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Unravelling Socio-Spatial Dimensions Of Appropriation Of Urban Spaces For Street Vending In Hyderabad

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Abstract: Street vending forms a crucial part of the informal urban economy in Indian cities, offering affordable services and livelihoods to a significant section of the population. This study explores the spatial appropriation and negotiation of urban public spaces by street vendors in Hyderabad, focusing on three strategically selected case areas: Ameerpet, Sultan Bazaar, and Gudimalkapur. Employing in-depth fieldwork, spatial mapping, interviews, questionnaire based surveys, and regression analysis, the paper investigates the relationships between spatial patterns, economic outcomes, and the socio-political environment within which street vendors operate. Findings reveal that despite the visibility, vendors engage in daily negotiations and informal arrangements, often with private shop owners or through mobile kiosks, to maintain their presence, space and livelihoods. These adaptive strategies, while resourceful, remain precarious in the absence of formal recognition and a structured planned support. The paper takes up two case areas from Hyderabad and argues for urgent spatial interventions, and institutional reforms including the formal integration of vending zones into urban planning frameworks, participatory governance, and infrastructural improvements. In terms of street vending, urban authorities in Hyderabad have limited success in adopting inclusive planning measures, particularly in the allocation of fixed vending zones or designated vending spaces. Vendors continue to face insecure tenure, overcrowding, poor sanitation, and vendors are high vulnerability to eviction. Regression analysis indicates strong correlations between vendor earnings and spatial-environmental variables such as footfall intensity, access to infrastructure, and legal security of vending locations. Analysis and findings portray that the process of appropriation of public space reveals the inherent requirements of informal trade and spatial needs, which is understood in urban design guidelines can lead to better design of public space and realm in the context of Global South. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on urban informality, spatial justice, and sustainable, equitable urban development.

Keywords: Informality, Livelihood, Street Vending, Spatial Appropriation

Introduction

In the global world, informality is often comprehended as the rapid growth of informal settlements often termed as ‘slums’, and spread of unplanned urban areas. Most of such residential informal zones emerge due to inadequate infrastructure, lack of affordable supply of housing, the need to earn in a city, and rapid urbanization. However, there is an equal quantum of informality associates with earning livelihoods through the unrecognised sector of a city’s economy. A sector that thrives on cash transactions, service without deeds and rooted in informal arrangements. These are often manifested as street vending, informal weekly markets and commercial zones. The informal sector plays a crucial role in the global economy, particularly in developing countries, where it accounts for 60–70% of total employment and contributes up to 50% of GDP in some cases (ILO, 2021). Globally, nearly 2 billion people —about 60% of the workforce— are engaged in informal work across sectors such as agriculture, construction, retail, and

domestic services (ILO, 2023). Over 90% of businesses in developing countries operate informally, providing essential services in areas lacking formal economic structures (World Bank, 2020). Informal cross-border trade constitutes around 30% of total trade in parts of Africa (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022), while in urban areas, informal employment can make up 50–70% of total jobs (UN-Habitat, 2021). These figures underscore the sector's significance and the urgent need for inclusive urban policies that integrate informal workers into the planning framework.es, even though it often lacks legal protections and visibility in official economic data.

Such informal public spaces and areas typically lack basic services like sanitation, electricity, and proper access, leading to poor working conditions. Informal economies thrive mostly in public spaces, which serve as urban commons. The actors operate outside of the formal regulations yet provide quality output and also generate livelihoods for many. While these informal spaces can offer flexibility and resilience, they often result in overcrowding, environmental risks, and social inequality. Understanding these informal dynamics is crucial for planning cities that aim to be inclusive, sustainable, and capable of managing the challenges posed by informality.

Conceptualizing Informality in Southern Urban Contexts

In India, the informal sector plays a critical role in sustaining the economy, accounting for approximately 90% of the national workforce across agriculture, construction, domestic services, retail, and small-scale industries (National Sample Survey Office, 2018). Informal employment is notably prevalent in urban areas, where it constitutes nearly 58% of the total urban workforce (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2021). The sector contributes an estimated 50–60% of India's GDP, primarily through informal enterprises, agricultural activities, and service-based work (Ministry of Finance, 2020). Women are disproportionately represented in informal employment, with 70–80% engaged in unregulated and often precarious occupations such as domestic labor, agricultural work, and self-employment (NSSO, 2018). Agriculture remains a dominant source of informal employment, involving nearly 65–70% of the workforce in largely seasonal and low-wage jobs (ILO, 2020). Despite its vast scope, the informal sector is marked by high vulnerability, with limited access to social protection, job security, and healthcare benefits.

Street vending forms an integral part of India's informal economy, with an estimated 10–15 million vendors across the country (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2014). These vendors play a critical role in providing affordable goods and services, especially in low-income urban areas, and contribute significantly to employment in cities. Approximately 30% of street vendors are women, underscoring the sector's importance for gender-inclusive economic participation (National Association of Street Vendors of India, 2020). However, vendors face persistent challenges such as lack of legal recognition, poor working conditions, and vulnerability to harassment and eviction. Despite the enactment of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, its implementation has been inconsistent, and many vendors remain excluded from social protection schemes and access to formal credit (ILO, 2018; Government of India, 2014).

This paper explores the uncharted domains that try to bridge the spatial city planning discipline with the need to modify its traditional approach that incorporates street vending as a required spatial design component, in order to bring order and include the vast sector that otherwise devises everything for itself.

Situating the Study Within Existing Literature

While some studies acknowledge the legal challenges street vendors face—such as the absence of formal permits or the constant threat of eviction—there is little exploration of how vendors actively resist, negotiate, and challenge these restrictions. Vendors often respond by forming associations or engaging in collective bargaining to secure better treatment and resist displacement. In some instances, they organize protests, demand legal recognition, and seek to influence urban policies that affect their livelihoods. These acts of resistance and negotiation are crucial aspects of how vendors appropriate space, asserting their rights and shaping their environments. However, much of the existing literature treats these struggles as distinct from vendors' everyday business activities, overlooking the ways in which spatial appropriation is deeply intertwined with broader socio-political dynamics.

The limited focus on appropriation processes highlights a broader tendency to view street vending in isolation, rather than as an integral part of the urban system. While research has addressed topics like informal economy integration, waste management, and urban governance, there is little attention given to how vendors, as active agents, shape and redefine urban space through their practices (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2022). This gap in understanding neglects the transformative role that vendors play in altering the physical and social fabric of cities. The occupation and use of public space by vendors influence pedestrian flows, commercial activity, and social interactions, subtly reshaping the functionality of urban areas. Despite the significance of these changes, the literature

often emphasizes the negative impacts of street vending—such as congestion and informal waste accumulation—without recognizing vendors' contributions to urban vibrancy and diversity.

The Case of Street Vending in Hyderabad

The city of Hyderabad, administered by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), is home to approximately 3,944 slums, accommodating around 1.7 million people—about 35% of the city's total population as per the 2001 Census of India (Census of India, 2001). Of these, 1,476 slums fall within the jurisdiction of GHMC, with 1,179 officially notified (GHMC, 2019). The distribution of the slum population is skewed, with 66% residing in the city's core—formerly under the Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH)—and the remaining 34% in peripheral areas (GHMC, 2019). Street vending constitutes a significant component of Hyderabad's informal economy. As of 2020–21, over 1.56 lakh street vendors were registered, according to data from the Telangana State Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (TSMEPMA, 2021). Among these, 56.2% are male and 43.8% female, indicating relatively high female participation in informal urban livelihoods. Notably, more than 33% of these vendors are engaged in fruit and vegetable vending, while the street food sector alone supports approximately 1 lakh individuals and sustains around 18,000 families (TSMEPMA, 2021).

Despite the sector's size and importance, only 3% of vendors are affiliated with Self-Help Groups (SHGs), reflecting the limited reach of collective support and financial inclusion initiatives (TSMEPMA, 2021). Daily work routines are marked by extended hours, with about 72% of vendors reporting workdays lasting between 8 to 12 hours. In terms of mobility, 56% commute by walking, 23.5% rely on public buses, and 16.5% use bicycles (TSMEPMA, 2021). Storage practices reveal additional challenges: 65% of vendors store goods at home, while 27% rent commercial space, often without security or legal tenure. Housing conditions further highlight their precarious situation—88% of vendors live in temporary or semi-permanent structures, underscoring broader issues of insecurity, inadequate access to urban housing, and vulnerability to displacement (GHMC, 2019; TSMEPMA, 2021). Together, these findings illustrate the structural challenges and daily resilience of Hyderabad's street vendor community. Despite their critical economic role, they continue to face systemic exclusion from formal planning, legal protections, and social safety nets

The Rationale for the Study

This study has aimed to address the critical issue of unplanned hawking spaces in Hyderabad, examining the hazards faced by street vendors and the subsequent impact on their livelihoods. It seeks to uncover the socio-economic and infrastructural challenges that undermine the stability and growth of street vendors in the city. A review of theoretical frameworks and existing literature reveals a predominant focus on the socio-economic conditions of street vendors, while the spatial dynamics they generate through the appropriation of urban spaces remain largely unexamined. The intersection between the occupation of public space and its direct influence on vendors' economic resilience and livelihoods has been overlooked. A deeper understanding of how street vendors negotiate and appropriate public urban spaces—along with the vulnerabilities they face—can pave the way for more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable urban design and planning strategies. By addressing spatial marginalization, this study aims to foster urban environments that integrate street vendors as vital contributors to the city's economic and social fabric.

The paper attempts to answer the pertinent question of "How can an understanding of the processes through which urban public space is appropriated inform planning and design strategies that promote the sustainable livelihoods of street vendors?" In order to delve deeper into the topic, the paper sets forth the following objectives of – (a) Analyzing how urban public space is appropriated by street vendors, identifying the key factors influencing space usage; (b) Assessing the quality, quantity, and efficiency of street vending as a livelihood strategy and (c) Examine the vulnerabilities and risks faced by street vendors. These objectives are driven towards the overall intention to develop a framework for planning and designing urban public spaces that cater to the needs and preferences of street vendors.

Urban Dynamics of Street Vending in Hyderabad

Street vending, as a vital component of the informal economy, plays a significant role in shaping urban livelihoods, spatial practices, and everyday economies in cities across the Global South. Despite its economic and social relevance, it remains marginalized in formal urban planning processes, often leading to conflicts over space, tenure insecurity, and exclusionary policies (Kakani and Tarafdar 2025). A focused study on street vending is essential to understand how informal actors negotiate their right to the city, and to inform inclusive urban policies that balance economic opportunity with spatial order and equity. As cities continue to urbanize rapidly, such research becomes increasingly important for developing sustainable and socially just urban environments. Hyderabad, a rapidly expanding metropolitan city and the capital of Telangana, represents a complex and evolving urban landscape where formal planning frameworks intersect with informal economic practices. With a population exceeding 10 million and a diverse

mix of socio-economic zones, the city provides a representative context for understanding the spatial, regulatory, and economic dimensions of street vending in Indian urban centers. The presence of over 1.5 lakh registered street vendors within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) area highlights the sector's scale and significance in contributing to urban livelihoods and service provision.

This study focuses on two contrasting yet complementary case areas -Ameerpet, and Sultan Bazaar- each selected for their unique spatial typologies, economic functions, and vendor dynamics. Ameerpet is a high-density commercial and educational hub with intense pedestrian traffic; and Sultan Bazaar, is one of the oldest traditional marketplaces in the city, reflecting historical continuity of informal trade within congested urban cores.The selection of these areas is grounded in the need to examine how spatial appropriation and negotiation practices vary across different urban contexts—ranging from formal institutional neglect to organic integration. Moreover, these sites exhibit distinct challenges related to tenure insecurity, overcrowding, infrastructure deficits, and governance inconsistencies, making them ideal for comparative analysis.

Studying street vending in Hyderabad through these diverse locations provides critical insights into the everyday negotiations vendors undertake, the role of informal economies in shaping urban space, and the implications for inclusive planning. As Indian cities continue to urbanize at a rapid pace, research grounded in such context-specific case studies is essential to inform policy frameworks that balance spatial order, economic vibrancy, and social equity.

Study Areas of Street Vending in Hyderabad

This study examines the dynamics of street vending in three key areas of Hyderabad—Ameerpet, Sultan Bazaar (Koti), and Gudimalkapur—each offering distinct insights into the relationship between vendors, urban spaces, and regulatory frameworks. These areas were chosen to highlight the diversity of street vending practices and the varying challenges faced by vendors in different urban settings. By exploring these areas, the research aims to develop strategies that not only support the livelihoods of street vendors but also promote efficient and sustainable urban planning.

The research collected data through interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions involving 75 street vendors, 30 retail shop owners, 30 customers, and 10 government authorities. Regression and correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between space appropriation, perceived threats by vendors, and the quality of urban spaces in these areas. Key findings revealed issues such as the struggle for appropriate and secure vending locations, safety and hygiene concerns, and the strategies employed by vendors to negotiate space with urban authorities. Additionally, the study explored the historical evolution of street vending and land use in Hyderabad over the past 30 years, shedding light on how these practices have changed over time. As a research process, there were several measures taken to mitigate potential internal biases in the qualitative data. Triangulation by cross-verifying verbal interviews, textual records, and visual observations was done. Standardized interview questions and observation protocols were followed. A reflective field journal was maintained to bracket the researcher's assumptions during data collection. Additionally, systematic coding and interpretation was conducted for the analysis, to ensure that personal perspectives did not unduly influence the findings.

To visualize these findings, flow charts and other graphical representations were created to illustrate both qualitative and quantitative data, helping to clarify the complex relationships between space quality, vendor behaviour, and urban dynamics. Ultimately, the research provides valuable insights that can inform strategies for managing street vending more effectively, ensuring that vendors' livelihoods are supported while promoting sustainable urban development.

Findings from the Study Area of Sultan Bazaar

'Sultan Bazaar' is a historic market over a century old and is a significant cultural and commercial area in Hyderabad city, between the neighbourhoods of Abids and Koti, within the corridor of Hyderabad's Metro Rail network. As the city's only designated pedestrian market, it offers diverse goods, such as clothing, silverware, and toys. Street vendors are integral to the market's vibrant atmosphere, but the presence of informal vending in a heritage site poses challenges in balancing heritage preservation with the need for commercial space, especially as the demand for space grows. The following section discusses the case in more depth in terms of the informal sector's spatial appropriation.

Morphology and Formation of the Market Stretch

Street vendors in Sultan Bazaar face significant challenges, primarily due to limited space, forcing them to operate in overcrowded conditions (Fig. 1). The lack of designated vending zones leads to conflicts with shop owners, who experience reduced visibility and declining sales due to encroachment. Additionally, heavy traffic causes safety issues and worsens accessibility for vendors and customers. Vendors also struggle with the absence of proper storage, sanitation, and amenities, while the constant threat of eviction adds instability to their livelihoods. These challenges

highlight the need for inclusive urban planning to support vendors' livelihoods while promoting coexistence with other stakeholders.

Figure 1: Morphology of Sultan Bazaar market stretch since year 2010 – 2023

The spatial analysis of the study areas reveals a complex interplay between vehicular movement, vendor positioning, and land-use dynamics (Fig. 2). The streets demonstrate a high degree of vehicular activity, with both two-wheeler and four-wheeler traffic contributing to the functional and spatial congestion of the area. Street vendors have strategically positioned their carts directly in front of adjacent retail shops, utilizing available public space to maximize visibility and customer access.

This spatial arrangement creates significant conflicts, as it obstructs retail shop entrances, reduces accessibility, and exacerbates competition for space and customers. In 2011, street vendors in Hyderabad began protesting against urban development projects, particularly the metro rail construction, with many shutting down their businesses in resistance (Fig.3). Their protests were so intense that authorities were prevented from conducting soil tests in affected markets for five years. By 2015, the metro rail project began, displacing several vendors who faced significant losses as they were forced to relocate, disrupting their livelihoods (Fig. 4).

Despite this, protests continued, highlighting the ongoing conflict between urban development and the informal economy. In 2018, as the metro construction progressed, more vendors were displaced, but the proposed complexes for relocation failed to accommodate them, further exacerbating their financial struggles. By 2020, when the metro was completed and inaugurated, vehicular movement was restricted along the market stretch up to Badi Chowdi Junction. Despite the spatial restrictions, vendors exhibited remarkable resilience by adapting to the challenges of operating beneath the metro.

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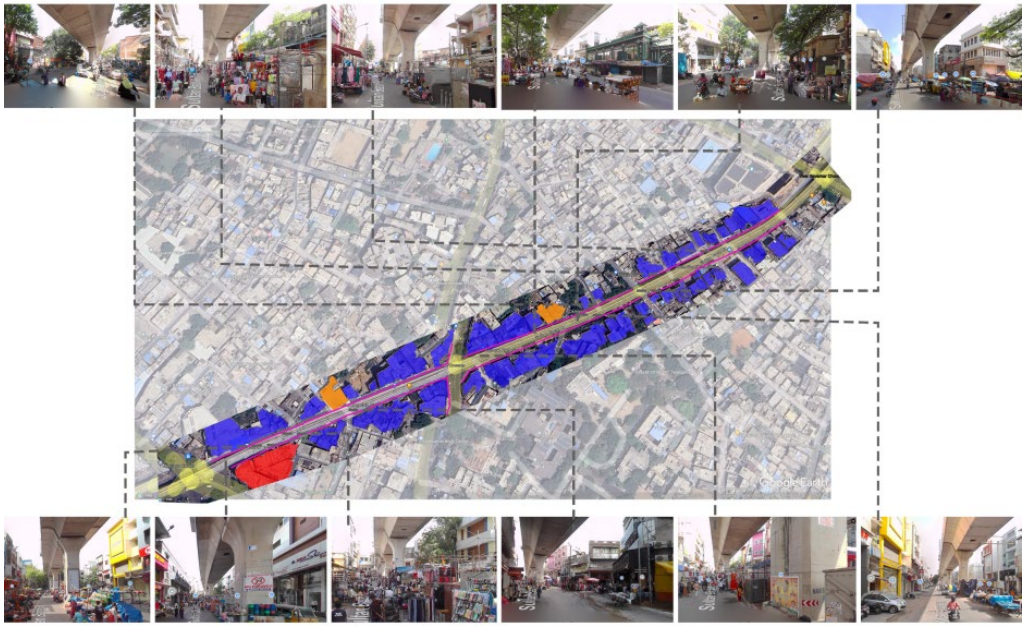
Figure 2: Sultan Bazaar on-site observations



They navigated the new environment by adjusting their methods and strategies, ensuring they could continue to earn a living while facing limited space and resources. This determination allowed them to maintain their livelihoods despite the difficult circumstances.

Figure. 3 Cross section of Sultan Bazaar market in 2010

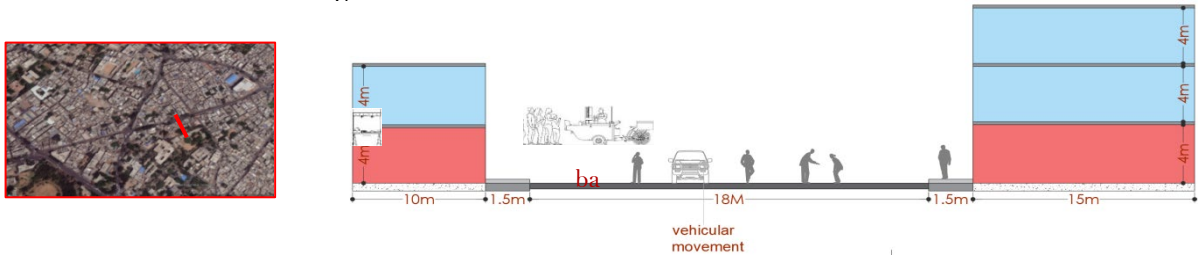
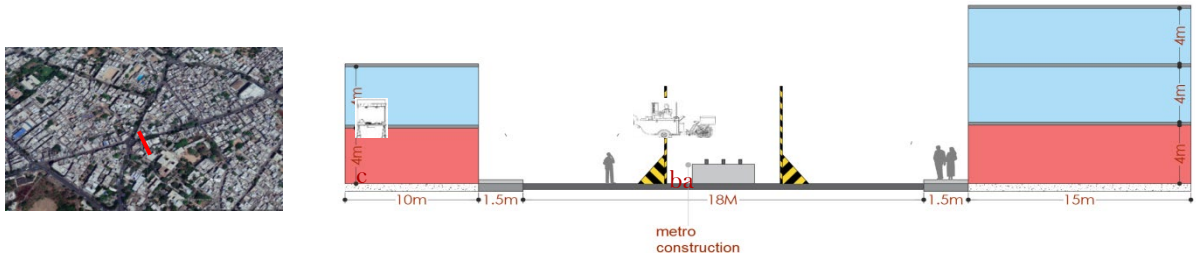


Figure. 4 Cross section of Sultan Bazaar market in 2015



Perceptions of the Vendors

A survey of 75 street vendors was done during day and night time to understand the process in which they chose the areas and zones for vending and to also understand how they are coping with the challenges they face. The survey brought out that most vendors are male. Families typically have 5–9 members, with two earners being most common. The largest age group is 25–45 years, and most have middle school or post-high school education. A majority have

basic vocational skills, and most walk to work. Only 5 of the 75 respondents own their homes. About 25 of the respondents lack proper housing and stay in extreme unhygienic and adjusted conditions.

Figure 5: Constructions on the above floors of development on the adjacent sides of the

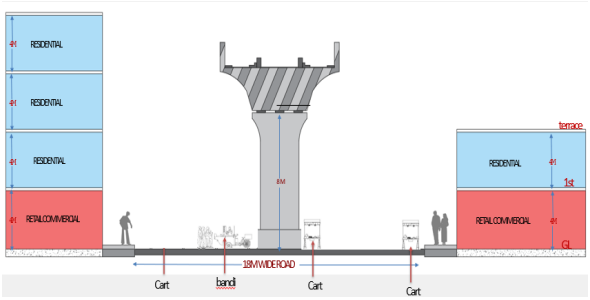


Figure 6: Cross-section showing recent adjacent buildings

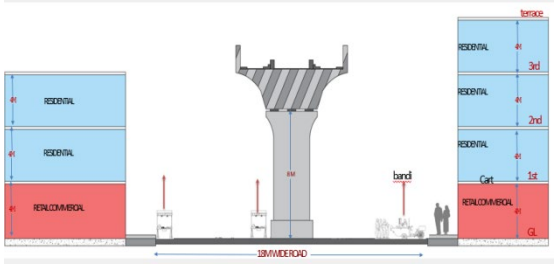


Figure 7: Street vendors operating under the metro rail

This detailed description of the hawking characteristics in Sultan Bazaar paints a clear picture of the challenges faced by street vendors in the area. To summarize and highlight key points:

1. **Ccommodities sold**: The vendors primarily trade garments, leather accessories, footwear, fancy jewellery, cosmetics, and home décor. These items reflect a diverse range, but their display is hindered by space constraints.
2. **Hawking space**: Vendors occupy about 1.5 to 2 sqm, which is insufficient to display their products effectively. The limited space not only affects product variety but also reduces customer interaction, contributing to overcrowding.
3. **Customer engagement**: On a typical working day, each vendor attracts about 20 to 30 customers between 10 am and 6 pm. However, the lack of space and amenities might hinder further customer flow.
4. **Qquality of space**:
    a) **Storage**: Insufficient storage space forces vendors to transport goods daily, increasing costs and limiting storage for perishables.
    b) **Proximity to Poor Infrastructure**: The presence of drains, sewers, and waste dumps, along with the lack of public toilets, further degrades the quality of the space and public health.
5. **Perception of space**:
    a) **Sense of Belonging**: Vendors lack a sense of ownership due to insecure spaces, frequent displacements, and inadequate urban amenities.

b) **Customer Experience**: The area lacks customer-friendly design elements such as clear walkways, seating, and sanitation, which makes it difficult for shoppers to engage.
c) **Threat of Eviction**: Vendors face the constant risk of eviction, creating instability in their livelihoods.

Space appropriation

Vendors who invest in kiosks face financial strain due to the lack of secure spaces and consistent traffic. Poorly positioned vending spaces reduce vendors' earnings. Inadequate organization and overcrowding make the situation worse. Many vendors start by sharing space with others, exacerbating competition and reducing personal space for business growth.

Some Critical Issues Perceived by The Vendors of Sultan Bazaar

The hawker respondents were interviewed on four predominant heads of data investigation. Questions were asked on several sub-parameters under each head (as indicated in Tables 1 to 6). The responses were normalized on a scale of 1 to 5, for each sub-parameter to arrive at overall scores for each analytical head. The individual sub-parameters were correlated with the overall weighted score of the corridor to understand which correlation shows strong statistical significance and whether the nature of relation is positive or adverse. First analytical head was 'the quality of hawking space'. This was assessed by aspects like how much space they are occupying, the storage space available, the lighting options at night, the nearness to drains, proximity to toilets, shade, etc.

Quality of Hawking Space

It was found that 'proximity to toilets' is the most significant parameter and has strongest relation with the sense of a good quality of space. This is followed by the factor of being away from open drains or solid waste dump. The third factor of significance for the hawkers was having a space near to carriageway. In summary, the hawking space works well for them if close to the road, away from drains and close to a toilet.

Table 1: Quality of hawking space in Sultan Bazaar

Quality of Hawking Space	R Square Value	Co-Efficient
Space on Carriageway	0.230928452	0.1726
Storage Space Available	0.133390776	0.1269
Lighting Options at Night	0.100489571	0.1287
Nearness to Drains/Sewer/Solid Waste Dump	0.22003759	0.1606
Proximity to Closed Toilets	**0.347322067**	**0.1987**
Proximity to Open Toilets	0.116234774	0.124
Has Shade from rain	0.020056643	0.0054
Has Shade from sun	0.026748362	0.0653

Perception of Hawking Activity as a Livelihood, in Sultan Bazaar: The overall perception of the informal activity as a source of livelihood was understood in terms of gauging their sense of belonginess, their threat of eviction, their sense of hygiene, sense of safety and infrastructure deficiency and customer friendly spaces. It was observed that the aspects of threat of eviction is of highest concern among hawkers. It is the threat of eviction that looms strong over their activity and creates hazard, vulnerability and exploitation in situations of crisis, as revealed by the data obtained.

Table 2: Perception of Hawking Activity as a Livelihood, in Sultan Bazaar

Perception	R Square Value	Co-Effecient
Threat of Eviction	0.222856168	0.1499
Sense of Belongingness to Space	0.135888132	0.0913
Sense of Hygiene	0.106281834	0.0943
Sense of Safety	0.023506982	0.0507
Is the space customer-friendly	0.119257957	0.0996
Is Space Infrastructure Deficient	0.133665066	0.1079

Appropriation

The overall process of appropriation of public space as a space that becomes a source of livelihood generation was understood in terms of the different steps they have undertaken over time to establish the space and each of these steps were scored and marked by the respondents in terms of its significance. It was observed that they mostly have to arrange their own kiosk or frame which becomes a unit of storage and sale. This is their biggest and most significant aspect. Thereafter, the aspect that they have to pay a informal deposit and capitation amount to local formal sector traders in the vicinity is another important concern. Thirdly, the need to negotiate with the formal urban authority is an important factor in their decision to stay or move.

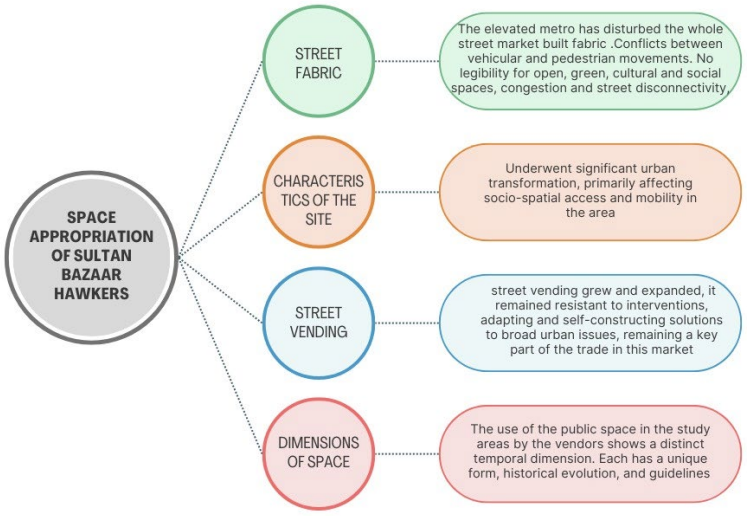
Table 3: Appropriation of hawking space in Sultan Bazaar

Appropriation	R Square Value	Co-Effecient
Had to pay informal deposit and capitation amount	0.160238203	0.1266
Arranged Own kiosk / frame	0.267487332	0.1695
Shared space with another hawker initially	0.044356468	0.2508
NGO / CSO / CBO helped in getting space	0.061987572	0.3095
Formal Shopowners are collaborative?	0.001504011	0.1470
Police / Urban Authority / Municipal helped?	0.16164933	0.1510
Potential of the Position of hawking	0.15594421	0.1311

In general, it can be summarized that the transformation of the Sultan Bazar area has four main tenets (see figure 8). Firstly, the elevated metro corridor has provided shade and new space underneath, nut has also disturbed the earlier spaces of vending creating lesser zones due to emerging parking, landscaped areas and less customers. There is conflict between pedestrian and vehicles, which reduces their customer base and creates unsafe zones.

The need for dedicated pedestrian corridors is essential for street vending with reduced vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. The site underwent changes in socio-spatial access of various income groups leading to different set of customers for which the hawkers had to change their commodities and timings. Hence, there needs to be spaces, which can be modified for multi-purpose activities of hawking. The number of hawkers have grown steadily over time showcasing the area's strong local inclination towards street level buying tendencies, and hence more space and demand estimation is required in proportion to the formal sector to be able to arrive at an appropriate quantum of space to be design for the hawkers.

Figure 8: Space appropriation aspects of sultan bazaar hawkers



Findings from the Study Area of Ameerpet

Ameerpet is located in the north-western part of Hyderabad. The neighbourhood of Ameerpet is a bustling commercial hub with a mix of retail shops, textile stores, service outlets, and numerous street vendors. It is densely populated and hosts many educational institutions and businesses, resulting in high pedestrian traffic. While street vendors play a vital role in the local economy, the growth of retail outlets and hawker proliferation has led to congestion and challenges in managing public space. Balancing pedestrian flow and the needs of vendors is a key concern in urban planning for this area.

1. **Type of Hawking Space**: Vendors use uncovered stands/carts with no kiosks, exposed to weather conditions (rain and sun).

2. **Earnings**: Insufficient earnings to cover basic expenses due to limited space, overcrowding, and lack of infrastructure.

3. **Space Quality**:

    a) Carriageway overcrowded, disrupting traffic and reducing space for pedestrians/vehicles.
    b) Proximity to drains, sewers, and waste dumps highlights poor infrastructure.
    c) Public toilet nearby but unhygienic and temporary.

4. **Perception of Safety and Space**:

    a) Vendors feel unsafe due to lack of designated spaces, theft risk, and accidents.
    b) Feel disconnected from the space due to insecure, informal vending locations.

5. **Space Appropriation**:

    a) Collaborative arrangements with shop owners, who rent space in front of their stores.
    b) High foot traffic from malls and metro station boosts vendor visibility and sales potential.
    c) Vendors use portable kiosks/carts but store them securely in designated areas to prevent theft.

Figure 9: Segment maps of Ameerpet

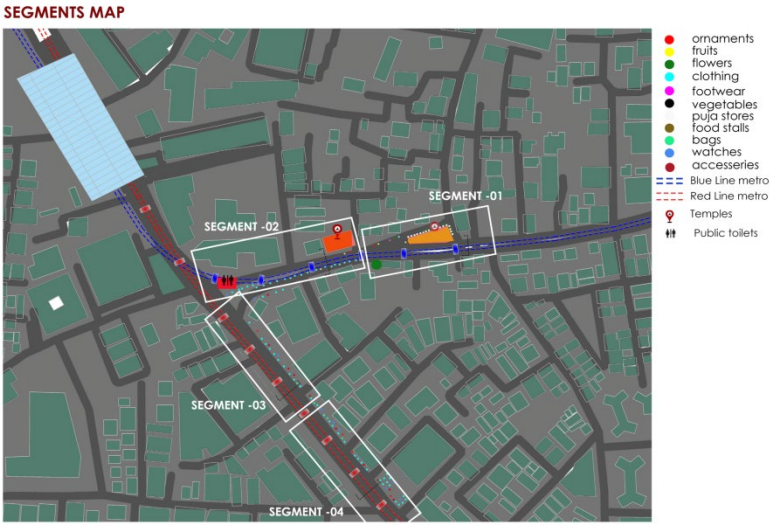


Figure 10: Cross sections and images showing street vending activity in Ameerpet

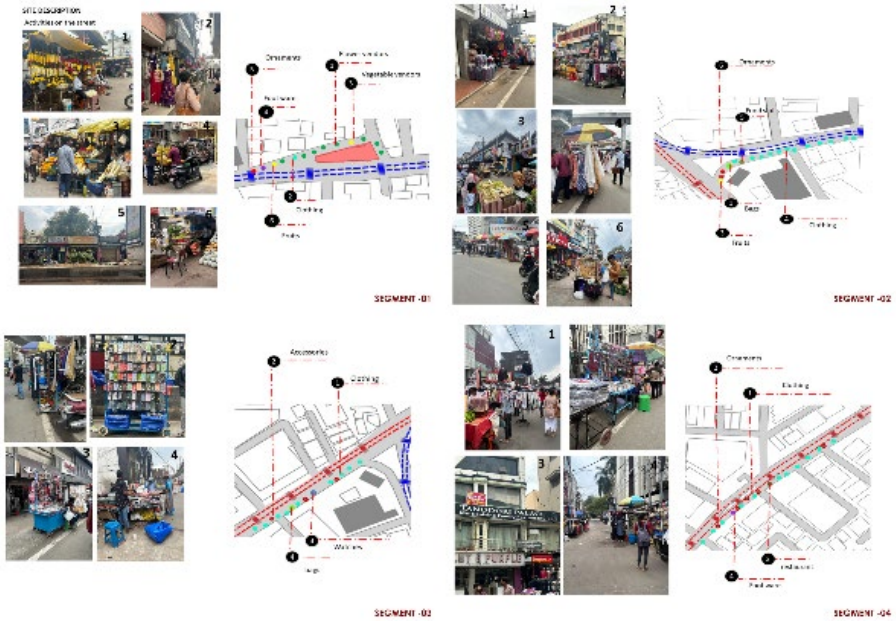


Figure 11: Cross sections of Ameerpet main road

Critical Issues in Ameerpet

Similar to previous section, the hawker respondents were interviewed on four predominant heads of data investigation, discussed as below.

Quality of Hawking Space

It was found that 'proximity to drains, sewers, or waste dum' is the most significant parameter of concern and has strongest relation with the sense of a good quality of space. This is followed by the factor of 'lack of storage space for the commodities'. The third factor of significance for the hawkers in this site was presence of shade. They preferred shaded areas not only for themselves, but for the customers and find them to be a significant factor affecting the quality of hawking space.

Table 4: Quality of hawking space in Ameerpet

Quality of Hawking Space		
	R Square	**Coefficient**
Space on Carraigeway?	0.844	2.439
Storage Space Available?	0.862	2.265
Lighting Options at Night	0.808	2.207
Nearness to Drains/Sewer/Solid Waste Dump	0.915	2.884
Proximity to Closed Toilets	0.729	2.191
Proximity to Open Toilets	0.677	2.266
Has Shade from rain	0.833	2.490
Has Shade from sun	0.738	2.316

Perception of Hawking Activity as a Livelihood, in Sultan Bazaar

The overall perception of the informal activity as a source of livelihood was understood in terms of gauging their sense of belongingness, their threat of eviction, their sense of hygiene, sense of safety and infrastructure deficiency and customer friendly spaces. It was observed that the aspects of sense of belongingness is of highest importance and that is what is keeping them from moving away. Infrastructure deficiencies and safety are equally significant parameters that influence ther decisions to hawk at a particular place or to move from that place.

Table 5: Perception of Hawking Activity as a Livelihood, in Ameerpet

Perception		
	R Square	**Coefficient**
Threat of Eviction	0.821	2.496
Sense of Belongingness to Space	0.999	2.074
Sense of Hygiene	0.762	2.323
Sense of Safety	0.864	2.165
Is the space customer-friendly	0.861	2.224
Is Space Infrastructure Deficient	0.868	2.175

Appropriation of Hawking Space

The manner in which the space in this site got appropriated also indicated that the possibilities of arranging their own kiosk or frame ($R^2 = 0.319$, Coefficient = 2.525) is the most significant factor in appropriation for a hawker. This gives hawkers a stronger sense of ownership of the space their appropriate and develops a sense of belongness towards protecting the kiosks and the space. Collaboration with formal shop owners ($R^2 = 0.281$, Coefficient = 2.546) also positively affects appropriation chances. Informal payments ($R^2 = 0.212$, Coefficient = 2.588) are another major factor, showing how financial challenges influence the ability of hawkers to secure their space.

Table 6: Appropriation of Hawking Space, in Ameerpet

Appropriation		
	R Square	**Coefficient**
Had to pay informal deposit and capitation amount	0.782	2.588
Arranged Own kiosk / frame	0.819	2.525
Shared space with another hawker initially	0.701	3.098
NGO / CSO / CBO helped in getting space	0.732	1.607
Formal shop-owners are collaborative?	0.781	2.546
Police / Urban Authority / Municipal helped?	0.791	2.601
Potential of the Position of hawking	0.705	2.463

Summary of Findings from Ameerpet and Sultan Bazaar

In the rapidly transforming urban landscape of Hyderabad, street vendors in areas like Ameerpet and Sultan Bazaar live a daily reality marked by uncertainty, struggle, and exclusion. These informal workers endure long hours in overcrowded, unhygienic, and unsafe environments—often without shelter from the elements, clean sanitation, or legal protection. Despite their vital role in sustaining the urban economy and serving the everyday needs of thousands, they remain invisible in mainstream urban planning discourses. Some of the findings that need planning and design solutions are summarised herewith.

1. **Limited Space and Infrastructure Deficiencies**: Both areas face significant challenges due to overcrowding, limited vending space, and inadequate infrastructure. In Ameerpet, the lack of designated spaces and the use of uncovered stands expose vendors to harsh weather conditions, while in Sultan Bazaar, vendors also experience limited space and poor sanitation facilities, reducing their business efficiency and safety.
2. **Impact of Environment on Quality of Space**: The proximity to drains, sewers, and waste dumps negatively impacts vendors' perceptions of space quality in both areas. Vendors in both locations report feeling unsafe and disconnected from the space, further exacerbating the challenges they face.
3. **Financial Instability**: In both areas, vendors' earnings are insufficient to cover their operational costs, including rent and maintenance of equipment. Expenditures often exceed earnings, creating financial instability and making it difficult for vendors to sustain their businesses.
4. **Collaborative Appropriation**: Collaboration between hawkers and shop owners is a common practice in both locations. This arrangement allows vendors to access space in front of retail outlets, providing a steady flow of potential customers. However, this approach often involves informal payments, which further complicate financial stability.
5. **Sense of Belonging and Ownership**: Vendors who have a sense of ownership over their space, particularly those with their own kiosks or stands, experience a greater connection to the space. This sense of belonging positively impacts their business perception and success, while insecure vending locations contribute to instability and low morale.
6. **Need for Formal Recognition and Urban Planning**: Both areas highlight the need for more structured urban planning that integrates street vendors into the urban fabric. Designated, secure vending zones with basic amenities would not only improve vendors' livelihood but also enhance customer experience and overall urban space quality.

Urban India thrives on its streets. Nowhere is this more visible than in the vibrant neighborhoods of Ameerpet and Sultan Bazar in Hyderabad, where the streets are not just corridors of mobility but active spaces of economic exchange, social interaction, and informal livelihood generation. These urban arteries, pulsating with the presence of street vendors, challenge conventional notions of planned order and demand a more Inclusive and nuanced approach to urban planning. Street vending in these locations is not merely a function of informality but a complex outcome of urban poverty, spatial contestations, economic need, and the failure of formal employment structures to accommodate the urban poor.

Yet, planning authorities have historically viewed these vendors as encroachers rather than contributors to the life and economy of the city (Tarafdar 2018). This mindset has resulted in spatial exclusion, periodic evictions, and a lack of infrastructural support. What is urgently required is a shift from enforcement based urban management to a people focused planning approach that recognizes vendors as stakeholders in the urban process. This essay draws from academic literature, field observations, and planning discourse to propose a humanised and holistic framework for integrating street vending into the urban design of streetscapes such as Ameerpet and Sultan Bazar.

This study examined the socio-economic characteristics of street hawkers, customer perceptions, and formal shop owners' perspectives on urban space utilization. The findings reveal the challenges hawkers face, the importance of accessible and hygienic vending spaces, and the interactions between informal and formal retail actors in city streetscapes. To ensure the credibility of the conclusions, internal biases were mitigated through - triangulation, coding and thematic analysis, and keeping a reflective journal - as described in the earlier sections. Each participants identify has been kept anonymous and their reflections on the topic has been understood for development of suggestive interventions.

Suggested Interventions

Ameerpet and Sultan Bazar are iconic commercial hubs in Hyderabad that demonstrate the dynamic nature of Indian urbanism. Ameerpet has evolved into a transit rich, education and shopping zone, while Sultan Bazar retains a

traditional market character with layered commercial and cultural significance. In both locations, street vendors coexist with formal shops, public transport facilities, and pedestrian flows in a highly negotiated and contested space. They provide affordable goods and services, promote economic inclusion, and contribute to the unique sensory and cultural identity of the streets.

However, current urban interventions often attempt to erase this organic order in favor of standardized beautification or infrastructure upgrades. As a result, the vulnerability of vendors increases. Planning authorities must begin by accepting the fact that street vending is not a temporary aberration but a permanent urban reality that requires thoughtful accommodation. Many fear eviction, face harassment, or are forced to pay informal fees just to hold on to a few feet of vending space. Their livelihoods are precarious, and their aspirations often ignored. Acknowledging their pain and perseverance is essential. Their inclusion in city planning through secure vending zones, access to basic services, and legal recognition is not simply a policy need—it is a moral responsibility. Addressing their woes with compassion and commitment can help build a more equitable, inclusive, and humane urban future.

A few important interventions are advocated which attempts to re-think the way planners and urban designers work and approach this issue.

A. Rethinking Spatial Design for Inclusion

A first step towards integration is to move away from the binary of formal versus informal and instead embrace spatial co existence. This can be achieved through participatory spatial mapping exercises, where planners work with vendors to identify preferred vending zones, pedestrian desire lines, and shared spaces. Ameerpet's wide roads and footpaths present opportunities for delineated vending bays, modular stalls, and shaded vending pockets that do not obstruct pedestrian flow. In Sultan Bazar, spatial interventions must respect the historical built fabric while introducing mobile and collapsible vending units that align with heritage aesthetics.

Designs should also include essential amenities such as waste bins, water access, night lighting, and seating for customers. Importantly, these amenities must not be conceived as separate vending zones but as part of the everyday public realm. Flexible design templates that respond to daily and seasonal variations in footfall are crucial. A people centric design lens will help planners view the street not just as infrastructure but also as a shared civic space where vendors are an integral part of the urban ecosystem.

B. Policy and Regulatory Support

Legal recognition of street vendors has significantly improved through the Street Vendors Act of 2014. However, implementation gaps remain wide, especially in the formation and functioning of Town Vending Committees (TVCs). For areas like Ameerpet and Sultan Bazar, planning authorities must ensure that TVCs are not only formed but are participatory, gender inclusive, and responsive to the spatial dynamics of the area.

Zonal vending plans need tp be created with updated spatial data and on ground verification. Enforcement mechanisms should shift from punitive actions to supportive engagement, including grievance redressal mechanisms and inclusion in disaster management planning. Policies should also promote digital and financial inclusion of vendors, offering access to microcredit, insurance, and formal registration without complex bureaucratic hurdles.

C Participation and Co Creation

One of the most powerful strategies for sustainable integration of street vendors is participatory planning. Urban planners, municipal officials, and urban designers should engage vendors as collaborators and co designers of their working environments. Methods such as street audits, storytelling, focus group discussions, and visual mapping can help capture the lived experiences and needs of vendors.

Women vendors in Sultan Bazar, for instance, may have specific requirements for safety, storage, and sanitation. Young migrant vendors in Ameerpet might benefit from digital literacy workshops and mobile based vendor registration. By recognizing these diversities, planning processes become more humane and context aware.

Educational institutions in Hyderabad can be roped in to conduct living labs and pilot projects on vendor inclusive street design. This collaboration will not only provide academic grounding to planning efforts but will also sensitise the next generation of urban practitioners.

D. Data Driven yet Empathetic Governance

Technology can support vendor planning by offering geo referenced vendor databases, dynamic occupancy patterns, and AI driven pedestrian heatmaps. However, such data must be contextualized through ground realities. For instance, a GIS map showing vendor clusters is meaningless unless it also records working hours, seasonal fluctuations, and cultural rhythms of the market. Empathy must remain at the core of planning decisions. Vendors are often migrants, single mothers, senior citizens, or persons with disabilities, all of whom operate under daily insecurity. Policies must therefore be guided by the principle of "Right to the City" where urban space is not a commodity but a collective resource.

Overall, the study provides insights for planning inclusive and sustainable urban spaces that accommodate both informal vendors and formal retailers. These findings can guide policy and design strategies to create vibrant, equitable, and safe public spaces in Indian cities.

Ameerpet and Sultan Bazar are more than just congested commercial corridors. They are living laboratories of urban informality, resilience, and negotiation. To plan these streetscapes better for street vendors is to embrace the idea that cities must work for all their inhabitants, not just the privileged or formal.

Human centric urban planning requires moving beyond masterplans and engineering templates to co created, locally anchored, and socially just strategies. Planners and authorities must thus become facilitators rather than controllers of urban life. The vision for Hyderabad's streets must be one where the informal and formal, the mobile and the fixed, the old and the new can thrive together. Only then can our streets truly reflect the inclusive, democratic, and plural character of the Indian city.

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Authors' Contribution

Ayon Kumar Tarafdar: Conceptualization, Visualization, Writing – review & editing, Supervision.

Shalini Kakani: Conceptualization, Visualization, Writing – original draft

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