



# **Nationwide Programs Mark Vendors' Day**

**Government Must Bring in Draft of Bill for Central Law for Street Vendors in Public Domain, NASVI demands**

**Law Must Ensure Participation and Inclusion of Street Vendors**

New Delhi, 20 January:

Nationwide programs marked Vendors' Day on Friday as street vendors' organizations affiliated to National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) held conventions, demonstrations, sit in, hunger strike and human chains in different cities and towns of the country demanding drafting of Bill for central law for street vendors in consultation with all stakeholders.

NASVI demanded that the proposed law should be effective and comprehensive enough to ensure that the street vendors get secured and dignified livelihood and the participation and inclusion of street vendors takes place at a rapid pace.

NASVI celebrates Vendors' Day every year since 2004 when on the day the street vendor movement had influenced the Government of India to announce the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors.

Meanwhile, StreetNet International, a Durban based international alliance of street vendor organizations working in Latin America, Africa and Asia, has greeted all NASVI members on the occasion of the Vendors' Day. Its chief Ms. Pat Horn has sent a solidarity greeting and expressed full support for the People's Campaign for the adoption of a Central Law for Street Vendors in India.

*It is worth remembering that NASVI has long been campaigning for an effective and comprehensive central law to protect the livelihood and social security rights of street vendors and its campaign has yielded positive result with Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA) agreeing to bring in Bill for central law in the coming session of parliament.*

**NASVI organized a Street Vendors' Convention here in Delhi on the occasion of Vendors' Day with the central theme of *Nothing for Us/ Without Us: Ensuring Participation and Inclusion through Law*. The convention discussed on the key components of the law which the government has agreed to bring in and brainstormed on the issues related to ills plaguing municipal governance in the national capital. A large number of street vendors, informal sector organization representatives, labour rights activists and urban development experts joined the convention.**

**Inaugurating the convention the Union Minister of State for Women and Child Development Krishna Tirath said that the street vendors had the legitimate right to have secured spaces for their livelihood and the right must be protected by adequate legal provisions.**

**She said the street vendors, particularly their children and women, do need better deal from the governments as they contribute immensely to city economies and society. Mrs. Tirath assured that her ministry would frame a scheme for street vendors.**

**She assured NASVI that Ministry of Women and Child Development would write to the Ministry of Urban Development to see to it that wherever the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) constructs colonies and flats, there must be spaces for street vendors.**

**Senior retired IAS officer and the chairperson of the Expert Committee on New DMC (Delhi Municipal Corporation) Act K. Dharamarajan also joined the convention as special guest and listened to the testimonies of the street vendors and their leaders.**

**Mr. Dharamarajan found the testimonies quite revealing and said that the integrative city development framework and responsive municipal governance would be the corner stone of the proposed new DMC act. He assured that the concerns and demands of street vendors would be duly taken care of in drafting and finalizing the new municipal act.**

**Earlier setting the agenda of the convention, NASVI Coordinator Arbind Singh said that the increasing marginalization of urban poor like street vendors from city governance could only be checked if street vendors' roles were institutionalized through law.**

**He said, "The Supreme Court mandated formation of ward vending committees and zonal vending committees. 272 ward vending committees and 12 zonal vending committees were formed by the MCD and also zonal vending committees by the NDMC. But, the officials ensured that these committees do not function and they continue taking decisions about the street vending which should be taken by these committees."**

**The NASVI leader argued, "Experiences have shown that when law mandates consultation and participation, officials are then bound to follow. So, the city governance structures must have institutionalized roles for street vendors in any**

**process of decision making. Only when the decisions are taken together, they have far better chances of implementation.”**

**He said, “ As Delhi is gearing up for its new municipal act, the act must have provisions which give legitimate participation to urban poor like street vendors in shaping their destiny. Their destiny should not be left in the hands of officials who come and go.”**

**Senior Congress leader and Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee President J. P. Agrawal expressed full solidarity to the street vendors and said that all provisions must be made in the new DMC Act to protect and promote street vending.**

**Several street vendor leaders of Delhi and NASVI representatives also addressed the convention.**

According to a NASVI release issued here, vendors’ day programs were held in more than 60 cities and towns. In southern states, NASVI affiliates organized conventions, seminars and public meetings in Hyderabad, Mysore, Dharwar, Chennai, Trichi, Palakkad and Cochin. In west and central parts, rallies and demonstrations took place at Andheri in Mumbai, Surat, Vadodra and Bhopal.

In elections bound states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab, NASVI associates organized sit in and demonstrations calling upon political parties to announce their intentions and programs in favour of street vendors. NASVI affiliates also sent memoranda to different political parties urging them to include street vendors’ issues in their election manifesto.

In Bihar, NASVI affiliates organized statewide hunger strike in protest against increasing incidence of harassment and forced eviction of street vendors in different districts of state, such as Patna, Nalanda, Samastipur, Muzaffarpur and Motihari.

At Hissar in Haryana, a massive meeting of street vendors was held and the vendors pledged to fight to the finish to secure their livelihood.

At Ranchi in Jharkhand, hundreds of street vendors gheraoed the Ranchi Municipal Corporation office to protest loot and corruption of municipal authorities.

In West Bengal, a rally was taken out in Kolkata from Kolkata College Square to Dharamtala Metro Channel. The rally demanded strict implementation of the policy for street vendors as well as inclusion of railway vendors under the purview of the policy. Demonstrations were also organized at Imphal and Lakhimpur in the north east.

**Reports are still pouring in.....**

## See a few photographs of Delhi convention





Chairperson of Expert Committee on New Delhi Municipal Corporation Act. K. Dharamrajan interacting with street vendors



Member of Parliament J. P. Agarwal addressing Delhi convention



Union Minister for Women and Child Development Krishna Tirath addressing Delhi convention