

Striving for Livelihood and Urban Space

A Study of Street Vendors of Pokhara

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

It is with great pleasure that I recommend for the approval of the thesis entitled **Striving for Livelihood and Urban Space: A Study of Street Vendors of Pokhara** completed by **Namrata Khawas** under my supervision for partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Anthropology. Therefore, this thesis is recommended for its evaluation.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the thesis submitted by **Namrata Khawas** entitled **Striving for Livelihood and Urban Space: A Study of Street Vendors of Pokhara** has been approved by this Department in the prescribed format of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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Glossary

Nepali words

Chatpatey :

Didi :

Dhukuti :

Doko :

Mandi :

Nagarpalika :

Nagar Prahari :

Sukumbasi :

Meaning in English

spicy snack

elder sister

rotating credit institution

a kind of wicker basket

wholesale market for buying fruits & vegetables

municipality city office

municipal police

slum dwellers

Abstract

This study was undertaken with the general objective of assessing the living condition of street vendors of Pokhara metropolitan City and the contribution of street vending in making their livelihood. The specific objectives were to examine the reasons for these people being engaged in street vending in Pokhara City and to investigate the vendors' striving for getting subsistence livelihoods in the context of increased rigidity of local authorities towards them.

*Embedded with the thematic notions of urban anthropology conceptually, theoretically and methodologically, this study was guided by the concepts like livelihood and informal sector. Right to the city has been used as the main theoretical guideline. Literatures related to these conceptual and theoretical bases as well as others, which were undertaken on and about street vending in and out of Nepal have been reviewed during this study. Methodologically, this study was carried out in main market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City, namely Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga, and Prithivi Chowk including Buspark. These areas were purposefully selected for the data collection of this study. This is a study based on qualitative research tradition. Within this tradition, this study made use of the basic elements of ethnographic research. In terms of research design, this study is based on **exploratory** and **descriptive** research designs.*

There have been no documented /official records on the total number of street vendors in Pokhara Metropolitan City as the metropolis authority has classified this activity as an illegal act. However, street vending is quite a common practice in the major market centers of Pokhara and all those street vendors formed the universe of this study. Thus, for the qualitative research, I had selected 11 woman street vendors as the main informants of this study by adopting purposive sampling procedure. Besides, four informants were chosen purposively for case studies and additional two informants for key-informants interview. Basically, this research has been based on primary types of qualitative data collected from the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken mainly by making use of the techniques of in-depth interviewing with the informants, key-informants and participant observation. To be precise, fruits selling women as street vendors in Pokhara were main sources of primary data. Some important secondary data were also gathered through the review of published and unpublished documents available in libraries, official records of Pokhara Metropolis office, and personal collections. Data analysis followed a kind of cyclical pattern of data collection, recording, analyzing, and returning to the field to collect more data. During data analysis, at first I collected data from participant observation and interviews. After that I transcribed all of those recorded data in Nepali by using computer software named VLC media player. Then each of the transcripts was translated into English and the translated data were coded in

English to generate themes and categories. Finally, those themes and categories were analyzed descriptively.

There are several reasons for which the women street vendors have been engaged in street vending in Pokhara. The most important reason that has been discovered is that street vending can be started with much lower investment. Besides this, lack of appropriate alternative, lack of educational qualification, more personal freedom etc. are other reasons. Therefore, street vending can be a good option to avoid business insecurities. Metropolis authority has been trying to prevent them from appearing on the streets but they are not in a mood to give up. In the streets, they have to strive against a number challenges which are posed by metropolis authority and their police, their customers and other shop keepers. As evident in their stories, they have been continually striving against these challenges for generating income. Their incessant striving for some of the urban space for undertaking vending practices has been going on and on. Such tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by the local authority, local entrepreneurs, businesspersons and their associations also gives an unspoken or indirect message that the vendors have been claiming their right over urban space.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The livelihood of people is largely shaped by the occupation they adopt. In the other words, their status of employment they have largely shapes their livelihood. Self-employment, which is an important category of employments, is simply a situation in which an individual works for himself instead of working for an employer that pays a salary or a wage. Within self-employment, street vending or trade is one of the most visible occupations in any urban center or city.

Street vending or trade is a part of the informal economy. Graff and Ha (2015) astutely write that “In everyday language the practice of street vending goes by many different local names” (p. 2). However, Shrestha (2013) maintains that “Street vending is a means of survival for individuals who lack sufficient capital, skill and knowledge.” Street vendors include all those selling goods or services in public spaces by making a temporary built up structure or by moving across the market carrying goods in cycles, motorcycles or baskets for selling. “In developing countries millions of people depend on street vendors for their daily requirement as the goods are more economical than those available in the formal sector” (Indira, 2014, p.5). In any city, it is a much complicated task to estimate the exact number of people employed as street vendors, due to their high mobility and the marked seasonal variation in work.

Different people tend to give different reasons for them getting involved in street vending. In the context of a developing country like Nepal, the reasons furnished by Bhowmik (2005) are quite useful to explain the main reasons for people getting engaged in street vending or trade:

Lack of gainful employment coupled with poverty in rural areas has pushed people out of their villages in search of a better existence in the cities. These migrants do not possess the skills or the education to enable them to find better

paid, secure employment in the formal sector and they have to settle for work in the informal sector (Bhowmik, 2005, p. 2256).

In this context, the reasons given by Timalcina (2007) can also be much appropriate to explain the main reasons about why people tend to engage in informal; economic activities like self-employment though street vending or trade. He puts forward that

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

Just like in the case of other cities of Nepal and those across globe, people are pursuing internal migration as a way of survival strategy among others to create livelihoods in the urban informal sectors of Pokhara City. Street vendors of Pokhara, majority of whom are women, perfectly represent such categories of in-migrants. In the context of Pokhara, we can see street vendors engaged in selling fruits, vegetables, kitchen items, carpet, ready-made clothing, etc.

Urban anthropology has already pioneered in the study of dynamics of urban social, cultural and economic lives. Pioneering contributions by scholars like Eddy (1968), Fox (1972, 1977), Gulick (1973, 1975, 1979), Southall, (1973), Basham (1978) Hannerz (1980), Gmelch & Zenner (1996), Kemper & Rollwagen (1996), Low (1999), Jaffe & Koning (2016) and many others have already led urban anthropology to a distinct height. Bhandari (2010) highlights the scope of urban anthropology in the contemporary urban issues as

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

Entrenched with the theoretical enclosure of Urban Anthropology and wide red dimensions of street vending in urban Pokhara, the issues of street vending as a human issues from cities, the urban space they claim, their struggle for making a livelihood are the issues of concern. This study has been undertaken by adopting the conceptual and theoretical orientations as well as methodological contributions of urban anthropology.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The informal sector is a survival strategy of the urban poor in response to insufficient job creation. In addition to this, it is a very significant component of national economies for several reasons: it provides goods and services at a low price; it plays the role of a reservoir of the individual reserve army that holds down wages for the formal sector of the urban economy (Gottdiener and Budd, 2005, p. 77). Similarly, it provides opportunities for earning income to the indigenous city residents as well poor in-migrants of the city. In the context of the city of Pokhara too, street vending is a source of employment, income and survival for a large number of population; especially the middle and low-income earners. These street vendors are particularly significant for some sections of Pokhara city. For the urban poor of Pokhara, street vendors provide goods, including food, at low prices. Besides, middle-income groups also benefit from street vending because of the affordable prices offered. This is quite reflective of the argument of Timalsina (2007), who maintains that one section of the urban poor, namely, street vendors, subsidize the existence of the other sections of the urban poor by providing them cheap goods and services.

Despite the important service provided by street vendors to the general public, their contributions are not viewed in the same light by the local authorities, who treat street vending as an illegal activity. Therefore, we frequently get to see street vendors, especially those in unauthorized areas of Pokhara, being subject to frequent raids and evictions by municipal policing under Pokhara Metropolis. However, this is not unique to Pokhara only as Bhowmik (1999) puts forward that in almost all the Asian countries, street vendors have no legal status to conduct their business and they are constantly being harassed by the authorities.

In the eyes of local administration or authority, they are burden to the smooth functioning of the city-system. Further, they are viewed as non tax payers. Due to these reasons, the local metropolis authority tends to be very tough on them. Frequently, we can find metropolitan police acting severely against them. Thus, chasing away of these vendors by metropolitan polices, seizing of their baskets and *doko* along with the items that the vendors have been carrying for selling, dispersing the sellable items on the road, arresting of the vendors along with their items for selling have become quite common sights in the main market centers of Pokhara like Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga, Newroad, Prithvi Chowk, etc. Due to these reasons, these vendors always try to engage in selling their items by dodging the metropolis polices. Thus, the livelihood security of these street vendors has always remained a challenging as well as complicated issue. These vendors have to engage in a tireless striving for ensuring their livelihood in the city of Pokhara.

Mengistu and Jibat (2015) maintain that for cities to be inclusive, they must commit to place limits on accumulation and enable the urban poor to access these strategic spaces. However, this hasn't been the case in the city of Pokhara. The issue concerned with the street vendors in Pokhara is quite important for systematic investigation; however I could not find such scholarly studies/researches which have analyzed this issue in detail. In the other words, there is a kind of lack of researches on the street vendors of Pokhara and the dynamics of their striving for livelihood in this rapidly urbanizing city. Thus, this study has been purposed with an aim of investigating the dynamics of strivings that women street vendors have been making to sustain their livelihood in the urban context of Pokhara. In this study, the terms 'street vendor' and 'hawker' have the same meaning and they are often interchanged.

To sum up, this study will endeavor in searching the answers to the following research questions:

- i. How is the living condition of women street vendors of Pokhara?
- ii. Why these people are engaged in street vending in Pokhara City?
- iii. How is street vending contributing in the livelihood securities of these people?
- iv. How these vendors have been striving for getting subsistence livelihoods in the context of tough local authorities towards them?

- v. Why do these vendors continue to engage in vending despite tough metropolitan authority/regulations and repeated harassment by the metropolitan police?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to assess the living condition of street vendors of Pokhara metropolitan City along with the contribution of street vending in making their livelihood.

However, the followings will be its specific objectives:

- i. To examine the reasons for women street vendors being engaged in street vending in Pokhara.
- ii. To investigate the vendors' striving for getting subsistence livelihoods in the context of increased rigidity of local authorities towards them.

1.4 Operational definitions of the key terms

Livelihood : In this study, livelihood refers to the way in which people make income, create different assets, activities and entitlement for making their living.

Street vending : Street vending refers to both a survival strategy and an additional form of income in which people offer fruits and vegetables for sale to the public by carrying them in a basket or *doko*.

Urban space : Outdoor spaces in Pokhara city that are among or besides the buildings and allow for the communication, transit and social interaction of the inhabitants.

Striving : In this study, striving refers to the act in which women street vendors have been endeavoring to make their livelihood in the city of Pokhara.

1.5 Significance of the study

By nature, this research is an academic undertaking. So its immediate academic significance is to gain Master's Degree in Anthropology. The life or livelihood of urban street vendors is full of strivings. Interestingly, these strivings are of different nature depending on the types of actors against which the street vendors have to strive for their own space. As an academic undertaking, this study has endeavored to highlight and analyze those strivings of street vendors from '*emic*' perspective. There have been a number of researches on street vendors, but there have been very few studies in Nepal about such an important subject of anthropologists. I expect this research to fulfill that lacuna to some extent. Furthermore, it is also expected that this study would provide the reader with some kinds of information on various issues related to urban informal economy of Pokhara, and striving of street vendors for making their livelihood. It may also provide future researchers concerned with the similar issues with theoretical and methodological inputs to some extent.

Besides the above mentioned academic relevance, this study may have some applied implications too. The findings of this study may be useful to different types of formal and informal organizations working in the fields related to urban policy, urban planning, urban informal economy, self-employment, and street vendors.

1.6 Limitations of the study

Despite of all of its significance, this study was bounded by different types of limitations. This study followed a qualitative research tradition so it has not made any kind of numerical and statistical data analysis on the street vendors of Pokhara city.

Though different types of street vendors are there in Pokhara, this study is based only on the study of those women vendors who sell fruits carrying in basket or *doko*. Though such vendors are available all over Pokhara City, this study was undertaken only among those women vendors who were concentrated in main market centers of Pokhara i.e. Mahendrapool, Chilpledhunga and Prithvi Chowk including Buspark.

1.7 Conceptual Framework of the study

The following figure shows the conceptual framework of this study.

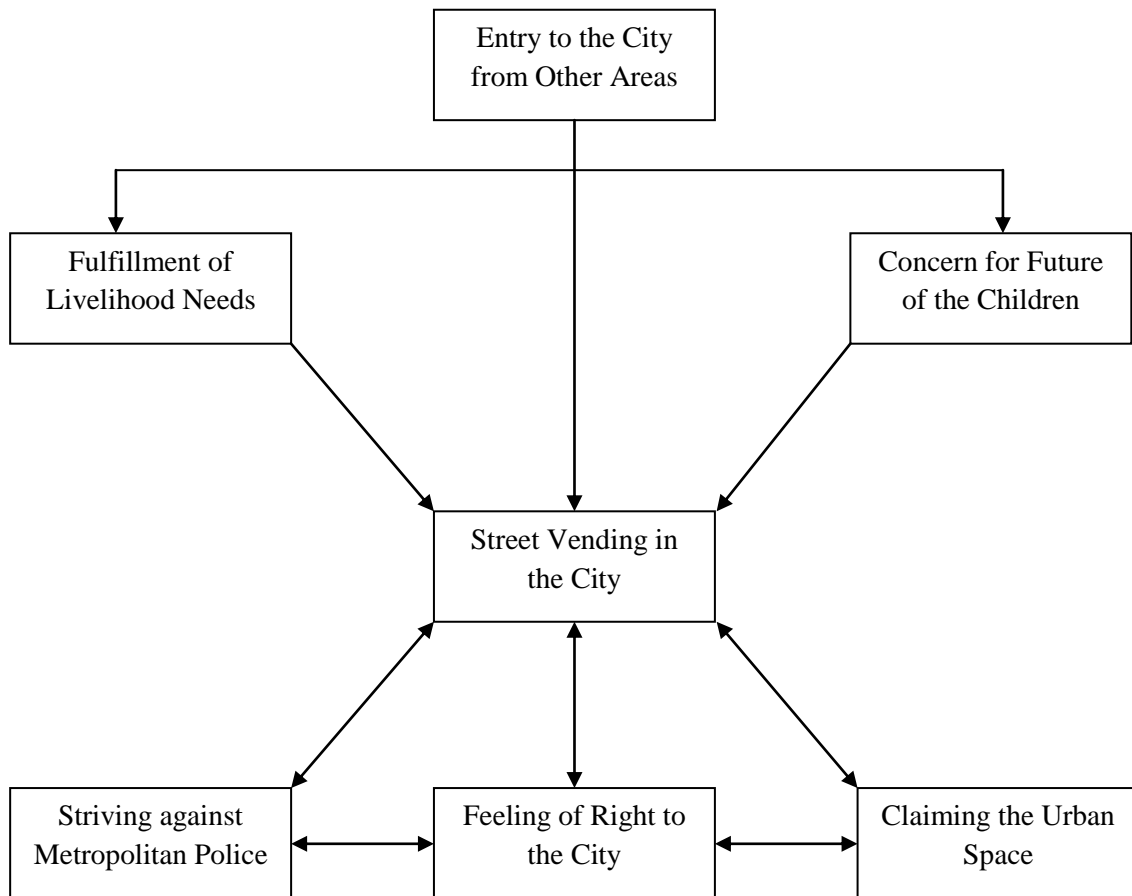


Fig: 1

Conceptual Framework of the study

The above framework illustrates that people come to Pokhara from various areas due to a number of reasons. Some of them cannot find any alternative for making a livelihood here in Pokhara so they choose street vending. Two major factors compel them to do so; one is the fulfillment of the livelihood needs of the family in the city and the other being the concern for the future of the children. As they engage in vending in a continuous manner, they were compelled to strive against metropolis authority directly or indirectly. The coercion of metropolis keeps on increasing, however, they do not give up vending rather become more determined for vending which gives a clear indication that they want to assert their right to the city. As a result they strive even more than before whereby they also assert their claim for the

urban space for themselves and this claim indirectly or directly keep them in the street vending practice.

1.8 Organization of the study

The main body of this study has been divided into seven different chapters excluding References. The first or introductory chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, the objective of the study, its limitations, significance, definition of the terms and conceptual framework. The second chapter presents the conceptual/theoretical overview and review of related literature. The third chapter includes the methods adopted in this study and the fourth chapter presents introduction of the study area and the informants.

Likewise, chapter five explains why street vendors choose vending business and the sixth chapter is about striving of vendors for vending including contributions of vending in livelihood. Chapter seven presents the summary, findings and conclusion of the study, which is followed by references. At last, check-lists used in this study, list of key - informants, maps etc. are presented.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter first discusses the main concepts and theories that have guided this study. In the latter part, the review of related literature has been presented, which is followed by the research gap.

2.1 Conceptual/Theoretical overview

2.1.1 Livelihood strategies

Livelihood strategies are the way in which people adopt different activities for survival in different socio-economic and environmental settings. These strategies are composed of the activities that generate the means of household survival. According to Ellis (2000)

By livelihoods, we mean, broadly, the assets (natural, physical, human, financial, social, to which we can add political), activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions, organizations and social relations) that together determine the living gained by individuals or households' (p. 10).

Scoones (1998, p. 9) identifies three types of rural livelihood strategies: agricultural intensification or extensification, livelihood diversification including, both paid employment and rural enterprises, and migration (including income generation and remittances). Carney (1998) classifies these categories of livelihood strategies as natural resource based, non-natural resource based including, migration and remittances and other transfers.

2.1.2 Livelihood approaches

Livelihoods approach tries to see the world from the point of view of the individuals, households and social groups who have been striving to make a living in volatile conditions by making use of limited assets. It provides a framework for understanding the opportunities and assets available to poor people and the sources of their

vulnerability, as well as the impact upon them of external organizations, processes and policies.

According to Seddon and Hussain (2002)

Livelihoods approaches are conceived of broadly as part of a family of approaches to research and development that have in common a commitment to: acknowledging diversity; understanding people's existing assets, strategies and their own livelihood goals and identifying strengths on which to build; holistic analysis that acknowledges both micro- and macro-level factors; participatory approaches and partnerships; developing an understanding of the political, institutional and vulnerability context and how these affect people's capacities to achieve their goals (p. 8).

The concept of livelihoods became prominent in the middle of the 1980s with work done by Robert Chambers and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex (Schafer, 2002, p.22-23). Schafer (2002) states that:

“For Chambers, the livelihoods approach and increased participation of the poor were means of correcting the inevitable biases introduced by outsiders deciding what was best for the poor people. The idea of a livelihoods framework as a tool for analysis is simply to capture the main elements, which comprise the complex livelihoods of people at a given point in time, and ideally the course and dynamics of change in livelihoods as well” (p. 22-23).

2.1.3 Informal sector and livelihood linkage

The term ‘informal sector’ is commonly used to refer to that segment of labour market in developing countries that has absorbed significant numbers of job seekers, mostly in self-employment, and to workers in very small production units. The informal sector operates outside the formal economy, utilize lower levels of investment and less demanding skills and handle relatively simpler products. In addition to this, it links with the formal sector through subcontracting the networks and commodity chains of production.

In developing countries, informal sector is linked to poor people's livelihood approach due to its increasing role in absorbing and creating employment opportunities. The informal sector provides activities for the urban poor and is carried out within easy reach of their available resources. As Chambers (1997) puts the reality

for the majority of the very poor in the south both in the rural areas and the urban informal sector, is one of diverse livelihoods exploiting various resources. Informal sector has been recognized as leading to development and has continued to support most of the population in many developing countries, by creating necessary employment opportunities and income.

2.1.4 Urban space

Urban space is a term which is quite popularly used in subjects like urban geography, urban sociology, urban planning etc. Defining urban space precisely is not an easy task. For Lefebvre (1970) urban space is transparent. However, Franco (2011) defines urban spaces as those outdoor spaces that are among the buildings and allow communication, transit and social interaction of the inhabitants within the city. In any city, public spaces may be public, semi-public or even private in terms of ownership. It is in the urban spaces, where the inhabitants carry out important activities of their daily lives, shedding of public way past events, present and future which mark the history of the city. Lefebvre (1970) highlights the significance of urban space by arguing that “the urban space of the street is a place for talk, given over as much to the exchange of words and signs as it is to the exchange of things” (p.19).

2.1.5 Urban anthropology

Within the discipline of anthropology, urban anthropology is of recent origin. According to Prato and Prado (2013) urban anthropology is a relatively recent new field of study within socio-cultural anthropology. However as Eames and Goode (1997) claim it “is presently one of the most rapidly growing areas within the discipline” (p. 28). Bhandari (2010) defines urban anthropology as “the specialized field of anthropology which is primarily concerned with the study and analysis of urban life, urban planning, and other urban dynamics” (p.430).

Kemper and Rollwagen (1996) highlight the scope of this sub-field by stating “urban anthropology emphasizes ethnographic research on the cultural systems of selected populations, compares the cultural systems of these populations, and offers contextual explanations for the attitudes and behaviors observed among these populations” (p. 1337). Similarly, Jaffe and de Koning (2016) maintain that “urban anthropologists

seek to understand the changing nature of urban social life, the influence of urban space and place, and more broadly what constitutes a city in the context of global flows and connections” (p. 1).

2.1.6 The right to the city

I have tried to base my analysis of the striving of the street vendors in Pokhara for making their livelihood on the notion of “Right to the City”.

The right to the city is like a cry and a demand (Lefebvre, 1968). The term ‘The right to the city’ was first expressed in 1968 by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre in his book entitled *Le droit à la ville*. As summed up by Sugranyes and Mathivet (2010), in this book, Lefebvre describes the negative impact that the capitalist economy has on cities, converting the city into a commodity serving only the interests of capital accumulation. To counter this phenomenon, Lefebvre proposes that inhabitants demand control over the construction of urban spaces. Facing the effects caused by neoliberalism such as the privatization of urban space, the commercial use of the city, and the predominance of industries and commercial areas, a new political perspective was proposed known as the right to the city.

In this book, Lefebvre elaborates his idea of the ‘Right to the City’ as

The right to the city manifests itself as a superior form of rights: right to freedom, to individualization in socialization, to habitat and to inhabit. The right to the *oeuvre*, to participation and appropriation (clearly distinct from the right to property), are implied in the right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996 [1968], p. 174).

The city, overtaken by the interests of capital, has ceased to belong to the people and thus Lefebvre advocates for the “rescue of man as the main protagonist of the city he has built.” Therefore, the right to the city focuses on restoring the city’s significance to its inhabitants, establishing the possibility of a high quality of life for all, and constructing the city as “the meeting point for collective living” (Lefebvre, 1968).

Lefebvre further extends his views on the issue of the Right to the City in this way

The right to the city was the right “to urban life, to renewed centrality, to places of encounter and exchange, to life rhythms and time uses, enabling the

full and complete usage of . . . moments and places . . .” (Lefebvre 1996 [1968], p. 179).

The influence of capitalism on urbanization taking place across the globe was ever on rise; as a result urban areas were increasingly favoring the interests of particular groups of people in a city over others. This led to the marginalization and as well as deprivation of some of the sections of urban population including urban poor. In this context, Lefebvre directly or indirectly inspired some other scholars to carry forward his idea of the Right to the City. One among them is Purcell (2002) who evaluates Lefebvre’s notion of the Right to the City in the article entitled “Excavating Lefebvre: The right to the city and its urban politics of the inhabitant” as

I suggest that Lefebvre’s right to the city is an argument for profoundly reworking both the social relations of capitalism and the current structure of liberal-democratic citizenship. His right to the city is not a suggestion for reform, nor does it envision a fragmented, tactical, or piecemeal resistance. His idea is instead a call for a radical restructuring of social, political, and economic relations, both in the city and beyond. Key to this radical nature is that the right to the city reframes the arena of decision-making in cities: it reorients decision-making away from the state and toward the production of urban space. Instead of democratic deliberation being limited to just state decisions, Lefebvre imagines it to apply to all decisions that contribute to the production of urban space. The right to the city stresses the need to restructure the power relations that underlie the production of urban space, fundamentally shifting control away from capital and the state and toward urban inhabitants (p. 102).

To sum up, Purcell tries to present the Right to the City as one of the best strategies for renewing urban democracy. Similarly, assessing Lefebvre’s notion of the Right to the City, Mitchell (2003) maintains

..... That is to say, the use-value that is the necessary bedrock of urban life would finally be wrenched free from its domination by exchange-value. The right to the city implies the right to the uses of city spaces, the right to inhabit (p. 19).

Further, collective living can be constructed based on the idea of the city as a cultural, collective, and therefore political product. As analyzed by Borja (2003), the city is a political space where the expression of a collective will is possible. It is a space for solidarity but also for conflict. The right to the city represents the possibility of building a city in which people can live with dignity, where they are recognized as part of its structure, and where equal distribution of all kinds of resources is possible, such as labour, health, education, and housing, as well as symbolic resources such as participation and access to information. The right to the city is the right of everyone to create cities that meet human needs. All people should have equal rights to build the different types of cities that they want.

Harvey (2009) argues that the right to the city is not simply the right to what already exists in the city; it is also the right to transform the city into something radically different. He continuously worked on the right to the city and his book entitled *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, which was published in 2010 is another evidence of this. In this book, he asserts that

..... The right to the city is, therefore, far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights (Harvey, 2010, p. 4).

In this book, Harvey tries to elaborate the notion of the Right to the City further by maintaining

To claim the right to the city in the sense I mean it here is to claim some kind of shaping power over the processes of urbanization, over the ways in which our cities are made and remade, and to do so in a fundamental and radical way (ibid. p. 5).

According to Sugranyes and Mathivet (2010) the necessary demand of the possibility of creating another type of city is based on a human rights framework, and more precisely on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR). The phenomenon of the

city is analyzed and envisioned through concepts of citizenship and public space, incorporating a comprehensive and interdependent vision of human rights to achieve the goal of reclaiming the city for all its inhabitants. However, it is important to clarify that the right to the city is not an additional human right; rather it is the right to enforce other rights that already formally exist. As such, the right to the city is based on a dynamic of process and conquest, in which social movements are the engine driving the achievement of this right.

2.2 Review of previous studies

A number of studies have been already undertaken by a number of scholars in the issues related to street vending. I've attempted some of the studies undertaken in Nepal as well as across the world on the issues of street vendors.

2.2.1 Review of previous studies outside Nepal

In his study entitled, "Street vending and public policy: A Global review", Bromley (2000) makes the general overview of street vending around the world. He has tried to focus on the major issues underlying its permanence as a phenomenon and the ambivalent attitudes displayed towards it by government and off-street business communities around the world. The study was based on local case studies as well as secondary resources. The key feature of his study is that it focuses directly on street vendors as an occupational group, rather than treating them as an example of some larger aggregate group such as the informal sector, petty commodity production, underemployment, micro- enterprises, or underground economy. He has discovered that there were both arguments for street vending and the argument against street vending but there is no clear, simple and absolute way of determining, which set of arguments is correct. The arguments for and against street vending have obvious class and ideological dimensions. The interesting fact of his study shows that many politicians have pressed for street vendors' rights because they see vendors as a voting potential, because they have a business interests in street vending or because organized vendors groups have funded their campaigns. On other hand, the arguments against street vending come mainly from urban elites and big businessman source of discover, connection and crime, and threat to larger scale off-street commerce. His review shows that in most African, Asian and Latin American countries, urban

authorities and elites have long complained that street vending is a major problem in their cities. In most of the countries whether the number of street vendors is growing faster than the urban population as a whole, or whether their numbers grow faster in periods of economic crisis.

In his study entitled, “Conditions of ‘decent working life’ of street vendors in Mumbai”, Saha (2009) has tried to find out the condition of working life of the street vendors in Mumbai within the framework of ‘decent life’. He has also highlighted the role of the member based organizations to provide them decent working life by regulating the concept of the decent work. His study shows that the street vendors depend on the money lenders for credit accessibility as well as for social security purposes. His study also shows that the street vendors are also forced to borrow at exorbitant rate of interest more so for the social security purposes that lead them to fall in to a debt-trap situation. He has found that there is no safety and security at the vending place. In addition, these retailers face constant harassment from local authority such as local police and municipal corporation however some stakeholders, trade unions or member based associations are trying to organize them by providing social security and credit facilities but the problem is they are very few.

In their article entitled “Cleaning up the city: A study on the removal of street vendors from downtown Belo Horizonte, Brazil”, Carrieri & Murta (2011) critically analyze the main issues concerning peddlers in Belo Horizonte, Brazil to the shopping popular indoor market of the city. In this article, they argue that in the process of trying to clean up downtown through this relocation, city council caused a disruption of the informal work of the city’s peddlers and increased the precariousness of the political and social conditions that these vendors face at work. They further argue that informal work did not originate in the failure of an inefficient industrialization process but rather in factors that preceded the proletarianization of human beings.

Hassan & Alam (2014) try to assess the economic contribution and the impact of the street vendors to the local community in Bangladesh in their article entitled, “Street garment vendors’ contribution to the economy and local community: An empirical study to the street garments vendors in Dhaka city, Bangladesh.” They have found that street garment vendors are playing important role in both the economy and the local community of Bangladesh. However, they are socially disadvantaged. Their products are also treated as wastes or of less value. Street vending has been seen as an

option for the poor, but their legal and social status and business prospects differ domestically as well as regionally. The study shows that most of the vendors are illiterate and haven't got pure drinking water, proper hygiene and sanitation. So their living status is very low. Thus they recommend the government to adopt proper policies to develop vending sector and to upgrade the socio-economic status and the living status of the vendors.

A study "Street vending as the safety-net for disadvantaged people: The case of Jimma town" by Mengistu and Jibat (2015) tries to explore the street vending activities in Urban informal sector in Jimma town of Ethiopia similar to Nepal with particular reference to three streets in which street vending was concentrated the most. By making use of qualitative research techniques such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion and observation, they have shown that the street vendors have low social economic status resulted from low educational level and lack of adequate skill to get better employment. They have discovered that lack of employment is the main reason for engaging in street vending for some while others have adopted it to supplement the income that they get from the formal employment. They have further discovered that some of the vendors romanticize street vending as a vital occupation and they praise it for enhancement in their financial, human and social capital. Their triangulated method used for examining the causes for engaging in vending is excellent however the study might not have presented the total realistic picture overall.

Batreau and Bonnet (2016) assess the relationship between street vendors and local authorities in Bangkok in their article entitled "Managed informality: Regulating street vendors". They have examined the goal, the means, and the effects of everyday regulation of street vending as well as documented how the district administration produces and maintains informality by creating a parallel set of rules where street vendors enjoy negligible rents and little competition. Further, they have tried to provide detailed empirical evidences on earnings, rents, fines and the rules regarding commercial real estate. They have also described that there is a better status of legal and registered vendors who pay the taxes to the government but mobile vendors are fully illegal and unauthorized. According to them, more established informal vendors control the less established ones which might create social conflict.

In their article entitled, "Economic informal sector and the perspective of informal workers in India" Bhat and Yadav (2017) try to highlight the issues related with

working women, child labour and their social security while engaging in the informal sectors in India. Their study explores the disadvantages of engaging in informal sector to make their day to day life. As they have revealed that the exploitation has become everyday stuff for owners who were engage who abuse working women and children in every stage. Specifically, contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and others exploit workers by compelling them to do some cumbersome works. They have found that government and public know each and everything about the plight of those involved in informal sector. However, none of them has been coming forward for safeguarding the rights of those involved in informal sector for making their livelihood. They have further found that the variable such as social security, issues of working women and issues of child migrants are directly related to the economic welfare. Similarly, child labor, and growing migration are indirectly related to future problems. So they have suggested that government must have to provide much-needed attention to them and formulate the strategy for their social security. Similarly, they suggest non-government organization also to manage some credible comprehensive and workable social security package for unorganized women worker in India.

In their study entitled, “An ethnographic account on the meaning, strategies, and dimensions of street vending in an urban setting of Kolkata, West Bengal” by Das, Mallick and Mukherjee (2017) have found street vendors as being one of the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of the urban and sub-urban Indian context. They have found that the current effort reflects a detailed understanding of the processes and networking of informal sector that could provide an open scope for future research and innovative regulatory programmed initiatives should take into consideration in the process implementing policies for the hawkers. So, they have recommended to the government and non-government agencies to avoid limitations on the multiple and different informal market oriented spaces and settings of the concerned city, as well as on the other cities in India for the issues of wellbeing and sustainable living of informal sectors professionals.

2.2.2 Review of previous studies in Nepal

The study entitled “Rural Urban Migration and Livelihood in the Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors of Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Nepal”, by Timalsina (2007) shows that the informal sector, including street vending activities in Kathmandu are increasing with increasing rural to urban migration. His study has

found that with the increase in the number of street vendors in the urban areas in recent years, the situation is linked to rural conflict and displacement. This study also shows that street vending is an opportunity to rural poor for making a living in the urban areas. The livelihoods of migrant vendors, as compared with their previous occupation, have increased after getting involved in the street vending. Comparing access to assets before and after migration shows migrant vendors have improved their financial and human capital assets by getting better access to physical and political capital assets than before. However, with limited access to physical, financial and political capitals, rural societies have to depend on natural and social capitals for their livelihoods. Thus, there is difference in getting access to assets between urban and rural societies, and street vending in Kathmandu can be accounted as a resource rather than a problem.

A study report entitled, “Situation Analysis of Women Street Vendors in Kathmandu” by Care Nepal (2008) has made the need assessment of them and come up with recommendations to improve their conditions. The study also attempted to explore the health status of women vendors in terms of health problems, accessibility to health services and awareness on it. According to the report, women street vendors were experiencing some additional problems related to business skills, infrastructure facilities and health problems. Most of the women vendors were from lower educational background, therefore, poor in calculation and dealing with customers. Furthermore, low educational status had significant negative impact on resource mobilization too. Most of them lacked infrastructural facilities in their centers. However, despite being poor in education, they had gained substantial knowledge on health and were able to manage their basic infrastructural need.

In his article entitled “Urban poverty: A study of income patterns and processes of the poor families in Kathmandu” Dahal (2011) analyzes the situation of poor people who were engaged in informal sector likes vending, shoe-mending, driving, and construction work. For Dahal, they are hard working and decent people and contribute significantly to boost the informal sector of urban economy. However, they were discouraged and largely ignored in the society. The development policy is also apathetic to them because of poor policies of government and working mechanism. He has explained that the government’s policy and the public attitude were two of the core factors to make them highly vulnerable in the urban environment. He has further

explained that in the case of Kathmandu, many urban poor are very close to the radical political parties. To be precise, many of them are associated with left wing political parties because they are allured by those parties by promising them to provide land, shelter and urban services to them. It means, in the other words, the situation of these urban poor is such that that they have been compelled to make use of political cover for supporting their livelihood.

The study entitled “Income generation in informal sector: A case study of the street vendors of Kathmandu Metropolitan City” by Adhikari (2011) has analyzed the determinant of the street vendor’s income in Kathmandu city. He further examines whether the income from vending business in Kathmandu Metropolitan City increases with the rate of increase in investment education and labor supply. His study shows that the widely involved population in street vending business is the rural population. He reasons that a large number of rural population are involved in agriculture, as each individual possesses small area of land to cultivate, it becomes difficult to sustain the family from the produce. Therefore, large number people are migrated to Kathmandu City and are involved in street trade in order to earn their livelihood. He suggests that if street vending can be brought under the legality and if the taxes can be collected, it will groom as one of the best forms of entrepreneurship that make sizeable contribution to economy.

Timalsina (2011) concentrated on the street vending activities of Kathmandu Metropolitan City in order to examine the livelihood opportunity to poor or challenges for urban governance in the urban informal economy in his article entitled “An Urban Informal Economy: Livelihood Opportunity to Poor or Challenges for Urban Governance, Study of Street Vending Activities Of Kathmandu Metropolitan City”. The main objectives of the study were: to show the income and employment opportunities of street vendors in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, to analyse the livelihood opportunity of urban poor. This study was based on both primary and secondary data. The main findings of this study were: rural migrants, having low level of education and skills, are forced to involve in the informal economy for their scanty livelihood. Street vending activities has become an easy access to those migrants’ vendors in Kathmandu. Those vendors see street vending as an opportunity for work and employment in the urban areas and take street vending as an earning opportunity and an opportunity to provide livelihoods to dependent family members. Poor, better

off people and some educated fellows have been engaged on the street of Kathmandu for making a living. In Pokhara rural poor are getting livelihood opportunities in informal economy, vendors are providing goods in cheaper price to another section of urban poor that otherwise would be impossible to provide by the urban authorities or by the urban governance system. Thus street vending has become opportunity of marketing space to most of the urban poor in Kathmandu Metropolitan City. However in his study Timalina focused mainly on income and opportunities of vendors and gave little attention to vendors striving for livelihood. Hence, this current study endeavored to fill up this knowledge lacuna by focusing on the struggles vendor do and the urban space they claim.

In her article entitled, “A study on the street vendors of Kathmandu Municipality”, Shrestha (2013) has explained street vending as one of the most visible sectors of informal economy in sufficient of job creation. According to her, these street vendors are mainly those migrants from rural to urban who have a lack of knowledge, skills and education for getting other better paying job in the formal sector. In her study, she has found that the traditional attitude of the people in division of occupation is beginning to change as the number of Brahmin and Chhetri involved in business is increasing to surpass the number of Newar in business persons in Kathmandu. She further argues that the main reasons for street vending among the men are to provide for the family needs as well as unemployment whereas, for the women, it is largely a supporting source of the income as the income earned by the spouse is insufficient for meeting the basic needs of the family. For both genders, however, the source of inspiration for pursuing business is self. Her study further discovered that some of the female street vendors have to face sexual harassment, and the metropolitan city police are the major threats to them. Besides that, street vendors also have to suffer from different health problems such as gastritis, headache, back bone pain, cold and fever. However, street vendors do cause some traffic problems such as blocking the roads meant for pedestrians and vehicles. Thus, she suggests the government to provide proper management of street vendors by providing them to a safe and suitable place away from the busy roads. Her suggestion sounds pertinent in the current study in Pokhara where women vendors strive for livelihood and are claiming the urban space through their vending business in a lack of a proper venue (or a lack of money to rent a shop).

2.3 Research Gap

As reviewed above, there are literatures that focus not only on street vending in Nepal but also on the street vending around the world, and their number is increasing. Those literatures on street vending in Nepal have largely been based on the studies carried out in Kathmandu Valley. Most of them are basically quantitative ones. Street vending has already proved to be a fruitful subject for qualitative researchers. There appears an absence of qualitative anthropological orientation while looking at street vending in Nepali context. Thus this study may be able to fulfill this lacuna.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

I had undertaken this study by adopting qualitative research method. This chapter discusses about the research methods which were used to fulfill the objectives of this study.

3.1 Rationale of the selection of the study area

This study was carried out in main market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City, namely Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga, and Prithivi Chowk including Buspark. These areas were purposefully selected for the data collection of this study because of the following reasons:

- i. Mahendrapool and Chipledhunga form the core of the market areas of Pokhara and thus they are the busiest places in Pokhara as they see a flow of a large number of people for shopping, trade or other purposes. Prithvi Chowk is both a busy market centre as well as a junction from which people can come from or go to different destinations from Pokhara. Street vendors are mainly concentrated and largely visible in these areas of Pokhara.
- ii. Dynamics of the street vendor's struggle and strife with *Nagar Prahari* can best be observed in these areas than other areas of Pokhara.

So, I believed that the street vendors who have been concentrating in these major market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City were the best suited ones for analyzing how street vendors continually strive against all the adversities in a city for the sake of livelihood within it.

3.2 Research design

This research is primarily based on qualitative research tradition. Within this tradition, this study made use of the basic elements of ethnographic research. By using this

technique, the study has tried to explore and assess the current livelihood situation of the street vendors in Pokhara and then describes the dynamics of the striving of the street vendors in order to ensure livelihood securities in the urban settings of Pokhara Metropolitan City.

Qualitative research is a systematic, anthropological research to emphasize deeper understanding of social phenomenon as street vending. There are major five purposes of qualitative research methods which are especially suitable for this study. These are:

- More subjective and smaller but focused samples which seeks to understand a given research problem or topic of women vendors from the perspectives of the local population it involves.
- In-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior.
- Multi method focuses on live experiences, belief and optimistic of participant and interpret participant viewpoints and stories.
- Investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when.
- Identifying unanticipated phenomena and generating new grounded theories about these.

Within qualitative tradition, this research has adopted ethnographic method. Ethnographic method is a slow and long process aimed at understanding the native people's thoughts, beliefs, behaviors, feelings, myths and their cultural context by using various ethnographic techniques. In this research, I used various ethnographic techniques such as an in-depth interviewing, unstructured informal talks, observation, participatory observation etc. These techniques helped me to explore and uncover the current livelihood situation of the women street vendors in Pokhara. In addition to this, they have also enabled me to describe the dynamics of their striving for getting subsistence livelihoods in the context of increased rigidness of local authorities towards them. In this way, within the qualitative research tradition, I have prepared my thesis by making use of **exploratory** and **descriptive** research designs.

3.3 Universe and sampling

This study was carried out in the Pokhara metropolitan city of western Nepal. Currently, there are no documented /official records on the total number of street vendors in Pokhara Metropolitan City as the metropolis authority has classified this activity as an illegal act. However, street vending is quite a common practice in the major market centers of Pokhara. Since street vending has been banned officially, it was not possible for me to enumerate all the vendors in Pokhara. As revealed by one of the office bearer of Pokhara Metropolitan City office, currently there are about 150 street vendors in total, which includes both men and women. All the women vendors in Pokhara city formed the universe of this study. During the preliminary field study, I discovered that not all women vendors were '*doke*' vendors. Since, my prime focus was on '*doke*' women vendors selling fruits; I decided to select informants by adopting purposive sampling technique. At first, I engaged in informal talks to each of the women vendor whom I met by becoming a customer. I could select the first informant only after a regular field visit and interactions made for a week in Mahendrapool Chowk. Other informants were also selected by the same process. While selecting informants, I had given priority to those vendors who have been vending here for the last seven years. Since data saturation was achieved after taking 11 in-depth interviews, I stopped taking further in-depth interviews. In this way, for the qualitative research, I had selected 11 woman street vendors as the main informants of this study by adopting purposive sampling procedure.

3.4 Nature and sources of data

Intensive fieldwork was undertaken in order to gain deeper understanding into the issues related to the livelihood of the street vendors of Pokhara City. Basically, this research has been based on primary types of qualitative data. Such data were collected from the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken mainly by making use of the techniques of in-depth interviewing with the informants, key-informants and participant observation. To be precise, fruits selling women as street vendors in Pokhara were main sources of primary data.

Some important secondary data were also gathered through review of published and unpublished documents available in libraries, official records of Pokhara Metropolitan

City office, and personal collections. Secondary information, thus collected, was used to supplement and substantiate the primary data. Proper reference has been cited whenever such data have been used. The collection of secondary data continued during the fieldwork and writing phases as well.

3.5 Tools and techniques of primary data collection

I have used various anthropological tools and techniques of primary data collection during the fieldwork. Primary data were collected a field work that started on 10th January 2018 and ended on 8 August 2019 in the study area in order to gain deeper understanding in the issues related to the livelihood of the street vendors of Pokhara municipality. Basically, this research was based on qualitative data generated by open-ended in-depth interviews and participant observation which were supplemented by key-informants interviews and field jotting. Some photographs were also taken for analyzing and narrating some issues.

3.5.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is one of the important methods of data collection in anthropology. For doing participant observation, it was necessary to understand overall background of street vendors for building rapport with them. So for that, I started as becoming their regular customer and did conversation with them daily. By doing daily conversation with vendors, I had found some vendors going to the same organization (Sachchai) which I used to visit sometimes.

For rapport building with them, I started sharing my experience about Sachchai and listened to their experiences too. After that, I talked about my research studies with in them. I met with them daily and they also introduced me with their co-vendors, some of whom became my informants later. Moreover, I did sit with some other vendors while they were vending, ate food and drank tea with them, listened to their family issues patiently; visited their home occasionally and even assisted them in selling their fruits to their customers etc. Day by day, I tried to get deeper insights into the everyday life of these vending people, their pattern and reasons of engagement in vending practices as well as their striving for livelihood generation in the city of

Pokhara. By doing participant observation, I also tried to understand their relationship and interaction with customer, whole sellers, and shopkeepers running other shops in the market and metropolis police authority. Therefore, participant observation was one of the very useful methods in this research.

3.5.2 Interview

In-depth interview was one of the main major techniques for generating required primary data for this research. In-depth interviewing as a qualitative research technique, involved conducting intensive individual interviews with in a small number of informant (vendors) to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.

For the purpose of in-depth interviews, a checklist was developed and all interviews were recorded using an audio recorder. Each in-depth interview was varying in length from 30-50 minutes. In total, 11 in-depth interviews were undertaken for this research. Due to the data saturation, I did not see the scope of conducting more interviews. However, I had taken four more interviews for the purpose of preparing case studies. A sample of the checklist used for in-depth interviews has been included in the appendix one.

Besides, these main or in-depth interviews, I had undertaken two key-informant interviews: one with the Chief Administrative Officer and another with the In-Charge of Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office. A checklist was developed for conducting these key-informant interviews also. I also took some informal talks with a range of personnel during the field work.

3.5.3 Field jotting

During my field observation, I also made some jottings according to what I observed and heard on the field area. It creatively helped me in analyzing the data by providing some refreshing knowledge about environment of the field.

Regarding the income, they illustrated that; *“Bepar ma sing pani hudaina juro pani hudaina” (the income is not measurable)*. Some vendors also told that, *“Nagarpalika le hamalai kamta khedo khanxa, kukur le lakhete jasari hur-hur ti lakhetxa, jhamterai aauxa” (Tough chasing by metropolitan police)*.

Interestingly, I have also found that some street vendors give a nick name for each of the metropolitan police according to their behavior. Like, *faure*, *arne vaisi*, *tikhe goru excetra* (animals' names in local dialect).

Some vendors also said that, "*ke garne dhanta xoina ramro mann ta xa thulo bepar garne tara ke garne dhan huneko man hudaina man hune sa dhan hudaina ,astai xa aha*" (*dream to do a large business but do not have enough money except only good heart*).

These jottings have been incorporated in the analysis of data that have been presented in the 5th and 6th chapters of this thesis.

3.5.4 Case study

Four case studies have been prepared from two different street vendors highlighting their striving and complexities that they have been experiencing while making their livelihood in Pokhara. For this purpose, a checklist was prepared and later it was used to collect needed information from the cases selected for developing case studies. I chose those four cases purposively towards the end of my fieldwork.

3.6 Data analysis scheme

Since it was a qualitative research, data analysis took place throughout the study right from the commencement of the fieldwork. Data analysis followed a kind of cyclical pattern of data collection, recording, analyzing, and returning to the field to collect more data. During data analysis, at first I collected data from participant observation and interviews. After that I transcribed all of those recorded data in Nepali by using computer software named VLC media player. Then each of the transcripts was translated into English and the translated data were coded in English to generate themes and categories. Finally, those themes and categories were analyzed descriptively.

3.7 Main challenges faced during the fieldwork

In this research, I fieldwork was the most challenging task for me. Though the field was quite familiar to me, my immediate task was to find the first vendor who would

agree to become informant for my study. For this, I had to build rapport effectively. However, it proved to be a tricky affair. Since, their activity is legally banned by the metropolitan authority; they used to become quite suspicious towards me as a spy of the metropolis. Moreover, they were suspicious towards the use of the data given by them, so I had to assure them that the privacy of their data. Some of them used to feel annoyed and get angry whenever I reached to each of them to talk. Later on I discovered that they used to think that their customers might go away or they might be caught by metropolitan police while remaining busy in talking to me. Sometimes I had to wait till the late evening to interview the informants. The most unforgettable moment was the one in which I had witnessed the chasing of my informants and other vendors by metropolitan police. As soon as I saw the event, I took out my mobile phone for taking a photograph of it. However, a female metropolitan police threatened me not to take the photograph. In this way, I was not able to incorporate the images of that event in my research report.

CHAPTER IV

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA AND THE RESPONDENTS

This chapter presents a short introduction to Pokhara including its physical and socio-cultural setting. Besides, it also presents the background characteristics of the informants of this study.

4.1 Introduction to Pokhara: A glimpse

4.1.1 Physical setting

Extended to an area of 534 sq. km., Pokhara Metropolitan City is the largest Metropolis in Nepal in terms of geographical area. Situated at an altitude of about 827 meters from the sea level, Pokhara possesses climatic varieties, contrasting vegetations, various scenic Lakes, attractive gorges of Seti River and ranges of snow-capped mountains (Uprety & Upadhyay, 2013). Pokhara is basically a river valley which is extended from Ghachok to Khairanitar in its extended form. The spectacular views of scenic Annapurna Himalaya range, the shortest distance of snow capped mountains (Mt. Fishtail just about 28 kilometers away), the harmony of exotic mountains, attractive caves, mysterious Davies' Falls, eye catching lakes like Fewa, Begnas, Rupa, Dipang and others have been the prime resources of Pokhara that can have multiple kinds of use and economic values. Moreover the mystical form of Machhapuchhre Mountain reflected into Fewa Lake, are the praise worthy features of Pokhara that have made to fascinate thousands of tourists, not only from home but also from abroad.

The total land area of Pokhara Metropolitan City has been divided into 33 wards for the administrative purpose. The study area of this research is located in the ward no 8 and 9.

4.1.2 Socio-cultural setting

The total population of Pokhara Metropolitan City is 402995 according to the census of 2011 (CBS, 2012). From socio-cultural point of view, Pokhara can be explained as a mosaic of caste and ethnicity, religion and identity. Here people from different caste and ethnic groups like Newar, Kshetri, Brahmin, Gurung, Magar, B.K., Pariyar, Gandharva, Majhi, Muslim and others are the major communities who have been living with harmony and cooperation for a long time.

From religious point of view, Pokhara has traditionally been a place of Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. Now the number of Christians is also gradually increasing. Temples like Bindabasini, Bhadrakali, Tal Barahi, etc., monasteries and stupas like World Peace Pagoda, Tibetan Gumba, etc. and mosque at Kundahar are the major places that have been playing a major role in popularizing Pokhara to a wider set of people from different religious backgrounds.

4.2 Background characteristics of the informants

4.2.1 Place of origin of the vendors

In the initial stage of this study, I was much inquisitive to know about where these street vendors might have come from. Thus, I made efforts to discover the place of origin of the informants. The informants of this study were found to have come to Pokhara from its surroundings villages like Ghachok, Deurali, Hansapur, Kaskikot etc. to various districts of Nepal. In addition to from the villages of Kaski district, some of them have come from nearby districts like Syangja and Tanuhun. Some of the others were found to have come from districts like Okhaldhunga, Rasuwa, Dhading, Lalitpur, Nuwakot, Pyuthan, Dolakha, and Udaypur, which lie relatively far from Pokhara. One of the informants was from Motihari, Bihar, India. So, regarding the place of origin, people engaged in street vending in Pokhara are found to have come from diverse places and their origin is not limited to the nearby places of Pokhara only. In fact, it reflects the general trend of migration in Nepal in which people flock to cities from various areas due to a number of push factors in their place of origin.

4.2.2 Educational background of the informants

I was also interested to know the educational background of the women street vendors. I was mainly concerned to find out about women of what educational background adopt street vending as their occupation. As revealed by the informants during interviews and informal talks, most of them were either illiterate or literate (under Class 8 or less) only. Old women were mostly illiterate while the younger ones were literate. The younger street vendor women also revealed that they were forced to drop out from school due to poor economic condition of their families. Two of the informants had left the school after Class 8 while others had left in the primary level. From their talks, it was evident that they were quite eager to get higher education but their family condition did not support that. This clearly reflects the general scenario of Nepali society in which female students are compelled to give up their studies at a certain level for a variety of reasons whereas their male counterparts continue studies as much as they desire.

4.2.3 Caste/Ethnicity of the informants

In this study, I also attempted to know about the caste/ethnic background of the women street vendors of Pokhara. In this attempt, I found that people of diverse caste and ethnic backgrounds were involved in street vending. Most of the informants with whom I talked were the women from marginalized groups like Dalits. After Dalits, I found Janajati women being engaged in vending. After that, a few Brahman and Chhetri were also found to be engaged in street vending activities. From Dalit community, there were vendors from different castes like Bishwokarma, Nepali, Sunar etc. Regarding Janajati groups, there were street vendor women from Magar, Lama, Sherpa and Chaudhari. One of the Dalit informants told that, she followed the street vending tradition because she had learnt through her mother. Another ethnic woman revealed that, she did not have any supporting connection to involve in other business so she chose it. In this way, I found street vending not restricted to any particular caste/ethnic group only; however, women from marginalized groups like Dalits and Janajati were mostly engaged in this activity in Pokhara. This finding gives another reflection of Nepal society in which women of low-caste, minority or underprivileged groups mostly lack opportunities for higher studies and professional

career development. As a result, these women are forced to adopt various kinds of activities related to informal economy to make livelihood.

4.2.4 Religious background of the informants

After discovering the caste/ethnic backgrounds of the informants, I also tried to find out their religious affiliations. In this inquiry, I found that most of the street vendor women were Hindus, while a few of them were Buddhists and one was a Christian. This finding is quite consistent with the reality of Nepali society in which Hinduism is the dominant religion.

4.2.5 Age composition of the informants

I was also interested to know the age composition of the street vendors. My interest was mainly aimed at finding out about women of what age are mainly engaged in street vending. This study has found that women as young as 28 years old to as elderly as 70 years old have been engaged in street vending. However, there was the domination of the women from middle ages i.e. those at thirties, forties and fifties. Actually, the middle age represents an economically active stage in an individual's life; so it is obvious to find most of the informants from this age group.

4.2.6 Marital status

During the study, I also endeavored to find out the marital status of the street vendor woman. In this effort, all the women with whom I interviewed in-depth were found to be married but some of the vendor women with whom I had made informal talks were found to be unmarried also. One of the very important observations that I made in this regard was that most of the vendor women were married at an early age. Three of the informants were living single as their marital life did not become a successful one.

4.2.6 Family income

Family income plays the vital role in livelihood of any family. Therefore, I tried to assess the income source of these street vendors besides street vending. In this effort, I

have found that for six informants (women living single), there is no any other income source besides street vending. In the case of other informants, most of the informants' family members were working in lower wage and able to earned Rs. 200 to Rs. 1000 in a day. Some of women's spouses were sick and jobless so street vending is the only one main income source for sustaining their livelihood.

CHAPTER V

REASONS FOR CHOOSING STREET VENDING BUSINESS

In this chapter, I have explained why street vendors choose street vending as well as continue street vending business despite many hardships. The local government i.e. Pokhara Metropolitan City (former Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City) had already banned street vending in Pokhara about 6 years ago. The metropolis has been making a lot of efforts to remove the street vendors from the streets in the recent times too. It has illegalized vending practices, so it seizes their stuffs, fines, even harasses, threatens, and sometimes arrests the vendors. However; street vending still continues to operate in the streets major market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City. However, despite such unfavorable circumstances, some people still continue to engage in street vending.

During this research, I endeavored to assess the main reasons behind the continuous involvement of the street vendors in vending practices in Pokhara. Now, I am going to explain the duration of involvement, income and expenditure pattern of the vendors, their main saving practices and the main reasons that have been keeping them in the vending practices in greater detail in the pages below.

5.1 Duration of engagement in street vending in Pokhara

Before 2068/69 B.S., street business including vending was a much common and familiar practice in the main market centers of Pokhara. Footpath, which are made for pedestrians used to remain completely occupied by the vendors. As revealed by the Chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office, there were more than one thousand street vendors carrying out street business in Pokhara. In Chipledhunga, not only the footpath, but more than a half of the street was occupied by the vendors. Backed up by some of the powerful political parties, these vendors were making the life of the administrators and other business person and their associations like Pokhara Chambers of Commerce and Industry much difficult. There was not even space in the footpath for the pedestrians. However, as

revealed by the chief of the Disaster management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan city officer, breakthrough was made in 2068 B.S. by the collective efforts of all stakeholders including Pokhara Metropolitan City (then Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City) Office, local political parties, Pokhara Chambers of Commerce and Industry and different associations of street businesspersons/vendors. As revealed by the Chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office, at that time there were 1046 enlisted street businesspersons/vendors. The outcome of this collective effort was that the street businesspersons/vendors were shifted to different locations within the main city for operating their businesses in more or less systematic and legal manner. Then the Pokhara Metropolis authority had announced Pokhara being free from street vending practices.

In the beginning, I attempted to discover how long these street vendors have been engaging in vending practices in Pokhara. Out of 11 informants whom I had interviewed in-depth, only one was a newer as she had been vending for the last two years. Rest ten vendors had been vending from before 2068 B.S. It means that the joint effort of different sectors made in 2068 B.S. had not been able to manage all street vendors adequately as it could not provide proper space for these street vendors. As a result, they were left to the street.

5.2 Analysis of income, expenditure and saving pattern of street vendors

Street vending is one of the easiest and profit-making businesses in terms of investment and cost of labor. As revealed by the informants of this study, the vending business can be started from a couple of thousand rupees. It has been discovered that most of the time vendors invest Rs. 1000 to 10,000 per day. However, sometimes, especially during festive days or occasions, they have to invest even more than that amount. The following table presents some detail of their income-profit and expenditure and saving practices:

Table 5.1**Income-profit, expenditure and saving practices of vendors**

Informant	Daily income	Daily expense	Saving practices
1	100-200	500-600	Dhukuti, life insurance of her, saving some (Rs.5000-10,000) in her own home to sustain health security
2	100-1000	500-1000	Lost altogether Rs. 5 lakh in <i>dhukuti</i> and in family life insurance (insurance agent cheated).
3	500-600	200-600	Saving in mother group account
4	200-300	200-300	Saving during festival time
5	100-500	200-300	Nepal bank, life insurance of her
6	300-500	100-200	50/60 thousand to one lakh in some cooperatives
7	400-500	200-250	Saving in her own home, gave her relatives in credit
8	200-600	200-800	No saving
9	100-200	300-500	Saving in co-operatives
10	300-700	100 or more	Saving in bank
11	200-700	500	Daily saving 50 rupees in a co-operative

Source: Field Survey: 2018

One important fact I drew from the table above is that the informants were not telling me their exact daily income. This is because their expense is more than income; since most of them lacked alternative source of income, the question is that how they could sustain their livelihood for long.

5.2.1 Vending income: Past and present

For the vast majority of the vendors, vending is the source of income. From my preliminary fieldwork; it had become clear to me that for some of them, it is the only source of income. So, I realized that it was very important to assess their income, expenditure pattern and saving practices. Thus, during the fieldwork, I endeavored to

find out the actual income that these vendors make in a day from vending. However, I have found most of them being quite hesitant to reveal their income made from this job. On 16 March 2018, I was doing my fieldwork in the street of Prithvi Chowk, during which I made an interesting observation. One of the vendors was doing conversation with another vender. She was the same vendor whom I had interviewed two days ago. In their conversation, she told her that today she had brought two boxes of fruits, out of which she sold one box of fruits already and one box was in the stall. On that moment she showed her income that she had made on the half day. It was surprising because that income was more than what she had revealed me the day before when I had interviewed her.

Among the street vendors that I interviewed formally or informally, it has been found that income from vending is the main source of family income for some and only a supportive income for some others. According to one informant, who usually vends in Mahendrapool area, "Here is no one to support me because my children are little kids and my husband is unemployed due to chronic illness. Our family has no any other income source besides vending." In this matter another informant told that, after her husband married with another woman she was avoided and alone. So she proudly told that even she is a single mother, she was able to raise, educate as well as did marriage of her three children due to the vending income. Yet another informant, who usually vends in Buspark, Prithvi Chowk was of the opinion that, in this rather expensive time, income from vending is very much supporting for her in fulfilling her family needs as her husband's income is enough only to pay rent.

During my fieldwork, I heard from most of the vendors that income from vending was very good in previous time i.e. prior to the removal of footpath business. In this context, one of the informants, who vends in Prithvi Chowk told that because of the tough metropolis authority income from vending is decreasing so it is becoming very difficult to make income sufficient to fulfill family needs. Similarly, another informant vending in Chipledhunga also revealed, "Before the metropolis authority turned tough for us, I used to do more investment in buying fruits so I used to make a very good income. But now the market is not favorable for vending as a result I make low investment and naturally I have a low income." In this matter another informant vending in Chipledhunga area also told, "In previous time my income was very good because I had a permanent place and permanent customer. Sometimes, one customer

used to buy fruits of about one thousand to fifteen hundred on a single day but the situation is changed now.”

In this way, as revealed by the informants, they used to invest from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 10,000 per day and earn even up to Rs. 1000 in a day. The situation was such that even if they couldn't make any income on any particular day, they used to be able to manage to their needs fulfilled from another day's profit. Once afternoon around 3 pm, during my field work near Bus park area, I happened to see one vender being caught by metropolis police along with her *doko* with fruits. They took away her fruits. After they left, I went to talk to that vendor woman. I asked her about what she would do then when all of her fruits were taken away by metro police. Actually, I wanted to discover about how she would manage her needs for that particular day. She replied me that she would manage from her previous day's income, if that became insufficient, she would try to invest more time to recover from the selling of tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.

5.2.2 Expenditure pattern of the street vendors

Alongside income, I also endeavored to find out the expenditure pattern that these vendors spend in a day from vending. What I found was that their expenditure was a variable one. In this context, one of the informants, whom I had met when she was vending in Buspark area of Prithvi Chowk, told that her daily expenditure depended upon how much she earned from vending in a day. In her view, if she earned more, she used to spend more otherwise she usually expends approximately hundred to five hundred in a day. In the words of another informant, who usually vends in Chipledhunga area, “My expenditure is unexplainable; sometime I have to do more spending than I thought. Specially, it goes very high at that time when my guests come to my home.”

In this matter another informant vending in Mahendrapool area told that, she sometimes spent more and sometime less. She had to manage all of her expenditure from the income from vending. She further added that, whenever she had a good income she used to buy good food like fish and meat for her family. Similarly yet another informant, whom I had met while she was vending in Chipledhunga also disclosed that, when she had a bigger family, even one thousand was not enough in a

day. After her family is separated now she is living with her one son. So her vending income is enough to fulfill their basic daily needs.

Some other informants expressed that vending is very supportive practice for meeting expenditure. In this context one of the informants from Prithvi Chowk explained that she has four members in the family and needs around one and half sack of rice and vegetables etc. to feed in a month which cost about Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 16,000. She further added that her family needs about Rs. 500.00 in a day. According to her, without vending it was impossible to meet her family expenditure.

Some of the other informants revealed that they spend their almost all of the income from vending, while some others told that they spend half of the income. In this context one of the informants, who usually vends in Prithvi Chowk area told that right from the start of the day, she starts spending and that continues till evening. She spends her almost all of her income in activities like feeding, buying cigarette, buying recharge card and other necessary things. Another informant, who mostly vends in Mahendrapool told that she spends half of the money from the income from vending. Some of informant also revealed that their expenditure is more than their income.

5.2.3 Practices of saving among street vendors

After the assessment of income and expenditure pattern of the respondent vendors, I was interested in discovering if these vendors engage in any kind of saving activities. In this attempt, I found most of them making some kind of saving in a number of ways. In regards to saving practice one informant vending in Prithvi Chowk area disclosed during informal talks that she has saved about Rs. 50,000.00 to Rs. 1,00,000.00 in some co-operatives. Interestingly, she also revealed that she doesn't remember the name of those co-operatives but she knows their locations and deposits money through daily their money collectors.

Another informant, a vendor from Buspark, Prithvi Chowk also revealed, "I have a saving account in my daughter name in Prithivi Sahakari. Since my daughter is small and we are becoming old, there may be difficulty in making needed investment in her higher studies. So I must have to save some amount of money for her education. That is why I have been saving Rs. 50.00 per day in my daughter's account from the income that I make from vending." The worry as well as the plan for the daughter's

future is clearly evident in her. Similarly, in the matter of saving, another informant, a vending woman from Chipledhunga expressed, “I have done my own life insurance because I don’t know what is going to happen in the future, there may be accident during vending or I may die during striving with tough authority. So, even if something fatal happens to me, my children can have some money in future.” This vendor woman also was equally sensitive towards the future of her children. Even though these vendors are mere petty businesswomen, their future planning and contribution for their children’s future is fully admirable one

One day during my field work in Mahendra pool area, I was busy in an informal talk with one of the vendors. Suddenly, our conversation was interrupted when one lady dressed in an official suit came in between us. The lady asked the vendor woman for money and she gave her Rs. 200. The lady noted that in her records and left from there. Then I saw her doing the same with another vending woman. I was so curious about it then I asked the vendor woman whom I was talking to previously about who the lady was, why she was collecting their money and why they were giving their money to her. Regarding my question she gently smiled and replied me that, the lady was marketing assistant from Dhanus Co-operative where they had been saving some money from their daily income from vending for using in crunch time in the future. In this way, I witnessed the saving practices of the vendor women in Pokhara on that day.

After talking to a number of vendors from my study area, I came to know that some of the vendors save money in a bank, while some other save in mothers group also. I further discovered that some of them even collected some of their income from vending at home. While talking to me, one of the vendor women from Buspark, Prithvi Chowk, disclosed me that she had saved some money at her home. Moreover, she had given some money to her relatives in loan; this gave her extra income in the form of interests. Regarding saving, I came to know about yet another saving practice of these women. During the conversation with me, some of the women revealed me that they even practiced *Dhukuti* for saving money. An informant from Prithvi Chowk revealed me that she had been playing *Dhukuti* by using the income that she made from vending. She further revealed me that she has done her own life insurance. Moreover, she also revealed that, she used to keep Rs. 5,000.00 – Rs. 10,000.00 in her home for any kind of accidental use. Surprisingly her income was lower than her

expenditure; she didn't reveal me about how she managed all those stuffs from such a low income. So, I thought that she might have other sources of income too, which she did not want to reveal me. Regarding insurance, one of the informants was found to be cheated by an insurance agent who took money from hers but later on she came to know that her life insurance was never done. She couldn't get that money back as the agent has gone out of contact. It means that there are some people who live in the city by cheating these hard working women.

In this matter of saving another informant, who mostly vends in Chipledhunga area told that she used to have more selling and thus more profit from vending during festive time. So she could save some money only at that time while in other times, her income became only enough for meeting the basic needs of her family. Later on, I discovered that her income was not the only income of her family as husband was a city bus driver.

In this way, I found a strong sense of future security, not only of their own but also of their family members, among most of the vendors that is why they had been practicing different types of saving practices and investing in life insurance. However, I found a few vendor women, who did not practice any kind of saving. As disclosed by them, they used to spend all of their income as their expenditure is quite high and they believed on enjoying the present time rather than worrying about uncertain future.

5.3 Reasons for engaging in vending

5.3.1 Very low investment

Perhaps, street vending may be the easiest way of doing a business in Pokhara in terms of investment. It is because one person does not need more than a couple of thousand rupees to start a street vending business. One only needs to buy a few dozen kilos of fruits, weighing machine, and a bamboo basket (*doko*). They can just occupy a small public space in a footpath.

The vendors I interviewed revealed that they did not have enough money to invest in other business. One of the vendors whom I had found busy in vending in Mahendrapool told me that she had only two hundred rupees in her pocket on the day in which she had started this practice. She bought fruits from local *Mandi* with that

two hundreds of rupees and sold them in the market. Another informant, who sells fruits in the streets of Buspark area revealed me that if they wanted to get a space in a building in the center of the city on rent, they needed to pay at least one million rupees only for the empty space. They needed to additionally pay the monthly rent of the space. Most of the women were poor, and they did not have any saving or bondage to invest in business other than street vending. It is unimaginable for these women to receive loans from banks since they do not have properties in the city. Additionally, these women do not have political networks to access government subsidies or benefits to establish other better businesses. Thus, for these women, street vending is the only option.

5.3.2 Lack of education, skills and ramifications

Education is one of the essential factors to get a job. Most of vendor women I interviewed believe that for getting a better job in a company or a government office, they require higher degree, technical skills, and good work experience. I found that most of the vendors don't have even a secondary school degree. Most of them are either illiterate or just literate; and a few have just lower secondary level education. Most of the women vendors haven't received any formal skill-based or professional training. Among the eleven vendors I interviewed in depth, just one had received a knitting training. She did knitting for some time but left it because of low and inconsistent income. Therefore, the lack of education and skills among the vendors is the one of the main reasons for them to choose the vending.

After discovering their poor educational background, I attempted to assess the main reasons behind them. In this attempt, I found a number of reasons why the vendors couldn't get a better educational degree and skill-based training. One of the women whom I had met in Mahendrapool said that she had a strong desire to receive a higher degree as well as some kinds of skills-based training but due to the family problems she didn't get those opportunities. Early marriage was the reason behind it for a woman vendor whom I had met while vending in Buspark area of Prithvi Chowk. Another vendor told that she was married in her early teenage. The door to the school was closed for her after she went to her husband's home.

The other reason discovered is poverty. Most of the vendors didn't go to school because of their poor family background. Gender is another factor. One of the women whom I had met vending in Mahendrapool revealed that her parents didn't educate them because she was a daughter. Another vendor from Chipledhunga also revealed that she was denied of higher education because she was a daughter. In Nepal many parents think that investing on daughter's education is worthless because daughters are supposed to do domestic chores and are thought to be going to husband's home after marriage. Some of the vendors disclosed that they do not have social and political connections to get skill-based trainings. That is why, despite their aspiration to get better education and skill development training, they are deprived of it.

5.3.3 Flexibility of street vending

Street vendors can have their own self determination and freedom to do their own business. They can start their business on according to their mood. If they will be sick; they need some rest; and they want to go somewhere, they can have their own freedom of choice to do.

Sometimes in needy situation vending can support to fulfill their needs and they do not have to seek for it. Some vendors revealed that for doing good job have to be a relative man power in that company or have to give bribe but in vending they do not have to ask help for their business. Thus, street vendors can have their own determination and freedom to do their business.

5.3.4 Lack of alternatives

Due to the poverty, polygamy marriage, domestic violence and difficult in other occupation street vendors cannot find other better jobs to do. When people do not have anything to eat or inadequate to feed their children they must have to do what they found. Street vending is only one easy option for them to choose. They can learn easily by doing some observation and knowing from their relatives and friends. So, they involve in street vending.

One of the informants named Sahara Devi Rokaya (name changed) was vending in Prithvi Chowk during my field studies. Her husband had married another woman, and

he started to neglect her and her children. She was just a pre-literate and economically poor, but she had a daunting task of raising her children. She searched for source of income but could not find out any another income of source to raise her children and feed them. So, she opted to engage in vending. Her case below explains in detail:

Case study 1

“yehi doko bokera 4 ota balbacha paleko ra padako chhu”

(Raising & educating 4 children carrying this doko)

My name is Sahara Devi Rokaya Chettri (name changed). I am 45 years old. I live in Gairapatan, Pokhara on rent. My permanent home is in Gorkha district. My husband left me to another woman when our children were quite younger. However, I did not marry to anyone and has been living ever since with four children. My elder daughter reads in Bachelors level, small daughter is in 10+2 level while two sons are in class 8 and 10 respectively. I am illiterate and I did not have enough money to involve in any kind of business or work so I chose street vending as a surviving strategy for my family. Now, it is almost 20 years that I have been doing street vending in this place.

Every morning, I wake up at 5 am, have some breakfast and then start cooking the meal. When the meal is ready, I pack some of it into the Tiffin box in order to eat in the vending place because I do not have time to return back home for taking food. After that I go to the Mandi, buy some fruits and bring them to this and start my vending business of the day. I do this till the sunset. Many difficulties came across my way but I never stop doing vending because my whole family has been completely depending upon it. This is the only one source of income I do have and there is no one to support me. My children haven't finished their study so they cannot engage in work for generating income. This doko has been the only way that has been helping me to raise and educate my four children. Each day, I earn Rs. 500 to 1000 as profit. This earning is only enough for fulfilling our needs and paying the rent.

In the past, I had a permanent vending place in the street. I had made one iron bed and used to sell the stuffs nicely by placing on it but Nagarpalika took away my iron bed and removed me from my permanent place in the street. Owing to my weaker financial condition, I was not able to do my business by taking a shutter on rent. So, even though I was removed from my permanent place, I have been carrying my stuffs in this doko and selling them to the customers. I have to engage in a struggle with Nagarpalika almost daily and thus it is so hard. However, I cannot leave it because

this doko is the only way for feeding and educating my children. So I request the government to allow us to do our vending without any fear.

Few of the vendors faced domestic violence from their drunk and jobless husband. So they saw vending being a good option to do because there was no one to help them. Some of vendors felt difficulties in wage laboring because the owners did not provide salary in a time. Besides they felt it very hard to engage in menial work. So, they moved on to vending business. Rukmaya Bishwokarma (name changed) used to work in construction sector. Her main tasks there were carrying stone, sand and cement from one place to another in the construction site. One has to use tremendous physical power in such activities, which she could not provide for a long time. So she chose vending as an alternative.

Doing my observation, I met one old-aged vendor named Nauli Bishwokarma (name changed) in Prithvi Chowk. During talks, she told me that her husband died. Her son also started to live separately after he married and she became alone. She had been suffering from diabetes for the last 13 years, so she had to take regular medication against this chronic health problem. She needed a continuous source of income for buying medicines. This reason compelled her to engage in vending in her old age too.

5.3.5 Passing time

Another interesting inference that I drew from the fieldwork is that some of the vendors are coming to do vending only for time-pass. One of the vendors vending in Prithvi Chowk area shared that, after her son moved to the city for doing groceries business, she also came here. Her family has enough income sources. In the city of Pokhara, her family was busy in business but she couldn't find anywhere to go for passing her time. So, she found it very hard to spend her time in the city and started to engage in vending as a way of passing her leisure time.

Another vendor from Chipledhunga disclosed that after coming to the city, she found it very difficult to pass days by remaining more or less idle. So, she opted for vending for the sake of passing her daytime. Later she discovered that this practice gives her fair bit of income which she could spend in her needs. In this way, vending has

proved to be a very good option for her for not only passing her time but also for making income for her use.

In cities of Nepal, the local as well as the federal government have not been able to ensure the availability of free places for aged people or children. The situation of Pokhara is not much different. Day by day cities are getting overcrowded by building, vehicles and people. However, the free zone or parks have not been the part of urban planning policy that's why people have been finding it very difficult to spend their leisure time. As revealed by some of the informants, the street vending has been a very good way for utilizing and spending their time.

There are several reasons why the vendors continue to do street vending in Pokhara. The most important reason is that they can start the business in much lower investment. In Nepal, it's not easy to do any kind of business because of political instability, corruption, lack of securities, lack of skilled man power, lack of energy, political strikes, and so on. Small scale business and entrepreneurs are also suffering much. Therefore, street vending can be a good option to avoid business insecurities. Other reasons include their lack of education and skills to do other business; they don't have other alternatives; street vending can be a good source of income; and they have personal freedom in street vending.

Entering to street vending is easy. However, continuing this business in the long run is tough. This is because it is an illegal activity in the eyes of municipal government and it tries its best to prevent any kind of street vending by making different kinds of policies and regulations. Therefore, street vending is a challenging affair for practicing. Each day a street vendor has to strive against a number of obstacles or challenges. The following chapter explains about the striving of women street vendors for livelihood sustenance in Pokhara.

CHAPTER VI

STRIVING OF VENDORS FOR SUBSISTENCE LIVELIHOOD

As explained in the previous chapters, street vending is main source of livelihood for a section population in Pokhara. However, practicing street vending poses a variety of challenges as the metropolis authority has termed street vending an illegal activity. In this chapter I have attempted to explain the main challenges encountered by the women street vendors of Pokhara, which I discovered through the observations as well as formal or informal talks made with the informants during the fieldwork.

6.1 Relationship with metropolis

In the view of street vendors, their relationship with metropolis authority is shaped by very strict policy of the metropolis made to curb vending practices in the streets of Pokhara Metropolitan City. In this context one of the informants revealed that their relationship with metropolis is very complicated. She feels the metropolis authority frequently becomes too coercive towards them. However, the metropolis authority has its own stand regarding street vending. One of the key-informants, who is also the Chief Administrative Officer of Pokhara Municipality was of the opinion that the footpath is for pedestrians and no one can encroach it. He added that it is the fundamental duty of the metropolis authority to guarantee an obstruction free movement of the people walking along the footpath. Moreover, he was adamant that any business can be run only after formal registration and the metropolis will make every possible effort to prevent those activities which violate the policies and acts of the metropolitan. He suggested the vendors to follow the officio-legal procedures if they want to run any kind of businesses within the metropolis. Interestingly, the officer was more or less silent regarding the duty of the metropolis authority towards the street vendors and best possible ways to manage their issues.

6.2 Relationship with metropolis police

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

I found the relationship between metropolis police and vendor similar to that of two of the popular cartoon characters, *Tom and Jerry*. The relationship between metropolis police and vendors is somehow similar to that of a cat (Tom) and a mouse (Jerry) in that cartoon show, where they mostly play the hide and seek game. The role of cat represents metropolis police and the role of mouse by the street vendors. The cat always seeks to catch out the mouse and attacks when he finds it out. However, the difference is that cat might try to kill the mouse but metropolis only grabs the vendor’s stuffs. Sometimes cat uses various traps for catching the mouse like metropolis police frequently do. On the other hand, the mouse can’t do anything except hiding from the cat and uses his best possible trick to hide away and protect herself from the cat. Street vendors adopt the same strategy just like the mouse in order to escape from the traps of metropolis police.

The following case presents a typical example of how street vendors of Pokhara strive for selling their stuffs:

Case study 2

“Charai disa aakha tej banayera, uthera bepar garna parcha”

(I have to sell fruits by standing and keeping a sharp eye all around)

My name is Sudhika Achchhami (name changed). I am 37 year old. My permanent home is in Dhading district. Now I am living in Nayabazar, Pokhara within my husband and one son. It’s been 18 years that I have been living in Pokhara city and almost doing street vending for about 16 years. After having a conflict with my mother in law, I had come to live with my husband in this city.

When I came here, I felt very happy to see the beauty of Pokhara and enjoyed my youth time very much which is still in my mind. I was not aware that Nagarpalika would rule this area and control the activities over here as I was not aware about this institution. I always have that day in my memory in which I was caught by Nagar Prahari for the first time. When I was caught, I even didn’t know that they were from

Nagarpalika so I just stayed silent. I didn't do any kind of back to back conversation with them so they left my fruits.

My husband used to work in transport as a mechanic. He earned only Rs. 400.00 to Rs.500.00 in a day which was not enough in this expensive city. So I chose street vending for sustaining our livelihood. In the beginning, I felt very easy to involve in this business because there was no fear of anybody and even if I was unsuccessful to get profit on a particular day, I earned it the next day. Most disappointingly, many things have changed after Nagarpalika implemented their rules against us about 6/7 years ago. Now, It is very hard to do street vending as I have to face many difficulties each day.

I have to discuss with customers daily because they do not believe in my measurement. Some of the fraud vendors mislead the spring balance so customers also thought that I am also one of them. Here is no permanent customer now a day. I always have a fear in my heart that Nagarprahari will be come and snatch away my stuffs. So, I always sell my stuffs by standing and frequently looking around cautiously in all possible directions in order to avoid myself from being caught by Nagarprahari. Otherwise if don't do that they would grab all of my stuffs and I would lose that day's income. Hiding and selling is the crucial part of my vending business.

On the afternoon of 10th February 2018, I had been to Prithvi Chowk in order to undertake a scheduled interview with a vendor named Maya Lama (name changed). Before I could start her interview, I witnessed an example of how metropolis police treat the street vendors. A metropolitan police quickly and secretly got down from his van and all of a sudden grabbed the *doko* of a vendor woman, who was selling pomegranates. The woman also tried to pull her *doko* towards herself in order to prevent the police from snatching it. During the struggle to keep the *doko* away from the police, all of her fruits fell from her *doko* and dispersed along the road. Pedestrians and other people around including me witnessed the entire event helplessly as mere spectators. Then, the metropolitan police collected all the pomegranates and put them inside the van. I wanted to take a photograph using my mobile phone. But another police woman who came from behind threatened me not to take the photograph.

About a month later, on 15th March 2018, I witnessed another incident in Chilpedhunga while doing fieldwork. That time, metropolis police came out of their

van, got divided and went to the different sides to surround the vendors from all the sides and catch them. Two vendors somehow managed to escape away with their fruits but one of them got caught.

The case study given below presents yet another example of the striving of street vendors that they have to make against *Nagar prahari* in order to sell their stuffs:

Case Study 3

“doke huna ka lagi ramro daudina saku parchha”

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

My name is Maushara Bishwokarma(name changed). I am 42 years old. I am a mother of five children and a grandmother of another five grandchildren. It has been 26 years since I came from Syangja to Pokhara with my husband. Since there were not enough opportunities for income generation in our village, we thought to do something in Pokhara and moved here. Now, I am living in Sukumbasi area near Buspark. After moving here, I did work for supporting my husband in his occupation, because my husband's was not sufficient to fulfill our needs. I am able to count up to 35 only, didn't get a chance to study, so I had no chance to get proper job. Working in others house was an option available but I thought that this might be burdensome and full of hardship. So, I decided to do street vending. In early time, I started selling vegetables but I felt it very hard as I had to move from door to door in customers home. Understanding my hardships, one of my friends suggested me to sell fruits because I did not need to go far for this like vegetables. After that it has been 25/26 year for which I have been involved in street vending.

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

Some insurance agents were to us for telling us about life insurance and convinced that after paying half of money, we will get it back with interest. So, I thought they

were right and I did insurance. I saved Rs. 7000.00 in every six month for almost nine times. However, I could not get my money back again. I asked them to return back my money without interest but they only returned Rs. 30,000.00 and Rs. 8000.00 in two occasions, so I left it.

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

I don't know why government does this with us!

One of the informants, whom I had met when she was vending in Chipledhunga area, explained how the metropolitan police treat them as “Sometimes, they chase us even up to the third floor of a building.” She further revealed that the metropolis police sometime use foul language with the vendors. In this context, another vendor from Prithvi Chowk disclosed in an informal talk that she was arrested and taken to a police station when she and her friend had a heated verbal confrontation with metropolis police. Yet another one from Mahendrapool revealed that her one of the co-venders was very badly injured when she was trying to escape away from the metropolitan police. She further added that one *chatpatey* vendor died in an accident that he met when he was being chased away by metropolis security personnel.

However, one key-informant who is also the Chief of the Disaster Management and Supervision Division of Pokhara Metropolitan City Office denied any kind of wrongdoings by the Metropolitan police towards street vendors. According to him, the office has given his division the duty to clear the footpath for unobstructed movements of the people walking along the streets. So, metropolitan police acts only to fulfill its allocated duty.

6.3 Relationship with other shopkeepers

Vending practices are mainly done in the busy markets of Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga and Prithvi Chowk including Buspark. These are the major market centers of Pokhara and thus they remain crowded with people during the day time

mainly from 11 am to 4 pm. For vendors, this is the best time to sell fruits. However, the vending environment doesn't always remain hospitable to the vendors. As I observed during my field work, other shopkeepers felt annoyed with the presence of vendors around their shops. As revealed by one of the shopkeepers, who runs a fancy store in Chipledhunga, the presence of too many vendors around the shops distracts their potential customers.

On the other hand, vendors feel that they are misbehaved by other shopkeepers. Not only fruit selling shopkeepers but shopkeepers also misbehave them. As revealed by one of the vendors from Mahendrapool during her interview, she always makes sure that she doesn't sell standing in front of only one shop because once she have faced a misbehavior of shopkeeper. She further said that, the shopkeeper first threatened her to go away from that place but when she did not go as he said he threw water into her. Another informant from Chipledhunga also shared that, once she was hiding from metro police at the side of a shop, but one shopkeeper saw her, then he caught her by her neck and handed her over to the metro police. Yet another vendor from Prithvi Chowk added that "big businessmen tend to do conspiracy against them spying to Nagarpalika." She further added that the fancy owners did not allow them to sell fruits by standing in front of their shop and scold them by chanting bad words. In this matter another informant from Buspark, Prithvi Chowk remarked "the Hongkong bazaar businessmen pressurized Nagarpalika for removing us from the street as they felt that we are threatening their business and if Nagarpalika does not remove us, then they will also come to the road to sell their stuffs."

I have an amazing experience regarding this. During my early stage of field work, some vendors also thought that I was one of the spies from Metropolis so they tried to remain away from me and did not wanted to talk to me. Once, one vendor from Prithvi Chowk was angry with me and she even scolded me. However, after doing daily conversation, I was able to convince her and others and won their trust. When I engaged more and more in rapport building with them, they started to talk openly more and more.

While doing field observation in Bus park area of Prithvi Chowk, I got a chance to witness a case of conflict between fruit-selling shopkeeper and a vendor regarding. They had a heated exchange of words for a while. After the situation calmed, I asked the fruit-selling shopkeeper about the reason behind that incident. According to him,

the fruit vendor was trying to allure his regular customers. However, when I inquired about the vendor woman about that incident, she told me that she was offering the fruit to the customer in the lower rate than him, so he could not bear that. She went on to add that those fruit shopkeepers were jealous with her and other vendors as they sold fruits to the customers in front of them. That is why sometimes they tried to create misunderstandings between the customers and vendors by provoking the customers to check the weight of the fruits that they bought from the vendors in the weighing machine of their shops.

6.4 Customer's behavior towards street vendors

In terms of dealing with customers, street vending is generally a challenging task. This is because each day, the vendor encounters customers of different characteristics. In this context, one of the informants, whom I had met while she was vending in Prithvi Chowk, told that not some of her customers were courteous and friendly. However, she further added that most of her customers directly engage in bargaining in order to lower price of the fruits. She feels that most of the customers think vendors give significantly high discount if they bargain more and more.

During my fieldwork in Prithvi Chowk, on 17th February 2018, I was talking to a vendor in order to finalize the date for interviewing her. Suddenly I saw one young man coming closer to other vendor near to us in a very angry mood. In fact, he had come back to return the grapes which he had bought from that vendor woman. He accused the vendor woman of cheating him in the weight of the grapes as he found them being underweight when he measured their weight in a grocery. The vendor woman tried to convince him by adding more grapes but he didn't accept that and wanted his money back. At that time, there occurred a little conflict between them. When the young man left, the vendor, whom I was talking to, said that sometimes the vendors might make mistakes but not always as they had to sell fruits not only for one day.

On 5th March 2018, I was doing my fieldwork in Chipledhunga. One of the vendor women called a lady passing nearby her by saying *didi* and the lady stopped. Then the vendor woman told her that she has very high quality pomegranate and requested her to buy some of them. The reaction of the lady clearly showed that she was not happy

with that request. She asked the vendor woman about the price in a rude way, when vendor woman told the price, she shook her head and said her that her price was in higher side. After a debate for a while the vendor agreed to lower price by some margin and the lady became ready to buy two kilograms of pomegranate. However, the lady turned suspicious about the weight then and told the vendor show the measurement in the other weighing machine. After that the vendor took that lady to a nearby veterinary shop in order to clear her suspicion.

Regarding customers' behavior with the vendors, another informant from Chipledhunga revealed, "Not all customers are troublesome. Some of them are kind and supportive. But some of them are too much annoying as they tend to engage in excessive bargaining and if we do not agree to sell the fruits in the rate they say, they threaten us by taking the name of *Nagapalika*. Whether they are from *Nagarपालिका* or not, they defrauded us by saying that they were the men from *Nagarपालिका* so we must have to give them in lower price that they want."

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

6.5 Ways of negotiations/bargaining with customers: chatting and cheating

Bargaining for a price is a main method of setting a price of a good in vending business. Vendors find it very hard to overcome the bargain made by their customers regarding the price of the items that they sell. This is because, they cannot afford to invest more time to deal with the bargain made by their customers for a long time as the metropolis police might come to snatch their *doko*. As a result, they often get compelled to compromise with the price. Moreover, from my own field observation and informal talks with some of the customers, I have discovered that the customers don't want to give a good price because they consider the fruits sold by the vendors as having low quality. In addition to this, some of the customers believe that the vendors

cheat them in terms of weight. Another important point is that I have found most of the customers thinking that vendors' fruits must be cheaper as they don't need to pay any kind of rent or taxes.

In this context, one of the vendors, whom I had met in Chipledhunga told, "Some customers are good and quite easy to deal with while finalizing the rate of the fruits. However; some are very difficult to be handled though I deal with them by understanding their mentality. Here, I also used my own experience of vending." Similarly, another informant, who mostly vends in Buspark area of Prithvi Chowk also revealed "even they shouted, become angry and greedy with me, but I must have to be very soft, speak sweetly and should not be angry with them because they are my buyers. When they become happy and satisfied then they would buy my fruits and I would be able to earn more."

Vending is one of the businesses where vendors should have to speak loudly and for better advertise as well as have to do much more communication with people for better sell. In this context, one of the informants from Chipledhunga told me that when she did much more advertisement by speaking loudly she attracted more customers on that day as well as her earning also good however, some time if she can't due to the sickness her earning also lesser than other days.

During my fieldwork, I also discovered that some of the vendors were very smart to cheat the customers using their spring balance if the situation demands that. One day during my fieldwork in Buspark area, I was sipping tea with one of the informant vendor in a tea shop. She was having tea as well as selling her fruits too. At that time one man came to buy her orange and he started bargaining for lowering the price. She started chatting with him in a soft tone and shockingly, she gave her orange in very cheap rate i.e. the rate that the man was wanting. After man went I asked her about if she was not in loss by doing that and she replied me that she never loses like that. She further disclosed that she smartly cheated with the spring balance and fooled the customer successfully so that the loss that she had from lowering the price was covered by the loss in weight that she created.

6.7 Alterations in selling pattern

In the course of this research, I tried to discover the type of changes that the vendors experienced in the selling pattern while vending overtime. Obviously, the vending environment was easier in the past but now the scenario had completely altered. “In the past, we used to sell the fruits by sitting comfortably on a place. There was no fear of municipality at all.” This was a remark made by one of the vendors in Prithvi Chowk area that she made while recalling the vending environment in the past. Similarly, another informant from Mahendrapool remarked that in the past there was manageable distribution of places for selling. There were more co-operations and a little competition between co-vendors. Now it is more the case of competition than cooperation. As a result, now she likes to remain at a significant distance from another vendor for better selling. She further told that, the chance of getting caught by the metropolitan police is very high when there is vendors’ crowd so now she tends to stay separately away from the crowd. This increases the likelihood of selling more fruits and minimizes the risk of being caught by the police. Another informant from Prithvi Chowk also disclosed that she used to enjoy a lot in vending in the past. She added further that the sale was much better and it was much easier to fulfill the daily basic needs by doing vending but now she felt very difficult due to tough metropolis authority.

Till 2068 B.S., street vendors were allowed to operate shops on the streets by paying a certain tax, which was largely a nominal one. Thus, the vendors used to have a very good business. This is what some of the old vendors still have in their memories. This was evident in the words of an informant from Prithvi Chowk, who revealed that in the past they paid some taxes to the municipality so they were allowed to do vending. But now, she went on to add that they have now illegalized street vending, they do not have to pay any kind of taxes to municipality and always get chased away by them. In the words of another informant, whom I had found vending in Mahendrapool “In the past I was unknown about municipality because they did not trouble us so I felt very easy in vending. Nowadays, I am feeling very difficult because I always have to do daily striving against metropolitan police.” Similarly, yet another informant, who was from Chipledhunga informed that, her vending was good in the previous time because the vending environment was also good that is why she used to make more investment but now her investment is lower due to the changing situation. Yet another informant

from Prithvi Chowk was of the opinion that, after municipality implemented their own rules and regulation, she also became compelled to change her selling pattern. In her view, in the past she used to remain at a fix place so she had permanent customers and also had good familiar relationship with them. However, now the situation has changed as a result she has to deal with new customers daily so the vending life has become very hard.

Interestingly, I found some of vendors feeling present vending environment easier than the past one. As informed by a vendor, whom I had met in Prithvi Chowk, in the past the vending was difficult because the street was overtaken by old vendors or footpath businessman. So they used to have their own kind of monopoly. However, after municipality removed them, our vending life has become easier one and everyone is feeling very free as they can undertake vending by hiding from metropolitan city. Similarly, another informant from Chipledhunga also shared that, she feels it being easier than that in the past. In her View, now she does not have to wander all around the valley for selling her fruits as she has regular costumers there.

6.8 Reasons for not giving up vending: Contribution of vending in livelihood

From my observations made during the fieldworks, I have found the life of a vendor being full of struggles and strivings. Now the vending environment has been more hostile for the vendors. The metropolis authority has labeled street vending as an illegal act. Still, there are a number of people in Pokhara, who are not being able to give up this practice. I was equally interested to know the main reasons by which they are engaged in what metropolis labels as an illegal act. Here I tried to focus mainly on those vendors who have been vending in Pokhara for more than six years now. While exploring about the reasons for not being able to give up vending practice, one of the most significant inferences that, I got from the talks with the informants was that they are continuing vending practice due to the lack of appropriate alternative.

In this context, one of the informants who usually vends in Mahendrapool disclosed that she could never think about giving up vending because her vending is playing very significant role to sustain her family needs. Moreover, she is now familiar in this business. She also shared that she could not have a patience to wait for a whole month for a little salary if she did work for others in a monthly salary. Another informant

who was vending in Chipledhunga at the time of my fieldwork also revealed that, once she had left street vending and opened her own fruits shop. However, she had to suffer a significant loss from that shop; she sought for other options but could not find any. This ultimately brought her back to the street vending again. She further told that there is less chance to bear greater loss in vending and also do not have to pay the rent.

Regarding the matter of giving up street vending, yet another informant from Chipledhunga shared that she wanted to leave vending and do work in other sector. However, she found it being that much easy to do work under pressure. She felt that vending is her own choice where she does not have to be scared from owners as well as she can go through her own time schedule and freedom. Another informant, who was vending in Prithvi Chowk at the time of my fieldwork shared that, she really wanted to leave vending and open her own shop. However, her economic condition was very weak to do enough investment for that shop that is why she is still doing vending.

I discovered that the vendors are still involving in street vending due to their family condition, economic condition, education, skills and also due to the lack of appropriate alternative. Once I was doing observation in Mahendrapool area, I saw one street vendor away running to protect her stuffs from metropolitan police while doing that she get little injured. After metropolis van went away, I did talk to her asking about the reason for being involved in such a practice which is quite risky for her. What she replied was very significant. She told that she have been doing street vending for the last ten years. She is fully habituated in it in such a way that even if the situation becomes even more tough she never think about to abandon vending as it supports her livelihood. She further revealed that she is very poor and do not have any alternative option due to the lack of education and there is no any relatives in political power.

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

Case Study 4

“Toilet ma lukera jyan jogaunu parchha”

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

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

Every day, I wake up early morning at 5 am and go to the job of housekeeping. After doing housekeeping, I go to the Mandi for bringing some fruits and do sell them until finished. It usually takes me almost 8-9 hours for finishing. Then I go back again to my job in housekeeping, where I work till 9 pm. I feel that street vending has become very tough now days. Due to the earthquake and other reasons, the number of the vendors has increased and so situation has turned very competitive day by day for getting customers as well as satisfying them. Specially, there is very challenging environment as the metropolis has turned tough against us greatly. Every day, I have to cope with metropolis police for protecting my stuffs.

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

For making Pokhara city, beautiful they have been trying to remove us; however they don't know how hard our life is. My job owner does not provide salary in a time and salary is also not enough so vending is a must for sustaining my daily life. Vending is not that easy. I do not have a proper time to eat food, take a rest, and care my daughter nicely. There is no safe environment in the street. However, I have to struggle in this society because there is no one to support me. I hope the government will provide peaceful and permanent place for us to do vending as it keeps us alive by contributing in our livelihood.

In this way, what I learnt is that when there is lack of appropriate alternative, people become ready not only to sacrifice their choices and freedom but also to accept any kind of adverse condition. Moreover, a very important insight that I gained after such a long intensive field work is that these vendors are indirectly claiming their share in urban space. Metropolis authority tries its best to prevent them from appearing on the streets but they do not give up. Their incessant striving for some of the urban space for undertaking vending practices has been going on and on. Such tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by the local authority, local entrepreneurs, businesspersons and their associations also gives an unspoken or indirect message that the vendors have been claiming their right over urban space amid coercion of metropolis authority or a 'struggle for existence'.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, FINDING, AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have presented the summary of this study, which will be followed by the main findings made. The latter part of the chapter includes the conclusions and recommendations that I have drawn from the study.

7.1 Summary

I had initiated this study with the general objective of assessing the living condition of street vendors of Pokhara metropolitan City and the contribution of street vending in making their livelihood. The specific objectives were to examine the reasons for these people being engaged in street vending in Pokhara City and to investigate the vendors' striving for getting subsistence livelihoods in the context of increased rigidness of local authorities towards them.

Embedded with the thematic notions of urban anthropology conceptually, theoretically and methodologically, this study was guided by the concepts like livelihood and informal sector. Right to the city has been used as the main theoretical guideline. Literatures related to these conceptual and theoretical bases as well as others, which were undertaken on and about street vending in and out of Nepal have been reviewed during this study. Methodologically, this study was carried out in main market centers of Pokhara Metropolitan City, namely Mahendrapool, Chipledhunga, and Prithivi Chowk including Buspark. These areas were purposefully selected for the data collection of this study. This is a study based on qualitative research tradition. Within this tradition, this study made use of the basic elements of ethnographic research. In terms of research design, this study is based on **exploratory** and **descriptive** research designs.

There have been no documented /official records on the total number of street vendors in Pokhara Metropolitan City as the metropolis authority has classified this activity as an illegal act. However, street vending is quite a common practice in the major market centers of Pokhara and all those street vendors formed the universe of this study.

Thus, for the qualitative research, I had selected 11 woman street vendors as the main informants of this study by adopting purposive sampling procedure. Besides, four informants were chosen purposively for case studies and additional two informants for key-informants interview. Basically, this research has been based on primary types of qualitative data collected from the ethnographic fieldwork undertaken mainly by making use of the techniques of in-depth interviewing with the informants, key-informants and participant observation. To be precise, fruits selling women as street vendors in Pokhara were main sources of primary data. Some important secondary data were also gathered through the review of published and unpublished documents available in libraries, official records of Pokhara Metropolis office, and personal collections. Data analysis followed a kind of cyclical pattern of data collection, recording, analyzing, and returning to the field to collect more data. During data analysis, at first I collected data from participant observation and interviews. After that I transcribed all of those recorded data in Nepali by using computer software named VLC media player. Then each of the transcripts was translated into English and the translated data were coded in English to generate themes and categories. Finally, those themes and categories were analyzed descriptively.

There are several reasons for which the women street vendors have been engaged in street vending in Pokhara. The most important reason that has been discovered is that street vending can be started with much lower investment. Besides this, lack of appropriate alternative, lack of educational qualification, more personal freedom etc. are other reasons. Therefore, street vending can be a good option to avoid business insecurities. Metropolis authority has been trying to prevent them from appearing on the streets but they are not in a mood to give up. In the streets, they have to strive against a number challenges which are posed by metropolis authority and their police, their customers and other shop keepers. As evident in their stories, they have been continually striving against these challenges for generating income. Their incessant striving for some of the urban space for undertaking vending practices has been going on and on. Such tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by the local authority, local entrepreneurs, businesspersons and their associations also gives an unspoken or indirect message that the vendors have been claiming their right over urban space.

7.2 Major findings

The major findings made from this study have been summed as follows:

a) Demographic characteristics

- In terms of the place of origin, the street vendors have been found to have come from diverse places and their origin is not limited to the nearby places of Pokhara and Kaski district only.
- Most of the vendors were either illiterate or literate (under Class 8 or less) only. Old women were mostly illiterate while the younger ones were literate.
- I found street vending not restricted to any particular caste/ethnic group only though women from marginalized groups like Dalits and Janajati were mostly engaged in this activity in Pokhara.
- Most of the street vendor women were Hindus, while a few of them were Buddhists and one was a Christian. This finding is quite consistent with the reality of Nepali society in which Hinduism is the dominant religion.
- Women as young as 28 years old to as elderly as 70 years old have been found to be engaged in street vending. However, there was the domination of the women from middle ages i.e. those at thirties, forties and fifties.
- Both married as well as unmarried women were found to be engaged in street vending in Pokhara. However, the number of married women is much more than that of unmarried one.

b) Reasons for choosing street vending

- Out of 11 informants whom I had interviewed in-depth, only one was a newer as she had been vending for the last two years. Rest ten vendors had been vending from before 2068 B.S. Thus, it has been found that the joint effort of different sectors made in 2068 B.S. had not been able to manage all street vendors adequately as it could not provide proper space for these street vendors. As a result, they were left to the street.
- The vending business can be started from a couple of thousand rupees and most of the time vendors invest Rs. 1000 to 10,000 per day. In terms of earning, they earn Rs. 100.00 to Rs. 1,000.00 in a day.

- For the vast majority of the vendors, vending is the main source of family income for fulfilling all kinds of needs while it is only a supportive income for some others.
- It has been found that income from vending was very good in previous time i.e. prior to the removal of footpath business.
- In terms of expenditure, I have found that their expenditure was a variable one. For some, the expenditure depended upon how much they earned from vending in a day. Some of them spend their almost all of the income from vending, while some others spend half of the income. Interestingly, some of informant also revealed that their expenditure is more than their income.
- Street vendors of Pokhara were found to be making some kind of saving in a number of ways like in co-operatives, informal groups and insurances. Most of them were found to be saving for their children's future.
- I found a strong sense of future security, not only of their own but also of their family members, among most of the vendors that is why they had been practicing different types of saving practices. Importantly, some of them believed on enjoying the present time rather than worrying about uncertain future.
- Very low investment, lack of education and skills, self determination, lack of alternatives, flexibility in street vendings and spending time have been discovered as the main reasons for these vendors to engage in street vending though metropolis authority has banned it.

c) Dimensions of striving of street vendors for sustaining livelihood

- The metropolis authority has been found to be very restrictive regarding vending. So, the vendors' relationship with the metropolis is much complicated.
- I found the relationship between metropolis police and vendor similar to that of two of the popular cartoon characters, *Tom* and *Jerry* of a cartoon show, where they mostly play the hide and seek game. The role of cat can be represented as metropolitan police and the role of mouse by the street vendors.

- Shopkeepers were mostly found to be annoyed with the presence of vendors around their shops. While vendors were found to be feeling being misbehaved by other shopkeepers.
- In terms of dealing with customers, street vending was found to be a challenging task as most of the customers think we vendors give significantly high discount if they bargain more and more.
- Vendors were found to be finding it very hard to overcome the bargain made by their customers regarding the price of the items that they sell.
- It has also been discovered that some of the vendors were very smart to cheat the customers using their spring balance if the situation demands that.
- Till 2068 B.S., street vendors were allowed to operate shops on the streets by paying a certain tax, which was largely a nominal one. Thus, the vendors used to have a very good business as they used to remain at a fix place and she had regular customers and also had good familiar relationship with them. However, now the situation has changed.
- Vendors were not being able to give up vending practice due to the lack of appropriate alternative.
- It has also been discovered that these street vendor women, as of now, are not going to give up this practice.

7.3 Conclusion

Though Pokhara Metropolitan City has declared street vending as an illegal act, it has continued to be an important part of informal economy of urban Pokhara. It has been serving as the main or supportive source of income for fulfilling the livelihood needs of a number of families. The intervention made in 2068 B.S. regarding street business including vending was a milestone as it had ensured more or less durable places other than the streets for business to the existing street businesspersons and vendors. However, despite that intervention, some of the vendors were left out in the streets; as a result they have been continuing street vending citing reasons like lacking appropriate alternative source of regular income.

Before 2068 B.S., street businesspersons and vendors were organized under a number of associations and were backed up by political parties too. These reasons compelled the concerned authorities to guarantee a definite space away from the streets in the city where they could run the same business in more or less durable manner. Now, the street vendors are quite less in number as compared to the past. Moreover, there exists no such organized endeavor among them and they are not being backed up by any political party or force as it was the case in the past. These are the main reasons why they are not being able to pressurize the concerned authorities to address their issues. Though, their activity has been classified as a prohibited one by the local authority, the street vendors are not in a mood to give up their main source of livelihood. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tireless engagement of the street vendors in coping with the adversities created by different agencies is an indication that they have been claiming certain kind of right over urban space in Pokhara city amid coercion. However, these street vendor women have not been able to spell out their claims over the right to the space in the city effectively and systematically as a result their grievances have largely remained unaddressed. Thus, I further conclude that the street vending practice by these women will continue as it is now unless metropolis authority offers them an effective alternative source of income.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

- I have studied the street vendors' issues from the perspective of Urban Anthropology. However, further researcher may use various the lenses of anthropology to assess this issue.
- During this research, I have found some of the vendors were doing street vending as well as prostitution too. This issue may form an important subject for further researches.

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Appendix -1

Checklist for interview

Background Information

- Name
- Age
- Marital Status
- Permanent Address
- Current Address
- Type of Family
- No. of Family Members
- Occupation of the Spouse
- Duration of Living in Pokhara
- Main Source of Family Income

Engagement in Vending Occupation

- Previous Occupation
- Number of Years Involved in the Previous Occupation
- Reasons for Abandoning Previous Occupation
- Reasons for In-migrating to Pokhara
- Duration of Engagement in Vending
- Learning vending business
- Reason for Choosing Vending (Any Motivator for Choosing Vending)
- Number of Family Members Engaged in Vending
- Average Daily Income, saving, expenditure from Vending and Its Sufficiency
- Livelihood and Vending Relationship
- Livelihood securities
- Places in Pokhara for Vending
- Nature and Types of Customers
- Relationships with Customers
- Customers' Behaviour
- Relationship with Whole-sellers
- Relationship with Other co-Vendors
- Attitude towards Vending
- Organizational Involvement (Related to Vending and alike)
- Political involvement

Challenges in Vending Occupation

- Relationship with Nagarpalika (Gather all the struggles that they make i.e. behavior of office staffs, politicians)
- Relationship with Nagar Prahari
- Relationship with Large Shop Keepers
- Social and economical status
- Suggestion for policy maker

Appendix-2
List of key-informants

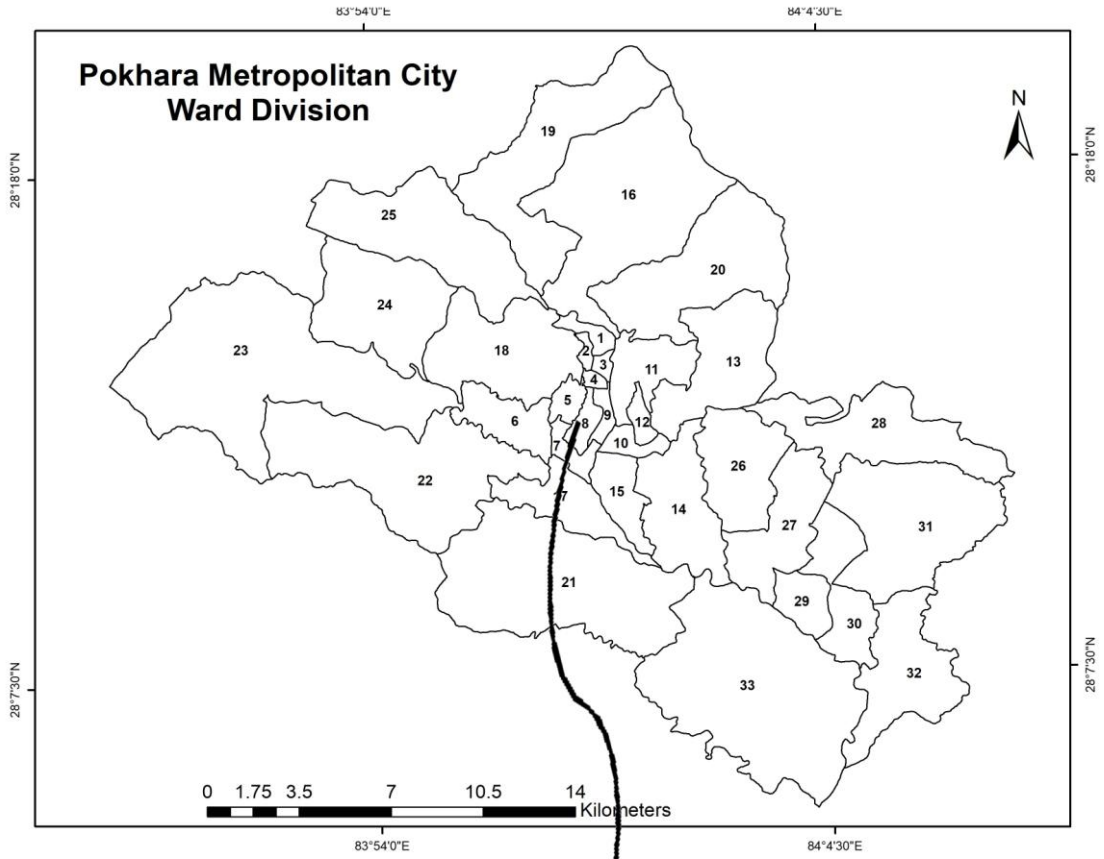
S.N	Name	Designation
1.	Shesh Narayan Poudel	Chief Administrative Officer, Pokhara Metropolitan City Office
2.	Basanta Chalise	In-charge, Disaster Management & Supervision Division, Pokhara Metropolitan City Office

Appendix 3

Checklist for key-informant's interview

- Number of street vendors in Pokhara
- Background to the banning of vending in Pokhara
- Present context of street vending in Pokhara
- View towards street vendors
- Behavior with street vendors
- Publications of metropolis on street vendors
- View on alternative source of income for street vendor
- Metropolis' plan & programs addressing street vendors

Appendix 4 Study Area



**Appendix 5
Photo Gallery**



Vendors in Prithvi Chowk waiting for their costumers



A vendor selling oranges to her customer



Dokos of street vendors seized by the metropolitan police in Pokhara Metropolis Office



Vending women waiting for their customers



Researcher during an interview with an informant



Researcher with another informant