women are thus much more likely than men to seek flexible or part-time jobs that pay them less but enable them to combine paid work with unpaid domestic and care work. Moreover, when these women find such flexible jobs, they tend not to look for alternative jobs, limiting their ability to advance in their careers (Merluzzi and Dobrev, 2015). A typical example is care work, which remains invisible and exploited in most societies (Hebson *et al.*, 2015). This is what Deakin (2013) calls the 'double disadvantage' for women, whose household labour is not valued and who find themselves restricted to jobs outside the home where the employers undervalue their labour. It is particularly true for young women in developing countries (Elder and Kring, 2016), migrant married women in developed countries such as Israel (Raijman and Semyonov, 1997; Donato *et al.*, 2014), Australia (De Jong and Madamba, 2001), Sweden (Adsera and Chiswick, 2004), U.S. (Greenman and Xie, 2006), Germany (Zaiceva, 2007) and Canada (Boyd, 1984; Donato *et al.*, 2014).

Such gender-based labour market segmentation is particularly relevant for India, where segmentation is accentuated by the culturally determined social reproduction responsibilities of women workers besides other socio-cultural factors such as social discrimination due to ethnicity and caste (Srivastava, 2019). Social Reproduction Theory (SRT) focuses on the disadvantages women face due to the burden of domestic responsibilities and their productive roles. The theory advances the concept of two arenas of activity performed by value-producing labour (associated with the waged economy) and domestic labour (associated with

giving birth, feeding and raising the current and future generations of workers) (Laslett and Brenner, 1989; Ferguson, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2017). Thus, SRT argues that in capitalist societies, women's unpaid domestic work, such as giving birth and looking after children and ageing relatives, supports the productive work of men as the breadwinners. In societies where married women contribute to family income, they work differently than their husbands because domestic responsibilities largely shape their employment as home and part-time workers. In a study of construction workers in India, Agarwala (2018) found that employers interpreted the expectation that women workers fulfil domestic reproductive chores as a liability on their paid work requirements due to the frequent leaves they had to take to cater to their childcare responsibilities. Consequently, women workers at the construction sites in India are considered 'helpers' rather than 'labourers' by their employers. The attitude of male employers towards women workers can be explained through the way gender shapes power, from the 'private' relationships within household to relationships between males and females at the workplace. The gender-based power dynamics emanates from the social roles and expectations placed on women (Brodsky, 2007). Men often use the control over resources to influence the behaviour and actions of women in the private and public sphere. Thus the power dynamics between the males and the females is governed by men's access to resources which are needed by women and higher status of men as compared to women (Sagrestano, 1992; Namy *et al.*, 2017). Such power dynamics are extremely important in the Indian context, where women usually are entirely dependent on their husbands. They lack access to resources, making them vulnerable and less likely to have the knowledge and power to challenge patriarchal norms (Dey and Orton, 2016a). Women are either deliberately prevented from entering the job market or permitted to work only in low-paid informal jobs while being required to continue to focus predominantly on their families.

Gender inequality in the labour market becomes more acute during different stages of a woman's life. Multiple factors shape women's lives from birth to death. Therefore, it is crucial to place women and their decisions in cultural and historical contexts, as proposed by Life Course Theory (LCT), more commonly called the Life Course Perspective (Mitchell, 2003). Four fundamental concepts are associated with this theory: cohorts, transitions, trajectories, life events, and turning points (Hutchison, 2011). A cohort denotes a group of people born at the same historical time and who experience specific social changes in a given culture in the same sequence. In addition, individuals experience transitions in their roles and statuses related to their family life, such as birth, death, marriage, divorce etc. Transitions are discrete, while trajectories involve multiple transitions leading to long-term patterns in an individual's life, such as family life trajectory, work-life trajectory etc. Transitions and trajectories are influenced by life events and turning points that involve abrupt changes with potentially long-term consequences. Types of life events that can serve as turning points are those that either close or open opportunities, cause a long-term change to an individual's environment or change a person's beliefs and expectations (Rutter, 1996). Of the four main concepts associated with the LCT, it was transitions, life events and turning points that were most useful to my research. The transition of women from one marital status to another (unmarried to married or married to divorced or widowed) and the associated life events requiring adaptation to their new status (such as in the case of widows) were important life course concepts in the context of this research. Some of the life events were turning points for women, such as the sudden demise of their husbands, which required them to transform from docile homemakers to astute street vendors. The concepts of cohorts and trajectories required longitudinal study to recognize their effects, which was not possible for this research as it was conducted at a single point in time (i.e. it was a cross-sectional design).

The vulnerabilities associated with the transitions in women workers' life are intensified by structural gender inequalities that intersect and accrue over their life course. These vulnerabilities include reduced access to and control over resources, exposure to gender-based violence, and disproportionate accountability for domestic work and unpaid care responsibilities (UN Women, 2021). For example, the onset of motherhood is associated with gender inequalities in the labour market manifested in women's access to jobs, most likely in less productive firms nearer to home; selection of flexible jobs over high pay; and lower bargaining power, and subsequently lower remuneration (Joyce, 2018). Working mothers have to bear the negative repercussions of childbirth at the workplace. This is because their employers use 'society's perception'[6] of the motherhood demands such as maternity leave and child care leave (which might not be accurate for every working woman who attains motherhood) as an instrument to offer these women lower wages and less challenging jobs (Self, 2005; Anxo *et al.*, 2007). Das and Žumbytė (2017), in their study of the Indian labour market, found that the labour supply of married women with children is negatively correlated with the presence of young children in the household, especially where there are no older women in the family to take care of the children. Sarkhel and Mukherjee (2020) studied the impact of 'the motherhood penalty' on Indian working women. They found an inverse relationship between the presence of young children in the household and the women's wages and working hours. The LCT proposes six fundamental principles, viz socio-historical and geographical location; timing of lives; heterogeneity or variability; "linked lives" and social ties to others; human agency and personal control; and how the past shapes the future (Hutchison, 2011). Of these six principles, the last two are highly relevant to my research and

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[6] A mother is perceived by society to devote more time to her caring respjnsiblities and take a break from their careers after childbirth. These expectations determine the way the mothers are treated in labour market despite the actual decisions and actions of these mothers, which might be contrary to the societal perceptions (Waldfogel, 1998; Self, 2005).

explain the underlying reasons for gender inequality. According to LCT, individuals are active agents who mediate the effect of social structure besides shaping these social structures through their decisions. However, the ability of the agents to make decisions depends on the opportunities and constraints they are exposed to (Clausen, 1991; Mitchell, 2003). For example, the historical circumstances shaping the life history of one generation are transmitted to the other through several movements or conditions under which life events occur (such as dropping out of school) sets up a chain reaction of experiences for individuals and their families reflected in their socioeconomic status or marital patterns (O'Rand, 1996).

The last strand of literature underpinning the NLMS theory is comparative institutionalism, alternatively referred to as 'societal institutionalism' (Djelic and Quack, 2002). Comparative institutionalism emphasises how the impact of institutional arrangements of political, financial, educational, industrial relations and other systems at the societal level affect social stratification and equality. This theory highlights the complementarities between societal institutions within and across different institutional orders (Morgan *et al.*, 2009) and their firm and society-level outcomes (Casper and Whitley, 2002; Hall and Gingerich, 2009). For example, in India, gender inequalities are rooted in socio-cultural norms and entrenched in policy and institutional frameworks, including labour institutions, shaping employment opportunities of female workers and the development of the female labour force (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014). Papola and Rodgers (1992) and Rodgers (2020) argue that formal laws, trade unions, state agencies and informal norms and values are collectively responsible for the growth of informality and precarity in India (Harris-White and Gooptu, 2007; Dasgupta and Kar, 2018).

The NLMS approach amalgamates the three traditions mentioned above. It is a multi-dimensional framework that can be used to better account for labour market segmentation. In

countries like India, horizontal and vertical segmentation[7] is evident in the labour markets. Moreover, the country has a long history of social division along the lines of ethnicity, class, caste and gender (Breman, 1996, 2019; Srivastava, 2012, 2019; Harris-White and Gooptu, 2007; Dasgupta and Kar, 2018). This produces a complex hierarchical stratification system where upper-caste workers (male and female) oppress lower-caste workers of disadvantaged ethnicities and religions. The concept of intersectionality was proposed by Crenshaw (1991), who argued that those doubly disadvantaged due to their gender and race inevitably face discrimination and inequality, a combined effect of these two factors. The subordinate group is marked not just by gender or ethnicity but is a social location in multiple systems of domination (Lorber, 1997). In India, the concept of intersectionality has been utilised by researchers, activists and organisations to study the intersections of caste, disability and gender in depriving women of accessing various resources. For example, Omvedt and Patankar (2012), in their study of India, found that the higher castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) have traditionally intentionally kept the lower castes (Shudras and Dalits/ untouchables) deprived of development by forcing them to take the job prescribed to these castes according to the caste system[8] of India. Also, women from upper castes experience oppression within the household regarding stringent control over their mobility and sexuality by male family members. In contrast, the Dalit women (lowest in the caste hierarchy) are exposed to sexual exploitation and physical violence in public places and workplaces by men of higher castes and Dalit men (Mandal, 2010). Ghosh, Chakraborty and Basu (2022) arrived at similar results in the context of disabled women who face discrimination in school

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[7] Horizontal segmentation refers to segregation across various occupations or sectors on the basis of caste religion or ethnicity while vertical segmentation represents segregation in career advancement or remuneration of two groups within an occupation (Chattopadhyay *et al.*, 2013).

[8] Hindu caste system, commonly known as chaturvarna (meaning four castes), places Brahmans at the top of the caste hierarchy, followed by the warrior community (called the Kshatriyas) and the merchant community (called the Vaishyas). Shudras are placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy who are supposed to serve the people of castes above them in the hierarchy (Mani, 2005).

enrolment due to denial from schools to admit disabled students. Other manifestations of intersectionality in India are evident in the discrimination faced by women in being rejected by prospective grooms and being overlooked for promotions in jobs due to the colour of their skin (Timmons, 2007) and Muslim women faced with more acute discrimination than women of other religions in getting equal rights in marriage (Ghosh and Roy, 1997).

Due to intersectional discrimination, women from poor and marginalized sections of society are pushed further behind on different development indicators. This has recently been reaffirmed by the UN Women's (2018) global monitoring report, which argues that the intersection of gender with other forms of discrimination pushes women from marginalised sections behind. One form of discrimination women face at different phases of life relates to their family and marital status. For example, widowhood in African and Asian countries leads to sexual exploitation, stigma and isolation from the community, hampers their access to resources and opportunities, thereby pushing them into the trap of poverty. Sen and Iyer (2012), in their study on access to health care facilities in sixty villages of Karnataka state in India, found that poor women were consistently disadvantaged in access to health services compared to the non-poor women, whose outcomes were similar to poor men. However, the economic advantages of the non-poor women helped them to leverage their financial status to avoid being included in the furthest category. Their gender disadvantage implied that their access to health services was similar to that of poor men.

The NLMS approach offers a holistic explanation for the horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market because it equally considers how the employers shape the inequalities on the one hand and the regulations, policies and institutions on the other. This approach is particularly relevant to my research because, through this approach, I attempt to look for deeper structural explanations for gender segregation in the labour market and women's access to resources. The subsequent sections discuss the literature available on the

concepts of decent work, resources/ assets and the barriers women face in accessing the resources required for decent work conditions at different life cycle stages.

2.4 Concept of decent work

Even though the informal economy employs many workers globally, it is plagued with a range of decent work deficits (ILO, 2002a). The ILO introduced the concept of 'decent work' in 1999. The ILO defines decent work as the 'availability of prospects for males and females to find decent and productive work with freedom, equity, security and dignity'. Thus, decent work is an integrated approach comprising four vital components: productive employment, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue (ILO, 1999). Productive employment refers to access to valued jobs that provide sufficient earnings to allow workers and their dependents to consume above the poverty line. Social protection as an aspect of decent work has two sub-components: social security and labour protection. 'Social security' encompasses measures addressing contingencies (such as joblessness, loss of income, maternity, illness or old age) affecting people's livelihoods. Labour protection refers to providing protection to workers through occupational safety and health measures, protecting workers' rights and integrating medically vulnerable groups (workers with HIV/ AIDS) into the workplace (ILO, 2008b). Rights at work include three fundamental rights of ILO relating to protection from discrimination at work (Convention No. 100 and 111); elimination of all forms of forced labour (Convention No. 29 and No. 105), and child labour (Convention No. 138 and No. 182 on) and right to freedom of association (Convention No. 87) and collective bargaining (Convention No. 98), besides other rights such as access to the dispute resolution systems. Social dialogue refers to negotiations and information exchange between the representatives of governments, employers and workers (ILO, 2013c). The UN views 'decent work' as instrumental in the sustainable development of a country, and thus it has been

incorporated as Goal 8: decent work and economic growth, of the UN 17 Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

Scholars have critiqued the concept of decent work in terms of the range and universality of this concept. Burchell *et al.* (2014) argue that the definition and articulations of decent work are conceptually confusing. For example, social dialogue, a part of the ILO's definition of decent work, might more aptly be considered a driver of decent work rather than its objective. Similarly, there are issues in operationalising the concept of decent work. This is because some characteristics of decent work are intended for individual workers, such as the elimination of child labour, some for the working environments, such as ensuring occupational health and safety, and some at the aggregate level, such as drafting social protection legislation. This inherent confusion in the operationalisation of this concept at the level of the individual worker or the job is primarily because the idea of Decent Work does not consider the specific conditions of each labour market (Lanari, 2005). While some ILO experts have supported the need for a comparative indicator, gender experts have objected to the idea of a composite indicator which might over-shadow the different employment conditions of men and women (ILO, 2008a). This difference of opinion between the experts on the concept of decent work makes it difficult to directly address critical issues such as gender gaps in job quality or the quality of employment for migrants.

Another important critique of the decent work agenda concerns the tendency to treat precarity in direct contrast to 'decent work' (Saunders, 2003). Barbier (2004) and Burchell *et al.* (2014) criticize the ILO's dichotomy between decent and precarious work. They argue that the intricacy of the working world does not allow such clear-cut distinctions. Moreover, the meaning and definition of precarious work differ in diverse disciplines and national contexts. Thus, Blustein *et al.* (2016) argue that the growth of dangerous work emphasises

the need for a wide-ranging definition of decent work that addresses various aspects and types of working.

There has been an extensive debate about the relevance of the decent work agenda for the Global North versus the Global South. The Global North may consider the decent work agenda to be more relevant for the Global South because it perceives itself to have already achieved the decent work agenda and is perhaps 'above' the objectives and targets of the decent work agenda (Charlesworth and Macdonald, 2015). In contrast, Ferraro *et al.* (2015) and Pereira *et al.* (2019) state that given globalisation and the progressive integration of the world economy, it is not fair to treat countries with decent work deficits as the sole 'owners' of the problem because such deficits are an outcome of intricate relationships between various players and countries. For example, if child labour is not controlled in country 'X' and employers of factories hire children, this allows them to pay meagre wages and reduce their prices. This encourages factory owners in developing countries to seek a trading advantage in labour-intensive goods produced by children in the international market This example of international trade supports the notion that it is inappropriate to seek abolition of child labour, a component of 'rights at work' (one of the pillars of decent work) at a country level because it is a global problem (Schwartz, 2003; Strudler, 2003). Banning child labour in developing countries due to the boycott of the developed world to import such goods from developing countries further negatively impacts the earnings of poor parents who push their children to move into even more hazardous forms of work (Chatterjee and Ray, 2019). Thus, policymakers, practitioners and academics should approach decent work as a global issue which requires a broader understanding of the complex relationships between the various countries.

Social dialogue has been operationalized in bipartite negotiations between employers and workers and tripartite talks between employers, government and labour representatives,

which leaves out the other actors such as civil society organisations (Ghai, 2006). This is particularly an issue in developing countries where most workers work in the informal sector or are self-employed, with little collective bargaining power. Moreover, social dialogue arguably involves an implicit assumption that an employment relationship exists between workers and employers (Kuruvilla, 2006). Such relationships are often absent or disguised in the informal economy. Even so, developing countries have a long and robust history of labour activism where informal workers manage to organise themselves and find a voice (Global Deal, 2018). Governments in many developing and emerging countries have started recognising informal workers' associations and paying attention to their demands. An excellent example of social dialogue between the government and the representatives of the informal economy workers and its successful translation into policy framework is the Indian government which has advocated the formation of town vending committees through the Street Vendors Act (Government of India, 2014). These committees provide adequate representation to vendors' unions, government officials and civil society organisations representatives to discuss street vendors' issues. Similarly, a waste pickers association organised waste pickers and engaged in meaningful social dialogue with the Reference Center on Solid Waste (the relevant governmental agency in India), which resulted in the recognition and formal inclusion of informal workers into the state policy process (Silva, 2012). Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognise that it is not always possible for conflicts of interests between negotiating parties to be overcome through discussion (Therborn, 1994; Hyman, 2010) and that social dialogue does not always give rise to effective and inclusive outcomes that deliver improvements for workers. A classic case in this regard is the failure of the KTC (Korean Tripartite Commission) to engage in positive social dialogue outcomes. The underlying reasons for its failure were an imbalance of power that favoured employers, a fragmented labour movement and weak political representation of labour, which led to a

dysfunctional relationship between the government and the KTC (Kim and Ahn, 2018). Moreover, effective social dialogue requires political support, which is not always consistently provided. Papadakis (2021) explains this through an example of the commitment of the majority of the countries to move towards a low-carbon future as part of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Social partners in some countries are engaged in project steering committees defining work programmes and devising green projects. Yet, the weak limited progress of the social partners in these countries reflects a lack of political will to prioritise green projects in policy making. Similarly, taking the example of Brazil, Guardiancich and Molina (2022) explain how an absence of political backing led to the dissolution of CDES (n Conselho de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social), the National Social Dialogue Institution (NSDI) of the country. As Papadakis notes, social dialogue institutions need to be given sufficient time and political support to evolve in countries that lack firmly-established social dialogue traditions.

Another critique of the ILO's decent work agenda has emerged from psychologists such as Dejours (2006) and Deranty *et al.* (2012). They have highlighted the relative disregard for the psychological concept of work within the notion of ILO's decent work agenda. They argue that work is not merely an economic occupation or social relation but is an activity that has an important bearing on the well-being of the workers. Thus, Deranty *et al.* (2012) argue that the decent work agenda views work as an economic occupation and social relation, without giving any consideration to the 'content' of work' which impacts significantly on the well-being of the workers. It might be the case, for example, that workers have signed a contract with fair terms and conditions, where the core values of free and equitable access to work relations are thoroughly appreciated, yet the work may not be decent (Deranty and Macmillan, 2012). This may be a situation where workers willingly agree to be

employed in a workplace where the organization of work is stressful, intensive or burdensome, which is detrimental to the workers mentally and emotionally. In such situations, there might be no discrimination; workers would have knowingly signed a work contract without any pressure; their working hours would be reasonable, and they might be entitled to social protection. And yet the work would not be decent because of its psychological effect on their well-being. Thus, Dejours (2006) makes a convincing argument that decent work needs to be inclusive of the workers' perspectives. They argue that the notion of work must be flexible in applying to different cultural and economic contexts, which is missing from the ILO's decent work agenda. Despite the critique of the decent work agenda, feminists welcome its scope, arguing that this has paved the way for the protection of workers employed in the informal economy, where there is an over-representation of women (Lombardo *et al.*, 2009; Bletsas and Charlesworth, 2013). Gender equality has been at the heart of the decent work agenda of the ILO since 2009 (ILO, 2009). Gender equality as a central objective in the decent work agenda of the ILO offers an opportunity to mainstream gender equality in employment procedures and policies across sectors (formal and informal) and economies (developed and developing) (Charlesworth and Macdonald, 2015). This is important because there is inequality not only in terms of lower average earnings of women workers compared to men working in similar segments of the informal economy but also in terms of the dual burden of unpaid and paid work responsibilities on women (ILO, 2002a). This double responsibility burden is the biggest obstacle to decent work for women workers in developed and developing countries (ILO, 2013c). Regarding street vending, women encounter inequality in numerous forms. For example, women vendors face harassment from police officials and public authorities globally (Agnello and Moller, 2006; Saha, 2009; Narayan, 2011; Bhowmik and Saha, 2012; Chirau, 2012; Sharma, 2014; Mosammam and Ahmadi, 2018). Women vendors have to depend on their close relatives for credit compared

to men, who approach money lenders and banks to start the business (Baliyan and Srivastava, 2016). The travel patterns of women street vendors indicate that their choice of a workplace is severely restricted by the lack of travel modes available and societal barriers to travel (Sharma, 2015). These studies show that women vendors' access to financial or physical resources is highly constrained compared to men. Thus, the following section discusses the concept of 'access' and the associated barriers to accessing resources.

2.5 Concept of resources and 'access' and 'barriers' to access resources

The idea of resources in this research has been borrowed from the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) frameworks (developed by various organisations) and the ILO toolkit identifying the resources required for decent work. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development advocated the achievement of SL as a broader goal of poverty eradication in 1992. However, the contemporary understanding of SL as a concept is widely attributed to Chambers *et al.* (1991), who presented SL as a linking of three well-established ideas of capability (Sen, 1981; Jodha, 1999), equity and sustainability (Solesbury, 2003).

The Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) framework is an asset approach which examines livelihood sustainability in terms of assets, on the one hand, and the context in which these assets exist, on the other (Morse and McNamara, 2013). The assets in the SL framework include both tangible assets (food stocks, bank savings, jewellery etc.) and resources (land, water, trees etc.), and intangible assets such as claims (demands for moral, practical or material support) and access (opportunity to use a resource or service). A livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from shocks (sudden, unpredictable events such as floods, epidemics etc.) and stresses (predictable and continuous pressures such as increasing population, reducing resources etc.) and enhance its assets (Chambers and Conway, 1991). Various bilateral organisations, such as Department for International Development, and

multilateral organisations, such as Food and Agriculture Organization, World Bank and World Food Programme, have developed their SL framework. Moreover, Non-Government Organisations, such as CARE, Oxfam, Save the Children, and international organisations such as European Commission, Population Council, and Traidcraft have also utilised the SL framework in their plans, projects, and programmes (Hussein, 2002). However, four main SL frameworks have been developed by development agencies based on their interpretation of the SL framework (Carney *et al.*, 1999). Each of these four models identifies different resources required for sustainable livelihoods.

The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (Oxfam) proposed the first SL framework in 1993 and identified five resources (human, physical, social, natural and financial) for sustainable livelihoods (May *et al.*, 2009). Human resources refer to formal education and skills and good health; natural resources refer to land, water, and forests; physical resources denote the basic infrastructure of transport and communication, shelter, water, sanitation and energy; financial resources refer to cash, credit and savings, and social resources denote the networks, social relations and membership of groups and organisations. The Cooperative for Assistance and Relief (CARE) proposed a new framework in 1994 consisting of three significant resources: human, social and economic (Carney *et al.*, 1999). The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) SL framework proposed in 1995 expanded the list of resources required for sustainable livelihoods and identified six resources, viz. natural/ biological, social, political, human, physical and economic (Hussein, 2002). The UK Department for International Development (DFID) proposed another SL framework in 1998 that identifies five resources (social, human, natural, physical and financial) necessary to achieve sustainable livelihoods(Department for International Development (DFID), 2001). The commonality among all the frameworks is that all these Sustainable Livelihoods frameworks adopt an asset-based framework for operationalising the Sustainable Livelihoods

concept (Hussein, 2002). This is significant because SL frameworks help the people to analyse their own resources and constraints, on the one hand, and emphasise strengthening people's capabilities (especially women) to access assets, on the other hand.

In 2006, the ILO published a toolkit that identified the resources essential for accessing decent work. These resources are human and social resources, such as leadership, knowledge and skills, financial resources such as financial services and credit, physical resources such as machinery and infrastructure and natural resources such as markets, land and topography. Based on the existing literature on resources required for decent work and the responses of the interviewees, the resources/ assets in this thesis have been classified into five main categories, as follows: institutional resources (vending license, assistance from police and municipal authorities), human resources (formal education and skills-based training), physical resources (basic infrastructure of transport, water, sanitation etc.), financial resources (start-up capital, loans and pension) and social resources (bonding and bridging capital). Below is an overview of the definitions of the five resources, with particular reference to their utilisation by vendors to ensure decent work conditions at their workplace.

a) Institutional resources refer to the institutions and institutional governance structures required by vendors to obtain legal access to their workplace (vending licenses) and build good connections with the government (municipal authorities) and law enforcement authorities (police).

b) Physical resources refer to the tangible assets required by street vendors at their workplace. These include providing utilities (water, toilet, and electricity), merchandise, storage space, transport, shaded stalls and childcare facilities.

c) Human resources refer to the non-tangible assets of knowledge and skills (acquired through formal or informal education and training programmes) required by the vendors to do their business successfully.

d) Financial resources refer to vendors' access to institutional credit to establish their business and allow consumption smoothing (such as enabling expenses on medical facilities). Financial resources also include social security for widows and old-age pensions.

e) Social resources refer to intangible assets in the form of rules, norms and reliance rooted in social relationships and societies' institutional arrangements.

The concept of social resources is very similar to that of social capital, which began to receive attention in the late 1980s (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). In its current use, two leading schools of thought emerged regarding social capital. The first school draws on the work of Bourdieu (1986), and (Portes, 2014), who defined social capital as an aggregate of resources such as ideas and information related to ownership of a strong network of relationships. These resources are social because they accrue to group members who use their group association and network to get benefits and advance their interests. They are accessible only through and by the relationship between group members. Bourdieu (1980) argued that social capital differs from economic, cultural and symbolic capital because it distinguishes groups' status and position differences. Moreover, it can be called capital because it is an outcome of relationships formed with a specific aim which contributes to the reproduction of positions of power with unequal power dynamics between individuals. Coleman (1988) took a similar approach and described social capital as deep social ties among people which offer them benefits otherwise not accessible. Granovetter (1973) divided the nature of the ties based on two types of networks: networks of weak ties and networks of strong ties. Weak ties refer to connections with acquaintances, and strong ties refer to profound and prolonged relationships, for example, with family and close friends. Granovetter (1990) argued that economic actions are always socially embedded, implying that actions are always socially situated and cannot be explained only for individual motives. Similarly, social institutions are

socially constructed through ties between individuals and do not appear randomly in some usual form. The second school of thought draws on the work of Putnam (1995), who defined social capital as features of social organisation, viz. norms, networks and trust, reflected in the structure of social relationships. Social resources enable the vendors to attain their objectives by following the rules and conventions governing formalised institutions in the marketplace and civil society. The concept of social capital employed in this thesis has been borrowed from Putnam (1995), who identified two forms of social capital: bonding social capital, which occurs within a community of individuals such as immediate family members, close friends and neighbours, and bridging social capital, which occurs between members of two diverse groups to seek help or to gain information, such as vendors unions or non-government organisations working for the welfare of vendors. Horizontal ties such as those formed in bridging social capital are woven between equal individuals while vertical ties such as bonding social capital are woven between actors of unequal power in relationships of hierarchy. It is in the bridging social capital where we find Granovetter (1973) of weak ties.

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Granovetter (1973), weak ties involve connections among acquaintances, while strong ties involve profound and prolonged relationships, for example, with family and close friends. The second school of thought concerning social capital draws on the work of Putnam (1995), who defined social capital as features of social organisation, viz. norms, networks and trust, reflected in the structure of social relationships. Social resources enable the vendors to attain their objectives by following the rules and conventions governing formalised institutions in the marketplace and civil society. The concept of social capital employed in this thesis has been borrowed from Putnam (1995), who identified two forms of social capital: bonding social capital, which occurs within a community of individuals such as immediate family members, close friends and neighbours, and bridging social capital, which occurs between members of two diverse groups to seek help or to gain information, such as vendors unions or non-government organisations working for the welfare of vendors. Horizontal ties such as those formed in bridging social capital are woven between equal individuals, while vertical ties such as bonding social capital are woven between actors of unequal power in relationships of hierarchy. It is in bridging social capital that Granovetter's (1973) weak ties are to be found.

Although widely used in the social sciences, the concept of social capital has been criticised in a number of ways. Harriss and De Renzio (1997), Bebbington (1999) and Narayan and Pritchett (1999) argued that social capital lacks a clear definition and that attempts to integrate insights from studies that draw on the concept are hindered by the fact that social capital is operationalised in varying ways. However, there are more similarities than differences in the definition of social capital (Inglehart, 1997; Woolcock, 1998; Dasgupta and Serageldin, 2000). For example, the researchers largely agree that social interactions are the essence of social capital. Similarly, there is a consensus that even though

the underlying mechanisms are understood differently, social capital is linked to the diffusion of information, forming trust and expanding cooperation.

A further consideration is whether social capital should be considered to be 'capital'. There are various critics of the inclusion of 'capital' in social capital (Arrow, 2000; Solow, 2000; Bowles and Gintis, 2002). Clearly, social capital is not capital in the conventional sense because (among other things) it cannot be owned and traded by individuals. Furthermore, Marxist scholars emphasise that social capital should not be confused with the fundamental social relationship between workers and capitalists that lies at the heart of capitalism and associated processes of value extraction and capital accumulation (Fine, 2003). However, social capital can be said to share some of the qualities of capital if that term is used in a more restrictive sense to refer to an asset that might result from an investment and that involves a return of some kind. Like other types of capital (physical and human), social capital is appropriable (Coleman, 1988), changeable (Bourdieu, 1986), requires maintenance (Gant et al., 2002) and can be invested in anticipation of potential returns (Adler and Kwon, 2002).

After understanding the concept of resources, it is essential to review the associated concepts of 'access' and 'barriers' to access resources. Etymologically, access refers to the means or opportunity to approach a place or service or use something (Oxford English Mini Dictionary, 2014). Donabedian (1972) states that access evidence is reflected in the usage of - and not the mere existence of - a resource/service. A significant contribution in defining access has come from studies conducted in the field of health care, which describe access as the ease with which consumers use facilities proportionately to their needs (Daniels, 1982; Whitehead, 1992). Penchansky and Thomas (1981) gave the first comprehensive definition of access. They defined access as an amalgamation of five 'As', namely, Availability (relationship of the type and volume of resource), Accessibility (location of the resource),

Acceptability (in terms of age, sex, ethnicity, religion etc.), Affordability (ability to pay for the resource) and Accommodation (in terms of resource characteristics such as hours of operation and communication system). Borrowing from Penchansky and Thomas (1981), O'Donnell (2007) explained access in terms of its four dimensions: availability, affordability, acceptability and geographic accessibility. He argued that the dimensions of access are not as important as the identification of barriers along these dimensions of access which restrict an individual's potential to benefit from health care services. Similarly, Ensor and Cooper (2004) and later Peters *et al.* (2008) and Jacobs *et al.* (2012) identified barriers along the four dimensions of access, namely availability, acceptability, physical accessibility and financial accessibility. Since the three frameworks were borrowed from Penchansky and Thomas (1981), the definitions of these access dimensions remained unchanged. Similarly, Levesque *et al.* (2013) identified six-dimensional access of acceptability, accommodation, approachability, appropriateness, affordability and availability, again borrowed from the Penchansky and Thomas (1981) access framework. Saurman (2016) modified the Penchansky and Thomas (1981) description of access by adding another dimension of awareness, which refers to the users' knowledge about a resource's existence. Few other scholars explored several different dimensions of access. For example, Donabedian (1972) defines access as initiation and continuation because he argues that one-time access may not necessarily mean continuous access. Andersen (1995) bifurcates access into potential and realised access. Potential access denotes the existence of a facilitating resource, and realised access is the actual usage of that resource (Andersen, 1995).

A practical and alternative way to describe access is through the concept of barriers (Mackinney *et al.*, 2014). Mackinney *et al.* (2014) define barriers as an indirect yet effective measure of access. Access to a resource transforms from potential to realised when the barriers to access are overcome (Aday and Andersen, 1975; Gulzar, 1993). Ensor and Cooper

(2004) and O'Donnell (2007) argue that barriers to access are present along all dimensions of access. There is extensive literature on barriers to access in the public health discipline. For example, Whitehead (1992) argues that financial, organizational, linguistic and cultural are major potential obstacles confronting people when accessing a service. Donabedian (1972) states that barriers to access can be financial, informational, temporal, social, spatial, psychological and organizational. Frenck (1992) introduced the term 'resilience' to denote cumulative barriers. These cumulative barriers include the three most prominent barriers to access a service, namely, the financial barriers of the cost of the services, the ecological barriers arising from the location of a resource and the organisational barriers in the initial contact or the timely provision of a resource.

Carrillo *et al.* (2011) developed a comprehensive Health Care Access Barriers Model (HCAB), a taxonomy of three access barriers: cognitive, financial and structural. Financial barriers primarily refer to the costs incurred to access a resource. Structural barriers refer to the availability of and proximity to a resource. A resource's non-availability or excess waiting times to access a resource due to institutional or organisational mismanagement may affect the people already experiencing acute financial pressures. Thus, structural barriers exist exclusively or simultaneously with financial obstacles. Financial and structural barriers may be further compounded by cognitive barriers, which refer to the beliefs and knowledge systems of the people accessing the resource. A lack of awareness of a resource, limited literacy of people accessing a resource and linguistic and cultural barriers are examples of such cognitive barriers (Carrillo *et al.*, 2011). Recently George, Daniels and Fioratou (2018) added psychological barriers to the list of obstacles identified by the HCAB model. Psychological barriers refer to the past experiences of people shaping their decision to access a resource or not. George *et al.* (2018) identify suspicion, hopelessness, fear and uneasiness as subthemes within the psychological barriers. Duncan *et al.* (1996) and Ecob and Macintyre

(2000) contend that social, economic, physical and cultural factors determine individuals' access level.

The available literature on access bifurcates the barriers into demand and supply-side barriers. Demand-side barriers refer to the factors impacting the capability to use resources or services by the individuals or community, such as financial constraints, geographical (spatial) and temporal constraints, gender attitudes and roles, constraints to knowledge and education etc. Supply-side barriers refer to the intrinsic characteristics of the resource that deter their access by the individuals, or community such as lack of availability of a resource, organisation of a resource etc. (Jacobs, 2012). Ensor and Cooper (2004) have identified the barriers to accessing health services along with accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability. For geographical accessibility, only the demand side barrier of transport cost is mentioned. Similarly, for affordability, the price of the service is the main supply-side barrier, and the opportunity cost is the demand-side barrier to accessing health facilities. According to Ensor and Cooper (2004), availability and acceptability are the most critical dimensions of access, with more demand and supply-side barriers than the other dimensions of access. Peters *et al.* (2008) also studied barriers to access to health facilities along the four dimensions of access, namely accessibility, availability, affordability and acceptability. However, their model is much simpler regarding the equal emphasis placed on all four dimensions of access and identification of a single demand and supply barrier along each dimension. For example, along the accessibility dimension, the household location is a demand-side barrier, and the service location is a supply-side barrier. Similarly, charges of the facilities are the supply side barrier to the affordability dimension of access, and the household's willingness to pay is the demand side barrier. Jacobs *et al.* (2012) identified additional barriers to accessing health facilities missing from the earlier frameworks. According to Jacobs *et al.* (2012), supply-side barriers such as lack of organisational

coordination and health infrastructure are more prevalent along the availability dimension of access, while the affordability, geographic accessibility and acceptability dimensions are marked by demand-side barriers such as household expectations and knowledge about resources or socio-cultural factors of stigma and cultural preferences. This thesis has identified barriers to access resources through the framework developed by Saurman (2016), a modification of the Penchansky and Thomas (1981) access framework. I chose these two frameworks because the definition of access as described by these two frameworks holistically presents all the dimensions of access proposed by other researchers such as O'Donnell (2007), Peters *et al.* (2008), Jacobs *et al.* (2012) and Levesque *et al.* (2013).

Access to decent work for women has been studied from the perspective of barriers. Kercheval *et al.* (2013) identify seven significant barriers to genetic factors; education, patriarchy, religion and culture, gender typecasts, politics and marital status. The patriarchal norms influence the scope of women's participation in the workforce, segregate the jobs suitable for women in society, put a physical constraint on the time to be spent between productive and reproductive work by women and also decide the pay gaps between men and women in the labour market (Kercheval *et al.*, 2013). In countries like Indonesia, the government promotes patriarchy by assigning women the dual role of working and earning money and serving the husband and other household members (La Botz, 2001; Parawansa, 2002). Gender stereotypes surrounding employment and gender tend to be closely related as men are assumed to have more power than women, and working in the formal sector gives more power to men (Cikara and Fiske, 2009). This is the primary reason for women are confined to the informal sector. Also, biological factors of menstruation and pregnancy deter women from continuing in formal employment over time (Anker and Hein, 1986; Pangestu and Hendytio, 1997). Similarly, Datta (2018) and ILO (2012) identify stereotypes, social norms and patriarchal attitudes as the main barriers to working for women across the country.

Fapohunda (2012) added social, cultural and economic barriers on top of structural barriers (comprising of the norms and attitudes), which lead to horizontal and vertical gender segregation of labour markets. Similarly, Kabeer (2012) added individual constraints (such as lack of education and skills required for employability) and the resilience of the gender-segmented structure of labour markets to the list of structural constraints (such as customary norms, beliefs and values) as the main barriers to access to paid work by women globally. Most of the literature on barriers to access to paid work has held both individual and structural factors equally responsible for gender segmentation of the labour markets. For example, Ulrichs (2016) identified the low contributory capacity of women workers, limited awareness of social security programmes and their benefits, lengthy administrative procedures to register for social security programmes and socio-cultural norms as the significant barriers that prevent women from accessing resources. These studies reflect how the NLMS approach is relevant to understanding women's structural barriers to entering the labour market. The combined effect of the socio-cultural norms with the institutional frameworks shapes the employment opportunities for women and is responsible for gender segmentation of the labour markets. These constraints become more intensive and deepened with intersectional discrimination faced by women of specific classes or ethnicity. Ulrichs (2016) argued that the barriers preventing women are not only gender-specific but are also gender intensive. She defines gender-specific barriers as the constraints arising from the social norms which limit women's role as the carer in a household, as inferior to the male breadwinner. On the other hand, gender-intensified barriers denote disadvantages that women of the same class, caste or religion face in a more intensified way than men due to gender discrimination in the distribution of resources and responsibilities.

2.6 Gendered access to resources and decent work

Studies of street vendors in Africa, Asia and Latin America have identified a lack of access to financial resources (Moloi, 2014; Brauneis and Patt, 2015; Zikhali, 2017; Mago, 2018), human resources (Narayan, 2011; Moloi, 2014; Luphahla, 2015), social resources (Narayan, 2011; Moloi, 2014; Mago, 2018) and political resources (Iyenda, 2005; Moloi, 2014; Luphahla, 2015; Mago, 2018) as underlying reasons for decent work deficits. However, it is essential to study the concept of access to resources from a gendered perspective as decent work deficits are more acute in the case of female than male workers in the informal economy (ILO 2002a, Floro and Meurs, 2009). Regarding women workers, the experiences of access to resources vary with the age of women, their marital status, and education level (Kabeer, 2012; Kercheval *et al.*, 2013). The literature on each of these life cycle aspects is discussed below:

a) <u>Marital status and access to decent work</u>: Floro and Meurs' (2009) global study on women's access to decent work found that women's access to such work is closely associated with the roles ascribed to each gender and the subsequent partition of work in the household. Married women tend to work longer hours than men due to their combined paid and unpaid work, which affects their work efficiency. Also, the choice of workplace and employment is decided by the demands of reproductive and care work of married women. Grassi *et al.* (2015) argue that the time women spend attending to their reproductive activities of cooking and taking care of the children hampers their prospects of accessing resources. For example, a woman's marital status impacts her access to credit. Vonderlack and Schreiner (2002) state that the marital status of women, especially in the Global South, determines their eligibility to obtain loans. They further explain that even in countries where women have the legal right to apply for a loan, such as Bangladesh and Indonesia, banks ask married women's husbands for written permission.

This indirectly deters married women from applying for a loan because they fear getting their husband's permission. Similarly, unmarried women depend on their parent's approval to do any financial transactions and young married women can apply for a loan to start a business only after the backing and support of their husbands (Mathur *et al.*, 2003). Marital status also influences the propensity of women to participate in the workforce. In their study on Sub-Saharan Africa, Johanson and Adams (2004) found that married women receive less support from their spouses than unmarried women, who are highly encouraged by their parents to work outside the home. This compels married women to give up their job and focus solely on their families. Also, women without access to maternity benefits post-childbirth have to either leave their jobs or devote less time to paid work, negatively impacting their incomes (Lund, 2009). Iversen and Rosenbluth (2010) argue that women's marriage and divorce status influences their economic decision to work outside the home. They state that women develop their skills depending on the market they are forced to enter. These markers are of two types: the marriage market (i.e., marriage is an economic arrangement where a wife gives up her freedom to seek employment outside the home in exchange for a gainfully employed husband) and the job market. Only when the marriage contract is terminated will women gain the skills required in job markets.

b) <u>Education level and access to decent work</u>: Another important parameter that impacts access to decent work is the education level of women workers. Begari (2017), in a study of 120 vendors in Hyderabad, concludes that there is a strong positive correlation between the education and incomes of women vendors. Lower educational levels in general, and a shortage of access to vocational and technical education in particular, compel women to work in low-skilled occupations (primarily the informal sector). Herath (2011) mentions four areas where women encounter barriers to vocational

training: formal education being imparted with no emphasis on skills development, problems with accessing formal education due to socio-cultural barriers, lack of skills-based training, and socio-ethnic barriers that hinder skills improvement and training. These barriers can be overcome if formal and non-formal training is incorporated into formal education or informal community-based training. However, women's access to formal education and informal training is restricted. Young women are not allowed to enter formal education due to family and social constraints. With limited resources, parents in low-income families have to choose to educate their sons or daughters. Due to patriarchal traditions, religious restrictions, inheritance laws and the invisibility of women's work, the parents decide to educate the sons rather than the daughters (ILO, 2009). Similarly, opportunities for women in the family and community-based training are also narrow due to cultural notions attached to these training. An example of such cultural concepts is that women are encouraged by their parents and society to train in low-skilled, poorly-paying 'feminine occupations' such as food preparation, while men are encouraged to seek technology-based training (ILO, 2009).

c) <u>Age and access to decent work</u>: Moore (2015) states that marginalised youth face unique challenges to access decent work and primarily end up being engaged in informal employment. A joint study conducted on the workers of Indonesia by the ILO and IFC (2012) found that young married women leave the workforce once they get pregnant. In comparison, employers prefer to hire young single women because of their lower risk of pregnancy and thus greater availability to join the workforce. Also, young and middle-aged married women must seek approval from their husbands or parents-in-law to work outside their home (Kabeer, 2000b; Fontana *et al.*, 2010; Oya, 2010). In their study of women working in the informal sector in Bangladesh, Repon *et al.* (2015) conclude that young unmarried and divorced women face harassment at the workplace from their

colleagues rather than older married women. Similarly, the young unmarried women are often treated as an 'out-group' in contrast to the large 'in-group' of older married women who protect each other from harassment.

Termine and Percic (2015) acknowledge that rural women are at a disadvantage in terms of opportunities to access decent work through self-employment due to their poor access to natural resources (such as land, water, livestock etc.) and complementary resources (such as finance and technology). The FAO (2011), in its study on rural areas in Ghana, Tanzania and Malawi, argues that women have less access than men when it comes to accessing resources of land, skills and services. However, the lack of access to resources for decent work conditions has also been emphasised in the literature on women workers in urban areas. In a study in Sri Lanka, Herath (2011) found that women do not have the chance to access formal education and skills-based formal training, both of which are essential to access decent work. Fapohunda (2012) examined the factors constraining women's access to decent work in Nigeria and concluded that women, who are primarily engaged in the informal economy, lack access to social protection and have limited unionisation potential, which is the key impediment to accessing decent work. The problems of access to decent work conditions for women vendors in India are reflected in three main ways: *first*, in terms of lower earnings than the male vendors as well as in terms of harassment from police officials and public authorities (Agnello and Moller, 2006; Saha, 2009; Narayan, 2011; Bhowmik and Saha, 2012; Chirau, 2012; Sharma, 2014; Mosammam, and Ahmadi, 2018); *second*, women lack access to credit to set up their street vending stalls and have to depend on their close relatives for credit as compared to men, who approach money lenders and banks to start up their business (Baliyan and Srivastava, 2016) and *third*, women street vendors tend to have a problem accessing transport, which means that they tend to prefer workplaces that are located close to their home (Sharma, 2015).

The literature on women working in the informal economy includes studies showing how barriers to accessing resources lead to decent work deficits. However, there is no comprehensive framework for studying the 'access' to resources required for these decent work deficits to be addressed. Therefore, this thesis uses a comprehensive access framework proposed by Saurman (2016) and Penchansky and Thomas (1981) to understand various barriers women encounter to access physical, social, financial, institutional and human resources.

2.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on the informal economy, including the four main approaches to theorising the existence of the informal economy and holistic models that seek to blend insights from different perspectives. The second theme of the literature review focused on occupational segregation according to gender, concluding that the NLMS approach provides a means of holistically analysing gender inequality in the labour market and women's access to jobs and resources. The following two themes discussed the evolution of decent work and the associated concepts of resources, access and barriers to access. Finally, the chapter reviewed the literature on women's access to resources and decent work according to their life cycle parameters of age, education and marital status. The chapter concluded by identifying a research gap in the existing literature on decent work, specifically the lack of a comprehensive framework to analyse access to resources required for decent work conditions, especially in the context of women workers engaged in the informal economy.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology used to answer the research questions and examines the philosophical assumptions underpinning the chosen methodological approach. Kothari (2004) refers to research methodology as a logical way of solving a research problem. The first section of this chapter discusses the research philosophy adopted for this study and explains the ontological and epistemological stance of the researcher. The next section discusses the research strategy followed by the research design that was developed to accomplish the research objectives. The chapter then discusses the data collection and analysis process followed by the researcher to achieve this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations and charts the reflections on the researcher's journey over three years.

3.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a researcher's understanding of a phenomenon based on certain assumptions about the knowledge and methods used to arrive at the findings (Crotty, 1998). Research philosophy, which comprises ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations, influences the choice of the research design (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Bryman, 2012; Creswell and Creswell, 2014).

The term ontology, borrowed from the Greek words `ontos' (being) and `logos' (theory or knowledge), means the study of the nature of reality (Dobson and Love, 2004). A researcher's ontological position concerns their assumptions about the nature of reality and their commitment to the two aspects of ontology: objectivism and subjectivism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Bryman, 2012). For example, objectivism assumes that social phenomena and social entities exist independently of human cognition. Bryman (2012) argues that people are

socialised into cultures and subcultures (social entities), which are regarded as storehouses of broadly communal standards and customs. These cultures and subcultures constrain those people because they internalise the principles and morals of their culture. In this case, social entities are external to the actor and have their own reality. Cultures and subcultures can thus be said to have an objective reality. A subjective ontological stance, by contrast, treats reality as the outcome of human cognitive processes (Cassell *et al.*, 2006), and thus, reality is socially constructed by social actors. Continuing the example of cultures and subcultures as social entities, Bryman (2012) argues that subjective ontology challenges the idea that cultures are pre-existing and consequently defy social actors as external realities that they have no role in shaping. Instead, culture is viewed as an evolving reality in a constant state of creation and recreation. Thus, subjectivists must understand culture through the meaning people attach to it through the phenomenon of social interactions.

Epistemological and ontological positions are closely linked to each other because a specific epistemological stance of a researcher also reflects their ontological stance and vice versa (Crotty, 1998). Bryman (2012) refers to research epistemology as that element of research philosophy which describes the present and ideal knowledge in a discipline and the process of acquiring this knowledge. Saunders *et al.* (2009) refer to epistemology as acceptable knowledge in a study. All research has certain epistemological assumptions determined by how the researcher asks questions and assesses the relevance of different research methodologies (Johnson and Duberley, 2000). Denzin and Lincoln (2008) argue that there are two extremes of the epistemological scale and hence two distinct epistemological positions, namely, positivism and interpretivism. Positivism, underpinned by an objectivist ontology, is a philosophical position that asserts that knowledge should be gained through scientific observation and measurement and (typically) the analysis of quantitative data (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Neuman, 2014). Positivism assumes a neutral truth to each phenomenon

that can be discovered. It emphasises methodically and statistically determining relationships between concepts (operationalised as variables) (Cassell and Symon, 2004). Bryman and Bell (2011) argue that advocates of the positivist epistemological approach claim that actual truth can be discovered only using methods associated with the natural sciences. In contrast to positivism is interpretivism, underpinned by a subjectivist ontology. It contends that subjective interpretations can help a researcher understand reality, implying that subjectivity plays a pivotal role in studying a phenomenon (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The interpretivist perspective asserts that the researcher needs to interpret the subjective meanings and values assigned by people because reality is socially constructed (Klein and Myers, 1999; Neuman, 2014).

Critical realism bridges the gap between positivism and interpretivism (Grix, 2010). Critical realism proposes ontological realism and epistemic fallibilism and ties the two together through judgmental rationality. Ontological realism implies that reality is independent of our cognizance or awareness. Bhaskar (2008) contends that paradigms, concepts and theories disclose reality, but do not create reality as our knowledge of the world constantly evolves, epistemes, methodologies, and ideas change. Critical realists refer to epistemological relativism in terms of epistemology, which implies that all knowledge is fallible (imperfect), incomplete, and changeable over time (Archer *et al.*, 1998). Critical realists claim that their commitment to ontological realism requires a complementary commitment to epistemological relativism because comprehension of the world by the human mind is incomplete and imperfect since the world is complex and stratified and irreducible to the mind. However, even though knowledge is fallible, critical realists believe that some knowledge assertions are superior to others and that the researcher can discover this through judgmental rationalism. Judgmental rationalism implies the ability of the researchers to decide through a criterion among competing theory claims explaining which interpretations

of the world are inferior or superior (Albert *et al.*, 2020). Bhaskar (2008) argues that the researcher evaluates competing truth claims through a sensible conversation among themselves; thus, the researcher comes nearer to truth and reality as time passes. Bhaskar (2008) further clarifies that it is not because of consensus among the researchers that they arrive at the truth but because all the proof indicates the reality and the truth. Adopting a critical realist ontology, I conducted my fieldwork accepting that women's beliefs (and my own) are produced, transient and fallible. I subscribed to judgemental rationalism claiming that there are rational reasons for preferring one belief over the other.

According to critical realists, positivism fails to recognise the essential social nature of knowledge development through the impact of underlying causal mechanisms and their associated hierarchies (Bhaskar, 1978; Archer, 1995). Similarly, constructivist philosophies over-indulge in human perspectives and associated awkward variations of relativism that cannot effectively resolve or explain competing claims to knowledge development. Critical realism delineates three domains of reality, namely the actual, the real, and the empirical (Bhaskar, 1978), to resolve these issues. According to Bhaskar (2008), the real domain comprises the structures enabling or constraining people's actions within a social setting. The actual domain consists of events (or non-events) as an outcome of human actions (or non-actions. The empirical domain comprises observations and experiences of individuals arising from the actions and events in the actual domain. Thus, the choice of critical realism for my research was guided by the fundamental premise that the world of work of the women vendors has depth (beyond the narrations of women about their experiences) and that 'the real' cannot be reduced simply to experiences of these women. 'The real' domain of work of these women is understood by looking at the structures of women's oppression in society and identifying the mechanisms which create barriers that prevent them from accessing formal

jobs and required resources (such as physical, social, economic resources etc.) to ensure decent work.

Critical realist ontology was also an appropriate choice according to the primary theoretical lens of the NLMS approach used to analyse the findings of this research. According to this theory, labour markets are embedded in institutions or social structures such as rules, conventions, resources etc. One of the theoretical traditions that the NLMS approach draws upon, namely the feminist socio-economics, emphasises that labour markets are strictly embedded in social structures (Fleetwood, 2006). For example, countries with high collective bargaining coverage are likely to have more inclusive labour markets (Hayter and Weinberg, 2011). In labour markets where collective bargaining is weak, disadvantaged groups such as migrants, marginalised women workers or domestic workers remain underrepresented within social dialogue institutions (Briskin and Muller, 2011).

I relied on critical realism to thematise the underlying mechanisms affecting or creating the experiences of women vendors. Using a critical realist epistemology was essential because the systems of inequality such as patriarchy and ethnicity and their effects are central to the decisions taken by women. Patriarchy was silent yet effective force shaping how women comprehended and construed their world of work. Adopting a critical realist philosophy allowed me to evaluate the unequal relations between men and women as a social structure with deep "generative mechanisms"[9] thereby allowing me to decipher the 'real' domain of reality (derived from the actual, the real, and the empirical domains) as proposed by Bhaskar (1978). These generative mechanisms (alternatively called causal mechanisms by Johnson *et al.* (2000), Pawson (2013) and Albert *et al.* (2020)) are not directly visible. Still, they do exist in the real domain, whether we conceptualise them or not. Two such causal

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[9] Mechanisms are defined by Bhaskar (1998) as causal structures explaining why and how a phenomenon or event occurs.

mechanisms underlying the structure of patriarchy were power dynamics (mediated through social interaction between the vendors and the decision-makers such as municipal authorities and governments) and social and material structures (such as role expectations tied to gender, ethnicity and religion, rules and vending regulations, financial systems, educational systems etc.). For example, the municipal authorities' power to confiscate vendors' merchandise implies a mechanism (such as vending laws specifying vending and no-vending zones and spatial rules of selling on the streets) by which this occurs. The exercising of power by the municipal authorities results in tendencies which, in the social world, may be manifest in visible events such as individual and collective resistance of vendors and civil society organisations.

I examined vendors as social actors to understand their situation. These forces shaped their position, the complex relationships among the vendors and between the vendors and the municipal authorities, and the extent to which they could access resources. Thus, my research subject was not only concerned with the interviewees' reflections, experiences, and motives. Instead, my research sought to explore the broader social conditions that produced these reflections, experiences, and explanations. Building upon Archer's (1995) variant of critical realism, I maintained ontic differentiation between structure and agency. This essentially meant that I viewed structure and agency as different strata of social reality where structures such as religion, marriage, ethnicity etc., pre-date the agents and are reproduced, transformed and elaborated by the intended and unintended actions of the agents through a process that Archer called morphogenetic/static approach (Archer, 1998). She defines morphogenesis as the complex exchanges between the structure and agent that change a system's structure or state. On the other hand, morphostasis represent no change or transformation in the system due to the interaction of the structure and agent (Archer, 1995). This approach helped me to explain the influence of structural conditioning on the socio-cultural interaction of agents and

the impact of these interactions on structural reproduction or change. For example, the women belonging to specific ethnic communities, such as the Gadia Lohars, were socially and culturally conditioned to continue their ancestral work of vending iron wares. However, the changing patriarchal relations within the home and the support of the free primary education provided by the Delhi Government are encouraging these women to challenge the oppressive structures. The past life course decisions taken by their parents deeply impacted the future of the older women. Having borne the repercussions of submitting to the patriarchal norms at home, these older women (now mothers of the younger women) decided to support their daughters in their educational pursuits so that they would not have to work as street vendors in future. Thus, despite the causal mechanisms of ethnicity and patriarchy constraining the agency of older married women to choose their occupation, social interaction among the agents and with the structures has encouraged them to challenge the oppressive structures. They have successfully convinced their husbands and in-laws to allow their daughters access to formal education, a process similar to Bhaskar's transformational model of social action (Bhaskar, 1998). As proposed by the LCT, these younger women used the proxy agency of their mothers, who had a more significant influence on the decisions of their husbands (compared to their daughters), to act on their behalf to accomplish the goal of being allowed by their fathers to continue their education. Through their individual and proxy agency of their mothers, these young women countered the effect of the patriarchal structure in their homes. Also, they transformed this structure (such as getting permission to attend school and travel alone to their educational institutes and workplaces) through their decisions.

Following the critical realist ontology and epistemology, I moved back and forth between the best possible explanation of collected data and reality through an iterative process. Explication of data required me to collect information about observed, empirical events from participants and identify structures, cultural backgrounds, and the context of the

interviewees based on the events found. Based on this data, I engaged in the process of retroduction to produce multiple possible explanations of causal mechanisms. This required me to adopt a reflexive posture to consider different mechanisms[10] to explain the barriers women vendors face to access resources and formal jobs, which is discussed in the following section.

3.2.1.1 <u>Reflexivity</u>

Accepting a critical realist philosophical stance requires that a reflexive posture be adopted by the researcher, where reflexivity refers to the ability of the researcher to reflect critically on oneself (Tracy, 2010). Within a critical realist position, the researchers cannot extract themselves from the research, and therefore, reflexivity becomes essential where researchers reflect on their background, motives and thus biases (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Similarly, in this research, a relativist stance required transparency and self-examination, particularly about how explanations were grasped, identifying the role of the researcher in knowledge production. The process of reflexivity aims to identify and acknowledge the research's limitations, location, operation and theoretical context (Shacklock and Smyth, 2004). Although Johnson and Duberley (2000) argue that reflexivity is a difficult process, Nadin and Cassell (2006) suggest that specific tools such as a research diary can be an effective instrument that can considerably help the researchers to become more reflexive. This tool was, therefore, used extensively throughout the fieldwork to record my experiences systematically. Self-critique of my biases of having been brought up in Delhi and my research on street vendors for the past twelve years influenced the construction of knowledge about the notion and interpretation of 'access'. I first researched the lives of the street vendors

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[10] This was important because my previous employment as a central government employee, I was blind (to the point of favouring government working style) to the mechanisms of oppression faced by vendors in the shape of atrocities inflicted on them by the police and the municipal authorities.

of Delhi in 2007 for my Master's dissertation. Having researched 275 vendors drawn from various markets of New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) in my Masters dissertation and later on continuing researching various aspects of living of the street vendors of Puducherry, Chennai and Vijayawada in India over a span of ten years, shaped the theoretical background and fieldwork interfaces of my PhD research.

As my research project advanced, I observed that my background knowledge about street vending, in general, and street vendors of Delhi, in particular, was affecting my fieldwork in terms of how I posed questions to vendors during my formal interactions with the vendors during the interviews. I started reflecting more earnestly on the epistemological repercussions of my positionality and the bias involved. Thus, I adopted what Butz and Besio (2009) call the autoethnographic voice. Reed-Danahay (1997) refers to autoethnography as a self-narrative that helps the researcher place the self in a social setting. I used this voice to discover how my positionality and self-reflection process designed my field experience and its theoretical framing. Using the concept of relational positionality, which refers to the relational nature of our positioning as researchers (Crossa, 2012), I discuss how several dimensions of my positionality coincided and how that shaped the journey of my fieldwork.

When I first went to the field, my nationality opened doors to my 'gatekeepers', which might not have happened if I was not an Indian. Gatekeepers in a research process are usually referred to as the intermediaries between the researchers and the participants who provide access to critical resources required to do research (Campbell *et al.*, 2006). These resources can be human, informational or logistical. I had a preconceived notion of what to expect in the field after telephonically interacting with the gatekeepers, the key NGOs working for the street vendors in Delhi. Being an Indian and speaking the same language as my gatekeepers (Hindi) encouraged them to interact with me. However, the preconceived notions of support I expected to find from the NGOs in the field were challenged, and I was exposed to networks

I did not anticipate. Each NGO had its agenda when I first met them. While a majority of the NGOs wanted to strictly monitor my interviews with the participants because they feared that 'the participants would say something against the NGO', the others offered to choose participants for me who could put in a good reference about the work of the chosen NGO. Still, others demanded bribes to allow me to interview the participants. Due to my experience of independently interviewing the vendors without intermediaries, I could not fathom the extent of physical and mental exhaustion I would undergo in choosing the right gatekeeper. After continuous rounds of meetings with several NGOs, I decided to work with the National Hawker Federation (NHF), which allowed me to work independently as a researcher without any interference in my fieldwork.

My position as an educated, young Indian woman provided me with opportunities to interact with my participants in Delhi, but at the same time, overlapped in problematic ways with a few objectives of my fieldwork. For example, my educational background and gender helped me build trust with the members of the NHF. Working with the NHF was instrumental in introducing me to the vendors of different markets in the city. However, the downside of being introduced by the NHF was that the participants were initially biased about what they said (they had only good things to say about NHF), with an understanding that their responses might affect their relationship with the NHF. This bias originated from their misconception that I was an 'insider' to the federation who expected to hear only positive responses about the working of the NGO from the vendors. I appreciated vendors' cautious attitude towards me as many were in a vulnerable position. On the other hand, they considered me an 'outsider' who had come to research the vendors from a 'foreign' university. Thus, during the interviews, I intentionally avoided asking questions emphasising my privileged subjectivities of being an 'outsider'. I was simultaneously considered an 'insider' and an 'outsider', and I needed to help my participants bridge this dichotomy before proceeding with my interviews. I

started to win the trust of my participants by visiting their workplaces and spending time with them, chatting informally and simply observing them in their natural setting. During these visits, I ensured that the vendors understood my role as an independent researcher who did not represent the interests of any federation or union or government body. I spent the first fifteen days of my fieldwork just roaming around in various markets of Delhi, all by myself and casually chatting with them. Once the vendors started recognizing me, they started trusting me, agreeing to be interviewed and candidly sharing their life stories with me. Finally, they were assured that their conversations (formal or informal) with me would have no implication (positive or negative) on their relationship with the NHF.

I faced the most difficulties in raising questions regarding the role of the government in providing financial, social and physical support to the vendors. My understanding of the policies launched by the central and the state government for the betterment of the vendors guided my questions in the initial interviews. However, when I listened to the audio recordings after the initial few interviews, I realised that my positionality of being a government employee in the past was unintentionally compelling me to ask prejudiced questions. For example, I asked the participants, 'Why do you not use the government support schemes available for vendors, such as the free health services in the government hospitals?' Upon realising the prejudice in how the question was phrased, I re-framed the question 'Do you believe the government provides support to the vendors? If yes, what benefits have you drawn from the government schemes that made or will make your work 'decent'?

Reflecting on the expected power difference between the researcher and the researched, it is worth mentioning that despite making the research process interactive and participant-driven, a researcher cannot evade being the controller of their research agenda (Råheim *et al.*, 2016). Although the vendors had a life enriched with their experiences, they looked to me to

facilitate the process of making this interaction work. My participants constantly noticed how I responded to their talk, which guided the direction of the interview. Consequently, it became my most significant challenge to 'maximise' women's ability to express themselves and boost their willingness to share their opinions and outlook in an unrestricted, honest and non-intimidating manner with me. It became my utmost responsibility to manage how I looked and acted to exhibit empathy and build a connection with my participants. My ability to converse with them in Hindi, spend time with them in their workplace, share my food and maintain an empathetic bond with them helped me to alleviate this power difference and dispel their worries and reservations.

3.3 Research strategy

Bryman and Bell (2011) refer to research strategy as the research orientation, which can be qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods. According to Creswell and Creswell (2014), quantitative research is an empirical study of a social phenomenon or human problem. This type of research usually relies on a deductive approach where the theories are tested based on specific, measurable variables and analysed to ascertain if the theory explains the phenomenon or problem under study (Black, 1999). Qualitative research is usually an inductive approach to studying a social phenomenon or human problem in its natural setting. This type of research describes the specific terms and meanings people use to explain their experiences in their milieu (Yilmaz, 2013). Research which requires questions to be asked from an epistemologically subjective perspective benefits more from a qualitative research strategy (Guba and Lincoln, 1994) which helps to understand, rather than explain, a social phenomenon by answering questions of what, why and how (Sarason *et al.*, 2006). While theory postulation is an important feature of qualitative research (Gummesson, 2006) and quantitative research focuses on testing theories stated at the start of a study (Bryman and

Bell, 2011), it does not imply that qualitative research cannot be used to test theory (Silverman, 2018) or that quantitative research cannot be used for theory generation (Robson and McCartan, 2016). The point is that there is no 'best' strategy to conduct research, and the choice of the research strategy is decided by the research aims and objectives and the conceptual framework of the research (Silverman, 2018). Mixed methods research involves different methods for observing social phenomena and can potentially enable an appreciation of the multifaceted dimensions of such phenomena through quantitative and qualitative approaches (Greene, 2008). The (ultimately simplistic) dichotomy between objectivist approaches, typically associated with quantitative empirical methods, and subjectivist approaches, typically associated with qualitative empirical methods, is based on the assumption that some data should be discarded on the basis of its aptness and consonance with the general orientation of the approach. This assumption is flawed because numbers can often give an understanding of the meaning or beliefs (for example when school dropout rates for girls increase), and inferring human actions can offer better appreciation of an external and objective reality (for example, the resistance strategies used by girls to get permission from their parents to attend school). Critical realism overcomes this odd dualism between objectivism and subjectivism by assuming the presence of an objective or 'intransitive' world with powers and properties, on the one hand, and that the subjective and 'transitive' creation of knowledge due to continually changing social construction, on the other. I deliberately chose critical realism to identify the generative mechanisms which explained why vendors did not have access to resources or formal jobs and why they commenced vending. This required me to collect empirical data about the rich experiences of women and also to move beyond the empirical to the theoretical explanation of their behaviour and choices.

The decision to select a qualitative research strategy for this research was essentially based on the focus of my research. The focus of the study usually ranges from intensive to extensive research (Ackroyd and Karlsson, 2002). While intensive research prioritises using qualitative research approaches, in which the context is known to the researcher, but the mechanisms are hidden, extensive research prioritises a quantitative research approach in which mechanisms are known to the researcher, and the social context is hidden. The focus of my research was essentially intensive because the context (vendors and their working patterns) was known to me. Still, I had to explore and explain the mechanisms of discrimination (such as patriarchy and labour market segmentation) deterring these vendors from applying for formal jobs or getting access to resources to improve their working conditions. To understand these hidden mechanisms and subsequently achieve my research objectives, it was necessary to know how vendors interpreted and made sense of their experiences to explain the significant barriers they faced to accessing formal jobs and resources. Thus, the intention was to understand and recognise the factors enabling or preventing access which could only be acquired through a qualitative research strategy. For example, the first research question on the barriers preventing vendors from accessing formal jobs required me to empathetically understand the underlying factors of patriarchy and social norms which deterred them from accessing formal jobs, and the impact these factors had on their ability to access education or choose their work options in future. Similarly, to answer my research question on motives for vendors to commence vending, I had to understand the context of vendors' lives and work, which affected their reasons for initiating vending. I had to inductively move (from the specific to the general) from the data to describe underlying reasons for vendors' choices regarding their access to formal jobs and motives to become vendors. Similarly, based on the previous literature, I could not impose my understanding of 'access' on vendors and follow assumptions about the barriers they faced to access resources.

Although I went to the field with some `hunches' about what I might find due to my familiarity with the city and the vending population, I had to be open-minded to give accounts of reality about 'access' and 'barriers' as understood by vendors, which was only possible with a qualitative research strategy.

3.4 Research design

Bryman (2012) refers to research design as a framework to gather and analyse data. Research design is vital for deciding and planning the methods for relevant data collection and the techniques for data analysis, given the research objective and the availability of resources (Kothari, 2004). The following sections discuss this study's research design, including the data collection instruments used, study area and target population depiction and choice of the sampling procedure and data analysis methods.

3.4.1 Choice of methods for data collection

Data collection is usually done through a particular instrument, such as participant observation, questionnaire or an interview schedule, through which a researcher listens to and perceives others (Bryman and Bell, 2011). There are various data generation and collection methods, such as surveys conducted in person or through postal and electronic mail or telephonic and face-to-face interviews. Giddens (2006) posits that detailed informal interviews allow the researcher to have greater flexibility in probing participants, enabling the researcher to understand a phenomenon or problem in detail, compared to the survey questionnaires. When data needs to be collected on sensitive topics, a face-to-face interview is the ideal method of data collection (Liamputtong, 2007; Elmir *et al.*, 2011; Taylor *et al.*, 2011) because interviews allow the interviewer to build a rapport with the participants to make them feel more safe and comfortable to discuss sensitive issues (Knox and Burkard,

2009). The interview method was chosen because interviews, as argued by Miles and Gilbert (2005), allowed me to request the respondents to corroborate their responses with additional details and encourage them to raise imperative issues somehow skipped by myself. This method of data collection also allowed me to ask for clarifications in cases where the narrations of vendors were unclear or incomplete. Moreover, following my critical realist ontology, interviews as a method for data collection were a natural choice because interviews help the researcher uncover rich, detailed insights, as confirmed by Porpora (2016). These detailed insights allow the description of more comprehensive mechanisms translating into more logical explanations (Brönnimann, 2022).

Interviews, one of the oldest data collection methods, can be defined as 'a structured discussion in which questions are asked to understand a phenomenon or social situation' (Vogt and Gardner, 2012). Following previous studies on the informal economy where the key method for data collection was face-to-face interviews (Chen *et al.*, 2004; Gurtoo and Williams, 2009; Williams and Round, 2009; Williams and Nadin, 2012; Adom, 2014; Williams and Williams, 2014), the fieldwork for this study also involved the use of interviews. I chose this method because semi-structured face-to-face interviews provided opportunities to notice how participants felt happy and uncomfortable answering specific questions, which was visible in their facial expressions and gestures. Also, interviews have an advantage when participants are illiterate as there is no need for them to read the questions asked or write their answers (George *et al.*, 2018). The adaptive nature of interviews in terms of being designed and re-designed as the research progresses makes them a preferred option over other methods of data collection (Baric, 2016). Although surveys allow researchers to measure the attitudes of many participants, they do not permit probing the underlying reasons for the attitudes being expressed. In this research, information about the access to specific resources facilitating decent work conditions was obtained through face-to-face interaction

with the interviewees. The subjective perceptions, attitudes and rationales for the interviewees' behaviour helped explain differences in their access to resources according to their age, marital status and educational background.

The semi-structured format of the interviews allowed me to discuss themes and issues that were of relevance to my research. The semi-structured interviews reflected my critical realist outlook, where I predominantly used the 'why' and 'how' questions based on my prior theoretical ideas. The respondents used statements narrating their real-life experiences of exploitation and discrimination in the labour market while accessing formal jobs, such as 'I remember witnessing…', 'the sexual exploitation in domestic work compelled me to opt for street vending because…' and 'because of the corruption in recruitment practices of formal workplaces, I decided to…'. The interviews were self-evolving and flexible, which allowed the women to raise new topics and partially determined the direction of the discussions.

However, the interview as an instrument of data collection is not free from disadvantages. Interviews are a costly and labour-intensive research method. The most common risk of using interviews as an instrument of data collection is the possibility that participants will be unwilling to give honest answers to sensitive questions posed by the interviewer (Ram *et al.*, 2002). However, building rapport with respondents was one of the methods I adopted to make the vendors feel comfortable during the interview and willing to discuss sensitive topics. It was necessary to spend time with the vendors in the market before commencing the interviewing process. This helped them overcome the insider/outsider dichotomy surrounding me as an interviewer and built trust in me to share their profound emotional life experiences honestly. A discussion of this rapport-building exercise has been given above in the section on 'reflexivity'.

The method to conduct the interviews was individual face-to-face oral communication because of the open-ended and semi-structured nature of questions which required prompts

and enquiries to elicit an appropriate complete response. Also, a few questions required a deeper description to confirm that the participants completely comprehended them. Face-to-face communication offered me the opportunity to get first-hand information from the street vendors, which was more precise and a better echo of their perceptions than could be gained through telephonic communication. Questions in the interview schedule (refer to Appendix 6) were carefully phrased because inadequate or confusing questions would not have allowed me to acquire an in-depth understanding of terms like 'access' and 'barriers' from the interviewee's perspective. My presence in the study area allowed me to understand better the setting being researched. During the fieldwork, I interacted with the participants and tried to understand their beliefs by 'seeing through their eyes'. I aimed to comprehend the research questions from the viewpoint of those being researched, simultaneously recognising that I was not a disconnected and unbiased observer in the data collection process. This stance is summarised in the argument of Atkinson *et al.* (2007), who state that the researcher shares the social world being researched. Thus, an 'escape' from the social world is not essential to successfully study the phenomena in question.

After deciding on the data collection instrument, it was necessary to select the target population. The subsequent section discusses the rationale for selecting the study area and the target population for conducting the interviews.

3.4.2 Study area and the target population

Ten million street vendors work in India. Their numbers range from 0.15 million to 0.20 million in metropolitan cities to 30,000 in smaller towns (Bhowmik and Saha, 2011). One such metropolitan city, Delhi, was chosen for this research. There were two primary reasons for choosing Delhi as the study area. Firstly, the city has the country's largest concentration of street vendors, approximately 0.45 million. Secondly, Delhi is the only city

in India that has an extensive range of vending markets, from the exclusive 'ladies market' where only the women vendors work to the 'natural/ regular markets' and weekly markets where both male and female vendors work together (Sankrit, 2015).

Delhi is the capital city of India and is situated in northern India. It is spread over an area of 1483 km^2 and has a population of 18.3 million (Government of India, 2013). Delhi has the most significant inter-state migrants (33 per cent) as a percentage of its total population among all the states of India (Times News Network, 2018; Kawoosa, 2019). The large-scale immigration to Delhi, coupled with the low absorption rates of unemployed youth in the formal sector, has led to the growth of the informal sector in the city (Sharma, 2014). Chatterjee, Murgai and Martin (2015), in their paper on the female labour force participation in India, found that married women who migrate to the cities from the villages have poor skillsets and negotiating power and end up working in the informal sector primarily as self-employed workers. Street vending is the most observable form of informal employment within self-employment (Roever and Skinner, 2016). Street vendors comprise 2.7 per cent (0.45 million) of Delhi's population, which is more than the maximum vending population (of 2.5 per cent of the city's population) allowed in any Indian city, as per the Street Vendors Act passed by the Government of India (2014).

The Government of Delhi has categorised street vendors into stationary, mobile/ peripatetic, and others (weekly/festival/fair market and night bazaars) (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2015). *Stationary vendors* regularly carry out vending activities from a specific location, and *mobile vendors* move from one place to another, either on foot or in a vehicle, to sell their products (Government of India, 2014).
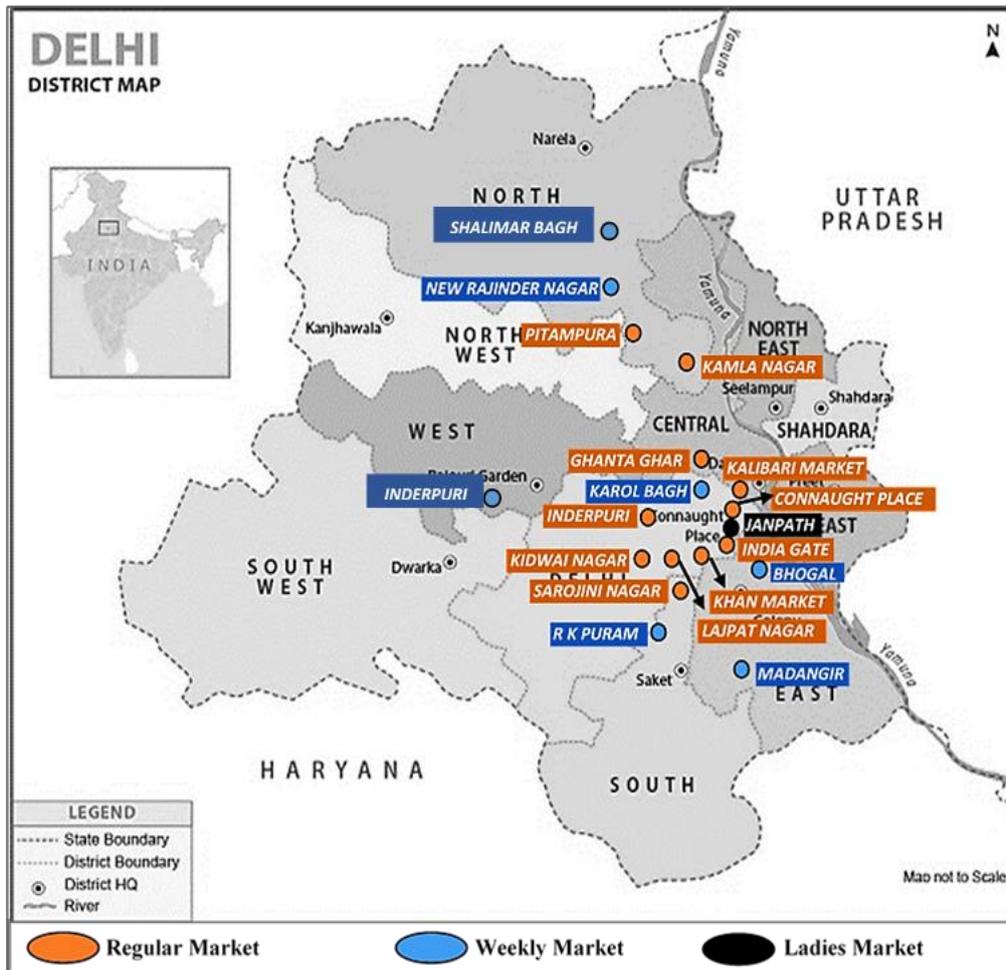
Figure 1: Vending market locations of the interviewees

Natural/ regular markets are markets where the sellers and buyers have conventionally assembled for the trade of merchandise or services. These markets can be found in any type of land use, such as commercial, residential, or public/ semi-public areas. The weekly market vendors carry out street trading once a week on the street in a residential area, and *temporary vendors* perform street trading on specific occasions such as festivals or fairs in the public or semi-public areas of the city. *Night bazaar vendors* work in a specified night bazaar during the period permitted by the municipal authorities (Government of India, 2014).

The target population for this research was the *stationary* and *mobile* vendors operating in the *regular*, *weekly* and *ladies* markets. The locations of the markets from which participants were chosen for the study are shown in Figure 1. *Festival/ fair markets* were

deliberately excluded because the vendors working in such markets also worked in the *regular* or *weekly* markets. The *night bazaars* were also excluded from this study because no *night bazaars* were found in Delhi, perhaps due to the city's reputation of being the country's crime capital and incredibly unsafe for women (Banerjee, 2008).

After deciding on the target population, choosing a population sample to conduct the interviews was necessary. Thus, selecting a sampling frame from which to draw a sample was essential, which is discussed in the next section.

3.4.3 Sampling

Groves *et al.* (2009) contend that the sampling frame is already present in some situations, while in other cases, it has to be created. A sampling frame refers to drawing a perimeter around the population members eligible to be included in a sample (Given, 2008). In my research, a sampling frame had to be drawn because of complexities in vendor license status after enacting the Street Vendors Act, 2015. The vendors in Delhi have been issued licenses under the *Tehbazari* (foldable markets) licensing system since the 1980s. However, the Government of Delhi officially published the Street Vendors Scheme in 2015 (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2015) under the Street Vendors Act (Government of India, 2014). According to this scheme, Town Vending Committees (TVCs) should be formed to conduct comprehensive surveys to enumerate the population of Delhi's street vendors. The Municipal bodies will distribute fresh 'Certificate of Vending (CoV)' (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2015) based on the surveys done by the TVCs. However, the survey did not occur until after the fieldwork was concluded in November 2019 (Reporter, 2019). When the fieldwork commenced in 2019, all the vendors were at par in terms of licensing. This was because the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending)

Scheme drafted by the Government of Delhi in 2015 declared the existing vending licenses invalid until the new licenses were issued as per the scheme (India Today, 2015).

When the city was transitioning from one licensing system to another, a sampling frame did not exist in this situation. Thus, the sampling frame for this research was drawn from the street vendors' list available with the most prominent street vendor association in Delhi, namely the NHF, which was chosen as the second-best alternative. NHF is a 20-year-old national federation of street vendors with branches spread over 28 states of India. The federation does not directly offer membership to the vendors registered with it but gives membership to the unions registered with the federation. There were 1188 national and international unions associated with the NHF at the time of commencement of my fieldwork. The origin of this federation can be traced to January 2000, when they held the first national meeting demanding a national policy for street vendors. Due to their frequent meetings held in various parts of India over the next two years, the NHF succeeded in compelling the government to frame the National Policy of street Vendors in 2004. Later, the NHF was involved in preparing the revised National Policy of Street Vendors, 2009; Model Act for Street Vendors, 2010 and the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.

Within Delhi, there are 51 vendor unions associated with the NHF. These unions give membership to the vendors across Delhi and keep a record of their members' basic demographic information, such as their name, age and gender, as well as information about their location and the type of goods they sell. The first three weeks of fieldwork were devoted to arranging meetings with the NHF officials to better understand the street vending scenario in Delhi and decide upon the research process without much intervention by the NHF. During these initial meetings, the NHF shared the list of vendors registered with the trade unions associated with the NHF. I could choose participants from the registered vendor's list based

on the maximum variation sampling. Maximum variation sampling is a purposive sampling technique where a sample is constructed by finding significant variations in dimensions and then finding cases widely varying from each other (Patton, 2015). The criteria for drawing such a sample were geographical variation among the markets and demographic variation among the vendors.

Interviewees were selected from the *ladies market* situated at Janpath (in Connaught Place), eight *weekly markets,* and twelve *regular markets* spread all over the city to fulfil the criterion of geographical variation. Maximum variation sampling allowed me to select participants from the three kinds of street vendors' markets in Delhi, in different locations all over the city. The regular markets of Delhi had the most significant number of registered women vendors with the NHF, and the *ladies market* had the least number of registrations. Thus, 71 participants were chosen from the *regular markets*, followed by 23 vendors from *weekly markets* and nine from the *ladies market* in Delhi. Three women who worked in both the *regular* and the *weekly markets* were also chosen to understand the differences and similarities in their access to resources when their work setting changed from a regular market to a weekly market. These women worked for one or two days in the *weekly and regular markets* on all the other days of the week. The classification of vendors according to the market type was not necessary to answer the research questions on barriers to getting jobs in the formal sector and motives to commence vending. However, classifying vendors according to the market type was highly relevant in understanding the barriers and facilitators to access resources for decent work conditions. For example, the access to physical infrastructure in each market varied greatly. It was necessary to understand barriers or facilitators to access perceived by vendors working in the *ladies*, *weekly* and *regular* markets separately.

The interviewees were identified based on three demographic parameters: age, literacy level and marital status. We decided to have at least one interviewee fulfilling each demographic parameter. Using a maximum variation sampling technique to select the participants was extremely useful because it showed the differences in comprehension of the concept of 'access' to resources by the vendors of varying ages, education level and marital status. The distribution of the samples according to the life cycle parameters of vendors collected from various markets is summarised in Table 1.

The number of vendors to be interviewed was decided according to the principle of 'saturation'. Saturation includes recruiting participants into the research till the dataset is exhausted for data recurrence or redundancy (Bowen, 2008). However, the concept of saturation is flexible, with no precise rules to decide the sample size justifying the saturation point (Mason, 2010). Various authors have suggested different sample sizes for qualitative research. For example, Creswell (2012) proposes a sample of 20-30 interviews to be taken for studies using grounded theory. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Morse (1995) suggest conducting 30-50 semi-structured interviews for qualitative studies. Morse (2000) recommends a sample size of 20-30 interviewees for qualitative research. In this study, 105 vendors were interviewed, bearing in mind all thinkable variations of the geographical and demographic criteria for sampling.

Table 1: Distribution of interviewees across various types of markets

		Ladies Market (9 samples)	Weekly markets (22 samples)	Regular markets (71 samples)	Regular & weekly markets (3 samples)	Total samples
Literacy	*Literate*	3	14	23	1	41
	Illiterate	6	8	48	2	64
Age	*20s & below*	1	1	3	0	5
	30s	4	7	15	1	27
	40s	3	8	22	1	34
	50s	0	5	18	1	24
	60s & above	1	1	13	0	15
Marital status	*Unmarried*	1	1	3	0	5
	Married	7	13	43	3	66
	Divorced	0	3	2	0	5
	Widow	1	4	22	0	27
	Abandoned	0	1	1	0	2

3.5 Data collection

The fieldwork was conducted from August 2019 to November 2019 in Delhi. Before commencing interviews with the vendors, I had the task of choosing the right gatekeeper to access interviewees for my research. In such a confusing situation, when there was no clear understanding of the licensing mechanism to be followed in the wake of the new Street Vendors Act, it was difficult for me to approach a neutral civil society organisation (which was neither biased toward the vendors nor the government) to obtain a sampling frame. There is a risk that a researcher who moves to and fro between different organisations may be considered treacherous or disloyal if they spend a lot of time with each organisation. However, none of the organisations doubted my integrity, as reflected in their conversations with me and their intention to help me conduct my fieldwork. However, some civil society organisations tried to win my trust through false pretences of helping me, although their real

purpose was to get funds for their projects from me in the future. Almost all the representatives of these organisations frequently bought up political topics to tarnish the image of the other organisations during the discussions. Deliberately taking the discussion in the direction of such issues which had no relevance to my study, such as the caste composition of other NGOs[11] was an issue I encountered in most of my meetings with these organisations. Another critical issue that I frequently encountered was the constant persuasion of the organisations to choose the city where I could conduct my interviews with the vendors and, sometimes, select my participants for the research. This placed me in danger of not only being misled and manipulated by various vending organisations but also by interviewing participants chosen by the organisation. Interviewing the hand-picked (by the NGO) vendors would have perhaps introduced the element of 'biased' answers, especially around the questions of the effectiveness of the NGO's work on the working conditions of these interviewees.

After a week of endless elaborate meetings with five different NGOs, I chose the NHF. The reasons for selecting the NHF were two-fold. First, the NHF is not a union or association that issues membership cards to vendors; instead, it is a federation of street vendor unions, and these unions give membership cards to the vendors. The NHF did not interfere in the internal matters of these unions. Due to the nature of their operation, it was nearly impossible for the NHF to influence the vendors directly because the vendors were not getting any direct benefit from the federation. Second, the NHF is a much larger body than any NGOs working in Delhi for the rights of the vendors. Due to their wide area of operation (nationally and within Delhi), the NHF was more likely to give me wide exposure to the variation of

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[11] Caste was delibertately brought up in several discussions because these NGOs believed that I would not like to work with people of lower castes in other NGOs as I belong to the highest caste of 'Brahmins' in India. Caste composition of the NGOs was irrelevant to my research as my research understands the experiences of vendors (and not the NGO officials) in a particular social context.

interviewees I needed for my research, which seemed impossible if I worked with other NGOs because each NGO concentrated on vendors of one or two particular markets, where they worked more effectively.

After conveying my decision to work with the NHF, I visited their office and met the officials again. I shared with them the consent form and participant information sheets to be circulated to all the prospective participants in the study. To build a rapport with the interviewees, the NHF officials used to take me to various markets and introduced me to all the vendors. Later, I started visiting these markets independently and talked casually with the vendors, sometimes sharing my food with them or taking chocolates for their children. This went on for the first fifteen days of my fieldwork. After I was sure that the vendors recognised me and started trusting me, I began the actual process of interviewing them.

After selecting the prospective participants from the registered vendors' list of the NHF, I arranged a time, through telephone calls, to meet the future participants (who fulfilled the criteria to be eligible for interviews) and requested them to participate in my study. I procured the telephone numbers of all the vendors from the NHF. The vendors who agreed to participate were given an information sheet and consent form to take home. This allowed them to decide on their participation after consulting with their family members. The women were encouraged to ask questions about my research while I was handing out the information sheets and consent forms. The vendors were asked to convey their decision to participate in the study to the members of the NHF, either by telephone or in person, by visiting their office. Once a vendor decided to participate in the study, she was contacted by me directly, either by phone or through my visit, to confirm her consent to participate. During my conversation regarding her participation, I invited the participant to meet me at a specific time (convenient to her) and venue the following day.

The interviews were conducted in rooms rented explicitly for the purpose and near to the workplace of vendors in the chosen markets (so that they could proceed to work after the interview without bearing any transport cost in commuting to the workplace), thus posing no risk to the safety of the women. The semi-structured interviews with the interviewees were based on an interview schedule guided by four clusters of questions that reflected the four key topics (refer to Appendix 6): 'What are the barriers vendors face to get jobs in the formal sector?', 'What are the motivating/ driving factors of the participants to opt for street vending?', 'What are the resources required by vendors to access decent work conditions at their workplace?' and 'What are the street vendors' perceptions and experiences of access to identified resources for decent work conditions?'.

More details about participants' perspectives were elicited through nondirective probes (such as asking questions such as 'Can you elaborate on this?') and follow-up questions which were re-phrased throughout the interview process[12]. For example, during the initial few interviews with the divorced vendors, I used to ask a question, 'why did you not approach any NGO or union for further financial support?' However, after conducting a few interviews, I understood that a direct question like that brought out the disappointment of vendors in such organisations. They became highly emotional while narrating their experiences with various NGOs. A few participants even felt they were being blamed for not approaching the unions or NGOs because of how I phrased my question. Initially, the participants thought that I was working with the NHF and expected to hear only positive things about the work of this organisation. Understanding my positionality, as an interviewer introduced by the NHF to the vendors, I re-phrased this question in further interviews. I asked the same question, 'were you associated with any NGO or union at the time when you were

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[12] Five pilot interviews were done with women of different marital status (unmarried, married, divorced, abandoned and widowed).

facing the financial crunch?' A follow-up question to this one was, 'if you were associated, then was any sort of help offered to you by them, financially, physically or emotionally?'

Each participant was interviewed for approximately one hour, and I took extensive notes. Interviews were conducted in the local language, Hindi. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed before being translated and transcribed to text verbatim from Hindi to English by me.

Table 2: Key discussion themes for interviewees with vendors and NHF officials

Interviewees	Number of Interviewees	Key discussion themes
Ladies market	9	- Barriers to getting jobs in the formal sector
Weekly market	22	- Motives for the commencement of street vending
Regular market	71	- Barriers and facilitators to access resources required for decent work conditions at the workplace for street vendors
Weekly and regular market	3	
	Total: 105	
NHF officials	Vice President (Delhi)	- Motives for women to commence street vending
	General Secretary (Delhi)	- Role of the NHF in providing access to resources for decent work conditions in the street vending
	All India Women Hawker Federation (AIWHF) General Secretary (Central)	- Significant barriers for women to apply for jobs in the formal sector
	National Youth Hawker Federation (NYHF) President (Central)	- Understanding street vending as a decent work - Significant resources required by vendors to achieve decent work conditions in their work
	1 Volunteer	- Barriers and facilitators to access the identified resources
	Total: 5	

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect data from the NHF officials, all of whom were vendors and had closely worked with the vendors in Delhi for the past twenty years in their capacity as NHF officials. These interviews gave me profound insights into the understanding of the NHF officials concerning the working lives of vendors and the personal or structural barriers to accessing various resources. The interviews with the officials were conducted after finishing the interviews with the vendors. This was a deliberate decision because the interviews with the vendors gave me enough insights into the issues of lack of representation and voice, which were essential to frame questions for interviews to be conducted with the NHF officials.

Questions for the interviews with the officials were designed based on the topics determined through interviews with the vendors. Interviews with the key informants were crucial to understanding their perspective on the vendors' access problems. These interviews also helped elicit the areas that the key informants thought necessary to be examined for drawing conclusions and suggesting recommendations for this study. The description of the interviewees and the key discussion themes are listed in Table 2.

3.6 Data analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), qualitative analytic methods can be bifurcated into two types: methods attached to a particular theoretical position, such as conversation and discourse analysis, and methods that apply to various theoretical approaches, such as content and thematic analysis. The data analysis method I used was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for detecting and examining patterns (themes) in a dataset (Braun and Clarke, 2006). TA is appropriate for explaining the precise nature of the participants' conceptualisation of the phenomenon being studied, which in my research ranged from vendors' conceptualisations of barriers to access to their motives to commence vending.

A critical realist ontology and epistemology determined the focus of my data analysis process. My data analysis process was not guided exclusively by a need to develop a detailed description of respondents' subjective experiences, such as their feelings, thoughts and perceptions shaping their experiences (as done in phenomenological studies), but also to understand the 'context' (social systemic, cultural etc.) giving rise to these experiences. Thematic analysis was chosen because it enabled me to interpret my respondents' experiences and the context giving rise to such incidents. Also, the thematic analysis allowed me to focus on patterns of meaning across data sets drawn from vendors working in different markets, in contrast to the vendors' individual experiences'. This subsequently enabled my data analysis process to make generalisations about the 'reality' of the women belonging to different age groups, marital and education statuses.

An alternative method of data analysis, Grounded Theory (Glaser & Straus, 1967), was considered an alternative method of data analysis. However, this method allows the development of a theory from the data in a specific context. Hence, this method is more appropriate in studies aiming to develop a theoretical model. Since the nature of my research was exploratory, the thematic analysis offered the most suitable methodological framework because theories can be applied to it flexibly without particular *a priori* theoretical assumptions about what may be derived from the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Clarke and Braun, 2013; Willig, 2013). This data analysis method helped me assess the recurrence of codes and themes and also helped me analyse the contextual meanings of themes derived from the interviews (Joffe and Yardley, 2004).

An approach to thematic analysis, known as Template Analysis, was used to analyse the interviews. Template analysis helps make the analytical process more convenient by organising qualitative data (Cassell and Symon, 2004). The main reason to use Thematic analysis was the flexibility it offered to adapt to the needs of the study, despite having a

hierarchical coding structure. Central to this analytical technique was creating a coding template based on a data subsection, which was later applied to further data. I used a hybrid approach (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) involving inductive-deductive TA, which was extremely useful for my research. I adopted an inductive approach to capture and find patterns within the data and explore the codes and themes emerging from and strongly linked to the data. On the other hand, the deductive process produced a set of codes from an extensive literature search. The interview data were coded for the four specific questions mentioned in Section 3.5, and the data were assigned to a pre-existing coding frame. The data collection and analysis exercises were carried out simultaneously. I reviewed the previous process steps before further analysis to ensure that the emerging themes were grounded in the original data.

The first step in TA was to familiarize myself with my data set. Conducting interviews in my native language and familiarity with English gave me more clarity in translations and reduced the risk of errors linked to translation through an interpreter. Since I transcribed the interview data collected through semi-structured interviews without searching for external transcription assistance, I could engage with and reflect on my data set.

The transcribed data were imported into NVivo for analysis. The analysis of the interview transcripts began by thoroughly going over the transcribed interviews and writing my initial observations about the content of the discussions. The code-generating exercise involved iterative rounds of consolidating data into condensed meaning units (Tuckett, 2005). For example, the 'meaning units' were summarised versions of text sections identifying the resources required for decent work and the experiences of interviewees' access to the specified resources. Later, the units were classified into 'a Priori codes' of various dimensions of access (accommodation, acceptability, adaptability, awareness, availability and accessibility) to the identified resources. After generating theory-driven codes, I moved to the

generation of data-driven codes for interpreting vendors' barriers to accessing resources. This meant searching for different themes in each vendor's interview transcript and applying inductive coding to interview transcripts. An iterative coding template was developed using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software, outlining the themes and sub-themes developing from conversation topics and classifying them in a meaningful way (refer to Appendix 7 for coding for each of the four questions). Linking codes by detecting themes and patterns in the data (Crabtree and Miller, 1999) and searching for themes involves sorting, collating and combining codes to form a central theme (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Sorting essentially involved putting contextualised quotes under a specific code and linking similar quotations under a particular theme. Novel themes and subthemes emerged during the data evaluation process and were revised in an iterative process. The anonymised quotes from the respondents further corroborated the identified themes. Some portions of the transcripts were coded in more than one node. Coding helped me to comprehend the underlying reasons for each participant's perspective by recognising and inferring issues, resemblances and dissimilarities revealed in response to participants' narratives.

3.7   Ethical considerations

Paying attention to ethical considerations is of utmost importance in qualitative research. I took account of specific moral concerns because my study involved procuring sensitive information from a vulnerable section of society, the street vendors. Ethical considerations were made from the beginning of the study and were entrenched in formulating the research design to enhance the reliability and thoroughness of this research. The ethical considerations before commencing my fieldwork were the choice of the sampling method and instrument for data collection.

One of the first tasks in conducting research was selecting a sample of a population to study. This selection posed the ethical question regarding the inclusion and exclusion of women to be interviewed. Based on the pre-decided sampling criteria, vendors were chosen without any prejudice concerning their caste/ religious background. Similarly, preparing interview guides for conducting semi-structured interviews with the vendors ensured that all the questions were crucial and valuable for this research. The questions were worded, free from any technical jargon, and were phrased so as not to sound offensive to the respondents.

The essential ethical considerations during my fieldwork were obtaining the interviewees' informed consent to participate in my research and risk assessment and mitigation. Informed consent of the interviewees was sought at two levels. Due to the insecure and unpredictable nature of the vending activity, access to the markets was first discussed with the 'gatekeeper', the NHF. At the second level, the consent of the chosen participants for interviews was sought. Each respondent was given a participant information sheet which elaborated the intent of my research and answered questions related to the possible use and confidentiality of the data collected during the interviews.

Along with the participant information sheet, they were also given the consent forms (in Hindi). They were asked to return the signed consent forms to me if they agreed to participate before we commenced the interview (see Appendix 1 and 2 for the information sheet and the consent form, respectively). The participants were asked to sign or give a thumb impression (depending on their literacy level) on the consent form to confirm that they understood the aim of my research and the need for their interview. I informed the participants verbally about the content in the information sheet and the consent form to ensure they understood it correctly. Also, the illiterate women vendors were encouraged to invite a trusted third party who was able to verify the information sheet and consent form. The consent forms and the information sheets were translated to their local language, Hindi,

for easy comprehension. Even after the participants' consented to be interviewed, they were allowed to withdraw from the interview at any stage if they felt uneasy for any reason. I did this to ensure that the interviewees' participation was voluntary, with no compulsion. De-briefing sessions were held with each participant after her interview, where she was encouraged to ask questions about my research or clarify her doubts if any. A similar process was followed before commencing the interviews of the NHF officials. As the officials were literate, they were asked to sign the consent form (see Appendix 4). Audio recordings for all the interviews were done for subsequent transcription, and permission was sought in the written consent form, which was given to them before the interview. Six divorced and separated vendors were hesitant to be audio-recorded, for whom I took detailed notes (with their consent) during these interviews and elaborated these notes immediately after the interview.

Risk assessment was vital to the fieldwork to be undertaken for this study. This research did not present any risk of physical harm to the respondents. However, due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, psychological 'risks' of participating emerged due to the discussions during the interviews. For example, during the interviews, unmarried vendors became extremely emotional while narrating the incidents where they were forced to work despite their desire to continue their education. Similarly, the divorced vendors found it distressing to share their stories of rejection by their marital and natal families after their divorce. The interview was stopped for some time, and the female NHF volunteer (who always accompanied me to my interview site) was asked to provide emotional and psychological support. To ensure that the volunteer did not become involved in the interview process, she was asked to wait outside the interview room while the interview was being conducted. She was called into the room only when any emotional and psychological support

was required. The interview was paused during emotional breakdowns and resumed after the participant felt better and agreed to respond.

Confidentiality of the responses was ensured, throughout the data collection, analysis and write-up phases, to protect the participants from harm (Bryman, 2012). The identities of all the participant vendors and NHF officials were hidden throughout the research transcription, analysis and write-up

Delhi has the country's highest crime rate against women regarding personal safety issues. Thus, certain precautions were taken to ensure my safety, such as conducting the interviews only during the daytime, taking only known routes to and from the interview location, and using my car rather than public transport. A trusted person from my family was always kept informed about my interview location and the estimated return time. If I did not return from the interview site in the pre-decided time, the trusted person was pre-notified to inform the police of my whereabouts. Since the word spread quite fast that I was in the city interviewing the women vendors, the officials of the municipal bodies started visiting my interview location. After being disturbed by the frequent visits of these officials for a week, I decided to visit the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) along with the NHF officials. I explained the intent of my research to the civil servants in the CMO. They not only issued a formal letter permitting me to carry on with my interviews but also instructed the municipal bodies to stop visiting my interview locations (rooms taken on rent) and interfering in my research. This step ensured not only my safety but also the safety of my participants, especially those who were already being harassed by the municipal inspectors at their workplace.

After data collection, ethical considerations mainly involved handling and storing my fieldwork data. It was ensured that the procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data fulfilled the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements. . Each participant's demographic data, consent form and personal notes were stored separately

in a secure location in my university office. Audio recordings (interviews conducted in Hindi) were immediately detached from the audio device after it was encrypted, password protected and safely stored on my laptop. Care was also taken to transcribe at my home during the data collection phase and in my university accommodation after the data collection phase. This was done to ensure that the data was not disclosed to anyone except the research team, either during or after data collection.. When I transcribed all interviews in English, the completed transcriptions were handled with attention and carefulness, stored in the secure location of my laptop and access to full transcripts was only granted to my research team (I and my supervisors). The secondary data, which was collected as hard copies, was kept safely in locked cabinets in my study room, and the soft documents were saved as encrypted files on my laptop.

All respondents in the research were given aliases. These aliases were maintained throughout the transcription, analysis, and report writing. The names of the NHF officials were not revealed in the transcripts. However, their designations were used throughout the research transcription, analysis and write-up. The audio records of the interviews were used exclusively for analysis and academic conferences. No one apart from my supervisors was allowed access to the original recordings at any stage of my research. The list of the registered vendors with the NHF was not shared with anyone and was only used to identify the samples for conducting the semi-structured interviews. This data was shared with my supervisors and was destroyed immediately after the data analysis.

Any personal details such as the interviewees' contact number or address will be kept until my degree is conferred. This will ensure that interviewees can be further contacted about my research outputs and prospective studies (the participants already consented to this in the consent form attached in Appendix 2 and 4). My field notes and audio recordings of the

interviews will be kept safely for five years following my thesis submission. After five years, all of the information will be safely destroyed.

3.8   Reflections on my research journey

Commencing a doctoral project is a challenge because of the long duration of the project and the difficulties encountered at each stage. However, there are differing perspectives on such a journey; for some people, it may be discretionary and idealistic, while for others, it may be essential and realistic. I view my period of doctoral study as having enabled my personal growth and development because it has enhanced my knowledge and intellectual capacities, my professional career and, especially, my outlook. Without perseverance and commitment to the doctorate project, these positive developments would have been impossible. Reflections on specific steps of my PhD journey are presented below.

In my research journey's early phase (September to December 2018), I understood the difference between a quantitative and qualitative research project. This period was characterized by the substantial effort needed to study the numerous information sources, particularly journal articles. The research focus was narrowed in the subsequent period (January to March 2019). With guidance from my supervisors, I drafted a research proposal focussing on the concept of decent work for women working in the informal sector. This period was characterized by significant stress from redrafting the literature review and methodology chapters. However, I could tolerate such stress because of my supervisors' support. Besides preparing my confirmation review document, I simultaneously prepared my ethics application in May 2019, and with a revision, the application was approved in June 2019. After successfully passing the confirmation review in July 2019, my supervisors and I had another round of discussion to refine the section on 'gender inequality theories' within the literature review. After submitting the revised literature review and finalising my

interview schedule, I conducted my fieldwork in India. The period from August 2019 to November 2019 was quite challenging due to the problems associated with finding the right gatekeeper (NGO), especially considering that each had its own political or financial agenda. Once the participants were identified and invited for interviews, some had professional commitments and could not come for the interview on the decided day. This led to the postponement of the scheduled interview meetings occasionally. However, these snags were reduced to a certain extent by explaining to the participants how such postponements could prolong my stay in India, thereby affecting my research progress. Understanding my situation, the participants co-operated by arriving at the interview venue per our mutually agreed date and time.

Between December 2019 and February 2020, I transcribed the 105 interviews with the vendors and the five interviews conducted with the NHF officials. However, before commencing data analysis, my supervisors advised me to read extensive literature on the structure-agency debate and shared a representative reading list of journal articles and books in this regard. Through constant discussions with my supervisors on the presentation of data, the analysis chapters were written from May 2020 to October 2020. The draft thesis document started taking shape in January 2021 and was finally submitted in September 2021.

Sharing the results of my research with a broader audience has been a continuous process since 2019. I shared the initial ideas about my research at the Centre for Employment Relations Innovation and Change (CERIC) Doctoral Conference held at the University of Leeds in May 2019, and the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership (WRDTP) 8th Annual Conference also held at the University of Leeds in June 2019, just before my confirmation review in July 2019. In 2021 I shared my results regarding motives for women to commence vending at the WRDTP 10th Annual Doctoral Conference held in June and won the 'best presentation award' for the same. I also shared my results about the barriers faced by women

to access jobs in the formal sector at the British Sociological Association WES Conference held in August 2021. Generally, the fluctuations in research are an integral component of any doctoral journey, including my own. However, the research objectives were accomplished with my determination and constant support from my supervisors, family and friends. My research journey proved once more that success in an academic research project is primarily motivated by the perseverance of the researcher and human relationships.

3.9   Chapter summary

This chapter has described and defended the methodology adopted to accomplish this research. The chapter has explained the rationale for relying on critical realist ontological and epistemological stances. It has also described why adopting a qualitative research strategy using semi-structured face-to-face interviews is a good option for this research. The chapter discussed the process of conducting the fieldwork, from the choice of the qualitative research strategy to the formulation of the research design. The chapter has also offered detailed information about the location and types of markets, the participants chosen for interviews, the sampling framework and the content of the interviews. In addition, it has discussed the motives for using thematic data analysis, and the hybrid approach (involving the inductive-deductive method) used to conduct the research. The chapter has concluded by highlighting ethical considerations before, during and after completing the fieldwork and personal reflections on the researcher's doctoral journey.

FINDINGS CHAPTERS

The results and analysis of the findings comprise three chapters that together answer the four research questions in Chapter 1 of the thesis: What barriers prevent women from accessing formal work? What are the motives for women to commence street vending? Which resources are relevant to attain decent work conditions for women vendors? What barriers prevent women from accessing resources for decent work?

To answer these research questions, Chapter Four analyses the factors disproportionately obstructing women's access to formal work, viz., illiteracy, age, marital status, delay in getting a formal job and corrupt recruitment practices. Chapter Five evaluates women's motives (necessity driven and opportunity-driven) to commence street vending. Chapter Six reports the findings answering the final two research questions. This chapter discusses the essential resources identified by the interviewees to achieve decent work conditions at their workplace, viz., the institutional, social, physical, human and financial resources. It also presents an analysis of the barriers that prevented vendors from accessing these resources, which varied according to their age, education and marital status.

CHAPTER FOUR: BARRIERS TO ACCESSING JOBS IN THE FORMAL SECTOR

4.1 Introduction

The informal economy is marked by decent work deficits, such as poor job quality, low pay, illegal work status, absence of social protection or rights at work, and a lack of opportunities for workers (especially women and young workers) to have a voice in decision-making (ILO, 2002a). The ILO emphasises that the formalisation of the informal economy is vital to achieving decent work for all (Termine and Percic, 2015). The meaning of 'formalisation of informal work' depends on where workers are within the work hierarchy. While for informal workers, it may mean the creation of new jobs in the formal economy or access to social protection, for informal enterprises, it may mean registration and paying taxes or enabling collective action (Hearle *et al.*, 2019). Thus, before we explore how to achieve decent work for informal workers, we must understand the barriers preventing vendors from accessing jobs in the formal economy. This chapter will discuss these barriers.

4.2 Factors segmenting the labour market and obstructing women's access to formal work

The barriers that women may face in accessing formal employment have been broadly divided in the literature into demand-side and supply-side factors (Moore, 2015). Demand-side barriers refer to the lack of demand for labour due to a lack of formal job opportunities, imperfect information about the availability of formal jobs, workplace closures, and corruption, which considerably affects the potential job seekers (Betcherman and Khan, 2015). The supply-side barriers refer to human capital deficiencies, such as a lack of appropriate qualifications or low literacy levels, and barriers that are more specific to

individuals seeking employment, such as age, marital status and religious barriers. However, other barriers arise from the prejudices against women, such as the social and cultural norms and stereotypes that deter a woman from entering the labour market. These prejudices cut across both demand and supply-side factors. For example, the stereotype of women as homemakers and men as family breadwinners is a supply-side barrier. The responsibility to care for the children and the elderly reduces women's participation in the labour market. The stereotype of women as homemakers becomes a demand-side barrier when they are specially hired for paid care jobs compared to the other formal jobs because care work is considered an extension of women's unpaid care work at home. Similarly, lack of information might be due to women not having access to newspapers and the internet where the vacancies for formal jobs are advertised, which becomes a supply-side barrier because women cannot apply for such jobs. It becomes a demand-side barrier if there is a lack of advertisement for such vacancies by the employers. Thus, instead of compartmentalising obstacles into the supply side and demand side, what is more relevant is to identify the barriers segmenting the labour market into formal and informal markets, which restrict the entry of women into formal sector jobs. Hence, this chapter discusses the major factors that deter women from applying for a formal job without distinguishing between the demand-side and supply-side barriers. Also, this chapter identifies the underlying mechanisms responsible for the segmentation of labour markets from the perspectives of the respondents.

The face-to-face interviews with the vendors revealed five significant barriers to accessing formal jobs: illiteracy, age, marital status, long search times for formal employment, and corrupt recruitment practices. These barriers disproportionally obstructed women's access to formal jobs. Arabandi (2016) states that women are discouraged from pursuing paid work due to evident and obscure structural barriers, not only in the labour market but also in the family. My research showed that women became so used to such

experiences of control and dissuasion that these structural restraints were gradually internalised by women, leading them to discount alternate possibilities in the labour market. The following sections examine the impact of each barrier identified by the respondents in influencing their access to jobs in the formal economy.

4.2.1 Illiteracy

Most interviewees identified illiteracy as the most critical barrier to applying for formal jobs. This was especially true in the case of primarily married women and some widowed women. The ILO (2002a) has emphasised that women who do not enjoy equal opportunity access to education and training have less access to the formal economy and end up working in the informal economy. Harriss-White (2003), through her extensive fieldwork in India, found that educational hypergamy, where women marry men with higher educational attainment than themselves, is widely prevalent among those women with arranged marriages. This results in women deliberately being kept less educated in preparation for a wedding because men are intimidated by highly educated women (Fisman *et al.*, 2006). Harriss-White's (2003) findings were echoed in my discussions with the vendors. A majority of the illiterate vendors can be grouped into two broad categories: first, the ones who attended primary school and later dropped out because they were overburdened with domestic responsibilities and hence faced the problem of time poverty, and second, the ones who never went to school due to dire poverty or patriarchal discrimination at home where the daughters were not allowed to go to school but their brothers were allowed.

The interviews highlighted that no single specific factor impacted a woman's access to education. Instead, several factors collectively acted as deterrents to accessing formal education for these women. For example, Lalita, a middle-aged Gujarati woman, attained only primary education because her parents could not afford the fees to send her to secondary

school. Moreover, being the family's eldest child, she was responsible for caring for her younger siblings while her parents went to work. She says, *'I had to sacrifice my education for my domestic responsibilities because I am a girl'*. She stated, *'I am not educated enough; thus, I know I can never get a regular office job'*.

On the other hand, Kanchana, a Gujarati woman working at the Janpath market, was considered a 'burden' by her brother and his wife and was forcibly married six months after her mother's death in 2017. Kanchana faced the dual barriers of cultural norms and stereotypes, which prevented her from continuing her education. She pointed out that she had only received a primary school education because of the mentality of the Gujarati community she belonged to, which prioritised marriage over education for the girls and business over education for the boys. She stated, *'If given a chance, I would like to continue my studies to become eligible for a formal job in the future'*.

Some vendors were never sent to school due to the safety concerns of their parents. For example, Hirani Devi was born in a small village in Uttar Pradesh. She explained that due to the absence of a school in her village, the children were supposed to travel ten kilometres to another village for education which the parents did not consider safe for their daughters. On the other hand, the sons were allowed to travel to schools in distant villages on their bicycles. She stated, *'Had there been a school in our village, my parents would have considered sending me to school, at least to primary school'*. She held her illiteracy to be responsible for deterring her from applying for a job in the formal sector. She stated, *'this work [as a vendor] is good for illiterate people like me. But educated people deserve better jobs with good working conditions. Had I been educated, I probably wouldn't be doing this work and would have a formal job perhaps'*. Thus, most of the vendors could not continue with their education, the repercussions they faced later in life. Their parents made critical decisions about the course of their early lives, which had irreversible consequences for the rest of their

lives (Walby, 1996).

Another issue was the quality of education received by the vendors. Perrot (2015) argues that women face barriers to accessing quality formal education and vocational training opportunities, which restricts their prospects in the job market. In the case of Muslims, the young girls were sent to *Madrasas* (religious, educational institutions) where they were only taught to read the Quran (the holy book of the Muslims), with no formal education whatsoever. For example, Zulekha, a married woman, who had been vending at the Ghanta Ghar regular market since 1989, migrated from a small village in Gorakhpur district of Uttar Pradesh state. Telling her story, she explained, '*I am a bit educated…no formal education though…I attended a Madrasa in my village for five years, which had no fees…my parents were destitute and could not afford to send me to a formal school…with knowledge of the Quran; I could not apply for a proper job…I should have been given a formal education by my parents'*. The absence of formal education was a barrier to employment for Muslim women like Zulekha because jobs in the formal sector necessitated a specified level of formal education and training.

None of the vendors identified skill gaps or mismatches as barriers to obtaining a formal job. Even though the interviewees had not received any formal training to work in a factory, a substantial number of them had started their careers working as casual workers in factories, where they performed tasks related to producing garments or manufacturing water bottles. The interviewees stated they did not need a minimum literacy level or a specific skill set to apply for such factory jobs and acquire new skills.

All the vendors (literate and illiterate) associated a high literacy level with better job opportunities in the formal economy and a lack of literacy with informal work. This was particularly relevant for younger unmarried women (below the age of 20) who had either finished their schooling or were enrolled in a college. One such vendor was Shireen, an

18years old unmarried woman who worked part-time as a vendor in the evening and attended college in the morning. She had worked as a vendor with her parents since the age of six and worked in one of the weekly markets on Friday at one of the city's residential areas (R K Puram). She stated, *'I am trying to help my parents financially by working as a vendor…I am too young to get a formal office job at present…I will hopefully get a good formal job when I complete my education.* Due to her education, Shireen hoped to find a quality job in the formal sector.

Patriarchal norms were found to be the underlying reason for the lack of literacy of the interviewees. Patriarchal norms within the house encouraged the sons' education compared to the daughters, which restricted the entry of the women into the formal sector in terms of the eligibility criteria favouring educated men. These norms were also responsible for a gendered division of work at home which allocated domestic work to young unmarried girls and indirectly excluded them from getting access to education by using the time to their disadvantage. Public patriarchy was reflected in the risk of harm to girls, discouraging their parents from sending them to school in far-off locations. A deeper analysis of vendors' narratives about underlying reasons for their lack of access to education revealed that the patriarchal norms and the gender stereotypes restricted their access to education and, subsequently, their access to formal employment. These norms created a segmentation in the labour market where the less educated or uneducated women were stuck in bad informal jobs due to their low human capital endowments.

4.2.2 Age

During the interviews, the vendors often mentioned age as a barrier to applying for a job in the formal sector. Middle-aged and older women considered age an impediment to applying for a formal job. This was because of their past employment in the construction

industry, which they found difficult to continue in middle or old age due to their deteriorating health. After leaving these jobs, they could not apply for jobs in the formal sector because they had passed the maximum eligible age to apply for such jobs. The following section discusses these two groups of vendors in further detail.

4.2.2.1 <u>Middle-aged women</u>

This group can be bifurcated into women under 50 years of age and those above 51 years. The women in their 40s or 50s hesitated to apply for a formal job because the construction jobs they were employed in before becoming street vendors were quite strenuous. They could not continue working in them as they aged and their health deteriorated. For these vendors, age was a dominant factor preventing them from transitioning from street vending to a formal job. Katungi, Neale and Barbour (2006) found that informal workers are trapped in low-paid work due to their age, believing it would be challenging to learn new skills late in life. One such case in my research was Sushma, a middle-aged woman who never got a chance to attend school or enrol in a training course. She was married at sixteen, and due to the poor financial circumstances of her family, she had to commence paid work soon after her marriage. Despite her aversion to street vending as an occupation, Sushma continued to work as a vendor and explained,

> *'I do not like this work as there is a lot of harassment in this work and absolutely no respect. Still, I am doing this work because I have done it for many years and am used to it. I cannot experiment at this age and do a regular job now. I would have done a regular formal job if I had been young and educated. But considering my age, this is the only work I can do'.*
>
> (Sushma, 43 years old, married)

The women above 50 were widows and could not apply to jobs in the formal sector of

their liking due to the age criteria sometimes attached to such employment. For example, Mohini, a 55 years old widow with primary education, went out of her house to work for the first time after her husband's death in 2005. She explained, *'when my husband died, I had to step out of the house to earn money…I was already 40 by then…I wanted to work in a school but could not apply for a housekeeping job in a government school as the maximum age to apply for such a job is 40 years in India'*. Women like Mohini were married at a very young age and began working outside the home quite late in their life, forced by unforeseen circumstances such as the husband's death. Such women were not eligible to apply for permanent jobs in the formal sector due to their age and thus missed out on the opportunity to work in the formal sector. The prospects of entry to the good formal sector jobs were marred right from childhood when their parents did not allow them access to formal education. The government's policies further constrained their chances of employment in the formal sector, which put a maximum age cap on the entry eligibility criterion for government jobs.

4.2.2.2 Older women (60 years and above)

Most older women had casual jobs in the formal sector before becoming street vendors. This group of vendors were formerly employed as construction labourers. For example, Prema, a 60 years old migrant woman from Rajasthan, moved to Delhi with her husband just after their marriage at the age of twenty. Being completely illiterate, she started working as a construction labourer (*beldar* in colloquial language) with her husband. Beldar is a tribal community associated with earthwork. Men are responsible for digging the earth, and women are engaged in removing the mud in baskets carried on their heads (Crooke, 1974). Prema continued working as a construction labourer over the next twenty years of her life. However, at age 40, she quit this work because it required a lot of physical strength and stamina. She stated, *'due to my increasing age and deteriorating stamina; my employer found me*

inefficient at work'.

Similarly, Rajkali, an elderly vendor, started working as a construction labourer during the day and sold water bottles at the India Gate (as a mobile vendor) when she was 20 years old. She had experience working as a construction labourer for twenty years and as a vendor for 40 years (since 1979). When asked about her reason for quitting her casual, formal job, Rajkali stated, *'when I was 40 years old, I found it difficult to work as a construction worker…I was not strong enough to do this tiring job, so I became a full-time vendor'.* When asked whether she had left the construction work of her own free will, Rajkali revealed that *'my employer started considering me a "burden" as I was not able to work as much as I used to work when I joined this industry…so I left that job instead of being abused by him at work every day'.* The poor physical condition of these women due to continuous exposure to strenuous work conditions and repeated pregnancies further segmented the labour market. Due to poor physical and emotional states, these women were not hired for other informal jobs such as domestic workers, which also required a lot of physical strength and lengthy working hours where they would have to stay away from their children. These women were, therefore, compelled to seek self-employment avenues within the informal economy where they could have flexible working hours and prioritise their domestic responsibilities over professional ones.

The middle-aged and older women interviewed had never had an option to choose their educational qualifications or decide about marriage. Instead, their parents had made choices for their daughters quite early on in their lives, and these initial choices restricted the options (in terms of their decision to work and the choice of their occupation) available to these women later on in their lives. Because these women were not allowed to study and were married at quite a young age without their permission, they had fewer opportunities to be employed in the formal sector later in their lives. These examples illustrate how patriarchal

structures constrain the possibilities of poor women in India to access work outside of the informal sector. The life course decisions taken by these women's parents impacted their choices later on in life. Their decisions regarding education and marriage constrained by the structural arrangements in their childhood had a domino effect on their present and future lives, reflected in their low self-efficacy[13] regarding getting a 'good' job in the formal sector and performing well in their workplace.

4.2.3 Marital status

This section has been divided into four sub-sections: unmarried, married, divorced, and widowed women, to understand the impact of marital status on the vendors' choice of occupation.

4.2.3.1 Unmarried women

The unmarried vendors included two groups of women; the literate unmarried vendors and the illiterate ones. The literate unmarried vendors were in their 20s and were still pursuing education or had temporarily taken a break in their education to support their families financially. They did not identify any barrier to accessing formal work and intended to apply for a quality formal job in the future. The illiterate unmarried vendors were in their 40s or 50s and never had a chance to go to school due to their disability or the burden of their domestic responsibilities. Their illiteracy and lack of awareness about jobs in the formal sector were the main reasons for not applying for such jobs. For example, Smita was a middle-aged vendor who was medically certified as mentally unstable, a condition that began in childhood. Her father died when she was 20 years old, and she started selling mobile phone

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[13] Self-efficacy is a concept introduced by Bandura (2006) which means a sense of personal competence. Individuals with high self-efficacy make their work life more productive and fulfilling by reorganising their occupational roles and the practices by which their work is done (McDonald and Siegall, 1992; Speier and Frese, 2009).

covers in the Karol Bagh in 1999. Due to her mental condition, Smita's parents never sent her to school, and she was unaware of any formal jobs in the market. Seeing the people of her community selling merchandise on the street, Smita decided to become a vendor. She explained, *'due to my mental condition and illiteracy; I could never apply for a formal job...frankly, I do not know about the other job options I have...I learned vending by watching the people of my community engage in street vending'*.

Some women in the same age group (the 40s and 50s) had become the sole income-earning members of their family after the death of their parents and had assumed responsibility for caring for their younger siblings. One such woman was Rajsati, a 50-year-old woman who started the work of putting *henna* on the hands of women customers at the age of ten, following the death of her parents. She was left to care for her four younger siblings alone. Rajsati only went to school while her parents were alive. She was so desperate to get a job to feed her siblings that she did any odd job that came her way. This included being a construction labourer and a domestic worker. She could not point to any particular barrier that prevented her from applying for a job in the formal sector but believed that, given her circumstances, she did not get a chance to choose her occupation. She took whatever jobs were available; all available jobs were informal. This is perhaps what Walby (1996) means when she states that even though all women make choices in life, the options available to some women are highly constrained.

4.2.3.2 <u>Married women</u>

Kercheval *et al.* (2013) state that marriage and motherhood are the primary barriers that constrain women from making a smooth entry into the formal labour market. In India, a woman is expected to prioritize her housework and limit paid work outside her home (Sudarshan and Bhattacharya, 2008). The interviews with married vendors revealed that these

women were scared to work alone without their husbands or were compelled to work with their husbands by their in-laws. Thus, the lack of confidence to work in a formal job and the family compulsion to work with their spouses were identified as the significant access barriers to formal employment by the married vendors. For example, Geetu was married when she was 16 and had just finished her secondary education. At the age of twenty, she was a mother of three children. Fulfilling the expectations of her in-laws, Geetu used to stay with them in a village in Uttar Pradesh and take care of them along with her children. However, in 2013 her husband had an accident, and she was compelled to find paid work. She stated, '*I am not "allowed" by my husband to work in a formal job. Moreover, working in the market with my husband is much safer than working elsewhere. My husband is paralysed; still, he sits with me in the market, and thus, I am comfortable working as a vendor'.*

Mehrotra (2019), in her study of married Indian women, found that a married woman is considered to be the 'honour' of the house. Thus it is morally unacceptable for men to allow the women of the house to go out to work with unfamiliar men. This social norm was internalised by these young married women, who later lacked the confidence to go out to work alone in formal jobs, as explained by Geetu. Social norms played an essential role in women's perception of themselves. The restrictions imposed on the married women by their in-laws to work only with their spouse compelled these women to internalise gender roles as their gender identity. This internalization of gender roles, in turn, impacted their confidence to apply for a formal job where they would have to work without their spouse amidst unknown men.

Another example was Kira Garg, a woman who married when she was 22. She was well qualified with a degree in Tool & Die Making (Engineering) from the Indian Technical

Institute (ITI) in Delhi. Kira taught in a school before her marriage, but after that, her in-laws forbade her to work. She stated,

'I would never be allowed to do a formal job by my in-laws, so there is no point in fighting with them to get permission to do a formal job. I have been sitting in various weekly markets around the RK Puram Market in South Delhi with my husband as I cannot sit idle at home. I am only allowed to work with my husband. If I could choose between teaching and sitting at the stall, I would choose to teach. But I would never be allowed to do that work, so I have to continue working as a street vendor'.

(Kira Garg, literate, married)

The social condemnation of married women, like Kira, working outside their home was a major cultural constraint preventing them from applying for a job in the formal sector, irrespective of their age.

Similarly, Ramya, a married woman, was not allowed by her parents to go to school before marriage and was not allowed to choose the paid work of her preference by her husband after marriage. She was married at the age of thirteen. She faced discrimination at home as her brother was allowed to go to school while her parents expected her to stay home and learn domestic chores. Expressing her disgust, Ramya stated, *'my brother was sent to school, but he did not study because he had no interest in studies…I was never even asked by my parents about my desire to go to school…I was asked to stay home and learn domestic work, just because I was a girl'.* She continued to face this discrimination even after her marriage when her husband decided on her workplace. She explained, '*due to the poor financial condition of my family; I had to do paid work after my marriage…my husband never wanted me to work in a factory or in any job where I had to work under someone as*

there was always a risk of sexual harassment…thus I started selling vegetables on the street…I did not have to work under anyone in this street vending business.

Due to patriarchal and cultural norms, Ramya was never given a chance to access formal education. The socio-cultural norms reinforced patriarchy by dependence on the males as the family's breadwinners. The primary influences restricting Ramya's access to education before marriage and access to work after marriage can be attributed to the cultural norms of either confining her to the house or choosing her place and type of work. On the other hand, Seemanti, a married woman, faced harassment in her first formal job, which led her to opt for street vending. Seemanti's husband became critically ill in 2003-2004, and she had to find paid work outside of the home as she was the sole income-earning member in the family. She faced harassment in her first formal job as a factory worker and thus shifted to street vending. She stated, *'Initially, I worked in a factory in Defence Colony, but I did not like the work atmosphere there as I felt quite unsafe working among the males…there was sexual harassment at my workplace by my manager…I quit that job and decided to do my own business as a street vendor…all jobs have sexual harassment'.*

Seemanti's narrative reveals that concerns for women's safety are genuine in India. Despite being a married woman, she did face sexual harassment at her workplace. Such experiences of harassment firmly compel women to leave their jobs in the formal sector (Satyam and Pickup, 2018). Fernandez, Gopal and Orlanda (2016), in their study of Indian women, stated that sexual harassment is a barrier that women often encounter when accessing the employment market. These incidents support the argument of Ruthven (2016) that there is always a trade-off between the freedom and safety of women in India. He argues that a woman marrying a man of her own will is disowned by her affinal and natal families. Similarly, when a woman wants protection against exploitation by the senior staff at her workplace, she should agree to work as per the demands of the top management, such as

coming to the office to work on holidays. In both cases, the women's freedom is traded off for their safety. Ramya's and Seemnati's stories re-iterated the argument of the feminist socio-economists that the opportunities for women in the labour market are shaped by gender discrimination, gender disparities in the division of household labour and the interaction of domestic and workplace power relations. The married women faced obstacles in exercising their autonomy within the household and at work and were often victims of dual disadvantage.

It is also imperative to understand the link between gender inequality in the labour market and the ethnicity of working women. Vendors from certain ethnicities faced multiple disadvantages where their ethnicity was a barrier to their entry into the formal labour market and their gender. As a highly diverse society, India is marked by varied ethnicities, which implies that the discrimination and disadvantages faced by women differ due to the intersection of gender and ethnicity (Dey and Orton, 2016). An example of such intersectional disadvantages was evident in a particular community of Rajasthan called the *Gadia Lohar. Gadia Lohar* is a nomadic community involved in manufacturing and selling iron utensils and tools (Ayushmaan, 2019). The men of the house are supposed to manufacture the iron utensils at home in small kilns, and the women of the house are supposed to go out and sell the material. This is the ancestral work of the *Gadia Lohars,* and they still prefer to do the identical occupation instead of working in the formal sector. One of the interviewees from this community, Basant, explained, *'I am an illiterate, so I cannot work in an office…I cannot do any housekeeping work in an office or a school because no one hires us, the Rajasthani people…they believe we are dirty and cannot work in the house. This is the work I have learned from my ancestors, so this is the only work I can do'.* Basant highlighted a critical factor of 'stigmatisation' which is associated with specific communities in India and is a significant barrier that prevents women from accessing formal jobs. The

nomadic communities of Rajasthan were designated as 'criminals' under the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, passed during British rule in India. The Indian government repealed this act in 1952 (Government of India, 2008), and 200 such communities were 'de-notified'. *Gadia Lohars* is one of these communities, which became known as De-notified and Nomadic Tribes (Ayushmaan and Pandey, 2019). Indians continue to stigmatise and brand the people belonging to such communities as 'criminals' because of the long colonial period and the absence of rehabilitation of these communities after independence. This deters employers from hiring them (Motzafi-Haller, 2012; Sabar *et al.*, 2017).

The labour market in India is closely aligned to the social institutions of caste, community and religion, and these institutions play an important role in allocating vocations to individuals according to their connection to the community they are born (Mhaskar, 2019). In other words, one's membership in a given community determines occupational opportunities. One such community is the Gujaratis, a business community in India. Rakhi was a middle-aged married Gujarati woman inclined to be a street entrepreneur. She was born in the Gujarati community, which had instilled business skills since childhood. She stated,

> *'I have been vending for the past 28 years (since 1991). I started vending soon after my marriage because my husband did not earn much and I also did not like sitting idle at home. But I never thought of doing a job as it's quite against our Gujarati mentality. We Gujaratis do not like to do a job, but we prefer to do business. Business is in our blood'.*
>
> (Rakhi, 50 years old, married).

Thus cultural norms, as in the case of the vendors belonging to the Gujarati community, subtly discouraged women from this particular community from applying for formal jobs. In such communities, the women's structural norms were so well internalised that they did not

consider alternative possibilities. The intersectional discrimination against the women of certain ethnicities (tribes) further segmented the labour market, where these women were surviving at the bottom rungs of the employment market. Even though the country's legal system has denotified these tribes, these women are stigmatised by employers and intentionally deprived of access to education and formal or informal jobs. Thus, the barriers to entry of these women into the employment market were pre-decided by the multiple disadvantages they faced on account of their ethnicity and gender. Ayushmaan and Pandey (2019) suggest that such intersectional discrimination can be addressed if the Indian government sets up Welfare Board for these communities to address their historical injustices. These boards can plan welfare schemes and ensure that all government funds and schemes are utilized adequately for the members of ethnic communities.

4.2.3.3 Divorced/ abandoned women

Sharma and Kunduri (2016), in their study of Indian society, observed that Indian society is highly patriarchal. Men are always the heads of the household, and women are supposed to contribute to domestic work and reproduction. These roles, however, change when a woman is divorced. Divorce has profound economic implications for women in India (Amato, 1994). None of the divorced women that were interviewed went back to their natal family after their divorce. This was primarily because of the cultural norms of the Indian society, where daughters are disowned by their parents upon their marriage and are not welcomed back to their parent's home after the divorce or death of the husband (Fernandez *et al.*, 2016). Kercheval *et al.* (2013) state that it is only when a woman is divorced that she thinks of pursuing an education and learning skills required for the labour market. However, none of the interviewees considered educating themselves or learning new skills. This was because they were overburdened with caring responsibilities at home, leaving them with no

time to invest in formal or informal education or training programmes. These women applied for formal jobs with whatever skills they acquired. For example, Karuna Khanna, a divorcee, attended primary school and then quit her studies because she preferred to work rather than continue her education. She did not like studying as she did not find any educational utility. Instead, she was interested in attaining practical experience in the field and started working at fifteen on her initiative. Karuna learned communication, networking, and numeracy skills through an NGO on her job. With these newly learned skills, she got employment at a petrol pump and later as a security guard in a cinema hall. However, Karuna stopped searching for formal jobs stating, '*I stopped getting a job that suited me…somewhere I was getting a 12-14 hour shift job and somewhere a night shift…I didn't prefer to do such odd jobs. My younger sister also stays with me. Since she is physically disabled, she completely depends on me to take care of her. Thus, I needed a flexible work where I could take care of my sister and earn money too and that could be possible only in my own work as a street vendor*'.

Another case was of *Mala*, a 35-year-old woman who started working at fifteen. She chose to work because, like Karuna, she had no interest in studying. She started applying for jobs with no prerequisites for educational qualifications but required specific skill-sets that she had already learned from her mother at home. She worked as a cook and later became a beautician before shifting to street vending. Mala got married at the age of seventeen and got divorced after thirteen years of marriage. She had two children to take care of when she got divorced. While she continued to live in Delhi, she left her children at her parents' home in the village after her divorce. Even though her children stayed in the village, her responsibility remained to care for them financially. Mala decided to shift from formal to informal work as she had the additional financial burden of her children. After the divorce, she was the sole income-earning member of her family, and her formal jobs were not paying enough (£250 per month) to enable her to take care of her children. She started working as a part-time vendor in

a weekly market where she used to buy a small stock of readymade garments from a wholesale market in the city. She generally earned around ₹1,000 (approximately £10) in just one day's sale. Realising that street vending was more remunerative than any other work, Mala became a full-time street vendor in 2015. She soon learnt the tricks of the trade and became very successful in six years. Her business strategy included procuring a massive stock of better quality and latest fashion merchandise (readymade garments) from the other states and selling them in Delhi. She soon became popular among the customers in Delhi because they could now get better garments from others states within their city, for which they were even ready to pay more. Slowly Mala increased her profit margin, and at the time of the interview, Mala reported that she quickly managed to earn around £2,000 per month, even after skipping work for a couple of days.

Tabassum was a middle-aged woman who was married at eighteen and abandoned by her husband when she was 27. Within nine years of married life, she had five children. Tabassum was not given formal education; instead, she was sent to a *Madrasa* (an Islamic religious school), where she was only given religious education. Her parents primarily prepared her for what Iversen and Rosenbluth (2010) call the 'marriage market'. Education in India negatively influences the marital prospects of Indian girls. Educated girls (who end up being older due to more years of education) are less desirable in the marriage markets (Raj *et al.*, 2019). Tabassum was taught the skills of stitching and making handicrafts, which were extremely useful when she had to leave the house to earn money for the first time. She was hired by a shop to make paper bags and later worked in a handicraft industry before she shifted to the informal sector. However, after doing a couple of formal jobs, Tabassum decided to start her own business because the formal jobs paid her approximately £9 per month, and she had long working hours. Street vending offered her flexible working hours and better earnings of about £20 per month. Although Tabassum's earnings were much

lower than Mala's because of the products they sold (Mala sold apparel and Tabassum sold bangles), her earnings were nevertheless greater than her earnings in her previous jobs. Moreover, street vending offered her flexible working hours where she could take care of her children along with her work. Tabassum always felt guilty when she was doing a formal job because she had to put in more working hours than when she became a street vendor. Her children were always her priority over her work.

Another example was Neelu, who was married at fifteen and abandoned by her husband just two years after marriage. Neelu was seven months pregnant with her only daughter when her husband left her. She did not have the option to return to her natal home, nor could she go to her marital home as her husband had deserted her. Her low education level (finished secondary education) and caring responsibilities as a single parent deterred her from applying for formal jobs with stringent work hours. She preferred to work as a vendor because she needed the most flexible working hours as a single parent. Among the divorced and abandoned women, the decisive factor for their choice of work was that the demands of the dual burden of work (care of family members and work responsibilities) restricted their mobility. Moreover, the lower remuneration offered by formal jobs was a deciding factor for these women to opt for street vending as their preferred work.

Religion did not have any impact on the differences in the participation of women in the labour market. The Hindu and the Muslim women were prevented by their parents from working before marriage and their husbands after marriage. The married Hindu or Muslim women were supposed to stay home and take care of domestic chores and reproduction. The wives were restricted by their husbands not only in their mobility but also inhibited from working in public with other men. In return for this subordinate status to men, women are entitled to what Kandiyoti (1988) calls the 'patriarchal bargain'. In this bargain, married women give up their freedom for maintenance and protection by their husbands. Only after

being divorced, abandoned by their husband, or widowed were women free of this patriarchal bargain and could choose to work in the formal or informal economy. However, the dual responsibilities of caring for their children and being the breadwinners of their families compelled these women to remain in secondary jobs. These jobs did not provide them with an opportunity to earn well but offered them flexible work hours or the option of working as self-employment. The exclusion of these women from the formal job markets could be traced to their childhood, where their parents decided to marry them off at a young age at the cost of their education.

4.2.3.4 <u>Widows</u>

Women in Indian society derive their social position from their husbands (Sonawat, 2001). Widowhood not only lowers a woman's social status but also results in a woman being considered 'jinxed' if her husband dies soon after marriage or when the woman is still young. This phenomenon has been termed 'social death' by (Mohindra *et al.*, 2012). This was evident from the interviews with the widowed vendors. Most of them were married at a very young age and never got a chance to go to school, and they held their lack of education as a significant barrier to applying for jobs in the formal sector. For example, Koori, an elderly widow, lost her husband in the 1984 Sikh riots in Delhi. Her parents did not have any money to send their children to school. Koori was married at sixteen, and her husband died after three years of marriage. She was ostracized by her in-laws and thrown out of her marital home as she was considered jinxed and responsible for her husband's death. With no education or work experience, Koori faced a lot of challenges. She stated,

'My husband died in the 1984 riots. I was only 19 years old when he died. After

his death, I had no option but to work because my marital and birth parents did

not allow me to stay with them. I was illiterate, so I could not get any good

formal job. Instead of working as a domestic worker, vending seemed more

lucrative as it had flexible working hours where I could take care of my kids

while working'.

(Koori, 54 years old, widow)

Another example was Heeral, a middle-aged woman who was married at thirteen and became a widow at seventeen. Shortly after her husband's death, her son also died. Because of two consecutive deaths in the family, her in-laws threw her out of their house, considering Heeral unlucky. However, she had the support of her biological parents. They not only allowed her to stay with them but also encouraged her to learn stitching from a local tailor in their locality. Due to her newly discovered tailoring skills, Heeral opened a boutique. Again, luck did not favour her: she spent all her savings on medical treatment for her parents when they fell ill and had to close down her boutique as it was running at a loss. Finally, Heeral bought a small stock of toys with her meagre savings and started selling them on the street as a vendor. She explained, '*I do not like this work because there is no dignity in this work. But then, where will I find a formal job with just a primary education? So, I am working because there is no other option for me. Had I been more educated, I would have preferred to do a formal job with dignity'.*

Illiteracy was also a significant barrier faced by the older unmarried and widowed vendors in applying for jobs in the formal sector. However, the underlying reason for their illiteracy was the social constraints imposed by their parents through gendered division of labour at home. The women were supposed to do domestic work from childhood at the cost of their education. The cultural norm of married women being allowed to work only with their spouses was a significant barrier for these women to apply for formal jobs. The divorced and abandoned women were not constrained by familial norms and gender stereotypes in

their paid work choices. However, they had caring responsibilities for their children as single parents, which compelled them to look for work with flexible hours and in proximity to their homes, thus deterring them from applying for formal jobs. Like the divorced and abandoned women, the widows were deprived of the right to education by their parents, who decided to marry them at a young age. Thus, women faced these social prejudices resulting in labour market discrimination from their childhood. The negative impact of these prejudices was reflected in women's lack of access to education, travel options and social networks outside the home. Such restrictions subsequently lowered their self-esteem and confidence to apply for work in the formal sector.

4.2.4 Long search times for formal jobs

The often substantial amount of time required to find a formal job discouraged abandoned or divorced women with children from seeking formal employment. These women were the sole income-earning members of their families and were struck by a financial crisis. It was much more reasonable for these women to take the first opportunity to improve their economic condition rather than wait for a formal job. One of the interviewees, Hima Devi, a widow, stated that she tried to apply for school housekeeping jobs after her husband's death. She visited various schools because she was unaware of the formal vacancy advertisement portal for such employment. However, Hima could not even get a casual job in any of the schools in Delhi. She explained, *'I am literate…finished secondary education…Initially, I tried to go to various schools to ask for a housekeeping job, but I was turned away everywhere…I had to feed my children and could not wait forever for a job…so I set up my own business'.*

Similarly, Neela, a young migrant from Kolkata, argued that the employment market did not have enough formal jobs for Delhi's burgeoning migrant working population. As

revealed through the interviews, the migrant vendors were primarily from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal and did not have enough work opportunities in their home towns. As a result, migrants like Neela moved to Delhi, hoping to get a job. Neela was married at fifteen and migrated to Delhi with her husband soon after marriage. Unfortunately, she was abandoned by her husband just five years after their marriage, when she was pregnant with her only daughter. With no one to support her, she had to find a suitable job to feed herself and her newborn daughter. Telling her story, she revealed,

> *'I have been vending only for the past five months (since May 2019). Earlier I used to get random jobs as a nanny, a housekeeping staff in school and a domestic worker. I had to shift to vending because I stopped getting a job as a domestic worker or as a housekeeping staff. So many people come to Delhi every day that it is difficult to get a job as a domestic worker. When I stopped getting formal jobs and my health condition started deteriorating, I had no option but to start selling on the street to sustain myself and my daughter'.*

(Neela, literate, abandoned by her husband)

There has been a structural transformation in India wherein GDP growth has been propelled by mechanised sectors. Thus, there have been limited formal job prospects for the low-skilled and unskilled workforce (Kapoor, 2019). Therefore, poor migrants to cities like Neela do not have the option to endure unemployment while waiting to obtain a job in the formal economy. They choose informal employment as a survival strategy. Migrant workers, in particular, faced problems accessing information about formal positions in the cities and thus preferred to take up informal work rather than waiting for formal jobs. Chari *et al.* (2017), in their study about the barriers to labour market access for young women in Sub-Saharan Africa, found that women lack knowledge about how to find formal job

opportunities and access networks of prospective employers because they interact in small circles of influence. During the interviews, it was found that this was a significant factor responsible for women's inability to apply for formal jobs, especially for migrant vendors. Neeti, a married vendor selling purses in the Lajpat Nagar market, explained that she could not apply for a formal job as she was a migrant from her village in Bihar to Delhi, even though she finished secondary education. When asked about the reasons for her inability to apply for a formal job, Neeti stated that she was married when she was just fifteen and moved to Delhi with her husband soon after her marriage. Before her wedding, she was staying in a village in Bihar. She explained, '*when I stepped out of my house to earn money, I did not have any information about the formal jobs available in the market matching my educational qualifications…It would have taken a lot of time to find such jobs, and I desperately needed some source of income. So I started my work of street selling'*. The migration of Neeti from her village to Delhi reflects how her spatial networks in the village affected her social networks in the city and her ability to find a formal job. The social networks Neeti had built in her village could not be transferred to Delhi when she migrated. In developing countries, accessing a formal job is highly dependent on networks of friends and relatives (Chari *et al.*, 2017). Thus Neeti's decision not to spend time looking for a formal job reflected that she was new to the city and had no social network to help her find a formal job.

The importance of social networks to women's ability to find a job was also explained by Rajsati, a middle-aged unmarried woman whose parents died when she was ten. Burdened with the financial responsibility of five younger siblings, Rajsati could not wait to apply for a job. She accepted any available position through the social network she developed in the city after migrating from her village. She stated, '*I am not much educated…only attended primary school…so I was not aware of any good formal jobs…did whatever jobs were available to me irrespective of my age or education level. I started working as a domestic*

worker…worked in a factory as a casual worker…also worked as a construction labourer. All these jobs I got through my network of known people in the city'. An important point to highlight here is that Rajsati's network of friends in Delhi primarily worked in the informal sector. Thus, her friends could suggest jobs in the informal sector to Rajsati. Women like Rajsati face 'information asymmetry' (Baah-Boateng, 2016), where their poor knowledge of the labour market is a barrier to accessing jobs in the formal sector. The failure of the employment exchanges[14] to spread information about job vacancies in the formal economy is responsible for this 'information asymmetry'. There is a vast regional difference in the performance of these employment exchanges in India. While Gujarat has provided 85 per cent of the exchange-facilitated placements in the country since 2016, the fourteen such exchanges in Delhi have not advertised a single vacancy over the past five years (Government of India, 2019a, 2019b, 2020, 2021). The reason for such discrepancy in the performance of employment exchanges is that Gujarat has adopted modern techniques such as outreach programmes and organising job fairs compared to Delhi, which has not been so proactive (Raghavan, 2014). The experiences of these women regarding accessing jobs in the formal sector revealed that the gender inequalities in the labour market were deeply rooted in the policy and institutional frameworks, which shaped employment opportunities of female workers. The state employment exchanges were not able to advertise enough employment opportunities and use effective outreach programmes to spread awareness about the limited job vacancies for migrant workers which pushed these women towards informality. These women had no option but to be self-employed due to lack of information about vancacies in the formal sector or long delays in seeking employment in the formal sector.

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[14] The functioning of the Employment exchanges is in accordance with the Employment Exchanges (Compulsory Notification of Vacancies) Act 1959. These exchanges are entrusted with the responsibility of notifying vacancies available not only in public sector establishments but also in non-agricultural establishments in the private sector employing 25 or more workers. Employment Exchanges perform mainly three functions viz. registration and placement of applicants, providing advice to job seekers and collecting information about vacancies from establishments in the organized sector.

Some vendors reported that when they did manage to find out about jobs in the formal sector through their informal networks, employers demanded bribes, which these women could not afford to pay. This barrier of corruption is discussed in the following section.

4.2.5 Corrupt recruitment practices

Corruption is a significant factor in the proliferation of the informal sector in developing countries. Dutta, Kar and Roy (2011), in their empirical analysis of the linkages between corruption and informality in India, concluded that extensive corruption among the police, decision-makers and other watchdogs of the economy leads to further bribery in the formal sector and growth in the size of the informal sector. One-tenth of the interviewees cited corrupt recruitment practices as a barrier to applying for a formal job. *Rajini*, a middle-aged widow who had been vending in various weekly markets of Delhi for the past seven years (since 2012), faced corruption in recruitment practices while applying for formal jobs. She explained,

> *'I was burdened with financial problems after my husband's death seven years ago (in 2012), and I had to step out of the house to earn money. Initially, I worked in a government school as a housekeeping staff for five years. When my contract with the school was over, I tried working as a housekeeping staff in Anganwadi but did not get a job there. They demanded a bribe from me, which I could not give. There is a lot of corruption in this formal job sector. They openly ask for bribes in return for a job'.*
>
> (Rajini, literate, widow)

Similarly, *Seemanti*, a literate married vendor who sat in a regular market in Madangir, wished to find a formal job instead of a vendor. Her husband had been a street vendor since

1999, and she knew about the hardships of being a vendor. Unfortunately, the open demands for bribery dissuaded her and forced her to take up vending as a livelihood option. She explained,

> *'My husband was quite ill from 2003-2004. So I desperately needed to earn money. I tried to get a housekeeping job in a school after I quit my job in a factory due to sexual harassment. But I did not get a housekeeping job in any school because all the recruiting officials used to demand bribes from me to give me employment in their schools, and I did not have the money to pay the bribe'.*
> (Seemanti, literate, married)

Thus, corrupt recruitment practices deterred these women from applying for formal jobs and reduced their confidence in the country's political institutions. It is difficult to conclude whether corruption as a barrier impacted women more than men in this research (as all the interviewees were women). However, the literature on malpractices in recruitment suggests that women's experiences of corruption tend to be more acute. This is because women are often less able to afford bribes than men, and their avenues to respond to bribery are limited because women have less power and authority to resist the pressure and cannot report bribery cases (Chene and Fagan, 2014; United Nations, 2020). Similar to the plight of the women mentioned in section 4.2.4, the migrant women and the women who were victims of corrupt recruitment practices were pushed to seek self-employment in the informal economy.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the factors obstructing women's access to work in the formal economy and how these factors lead to labour market segmentation in the context of

women workers in Delhi. The findings raise important questions about the relationship between structure and agency. The results suggest that women exercised agency within the constraints imposed by patriarchal social structures. Patriarchy - the domination of women by men - was the most prominent causal mechanism constraining women's options to work in the formal sector. Conforming to the concept of patriarchy as discussed by Walby (1996), women were victims of private and public patriarchy. At home, they were not allowed by the patriarchs to apply for paid work due to cultural norms, stereotypes, and prejudices. Outside the house, they were deterred from working for fear of sexual harassment or exclusion/discrimination based on their ethnicity or human capital endowments. Specific categories of women, such as the literate married women, were aware of their feelings of discomfort in the marital house where they were not allowed to work outside the home by their in-laws. However, they were reluctant to challenge those patriarchal and cultural norms due to the fear of separation or divorce or inflicting domestic violence if they resisted these norms. There were engaged in 'constant bargaining', a term used by Agarwal (1997), involving conflict and cooperation with their in-laws regarding their right to work outside the home. Some women had successfully convinced their in-laws to allow them to work outside the home. However, these women were under the strict surveillance of their in-laws, who allowed them to work only with their husbands. These patriarchal norms held them back from finding work in the formal sector, despite being graduates or technically trained to work in industrial workplaces. The labour market segmentation along the lines of gender resulted from patriarchal norms, which shaped women's occupational choices.

In exercising their agency within these constraints, some women were successful in partially transforming patriarchal dynamics within the household. For example, the young unmarried women of this generation successfully changed (by agreeing to contribute to family income in exchange for continuing their education) the patriarchal structure at home.

These young women were consistently working towards challenging the patriarchal norms and were, therefore, hopeful of getting a formal job. The success of these women in challenging the patriarchal norms can be attributed to their determination to get access to education and the support of their mothers. The mothers of these young women felt they should support their daughters in claiming their right to education because of their bitter personal experiences with the patriarchal norms and missed opportunities due to discrimination at home. The middle-aged and older women submitted to the patriarchal structure at home because their mothers were not supportive of their decision. Due to non-supportive oppressed mothers, their fathers made decisions on these women's behalf early on in their lives, profoundly impacting the range of choices available to these women later on in their lives. Gender binaries of dominant masculinity and subordinate femininity were, thus, more entrenched in the minds of the elderly illiterate women (especially those born and brought up in a village). The exposure to constant discrimination at home, where their brothers were allowed to go to school and take significant decisions in the family while they were not, led them to believe in their subordination to males in the house. This was not the case with the young unmarried women staying with their parents, who were now allowed to attend school/ college without discrimination. Transformation of the patriarchal norms is visible in the fathers allowing their daughters to travel alone to their educational institutes and workplace besides getting access to formal education.

Similarly, the marital status of women determined whether they could conform to or transform the generative mechanisms of patriarchal norms (deciding their place of work) and gender disparities in the division of household labour (forcing them to choose flexible work with low wages). The restrictions imposed on the married women by their marital family to work only with their spouses to maintain the image of the 'honour of the house' was a significant barrier to seeking employment in the formal sector. It was much more difficult for

married women to challenge these norms. These women were doubly disadvantaged. The male members of the house, along with the mothers-in-law, suppressed the young married women in the house. The mothers-in-law turned oppressors against their daughters-in-law while being simultaneously oppressed within patriarchy. This was because the mothers-in-law had become 'token torturers' who oppressed their daughters-in-law as a token of authority. This pleasure of wielding control over the young brides compelled these senior women to internalise the patriarchal norms to such an extent that they were unable or unwilling to reflect on the injustices perpetrated against them as young brides. This was in contrast to the plight of the young unmarried women whose mothers supported their decision to get access to formal education or travel alone to their educational institutes or workplaces. The support of the mothers to educate their daughters was a reflection of changing societal norms regarding expectations of women to be confined to their homes. Instead, the mothers of the young women recognised the importance of access to education for their daughters, which could impact their occupational choices in future and improve their chances of attaining 'good' formal sector jobs. This was an example of intergenerational support (a component of the LCT) where the daughters engaged the proxy agency of their mothers in attempting to convince their fathers to allow them to go to school.

The caring responsibilities of the widowed, divorced and abandoned women further constrained their agency. The dual burden of being the primary earners and domestic work forced them to opt for less remunerative jobs. The non-monetary benefits of flexibility partially compensated for the better working conditions of formal employment. While the unmarried girls and married women mostly worked as secondary earners in the family, the divorced, widowed and abandoned women with children worked out of necessity. The lack of familial or governmental support for these women, combined with the need to labour in a capitalist society, compelled them to accept work in the informal economy with flexible

working hours rather than spend time searching for a job in the formal sector with fixed working hours. An acute segmentation of the informal sector jobs was observed for the widowed, divorced and abandoned women. These women could not opt for better-paying jobs within the informal economy because of their social reproduction responsibilities. They had strict time budgets and prioritised flexible working hours when seeking paid work. Thus, these women were willing to accept casual work, which offered them flexible work hours, such as being domestic workers or construction labourers. However, these jobs were associated with a high risk of experiencing sexual harassment or pay discrimination based on gender.

The stratified organisation of society, especially in terms of ethnic inequalities (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 2001), further limited the opportunities for women who were members of the discriminated against ethnicity. For example, the women who belonged to the Gadia Lohar community were not hired by employers as they were considered unclean. Societal norms often forced them away from any formal or informal job. Because of the constant discrimination faced by this community, their children never went to school or were school dropouts, and they had no ambition to find a formal job. Thus, illiteracy coupled with stigmatisation translated into these women being stuck in their ancestral work of selling ironware, further limiting their potential to break the vicious cycle of stigmatization. Not only were the people of this community exposed to these layers of 'external' stigmatisation but there were inequalities against the women existing within the community. Like other women, women in this community were not necessarily free from patriarchal practices. Women and young girls were often victims of deep-rooted traditions and customs in the community, reflecting the stereotypes created by gendered norms. For example, the young girls of the Gadia Lohar community were not allowed to go to school and were married off as soon as they reached puberty. The girls of this community, while

choosing to become street vendors, were systematically denied the choices that women from other communities have. The patriarchs of the house expected them to continue the family tradition of selling the ironwares on the streets. At the same time, their husbands stayed idle at home and usually took to alcoholism. Thus, these intersecting inequalities against women belonging to such ethnic communities did not generate a linear model of marginalisation but multiple layers of deprivation. The labour market segmentation along the lines of gender was more acute for women belonging to ethnic communities that were stigmatised by society and were considered unfit to be employed even for dirty and demeaning work. These women were excluded entirely from the labour market because of the stereotypes attached to their community, which left them no choice but to seek to become self-employed.

CHAPTER FIVE: MOTIVES FOR STREET VENDING

5.1 Introduction

Early studies of street vendors viewed them as necessity-driven entrepreneurs who engage in street vending because other work opportunities are either not available or unacceptable (Reynolds *et al.*, 2002). Subsequent studies questioned the proposition that all informal economy entrepreneurs are necessity-driven and contended the opposite, representing them as opportunity-driven (Gërxhani, 2004; Snyder, 2004; Gurtoo and Williams, 2009). Recently many studies have questioned the delineation of entrepreneurs as driven either by necessity or opportunity and have explored the co-existence of these motives and the temporal changeability of the motives of entrepreneurs over their life span (Williams and Gurtoo, 2012; Adom and Williams, 2014; Williams and Williams, 2014). As explored by the contemporary studies on street vendors, it is difficult to segregate the vendors into necessity-driven and opportunity-driven entrepreneurs. Thus, to elicit the motives of interviewees to engage in street entrepreneurship, they were asked, 'How and why did you become a vendor?' In specific interviews where further clarity was required, an additional question was asked based on their first answer: 'Why did you not turn to any other informal work, excluding street vending?' The interviewees' responses were finally analysed for the structure/ agency dualism of the necessity-driven vs opportunity-driven street vendors. The following section presents the analysis of each of the motivating factors identified by the interviewees to commence street vending.

5.2 Motivating factors for the commencement of vending

5.2.1 The ancestral line of work

Around one-tenth of the interviewees stated that family tradition was the most important motivating factor for selecting street vending as their preferred occupation. Following the ancestral line of work was the benefit gained through the transfer of skills (from parents to children) in selling tactics, acquiring the stock to be sold and adding value to the initial inventory. This group of vendors primarily comprised unmarried and married women who started vending alongside their parents very young. The unmarried women started street selling as part-time economic activity to supplement the income for their parents. These women studied at college in the morning and sold goods in weekly markets in the evening. One such unmarried 18-year-old, Shireen, explained her journey to become a vendor:

> *'I have been vending for twelve years (since 2007). Since my childhood, I have been doing this work. I only sit in the weekly market on Friday in R K Puram. I study in the college in the morning and do street vending in the evening. I and my sister, who is two years older than me, have been vending since our childhood. My parents, my sister and I have our separate vegetable stalls. My sister and I learnt the tricks to do this business from our parents, and thus it was straightforward for us to pick up this line of work'.*
> (Shireen, 18 years old, literate)

Shireen and her sister started vending with their parents at ten. They were gradually allowed to have their own squatting space in the market, where their parents sat in proximity to their daughters' space. Being in proximity allowed the parents to keep an eye on their daughters. Thus, the decision to work alone transpired organically. In these poor households,

it is common for the parents to make the most of the free labour of children. Working since their childhood along with their parents helped these young unmarried women to develop what Estrada (2016) calls 'economic empathy' towards their parents. Close working with their parents since childhood developed their understanding of the approaches needed to support their parents in navigating their precarious situation. Not only did this experience of participating in the family business enrich the unmarried women's experience, but this 'economic empathy' also led to a power shift favourable for these women. This is reflected in Shireen's decision to study later on in life. There was an evident trade-off between Shireen's economic contribution to her family and permission from her parents to continue her education. Shireen stated,

> *'So many relatives in my own family objected to my education. Even our neighbours tried to convince my parents not to send me to school. But because I was an earning member of my family, my parents had to agree to my decision to go to school. I will finish my college education and apply for the post of teacher. I am working as a vendor to help my parents gather enough money to marry off my sister'.*

(Shireen, 18 years old, literate)

Another group of vendors who commenced vending as their ancestral line of work were married women. These women essentially belonged to communities specialising in some form of art, such as the *Gadia Lohars* (nomadic ironsmith community) or Prajapatis (earthenware makers) of Rajasthan, or the handloom embroidery communities (such as the *Kathi* community, *Rabari* community or *Kanbi* community) of Gujarat. For example, it is a common tradition in Gujarat for mothers to teach their daughters embroidery work at a very young age. Similarly, the *Gadia Lohar* community have a role reversal in the family where

the husbands manufacture the iron utensils and tools while taking care of the children at home, and the wives are supposed to sell those manufactured tools in the market (Ayushmaan and Pandey, 2019). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Gadia Lohars* prefer to continue their family manufacturing tradition and sell iron utensils rather than take up formal jobs. This community of *Gadia Lohars* prefer to carry forward their ancestral line of work. For example, Ani, a young married woman, started vending when she was ten and married at fifteen. The constant travel from one city to another to sell ironware prevented Ani from getting access to formal education. When asked about her journey to becoming a vendor, Ani recalled,

> *'I was a vendor even before my marriage. I started vending at the age of ten. I used to sit with my parents in the market when I was young. I did not sell in the market, but I used to sit with my mother and learn how she used to do the business. My father used to stay at home and make cast iron utensils which my mother sold in the market. You can say that this work was passed on to me by my parents as their legacy. When I got married and came to my husband's house, which was when I started vending independently. I have been vending independently for twelve years (since 2007). Now, my husband makes the iron tools and utensils in the kiln at our home, and I sell the finished products in various weekly markets in Delhi. If I fall ill on any day, my mother-in-law comes to the market to sell these cast-iron tools'.*

(Ani, illiterate, married)

Similarly, Gunti, a middle-aged woman belonging to the *Gadia Lohar* community, had been vending since she was ten. Gunti used to accompany her mother to the market and learnt the skill of selling ironware from her mother. When she was sixteen, she was married and

continued selling the ironware prepared by her husband. She explained,

'I have been sitting in the Karol Bagh market since 1989 and selling cast iron utensils produced by my husband. I never tried any other formal work, as making and selling cast iron utensils is our ancestral work, and I have learnt this work since childhood. Thus, I naturally picked up this work from my parents.
(Gunti, illiterate, married)

What is evident in both the interview excerpts mentioned above is that vending tricks of the *Gadia Lohar* community are passed on from one generation of women to the next. It is because the vending women solely depend on their mother-in-law (who is already well-versed in vending this merchandise) or daughter (who is learning to sell the merchandise) to help them in their work and not on the male members of the family.

Other communities that carried forward their family tradition were the handloom embroidery communities of Gujarat. For example, Kirani migrated from Gujarat to Delhi after her marriage. She belonged to the *Mochi* community of the Kutch region in Gujarat. The *Mochi* community specialise in Aribharat embroidery, a highly ornamental form of silk thread. Kirani started vending when she was eight. Her grandmother introduced her to vending, who used to bring Kirani along to sell Gujarati handloom woven women's clothing in the Tibetan market. Explaining her family tradition of embroidery, Kirani stated,

'I started vending when I was eight. My grandmother used to bring me along to the Tibet market when I was a kid. Besides learning the art of selling the handlooms from my grandmother, I used to learn the embroidery work in the Gujarati handlooms from my parents at home. In our community, men, as well as women, do embroidery work. I continued selling Gujarati handlooms even after my marriage. This work is important for me as this is our ancestral work, and I

would like to work as a vendor even in future'.

(Kirani, illiterate, married)

Kirani's grandmother trained her in selling the handlooms and taught her the art of adding value to the Gujarati handlooms by doing Aribharat embroidery from her parents. Following the family tradition also helped Kirani obtain initial start-up resources (interest-free loans in this case) from her family members to commence her own business.

Another vendor following her ancestral work was Jiya. She was a middle-aged married woman who learnt the art of embroidery from her parents during her childhood and began to accompany her parents to the market at the age of eight. Jiya belonged to the *Rabari* community of the Saurashtra region in Gujarat, who specialised in embroidery using vibrantly coloured threads and mirrors on Gujarati fabrics. When asked about her reasons for becoming a vendor, Jiya explained,

> *'I have been vending since 2007. Doing Gujarati embroidery on the garments is our traditional work, so I used to stay at home and learn that work from my parents since I was five. In my community, we do business, whether literate or illiterate. Thus, my parents taught me how to do embroidery and sell the embroidered handlooms in the market rather than sending me to school. This work of doing embroidery in the Gujarati handlooms and selling these handlooms is our family tradition. As the family tradition, it was natural for me to sell the embroidered handloom products my husband and brothers prepared. When I started vending twelve years ago, my husband stopped vending, stayed at home and did the embroidery work on the hand-woven clothes besides taking care of our children'.*

(Jiya, illiterate, married)

The vendors who commenced vending as a family tradition were either unmarried women who were vendors due to 'economic empathy' for their parents or married women belonging to specific communities specialising in an art form, such as making ironware or doing embroidery in the handlooms. Usually, in such communities, the male members stay home and manufacture the products. At the same time, the female members are responsible for selling those finished products in the market. However, none of the women in such communities was willing to pass on their ancestral work to their children. When asked whether Jiya would like to give on her ancestral work to her children, she stated, '*my daughter is in college, and my two boys are in school. I do not intend to marry my daughter soon or bring any of my children into this occupation. I want them to get the highest possible education and good formal jobs in the future*'. Similarly, Sanvlo, a Rajasthani woman belonging to the *Gadia Lohar* community, explained, '*I never taught this ancestral work to my children. I want all my three kids to get a good formal education to do better jobs tomorrow. This ancestral work should end with me in my family*'. These women believed their work was not decent enough and were plagued with many hardships that should not be passed on to the next generation. Although these women were satisfied with carrying forward their ancestral line of work, they realised that lack of access to education had constrained their ability to enter formal sector jobs. Thus these women supported the decision of their daughters to get access to education so they could have the opportunity to join the formal job market. This opportunity was denied to the married older women.

5.2.2 Illiteracy

Studies of motives for the commencement of vending have found that illiterate or less educated people are compelled to be street vendors as they see it challenging to secure a job

in the formal sector (Williams and Gurtoo, 2012; Husain *et al.*, 2015). While illiteracy was a barrier to applying for formal sector jobs, lack of literacy was a pull factor for many women to commence vending, as street vending did not require them to be literate or skilled. The age at which participants began street vending was found to have a strong bearing on whether they viewed illiteracy to be a significant pull factor or not. The following discussion will highlight the nuanced differences in identifying illiteracy as an essential pull factor differentiated by the age of commencement of vending.

5.2.2.1 <u>Women who commenced vending before 20 years of age</u>

As discussed in the previous section, unmarried women started vending during childhood. Besides this group of vendors, the women who commenced vending before the age of twenty represented married women who started street selling soon after marriage due to the poor economic condition of their marital homes. Being illiterate, these women had no information about jobs in the formal sector and were therefore drawn to informal employment. Kesar, an illiterate vendor, was married at the age of fourteen. She started vending soon after her marriage. When asked about her motive to become a vendor, Kesar replied,

> *'I have been vending in the Lajpat Nagar market for the past 22 years, from 1997 onwards. I started this work soon after my marriage. My husband was a vendor, and he did not earn much. He was the one who asked me to work outside the house and earn money. Since I am illiterate, I did not aspire to do jobs in the formal sector. My husband encouraged me to be a vendor as vending neither required any educational background nor a lot of investment to set up a business'.*
> (Kesar, illiterate, married)

Similarly, Chand, a 50-year-old woman, started vending at twenty. Chand was born in a village in the least developed state of India, called Bihar (NITI Aayog, 2021), where married women have few opportunities to work outside the home (Chitrakar, 2009). While Chand was not sent to school, her three brothers were due to the patriarchal mindset of her parents, who considered their sons' education an investment and a future source of income. Since the benefits of Chand's education would go to her marital home, her parents did not invest their scarce financial resources in her education, a phenomenon similar to what Herz (2006) found in her study of South Asian societies. When asked about her reason for choosing to vend over other livelihood options, Chand stated,

> *'My husband has been a drunkard since our marriage. So he wasted all his earnings on drinking. I had no option but to go for paid work outside the home. I started vending to sustain my kids, as there was no need to be literate to do this work. I was never sent to school by my parents while all my brothers were sent to school'.*
>
> (Chand, Regular Market)

Kesar, Chand, and other women who commenced vending before twenty could not apply for formal jobs due to illiteracy. Illiteracy was a pull factor to begin street vending as it did not require them to have any educational qualification.

5.2.2.2 <u>Women who commenced vending between 21 and 40 years of age</u>

This group of vendors exclusively comprised married women who switched from other informal jobs to street vending. These married women lived apart from their in-laws and were usually migrants to the city and their husbands. They had to leave their jobs due to their deteriorating health condition. For such women, illiteracy was an important reason to choose

to vend over other informal work. For example, Rameshwari, a 70-year-old woman, was married at fifteen. She worked as a construction labourer for 25 years, from 1964 to 1989. Soon after her marriage, she migrated with her husband from the small town of Mathura in Uttar Pradesh to Delhi. Sharing her husband's financial burden, Rameshwari started working as a construction worker (at the same construction site as her husband) soon after marriage. When questioned about her reason for leaving the job of a construction labourer and her motivations to commence vending, she replied, *'From 1989 onwards, I started vending because I could no longer work as a construction labourer as it was a physically strenuous job. Another reason was that my son met with an accident, and I incurred many expenses to get him treated over the next five years. Only working as a construction worker was not a financially feasible option. Thus, I started selling flowers in front of a temple in Khan Market (behind my house) which increased my earnings manifold, and that's how I began this work'.* She added that being illiterate, she could not expect to get a good job.

Interviews with the NHF officials also revealed that illiteracy was a significant pull factor for women to commence vending. Vice President (Delhi Region) of the NHF stated, *'It is the illiterate or less educated women who turn to vending'.* Similarly, the Youth officer (Delhi Region, NHF) held the society responsible for women's lower education, which was a significant push factor for women to become street vendors. He stated, *'A woman sits in the market because of her low education level…till a girl understands her right to be educated, she is married off by her parents to another house where again she is not allowed to attend a school…street vending is lucrative for such women due to their low education level'.* Similarly, the General Secretary of the All India Women Hawker Federation, NHF, stated, *'primarily it is the uneducated or less educated women who take up street vending as an occupation because this work does not require them to be educated to be successful as vendors'.* The NHF officials mentioned the labour market segmentation, where the educated

women usually got employment in the formal sector while the less educated or the uneducated were confined to the informal sector. The underlying reasons for such segmentation were socio-cultural norms relating to girls being married off at an early age and patriarchal norms which deprived these women of their right to education in their childhood.

5.2.3 *Harassment in other informal or formal jobs*

A recent report published by Bajoria (2020) on behalf of Human Rights Watch concluded that women factory workers, domestic workers and construction workers are the most vulnerable in India as they are sexually harassed and assaulted frequently at their workplace. The report further states that although the *#MeToo* movement in India highlighted the issues of violence and harassment in formal jobs, the plight of women working in the informal sector remains deplorable. Interview participants suggested that fear of harassment was a significant push factor in choosing street vending over other informal jobs for married women who switched from other informal jobs to street vending. They had to leave their jobs due to the harassment at their workplace. When asked about their rationale for selecting street vending, these women often made a comparison between street vending and domestic work. Domestic workers are usually disdained, and their work is perceived as demeaning and meaningless in India (Dhawan, 2010; Harju, 2017). In addition, there is a danger of working in the employers' houses as harassment is strongly tied to power where the victim (the domestic worker) experiences tremendous pressure because the wrongdoer (the employer) can have command over the victim's future employment (Koskela and Tani, 2005). This problem is more acute in the case of domestic workers because they work on their own in private homes, making them much more vulnerable to abuse by their employers. For example, Lalita, a middle-aged woman, started vending in 2011. She was born in Delhi and was married at eighteen. Due to mounting household expenditures, Lalita began to work five

years after her marriage. Having been born and brought up in Delhi, she had a good social network in the city through which she quickly got a job as a part-time domestic worker in six bungalows, all in proximity to her house. However, Lalita had a harrowing experience, as a result of which she decided to stop working as a domestic worker. Recalling her experience, Lalita explained,

> *'Earlier, I was a domestic worker, but I left that job because twice or thrice some incidents happened where the men in these big bungalows molested me. I was so shaken by those incidents that I could not think of working under anyone after that. I was completely illiterate and was scared to apply for a job, formal or informal. I decided to do my business where I did not have to work under anyone, thus no risk of harassment. That is how I landed up in this work of street vending'.*
> (Lalita, illiterate, married)

On the other hand, Kesar, a married vendor, did not experience any particular incident of harassment as a domestic worker, yet she never wanted to be one. She started vending soon after her marriage. When asked about her motive to become a vendor, Kesar replied,

> *'I started this work soon after my marriage. Since I am illiterate, I did not aspire to do jobs in the formal sector. The only other job I could think of was that of a domestic worker. But I did not want to be a domestic worker in someone's house, as such jobs are not safe for women in a city like Delhi'.*
> (Kesar, illiterate, married)

The fear of harassment was based on the reality that Delhi remains very poor in guaranteeing women's security (Soni, 2016). The women who had prior experience working in other informal jobs found them unsuitable from the perspective of women's safety. These

women were pushed to be street vendors due to fear or actual experiences of harassment in other informal or formal jobs and their perception of vending as a 'safe' occupation. NHF officials confirmed that fear or actual incidents of harassment in other informal or formal jobs was a key reason for women to choose street vending over other jobs. National Secretary, NHF stated, '*the women don't feel secure to work as a domestic worker…they feel more secured, and well looked after in the market among a crowd than working as a domestic worker in someone's house…there have been instances where they have been attacked by the males of the houses they worked in as domestic workers*'.

5.2.4 *Death/ illness of the vending license owner*

The death or illness of the vending license owner was another factor that pushed many vendors to commence vending. Widows and married women were forced to operate the vending stall due to the death or illness of the vending unit's owner. The licensed family members' death or long-term illness compelled the widows to commence vending to retain their licensed spots in the market. While the widows took over their husband's stall after the death of their husband, the married women had to turn to street vending to take care of the vending business of their ailing son/ husband or dead relatives (such as sister or father-in-law).

A fascinating example in this context was Ashu, a married vendor who started vending in 2009, following her sister's death. Ashu had been trained in tailoring by her mother since her childhood. She was married at the age of twenty and started her boutique at home after marriage. However, when Ashu's sister died, the responsibility of taking care of her sister's children and her jewellery stall fell on Ashu's shoulders. Although Ashu had her boutique, she had to run the jewellery stall as part-time work. Recalling her journey to becoming a vendor, Ashu stated,

'Ten years ago, my sister died because of a long-term illness, and I had to become a vendor overnight. The jewellery stall which I own today belongs to my sister. When she died in 2009, she asked me to take care of her stall and two kids. Her husband married another woman after my sister's death, and I started sitting at her stall besides taking official custody of her children. Had I not pitched in, her husband would have sold the stall and thrown the kids out of the house. I consider myself to be a caretaker of the stall. Whatever money I earn from this stall, I invest it exclusively in the education of my sister's children. The stall is still registered in my sister's name, and If my sister's son would like to take over this business tomorrow, then I will hand it over this stall to him as it ideally belongs to him and not to me'.

(Ashu, 39 years old)

Another group of vendors who were forced to run the stall of their family members were the widows. These women took over the business already set up by their husbands. The immediate need to work was a push factor for these vendors to commence vending from the vending units that belonged to their husbands. The sudden transition in status of these women from being married to widowhood transformed how they viewed themselves in relation to the world. Women who had never had experience of working outside the home were suddenly expected to take over the family business, which was a significant turning point in their life course. Due to religious restrictions, it was challenging for Muslim women to perform paid work outside the home. For example, Fahema, a 40-year-old widow, was married at fifteen. She hailed from a village in Bihar. Her parents never sent her to school due to their concerns for her safety. Following her marriage, Fahema moved from Bihar to Delhi, where her primary role was to care for her husband and children and undertake domestic chores.

Fahema was busy caring for her five children for fourteen years after marriage. However, when her husband died in 2008, she had no one to turn to for financial support. Her natal and her parents-in-law were too poor to support her, and she stayed in her native place in Bihar. Thus, Fahema had no option but to earn money outside the home. She recounted,

'In Muslim culture, women are not supposed to work outside the home, so I had no exposure to paid work, formal or informal. But after my husband's death in 2008, I had to take over his business as he had a vending license and my only source of income. I am the sole earner in the family feeding my five children'.
(Fahema, illiterate, widow)

Although Fahema quite vehemently stressed the restrictions imposed by her religion and the expectations from a woman in her faith during the interview, the stories of the Hindu widows were quite similar to the Muslim women. Koori, a 54-year-old Hindu widow who had been a street vendor since 1984, explained her reason for becoming a street vendor as,

After my husband's death, I had no option but to work because my daughters were too small, and I had no other earning member in the family to financially take care of my daughters and me. After my husband's death, I was considered cursed by my in-laws and was thrown out of my marital home. Even my biological parents refused to take me into their house as they believed that they were done their responsibility as a parent by marrying me off and had nothing to do with me after my marriage. Since I was completely illiterate and couldn't get any formal job, I started vending. I could work as a domestic worker, but street vending seemed more lucrative as it offered me the independence to work according to my circumstances where I could give priority to my kids over my work.

(Koori, illiterate, widow)

Thus, it became clear from the interviews that religion was not an essential factor compelling women to take up street vending as a livelihood option. Regardless of their religion, the women were compelled to be the breadwinners for their families after the demise of their husbands, the primary earning members. However, there was a difference in their journeys to enter street vending. The Muslim widows usually took over the vending stall set up by their husbands. The Hindu widows, on the other hand, had to set up their vending stalls after their husbands' demise as they were illiterate and had no other means of livelihood. Most of these women considered working as domestic workers. Still, they ultimately opted to become vendors due to the flexible working schedule offered by this occupation, allowing them to prioritise their reproductive work over their productive work.

5.2.5 *Lack of jobs in the formal sector*

Lack of jobs in the formal sector is one of the most common reasons cited in the literature (Haan, 2006; Bhowmik and Saha, 2012; González, 2015; Haider, 2016; Mosammam *et al.*, 2018) to explain why people work in the informal economy. However, in my research, only a few interviewees stated long search times for formal jobs to be a motivation for commencing street vending. This group of vendors included the women who had obtained a secondary education and were once employed in formal sector jobs. Unfortunately, they lost their jobs and could not be re-employed in the formal sector due to intense competition in the labour market and thus long search times for formal jobs or their inability to pay bribes to secure such employment. For example, Neela worked as a housekeeping staff in various schools in Delhi from 1999-2019. She got married when she was fifteen. Her husband abandoned her husband two years later when Neela was pregnant with a 7-month-old daughter. She could not return to her natal house as her parents were too

poor to financially support her and her unborn child. However, Neela stopped getting such jobs in the formal sector from the beginning of 2019. She believed that excessive competition from migrants in the labour market was why she could not find a formal sector job.

While Neela stopped getting formal job offers, Rajini stated that bribery was the primary reason for her inability to apply for jobs in the formal sector. Rajini, a 40-year-old widow, lost her husband at 28. After her husband's death, she was forced to apply for a paid job to feed her three daughters. Her in-laws stayed in the village, and her parents did not support her financially. Rajini, who had a housekeeping job for five years since she started working, explained the necessity for street vending as:

'My husband had a brain tumour and died after eight years of marriage. I was burdened with financial problems after his death. That is when I stepped out of the house to earn money for the first time. Initially, I worked in a government school as a housekeeping staff for five years. Later on, when my contract with the school was over, I tried applying for a housekeeping job in Anganwadi (a child care centre) but did not get a job there. The officials in the Anganwadi used to ask for hefty bribes, which I could not afford to give. There is a lot of corruption in this formal sector. The employers of such regular jobs openly demand bribes in return for a job. Since I did not have any money to pay as bribes, thus I had no option but to work as a street vendor where there was no bribe to be paid to start this work'.

(Rajini, literate, widow)

This group of vendors primarily comprised widows and abandoned women who were compelled to work either due to the death of their husbands or because their husbands deserted them. Despite being educated, these women could not get jobs in the formal sector

due to structural constraints of intense economic competition among the migrant job-seekers and corruption in the labour market, which compelled them to be vendors against their preferred choice of work. The failure of state employment agencies to offer jobs to prospective workers and corrupt recruitment practices of the employers in the formal sector collectively shaped the employment opportunities available for women workers and gender inequality in the labour market.

5.2.6 *Family restrictions on taking up formal jobs*

Another group of vendors had to take up vending as an occupation due to their husbands or in-laws forbidding them to apply for formal jobs. This group of vendors comprised of women married into a typical traditional Indian family represented by patriarchal and collectivistic characteristics. In such collectivist Indian families, married couples sometimes live with their parents and extended family network (Chadda and Deb, 2013). In traditional families, family unity is maintained at the expense of individuality and freedom of choice, especially for the women in the family (Mullatti, 1995). Thus, the women who married into such families were restricted in their choice of occupation by their marital family.

These women commenced vending in their 20s or 30s and were allowed to work only with their husbands. Renu, a 60 years old widow, who started street selling at the age of twenty, lost her parents when she was ten and was married off by her brother at the age of fifteen. Renu explained the restrictions imposed by her husband to apply for any job in the formal or informal sector. She recalled,

> *'My father-in-law used to sell soft drinks on the cart, which I run today. After my*
>
> *father-in-law's death, my husband started selling soft drinks from his cart two*
>
> *years after my marriage. I used to be bored sitting at home, so I too expressed my*

wish to work. However, my husband only allowed me to work with him in the market. Thus, as his helper, I started working with him on his soft drinks cart after my husband's death in 2016.

(Renu, illiterate, widow)

Similarly, Chand, a middle-aged woman, started vending at twenty. When asked about the other formal or informal jobs she could have taken up, Chand replied,

'My husband did not allow me to work as a domestic worker in a house or a factory. My husband instructed me to do some work where I do not have to work under any male. So I understood that I needed to be self-employed rather than doing a job because I would have to work under someone in all jobs. When I told about my desire to work and the restrictions imposed by my husband on the kind of work I could do, my neighbour introduced me to this work. She used to sit on the street and sell clothes. I also started selling water bottles at the India Gate'.

(Chand, illiterate, married)

Women like Chand and Renu were not allowed by their husbands to independently (without their spouse) engage in paid work or apply for formal jobs where they had to work under a male supervisor. The agency of married women like Renu is reduced when they are forced to work only with their husbands due to the fear of the patriarch that their wives might be sexually harassed outside their home if they work alone (Goswami, 2016). Similarly, Pradipa Devi, a woman who had been vending since 1991, was married at fifteen. Pradipa was also married in a traditional collectivistic family where her ability to work was subject to her husband's permission. Considering the financial condition of her household, Pradipa decided to earn money just two years after her marriage. She stated,

'I have been vending in the Kidwai Nagar market for the past eighteen years (since 2001), where I sell vegetables. The financial condition of my family was fragile when I was married into this household. Thus, I had to earn money just two years after my marriage. My husband did not approve of my working in a factory or even as a domestic worker. I was allowed to work only with my husband. I opened up the stall, and he has been working with me at my stall since the day I started vending. My husband did not earn anything when I got married'.

(Pradipa, illiterate, married)

In some instances, restrictions by in-laws even compelled married women to leave their jobs in the formal sector and accept work contrary to their preferences. An excellent example of such a woman struggling with the patriarchal restrictions on her choice of profession was Kira Garg, a middle-aged married woman vending in various weekly markets in Delhi since 1994. Kira completed secondary school and even undertook a training course at the Indian Technical Institute (ITI). Kira taught in a school before her marriage, but her in-laws prevented her from working after marriage. Her disappointment was reflected in the following explanation of her reason for commencing vending,

'I used to teach in a school before my marriage. However, I have been coming to the vending stall with my husband after marriage. My in-laws and my husband did not want me to continue teaching in a school after my marriage. I wanted to work because I did not like sitting idle at home. Thus, I accepted their proposal to work with my husband at his clothes stall. I was not allowed to teach in a school by my in-laws, so there was no point in fighting with them in the interest of family harmony. If I had the option of teaching in a school and sitting at the vending stall with my husband, I would have chosen the former option. But I know I would

never be allowed to do that job, so I cannot do anything about it. I just have to continue working as a street vendor'.

(Kira Garg, literate, married)

Kira's disappointment was evident in her description of the restrictions imposed by her in-laws regarding her choice of paid work. Her dissatisfaction with street vending was apparent in her desire to be a teacher rather than a vendor. In the Indian context, socio-cultural factors push women to fit into the societal norms charted for them; for example, women are expected to follow the command of their fathers in childhood, their husbands during marriage and their sons after becoming a widow (Haq, 2013). This was evident in the case of Ramya, who was not allowed to go to school by her parents. She was conforming to the custom of Indian society where women are supposed to stay at home and fulfil their domestic duties from childhood. She stated that she was '*never even asked about her desire to go to school by her parents and was forced to fulfil domestic duties since childhood'*.

When Ramya was married at thirteen, her ability to seek work was conditioned by her parents' decisions in her childhood and constrained by her husband's restrictions after marriage. When asked about the reasons for her becoming a vendor, Ramya recalled,

'I am from Bihar, where girls cannot leave the house. We are always supposed to depend on the male members of the family. After marriage, when our family expenditure increased, and my husband's income was insufficient to fulfil our basic needs, I had to go for paid work. Initially, I was scared because of my conservative upbringing by my parents. My husband never wanted me to work in a factory or any job where I was required to work under male employees. Thus, I started selling things on the street as that meant I did not have to work under anyone, which was acceptable to my husband'.

(Ramya, illiterate, married)

Thus, married women were highly constrained in their choice of work. They were forced to be vendors due to the restrictions imposed on them by their affinal families. These women were not allowed to work outside the home without their husbands. Similar views were expressed by the NHF Youth officer, Delhi Region, when I asked about the motives for a woman to commence street vending. He stated, *'despite being educated, a woman won't be allowed or accepted by society to work in a call centre or where there are primarily male workers. She is considered more 'honourable' in society if she works with her husband'.* Even for those with human capital endowments (literacy and skill sets), married women were restricted in their choice of occupation by their affinal families. The transition in their life course from unmarried to married deeply impacted their access to jobs. These women could not exercise their agency individually because of the fear of violence, separation or divorce and use their influence to challenge the patriarchal structures. Thus, they were stuck in a morphostatic cycle where they submitted to the norms set by their affinal families regarding their workplace and choice of occupation.

5.2.7 *Voluntary engagement in the street vending*

In contrast to the Structuralists and Modernisation theorists, street vending is seen as a matter of choice by the Neo-liberals and the Post-modernists. According to the Neo-liberals, entrepreneurs decide to commence vending to evade the excessive legal formalities of the formal sector (De Soto, 1989, 2000; Perry *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, Post-modernists see street vending as a voluntarily chosen work for women with weak business or family ties and the strong relationships offered due to community solidarity and reciprocity. The vendors have greater community solidarity, encouraging them to adopt vending as a preferred work option. Interpersonal trust is a motivating factor for the women to commence vending. Also,

Post-modernists argue that vendors are social actors who pursue vending due to their flexibility and achieving more personal freedom and autonomy (Hart, 1972; Cross, 2000). In my research, I found that many interviewees chose to be vendors because vending was seen as more remunerative than alternative livelihoods, with low investment costs to set up the business. In addition, the flexibility offered by this work was another reason for women to opt for vending voluntarily. Among the occupational options available, all such vendors who chose to be vendors had experience working in the formal sector. The following discussion is about the two most important reasons cited by the interviewees to choose vending over other means of earning a livelihood: vending as more remunerative and requiring low levels of investment (Neo-liberal perspective) and vending offering flexible working life and self-identity to the vendors (Post-modernist perspective).

The women who regarded street vending as a more remunerative work option than the alternatives available were widowed, divorced or abandoned women who were the primary breadwinners for their families. Before becoming street vendors, these women were previously engaged in some other formal or informal job. For example, Deepa, a 35 years old divorced woman, experienced severe indebtedness after her divorce and had to shut down her boutique as she did not earn enough from it. Recalling her motive to commence vending, Deepa stated,

> *'I got married at the age of 22. It was a marriage arranged by my parents which did not work out, and I got divorced two years ago, in 2017. Due to the poor financial condition of my home, I started working soon after my marriage. I had my boutique in proximity to my house, and I somehow cared for my son with whatever I earned from my boutique. However, due to my son's divorce proceedings and increasing education expenses, I came under severe debt. Initially, I took up a surrogacy job along with running my boutique.*

Unfortunately, I had a miscarriage, due to which I could not earn anything for six months, and I was only paid half the amount of what was pre-decided with the hospital. I did not even have the money to re-start my boutique. Thus, I had to shut down my shop and start street vending to pay off my debts. I am a graduate and could have gotten a good job in the formal sector. But such a job would not have given me enough money to pay off my loan. Street vending is a very remunerative work. I can repay my loans in the next three years if I continue working as a vendor. Once my loan is paid off, then I may re-open my boutique. But, at present, I am happy to have voluntarily chosen this work'.

(Deepa, literate, divorced)

Similarly, Mala decided to be a vendor due to its low start-up cost and the higher income offered compared to her previous jobs in the formal sector. Mala, a divorced woman, had extensive experience working as a housekeeper in an international bank and later in various embassies (French, American, German and Spanish) before commencing street vending. Mala came to Delhi (from West Bengal) with her aunt at fifteen. She started working as a housekeeping staff after migrating to Delhi and married at eighteen. Mala had a fascinating story to share regarding her motive to commence vending,

'When I was young, my uncle cheated my father and snatched his business. Thus, I came to Delhi with my aunt to lessen the financial burden on my father. I changed many jobs after coming to Delhi. I worked in the housekeeping department in an international bank in various embassies, such as the French embassy, the American embassy, the German embassy and the Spanish embassy. I also worked as a beautician and later on as a cook. I was earning enough to take care of my family in these jobs. From 2015 onwards, I started my street business.

When I used to work in the American embassy, there used to be a weekly Friday market held on the embassy premises. I started selling clothes in that weekly market. Initially, I bought the material for ₹800 (approximately £8) from that market. I used to sell that material in the weekly Friday market in the embassy and on the weekends (my off days) to my friends in Kotla, a wholesale market in Delhi. Soon the clothes I sold became too popular, and I had a good clientele. That is when I realised that I did not need to do a job, and I started vending as a full-time job as I was earning much more in vending than in those jobs'.

(Mala, illiterate, divorced)

During the interview, Mala mentioned that her street business was much more remunerative than any of her previous jobs. The low level of investment required further motivated her to become a full-time vendor. Initially started on an experimental basis, street vending proved much more remunerative for Mala than doing a formal job.

The women who chose vending over other means of livelihood due to the flexible working life it offered were mostly widows and divorcees who became breadwinners, besides being the primary carers after the death of their husband or after their divorce. For example, Koori, a 54-year-old woman, lost her husband at nineteen. Koori married at fifteen and lost her husband after four years of marriage. She was never sent to school due to the extreme poverty of her parents and had no experience of doing paid work while her husband was alive. However, after her husband's death, Koori was thrown out of her marital house as she was considered jinxed by her in-laws, and she did not have an option to return to her parents as they were too poor to take care of Koori and her two daughters. When asked about her reason for commencing vending, Koori explained,

'I have been vending from 1984 onwards. My husband was beaten to death during

the 1984 Sikh riots in Delhi. My in-laws threw me out of the house after my husband's death. I was completely illiterate, so I could not apply for jobs in the formal sector. I had the option of taking up informal jobs such as that of a domestic worker. However, the domestic worker job did not seem lucrative to me as I needed flexible working hours to care for my two daughters (1-year-old and – year-old) besides working. I was able to bring my daughters to work until they started going to school. Not only did I have the freedom to come to work at my convenience, but I could also go back home and prepare food for my daughters when they returned from school. Today, I am glad I chose street vending over any other work as it offered me enough flexibility to look after my children besides being a working woman'.

(Koori, illiterate, widow)

Similarly, Latika, an elderly widow, started vending in 1984. She became a widow when she was 25 years old. She was pregnant with her second daughter when her husband died. Due to her pregnancy, Latika found it challenging to do paid jobs outside her home. She started taking tailoring assignments at her home. Recalling her journey to becoming a vendor, Latika explained,

'I became a widow at the age of 23. I could not go out and work because my elder daughter was five years old, and I was three months pregnant with the other daughter when my husband died. I was thrown out of my in-laws' house when my husband died, and there was no one to feed my children. Even though I was a diploma holder, I could not do a job as all the jobs have time restrictions. Thus, I started taking stitching assignments at my home. That way, I could take care of my children and earn money. When my daughters were ten and five years old, I

started vending. I wanted to be a vendor because this work was very flexible regarding working hours. This work perfectly accommodated my children's schedule, who had started going to school by then. I used to leave for the market, on the Curzon road near India Gate, from my home at 9 am. I used to come back in the afternoon, pick up my daughters from school, feed them, lock them inside the house, and leave for work. After returning home at 9 pm, I used to finish my stitching assignments. I continued stitching till 4 a.m. and then again left to vend in the market at 9 am. I like my work because this work has given me a sense of self-dependence and the ability to stand on my feet with ample flexibility in my work schedule'.

(Latika, literate, widow)

Tabassum, a middle-aged woman abandoned by her husband, had been vending since 1999. Her husband left her after seven years of marriage. With no support from her natal or affinal family, she took on the responsibility of being a breadwinner for her six children. Initially, Tabassum worked in a handicrafts factory for ₹900 per month (approximately £9 per month). Tabassum was dissatisfied with this job as her salary was relatively low and she had to work long hours, from 9 am to 8 pm. She quit that job because she felt she was neglecting her children. Tabassum had the skill of making lampshades and thus decided to be a vendor. Street vending allowed her a flexible work schedule where she could take care of her children besides working outside her home.

The flexibility of work was the primary motivation to commence vending for a majority of the widowed and abandoned women and a few married women, whose role shifted from being a homemaker to that of a breadwinner. For example, Poojan, a Gujarati woman, was married when she was 18 years old. Poojan explained her motive to commence vending as,

'I have two children. I only started vending when my elder child [my son] started attending school. I wanted to work to supplement my husband's income. I preferred to be a street vendor as it was the most flexible work I knew. I stopped vending when my second child (my daughter) was born and re-started vending when she was two years old. I have been vending for the past eight years, on and off. There is no pressure on me to earn; I can leave and re-join my work anytime. My work easily accommodates the daily schedule of my children, which is my priority'.

(Poojan, literate, married)

Another married woman, Manu, a mother of three children, chose to vend over other livelihood options due to the physical disability of her daughter. Manu wanted her work schedule to accommodate her daughter's schedule and thus opted to be a vendor. She stated,

'My husband is a heavy drinker, and he used to spend whatever he earned on his drinks. Because of this, we had a deplorable financial situation at home. Considering our family's financial condition, I stitched school uniforms for a public school for four years. But I had to leave that job because my girl is deaf, and I was solely responsible for dropping her off and picking her up from her special school. My job was not flexible in terms of working hours. Because I am literate, thus, I could have got an office job. But my girl is my priority. Thus, I started selling spices in Delhi's regular and weekly markets. The flexible hours of my vending work allowed me to take care of my children and earn money. Besides the flexibility in terms of time, this work proved to be good in terms of higher earnings. Had I been doing formal work, I would not be earning that much, and I would have to follow a strict work schedule'.

(Manu, literate, married)

Although Manu was compelled to work due to the poor financial situation of her family, she chose to become a street vendor. Similarly, Poojan was forced to work due to the poor economic conditions of her household, but she decided to be a vendor due to the flexible working life it offered. These women were not directly compelled to take up vending due to economic necessity. However, their accentuated dual responsibilities of being a breadwinner and caring for their children due to the end of their marital contract and no family support indirectly compelled them to look for flexible work like street vending, where they could earn well and devote more time to their reproductive roles. The transition in marital status across the life course of these women freed them from the patriarchal norms in their affinal families, who had curbed their choice of occupation. However, such transitions also meant that these women had to earn money and take care of their domestic responsibilities, restricting their career choice. These women preferred self-employment avenues which offered them better work-life balance and higher earnings than any other formal or informal job. The economic necessity to look for better-paying work (as they were now the sole breadwinners of their family) and have a flexible working life to prioritise their domestic responsibilities over their professional commitments determined their choices regarding their workplace.

5.3   Chapter summary

This chapter has analysed the reasons why women became street vendors. Vendors' motives transcend the dualistic delineation of entrepreneurs as driven either by necessity or opportunity. The findings confirm that the theories of street entrepreneurship[15] do not

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[15] The theories here refer to the four theories of street entrepreneurship namely, 'Modernisation' theory (Bromley, 2007; Cross and Morales, 2007), 'Structuralist' theory (Castells and Portes, 1989; Sassen, 1997),

comprehensively explain women's motives to commence street vending. Instead, the various reasons for women to begin street vending resulted from their exposure to multiple socio-economic norms. The pressures produced by the structural forces they were exposed to, directly or indirectly, influenced their choice of work. However, the interaction of the women with these constraining structures varied as they experienced a transition in their marital status. For example, the patriarchal restrictions imposed on the married women to take up jobs in the formal sector and the death/ illness of their family members having a licensed vending unit in Delhi compelled these women to become street vendors. On the other hand, widowed and divorced women were attracted to street vending due to the flexibility this work offered, which enabled these women to prioritise their domestic responsibilities over their paid work. Their need to look for flexible work options arose from the shift in their role from being a homemaker to that of a breadwinner. Similarly, widowed, divorced and abandoned women chose to become street vendors due to the higher earnings it offered them compared to formal jobs. However, this need to look for more remunerative work was because their status had changed from being the supplementary income earner in the family to the primary income earner after the death of their husband or separation from their husband. The women with children had to opt for informal jobs to prioritise their reproductive activities over productive ones. The abandoned women started vending due to the unavailability of jobs in the formal sector or the high costs of securing such a job because of corruption and bribery.

Another important motivation for commencing vending was to carry forward the vendor's ancestral line of work. This category of vendors included the young unmarried women who were introduced to street selling by their parents in their childhood and who later developed the skills to work independently as street vendors in various markets of Delhi. This

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'Neo-liberal' theory (De Soto, 1989; Perry et al., 2007) and 'Post-modernist' theory (Cross, 2000; Cross and Morales, 2007).

category also included the women (of all age groups and marital status) belonging to particular communities specialising in a specific art form, such as the *Gadiya Lohars*, the ironsmiths of Rajasthan or the indigenous communities of Gujarat specialising in some state of textile art. Carrying forward their ancestral work was not a choice for these categories of women. Instead, it was the 'only' option because they had not been allowed to attend schools due to patriarchal norms and the nomadic nature of living of the *Gadia Lohars*. The conditioning of these women by their parents to work as street vendors, along with the lack of education, led these women to continue working as street vendors even after leaving the parental home.

The married women cited illiteracy as a motivation to commence vending because of the absence or low level of education required to work as a vendor. Usually, the women who considered illiteracy to be a pull factor to commence vending had prior experience working in the formal or informal sector. These women left their jobs either due to incidents of sexual harassment at their workplace or deteriorating health conditions by working strenuous and hazardous jobs such as construction work. Despite being illiterate, these women did have the option of taking up other informal jobs, such as that of a domestic worker. However, the younger married illiterate women detested these jobs due to the safety concerns associated with these jobs. Thus, at the outset, illiteracy seemed to be a pull factor helping to explain why these women became vendors. However, a deeper analysis through a critical realist philosophy revealed that the unsafe work environment (i.e. sexual harassment in other formal and informal sector jobs) and the patriarchal norms were the underlying mechanisms that prevented illiterate women from choosing alternative formal or informal sector work. On the other hand, patriarchal norms and the unequal division of domestic labour imposed restrictions on married women in ways that meant they could work only with their husbands or look for flexible work options. Thus, the meta-structures of patriarchy and cultural norms

conditioned the choice of work of these women. These women were 'doubly disadvantaged'. They were not allowed to choose their profession due to restrictions imposed on them at home and also restricted in their choice of occupation because certain occupations were unsafe for them, such as working as domestic workers. After all, the male employer of the house wielded power over the women employed as domestic workers in their house.

The structural barriers to taking up jobs in the formal sector (Roy and Mukhopadhyay, 2019), the gendered roles of men being the breadwinner and women the homemaker, and finally, the cultural norms of daughters-in-law as the 'honour' of the house (Mehrotra, 2019) constrained the agency of the unmarried and married women to apply for jobs in the formal sector. The impact of these causal mechanisms varied according to the age and marital status of women, and subsequently, women's motives to become street vendors changed over time. For example, literate women were engaged in formal sector jobs before their marriage but were compelled to be vendors after the wedding due to the restrictions imposed on them by their in-laws to work only with their husbands, who were usually street entrepreneurs. Similarly, women who worked in formal jobs before becoming mothers had to bear the 'motherhood penalty' imposed by their in-laws to shift to informal work with lower wages to prioritise their reproductive work over productive work. These women preferred to work in the formal sector in better positions if given a chance. Thus, although it seems that the interviewees chose street vending, they were confronted with a 'choice gap'[16] because they might have made different choices had they not been a mother or a caregiver.

Moreover, multiple motives influenced women's decision to become street entrepreneurs. For example, the widowed, divorced and abandoned women chose to be vendors because of the flexibility this work offered them and because they were the sole

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[16] A disjuncture between rhetoric of choice and reality of constraints shaping women's decision to enter or leave the labour force (Stone, 2007).

income-earning members of their families and could not endlessly wait to get a job in the formal sector. Thus, it was reasonable for them to start their own business to improve their financial condition at the earliest opportunity. Therefore, the women had multiple and fluid motives to start vending depending on their exposure to structural conditions over their life course.

CHAPTER SIX: BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RESOURCES

6.1 Introduction

ILO (2002a) has identified the lack of access to resources by women working in the informal economy as a fundamental cause of their difficulties in accessing decent work. Floro and Meurs (2009), in their paper on global trends in women's access to decent work, argue that studies of access to resources should pay attention to differences between genders since women working in the informal economy face more dire decent work deficits than men. Thus, this chapter discusses the significant barriers and facilitators to access resources according to the life cycle of the vendors.

6.2 Resources required for decent work conditions

During the interviews, the vendors were asked about the resources required to achieve decent work conditions and the barriers they faced in accessing them. The vendors identified five significant resources needed to attain decent work conditions. These resources included institutional (vending license, support from police and municipal authorities), physical (transport, water, sanitation, electricity connection, health, shaded stall, storage space, merchandise and child care facilities), social (bonding and bridging), human (education and skill) and financial (start-up capital and social security capital) resources.

I analysed their experiences accessing these resources through the access framework proposed by Saurman (2016). This framework defines access as a multi-dimensional concept consisting of six *A*'s, namely, availability (type and capacity of resource), accessibility (spatial position of the resource), acceptability (in terms of religion, age, ethnicity etc.), affordability (ability to buy the resource) and accommodation (characteristics of a resource such as its operating hours and communication systems) and awareness (information among the users regarding the presence of a resource). The following sections discuss the resources and the problems that vendors experienced in attempting to access them.

6.2.1 Institutional resources

Institutional resources include the institutions and associated governance structures that reduce workplace uncertainty (Platje, 2010). 'Institutions' refer to the rules of the game which provide motivations or deterrents for economic activity and include the written laws and regulations, unwritten rules and cultural norms (North, 1990). 'Institutional governance structures' refer to the decision-making bodies that construe and implement the game's rules. Examples of such structures are the judiciary, government agencies, police and police(Williamson, 1987, 1998). The vendors identified licensing systems and support from police and municipal authorities as necessary institutional resources responsible for creating and obstructing decent work conditions at their workplace. The following section discusses the institutions and institutional governance structures that influence the interactions between vendors and the government

6.2.1.1 <u>Vending license</u>

In 1989, the Supreme Court declared street vending a fundamental right under Article 19(1) (g) of the Indian Constitution (Sharma, 1989). However, Article 19(1) (d) of the Indian Constitution states that street vendors do not have the liberty to choose their preferred area for vending because it might interfere with the rights of other passers-by to travel without obstruction. Thus urban local bodies are responsible for identifying areas suitable for street trading and issuing licenses to vendors in these areas. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), the two central municipal bodies in Delhi, started to issue a stationary vending license, called *tehbazari,* in 1991. Vendors were eligible to apply for covered *tehbazari* (kiosks/ stalls covered with asbestos sheets) only if they could submit proof of vending at a fixed spot between 1970 and 1982.

The vendors who had been continuously selling at a particular location from 1983 onwards were eligible for open *tehbazari* (an open-to-sky vending space). Besides the vending proof, the vendors needed to furnish proof of residence in Delhi from 1970 or 1983 onwards for covered and open *tehbazari,* respectively (Kishwar, 2007). In 2001, the municipal bodies not only invited applications for open and covered *tehbazari* for stationary vendors but also initiated the process of inviting applications for mobile hawking. The licenses were issued for the third and final time in 2011. After the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act was passed by the Parliament in 2014, municipal bodies' authority to issue licenses was shifted to the Town Vending Committees (TVCs). These TVCs were supposed to conduct surveys of vendors all over Delhi and issue a Certificate of Vending to the eligible vendors. Although 28 TVCs have been formed, the process of conducting surveys of vendors did not commence until October 31, 2019 (Ravi, 2019), a date that fell during the time in which I conducted my fieldwork in the city. Despite the efforts of the Delhi government to issue licenses to street vendors, the final licensing drive in 2007 allotted licenses to only 0.13 million vendors of the total population of 0.45 million vendors in Delhi (Press Trust of India, 2020).

Approximately one-fourth of the interviewed vendors in my research were licensed. All the non-licensed vendors identified a vending license as an essential institutional resource required to continue working as a vendor. A license protected the vendors against confiscating their goods by the municipal inspectors and gave them a sense of ownership of their vending space in the market. The non-licensed vendors occupied a space in the market by bribing the police and the municipal authorities. Examples of such vendors included Minti Devi and her husband, who had completed an application for a vending licence as *mehendi* (henna) artists in 2007. They, therefore, continued to occupy a vending spot in the Kamala Nagar market by paying monthly bribes to the police and the MCD. Minti explained that *'I*

pay ₹1,000 (approximately £10) per month to the police, ₹900-₹1,000 (approximately £9-£10) per month to the MCD and bribes to the shopkeepers to be allowed to sit in the Kamala Nagar market...all these payments are illegal...no receipt issued'. A few non-licensed vendors occupied rented spaces in the market for which they had to pay an exorbitant monthly price. These rented spaces belonged to licensed vendors who sub-let their vending space to the non-licensed vendors. For example, Radhika, a vendor who has sold undergarments in the Bhogal market since 2014, stated, *'I sit on a rented space belonging to another street vendor where I pay a monthly rent of ₹10,000 (approximately £100). My rent for sitting in the market is almost equal to my earnings, leaving me with no savings'.*

A vending license also determined the location of the vendors, especially in the weekly markets. A weekly market was typically held on a stretch of road on which the licensed vendors occupied the road's edges. In contrast, the non-licensed vendors had no option but to occupy the median strip (the narrow piece of land between the two halves of a large road), which exposed them to the risk of being struck by moving traffic. Neela, a young woman who started vending five months before the start of my fieldwork, explained the issues of access to the contested physical space, '*the major problem I am facing in this work is that male vendors dominate all the weekly markets, and the market Pradhan (President) is also a male...they don't let the women vendors sit in these markets...I am not allowed by these men to occupy the pavement, so I sit on the median'.* The vendors claimed that the Presidents (*Pradhans* in colloquial terminology) of the weekly markets were aware of everyday fights over access to vending space between the male and the female vendors, but they refused to intervene. Radhika, vending in the Bhogal weekly market since 2014, explained, *'I don't want to complain against the Pradhan to the police or the committee... I am scared that if I say anything against him, then I will not be allowed to sit in the market from tomorrow'.*

The commercial markets that did not have a President were also spaces in which women were exploited by the male shopkeepers and male market vendors. The shopkeepers harassed the women vendors by parking their vehicles at their vending spots. Also, they did not allow these women to occupy the space in front of their shop and pushed them to the market corners, negatively impacting their business. The dominance of the male shopkeepers and vendors in the market led to a constant struggle for access to space for the women vendors. Malti Devi, a vendor who had sold corn for 38 years in the Kidwai Nagar market, explained her ordeal: ' *I lost my vending spot in the market 25 years ago when my daughter died, and I stopped working; for nine months…when I returned to the market, I found that my vending spot had been encroached by another male vendor…when my husband pleaded with the Pradhan of the market association, then we were allowed to sit at the end of the market…this location means lesser sales because the customers prefer to exit the market after shopping from the stalls at the front of the market*'.

Access to a vending license was primarily constrained by vendors' lack of awareness of the invitation for license applications published by the NDMC and the MCD or the eligibility criteria to apply for a vending license. Lack of information about the license applications was a significant barrier for illiterate vendors. For example, Jyoti, a woman who had been vending since 1979, was unaware she needed a license to continue selling in the city. She explained,

> *'The problem is that we, the women vendors, are never informed about the procedure to apply for a license or any other government policy introduced for our benefit from time to time. Thus, we can never apply for such schemes, policies, plans or projects'.*
>
> (Jyoti, 60-year-old, Ghanta Ghar regular market).

Jyoti stated that her lack of awareness about the vending applications stemmed from the lack of communication from the municipal authorities about the advertisement of these applications. The information about the vending applications was spread only by word-of-mouth, and intense competition discouraged the vendors from spreading timely information about the applications among themselves. Another barrier faced by illiterate vendors was the lack of awareness about the eligibility criteria to apply for a license. For example, Atulya, who started vending at age 60, explained, *'I applied for tehbazari in 2007...submitted the photocopy of all the challans (NDMC receipts of confiscation of merchandise by the municipal authorities) I had till 2007...but I was not allotted tehbazari...only the literate people got tehbazari, illiterate ones, like me, never got it'.*

Atulya's lack of awareness about the age eligibility (a person applying for a license should not be 60 years or above) to apply for a license led to her disappointment with the system, and she attributed her ignorance and corruption in the system to the reasons for the denial of a vending permit. Similarly, Ani, a young vendor who started vending when she was 15 years old (in 2007), stated that she had no information regarding applying for a vending license. She was unaware of the documents to be attached along with the application, such as the challan receipts issued against the confiscated goods by the municipal authorities. She stated, *'I was told recently by the NHF that the challan receipts are important to get a license...I didn't know this and thus discarded my old receipts...A few I lost'.*

Another critical obstacle to accessing the vending licenses was that the vending license applications did not accommodate the vendors due to their strict eligibility criteria. Most non-licensed vendors started vending either in or after 2007, the year in which the vending applications were floated for the street vendors. Thus, the ineligibility of the vendors discouraged them from applying for a license. In some instances, they submitted the license application form without attaching the required documents, such as the receipts of fines

(*challans* in colloquial terms*)* of the past three years issued by the municipal authorities against confiscating merchandise. Some vendors like Lalita, a mobile vendor, could not apply for a vending license as the last time the applications were floated was in 2007, while she started working as a vendor in 2011.

According to the NHF officials, a vending license was the most crucial resource required by vendors to achieve decent work conditions in their present occupation. The Vice President of the NHF stated that the frequent sub-letting of the vending space from the licensed vendors to the non-licensed vendors was an outcome of the corruption of the municipal authorities. He said, '*Vending space is easily given out on rent from the licensed owner of the space to another non-licensed vendor without the knowledge of the municipal bodies...no vendor can legally sub-let his licensed vending space*'. He also suggested a potential solution to resolve this issue*:* a vending license should be allotted for a specific time to a vendor, after which it should be cancelled. This would curb the domination of any particular vendor in the market as the license would be issued only for a specified time. Moreover, this would solve the widespread corruption of the municipal bodies that turn a blind eye to licensed vendors selling their vending space to non-licensed vendors. The subsequent section discusses the institutional resource of access to municipal bodies and police, which the vendors were a bit hesitant to discuss due to their bitter experiences in the past.

6.2.1.2 <u>Police</u>

Most interviewees regarded police officers as their persecutors rather than their protectors. They were held responsible for eviction drives of vendors across all major markets in the city. Moreover, police officers were held accountable for massive extortion from the vendors (called *hafta* in the colloquial language) to permit occupancy of the squatting space

in the market. This was a significant psychological barrier (Donabedian, 1972; George *et al.*, 2018) for vendors to approach the police officers due to their bitter experiences in the past.

Vendors' experiences varied according to the market in which they worked. The vendors in the weekly and the ladies' market did not face any harassment from the police. The vendors in the ladies' market were opposed to the deployment of male police officers for the whole day in the market as it made them more uncomfortable to sit in the market. The police officers were not deployed in the weekly and ladies' markets for long hours and patrolled once or twice a day. However, all the vendors in the regular markets experienced substantial harassment by the police, irrespective of their education level, marital status or their vending license status. The harassment was more acute in the regular commercial markets than in the residential or public/semi-public markets. In a few markets, the extortion by the police was quite visible, where they openly demanded ₹1,000 (approximately £10) per month from each vendor. In other markets, however, the extortion mechanisms were relatively obscure. Elaborating on the hidden extortion means of the policemen, Barfi, a licensed vendor who had worked in the Sarojini Nagar market since 2005, stated, *'the policemen put barricades in the market which cut off our clientele. They remove the barricades only if we pay ₹5,000 (approximately £50) to these policemen…because I am a woman, I cannot fight alone...my fellow vendors keep quiet and pay whatever money the policemen demand'.*

In markets like India Gate, an important tourist attraction, the police harassed the vendors by not allowing them to work inside the monument premises. Recounting her ordeal with the police, Chand, a vendor who had worked at India Gate since 1989, stated, *'for the past two years (since 2017), the harassment by the police has increased manifold…policemen come to check up on me every hour, and if I am still roaming around or sit temporarily to sell water bottles, they beat me and send me out of the India Gate premises'.* In the commercial markets of India Gate, Sarojini Nagar, Lajpat Nagar, Connaught Place, and Kamala Nagar,

the vendors were hesitant to go to the police for help due to their persistent harassment. Vendors shared horrific stories about the physical and verbal abuse they had suffered at the hands of the police, which discouraged them from approaching the police for help. Talking about the physical abuse, Minti recalled a specific incident. She stated,

'One day, a policeman came and kicked a young boy (a vendor in our market) in his leg and asked him to vacate the space or pay the policeman some bribe to be allowed to sit in the market. The boy refused to pay the bribe to the policeman. The policeman got offended, took the boy to the police station and thrashed him badly. That's why vendors are scared to say anything to the police officers. The policemen don't even spare the female vendors and abuse them'.
(Minti, 60-year-old, Kamala Nagar regular market)

Neeti, a vendor working in the Lajpat Nagar regular market, was another victim of verbal and physical abuse. Talking about the harassment of the police, Neeti explained, *'I am constantly mentally tortured by the police…just fifteen days ago, a policeman came to the market and asked me to pack up everything and go home. When I resisted him, the policeman tore my clothes and abused me…everyone recorded the incident on their mobile phone, but no one helped me'.*

Thus, even though the police officers were present in most of the regular and weekly markets, they did not provide safety and security to the vendors. Instead, the vendors were scared to access the police for grievances because the policemen themselves were the oppressors. The brutality of the police was also mentioned by the Youth officer (Delhi Region, NHF), who explained a particular incident, *'recently we captured a video where the police abused a 60-year-old vendor and evicted her from the market…at that time, the police did not think about the value a woman has in our culture'.* According to him, the women

vendors would approach the police only if this brutality came to an end. He suggested, '*respect for women can only come through awareness campaigns where the police are reminded of the role of the women in our society...government, police and Pradhan of the market should provide security to the women vendors so that they can work without fear in the market*'.

6.2.1.3 <u>Municipal authorities</u>

Local municipal officials controlled street vendors' access to public space through the licensing mechanism, which determined the level of harassment, merchandise confiscations and evictions of the street vendors from the markets. The municipal bodies in Delhi oppressed the vendors through these mechanisms, which deterred them from accessing them for support. The oppression was most severe in the case of the non-licensed vendors. Bhagmati, a stationary non-licensed vendor who sold processed food on a cart in Ghanta Ghar regular market, explained, '*municipalities charge unofficial money and issue no receipts...health department charges ₹700 (approximately £7) per month...establishment department (department dealing with removal of unauthorized vendors in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi) charges ₹400 (approximately £4) per month... food inspector takes ₹120 (approximately £12) per month...committee also confiscates my material every alternate day...I rush to the enforcement directorate office and beg the officials to release my material...I get relief for 2-3 days by paying ₹1,000-₹2,000 (approximately £10-£20), and again the same turmoil starts after 2-3 days*'. Thus, access to the Municipal authorities was obstructed by the vendors' reluctance to approach the New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) due to harassment by the municipal inspectors. Leela summed up her experience of harassment by the municipal authorities as follows '*the committee comes almost every day*

and confiscates my merchandise which is returned after I pay the challan. Another problem is that when I go back to claim my merchandise, either half of it is missing or is broken'.

Despite facing continual harassment from the municipal authorities, the non-licensed vendors were scared to raise their voices due to their gender and marital status. Suniti, a 22-year-old unmarried vendor, was too intimidated to speak against the NDMC. She felt that she was more likely to be targeted by the NDMC if Suniti complained about their abusive behaviour as she was an unmarried single woman with old parents. To escape abuse by the municipal authorities, the mobile vendors preferred to run away with their merchandise when they saw officials in the market. For example, Chand, a mobile vendor who sold water bottles at the India Gate, stated, *'the NDMC officers frequently confiscated earlier my material…over the years I learnt the art of running away with my material at the sight of the NDMC van'.* Mobile vendors used quiet and invisible resistance, such as evading the authorities by fleeing from the vending spot, termed 'infrapolitics' or 'everyday resistance' by Scott (1992). The mobile vendors usually adopted covert resistance tactics of escape and avoidance as they found it too risky to confront the inspectors directly. Chand also explained her ordeal of accessing the municipal authorities for grievance redress in the past. Despite constant complaints, the municipal officials' lack of attention discouraged her from approaching the NDMC for further grievances. Most of the non-licensed stationary and all the mobile vendors recounted similar incidents of oppression, making it difficult for them to access the municipal authorities for any grievance redress.

Another obstacle to accessing municipal authorities was the lack of information dissemination by the authorities to the vendors. The poor communication system of the municipal authorities regarding government policies and schemes for the benefit of the vendors developed mistrust in the minds of the vendors. This discouraged the vendors from approaching the municipal authorities and encouraged them to turn to NGOs for help. Chand

explained, '*six months ago; a few NDMC officials came to survey street vendors at the India Gate...NHF visited India Gate and informed us that the way our survey was done was against the rules...they intervened and got the survey cancelled...NDMC misguides us and never tells us about Delhi's vendors' new policies and schemes.*

None of the licensed vendors faced harassment from the municipal authorities. Chanda Devi, vending in the Kalibari market since 2009, justified the harassment by the municipal authorities of the vendors who flouted the terms and conditions of their license, such as the allotted space for displaying their products. She explained, *'If the vendors have been given a stipulated space to vend and they encroach on the space beyond the allowed limit, then obviously the committee will come and confiscate their material...I follow the rules; thus, I never face any harassment from the committee...it's ultimately the vendors' fault, not the committee'.* The difference in the perspective of licensed and non-licensed vendors toward the municipal authorities was one of the significant reasons for the lack of unity amongst the vendors.

The widowed vendors stated that the municipal authorities were usually sympathetic towards them due to their marital status, shielding them from harassment by the municipal inspectors who frequently visited the market. One such vendor, Ashi Garg, a widow, who started vending after her husband's death in 2017, stated, *'because I am a licensed vendor and a widow too; thus, the NDMC does not harass me...rather they sympathise with me'.*

In the case of a few respondents, the sympathy of the municipal inspectors extended beyond merely refraining from harassing widows to offering a helping hand to them. For example, the inspectors would often overlook the attempts of these vendors to build a temporary structure to protect themselves from the harsh climatic conditions or did not confiscate the products sold by these vendors even if they defied the spatial rules of vending spots in a market. Lakshita, a widow who started working on his stall at the regular Regal

market after her husband's death in 218, recounted her pleasant experience with the municipal officials and explained, '*I have access to NDMC officers who come to my stall...I can call them on the phone if I have a problem...my husband built a solid rapport with these officers... when I started vending, NDMC officers slowly got to know me, and now they listen to my problems and help me'*.

The widowed vendors believed they had more access to the municipal bodies due to the sympathetic and caring attitude of the municipal officials towards them. However, they also felt that the municipal bodies' communication system was weak because the vendors were unaware of the government's new policies and schemes.

6.2.2   Social resources

In this research, the term social resources refer to the vendors' social networks (or links) and cooperation in their community that enables the vendors and the vending groups (NGOs and unions) to assist each other and work together. Based on the responses received during the interviews with vendors, social capital has been analysed in this research from the perspective of bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 1995)

Putnam (1995) defined bonding social capital as relations between group members with a common identity. This shared identity can be a critical personal characteristic such as race, class, ethnicity, religion or gender. Bonding capital typically represents ties among immediate family members, neighbours and close friends. Bonding connections are frequently studied when workers find full-time employment through one-time job referrals (Lin, 1999). However, using social networks as a resource transcends occasional job referrals and covers routine uses of social networks. The networks identified by the vendors in this research were those individuals who advised and resolved problems for the vendors, such as their fellow

workers in the marketplace or favours in terms of lending money to either start the business or buy merchandise such as close and extended family members.

Interviews with the vendors revealed that their bonding social capital comprised their family members and relatives due to their availability and the willingness of the vendors to trust them. However, family members and relatives' physical and emotional support was only available to married women. For example, Lakshmibai, who started vending in 2015, was supported by her family and close relatives in balancing her domestic duties and work. She explained,

'I sell earthenware in the Shalimar Bagh residential area from 9 am to 8 pm, but during the festive time, I sit till midnight due to high sales. My husband helps me by dropping me in the morning at my workplace and sitting with me after 7 pm daily. He also collects the earthenware from the Gurgaon-Delhi border. My kids are also supportive. My elder daughter cooks food and washes clothes; the younger cleans the house and washes utensils. On Diwali, when I have to sit for long hours at my workplace, I invite one of my sisters to come home and take my children to her house. The other sister stays with me to cook food for my husband and me. It is because of the support of my entire family that I work comfortably'.

(Lakshmibai, 32-year-old, married)

The married vendors primarily depended on their family members due to the joint family system. The joint family system refers to lineally and collaterally extended families where the head of the family, along with the spouse, lives either with their married children and their spouses and parents or with married siblings and their siblings, a typical family living arrangement in South Asia (Desai, 1956; Niranjan *et al.*, 2005). The vendors' easy

availability and physical proximity to their family members were the main reasons to approach them for assistance. Another critical reason for accessing family members was the vendors' willingness to trust their family members compared to the outsiders. For example, Leela, a 38-year-old married woman, started vending when she was six and continued working even after her marriage because of the support of her husband and in-laws. She explained, *'my husband supports me physically, mentally, emotionally and financially...my father-in-law takes care of my two and a half-year-old daughter...because he takes care of my kid, thus I work freely without the tension of bringing my child to my workplace...if I am working today, then it's a combined effort of my entire family'.*

The widowed, divorced, and abandoned vendors were not supported by their natal and affinal families. Thus, they had to rely on the vendors' network for advice and to resolve their professional problems. The widows who started doing paid work only after their husbands' death lacked self-confidence and needed support to conduct the business that their helpers and the wholesale dealers usually provided. For example, Ashi Garg, a young widow working in Sarojini Nagar, turned to her natal and marital family after the death of her husband but did not receive any emotional or financial support. Not getting help from her family, Ashi decided to work as a vendor. Slowly her network of friends who were vendors in the same market grew, which made it easier for her to conduct her business. She stated, *'I started working after my husband's death in 2011...I did not know the business, so I hired an experienced male helper...he sells the garments at my stall and deals with the wholesale dealers. He takes care of the stock to be ordered while I take care of the accounts...the wholesale dealers are very cooperative; they come and deliver the garments at my stall and take the payment as per my convenience...my fellow women vendors in the market, my helper and wholesale dealers make me feel comfortable and confident in my work today'.* Ashi's case revealed her transition from fear to survival was strengthened by the *bonding* capital

among women vendors at the workplace who played different roles as 'introducers' or emotional supporters. The role of bonded solidarity cannot be ignored in the cases mentioned above, which inspired a close-knit community of women vendors to do whatever they could to help each other.

Similarly, Fahema, a middle-aged widow, did not have a family network to support her when she went out to earn money in the market. She was pregnant with her fifth child when her husband died in 2005. As she had no savings, she had to start working at her husband's stall after his death. Besides needing to bring her five-day-old infant with her to the market, Fahema felt unsafe working in the Ghanta Ghar regular market. This was because her stall was surrounded by stalls owned by male vendors who knew her marital status. These males tried to take advantage of her vulnerability by leering at her and publicly making lewd remarks. She explained how she overcame this fear through the *bonding* social network she built at her workplace. '*Initially, I was petrified to sit in the market…gradually I became friends with four other female vendors…they gave me the courage to sit amidst the lecherous male vendors…they discussed my issues and stood by me as a shield against the male vendors…due to my friends at my workplace, I am comfortable doing this work now'.* The network of women vendors provided Fahema with the security required to work comfortably in the market, which otherwise should have been the responsibility of the police. Because the police were persecutors rather than the protector of vendors, these vendors sought the help of bonding social capital available at their workplace to ensure their safety.

Despite the social stigmatisation and exclusion attached to widowhood in India (Mohindra *et al.*, 2012), widowed vendors had more access to social networks than married vendors. All the vendors, men and women, were sympathetic to their fellow widowed vendors and lent them financial, physical and emotional support. The social network beyond the family compensated for the lack of family support for the widows. For example, Hima

Devi, a widow working in the Sarojini Nagar market, got unrestricted access to the social network when she started vending after her husband died. She explained, '*my husband was a vendor in Sarojini Nagar…he committed suicide two months ago, and I started sitting in the market since then…the vendors in the market helped me a lot…they gathered ₹15,000 (approximately £150) among themselves and bought the merchandise for me to sell at my stall'*. Similarly, Sunetra Garg, an elderly vendor who became a widow in 2018, had been vending since 1982. Before she became a widow, she sat alongside her husband, but after his death, she continued working at his stall all by herself. She stated, *'After my husband's death, a vendor in the same market, the vendors helped me provide water and food at my workplace, and they also sent customers to my stall from time to time'.*

The divorced and abandoned women did not have access to bonding social capital (neither family support nor the support of fellow female vendors). This category of women was not accepted by their natal or marital parents, primarily because of their marital status. These vendors revealed that their in-laws believed these women to be 'cursed' due to the untimely death of these vendors' spouses. On the other hand, their birth parents labelled them as a 'burden' due to the patriarchal norms where daughters are disowned by their parents upon marriage. These vendors were reluctant to approach fellow women vendors for help due to the hostile work environment and intense competition among the vendors. They reported that the women vendors were highly competitive in their workplace and saw them as rivals. Divorced and abandoned women could not approach their fellow male vendors as well because the males considered these women to be of 'loose character' and would sexually harass them in the market. Heeral, a 50 years old divorced vendor who sold plastic toys in three weekly markets, explained, *'my in-laws considered me ill-omened after the death of my husband and threw me out of their house…my father also never supported me…vendors in the market are also so un-cooperative...my fellow male vendors harass because they know*

that there is no male support for me and they find me an easy prey to exploit...a woman becomes extremely vulnerable if she is a divorcee, a widow or is unmarried'.

Another type of social capital, bridging social capital, develops as people build contacts with individuals and groups in more extensive and dissimilar networks beyond their immediate family (Burt, 1995). Bridging capital is vital for resolving community problems by building relationships, sharing information between people, and organising community resources (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). According to the vendors, they had made horizontal links with diverse groups of vendors, which served to establish a common goal among themselves through civic engagement. This civic engagement was facilitated primarily through civil society organisations and vendors' unions.

Civil society is referred to as the 'third sector', which works beyond the family, state or market (World Economic Forum, 2013). Historically, the most prominent CSOs have been community-based organizations, workers' unions, professional associations, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Vandyck, 2017). The vendors identified NGOs and the vendors' unions as the two most prominent CSOs as crucial bridging social capital.

All the interviewees were associated with the NHF, which helped me draw a sampling frame for conducting the semi-structured interviews with the vendors. However, the benefits reaped by the vendors from their membership with the NHF varied widely according to their type of market. NGOs such as NHF, National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), Hawkers Suraksha Foundation (HSF) (Hawkers Protection Foundation), Rehri Patri Footpath Vikreta Ekta Manch (RPFVEM) (Footpath Vendors and Footpath Sellers Unity Forum) and Pankaj Pustak have been functioning in Delhi and fighting for the rights of the street vendors for many years. Thus, the vendors did not identify the availability of NGOs as an issue.

Physical accessibility of the offices of the NGOs was identified as a significant barrier

by the vendors in accessing this resource. The offices of the NGOs were located far from the vendors' workplaces and homes, making it difficult for them to visit the offices with their grievances. Atulya, a 75-year-old vendor, explained that *'NHF visited India Gate five months ago…they made me their member...they call me for meetings to their office for which I do not go…due to my tight work schedule and also because their office is far off'*. The lack of accessibility to the NGOs' offices was a significant barrier for all the vendors, irrespective of their age or the type of market they worked in. However, when the NHF officials were questioned about the lack of accessibility, they mentioned that meetings of the federation with the vendors were organized in markets where they not only made the vendors aware of the details of the Street Vendors Act but also spread awareness about the training opportunities available to the vendors. However, occasionally were such meetings held, three to four times a year. Because the volunteers gave the invitation to these meetings through word-of-mouth, the vendors did not take them seriously and did not attend. Even though some vendors working in the weekly markets could participate in these meetings, the regular vendors could not attend because of their busy work schedules and inability to take time off.

Another barrier was vendors' lack of trust in the ability of the NGOs to address their grievances. Lack of communication by the NGOs regarding their functions and ability to resolve the vendors' issues instilled distrust in the vendors' minds regarding the NGOs' effectiveness. For example, Fahema, a middle-aged widow, explained her experience with an NGO in the past. She stated, *'NHF listens to my problems, but it does not help me...once an NGO volunteer, called Naveen Bhai (I don't remember the name of his NGO), helped me get my disabled son treated in a hospital…half the treatment was done, and then Naveen Bhai never came back…I do not trust the NGOs now…they vanish when we start trusting them'*. The belief that NGOs would abandon the vendors, as stated by Fahema, was confirmed in an interview with the Youth officer of the NHF (Delhi region). He said, *'a majority of the NGOs*

approach the vendors, win their trust and then break the vendors' faith…they give few facilities to the vendors, make them dependent on them and later abandon the vendors…this spoils the reputation of the few good NGOs. The latter genuinely want to help the vendors'.

Many street vendors lacked awareness of the NGOs working for their rights because their physical outreach and public awareness campaigns were weak. Mohini, a woman who had been vending for the past fifteen years in the Madangir regular market, stated, *'I am not aware of any organisation working for our benefit, nor of anyone that comes to our market to inform us about their organisation and its work. I only learned about the NHF when they visited my market a few months ago. Otherwise, I would have never known about them'.* Similarly, Meeta, who worked in the same market as Mohini, had been unaware of the existence of NGOs until six months ago (in April 2019), when the NHF visited her market and persuaded her to become their member. She emphasised that *'the problem is that when we are not aware of the NGOs working for our welfare, how can we approach them?'*

The illiterate vendors held themselves responsible for the lack of awareness about the NGOs working for the street vendors. For example, Jyoti Devi, an illiterate elderly vendor working in the Ghanta Ghar market since 1979, stated, *'I am not literate, so I don't have much information about the NGOs/ organisations working for the vendors; in Delhi…I might have been aware of these NGOs if I had been literate.* When the NHF officials were interviewed about the lack of awareness about the federation among the vendors, their responses contradicted one another. The National Secretary, NHF stated, '*We make the vendors aware of the new policies and programmes launched by the government for vendors...we don't give a formal training to vendors, but we spread awareness about the rights of and the facilities for the vendors by visiting them at their place of work'.* In contrast, the Vice President (Delhi Region) stated, '*we don't have enough money to disseminate information about training opportunities available for the vendors...The government's role is*

to provide such information to the vendors…We cannot be present everywhere'. After a deeper probe, it was revealed that, due to a scarcity of funds, the NHF was most active in just a few city markets, such as Sarojini Nagar, Kidwai Nagar and Connaught Place. The NHF frequently visited these markets to spread awareness about new policies and schemes beneficial for the vendors. Thus, the claims of lack of awareness of the vendors working in other markets such as the Ghanta Ghar market or the Madangir market were valid because the NHF only started working in these markets at the beginning of 2019.

Vendors' unions were another form of bridging capital central to building networks amongst the vendors to mobilise community resources. The Street Hawkers' Union of Delhi is the umbrella organisation registered with the Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU). Besides this powerful union, each market has a local union. Even though the unions were available in most markets, the vendors were not generally associated with them because the unions were typically male-dominated. The women expressed a need for a separate union in the market because they believed their concerns were not well-represented in these male-dominated unions. In male-dominated unions, the women found it difficult to speak openly about their concerns, especially where the male members of the unions were the cause of the problem for the women vendors. Although all the women vendors interviewed expressed a desire to form a women vendors' union, the lack of unity among the vendors had derailed past attempts to create such a union. Explaining the rationale for the lack of vendors' unions, Hirani Devi, a middle-aged vendor working in the Ghanta Ghar regular market, stated, *'when the committee (MCD officials) comes to harass us, instead of supporting each other, the vendors run away with their material…everyone only cares for themselves…there should be a union of vendors which can unanimously fight against this oppression'.* Similarly, Chand, an elderly vendor selling water bottles at the India Gate, explained the problem of unionisation among the female vendors. She stated, *'I believe that we should have a separate union of*

women street vendors, but there is no unity among us at the India Gate…a few women sit inside the India Gate, a few have moved out of the premises, breaking our unity…without a union, it is difficult to fight against the oppression of the police'. According to Hirani Devi and Chand, a mismatch between the individualistic nature of vendors and the need to collectively fight against the perpetrators was a significant barrier for women to organise themselves and form their separate unions. The lack of common issues among the licensed and non-licensed vendors to fight for was the main reason for the lack of unity between them. The licensed vendors though small in number, were united but declined to form unions with the non-licensed vendors. The non-licensed vendors, even though much more in number and facing similar issues of oppression and harassment, were scared to lose their livelihood if they collectively protested against the police or the municipal authorities. Meenu Devi, a 41 years old vendor who started this work at the age of thirteen, explained the difference in the unity of the licensed and the non-licensed vendors. Even after working for 28 years as a vendor, she could not get a vending license, but she had a nuanced understanding of the lack of a common ground for the licensed and non-licensed vendors to unite. She explained,

'*Suppose if only ten mehendiwalis (female Henna artists) have a license from the total of 50 female artists, then the licensed mehendi artists are united and collectively fight for infrastructure issues such as non-working street lights at their workplace…the 40 non-licensed artists will never raise voice for provision of the public utilities at their workplace because they have bigger problems to think about such as earning their livelihood than picking up a fight with the police or the municipal authorities…I have understood that the unity, peace and harmony of the female mehendi artists depend on their license and nothing els*e'.

The interviewees cited corruption among union members as another reason for the reluctance to form vendors' unions in the market. Gunmeet Kaur started a union of the India

Gate vendors ten years ago, which was dismantled even before it was registered. She explained the reasons for its failure in the following words, '*the position holders in the union were corrupt…they used to extort money from their fellow vendors…seeing this corruption, I dissolved the union*'.

Some vendors associated with a union did not find its membership helpful enough to resolve their problems. For example, Rakhi, who had worked in the Kamala Nagar market for 25 years, found union membership useless. She stated,

> '*I have been a member of the Delhi Rehri Patri Khomcha Hawkers Union (Delhi Street Vendors and Hawkers Union) for the past fifteen years. I told them about the harassment I have been facing from the shopkeepers and the police in the Kamala Nagar market. But the union gave me an identity card and never came forward to help me or fight for my rights in the market. Better than these unions are the NGOs like NHF, who give us timely information about new policies and even fight for our rights but do not issue a membership card*'.
>
> (Rakhi, 48 years old, Kamala Nagar regular market)

Thus, it can be concluded that access to the unions was not only constrained by the lack of availability of women-only unions but also by the reluctance of the vendors to join the unions due to their lack of trust in them. Some vendors associated with such unions did not benefit from being their members because of internal corruption and politics, as explained by Gunmeet Kaur. When the General Secretary, AIWHF, NHF was asked about the lack of women vendors' unions in the market, she responded, '*the problem is that women vendors are discriminated against and oppressed by male vendors in all the markets, so the women are scared to come forward to form their union…scared because of the wrath of the fellow male workers, if these women form their union*. Recognizing unions as the most important

resource for women vendors, she explained the steps taken by NHF in this direction. She stated, '*Within the NHF, we launched All India Women Hawker Federation (AIWHF) exclusively for the women vendors in September 2019...AIWHF will spread awareness among the vendors about their rights and form unions to solve their problems by themselves rather than depending on any NGO...with 50 women as members of AIWHF, we will soon open its branches all over the country'*. This initiative resembles the efforts made by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in 1972 when it started organizing self-employed women into a workers' union in Ahmedabad. SEWA helped the women get access to better employment, negotiate with their employers for higher wages and increase their access to a range of services such as financial support, insurance facilities or health care centres (Bhatnagar *et al.*, 2003). Such 'women only' unions are essential, as was pointed out by the General Secretary of NHF, because they defend the rights and interests of women members and provide them with a platform to build their confidence and leadership skills in a culturally appropriate and non-threatening space.

6.2.3   Physical resources

The interviewees identified seven significant physical resources required for decent work conditions in street vending: transport, water, sanitation, electricity, merchandise, storage space and shaded stalls.

6.2.3.1 Transport

The vendors identified transport as an essential physical resource for commuting from home to the workplace and wholesale markets to buy merchandise. Most vendors stated that auto-rickshaws were their primary mode of transport. Although public transport, mainly representing buses and Delhi Metro, was more affordable and the vendors were aware of the

public transport options of buses and metro, there was a lack of willingness to travel by public transport. Two significant barriers were associated with women's acceptability to travel by public transport. First, the patriarchal norms restricted married women, discouraging them from travelling alone on public transport. The spouses of these married women did not allow their wives to travel alone on public transport due to their fears for their wives' safety. Ashu, a married woman who had been vending for the past ten years, stated, *'I buy my stock from the Sadar wholesale market, which is 25 kilometres from my home…I have been going with my husband to the Sadar since I started working…I am not scared to go alone…but my husband does not let me go alone'.* Most married vendors preferred to travel by automobile, even though it was more expensive than public transport (buses and metro).

Patriarchal norms imposing restrictions on women's travel were responsible for Lakshmibai, a 32-year-old married woman, being utterly dependent on her husband for commuting, not only to her workplace but also to buy merchandise from the wholesale market. She explained, *'I sell earthenware at my workplace, which my husband gets from the Gurgaon-Delhi border…when my husband is there to accompany me to my workplace and purchase the merchandise for my business; then why should I bother?'* The age of the vendors did not have any link with the impact of patriarchal norms in limiting their travel options. Pracheen Arora was a 60-year-old married woman who had never travelled alone to work at the wholesale market since she started vending 25 years ago in 1994, just like Lakshmibai, who was much younger and a vendor only since 2015. Explaining the reason for not commuting alone, Pracheen stated, *'in my community, the women of the house are not allowed to go out of the house alone…my in-laws never allowed me to go out of the house alone…so it became a habit to always go to my workplace along with my husband or my son…they have always accompanied me to the Sadar wholesale market to buy merchandise for the past 25 years'.*

Second, the vendors' tight time budgets discouraged them from travelling by public transport, which took more time than the auto-rickshaws to reach the destination. Prema, a 60-year-old vendor, chose auto-rickshaws over public transport as her preferred travel option, saving her time. She explained her commuting pattern as follows: *'I live in Madanpur Khadar and commute by auto to my workplace, the Sarojini Nagar commercial market…both the locations are 15 kilometres apart... we, the female vendors, go in groups of three…this keeps us safe and saves our money as we spend ₹50 per day in travelling by auto on a shared basis…although buses are available and they are cheaper too, it takes more than an hour to travel by bus and only half an hour to travel by auto'.*

All the Gujarati women sitting in the Kamala Nagar commercial market found it much safer and more economical to travel in groups from home to the workplace. One such vendor was Rakhi, who explained, *'My fellow vendors and I stay in Paschim Puri. We always travel in groups of three and commute by auto. This way, we share the travel fare, which is ₹40 per head (approximately £0.40), and it is much safer to travel in groups in Delhi, especially at night'.*

The situation was completely different in the case of the unmarried, divorced, widowed and abandoned vendors. For these individuals, commuting by public transport (especially Delhi Metro) was the preferred option because they considered public transport to be safer (in terms of personal safety) and more affordable than auto-rickshaws and did not have to negotiate the same patriarchal restrictions imposed on them by their family members and were, therefore, able to travel by public transport. Thus, public transportation was considered accessible, affordable and acceptable by the unmarried, divorced, widowed and abandoned vendors.

Another barrier to accessing public transport was a lack of willingness by the bus conductors to allow the vendors to board the bus with their heavy merchandise, especially

while commuting back from the wholesale market to their home or marketplace. This created challenges for the vendors to travel by bus. Kauveri Devi, a middle-aged widow, working in the Kidwai Nagar Market, explained her commuting patterns *'I go to the Okhla Mandi to buy the vegetables daily. The market is approximately seven kilometres away from my home...I go by bus to Okhla...while coming back, I take an auto, which costs around ₹50 (approximately £0.50)...there is a huge stock of vegetables while returning and the bus drivers do not allow me to board the bus with that stock'.* However, the vendors who could not afford to commute by auto had to engage in daily arguments with the bus conductors and beg them to board the bus. The bus conductors did not allow the vendors to board the bus with their merchandise or charged the vendors extra for their inventory. Koori, a middle-aged widow, working in various weekly markets in Delhi, stated that commuting from her home to her workplace was the biggest challenge in her work which she had to face daily. She explained, *'I sit in various weekly markets, so I need to bring my merchandise to my workplace daily from my home...I commute by bus, but it is very tough...I have to beg the bus conductors every day to <u>allow</u> me to board the bus...of the ten buses that pass by, one bus conductor may allow me to board the bus along with my material...I cannot come by auto; they charge around ₹40 (approximately £0.40), which I cannot afford to pay'.* Thus, travelling by bus was still an option for the licensed stationary vendors in the regular and the ladies' market, who could leave their merchandise in the warehouse or at their workplace overnight due to a permanent vending spot in the market. It was, however, the biggest challenge for the vendors working in the weekly markets and all the mobile and stationary non-licensed vendors. They had to travel with their merchandise to and from their workplace every day as they had no permanent vending spot in the market where they could store their material overnight.

6.2.3.2 <u>Merchandise</u>

Access to merchandise sold by the vendors in the market varied according to the merchandise type, the vendors' age and marital status. While most interviewees bought merchandise from the wholesale markets, a few vendors also bought merchandise from retail shops. All kinds of merchandise, except Gujarati jewellery and apparel purchased directly from the wholesale dealers in Gujarat, were bought from various wholesale markets in Delhi by the interviewees. The most prominent barrier to accessing the merchandise from the wholesale markets was that the married women's husbands did not allow to go to these markets alone as these markets were 'unsafe places'. The overcrowding of men in these wholesale markets and the fear of the husbands of the molestation of their wives led them to wield their patriarchal power to control their mobility. For example, Ashu, a woman who had been a street vendor for the past ten years, had never gone to the wholesale market to buy the merchandise (cosmetics) she sold in the Madangir market. Explaining the rationale for not visiting the wholesale market alone, Ashu explained, '*I buy the cosmetics from the Sadar wholesale market, which is a very crowded place, and my husband considers it unsafe for me to go to this market alone…the market also has the reputation of being a place famous for rampant molestation of females'.*

The husbands of the vendors selling ladies' products such as cosmetics could not go alone to shop for these products at the wholesale markets. In such cases, the women accompanied their husbands to the wholesale market. It was mainly the husbands or sons who went alone to buy the household articles or fresh fruits and vegetables from the wholesale markets to be sold by their wives in the regular markets. The fruit and vegetable vendors contracted with the light commercial vehicle (colloquially known as *tempo*) drivers who delivered their stock from wholesale to the regular market. The husbands of these fruit and vegetable vendors had the responsibility to go to the wholesale market to select their

merchandise which the tempo drivers later delivered. Explaining this arrangement of merchandise delivery to her workplace, Mansi Rani, a married fruit vendor, stated, *'My husband goes to buy the fruits from the Azadpur Mandi…he doesn't allow me to go to Azadpur as it is an over-crowded and unsafe market…my husband just needs to choose the stock of fruits, place an order and make the payment…fruits are directly delivered to our stall in the afternoon by a tempo driver'.*

Widows faced multiple barriers to accessing the wholesale markets to purchase their merchandise. Although they were neither reluctant nor restricted to travel alone to these markets, they did face obstacles of accessibility (physical distance) to the wholesale markets and accommodation (hours of operation) of the wholesale markets selling the merchandise. Most widows sold perishable products (fruits, vegetables and flowers), and they had to leave early in the morning (between 4 am to 5 am) to travel to the wholesale markets far from their homes. Rameshwari, a widow who had been vending since 1989, explained her difficulties in accessing the wholesale markets of Ghazipur and Fatehpuri:

'I sell flowers in the Khan market. Earlier I used to go by myself to buy the flowers from the wholesale flower markets of Ghazipur or Fatehpuri (both approximately fifteen kilometres away from my home). I used to get up at 4 am and leave by 5 am to go to the wholesale market. It used to take me at least an hour to commute to these markets by bus. Unfortunately, ten years ago, my leg broke in an accident, and thus my mobility was severely restricted, and I stopped going to the wholesale markets to buy flowers. Now my younger son gets the stock of flowers on his motorcycle'.
(Rameshwari, 70-year-old, flower vendor).

Talking about the problem of accommodation in the wholesale markets, Shakti, a

widow, explained the rationale behind her early departure to the wholesale markets to purchase the merchandise, which she further sold as a street vendor at Connaught Place. She explained, *'I buy the stock of fruits from the Azadpur wholesale market every day…I leave for the market at 6 am. I come back by 8 am to my home…the stock of vegetables starts exhausting by 8 am in the Azadpur market, so I must reach the market early in the morning…that way I can get ample and fresh stock of fruits to sell at my workplace…the stock of vegetables in the market get exhausted if I am late even by half an hour'*. The narrow time frame of the availability of perishable merchandise in the wholesale markets compelled the vendors to leave their homes early in the morning, even in winter, hampered their access to these markets. Thus, the accommodation of the wholesale markets in terms of the availability of products within a short time frame (from 6 am to 10 am) was a significant obstacle for the women, primarily widowed vendors, who had to travel alone to the wholesale market.

6.2.3.3 <u>Water</u>

Availability of drinking water at the workplace was a significant concern for almost all the interviewees. Except for one market (Kalibari market), none of the regular markets had any provision by the government for drinking water. Although a public tap was installed in the Kalibari regular market, the water quality was so poor that more than half of the interviewed vendors in this market preferred to take their water bottles to the workplace. Shruti Kumari, a stationary vendor working in the Kalibari market, explained her experience of drinking from the water faucet installed in the market by the government: *'I sit from 4 pm to 10:30 pm in the Kalibari market every day…earlier there was not even a single tap in the market. It was installed only six months ago. However, the water quality is so poor that I got*

diarrhoea after drinking this water once. After that incident, I started getting my water bottle from home'.

The vendors had to make private arrangements for drinking water in all the other markets. These vendors can be divided into three categories based on their contract for drinking water at the workplace; first, the ones who could afford to buy water from the private water sellers in the market; second, the vendors who brought water bottles from their home to the workplace and third, the ones who begged or borrowed water from fellow vendors at their workplace. The affordable drinking water at the workplace was directly related to the vendors' earnings. For example, Ashi Garg, a stationary vendor working in the Sarojini Nagar Market, could afford to buy water from private sellers in her workplace as she earned more than ₹1,000 (approximately £10) daily. When asked about water provision at her workplace, she explained, *'I sit in the Sarojini Nagar market from 11 am to 10 pm…there is no provision by the government for drinking water in the market. Thus, all the vendors in the market (who can afford to pay) have to order water from a private water company…I order a five litres water bottle daily from this company and pay ₹200* (approximately £2) *per week to the delivery person'.*

The bottled water or water can sellers were more accessible for the stationary vendors, who had a designated place to vend and longer hours spent (between 12-16 hours) in the market. The stationary vendors were better positioned to negotiate a weekly deal for water delivery from the private water companies. The mobile vendors spent less time in the market (between 5-8 hours) and thus found it expensive to buy water cans in the market due to their low earnings relative to the stationary vendors. Therefore, even though the mobile vendors had access to private water suppliers, they could not afford to pay for big water cans. For example, Jyoti Devi, who had been vending for 40 years without any provision of water by the government at her workplace, stated: *'I do not earn much…I can buy only one water*

bottle for ₹20 (approximately £0.20) *every day, no matter how hot the weather is…there are days when I am thirsty, but I cannot afford to buy more than one water bottle; thus, I wait to drink water till I get back home at night'.*

Mobile vendors, like Jyoti Devi, who spent more than five hours at the workplace, preferred to take a one-litre water bottle with them from their homes to reduce their expenditure. Nalini, a mobile vendor who sold vegetables on a cart in the Madangir market, stayed in a *jhuggi jhonpri* colony (an unauthorised slum) towards the rear end of the market. When asked about the water provision at her market, she revealed, *'I come at 4 pm to the market and return home by 11 pm…there is no provision by the government for drinking water in the market, so I get a one-litre water bottle from my home…since I work in the market for only five hours, I do not feel the need to get more water'.*

There was another category of vendors who could neither afford to buy water from the private water sellers nor bring a water bottle from their homes. These vendors did not have a house and slept on the road. One such vendor was Mishti, a young married woman whose entire family resided on the street in Karol Bagh, where she sold mobile covers. When asked about the water facility at her workplace, she explained, '*Since I do not have a house to stay in and there is no public drinking water faucet in the market, I have to beg for water, either from the temple located in the market or from the nearby residential area'.* Basant, another vendor, had a similar story to share. She had been vending in the Karol Bagh market for 30-35 years. She became emotional when asked about the water provision at her workplace. She explained, *'There is not even a single tap in the market…I roam around and beg for water from my fellow vendors or even the customers sometimes…this market has been in operation for so many years, but the government never installed a water tap in the market'.*

Not only was water availability at the workplace concern for the street vendors in all the markets except the Kalibari market, but water affordability was also a significant concern

for vendors who earned less than ₹500 (approximately £5) per day. Even though private water bottle suppliers were available in the regular markets, mobile vendors could not afford to buy water from these sellers. While a few stationary vendors could afford to buy large water cans (around 2-5 litres) each day, none of the mobile vendors could afford to buy a water bottle at their workplace. Thus a majority of the stationary vendors and all of the mobile vendors preferred to get their water bottles from their workplace. Only a few stationary vendors had a weekly contract for the supply of water cans from the private water sellers to their vending spot in the market. Summing up the vendors' concerns regarding the provision of drinking water in the market, Seemanti stated, '*I sit in the Madangir market from 3 pm to 9 pm daily...I get a water bottle from my house as there is no provision of water in the market...there should be a provision for drinking water in the market...in the scorching sun, if they get someplace to drink water from, then the customers would like to revisit the market in the future....this will improve our business also*'.

6.2.3.4 <u>Toilets</u>

The interviews with the vendors drawn from seventeen regular markets revealed that public toilets were available in only ten such markets. The provision of public restrooms in the markets was a political battle for the vendors. The politics behind the provision of public toilets in the market was revealed by Shruti Kumari, who had been vending in the Kalibari regular market since 1999. She stated,

> '*There is a toilet in the Kalibari market, which Mr Arvind Kejriwal, our Chief Minister, ordered the construction in 2016. Building a toilet was an election gimmick. When Mr Kejriwal visited my market in 2015, I told him that we need a ladies' toilet in this market. So he openly said that if we voted for him, he would build the toilet for us in this market. All the vendors in the market voted for him,*

and he won the election. Earlier, when there was no toilet in the market, I had to waste twenty minutes going to the toilet and another twenty minutes coming back because that toilet was far off from the market'.

(Shruti Kumari, Kalibari market).

The provision of a public toilet in the Kalibari market had made life easier for Mansi Rani, who had been vending in the market since 2008. She explained, '*I sell fruits in the Kalibari market from 3 pm to 12 am…recently a toilet was constructed by Mr Kejriwal as a trade-off for votes…earlier there was no toilet in the market, so I used to hold my urine till I reached home in the evening. Because I could not go to the toilet for 7-8 hours every day, this led to damage to my liver…my condition worsened to such an extent that I had to stop working…it is good that we have a ladies' public toilet now'.* As mentioned by Mansi Rani, the vendors working in markets that did not have a toilet mostly preferred to go to the toilet only after reaching their homes at night.

A small proportion of the interviewees mentioned that they had the option to go to public toilets in nearby residential areas or use the ones available at the metro stations. However, physical accessibility to these toilets was a significant concern for such vendors. For example, Fahema, a woman who had been vending in the Ghanta Ghar regular market for the past eleven years, described the problems associated with accessing toilets in the market. She stated, '*there is no ladies toilet in the Ghanta Ghar market…to access the ladies public toilet, all the women vendors have to go to the Roshanara road, which is one kilometre from our market…I waste at least half an hour in one visit to the toilet; thus I avoid going to the toilet during my work hours'.* Husna, a vendor for the past 22 years, summed up her experience of lack of ladies' toilets in various markets of Delhi as, '*I have been selling corn on the street for the past 22 years in various markets of Delhi…a ladies toilet is a major problem in all the markets of Delhi…either a ladies' toilet is not available in the market or so*

far off from the workplace that the women prefer not to go to the toilet at their workplace…all the markets have a gent's toilet, but there is no toilet for the ladies…why this discrimination?'.

The lack of ladies' toilets in the market pushed the vendors toward open defecation, which was uncomfortable and embarrassing for them and increased the risk of assault besides being a public health issue. Thus, most vendors in such markets avoided defecating during their working hours. For example, Kauveri Devi, a mobile vendor selling vegetables in the Kidwai Nagar market, described the unsafe sanitation conditions at her workplace: '*I work in the Kidwai Nagar market from 10 am to 10 pm daily….there is a ladies toilet, but it is a bit far off from the market…this toilet is the property of a private warehouse on the far end of the market, which is an unsafe area and it is risky to go there, especially after sunset. Many delivery men keep standing there, making it a scary place for the women to go to…thus, I avoid going to the toilet during my working hours'.*

Due to the lack of ladies' public toilets in the regular markets, vendors defecated in open secluded places or avoided defecating despite their long working hours. Another problem associated with access to toilets concerned their hours of operation. Sahila, a vendor in the Karol Bagh market, explained, '*I work in the Karol Bagh market from 8 am to 8 pm…there is a public toilet in the market…but it is open only until 5 pm. After 5 pm, I need to defecate in the open, behind some parked vehicles or in dark, dingy places, because I do not own a house'.*

The vendors expressed a willingness to pay to use a toilet facility if it was constructed within the market and had high hygiene standards. Seemanti, a stationary vendor working in the Madangir market from 3 pm to 9 pm every day, stated, *'there is only a gent's toilet in the Madangir market and no ladies toilet…my home is in the market, so I go to the toilet at my home throughout the day…I take a lot of women vendors to my home for the toilet…if the*

government can give paid toilet facility in our market, then we won't hesitate to pay for it, provided it is clean and hygienic'.

6.2.3.5 <u>Electricity connection</u>

The street vendors identified the provision of electricity at the workplace as essential because they usually stayed at their workplace till late at night. Thus, inadequate light at the workplace was a significant obstacle for them to earning well at their workplace. This was especially true for the stationary vendors who sat at a particular vending spot in the market. The mobile vendors, by contrast, could stand under the street light to sell their merchandise at night. For example, Lalita, a mobile vendor, explained why she did not need an electricity connection at her workplace: '*I roam all over the Kamala Nagar market and sell Gujarati artificial jewellery from 3 pm to 8 pm…buying an electric battery would be expensive for me…to save on my expenditure, I stand wherever there is a street light at night'.*

All mobile vendors found buying an electric battery at their workplace an additional financial burden. In markets with no provision for street lights, vendors like Shakti, a mobile vendor, had no option but to stand in the dark as they could not afford to buy or rent an electric lantern. Shakti had to be content with whatever meagre earnings she had after sunset. All of the vendors working at the Janpath ladies' market preferred to wrap up their work by 6 pm as there was no provision of a street light in the market. Jaya, a vendor who had been working at the Janpath market for the past twelve years, stated, '*Janpath market has no street lights because of which it becomes unsafe to even stand in the market after 5 pm in the winters…so we have to leave the market by 5 pm in winters and by 6 pm in summers…we require street-lights in our market even more than the other markets because in those markets females work with male vendors, but ours is a ladies exclusive market'.* Shakti further explained that the weekly and regular markets where male and female vendors work together

are safer. It is because, in those markets, women work with their spouses or another male family member, who protect them from sexual harassment by customers and other male members. On the contrary, since the male family members cannot sit alongside the females in the ladies' market, the women vendors are more prone to harassment by the customers and passers-by.

The stationary vendors had to make arrangements for electricity provision at their vending spot in the market. Some market associations provided charged electric emergency lanterns to the vendors daily, weekly or monthly. For example, Zulekha and Fahema, who worked in the Ghanta Ghar market from 8 am to 10 pm, rented emergency lanterns for ₹1000 (approximately £10) per month from their market association. Similarly, Pracheen Arora, a vendor who worked in the CD market from 3 pm to 9 pm, and Sunetra Garg, a vendor who worked in the same market from 12 pm to 10 pm, rented emergency lanterns for ₹400 (approximately £4) per month from the market association. There were markets, such as the SN market, where the electric lanterns were available on weekly rent to the vendors. For example, Ashi Garg and Hima Devi working in the Sarojini Nagar regular market rented electric lanterns for ₹150-₹200 (approximately £1.5-£2) per week from the market association.

The vendors were not compelled to rent lanterns from their market association. Instead, lanterns could also be rented daily from private sellers in the market. The average cost to rent a lantern was ₹20-₹30 (approximately £0.20-£0.30) per day in all the markets. The vendors with smaller stalls (4 x 4 ft.) required only one emergency lantern, while the vendors who had bigger stalls (6 X 6 ft.) required two lanterns. The stationary vendors who had been vending for the past fifteen years (since 2004) and more had permanently bought an emergency lantern and avoided the additional cost of renting a lantern at their workplace.

However, the proportion of such vendors was much smaller than that of vendors who rented electric lanterns.

A small proportion of the stationary vendors stated that they neither had an emergency lantern nor could afford to rent one. These vendors had to either shift to well-lit areas within the market after sunset or continue selling their merchandise in the dark. Mishti, working in the Karol Bagh market since 2007, elaborated on the problem of selling her merchandise after sunset and her strategy to overcome this problem: *'I work from 8 am to 11 pm in the Karol Bagh market…there is no provision of electricity in the market…there are just two street lights which are at either end of the market…I do not earn enough to rent or buy an electric battery, so I shift to the corner of the market at night so that I can sell mobile covers under the street light…It is inconvenient because I need to carry my table (to display the mobile covers) to another spot at night'.*

Kimakshi, on the other hand, was not allowed by the police officers to work in the Lajpat Nagar regular market, and she had to run away from her spot as soon as police personnel approached her. Thus, she could neither use a street light in her market nor rent an electric emergency light due to the constant risk that the police would evict her. However, she continued to sit in the dark to sell her merchandise. She explained, *'I sell ladies purses in the Lajpat Nagar market…there is no electricity provision at my workplace…because I have to run away as soon as the police arrive, I can't place a charged electric battery at my workplace because there are chances that the battery might be broken during such eviction drives by the police…I ask my customers to pick the jewellery of their choice and look at it near the shop where there is ample light. My customers understand my problem and buy the material from me in the dark, too, thanks to my loyal clientele'.*

Access to an electricity connection at the workplace was severely constrained by the lack of availability of street lights in all the markets. The street lights were only available in

eight of the seventeen regular markets and none of the weekly and ladies' markets where the vendors worked. The access to electricity connection was also constrained by the vendors' inability to afford to rent an electric emergency lantern at the workplace. All the vendors were aware of the sources of lanterns (private lantern suppliers and market associations). Still, none of the mobile and very few stationary vendors could afford to rent one.

6.2.3.6 <u>Shaded stall</u>

Every vendor regarded having a built-up structure like a shaded stall as a necessary resource at the workplace. Having a shaded stall was highly correlated with the license status of the vendors. Only those vendors who could submit proof that they had been vending between 1970 and 1982 were allotted a *covered tehbazari* (where vendors were allowed to set up covered vending kiosks) by the Thareja committee. Licensed vendors who had started vending after 1982 were instead allotted an *open-to-sky tehbazari* (Kishwar, 2006).

Even though the non-licensed stationary vendors had a squatting space in the market, a majority of them were not allowed by the municipal authorities to cover their stalls due to their *open-to-sky tehbazari* (license) status. The lack of a stall shade exposed these vendors to the harsh climatic conditions of the city but also impacted their business. Severe weather added to the woes of vendors by destroying their goods. The effects of extreme weather were most challenging for vendors undergoing life transitions, such as ageing vendors whose health had deteriorated after years of working in hazardous conditions. Despite old age and poor health conditions due to adverse weather conditions, these vendors continued to work for their survival. Atulya, a 75-year-old stationary vendor selling cigarettes and tobacco at the India Gate, explained: *'I put a plastic sheet and sit on it to protect myself from the hot pavement in summers and icy pavement in the winters. There is no provision for shade even. The winter and rainy season are particularly tough for me to work as I frequently get fever,*

cold and cough due to the harsh weather'.

Similarly, Chanda Devi, a licensed vendor selling vegetables in the Kalibari market for twenty years, sat in harsh climatic conditions without any protection from the weather. She put a plastic sheet on her stall during the rainy season to protect herself from the rain. However, she was exposed to the wintery nights of Delhi as the plastic sheets were practically useless in cold conditions. She only had the option of '*wearing layers of warm clothes'* to protect herself from the cold.

The vendors who made a temporary shade arrangement at their workplace faced additional harassment from the beat constables and the municipal inspectors. These vendors not only met the problem of a lack of availability of shaded stalls at their workplace, but they were not even allowed to set up temporary structures. The police and the municipal inspectors pulled down the plastic sheets the vendors put up to protect themselves from the harsh weather of the city. Describing the dual challenges presented by the extreme weather and the police, Hirani Devi, a non-licensed vendor, stated, '*I sell bangles in the Ghanta Ghar market from 9 am to 11 pm…my stall is open-to-sky, so I have put a plastic sheet on my stall to protect myself against the sun and the rain…when the committee comes, then, they remove the plastic cover I put over my stall'.*

The mobile vendors also had to work in harsh climates without protective gear. Gunmeet Kaur, a mobile vendor at the India Gate, stated, '*I sell water bottles at the India Gate from 11 am to 10 pm daily….I get wet during the rainy season and have to work in wet clothes the full day…I frequently get fever and headache in the winters as there is no protection from the cold…just wear layers of warm clothes to protect myself from the biting cold in December and January'.*

Thus, the mobile and the stationary vendors were legally prohibited from using covered stalls due to their non-licensed status. Moreover, they could not even use temporary shades

due to the restrictions imposed by municipal authorities to allow such arrangements. The mobile vendors were not allowed to put up plastic sheets and protect themselves from the harsh winters and rainy season due to harassment by the police and municipal authorities.

6.2.3.7 <u>Storage space at the workplace</u>

None of the mobile and a few stationary vendors had storage space available at their workplace, and those that did not were compelled to make arrangements to store their merchandise at the end of the day. Even though private warehouses were available near the markets, the vendors could not afford them and preferred to either transport their merchandise to their homes at the end of their working day or risk keeping it at the back of their stall. Fahema, a stationary vendor who had worked in the Ghanta Ghar since 2008, described the problem of storage in the following way: *'I sell bangles in the Ghanta Ghar market and have no storage space to keep my stock at my workplace...I pack up my merchandise and keep it at the back of my stall at night...there is no government 'godown' facility (warehouse), and the private godown owners charge ₹4,000-₹5,000 (approximately £40-£50) per month, which I cannot afford to pay. But my merchandise has been stolen many times in the past from my stall'.*

The vendors selling perishable goods such as vegetables had to face the dual risk of their stock being stolen and damaged by rodents in the market. For example, Sanjh, a vegetable vendor working in the Kidwai Nagar market, stated, *'I live in Dwarka, which is around twenty kilometres from my workplace, Kidwai Nagar market...I cannot carry my vegetables back home at night...so I keep the vegetables covered with a plastic sheet in the market at the backside of my stall...there are so many rats in the market that they eat my vegetable stock at night...I bear huge financial losses due to this'.*

The vendors, scared to keep their stock in the market, were compelled to carry it back

to their homes every day, which took a toll on their health. For example, Preeti, a stationary vendor, described the problem presented by the lack of storage space at her workplace as follows:

> *'I have been selling carpets and doormats in the Madangir market for 30 years. There is no storage space in the market, so I must carry my stock daily back home, which is tough. My house is within a twenty minutes walk distance from the market. My old age makes it difficult to carry a heavy load on my shoulders every day'.*
>
> (Preeti, 60-year-old, Madangir market).

Similarly, Kauveri Devi, a stationary vendor selling vegetables in the Kidwai Nagar market for 40 years, found it difficult to carry her merchandise back home. This was due to her old age and ailing health, despite residing only two kilometres from her workplace. She kept her stock of vegetables at the back of her stall, usually partly eaten by rats.

Thus, not only was the availability of storage space at the workplace a problem for the vendors, but the affordability of renting a space in the private warehouses was a critical barrier to accessing this physical resource at their workplace. Even though the vendors knew the location of the private warehouses, they could not afford to rent warehouse space. The Janpath ladies' market vendors stored their merchandise in a private warehouse, two kilometres from their workplace. They paid a monthly rent ranging from ₹500-₹1,500 (approximately £5-£15) to access this warehouse, depending on the merchandise quantity to be stored. However, the lengthy waiting time of the vendors for the delivery person to transport their merchandise from the warehouse to their workplace adversely impacted the vendors' business. For example, Phoolan Devi, a vendor at the Janpath Ladies market, explained,

'I store my stock of material in a private godown (warehouse) for ₹500 (approximately £5) per month. I must depend on the lorry driver to transport my material from the godown to my workplace at Janpath. He transports my stock at 1:30 pm, and I set up my stall by 2 pm. If I had storage space at my stall, I would not have to depend on the lorry driver to transport my stock. I would come early and start my work straightaway'.

(Phoolan Devi, 60 years old, Janpath market).

The vendors working in the ladies' market reported that the private warehouse was quite far off from their workplace. They, therefore, depended on delivery drivers to transport their merchandise from the warehouse to their vending spot. This negatively impacted the vendors' work schedule and their earnings.

6.2.3.8 <u>Child care facilities</u>

Moussié (2000) argues that women working in the informal economy have limited childcare options. Consequently, they lose income by either decreasing their hours of work or by shifting to more vulnerable and lower-paying forms of work such as street vending, which allow them flexible arrangements to work along with taking care of their children. Although Delhi has 10,000 *Anganwadi*[17] centres (Chettri, 2020), the lack of child-care facilities in their home or workplace was identified as the most prominent barrier by all vendors with school-age children.

When asked about the child-care facilities at her workplace, Husna, who started vending when she was 18 years old in 1995, elaborated on the problems she faced in her

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[17] *Anganwadis*, the government child-care centres, were started in 1975 by the Indian government under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) to provide holistic development of children (education and nutrition) under the age of six years (Timsit, 2019).

initial working years. She found it challenging to balance her work and caring responsibilities due to a lack of child-care facilities at her workplace. She stated, '*my kids were tiny when I started vending 24 years ago…it was difficult to sit with them in the market…I couldn't leave them at home as my parents-in-law reside in the village…there was no facility of crèche also…slowly I got accustomed to sitting in the market with my kids…when they started going to school, then I used to come back home to feed my kids in the afternoon and then again go back to my work…it was so difficult for me'*.

The situation was similar for married women who had no family support for childcare and the widowed, divorced or abandoned vendors who were disowned by their marital and natal homes. For example, Kesar, a young widow, was married at the age of fourteen and commenced vending soon after marriage due to the poor economic condition of her marital home. She did not stop working when she became pregnant, resulting in her son's death due to the lack of child-care facilities at her workplace. She explained, *'my son was just five-days-old when I started bringing him to the market with me…there was no one at home to take care of my son when I used to work…I used to breastfeed my son in the market only…my younger son died when he was one because I brought him to the market too. He couldn't bear the scorching sun at my workplace…we need a crèche facility or a feeding room where we can breastfeed our babies…an Anganwadi near our workplace will also be a great help from the government'*. The women whose children were of school-going age had to go home to feed them in-between their working hours, which reduced their earnings potential.

The widowed vendors who started working after their husband's death had to adjust their working hours to take care of their children because they were the sole earning members of their families. Sarita was married at the age of sixteen and became a widow at the age of 24. Since there were no other income earners in her family and she had to take care of her four children financially, she decided to begin working. Reflecting on the difficulties she had

faced during the initial years of her work life, Sarita said, '*my youngest son was only a few months old, and my daughter was only two when I started vending…I brought my two younger kids to the market…there was no one at home to look after them…when my two elder kids used to come back from their school, then I took all the kids to our home, fed them, locked my home and then again came back to my workplace…I returned home by 7 pm because I had to go back and take care of my kids…It's only for the past five years (since 2014) that I sit till 9 pm in the market as all my kids are grown-up*'.

Only a tiny proportion of married women with children had access to an *Anganwad*i near their homes. Those that did were able to work more efficiently. Kirani was able to use the facility of an *Anganwadi* as it was in her neighbourhood in the Paschim Vihar area of Delhi. She had an 8-month-old daughter she left in the *Anganwadi* at 10 am and picked up on her way home at 7 pm. She found '*the Anganwadi government facility to be quite beneficial for the working women*'. Private crèche facilities were quite expensive for the vendors; they relied on the Anganwadis or their immediate family members to care for their children. The General Secretary of the AIWHF (NHF) acknowledged the lack of availability of childcare facilities and vehemently expressed the need for the provision of such facilities in the workplace for women vendors. She stated, '*there should be the provision of childcare facilities at the workplace of vendors…these facilities are most important for the widowed, divorced or separated women who do not have any support from their family members to take care of their children as compared to the married women…there should be separate vending markets for female vendors where crèche and breastfeeding rooms should be built*'.

6.2.4 Human resources: skills and training

De Bruin and Dupuis (1999) argue that the ability of women street vendors to work in different economic locations is limited by information constraints related to their relative lack

of education and training. Sixty per cent of the interviewees in this research were illiterate and never had an opportunity to attend school because their parents could not pay their tuition fees or were overburdened with domestic responsibilities due to private patriarchy. A majority of the illiterate vendors, however, felt that their lack of literacy did not hinder their ability to conduct their business. For example, Gargi Devi, who had been vending in a regular residential market in Delhi since her marriage, explained, '*I am illiterate...I never went to school...but my illiteracy is not a barrier to my work. I can communicate with my customers and do all the monetary transactions without a problem. I learnt all this on the job...So I don't think going to school would have added anything to my skill-set to do this work*'.

Only a few vendors felt that on-the-job learning was insufficient to carry on their business activities. These vendors could acquire a few basic skills on-the-job, which, according to them, were not adequate to work independently. One such vendor was Jyoti Devi, an illiterate vendor who had been vending for 40 years. She struggled to acquire satisfactory numeracy and communication skills despite working for so long. She explained, '*I am illiterate due to which I do not know how to count beyond 100...my son helps me do the financial transactions at my workplace...also, I can speak only Bihari* (a language spoken in the state of Bihar), *and I find it difficult to converse in Hindi with my customers...my son helps me in my work by communicating with my customers in Hindi on my behalf*'.

The vendors who never received a formal education were more willing than the literate vendors to learn business skills on the job. The need for such on-the-job training was more acute for the widowed vendors, who had numeracy skills but no exposure to the marketing skills required for vending. These vendors had little work experience and were only exposed to the world of work after their husband's death. Hima Devi, who had been vending for only two months, described the problems she encountered due to her lack of marketing skills: '*I finished secondary school, but I have poor communication skills...I do not know how to*

communicate with the police and the NDMC, who harass me constantly…I also have poor marketing skills, so I cannot sell my merchandise…I have employed a 14-year-old boy who is far better at selling the merchandise than I am…I am educated but have no skills required for vending'.

The primary means of accessing such on-the-job training were the social network vendors built in the market, which included their family members (as in the case of Jyoti Devi) and the helpers at their stall (as in the case of Hima Devi) or their fellow vendors. Ashi Garg had to start undertaking paid work after her husband died in 2017. Even though she had completed her secondary education, Ashi struggled to begin work as a vendor. She realised that she did not have the excellent business and communication skills required to work as a vendor, even though she was educated enough to read, write and have basic numeracy skills.

The World Bank's (2008) report on skill development in India concluded that the central and state-level programmes were insufficient to fulfil the training needs of people employed in the informal sector. A significant proportion of this training occurs outside the formal training structures through polytechnic institutes, adult education schools and the National Open Schools. The findings of my research support the World Bank's results. The interviews with the literate and the illiterate vendors alike revealed that formal education was not required to enable them to conduct their business. What was needed was access to informal training, allowing them to develop the right skill-set to work as a vendor. Such informal training institutions for the vendors were available only through bonding social capital (helpers, fellow workers or family members) at their workplace. The vendors were aware of such social resources and were willing to acquire the skill-set required to work as a vendor on the job from their social network. The vendors with no experience of vending were socialized into the life of a street vendor through the help of an 'introducer', viz helpers, friends or family members, who helped the interviewees to learn the tricks of the trade

sustained through bonding capital.

6.2.5   Financial resources

Street vendors are a financially excluded section of society due to the lack of affordable access to formal financial services (Muduli and Ramana, 2018). Significant financial resources identified by the vendors for decent work conditions at their workplace were start-up capital and social security (pension and medical care). The barriers to accessing these resources are discussed in the following sections.

6.2.5.1 <u>Start-up capital</u>

The most common obstacle confronted by the street vendors is the capital required to set up their business (Steiler, 2018). The most common source of business capital for the married interviewees was loans taken from their close family members or relatives. The social network's mutual trust and easy accessibility were the most common reasons for turning to family members and relatives to access business capital. The vendors' descriptions of their business start-ups indicated that proximity, shared need, and everyday interactions allowed for close relationally governed exchange arrangements between street vendors and their family members or friends. These relational exchange arrangements, as opposed to formal contracts, are usually frequent exchanges embedded in social relationships and characterised by trust, solidarity and smooth information-sharing (Popp and Zenger, 2002). Research on the subsistence marketplace has emphasised the benefits of social capital for business start-ups in capital-scarce settings (Moser, 1998, Barrios and Blocker, 2015), which was evident in my research. For example, Ashu, a stationary vendor in the Madangir market, took over the jewellery stall from her sister after she died. When asked about the finances required for her business, Ashu explained, '*I depend only on my family members to borrow*

money for my business…when I need to buy bulk merchandise during festivals, then my parents lend me ₹10,000-₹20,000 (approximately £100-£200)…I repay the borrowed money later on from my earnings…there is no interest to be paid to my parents…also, no one outside my family gets to know that I have taken a loan…my husband and brother-in-law also lend me money to buy the merchandise for my business'.

Similarly, Pracheen Arora borrowed the start-up capital for her business from her family members: *'I started vending 25 years ago for which I borrowed ₹1,500 (approximately £15) from my sister-in-law and my sister, to set up my cosmetics stall…I never took a loan from a bank…I always borrow money from my sister and brother-in-law, who charge no interest from me…I slowly repay the loan in easy instalments through my monthly earnings'.*

Married vendors who could not borrow money from family members relied on private money lenders for loans. Although the private money lenders offered loans with fewer formalities, they pushed the vendors into a debt trap by charging exorbitant interest rates. One such vendor was Mamta Devi, a stationary vendor selling garments in the Lajpat Nagar market. Mamta Devi explained her source of business capital, *'I did not have the start-up capital to start my business…I took a loan of ₹10,000 (approximately £100) from a private money lender…he charged a high-interest rate of 12 per cent...I paid ₹200 (approximately £2) per day for two months to repay the loan…it was difficult to repay the loan at such a high-interest rate'.*

The abandoned, divorced and widowed vendors primarily relied on their savings for their business capital. For example, Atulya, a widow who started vending after her husband's death in 1995, explained, *'when I started this business, I did not have enough savings…I used to sell low-investment, non-processed food such as peanuts and corn…when my earnings increased, then I started selling expensive products such as cigarettes and tobacco…I bought*

merchandise from my savings and money borrowed from my friends'. This category of vendors who did not have enough savings approached private money lenders due to their flexible terms of repayment of the loan. For example, Fahema, a middle-aged widow, started vending after her husband died in 2009. She did not have adequate savings to start her business. Narrating her experience of gathering business capital, Fahema said, *'to set up my business of selling bangles, I needed an investment of ₹4,000-₹5,000 (approximately £40-£50), which I did not have...I borrowed money from a private money lender...known to my husband...if I had not known him, then I would not have the money to invest in my business...He charged a 10 per cent interest rate but was flexible in my re-payment loan plan'*.

Vendors had not sought loans from a government bank for several reasons. Most vendors had not applied for a government loan because of the strict terms and conditions. This was also confirmed by the Vice President of NHF (Delhi region), who stated, *'there are many government policies for giving loans to the vendors, but we do not apply for them due to the strict and complicated formalities of the banks'*. Also, many vendors did not possess documents to prove their identity, address or vending license. Ketaki, who had been vending for twelve years in the Kamala Nagar market, had not applied for a government loan because she did not have the required documents to apply for such a loan: *'I cannot apply for a government loan because I do not have my own house in Delhi and no permanent source of income...I do not even have a tehbazari (vending license), which is proof of my income source'*. Furthermore, while the non-licensed vendors considered a lack of a vending license to be an obstacle to applying for a government loan, the licensed vendors, on the other hand, reported a lack of collateral as a difficulty. Most licensed street vendors earned enough money to satisfy their daily needs but did not have a property that could be used as collateral against a loan.

The licensed and non-licensed vendors, who had shallow levels of income, were unwilling to apply for a loan as they were scared of the consequences should they be unable to pay their instalments. A few vendors who could not obtain loans from private money lenders or their family members and relatives relied on a parallel network of finance called the 'committee system'. The committee system involves a group from the same neighbourhood who come together to contribute a fixed sum to a fund. The contribution to the fund depends on the financial capability of each member. Every month the committee holds an auction among the members to grant the fund as a loan. In other committees, the loan is given as per the urgency of the needs of the committee members. The auction winner gets the chance to spend the fund according to her requirements and repay the principal amount in a fixed time frame on a specified date each month, as decided by the committee. However, the most significant risk to the committee system is that recipients of loans do not repay the principal. In such situations, the committee collapses, or the other committee members must shoulder the burden of refunding the money.

The perils of the committee system were experienced by Ratna, a woman working at the Janpath Ladies market. She applied to various government banks for a loan but was turned away due to a lack of residential and income proof. After failing to secure a loan from a government bank, Ratna sought the help of her friends, who introduced her to the committee system working in their neighbourhood. She explained that *'all the Gujarati women in my neighbourhood informally put in a committee every month. This committee money is used to give out to a member every month as per their need and urgency, and this loan keeps rotating among the members. But one of the members ran away with the committee money. Thus, even that hope is lost now'*. As explained by Ratna, the committee system as a parallel financing system was not popular amongst the vendors due to a lack of trust and credibility among the committee members.

6.2.5.2 <u>Social Security</u>

Another crucial financial resource identified by the vendors was social security, which generally included medical care, sickness, maternity benefits, disability benefits and old-age pensions. The Indian government's involvement in providing social security to street vendors is restricted to granting old-age pensions in India (Bhowmik, 2006). However, the widow pension scheme and medical care services were additional social security measures provided by the Delhi government to all the residents of Delhi, including the street vendors.

6.2.5.2.1 Pension

As a social security measure for vulnerable women, the Department of Women and Child Development, Delhi government introduced a 'Delhi Pension Scheme for Women in Distress' in 2007-2008 (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2020b). Under this scheme, ₹2500 (approximately £25) per month is given to disadvantaged women (widows, divorced, separated or abandoned women) in the age group of 18 years and older who are residents of Delhi consecutively for five years and whose annual household income does not exceed ₹1,00,000 (approximately £1000). Interviews with the vendors revealed that only the widows were accessing this scheme. The divorced, abandoned, and separated women were unaware of this scheme. When Tabassum, a woman abandoned by her husband, was asked whether she had tried to access the 'Delhi Pension Scheme to Women in Distress' scheme, she responded, *'I am not getting any pension from the government because neither am I a widow nor above 60 years of age…my husband left me just nine years after marriage…I don't even know whether my husband is alive or dead'.*

The lack of awareness of the scheme among the divorced, abandoned and separated women was due to the poor communication system of the Department of Women and Child Development, which did not advertise the scheme to the prospective beneficiaries. A majority

of the widows also could not access this scheme as they did not have the death certificate of their deceased husband to apply for the pension. For example, Harini explained: *'I am not getting the widow pension as I do not have my husband's death certificate. The last rites of my husband were performed in our village in Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and I was never issued his death certificate'*. Another vendor, Hima Devi, who became a widow in June 2019, was being harassed by corrupt policemen who were demanding bribes for dropping allegations against her in connection with her husband's suicide, for which she was being held responsible: *'I am not getting the widow pension because of corruption of the policemen…my husband committed suicide, and his death became a police case…police are deliberately not giving me his post-mortem report…they want me to give them ₹1,000 (approximately £10) as a bribe, which I do not have...unless I get the post-mortem report, I cannot apply for the death certificate of my husband, which is an essential document required to apply for the pension.'*

Another social security scheme offered by the Delhi government is the Old Age Pension, administered by the Department of Social Welfare since 2017. Residents of Delhi aged 60 years and over, with a five-year proof of residence in the city and having an annual household income less than ₹1,00,000 (approximately £1,000) are eligible to apply for this scheme (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2020b). Under this scheme, financial assistance of ₹2,000 (approximately £20) per month and ₹2,500 (about £25) per month is provided to senior citizens between 60-69 years and 70 years and above, respectively. Women aged 60 years and over who are vulnerable (widows, divorced, separated or abandoned women) are allowed to apply to either of the two schemes ('Delhi Pension Scheme to Women in Distress' or the 'old age pension scheme'). The old-age pension scheme is available in all the states of India, implying that an eligible beneficiary can avail themselves of the scheme in the city of her current residence or her native town. However, the interviews revealed a discrepancy in

the payment of financial assistance in different states of India. For example, Jyoti Devi, a 60-year-old woman, stated, *'I get an old-age pension in my bank account in my village in Bihar...the state government issues random pension amounts of ₹200-₹250 (approximately £2-£2.5) per month as per their wish...sometimes the pension is credited in two months and sometimes even in seven months...there is no strict rule or regulation regarding the pension amount and timely payment to the beneficiaries in Bihar...in Delhi, women pension is fixed at ₹2,000 (approximately £20) per month which is paid on time without fail'.*

Another woman, Sulekha Bai, a 65-year-old vendor, had experienced similar difficulties. She stated, *'Since I am from Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh, I am entitled to an old-age pension there and not in Delhi...My state government gives me only ₹300 (approximately £3) per month as a pension...I want my full pension of ₹2,000 (approximately £20) per month as the other elderly women are getting in Delhi'.* Thus, the mere availability of the old-age pension scheme did not ensure that the vendors had access to a full pension. The discrepancy in the scheme implementation within different states impeded the vendors' access to it.

6.2.5.2.2 Medical care facilities

Working on the street exposes vendors to harsh weather conditions and other dangers such as injury from the moving traffic or health problems due to air and noise pollution. Due to the lack of preventive measures to mitigate the risks of occupational hazards and the lack of subsidised or free medical facilities provided by the government, the vendors have to bear the high costs of accessing medical services. The Delhi government offers free medical care services for all the residents of Delhi, irrespective of their social or economic status. The residents of Delhi (with proof of continuous residence in Delhi for the past three years) are eligible to get free medical treatment in the 38 government-run hospitals in the city (Aam

Aadmi Party, 2017). Although the government claims to provide free medical tests at these hospitals, the interviews with the vendors revealed several issues in accessing these services.

All the interviewees were aware of the accessible medical facility provided by the government hospitals in the city. However, they did not find it acceptable to use these facilities for various reasons. The most common reasons cited for not visiting the government hospitals for treatment were the long waiting queues in these hospitals and the illusion of 'free' treatment. For example, Gunmeet Kaur, who had visited a government hospital in the past, expressed her dissatisfaction with the medical care provided: *'my son is mentally handicapped, and he is being treated in a government hospital…the condition of these government hospitals is pathetic…there are long queues and medicines are not free…we have to buy the medicines'*. Gunmeet Kaur could not afford to visit the private hospitals due to her meagre earning of ₹1,000-₹1,200 per day (approximately £10-£12) from selling water bottles at the India Gate. In contrast, Gunti preferred to go to a private hospital for an ailment because she earned ₹2,500-₹3,000 (approximately £25-£30) per day. She stated, '*when I fall ill, then I go to the private hospital…the treatment is free in government hospitals, but there are long queues, and I cannot waste time standing in those queues as my business suffers…in private hospitals, there is an instant appointment with the doctor and quick recovery from diseases due to better medicines'*.

One-third of the interviewees had problems accessing the government hospitals for free medical treatment because they lacked identity documents (Aadhar card and residency proof of Delhi), which pointed toward another dimension of access to medical care: accommodation. For example, Mishti, a Rajasthani woman (a migrant from the neighbouring state of Rajasthan) who was born in Delhi, was not allowed to access free medical treatment in the government hospitals of the city. When asked the reason for this, Mishti responded, '*whenever we go to a government hospital for free treatment, we are not attended to because*

the hospital officials say that we are not residents of Delhi…I was born in Delhi by a midwife at my house…my parents were illiterate and did not know they had to register my birth with the registrar's office…I am a resident of Delhi, but I do not have the proof for it'.

The interviewees were not aware of the other medical care schemes of the Delhi government, such as the Delhi Arogya Kosh (Delhi Health Pool), which provides financial assistance of ₹5,00,000 (approximately £5,000) to needy eligible patients for treatment of any illness in Government Hospitals) and Delhi Arogya Nidhi (Delhi Health Fund) which provides financial assistance of ₹1,50,000 (approximately £1,500) to the needy patients, having a National Food Security Card, for treatment of any illness in Government Hospitals) due to the poor outreach programmes of the Delhi government.

6.3 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the resources required by vendors to achieve decent work conditions in their present occupation and the barriers they face in accessing the identified resources. An important conclusion from the empirical findings is that access to the resources required for decent work conditions, as specified by the vendors, could not be entirely explained by the access framework proposed by Saurman (2016). An additional dimension of access, namely appropriateness, was identified by analysing the interviewees' responses, which was missing from Saurman's access framework. Appropriateness is an essential dimension of access identified by Levesque, Harris and Russell (2013), who defined appropriateness (within the domain of public health) as a proper match between the supply of a service and its demand by the users, the timeliness of the service and the adequate treatment and quality of the services provided. The vendors perceived the provision of resources to be appropriate according to their ability to use those resources. The availability, physical accessibility, affordability, accommodation and awareness of the identified resources were

insufficient to ensure that vendors could access them. An even more important dimension of access, namely appropriateness, must be incorporated into Saurman's access framework to make it holistic and all-inclusive. Access to resources is shaped by the gendered social relations in which vendors are enmeshed.

The access to specific resources was decided by their availability at the workplace, which is a structural barrier according to the HCAB model developed by Carrillo *et al.* (2011). These resources were the essential utilities of water, electricity connection and toilets. Most interviewees reported either the absence of these utilities or inadequate availability at their workplace, which directly and indirectly impacted their health due to sitting in the scorching sun without drinking water or lack of toilets at the workplace. Besides the utilities, there was no provision of storage space, a physical resource, in most markets, which exposed the vendors to the risk of bearing additional costs due to damage to their merchandise by rodents or the weather. Similarly, the lack of childcare facilities such as Anganwadis impacted the vendors' earnings. The widowed, divorced and abandoned women with children did not have support from their families to assist them with childcare and thus had to sacrifice working time, and subsequently, earnings, to devote time to their children.

Public patriarchy, which uses space to disadvantage women, played a significant role in deciding the vendor's access to the marketplace. Only one-tenth of the interviewees had a dedicated vending spot in the market. Other vendors had to bribe officials or illegally occupy temporary vending places in the market. This left considerable scope for the patriarchal heads to decide on women's access to vending locations in the market. Presidents (Pradhans in colloquial terms) of the weekly markets, who were primarily males, discriminated against women in the allotment of space to vendors in the market. They either pushed the women vendors to the corners of the markets (which reduced the clientele of the women vendors) or allowed them to occupy the riskiest vending spots in the market, such as the central median

on the street (which exposed them to accidents by moving traffic on the road). Similarly, the gender inequalities in the design of the markets were a direct outcome of the patriarchal norms, which did not cater to the sanitation needs of the women. The lack of availability of ladies' toilets in most markets and the short hours of operation of the paid toilets in a few others (in contrast to the extended working hours of the vendors) took a toll on the health and safety of women. This compelled the women to either avoid going to the toilet during their work hours (leading to urinary tract infections) or defecate in the open, exposing them to the risk of physical assault.

Despite the availability of specific resources, such as public transport, women did not have access to these resources due to cognitive barriers (according to the HCAB model (Carrillo et al., 2011)) arising from private patriarchal norms. This was especially true for married women who were not allowed to travel by public transport or access the wholesale markets without the presence of their husbands or sons. This was even though public transport (primarily buses) was a much more affordable mode of transport than autos (used mainly for commuting). The underlying reason for the imposition of restrictions on the mode of transport by their husbands was the institutional failure of the city's law and order situation, which is inimical to women's safety and thus instilled fear in the minds of the in-laws. Therefore, married women could travel to their workplace and wholesale markets with their husband/ son or in groups while commuting to these places.

Vendors' lack of awareness of the existence of specific resources restricted their access to these resources. These included accessing civil society organisations (mainly NGOs) and various health and financial schemes offered by the state and the central governments. Such barriers can be termed informational barriers to access (Donabedian, 1972). The lack of awareness of vendors was due to the NGOs' poor communication and dissemination system. A repercussion of lacunas in information flow was that the vendors could not approach the

NGOs when they needed them the most (during eviction drives by the municipal authorities). It was not possible for the vendors to personally visit the offices of these organisations, which were often far off, for the grievances because that meant losing their total earnings for the day. The lack of other communication means deterred the vendors from accessing these organisations. Information barriers in accessing social security schemes meant that vendors were deprived of these schemes and had to bear extra expenses for the services offered for free by the government. For example, lack of awareness about the eligible beneficiaries for the pension scheme discouraged the divorced, abandoned and separated women from applying for it.

Affordability or financial barriers (Donabedian, 1972; Frenck, 1992; Carrillo *et al.*, 2011) impeded access to specific physical resources, such as the paid water and electricity connection services, which varied by the type of vendors (stationary vs mobile). The affordability of these resources varied between stationary and mobile vendors and the hours spent in the market. Only those stationary vendors who spent more than five hours in the market could afford to pay the rent of their vending spot, buy large cans of drinking water and rent the electric lanterns at their workplace. The mobile vendors and the vendors working for less than five hours in the market could not afford to pay for these services as they had to bear the extra cost of paying daily for a vending spot and lesser earnings.

Specific resources were not considered essential to perform well in street vending work by the interviewed women. For example, vendors stated that they gained better numeracy and business skills in their workplace through their social capital (which included bonding social capital such as helpers, fellow vendors or family members) rather than enrolling in a school or a training centre. However, access to social resources was highly dependent on the marital status of the vendors. For example, married women had support from family members who took care of their children while these women were at work or might offer financial

resources, such as start-up capital. On the other hand, widowed, divorced, abandoned, and separated women had to rely mainly on their helpers and their network at the workplace for financial, moral and emotional support. Also, they had to primarily rely on private money lenders to access start-up capital. These lenders charged the vendors very high-interest rates, but they were readily available to the vendors in times of financial need.

Widowed vendors were, however, able to gain better access to the police and the municipal authorities when compared to the married vendors. This was mainly due to the law enforcement officers' greater sympathy for the widowed vendors. Thus, even though the married women had a substantial amount of bonding social capital available to them to 'get by' in their work, they had less access than widows to bridging social capital. Most married women worked with their husbands, and their interactions at the workplace were closely monitored and controlled by their husbands. The 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973) for widows in the form of their co-workers and municipal authorities connected them across networks and enabled them to 'get ahead' in their work.

Finally, the non-licensed vendors unanimously stated that their access to a vending license could improve their access to other resources. These other resources can be institutional resources (such as support from police and municipal authorities), physical resources (such as shaded stalls, access to vending space in the market and storage space) and financial resources (eligibility to apply for loans and social security schemes). A deeper analysis of the licensing system in Delhi revealed the failure of the policy and institutional framework to provide a license to vendors who are less than two per cent of a city's population (Government of India, 2009a), as allowed by the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009. This is a significant finding, especially in the context of the new Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) rules (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2016) drafted by the Delhi Government. These rules will decide the allocation

criteria and revoke the Certificate of Vending (CoV), which may substantially increase or

decrease vendors' access to other resources required to achieve decent work conditions.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 have answered the four research questions for this thesis, which were: What barriers prevent women from accessing formal work? What are the motives for women to commence street vending? Which resources are relevant to attain decent work conditions for women vendors? What barriers prevent women from accessing resources for decent work? This chapter summarises and deliberates on the findings, answering the four research questions and making policy and practical recommendations for the Indian government, municipal authorities and vendors' organisations to ensure decent work conditions for women street entrepreneurs. This chapter explains the contributions of the research at a conceptual, theoretical, empirical and policy level. It concludes by discussing the limitations of the research and identifying directions for further research studies.

7.2 Research contributions

7.2.1 Theoretical and empirical contribution to the street entrepreneurship literature

This study's most important theoretical contribution is that the four dominant theories of street entrepreneurship (Modernisation, Structuralist, Neo-liberal and Post-Modernist) do not adequately explain the factors shaping women's participation in street vending. This research proposes that the NLMS approach, an amalgamation of feminist socio-economics (such as social reproduction theory) and institutional factors (such as family and societal norms and traditions), offers a better explanation for their motives than the four dominant theories of street entrepreneurship. Three distinct segments of women worked as street vendors, depending on their exposure to patriarchal and societal norms and traditions. The first segment represented women who started vending because of a lack of access to education and training opportunities. These women had to bear the burden of domestic

responsibilities since childhood, were introduced to street vending at a young age and had low self-confidence to apply for formal jobs. Their families were primarily responsible for pushing them into street vending. This group of women can be bifurcated into two sub-groups: older married women who were deprived of their right to education by their parents and were married off at an early age; younger women who were continuing their education while working as vendors along with their parents. Their parents conditioned the former group of women to continue their ancestral line of work without questioning their parents' decisions and submitting to the decisions taken on their behalf by their father before marriage and husbands after marriage. However, the latter group challenged the patriarchal norms at their home and entered a morphogenetic cycle where they were slowly transforming the patriarchal structures by getting access to education and deciding their mobility patterns, unlike their mothers. The women who carried forward their ancestral line of working as street vendors also included women of specific ethnic communities who were victims of intersectional discrimination. In addition to their gender, their membership in specific ethnic communities further constrained their opportunities to be included in the mainstream due to the stigmatisation attached to their community. These women were stuck in a morphostatic cycle where they found it difficult to exercise their personal, proxy or collective agency to challenge the patriarchal and societal norms and submitted to the patriarchal and cultural norms and stereotypes associated with their gender and community. The second segment was composed of women who commenced vending due to transition in their marital status. These women included married and divorced, abandoned and widowed women who had to take up flexible work such as street vending due to the expectations of society and their families to prioritise their reproductive responsibilities over paid work. These women were free from the marital contract, which essentially meant freedom from the patriarchal restrictions imposed by their affinal families on the choice of their occupation and mobility. However, the

transition in their marital status also put an extra burden on being the family's primary earners besides fulfilling their domestic responsibilities. The change in marital status was a turning point in these women's lives, who transformed from docile homemakers to confident income earners. However, their choice of occupation was still constrained by their dual responsibilities, and they were also stuck in a morphostatic cycle where the structures determined their choice of action. The third segment comprised women who were compelled to leave formal employment due to exposure to incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace or deteriorating health conditions. These women were victims of unequal power relations at their workplace, where their employers took advantage of their position and exploited them or discriminated against hiring them as they got older. These women primarily included married women, the secondary earners of their families. Their work was devalued in the house, and they were also subjected to exploitation and discrimination at their workplace. Thus, this segment comprised women who were victims of double disadvantage and their opportunities were shaped by gender discrimination and interaction of domestic and workplace power relations.

This research argues that the four dominant theories are, to some extent, 'blind' to gendered explanations for the varied motives of women to commence vending. I am proposing a gendered explanation for the diverse reasons women begin street vending. This gendered explanation fills the gap in the street entrepreneurship literature where none of those mentioned above (four) theories accounts for gendered experiences to explain the motives for street entrepreneurship. Modernisation theory views street entrepreneurship as a remnant of the pre-modern period. Indeed, a subset of the vendors interviewed for the study continued with their inherited work, passed on to them by their parents. These vendors belonged to specific nomadic (Gadia Lohars) or business (Gujarati) communities and commenced vending very young. Their parents inspired them to carry forward their ancestral

work in traditional crafts of making iron tools and selling hand-woven apparel. The women who took up street vending as a family tradition started their business at a younger age. Succession training for the continuation of family business generally started at a young age because it was easy for their parents to inspire and mould their mindset to acquire the family craft during their formative years. This allowed these young girls to develop their skills in their traditional occupations. Thus, this group of vendors were structurally conditioned by their parents to continue their ancestral work of vending specific products (such as Gadia Lohars selling iron wares). Their parents did not send them to school, leaving them no choice but to work in the informal economy. Nevertheless, counter to what Modernisation theory suggests, they were neither parasitic nor surviving on the fringes of modern society (Bromley, 2007). Instead, these vendors had their niche in the market and client base (primarily foreigners who bought hand-woven apparels from the Gujarati street vendors at Janpath). They were unlikely to be absorbed by the modern formal sector, as proposed by the Modernisation theory.

The motives for street entrepreneurship of a majority of the vendors can be better explained by Structuralist theory, which recognises street entrepreneurship as a survival strategy adopted as a last option due to a lack of other means of livelihood. However, these 'survivalist' vendors did not commence vending only due to a lack of other livelihood options. Instead, patriarchal norms and fear of losing their licensed vending stalls pushed them into street vending. In my research, however, I found that patriarchy worked in combination with Capitalism to shape the lives of women street vendors. For example, married women were forced by their husbands to supplement the family income by working outside the home but were not allowed by their in-laws and husbands to work in the formal or informal sector, where they had to work under the supervision of male members. This pushed these women to work independently or in association with their husbands at their vending

sites. Similarly, the economic vacuum created by the death of a husband or illness of a family member having a licensed stall in the market propelled the widows and married women with children to commence vending due to the fear of losing their vending space in the market. A critical realist explanation of this group's choice of street vending in their 'actual' and 'empirical' domain was found in the 'real' domain of working of these women. The 'real' domain of these women's working lives revealed the robust operating mechanism of economic pressure to take over the business established by their family members, which created a barrier for them to access formal jobs. These findings re-iterated that the patriarchal influences interacted with the economic necessity to shape these women's trajectories.

Similar patriarchal norms applied to another set of vendors who emphasised the benefits of flexibility street vending afforded, as Post-modern theory would suggest. The literate married women engaged in formal jobs before their marriage. However, they were 'forced' to choose more flexible informal employment such as street vending due to the expectations of their in-laws to prioritise their reproductive work over productive work. Despite shouldering the double shift of home and work, their husbands did not value their labour, which was evident in the power dynamics at home, where men made all the decisions on behalf of the women in the house. Thus, even though married women seemed to be 'choosing' vending over other occupations due to the flexibility it offers, contrary to the arguments of Post-modernist theory, it was not a 'free choice but a 'forced choice'. This was due to the gender disparities in the division of household labour which reflected a more profound gender power imbalance.

Another set of vendors emphasised that street vending was a rational economic choice made by them, as neoliberal theory would suggest. They viewed street selling as the best option for making money because it was more remunerative than alternative livelihoods, was easy to establish and required low investment. These vendors were previously employed in

various jobs in the formal and informal sectors. They later shifted to vending because of the lesser investment needed to set up the business and the higher remuneration offered than any other job. Although these vendors seemed to exercise their agency in their choice of work, the underlying reason for this desire to look for higher-paying work such as vending was also an economic necessity. They had no financial support (due to the termination of their marital contract) and needed to sustain their families. Thus, these vendors' actions did not 'fit' with the neoliberal account of motivation to work in the informal economy since the women were pushed into vending by economic necessity (Structuralist school) rather than having a particular desire to be entrepreneurs.

However, there were a set of vendors who did not fit into any of the street entrepreneurship theories. These included the women previously employed in the construction sector as casual labourers. They were forced to leave their jobs due to frequent incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace or due to their ailing health. The patriarchs at the workplace instilled fear in these women, often exposing them to sexual harassment. Moreover, the employers considered these women a burden if employed beyond forty. This was because the physical strength of the working mothers had reduced due to frequent pregnancies, and they found it challenging to do strenuous labour such as climbing the scaffolding with bricks on their heads or working as stone-breakers. Moreover, these women had to undergo the emotional strain of staying away from their newborn babies for extended hours. The employers considered it profitable to stop hiring these women beyond forty. Thus, the power difference between the employers and employees and between men and women (i.e. patriarchy) were the two most dominant generative mechanisms that deterred these women from applying for such formal or informal jobs.

Another significant theoretical contribution of this research is that it proposes that women have multiple and fluid motives for commencing vending, which in many cases

change over time. The diversity and fluidity of the reasons for the commencement of vending reflected the transition in roles and statuses of women across their life course. This understanding of women's actions as dynamic and related to other changes in their lives and social relationships contrasts strongly with the four dominant theories of street entrepreneurship, which view women's motives to commence vending as compartmentalised and exclusive of each other. Widowed, divorced and abandoned women generally chose to be vendors because of the flexibility of work vending offered. Another motivation for these women to commence vending was to earn an income as soon as possible rather than wait for a formal job. The change in their marital status meant they were no longer supported financially by their spouse or his family. Similarly, married women who worked in formal employment before becoming mothers were compelled by their in-laws to look for flexible, informal work and prioritise reproductive work over productive work after having children. Thus, the women's motives to commence vending varied according to their exposure to the various structures they were exposed to over their life course.

7.2.2 Theoretical and empirical contribution to the literature on women's access to jobs in the formal sector

A significant contribution of this study is that it has presented a critical review of the structure-agency debate concerning women's access to jobs in the formal sector. The structural constraints arising from the patriarchal norms and personal characteristics of the women, such as ethnicity, lead to further labour market segmentation within street vending in the Indian context. This research identified two distinct segments within street vending. One segment represented women who, despite being educated, were not allowed to enter formal jobs due to patriarchal norms. These were primarily married women whose transition in marital status required their adaptation to the new family set-up and associated norms and

traditions. The other segment represented women who never got access to education due to patriarchal norms and their ethnicity. This was a much larger segment, including women of different marital statuses and educational backgrounds. However, within this segment, the most disadvantaged were the women belonging to specific ethnic communities, such as the Gadia Lohars, who were doubly disadvantaged. These women deserve more attention from the policymakers and civil society organisations to collectively challenge the patriarchal norms and stigmatisation attached to their ethnicity.

The inter-related structures such as patriarchy, marriage, religion, ethnicity etc., predated the existence of agents (women vendors in this study); however, the agents recreated, reproduced or transformed these structures according to transitions in their age, education and marital status. Middle-aged and older women who never got a chance to go to school due to patriarchal norms were conditioned to believe that they could not seek education or learn new skills later on in life which deterred them from breaking the cycle of being stuck in the informal economy. Yet, young women below the age of twenty were continuing their education, despite the restrictions imposed on them by their families. Through their bitter experiences, they had learned to engage in a patriarchal bargain with their parents to allow them to attend school in return for contributing economically to the family. Young literate women could counter the restrictions imposed on them by their parents and in-laws through individualised active resistance strategies such as arguing, raising objections or negotiating to oppose such restrictions. The interaction of these women with their parents transformed the patriarchal structures through a morphogenetic cycle (Archer, 1995) by adopting dynamic mechanisms of communication and negotiation to allow them to attend school or college in exchange for contributing to their family's income by working as a vendor alongside their parents. These women were hopeful of being employed in the formal sector. This group of women were gradually transforming the patriarchal structures. The

critical realist philosophy helped me delve more deeply into the 'empirical' domain of working for these women. Their 'empirical domain' depicted them as stuck in the street vending. However, a deeper interrogation through a critical realist lens revealed that the 'real' domain of working lives of these young women was witnessing a gradual shift in their mindset to seek jobs in formal jobs in the future. This shift in perspective was made possible through their access to formal education, which was denied to their mothers or grandmothers. This finding contradicts the existing literature (Kabeer, 2000a; Lindahl *et al.*, 2011), which argues that human capital benefits such as investments in a daughter's education or deficits such as lack of mother's education are transferred from one generation to another. These young women themselves adopted the pragmatic approach of reconciling their right to education with the need for their economic contribution to the family through engaging in part-time street vending. The young women used their personal agency and the proxy agency of their mothers to convince their fathers to allow them to continue their education. This essentially meant that these women could choose their occupations upon completion of their education and make informed decisions about other aspects of life, such as choosing their life partner. These choices had been systematically denied to their mothers.

Barriers to formal jobs also differed according to the women's marital status. There is extensive literature on the impact of reproductive labour and care work on the choice of workplace and employment of married women (Johanson and Adams, 2004; Floro and Meurs, 2009; Lund, 2009). However, in this research, the widows, divorced and abandoned women had to bear the increased burden of balancing their paid and unpaid work due to a lack of family support. Although these women were free from the marital contract and subsequently private patriarchal norms and, thus, seemed to be free to choose their preferred paid work outside the home, these women were more constrained in their choice of work as they were not only single parents but also sole income-earning members of their family. Due

to their economic responsibilities as income-earning family members, in addition to their role in caring for their children, these women chose more remunerative, flexible, informal work compared to employment in the formal sector, which would probably have required them to have worked to strict time schedules for relatively lower wages.

Married women faced substantial barriers to exercising agency within the workplace due to patriarchal norms of their husbands and in-laws, such as only being allowed to work with their spouses to maintain the image of the 'honour of the house'. Women feared that fighting these cultural norms at an individual level within the family would lead to domestic violence, separation, and even divorce. It is important to note that these women were exposed to patriarchal structures at their workplace and within their households. The interaction between the oppressive structures at the workplace and home compelled these women to work with their husbands or sons in the workplace. This supports Folbre's (1994) argument that the work opportunities for women workers are shaped by the interaction of domestic and workplace power relations. These findings point to the need for a more effective collective organisation of women to address these challenges. However, due to a lack of women-only unions and inefficient outreach programmes of the NGOs, these vendors did not have an effective platform to organise themselves and take collective action.

7.2.3 *Conceptual and empirical contribution to the access to resources literature*

This research contributes significantly to the existing literature on access to resources. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the current literature on access to resources affecting decent work conditions focuses on barriers to accessing four resources, namely, financial resources (Moloi, 2014; Brauneis and Patt, 2015; Zikhali, 2017; Mago, 2018), human resources (Narayan, 2011; Moloi, 2014; Luphahla, 2015), social resources (Narayan, 2011; Moloi, 2014; Mago, 2018) and political resources (Iyenda, 2005; Moloi, 2014; Luphahla, 2015;

Mago, 2018). This study conceptually contributes to the existing literature on access to resources by proposing a comprehensive framework that borrows from the 'access' framework developed in the health care field by Saurman (2016). The access framework used in my research comprises six dimensions of access, namely, availability (type and capacity of resource), accessibility (spatial position of the resource), acceptability (in terms of religion, age, ethnicity etc.), affordability (ability to buy the resource) and accommodation (characteristics of a resource such as its operating hours and communication systems) and awareness (information among the users regarding the presence of a resource). The findings confirm that the gender disparities in the division of household labour and interaction of domestic and workplace power relations influenced women's access to various resources.

This study identified eight barriers hindering vendors' access to the resources required to achieve decent work conditions: structural, spatial, financial, temporal, institutional, social, informational, and organisational. HCAB model developed by Carrillo *et al.* (2011) terms barriers arising from the availability of free resources as 'structural barriers'. The structural barriers encountered by the vendors included a lack of access to public utilities such as water faucets, electricity and toilets and other physical resources such as shaded vending places in the market, storage space to keep merchandise and childcare facilities. In the absence of government provision of essential services such as water, electricity, storage space and childcare facilities, the vendors either had to buy these services from private sellers or carry on working without this essential infrastructure. While the stationary and licensed vendors could afford to buy services such as water and electric batteries, the mobile and non-licensed vendors could not. Consequently, the vendors had to bear the indirect cost of the non-availability of these services in terms of their health (mental and physical) or direct economic loss (by reducing their work hours or having less merchandise to sell due to theft or wastage). They were of little use to the vendors in a few markets where physical resources such as

public toilets and wholesale markets were available. This was because of spatial (located far off the vendors' workplace) and temporal barriers (such as public toilets only being open from 9 am to 5 pm and perishable products in wholesale markets only being available from 6 am to 9 am).

Spatial barriers (location of these resources) and structural and institutional barriers (practices and institutions that perpetuate inequality) constrained access to specific resources. The nature of these barriers varied according to women's marital statuses and age, reflecting variations in the underlying power mechanisms that sustained inequalities. For example, unmarried and married vendors considered themselves to be more vulnerable and subsequently easy targets for harassment by the police and the municipal authorities. The police and municipal inspectors were seen as persecutors rather than protectors by these vendors because these institutions instantiated power. This power, when exercised through eviction drives and massive extortions, was the cause of oppression and subjugation of vendors. The sympathetic attitude of these institutions toward elderly widows perpetuated inequality because the eviction drives of police or inspection rounds by municipal authorities often overlooked these women. Although bridging social capital, in terms of civil society organisations and vendors' unions, did exist, the physical accessibility constrained vendors' access to these resources to the offices of these organisations. These offices were usually located far from the homes and workplaces of the vendors. The tight time budget of the vendors discouraged them from overcoming this spatial barrier. The dominance of men in the organisational structure of the vendors' unions de-motivated the women from participating in these unions. These women had past experiences when their concerns were not well-represented in such male-dominated unions. In some cases, women found it difficult to speak openly about their concerns, especially where the male members of the unions were the cause of the problem. The causal mechanism of patriarchy had a spiralling effect on women's

access to vendors' unions and their access to transport systems. The families of married women imposed restrictions on their travel options. They made them depend on the male members of the house (father-in-law, brother-in-law, husband or son) for commuting to their workplaces and wholesale markets for buying merchandise. The interaction between the married women (agents) and the patriarchs of the house reproduced a morphostatic system (Archer, 1995), where these women reproduced the structural constraints extended from their social conditioning (to be submissive to patriarchs) pre-marriage.

Information barriers were another set of barriers encountered by vendors to access civil society organisations and various government schemes available to them. Although Delhi has several NGOs fighting for the rights of street vendors, such as the National Hawker Federation (NHF), the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) etc., the physical outreach and public awareness campaigns of these NGOs are pretty weak. Similarly, the interviewees reported that they were not aware of the medical care schemes provided by the Delhi government, such as the Delhi Arogya Nidhi (Delhi Health Fund). The failure of the government to launch programmes to raise awareness of the licensing scheme, medical care schemes or pension schemes of the state and the central government was a significant information barrier for the vendors to access these resources.

An important dimension of access missing from the access framework proposed by Saurman (2016) is the appropriateness of a resource. This appropriateness refers to the usability of a resource by the women. A resource can be made usable by addressing the generative mechanisms of patriarchy, the government institutions' discriminatory policies and structures, and intersectional discrimination, an outcome of the socio-cultural norms deeply entrenched in Indian society. Thus this research proposes modifications to the access framework proposed by Saurman (2016) based on the empirical findings. The modified access framework is depicted in table 3.

Table 3: Modified 'Access' framework based on the empirical findings of this research

Dimension of Access	Barrier(s) to Access	Resource
Availability* (type and volume of resource)	Structural barrier	**Physical resources** Water, electricity, storage space, childcare facilities and toilets
Affordability* (ability to pay for the resource)	Financial barrier	**Physical resources** Water, electricity, storage space, child care facilities and toilets, Intermediate Public Transport (autos)
Physical accessibility* (location of the resource)	Temporal and spatial barriers	**Physical resource** Toilets Merchandise
		Social resources Civil society organisations and vendors' unions
Awareness** (knowledge among the users about the existence of a resource)	Information barrier	**Social resource** Civil society organisations and vendors' unions
		Financial resources Medical care schemes and pension schemes
		Institutional resource Vending license
Acceptability* (In terms of age, sex, ethnicity, religion etc.)	Social barrier	**Physical resource** Public Transport (buses)
	Structural barrier	**Social resource** Civil society organisations and vendors' unions
		Institutional resources Police and municipal authorities
Accommodation* (resource characteristics)	Organisational barrier	**Financial resources** Government loans, medical care schemes and pension schemes
Appropriateness*** (proper match between supply of a resource and its demand by the users)	Personal barriers (characteristic of vendors) Social barrier	**Institutional resources** **Social resources** **Physical resources** **Human resources** **Financial resources**

* As defined by Penchansky and Thomas (1981)
** As defined by Saurman (2016)
***As defined by Levesque, Harris and Russell (2013)

This study concurs with the view of the NLMS approach that there are deep structural explanations for gender segregation in the labour market and gender inequality concerning

access to resources. Patriarchal and societal norms and traditions, and the broader institutional framework of the labour market, were powerful influences on women's ability to participate in paid work. However, the precise nature of these influences varied according to the roles and status of women across their life course. On the one hand, patriarchal norms constrained women's access to education and training opportunities or choice of transport modes. On the other hand, the government policies and urban planning frameworks were blind to the needs of women workers, such as providing toilets and child-care responsibilities in the workplace. Infact, the government institutions such as police and municipal authorities were the perpetrators of violence against women. These two mechanisms together shaped women's interactions with the oppressive structures and, subsequently, the ability of women to reproduce or transform these structures. Access to resources was even more constrained for women victims of intersectional discrimination due to their ethnicity, such as the Gadia Lohars. These women had no access to education and, later on, better employment opportunities due to the stigma attached to them by Indian society.

7.2.4 *Contribution to methods*

This study also contributes to research methods in that the critical realist qualitative methods approach adopted within the thesis provided a unique perspective of the working lives of women vendors. It offered a genuine and distinctive contribution to knowledge by combining face-to-face interview settings within a reflective narrative. Researching women's working lives in detail involved engaging a diverse set of women from different ethnic backgrounds and at different stages of their life courses. The iterative data collection and analysis process helped to obtain knowledge as close to reality as possible to achieve the aim and objectives of this research.

The attempt to configure the impact of the specific contexts and conditions of work of women as well as the interaction of the agents with the oppressive structures that acted as generative mechanisms to create particular events or outcomes led to the generation of rich empirical data about the women in different life stages of their life. The method of gaining knowledge about women's working lives grounded on the understanding, views, beliefs, opinions, judgements and experiences of the interviewed women helped make sense of the knowledge of reality. The understanding of the vendors about barriers to 'access' to jobs in the formal sector and resources facilitating decent work conditions were constructed from generative mechanisms explaining social structures and their exposures to these structures. To elicit a deeper understanding and experiences of exposure to these structures from the women required spending time with the vendors before formal interviews. This meant devising unique methods of interaction with the vendors in informal settings of their homes, public transport options such as buses and auto-rickshaws for a deeper understanding of the fears of sexual harassment in public places and power dynamics within the home, exploring innovative rapport-building methods such as sharing my encounters with harassment on various public transport options in the city to elicit honest responses from the interviewees, to make them feel comfortable enough to easily share their deepest fear and horrific experiences during the interviews. Thus, this research made a significant methodological contribution to developing the value of close interactions with vendors in their informal, natural settings, which enabled me to generate rich empirical data from the 105 interviews conducted with the vendors.

7.3 Practical and policy implications

This research has significant practical recommendations for Civil Society Organisations, particularly NGOs and vendors' unions, to adopt strategies which will make

them more accessible to vendors, as well as for municipal authorities in terms of provision of basic infrastructure (such as water, electricity, toilets, shaded stalls, storage space and child care facilities) at the workplace of vendors. This research also has policy implications for the national and state governments in India about dealing with corrupt recruitment practices and promoting social dialogue by forming tripartite links with law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations.

7.3.1 Practical implications for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

An important practical implication of this research is for the CSOs to understand the significant barriers to mobilising vendors and adopt strategies to address this problem by learning from the global best practices. A small number of young literate women were able to use individualised active resistance strategies to challenge the restrictions imposed on them by their parents and in-laws. Scott (1985) argues that by using such 'practical' resistance measures, women can demand their right to education and also succeed in convincing their parents to delay their marriages or choose a spouse of their liking. However, the overwhelming majority of the women could not counter familial restrictions at an individual level due to fear of domestic violence or separation. In addition, individual resistance was unlikely to succeed in workplace contexts, as evidenced by the fact that fear of harassment was a significant push factor for many women to choose street vending over other informal jobs. Women who worked earlier as domestic workers faced endemic sexual harassment at their workplace and could not individually resist such harassment due to the power of their employer over the victim's future employment. The unequal power relations between the employers and the employees led these women to submit to such harassment or look for alternative work options. It is necessary to address the issue of a power imbalance to enable these women to transform the oppressive structures obstructing their access to jobs and

resources. This is possible through community resistance strategies, which are likely to be more effective.

Comparative case studies demonstrate the critical role of Civil Society Organisations in organising resistance movements. For example, Agarwala (2018), in her research on domestic workers in India, examined how the Pune Zilla Ghar Kamgar Sangathan (Pune District Domestic Workers' Union) succeeded in organising female domestic workers in a context in which only male workers were organised until the 1980s. Initially, this union concentrated on social reproduction issues in the private sphere of women workers. By focusing on such matters, the union could contact the otherwise shy women, listen to their grievances and mobilise the women domestic workers. The union was successful in its efforts to mobilise the domestic workers because of two reasons. First, it approached the women in their homes rather than their workplaces when their husbands were not at home. Such informal interaction with these women gave them the freedom and privacy to discuss their personal issues openly with the union members. Second, the union was successful because it initially focused on community concerns and then associated with women's productive labour issues, which led to the identification of deeper integrations between women's issues and Capitalism and patriarchy. CSOs in Delhi would do well to adopt these strategies.

Another practical implication for the CSOs concerns the importance of appropriate forms of communication with the vendors. Interviews with the vendors suggest that the primary barrier faced by vendors in accessing the CSOs was information. The MBOs, which act as intermediaries between vendors and the local authorities, need to increase their outreach programmes, and social media can play a vital role in this regard. Best practices in this regard can be borrowed from organisations like Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Kenya National Alliance of Street Vendors and Informal Traders (KENASVIT) and National Alliance for Street Vendors of India (NASVI), which have their organisational

websites and blog site which is an important platform to publish information about new policies and everyday activities of the organisation. Similarly, StreetNet International and StreetNet Asia regularly use their Facebook pages to interact with the vendors in South Africa (Horn, 2012). Such information dissemination platforms, absent in the context of smaller NGOs working for street vendors in Delhi, can be highly effective in organising vendors. These social media platforms can be easily used by illiterate women as well because even though illiterate women cannot read the text, they can be easily guided by a visual/pictorial understanding of the published data (Venkatraman, 2014). My fieldwork confirmed that all the interviewees, whether literate or illiterate, possessed a smartphone, access to the internet and their own social media account, which they often used for their business promotion outside India. However, the younger women were more proactive in using social media platforms to connect with their bonding capital than older women (above 60 years).

Lessons from the successful deployment of physical outreach programmes, such as those adopted by SEWA in the case of construction workers in Ahmedabad (Ahn, 2007), are also applicable to Delhi-based NGOs. In particular, to address the time poverty identified in this research, NGOs could adopt SEWA's strategy of contacting vendors where the patriarchs in their family are not directly observing them. In the case of vendors, this is usually the workplace, where the vendors typically find it comfortable to interact in the morning before setting up their stall and selling the merchandise. This could be followed up by holding small meetings in the neighbourhoods of vendors at night, where consciousness-raising exercises regarding the rights of the vendors could be undertaken by distributing fliers or organising public meetings for vendors in the city to focus on the need to fight for laws to improve their working conditions.

A practical implication for the trade unions concerns the importance of forming women-centric unions where they have the freedom to express their views without fear or pressure from the opposite sex. This might enable the women to develop the confidence to interact effectively with the patriarchal structures they encounter at their home and workplace and ultimately transform these structures through individual and community resistance measures. Trade unions are an effective medium of collective bargaining where workers' representatives unite to negotiate with the local authorities and the police force. The ILO's 2002 International Labour Conference concluded that trade unions could play a pivotal role in providing exceptional services to workers in the informal economy, such as launching educational and advocacy projects, disseminating information on the legal rights of workers, and providing legal aid, credit and loan schemes (ILO, 2002c). However, as argued by Carr, Chen and Jhabvala (2011) and confirmed by my research, trade unions providing a shared platform stage for male and female workers has not been very effective. The reasons for this are twofold. First, many of the most critical issues that women workers face – such as sexual harassment, patriarchal household pressures or caring responsibilities differ substantially from male workers, and the women are not comfortable discussing these issues in the presence of men. Second, a common platform for male and female workers usually prohibits women from active participation and makes them passive listeners due to the use of sexist language and behaviour in meetings, the informal male structure of these unions where men occupy leadership roles and a male-defined bargaining agenda (Ratnam and Jain, 2002; Saha, 2012). More women-centric unions need to be formed to increase women's participation in unions and help them mobilise to form their unions. An excellent example of such a women-centric union is SEWA, the largest national union of self-employed women in India that has collectively defended the rights of the vulnerable women workers in various forms of self-employment in India, where collective bargaining coverage is below five per cent

(Budlender, 2013). Another excellent example of a women's union is the Self-Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in South Africa, launched in 1994, which not only negotiated with the Durban local authorities to improve facilities at the workplaces of street vendors but also ensured that vendors were involved in city planning (Lund *et al.*, 2000). The resource kit prepared for promoting gender equality through trade unions by the ILO (ILO, 2002c) can also be an essential document to which the trade unions can refer. Trade unions can use this resource kit as a basis for stimulating discussions, and it is also a crucial resource in organising media campaigns, informing and educating other social actors about the innovative initiatives for improving women's involvement in their structures and activities, and promoting gender equality and solidarity among their members.

Vendors' unions must also devise strategies to ensure their sustainability over time. This research found that even though the vendors successfully formed their unions, they could not guarantee the sustainability of these unions over time. Most of the vendors' unions dissolved due to their weak organisational structure and corrupt practices of the position holders. An essential lesson for improvement can be learnt from the Pedagang Kaki Lima (PKL) movements in Bandung, Indonesia, which sustained itself by adopting better management practices such as changing the management team members every three to five years and by asking corrupt team members to resign before completing their term of three years (Hermawati *et al.*, 2019). Vendors' organisations in Delhi could potentially benefit from adopting similar management practices to address the concerns of internal mismanagement in these organisations and conflicts arising from mistrust of members toward the organisation leaders, as reported by the interviewees in this study. Another lesson that can be learnt from the PKL movement is in terms of the methods used to ensure continued unity among the members of the organisation. Such strategies include conducting various informal activities, such as organising social gatherings where vendors can be open about personal

problems and discuss ways to help other street vendors who encounter similar issues in accessing resources such as health care and education. Such informal activities would build trust and a sense of solidarity among the association members, ensuring the sustainability of vendors' unions.

7.3.2 Practical implications for municipal authorities

A direct practical recommendation for the municipal authorities is the provision of basic infrastructure in the workplace of street vendors. Vendors reported an urgent need for basic infrastructure, which municipal authorities are best situated to provide in consultation with the vendors. All the vendors working in ladies' market and weekly markets reported a lack of infrastructure such as toilets, electricity, water and storage space for merchandise and child care facilities at their workplace. In a few regular markets, where some essential services were available, they were not accessible to the vendors due to spatial barriers (the location of public toilets far away from the market), temporal barriers (the closure of toilets much earlier than the market shut-off time) or financial barriers (no government warehouses near the workplace of vendors and expensive private warehouses to allow the storage of vendors' merchandise). However, the provision of basic infrastructure at the markets by the municipal government should be made after consultations with the vendors. This is important because most of the infrastructure in the markets is male-centric at present. For example, every market in Delhi has a 'gents' toilet, but there is no such provision for women customers or women working in the market. Few interviewees who reported that they had 'ladies' toilets in their market found them inaccessible due to their far-off location or short opening hours. An example of good practice is the Warwick Junction in South Africa. In 1997, the Durban City Council launched the Warwick Junction project. In the project, the City Council members provided trading facilities to vendors such as shelters, an exclusive

market for medicine sellers, and revamped the 'Early Morning Market'. All these interventions by the Council were done in consultation with the street traders (Skinner, 2008). The attitude of the Durban City Council reflected the project's inclusive approach, which acknowledged the importance of street vendors as 'eyes on the street' and established a department to allocate more resources to infrastructure development for traders. A similar inclusive approach needs to be adopted by the municipal authorities in Delhi, which has no specific department to cater to the infrastructure needs of the street vendors.

7.3.3 Policy implications for national and state governments

This research has important policy implications for the national and the state governments to frame stringent policies to deal with the corrupt recruitment practices in the formal jobs, corruption in the police force, addressing the issue of harassment by the municipal authorities and promoting social dialogue with the vendors through the formation of tripartite agreements. Interviewees cited corrupt recruiting practices as a significant barrier restricting their access to formal jobs in Delhi. It is essential to look again at the policy and institutional frameworks shaping employment opportunities for women in the formal economy. The state government must devise more robust policies to curb corrupt recruitment practices, such as demanding bribes from applicants in return for a job in the formal sector, which hinder the transition from informality to formality for vendors. The enforcement of existing legislation dealing with corruption in public and private sectors is currently inadequate to curb corruption in the formal sector, as highlighted by the interviewees in my research. To ensure compliance with the prevailing anti-corruption laws such as the Prevention of Corruption Act 1988 for public servants, the Companies Act 2013 to prohibit private commercial bribery, the Lokpal and Lokayukt Act 2013 to create corruption ombudsmen (called Lokpals and Lokayukts) and Whistle-Blowers Protection Act, 2011 to

safeguard persons reporting an act of corruption, the Indian government should devise a robust anti-corruption compliance programme. Such a compliance programme should include comprehensive policies outlining clear rules regarding the provision of monetary and non-monetary bribes, periodic training for all employees and a robust monitoring and reporting mechanism which can identify and mitigate compliance risks. The programme should also include spreading awareness among the victims of corruption (vendors in this research) about their rights and mechanisms to exercise them and encouraging whistle-blowers to come forward with disclosures. These awareness-raising methods could range from holding campaigns, where information regarding various anti-corruption laws is verbally given to vendors in their colloquial language, to organising street plays depicting the forms and types of corruption widely prevalent in the world of work. Such methods would familiarise illiterate and literate vendors with the legal framework available to protect them against corruption and the appropriate platforms to report corrupt employers and lawmaking or enforcement authorities.

Another direct policy implication of this research is addressing the inadequacy of the existing legislative framework to deal with corrupt police personnel involved in extorting money from vendors and using abusive strategies when evicting vendors from their workplace. Usually, corruption in policing occurs at two levels; overtly on the street, through extorting regular pay-offs and participating directly in criminal activities or covertly, in the offices through irregular practices in internal processes (Neild, 2007). The first step in devising stringent policies to deal with police corruption requires acknowledging the various types of police corruption[3], as has been done by DCAF- Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF, 2019). All the stationary and most mobile non-licensed vendors were allowed to carry on their street business only by paying a bribe to the police. Refusing to do so additionally resulted in physical and psychological abuse by the police officials.

Interviews with the vendors revealed that the police frequently disregarded the law by not respecting the human rights of vendors in the name of implementing various street vending and urban policies in the city. They also blatantly denied the claims of the street vendors and the NGOs regarding the atrocities of the police. These most prevalent types of police corruption should be addressed on three fronts: legal (improving legislation and publicising punishments to such corrupt officials), administrative (rotation of officers among different departments, regular monitoring of working conditions of the police force, changing gender balance in the police force and adopting new codes of conduct) and educational (organising seminars for police officers, organising public awareness campaigns and role modelling within the police force) as proposed by the DCAF- Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (2019).

Best practices to successfully tackle police corruption can be borrowed from Georgia in the United States, where police officers are trained to increase professionalism and enhance their responsiveness to and observance of human rights and law and order (DCAF, 2019) and Hong Kong, where the government authorities established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) (Hong Kong Police Review, 2015), a highly regarded anti-corruption body. The interviewees often reported that they had no information regarding whom to complain to in case of police misconduct and harassment. Although the Supreme Court of India directed all state governments to set up Police Complaints Authorities (PCAs) in 2006, only 14 states (of the 28 states and 8 Union Territories) had set up PCAs till December 2012 (Prasad and Kotwal, 2012) with Delhi setting up a PCA in February 2019 (Government of NCT of Delhi, 2020a). These PCAs are either missing in most states or lack operational and financial autonomy and deploy scanty public outreach measures. Drawing from the successful Hong Kong model, the Delhi government should form three independent departments within an anti-corruption body to inspect complaints of corruption (law

enforcement department); examine the public policy to recommend policy changes for limiting corruption (corruption prevention department) and circulate information related to corruption to the public and provide a medium for the public to report corruption (community relations department).

Similarly, vendors require policy changes to increase their access to the police and the municipal authorities, which is at present limited as a result of numerous incidents of harassment in terms of frequent confiscation of their goods and demands for bribes to return the confiscated merchandise to the vendors. Ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (ILO, 2019a) and Recommendation No. 206 (ILO, 2019b) by the Indian government could be an effective measure to redress these issues. Convention No. 190 directs ratifying countries to address the root cause of gender-based harassment in the world of work, which includes gender stereotypes, intersecting types of discrimination and socio-cultural norms supporting violence and harassment. The convention is important because it acknowledges the role of municipal authorities in impacting informal economy workers (Art. 8(a)) and adopting strategies to protect workers employed in street vending from the atrocities of the municipal authorities (Art. 8(c)). Specific measures to protect street vendors can potentially include acknowledging municipal authorities as abusers of power, as has been done in Nicaragua, where the Integral Law on Violence against Women, 2014, clearly recognises public officials as culprits of violence against women and legalising street vending as was done in California where the state enacted the Safe Sidewalk Vending Act which forbids local authorities from imposing criminal penalties on sidewalk vendors. Ratification of Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 might help to address the problem of violence in the workplace of women vendors at two levels: it should ensure that the Indian Government commits to design laws and regulations as per the authoritative guidance on law and policy provided by the Convention (ILO, 2021) and bring R190 and C190 to the consideration of the Legislative

body of the Indian government within one year of its adoption and pledge to incorporate the tenets of the Convention into national policies and acts, rules and practices. To check that the Indian government complies with the guidance of the Convention and Recommendation, ILO makes it mandatory for the ratifying country to report on its application regularly by submitting reports to the Committee of Experts (ILO, 2020).

Currently, the Delhi Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Scheme and similar schemes framed by other states in the country are silent on the mechanisms to tackle harassment and violence at the workplace of vendors. Moreover, these schemes are marked by a lack of solid complaint procedures, inspection systems, or grievance redress procedures for vendors, in general, and women vendors, in particular. Thus a direct policy implication of ratifying Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206 can be a directive from the Indian Government to each state government. Such a directive should instruct all state governments to incorporate sections in their respective Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Scheme on framing codes of practice for the workplace of street vendors, imparting training to vendors to make them aware of their rights, reporting mechanisms and the ways to collectively fight against the perpetrator of harassment and violence at the workplace.

Promotion of 'social dialogue' through allowing collective bargaining (implying a negotiation procedure in which a set of workers, usually represented by a union, advocate for better terms of employment) is another policy implication for the national and state governments. At present, collective bargaining is confined to the formal sector in India. The lack of collective bargaining in the informal economy is due to the causal nature of employment and the widespread illiteracy of the worker. At the international level, ILO adopted C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949, which states that workers should have ample protection against anti-union discrimination acts in the

context of their employment (ILO, 1949) and C154 - Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 which advocates 'collective bargaining to include dialogues between employers or their organisations and other labour organisations to improve working conditions of workers (ILO, 1981) to promote social dialogue through collective bargaining. However, the Indian Government's non-ratification of C154 and C098 reflects its non-commitment to allow collective bargaining for workers in the informal economy. Although ratification of these conventions may improve the working conditions of workers in the informal economy, it will still not address the problem of street vendors, who are not classed as 'workers'. Therefore, the role of the CSOs becomes instrumental in guiding and compelling the government to frame acts and policies for improving the working conditions of street vendors. CSOs in India have played an essential role in promoting social dialogue between street vendors and the national and state governments. For example, four vendors' organisations, NHF, NASVI, SEWA, and Manushi, came together to draft the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009 and later compelled the Indian government to adopt it (Government of India, 2009a). Similarly, it was through the efforts of SEWA that the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 was modified to include the sectors of home-based workers such as incense stick rollers and bidi-makers (Indian cigarettes) in the state schedules in the 1990s; and SEWA ensured strict enforcement of the Act by working closely with the relevant government department.

Tripartite negotiations between the Governments, police and workers' unions can also effectively promote social dialogue. India has a long history of tripartite social dialogue accordant with the C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) (ILO, 1976). Tripartite committees at present involve governments, employers' organisations and trade unions and are confined to industries in specific states such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal and to selected casual workers such as *mathadis* (people who carry a load of material either on their head or on back to stack at the appropriate place) employed in

industries in Maharashtra (ILO, 2013b). Recently four labour codes regarding wages, social security, industrial relations, and occupational safety were met with strong opposition from trade unions in India because they were introduced without having social dialogue and tripartite consultations, which was a blatant violation of the C144 (Sarkar, 2021). Therefore, through the national government's policies, tripartite boards/ committees need to be set up for the self-employed workers, such as street vendors. Best practices in this regard can be borrowed from Rwanda, where trade unions of construction workers, donors (ILO) and the government (Ministry of Public Service and Labour) promoted tripartite arrangements to enable social dialogue (Munu, 2019).

Another good example is the formation of tripartite boards for beedi workers in 1996 through consistent efforts of SEWA (OECD, 2018). Such tripartite boards, including vendors' unions, NGOs working for the welfare of the vendors and state government, should meet periodically to decide on appropriate policies and laws for improving the working conditions of street vendors. The formulation of proper policies, after consultation with CSOs, might help address the barriers identified by the interviewees in this research to access resources and improve the future of street vendors' work in India and other developing countries grappling with similar problems of access.

7.4   Limitations of this research

Due to time constraints, the researcher conducted interviews in a single city in India - Delhi. While many findings regarding the impact of patriarchal norms on the vendors are likely to be generalizable across the country, some results regarding barriers to access may vary geographically. For example, the perception of vendors towards access to financial and social capital in a city like Ahmedabad, where the vendors are more organised by the Membership Based Organisations (MBOs) like SEWA, is likely to differ substantially.

SEWA has not only been mobilizing women vendors by raising awareness about their rights, but it has been instrumental in pursuing legal cases and forming market committees to protect the vendors from harassment of the local authorities. Through the establishment of the Urban Unorganized Workers Welfare Board, SEWA improves the skills of its members through training and workshops, provides weighing scales and umbrellas required by vendors in their business, provides medical assistance and provides financial support to its members through its SEWA banks which extend loans to vendors (Mahadevia *et al.*, 2014). In such cities where MBOs are strong, the vendors are not only more aware of their rights but are less susceptible to extortion by the police and municipal authorities. Thus, a cross-sectional study spanning a few cities with different models of collective bargaining can help understand civil society organisations' role in impacting vendors' access to resources required for decent work conditions. Comparisons can also be made between vendors in different cities.

The stakeholders interviewed during the research were primarily the women street vendors and a few officials of the NHF. Accessing policymakers and the police was a difficult possibility due to the enormously volatile political situation arising from the Delhi government elections in January 2019. Getting access to the policymakers and the police would have cross-verified the vendors' claims regarding the harassment of the police and the municipal authorities. Thus, this research provides an accurate description of the views and perceptions of the vendors and the NHF officials but does not allow for the enlargement of the interview framework to incorporate a broader spectrum of stakeholders who may offer a very diverse picture or show opposition or inadequate understanding of the concept of 'access'.

The urban setting of the study is another limitation of the study. Had the research been conducted in more rural areas such as Goa, where the vendors come under the purview of the Village Council (Gram Panchayat), the problems of access to resources would have been

more acute or different from the ones identified in this study. For example, the Village Council of Goa has a strict policy of issuing vending licenses only to the residents of Goa, which leaves out a considerable proportion of migrant women from the neighbouring states. Thus, the migrant vendors in Goa have a more vulnerable status in the context of vending licenses, which exposes them to more acute harassment, extortion and bribes by the police (Singh *et al.*, 2012) than the vendors working in the urban areas. The local and regional-level variation in the governance of street vending would have indicated potential variation across the country.

An additional limitation of the study is that the interviews were conducted with the vendors at a specific time, from August to November 2019. Longitudinal research of vendors' experiences of access to various resources might have identified additional resources required to achieve decent work conditions at the workplace of vendors. For example, after consulting with the street vendors, the municipal authorities would have realised that COVID-19 has thrown up new issues for the provision of infrastructures, such as the installation of sanitisation booths for the consumers and the vendors in the market. A longitudinal study might also have studied the impact of implementing the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Scheme, 2015 in Delhi. Because this study was conducted at one point in time, when the licensing mechanism was being replaced by the Certificate of Vending (CoV) as per the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Scheme launched by the Delhi Government in 2015, it could not capture the impact of the likely changes brought about by the implementation of this scheme in the city, especially in the context of the licensing mechanism being replaced by the Certificate of Vending (CoV) which would be valid for nine years as compared to the earlier licenses issued for a life-time. This is especially

important because vendors identified a vending license as the most crucial resource, the availability of which determined access to other resources.

Although this study is geographically restricted, given its emphasis on the street vendors of Delhi and the interviewees' interpretations (vendors and the officials of the NHF) cannot be considered typical of vendors and NGOs in the broader state or national context. Yet, the value of this research lies in the rich insights it provides regarding the barriers to accessing jobs in the formal sector, motives of women to commence vending and barriers to accessing resources required for decent work conditions for women vendors in similar developing countries. The findings regarding the economic necessity and patriarchal norms being the two most important underlying reasons for women to commence vending are likely valid across the country. Similarly, the lack of infrastructure in the workplace of street vendors and the harassment meted out to them by the police and the municipal authorities are generalizable findings for street vendors all across the developing world.

7.5 Directions for future research

The study has established that existing theories of street entrepreneurship cannot adequately explain the range of motives for women to commence vending. The finding that the vendors are often driven by multiple reasons to initiate vending, which change with their age, education and marital status, is likely to be valid across India. However, further research is needed to evaluate and reaffirm whether this is more commonly the case. This study may encourage broader research to re-think the theories of street entrepreneurship in other socio-spatial contexts.

The findings highlight the need for a better understanding of the role of CSOs in mobilising women, how they use community resistance strategies to challenge the patriarchal and socio-cultural norms restricting women's access to jobs in the formal sector and the

implications of their efforts to generate intergenerational transmission of agency from the empowered mothers to their daughters. The study reveals that the young unmarried daughters of this generation are not as constrained in exercising their agency as their mothers used to be. Instead, these young women use individual resistance strategies to negotiate with the patriarch for their right to education in exchange for their agreement to contribute to the family through part-time vending financially. Future research to explore how the ability to exercise agency might differ across generations would provide important insights to inform the community resistance strategies of the CSOs concerning transforming the passive and constrained forms of resistance to active and transformative shapes of resistance. A longitudinal study of the life trajectories of cohorts of women would help to understand better the interactions of agents with the structures and their transformations from one generation to the other.

Future research might also usefully expand and elaborate the framework of access to include the 'appropriateness' of a resource as one of the essential dimensions of access. It would be vital to explore and understand the contextual factors (personal and structural) which would make a resource appropriate and thus likely to be utilised by the vendors.

7.6   Concluding remarks

This research has provided a critical realist socioeconomic account of gender inequality in women vendors' access to formal jobs and resources in the labour market. This research has established that women vendors are subject to constraints on their agency in their work choice and access to resources. Besides the patriarchal structures within the home, the state agencies' incompetence in using effective outreach mechanisms for advertising the job vacancies and ensuring fair recruitment practices contributed to segmentation in the labour market. Women of all age groups and marital statuses are constrained in their choice of

work. However, the impact of patriarchal and cultural norms and traditions is more severe for married women and women belonging to specific ethnic groups who bear the dual disadvantage of being a woman from a stigmatised ethnic community. Unmarried women are also constrained in their choice of work and have restricted access to education. However, these young unmarried women are gradually challenging the patriarchal norms in their homes through the support of their mothers, who are victims of such patriarchal norms and recognise the importance of education for entering the formal sector employment market. Rather than reproducing and submitting to oppressive structures, the young unmarried women have entered into a morphogenetic cycle where they continually negotiate with the patriarchs for their fundamental rights. The widowed, divorced, abandoned and separated women are free from private patriarchal norms due to the termination of their marital contract. Still, they continue to face barriers to entering the formal sector due to increased responsibilities to manage their domestic work while being the sole earners of their families after the transition in their marital statuses. The change in marital status from married to divorce, abandoned and widowed essentially leads them to seek opportunities for self-employment that offer them a better work-life balance than formal sector jobs. This translates into increased precarity, informality, and segmentation of labour engaged in street vending.

Another important conclusion drawn from this study is that the ability of women to interact with structures of oppression differs according to the transitions across their life course. This interaction determines whether the agents can transform their structures or reproduce them. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, young unmarried women have entered the morphogenesis cycle of transforming the patriarchal structures by using individual resistance strategies and proxy agency of their mothers to challenge the patriarchal norms they are exposed to in their homes. These women have learnt to use individual resistance strategies to negotiate with their patriarchal parents for their right to education in

exchange for financially contributing to the family through part-time vending. The effects of such transformation of structures are visible in the 'real' domain of working of these young women who are not being persuaded to marry early on in their life or look for better opportunities in the formal sector, which was denied to women of earlier generations. On the other hand, older married women who were never allowed to access the formal education system conform to the patriarchal structures due to fear of separation, divorce or domestic violence inflicted by their husbands and in-laws. The most disadvantaged women belong to stigmatised nomadic communities as they were subjected to intersectional inequalities. These women suffer the combined effects of patriarchy and ethnic discrimination, which deprive them of their right to education due to the nomadic nature of living and expose them to stigmatisation (being labelled as unclean and criminal) directed at their community. Except for the young unmarried women continuing their education, women of the other age groups and marital statuses are stuck in a morphostatic cycle. These women were scared to challenge the restrictions imposed on them by the patriarchs, both within the home and outside, reproducing the patriarchal structures by not sending their girls to school, which implies that these women will continue to face barriers to accessing jobs and resources unless they use their personal or collective agency to challenge these oppressive norms, traditions and institutional frameworks.

Finally, this research has highlighted that governmental and non-governmental organisations have essential roles in eliminating gender inequality in women's workplaces. These institutions primarily include the state and the national governments, municipal authorities and civil society organisations. Governments should ensure the provision of basic infrastructure specifically for the women vendors, such as toilets and child-care facilities and devise policies to address sexual harassment in the workplace and tackle corrupt recruitment practices. The municipal authorities need to promote social dialogue with the vendors and

develop effective implementation, monitoring and forms of redress. Civil society organisations have an essential role to play in terms of timely and accurate dissemination of information about various policies of government devised for vendors and giving a voice to the otherwise powerless vendors. The bipartite and tripartite agreements and working systems must be developed between the governments, vendors and civil society organisations. Such systems will help the vendors formulate policies and inclusive institutions, which can ultimately be used to uproot the socio-cultural norms and practices promoting gender inequality.

This research concludes that labour market segmentation results from patriarchal and socio-cultural norms and policy and institutional frameworks that shape women workers' employment opportunities and access to various resources. Eliminating the inequalities of this segmentation will require women to exercise their personal, proxy (intergenerational support from mothers to daughters) and collective agency to challenge the meta structures of oppression and discrimination. Such exercise of agency by the women at multiple levels would lead to a gradual transformation of the oppressive structures leading to more gender equality in the labour market and better access to resources for women.

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APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR STREET VENDORS

Participant Information Sheet
Accessing decent work conditions: A Study of women street vendors in Delhi, India

Hello

My name is Shweta Sharma, a researcher from the University of Sheffield, UK. You are invited to participate in a study carried out in the public interest, according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Before deciding to participate in this study, you need to understand why this research is being undertaken and what it will comprise. Please read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask me if you are not clear about anything or if you would like further information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the purpose of this study?

This research will form the basis of my Doctoral thesis to be submitted to the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield researcher. This study aims to understand the barriers in access to resources required for decent work conditions for women vendors in Delhi.

2.   Why have I been contacted?

You have been contacted because you are a street vendor. I will be interviewing a range of such registered women vendors varying in terms of their age, education level and marital status. I am inviting specifically chosen women vendors from the ladies', weekly, and commercial markets to participate in this study.

3.   **Is it necessary for me to participate in this study?**

It is not binding on you to participate in this study. This information sheet aims to describe the study's purpose and content, which will aid you in making your decision. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without bearing any adverse consequences during this entire process. Also, your decision to not participate in this study will not affect your association with the NHF.

4.   **What will happen after I decide to participate?**

If you are willing to participate, you will be invited to have a face-to-face Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) with me. The face-to-face SSI will take place at a mutually convenient venue; a room rented especially to conduct these interviews. The interview will be a one-to-one conversation in Hindi with me. It will focus on your views and experiences of what helps and hinders access to decent work conditions in your present occupation of street vending. The interviews are expected to last from half an hour to an hour, depending on your level of participation. All the interviews will be audio-recorded after taking your consent. In case you do not wish to be audio-recorded, I will take detailed notes on my notepad during the interview.

5.   **What are the potential risks of participating in this study for me?**

There are no expected risks to you as a participant. I do not intend to discuss any embarrassing issues. However, if you feel uncomfortable during the interview, we can take a break, after which you can decide to close the discussion or continue.

6.   What are the potential benefits of participating in this study for me?

You will not have any direct benefits; however, you might appreciate having the chance to share and reflect on your experiences. By participating in the interviews, you will help me understand what facilitates and hinders your access to decent work conditions at your workplace. It is hoped that the results will be used to improve access to decent work conditions for women vendors in Delhi, in particular and for women vendors across the country.

7.   Will my participation in this study be kept confidential?

The information I will gather about you during the study will be held strictly confidential and will only be available to my research team (which comprises myself and my research supervisors at the University of Sheffield). Quotes from the interviews will be used in articles and presentations at academic and professional seminars and conferences. However, you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. During this study, your personal details will not be shared with anyone, including my research team. All information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential, stored in a protected and safe place and a password-protected folder.

8.   How will my audio recordings be used?

The audio recordings of your interviews will be strictly used for analysis. No other use will be made of your recordings without your written consent, and no one external to my research team will be allowed access to the audio recordings. Recordings will be done only with your written approval before recording your interview.

9.   Is there any legal basis for handling my personal data?

According to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), I am obligated to apprise you that the legal basis I am applying Article (1) (e)) of the GDPR to process your personal data, which states that processing of data is essential for the performance of a task conducted in the public interest'. As I will be gathering some information that is defined in the regulation as more sensitive, such as your affiliation with a trade union or a Non-Government Organisation, I also must inform you that I am applying the condition in the regulation, which states that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

10. **How will you ensure the confidentiality of my interview data and the results of this study?**

Your data will be entirely anonymised, and the dataset will be made available to my University at the end of the study. However, you will not be identifiable in any way. I will label the interview recording with an alias name and transcribe your interview. The audio recording and the transcript, identified only by an alias name, will be saved in a secure folder on my personal computer. Such identifiable personal data (such as the alias name which links you to your interview recording or transcript) will be destroyed as soon as it is ensured that this will not affect the research aim. All the other non-identifiable information (interview notes and audio recordings) will be retained securely for five years after the publication of my PhD thesis. After five years, your data will be disposed of securely.

The data collected for the study will be studied and processed by my supervisors and me at the University of Sheffield, who will cross-check that the survey is being conducted appropriately; all research team members have a duty of confidentiality to you. The study results will be published as a thesis, and peer-reviewed articles will be prepared for publication in an academic journal. The University of Sheffield is responsible for the publication of the thesis.

11.   Who are the organisers and funders of this study?

The study is structured and executed by a research team (comprising of myself and my supervisors: Prof Jason Heyes and Dr Katy Fox-Hodess) at the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield, as part of a PhD study. This study is funded by the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield.

12.   Who are the data controller and the reviewer for this study?

The responsibility to look after your information and ensure that it is appropriately used rests with the University of Sheffield. Also, this study has been ethically approved through the Ethics Review procedure of the University of Sheffield. Thus, this study's data controller and ethical review are the University of Sheffield.

13.   Where can I complain if I am unhappy with any aspect of this study?

If you wish to complain about any aspect of this study related to you, please contact me at ssharma13@sheffield.ac.uk. If you are dissatisfied with my response to your complaint, you can further complain to the Dean of the Sheffield University Management School, Professor Rachael Finn, at r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk. She will escalate the complaint through appropriate proper channels. Further information regarding the procedure to raise a complaint in such research studies is available in the University's Privacy Notice at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

14.   Contact for further information

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of this study or your participation, which this information sheet has not satisfactorily clarified, then please feel to contact the members of my research team, the details of whom are as follows:

Ms Shweta Sharma

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Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

APPENDIX 2: CONSENT FORM FOR STREET VENDORS

Accessing decent work conditions: A Study of women street vendors in Delhi, India
Consent Form

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
Participating in this study		
The purpose of this study has been adequately explained to me, and I confirm that I have read and comprehended the project information sheet dated_____. (If you choose to answer 'No' to this question, then do not proceed with this form until you fully comprehend the meaning of your participation in this study.)	☐	☐
I have been allowed to ask questions about any aspects of this study.	☐	☐
I give my consent to participate in this study, and I do understand that my participation will include being interviewed by the researcher and field notes to be taken by her.	☐	☐
I consent to audio-recorded during the interview, and no recording will be done without my prior permission.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary. I also know that I can exit from the study at any time without offering reasons for my withdrawal, and there will be no adverse repercussions of my departure from this study	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide during and after the interview		
I understand my personal details will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone except the research team. These personal details include my name, phone number, address and email address.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to quote my words in academic publications, presentations, reports and other research outputs. I know that my identity will be anonymised and will not be identifiable in these research outputs.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to allow other authorised research to access my data only if they agree to keep my information confidential, as mentioned in this form.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to allow other authorised researchers to use my data in academic publications, presentations, reports and different research outputs only if they agree to keep my information confidential, as mentioned in this form.	☐	☐
I permit the interview notes and transcripts I provide to be submitted as a PhD thesis by the researcher at The University of Sheffield library so that they can be used for future research and knowledge sharing.	☐	☐
Legal use of your information by the researcher		
I consent to give my copyright of the outputs generated by this research to the University of Sheffield.	☐	☐

Name of the participant   Signature   Date

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Contact details for further information:

If you wish to complain about any aspect of this study related to you, please contact me at ssharma13@sheffield.ac.uk. If you are dissatisfied with my response to your complaint, you can further complain to the Dean of the Sheffield University Management School, Professor Rachael Finn, at r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk. She will escalate the complaint through appropriate proper channels. Further information regarding the procedure to raise a complaint in such research studies is available in the University's Privacy Notice at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET FOR NHF OFFICIALS

Participant Information Sheet
Taking part in the interview - Accessing decent work conditions: A Study of women street vendors in Delhi, India

Hello

My name is Shweta Sharma, a researcher from the University of Sheffield, UK. You are invited to participate in a study carried out in public interest, according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Before deciding to participate in this study, you need to understand why this research is being undertaken and what it will comprise. Please read the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask me if you are not clear about anything or if you would like further information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

1.   What is the project's purpose?

This research will form the basis of the researcher's PhD thesis to be submitted to the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield. This study aims to understand the barriers in access to resources required for decent work conditions for women vendors in Delhi.

2.   Why have I been contacted?

You have been contacted because you are an official of the National Hawker Federation (NHF). As you have been working closely with the vendors and for the welfare of vendors since the year 2000, thus you are in a better position to explain the barriers in access to resources required for decent work conditions for women street vendors.

3.   Is it necessary for me to participate in this study?

It is not binding on you to participate in this study. This information sheet aims to describe the study's purpose and content, which will aid you in making your decision. You will be asked to sign a consent form if you decide to participate. However, you will be free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without bearing any adverse consequences during this entire process.

4.   What will happen after I decide to participate?

If you are willing to participate, you will be invited to have a face-to-face Semi-Structured Interview (SSI) with me. The face-to-face SSI will take place at a mutually convenient venue; a room rented especially to conduct these interviews. The interview will be a one-to-one conversation in Hindi with me. It will focus on your views and experiences of what helps and hinders access to decent work conditions in your present occupation of street vending. The interviews are expected to last from half an hour to an hour, depending on your level of participation. All the interviews will be audio-recorded after taking your consent. In case you do not wish to be audio-recorded, I will take detailed notes on my notepad during the interview.

5.   What are the potential risks of participating in this study for me?

There are no expected risks to you as a participant. I do not intend to discuss any embarrassing issues. However, if you feel uncomfortable during the interview, we can take a break, after which you can decide to close the discussion or continue.

6.   **What are the potential benefits of participating in this study for me?**

You will not have any direct benefits; however, you might appreciate having the chance to share and reflect on your experiences. By participating in the interviews, you will help me understand what facilitates and hinders your access to decent work conditions at your workplace. It is hoped that the results will be used to improve access to decent work conditions for women vendors in Delhi, in particular and for women vendors across the country.

7.   **Will my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

The information I will gather about you during the study will be held strictly confidential and will only be available to my research team (which comprises myself and my research supervisors at the University of Sheffield). Quotes from the interviews will be used in articles and presentations at academic and professional seminars and conferences. However, you will not be identified in any publications or presentations. Your personal details will not be shared with anyone, including my research team, during this study. All information collected from you will be kept strictly confidential, stored in a protected and safe place and in a password-protected folder.

8.   **How will my audio recordings be used?**

The audio recordings of your interviews during this research will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of these without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. No recordings will be done against your will, and your consent will be sought in writing before recording.

9.   Is there any legal basis for handling my personal data?

According to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), I am obligated to apprise you that the legal basis I am applying Article (1) (e)) of the GDPR to process your personal data, which states that processing of data is essential for the performance of a task conducted in the public interest'. As I will be gathering some information that is defined in the regulation as more sensitive, such as your affiliation with a trade union or a Non-Government Organisation, I also must inform you that I am applying the condition in the regulation, which states that the use of your data is 'necessary for scientific or historical research purposes'.

10.   How will you ensure the confidentiality of my interview data and the results of this study?

Your data will be entirely anonymised, and the dataset will be made available to my University at the end of the study. However, you will not be identifiable in any way. I will label the interview recording with an alias name and transcribe your interview. The audio recording and the transcript, identified only by an alias name, will be saved in a secure folder on my personal computer. Such identifiable personal data (such as the alias name which links you to your interview recording or transcript) will be destroyed as soon as it is ensured that this will not affect the research aim. All the other non-identifiable information (interview notes and audio recordings) will be retained securely for five years after the publication of my PhD thesis. After five years, your data will be disposed of securely.

The data collected for the study will be studied and processed by my supervisors and me at the University of Sheffield, who will cross-check that the survey is being conducted appropriately; all research team members have a duty of confidentiality to you. The study results will be published as a thesis, and peer-reviewed articles will be prepared for

publication in an academic journal. The University of Sheffield is responsible for the publication of the thesis.

11.   Who are the organisers and funders of this study?

The study is structured and executed by a research team (comprising of myself and my supervisors: Prof Jason Heyes and Dr Katy Fox-Hodess) at the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield, as part of a PhD study. This study is funded by the Sheffield University Management School, The University of Sheffield.

12.   Who are the data controller and the reviewer for this study?

The responsibility to look after your information and ensure it is appropriately used rests with the University of Sheffield. Also, this study has been ethically approved through the Ethics Review procedure of the University of Sheffield. Thus, this study's data controller and ethical review are the University of Sheffield.

13.   Where can I complain if I am unhappy with any aspect of this study?

If you wish to complain about any aspect of this study related to you, please feel free to contact me at ssharma13@sheffield.ac.uk. If you are dissatisfied with my response to your complaint, you can further complain to the Dean of the Sheffield University Management School, Professor Rachael Finn, at r.l.finn@sheffield.ac.uk. She will escalate the complaint through appropriate proper channels. Further information regarding the procedure to raise a complaint in such research studies is available in the University's Privacy Notice at https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general.

14.   Contact for further information

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of this study or your participation, which this information sheet has not satisfactorily explained, then please feel to contact the members of my research team, the details of whom are as follows:

Ms Shweta Sharma

Doctoral Researcher

Sheffield University Management School,

The University of Sheffield, S10 1FL

ssharma13@sheffield.ac.uk

Prof Jason Heyes

Chair in Employment Relations

Sheffield University Management School,

The University of Sheffield, S10 1FL

j.heyes@sheffield.ac.uk

Dr Katy Fox-Hodess

Lecturer in Employment Relations

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The University of Sheffield, S10 1FL

Katy.Fox-Hodess@sheffield.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR NHF OFFICIALS

**Accessing decent work conditions: A Study of women street vendors in Delhi, India
Consent Form**

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
Participating in this study		
The purpose of this study has been adequately explained to me, and I confirm that I have read and comprehended the project information sheet dated_____. (If you choose to answer 'No' to this question, then do not proceed with this form until you fully comprehend the meaning of your participation in this study.)	☐	☐
I have been allowed to ask questions about any aspects of this study.	☐	☐
I give my consent to participate in this study, and I do understand that my participation will include being interviewed by the researcher and field notes to be taken by her.	☐	☐
I consent to audio-recorded during the interview, and no recording will be done without my prior consent.		
I understand that my participation is voluntary. I also know that I can exit from the study at any time without offering reasons for my withdrawal, and there will be no adverse repercussions of my departure from this study	☐	☐
I consent to share the secondary data such as our Foundations' petitions, newspaper clippings and other relevant data to support my views during the interview.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide during and after the interview		
I understand my personal details will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone except the research team. These personal details include my name, phone number, address and email address.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to quote my words in academic publications, presentations, reports and other research outputs. I know that my identity will be anonymised and will not be identifiable in these research outputs.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to allow other authorised research to access my data only if they agree to keep my information confidential, as mentioned in this form.	☐	☐
I understand and consent to allow other authorised researchers to use my data in academic publications, presentations, reports and different research outputs only if they agree to keep my information confidential, as mentioned in this form.	☐	☐
I permit the interview notes and transcripts I provide to be submitted as a PhD thesis by the researcher at The University of Sheffield library so that they can be used for future research and knowledge sharing.	☐	☐
Legal use of your information by the researcher		
I consent to give my copyright of the outputs generated by this research to the University of Sheffield.	☐	☐

Name of the participant   Signature   Date

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Contact details for further information:

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APPENDIX 5: RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

NAME: Shweta Sharma   **RISK ASSESSMENT of personal safety**

Research approach:	Field Research					
Location:	Delhi, India		Assessment date:	21.09.2019	The University Of Sheffield.	

Specific activities or locations	Nature of hazard or potential harm to you?	Control measures taken by yourself	Risk Rating (with current controls)			Additional control measures Supervisor's recommendations to reduce the risks to a low level? (if needed)	Residual Risk		
			L	**S**	**RR**		**L**	**S**	**RR**
Semi- structured Interviews Location: Weekly markets Potential harm: Interference from the municipal officials or police, probable risk of sexual harassment while travelling to and from the interview location, interference from the NHF volunteers		1) A room will be rented near the respective market to conduct the interview. This will reduce the interference from municipal officials and the police. 2) No publicity of my presence in the market will be done by me or allowed to be done by the NHF. The interviews will be done in a discreet room explicitly rented for this	**2**	**1**	**2**		**1**	**0**	**0**
Semi- structured Interviews Location: Commercial markets Potential harm: Interference from the municipal officials or police, probable risk of sexual harassment while travelling to and from the interview location, interference from the NHF volunteers			**2**	**1**	**2**		**1**	**0**	**0**
Semi- structured Interviews Location: Ladies market Potential harm: Interference from the municipal officials or police, potential risk of sexual harassment while travelling			**2**	**1**	**2**		**1**	**0**	**0**

to and from the interview location, interference from the NHF volunteers.	purpose. 3) Strictly normal hours of working from 9 am to 6 pm will be followed to avoid any harm during travel. My father will be informed about my interview location and the estimated time of return in a sealed envelope and in case, I am not able to return from the site in the stipulated time (accommodating for the interview time and the travel time), then my father will be instructed to inform the police of my last location. 4) Only known routes to and from the interview location will be taken and I will travel only by car rather than						

	public transport. 5) To ensure no interference from the volunteer, he will be asked to wait outside the interview room.						

L = likelihood, S = severity, RR = risk rating

APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW TOPICS

Background:

Please tell me about yourself and your family.

Topic 1:

What are the motives of vendors to commence street vending?

1. How and why did you start working as a vendor?

   a. What were your primary reasons?

   b. Did this factor compel you to begin street vending, or was it your choice?

   c. Would you have still worked as a vendor if this factor had not been a push or a pull factor?

   d. If you were drawn to vending, then what was it that pulled you towards this work?

   e. Why did you not choose any other informal work instead of street vending?

2. Was your decision to be a vendor influenced by your marital status?

   a. Had your marital status been a motivating factor for you to commence vending?

   b. Would you still have been a vendor if your marital status was different?

3. Was your decision to be a vendor influenced by your age?

   a. Do you believe that age plays a vital role in your journey to become a vendor?

   b. If yes, then how did it affect your decision or circumstances to commence vending?

4. Was your decision to be a vendor influenced by your literacy level?

   a. Did your literacy level impact your decision to become a vendor?

   b. Would you have chosen any other occupation/ work if you had been literate?

Topic 2:

What are the barriers to accessing formal work?

1. Did you ever apply for formal work?

a. If you applied for formal employment, did you get the job?

2. If you did get a formal job, what were the reasons for shifting from that job to vending?

   a. What specific barriers are you responsible for pushing you out of the formal job?

   b. Would you continue working in the formal sector if these barriers were not present?

3. If you did not get a formal job, what were the reasons for that?

   a. What were the barriers you faced to applying for a formal job?

   b. What were the barriers you faced to getting a formal job?

Topic 3:

Which resources are required to achieve decent work conditions in the street vending, and how does the access to these resources vary as per the age, education and marital status of women?

1. Do you think that your work is 'decent work'?

   a. If yes, then what makes you think this work is decent?

   b. If not, then what resources do you need to make it decent work?

2. What are the barriers to accessing the identified resources required for decent work conditions?

   a. What were the barriers you encountered during the initial years of your work?

   b. Did your experience of access to these resources change over the years?

   c. What are the main barriers you face today to accessing resources required for decent work conditions?

3. What has been the role of the trade unions in making your work decent or otherwise?

   a. Are you a member of a trade union?

   b. If yes, do you believe the association with them gives you access to decent work conditions in your work? Please elaborate.

c. If not, why are you not a trade union member? What are the significant barriers you perceive to becoming a member of these unions?

4. What has been the role of the municipal authorities and the police in making your work decent or otherwise?

   a. Do you believe the police and the municipal authorities hear your voice?

   b. If yes, then can you elaborate on the reasons for believing so?

   c. What barriers do you face to access the law enforcement authorities if not?

5. What has been the role of the civil society organisations in making your work decent or otherwise?

   a. What has been your experience with the civil society organisations when approaching them?

   b. How has your experience with the civil society organisations been regarding resolving your problems?

6. What has been the role of the government in making your work decent or otherwise?

   a. Are you aware of any government schemes which can be helpful for your work?

   b. Have you ever availed of these schemes?

   c. If not, what have been the significant barriers to accessing these schemes?

   7. What can be the most effective platform to hear the voice of the vendors?

   a. Where exactly do you want your voice to be heard that can make your work decent?

What can be the facilitators to take your voice to the right platform?

APPENDIX 7: THEMATIC ANALYSIS TEMPLATES

Q 1. What are the barriers women face to access formal work?

Theme	*Sub-theme*	Code
Access	**Barriers**	- Political barrier such as corruption and red tapism - Literacy barrier - Marital status barrier - Stereotypes barrier such as job segregation as per gender - Patriarchal barrier such as women should travel only with a male member of a family - Religious barrier - Social and cultural norms barrier such as unmarried females should not work with men

Q 2. What are the motives to commence street vending?

Theme	*Sub-theme*	Code
Necessity driven vending	*Push factors*	- Sudden closure of the formal workplace - Failure to find a job in the formal sector - Supplement husband's income - Absence of earning member in the family - Death of the husband - Death of parents - Parents' pressure to commence vending - The only occupation known to the vendor/ inherited - Lack of education and skills
Opportunity driven vending	*Pull factors*	- Flexible working hours - Low cost of investment - Desire to interact with customers through this work - Needs less skill - Sufficient income provided by vending - Entrepreneurial motivation

Q 3. Which resources are required to achieve Decent Work conditions in vending?

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
Financial resources	*Banks*	• Availability • Affordability • Accommodation • Accessibility • Awareness • Acceptability
	Loans	
	Pension	
	Other financial schemes	
Physical resources	*Transport*	
	Merchandise	
	Water	
	Toilets	
	Electricity connection	
	Shaded stall	
	Storage space	
	Child care facilities	
Human resources	*Education*	
	Skills	
Social resources	*Union*	
	NGO	
Institutional resources	*Vending License*	
	Police	
	Municipal authorities	

* These codes were analysed for each sub-theme.

Q 4. What are the barriers and facilitators to access resources required for decent work conditions?

Theme	Sub-theme	Code *
Access to human resources	*Access to education*	
	Access to skills	
Access to social resources	*Access to unions*	
	Access to NGOs	
Access to physical resources	*Access to transport*	• Social barrier • Financial barrier • Spatial/ ecological barrier • Temporal barrier • Informational barrier • Psychological barrier (past experiences) • Organisational barrier (timely provision) • Cognitive barrier (belief system) • Structural barrier (availability)
	Access to water	
	Access to merchandise	
	Access to toilets	
	Access to shaded stall	
	Access to storage space	
	Access to child care facilities	
	Access to electricity connection	
Access to institutional resources	*Access to vending license*	
	Access to police	
	Access to municipal bodies	
Access to financial resources	*Access to banks*	
	Access to loans	
	Access to pension	
	Access to other financial schemes	

* These codes were analysed for each sub-theme.