

Get ready to pick your way through 100,000 more hawkers; BMC meets issue with panel

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Mumbai: Mumbai's footpaths and, at places, its streets have been taken over by hawkers. There are an estimated 1.5 to 2 lakh of them hogging space on public walkways. Another 1 lakh will be added to the lot next year after the Rajya Sabha clears the draft bill on hawkers policy.

According to the policy, which will become law, the number of hawkers will be 2.5 per cent of the population. So, if the city's population is 1.25 crore, the number of hawkers will be 3.25 lakh. This change will be brought under the ambit of the 'Right to earn livelihood'. Concerned about how hawker-activities will be regulated and public space protected to the extent possible, the city's municipal body has formed a town vending committee. The BMC has appointed two experts who will conduct street surveys and spatial studies for a solution which can be implemented as a pilot project. The work order for the study was issued last week.

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To strike a right balance between citizens' expectations and hawkers' demands, the BMC has appointed a two-person committee who will conduct street surveys and spatial studies and look for a holistic solution. The two persons in the

committee are Sharit Bhowmik, professor, chairperson - Centre for Labour Studies, School of Management & Labour Studies, and architect Rohit Shinkre, principal & professor at Rachna Sansad Academy for Architecture.

More than two-thirds of the footpath is occupied... We want this to come down to one-third. —Sharit Bhowmik, committee member