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Residents likely to be part of panel to decide space for vendors in each ward in Mumbai

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Mumbai: A town vending committee comprising elected representatives of hawkers and nominated members from various associations, including residents' associations, will decide on space to be allotted for vending in a ward.

The Maharashtra government on October 7 issued draft rules for implementing the Street Vendors' (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. The rules, once notified, will be applicable across urban Maharashtra to regulate hawking.

Electoral wards will be mapped by the municipal commissioner. It may be an administrative ward, an electoral or several electoral wards in a ward committee clubbed together. Mumbai has 24 administrative wards and 227 civic electoral wards. Registered street vendors in a ward/zone/prabhag samiti will elect a representative. Those contesting elections must have a licence, should be 18 years old (the legal age for obtaining a vending licence is 14), should not have unpaid dues to the local municipal authority and should not have any criminal record.

As per the draft, the committee will decide the place of vending based on recommendations of the ward committee, it will plan the area to be allotted for vending, earmark hawking zones, restricted and no-hawking zones. It will also allocate space for festival, nights, weekly and temporary bazaars. It will decide on the means for hawking, whether a stall, kiosk or khoka, cart size for mobile vendors and commodity permitted for sale by stationery and mobile hawkers.

The committee will also ensure facilities in hawking zones and set conditions for street vending and action against defaulters.

Maharashtra Hawkers' Federation member Vinita Balekunderi said as per the Street Vendors' Act, a survey must be conducted

of hawkers in zones every five years. The draft rules, however, do not mention any survey.

The Act mandates that street vendors identified in the survey have to be accommodated in hawking zones subject to a norm conforming to two-and-a-half per cent of the population of the ward/zone/town/city, in accordance with the plan for street vending and the holding capacity of the hawking zones.

"We had submitted our suggestions to the government in May to incorporate in the draft rules. We will soon call a meeting to discuss what draft rules the government has issued and accordingly send in objections and suggestions," she said.

The BMC had carried out a week-long survey in July last year to assess the number of hawkers in Mumbai. It had distributed around 1.2 lakh forms but around 4,000 hawkers had claimed the survey was unfair.