

ENHANCING LIVELIHOODS, BUILDING COLLECTIVES

A review of engagement with street vendors
across eight cities of India



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External reviewers and principal writers of this report

Dr. Ritajyoti Bandhyopadhyay, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (Mohali)

Mackenzey Dabre, National Hawker Foundation, Kolkata.

Partners and Allied Organisations

Centre for Integrated Development (CID)

Institute of Social Research & Development (ISRSD)

Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH)

Mahila Action (MA)

Nidan

Society for Social Transformation and Environment Protection (sSTEP)

The Calcutta Samaritans (TCS)

ActionAid Regions and Hubs

Citizen Rights Collective (CiRiC)

Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Regional Office

Madhya Pradesh Regional Office

North East India Regional Office

North India Regional Office

West Bengal Regional Office.

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ActionAid Association,
R - 7, Hauz Khas Enclave
New Delhi - 110016

+9111-11-4064 0500

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139, Richmond Road,
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Foreword

The central challenge for sustainable and inclusive urbanisation in India is to position quality employment along with quality habitat as the pillars on which cities should be developed and helped evolve. This challenge is significant when, in most regions of the Global South, informal employment accounts for more than half of total employment, and when self-employment outweighs wage employment. Within self-employment, street vending is one of the most visible occupations. The contributions of street vendors to urban life go beyond their own self-employment. They generate demand for a wide range of services provided by other informal workers, including transport workers, tea sellers, market porters, security guards, recyclers and others. They also generate demand for services provided by formal sector both public and private actors, including transportation, and formal shops and suppliers from whom they source their goods.

After a decade of struggle the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 was passed to provide social security and livelihood rights to street vendors. However the effective implementation of the law and especially its key provisions is still a challenge in most cities of India. For instance, the presence of Town Vending Committees is still limited and the lack of identity cards or certificate for vending pose great challenges to street vendors and are important instances of the lack of implementation of the Act. To be made effective on the ground the of rights for street vendors needs to programmatic collaboration with the other labour struggles.

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This context narrates the strong rationale of ActionAid Association's intervention with street vendors in seven cities of India – Bhopal and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh; Delhi in the National Capital Territory of Delhi; Guwahati in Assam; Kolkata in West Bengal; Patna in Bihar and Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

The intervention was part of the “Securing rights and sustainable livelihoods through collective action and education for people dependent on the informal economy in India.” project that was supported by the European Commission. The intervention with street vendors was implemented through a collaboration between grass roots base civil society organisations, ActionAid Associations regional offices active in the states and Citizens’ Rights Collectives (CiRiC), the knowledge and advocacy group hosted by ActionAid Association. The grass roots based civil society organisations were: Centre for Integrated Development (CID), Institute of Social Research & Development (ISRD), Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH), Mahila Action (MA), Nidan, Society for Social Transformation and Environment Protection (sSTEP) and The Calcutta Samaritans (TCS). ActionAid Association’s regional offices were: Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Regional Office, Madhya Pradesh Regional Office, North East India Regional Office, North India Regional Office and the West Bengal Regional Office.

The intervention focused on collectivizing street vendors and building their capacity in terms of knowledge and skill to enhance and broaden their livelihood options. The collectives of street vendors were empowered to raise fundamental demands for housing, food, social protection and the right to work. In past years significant milestones were achieved including the formation of street vendors’ collectives, facilitation to activate “Town Vending Committees” and the participation of the street vendors in the Town Vending Committees. The intervention also enabled street vendor collectives to address the issue of eviction of the street vendors. Life skill training sessions built leadership amongst street vendors and enhanced their negotiating capacities. The intervention also sought linkage of street vendors to various State specific labour schemes/provisions.

Keeping in mind the gains secured for street vendors and their collectives it was strongly that a review and reflection on the processes enabled and the work done with street vendors be done to analyse the lessons that could be drawn from the intervention and how to better align it with the larger political economy of the street vendors in India. Dr. Ritajyoti Bandhyopadhyay, with the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (Mohali) and Mackenzy Dabre, associated with the National Hawker Foundation, Kolkata, kindly helped us with the review. They participated in the national review and reflection workshop held in Kolkata which was attended all collaborating organisations and concerned ActionAid Association regional offices. The reviewers also conducted field visits in Vishakapatnam and Delhi to understand the ground actions of the intervention and how each region uniquely contributed to the national project.

This exercise has helped us understand both the advances we have been able to make and the limitations of the intervention, it has helped us evolve a future perspective to work with workers in the informal sector across India. This report serves as a means to capture the learning and the experience of all collaborating organisations and the collectives of the workers involved in the process.

We are immensely grateful to Dr. Ritajyoti Bandhyopadhyay and Mackenzy Dabre for their efforts and bring this report together. We remain grateful to our allied organisations for their untiring efforts during the intervention and their contribution to the processes of bringing this report together. We are also thankful to colleagues in the concerned regional offices and in the CiRiC team who helped ensure the intervention led to change for the better and brought this report to fruition.

Please do share your comments, suggestions and questions so we can carry this conversation further.

In solidarity,
Sandeep Chachra
Executive Director
ActionAid Association

Introduction

Working with the support of the European Commission, ActionAid Association launched a project to secure rights and sustainable livelihoods through collective action and education for people dependent on the informal economy in India. This project is also referred to as the EC-PIE project. The EC-PIE project was launched with the objective of ensure rights of persons dependent on the informal economy (PIE) across 35 cities, 18 districts and 15 states in India. Street vendors are prominent constituency within this gamut of work. Working with partners and allies including Centre for Integrated Development (CID), Institute of Social Research & Development (ISRD), Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH), Mahila Action (MA), Nidan, Society for Social Transformation and Environment Protection (sSTEP) and The Calcutta Samaritans (TCS), the engagement with street vendors reached across eight cities, namely Hyderabad, Vishakapatnam, Patna, Bhopal, Gwalior, Guwahati, Delhi and Kolkata, across the seven states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and West Bengal.

To document and capture the gains secured for street vendors and their collectives a review and reflection was undertaken to analyse the lessons that could be drawn from the intervention and how to better align it with the larger political economy of the street vendors in India. This 'review and reflection' exercise has sought to make a detailed analysis of the work done so far and the strategies undertaken to equip street vendors who form a significant component of the informal economy in various cities with access to education, skills, decent work and social cohesion through collectivization. This analysis guides us in evaluating CiRiC/

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ActionAid Association's project, suggest improvements and recommend a future pathway for addressing certain 'missed opportunities'. To accomplish this, the following steps were taken over about two months:

1. A critical reading of the main proposal, annual and other reports of the organizations involved, presentations of various organizations and policy pieces.
2. Consultations with some key functionaries of CiRiC/ActionAid Association.
3. A detailed ethnographic survey of the work done in two cities, Delhi and Visakhapatnam.

As a complementary exercise, the following was also undertaken:

1. A reconnaissance ethnographic survey of street vendors in Delhi and Kolkata, who were not exposed to this program. This was done as an independent initiative to understand the larger field of street vendors and the forces at play in it.
2. A targeted archival research in Delhi and Kolkata to give the review a wider perspective.

These two additional research initiatives help the reviewers to suggest some future course of action for ActionAid Association. The reviewers have also made use of their own long engagement with this sector and its networks to come up with certain findings that would not have been possible in just two rounds of field visits to two cities. For instance, they were specifically invested in understanding the unfolding of macroeconomic issues such as urban renewal, gentrification and demonetization in the lives of street vendors; these are initiatives that such a project can hardly ignore in realizing its sector-specific interventions. This additional work (outside the scope of this consultancy) has helped the reviewers immensely in this regard.



This report is divided into five sections and two Appendices. Section I analyses the recent transformations in the informal economy in India, which is followed by a brief review of the politics and economics of street vending in various cities. The approach that CiRiC developed to design its interventions in this field has also been discussed (the discussion is restricted to street vending only). Section II presents an overall reflection on the presentations made by various city and regional groups, giving a general reconnaissance of the issues at stake across the various states and regional centres. In Section III, an ethnographic field research conducted in Delhi and Visakhapatnam is presented along with the additional work the reviewers undertook to understand the sector in Delhi and Kolkata. The motivation for studying multi-sited ethnographies in different cities was to create a platform for horizontal interactions between different geographies of knowledge on urban informality produced in and on several Indian cities, thereby developing a toolkit for understanding urban policy through the parameters of what the reviewers called a 'trans-city interrogation'. A trans-city interrogation makes use of a one city context to ask questions of another as there is wide variability in urban economies, governance structures and histories of street vending across different Indian cities. In Section IV, recommendations and ways forward based on the findings in the previous sections are presented.

The report also contains two appendices extracted from ongoing work in Dr Rityajyoti Bandyopadhyay's research group at IISER Mohali. The appendices also give a general theoretical understanding of the relationship between formal/corporate and informal/non-corporate capital and details of a public outreach program undertaken by the street vendors in Kolkata. The appendices are only illustrative of various issues raised in the main report. A reader can ignore them if she is not interested in academic reading in the field under discussion. The central spirit of this report, however, invites us to a platform of mutual learning among academics, activists and development practitioners.

Chapter I

Scoping the Field: Informal Economy and Street Vending in Indian Cities

1.1 Informal Economy in India: Emerging Trends

Scholars working in the field have reported a few trends in the organizational aspects of the informal economy in India. First, it is observed that to survive in a globally competitive market, there has emerged a move for the standardization of labour relations and commodity chains within the informal economy. Further, scholars have noticed a dramatic decline in the growth of casual employment since the beginning of the new century, while there has been a corresponding growth in the number of regular workers and self-employed within the informal sector (Kundu and Mohanan, 2009; Bandyopadhyay, 2016). Second, there has been a significant increase in organizational activities outside the scope of official trade unions in both the formal and informal sectors. Scholars report two kinds of unionizations: the extension of already registered trade unions, accommodating workers in the informal economy or providing affiliations to new unions in the informal economy; and unions organized by the informal workers themselves outside the fold of the existing legal trade union complex. Both types of unions are seen to combine the issues of labourrights and representation with the concerns of economic and business development (Bonner and Spooner, 2010; Bandyopadhyay, 2016). In short, the three major attributes of an informal economy— the existence of a casual labourforce, para-legality and lack of organization—are now called into question (Bandyopadhyay, 2016).

The unions and associations within the informal economy are generally seen to target the government and not the employers to earn vital state-supported welfare benefits (Agarwala, 2011). However, this does not mean that the workforce in the informal economy is well integrated

into a universal social security fold, as a large majority of them cannot afford to make a contribution under this system. Given this, the role of labour organizations in maintaining state capital-labour relations in the informal economy has become crucial. It is a matter of much satisfaction that the National Hawkers Federation (NHF) recently demanded the inclusion of street vendors in the Employees' State Insurance Scheme and some other facilities available to populations below the poverty line. It should also be noted that with the coming of a relatively privileged section from within the labour force, organizations like NHF are seen to play an increasingly important role in managing the existing labour force thus insulating it from the 'population-in-waiting' (the population waiting to become street vendors if given an opportunity).

Although it is difficult to make a clear separation between the owners of capital—employers—and laborers in the informal economy, research shows that at least in the case of street vendors in India, the organizations represent the former segment (Bandyopadhyay, 2016, 2017). It appears that the emergence of an institutional and a political structure within the informal economy has a lot to do with issues of wage relations (as very often the hawkers recruit labor), profitability, accumulation and scale as the informal economy is increasingly becoming subject to an anonymous market process (Bandyopadhyay, 2017).

Are we then witnessing a wider process of institutionalization and inclusion of labour as we did between the 1930s and the 1960s? Are we witnessing a second phase of formalization, or should we call this process 'un-informalization' (Bandyopadhyay, 2015) which suggests a stable new formation that qualitatively differs from the available modular forms of formality and informality as a distinct reality of labour and production relations? If the answer is in the affirmative, what does this say about the current situation and the project of the state? What currency does the 'formal' carry when informalization sets in at the heart of the 'formal sector'? How, then, are we to envision the future of the informal sector and the politics of informal workers?

Reading ActionAid Association's documents and doing field research with this organization in Delhi and Visakhapatnam, it appears that these are some of the central questions, issues and objective realities that the project is currently seeking to engage with.

1.2 A New Landscape of Labour Laws: Some Concerns

In July 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Employment finalized a proposal for four legislations with the stated view of simplifying, amalgamating and rationalizing the existing 44 labour laws; these have been sent for Cabinet approval. This Labour Code encompasses all the vital terrains of a worker's life—wage, industrial relations, social security and occupational safety, health and working conditions (The Times of India, 13 July, 2018). The Code is likely to affect 700 million workers in this country of which a staggering 92 percent eke out a living in the informal economy. As a result, the Code must be open to a critical interrogation.

There are two major areas of concern in the Labour Code which might have long-term implications in shaping the state-union complex:

First, it minimizes the participation of workers. The proposed national council under the Code will have 21 members out of which the employees will have just three government nominated representatives. Needless to say, such a move eliminates the scope for tripartite negotiations and the role of trade unions in crucial realms of workers' lives. The national council, chaired by the Prime Minister, is invested with remarkable financial, administrative and regulatory powers which indicate a hyper-centralization of decision-making powers. Further, the Code does not recognize the self-declaration of the workers regarding employment as a valid document and instead requires every employment relationship to be registered. We know that the employer-employee relationship in the informal economy can be heterogenous and complex which may not follow a clear-cut one-to-one relation between the two. In certain areas of informal employment (for instance, domestic workers), an employee has multiple employers. Thus, a formal sector centric understanding of

employment relations as enshrined in the Code will result in ambiguity, which might turn out to be exclusionary in a large number of cases.

Second, the Labour Code maintains a disturbing silence on gender balance as it proposes 'at least one of the three nominees to be a woman' in the proposed national council. However, the Code does not specify a formula of gender representation in central and state boards. What is more worrying is making the two-child norm the criterion for availing benefits under the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961, which has so far remained universal (Pinto, 2017). In addition, Section 55, which says 'a woman who has actually worked in an establishment for a period of not less than 80 days in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of her expected delivery' can qualify for maternity benefits, ensures exclusion of many women with irregular employment. Hence, as Pinto (2017) points out, 'although superficially the language of the code states that "all women" will be entitled to maternity benefits, in practice such a criterion renders a large number of women, especially the most vulnerable sections, ineligible to avail maternity benefits.'

Thus, in reality, the Code is designed to exclude workers from the decision-making process. It is important to note that the Code envelops a 'rights-based discourse' for workers by a 'benefits' oriented discourse (arguably, this is a major reversal from the 'dignity' oriented discourse of development as propagated by the UPA 1 government) which will further erode one of the core principles of citizenship—that workers are not just beneficiaries of government policies, but stake-holding citizens for whom the government formulates policies as its constitutional responsibility (Pinto, 2017).

Street vendors occupying public spaces such as pavements, parks and thoroughfares appearing to deny access to their 'rightful' users has been a highly contentious issue in major cities across the globe. Attacks on street hawkers by civic governments are often viewed as part of a larger reformatting of urban space associated with neoliberal policies which call for a shift in state priorities from 'developmentalism' to 'entrepreneurialism' (Harvey, 1989; Anjaria, 2008). As Rajagopal (2001:

94) tells us in the context of a series of eviction drives undertaken by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) in India, 'the radical shifts under way in the restructuring of the economy might be symbolized in the... figure of the pheriwala [read street vendor], against whom a furious campaign is currently being waged in the press and by the BMC.'

Thus, in this backdrop of global restructuring of both policy and the economy, street hawkers have emerged as political subjects, who much like slum residents and squatter dwellers, are capable of claiming subsistence resources and entitlements that governments refuse to make available to them. For some scholars, street hawkers thus offer a collective 'resistance' (Stillerman, 2006: 511) and have the prospects of emerging as emissaries of transformative politics of sorts actively contesting the overwhelming sway of global capitalism (Davis, 2004).

In India, the street vendors' question received enthusiastic public attention with the passage of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 [in short SVA]. Since the late 1990s, several associations and unions of hawkers had been lobbying for central legislation in their favor to end extortions from the bribe-seeking 'predatory state.' They expected that the central legislation would 'empower' them to withstand the 'everyday experience of vulnerability' from state functionaries (especially the police and civic officials), corporate players in the retail economy and middle-class activist civic bodies (such as residents' welfare associations) in many Indian cities. In 2001, the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation formed a national task force to deliberate on SVA. The task force comprised members of the Government of India, state governments, municipal bodies, street vendors' unions and experts. In 2004, the first draft of the Act in the form of a national policy was made public for wider consultations. Several street vendors' associations, activists and academics across the country participated in a nationwide debate that continued for over a decade (MoHUPA, 2015).

SVA introduced four important regulations that have long-term implications for street vendors. First, it divided the public space in the

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city into a vending zone and a non-vending zone. But there is also a clause of 'public purpose', for which a vending zone can be made a non-vending zone for 'greater public good'. Second, it articulated the basic framework of 'participatory' management of street vending in the vending zones. The Town Vending Committee (TVC) is the participatory body which is supposed to mediate between the local state and civil society. It has representatives of the state, street vendors, the banking sector, NGOs and citizens' bodies (like the residents' welfare associations and consumers' forums). The TVC is mandated to recruit at least 40 percent of its members from among registered street vendors; they are to have voting rights to elect their representatives. Thus, street vendors have the right to elect only a section of the members in the TVC, a crucial decision-making body, and that section does not even constitute a majority of its members. Hence, like in all other instances of 'participatory democracy', the term 'participation' conceals more than it reveals.

Third, the TVC must develop zoning norms based on consensus among stakeholders and demarcate and micro-manage vending and non-vending zones; it must also consider traffic, public health and environmental issues to balance usable space and the number of vendors. If the government wants to make any changes in the zoning norms, it has to consult the concerned TVC and experts in the pre-implementation phase. In the vending zone, both stationary and mobile registered vendors can vend with legitimacy as long as they observe certain disciplines of sanitation and public health and pay periodic fees for using public resources.

Fourth, the Street Vendors Act mandated municipal governments to undertake a periodic census of street vendors, registering them based on this census and allowing them to vend at designated locations in the vending zones. The business of enumeration and registration is to be conducted entirely by municipal governments with the help of associations/unions of street vendors.

This leads us to one of the oldest questions in labour studies: What happens to those who do not belong to any association/union that

represents the workers' voice in government? What happens if the associations/unions decide to restrict the inflow of aspiring street vendors and push them out through a cumbersome bureaucratic process of enumeration and registration, which, as the Street Vendors Act itself suggests, is to be undertaken every five years? What happens to the existing street vendors when every five years the government identifies a reserve army of labour at the city's doorstep willing to be registered as street vendors? The space available in any city is finite and such a situation will bring the rent-seeking, predatory state back to the scene; existing vendors will have to bribe the police and municipal authorities to retain their positions. This also means that the existing army of registered vendors can be regulated through a database, by following the logic of scarcity of available space and through the deployment of a classic mechanism of blackmail because of loss of employment in the hands of putative excess or the reserve army of labor. Thus, the Town Vending Committees maintain a sort of employment bank, and the use of the law not only codifies the street vendors but also creates regulated access for their tactical deployment.

Deliberations on the Street Vendors Act will shape the politics of street hawking in at least four significant ways. First, the Act signals a concerted effort by the Indian state to govern the informal economy in general and to integrate the street vendors' question with concerns regarding urban spatial planning. Second, it has augmented the pace at which street hawkers form associations. Third, the promulgation of 'public sector'-like reservation norms in managing hawkers' representation in the Town Vending Committees and treating street hawking as a transitory employment bank seem to suggest a greater influence by the government in structuring street hawking. Fourth, the Act formally resolves a central paradox associated with any kind of formal recognition of 'stationary' street vendors, or the privatization of public space.

The footpath, it is argued, is primarily for pedestrians who do not loiter around, but move from one point to another. Any kind of formal, legal recognition of stationary street vendors means the violation of the very foundation of the bourgeois notion of property distributed neatly

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between the domains of the private and the public. Given this, it seems that the Street Vendors Act permits street vending in a limited and restricted space by considering it an acceptable exception to the rule of property. Unlike the abstract pedestrian's rights, which are fundamental to the law of public space in a bourgeois city, street vendors' rights are founded on a series of exceptions and contingent legalities. This is why the Street Vendors Act is so invested in articulating the conditions under which street vendors' rights are realizable. In some ways SVA is a legal 'formalization' of the hawkers' right to livelihood that does attempt a reversal of this contingency.

SVA appears to be sympathetic to peripatetic hawkers – if they are registered in the municipal notebook. It is also more concerned with sedentary/stationary hawkers – 'objects' that can potentially obstruct pedestrian flows. In this respect, SVA is consistent with a number of earlier municipal acts over which it prevails. These municipal legislations have for long forbidden, 'structure or fixture' or even moving vehicles for vending, as they see them as obstructions to bodies and movement on streets. SVA modifies this approach to make an allowance for vending materials that are collapsible like folding tables and chairs made of metal and plastic rather than the traditional wooden chowkies to display merchandise; push carts and umbrellas rather than bamboo structures and corrugated roofing; and removable plastic clothing racks, shelves and cardboard boxes of various size. But the Act continues to harbor a governmental rationality founded on a clear distinction between static objects and channels of circulation like the street, the pedestrian zone and a drain. Static objects are viewed as obstructing the free circulation of pedestrians and of air and water. In this sense, street hawkers are nothing more than urban objects legitimate only in so far as they do not obstruct pedestrian flows. Hence, measures like SVA continue to pronounce laws, in howsoever a modified way, on conditions of eviction rather than the means of inclusion or facilitation of livelihood on the streets.

Between 2014 and 2018 a number of states came up with rules and schemes to implement SVA in the states. In general, the rules and

schemes proved to be strictly in accordance with SVA in those states where street vendors had a strong presence in state and municipal politics. For instance, during their ethnographic research the reviewer's found that the Delhi group worked very closely with the Delhi state administration to come up with street vendor friendly rules, while the Visakhapatnam group crucially lagged behind in even understanding the nuances of the law. The passage of SVA, however, led to some fundamental changes in the language of activism in this sector. Evidence from various cities suggests that the last three decades have witnessed a steady 'judicialization'¹ (dhyay, 2016). They have taken refuge in the court while continuing their anti-eviction struggle on the ground. Most rulings, both in the high courts and in the Supreme Court, bolstered the cause of livelihood while restricting the radical spatial claims of street hawkers. Many of the unions and associations have to maintain strong connections with activists and progressive lawyers' collectives. If an eviction happens, their lawyers process hundreds of petitions by hawkers and file them together in court, making it difficult for its officials to maintain their everyday routines. To bolster the case of evicted vendors, the associations clog the court entrance so that the judges come to know their moral and numerical strength. This is how judicialization politicizes the physical space of the court and disrupts its normal operations.

We are yet to see how the Street Vendors Act opens new possibilities of subversion when it is taken to the court and the street. Its success will depend on how the hawkers are able to bring other, poorer social groups into the fold of their movement and also how they come to terms with the middle-class public in the city.

1. For a general discussion of the meaning of 'judicialization', see Pilar Domingo (2004); 'Judicialization of politics or politicization of the judiciary? Recent trends in Latin America', *Democratization*, 11:1, 104–26; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff (2007). 'Law and disorder in the postcolony', *Social Anthropology*, 15:2, 133–52; Shalini Randeria (2007). 'De-politicization of democracy and judicialization of politics', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 24:4, 38–44. For a discussion of judicialization of politics in contemporary West Bengal, see Nielsen, *Farmers' use of the courts*, pp. 121–44.

Approach Adopted in the Engagement with Street Vendors

The project sought to enable marginalized populations in the informal economy to access social protection and decent work and achieve sustainable livelihood through skill development. To achieve this goal, the project targeted 99,870 individuals from various social constituencies scattered in 32 cities/towns and 18 rural/semi-urban districts in India. It is estimated that ultimately, 700,000 individuals (if we include the workers' family members) will directly benefit from various schemes and that this will benefit everyone in the informal economy, as in the long run access to information on government schemes will be easier (Suresh, 2018).

The project had three prominent result areas:

Result Area 1: Awareness building for the people in the informal economy (PIE) to realize their existing socioeconomic rights. To achieve this goal, CiRiC, its allies and partners in cities/towns formed or strengthened various collectivization initiatives. The collectives have varied numbers of members ranging from 10 to 1,000 individuals. The collectives are in turn empowered to bolster and protect the socioeconomic rights of their members including a range of issues such as right to equal pay, just and favorable conditions of employment, right to basic entitlements and implementation of minimum wages in a transparent way.

Result Area 2: Skill development for women and youth so that they can gradually diversify their work profiles and move up in life. It is anticipated that skill development will lead to the population in the informal economy transitioning from the so-called unskilled jobs to self-employment. To achieve this goal, the target PIEs were broken into various demographic categories and assigned age and category specific vocational training. Digitized databases, training reports, attendance registers and award certificates were maintained.

Result Area 3: Creation of a knowledge and information base for the training of civil society functionaries working in the informal economy

and government officials for 'two-way linkages between grassroots work and policy level knowledge'. A number of collaborative activities such as research campaigns, policy and advocacy work were planned through the Urban Action School whose course (an intensive 21-day annual course on informality and urbanization) was planned to bring together networks of academics, activists and social workers.

Overall, the proposal is devised as a four-year intervention in the informal economy capitalizing on ActionAid Association's existing work and networks. The proposal is well-structured and clearly articulated. Each of its objectives is in sync with ActionAid Association's overall goals. It aspires to execute a massive action program through a federal approach with its co-applicants. Thanks to ActionAid Association's presence in all the states and cities where the project was supposed to be implemented, the CiRiC team received very strong logistical support and could co-opt the already accumulated social-cultural capital and ActionAid Association and its co-applicant organizations' long enjoyed reputation.

An attempt was made to bring various collectives together in the form of a Working People's Charter to 'leverage on collective bargaining to demand their rights'. In future, the Urban Action School can become an important platform for developing a cadre of development workers in the informal economy.

To summarize, this section discussed the macro-political and economic setting that has played a significant role in enabling and limiting the 'action' proposed and enacted by ActionAid Association/ CiRiC, its allies and partners. It also discussed the salient aspects of the interventions proposed by the them.

Chapter II

A State-wise Analysis of the Engagement with Street Vendors

The role of Citizen Rights Collective (CiRiC) in the engagement with street vendors has been crucial in centrally coordinating this geographically spread out project. The engagement started with a baseline study to understand the situation of the identified sectors within informal workers. This was a good inception strategy as it supported taking an informed position for developing the project intervention. CiRiC is the urban knowledge activist hub of ActionAid Association working with the regional offices, allies and partners involved in the project. It has supported grassroots interventions through cross-learning processes among regions and facilitating the adoption of best practices in them. It has also played a fundamental role in creating awareness on policies and their linkages to street vendors. CiRiC has also contributed to the overall understanding of what social security entails for informal workers through its strong association with the Working People's Charter.

However, one area of improvement is in its involvement in building knowledge regarding street vendors and other urban issues such as the impact of increasing commercial complexes on street vendors, effect of demonetization on street vendors and claiming 2.5 percent of the city's space for vending zones. It also has immense potential to connect grassroots collectives with the larger networks of informal workers.

2.1 Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Region

Hyderabad

Hyderabad is one of contemporary India's mega cities and the number of street vendors in it has been increasing. In term of the target given by ActionAid Association, the organization is moving well and the Andhra

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Pradesh & Telangana Regional Office, located in the city, is also making efforts for promoting and developing an organization of street vendors; 52 collectives in four zones with 3,750 members is a phenomenal number. The regional office is trying to build linkages between these collectives. It has also been able to facilitate 890 street vendors' access to Mudra loans that range between Rs 20,000 and Rs 50,000. It has trained around 1,075 street vendors on improving their incomes. Besides working with street vendors, it is also liaising with anganwadi centres for education of street vendors' children, sulabh complexes for accessing toilets and repairs for electricity in street vendors' residences. Such a comprehensive move will strengthen the workers' claim for a better common future. The regional office also supported three collectives in registering under the Trade Unions Act. This initiative might ultimately enable these collectives to work independently. The regional office needs much more presence in the other cities under its jurisdiction.

Vishakhapatnam

Mahila Action (MA) and the Fishermen's Youth Welfare Association (FYWA) are working with hawkers in the Vishakhapatnam area for their social and financial upliftment. Their work is concentrated in the coastal zones. The organizations are engaged with 2,000 street vendors. Their main task is giving skill training and enrolling street vendors in government schemes like Mudra, schemes of the fishery department and the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM). The organizations showcased their unity during the eviction process and during street vendors' harassment by municipal officers and the police. They also have some welfare schemes for their members.

The organizations have capacity and opportunity to expand their work to the entire Vishakhapatnam area but they have restricted themselves to some areas. It came to the notice of the reviewers that these organizations mostly worked with fisher-folk communities and vendors on the nearby beach.

These activities need to be expanded to include food and vegetable vendors.

2.2 Bihar & Jharkhand Region

Patna

The Bihar & Jharkhand Regional Office, based in Patna, has many focus areas such as street vendors, housing, skill training, homelessness and issues of basic services. It has worked towards building partnerships with likeminded NGOs on issues concerning unorganized workers. It is felt that because of this diversity of focus its work among the street vendors has been affected to some extent. The regional office provides necessary support for skill training and capacity building programs by nurturing collectives of street vendors and facilitating their accessibility to entitlements. It also helps in advocacy through liaisoning with urban local bodies and provides legal support during evictions.

Nidan is a much-acclaimed organization working in Bihar. It has been working with street vendors in Patna and nearby areas for several years. It has a good membership and enjoys a rapport with the administration in Patna. Besides, it also has a good understanding of street vendors' issues. However, despite this the organization remains largely dysfunctional in protecting the rights of street vendors. As is known, several major eviction operations are currently underway in Patna and other cities in Bihar.

The organization conducted a survey of street vendors in 42 urban local bodies (ULBs) in Bihar. It is worth mentioning here that out of the 6,58,463 street vendors who took part in a biometric survey only 20,283 candidatures were approved and 10,769 vendors were issued identity cards. This means only 3 per cent of the hawkers were recognized and a staggering 97 per cent of them were declared illegal. This is shocking given that the street vendors have very strong legislative backing. It appears that the evictions and the survey happening at the same time significantly dented the legitimacy of the organization. Given the scale of the issues and the felt needs of the community the regional office together with Nidan needs to critically review its work and build effective strategies of working with hawkers in Bihar.

2.3 Madhya Pradesh Region

Bhopal and Gwalior

In Madhya Pradesh, Institute of Social Research and Development (ISRD) and Centre for Integrated Development (CID) are working on issues concerning construction workers, domestic workers, street vendors, carpet weavers and bidi workers. With street vendors, they are working in Indore, Jabalpur and Bhopal. Till date, they have formed 14 collectives with a membership of 242 individual units.

A major issue of concern in Madhya Pradesh is that the Street Vendors Act has not been implemented till date. No rules or schemes have been formulated to implement the act. The state government has not even issued a RO or GR to implement the Act. ISRD and CID are working in three of the biggest cities in the state covering almost 50 per cent of the hawkers in Madhya Pradesh. The street vendors' organizations are neither united nor organized in the state. As a consequence, we have disturbing reports of large-scale evictions of street vendors from all parts of Madhya Pradesh.

The organizations are seen to form collectives and gather memberships, but have failed to represent street vendors' voice in various cities. The organizations' focus is on getting maternity benefits, ration cards, food coupons and loans. This arguably is a social approach towards poverty. The organizations need to embrace a well-framed economic and organizational approach to protect and promote street vendors' livelihoods. For this, it also needs to develop a rapport with the local administration and government officers.

2.4 North East India Region

Guwahati

Society for Social Transformation and Environment Protection (sSTEP) started its work with street vendors in 2004. Its work can be divided into three phases.

In the first phase, the focus was on understanding the socioeconomic conditions of street vendors, particularly indigenous women street vendors, and building the base of the organization. In the second phase, it took up an action program against evictions and tried to establish street vendors' rights with the help of street vendors' organizations. In the third phase, the organization extended its work to seven cities in Assam. A survey of street vendors and vending zones and the formation of a TVC were the major focus during this phase. After understanding the Street Vendors Act and its provisions, the organization is working smoothly on street vendors' issues. Now its major task is strengthening the organization.

2.5 North India Region

Delhi

ActionAid Association's North India Regional Office located in Delhi operates with the principle of 'Facilitating to Realize an Equitable, Sustainable and Humane Delhi' (FRESH). The regional office works directly with street vendors' groups. In addition, it has come up with a religious minority (Muslim) front and a women's front to address issues affecting street vendors' identity. This has helped substantially in promoting and strengthening street vendors' organizations in Delhi. The regional office is focusing on leadership and skill development programs and networking and advocacy. Its advocacy, efforts are specifically concentrated on policy interventions with respect to pending bills-amendments and new acts through influencing the relevant institutions, commissions, boards, committees and ministries and legislatures.

Because it is located in Delhi, the regional office has a good opportunity to initiate a multi-pronged dialogue with various branches of state and political governments and various national organizations which can ultimately make it a nodal centre for the implementation of the Street Vendors Act. According to estimates, there are more than 200 street vendors' associations in Delhi which are often in conflictual relations with one another. The internal fights among these organizations hamper coordinated action for the implementation of the Act. The regional office

may take up an initiative to bring these groups to a shared understanding for a common future.

The Hawkers Joint Action Committee (HJAC) works in some parts of Delhi with a strong presence in the eastern part of the city. Its major focus is on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and the implementation of the Street Vendors Act. This organization has played an important role in the formation of town vending committees (TVC) in Delhi. Around 27 TVCs have been formed in Delhi due to a conducive political environment for effective implementation of the Street Vendors Act, 2014.

The Delhi government has limited power in taking major decisions. The situation is fraught with multiple power centres and various layers of the government ranging from the central government to civic corporations. Due to conflicts among these power centres, TVCs' operations are often disturbed. HJAC has limited its work to street vendors. Delhi does not have a dearth of street vendors' organizations. However, these organizations are not in conversation with one another. Hence, HJAC can become a platform for street vendors' organizations to fight for street vendors' rights and working on common agendas.

2.6 West Bengal Region

Kolkata

The city of Kolkata is the historic nerve centre of the hawkers' struggle. However, despite this, it is yet to see the implementation of the Street Vendors Act. However, because of the scale of unionization in Kolkata, the city has witnessed a smaller number of evictions as compared to other metro cities in the last couple of decades.

The West Bengal Regional Office, located in Kolkata has been working with hawkers in the city for the last three years. Considering Kolkata's history and support for the city level network, there is an opportunity to develop on its work in this sector. The model of intervention adopted by the regional office is apt. It initiates building of hawkers' collectives to negotiate and liaison with the city administration against bribes that

the hawkers have to pay. The collectives also settle disputes within themselves and other informal groups on the pavement. In Kolkata and in West Bengal, there are many women hawkers. However, based on ActionAid Association's field observations, all the hawkers' unions are typically led by men who fail to recognize women's potential in leadership. The regional office may take up a much-needed initiative to empower women and catalyze the formation of women's collectives.

The Calcutta Samaritans (TCS) started working with street vendors in 2015. So far it has 10 collectives with 302 members. The focus of its work is on woman street vendors. Initially, it did a small research in this field to map the market and to come up with a baseline survey; it also did a focus group discussion (FGD). After this, the organization selected the most marginalized areas to form the collectives.

The organization is very new in its work with street vendors and hence lacks knowledge about street vendors and the Street Vendors Act and its provisions. However, the commitment and willingness of the organization to work with street vendors is highly appreciable. There is need for the organization to work closely with the already established street vendors' unions in the city. Unlike many cities, Kolkata does not lack unions/associations of street vendors.

Chapter III

Close Look at the Engagement With Street Vendors in Delhi and Vishakhapatnam

3.1 Choosing Sites

One of the components of review on which this document is based was the conducting multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in select cities. After considering all the presentations by members of a highly heterogeneous team of activists and colleagues at a workshop in Kolkata in August 2018, and having discussed the issues with ActionAid Association/CiRiC functionaries, the reviewers decided to conduct ethnographic surveys in Delhi and Visakhapatnam. They spent two days in each city to try to understand the implementation of the proposed actions in three result areas of the project. ActionAid Association's North India Regional Offices in Delhi and Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Regional Office in Hyderabad, along with local partners were in overall coordination in the logistical aspects of the field visits. The reviewers were able to visit and interview various stakeholders including the primary subject population of the project, NGO colleagues of various descriptions, community mobilizers and municipal officials directly in-charge of urban planning and regulation of street vending. As keen observers of the political economy of urban regimes in contemporary India, the reviewers found this ethnographic consultation productive and enlightening.

Needless to say, their choice of the two cities for intense fieldwork was informed by a reasoned understanding of the ways in which urban transformations are taking shape in contemporary India. Delhi was chosen not just because it is now at the heart of rural-urban migration and capital investments in the spatial recycling of the city. Rather, it was chosen to understand the challenges that an administrative and

territorial scramble between multiple levels of state government and the centre can pose for the urban poor.

Visakhapatnam presents a different and at times contrary picture. In this city, more than rural-urban and inter-regional migration, it is the phenomenon of occupational switching among street vendors that is of prime sociological importance. If Delhi represents the power of being the administrative centre of the country, Visakhapatnam represents the promise of a second tier city which will witness the most profound transformation in the coming decades. Taken together, these two cities represent two very specific impulses of urbanization and poverty and give us valuable clues in understanding the political economy of urban informality.

3.2 Fieldwork in Delhi

The two-day fieldwork in Delhi occurred on 7-8 September, 2018. It started in ActionAid Association's regional office where a staff member gave the reviewer's a brief overview of the progress of work among street vendors and directed them to the office of its key partner organization, the Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH) in East Delhi. Subsequently, three EFRAH functionaries gave a detailed account of the various aspects of its work- in-progress and shared the documents and records to demonstrate how it had organized 23 market-based street vendors' groups in the project area under the Hawkers Joint Action Committee (HJAC) along with a women's and a minority front. In subsequent discussions with TVCs' members from three zones in the city, the reviewers started getting a sense of the modalities of HJAC's operations in supporting street vendors, in accessing social security schemes, acquiring skills and forming networks with other sectoral organizations. Later, EFRAH functionaries took the reviewers to eight markets in East Delhi and gave them a chance to interact with street vendors. Reviewers were also supposed to meet a key municipal official. However, this plan was dropped as it was felt they needed to have a better understanding of the nature of advocacy that this organization has done in the last three years before they could make use of the opportunity

to interview a government official. The Government official interviewed later on 4th October, 2018.

3.2.1 The Historical Setting of Street Vending in Delhi

Delhi's street vendors caught the attention of the authorities at the time of the refugee influx following Partition and Independence. The Delhi Municipal Corporation Act, 1957 made provisions for licensing (tehbazari) of street vendors. In 1965, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) set up the Gadgil Committee to rehabilitate refugees as street vendors (Kumar and Akhtar, 2015). Subsequently, in 1971, 1982, 1992 and 2001 applications were invited from street vendors for tehbazari, but in each case only a very restricted number of vendors were given vending licenses. In 1992, for instance, from 84,000 applicants only 5,000 were considered eligible for licensing. Similarly, in 2001, of the 17,000 applicants only 500 were given licenses. The regime of selective licensing thrived on ambiguities about procedural aspects (such as determining a bench-mark/cut off year) of legalization and created a space for rent seeking and predatory behaviour in the lower rungs of the municipal and police bureaucracy. Moreover, often the licensed street vendors proved to be effective instruments for checking fresh entries of street vendors in their areas. The battle between these two groups often resulted in eviction drives that ended up in courts.

Currently, the TVCs have become new sites of contestation between these two groups. In the last two decades, many tehbazari holders have expanded their businesses and established many shops in one name. The new enumerative drives undertaken by the TVCs have endangered the old privilege of tehbazari holders. During fieldwork, interlocutors at HJAC were very anxious to hear the outcome of a court case related to this conflict.

Usually, evictions in Delhi have a continuous, low intensity, latent and everyday presence. As the capital, Delhi is more surveillant about encroachments in public spaces than cities like Kolkata and Mumbai that have witnessed more organized encroachments of public space in

post-colonial decades. Eviction operations in Delhi never assumed the feature and magnitude of eviction operations in Mumbai and Kolkata in the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, Delhi also lacks a consolidated memory of a very spectacular eviction against which street vendors united and fought back. Often the eviction drives were prompted by established retailers and RWAs. At times, established street vendors are not too unhappy about a low intensity eviction drive as police action thins out competition from the more unsettled and new street vendors in the area. While hawkers are generally seen to be cooperative with one another the veterans at times feel a bit unsettled with a lot of new entrants. Police action in an area impacts the new entrants with more severity than the experienced lot. A number of newcomers exit the market as they are not able to withstand the shock of confiscations and demolitions.

Unlike Kolkata and Mumbai, street vendors' unionization in Delhi did not witness the significant presence of central trade unions. In their absence, various activist NGOs took part in the collectivization of street vendors. In the course of fieldwork for this project the reviewer's came in close touch with HJAC that has been successfully operating in many markets in Delhi with its central political base in East Delhi. It was founded in 2013 through DFID-IPAF funding. In April 2013, HJAC decided to form women and minority fronts of hawkers. Training was provided to their leaders. Both the fronts became strong arms of HJAC and it started negotiating with policymakers and the implementing agencies (primarily MCD). The social infrastructure of action that HJAC established proved to be very effective when it was inducted into the current project.

3.2.2 A Review and Reflection on the Work of Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health

The Empowerment for Rehabilitation Academic & Health (EFRAH) is an NGO that started its journey in 1999 with an explicit interest and expertise in the fields of education (advocating the right to education), livelihoods (SHG formation, micro-finance, placement of students through vocational training), health (especially reproductive and child health awareness and HIV/AIDS prevention among sex workers and

migrant workers) and rights (child rights, domestic violence and sexual harassment related advocacy). The organization has a strong presence in various areas of Delhi such as Madanpur Khadar, JJ Colony, Ali Vihar, Okhla, Sangam Vihar, Tughlakabad Extension, Shaheen Bagh, Batla House, MCD schools in the West zone and also in Uttar Pradesh, especially in Auraiyah and Etawah districts.

EFRAH is currently supporting HJAC under the EC-PIE project to organize street vendors and disseminate necessary skillsets to the street vendors and their family members. Between 2015 and 2018, HJAC-EFRAH enabled 29 street vendors' collectives with 356 members. During a field visit to these collectives the reviewers found that the initiative has been successful in building a well-informed cadre base which is well versed with the post-SVA legal landscape. HJAC-EFRAH has been successful in placing these community leaders in various TVCs. Their presence in TVCs in fact outnumbers the more established organizations such as the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) and the National Hawkers Federation (NHF). In the recently concluded TVC elections in Delhi, more than 70 street vendors associated with various collectives with HJAC got elected.

In the field of advocacy with the state government and municipal corporations too HJAC-EFRAH has proved its excellence. In fact, it pressurized the government to change the Street Vendors Rules thrice to make them close to SVA's letter and spirit. This is something that the reviewers also heard in Delhi's bureaucratic circles in an independent inquiry. It is also important to mention here that the Delhi Rules (2018) can be a template for rules in other states as, for instance, the Delhi Rules ensure the best possible representation of TVC members in decision-making about street vendors.

Another major initiative of HJAC-EFRAH under the EC-PIE project was conducting a sustained outreach campaign to connect hawkers with the community at large including the upper middle class—a section of society that is often touted as being anti-street vending. The campaign 'Community4Hawkers' was able to generate an audience of 150,000.

In our view, this is a very significant initiative for fighting negative media campaigns on hawkers. This drive holds special merit in a city like Delhi, where RWAs control much of the residential and neighbourhood land and have been the central force in determining who can use land in their territories and for what purpose. For instance, the reviewers came across a number of upper middle-class colonies where RWAs have set up regular street vendors' markets to procure fresh fruits and vegetables. There are instances of providing vending licenses certified by RWAs to a certain stipulated number of individuals who can vend within the territory of that RWA. An outreach campaign with residents and pedestrians can build solidarities which can be used for resisting extortions and evictions.

3.2.3 Way Ahead in Delhi

In interactions with street vendors in Delhi the reviewers found that it was a common practice among street vendors to employ workers on wages from outside their immediate and extended families. This in fact is a constitutive feature of street vending in many cities. In 1992, a socioeconomic survey of the hawkers in Kolkata (Dasgupta, 1992) found that there was a mismatch between the number of hawkers on the sidewalks and the number of stalls. It was then found that the stalls kept two to six persons employed. This revealed the existence of a sizeable section of laborers in the sector whom the 'owner' hawkers employed. When the reviewers started research on hawkers in Kolkata in 2006 they found that there existed an employment cycle in the sector. During two festive seasons (one during the Pujas between August and November, and the other during the Chaitra Sankranti/ Bengali new year between April and May) the hawkers tended to employ a significant number of laborers, especially in stalls selling garments to attract and manage buyers through an aggressive and competitive use of 'lung power'. The reviewers also found that a significant portion of these laborers were not related to the owner hawkers through blood and family relations, which implied the existence of a wage relation among those who were selling on the sidewalk. The stalls hardly appeared to be an extension of the hawkers' 'family enterprises' leading to a collapse in the number of employers and employees in the figures for hawkers.

The reviewers also found that the wage earners among hawkers were counted when the union gave a count of its members. However, they disappeared in the organizational structure of the union. The union appeared to be a cartel of employer hawkers that aggregated thousands of petty employers and sellers who functioned in the competitive market and operated in the governmental space. SVA excludes them when it defines a street vendor as an individual who can legally transfer her/his vending license only to a family member. The law further asserts that if a hawker makes use of another person's labor, then that person should be related to him/her by blood or by marriage. This is where, the enterprise of the union, the state and the academic arrive at a consensus. The consensus is that in the 'informal' economy while wage relations and profit motive are not irrelevant they do not play a dominant role (Chatterjee, 2004). SVA creates a norm out of this agreement which de-recognizes wage workers in this sector. This makes it difficult for wage workers among hawkers to claim their 'right to have rights'.

EFRAH-HJAC, or for that matter any trade union, has so far not raised any voice to acknowledge their existence either. Perhaps this is one of many 'constitutive exclusions' of the current project. The success of HJAC in pursuing radical democratic politics will depend on how it addresses their discursive frontiers and the issues of wage relations (as very often the hawkers recruit labor), profitability, accumulation and scale as street hawking is increasingly being subjected to an anonymous market process. The reviewers are convinced that an exclusive focus on livelihood is no longer enough to follow the forms of association that the hawkers are now forced to establish. It is important for HJAC to start thinking of organizing the wage-working population among the hawkers. This is an area which has remained completely untouched by the more established and large-scale associations such as the NHF and NASVI.²

3.3 Fieldwork in Visakhapatnam

The logistical aspects of the fieldwork in Visakhapatnam were similar to those in Delhi. The reviewers visited Visakhapatnam on 14-15 September,

2. Based on Reviewers' experience and field visit for seeing EFRAH's work.

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2018, and were accompanied by CiRiC member who gave them an idea of the complex and unique organizational aspects of the project. The project is under the overall administrative control of ActionAid Association's Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Regional Office that works closely with two local NGOs -- Mahila Action (MA) and Fishermen Youth Welfare Association (FYWA), both organizations with stellar records in working with the marginalized sections of the city's population. The tour officially commenced in FYWA's office with an introduction to the organizational and field dynamics in the city by ActionAid Association's regional manager. During this interaction the reviewer's came to know that FRWA's sustained work in the field has resulted in the formation of 52 groups of street vendors with around 4,000 members covering 30 slums in the city. That apart, coordinated action by these organizations has resulted in the formation of three registered street vendors' unions. The reviewers learned that a considerable amount of work is done in enabling the street vendors to access government schemes such as Mudra loans and the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) housing scheme. MA and FRWA appear to have supported the group to successfully lobby for anganwadi centres, sulabh complexes, private toilets and voter identity and ration cards.

Subsequently, three field sites were visited -- the iconic RK Beach street vending zone (here, the FRWA successfully lobbied with the city corporation and political functionaries to reinstate street vendors as legally recognized entities), Rushikonda Beach and the Chepel Timmapuram Cooperative Society (run by a group of fisher-women) -- and stock of the situation was taken. For instance, the process of forming highly successful community organizations was tracked and examined to issue of common assets and certain issues of concern were examined that very specific to the history of this particular city which is undergoing a process of renewal following the partition of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. The long-drawn processes of regime change, climate change (leading to occupational migration) and the political economy of tourism along with the physical unfolding of the 'smart city' mission have interfaced to offer new challenges to the processes of collectivization, skill development and an articulation of the poor's right to the city.

The fieldwork in the labyrinth of the city's municipal bureaucracy remained instructive in understanding the spatial translation of the smart city which includes an ambitious renewal of the sea front which is bound to impact the livelihoods of various poorer sections of the population.

3.3.1 Significant Aspects of the Fieldwork in Visakhapatnam

1. Corporatization of fishing: A number of respondents in Rushikonda Beach and in Chepel Timmapuram Cooperative Society mentioned the declining availability of fish in the sea. Further questioning through light on how big corporate fishing trawlers create a wall beyond 12 nautical miles in the sea where the fishing communities have recognized usufructuary rights over resources. The magnitude of the corporate network is so deeply entrenched that fishing nearer the seashore has become economically unviable.
2. Sea-water pollution: The city has a number of pharmaceutical and other factories that regularly release industrial waste into the sea making floral life in the vicinity unviable.
3. Changing olfactory sensibilities: As Visakhapatnam embraced tourism over and above its traditional business activities, the smell of fish (especially fish being processed in the open for frying) started being looked at as a veritable nuisance in middle class urban life. A number of fishing communities were thrown out of the more lucrative beaches to remote margins of the city. The beautification of the iconic RK Beach area, for instance, led to the displacement of the community which the reviewers earlier encountered in Chepel Timmapuram (in the early and mid-1980s). As tourism finds its new frontier in this area, the same community is again at the brink of evictions and elimination.
4. Occupational migration: As fishing becomes difficult for indigenous communities who, for generations, sustained their livelihood from fishing, they have started searching for new occupations. A group

of fish vendors have moved from the fishing business to tourism induced services. In many settlements outside the city, market and capitalist relationships have progressed through tourism.

5. FYWA was found to be extremely productive in enabling the formation of cooperatives among indigenous fishing women. The Chepel Timmapuram experience can become a model for other city groups under this project. If CiRiC takes up the formation of cooperatives as a logical step forward in collectivization, then here is a model that they can definitely learn from and promote.

3.3.2 Way Forward in Visakhapatnam

The Visakhapatnam case stands in stark contrast to Delhi in terms of its handling of the changing legal provisions after the passage of SVA. The reviewers were surprised to see lack of understanding about the legal landscape even among some of the senior-most functionaries of the co-applicant organization. For instance, the collectives did not know that the State Rules have been drafted as have the clauses which violate the essence and spirit of the Act. As a consequence, the state government and the city corporation have imposed a rule which is least consistent with SVA's spirit. Experience in Delhi showed that bringing out State Rules in favor of street vendors is a much-negotiated process in which vendors' collectives and unions should have a major role to play. The key functionaries in Visakhapatnam were well-connected to the municipal administration, but unlike the Delhi group, they had very little say at the level of the state government. This is a major lacuna and it requires to be addressed immediately. In fact, this might be a general scenario in many second-tier cities, where the state government is represented by local and district-level regime functionaries. Therefore, advocacy at the level of the government in smaller cities has to be evaluated using a different set of parameters. Incidentally, these are also the cities that are witnessing major infrastructural revolutions and expansion leading to violent evictions of marginalized communities.

Some of the second-tier cities are also the sites of new identarian movements (for instance, the geography of the new quota movements in

India). Research in cities in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana suggests a major switch of the old rich farmer capital in the hinterlands to the urban real estate market, some of which is invested in fueling these movements along with funding local election campaigns. Therefore, those who are organizing the poorer social classes in these cities need to analyze the conditions that exist there.

To summarize, this section discussed the ethnographic findings in Delhi and Visakhapatnam. It executed a framework that could be called a 'trans-city interrogation' to do a comparative analysis of the two.

Chapter IV

Recommendations

4.1 Direct Interventions

1. The Street Vendors Act, 2014 is a powerful weapon for protecting the livelihoods of street vendors. ActionAid Association has good opportunities in six states for developing and promoting organizations of street vendors with support from local partners.
2. The Street Vendors Act makes legal provisions for allocating 2.5 percent of the space in a city for street vending. In this context, ActionAid Association can push city planners and municipal authorities to opt for inclusive city planning.
3. Considering the daily turnover of street vendors it seems feasible to develop inclusive credit societies in this sector. These will be a good platform for street vendors for daily savings, deposits and loans.
4. Street Vending Act (SVA) is one of the most powerful weapons for street vendors. Unfortunately, 90 percent of the street vendors are not aware of the Act and its provisions. ActionAid Association can come up with supporting material in vernacular languages for education at a large scale. Only educated street vendors can make an argument in TVC meetings in favour of street vending.
5. Most of the times even the system is not aware of SVA's provisions, the Supreme Court's judgments and other rules and schemes. To generate awareness and for garnering positive support, it is very important to undertake training of local NGOs, civil societies, police, municipal officers and political representatives.

4.2 Policy advocacy

1. Most of the states do not have rules and schemes to implement SVA. The regional offices should simultaneously follow a coordinated approach to campaign for such initiatives.
2. Almost all the surveys conducted by municipalities on street vendors are methodologically flawed. The surveys do not even cover one-third of the existing hawkers. According to the Act and as per the Supreme Court judgment all existing hawkers should be accommodated. This is a huge gap between the Act and ULB action. This gap needs to be addressed with utmost sincerity.
3. Space is arguably the most important part of a street vendor's occupation. Only the elected TVC has the power to finalize the street vending/non-vending zones within its jurisdiction. However, municipal authorities are seen to bypass the law. It is often seen that major decisions are taken by municipal commissioners in the absence of an elected TVC. This becomes a challenge and we need strong advocacy in this field.

4.3 Capacity Building and Skill Training

1. An elected town vending committee (TVC) is the main decision-making body. Municipal and police commissioners and powerful government officers are members of a TVC. Knowledge, capacity, communication skills and leadership need to be developed among street vendors who are members of a TVC.
2. Training of the functionaries of partner organizations as well as ActionAid Association's regional and state level officers on matters of street vendors is deemed necessary.

4.4 Networking and sharing

For better implementation of SVA, there is a need to develop city, state and national level networks. City level networks can be used for

interacting with government officers, resolving internal street vendors' issues within cities and working as a support system for vendors if there is an eviction. State-level networks can be deployed to pressurize the government to make better rules and schemes for street vendors. In addition, such networks can advocate for more fund allocations for social security, health and education benefits and provisions for skill training to upgrade street vendors' businesses. At the national level, the basic need is building a wider support system, providing more information on the Act and court judgments, organizing capacity building programs and providing a platform for sharing innovative ideas and ensuring a national presence for state and city level activities. NHF is the best platform to join in for the national network. Importantly, it is run by actual trade unions and grassroots hawkers' leaders who have made their mark and have a presence in 28 states and in almost 165 cities in the country.

4.5 Overall Recommendations

First, the problem of any decentralized and horizontal initiative of working with several co-applicants is that there can often be lack of political and ideological synergy among the groups. Across the intervention the reviewers did not come across any attempts to resolve/address latent ideological differences. Each co-applicant is supposed to work with several grassroots organizations. Can there be a centralized effort to streamline differences without marginalizing certain views? In the limited interactions with various groups in different cities, the reviewers found that there are groups and individuals who have successfully mobilized informal workers on the legal path, while there are also other groups who appear to be upholding self-development and constructive work without bothering too much with legal issues concerning their rights. Ultimately, the project tends to become an aggregation of various localized initiatives guided by different principles of action.

It might prove difficult to accommodate heterogeneous outcomes within a single qualitative framework. It is possible to bring local performances together when there is a tabular representation of certain numbers (such as x number of collectives have been formed in Patna as opposed to

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x-1 collectives in Kolkata). However, if one goes deeper and wishes to grade the collectives' comparative performances in qualitative terms (such as the value system that each collective represents) it might be very difficult within the existing mechanism.

A probable way out will have to come up with precise and well-regimented definitions of certain categories such as 'collectivization' and 'skill' generation—a concern clearly raised in the mid-term review of the project, which states '...the proposal does not define collectivization and its expected manifestation in the Indian context, where collectivization of PIEs and trade union linked activism is not a new phenomenon (p.5: related to Result Area 1) ...the gaps in conceptualization of this skill development initiative has resulted in budget allocation gaps...' (p.6: related to Result Area 2).

Second, a decentralized approach to social action does not automatically lead to bottom-up outcomes that could be called 'empowerment'. In fact many of the crucial decisions are still taken on behalf of the workers' collectives. This might be an issue that can potentially make the impact superficial once the project ends. The grassroots organizations need to evolve their own ways of navigating developmental challenges. To this effect, community mobilizers need to be more attentive to the contingent nature of power and authority at work in the community in question. Often, it can be seen that substantial decision-making powers reside in the hands of men (in women's collectives) and dominant caste representatives (if the collective is caste heterogenous in its demographic constitution).

Third a more coordinated approach is required in gathering, processing, archiving and analyzing the data from various fields to create new configurations of a knowledge geography. The richness and scale of this project is impressive. The processed data will definitely contribute to the creation of new knowledge in the development sector. In this, there is a need to establish a more long-term association with academics, planners, architects and development practitioners in the development sector who anyway contribute to the Urban Action School. How, for

instance, are we to measure the contribution of street vendors in making cities livable for the poor? Is it really possible to come up with a platform of understanding across a commodity supply-chain—consider, for instance, the possibility of a national-level coordination committee for farmers and urban street vendors. In other words, can we think of a new horizon of trade unionism that will spread across a particular chain of interdependencies and consolidate the shared concerns? Can there be a joint march of farmers and hawkers in Delhi? What are the ways in which the complex interdependencies of various players in the informal economy in everyday life can be translated into a durable political vocabulary?

It is also important that we learn from the situated knowledge of the communities that we are working with and addressing various developmental challenges from the ways in which these communities have historically negotiated these social transformations. Such an approach is often nipped in the bud when we approach these communities with an already formulated package and become too keen to empower them with a set of skills. A more democratic and sustainable approach is identifying and developing areas in which mutual learning can happen. Needless to say, this is squarely related to the first two points.

Fourth, the local project teams may find it worth their while to be in touch with other community organizations and NGOs working in the fields of public health, sanitation and basic education. The extent of the deepening of democracy and sustainability of economic opportunities depends crucially on the existing social infrastructure that is available and accessible to a community. A centralized initiative in this direction will be welcome.

Fifth greater orientation is needed towards larger policy changes in the government and the market. An understanding of the unfolding of corporate retail (especially E-commerce. A number of street vendors complained that E-commerce had substantially reduced their customer-base), GST and demonetization in the informal economy was found lacking. A certain section of the team can be invested with the charge to

link the project with the changing policy scenario from time to time (See Appendices).

Sixth, there is a need for different city-based teams to visit other cities and share their experiences with the host team and solve certain problems that the host team is facing. If, for instance, the Delhi or the Kolkata team is good at addressing legal issues of street vending following the passage of SVA, they might be sent to Visakhapatnam where such activism has not taken root. In other words, there should be more internal mobility and sharing of experiences among the local teams that move beyond occasional workshops.

Seventh, it is time for CiRiC/ActionAid Association to take note of the public outreach program undertaken by the Delhi group. This program can be funded further and be given the form of a robust country-wide social audit to measure street vendors' contributions in the making of the urban economy. If accomplished, this survey will be one of its kind in the domain of knowledge and development interventions on a national scale. Academics in various universities in the project areas can be productively roped in for this endeavor with the overall methodological framework of trans-city interrogation as elaborated in this review and reflection. This will also have the potential to unite all the three result areas into a single overarching perspective.

Overall, the project is well framed. Several well-trained and ideologically driven individuals are in charge of various activities; this ensures a very honest execution of various schemes under the project. In fact, in some instances the co-applicant organizations have exceeded the limits of the project using the limited resources that the project provided. Nevertheless, it still requires: a) a qualitative optic for a comparative analysis of action in disparate locations, b) a transformative vision to go beyond catching up with the limited governmental and market opportunities for the population that it serves, and c) a more eclectic view of knowledge and its preservation—one needs to trace where the world of skills ends and knowledge begins.

Table 1: General conclusions and recommendations (according to priority)

Report Chapter	Priority Points	Conclusion	Term (Long/Mid/Short)	Recommendation
	Permanent empowerment of grassroots organizations	In most of the cases, this is not being done. The ActionAid Association-CiRiC team is seen to support critical decision making especially when it involves interaction with the bureaucracy and judiciary	Short	Members of grassroots initiatives should be encouraged to interact with the bureaucracy directly
	Definitional ambiguities in CiRiC documents	More clarity needed	Mid-term (this will be important when you compose the final report)	Ask team members in various cities to develop an understanding of terms and then develop an interpersonally sharable understanding
	Lack of a central framework	More clarity needed	Long-term, in case you wish to further this work	A workshop with academics and team members after the conclusion of the project might be helpful
	Scope for more research in this field using the existing networks	The informal economy demands more situated and comparative research. A survey of the impact of demonetization and E-commerce might be the need of the hour	Short-term/ Long-term	Some money from the existing project can be saved to create a seed fund for this research. This could be a complementary initiative
	An acquaintance with larger governmental policies and market trends affecting the informal economy	The project team needs to be oriented towards larger policy changes in the government and the market	Short-term	Project team members may be encouraged to keep themselves updated. They may be asked to read journals such as EPW. Some funds may be earmarked for organizing periodic workshops to orient the members

Appendices

Appendix 1

A Theoretical Framework to Understand the Contribution of the Informal Economy to Capitalist Development

**Analysis developed by
Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay**

How to situate and explain the informal economy in the context of global capitalism? Making a sharp distinction between capital and capitalism, economist Kalyan Sanyal says that the latter is a combination of both capitalist and non-capitalist elements—a 'differentiated unity' that he calls the 'capital-non-capital complex'—a complex co-existence of various forms of corporate and non-corporate capital along with popular sovereignty and electoral democracy. Let us first identify various circuits that co-exist within capitalism and then explain how influential non-governmental bodies such as the ActionAid Association/CiRiC and their local associates contribute to the management of this system. Let us assume that money is represented by M and commodity is represented by C.

Let us now explain the theoretical insights mentioned earlier through some real-life instances. Circuit 1 (C-M-C): A farmer goes to the marketplace with her/his product and sells it and uses the entire money to buy a pair of shoes and clothes to use these commodities in her/his everyday life. She/he does not buy these commodities to sell them again with a profit margin. Here, money is just a mediator for exchange. In short, the farmer is selling to buy. The artisan who is selling a pair of shoes to her/him is also performing the same task.

Circuit 2 (M-C-M'): A trader enters Circuit 1 with some money and begins to make the relation between the farmer and the artisan in

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Sl. No.	Sectors (need to find a better term)	Dominant Attributes	Representation
1	Petty Commodity Production	'Sell in order to buy', yet to get embedded in the circulation of money, pre-capitalist order of things	C-M-C: Note: use value at both the ends of the circuit
2	Accumulation of the Merchant's Capital	'Buy in order to sell' (the flipside of 1), source of accumulation lies in circulation, profit is derived from unequal exchange—exploitation of labor is not a source of profit	M-C-M' (where, M'-M>0): Note: circuit begins with money and ends with more money
3	Accumulation of Industrial Capital	Labor becomes a commodity, unpaid labor time over and above socially necessary labor time is the source of surplus value	M-C-C'-M'-C'-C''-M''... yellow zone represents the industrial labor process
4	Informal Economy under the Hegemony of Industrial and Finance Capital	Petty commodity production is monetized through small credit such as micro-finance, the non-accumulation economy—producing petty surplus within a capitalist economy	M-C-C'-M' (M'-M, M), M-C-C'-M'-M-C-C'-M'...: Labor surplus within the household, surplus through self-exploitation
5	Corporate Retail/Wal-Mart (ism)	Merchant capital is reinvented as giant retail networks operating through Toyotist principles. More emphasis on shortening turnover time. Synchronization of intermodal transportation of goods becomes its central mode of operations	M-C-C'-M'-C'-C''-M'' ... C-C' takes place in diverse local situations controlled by Wal-Mart using information technology (to be discussed in class using Tsing's piece). M-M' is more important for it

Derived from Marx 1971 (chapter 4) and Sanyal 2007 (chapters 3, 5).

Circuit 1 indirect. The trader's purpose is to make more money out of the circulation of commodities. In other words, she/he buys in order to sell and thus a reversal takes place between Circuits 1 and 2.

Circuit 3 (M-C-C'-M'-C'-C''-M''...): A more complex circuit with elements of both production (Circuit 1) and circulation (Circuit 2) being reinvented in the context of capital accumulation. In this, a capitalist buys a commodity (say raw jute) and then employs workers (labor power or C) in the factory along with machinery (say a jute mill) to transform labor power into C' within the sphere of production which gives him more money or surplus. The source of this higher margin is the labor power of the workers, a part of which always remains un-remunerated. A section

of this surplus goes to the capitalist's self-upkeep and the upkeep of her machinery (which depreciates in the transformation of C-C'). Another part of the surplus is injected into the circuit for its expanded reproduction. This is how profit-making corporations work. Expanded reproduction of capital is the motive of corporate capital. In Circuit 3, money remains confined to circulation and in Circuit 3, money is pumped into the realm of production.

Circuit 4 (M-C-C'-M' [M'-M=M], M-C-C'_M'...): Now, let us see what happens with the people in the informal economy. In his provocative analysis, Kalyan Sanyal (2007) suggests that in this circuit, a player begins with an initial stock M with which she buys means of labor, C and adds value to it through self-labor or by inviting the labor power of kin and family members and produces C' which in turn gives her M'. Out of M', she uses M to re-do the circuit and uses the surplus to buy commodities to eke out a living. In short, she cannot translate the enhanced stock into the expansion of the circuit. This is where her role differs from a capitalist whom we met in Circuit 3. 'Here,' continues Sanyal, 'the purpose of production is consumption for the satisfaction of need, although production and consumption are both mediated by the circuit of money. Production is undertaken with the goal of obtaining money to purchase a consumption basket, and the money obtained must also be enough to replace the initial stock so that the activity can be self-reproducing' (2007: 212). Put in simple terms, a typical player in the informal economy keeps her initial stock intact and satisfies her needs by using the surplus.³ If, for instance, I am a player in the informal economy, I will take all measures to keep my enterprise's size intact. Typically, I will not be able to reproduce my enterprise at an expanded scale as the TATAs or Ambanis do in Circuit 3. My surplus comes from my own work as a laborer in the enterprise and from the unpaid-labor of my partner, siblings, kids and other kinsmen. At times, I do employ workers, but this might not be a round-the-year feature of my enterprise.

3. The flow of cash is central in this circuit and (as we will see in Appendix 12) hence demonetization affected them dearly. In the course of demonetization, the initial stock got depleted (M-x=m) and hence the self-reproducing character of many enterprises got severely affected.

Because of self-exploitation and unpaid family labor that goes into the transformation of a commodity, I can keep the commodity price low.

Sanyal appears to suggest that all these circuits in various combinations co-exist to make up the capitalist system. Circuit 4, for instance, is required for Circuits 2, 3 and 5 to keep higher margins of profit. In this, Circuit 4 enables the supply of ancillary materials at a comparatively lower price (produced in various contexts including households) and also provides basic commodities to the workers in Circuits 2, 3 and 5 at a considerably lower price, which in turn enables the corporate sector to maintain workers at lower wages. In short, Circuit 4 socially subsidizes Circuits 2,3 and 5 and hence its presence in capitalism becomes an imperative. To cite an instance of the transfer of a social subsidy to the other sectors of the economy, in the early 1990s, the All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health conducted a survey on the street food sector in Kolkata (Chakravarty and Canet, 1992). The survey was carried out on 911 consumers from various important commercial areas and transit points, of whom a staggering 80 percent were men and the rest women earning between Rs 250 and Rs 10,000 (at that point, USD 1= Rs 30). The survey further revealed that in some of the prominent business districts of central Kolkata about 75 percent office goers obtained at least part of their mid-day meal from street vendors. The survey also considered the nutritional value of some of the most consumed food items and found that the street food 'may be the least expensive means of obtaining a nutritionally balanced meal outside the home, provided the consumer is informed and able to choose the proper combination of food.' During the period of this survey, Rs 1 could buy approximately 200 kilocalories with a protein content of 25 kilocalories. The street vendors thus offered a range of services to the city dwellers at a remarkably low cost and thereby enabled the city to renew its own conditions of living. The bazaar beneath the mall did not pertain to the moment of transition from pre-capital to capital. Nor was it an initial condition which capital transformed. Rather, contemporary capitalism is a world of difference and heterogeneity in which the corporate economy lives in a harmonious relation with other forms of capital.

More often than not, there are also instances of inevitable conflicts between different circuits (for instance, the conflict between corporate retail and small-scale, petty retail in Indian cities) that governments and political systems have to contain within a limit for capitalist development. Capital accumulation in other circuits (see the table) results in growing dispossession of people in agriculture and petty-commodity sectors. Political consensus has emerged in the last three decades or so that such a dispossessed population (often crowding the cities as distress migrants) needs to be provided with certain basic conditions of livelihood for social reproduction and that if the governments fail to address the phenomenon of continuous dispossession associated with capital accumulation some other bodies such as international organizations or NGOs must accomplish the task of managing dispossessed population groups in the non-corporate/informal sector (Circuit 4) by enabling them to avail certain existing social security schemes and attain certain skill sets to swim in troubled waters.

Being electorally numerous, these groups are often seen to demand concessions from the government as a matter of right to livelihood in the city. They place such claims not as a matter of rule, but as acceptable exceptions to the rule of property. At the time of competitive electoral mobilization in cities such claims define the terms on which these groups are considered parties to governmental negotiations (Chatterjee, 2004, 2008, 2011). In doing so, they periodically sidestep the bourgeois law of property, and appropriate infrastructure, and make infrastructure the focus of a collective existence (Mitchell, 2014; Bandyopadhyay, 2017).

The prominence of the urban poor in the electoral process is part of a larger consensus on the evolution of political history in post-colonial India. The standard historical explanation is that there existed bipolarity in the pre-Emergency era between the governing elite, divided into several corporations sharing the power of the state, and the mass of vanguard labor. In social life, nationalism still had the currency to mobilize votes in favor of a self-sacrificing leader. The Emergency broke the oligopoly of the governing class and concentrated power in a particular corporation. This was Indira Gandhi's betrayal, which was responded to vehemently

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by political parties from the Left and the Janata Party cluster through endless regional formations. This process dissolved the old vanguard labor, destroyed its polarizing function and ultimately reconfigured the existing relation between the party and the trade union. All this happened through a spectacular expansion of biopolitical-governmental technologies in the social body which also provided a rich field for the fledging NGO revolution for managing poverty. This is the historical and material context in which the project under review undertaken by the CiRiC/ActionAid Association is situated.

Appendix 2

An Account of a Mass Outreach Drive by Hawker Sangram Committee in Kolkata

Study done by Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay

In the mid-1990s the 'hawker problem' surfaced prominently in coverage by the print media. One reason for a flurry of reports on hawkers was also that from the 1990s both English and vernacular newspapers started publishing special sections on the city and its everyday life. The center stage of news started decisively shifting to urban areas. Aniruddha Dutta (2007) analyzed such news content with consummate skill. Through an analysis of the sensational titles and content of news on hawkers in the early 2000s, Dutta shows how such reports tended to draw sharp lines between 'the citizen and non-citizen, civic order and disorder, and the legitimate and the illegitimate.' Dutta continues to show how the local English print media constructed a sharply distinct opposition between the right-bearing and politically innocent common man (read the pedestrian) and the illegitimate, but vote-bank yielding and aggressively organized hawkers. Thus, an editorial in *The Telegraph* says with a righteous tone that 'civic rights cannot forever remain captive to an illegality that has been allowed to prosper for the convenience of a few' (*The Telegraph*, 20 April 2007, quoted in Dutta, 2007). Another article alleges that due to political parties' patronage of the hawkers 'a facility created with the help of taxpayer's money is freely handed over to petty traders even as serious business initiatives are inconvenienced' (*The Telegraph*, 15 May 2007, quoted in Dutta, 2007). Note how the line between the 'petty traders' and 'serious business initiatives' is brought into a zero-sum game. The pedestrian loses her/his gender, caste and all other social and cultural distinctions, and is presented as the

tax-paying (and hence) citizen with legitimate claims on the footpath over the hawkers representing 'illegality', 'corruption', 'disorder' and 'cancer' in the urban space (Dutta, 2007). While the media appears to be generally more tilted to judicial calls over political action, Dutta (2007) shows that some reports do not hesitate to deliberately over-read the terms and scope of the actual court directives. Consider, for instance, the following headline: 'Free roads or court trouble-Hawkers like cancer, says chief justice' (The Telegraph, 20 May 2006, quoted in Dutta, 2007). The actual court directive asks the city police and the corporation authority 'to submit reports within a month on what steps they have taken regarding hawker congestion and traffic chaos on city streets' (Dutta, 2007). Though antagonistic, the court directive hardly suggests any drastic steps to outright evict hawkers as it appears from the media coverage on the directive, 'free roads or court trouble'. In fact, the directive mentions a host of other issues including the absence of automatic traffic signals and unruly driving of public buses that could also have contributed to traffic problems, which are not emphasized at least equally in the article. It is also to be noted that the article makes no attempt to cite statistical accounts of the allegedly hawker-induced accidents. It, for example, does not mention any particular street where such an accident took place, or specify any particular group of hawkers who could be implicated for the accident.

To counter this powerful media representation of hawkers, HSC's leadership decided to organize a mass contact drive. HSC formed a team that visited hawkers' stalls, interacted with hawkers and documented pedestrian behavior. The idea was to reaffirm the intimacy of the hawkers' connection with the rest of society and establish that hawking was not the primary cause of congestion, accidents or pedestrian immobility.

As a member of that team, I was asked in particular to demonstrate that the notion of a conflict of interest between pedestrians and hawkers was premised on factually wrong assumptions. The investigating team, which comprised hawkers and activists, visited 22 busy street intersections in the city, observing transactions and talking to all willing participants. The team interacted with shop owners, traffic police, shopping mall

employees, transport sector workers, office goers, pavement dwellers, hospital visitors and daily commuters.

Our observations and survey continued for two months. We asked hawkers about pedestrians and vice versa, but we spent more time observing how pedestrians and hawkers engaged with each other. We noted how human relations on the street were framed and mediated by the street apparatus – benches, traffic barriers, bollards, streetlamps, traffic lights and signs, bus and tram stops, taxi and auto rickshaw stands, public lavatories, municipal water taps, tree protectors, memorials, public sculptures, waste receptacles and so on. Lastly, we also learnt how the street actors developed their own theories of association.

Generally, hawkers set up their stalls either in front of buildings, and used the walls facing the sidewalk and opposite buildings and other shops at the curbside edge of the sidewalk, forming a corridor in the middle for pedestrian traffic. The ideal site for a food stall, according to food hawkers, is the mid-point between the municipal water tap and the drain at the curbside of the sidewalk. The chances of transactions improve with proximity to busy transit points and the hawkers' access to certain utilities (such as a municipal water tap) by the sidewalk. Lucrative stall spaces are also traded and rented out (something that the SVA thoroughly 'illegalizes').

In the garment sector, shopkeepers often cooperate with hawkers to extend their shop interiors to the sidewalk – hawkers sell the shopkeepers' merchandise at a lower price to access a different consumer base and, in return, use the electricity connections in the shops and store their wares there when the market is closed. But, the established food sellers, vegetable vendors and fruit sellers usually view hawkers near marketplaces, where they normally cluster, as potential encroachers of their consumer base; the authorities too feel that they usurp ratepayers' privileges. This antagonism often leads to small-scale eviction of hawkers. In Kolkata's New Market area one finds instances of this antagonism between the shop owners and hawkers.

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The 'evidence' we collected enabled HSC, to frame its official position regarding pedestrianism in certain ways. Subsequently, HSC organized a road show of photographs that demonstrated how hawkers and pedestrians inhabit a kind of shared network in which categories continuously over-reach their assigned labels. The pedestrians were categorized through categories like occasional visitor, the regular and office worker; a hawker at times became a pedestrian and customer; the tree protector and lamp post turned out to be ideal supports for a tarpaulin sheet. Many of our pedestrian respondents pointed out that in congested hawking areas such as in Shyambazar and Gariahat (in Kolkata), the long continuum of tarpaulin roofs protected them from sunburn and rain. Some mentioned how in the late evenings the city was illuminated thanks to the abundance of electricity hook-ups at hawkers' stalls.

The more one follows these arrangements in particular situations, the more one understands how the destiny of an 'object', no matter how human or non-human by preconditions of vitality, acquires infinite dimensions but only in association with other objects. In the course of a number of street demonstrations, HSC pointed out how the demolition of one stall in a particular area could lead to the destruction of a network of small economies that sustained the 'poor', 'daily commuters' and the 'lower middle class' and severely affect the way other hawkers carried out their business. How does that happen? Since stalls other than mine, understood as a part of a network in excess of my existence as a hawker, provide a crucial condition of my self-definition, my singular existence can make no exclusive claim on the network. No hawker can live devoid of this crucial connection to a network that exceeds the limits of human actors (Butler, 2015). When, for instance, hawkers gather their stalls, new spaces between bodies and stalls are assembled whose internal dimensions and consistencies are vital for collective living. To give you an example, in many cities hawkers collectively buy mini generators and place them between two sets of continuous stalls. Electric wires move between stalls, producing a very different play of light and noise on the street.

The demonstrations further exhibited how a pedestrian's right of passage in a busy street intersection was hampered usually by factors other than hawkers. These included illegal extensions of shops, potholes, intermittent enclosures related to work being done on roads, drainage systems, and telephone and power lines (requiring enclosure and diversion of traffic for indefinite periods); parking spaces, both legal and illegal; and illegal shrines on streets and sidewalks.

We, for instance, observed that the sidewalks were often broken and manholes adjacent to the sidewalks were open, threatening commuters with serious accidents. We also found that road repairs were going on near several of the city's major crossings, suspending the normal flow of traffic. Lack of coordination between different state departments was evident. In one instance it was found that a busy street intersection where a new flyover was to be erected the condition of the sidewalk was unfriendly to pedestrian passage. Once the roads were repaired by PWD, Kolkata

Telephones started digging up the land. When Kolkata Telephones ended its job in late 2007, the corporation's water department felt it necessary to repair the underground water channels. Once the water department repaired the sidewalks, the conservancy department started addressing the long-standing public demand of having a better sewerage system in the area, especially during the rainy season. This way, the streets and sidewalks remained in a state of constant repairs between 2006 and 2010, indefinitely suspending 'normal' life on the streets. Since much of the public utilities run under the sidewalks, the sidewalks are the prime sites of such development projects. Needless to say, much of the city's traffic obstructions is caused by the fact that pedestrians are forced to walk on the streets due to enclosures because of repair work.

In another instance, we interviewed three traffic sergeants of Kolkata Police and also consulted the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of traffic police in the central part of the city. All of them attested to the fact that most road accidents in their jurisdictions occurred between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. We also interviewed the superintendent of Bangur

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Hospital at Tollygunge, who corroborated that the largest number of accident patients arrived between late night and early morning. In fact, this is the time when hawkers are not present to throw pedestrians to the sidewalks. This piece of information was important for the hawkers to contest the view that it is because of the obstructions by them that the pedestrians leave safe and secure sidewalks to walk on the carriageways.

To verify whether pedestrians thought that hawkers acted as an impediment to their mobility, forcing them to risk their lives on the streets, we interviewed five pedestrians in each of the 22 crossings. Our pedestrian sample size was thus 110. Though it was hard for us to determine the class background of each respondent, we could make out by observing their clothes, bags, cell phones, wrist watches and other accessories, that an overwhelming proportion (94.5 percent) of the sample came from middle to lower middle-class backgrounds (we also deliberately chose people from these classes anticipating that they would have strong anti-hawker feelings). We also wanted to make the representation of both genders nearly equal. Thus, we had 54 female respondents (49.1 percent) (between 21 and 65 years) and 56 male respondents (50.9 percent) (between 20 and 75 years). We asked each of our respondents three questions: a) whether they thought that street hawkers caused an obstruction in their mobility and whether they thought that evicting all hawkers from crossings would solve the problem of obstruction; b) whether they were frequent visitors to the street stalls; c) whether some regulation would add value to street hawking and improve traffic:

Do Hawkers cause an obstruction?	No. of people
Yes	19
At times	81
No	10

Ten respondents said that street hawkers did not cause any impediments to their mobility on the sidewalks; 81 respondents claimed that sidewalks

become inaccessible during the festive season or cyclically. However, they were of the opinion that even the seasonal or cyclic congestions were not reason enough to evict hawkers from crossings as they did not find any immediate solution either to the hawker problem or to traffic problems or to the mass hysteria of shopping associated with the festive seasons. Of the total respondents, 19 found a strong correlation between congestion and street hawking, out of which seven accepted that the positives of hawking outnumbered the negatives while 12 respondents were in favor of complete eviction of hawkers from important crossings to facilitate pedestrian and vehicular traffic:

Should Hawkers be evicted	No. of people
No	98
Yes	12

If we look at the number of respondents who want hawkers to be evicted, 98 felt that there was no need to evict the hawkers, while only 12 were of the opinion that hawkers should be evicted. While addressing the second question, all the respondents (110 out of 110) said that they bought wares and services from hawkers. Street food was preferred by 103 respondents (93.6 percent) while 45 of them (43.7 percent) expressed concerns over public health issues associated with street food vending and justified their street food eating in terms of price, convenience and variety. We found that all the respondents supported some form of regulation on street hawking. However, a significant majority of the sample (107 out of 110) said that there were several other reasons why free traffic flow was obstructed including political rallies, *dharnas*, strikes, inefficiency of the traffic police, road repair works and car parking. A significant number, 100 respondents, strongly felt that a growing demand for parking of vehicles was leading to the problem of encroachment on sidewalks and open spaces leading to congestion. None of our respondents had a clear idea of the nature and mandate of the regulations to be implemented on hawking. The limited sampling and class homogeneity of the sample did not allow us to discern a general trend in the hawker-pedestrian-consumer relation. Yet our sample

clearly shows the falsity of the assumption that sidewalk hawking is responsible for pedestrian flight from the sidewalk. It also shows that the middle-classes and the hawkers are tied to each other in important social and economic exchanges.

In their explanation to the public on the many causes of pedestrians' flight from the sidewalks, HSC demonstrations admitted to hawkers' stalls being potential impediments to pedestrian mobility, but only as one of numerous such impediments. The demonstrations asserted that despite their 'encroachment', hawkers merited immunity as they provided the poorer social classes with 'services' at a remarkably low cost and thus contributed to the country's economy. As one of the HSC leaders said, 'We keep the city affordable and accessible to the poor. We are here as poor pedestrians require us to be here. We are also here to create pedestrians.' At that moment, HSC perhaps invented an entire cosmos where the hawkers' claim to space became a claim to enter society's structures of obligation. In fact, as he mentioned, as a sale strategy hawkers encouraged pedestrians to walk on the sidewalks rather than on the streets.

The HSC leader's comment encapsulates the political economy of street vending in cities like Kolkata. The leader reminded the rest of the city that hawkers survive but also contribute to the circulation (the hallmark of pedestrianism) of commodities, money and bodies. While the apparent conflict of interest between the 'mobile' pedestrian and the 'immobile' hawker could continue to frame conceptions and decisions concerning urban street life even after SVA, by virtue of both its form and content, HSC's campaign could throw light on the much deeper structural connections among diverse elements of the street that implicate each other in mutual creation and often exceed their intended utility to create multiple publics around them. Thus, like pedestrianism, counter-pedestrianism attaches much significance to the relationality among bodies, spaces and things.

This discussion shows the ways in which the facts of complex interdependencies continually haunt and bring to crisis our current

conceptual frameworks. Counter-pedestrianism is an effort to bring into being an alliance and re-imagining a space of sociability to fight legal and governmental exclusions. It first asserts that we cannot act without the infrastructure/material means of action. It then suggests that we should also emerge as a collective to struggle for installing and preserving this very infrastructure of action.

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ActionAid Association, R - 7, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi - 110016

 +911-11-4064 0500