

BMC to find more places for hawkers

NEW STUDY 2-member committee to look at various locations, ways in which they can be relocated; civic body may shift and legalise 2.5 lakh hawkers

Kunal Purohit
 kunal.purohit@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The civic body is taking a major step to regulate at least 2.5 lakh hawkers in the city.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has ordered a fresh study for looking at more places in the city where hawkers could be rehabilitated. It has appointed a two-member committee of independent experts on the issue, which will scout for more places where hawker pitches could be legitimately relocated.

These new locations will be in addition to the 191 hawking zones that already exist in the city, as demarcated by the BMC.

The civic body has been facing criticism for failing to take concrete efforts in time to regulate hawking in the city. Wanting to salvage the situation, the civic body has now asked two academicians —

Sharit Bhowmik, a professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Tiss) Centre for Labour Studies and Dr Rohit Shinkre, from the Rachna Sansad Academy of Architecture — for help.

Bhowmik said the study would look at various locations and ways in which hawkers could be relocated.

Confirming this development,

Mohan Adtani, additional municipal commissioner, said, "The committee has been asked to come up with logistical details of the number of pitches and the hawkers that could be relocated to different places across Mumbai."

Once the study is done, the civic body is looking at legitimising and issuing fresh permits to hawkers. Currently, only 15,500 hawkers are legal and hold permits, while there are around 2 to 3 lakh hawkers in the city.

"The National Policy for Urban Street Vendors says that around 2% of the city's total population can be legally recognised as street vendors, which means that we can permit around 2.5 lakh hawkers on our streets. Since this is a huge number to achieve at one go, we'll be taking steps to reach there in phases," said a civic official.

Citizen groups, however, are not happy with the move. "The BMC has already spent a lot of time and money demarcating hawking zones. It is imperative that they start regulating hawkers in these zones at least. Such an exercise is completely unnecessary and an attempt to buy more time," said Nayana Kathpalia, co-convener, Citispace.

ACADEMICIANS LEND HELPING HAND TO CIVIC BODY

The BMC has set up a two-member committee to study the issue of hawkers regulation in the city



IN NUMBERS

191

Total hawking zones in the city declared by the BMC

1.02 lakh

Total hawkers that existed according to the last BMC study done in 1998

2.5 lakh

Total number of hawkers that the BMC plans to locate across the city

3 lakh

Approximate number of hawkers that currently exist in the city

3

three-member committees set up by SC to decide on hawking zones

WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT

THIS COMMITTEE will be looking at places where hawkers can be located

THESE INCLUDE places which are natural markets, such as outside shrines, educational institutes, markets, commercial zones and wide foot-paths

HAWKERS OUTSIDE government offices, tourist locations among other places will be taken into account

THE AIM WILL BE to regulate and relocate as many hawkers as possible in these areas

THE STUDY WILL also look at effective ways of having hawker stalls in the least possible space. For instance, it will look at various kinds of stalls/carts that can be placed in these locations so that easy flow of pedestrians and traffic is maintained

LEGAL TANGLES



As there is no comprehensive policy on regulating the city's hawkers, the BMC has to follow the Supreme Court's guidelines, issued through the years in different judgments, on regulating them. These are:

The BMC is to create hawking and non-hawking zones in the city and ensure its implementation

THERE SHOULD BE no hawking zones within 100m from any place of worship, educational institutions, hospitals and 150m metres away from municipal markets and railway stations; however, hawkers essential for these places (such as those selling items of use in a temple) can be placed at these spots, but in a regulated manner

COOKING IS banned on roads; hawkers can only sell cooked food

HAWKING MUST be only between 7am and 10pm

NO HAWKING to be permitted in areas which are purely residential

NEW PERMITS

THE BMC IS also planning to issue new permits to legitimise and regularise hawkers in the city

OF THE NEARLY 3 lakh hawkers, only 15,500 have permits

