



Street Vendors in Islamabad – Voice from the Ground

Webinar

According to a survey about street vendors conducted by a Senior Research Fellow Zia Banday at PIDE, more than 95% of the street vendors in Islamabad are migrants from poor and under developed areas of the country. The highest percentage of vendors was 43% representing KPK and most of them belonged to the terror affected areas of agencies. It was generally observed during the survey that most of the respondents belonging to the Afghan Nationality and there were around 6% Afghan national Vendors.

Education level was observed to be low among street vendors. 29% were completely illiterate and two third of them possessed the education level below matric. Vending starts at the very early age as 8% of the vendors were below 18 years of age and youngest of them was 15 years old. There is a possibility that there exists a large number of young vendors below the age of 18 as these young vendors doesn't have CNIC. There were 10% vendors whose age range ranged 50 years and above, oldest being 70 years of age. If we link these vending years with age factor in vending then we came to a conclusion that there is a significant number of vendors that started at a very early age. Lack of education and skill development are due to poverty and large household size that limits the affordability of education.

Most of the street vendors reside near to their workplace in a diameter of almost 1-2 KM radius to commute daily to their workplace by foot. Majority of workers reside in shared accommodation with 4-5 persons living in a single room. Some of these vendors reside in far flung areas of twin cities and commute to workplace using their bikes. Vendors living with their families in far flung areas of cities had to travel long distance to their workplace as they can afford only to live in slums.

During the survey it was found out that some vendors are in the business of vending for the past 30 years and during their vending career various vendors have been vending in different locations of both cities. Around one fourth of street vendors in Karachi company are 14 years old or more. So, the length of their vending period reflects that tenacity of street vendors despite all the frequent efforts to uproot them.

Majority of street vendors are evicted and their materials are confiscated by city authorities. It takes almost a month to retrieve their materials from government by paying penalties and bearing a loss between 50% to 100%. After such actions by government, street vendors become heavily indebted in efforts to revive their business. Number of these vendors become patients of B.P, hypertension and other diseases. It was revealed during the detailed survey with these vendors that none of them possessed any legal license from city administration for vending. The economy of Karachi Company is well established with its proper supply chains spread across the country and oversees. The well-established shopkeepers provide the front of their shops as a vending place to these vendors on rent. Corruption of low-key staff of city authority taking regular payments from street vendors is a major obstacle in complete uprooting of this issue. Vending on footpaths and green belts result into problems for commuting the pedestrian traffic and car parking. Despite all these odds, there is one benefit of street vending that it is serving the poor and local economy.

Ehsaas will be utilizing survey findings in formalizing its policy response for street livelihood

Message by Dr. Sania Nishtar

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO PRIME MINISTER ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

she mentioned that prime minister IK is very concerned about the future of street vendors in our country.

She also mentioned that government is well aware of the issues of the vendors and wants to proceed with implementable solutions by taking into account the constraints of operating environment.

She suggested that the solution will be chalked out by engaging the multi-stakeholders on necessity of law change or introduction of byelaws and regulations within the legal framework.

SYEDA SHAFaq HASHMI, CHIEF OFFICER, METROPOLITAN CORPORATION ISLAMABAD (MCI)

MCI is the authority for issuance of vending licenses in Islamabad and it has issued 300 licenses so far.

Municipal authority faces the challenge of limited resources for monitoring and emergence of new vendors in various parts of the city.

Municipality is eager to collaborate with PIDE for construction of design effective intervention for managing street vendors in Islamabad.

DR. SHAHID MAHMOOD, MEMBER-PLANNING, CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA)

Vending inside the marketplaces cannot be supported but vendors could be accommodated in separate vending zones or spots.

Existing law doesn't support vending in markets as they occupy public spaces meant for parking and pedestrians.

Vending creates unfair competition for shopkeepers who pay hefty amounts in form of taxes and rents.

SARDAR YASIR, PRESIDENT, ISLAMABAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (ICCI).

ICC along with CDA are making efforts to remove the unauthorized vendors from the streets of Islamabad.

He advised that a strategy should be made for arrangement of alternate zones for the reallocated vendors.

To protect the livelihood of vendors there should be space allocation in the master plan of the city by creating special vending zones.