

# Hawkers' Bill Herculean task for BMC

Stakeholders say its implementation difficult, planning experts dub passage of Bill as poll gimmick

Geeta Desai @desalgeeta

With Parliament passing the Street Vendor's Bill, 2014 on Wednesday, it will bring respite to city hawkers who were in constant fear of raids and penalties by civic authorities. For the BMC it will face a huge challenge in identifying legal hawkers. Implementation of the policy will prove a huge task for the civic body.

The BMC has already begun working towards implementation of the policy. A town vending committee, set up by the BMC, has already started working on this issue.

Additional municipal commissioner Mohan Adtani, who is a presiding member of the town vending committee, said the panel comprises 30 members. "It will prepare guidelines and framework to implement the scheme. Two members will take up the job of design and planning rehabilitation of hawkers. It will decide how, when and where the hawkers will be placed," said Adtani.

While Adtani said the process to register vendors will be video-recorded, this has been opposed by the hawkers' union. The civic body plans to ask for domicile certificates to help identify legal hawkers.

The idea of domicile certificates has been turned down by the hawkers' union. Unions have suggested that hawkers who have any proofs of existence over the last decade or up to 12 years be considered as 'legal' hawkers.

## A new order for vendors

The Street Vendor's Bill – which will ensure legal status to hawkers – was passed in Parliament on Wednesday. While it brings major relief to hawkers, the civic body will have quite a task at hand telling the legal hawkers apart from the illegal ones. As legal proof, the civic body will ask for domicile certificates.

The policy has laid down a hawker-people ratio for a given vicinity. Every area having population of 1,000 will have 100 hawkers.

A civic panel will prepare guidelines and framework to implement the scheme. Vending areas will be earmarked to design and plan rehabilitation of hawkers.

The hawker unions have also objected to ward-level committees comprising only civic officials as these have no member representing the hawkers.

## Include hawkers in social fabric

Dr Sharit Bhowmik, professor and chairperson of Centre for Labour Studies, and Rohit Shinkre, principal, Rachna Sansad Academy of Architecture will conduct a survey to accommodate licensed hawk-

**2 crore** the estimated hawker population in the country

**1.20 lakh** the number of hawkers in the city estimated by a 1997 survey by Tata Institute of Social Sciences

**1.02 lakh** the number of hawkers in the city, according to a document filed by hawkers in 2009



Shradha Bhargava/Chaturvedi/dna

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ers in the city.

This panel has taken up three populated areas with maximum hawkers – Dadar, Chembur and Vile Parle as a pilot project. The panel has suggested that in order to create trust, a visual identity (like licence) for hawkers is necessary. "This is an important factor for assimilation of hawkers into the social fabric," said the panel member.

However, hawkers say several issues revolving around implementation of the Bill

are vague. The basic issue is how the BMC will identify legal hawkers. "Besides, what if I am shifted to a spot, in the name of regulation, where I will have no business? My clients will go to other hawkers who get my space," said a hawker at Dadar station.

DR Singh, president of Azad Hawkers' Union said that the issue of legality will prove a major crisis. "I have advised the committee to consider proof other than Aadhar card or Pan card as some

hawkers might not have any of these," said Singh.

## Is it mere politics?

A city planning expert said that implementation of the policy will not be too easy. "Since the announcement is just to please voters and there is no political will at the local level, it will be very difficult for hawkers to claim their ground," said this expert. Despite the pessimism, hawkers see a ray of hope. "At least, we will get some sort legal stamp," said Singh.