

Research Scholar Information Sheet  
Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir



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Name of Scholar: IKHLAQ UL REHMAN MIR

Name of Supervisor: **Dr. M. Ibrahim Wani**

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**1. Title of PhD: *Digital Media Literacy in Informal Sector: A Study of Street Vendors in Srinagar***

Short Summary (300-400 words): Street vendors constitute an important segment at the bottom of the pyramid of the informal economy in cities. Street vending provides a source of self-employment and acts as a measure of urban poverty alleviation. It holds an important place in the urban supply chain and provides inexpensive and convenient access to goods and services to all segments of the population including the poor. Street vending is therefore an integral part of all economic growth process in urban areas. In India and international level many papers and thesis have come on street vendors but the focus mostly has been on their working life and challenges. Today everyone is making use of Digital technologies to make their lives better. Street vendors form an integral part of economy. The ability to confidently use, participate in and understand digital media and services is becoming an important prerequisite to effective participation in the digital economy and society more generally. Digital media literacy is often understood as the ability to access, understand and participate or create content using digital media. It is the ability to think critically about the media we consume, and to access, use and engage with digital media in an effective, responsible and meaningful way. Street vendors also use Digital Media for various activities like voice calling, for communication, entertainment and now for digital payments which is shaping their business and overall lives but the question

arises does street vendors have the requisite awareness, skills /literacy in using these digital technologies. Such shifts indicate that digital divide in physical access (access to Smartphones and internet) is narrowing. At the same time, the focus has shifted to challenges associated to digital Media literacy and skills, inequality, exclusion among street vendors. The need for informal workers like street vendors is to explore the benefits of digital technology and to adopt them as tool to enhance their skills and to catalyse their growth for better livelihood.

The study of street vendors with reference to digital technologies is new research area and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where digitally empowered society is a new notion, street vendors also need access, awareness, and skills to adapt to new digital technologies. In large sense this development of street vendors will contribute for the betterment of the society overall. For policy makers and governments this study will provide solutions and possible suggestions to come up with better policies and innovations in future for these sections of society.

The present study will focus on Digital Media access, patterns and purpose of Digital Media usage among street vendors, with a focus on the ways in which street vendors use internet based Digital applications.

Current Status: Field work