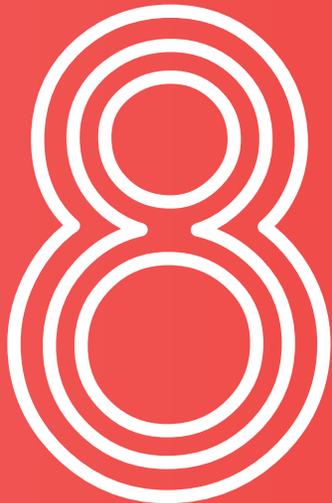




Prosperity



# Food Safety in the Informal Sector



# Actionable Area

Support and strengthen the participation of street food vendors in the implementation of food safety programmes to ensure safe and nutritious food for all consumers.

## Issue

- Street foods play an important socio-economic role in meeting food and nutritional requirements of city consumers in the lower and middle-income groups at affordable prices. They are also appreciated for their unique flavours, tastes, and convenience. Street foods also assure food security for the low-income urban population and livelihood for a significant proportion of the people. They are also important in contributing to the nutritional status of the population.
- In contrast to these potential benefits, it is also recognised that street food vendors are often poor, less educated, and lack knowledge in safe food handling, environment, sanitation and hygiene, mode of food display, foodservice, and handwashing, sources of raw materials, and use of potable water. Consequently, street foods are perceived to be a major public health risk. According to India's Ministry of Urban Poverty Alleviation, there are over 100 lakh street vendors in the country, roughly 20 lakh of them food sellers.
- The traditional processing methods used in the preparation of street foods, inappropriate holding temperature, and poor personal hygiene of food handlers are some of the main causes of contamination of street foods. Also, the foods are not effectively protected from flies and dust. For the sake of public health, it is important to understand the epidemiology of foodborne illnesses. This will help in prevention and control efforts, appropriate allocation of resources to control foodborne illness, monitoring and evaluating food safety measures, development of new food safety standards, and assessment of the cost-effectiveness of interventions.

## Street Story

There are over 10mn street vendors in India. NASVI's report based on 10 cities and other research agencies estimates,

**30%** vendors are of age group 21-30 years while 51% are in age group 31-50 years and 12% are in the age group of 61-80.

**40%** street vendors are illiterate

**82%** sell perishable goods, while 71.5% are stationary vendors and 29% are fruit sellers

**65.5%** of vendors store their goods at home, 33.5% keep it at their vending place while only 1% use rented space.

**70.5%** vendors spend between 8-12 hours on the street, besides two hours for cleaning and display.



- Application of Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) will also help identify and control hazards for different types of products prepared and sold on the streets. Along with general training to vendors on good hygiene practices, each vendor needs to understand the critical control points for their product and how to prevent and manage hazards in a cost-effective manner.
- Street food vendors are not dependent on any institutional structures to find their livelihoods. Their enterprises evolve exclusively around their strengths and the support extended to them by their immediate social networks such as family members and other close associates. The earnings from their business enterprises are a means of living for the vendors themselves and their dependent family members. As such, these economic activities of the street food vendors have provided a source of livelihood and have reduced the plight of their becoming an economic and social burden on the state.
- Street vendors face unique kinds of livelihood risks. The most pressing and ongoing risk is the possibility of forcible eviction by local government authorities from their business place on streets and even confiscate their merchandise. The risk of displacement often increases in the context of elections, mega-events, or efforts to beautify historic city centres.
- Street traders face several routine occupational hazards as well. Many have to lift and haul heavy loads of goods to and from their point of sale each day. The physical environments in which they work typically lack proper infrastructures, such as clean running water, toilets, and solid waste removal. Street vendors are exposed to physical harm from the improper provision of fire safety equipment and the traffic regulations in commercial areas. They are also exposed to a high concentration of air pollutants and inclement weather. Income and earning risks are also common to many street vendors. Harassment on the part of local authorities is a common source of income risk.
- Street vendor's legal status can act as a bridge between their employment conditions and the range of employment risks they face. For example, a vendor with a fixed structure in a designated market may be more likely to hold a license or permit, and in turn, would be less exposed to certain kinds of risks. Likewise, a street food vendor who works as an employee selling a particular product may be better protected by law and, therefore, less vulnerable. Therefore, obtaining a legal status of some kind is a key demand of street trading organisations in many cities.
- Street food vendors mostly come from economically weaker sections of society. This section of the urban poor tries to solve their problems through their meagre resources. The study on street vendors in seven cities shows that the average earnings range between Rs. 40 and Rs. 80 per day. Women vendors earn even less.

# Status

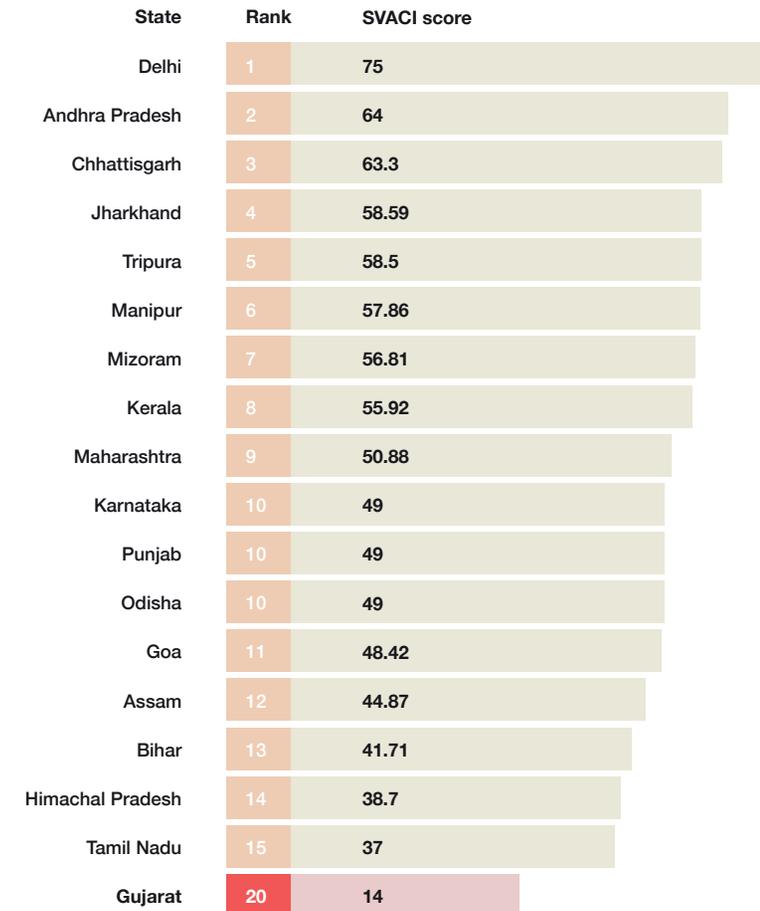
- In June 2020, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) unveiled the 'Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)' scheme to support street vendors in regaining their livelihoods. It was to provide easily repayable loans of up to Rs. 10,000, with the government hoping that it would benefit over 50 lakh street vendors in India. According to government data, nearly 30 lakh applications were received, with the Centre sanctioning a little over half of them. More than 7.5 lakh loans were disbursed as of November 2020. But, going beyond the mandate of this scheme, the government wants to use the data for comprehensive poverty alleviation. The NSSO data estimated that around 200,000 women and 21,500 children were also engaged in street vending.
- Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had published Indian Standard IS 16066:2017 for street food Vendors for food safety requirements, including control checkpoints covering all aspects of the process flow using Level 1 and 2 methods.
- Covid-19 pandemic has restricted consumers from stepping out and forced them to follow physical distancing norms. In the given scenario, it is important to connect Street Food Vendors with technology-enabled platforms to help them grow their business, thus helping them gain financially. As a part of the PM SVANidhi Scheme, the MoHUA entered into MoU with Zomato and Swiggy, the largest online platforms for ordering and delivery of food in India, to onboard street food vendors on its food-tech platform. This will give street food vendors online access to thousands of consumers and
- help these vendors grow their businesses. MoHUA has coordinated with the key stakeholders, including Municipal Corporations, FSSAI, Zomato, and GST officials, to ensure that street food vendors are facilitated in completing the necessary prerequisites for this initiative. Further, MoHUA launched the mobile application for PM SVANidhi se Samridhhi- Socio-economic profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their families to link them to various Central Government Schemes.
- FSSAI is responsible for ensuring safe and hygienic food to citizens. In addition to the mandatory regulatory requirements for street food vendors, it has initiated a "Clean Street Food Hub" initiative under the "Eat Right India" umbrella to uplift food safety and hygiene in street food vending through a cluster approach. Recognition of these clusters involves auditing and training street food vendors in basic food safety and hygiene. Clusters meeting eighty per cent of specified benchmarks framed for street food safety and hygiene will be declared as "Clean Street Food Hub". So far, a total of twenty-eight hubs have been recognised.

# Vision 2030

- Support & Strengthen the participation of street food vendors and local communities in improving food safety and sanitation management.
- Enhance Public-Private Partnership involving municipalities, street food vendors, FSSAI, BIS, food business operators, consumers, and stakeholders to ensure a safer, healthier, better nourished India.

## Street Vendors Act - Compliance Index (SVACI), 2017

Gujarat among states having least compliance with new street vending law, Delhi highest



# Pathways

## IMPLEMENTATION



**App-based quick learning lessons** for consistent training, list of approved vendors and affordable sourcing from local market suppliers for purchasing, standardised RM/PM/serving plates/PPE/Hygiene kits/ waste management etc. at affordable rates.

**Promote sustainable mobile vending platforms or kiosks** for selling goods.

**Monitor free moving vendors** who form the major bulk of street vendors by using simple assessment procedures.

**A rigorous evaluation** of the microbial loads of street foods should be conducted throughout the year.

**Launch a mobile app to receive citizens' feedback** on food safety, hygiene street food stall, covering all vendors, and use the feedback for further relevant actions as required.

**Involve college and school students** with local food vendors in the promotion of food safety and hygiene check.

**Provide hygiene kits, model vending carts** and other better facilities like water storage, covered display unit, heating/cooling facility through company CSR funds to empower vendors.

# Pathways

## POLICY



**Local-self-governments should integrate street vendors** into market architecture by giving them proper space to earn their livelihood and basic necessary facilities and support at the workplace.

**The local authorities should recognise** the importance of this informal sector and provide identity cards as proof of legal business. Identify natural markets in town to make it easier to integrate vendors via relocation as per trade.

**Do more research to determine** the nutritional contribution of street foods in consumers' diets.

**Preparation and promotion of guidelines** for street food vendors based on the products they sell and handle.

**Introduce inspection and monitoring** by approved third party experts at regular intervals.

## TRAINING



**Strengthen capacity building, hand-holding,** and infrastructure on food safety and hygiene culture development, good storage practices, good manufacturing practices, integrated pest management, and food nutrition regularly.

**Conduct capacity-building programmes** on the usage of online delivery applications and use digital marketing for payments. Localised delivery networks could be encouraged where the larger delivery platforms don't work.