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# Survey of street vendors begins for rehabilitation

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**V**ARANASI: To streamline street vending and to rehabilitate street vendors as per Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, an Unnao-based private agency, roped in by Varanasi Municipal Corporation (VMC), launched its survey of street vendors in the city from Jawaharlal Nehru Market in Englishia Line on Wednesday.

According to municipal commissioner, Shrihari Pratap Shahi, the survey is set to cover all the street vendors operating in the city. "In compliance to the legislation passed by Centre, the survey of street vendors began on Wednesday evening. This will help us to figure out the total number of street vendors in the city and the area occupied by them, thus giving a fair idea of the space required for organising them in a certain area and the number of vendors who can be accommodated," he said. This will not only ensure occupational security to these street vendors, but also help remove encroachment hassles from the congested and busiest lanes of the city, added Shahi.

Under the Act, passed by Parliament in February last year, all the local bodies have been mandated by the Government of India to form Town Vending Committees (TVC) for implementing provisions of the Act within one year. These TVCs will be involved in carrying out activities like determining natural markets, identifying vending zones, preparing street-vending plan, survey of street vendors, issuing them vending certificates and fixing annual licence fee for them, among others. The Centre had asked all the states to conduct survey of vendors, demarcate vending spaces, provide amenities and promote simple registration of street vendors and provide credit access to them.

As per the national policy, street vendors will be provided with vocational education and training and entrepreneurial development skills to upgrade their technical and business potential so as to increase their income levels as well as to look for more remunerative alternatives.

Street vending is seen as a major menace in the city compounding traffic problems which causes a great deal of inconvenience to commuters. With the national policy aiming at providing legitimate vending and hawking zones in the city, the commuters as well as denizens can heave a sigh of relief.

Meanwhile, the street vendors also seemed delighted with the start of the survey. The vendors' association, Pheri Patri Thela Vyavasayi Samiti, felt that with proper regulation, persisting chaos in areas and localities will be solved. "Although the law had given protection to street vendors by passing the legislation, yet the survey of vendors and allotment of certified vending zones was awaited. Now, we are hopeful that after the survey is complete, we would be allotted our own legitimate 'vending and hawking zones' in the city," secretary of association, Pramod Kumar Nigam said, adding that the city has roughly 25,000 street vendors.