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Politics of Urban Space in Mumbai: 'Citizens' Versus the Urban Poor

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Mumbai, with a population of 1.2 crores, is the largest of the metros in the country. It is a city of contrasts because only in very few megacities in the world do utmost poverty coexists with conspicuous wealth as in Mumbai. Moreover, in no other city has the poor been as marginalised and powerless as in Mumbai. These people, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the megacity's population, are left to fend for themselves with little or no civic amenities and are frequently, hounded as criminals. The shrinking of employment in the city's formal manufacturing sector has pushed workers into low income, insecure work in the informal sector. Along with this the scores of low skilled migrants from the smaller towns and rural areas adds to the burgeoning population of the poor. This has led to the mushrooming of slums that provide the only affordable housing for these low-income earners. On the other hand, the affluent, who form a microscopic minority, are very assertive in dislodging the marginalised from their homes and their economic activities in self-employment. Their NGOs have emerged as powerful bodies in influencing the city's bureaucracy and its policies. Under the garb of good governance and protection of public space, these NGOs have been active in eviction of slums and street vendors, leading to greater insecurity and poverty among the marginalised. This paper examines urban poverty in the context of the changing position of labour in the city. It will cover mainly the changing employment patterns in the city and its effect on housing. Much of the views in this paper are based on the author's involvement as a researcher on slum dwellers and street vendors and they stem from his own experiences of interaction with these sections of the population..

Rise of the informal sector

During the past few decades, especially since the 1980s, the employment situation in Mumbai has undergone drastic changes. This can be seen from the decline in the share of the formal sector[2] in employment and the equally rapid increase in employment in the informal sector. In a study based on the 1961 Census data, Heather and Vijay Joshi (1974) found that 65% of the city's workforce was engaged in the organised sector while only 35% were in the unorganised sector. Subsequent figures from the later censuses indicate that the situation changed rapidly after the 1980s. The draft plan of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (1996) indicates that the shares of the two sectors reversed by 1991. The plan, quoting the 1991 Census, shows that 65% of the workforce was engaged in activities in the informal sector while the formal sector employed only 35% of the work force.

Formal employment in the metropolis has hardly grown during the above-mentioned three decades. In the decade 1971-1981 it grew by only 1.4% and during 1981-1993 it declined by 0.7% (CRD 1995: 36). This was the period of the textile strike and closing down of other large manufacturing units in the city. Thus during the period

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[2] The term 'formal sector' and 'informal sector' include organised and unorganised sector respectively.

1971-1993 formal employment grew by only 0.2% (Ibid.). Another important trend during this period is that employment share in the manufacturing sector, which includes the large and small manufacturing units, fell from 47.3% in 1983 to 34.7% in 1993. This fall is computed at 8.9% per annum (Ibid: 37). At the same time, growth of informal sector employment has been high as seen by the changes in proportion of employment in the two sectors between 1961 and 1991. Another trend observed is that while the share of employment in the manufacturing sector declined, there was increase in the employment share of the services and finance sectors. The services sector's share in 1983 was 19.6%, which increased to 25% in 1993, while the finance sector's share was 7.6% in the 1983 and it rose to 11.5% in 1993 (Ibid). It should be mentioned here that most of the jobs in the services sector fall in the informal sector.

The rapid increase of the informal sector indicates that employment opportunities in the city have increased. However, we have to consider the types of employment available. There are mainly two types of employment available in the city's unorganised sector. These are, casual or contract labour and, self-employment. For the overwhelming majority of those engaged in this sector, both types of employment denote low and irregular income, lack of social security, little regulation in work and, absence of legal protection. All casual and contract labour find employment under such circumstances, as do workers in small-scale industries. For the self-employed, the main sources of income include street vending, providing domestic services and, home-based work. The most visible section of the informal sector is the street vending. It is estimated that there are around 250,000 street vendors in the city that accounts for 2% of the total population. These people live and work under a great deal of insecurity. They are harassed by the police and the municipal authorities either through raids or through bribes. Around Rs. 400 crores is collected annually as bribes from street vendors (Bhowmik 2001).

A large section of the workforce in the informal sector consists of low skilled rural migrants or migrants from smaller towns. Hence, for these people, right from the time of their entry to the city, they become a part of the informal sector as they have neither the skills nor the opportunities to enter better paid and more secure formal sector jobs. They thus move from one level of poverty, at their place of origin, to another level of poverty, at their destination.

At the same time there are a growing section of workers in the formal sector who have lost their jobs and are compelled to work in the informal sector. For these people and their families this change means a reduction in their standard of living and insecure, unregulated employment. This process was intensified since 1983 after the textile workers strike, when several mills closed.

The Textile Strike: Decline of the Formal Sector

Decline in formal sector employment after 1981, as mentioned above, is mainly due to the near closure of the textile mills in Mumbai after the textile strike in 1982-83. The textile industry occupied a central position in Mumbai's economy till the 1980s. Chandavarkar (1994: 76) notes that "From the late nineteenth century onwards, the cotton-textile industry formed the mainstay of Bombay's economy. Its development shaped the growth and character of numerous other activities." In 1921 this industry employed 16.2% of the male population and 9.5% of the female population (Ibid: 77). He quotes the Census Commissioner of the 1931 Census who stated, "Save for its textile manufacture, Bombay has really no claims to be an industrial city."

There were around 2,50,000 textile mill workers in Central Mumbai area till 1980. After the 18 month long strike, which began in January 1982, the figure declined to 1,23,000. Over one hundred thousand textile workers lost their jobs during this period. After this the number of textile workers continued to decline and by the middle of 1990s there were only around 80,000 and their jobs too were at stake (LHK Report: 2). More recent figures indicate that the number has fallen to 30,000.

The textile strike of 1982-83 undoubtedly had the worst effect on the workers in this industry (see Rajani Bakshi 1984). This strike is recorded as the longest strike in the country comprising the largest number of workers. Unfortunately, besides breaking records, the strike achieved nothing else for the textile workers. The mill owners refused to concede to the demands of the workers. The state government too came out heavily in favour of the employers, which in fact helped them maintain their rigid stand. During the period of the strike, the chief minister of the state, Babasaheb Bhonsale, was replaced by Vasantdada Patil, a formidable political leader who had the backing of the state's powerful sugar co-operative lobby. It is significant that Patil was once the leader of the INTUC led union, Rashtriya Mill Mazdur Sangh (RMMS), the recognised union in the textile industry. This union was not in favour of the strike and it is possible that the fact that he was once a leader of textile workers was an important consideration for Patil getting the post. He could be more effective in breaking the strike.

At the time of the textile strike, the mill owners shifted production to the power loom sector. The concentration of power looms were in Bhiwandi (in Thane district close to Mumbai), Solapur, Ichhalkaranji, Jalgaon etc. During the strike, the textile companies out-sourced their production to the power loom sector so, despite the long closure of the mills, there was no shortage of cloth in the market. This in fact reduced the impact of the strike.

The situation did changed significantly after the strike fizzled out in mid 1983. It marked a rapid decline of the economic conditions of the mills workers. This was the beginning of the phase when these workers joined the informal sector and became a part of the urban poor. The workforce was reduced by over 1,00,000 and ten textile mills closed down as their owners claimed that accumulated losses during this period had ruined them. The mills which reopened decided to go in for massive rationalisation, which actually meant reduction in the workforce. Most workers were unable to get back their jobs and those that did find employment found that conditions had changed. They were asked to join afresh as new recruits. This meant that they lost their seniority and continuity of service. This reduced their post retirement benefits considerably. Some of the others were taken back as casual workers with no security in employment.

A study of former textile mill workers by the author in 1999 (Bhowmik and More 2001) showed that a majority of them were working in the small-scale industries and in power looms. Their earnings in 1999, seventeen years after the strike, had remained the same in cash terms. A section of them, or their wives, had taken to street vending. In another study, on street vendors, the author found that round 30% of street vendors in Mumbai and 80% in Dr. Ambedkar Road, that runs through the mill areas, were former workers in the formal sector. The daily income of these vendors ranged between Rs.50 and Rs. 80 per day while the women earned even less--Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 per day (Bhowmik 2001).

The decline of work in the formal sector was not restricted to the textile industry. Other major industries in the manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals sectors

started moving out of the city or reduced their labour force drastically due to out-sourcing. Most of these companies have offered 'voluntary retirement' to their workforce, which in turn had disastrous consequences on their lives (see Barse 2001).

Contesting Urban Space

Mumbai's industrial district was traditionally in Central Mumbai where the textile mills were concentrated. This area is also known as Girangaon--the village of mills. It comprises Lalbagh, Parel, Wadala, Chinchpokli and Bhaikhalla (also known as Byculla). The mill workers and workers in other industries were also housed in this area. The common form of housing was the *chawls*. These were three or four storied buildings having a number of one-room tenements with common toilet facilities. These *chawls* became synonymous with lower middle class and working class housing. The families living in these *chawls* were normally from the same region or caste and they were in this sense integrated. In many cases more than one family lived in a room.

Chawls were built in the earlier phase of the city's industrialisation and were meant to house migrant mill or factory workers. Some of these were built by the textile mills, the factories and the railways to provide housing to their workers in close proximity to the workplace or by government bodies such as the (now defunct) Bombay Improvement Trust. The working class belt in Central Mumbai was in sharp contrast to upmarket South Mumbai that houses the affluent sections and also has the business district. In the north of this area lies Dadar and Mahim, both middle class and white-collar areas. The suburbs begin in the north, after Mahim, from Bandra onwards. As long as the industries thrived in Central Mumbai, this area, despite its proximity to the business district, was a low market area as far housing was concerned. The mix of factories/mills and working class houses made it unattractive for the better off to settle there. As a result, the suburbs developed as the new areas of middle-class or affluent housing.

Since the gradual closure of the mills and factories, the importance of this area as a centre for business and housing began to grow. Businessmen and traders moved in and tried to convince the working class residents to move out by offering money. They were often helped in their endeavours by the underworld. It was easier to convince the unemployed workers to leave their residences for a fee, with the backing of musclemen. Many residents had no option but to leave and move to the distant suburbs or to Thane where they could find work in the informal manufacturing sector. These residences were then used as workshops for jewellers or for garment manufacturers.

In 1993, the then Chief Minister, Sharad Pawar, announced that this area would be redeveloped as a replica of Singapore. The land occupied by the textile mills would be turned to upper class housing or offices. The area would have all the trappings of the rich-- skyscrapers, entertainment centres, shopping complexes and a few parks. The main problem was of removing the few functioning mills to the outskirts of the city and moving the workers out of their *chawls*.

This announcement came at a time when Mumbai's real estate values were at an all time high. The construction lobby immediately took up the offer. Government permitted a couple of mills to develop their land as real estate. The Tatas were the first to accept the offer and they built two huge buildings on their mill lands.

The chief minister's Singaporean dream came to an abrupt halt with the murder of an industrialist (Khatau) who owned a closed mill. This person was shot dead by a sharpshooter right in the middle of a busy traffic intersection during the morning office hours. In was now quite evident that the involvement of the underworld was very prominent in the property dealings. These gangs were paid commissions (a percentage of the land value) for helping in clearing out tenants or workers who were reluctant to leave. This had resulted in rivalries between gangs for the extortion money. The police found that the industrialist was murdered by the Ashwin Naik gang, which was a rival of the Arun Gawali gang operating in the mill areas.

A few months after this incident, Dr. Datta Samant, of the Maharashtra Girni Kamgar Union, who had lead the textile strike, was shot dead allegedly by the underworld. Dr. Samant had been a strong opponent of sale of mill lands for commercial purposes, as this would lead to closure of the remaining mills and would deprive the workers of their livelihood. After his murder, the state government had to hurriedly abandon its plan of allowing commercial use of mill lands. Instead, the focus was shifted to developing a new area in the near suburbs, the Bandra Kurla Complex, as the new business centre.

Permission to use mill lands for commercial purposes has been recently revived and besides builders, two industrial houses owning closed mills in the area, namely, Bombay Dyeing and Tata, have started housing schemes in a big way. Besides upper class housing, the once largely working class area now boasts of having the finest pubs, restaurants, bowling alleys, multiplexes and shopping malls in the city. Ironically, the developers are keen to retain the 'old flavour' of Girangaon and in some of these places care is taken to preserve a chimney or an old loom as relics of the past. However, the living relics--the *chawls* and their low-income residents--have become an eyesore for the intruding affluent class in this area. Therefore every attempt is made to remove these structures so that better looking, and affluent, structures come up in their place.

At present, for the vast majority of the population, slums or other forms of cramped spaces provide the only form of housing. A study, sponsored by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Government of Maharashtra, notes that, "in almost 73 percent of the metropolis, households live in 1 room tenements another 18 percent in 2 room tenements. In 1981 things were a little better with 69 percent of the households living in 1 room tenements…" (CRD 1997: 7-9). Another survey conducted on behalf of the municipal corporation shows that a majority of the city's population lives in slums that don't have basic sanitation facilities (YUVA 2001). The survey covered 1959 slum settlements whose total population constituted 54% of the city's population. A majority of these slums (60%) had public toilet facilities, but these were over used or unusable as they were in dilapidated condition. Other amenities such as regular water supply, electricity, garbage disposal and drainage facilities were also woefully lacking. If we add another segment of the population, namely, the pavement dwellers, the proportion will increase further.

A significant fact about Mumbai is that despite the large slum population, the total area occupied by these settlements is almost negligible. It is estimated that slums occupy less than 10% of the city's land surface. In other words over half the population is squeezed into one-tenth of the city's area.

While the majority live in shanties, a small section of the population, which constitutes the upper middle classes and the rich, have improved their living standards

considerably, providing a stark contrast between poverty and unmitigated wealth. The rising affluence of this minority coupled with rapid growth of the poor has created new demands on the city's space. One the one hand, builders try to corner any space available for creating high-rise apartments and on the other hand the dispossessed poor try to find niches for building their shanties. Space in Mumbai is available at high premium and those who can pay are the winners in this game. Hence it is not quite uncommon to find hutments' of the poor being demolished to create space for housing the better off sections. The state government has proposed some schemes for slum development but we will come to this later.

'Citizens' versus the Poor

Proliferation of slums and lack of adequate living space for the overwhelming majority of the city's households have their roots in the growing size of the informal sector. With the low level of wages in this sector and the lack of regular employment, it is hardly likely that the working population can afford to buy or rent better accommodation.

However in a city where land is available at a high premium it is these people who are targeted as the villains responsible for the growing urban crises. Slums are projected as the causes of most, if not all, urban problems. They generate filth, they breed criminals, and they usurp facilities that should have rightfully gone to 'tax paying' citizens. What is more surprising is the widespread belief that this 10% of land area, occupied by slums, is responsible for all the ills of the city, as if the rest do not play any part in its degradation.

Whether slum dwellers are really responsible for such problems is never investigated but these views become a convenient handle for demolishing slums to make way for 'cleaner' and better-priced housing that the affluent minority needs. These high rise apartments cause greater strain on the public utilities (i.e. drainage, garbage disposal, water, sewerage etc.), as their usage of these facilities is several times more than that of a large slum.

The main threat to Mumbai's poor comes from certain NGOs who claim to represent the citizens. These invariably represent residents of middle and upper-middle class housing societies. Their interests lie mainly in protecting public spaces from encroachment by the marginalised (street vendors, slums etc.). Two significant NGOs need mention. One formed recently by a group of retired senior bureaucrats and police officers who feel that their expertise is needed for establishing good governance. Of course it would be rude to ask these veterans what they did to establish good governance when they were running the bureaucracy. The other NGO calls itself Bombay First and is backed by corporate houses. It recently commissioned a consultancy firm, McKinsey, to draw out a plan for improving the city so that it could attract foreign capital. Of the various suggestions given, one mentions that the city should be run by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who would preferably be from the corporate sector. An important finding is that the lowest 30% of the city's households have an average monthly income of Rs. 6,000 hence they could be shifted from slums to proper housing as they could afford to pay higher rent. How the company could come to the figure of Rs. 6,000 is literally anyone's guess because nowhere in report does it detail its methodology. In fact the report mentions, in fine print, that the data presented is not necessarily authentic.

The unfortunate aspect is that the demands of the so-called citizens groups,

despite their representing a microscopic minority of the city's population, are taken up seriously by the administration resulting in greater insecurity to the majority of the population through evictions, demolitions and disruption in their livelihood. NGOs genuinely representing the poor do exist in the city and their membership is several times larger than the supporters of the so-called citizens' groups, but their views are hardly considered by the authorities. One of the main problems is that these NGOs are not united in their stand. The voices of the marginalised majority could be heard if these groups could get together and in a united manner speak on issues of common concern. Instead, we have a situation where an organised minority can dominate over an unorganised and fragmented majority. This is the notion of good governance.

Organised minority versus unorganised majority

In his study of the power elite in the USA, the renowned sociologist, the late C. Wright Mills (1956) had noted that the country was run by a cohesive elite that was able to impose its policies on the rest of the people. In the analysis of his study, Mills had warned of the dangers of having an organised minority dominating over an unorganised and fragmented majority. According to Mills, the power elite, comprising the military, the bureaucracy and the industrialists, assumed its dominant position not merely by controlling the economy. It was able to gain acceptability through constant propaganda orchestrated by the mass media, which too it controlled. In this way the people of America were being literally brainwashed into believing that this self-seeking power elite was truly their representative.

The situation in Mumbai is similar to that described by Mills. Elitist groups that represent the interests of less than one percent of the population are most vocal in espousing on the maladies of the city. Slums and street vendors are of course their prime targets. The media too plays a vital role in this process by highlighting these issues and thus influencing the policy makers of the urgent need to eradicate these irritants from the city's landscape. Yet none of these elite organisations have effectively raised their voices against the violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules by builders. The fact that having high rise buildings in the textile mills will cause greater environmental problems, because of their excessive use of water and sewerage facilities and by the large number of cars owned by the occupants of these buildings, has never been raised even feebly by such groups.

Restoration of pavements as public space becomes important only when street vendors 'encroach' on them. The constant tirade by this elite that street vendors deprive pedestrians of their space, cause traffic jams and encourage anti-social activities finds favour with the media. The municipal authorities too act promptly on their advice by evicting these street vendors and depriving them of their livelihood. The inconvenience caused to the majority of the population who find it convenient to purchase from street vendors is never a consideration. The fact that no *chawl* committee, tenants' association or *jhoparpatti* (slum) committee has ever complained against street vendors is of course irrelevant as these groups represent the unorganised majority. The same enthusiasm is woefully lacking when pavements are leased for parking cars or when shopkeepers encroach on them.

Slum Development Programmes

The state government has initiated slum development programmes for providing better housing to slum dwellers. The most prevalent of these is of housing slum dwellers in high-rise buildings built on the slum land. The buildings are constructed by builders who charge the slum dwellers Rs. 15,000 for each unit. The unit is of 225 square feet and it includes a room, a toilet and a kitchen. Builders in turn are allowed extra Floor Space Index (FSI) so that they can build other flats that will be sold at market prices. These flats may be larger than those of the slum dwellers. The builders can thus recover their costs on the subsidised units. Initially, the flats of slum dwellers and the others were be in the same complex and all owners (slum dwellers and those who buy their flats at market prices) belonged to the same co-operative housing society. This obviously reduced the market value of the flats to be sold at market prices. A few such ventures have come up so far.

The Shiv Sena-BJP government (1995-2000) proposed a new scheme. The Shiv Sena declared magnanimously that 40,00,000 houses would be built for slum dwellers in the city under the Shivshahi Nivas Prakalp and would be provided free to bonafide slum dwellers. In this case too the scheme would be funded by builders. The only change in the scheme was that the builder was not compelled to use the extra FSI to build flats in the same complex as that of the slum dwellers. They were allowed to use the extra FSI to build houses in any part of the city provided it was in the north of the place built for slum dwellers. Secondly, land owners can transfer their rights to develop their plots to builders who are involved in such projects. This is known as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR). In other words, builders can develop slums in Central Mumbai and in turn they get the right to build in the north. This is inevitably in the northern suburbs where real estate prices are high.

The 'rehabilitated' slum dwellers soon found that they were worse off than before. Besides being shifted to cramped residences, the taxes and outgoings for maintenance were also very high. Each of them has to pay more than Rs. 1,000 per month for these charges. Costs are added because most of these buildings are seven stories high and lifts are required. This in turn adds to their costs. In Dharavi, known as Asia's largest slum, there are several such buildings in which the residents have cut off the lift connection in order to save on maintenance costs. This means that many of them have to climb several stories to reach their tiny homes.

The home-based workers, especially the women, face more severe problems related to their livelihood. Several women are engaged in making papads, pickles and other such items. These require space for drying, which was available in their slums. The new multi-storied buildings did not provide them any space for their work. Hence it is not surprising that the residents have started transferring their living spaces to others and are moving back to slums. The prices they get are less than half the market prices as these transactions cannot be done officially.

This situation has been created primarily because while making these plans the needs of the slum population was never considered. These plans were drawn by bureaucrats and politicians who were least concerned with the welfare of slum dwellers. The idea of housing slum dwellers in multi-storied buildings is borrowed from the developed countries and from Singapore. It was believed that if these people are forced into high-rise buildings they would not mess up the city.

The question that arises is, are such schemes merely a result of planning from above? If we examine the situation carefully we will find that there could be a method in the madness. Let us consider who are the main beneficiaries of this scheme. Are they the slum dwellers, who in fact do not want to reside in such places? In reality it is the builders, who form a powerful lobby in influencing urban planning in the city, who have gained the most. It would almost seem as if these plans were drawn up only for their gains. Under the garb of slum rehabilitation, they are allowed to develop large areas through TDR and rake in huge profits, a part of which may be shared with the concerned sections responsible for drawing up such plans. Here is another incident of how the urban poor are made scapegoats for the benefit of others.

Concluding Observations: Legalising the poor

We have discussed earlier that industrial restructuring has led to job losses in the formal sector and these workers have had to enter the informal sector in order to eke out their livelihood. Similarly, lack of gainful employment in the rural areas and in small towns in Maharashtra, Bihar and UP have pushed tens of thousands of job seekers to the metropolis. These low skilled immigrants find work only in the informal sector where the wages are low. The self-employed too, as we have seen in the case of street vendors, have low incomes. These people cannot afford proper housing and they are forced to live in cramped quarters. The solution to the problem lies not in evicting the poor but in legalising their existence. We will attempt to explain the implications of such steps.

The existence of slums as illegal settlements has certain positive features for sections of the authorities (police and municipal). Slum dwellers, because of their precarious existence, become easy victims of rent (bribe) seeking by these authorities. The collections amount to several crores of rupees. In the case of another vulnerable section, street vendors, it is estimated that around Rs. 400 crores is collected annually as rents. The contribution of slum dwellers could be higher given their vast numbers. Moreover, rents increase whenever there are raids or evictions by the municipal authorities. The provocations of the elite NGOs and the media that encourage the authorities to evict these people only help to increase rent seeking by corrupt officials. In the case of street vendors, it was found that after the former Deputy Municipal Commissioner Khairnar conducted his eviction drives in the Central Business District, rent collection rose ten times more than the normal (Bhowmik 2001). Street vendors were willing to pay large amounts to municipal or police personnel just to be forewarned of impending raids. The same is true of slum dwellers. Hence it becomes profitable for the authorities to allow slums to grow as they provide a source of illegal income. Other players such as slumlords and mafia also thrive because of the illegal status of slums.

The urban poor are not parasites, as the so-called citizens' groups would like to project them. They contribute significantly to the city's economy through their activities. The following extract from the National Slum Policy of the Government of India explains this aspect. *"Slums are an integral part of urban areas and contribute significantly to their economy both through their labour market contributions and informal production activities. This Policy, therefore, endorses an upgrading and improvement approach in all slums. It does not advocate the concept of slum clearance except under strict guidelines set down for resettlement and rehabilitation in respect of certain slums located on untenable sites."*

Had the state government and the municipal corporation adopted a policy of upgrading and improving living conditions in the slums instead of trying to house slum dwellers in multi-storied buildings, the conditions would have been different. This solution may sound simplistic in the given situation of rising real estate values because neither the builders nor the corrupt officials would find any benefit from such moves.

In the case of street vendors too the proposed National Policy on Street Vendors of the Government of India makes similar observations. *"Urban vendors provide valuable service to the urban population while trying to earn a livelihood, and it is the duty of the State to protect the rights of this segment of the population to earn their livelihood. This policy tries to ensure that this important section of the urban population finds recognition for its contribution to society and is conceived as a major initiative for urban poverty alleviation."*

In this case too a policy that attempts to regulate street vending through legalisation the profession cannot find much support from those who have a stake in maintaining the present status. The opposition will come from shopkeepers and restaurant owners who feel threatened by the competition and also from those who seek rents.

They only way of making such policies work is through pressure from below, namely, from slum dwellers and street vendors through their unions or organisations. A beginning has been made in this regard. A group of NGOs working in slums have got together to form an organisation called Aapli Mumbai (our Mumbai). They have drafted a state slum policy based on some of the points of the national policy. They have also contacted slum organisations in other cities by making the proposed policy as the rallying point. As a result of these moves, the state government has agreed to look into the policy and consider its applicability to the state. The unions of street vendors in the state have formed a federation with the explicit demand for implementing the national policy in the state. In this case too the state government has agreed to introduce the policy in the assembly. This only marks the beginning of the movement because even if these policies are accepted, there is always a slip between acceptance and implementation. The latter depends on how far the pressure from below is sustained.

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