Urban Women Participation and Livelihoods in the Informal Sector in Fiji: A case study of Suva – Lami Area

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies

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July, 2011
A DECLARATION

Statement by Student

I, Kamni Narayan, declare that this thesis is my own work. Where other sources have been used, these have been duly acknowledged. Any omission and error or otherwise is my own and to best of my knowledge the main content of this thesis has not previously been submitted for any degree in any other University.

Signature ................................ Date........................
Name: Ms. Kamni Narayan
Student ID No: S02000507

Statement by Supervisor

I confirm that this thesis was prepared under my supervision and is the work of Ms. Kamni Narayan except where other sources used have been duly acknowledged.

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Designation: Associate Professor
ABSTRACT

As in many developing countries, Fiji's economic participation, particularly female participation in development has remained low. However, with increasing urbanisation and associated rural–urban migration, and growing educational awakening, women's participation is on the rise especially in the informal sector of the economy. This sector plays a vital role in absorbing the rural–urban migrants, and aids in generating income and sustaining their livelihoods. The informal sector, commonly characterised by poor working conditions, and long working hours, accommodates a large number of women (and children), who rely on this sector as their primary source of income. However, their participation and livelihoods derived from the informal sector in Fiji and the overall impacts are less understood and documented. Hence to bridge this information gap, this study has been undertaken.

The aim of this study was to examine women’s participation and livelihoods in the informal sector particularly in the Suva–Lami area in Fiji. In addition to examining informal sector participants’ household and socio-economic characteristics, this study also identifies the impediments to informal sector activity and puts forward policy recommendations for the promotion of the sector. In doing so, this study utilizes a research methodology which is primarily qualitative; however, a ‘triangulation’ approach is employed in the study.

The results of the study re-establishes the fact that the informal sector remains a vital source of income for a large number of poor families in Fiji, with about 66 per cent of participants relying on this sector as a primary source of income and household security. It also brings out the issue of child labour, in particular, girl child participation in the informal sector as well as shedding light on the increasing prominence of the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) role in the informal sector, whereby a large number of women participate in the informal sector activity via social networking sites. In addition, impediments to female informal sector participation such as access to financial credit, increasing competition and cost of raw materials, adverse weather conditions and low vocational skills were also noted. The research concludes with a discussion of ways to strengthen female participation in the informal sector including promotion and strengthening of vocational training and micro-finance credit programs and formulation and adoption of pro-poor growth strategies and policies aiming at empowerment of women.
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This academic journey would not have been possible without all their support!
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Citizens Constitutional Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECREA</td>
<td>Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAWG</td>
<td>Fiji Association of Women Graduates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIBS</td>
<td>Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNEC</td>
<td>Fiji National Employment Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNPF</td>
<td>Fiji National Provident Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRCA</td>
<td>Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information, Communication and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KTFZ</td>
<td>Kalabo Tax-free Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTC</td>
<td>Lami Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSMED</td>
<td>National Centre for Small and Micro-enterprise Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIC</td>
<td>Pacific Island Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIFS</td>
<td>Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCC</td>
<td>Suva City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small and Medium Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT</td>
<td>Value Added Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOSED</td>
<td>Women's Social and Economic Development Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The United Nations Millennium Development Goal Three aims at promoting gender equality and empowerment. While a number of countries have taken on the task of subscribing to this aspiration, gender equality is still a long road ahead. When reflecting on the status of women around the world, the theory, ‘feminization of poverty’ comes into mind, outlining women's lack of access to power and resources to alleviate poverty. Myriads of issues face women and children each day as they are forced into prostitution and trafficking, or subjected to honour killings, domestic violence and discrimination at work, be it over pay or promotions. In addition, women’s participation outside the home is restricted in some cases due to traditional obligation, as well the perceived notion of women role being primarily associated with the domestic and reproductive sphere of childcare and housework. Moreover, for some women, access to health care and family planning remains a challenge, hence, a contributing factor to the high mortality rate. Where family subsistence farming is concerned, women work on par with men, yet very few own land or have access to financial facilities. United Nations (1997) states that women put in more hours of work in comparison to men, yet, the majority of the world’s poor remain women. Owing to globalization and urbanization, an increase in female educational development has come about, resulting in a changing scenario of women participation in various economic sectors: formal and informal.

Urbanization, as Bala (2009) states, “is a universal phenomenon triggered by the sectorial shift from agriculture to industry and modern services”. The early 19th century was a world of farms and villages in the rural areas; away from the hustle and the jostle of the busy city life. Back then, city and countryside appeared as two differing ways of life with urbanization being an insignificant phenomenon. During the mid to late 19th century, a time when the industrial revolution was rife, a modern juxtaposition of city and countryside was created by the growth of urban agglomerations. Global urban population increased from 48.8 per cent in 2005, to 50 per cent now, and is projected to 52.8 per cent in 2015 (UNDP, 2008). Urbanization is gaining momentum, with rural–urban migration being one of the main
drivers. Moreover, urbanization is seen as a part of the development process and is accompanied by challenges and opportunities. Challenges come in the form of limited employment opportunities, growing pressure on infrastructure (water and sanitation), housing and education. With increasing urbanization, the numbers of squatters are growing in cities and towns and they are taking up various informal activities for their livelihoods.

Pacific Island Countries (see Map 1.1) are no exception. They witness rapid urbanization.

Map 1.1: Map of Pacific Islands

Source: www.oneuptravel.com
Urbanization in the context of Pacific Islands is variable (Table 1.1). For instance, in the context of Micronesia, the extent of urbanization is considerable. For the Polynesian countries (e.g. Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu), the urbanization rates appear to grow at a slower pace in comparison with Melanesian (e.g. Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) and Micronesian countries (e.g. Kiribati, Palau, Marshall islands).

Table 1.1: Urbanization in the Pacific Island Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Urban Population (percentage)</th>
<th>National Population growth per annum (percentage)</th>
<th>Urban population growth per annum (percentage)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federated States of Micrones</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>-3.1</td>
<td>-0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>7.3</td>
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Urbanization encompasses processes that alter the way of life, as well as the means of acquiring the necessities and the luxuries. In sustaining livelihoods, owing to the limited absorption capacity of the formal sector and the pull factor of the informal sector in terms of ease of entry, the informal sector becomes the popular base for participation of urban women, accounting for 50 to 80 per cent of employment (ILO and WTO, 2009). In other
words, there is a preponderance of women in informal sector employment compared to a very low ratio of them in the formal sector.

The term ‘informal sector’ was first used by ILO in 1972 in the context of Kenya. A year later, Keith Hart used the concept of the informal sector to describe a part of the urban labour force, which operates outside of the formal labour market. This sector consists of activities that are unregulated, of a small scale operation with no fixed location and generally family-organized. The informal sector plays a crucial role in providing jobs and reducing unemployment; absorbing a number of rural–urban migrants, street kids and those living in the squatter areas, thereby helping alleviate poverty. Furthermore, with its role as an employment provider, the informal sector is the dominant segment of the labour market where most school-leavers (ADB, 2008) and vulnerable migrants, particularly women, are absorbed. Despite ongoing debates, the informal sector is being recognized as an essential sector in promoting growth and reducing poverty.

Women’s share of informal economy employment worldwide has remained between 60 and 80 per cent (ILO, 1999). Women are limited from entering the formal sector on account of their lower status in education and health levels (White, 1999). The informal sector acts as a social ‘safety net’ for many women; however, the informal sector-working women are placed at the lowest end of the socio-economic spectrum (Khan, 2006). They have poor education attainment, work as low status worker, having little or no access to capital and mostly live below the poverty line. Most of these women work in poor working conditions with little or no regard for their health, and are subject to harassment with no legal protection. However, working in the informal sector has become an ideal choice for a number of women because of little set-up cost, lack of requirement for formal training, flexibility of time and their ability to combine informal income-generating activities with a domestic role.

However, despite the informal sector having the flexibility of working hours, whether to send their children to school or to take them on the vending trip remains a predicament. Rather oblivious to the reality is the fact that some women already in the tight spot of providing their family with a decent meal are faced with an even more difficult task of making sure that everyone else at home is taken care of during her informal work outside the home. A rather sad observance is children, especially the girl child, seen on the streets helping out her parent(s) during a time when they should be getting a proper education.
Child labour is largely concentrated in Asia and Africa, which together account for more than 90 per cent of total worldwide child employment. Child labour in Oceania regions only makes up 0.2 per cent of total world child labour (ILO, 1993).

In the Pacific Island countries, the informal sector is limited. The relative absence of an informal sector in Pacific Island countries is attributed to the fact that the majority of the workers are home-based (Connell and Lea, 2002). Activities such as shoe shining, vegetable selling, roadside food vending, tailoring, carpentry and handicraft, businesses operating from home that sell cigarettes, kava, betel nuts, and ice-blocks, to small scale entrepreneurs, as well as activities extending beyond the law, for instance; those engaging in prostitution or marijuana selling all fall under the informal sector umbrella. Following its ratification of the Informal Sector Development and Control Act in 2004, Papua New Guinea became the only Pacific island country to adapt legislation recognizing the contribution of the informal sector to employment growth.

The rapid growth in Fiji’s urban population has led to a dualistic urban structure consisting of a formal and informal sector (Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty, 2003). Fiji’s informal sector consists of worker entrepreneurs, self-employed and the wage workers. The degrees of informality that characterize each of these groups differ. However, the category of interest during the course of this study is the self-employed and the wage workers. The informal sector on average, during 2002–2007, accounted for 49.3 per cent of the total employment in Fiji (Fiji Computerized Human Resources Information System, 2010). A report by the UNDP Pacific Centre and Pacific Financial Inclusion Program (2010), titled Fiji Financial Sector Assessment, citing Reserve Bank of Fiji 2008 Annual Report states that women constitute 31 per cent of the total economically active workforce and 79 per cent of those who are economically active operate in the informal sector. This figure indicates a large number of women resorting to the informal sector as a source of their livelihoods.

Conceptual frameworks underpinning the informal sector participation include those of poverty, education, economic participation opportunities and socio-cultural issues. These frameworks will be discussed in detail in the chapter that follows. In addition, the changing paradigms of feminist development theories have shifted from a centred approach of women in development in the 1950s and 1960s, to the women and development approach of the 1970s and to gender and development now. These approaches have put women as their
central focus in development. In this regard, power and decision-making at the national level in Fiji are mostly confined to men, while women economic participation is largely limited to informal economic sector. Where female education is concerned, it is of interest to note that progress has been made with the enrolment numbers (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009a) and in some instances, women dominating the numbers for higher education. Nevertheless, this advancement has yet to translate into greater equality in employment or socio-political opportunities. While opportunities do exist for women in the economic sector, most are confined to a constricted band of low paid jobs that relate to their domestic lives, for instance, clerical jobs, hotels, retail and restaurants. Against this background, a number of women workers in the urban areas are disadvantaged by the recent closure of a number of garment factories in the urban areas as well as the reduction of working hours at hotels around Fiji. The preceding issues have seriously impeded women developmental abilities. More so, it is vital to comprehend that women’s equality is a prerequisite for development, hence play a pivotal role in gender and development approach. To this end, it is vital to empower women in order for them to acquire power and to take control of their lives and to make a choice. For a majority of women, taking control of their lives came through the opening of the informal sector, which to some extent bridged the opportunity gap.

Women participation in the informal sector becomes evident while walking around the streets of Suva. A large number of them engage in selling doormats, cooked food, jewellery and handicraft. Most importantly, earnings from this sector becomes a primary source of income for a number of women, giving them the opportunity to become entrepreneurs and rise above poverty, by supplying the means to provide for basic needs such as education, food, shelter and clothing for their families. While some women have found a way to earn a livelihood through the informal sector, and to some extent, breaking the poverty cycle, more needs to be done. As Kofi Annan aptly points out, “the power must be put in the hands of women to break the cycle of poverty”. Hence, this study was undertaken to examine urban women participation and livelihoods in the informal sector in Fiji, with a focus on Suva and Lami areas.

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1 The denied opportunity of entry into the workforce.
2 Livelihood as defined by Chambers and Conway (1992) "comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress, shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets while providing sustainable opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at local and global levels and in the long and short run".
1.2 Rationale

The expanding informal sector absorbs a number of unemployed poor, vulnerable women and children and migrants that are unable to find other employment, representing people's hopes of escaping poverty. It further plays a role in economic development by means of contribution to the GDP. The informal sector’s contribution to Fiji’s GDP in 2005 stood at 16.9 per cent.

Women’s participation in the urban informal sector is a neglected area of research. While there has been research carried out pertaining to the informal sector, none has focused specifically on women participation. Women contribute largely to the country’s development but their needs are not addressed adequately. Their lives are characterized by low income, ill health, low nutrition and high levels of exploitation. To this end, more light needs to be shed on the informal sector to identify the problems associated with it, to reflect on the hurdles to its further development and recommend ways in which this sector can be strengthened.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions include:

- How is the informal sector defined in the context of Fiji Islands?
- What role(s) do(es) the informal sector play in Fiji?
- What is the extent of women participation in the informal sector in Fiji?
- What are the factors contributing to women participation in the informal sector?
- What are the socio-economic characteristics of women participants in the informal sector in Fiji?
- How does the informal sector contribute to alleviate women poverty?
- What are the impediments to informal sector?

1.4 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the participation and the livelihoods of urban women in the informal sector in Fiji with a special reference to Suva to Lami area.
The specific objectives are as follows:

- to define the informal sector in the context of Fiji Islands,
- to identify the extent of poverty surrounding women in the urban areas in Fiji,
- to assess the extent of informal activities in Fiji especially in Suva–Lami area,
- to examine the socio-economic characteristics of women participating in informal activities in Fiji,
- to examine the contribution of informal sector to poverty alleviation,
- to identify impediments to informal sector growth in Fiji, and
- to recommend policy issues relating to the informal sector in Fiji on the basis of research findings.

1.5 Research Methodology and Methods

The methodological philosophy opted for in this study is that of a post-positivist or the social scientist approach, which aims to assume a learning role. Both, primary and secondary sources of information have been utilized to obtain data for the thesis. In regard to the primary sources, the researcher undertook a three–month fieldwork research, covering the female participants of the informal sector in the Suva to Lami areas. The fieldwork involved the use of structured questionnaire surveys, employing the convenience sampling and snowball sampling technique.

Secondary data for the thesis was acquired from a number of national and international reports, mainly from United Nations and the Bureau of Statistics, Fiji. Amongst other local publications, the 2007 National Census Report as well as the Preliminary Report of the 2008–2009 Poverty and household incomes in Fiji were utilized.

While the research methodology is primarily qualitative, however, a ‘triangulation’ method was used where quantitative data was also gathered, tabulated and analysed in the thesis.

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3 Chapter Three discusses the research methods and methodology in greater detail.
1.6 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is categorized into six chapters. Chapter One is the introduction section of the thesis, mainly centring on the background of the study, a rationale or justification for the study, research questions, objectives and a brief research methods and methodology, as undertaken in this study.

Chapter Two provides a conceptual framework linking key concepts revolving around the research subject. This chapter provides an overview of relevant approaches, models and theoretical debates on the informal sector and on (urban) women participation in the informal sector.

Chapter Three consists of the detailed research methods and methodology employed in this study. More so, this chapter revolves around the sources of data, research design, sampling, research analysis, limitations of research and ethical issues.

Chapter Four provides a background of the study area that is, the Suva to Lami area and, in the context of Fiji Islands. It looks briefly at the geographic setting, demographic trends, the economic structure, and formal and informal sector activity and labour employment, the unemployment rates, as well as the migration trends. Moreover, this chapter also focuses on Suva and Lami in terms of origin, growth and informal sector development.

Chapter Five focuses on research findings and analysis. Finally, chapter Six provides conclusions and recommendations based on the study findings.
CHAPTER TWO
URBAN WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN INFORMAL SECTOR:
A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a conceptual framework and literature review focusing on the developing countries, the Pacific Island Countries, and in the context of Fiji. Moreover, it focuses on concepts and linkages pertaining to the informal sector and to urban women participation in the informal sector. In particular, linkages such as urbanization, education, informal sector, economic participation and poverty, as well as health and survival strategies are deliberated in this chapter.

2.2 A Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

Generally, the labour market is segmented into formal⁴ and informal⁵, hence creating a market dualism⁶. Where the informal sector is concerned, there is no universally accepted definition of the sector. It differs from country to country and context to context. However, during ILO’s Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 1993, it was recommended to use one or more of the following three criteria in order to distinguish informal sector enterprises from other unincorporated enterprises: (i) no registration of the enterprise; (ii) small size in terms of employment; and (iii) non-registration of the employees of the enterprise (ILO and WTO, 2009).

The informal sector is normally referred to as an oxymoron; for some it is simply a nuisance. For others, it offers a sense of optimism. For instance, consider a backyard garage. For the neighbours, it is an annoyance with the extra noise; however, for the person that needs his tire to be patched at nine at night, this garage is a life-saver.

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⁴ Alternatively called capitalist, modern or industrial.
⁵ Also referred to as subsistence, traditional, or shadow economy.
⁶ Lewis (1954), one of the dual economy modellers states that the quintessence of dualism lies in the fact that workers earn different wages, depending on the sector of the economy in which they find employment. See also Fei and Ranis, (1964); Harris and Todaro, (1970); Basu, (1997) for dualism.
Lewis (1954: 147), in a vivid manner portrays the difference between formal and informal employment as follows:

> What we have is not one island of expanding capitalist employment, surrounded by a vast sea of subsistence workers, but rather a number of such tiny islands . . . We find a few industries highly capitalized, such as mining or electric power, side by side with the most primitive techniques; a few high class shops, surrounded by masses of old style traders; a few highly capitalized plantations, surrounded by a sea of peasants. But we find the same contrasts also outside their economic life.

Informal employment refers to various types of workers and activities, ranging from marginal self-employed own account workers, to entrepreneurs that employ others and from informal employees of formal/informal firms to roadside vendors and hawkers to family workers. In developing countries, the informal sector accounts for 50 to 80 per cent of employment and 20 to 40 per cent of output (ILO and WTO, 2009).

Ranis and Stewart (1999) state that the urban informal economy consists of a traditional and a modern sub-sector. The traditional sector consists of firms with very low or no capital use and few workers that are mostly family members and operate within the premises of a household. They have no fixed location and undertake activities such as small scale retail sales. The modern sector, on the other hand, is made up of firms that have a fixed trading location, with their location being mostly outside the households and those that make use of some capital. Moreover, they tend to hire workers outside of the family boundaries, engaging in contractual agreements.

Apart from the labour market dualism, the informal sector has been considered as having its own internal duality\(^7\), namely, an upper-tier and a lower-tier. Those that voluntarily choose to be a part of the informal sector fall into the upper tier. This segment is also comprised largely of small scale or micro-enterprises. The degree of capitalization is usually higher and workers tend to be more educated and skilled than in the informal sector at large (Fields, 1990). On the other hand, the lower-tier comprises all individuals that have tried, yet failed at getting a job in the formal sector, and with a lower education and skills.

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\(^7\) See also Fields (1990), and Ranis and Stewart (1999).
Where the informal sector is concerned, there is a belief that everyone engaged in the informal sector has been forced to do so, with minimum earnings\(^8\). The conventional model of labour markets also states that the informal employment is as a result of labour market segmentation and implies that those that work informally do so without actually choosing to. The primitive traditional view perceives informal employment as being the result of a rationing out process in a dualistic labour market. The well-paid, secure and safe jobs with a good working environment are supposed to be in the formal sector, while the informal sector has been characterized as small-scale, illegal, a low-income earner and associated with poor working conditions (Harris and Todaro, 1970).

On the other hand, this view has been challenged by those who argue that informal employment is a voluntary choice (Maloney, 2004; Fields, 2005). There are some circumstances that compel individuals to enter the informal sector voluntarily, for instance, cultural reasons that forbid women working outside their homes, or those that choose to work from home while taking care of their children, or those that simply want to be their own boss and have the convenience of time\(^9\). Saavendra and Chong (1999) state that the various benefits and advantages of the informal sector may make a worker choose informal employment.

The diversity of the informal sector is also apparent taking into consideration the phenomenon of multiple job holding. For some people, the informal sector can be the primary source of employment while for others; informal work can be a complement to earnings from formal employment.

**2.2.1 Schools of Thought**

Early debates regarding the causes and characteristics of the informal sector developed into four dominant schools of thought. As sourced from Chen, Vanek and Carr (2004), the four

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\(^8\) This statement has been too generalized for two reasons. First, not everyone is ‘forced’ to work in the informal sector. Some, individuals prefer to seek employment in the informal sector out of their own preference, be it due to convenience of time or traditional factors. Second, while the minimum earning may apply to some individuals in the informal sector, this is certainly not a true picture for all involved in the informal sector. As this thesis progresses, the results from the research will depict that there are people who opted to be a part of this sector, as well as the lavish income that some individuals earn.

\(^9\) Mulinge and Mueller (1998) also state that “other factors such as autonomy, flexibility, working hours, distance to work and opportunities offered in the informal sector also determine job satisfaction.” The existence of ceiling in organizations may also compel women to work in the informal sector and be their own boss. Alternatively, as evidence from this study will point out, due to the compulsory retirement age enforced in Fiji, a number of female retirees have engaged in the informal sector, to spend their time better.
schools of thought include: (a) a dualist school, (b) structuralist school, (c) legalist school and an (d) illegalist school.

The dualist school was recognized by the ILO in the 1970s, which subscribed to the notion that the informal sector is comprised of marginal activities—distinct from and not related to the formal sector—that provide income for the poor and a safety net in times of crisis (Sethuraman, 1976). According to this school, the persistence of informal activities is due largely to the fact that not enough job opportunities are available to absorb surplus labour, due to a slow rate of economic growth and/or due to a faster rate of population growth.

The structuralist school on the other hand was popularized by Caroline Moser in the late 1970s and 1980s and subscribed to the notion that the informal sector should be seen as subordinated economic units (micro-firms) and workers serve to reduce input and labour costs, thereby, increasing the competitiveness of large capitalist firms. In the structuralist model, different modes and forms of production are seen not only to co-exist but also to be connected and interdependent. According to this school, the nature of capitalist development (rather than a lack of growth) accounts for the persistence and growth of informal production relationships (Moser, 1978).

Moreover, the legalist school, as put forward by De Soto in the 1980s and 1990s, subscribes to the notion that the informal sector is comprised of micro-entrepreneurs who choose to operate informally in order to avoid the costs, time and effort of formal registration (De Soto, 1989)\textsuperscript{10}. The same author further states that micro-entrepreneurs will continue to produce informally so long as government procedures are cumbersome and costly. In this view, unreasonable government rules and regulations are stifling private enterprise.

Finally, the illegalist school dominates the literature to which neo-classical and neo-liberal economists across the decades subscribe. This school states the notion that informal entrepreneurs deliberately seek to avoid regulations and taxation and, in some cases, prohibitions on dealing in illegal goods and services\textsuperscript{11}. This perception is associated with the belief that the informal economy is an underground or black economy. According to this school of thought, informal entrepreneurs choose to operate illegally—or even criminally—

\textsuperscript{10} See also Swaminathan (1991) and Anderson (1998) who are in agreement with similar perception.
\textsuperscript{11} See also Banerjee (1982), Renooy (1990), and Anderson (1998).
in order to avoid taxation, commercial regulations, electricity and rental fees, and other costs of operating formally (Maloney, 2004). This finding is further endorsed by Portes, Castells, and Benton (1989: 12) who state that:

_The informal economy is a process of income-generation characterized by one central feature: it is unregulated by the institutions of society, in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated._

De Soto (1989) defines the informal sector as the set of economic units that do not comply with government-imposed taxes and regulations.

### 2.2.2 Urbanization and Informalization

In the 1900s only 15 per cent of the world’s population lived in cities. Today, more than 50 per cent of the world’s people live in urban areas. A shift from a world in which farms and villages were preponderated to one which is so profusely urban focused. UNDP (1997) states 60 per cent of the world’s population will reside in the urban areas by 2030.

The labour surplus model\(^{12}\) provides a link between urbanization and migration. The model assumes that two sectors exist in a developing economy: a traditional rural sector with zero marginal labour productivity and a modern urban industrial sector with high productivity. Of significance to this theory is the notion that rural–urban migration is a natural and output–gain process in which surplus labour is withdrawn from the rural sector to provide needed manpower for urban industrial growth. ‘Urbanization thus augments national income through short-run efficiency gains due to shifts of labour from low to high marginal productivity employment and long-run growth effects due to higher accumulation rates in urban sectors. Therefore, output growth trend acceleration, and rising migration, and urbanization are the likely outcomes of labour surplus model’ (Zhang and Song, 2003).

With rural–urban migration laying the foundation for urbanization, Gilbert and Gugler (1992: 79) categorize four principal migration strategies:

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\(^{12}\) The traditional version of this theory, the dual economy model, was developed by Lewis (1954), Fei and Ranis (1964) and Jorgenson (1961). Alterations to this theory were proposed by Kelley, Williamson, and Cheetham (1972).
• circular migration (people who leave their village to seek temporary work in urban areas, returning home on a regular basis),
• long-term migration, separated from their families,
• family migration to urban areas followed by return migration to the community of origin,
• permanent urban settlement.

Migration tends to take place out of differences in opportunity. With the urban areas placed at an advantage due to the availability of better infrastructure and opportunities, rural-urban migration occurs hence resulting in the increase of urban population. While on one hand urban population increases, the availability of jobs remains a problem, hence resulting in urban unemployment. With men given preference over women in terms of employment opportunities, a number of the females resort to the informal sector as their primary source of employment. Sethuraman (1998: 69) states that markets are believed to discriminate not only the poor and the ill-educated, but more particularly women. The author further emphasizes that “women face greater discrimination than men in access to credit and training”.

Moreover, migration literature has emphasized family as a crucial element in migration decisions (Stark, 1991), wherein family members share costs and rewards of migration. In making a decision for or against migration, various factors are generally considered. For instance, rural income against urban income, the cost of migration and the possible returns to migration. Figure 2.1 depicts some of the factors determining the migration decision.

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13 Schultz (1990) states that females account for 27 per cent of the labour force in developing countries, with an annual rate of change at -0.67 per cent.
14 Defined as any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. Employment and occupation include access to vocational training, access to employment and to particular occupations, and terms and conditions of employment.
Moreover, Schaefer (1976) notes that the informal sector provides employment opportunities to those who lack the necessary credentials for immediate entry into the formal sector. The informal sector therefore helps to rehabilitate women by cushioning their economic plight.

Harris and Todaro’s (1970) model was designed to explain why scores of workers moved from the countryside (rural) to the city, in other words, to determine why migration occurred. The ideology of this model is that the rate of migration flow is determined by the perception of the difference between expected urban wages and rural wages as well as the probability of securing a job in the urban sector.
The Harris and Todaro (1970) model states that migration from rural to urban areas will increase under the following conditions:

- an urban wage increase means an increase in the urban sector, hence increasing the expected urban income. Therefore, rural–urban migration occurs.
- a decrease in the agricultural productivity means lowering marginal productivity and wages in the agricultural sector, thereby decreasing the expected rural income, and causing movement of people.

Moreover, some important conclusions from the Harris and Todaro’s (1970) model are the following:

- Need to reduce the urban bias of development strategies and encourage integrated rural development. This will reduce the wage differential between the urban and rural areas.
- Creating urban jobs is an insufficient solution to the urban unemployment issues as migration is induced to a greater extent.

### 2.2.3 Poverty, Informalization and Child Labour

Sen (2000) in his work *Development as Freedom*, defines poverty as the deprivation of basic capabilities that provide a person with the freedom to choose the life he or she has reason to value. These capabilities include good health, education, social networks, command over economic resources, and influence on decision-making that affects one’s life. Income is important as it allows a person to develop his or her capabilities.

The concept of poverty in developing countries is linked closely with underdevelopment that characterizes most of the developing countries today. When taking into consideration the term poverty, it entails more than just insufficient income. Storey (2006) points out that poverty includes lack of services, poor living conditions, difficulty in meeting basic human needs and a lack of representation in decision-making process. Moreover, Sen’s (2002) concept of capabilities\(^\text{15}\) approach states the freedom to achieve valuable beings and doings\(^\text{16}\).

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\(^{15}\) Where capability is referred to as a type of freedom that enables one to choose a lifestyle one wants to live.

\(^{16}\) Sen (2000) refers to beings and doings as functioning which focuses on issues such as access to food and water, maintaining good health, having self-respect and participation in community life.
The Director General of ILO, Juan Somavia, in his 2003 report to the International Labour Conference stated:

"We know only too well that it is precisely the world of work that holds the key for solid, progressive and long-lasting eradication of poverty. It is through work that people can expand their choices to a better quality of life. It is through work that wealth is created, distributed and accumulated. It is through work that people find a dignified way out of poverty. ... Poverty elimination is impossible unless the economy generates opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, job creation and sustainable livelihoods" (ILO, 2003: 3 and 7).

During a Review and Appraisal at the national level by ILO, it was revealed that by far, the greater majority of the poorest of the poor are women. About two-thirds of the world’s poor live in Asia and the Pacific, on a poverty line of a dollar (US) a day. Moreover, there are more than one billion people in the region that have an income between one to two dollars (US) a day. The majority of these one billion people are the working poor, many of whom work in the informal sector (UNESCAP, 2006: 1). Furthermore, it is reported by the World Bank (1990:3) that “the poor's most abundant asset [is their] labour”. Taking this statement into consideration, the poor possess little or no education and have a very slim chance of finding formal employment. With the absence of a decent income poverty is further compounded. However, livelihoods have to be sustained, and as such, their asset (labour) is recognized in the informal sector, hence becoming the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ for the poor.

Moreover, the workers of the informal sector are poor, illiterate and vulnerable. They lack possession of assets or working capital. As a result, their financial vulnerability remains a setback in providing basic needs and education for their children. Hence, the children of the informal workers are also absorbed into the informal sector. For a number of poor households, in many developing countries, the earnings from their children are their only source of income. However, it is not realized that employment for long working hours and unsafe working conditions further traps them into poverty, preventing them from pursuing a formal education thus precluding the opportunities of securing a better job in the future.

Despite the fact that a large number of countries prohibit child labour, it continues to prevail in the informal sector due to the unregulated environment. For instance, ILO and WTO (2009) estimated that nearly 218 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are engaged in child labour around the world. Of these, some 126 million are in the worst forms of child
labour. About 122 million children in the age range of 5 to 14 are economically active in Asia and the Pacific, 49.3 million in Sub-Saharan Africa, 5.7 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 13.4 million in other regions (ibid.).

Where poverty and informal sector linkage are concerned, there are two contradictory views. The first holds that poverty occurs because of the informal sector. The poor working conditions, the poor pay, the long working hours and sacrificing education to work (in some instances) traps workers in poverty. And because of the limited formal education, chances of acquiring work in the formal sector remain slim, hence, setting people up for living a life with little money, no job security and no social safety nets. The second view states that because of employment in the informal sector, women are able to lift themselves and their families out of poverty, hence minimizing the intensity of poverty.

An approach to poverty alleviation is the sustainable livelihoods approach (Department for International Development, 1999). This approach, later adopted by a number of agencies, including UNDP, entails a way of thinking about the objectives, scope and priorities for development activities. It is based on evolving thinking about the way the poor and vulnerable live their lives and the importance of policies and institutions (Serrat, 2008).

**Figure 2.2: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

The sustainable livelihood framework considers assets, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, an essential component to livelihoods analysis. First, human capital is an individual’s ability to work, combined with his or her education and knowledge. Along with these abilities, go the social capital, which involves having or maintaining networks. Thirdly comes natural capital, for instance, land and water; fourthly, physical capital, including technology and infrastructure; and finally, the financial capital, which means access to credit and savings. With the capital assets taken care of, the informal workers are frequently characterized by low incomes, vulnerability to a diverse range of shocks (e.g. health, natural disasters, fluctuating prices, and the recent global crisis), which may limit or restrict their access to resources. Deen (2009) points out:

The largest impact (of the global financial crisis) could be in the Asia-Pacific region, which has one of the highest ratios of women of working age. And, among working women, about 65 per cent are in vulnerable employment, largely in the region’s informal sector. Many of them have no benefits such as maternity leave and pensions or job security, and thus risk falling into poverty in economic downturns.

The next issue to consider is the processes that encompass the laws, regulations and policies that determine the operation of the entity. Informal sector activities are often associated with illegal status and high competition. As the Development Planning Unit (2001) states, the informal sector usually operates outside the established legal, administrative and economic structures of a country. However, it is essential also to take into consideration that the costly regulations prematurely sink informal operations or compromise their growth. Together, all of these influence the livelihood strategies, which in turn affect the livelihood outcomes such as the well-being, the vulnerability, the income and the food security of an individual in the informal sector (ibid.).

2.2.4 Education and Informality

Harbisan and Meyers (1964) stated, “education is both the seed and the flower of economic development”. Education provides the basis for both, individual and economic development. Formal education provides access to wider social networks, channels of communication and familiarization with new technology, all of which are essential for running a successful business, regardless of size. In most poor countries, a greater number of girls drop-out of primary and secondary schools as opposed to boys (World Bank, 1990). Moreover, girls’
choices within the educational system are limited. For instance, they are likely to be discouraged from taking maths, science and technology courses, and when vocational subjects are available at school, girls are usually obliged or encouraged to take courses in traditional female skill areas (ibid.). According to Neo-classical economists, women educational status is the key determinant of her participation decision in the labour force. More so, it is an equally important factor in determining selection into formal or informal employment. While a number of the educated find employment, others engage in employment within the informal sector (Packard, 2007).

Becker, (1964) states:

..that education is a productive input, whose marginal contribution can be roughly measured by wage differentials between more and less educated labour.

The human capital theory, proposed by Schultz (1961) and developed by Becker (1964), provides a framework for analysing the relationship between education and earning (Becker and Chiswick, 1966). In this framework, education is perceived as a capital investment in an individual's future. Education equates to a better employment, better salary, good working conditions and hence a better lifestyle. Moreover, firms may benefit from an increased level of productivity from their educated employees, hence may reward them with a competitive earning. In the long run, the employer will be satisfied with the quality of his workers' output and the employee with the remuneration.

Moreover, Paukert (1984) notes:

Women, for example, may not realize the same advantage from increased educational attainment as men because they are over-represented in low-skilled, low-productivity and/or part-time employment.

For those women that do get employment in the formal sector, their positions are mostly confined to positions of little or no authority, for instance, clerical, sales and elementary positions. Guy (1993) and Newman (1994) note that women are concentrated in lower-stratum positions because a lack of upward mobility within organizations.
Education is essential to the improvement of women living standards and to enable them a greater degree of participation in the decision-making processes at the family and community levels. In other words, ‘literacy provides access to knowledge, and knowledge is power’ (Kassam, 1989).

### 2.2.5 Women Economic Participation and Opportunities

Economic opportunities enable women to sustain their livelihoods. UNESCAP (2010), however, states, “women are often disadvantaged compared to men in access to employment opportunities and conditions of work...”. Equipped with education, women are progressing in life, but there are still some obstacles and discrimination along the way that deprives them of their rights and privileges. For instance, access to finance remains a worldwide problem faced by women. Since a number of women do not possess assets to put down as collateral, sourcing finance for their small scale activity becomes a difficult task (UNESCAP, 2010). As Ijere (1992) highlights, commercial banks and government agencies are unsympathetic to women seeking funds to set up income-yielding ventures.

Women’s work in the area of domestic work goes unnoticed and unpaid. In addition to having a career, women are responsible for taking care of their family, creating a situation of double-burden. The term ‘double burden’, as it suggests, refers to the double load that most women face. This is a combination of domestic work and their professional jobs. According to Narsey (2007a), economically active persons did an average of 14 hours of household work per week; the average for females was 26 hours, and 9 hours for males. The author further adds that females contributed 76 per cent of their time devoted to household work and 52 per cent of all time worked in the economy (inclusive of household work). As such, when the burden gets heavy and when the decision comes down to family or profession, family is normally the first priority for a number of women; as UNESCAP (2010: 75) puts it, ‘many women forgo or curtail employment because of family responsibilities’.

If the issue of ‘double-burden’ does not topple a woman down, then there is the ‘glass-ceiling’ concept which will restrict her from striving higher (Ridgeway, 2001). A ‘glass-ceiling’ is an unacknowledged barrier that will restrict progress beyond a certain level (the level is metaphorized by a transparent glass).
John Rawl’s Principles of Justice Theory17 (Difference Principle, 1971) emphasizes that “access to privileged positions should not be blocked by discrimination according to irrelevant criteria” (Rawls, 2002). What is needed is a level playing ground where men and women can compete based on merit not on their gender. Guy (1993) suggests that men seem better able to climb the ladder as opposed to women.

For the percentage of women that manage to secure employment in the formal sector, besides the glass-ceiling concept, the difference in the earning powers of male and female devalues the work women do, causing a negative effect on their capability. As documented by Gasparini and Tornarolli (2007), and Chen, Vanek and Carr (2004), a difference in earnings between the various groups of informal workers exists. Moreover, the same authors propose a pyramid (Figure 2.3) to describe the earning status of various informal groups.

**Figure 2.3: Earning Status of Informal Groups by Gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE EARNINGS</th>
<th>GENDER SEGMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Predominantly Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men and women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Predominantly women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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17 This theory has two Principles of Justice. One, Principle of Equal Liberty, which states that each person has an equal right to the most extensive liberties compatible with similar liberties for all. And two, a Difference Principle which states that it means that society may undertake projects that require giving some persons more power, income, status, etc. than others, provided that the project will make life better off for the people who are now worst off (Rawls, 2002).
Figure 2.3 above highlights the earnings along gender lines. Males are more represented at the top of the pyramid whereas women are seen as largely unpaid family workers and home workers, and positioned at the bottom of the pyramid. The crowding model of Barbara Bergmann (1986) is one of the labour market-based approaches to gender differences in earnings. In this model, women are allowed to enter occupation X, and not Y. This results in women ‘crowding’ occupation X, where the sizeable workers exceed the demand. Consequently, as the marginal product of labour declines, the large supply of workers in occupation X leads to a low marginal product of labour, therefore, a low wage. On the contrary, in occupation Y where the supply of workers is inadequate compared to the demand, the marginal product and wage are both high18.

Phelps's (1971) statistical discrimination theory is centred on stereotyping racial or gender inequality. The theory argues the discrimination by the labour market against females (and minorities) based on professed variation in costs. For instance, in evaluating workers, employers may prefer to hire a male worker over a female since there is a higher probability that the female worker will be involved in childbirth.

2.2.6 Women, Development and Informality

The process of informalization has resulted in “feminization” of the labour force, and in doing so, it has created more opportunities for females, in comparison to males (Sethuraman, 1998). It has also served as a basis for a number of organizations to decrease their labour costs as women are employed under informal conditions. As such, many small firms tend to prefer this form of employment due to no contractual binding, no threat of unionization, and being unbound of their obligation towards their contribution of superannuation funds.

2.2.6.1 Women in Development

This feminist development theory advocating for women in development, focuses on women in the development policies. This approach underlies the main issue as the exclusion

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18 It is important to keep in mind that in Bergmann’s model (1986), the wages are equivalent to the marginal product; therefore, there is no wage discrimination. The discrimination stems from female workers’ confinement into “female” jobs, resulting in a low marginal product.
of women in the development process and puts forward recommendations that encourage
women participation and increases in women productivity and income status.

2.2.6.2 Women and Development

The paradigm women and development argues for recognition and acknowledgment of the
special roles women have played in the development processes. This development approach
to women recognizes the dangers of integrating women into a patriarchal world, and seeks
to create “women-only” projects, carefully constructed to protect women interests from
patriarchal domination (Rathgeber 1990).

2.2.6.3 Gender and Development

Gender and development is a feminist development theory, an approach to development that
focuses on global and gender inequalities. This paradigm emerged in the 1980s as an
alternative theory to Women in Development and Women and Development approaches.
This framework, also known as the ‘empowerment approach’, identifies the main problem as
unequal power relations (rich vs poor; women vs men), which prevents equitable
development and women’s full participation (Moffat et al., 1991). For instance, power
imbalance is evident in unequal access to control over resources such as land, and in gender
division of labour. While women may have access to land, they do not have the control of
ownership. In addition, division of labour on a gender basis means that women’s and men's
work in different spheres allocates them differential financial and social power.

2.2.7 Women and Social Network

As a result of the technological advances, social networking has become a mode through
which the 21st century communicates. Social networking is carried out through two
mediums. First, face to face (also known as support groups), involving a number of
individuals with a common goal coming together as a group, and second, as a group with
shared interests that communicates online. An example of the former is the Fiji Association
of Women Graduates. Their aim is to promote lifelong education, to improve the status of
women and girls and to enable women to experience positive change.
Moreover, due to technological advances, informal activities via social networking sites have become popular, particularly involving women that prefer this medium of employment due to the convenience of flexible working hours. Doing business through this medium provides an opportunity to reach out to a larger market for potential customers in different regions. While this is a new concept, it is widely undertaken by women with children who often prefer to work from home.

### 2.2.8 Women and Socio-Cultural Issues

According to Blunch, Canagarajah and Raju (2001), “given the disadvantaged position of women in the labour market in most parts of the developing world — the result of long-standing societal norms which discourage the social and economic integration and advancement of women — the majority of female workers are in the informal sector”.

The World Bank (2001) notes the disparities between the two genders and states that:

> Women continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources, including education, land, information, and financial resources. Many women cannot own land, and those who do generally command smaller landholdings than men. And in most developing regions, female-run enterprises tend to be undercapitalized, having poorer access to machinery, fertilizer, extension information, and credit than male-run enterprises, which hurt women’s ability to participate in development and contribute to higher living standards for their families. Those disparities also translate into greater risk and vulnerability in the face of personal or family crisis, in old age and during economic shocks.

As the World Bank (2001) highlights, women in some countries are forbidden by customary restrictions to engage in business or to own a property. This obstructs women to a great extent from the formal economy, as they do not have any assets to use as collateral. Constraints such as these, besides denying equal opportunities to women, also impede their choice of activity as well as the mode of their participation in the labour market.

Moreover, in some cultures, a woman’s life revolves around being a daughter, wife and mother. Engaging in work outside the house is not permitted. With cultural obligations restricting their movement, a number of women resort to the informal sector to make a
living. In this way, they are able to stay within their cultural boundaries, as well as earn some money.

2.2.9 Women, Empowerment and the Informal Sector

At the core of empowerment is the idea of power\(^{19}\). In order for women to be economically self-reliant, they need to be empowered. Betty Friedan (1963), a 20\(^{th}\) century feminist noted in her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, that women are as capable of men to do any type of work or follow any career path. Women need to take this into consideration, free themselves from the oppression and switch the power gear into action.

Furthermore, the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 reiterated that one of the more powerful forces for sustainable growth and development, good governance, and the reduction of poverty, is gender equality and empowerment of women. Such views are reminiscent of Batliwala (1993), who noted that the terms empowerment and development are used synonymously. It is often assumed that power comes automatically through economic strength. If women are able to achieve the economic strength, then they have the power and the confidence to change their situation and be economically self-reliant.

Hence, empowering women means giving them strength and the power to achieve more. Women are seen as the pillars of strength of their families. Once armed with power such as skills, finance, basic resources and education, they can be catalysts for change. Moreover, with access to resources and finance, they would be in a better position to establish themselves in the informal sector through means of income generating projects, hence lifting their families from poverty to some extent.

The work of Amartya Sen (1992) and others provided a foundation for a broader definition of the human development approach, focusing on expanding people’s choices and enhancing human capabilities (the range of things people can be and do) and freedoms, enabling them

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\(^{19}\) Rowlands (1997) made the following classifications of power:

i. *Power over*: controlling power over someone and something.

ii. *Power to*: generative or productive power that creates new possibilities and actions without domination.

iii. *Power with*: power generating a feeling that the whole is greater than the sum of individuals as action as a group is more important.

iv. *Power from within*: a sense that there is strength in each and every individual. The recognition of one’s self-acceptance and self-respect enables the acceptance of others as equal.
to: live a long and healthy life, have access to knowledge and a decent standard of living, and participate in the life of their community and decisions affecting their lives (UNDP, 2010).

Theories such as Kabeer’s (2001) deal with three inter-related dimensions in empowering women. First, access to and control of resources. Second, agency (the ability to utilize resources), and third, achievement. Kabeer further states that empowerment is both – a process and an end result. Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) share a similar model and note that empowerment alone does not translate into desired actions and outcomes. This is affected by two factors, agency and opportunity structure. As Figure 2.4 illustrates, agency is defined as an actor's ability to make meaningful choices; that is, the actor is able to envisage options and make a choice, whereas opportunity structure is defined as the formal and informal contexts within which actors operate. Working together, these factors give rise to different degrees of empowerment.

**Figure 2.4: Relationship between Agency and Opportunity Structure and Empowerment**

For example, a woman chooses to take out a bank loan to finance her small-scale income project, sweet selling. However, the process for obtaining the loan required that she—an illiterate person—complete five forms, offer all her assets as collateral, and obtain a lawyer to verify that she owned such assets. The woman’s choice was well informed and economically viable, but the opportunity structure—in this case the regulations concerning procurement—was an obstacle in her ability to make an effective choice.
2.2.10 Health, Environment and the Informal Sector

Since the informal sector comprises different groups of informal sector workers, the problems they encounter vary. However, the most common problems centre on lack of proper workspace, resulting in workers being exposed to things such as excessive heat and/or rain, unhygienic/inadequate basic facilities especially water and toilets, lack of ventilation, long working hours and exposure to dangerous working conditions, all of which affect their health. In acknowledging such conditions, little action can be taken due to women's vulnerable position. Livelihoods, though, are a necessity; hence women are placed in a position where they cannot afford to be selective. Moreover, due to their status, the informal workforce continues to be unrecognized in official labour statistics and unguarded by labour legislation. Against this background, informal workers typically lack the social protection accorded to formal paid workers, such as sick leave and health insurance.

In discussing informal sector and environmental linkages, as the urban population continues to grow across the globe, the informal sector due to its low entry costs becomes the ideal choice to sustain their livelihoods. As a result of the increasing informal activities, a large quantity of rubbish is left behind on the streets and to accumulate in open dumps where disease-carrying insects and rodents propagate. In addition, urban dwellers face a range of environmental hazards, including those related to impromptu, unsustainable developments (Montgomery et al., 2003).

To exacerbate this, for those engaged in the informal sector, a large number of people may crowd in a small–sized house. For instance, a house meant for four people may have double the number of people in it, hence resulting in poor hygienic conditions. Worse, due to the basic housing structures that some people in this sector occupy, cooking and sleeping are undertaken in the same room. This results in indoor pollution from open cooking fires and stoves, resulting in respiratory infections especially among women and children. With health being a vital capital in the pursuit of different livelihood strategies, this impedes the development of women capabilities (WHO, 2007).
2.2.11 Formal and Informal Sector Linkages

Because we have purchased our computer from a formal shop, we might not realize its linkage with the informal sector (Gereffi, 1999). Neither do we realize that the clothes we bought from the up-market boutique had some association with the informal sector. Gereffi (1999) states that clothing items we buy and use are commonly put together by unregulated or poorly regulated sweatshops and home workers on a piece rate basis and with no social benefits.

The author further notes that the informal sector has both backward and forward linkages with the formal sector. For instance, the backward linkages include the flow of raw materials, finance, equipment, supply of labour, education and skill requirements, ownership of enterprise and location characteristics such as home-based, open space or squatter.

Forward linkages include the marketing method opted for; the supply of consumer goods from informal sector enterprises to the formal sector, the price and quality of products and services derived from the informal sector and the purchasing power of consumers (ibid.).

2.2.11.1 Formal Regulations vs. Informalization

The relationship between the informal sector and the formal regulatory environment can be best explained as De Soto (1989) said by the three dominant schools of thought, namely over-regulation, de–regulation and lack of regulation. These are explained below:

- **Over–regulation** – the legalists place emphasis on excessive regulations that create barriers to the formal sector. These regulations tend to be both, costly and time consuming. A good example is seen in the case of getting a business licence.
- **De–regulation** – De Soto (1989) states that de–regulation would lead to increase in economic freedom, particularly in developing countries.
- **Lack of regulation** – when it comes to the informal sector, it is to a large extent overlooked by the regulatory framework. As a result, in cases where the appropriate regulation is lacking, there is no enforcement on issues such as occupational health and safety policies, or the compulsory contribution to the superannuation fund. However, the lack of regulation can be as costly as the situation with excessive regulation. For
instance, in cases where excessive regulations exist, enforcement officials take either of the following stances towards street vendors. They either harass and force eviction of vendors or ask for bribes. Either way, the situation is costly.

Furthermore, taxes on firms constitute a major source of government revenue in the formal sector. Burgess and Stern (1993) report that in developing countries, corporate income taxes represent 17.8 per cent of total tax revenues. Bureaucratic requirements are also a significant cost of remaining formal. Chickering and Salahdine (1991: 191) in the context of Egypt state that “much of the country’s entrepreneurial talent is consumed in circumventing the country’s nightmare bureaucratic regulatory system”.

De Soto (1989) surveyed 37 formal firms operating in areas in which informal firms mushroomed. He found that 40 per cent of the administrative personnel’s working time was spent completing the bureaucratic paper work required by the state. On the contrary, an informal activity can be set up overnight.

2.3 The Informal Sector in the Developing Countries

Scholars such as Sethuraman (1976) and De Soto (1989) have commonly been associated with research in the informal economy in developing countries. Shaheed and Mumtaz (1981) conducted a study on informally employed women in Kot Lakhpat (Lahore) and found the majority of the women were working from their homes, due to traditional circumstances, which prohibit women from taking on work outside the home.

Women participation in the workplace leads to greater productivity, as in the study put forward by Elson (1993). He highlights a case of a toy factory suffering from levels of low productivity in spite of a bonus system put in place to provide extra incentives to employees. Women were given the go-ahead to participate in the re-structuring of the production process, which included the scheduling and the speed of their machinery. This resulted in an increase in productivity levels between 30 to 50 per cent (Elson, 1993).

The characteristics of the labour market also affect participation. Lanot and Muller (1997), in studying the female labour supply in Cameroon, state that labour markets in developing countries are characterized by dualism and imperfections as opposed to perfect competition. In this instance, dualism is marked by the existence of activities with diminishing returns to
labour in the traditional sector and high entry costs in the modern sector. Unlike the formal sector, which is characterized by high wages, high returns to education and on-the-job training, the informal sector is characterized by low wages, low returns to education and decreasing returns to labour, resulting in a wage gap between the two sectors (Lanot and Muller, 1997). The authors note that age and education of husbands are important for participation by women, while the presence of children lowers participation in the formal sector.

Maglad (1998) in a study of female labour supply in Sudan emphasizes the importance of human capital in increasing female labour force participation and illustrates that expected own wage, spouse’s earnings and the number of children, as well as their ages were important in determining participation in the labour market. According to Maglad, spouse's expected wages affected both participation and labour supply negatively. The presence of preschool children also has a negative effect on participation, seeing that they need constant care and attention.

Charmes (2000) analysed the contribution of the informal sector and of the women involved in the informal sector to GDP in African countries. It aimed at highlighting the underestimation of women activities in national accounting. The study estimates that in most countries, the share of women in informal sector to GDP is much lower than estimated. In another study, Blunch, Canagarajah and Raju (2001), claimed that women participation predominate in the informal sector.

2.3.1 The Informal Sector in the Pacific Island Countries

According to Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003), research on urban issues around the Pacific Islands began during the 1960s. While the activities of the informal sector are evident in the Pacific Islands, it is not as developed as that of Asian countries. Connell and Lea (1993: 5) stated that, the relative absence of the informal sector in the Pacific Islands is due to:

\textit{A lack of traditional urbanization, the relative affluence, the post-colonial regime, and the controlled public service or company origins of the towns and the shortage of skills that are appropriate to informal sector manufacturing.}
Bryant (1993) prepared a working paper on urban poverty and environment, with a focus on the South Pacific. Studies on women traders undertaken in the Solomon Islands (ILO and UNDP, 1993) confirmed the critical role of women informal sector activities to family livelihoods. UNDP (1999) reports that the informal sector in the Pacific is invisible as a number of activities are home-based, particularly for the women and children.

A thesis undertaken by Dunlop (1999) pertaining to women in the informal sector in Samoa, studied a total of 90 women from three sample villages namely Tanugamanono, Siumu and Safotu. On the basis of her interview with them, Dunlop (1999) found the following:

- there had been an increase in the number of women–headed households, which may explain the increase in women involvement in the informal sector,
- for Samoan males, small trading, such as that in the informal sector is seen as ‘not good culturally’, thus they leave it to females to undertake such activities,
- the study highlighted multiple jobs that some women held. For instance, weaving and selling mats, combined with selling cooked foods to sewing,
- seventy per cent of the sampled women had received secondary education,
- ‘the need for cash’ rated highly as the reason for their involvement in the informal sector, and
- of the sample, only one woman has gone to the bank for a loan. She was however unsuccessful.

Connell and Lea (2002) note that while the informal sector had a positive impact on employment and incomes, there had been little attempt to provide protection and space for the sector. Eugenio (2003) in her study discussed women informal sector participants in the National Capital region of Papua New Guinea.

2.3.2 Informal Sector in Fiji

In the context of Fiji Islands, urban poverty was examined by Cameron (1983). The Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG, 1994), through a study of the market vendors in Suva, found 70 per cent of the casual vendors were the only income earners in their households. The findings highlight the critical importance of women’s earnings from informal sector activities to the family budget. Moreover, it was noted that 89 per cent of their profits were spent on family expenses (such as school fees, bus fares) which attests to
the importance of women informal sector trading to the quality of family life. Furthermore, the study also found that the number of women casual vendors in Fiji had increased significantly, in line with the depressed economic climate Fiji had been experiencing at that time. FAWG proposed this increase proved that women informal sector activities were positively related to women economic vulnerability and, poverty.

The work of Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003), was the first detailed survey in the context of Fiji, which focused on the urban informal sector and the impediments to growth and development of the sector. This study revealed that difficulties in Fiji’s informal sector business “are caused by the absence of legal structure, unavailability of capital to develop businesses, and lack of appropriate skills to operate a business”. Moreover, their study revealed that the engagement in informal business activity led to a 59 per cent increase in income level and a 159 per cent increase in the value of assets, thus greatly contributing to poverty alleviation.

Mohanty (2006) through a study of the urban squatters, informal sector and livelihood strategies of the poor in Fiji Islands concluded that 36.7 per cent of those in the squatter households surveyed were engaged in the informal sector activity. Of this sample, Indo-Fijians made up 43.4 per cent and Fijians made up 28.2 per cent of those participating in the informal sector. Their activities included carpentry, taxi driving, hairdressing, tailoring, baby-sitting, boat-building and selling goods such as grog, BBQ, fruits and vegetables. In addition, Lal and Raj (2006) prepared a paper for Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics on the Informal Economy in Small Island Developing States, with the case study on Fiji Islands.

In 2007, Citizens’ Constitutional Forum and Women’s Action for Change in conjunction with Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education, and Advocacy (ECREA) compiled a report titled ‘NGOs Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning Fiji’. As per this report, it was revealed that for the women working in urban areas, two types of jobs predominate: housemaids and sewing, which accounted for 50 per cent of their employment. Women in these fields were more “accustomed” to such jobs. Disturbingly, these low paid jobs were commonly accompanied by insecure and poor working conditions.

According to 2008-2009 Household and Expenditure Survey, 31 per cent people in Fiji were in poverty (Narsey, Raikooti and Waqavonovono 2008). Moreover, surveyed proportion of
people in poverty in rural areas is much higher in comparison to the urban areas. Narsey (2008) noted that the Basic Needs Poverty Line (or the poverty line) calculated showed lower values for Fijians compared to Indians in both rural and urban areas. Similarly, Chattier (2005, 2011) focused her studies on gender perspective of poverty in Fiji.

2.4 Conclusion

Since the origin of the term informal sector by Keith Hart in the context of Kenya, a large literature on the informal sector has evolved. As such, four dominant schools of thought characterizing the informal sector have been widely adopted. These include the: (a) dualist, (b) structuralist, (c) legalist and (d) illegalist schools.

At the nexus of informality are concepts such as urbanization, poverty, education, economic participation and opportunities, and socio-cultural characteristics that are highlighted in depth. In doing so, this chapter provides a conceptual framework and the theoretical linkages in gaining an understanding of issues relating to informality and women participation.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology and the methods involved in the study. This chapter begins with a discussion on the conceptual methodological approaches. Following this, it sheds some light on the sources of data, the research methods and designs employed in the study. Furthermore, it entails a description on the sampling and sampling size, study area, limitation of research as well as some ethical considerations adopted during the course of this study.

3.2 Methodological Approaches

In social research, two major philosophical schools of thought exist: positivism and post-positivism. Positivist researchers place emphasis on understanding based on experiment and observation. Advocates of positivism argue that the only legitimate source of knowledge is data, through which reality is uncovered; findings are claimed to be reliable when they can be repeatedly verified.

The post-positivist stance on the other hand asserts values, passion and policies in research. Research in this mode requires an ability to see the whole picture, to take a distanced view or an overview. While adopting this approach, the researcher assumes a learning role rather than a testing one. However, challenges exist in this approach. As Wolcott (1990:19) states:

*One of the opportunities and challenges posed by this (post-positivist) approach is that the researcher recognizes the common humanity that connects researchers and the people who participate in research. We regard ourselves as people who conduct research among other people, learning with them, rather than conducting research on them.*

Post-positivist research principles emphasize meaning and the creation of new knowledge. With this approach, theory will be revisable, hence allowing for error. Furthermore, the methods of reasoning will be inductive, entailing an explorative, bottom-up approach, that is, starting with observation and then to formulate a theory.
Sampling is used in selecting a representative group for research. Sampling is the process of selecting units (e.g., people, organizations) representing a population of the particular subject group so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen (Trochim, 2006). The philosophical approach utilized in this study will be that of a post-positivist (or the social scientist) approach, and taking non-probability sampling.

3.3 Sources of Data

Both, primary and secondary sources of data were used. The primary data was acquired through questionnaires, informal participant discussions and observations. A structured questionnaire (see Appendix) was prepared for the fieldwork, and was used for the urban women participants in the informal sector.

The secondary sources of information included books, periodicals, reports of government and non-government agencies (pertaining to the subject of women, the informal sector and livelihoods). Various data sources including Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics’ Reports; Reserve Bank of Fiji Quarterly Reviews; and reports in the Fiji Times and publications of international agencies such as ILO, UNESCAP, UNIFEM, and UNDP were consulted.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Data Collection Methods

Walsh (2005:101) states that “research methodologies differ due to philosophical assumptions on the nature of reality, the discipline(s) involved, the purpose of the enquiry, the nature of the data and tools available for analysis. Research may involve the use of quantitative, qualitative or a mix of both”. In the case of this study, a questionnaire, informal participant discussions, observation, and field notes and case studies were employed to obtain the primary data. Photographs were taken to provide direct visual evidences from the field. The following section provides an account of each of the methods of data collection.
3.4.1.1 Questionnaire

Following a thorough analysis of the literature review, a structured questionnaire was prepared; consisting of both, open and close-ended questions. The literature review aided in having a better grasp of the current situation surrounding women livelihoods in the informal sector, hence assisting in designing the questionnaire in such a way that was on par with the theme of the thesis.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections: participants' background information; their employment and income related information; accessibility to financial services; and the impact of their informal participation. All together, the questionnaire consisted of 30 questions.

Officials of concerned Ministries and City and Town Councils, and NGOs involved in women issues, were also consulted. The Departments of Women and Social Welfare in Suva and Nausori, the Suva City Council, Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy (ECREA), Micro-finance institutions and Soqosoqo Vakamarama were consulted.

3.4.1.2 Informal Participant Discussion

While the structured interviews permit more focused information gathering, they may overlook aspects of the participants that an informal discussion might reveal. Hence, the informal discussions were conducted in conjunction with the questionnaires. Through the informal discussions, participants were able to freely relate their experiences and specific information of interest to the researcher. Discussions were recorded on audio tapes for later referencing.

3.4.1.3 Observation and Field Notes

Participant observation is a qualitative research method that assists the researcher in learning the perspectives held by study populations, hence allowing for insight into contexts, relationships and behaviour. As Jorgensen (1989) states:
The researcher engaged in participant observation tries to learn what life is like for an “insider” while remaining, inevitably, an “outsider.”

The environments in which female informal workers operate, as well as their interaction with the public and vice-versa, were observed. As a result, the observation method provided first-hand information in the field.

Field notes were also taken down during the observation to maintain a back-up of memory.

3.4.1.4 Case Study

The case study method was adopted to reflect the evidence from primary source of information in order to gain a clear understanding of issues in relation to specific objectives which added methodological strength to the research.

Singh (2006) notes that case studies produce much richer information, owing to the time spent with each individual. Three case studies were undertaken during the field survey to gain a sound understanding of women participants’ activities and problems in the informal sector in Suva–Lami area. To protect the identity of the individuals, pseudonyms have been used in reporting these.

3.4.4.5 Photographs

Being qualitative data, photographs assist in capturing and describing visual evidences. Moreover, this provides authentic graphic evidence from the field like the conditions in which people live and work, the things they make and do, and the human relationships they are involved in. In short, pictures can provide an illuminating record of the texture of their working lives.

3.4.4.6 Consultations with Key Government Officials

Consultations were held with concerned government officials, as they are the ones who deal with policies and have much more expertise in their respective line of work. Informal discussions were conducted pertaining to the women participation in the informal sector in Fiji and related issues.
3.5 Sampling

The sampling technique employed in this study is a convenience sampling\(^20\) of a non-probability type. In 2007, 50,905 women accounted for employment in the urban areas in Fiji. However, it is not clear what per cent of women participate in the informal sector. Since the population number is unknown, a convenience sampling is used in order to obtain a gross estimate of the results. “Convenience sampling is used as the population is so large that it is impossible to include every individual” (Castillo, 2009).

In addition to convenience sampling, snowball sampling\(^21\), also of a non-probability type was adopted, whereby participants were identified through recommendation of other participants. This technique was mostly employed in identifying the home-workers, whereby people doing similar activity in an area had knowledge of other participants engaging in similar work.

The sample in the study consisted of 80 female participants engaged in informal activities in the urban areas in Fiji, particularly in the Suva–Lami corridor. A larger proportion of those interviewed were indigenous Fijians. The respondents included 48 Fijians, 27 Indians and 5 Others (consisting of 2 Part-Europeans, 2 Rotumans and 1 Chinese). With the participants identified, they were approached and consulted for their voluntary participation in this study as respondents, while divulging the purpose of the study and assuring confidentiality. Those who were available and willing to participate were interviewed. The survey started at Suva City, covering women (and girl children) involved in the informal sector activities, before making its way to Lami and its surrounding areas.

3.6 Research Analysis

Questions were pre-coded to ensure swift data analysis. Following collection of data, it was tabulated and analysed in SPSS. Suitable tables and figures were prepared to depict and interpret the data. While analysing data, a due care was taken to correlate the analysis of data with the theoretical approaches outlined in Chapter Two.

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\(^{20}\) Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Castillo, 2009).

\(^{21}\) Snowball Sampling is a non-probability sampling technique whereby the researcher asks for assistance from the participant to help identify people with a similar trait of interest (Castillo, 2009).
3.7 Study Area

Suva–Lami area in Fiji was selected as the focus area of the study, and for the following reasons:

- Suva is the capital region of Fiji, accounting for more than half of the urban population in Fiji. Lami, although a separate township administratively, is, in terms of proximity, an integral part of greater Suva City.
- Suva is the hub of Fiji and the Pacific.
- As depicted by 2007 Census, Suva-Lami area attracts more women in the informal sector.
- The proposed study area was convenient for the researcher, who resided in the vicinity and was operating under a definite time constraint.

3.8 Limitations

The unavailability of required official data was a limitation in data collection for this study.

Language is also a limitation in the study. A number of Fijian women had limited knowledge of the English language, while the researcher had limited vocabulary in the Fijian language. This resulted in seeking assistance from a third person for translation of languages.

The study covered only a limited area (that is, Suva–Lami in Fiji) due to time and financial constraints. Other urban areas in Fiji can be covered for generalization of data.

Finally, the study found little methodological development in surveying informal and economic participation especially of women, which constituted a limitation for sound data collection in this study.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher assured participants of their anonymity and confidentiality before proceeding onto their verbal consent and administering of the questionnaire. A number of respondents that did not have a permit were hesitant of participating in the survey for fear of victimization. However, they were assured that their responses or any other information
in the discussions would be used for study purposes only, while maintaining anonymity. The same was assured while taking photographs during the fieldwork.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter entails a description of the methodological approaches as well as the methods employed in the study. It gives a detailed account of the sources of data, research design, including the data collection methods and sampling, study area covered and provides the limitations and ethical issues of this study.
CHAPTER FOUR
A BACKGROUND OF FIJI AND SUVA–LAMI AREA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background of Fiji, as well as the Suva and Lami areas, the focal points of the study. The chapter begins in the context of Fiji; providing the geography, history, economy, demographic characteristics and covering issues such as poverty, land tenure, labour employment, squatters, urbanization and migration. In addition, it looks at the history and growth of Suva and Lami areas and identifies some urban problems encountered by these areas, and the background of the informal sector in Fiji.

4.2 Background of Fiji

4.2.1 Geography

The Republic of Fiji is a small island economy located in the South Pacific between 15 and 22 degrees south latitude and 175 East to 178 West latitude. It has approximately 332 islands, spread over a total area of 18,333 square kilometres (sq km). These islands along with 522 islets make up the archipelago, of which about 106 are permanently inhabited. It comprises two main Islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (see Map 4.1).

Viti Levu, the largest island, covers about 57 per cent of the nation's land area, hosts the two official cities (the capital city Suva, and Lautoka) and most other major towns, such as Ba, Nasinu, and Nadi (the site of the international airport), and contains some 69 per cent of the population (Wikipedia, 2011b). Vanua Levu, 64 km to the north of Viti Levu, covers just over 30 per cent of the land area though it is home to only some 15 per cent of the population, with its main towns being Labasa and Savusavu. Low-lands on the western portions of each of the main islands are sheltered by the mountains and have a well-marked dry season favourable to crops such as sugarcane (ibid.). The rest of the population are dispersed to smaller outer islands in Fiji.
Due to its relatively well-developed transport infrastructure, as well as convenient port location, Fiji is a trans-shipment hub for the smaller Pacific Island Countries (PICs). It is also home to the regional office of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), as well as a number of UN organizations and diplomatic missions.

Administratively, Fiji is divided into fourteen provinces namely; Ba, Bua, Cakaudrove, Kadavu, Lau, Lomaiviti, Macuata, Nadroga-Navosa, Naitasiri, Namosi, Ra, Rewa, Serua and Tailevu.
4.2.1.1 Climate

Fiji has a tropical climate, with November to April being the wet (hurricane) season. The wet season results from the southerly movements of the South Pacific convergence zone, and is characterized by heavy, brief local showers and contributes most of Fiji's annual rainfall. Furthermore, during this season, Fiji is normally traversed by tropical cyclones as it lies directly in their path. Annual rainfall on the main islands is between 2000mm and 3000mm on the coast and low lying areas, and up to 6000mm in the mountains (Tourism Fiji, 2011).

Suva averages 3,000 mm of rainfall annually with its driest month, July averaging 125 mm of rain per year (Wikipedia, 2011a). In fact, during the whole year, Suva receives substantial rainfall. Suva City has a tropical climate, resulting in temperatures being relatively constant throughout the year, with an average of about 28°C and an average low of about 22°C (ibid.).

Lami town on the other hand, has a maximum average temperature between 28.8°C and an average minimum temperature of 22.10°C (Wikipedia, 2011a). Rainfall in this area is at a monthly average of 20-23mm from Jan to May and 17-21mm from June to December (ibid.). As noted, Suva – Lami areas receive considerable amounts of rainfall, and remain the wettest parts of the country. The extreme heat, cold and rainy conditions adversely affect the informal sector activities/business in these areas.

4.2.2 Brief History

A country's economic foundation and way of life is based on its history. Fiji has a long history of labour migration that determines the structure of the economy. Fiji has a long colonial past. Moreover, it is necessary to briefly understand the historical facts of Fiji to contextualize the labour structure of the country. It is thus imperative to deal with a brief history of the country.

The European discoveries of the Fiji group were accidental. The first of these discoveries was made in 1643 by the Dutch explorer, Abel Tasman and English navigators, including Captain William Bligh who sailed through in 1774 (Wikipedia, 2011b). The individual most credited with the discovery of Fiji was Captain William Bligh who re-visited Fiji in the *HMS Providence* in 1792.
The first Europeans to land in Fiji were shipwrecked sailors and runaway convicts from the British penal colonies in Australia. The pattern of colonialism in Fiji was similar to that in many other British possessions: the settlement of the countryside, the spread of plantation agriculture, and the introduction of Indian indentured labourers. European planters came to Fiji in the 1860s, and early 1870s. They bought land for plantation from the Fijians, sometimes fraudulently and often for whiskey and guns. On October 10, 1874 Fiji was formally ceded to Great Britain and in 1875 Fiji’s first Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon arrived from Australia. Soon after their initial contact with Europeans (and Americans), interests of financial and economic advantage were instrumental in affecting the lives of native Fijians. The advance of the European powers into the Pacific was a direct result of competition, politically and economically, amongst themselves (Wolf, 1992).

When the European planters decided in the early 1870s to switch from cotton to sugarcane, indentured labourers were imported from India. The first 463 Indians arrived on May 14, 1879 in the ship, Leonidas. Fiji, later gained its independence on 10 October, 1970. Levuka remained the capital until 1877, until after the arrival of Colonial Sugar Refinery in Fiji that saw the capital of Fiji moved from Levuka to Suva, which remained the administrative capital of Fiji, although, the move was not made official until August 30, 1882. Suva was proclaimed a city in 1952, and Lami a town in 1977.

4.2.3 Demography and Population Growth

Fiji is a multi-racial, multi-ethnic nation, and hosts several major religions of the world. This is obvious to the visitor who will see Christian churches, Mosques, Sikh and Hindu temples in towns and in the countryside. More than half of Fiji’s populations are Christians. Hindus account for about 38 per cent, Muslim 8 per cent, Sikhs 0.7 per cent, and others 0.5 per cent (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2007).

Indigenous Fijians currently have the highest population representation in Fiji with a population of 475,739 individuals and Indo–Fijians at 313,798 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2007). The Indo-Fijian population increased rapidly from the 60,55322 who were brought from India between 1879 and 1916 to work in the sugarcane fields as indentured labourers.

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22 As per article on History–Girmit events in summary: available at http://www.girmitunited.org/History.htm.
Fiji’s total population size has grown from 775,077 in 1996 to 837,271 in 2007 (Table 4.1). During 1996–2007, the population of rural areas has deceased while on the other hand, the population of urban areas for the same period has increased, manifold. Little less than half of the country’s population live in rural areas (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Population Size by Area in Fiji 1996-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Population Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fiji</td>
<td>775,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Areas</td>
<td>415,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Areas</td>
<td>359,495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### 4.2.3.1 Urbanization

The current urban population in Fiji stands at 51 per cent of the total population. As a result of the increasing urban growth, the availability of basic services such as housing and water supply, sanitation, waste disposal, education and health facilities will be further stretched. Not only will the basic services be affected, but also an erosion of cultural values and increased crime rates will occur.

The former President of Fiji, the late Ratu Mara (1994:9) aptly puts it:

*It does not require any great genius to figure out the consequences of the urban drift. Quite apart from the basic strains placed on limited infrastructure, we have seen an erosion of cultural values, growing unemployment and the attendant restlessness, increased crime and other ills which plague large urban centres. But in our case we have the additional constraints of limited resources, small land areas, isolation caused by distance, and the consequences of the great social and cultural changes wrought by the new realities that our traditional ethos was not equipped to handle.*

As a result of the increasing housing problems, informal and squatter settlements continue to grow as more migrants continue to seek a living in the urban areas. Figure 4.1 depicts the distribution of population in urban areas in Fiji.
With migration laying the foundation for urbanization, the 2007 Census report of the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics reveals:

...the continuation of present urbanization trends implies that, by 2030, 61 per cent of the population will be urban. It should be noted that an increase in the urban population is the result of natural increase and rural–urban migration as well as incorporation of formerly rural areas into the urban sector.
With the increased rural–urban drift, the urban labour markets are seen as an ‘urban magnet’, which holds out the allures of better economic prospects. As such, capitals are becoming primate cities, being substantially larger than the next largest city, and continuing to attract more growth (UNDP, 1997).

Rural–urban migration in Fiji occurs due to disparities between urban and rural areas. One of the three reasons identified in this section for rural–urban migration is the difference in earning powers. For instance, average income per adult per week residing in the rural area is at $48.57. Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, (2010) on the contrary states that an adult residing in an urban area earns an average of $72.43 per week.

Secondly, individuals in search of a higher quality of education migrate to the urban centres first, followed by their families due to the perceived notion of a quality education being available in the city (Rallu, 2006). In Narsey’s 2004-2005 Employment and Unemployment Survey, education was one of the main reasons for rural dwellers to migrate to urban areas, accounting for 83 per cent of migration.

Thirdly, people come to the urban areas in search of better employment, seeing that most services are confined to the urban areas (or centralized). Narsey (2007b) states that “employment related causes comprised 21 per cent of all the migration in 2004-2005”. As a result of the influx of migrants and their realization of costly housing in the urban areas, housing in squatter areas has become an option for a number of families. Instances such as these have caused an increase of squatter settlements around Suva. This in turn has contributed to urban sprawl, hence putting pressure on resources, leading to environmental degradation and hampering development. Under such circumstances, the growth of cities has exceeded their ability to absorb individuals in the formal sector; hence resulting in the growth of the informal sector.

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23 As the Harris-Todaro (1970) model states, (discussed in detail in chapter two), in order to be hired for a formal sector job, it was necessary to be physically present in the urban areas where the formal sector jobs are located.
4.2.4 Socio-Cultural Characteristics

4.2.4.1 Female Education

Female education is an important factor in analysis of female participation in the informal sector. In Fiji, females did considerably better in terms of education attainment, and had a higher attainment in secondary education in comparison with males during 2004-2005 (Table 4.2). About 13 per cent of the female population however, had received no schooling.

Table 4.2: Educational Attainment by Gender in Fiji during 2004-2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Education</th>
<th>Female (%)</th>
<th>Male (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No schooling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary (Class 1-7)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Secondary (Forms 2-4)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate/Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree/PG</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The enrolment numbers for the females in technical/vocational schools remain a concern. Figure 4.2 illustrates the enrolment numbers in technical/vocational schools in Fiji by gender.

While a large number of males enrol for vocational/technical education in Fiji, the female enrolment for the same period is less than half of that of male enrolments (Figure 4.2). Perhaps the low rate of female enrolment remains a factor which averts them from gaining formal employment.
4.2.5 Economy

Fiji is one of the relatively more developed among the Pacific Island countries (although it remains a developing country with a large subsistence agriculture sector). Fiji has relied heavily (apart from its tourism sector) on its ailing sugar industry to drive the economy. Other sectors that are a part of Fiji’s economy consist of agriculture, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, utilities (including electricity, water and communication), construction, hotel and restaurant, transport and storage, finance, insurance, real estate and business services and social and personal services (e. g. Legal and health services).

Currently, remittances from Fijians working abroad, and the tourist industry are the major sources of foreign exchange for Fiji. Meanwhile, the manufacturing Industry, as well as Information Communication and Technology (ICT) have resulted in a rapid growth with the introduction of the Kalabo Tax-free Zone (KTFZ). The tourism sector has grown significantly

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24 The KFTZ is a result of a government investment and export development project that was financed by the European Union from the sixth European Development Fund and was officially opened on September 1, 1997. A 13 year tax holiday is available to ICT businesses that establish at the Zone, subject to meeting the relevant criteria.
over the years and recently a number of hotels have been built in the country. In 2009, total tourism earnings were estimated at F$816.9 million (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). A large part of Fiji's international shipping is conducted at Suva's Kings Wharf as well as docking of international cruise ships, which has led to a growth in Suva's tourism industry, as well as giving rise to informal sector activities such as jewellery making and handicraft.

Agriculture constituted 10 per cent of GDP in 2009, while fishing and construction accounted for 3 per cent. Fiji’s main industries include tourism, sugar, clothing, copra, gold and water (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009a).

4.2.6 Poverty

The percentage of the population living in poverty in Fiji stands at 31 per cent (Narsey, et al., 2010). While urban poverty is 19 per cent, the rural poverty accounts for about 43 per cent (ibid.). According to Barr (2007), due to the poverty levels, overcrowding is common, with squatter and informal housing increasing. The author further states that 15 per cent of the country’s population live in over 200 squatter settlements around the country.

Females have a higher incidence of falling below the poverty line as a result of their restricted access to paid work and unpaid domestic household chores. Narsey (2008) highlighted that some 40 per cent of all economically active females earned below $60 per week, in comparison to 20 per cent of males.

Bryant-Tokalau (1993) states that 50,000 children were unable to afford school fees, whereas 65 per cent of school dropouts were mainly pushed out by poverty. In addition, due to poverty and the poor quality of food, one in three women in Fiji is anaemic. Poverty was again sighted as the main driving force for the increase in the numbers of sex workers, particularly in urban areas.

Access to basic needs such as safe water remains a challenge. A number of people still resort to river/creek and wells for their basic needs. Figure 4.3 depicts the sources of water supply in the rural and urban areas, and it shows a bulk of the rural population lacks access to safe water sources.
In terms of access to safe sanitary conditions, for the rural dwellers, pit toilet is the common type, accounting for 42.4 per cent, while for the urban dwellers, flush toilet accounts for 73.4 per cent (Walsh, 2006). The poor environmental sanitation conditions that could lead to health hazards are linked to access to water and sanitation.

In terms of access to electricity, 49 per cent of those in the rural areas and 87 per cent of those in the urban areas have access to electricity (Walsh, 2006). The rural areas fall below the country's average percentage, standing at 66.8 per cent (ibid.). Poverty is also evidenced through household lightings. Figure 4.4 dissects the different types of lighting used by the rural and the urban dwellers in Fiji.
While electricity is the main source of lighting in the urban areas, wick lamp on the contrary is the dominant source of lighting for rural dwellers (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.5 shows the households that fall under three poverty lines, namely, food, basic needs and relative poverty. Moreover, it reveals that a large number of households in Fiji were under relative poverty and struggling to make do with little more than F$30 per week.

**Figure 4.5: Poverty Lines in Fiji by Area and Ethnicity**

![Graph showing poverty lines by area and ethnicity](image)


Millennium Development Goal number one, targets the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Fiji, in its 2nd MDG report states that it (Fiji) is unlikely to achieve this goal by 2014 as poverty has shown an upward growth trend from around 25 per cent in 1990 to 40 per cent in 2008 (Government of Fiji, 2010).

### 4.2.7 Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Fiji rose from 3.7 per cent in 1996 to 8.6 per cent in 2007 (Narsey, et al., 2010).

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25 Unemployment here refers to individuals aged 15 years and over who i) are without work ii) are available for work and iii) actively looking for work or had taken steps to seek employment.
As discussed earlier, the expiry of land leases in cane producing areas has resulted in a steep rise in unemployment. Moreover, faced with four coups in the last 25 years, Fiji’s economy has suffered a major shake-up. To top it up, the recent economic crisis has resulted in downsizing, closure and or relocation of a number of businesses in/from Fiji. This in turn has resulted in making people redundant or having their hours cut down. As Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2007: 2) puts it:

It (the increase in unemployment) does not come as a surprise, considering that Fiji experienced two coups during this period. These coups led to a downturn in the economy, job losses etc.

It was also stated that in 2007 (as in 1996), female unemployment was still about two times higher than male unemployment. Narsey (2007a) in his study Gender Issues in Employment, Underemployment and Incomes in Fiji, reveals that the average wage gap between the male and female stood at 19 per cent.

4.2.8 Occupation and Income by Gender

The following sections cover the gender dimension of occupation and weekly earnings.

4.2.8.1 Distribution Patterns of Occupation by Gender

While opportunities do exist for women in the economic sector, most are confined to a constricted band of jobs. As depicted by Figure 4.6, a large number of women are confined to clerical jobs, with this occupation being the only occupation category where female workers outweigh male workers. This is in line with that of Bergmann’s model (1986) which as a result of the overcrowding in occupations (by gender) causes a difference in earning powers.

26 The Fiji Times on 26 August 2009, revealed that 16 companies prepare to be wound up as a result of debt problems. The same author on 15 November, 2010 reported that 3 pharmacies had closed its doors, with two others to follow suit.

4.2.8.2 Weekly Earnings by Gender

Figure 4.7 depicts weekly earnings of people by gender in different income range(s). While the majority of females fall under the F$0–$29 category of weekly earnings, a significant portion of men have weekly earnings of F$60–$89.
Figure 4.7: Weekly Earnings Range by Gender


Figure 4.8 illustrates the disparity in wages between males and females, in similar occupations. The earning power of men in various occupational categories outweighs that of women.

Figure 4.8: Average Weekly Pay by Occupation and Gender in Fiji (1999).

4.2.9 Land Tenure

Indigenous Fijians own 87.9 per cent of the land in Fiji (native land), while 3.9 per cent is State land (or crown land) and freehold land comprises of 7.9 per cent (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Moreover, according to Reddy and Naidu (2001):

since the small proportion of state and freehold land is not sufficient for agricultural expansion, native land, which is inalienable, was opened up for agricultural expansion via leasing, at first under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, and later under the Agricultural Landlord and Tenants Act (ALTA). These leases, mostly held by Indo-Fijian sugarcane farmers, have now begun to expire and it is likely that many will not be renewed. According to the Native Land Trust Board (NLTB), the majority of landowners want their land back and those few leases which are to be renewed they want renewed under a different Act, rather than ALTA, which is seen to be tenant-friendly.

As earlier highlighted on the importance of the sugar industry to development, Singh (1994), states that 25 per cent of the economically active population then derived their income directly from the sugar industry. Reddy and Naidu (2001) undertook a study on the land tenure system in Fiji and the poverty implications of expiring leases. As per this study, 93.4 per cent of respondents stated that they would prefer their children to seek employment in the non-agricultural sector when they grew up. Moreover, given the options of either lump sum payment, resettlement or lease renewal, 55 per cent of the farmers stated they would choose renewal, 41.9 per cent the lump sum and only 3.1 per cent resettlement. As such, the authors of this study noted, “the large number of farmers who would opt for a lump sum payout is also of concern because this would mean migration to the towns”.

4.3 Suva and Lami Urban Areas

4.3.1 Suva

Suva is the capital and largest city of Fiji, covering an area of 2,600 hectares. Suva City occupies a peninsula of rolling hills projecting into the Pacific Ocean on the southeast coast of Viti Levu, with Walu Bay and Suva Harbour on the west and Laucala Bay on the east. Suva City’s terrain is hilly and undulating. The urban area extends northeast from Suva, merging with the town of Nausori, which is located on flat land about 17 km from the city. Suva, which became the capital of Fiji in 1882, is the home of a number of diplomatic missions as
Suva City is a patchwork of mainly crown and freehold land, with free-holdings predominating in the central business district (CBD).


Suva is the dominant urban centre where the nation’s opportunities and services are concentrated (Connell and Lea, 2002: 36). Its enhanced employment and educational opportunities attract migrants to Suva and other urban areas.

### 4.3.2 Lami

Lami was formally incorporated as a town in 1977. The industrial area of Lami Town lies on a narrow coastal plain about 5 km to the west of Suva, at the head of Suva Harbour. Lami Town had a population of 20,529 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010) with approximately half of the residents located within peri-urban areas. The municipal boundaries enclose an area of 680 square kilometres. Lami Town Council took measures to address waste management through the closure of the landmark Lami rubbish dump, which had served the greater Suva area and subsequent rehabilitation of the site, as evidence remains of degradation to the Lami coastline.
4.3.3 Growth of Suva and Lami

Urban growth has spread well beyond the peninsula and Suva City boundaries. What is generally known as the greater Suva area includes the peri-urban areas along the Suva–Lami fringes.

*The original town boundary for Suva was one square mile, running along the eastern shore of the peninsula from the southern edge of Walu Bay (now the main*
industrial area) up to and including Albert Park, and extending one mile inland. Those boundaries remained unchanged for some 76 years, but urban growth took little notice and steadily spread over the peninsula. By the 1946 census, the municipal population had grown from around 200 in the 1870s to 11,398, with the rest of the peninsula having a population of 12,115. In 1953, Suva was proclaimed a city and its boundaries extended to take in most of the rest of the peninsula. That was the first of many boundary changes with the Lami area being included and then removed, and with the boundary creeping up the Princes road over the years (UNESCAP, 2009).

In 1946, Suva had more than six times the population of its nearest rival, the mining town of Vatukoula, western Viti Levu, and 70 per cent of the urban population. But by 1996 that had dropped to 46.8 per cent as other towns grew and more towns were created, even though no other municipality had even close to a third of the population of Suva (UNESCAP, 2009).

According to UNESCAP (2009), the last four population censuses from 1966 to 1996 indicated that Suva had continually attracted significant numbers from the rural areas and outer islands. The population of the greater Suva area doubled from 1966 to 1996, to stand at 167,421. However, the population of Suva City itself has not grown over the past decade, as a result of the steady encroachment of the central business district into residential areas.

Figure 4.9 shows the population of Suva City and Lami Town in 1996 and 2007. While Suva has recorded a slight decrease in population, Lami town on the other hand has had a slight increase in population.

**Figure 4.9: Population of Suva City and Lami Town, 1996 and 2007**

4.3.4 Urban Squatter\textsuperscript{27}

As a result of urbanization and lack of affordable housing, basic tin shack houses emerge overnight. Those that occupy such homes are often referred to as 'squatters' (Barr, 2007).

Squatters in Fiji can be divided into two broad categories: firstly, those who live at their own will on state or freehold land; and secondly, immigrants who reside on native land through informal arrangements with customary land owners. The latter practice is referred to as \textit{vakavanua}\textsuperscript{28}. The common ground in both the categories is the poor quality of the housing, the absence of inadequacy of service provision and insecurity of land tenure (Chung and ECREA, 2007). An advocate for the poor in Fiji, Fr Barr (2007:10) states that together with insecurity of land tenure and poverty, squatter settlements are also characterized by: (i) substandard housing; (ii) unemployment and low wages; (iii) health problems associated with overcrowding and unsanitary conditions; (iv) stress and worry; and (v) general poor environments for children.

It was estimated that total squatter numbers in Fiji increased by 73 per cent between 1996 and 2003 (\textit{Fiji Times}, 2011c). It is now estimated that approximately 140,000 people (or 15 per cent of Fiji’s population) are living in around 190 squatter settlements across the nation (ibid.). Within the greater Suva area, it has been estimated that 16.4 per cent of the total population are squatters, comprising 8,908 households of 58,508 people (Barr, 2007). More than 60 per cent of the squatters live in the Suva–Nausori town corridor (Mohanty, 2006).

Mohanty (2006) in a study titled ‘Urban Squatters, Informal Sector and Livelihood Strategies of Poor in Fiji Islands’ states that a large percentage of squatter households in Suva City (40 per cent) lived in absolute poverty (on less than F$2 per day) and without assets of any kind. Moreover, with the limited job availability, a number of these squatters turn to the informal sector activity to sustain their livelihoods. The author records:

\begin{center}
\textit{About 43 per cent of Indo-Fijians compared to 28 per cent of Fijians living in Suva squatters were engaged in informal activities including, for}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{27} A squatter is defined in the context of Fiji as ‘a person who is in illegal occupation of state, freehold or native land or without any form of security of tenure or without any consent from the landowner’ (cited in Mohanty, 2006). Also referred to as informal settlements.

\textsuperscript{28} This practice is always done informally. As such, there is no lease agreement (or legal title) in place. Requests are traditionally presented to the landowner and traditionally accompanied by a ceremonial presentation of \textit{sevusevu} (gift), \textit{yaqona} (kava), or \textit{tabua} (whale’s tooth), although the more modern trend is to offer cash (Eaton, 1988: 24).
example, carpentry, taxi driving, hair dressing, tailoring, babysitting, boat building, selling of goods (including grog, cloth, food, BBQ, fish, dalo, kite, fruit, crab, coconut and peanut), and vegetable vending. Others work as house-girls, hawkers, mechanics, electricians, fishermen and plumbers (Mohanty, 2006:67).

In more recent data cited by the Fiji Times (2011c), according to Fiji’s draft National Housing Policy, if the program to address the squatter informal settlements remains static by 2014, the greater Suva area will have in excess of 15,000 squatter households with more than 100,000 people, placing a great strain on the entire urban infrastructure such as water, sewerage, electricity, roads, municipal services and civic as well as social services. As such, the lack of quality piped water supply and proper sanitation disposal methods contribute to serious health deficiencies. One such evidence is the outbreak of typhoid in early February 2010 (Chand, 2010b). The infrastructure is old and run down, with the corroded old pipes often causing leaks, hence resulting in either low water pressure or no water at all. In situations where water supply is cuts off, upon restoration of service, the quality of the supply is very poor.

Moreover, Informal settlements place huge demands on the poorly developed network of infrastructure services. Informal settlements arise on the fringes of urban areas where provision of infrastructure is more difficult and expensive, hence making sustainable urban services even more challenging.

Informal settlements also contribute to environmental degradation. Since a number of them live on the coastal lines, in or adjacent to the mangrove swamps, disruptions to the mangrove ecosystem is caused through dumping of rubbish, and/or using the mangroves as a means of sewage disposal and cutting down mangroves for use as firewood. The Fiji Poverty Report by the Government of Fiji and UNDP (1997), reports that 23.3 per cent of the urban residents in Fiji use a pit toilet and 8.4 per cent use wood as cooking fuel. In coastal areas, the source of the wood is mangrove swamps. Enforcement of relevant laws remains an issue as the Fisheries Ministry agrees “Fiji has a very poor record in the area of legislation enforcement for the ocean” (Nakeke, 2008).
4.4 Suva City and Lami Town Councils

4.4.1: Suva City Council

The Suva City Council (SCC) is the municipal law-making body of the city of Suva, Fiji’s capital. Its Special Administrator\(^{29}\) is appointed on a three year term. He is responsible for maintaining a balance between economic growth and the protection of the environment, to continually upgrade and maintain urban infrastructure, to regulate the establishment of informal activities as well as to continually lobby the Government and service providers to improve the delivery of services such as water and sewerage facilities, power and communications (Suva City Council, 2008). In addition to overseeing the preceding responsibilities, the Special Administrator is also responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the Lami Town Council.

Suva was proclaimed as a Town under the Local Government (Towns) Ordinance (1935) and was administered by elected councils. It was proclaimed a city in 1952. The SCC is given limited powers and the Special Administrator reports directly to the Minister for Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment. The role of the Ministry of Local Government and Urban Development (MLGUD) is to undertake urban planning and managing the impacts of rapid urbanization, municipal reforms, fire protection and disaster management, and control and regulation of land use. The Department of Town and Country Planning also comes under the jurisdiction of the of Local Government and Urban Development and is entrusted with the role of controlling and regulating the appropriate use of land in Fiji (within the city limits) through the Town Planning Act (Cap. 139) and Subdivision of Land Act (Cap. 140).

4.4.2: Lami Town Council

Lami was proclaimed a town in 1977. The Lami Town Council (LTC) has similar responsibilities to that of Suva City Council. For instance, LTC also provides services such as rates assessment, building permits, health permits, garbage collection, market services and business licences.

\(^{29}\) Previously elected and referred to as Mayor
4.5 The Informal Sector in Fiji

The informal sector in the context of Fiji is defined as the sector that comprises small-scale unregistered activities, operating independently of the state and being the primary source of income for a large number of poor and vulnerable.

The formal sector’s capacity to absorb economically active population in Fiji is limited. As a result, a large number of unemployed people are absorbed into informal activities. While the size of the informal sector may not be as large in comparison to other developing countries, it is a sector that plays a critical role in national development, poverty alleviation, creation of employment, and most importantly, in sustaining livelihoods for hundreds of women and children in small Island communities like Fiji.

The informal sector in Fiji consists of small-scale operators to large entrepreneurs. It involves two kinds of people; one who work in the informal sector as the only means of generating income, and two, those that turn to the informal sector as a means of supplementing their income. The estimated number of persons in the informal sector in 2008 stood at 125,423 while the numbers in 2009 rose to 128,581 (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Mr. Waqabaca, said “the informal sector, which includes small and micro-entrepreneurs contributes to about 17 per cent of Fiji’s gross domestic product” (The Fiji Times; 2011b: 6). Of this, subsistence agriculture is estimated to contribute 3 per cent, informal manufacturing 3.4 per cent, while informal services and petty commerce over 4 per cent (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2009). As Figure 4.10 illustrates, there has been a steady growth of the informal sector’s contribution to GDP in Fiji during 2006–2008.
Figure 4.10: Informal Sector Contribution to GDP in Fiji during 2006–2008


In regard to the actual percentage of the total labour force in the informal sector, Fiji’s informal sector employment has been growing at a higher rate than its total labour force growth over the past decade. In 2006, the informal sector employment was estimated at 40 per cent, while the formal employment stood at about 30 per cent and subsistence agriculture employment was estimated at 23 per cent (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

Figure 4.11 shows a comparative picture of Fiji’s labour force.
While the formal sector provides employment for around 120,000 workers annually, approximately 16,000 school graduates enter the labour market every year. “Of these, about 8,000 can be expected to succeed in gaining formal sector work as around 2,000 vacancies arise annually through migration, a further 3,300 or so through natural attrition, and a maximum of around 2,400 new jobs can be expected to be created each year” (UNESCAP, 2007). Under such a scenario, nearly 8,000 job seekers will be compelled to enter the informal economy, with it (informal sector) playing a ‘bridging the gap’ role.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter, while discussing the background of Fiji and Suva–Lami area, outlines issues that are of concern to the respective areas. The demographic growth provides evidence of the growing urban population. As a result of the unplanned growth, the city is unable to cope
with the pressure, hence gives rise to a number of issues including poverty and growth of the informal sector. Because people are poor and cannot afford decent housing, they turn to the informal settlements and take up informal sector activities. Moreover, due to the unavailability of formal jobs in the market, participation in the informal sector is an easy option, hence a source of sustaining livelihoods for a number of women. On the contrary, the sector raises concerns regarding environmental degradation, health, wastes, water and sanitation and other development problems.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses women participation and livelihoods in the informal sector, with a micro-level focus, covering the Suva-Lami area. This chapter deals with the research findings and analyses based on data gathered from the field. In doing so, the focus is on the socio-economic characteristics of female participants in the informal sector, the extent of poverty, as well as the extent of participation and impacts of informal sector participation on women and the associated challenges. A few case studies pertaining to women participation and their hardships and achievements in the informal sector in sustaining livelihoods are used to highlight many of the features presented.

5.2 Women Labour Force Participation in Fiji

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there is wide variation in the nature of female and male labour force in Fiji. There are almost equal proportions of male and female population, however, the economically active population is half of the male population in 2007 (Table 5.1). Moreover, the disparities between men and women in the labour force are widening in Fiji. For instance, the ratio between male and female employment in Fiji stands at 2:1, meaning that for two employed men, there is only one employed woman. The number of males in the workforce was 203,120 in comparison to 95,854 females in 2007 (Table 5.1). Fiji’s female labour force participation of 32 per cent compares unfavourably with 46 per cent for Mauritius, 51 per cent for Trinidad and Tobago and 67 per cent for Australia (Narsey, 2007a). Slightly over a third of females were economically active (out of total female) in 2007. There was a marginal change of 13 per cent between 1996 to 2007 (Table 5.1).
Table 5.1: Change in Labour Force Status by Gender, 1996 and 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Labour Force</th>
<th>Change (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Aged 15+</td>
<td>500,913</td>
<td>252,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ. Active</td>
<td>297,770</td>
<td>200,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>286,646</td>
<td>194,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>11,142</td>
<td>5,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Econ. Active</td>
<td>203,143</td>
<td>52,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.2.1 Women Unemployment

The women unemployment was more than that of men in 2007. The female unemployment rate in Fiji stands at about 13 per cent of the total economically active female population (Table 5.1). Moreover, the women unemployed population has grown substantially i.e. over 162 per cent between 1996 and 2007 (Table 5.2). This can perhaps be attributed to the closing down of garment factories in Fiji where a large number of women were employed.\(^{30}\)

Table 5.2 Changes in Women Participation in Labour Forces in Fiji, 1996–2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Share of Women (%)</th>
<th>Change 1996–2007 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Age 15+</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Active</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2007).

In an effort to reduce the unemployment rates, Fiji National Employment Centre (FFNEC) was launched by the Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in 2010.

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\(^{30}\) As Chand (2010a) in an article in the *Fiji Times* titled “Jobs dry up” reports that the garment sector in Fiji employs over 4000 people, 80 per cent of whom are women.
under the FNEC Decree 2009. Under this decree, all unemployed individuals must register with FNEC, before undergoing compulsory counselling. Following counselling, individuals are required to sit for an aptitude test followed by eight weeks of skills training and six months of work attachment.

As a social responsibility employers who employ more than 50 workers must engage suitably qualified attachés or volunteers on a ratio of at least 5 per cent of the total number of workers employed by them. As such, currently almost 85 organizations have partnered up with FNEC in providing attachment for a number of the unemployed moreover. FNEC currently has 12,000 registered persons and has managed to find attachment opportunities for 2.5 per cent of Fiji’s unemployed.

5.3 Research Survey Findings

This section is divided into eight parts. The first part deals with informal sector participation in Fiji with a special focus on women participation in the informal sector. The second part covers the household characteristics of women informal sector participants and the third part deals with their socio-economic characteristics. The fourth part is centred around social protection of informal sector participants, with part five focusing on informal sector participation through social networking. Part six consists of registration issues, part seven impact of informal sector participation with part eight looking at the challenges to the informal sector participation.

5.3.1 Women Participation in the Informal Sector

The informal sector in Fiji consists of home based-workers, home-workers, mobile workers (door-to-door sellers), street vendors and kiosk operators. Home-based workers are those that operate from the home rather than the worksite, be it as self-employed or as paid workers. This category of workers suggests two images. First, the traditional and pessimistic, and second, modern and optimistic (Felstead and Jewson, 1999). The pessimistic image is of low-paid and low-skilled manual work done in cramped, dingy and unsafe surroundings, often involving child labour. The optimistic image is of highly paid and skilled professionals, technicians, and managers conducting business by fax, phone, e-mail, and other computer links from the comfort of their well-appointed residences (ibid.). Home-workers are the
workers that carry out paid work for firms and businesses, typically on a piece-rate basis, for instance, tailors undertaking sewing contracts for an uptown boutique, or a woman that makes jam/cakes to be bought and sold by a supermarket.

Street vendors are the people that operate from the footpaths, parks, in front of schools, and so on; for instance, the lady that sells sweets on the streets outside the school, or the lady at the roadside who sells seafood or the one that sells snacks and sweets from her pull cart. Mobile workers are those that do door-to-door selling. This is usually common for women that sell pies, pastries, cookies and cakes for morning or afternoon teas. There are also some women who sell vegetables and food parcels door-to-door.

Some women are in the informal sector by choice. When asked why they were engaging in informal sector activity, their response was as follows: a) some feel they could make more money in the informal sector job they were doing, b) others enjoyed doing what they were doing as it gave them an opportunity to meet new people, c) it was a chance for them to be their own boss, with little discrimination against them, d) they needed to do some sort of activity to keep them occupied and earn a living at the same time. Moreover, it is of interest to note that a large number of formal sector women retirees were engaged in informal sector employment “to pass their time”.

In regard to women participation in the informal sector and its relationship to children, two revelations were made. One, the ages of children have an impact on the kind of activity that a woman undertakes. Of the 21 per cent of women home workers surveyed, 13 per cent had children under the age of 15 years, which influenced their decision to participate as a home-worker. Moreover, the women home-workers value the flexibility and the autonomy that informal work offers them, allowing undertaking work and family responsibilities more effectively. Second, those that had children above the age of 15 years have longer working hours, and on an average of 11.75 hours working outside the home.

Moreover, of the 80 women participants surveyed, 16 (or 20 per cent) had immediate family members undertaking separately other informal sector activity. They were engaged in activities such as food selling, tyre repairing, fishing, carpentry and seasonal employment.
Case Study 1

Mere Nasili, covers her face with her sulu to avoid the heat of the drowning sun and shies away from the lights from the passing vehicles. At aged 53 years, a widow, and a mother of four, she sits by the Nasese seawall from ten in the morning until dusk to catch fish. Whatever she manages to catch during the day, she sells to passers-by and uses the money to buy dinner for grandchildren and herself. She looks after her two grandchildren, aged twelve and fifteen, who are children of her unwedded youngest daughter. In a day, Mere earns anything between $2 and $10, depending on her catch. After she sells her catch, she slowly picks up her basket and walks her way to the Vatuwaqa Settlement in the darkness of the night. On that particular day, she manages to earn $5.50. She stops at a home at the same settlement and buys a small tin of tuna and noodles. As she approaches her small tin shack house where everything (cooking, eating and sleeping) is carried out in a common area consisting of a tiny space; her two grandchildren can be spotted waiting for her at the doorway, with a kerosene lantern. By 9 pm, when half the people at the settlement are fast asleep, Mere and her two grandchildren have their dinner, careful to save some for lunch the next day.

Originally from Tailevu, Mere reminisces about the old days when things used to be affordable. Mere, who is educated up to class 3, came initially with her extended family to settle in Raiwaqa in the mid–1990s. She says that their main reason for coming to Suva was to earn a better income, as boasted by families who had come to settle in Suva from Tailevu. However, she says Suva was not what they had expected.

“Our family and friends who came to Suva from Tailevu, when they went back to spend their holidays in Tailevu, they had nice cars, nice clothes and painted a bright picture about Suva, full of opportunities for everybody.”

After a lot of struggle for work, Mere found work in a restaurant as a kitchen hand, where she worked for six years. However, she lost her job when the owners of the restaurant closed their business to migrate overseas. Following this, during the daytime, she used to sell cooked cassava and fish door-to-door in the city and ice-blocks and other sweets from her home in the afternoon for the school children. In 2008, following the eviction notice of residents at the infamous Raiwaqa flats, Mere and her two grandchildren moved in with her family at Sakoca, while the rest of the family went back to Tailevu. A few years later, Mere and her grandkids moved to the Vatuwaqa Settlement. While she gets the family assistance allowance of $55 per month from the Department of Social welfare, “it’s not enough”, she says.

“Prices of everything have increased so much, even it costs so much to buy kerosene. Sometimes, when the boys around the Settlement cut mangrove braches to use as firewood, they give me some, which makes life easy for me.”
Mere’s elder grandchild is educated up to class 6, and now stays home to take care of the household chores as well as to provide the opportunity for her younger sister to continue with her studies.

As she prepares for yet another day, Mere hopes that the next day would be better than today.

5.3.2 Household Characteristics of Women Informal Sector Participants

This section looks at the household size and ownership, the educational attainment of the participants, and the reasons the women participants gave for not having continued with their schooling.

5.3.2.1 Household Size

The household size in the informal sector is relatively large. Many of the households accommodate their extended families that come in from rural or peri-urban areas. These households have as many as six to seven dependants. The highest household number recorded in the study was eleven and the lowest three. The average household size was six. Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2008) reveals the average household size of the urban areas at 4.79 persons, as per the 2007 census. The study shows a larger household size for informal sector participants’ households. This is largely due to migrant family members from other areas including rural and peri-urban areas.

5.3.2.2 Household Ownership

A large proportion of informal women participants responded that they own a house. About 58 per cent of participants lived in their own house and another 27 per cent in rented houses. A substantial proportion of 15 per cent lived with their friends or relatives (Table 5.3) Of the 46 persons that own a house, 12 persons or 26 per cent are from squatter areas. However, it is important to note that squatters only own the materials that make up their homes; they do not own the land. The land is custom lease through the vakavanua process, as highlighted in chapter four.
In terms of ownership of residence (ethnicity wise), a large number of Indians undertaking informal activity own homes (67 per cent) compared to Fijian participants with 52 per cent of home ownership (Table 5.4). However, while a large number of women participants do own the homes they live in, their living conditions are poor. Many Fijian participants live in squatter settlements; nearly 31 per cent live in rented homes. Similarly, 22 per cent of Indian participants stated that they lived in rented houses. About 17 per cent of Fijian participants and 11 per cent Indian of participants live with their friends or relatives (Table 5.4).

### Table 5.3: Ownership of Residence by Informal Sector Participants in Suva–Lami

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Residence</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay with friends or relatives</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

### Table 5.4: Informal Participants' Ownership of Residence by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>Fijian</th>
<th>Indian</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15 31.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>25 52.0*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>67.0**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Relatives</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8 17.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>48 100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

* of which 10 per cent are squatter homes
** of which 5 per cent are squatter homes.

### 5.3.2.3 Participants’ Residential Area

Table 5.5 depicts the participants in regard to their areas of residence. The highest number of participants, nearly 85 per cent, originated from urban non-squatter areas, while about 15 per cent said they were from squatter areas, including urban and peri-urban squatter settlements.
Table 5.5: Informal Sector Participants by their Residential Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Number of persons</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Squatter Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peri-urban</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Squatter Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peri-urban</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.2.4 Change in Residence of Participants after Informal Activity

Figure 5.1 show that 59 per cent of the participants did not change their residential location after taking up the informal activity. However, 32 per cent of participants moved out from the squatter settlements into the urban and peri-urban non-squatter areas, as a result of their participation in the informal sector, hence improving their living conditions to some extent. This clearly suggests that a substantial proportion of informal sector participants moved out of poverty and hardships and raised their standards of living by participating in informal sector activities.

Another six per cent of the participants were able to have better access to services due to relocation from rural to urban areas, while three per cent moved into squatter areas as a result of unaffordable housing in the urban and peri-urban areas (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1: Change of Residence of Participants after Engaging in Informal Activity

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.
5.3.3 Socio-economic Characteristics of Participants

The informal sector participants depicted wide variations in their socio-economic characteristics, in terms of ethnicity, extent of poverty, and employment patterns and earnings.

5.3.3.1 Education of Participants

The number of respondents comprised of 48 Fijians, 27 Indians and 5 Others. On average, Fijians had the best schoolings record, 60 per cent of them having attained a ten-year educational level. Other category of respondents reported having had 9 year of schooling on average, whereas 34 per cent Indian women responded as 8.5 years. The average educational attainment for women participants was 8.7 years. In short, a large proportion of women occupying themselves in informal sector activity have at least completed primary school education.

Table 5.6: Education of Participants by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Respondents (%)</th>
<th>Average Education (Years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

The importance of education as advocated by the Government seems to be on track to achieving education for all. This is depicted through the level of education that the younger age group possess.

5.3.3.2 Age and Education Relationship of Participant

The study finds an inverse relationship between age range and education among the women participants. A high educational attainment exists in the age range between 18 and 28 years and decreases towards higher age groups (Figure 5.2).
Figure 5.2: Age and Education Relationship of Participant in the Informal Sector

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

The educational attainment of women participants in the informal sector decreases with age, perhaps indicating the fewer educational opportunities or lower emphasis on education of women in the past. However, at this day as Narsey (2007a) points out, females are on par with males in terms of school enrolment. Available data from the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2008) indicate the female literacy rate\textsuperscript{31} in the country stands at 91.4 per cent.

5.3.3.3 Reasons for Dropping-out of Education by the Participants

As important as education is for the development of women, many women remain in a predicament when it comes to furthering their education. Figure 5.3 identifies some obstacles encountered by the women participants in continuing with their education. Financial difficulty represents the largest share of obstacles (52 per cent) followed by separation or death of parent(s) (9 per cent), peer pressure (6 per cent) and personal problems (5 per cent). Other reasons include difficulty in finding a school, marriage commitment, pregnancy, transportation problems and not good academically.

\textsuperscript{31} Defined by the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2008) as portion of the population age 15 years and over who have completed 4 years of schooling.
5.3.3.4 Participants Prior Engagement

In addition to poverty, unemployment seems to be a defining characteristic of informal sector participation. About 35 per cent of women responded that they were unemployed before joining informal sector activity (Table 5.7). Moreover, as highlighted earlier, due to the global financial crisis and Fiji’s economic crisis, a number of garment factories, and other formal businesses have either shut down or reduced their scale of operation, impacting on the livelihoods of a number of women (38 per cent) that have since engaged in informal sector employment to sustain their living. Nearly 44 per cent of respondents said that they are either continuing from formal employment to supplement their income or have joined the informal sector following retirement from the formal sector. Only six per cent of respondents said they were schooling prior to joining informal activities (Table 5.7).
Table 5.7: Participants’ Prior Engagement before Joining Informal Sector Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Response</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schooling</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal employment</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal activity continuation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement from formal sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.3.5 Employment Patterns of Participants

Female participants in the informal sector who were interviewed included the self-employed as well as the wage earners such as market vendors, cart sellers, women on the side-walks selling jewellery, cooked food and pot plants, the mobile workers who sell pastries, lunch parcels, Tahitian chestnuts and fruits, the street workers including prostitutes, tailors and fashion designers. Of this, the highest respondent percentages were street operators (49 per cent), followed by kiosk operators (23 per cent) and home-workers (21 per cent) (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Type of Informal Sector Participants in Suva–Lami

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Participants</th>
<th>Number of person</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home worker</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street operator</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiosk (booth operator)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile (door-to-door) operator</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

Photograph 5.1 depicts a home-worker selling kava and root crops (dalo) to sustain her livelihood.
About 47 per cent of women participants were the only income earners for their respective families (Personal Interview, 2011). As such, their participation highlights the importance of informal activity in sustaining livelihoods.

5.3.3.6 Working Hours of Participants

In comparison to the normal eight hours of work in the formal sector, women in the informal sector spend an average of 10.48 hours a day at work (including preparation work). They work on an average of 6 days a week and also undertake household chores for at least 2.25 hours per day.

Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003) in a survey of the informal sector in Fiji concluded the average working day at 9.8 hours a day, and 6 days per week. Further, Narsey (2007a) states that female economically active wage workers devote on average, 24 hours per week on
household work, hence amounting to a daily 3.43 hours on household work, in comparison to the 2.25 hours put in by women in the informal sector. This difference is perhaps attributed to the different definition of a typical working day for the two sectors of women.

5.3.3.7 Income Patterns of Women Participants

An analysis of the average monthly income of women participants in the informal sector revealed that their income increased from $212.38 to $386.32, following their entry into the informal sector (Table 5.9). This reflects an 82 per cent increase of income, hence suggesting the critical role of the informal sector in poverty alleviation. Moreover, the positive increase in income confirms that of Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003), which records a 59 per cent increase of the average household income following the engagement of participants in informal activities.

Table 5.9: Socio-Economic characteristics of Participants by Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>Average Monthly Income before Informal Activity ($)</th>
<th>Average Monthly Income after Informal Activity ($)</th>
<th>Change in Income (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijians</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>290.89</td>
<td>410.16</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indians</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>274.14</td>
<td>364.60</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>355.74</td>
<td>384.20</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>212.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>386.32</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

The average monthly income of participants when categorised by ethnic group revealed that Fijian women participants had the highest average monthly income of $410.16 and also recorded the highest change in their income, by 41 per cent, before and after engaging in informal sector activity. On the other hand, Indian women informal sector participants recorded a change of income by 33 per cent (Table 5.9).

Where income in the informal sector is concerned, a wide gap exists between the participants. The highest income recorded during the survey was a little over $900 per week and the lowest, about $34 per week.
The single mothers are at the bottom of the income ladder, earning an average of $34.85 per week, followed by widow-headed households, with average weekly earnings of $38.60 and subsequently separated women with children, at $45.00.

**Case Study 2**

Marama, as she is fondly known, is a 48-year-old female who has been in the informal sector for the last fourteen years. She entered the informal sector after the working conditions at the garment factory where she was employed deteriorated. With her earnings of $40 per week and a family of 4 to feed, she took it upon herself to improve their livelihoods. She started off her informal activity selling salusalu (Fijian garland). At first she says “business was hard and I regretted leaving my work. Sometimes I would only earn only $20 per week”. But as time progressed, Marama learnt the tricks of the trade, and with three kids, she soon picked up on the “in-things”, as she calls it.

“You have to learn to go with the flow. So when the in-thing was colourful head bands, I made sure I had that in stock. When anklets and big pendant chains were the in-things, I had that in stock. I often changed my stocks to reflect the demand”.

Soon her weekly earnings grew as much as $300 per week, and she was able to send her children to school, as well as afford some luxuries in life. With her client base including a number of prominent people, she struck gold when she was sub-contracted by a prominent Hotel for providing assorted Fijian delicacies every week. She hires two women who help her out with the jobs.

The current ‘in-thing’ at Marama's stall is a plain headband decorated with huge bows and colourful feathers. From an initial earning of $40 to $1200 a week, and being an employer of two, Marama says patience and hard work is a virtue. Today, her son is an engineer, a daughter works as a teacher and a younger son is schooling at USP, all possible due to her participation in the informal sector.

5.3.3.8 Ownership of Facilities and Services

It is essential to note the realization of basic services such as flush toilet, electricity and clean drinking water following women’s participation in the informal sector, hence highlighting the pivotal role the informal sector plays in meeting basic needs.
At the same time, a bulk of women participants did not have a vehicle, computer and internet facilities (Figure 5.4), although almost all of them do have a mobile phone.

**Figure 5.4: Ownership of Facilities and Services by the Participants**

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011

Figure 5.4 shows almost 80 per cent of women informal sector participants had access to radio, TV, tap water and electricity prior to engaging in informal sector activities. The participants having access to daily newspapers almost doubled after taking up informal sector activity. About 42 per cent had access to daily newspapers. Also, 41 per cent of the participants have access to washing machines, while 11 per cent participants have gained ownership of vehicles following their involvement in informal activities.

As mentioned earlier, while on one hand, the informal sector is the primary source of income for a number of women, for others, it is also a means of supplementing their income. Of the 80 respondents, 11 participants (14 per cent) hold multiple jobs, with a number of them
undertaking a formal job during the day and selling BBQ or hot dogs at night. Their combined average weekly income was $922.80. In addition to working in the informal sector, two women participants said to have a formal job in the civil service. During the day they are at their formal employment, and in the evenings, they sell food.

5.3.3.8 Educational Attainment and Earnings of Participants

In comparison of average monthly earnings to the educational level of women, the study concludes that the education level does not have any relationship on the earnings, as illustrated by Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: Education Attainment vs. Average Monthly Earnings of Informal Participants

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.3.9 Age, Experience and Earnings of Participants

The study reveals that earnings increase with age and experience rather than educational level. This can be attributed to a strong client base built over the years. However, subsequent to the age group of 49–58 years, and 59 yrs plus, the earnings drop drastically. The decline in the earnings of women over 59 yrs indicates the new entrants that are in the informal sector as a result of government’s compulsory retirement policy. As such, their

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32 This policy states that all workers are to retire at 55 years and came into effect in early 2009.
low earnings correspond to their low average experience of 13 months (Figure 5.6). With regard to the new entrants, the retirees, 18 per cent of the respondents fall into this category, of which 12 per cent are civil servants forced into retirement following the compulsory policy.

**Figure 5.6: Earning vs. Age and Average Job Experience of Informal Participants**

![Graph showing earning vs. age and average job experience of informal participants.](image)

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

Moreover, the informal sector creates further employment opportunity for the vulnerable people, hence being a very vital source of livelihood for the poor. Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003) state that in a large number of cases, informal enterprises absorb mostly immediate family members. However, the findings from this study indicate 29 outside workers employed by the surveyed participants, with each person earning an average of $51.33. This highlights the generation of further employment, hence attesting to the importance of the informal sector.

### 5.3.3.10 Child Labour in the Informal Sector

Eight girl child labour cases were found in the survey. At a time when they should be in school, they were instead helping their mothers undertaking informal sector activities. Reasons for the children to engage in the informal sector activity were attributed to financial difficulties their parents faced in paying school fees and for purchasing books. In other
cases, it was found that having a large family limited people’s ability to afford schooling for everyone. At an age when children are supposed to be enjoying their school life and making friends, they are instead on the streets, and some under harsh conditions and working long hours. According to the Fijian Teachers Association and the Fiji Teachers Union, based on school attendance and drop-out rates, it is estimated that 20,000 to 30,000 children work in the informal sector, including family businesses and family farms (Fiji Department of Labour, 2006).

Photograph 5.2 depicts a child accompanying a member of the family for informal activity (fishing) during school hours.

**Photograph 5.2: Woman Engaging in Informal Activity (fishing), with a Child Accompanying her**

![Image of a child accompanying a woman fishing](image)

Source: Photo by Researcher, 2010.

### 5.3.3.11 Mode of Travel by Participants

Mode of travel and time taken to travel from home to work place by the women participants are important indicators of their status. The participants’ mode of travel to informal activity
sites is either on foot (2 per cent), by bus (21 per cent) and by carrier (14 per cent). A large portion of participants (62 per cent) stated that they used taxis as their mode of transport to travel from home to reach their work place. An average of 50 minutes (to and fro) is spent daily by the participants (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7: Mode of Transport by Participants

![Mode of Transport by Participants]

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.4 Social Protection of Informal Sector Participants

Contribution to the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) is mandatory for formal sector employees. However, it is voluntary for informal sector participants. The superannuation fund serves as a hope of a better retirement plan as well as having access to this money in terms of need such as health, education and housing.
Figure 5.8: Informal Sector Participants’ Coverage by FNPF (percentage)

![Pie chart showing coverage by FNPF](image)

1

Yes

No

99

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

Figure 5.8 shows only one per cent of women informal sector participant joining FNPF, and contributing towards the superannuation fund. In other words, a vast majority (99 per cent) did not have much to fall back on, which constitutes a contributing factor to poverty and hardship at the time of crisis. As Narsey (2007a) states, “the incidence of poverty for those not paying FNPF was higher, and much higher for females than males”.

5.3.5 Informal Sector Participation through Social Networking

Recently, a new trend has emerged among some home–based workers. Changing with technological advances, it has emerged that women prefer to do business online. This is through social networking sites such as Facebook. Some women engage in this activity and have a full time job, while earning a little extra on the side. On the other hand, some women are full–time mothers who prefer working in informal activities from homes and at the same time, fulfilling their responsibilities as a mother.
Case Study 3

Natasha Yee, a young mother of two children aged 14 months and 3 years, struggled to meet the high cost of day care facilities. Her husband, a sales consultant, earns $180 per week. However, the $180 spread too thinly. Even so, she gave up her full-time employment to take care of her children.

In late 2010, while going through Facebook, Natasha noticed a few people selling things online. With her background as a fashion designer, she decided put together a few pieces of hair bands and jewellery and created a new Facebook page to advertise her stuff. “Things were difficult at first, I hardly had any customers”, she admits. During the first month, she had 157 likes on her page. But as time progressed and people became aware of the products she was selling, the popularity of her page grew. By April 2011, she had 493 likes. Natasha's initial income from the Facebook business was $30 per week and now she earns about $64 a week.

“While the income may be not too significant, I'm glad that I manage to earn a little something for rainy days. And I manage to look after my children as well as choose my hours of work, which is very convenient”.

For her immediate future plans, Natasha is in the process of extending her current range of products, which she hopes to source from overseas.

The following are some screen grabs of the Facebook businesses undertaken by females in Fiji.

**Image 5.1: Pinkbiscuit Fiji**
The popularity of such business pages continues to grow, attracting as much as 300 likes in a month.

More recently, a Facebook page was created for an errand-running service whereby you can engage people to do messages and running around for you, for instance, collecting laundry from dry-cleaners, lodging applications such as Tax Identification Number (TIN) or any other errand that needs to be accomplished.
This group, headed by two women (and a male), take bookings for errands via Facebook only and engage University students to do the errands.

5.3.6 Registration

Nearly one-third of the participants had a licence to operate within the Suva–Lami area, while three per cent had a permit (applicable to street vendors) issued by the civic administration (Figure 5.9). However, 65 per cent of women participants responded that they had no license by the City/Town Council to operate the informal sector activities.

**Figure 5.9 Licenses of Informal Sector Participants from Town/City Council**

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.
Moreover, the vendors operating from the Suva market with a permit highlighted that their fees had increased from $1.70 to $3.30 (Personal Interview, 2011). While the SCC argues that this increase was long overdue, the vendors on the other hand argue that the increase will put a hole in their pockets.

Moreover, a business license fee increase has been proposed by as much as 86 per cent by the SCC (Personal Interview, 2011). While on one hand SCC argues that this increase will bring about increased revenue and better services for the rate payers, on the contrary, the retailers argue that there has been little generation of economic activity and a number of businesses are just breaking even. To this end, the proposed increase will bear an additional burden on the small businesses, to the extent where the increase will suffocate them.

**5.3.7 Impact of Informal Sector Participation**

The study went deeper into the subject of the impact of sector participation. Women participants were asked to describe the impacts of their participation on the following: a) family relations, b) livelihoods, c) social status, d) income status, e) housing conditions, f) children’s education, f) standard of living, and g) health. Their responses are discussed in the following section.

**5.3.7.1 Family Relation Impacts**

For family relations, while 79 per cent of the sample attributed the increase in incomes to better family relations, another 11 per cent reported to the contrary, that while the additional income was a blessing, the added hours put into the informal sector activity led to family problems. For instance, working odd hours resulted in family split ups, or children were left unsupervised at home, which resulted in other problems such as unplanned pregnancy and truancy. Figure 5.10 shows the overall impact of informal sector participation.
5.3.7.2 Impact on Livelihoods

In absorbing the hundreds of the unemployed, the informal sector is a source of livelihood. As such, 73 per cent of the respondents stated that their participation in the informal sector activity had resulted in a positive impact on their livelihoods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t Say</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.
Moreover, three per cent stated that their participation in the informal sector has a negative effect on their livelihoods as a result of not being able to fully develop their capabilities and assets. Nearly nine per cent indicate that the informal sector participation does not impact their livelihoods. This is so as a result of the increasing cost of goods and services in comparison to their sluggish income.

5.3.7.3 Impact on Social Status

In regard to the social status, 36 per cent of the women participants indicated that their social status had a positive impact. Out of this, 29 per cent stated that their social status increased in the community as they were able to contribute more generously towards soli (church levy), while the other 7 per cent stated that they were able to dress up better (Field Survey, 2011). However, 8 per cent stated that their participation has had a negative impact as people look down on them, with another 35 per cent stated that there was no impact as they do not have much time outside the informal sector for socializing (Table 5.11).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't Say</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011

5.3.7.4 Impact on Income Status

Table 5.12 shows a majority of 86 per cent stated a positive impact of informal participation to their income. On the other hand, 3 per cent state a negative impact due to their narrow income. Another 5 per cent stated no impact as they only manage to break even.
Table 5.12: Impact of Informal Sector Participation on Income Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>86.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t Say</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.7.5 Impact on Housing Conditions

In regard to informal sector participation on housing conditions, Table 5.13 shows that 59 per cent indicated it had a positive impact for them. 35 per cent stated no impact as money is spent on other things like education and food for the family. Also the participants reason that due to the increasing cost of living, they are unable to improve their housing conditions. However, it is very interesting to note that of the 36 per cent of women that stated a positive impact of social status, 29 per cent of these women state that the housing conditions have experienced no impact. So while on one hand their church soli and their dressing have improved, their housing conditions have shown no improvement, hence questioning the priorities of some women.

Table 5.13: Impact of Informal Sector Participation on Housing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t Say</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.7.6 Impact on Children’s Education

While 77 per cent of women indicated a positive impact of their participation in relation to their children’s education, 12 per cent stated a negative impact (Table 5.14). This is due to their children being neglected while they (the mothers) spend long hours at work, so much so that in some cases, children start playing truant.
However, 8 per cent stated the informal activity had no impact on their children’s education. This was due to their slow business and the high cost of books, uniform and other administrative fees required by the schools. Despite the government making primary education for all students ‘tuition free’, there are other administrative costs to be borne by the parents, for instance compulsory walk-a-thon limits, building fees, administrative fees and book fees.

Table 5.14: Impact of Informal Sector Participation on Children’s Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>77.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t Say</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

5.3.7.7 Impact on Standard of Living

Table 5.15 shows while 46 per cent of the respondents stated that their income status has had a positive impact, as much as 50 per cent stated that there was no real impact on their standard of living.

Table 5.15: Impact of Informal Sector Participation on Standard of Living

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can’t Say</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003) state that:

*On an average, the informal sector households spend 47 per cent of their incomes on basic household expenses (food, shelter and clothing). Of this expenditure, the major outlay is on food (28 per cent) while bus fare to work*
and school takes up the next largest component (15 per cent). Interestingly, the third highest expenditure category is kava (Piper Methysticum). Expenditure on alcohol is the fourth largest expenditure category. The combined expenditure on grog, alcohol and smoking is 25 per cent of total household expenditure.

5.3.7.8 Impact on Women Health

In regard to the health of women, Table 5.16 shows 30 per cent of women participants stated a positive impact due to the fact that in doing work, they are keeping fit, while 28 per cent stated a negative impact of informal activity on their health due to prolonged working hours, poor working condition and lack of proper work place.

Table 5.16: Impact of Informal Sector Participation on Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can't Say</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey by Researcher, 2011.

Photograph 5.3 depicts the absence of proper stalls to carry out informal activity. In addition, rubbish from a nearby supermarket is being dumped behind them (area marked in red circle). In this case, a foul smell had begun to emanate from the dump, hence affecting the health condition of women.
Street vendors in Fiji came under scrutiny following the death of a woman following consumption of pre-cooked seafood. Subsequently, a total ban was for a while put on cooked foods of any kind, hence creating a hole in pockets of women who depended on it for their livelihoods.

5.3.8 Challenges to Informal Sector Participation

The study found that accessibility to financial credit services is a major challenge to informal sector participants. Additionally, other impediments to participation include competition, absence of proper facilities and services, bureaucratic requirements and adverse weather conditions.

5.3.8.1 Accessibility to Financial Credit Services

Lack of financial credit services to informal sector participation in Fiji exists. An average of
$444.17 was initially injected into the informal sector activity. A large proportion of 71 per cent of the respondents relied on their own personal savings as their primary source of start-up capital for the informal sector activity. Another 26 per cent participated in the informal activity by borrowing from other sources and 3 per cent partial borrowing. Of the 26 per cent that borrowed from other sources, 11 per cent borrowed from family, 9 per cent from friends and the other 6 per cent from relatives (Figure 5.11).

**Figure 5.11: Source of Funds for Informal Sector Activity**

The study found that only one person of the 80 participants had attempted to borrow loan from the bank but her application was unsuccessful. It took her two months to run back and forth in collecting documents required by the bank and her degree of difficulty in obtaining the loan was placed at 5, being most difficult. Instances such as these have contributed to the unavailability of capital to develop a small-scale business. Lack of finance is one of the major obstacles of informal sector participation as identified by Reddy, Naidu and Mohanty (2003). Recently, the government through the Reserve Bank of Fiji has embarked on a microfinance policy and commercial banks have been instructed to establish a microfinance unit within their banks to increase the development opportunities of Small and Medium Micro-entrepreneurs (SMEs). The microfinance concept is still new to a number of women in Fiji; however, literacy efforts in raising awareness of microfinance continue. In addition, a National Centre for Small and Micro-Enterprise Development (NCSMED) was established in 1992 to cater for small development projects.
In 1993, a micro-finance scheme called Women’s Social and Economic Development Program (WOSED) was initiated by the Government. As of March 2010, 90 per cent of the 24,000 beneficiaries were women (Fiji Department of Women, 2011). The repayment rate stood at 58 per cent. Of the remaining 42 per cent, 37 per cent of loans were in arrears. Moreover, it was revealed that under this scheme, women faced difficulty when it came to repayment because they lack proper planning (ibid.). The scheme came to an end in 2010.

Hence two conclusions can be drawn from the informal workers’ position in accessing financial assistance. First, the life span for a number of informal activities remains short and second, informal enterprises have little chance of development due to their inability to access working capital.

5.3.8.2 Competition

Due to the close proximity of the informal sector workers, competition becomes a serious challenge to this sector. About 32 per cent of participants stated that they had been affected as a result of intense competition in the sector hence resulting in an average wage variance of $135.46 per month (Field Survey, 2011). One per cent of participants stated that they have changed their trading location as a result of competition.

5.3.8.3 Absence of Proper Facilities

The absence of proper work space is a constraint in the informal sector. To avoid extra costs associated with transportation, some women vendors stay overnight in the market during Friday nights. Since the inside portion of the market is under lock, women are forced to sleep outside the market. Moreover, the lack of toilet and bathroom facilities also remains a constraint.

5.3.8.4 Regulatory Obstacles

The importance of the informal sector is well documented. However, the bureaucratic requirements prevent the informal sector from developing further. To this end, the burden of paper work, the length of processing time, together with the increasing fees impede the growth of the informal sector.
5.3.8.5 Access to Public Services

About 45 per cent of informal workers reported theft against their properties. Moreover, due to their controversial status, they are unable to access the privileges of public services such as police protection. They are poorly protected by the police for crimes against their properties, resulting in severe losses.

5.3.8.6 Availability of Transport

Availability of transport remains a constraint for women working in the informal sector. Participants reported that a number of public service drivers refuse to take them from one point to another due to the large number of items that they carry with them. The small-scale vendors claim that the public service drivers (mainly taxi drivers) state that the produce will “dirty their vehicle”.

5.3.8.7 Weather

Weather conditions remain a challenge for operation of informal activity. With the unpredictable weather conditions around the Suva–Lami area, informal operators are left in a vulnerable position when they are caught unprepared during rain, or when they have to stand the strong heat.

5.3.8.8 Harassment of Informal Women Participants

Harassment of women participants by Council workers in the informal remains a constraint. As a result, two per cent of participants had changed their trading location. The harassment is performed in the context of urban clean-up.

5.4 Conclusion

The informal sector plays a critical role in providing employment and alleviating poverty. The study found more women participation in informal sector activities and women engaged in a variety of activities to sustain their livelihoods. However, as easy as it is for women to gain entry into the informal sector, it is as difficult to maintain their activities. The absence of
financial services, lack of proper protection from public services, weather conditions, transport problems and the increasing competition makes it difficult to sustain their source of livelihoods.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

The informal sector remains an ‘engine’ of economic development and job creation. With growing urbanization and rural–urban influx, Fiji’s informal sector, especially in urban areas, continues to grow. During 2002-2007, on average, Fiji's informal sector accounted for 49 per cent of the total employment, accounting for almost half the country’s employment (Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics, 2010). However, unlike many African, South and South-east Asian countries where a large number of children are employed in the informal sector, the participation of children in the informal sector especially girl children in Fiji is less evidenced, but growing.

In addition to a number of scholarly works, the findings of this study also illustrate the dominance of the informal sector by a large number of women. As such, women are becoming the economic lifelines for their families in realizing ways to earn an income to sustain their livelihoods, with the informal sector playing an indispensable role in employment and poverty alleviation. Hence, the aim of this study is to examine women participation in the informal sector activities, to identify their socio-economic characteristics, to assess the impacts of informal sector participation, as well as to identify the challenges to participation and making policy recommendations for the growth of the informal sector. In doing so, the study employs a multidimensional approach, integrating concepts such as urbanization, poverty, education, labour market and unemployment. The study was carried out on a micro-level, with Suva–Lami area being the focal point.

Although the research methodology is primarily qualitative, however, a ‘triangulation’ approach was employed to obtain reliable and well balanced results. The tools for this study included a structured questionnaire for urban women participants, participant observation and field notes, informal participant discussion, case study, and key informant interviews. In putting the tools to use, 80 female participants (48 Fijian, 27 Indo-Fijian and 5 Others) covering Suva–Lami area were selected for the study using a convenience sampling as well as a snowball sampling. Convenience sampling was utilized in this study to document that a
particular quality of a phenomenon transpires within a given sample, hence, uncovering the experiences faced by the participants.

6.1.1. Linkages of Theoretical Approaches to Findings

As outlined in Chapter Two, rural urban-migration has been one of the major contributing factors to urbanization in Fiji. In analysing rural–urban migration, Harris–Todaro (1970) model states that migration flow is determined by the perception of wage differences between the urban and rural sectors. In this instance, there is a perception of income capacity in urban areas exceeding that of rural areas. This perception is justified to some extent. For example, the average income per adult per week in rural area in Fiji stands at $48.57 as against $72.43 in urban areas. As evidence suggests, earning power is concentrated in the urban areas, hence act as a pull factor for rural–urban migrants.

With an increased rural–urban migration, and the limited capacity for formal sector employment, poverty exists. Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (2010) documents that little less than half (forty-five per cent) of the population in Fiji live in poverty. In this regard, an approach discussed in Chapter Two that aims to alleviate poverty is that of sustainable livelihoods approach that considers the scope and priorities of development. In doing so, it takes into account assets of various kinds, for instance, human, natural, financial, physical and social types. A number of women participants possess human asset, education (at an average of 8.7 years). However, a large number of women lack natural capital such as land, which is often seen as an obstacle in securing financial credit services for their endeavours. In considering social capital, only a small percentage of informal women participants have access to network. Moreover, at the core of sustainable livelihood approach is financial capital, which a significant number of women participant do not have access to. Linking up to vulnerability, more informal sector workers are susceptible to shocks such as the recent global financial crisis and the economic crisis (which saw women being laid off and working hours reduced). Also, their illegal status and excess competition contribute to a negative impact on their livelihoods in the informal sector, hence, affecting their income and well-being.

In regard to the high levels of competition and the illegal status instigating a negative effect on income, Barbara Bergmann’s (1986) crowding model was adopted in an effort to
comprehend the difference in earnings of men and women. In a large number of instances, certain occupations are seen as the domain of men and vice-versa. For instance, clerical work is a common occupation for women, while craftsmanship is regarded as a male occupation. In this instance, women are more concentrated in clerical work, hence crowding the occupation. Similarly, a large number of women in the textile industry exist. Hence, due to overcrowding of an occupation by women, the marginal product of labour declines, resulting in low wages, and having a negative impact on the livelihoods of informal participants.

Furthermore, Phelps’s (1971) statistical discrimination theory argues the labour market discrimination. In doing so, he states that the discrimination is based on perceived variation in costs. For instance, in evaluating workers, employers may prefer to hire a male worker over female. This is partially attributed to the fact that the female worker has a high tendency to be involved in childbirth. According to the Fiji Labour Laws, a woman is entitled to receive her full wages during her first three pregnancies in addition to her 84 days of maternity leave. This equates to extra costs for the employer in terms of engaging an additional employee to relieve the staff on maternity leave. Therefore, under such circumstances, it becomes too costly to hire a female worker.

The changing paradigm of feminist theories such as women in development, women and development and gender and development stresses the importance of women in the development process. The feminist theory of women in development puts forward the suggestion of integrating women in development plans. As the findings indicates, only a small percentage of women hold positions of power. As such, women issues and concerns are not adequately presented at national forums. Therefore, integration of women in decision making processes must be strengthened. In addition, improvement of women's access to income through efforts such as small-scale income-generating projects needs to be re-examined.

Women and development paradigm promotes creation of pro-women projects, designed to protect women's interests from patriarchal domination. It argues for recognition of distinctiveness and acknowledgment of the special roles that women have played in the development process. Against this background, women participants in the informal sector need to be acknowledged for their contribution towards national development. In acknowledging their contribution, it will be a basis for creation of pro-women projects.
The underpinnings of gender and development approach reflect on women empowerment and equal rights. In providing a linkage to the findings, women empowerment needs to be adopted. This study found a large number of women lagging behind in terms of technical/vocational educational attainment. Women need to empower themselves and to bring about change. Moreover, the study notes that while a number of women in the informal sector have the capability and the education to do better, they believe otherwise and continue to live in poverty. In addition, gender inequalities need to be transformed. As highlighted from the survey, wage gap and employment gap exists between male and female, both in the formal and informal sector. In order to promote development, women need to be seen as equal partners.

6.1.2. Summary of Broad Findings

Men continue to dominate the civil services while women lag behind. For instance, of the 182 senior executives in the formal sector in Fiji, women account for only 17 per cent, with a large number of them absorbed mainly in clerical jobs.

As such, the study of urban women participation and livelihoods in the informal sector reveals the following:

1. The household size of the informal sector stood at an average of six persons, accounting for a large number of dependents.

2. Three categories of participants are found in the informal sector activities in Fiji, a) entrepreneurs, b) self-employed poor women and c) women engaged in multi-sector activities.

For women engaged in multi-sector activities, their entry into the informal sector is a means to supplement their income. As per this study, 11 of 80 respondents (or 14 per cent) hold multi-sector activities and their combined average income amounts to $922.80 per week.
3. Women in the informal sector have had an overall average of primary education, that is, 8.7 years. Amongst the three ethnic groups, Fijians had the highest education of 10 years compared to 9.0 year for Others and 8.5 years for Indo-Fijians.

4. Informal sector plays an essential role in poverty alleviation. The average monthly income of the women in the informal sector rose from $212.38 to $386.32, reflecting an 82 per cent increase. This increase in income to some extent has lifted the families out of poverty, thereby attesting positive contribution of informal sector to poverty alleviation.

5. In addition to poverty, unemployment is a major reason for women participation in the informal sector. The government's compulsory retirement policy has had an impact on informal sector. About six per cent women participants joined informal sector after retirement from formal sector employment. Furthermore, a large number of people (38 per cent) were engaged in formal jobs. However, as a result of the closure, restructure or relocation of the organizations they were engaged in, participants ventured into informal activities. Conflicts arising from contracts were also contributing factors for involvement in the informal sector.

6. About 47 per cent of women participants in the informal sector were the sole bread winners for their families.

7. Participation in the informal sector enabled 32 per cent of women to improve their living conditions and to relocate from urban squatter to non-squatter areas within the urban and peri-urban boundary. Nearly 59 per cent participants had no change to their residential status, while another 9 per cent migrants moved from rural to urban non-squatter.

8. Women unemployment continues to increase. At present, women's share of formal employment remains at 32 per cent of the total economically active female population in Fiji. For a number of the poor and vulnerable women that are unable to gain entry into formal institutions, informal sector becomes an economic lifeline for them.

9. Participation in the informal sector has lifted the status of urban women. Through this sector, they have managed to afford luxuries such as washing machine (30 per
cent), vehicle (11 per cent) and computer (23 per cent). Moreover, their employment in the informal sector has enabled women to uplift their living conditions by moving out of squatter areas into non-squatter urban and peri-urban areas.

10. More than half of the women participants in the informal sector in Suva–Lami area own houses, with Indians having possession of the largest share of homes of about 67 per cent, including squatter homes, in comparison to 60 per cent of others and 52 per cent of Fijians.

11. Informal sector generates secondary employment. Twenty-nine persons bearing no relation to the participants were employed by the informal workers, with an average weekly income of $51.33.

12. Twenty per cent of the participants had immediate family members that were also separately engaged in various forms of employment in the informal sector. It seems that the ‘culture’ of poverty creates a design for living that is passed on from one generation to the next.

13. Child labour in the informal sector is limited, but evident in the study. Eight cases of girl child labour cases were identified from the survey. Majority of these child labourers belong to the poorest of the informal sector – the wage earner families.

14. It is well documented that a majority of the informal sector participants are women. Suva–Lami area is no different. Seventy-four per cent of the participants stated a stronger presence of women in the informal sector activities in their area in comparison to men.

15. Informal participants are not largely covered by the Fiji National Provided Fund (FNPF). While contribution to FNPF is mandatory for the formal sector participants, it is voluntary in case of informal sector participants. As per the findings of this study, only 1 per cent of the participants were contributing towards FNPF.

16. While linkages between the formal and informal sector exists, they are however on a very minute basis.
17. The affordable cost of mobile phones has led to a large number of people having access to internet through their phones. This in turn has provided convenience to a number of people to engage in merchandizing goods via social networking sites, for instance Facebook and other social sites. For a number of online businesses, new, as well as second hand goods are sourced from overseas and sold in Fiji.

18. Gaps between male and female wage earners in the informal sector exist despite the responsibility of similar undertakings.

19. Amongst the participants of the study, two out of 80 participants stated that they had been harassed by the Council workers for failing to obey their directive to close down their informal activities. In response, the Council states that while harassment is strictly discouraged by the management; however urban order has to be maintained.

20. A large number of women participants operating in the informal sector do so without obtaining proper license from the Suva/Lami town Councils. On one hand, participants agree that this practice is illegal; however, on the contrary, they maintain that this method of participation enables them to sustain the livelihoods of their families.

21. Informal sector participation has both, positive and negative effects on people’s lives. On one hand, while informal sector improves the livelihoods of families and increases their social status, on the contrary, it adversely affects their family relations and health conditions of women participants.

22. For the informal sector participants, their participation has had a positive impact on 6 out of 8 identified areas (family relations, livelihoods, income status, housing, children’s education and social status), with two areas having no impact (standard of living and health). In regard to the impact of informal sector participation to family relations, 79 per cent attributed an increase in income to a better family relation. On the contrary, 11 per cent reported that while the additional income was a blessing, the long hours put in the informal sector led to family problems, for instance working long hours resulted in: split-up of family and children left unsupervised at home resulting in problems such as child abuse, unplanned pregnancy and truancy.
23. In terms of the impact of informal participation on social status, 36 per cent women stated a positive impact. Out of this, 29 per cent stated that their social status had increased in the community as they were able to contribute more generously towards soli (church levy), and participate in social ceremonies. Another 7 per cent opined that they were able to dress more fittingly. Nearly 8 per cent stated that their informal sector participation has had a negative impact as people looked down upon them.

24. In regards to the informal participation on housing conditions, 59 per cent indicated a positive impact (as they were able to undertake housing renovations/or expansions). 35 per cent however, stated it had no impact as money is spent on other things like children’s education and food for the family. Also, the participants reasoned that due to the increasing cost of living, they were unable to improve their housing conditions. However, it is rather interesting to note that of the 36 per cent women that stated a positive impact of informal sector participation on social status, 29 per cent said that their housing conditions have had no impact. So while on one hand, their church soli and dressing have improved, their housing conditions remain the same, reflecting on the priorities set by some women participants.

25. While on one hand, 86 per cent of the respondents stated a positive impact of informal sector participation on their income status, on the contrary, only 46 per cent reported that their standard of living had improved significantly.

26. In regard to the impact of informal sector participation on the health of women, 30 per cent reported a positive impact due to the fact that in doing work, they were keeping themselves fit. 28 per cent stated a negative impact of informal activity on their health due to prolonged working hours, poor working conditions and lack of proper work place.

27. One of the significant challenges of informal sector participants in not furthering their education is financial constraints, which accounts for more than half (52 per cent) the respondents. This highlights the pivotal role access to financial services plays in continuation of education.
28. Accessing financial assistance from commercial banks is a strenuous task for the informal sector participants. With little or no collateral to offer, most informal sector participants rely on their own personal savings or equity as their primary source of start-up capital, followed by borrowing capital from family members, relatives and/or friends.

29. Competition is rife in the informal sector with workers operating in close proximity selling similar products. Hence, one’s success in business may depend on, or lead to, other’s failure.

The study also identifies several constraints faced by the informal sector participants including: (a) competition; (b) transportation issues; (c) poor working conditions/environment; (d) irregular working hours; (e) fluctuating market; (f) theft of items left behind; (g) harassment by council workers; (h) increasing cost of raw materials; (i) people not paying their dues on time and (j) access to financial services, all of which impedes on efforts of furthering their business venture and the growth of informal sector.

6. 2 Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward to counter the challenges pertaining to urban women participation in the informal sector.

1. Currently, there are no specific policies in regards to informal sector. There is a need for framing sound policies towards promoting and safeguarding the sector.

2. With limited employment absorption capacity of the formal sector, the informal sector sustains livelihoods for a number of women. Hence, to promote the growth of the sector, it is essential to comprehend the issues that impede the development process. As such, the following recommendations are put forward as per the findings of the study:
   a) There is a need for enhancing vocational training programs as well as to develop skills. Owing to the fact that Fiji has a high literacy rate, this may enable some women to have the knowledge, but they require the necessary training to develop their skills.
b) Securing financial assistance by the actors in the informal sector has been a mammoth task due to lack of assets. Hence, providing low cost housing will enable the actors in the informal sector to use it as collateral and hence over time, allowing them to gain stability and improving incomes through expansion projects. This will also enable some families to uplift their conditions of living.

Moreover, the unstable nature of informal sector is the reason for commercial banks hesitancy in provision of loans. In this regard, NGOs (particularly women NGOs) need to step up their role and form partnerships with aid donors in assisting women with provision of credit facilities. Incidentally, expanding businesses will increase employment and reduce poverty levels.

3. Government’s contribution in developing the capabilities of the informal sector is equally pivotal. In this regard, following are some suggestions:
   a) There is a need to develop the ability of local government officials in addressing the challenges and issues surrounding urban informal sector development.
   b) Women education level has increased over the years, making them available to participate in the formal sector. However, due to limited opportunities, a large number of women have little choice but to engage in informal activities to sustain a living. Hence, informal sector needs to be expanded, to create more opportunities.
   c) To promote a balanced gender representation in the public and statutory bodies, and specifically in decision-making processes of issues concerning women. Imposing a gender quota will be an effective way to ensuring better representation of women in different levels, hence providing a stronger voice for women on critical issues.
   d) Given that a large number of participants come to the urban areas for a better living and lifestyle, it is of importance to identify areas of improvement in rural areas in order to minimize the rural push. For instance, there is a need to create opportunities for a better lifestyle, renewing land leases and making available a better quality of education, housing and infrastructure in the rural areas through sound development projects.
   e) While access to finance and education are of significance in furthering the progress of the participants of the informal sector, it is also essential to develop linkages with the formal sector and to have access to wider markets for goods and services produced in the informal sector. Presently, the scope for expansion is constrained
as a number of low-income families compete against each other. Developing the linkages with the formal sector will mean access to outside market as well as to raw materials. To promote this linkage, authorities need to provide tax incentives to formal organizations that establish an affiliation with the informal sector. This in turn will denote less competition as well as an increased work security.

f) The need for data pertaining to informal sector is very minimal. Provision of reliable data will aid in: a) assessing the extent of women’s informal activities, and b) a sound understanding of issues concerning the informal sector. With the drawbacks in the informal sector acknowledged, this will be valuable in the design of: a) appropriate strategies to combat the impediments of this sector and b) as a basis for national planning process.

g) Government needs to improve rights and protection of informal sector participants. They also need to adopt a foundation based on good governance to ensure the proper implementation of contracts and personal security, thereby forging better working conditions for a number of the venerable participants in the informal sector. Moreover, it needs to provide encouraging regulatory policies that develop social protection in the informal sector.

h) National policies aimed at empowerment of the informal sector, promotion of pro-poor growth needs to be adopted. In formulation of the policy, participation of pertinent stakeholders including women must be guaranteed in addressing the necessary issues affecting the informal sector, thus protecting and diminishing their vulnerability. Moreover, a policy concerning urban informal workers (street vendors) could be taken onboard outlining the areas where trading is permitted and where it is prohibited. This will allow the street vendors to sustain their livelihoods while minimizing the traffic flow of pedestrian and unwanted harassment by hawkers.

i) Fiji is a signatory to international conventions such as ILO Minimum Age Convention and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, amongst others. Yet, child labour prevails in the informal sector. While the incidence of it is lesser in comparison to many other countries, nevertheless, it remains a pivotal issue of concern. Depriving children of their basic rights such as education is not justifiable. While commitment from the authorities do exist; however, enforcement needs to be reinforced and a rights based approach taken onboard.
4. To mainstream women and gender issues through programs that assist in constricting the gender gap in areas of concern, especially in employment programs and for poverty alleviation strategies.

5. As highlighted earlier, informal sector consists of those that primarily rely on it as a source of livelihoods and those that engage in the sector to supplement their income. Hence, in providing assistance to this group, there is a need to set a criterion to identify the deserving candidates in the sector and providing them with assistance.

6. As a result of the increasing rate of urbanization in Fiji, limited land is available for development purposes. Hence, if development efforts were to take place, a sound land policy needs to be in place.

7. Micro-finance units were set up in commercial banks following a directive from the Reserve Bank of Fiji in late 2009. Since then, there have been growing financial literacy programs that have been introduced by the respective banks and a number of NGOs. While the literacy program is directed at both urban and rural areas, it is to a large extent for the rural sectors. At present, no gender specific programs under the microfinance schemes have been introduced. Moreover, micro-finance remains a concept that is not too widespread, in particular with the urban women informal sector participants. While the participants of this study were aware of the term microfinance, none of them had any specific knowledge of it. Therefore, awareness needs to be embarked on in terms of the meaning, criteria used and how to access micro-finance credit by the informal participants. This can be achieved through advocacy, through different languages, targeting various ethnic groups.

8. Government’s Employment Taxation Scheme provides 150 per cent tax deduction for the recruitment of first time school leavers. This tax deduction was introduced in 1997 and expires in 2012. However, this scheme needs to be extended further with creation of more awareness pertaining to this scheme.
6.3 Future Research

There is a need to engage in further research in the area of women and their participation in the informal sector covering more urban areas in Fiji. Since the informal sector represents the poor people's best hope of escaping poverty, where time and finance are accessible, it would be viable to do a country study to gain a comprehensive grasp on the topic in general.

Moreover, future studies are required to establish the linkages of informal sector and women participation to other issues such as water and sanitation, environmental sustainability, health and role that the NGOs play, particularly women NGOs in promoting and safeguarding women participation in the informal sector.

Also, stakeholder participation needs to be strengthened in an effort to explore ways of developing opportunities that best suits the women in the informal sector. This is essential as women comprise of different ethnic groups and their ideologies of development opportunities would differ. Hence, future studies need to focus on the correlation of stakeholders and the authorities in paving the way forward for women participation in the informal sector.


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APPENDIX
Appendix 1

Questionnaire

Confidentiality: Your responses will be treated with strictest confidentiality and will be used for study purposes only. Your genuine participation and time are immensely appreciated.

Area: Squatter □ Non-squatter □ Street location: ______________________

Type of goods sold/services provided: ________________________________________________

Type of vendor: Street Operators □ Kiosk Operators □ Home-workers □

Mobile vendors (door-to-door) □ Others □ (specify)_____

1: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Please tick where appropriate)

1. Ethnicity: Fijian □ Indian □ Others □ (specify): ___________________________

2. How old are you? 18-28 years □ 29-38 years □ 39-48 years □ 49-58 years □ 59+yrs. □

3. Marital Status: Single □ Married □ Divorced □ Separated □ Widower □

De facto relationship □ Others □ (specify): ___________________

4. Current place of residence: ___________________ 4.1: Before taking up this activity? _________________

5. Ownership of house? Rented □ Own house □ with friends and relatives □ Others(specify): □

6. Highest level of education? __________________________________________________________

6.1: Reason(s) for not furthering your education? _________________________________________

7. Did you have the following items before and after taking up the activity?

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<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
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</table>
8. Mention number of people in your family?  
   Male adults ☐ Female adults ☐ 
   Male child under 15yrs ☐ Female child under 15yr ☐ Total Members ☐

2: EMPLOYMENT/INCOME INFORMATION:

9. How many female members of your family working? ________________________________

10. Do you earn income for any other work? Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes – proceed to the next question, if no - go to question 11

10.1: If yes, please state the work you do? ____________________________________________

10.2: What is your weekly income from this work? ______________________________________

10.3: Do you contribute to FNPF? Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Are you the sole bread winner in the family? Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes - go to question 12, if no - proceed to the next question

   11.1: If no, is your partner/spouse working? Yes ☐ No ☐

   11.2: If yes, what is his weekly income? ____________________________________________

12. Who else in your family is working? Please provide relationship and respective incomes (per weekly basis).
   Relationship: ___________________ Occupation: ___________________ Income: ____________
   Relationship: ___________________ Occupation: ___________________ Income: ____________
   Relationship: ___________________ Occupation: ___________________ Income: ____________

13. Do you hire any workers? Yes ☐ No ☐

   13.1: If yes, how many? ___________

   13.2: How much do you pay each worker (weekly)? ____________

14. Who else is helping out in your work? Partner ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ Relatives ☐ Friends ☐

15. How many total women working with you including your daughter(s) (if any)? ____________

   15.1: Total male working with you? _________________________________________________

16. What were you doing before taking up this work/activity? ______________________________

17. Is the place of your work and residence the same? Yes ☐ No ☐

   If yes - go to question 18, if no- proceed to the next question

   17.1: If no, how do you travel to your place of work? _________________________________

   17.2: How long do you travel to reach your place of work? ____________________________

18. What time do you start work? __________________ and finish at? ______________________

19. How many days do you work? _________________________________________________

   19.1: How many hours of housework do you do (per day)? ____________________________

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20. When did you start this activity? _____________________________________________________________

21. What was your weekly income before and after joining this activity?
   Before: F $______________________________   After:  F$___________________________________

22. Have you changed the location of your work in the last 6 months?      Yes     No
   22.1: If yes, why?_________________________________________________________________________

23. In the last six months, have you noticed more people doing similar work in your area?   Yes     No
   If yes- proceed to the next question, if no - go to question 24
   23.2: Do you think more male or female workers have joined?   Male  Female
   23.3: As a result of the increase in the number of people, is there a difference in your income level?
   If yes, by how much approximately? $__________________________________

3: ACCESSIBILITY TO FINANCIAL SERVICES:

24. How much money initially did you put in to start your activity? F $ ______________________________

25. Did you start this activity with your own money?  Yes   No
   If no, from which source did you take money to start your business/ activity? Family   Friends
   Relatives   Neighbors   Money lender   Government   Bank   Others (specify): ___
   25.1: What percentage interest did they charge? _______________________________________

26. If the loan is sought from a bank or money lender, how would you describe your experience in accessing the loan?
   Circle on a scale below 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely easy, and 5 being extremely hard:
   1   2  3   4   5

4: IMPACT OF INFORMAL PARTICIPATION:

27. Do you have any impact on the following by participating in the current activity?
   a). Family relations: Positive impact   negative impact   no impact   can’t say
   If positive or negative, how so?_________________________________________________________________________

   b). Livelihoods: Positive impact   negative impact   no impact   can’t say
   If positive or negative, how so?_________________________________________________________________________

   c). Your social status: Positive impact   negative impact   no impact   can’t say
   If positive or negative, how so?_________________________________________________________________________

   d). Your income status: Positive impact   negative impact   no impact   can’t say
   If positive or negative, how so?_________________________________________________________________________
If positive or negative, how so? _____________________________________________________________
e). Your housing conditions: Positive impact ☐ negative impact ☐ no impact ☐ can’t say ☐
If positive or negative, how so? _____________________________________________________________
f). Educating children: Positive impact ☐ negative impact ☐ no impact ☐ can’t say ☐
If positive or negative, how so? _____________________________________________________________
g). Standard of living: Positive impact ☐ negative impact ☐ no impact ☐ can’t say ☐
If positive or negative, how so? _____________________________________________________________
h). Health: Positive impact ☐ negative impact ☐ no impact ☐ can’t say ☐
If positive or negative, how so? _____________________________________________________________

28. List the problems you face while doing this job/activity?
   i. ________________________________________   ii. ___________________________________________
   iii. ________________________________________   iv. ___________________________________________

29. Do you have a license from city/town council authority to carry on this activity? Yes ☐ No ☐
30. Additional comments? _________________________________________________________________
    _______________________________________________________________________________________

Thanking you for your participation!!