



Women Vendors In Manipur And It's Impact On Economic Activities.

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ABSTRACT

Women vendors are vital to the survival of local trade in the women's marketplaces, popularly known as "Ema Keithels," in Manipur which exposes them to a great deal of stress. The study will look at women's roles as market vendors and the difficulties they face. It emphasized how important it is to comprehend how stress affects the general wellbeing, economic activities and market dynamics. The case study approaches will adopt to gain insights into the experiences of women vendors and emphasizes the significance of regional variations. The goal of the research is to provide practical advice for stakeholders, policymakers, and market providers to implement supporting initiatives. By highlighting the importance of establishing focused coping methods, the study aims to lessen the negative consequences of stress on women sellers which can enhance the resilience of women vendors and sustainable development of Ema markets.

KEYWORDS: women vendors, economic activities, women markets, stress coping, sustainable development

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become a commonplace in modern culture, influencing people's involvement in a wide range of activities and various domains of life. Stress takes many forms and affects people's physical, mental, and emotional health. It can be caused by anything from the intricate socioeconomic issues of modern life to the continuous pace of modern life. In Manipur, the women's markets are thriving hubs of trade, with female vendors making major financial contributions to household earnings and maintaining the local economy. But because of their nature of work, they are constantly exposed to countless stresses stemming from social pressures, physical demands of market activities, and economic concerns.

WOMEN MARKETS (EMA KEITHEL'S)

Manipur, a state in northeastern India, has a rich cultural and historical background. The history of women's markets in Manipur is closely tied to the traditional and cultural practices of the indigenous communities in the region. In Manipur women markets are known as " Ema keithels" . Ema means mother, kei- means storage and -thel means to spread out or to sell which literally means mothers' markets or women's markets (Laishram, Yaiphahenba,2018). Until now, the prominent Ema market among all the Ema markets in Manipur is Khwairamband Market which remains the identity of the Manipur. After many changes has gone through in term of the market area and building , the recent building were built in 2005 after demolishing the old Khwairamband market .Today, this new market has become the most important part of Manipur. It is comprised of three building named – 1. Leimarel Shidabi ema Keithel (also called Purana Bazar). It is named after the Goddess of supreme household. 2. Emino ema Keithel (aslo called Laxmi bazar) named after the Goddess of of prosperity, wealth and kitchen and 3. Phouoibee ema Keithel(aslo called new market named after the Goddess of bounty. The market is unique in that it is entirely run by women, and it serves as a significant economic and social space for the community (Hirom Ulemba Meitei, 2015). Similarly, like khwairamband market, in all the districts of Manipur there exists a women market.

STRESS

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and

threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, stress is a normal, human reaction. It's how the brain and body respond to any demand. Stress is a term used to describe the physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural response to events that are perceived as threatening and challenging. (Cicarrelli & White, 2017)

In this context of the study, stress refers to the challenges and pressures experienced by women vendors in Ema Markets. Factors or conditions that induce stress are called stressor. It includes economic uncertainties, social pressures, physical demands, and other challenges faced by women vendors in the market. And the concept of "stress level" generally refers to the degree of stress an individual is experiencing in response to various stressors. A more precise measure of personal stress can be determined by using a variety of instruments that have been designed to help measure individual stress levels. The first of these is called the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen et al in 1983. According to PSS, the stress levels are classified into 3 levels i.e. low, moderate and high stress based on the scoring ranges.

WOMEN VENDORS

Female individuals engaged in selling goods or services in Women Markets (Ema Keithels) are called women vendors. And there are lots of women street vendors who sit around the surrounding of the markets. These are the women who don't have their license to sell in the markets or the main buildings. Women vendors played a vital role in the society and family as mediators, sustainers in fulfilling the needs of the family and society. It is worth mentioning that the grits, and strength of the women vendors cannot be fathom, their courage and boldness in times of conflict is far worth the name. Women vendors of Ema Markets are the pillars of strength, integrity and provider through their earnest means in running the family management.

DISCOURSE:

Women markets are symbols of state, Manipur in rich cultural and economic history where women sell anything from locally grown vegetables to handcrafted items to imported commodities. The vibrant women's markets or Ema keithels of Manipur are not only major commercial centres but also lively places where women vendors are vital in sustaining local commerce. The place of khwairamband markets showcased as one unique item of tourist spot in Manipur for any inbound tourists visiting the place of Manipur.

Recent changes in Manipur's socioeconomic landscape have had a big impact on the way these markets operate and how the women vendors live. Amidst these changes, it is vital to comprehend the stress levels that women vendors encounter, as it is closely associated with their overall well being and, by extension, the economic activities that takes place in the markets. Numerous variables might intensify stress, including uncertain economic conditions, societal expectations, competitive situations, difficult balancing acts between work and familial responsibilities, and more. Women vendors at Ema Markets, who play a significant role in the local economy, deal with these pressures on a daily basis. Comprehending the various ways in which stress impacts women sellers is not only crucial for their personal welfare but also has wider consequences for the economic health of Ema Markets and the region's progress. Local women vendors contribute substantially to the family income and consumption purposes.

This paper is an ongoing research and seeks to delve into better understanding of the complex reciprocal link that exists between stress levels and economic activities among women vendors in the Ema Keithels of Imphal's East and West districts of Manipur. Here, the term "stress" refers to a variety of elements, such as competitiveness, societal expectations, economic uncertainty, difficulties juggling obligations to one's family, etc. Acknowledging the diversity of stress enables a thorough investigation of its impact on these women's economic endeavour. Stress levels might be used in the research to distinguish between the various obstacles faced by female vendors. Stress can have a significant negative or positive impact on the economy by influencing decision-making, productivity, and the long-term viability of a company. The study provides insights into the direct relationship between well-being and economic success by quantifying the possible losses and disadvantages suffered by women vendors through the assessment of the economic impact of stress. Comprehending the ways in which stress impacts the day-to-day operations in the markets is essential to comprehending the wider dynamics of the market. The study can determine how stress influences vendor collaboration, whether it discourages or encourages market participation, and what effect it has on the Ema Markets' entire economic environment. Therefore, it is crucial to create focused coping mechanisms in order to lessen the negative consequences of stress on female vendors. The study can offer practical suggestions for stakeholders, policy makers, and market organizers to put supportive initiatives into action by recommending effective approaches. This could strengthen the resilience of women vendors and support the long-term growth of Ema Markets i.e. sustainable development through sustainable livelihood.

Since the relationship between stress and market activities is dynamic, it is essential to comprehend how stress levels and economic activities interact in order to unravel the complexities of Ema Markets and develop strategies that increase the resilience of women vendors in the face of stress-induced challenges. Stress can either be a catalyst for innovation and adaptation among women vendors or it can become a barrier that impedes decision-making and stifles creativity.

The study, which focuses on Imphal East and Imphal West women markets, attempts to document the geographical variances and particular difficulties experienced by women vendors in different districts of Manipur. In addition, a mixed-approaches case study methodology will be utilized to obtain insights into the

experiences of women vendors and the wider economic consequences of their stress levels. This will involve the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The significance of examining the stress levels of women vendors at the Ema Markets in Imphal East and West, Manipur, and how its impact on their economic activities as it will base on the intersectionality study of gender, economics, and community development. The purpose of this research is to disentangle the intricate connections between the overall economic environment in which women vendors function and their mental health. Understanding the difficulties women vendors face in these dynamic markets is crucial for promoting inclusive growth, gender equity, and sustainable development in Manipur. It is also important for adding to the academic discourse on gender and economics and has real-world implications for legislators, market organizers, and community leaders. These factors are all related to the socioeconomic transformations that the region is going through. In order to promote sustainable development in the area, the results may be used to guide focused actions that lessen stressors, empower women merchants, and improve Ema Keithels' overall economic resilience.

ITS PROBLEMS :

Despite the strong resistance and the resilient efforts of the women vendors in Ema Markets they still faced lots of difficulties and encounter while running their daily chores in the markets. Mostly women vendors have low profit margin and are mostly doom in debt. Generally speaking women vendor do not have saving accounts but saved through small savings in the form of marup meaning through saving by forming group of people among themselves. Due to low savings most of the women vendors took loans for their small business through private sectors and even rich individuals and businessmen as studies shown by Tripti Panwar,(2017). Women vendors as pointed out by Jessica Tayengjam(2020) in her research studies found out that segment of entrepreneurs face a fragmentation of identity , balancing traditional gender roles with their positions as empowered business owners, a fractured underpinned competing values that resulted from Manipur's conflict ridden past.

Most women vendors enter market in their middle years after raising their children and families which means vast majority of women vendors in Manipur lead a hand to mouth existence. This is the crux of the point of issue to ponder deeply and find a lasting solution for eradicating their poverty level which adds more to their stress level thereby negatively impacting their economic activities in the long run. Therefore the problems faced by the Ima market women vendors are varied. The state government need to look deeper into their needs at the primary level maybe assisting micro finance loans at flat interest rate or low rate of interest for running their businesses. This will help push forward the economy of the state in terms of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP). The study aims to further research in depth as it is an ongoing research so that some significant research finding could be develop for the region and the state Ima vendors in particular. The profits derived are meagre enough though not all to meet the entire family needs. Ima women vendors are in fact supporting the schooling of their children. It will not be wrong to point out that women vendors in Manipur are hard working and sincere group of people having integrity of the state and social wellbeing at large. They are the pillar of the state peace and prosperity.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, it is critical to investigate the stress levels of women vendors in the women's markets (Ema Keithels) in Imphal East and West, Manipur, and its impact on their economic activities because of above reasons. Through comprehending and tackling the obstacles encountered by women vendors, this study will aid in the larger objective of establishing a fairer and more robust community within the dynamic socio-economic context of Manipur. In addition to addressing gender gaps, it explores the economic effects of stress, looks at market dynamics, takes regional differences into account, and has important policy implications for sustainable development. By dwelling in depth problems of the women vendors will help mitigate their stress level thereby elevate their economic activities in the long run.

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