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## **A Study on Street Hawkers and Their Willing Towards Continuation of Hawking Business in Bangladesh: A Statistical Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

This study is an attempt to examine the association of various socio-demographic characteristics on the willing concerning continuation of hawking business for the respondents of Chattogram metropolitan area in Bangladesh. The association of the selected variables with the willing concerning continuation of hawking business were examined using bivariate and logistic regression analyses. The result shows that the respondents who are male, married, come from the rural areas, secondary and less than secondary educated are more involved in street hawking than those who are female, unmarried, urban areas residents, higher secondary and above educated. Again, logistic regression analysis for the willing regarding continuation of hawking business shows that sex, marital status, educational qualification, age, monthly income, rural urban migration, savings' ability, fathers' survival status are highly significantly associated with willing towards continuation of respondents' business.

**Keywords:** Street hawker; Continuation; Business; Influential factors; Chattogram city.

### **1. Introduction**

Hawking as a profession is considered as an informal activity and it has been an integral part of both urban and rural culture of Bangladesh.

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Bangladesh is an over populated, underdeveloped and natural disaster prone country where an enormous number of people have to stay for work. Nobody willing to choose hawking as means of profession of this types of protracted and painstaking work, but they are helpless. Due to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and rural urban migration etc. make them to live and take hawking as means of livelihood. Flood, river erosion, landlessness, social and political conflicts, etc are the other important reasons to take hawking as a business. Since most of them are illiterate and limited literacy so they cannot get any suitable job. These events force a huge number of people to migrate to the big cities of Bangladesh in search of better job opportunity. But they are not in a position to get a better paid, secured employment in the formal sector and they have to stay for work in the informal sector [1]. Most of the unemployed people migrate to urban areas from rural areas or from small towns to get a work. In the very competitive cities, they often fail to get works. Thus they choose to expand their business in street hawking. The factors contributing for such expansion are low investment, high profit, no procedural steps either to start or exit, cross-border and rural urban migration, unemployment and poverty in rural areas resulted in the migration of people to cities in search of a better existence [2]. Street hawkers are a large and very visible workforce in cities of Bangladesh, yet it is difficult to estimate the exact number of people employed as street vendors, due to their high mobility and the marked seasonal variation in work. So, a good number of people in our country earn their livelihood by hawking things and street hawking is regarded as the prime way of living for the urban poor people. It has been playing a significant role in the informal economic sector of our country from the very beginning. A person who hawks his goods/commodities on the street for sale and gives out interesting cries to draw the attention of the customers, either from a stall or van or with their goods laid out on the sidewalk is known to us as a street hawker. They are identified as self-employed workers in the informal sector. A street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods and services for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall [3]. Street vendors offer products and services by occupying space on the roadways or other public or private areas. There are some street hawkers who sell their goods sitting on the footpath, usually carries either in hands or over his shoulders or heads and sometimes in a small handcart. He generally sells toys, bangles, ribbons, clothing, sweets, fruits, newspapers, domestic articles and goods of our daily consumption. Generally, the hawker is a very clever man who knows many tricks to convince the customers. He sells his things after haggling and bargaining and provides goods at a low cost. Besides they have to compete with themselves and also with the big shopping mall to sell items at low cost. A hawker always tries to sell his items at nominal price, so that he can sell all of his items with in short time. Customer also happy by obtaining their required items at low price. In Bangladesh, street hawkers aren't recognized as the legal workforce. So, the working condition of street hawkers isn't a concern for the government but the government isn't sitting idle either. Renovation & eviction both roles are played by the government to ensure a better and healthy living city. Government evicts street hawkers every now and then to minimize the number of hawkers and specially to ease traffic jam. Though a leader of Bangladesh Hawkers Union (BHU) stated that, the contribution of hawkers to the economy can't be denied. A majority of people from lower and middle- income groups buy things from the streets on the way back home from work. Not only men as well as women are also engaged with hawking profession, though they are few in number. It has been seen that a large number of young boys are involved in this profession. Some children hawkers are seen whose are engaged in this profession at the age of 8-12 years. All these children are work as subordinate of aged hawker. They specially work as mobile/ floating hawker. Generally, the aged and women

hawker are illiterate. Now-a-days hawkers are a part of our city life. Different types of hawker in urban area and various types of item they sell to the customers. It has been found that hawker in Dhaka sell various items which are obvious to the city dweller [4]. They are interested to sit near busiest footpath, road intersection and the place where human concentration is high. People buy their daily necessary items as it is affordable. An attempt has been made here to review literature on different aspect of street hawkers which is very limited at present. So far no worthy work has been done particularly in this field. The increasing growth rate of child hawkers in Nigeria has become worrisome. The investigation of the study [5] has brought to light that parents' levels of education, parents' occupations and the sizes of the family were significantly related to the problem of child hawkers in the study area. The study recommends intensified enlightenment programs on the problem of child hawkers, positive and genuine commitment by the government, mass, free and compulsory education, and a serious fight against poverty through poverty alleviation and eradication programs by the governments. Women comparatively face much more problems in street vending rather than men. Women are generally affected by crimes like eve-teasing, sexual harassment, rapes etc. Street vending is not an easy task for women, and the basic problems of women street vendors is insecurity and uncertainty as their profession is considered illegal, but according to government of India assessment done in 2004 shows around 2.5% of local poor urban population survive by working in this occupation. If the government provide the license to street vendors, they can be protected by harassment and eviction by local authorities and local police [6]. Hawkers sell goods at low prices and street vendors face unique kinds of livelihood risks because of the legal, physical, and socio-cultural environment in which they work [7]. The most pressing and ongoing risk for many street hawkers is the possibility that local government authorities will remove them against their will from the streets or confiscate their merchandise. Street hawkers face more routine occupational hazards as well. They need to boost and haul heavy loads of goods to and from their point of sale each day. The work environment lacks proper infrastructure, such as clean running water, toilets, and solid waste removal [8]. It has already confirmed the fact that street hawkers comprise one of the most marginalized sections of the urban poor [9]. Notwithstanding the fact that they play a very unique role in the urban economy, providing necessary goods, which are largely both durable and cost-effective, to average income-earning households at cheap and affordable rates. Also, they always have to serve their consumers need, who happens to be coming from the poor sectors [10]. A fairly high proportion of vendors were once workers in the formal sector and they had taken to street vending after they lost their jobs. This proportion is higher in cities like Kolkata (50 percent), Mumbai and Ahmadabad (30 percent). A study by SEWA in Ahmadabad notes that half the laid-off textile workers in Ahmadabad have taken to street vending. The paper [11] traces the changing characteristics of the street hawker in Kaulalumpur since the 1970's. It is identified that the majority of the residents (75%) wanted the hawkers to be relocated into a proper hawker center, close to their place of residents. The majority of the hawkers were against (70%) the proposal of relocation due to the difficulty in finding a relatively large piece of land at strategic locations. A study [12] found that the technology choice by hawkers is influenced by lack of initial capital and inconvenience associated with cheaper than overall economics of the alternative option is found. It is observed that hawkers with higher educational levels and hawkers in an urban setting scored the highest on food safety knowledge. This study [13] found inadequate guidelines for hawkers, ambiguities with licensing procedures, weaknesses in training programs and significant complaints of designated sites by hawkers. It [14] was found that generally food vendors were quite aware of hygienic conditions. But majority of them were not implementing their

knowledge into practice. They perceived that their products were of low risk to customers. It highlights the need for further health education of food vendors. A study [15] concludes that violence is a major problem affecting young female hawkers and recommends education programs for men on both physical and sexual violence. Young female hawkers need to be empowered educationally and economically to enable them to resist violence. Another study [16] exposes political action strategies on Indian Informal workers are launching against the state. It is [17] is found that mobile retailers that sell handicrafts to tourists are commonly found throughout the world. Aside from the chance to make a significant amount of money, the social networks and social relations practiced by female ambulates can have a positive effect on their lives. A study [18] was found that victimization is the most vulnerable element of vendors. Most of the street vendors use self-financing for their business. Street Vendors faces many hitches as they are vulnerable population, who are neither protected by the government, NGOs, labor union nor by any labor law. The working condition of street hawkers is quite ordinary in Bangladesh. They are subject to the unhygienic and unhealthy condition due to environmental hazards and noises. Whether a person having a shop in a shopping complex can enjoy several benefits but a street hawker is deprived of them. The street vendors of Bangladesh are more vulnerable than those in the neighboring countries due to poverty, lack of space for vending and lack of awareness about their rights [19]. Chittagong now officially known as Chattogram is a main coastal city and financial center in southeast part of Bangladesh. The city has a population of more than 2.5 million while the metropolitan area has a population of more than 4 million with a density of nearly 1500 people in per square km making it the second largest city in the country (BBS, 2011). Modern Chattogram is Bangladesh's second most significant urban center after Dhaka. Chattogram city have an enormous number of street hawkers as an informal trade in its various urban transaction points. Most of them are rural-urban migrant due to lack of work facilities and public services in rural areas. The local authorities of Chattogram city see that, the street hawkers are the problem for their urban subsists as they constraint the regular movement of the city residents in the footpath and so on. Though they create some problems, after a little while, a large number of urban dwellers fall into a critical situation in their lives without street hawking in the urban areas. Not only the low-income group but also the middle-income group of urban individuals depends on street hawkers for shopping in their life. Without the hawkers' activities in urban areas, poor urban dwellers cannot fulfil their basic needs. According to the opinion of the hawker, most of their income they spend to maintain living livelihood and are the able to save a little portion of them [4]. Some hawkers opinioned that they are leading a miserable life. Some aged hawker mentioned that they are unable to maintain family expenses with the income they earn from hawking. So they have no savings at the end of the month. Some hawker said that they cannot send their children to go to school, due to poverty and engage them in various types of income generating activities [4]. Hawking as a casual activity in Bangladesh, local authorities impose some restrictions on the use of urban space for street hawkers. They face a lot of difficulties from authorities and look some environmental hazards from their surroundings. As a result, they are not interested to continue their business and in a stage, they want to leave the hawking business for searching better works. Hence there is a need to study the nature of the hawkers' livelihood and about their intension to continue of this protracted and painstaking work of hawking. As we study more about them, some factors will come before us which are significantly important on their willing to continue of hawking. Though the study scanned the factors for which characteristics of hawkers may influence them to take decision of continuation of their business and try to find out the relationship among various socio economic factors. The objectives of this study

falls into

- a) To assess the status of street hawkers in Bangladesh,
- b) To explore the influential factors that encourage hawkers to take decision on continuation or cut out of their business,
- c) To find the association between several characteristics of the hawkers with their willing towards continuation of business,
- d) To make some recommendations to reduce the difficulties faced by street hawkers' in urban areas of Bangladesh.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

There are stationary and mobile hawkers in Chattogram city, Bangladesh which is the second largest city in the country after the capital city. Stationary hawker means who conduct business in one specific point, while mobile hawker means one who takes his commodities place to place. For this study, a survey conducted on only "stationary hawker" who was conducting their business in the selected study areas. Stationary hawkers in Chattogram city, Bangladesh were considered as target population of the study. Five important locations of Chattogram city were chosen purposively and street hawkers of those areas prearranged the sampling frame. The data for this study has been collected from primary sources. A structured questionnaire was used in interview to collect the information on the willingness of continuation of the street hawkers. Attention was given to record actual information provided by the respondents and the structured questionnaire was filled up with verbal mode which took approximately a period of 25 to 30 minutes. A total of 100 hawkers have been selected and about 20 hawkers have been interviewed from each of the five prime study areas namely Reazuddin Market, Jahur Hawkers Market, GEC moor, Chawkbazar and Agrabad in Chittagong city of Bangladesh. The sample was taken randomly from these areas in a purposive manner. To achieve the perception towards the willing of continuation of street hawkers, we collected information from them. This study was conducted during the period of November 2019 to December 2019. After collecting data, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS for windows 10.0) was used to analysis. Chi-square test was performed to know the association between the selected variables. P-value  $< 0.05$  was considered statistically significant. Three separate kinds of analyses were performed. The first one describes the univariate characteristics of the selected variables considering the percentage distribution. The second analysis examines bivariate relationship between selected variables with the willing of continuation of the hawkers' business. The third one uses a multivariate logistic regression technique to examine the association of the selected variables on the willing of continuation of the hawkers' business. The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that was assigned the value 1 if the respondent says yes to continue the business and 0 for otherwise. The study, like other research, is not out of drawbacks as data was collected from the respondents of limited sample unit. This study needed a lot of field visit. Hawkers usually are very busy. They don't intend to talk for a long time as they call for customers always and has to serve. So, to obtain this data, much cases of negligence had to endure for months. We think, there are some scopes for further study. In addition, some of the sustainability indicators were also exempted intentionally due to the specific objective of the study and circumstantial nature of the study area.

### 3. Results and Discussions

Though the hawking profession is mainly male dominated business but in Chattogram city women hawkers are also doing their business in a little extent. In this study, the percentage of male and female hawkers are observed to be 94% and 6% respectively. We also observe from the analysis that 56% respondents are married and 55% respondents are come from rural areas for search better jobs and to upgrade their living condition. In the study area it is found that, 40% hawkers are involved in their hawking business just after completing their higher secondary and above level of education and 36 % hawkers take clothing as their business. The 33% respondents' age are below 25 years and 38% hawkers have income below taka 10,000 which has a significant negative impact on their earnings and the overall standard of living. From the table it is seen that 47% respondents' father are not alive and 23% hawkers have no saving ability.

**Table 1:** Univariate Analysis of respondents according to the selected variables

Characteristics	Percentage of the respondents	Characteristics	Percentage of the respondents
<b>Sex</b>		<b>Place of Residence</b>	
Male	94	Rural	55
Female	6	Urban	45
<b>Marital status</b>		<b>Father's Survival Status</b>	
Unmarried	44	Alive	53
Married	56	Dead	47
<b>Age of Respondent (in Years)</b>		<b>Father's Occupation</b>	
Up to 20	14	Rickshaw Puller	20
20 – 25	19	Labor	14
25 – 30	20	Hawker	16
30 – 35	22	Farming	26
35+	25	Others	24
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		<b>Types of Business</b>	
Illiterate	23	Clothing	36
Up to Secondary	37	Foods	21
Higher secondary & Above	40	Plastics	20
		Others	23
<b>Monthly Income</b>		<b>Having Saving's Ability</b>	
Up to 7500	23	Yes	77
7500 – 10000	15	No	23
10000 – 12500	34		
12500 and above	28		

The study reveals that males are more involved in street hawking than their female counterparts. We also observed that sex of the respondents is highly significant with their hawking business. A male can go outside straightforwardly to perform their daily jobs and can easily mix with others. From the table it is remarkable that married hawkers are more involved in hawking business and are more interested to continue their job than the unmarried hawkers. P-value shows that hawking business is significantly

**Table 2:** Bivariate Analysis of respondent's willing towards continuation of hawking business according to different socio-economic characteristics

Characteristics	Willing to Continuation		Chi-square value	P value
	Yes	No		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	55	39	31.128	0.00
Female	2	4		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Unmarried	15	29	3.778	0.043
Married	30	26		
<b>Age distribution (in Years)</b>				
Up to 20	7	7	15.127	0.000
20 – 25	6	10		
25 – 30	5	15		
30 – 35	18	8		
35+	9	15		
<b>Educational Attainment</b>				
Illiterate	15	8	6.337	0.003
Up to Secondary	17	20		
Higher secondary & Above	13	27		
<b>Place of Residence</b>				
Rural	30	25	4.500	0.000
Urban	15	30		
<b>Father's Occupation</b>				
Rickshaw Puller	5	15	10.451	0.015
Labor	7	7		
Hawker	6	10		
Farming	18	8		
Others	9	15		
<b>Monthly Income</b>				
Up to 7500	5	18	13.766	0.000
7500 – 10000	5	10		
10000 – 12500	15	19		
12500 and above	20	8		
<b>Types of Business</b>				
Clothing	16	20	8.710	0.004
Foods	6	15		
Plastics	7	13		
Others	16	7		
<b>Having Saving's Ability</b>				
Yes	39	38	4.317	0.000
No	6	17		
<b>Father's Survival Status</b>				
Alive	19	34	3.815	0.000
Dead	26	21		

Associated by the marital status of the respondents. The reason might be that married hawkers faced a lot of problems and troubles happened in their families due to the unemployment. Unmarried hawkers, after completion a period of time, are not willing to continue the laborious hawking business as they have no pressure from family like married ones. The table discloses that street hawking is inversely related to the level of education i.e. as the level of education of the respondent's increases, the intension of continuing the hawking business decreases. We also found that hawkers' willing of continuing the hawking works with their education level is highly significant. It indicates that the more the educational attainment to the respondents the less the

willingness to continue the hawking business. From the age distribution it is observed that maximum hawkers want to leave the business as the age increase. P-value shows that age of respondents is highly significantly associated with the willingness of continuation of the hawking works. This is because as age increases of the respondents, the engagement of this protracted and painstaking work of hawking is decreases. The result for the variable place of residence shows that hawkers who come from rural areas has the good involvement to continue the job whereas respondents of the urban areas want to leave the hawking business for searching better works. P-value shows that place of residence is highly significantly associated their works.

**Table 3:** Logistic regression analysis of hawkers' willing concerning continuation of hawking business according to different characteristics

Characteristics	Regression coefficient ( $\beta$ )	S.E. of $\beta$	Odds ratio
<b>Sex of the respondents</b>			
Male (RC)	-	-	1.000
Female	-2.784	1.231	0.084***
<b>Marital status</b>			
Unmarried (RC)	-	-	1.000
Married	0.621	0.932	1.860
<b>Age of Respondents</b>			
Up to 20 (RC)	-	-	1.000
20 – 25	-1.266	1.070	0.282**
25 – 30	-2.233	1.124	0.107**
30 – 35	-2.871	1.337	0.057***
35+	-1.225	1.338	0.294
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
Higher secondary & Above (RC)	-	-	1.000
Up to Secondary	0.103	0.690	1.108
Illiterate	0.532	0.929	1.703
<b>Father's Survival Status</b>			
Alive (RC)	-	-	1.000
Dead	1.164	0.646	3.204
<b>Father's Occupation</b>			
Rickshaw Puller (RC)	-	-	1.000
Hawker	1.176	1.025	3.242
Labor	1.573	1.068	4.822
Farming	2.344	1.202	10.420*
Others	1.176	0.979	3.242
<b>Types of Business</b>			
Foods (RC)	-	-	1.000
Clothing	0.821	0.774	2.274
Plastics	0.936	0.885	2.549
Others	2.027	0.855	7.592*
<b>Monthly Income</b>			
Up to 7500 (RC)	-	-	1.000
7500 – 10000	0.271	0.939	1.311
10000 – 12500	1.962	0.904	7.115*
12500 and above	2.968	1.021	19.460*
<b>Having Saving's Ability</b>			
No (RC)	-	-	1.000
Yes	1.005	0.736	2.732*

**Note:** RC = Reference Category, \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \* $p < 0.10$

It is for urban hawkers have good idea about this bored and prolonged works and they have better scope of involving themselves in another favorable profession. It is observed that business types of respondents and their intension of continuing job is highly significant. It is also seen that respondents having clothing, foods and plastics business showed less interested to continue the hawking jobs. From the bivariate table, it is observed that respondents whose father are still alive are showing less attention to continue the business whereas respondents whose fathers' are not alive showing more interest to continue the hawking business. The respondents whose fathers' occupation are labor and farming are more enthusiastic to carry out their business than others and whose fathers' occupation are hawking and rickshaw puller are less interested to hawking works. It is found from the table that there is a significant association between saving's ability and willingness to continue the work among the respondents i.e. hawkers who has no saving ability wants to leave the business rapidly than who has somehow saving ability. The study reveals that there is a strong association between income level and will to continue the occupation. The result is found to be highly significantly associated with each other. As much as the hawkers' level of income increased, much attention grows among the respondents to carry out their business work. To find the factors related with the respondent's willingness to continue the business dichotomous variable 1 and 0 are used. 1 for yes and 0 for no i.e. 1 is taken for those who are willing to continue the job and 0 is for not willing to continue the job. It is observed from the analyses that the probability to carry out the business is 92% lower for the female than their male counterparts. It is strongly associated with the continuation of business. The table reveals that married hawkers are 1.860 times more likely enthusiast to continue the work than their unmarried complements. It is found that marital status has significant role with hawkers' continuation in business. It is also found that illiterate hawkers and primary educated hawkers are 1.703 times and 1.108 times respectively more determined to continue the business than those who have got the secondary & above level of education attainment. The significant association of education attainment indicates that Illiterate respondents and low level educated hawkers have much more attention to carry out their profession. The probability of continuation the hawks' work is 95 percent lower for the hawker's ages 30-35 years than the ages up to 20 years of the respondents. The hawkers whose monthly level of income is more than 12500 taka are 19.460 times higher than the hawkers whose income level less than 7500 taka. It is highly associated with the continuation of business. The study revealed that the plaintiffs who hawking cloths are 2.274 times likely to show their willingness to continue the profession than the respondents who hawking foods. It also clarified that the respondents whose fathers are dead show the likelihood of 3.2 times of eagerness to continue his business than those respondents whose fathers are alive. It is obvious that the respondents who have the saving ability are 2.732 times more likely willed to continue their work than those who do not have saving ability.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The analysis shows that the respondents who are male, married, come from the rural areas, secondary and less than secondary educated are more involved in street hawking business. On the contrary, those who are female, unmarried, urban areas residents, higher secondary and above educated are less involved in this types of protracted and painstaking work of hawking. The bivariate analysis and logistic regression analysis on the

willing to continue the hawking business shows that sex, marital status, educational qualification, age, monthly income, rural urban migration, savings' ability, father's survival status are significantly associated with continuation of respondents' business in the study area. Hawkers play an important part in the urban economy, as they support themselves and their families and also offer services to many citizens of cities of Bangladesh. Hawking is an income generating activities in urban area in developing countries like Bangladesh. It requires low investment and equipment but serves a huge number of people. With the growing population and rising unemployment status in the city, the number of hawkers is increasing rapidly. Hawker has created self-employment opportunity with their own effort. Through hawking does not require huge investment, space, experience but it requires much energy, a loud and attractive voice, sense of product choice and finally the trust of the customers in their honesty and quality of products. Hawkers perform an essential role in the socio-economic aspects of the city dwellers that needs to be given due credit. They help to keep the cost of living minimum to the city people by providing food and other consumer items at affordable prices. Most of the people in urban areas in developing countries greatly benefit from economic activities carried out by hawkers. Citizen also depends on them for their daily necessity items from food item to shoes repair. In this way they become favorite person to the citizens and as a self-employed worker they also contributing to the local and national economy. Therefore, in order to intervene in the best way to stimulate sustainable economic development and business formation, the hawkers' economy needs to be better understood both by governments and the other stakeholders. There is no data base regarding the actual number of hawker in Chattogram city as well as Bangladesh. A central database should be developed with a collaboration of different city authorities like metropolitan police, city corporation, etc. This database should include the registration number of hawker, name, fathers' name, home district, age, sex, education, location of business, type of business product, etc. This database will be helpful to fix the number of hawkers in a particular hawker's market. Moreover, it will be easier for the respective authority to monitor the hawkers. The government may also take proper steps to give hawkers identity cards and may arrange 'holiday markets' to rehabilitate them periodically in large cities of Bangladesh. We all should have a sympathetic viewpoint towards them and try to consider their contribution in our urban economy. If the hawkers are given facilities and the government take appropriate planning and policy guide line for the betterment of hawker's livelihood, then all the parties would have benefited and the functionality of the city could be made normal in Bangladesh. Some necessary steps should be taken to improve business environment free and fair in cities with an enthusiastic manner. Hawkers should be sited in fixed places of the city so that they can peacefully carry on their businesses. Training and business awareness program need to be arranged by government or non-government authorities and hawkers should participate in the programs to aware themselves about their business and right.

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