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Street Vending in Guwahati: Experiences of Conflict

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Centre for Urban Equity (CUE)



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CUE was established at CEPT University in 2009, evolving from the Urban Poverty Alleviation (UPA) Cell established in 2008. CUE advocates a human-centered and equitable urban development paradigm. CUE undertakes research and advocacy; conducts training and capacity-building; imparts education; and networks with stakeholders on various aspects of human settlements with a focus on urban equity.

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About Society for Social Transformation and Environmental Protection (sSTEP)

sSTEP is a development organization working with the poor and marginalized of urban and rural Assam as well as other states in the North East region of India. Its thematic areas of work include livelihood, education, health and hygiene, disaster (natural & manmade), and women's empowerment. sSTEP's mission is the empowerment of poor and marginalized communities, showing solidarity with people's struggles, advocating for accountable governance that protects the rights of the poor and marginalized, reducing the vulnerability of poor and marginalized communities and improving their living conditions.

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Abstract

Informality has played a crucial role in shaping cities. The rise of the informal has been a response to the inability of the formal economy to absorb employment-seeking migrants from the rural hinterland to the city. In order to survive, they must engage in informal activities like vending on streets and public markets that are highly contested urban spaces. Given the withdrawal of the State from the governance of these spaces and failures of urban planning in dealing with informality, conditions are created that lead to deprivations and conflicts among street vendors. This research attempts to understand the nature of these deprivations and conflicts by focussing on two markets in Guwahati, namely Ulubari and Beltola. It also presents the alleviating measures taken by the vendors and community-based organizations like *Unnayan Samitis* towards mitigating these conflicts.

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1. Introduction

Street vending is an example of an economic activity that is categorized as being part of the informal sector. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (1972), used the term “informal sector” to describe the activities of the poor who were working very hard but who were not recognized, recorded, protected or regulated by the public authorities. The seventeenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (2003) describes informal employment as jobs carried out in enterprises that could be either in the formal sector, informal sector or households in a very broad sense. These include a) own-account workers employed in their own informal sector enterprises, b) employers employed in their own informal sector enterprises, c) contributing family workers, d) members of informal producers’ cooperatives, e) employees holding informal jobs¹ anywhere, f) own-account workers engaged in production of goods exclusively for own use (2003: 13). In many developing economies, the demand for formal employment far outstrips the supply. As International Labour Office (2002: 1) notes, “a bulk of new employment in the recent years, particularly in developing and transition countries, has been in the informal economy.” Informal sector activities such as unpaid work in family enterprises, casual wage labour, home-based work, street vending etc. provide opportunities to poor people to secure their basic needs for survival. A report by the committee on unorganized sector statistics (2012) highlights the importance of informal sector in Indian economy:

“Unorganized or informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy. More than 90 per cent of the workforce and about 50 per cent of the national product are accounted for by the informal economy. A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in the informal activities. The high levels of growth of the Indian economy during the past two decades are accompanied by increasing informalization. There are indications of growing interlinkages between informal and formal economic activities (2012: 7).”

The ILO defines informal sector as “consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operated at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with the formal guarantees.” Recently, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) with a group of researchers and activists, worked with ILO to broaden the earlier concept and definition of the “informal sector” to incorporate certain types of informal employment that were not included in the earlier concept and definition. They wanted to extend the focus to include not only enterprises that are not legally regulated but also include employment relationship that is not legally regulated or protected. Thus, the new definition focuses on the nature of employment in addition to the characteristics of enterprises (Chen, 2007). However, the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS 2009), has defined “unorganized sector” as, “consist[ing] of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by

¹ Employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, paid annual or sick leave, etc.) owing to non-declaration of the jobs or the employees; short duration; jobs with hours of work or wages below a specified threshold among other reasons.

individuals or households engaged in the sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers.”

Besides the unavailability of adequate numbers of formal jobs, easy entry, low investment, small scale of operation, low-level of educational and skill requirements are the other reasons due to which a large section of the population is engaged in the informal sector. The types of work that make up the informal economy is diverse, particularly in terms of capital invested, technology used and income generated. This could range from self-employment or unpaid family labour to street vending, cobbling and waste-picking. Most workers in the informal sector are deprived of secure work, worker’s benefits, social protection and representation. Though production or employment arrangements in the informal economy are often semi-legal or illegal, most informal workers and enterprises produce and/or distribute legal goods and services (Chen, 2007). In spite of this, the informal economy is often portrayed as being illegal or part of the “black” or “underground” economy.

Historically, the informal sector was known as the traditional economy that was expected to wither away and die with industrial growth. However, the informal economy has not only sustained but has also expanded in this period. Also, notwithstanding the wrong notion that the informal economy is only marginally productive and exists separately from the formal economy; it has become a major provider of employment, goods and services to lower-income groups while contributing a significant share to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). There are also linkages with the formal economy as it produces for, trades with, distributes and provides services to the formal economy (ibid). The most prevalent types of work in the informal economy are home-based work, street vending and casual day labour in construction and agriculture sector.

2. Street Vending in India

In India, poverty coupled with the lack of gainful employment in rural areas continues to push people from rural to urban areas. Since the migrants have low levels of skill and education, the formal sector has not been able to address the demand for jobs. Many of these migrants resort to street vending in order to survive in the city. As of 2002, the total number of street vendors in India stood at around 1 crore. By one estimate, large metropolitan cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata had roughly 2.5 lakh street vendors each, while other cities such as Ahmedabad and Patna had around 80,000 street vendors (Bhowmik, 2003). The National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2009 estimated the number of street vendors in Indian cities to be around 2 per cent of the total city population.

Though street vending plays a vital role in assuring livelihoods to a large underprivileged section of the society, its contribution is seldom recognized by the city administration or urban planning agencies. Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution of India promises the right to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business to all Indian citizens. Paradoxically, on the other hand, different sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Police Act empowers police to remove any obstructions on the streets. The police and municipal authorities not only evict them from the streets by falsely labelling them as obstructions. In other cases, their so-called “illegality” is used to extort money from the vendors. In 2014, the Parliament of India passed a legislation called “Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014”. Many civil society organizations such as Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) and National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) were instrumental in getting the landmark legislation drafted, hoping that it would

ease the situation for the vendors. However, our fieldwork indicates that many cities have not implemented the act. In the few cities, where the provisions of the Act have been adopted, the executive has systematically undermined the well-meaning provisions, turning them instead into a tool to disenfranchise and harass the vendors themselves.

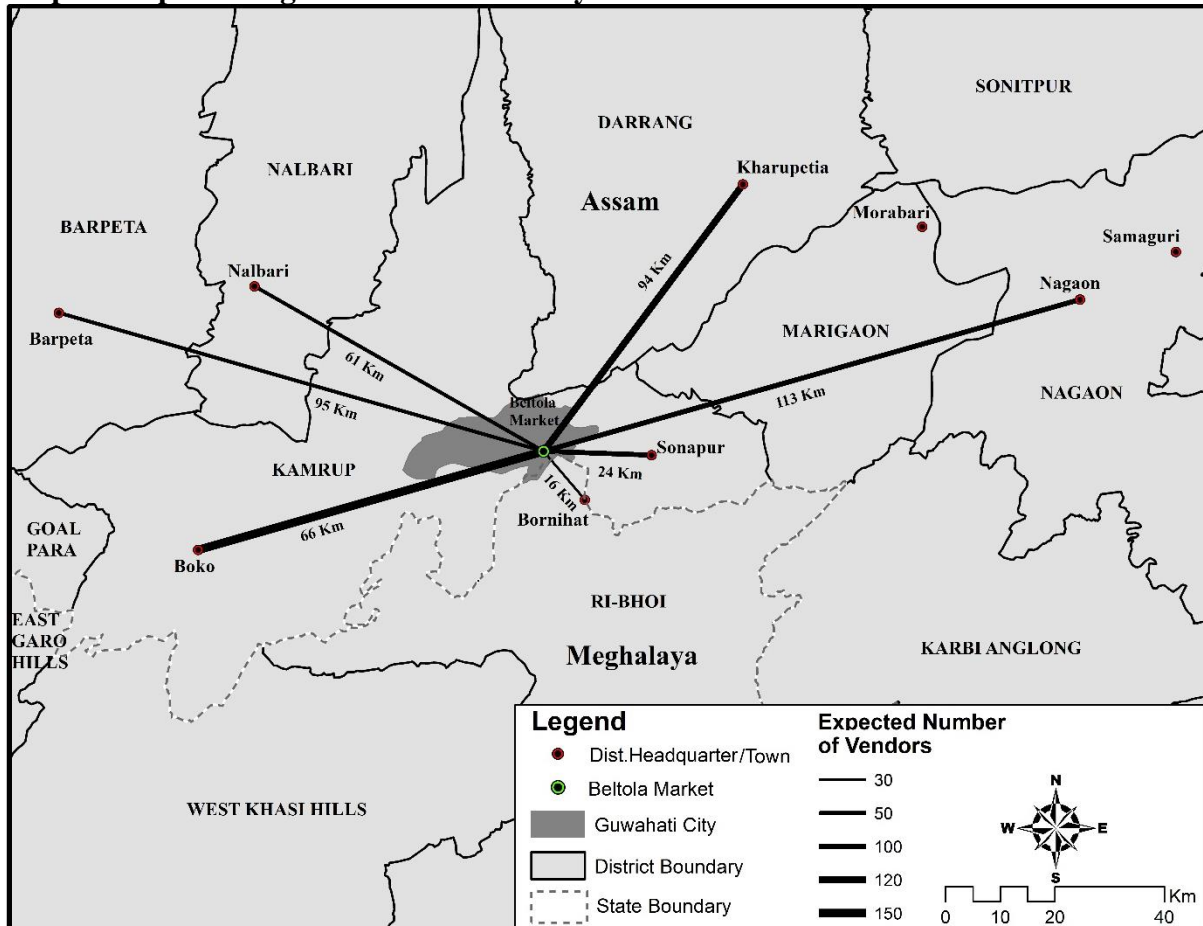
Box 1: Highlights of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014

- The Act aims to protect the livelihood rights of street vendors as well as regulate street vending through demarcation of vending zones, conditions for and restrictions on street vending.
- A Town Vending Committee (TVC) to be formed for every town. Any person intending to undertake street vending needs to register with the TVC. He/she may then apply for a vending certificate that will be issued based on various criteria.
- The TVC comprises of the municipal commissioner, representatives of street vendors, local authority, planning authority, local police, resident welfare association and other traders associations.
- The state government to frame a scheme for street vendors. The local authority, in consultation with the planning authority, to frame a street vending plan once every five years.
- Natural markets (those that have come up naturally on account of demand) not to be disturbed while framing street vending plans.
- No eviction of vendors to be undertaken without relocation.
- The Act recommends the reservation of 2 per cent land for vending as part of master plans and local area plans

3. Street Vending in Guwahati

Because of its geographical location as the gateway to India's north east, Guwahati became a major trade and commerce hub. The National Highway 37 and the main line of North Frontier Railway pass through the city. Historically, River Brahmaputra played a significant role in the transportation of goods to and from the city. As a result, markets like Fancy bazar, Machkowa and Uzan bazar developed along the river. Street vendors have always been a part of the city's informal economy. Kacharighat market, one of the oldest markets of Guwahati was run by vendors, small traders and farmers who came with food grains, vegetables and poultry items on bullock carts and boats. Indigenous women vendors, mainly from the Garo community, came with hill produce and indigenous vegetables to Kachari Basti market in Ulubari. Most of the vendors who came to vend in Kachari Basti and Kacharighat did not live in the city. They came to the markets with their produce, and after their sale went back to their villages.

Map 1: Map showing distances traveled by vendors to reach markets



Source: Prepared by CUE.

The shifting of the state capital to Dispur in 1973 was followed by a sudden spurt in the population of Guwahati from 1.24 lakhs in 1971 to 2.69 lakhs in 1981 (Desai et al. 2014). Consequently, the demand for perishable goods and non-perishable goods increased which led to an increase in the number of vendors coming to the city. People from areas like Naogaon, Barpeta, Kharupetia, Rangia (see Map 1) and other distant places started coming to Guwahati for vending. This catchment area varied from 20 km to 200 km from the city. During our visit to Barpeta road (80 km away from Guwahati), we found that farmers started their journey to the city's wholesale market very early in the morning, pulling carts loaded with hill produce for several kms (see Picture 1).

The vendors traveled to the city using modes of transport like trains, buses or shared pick-up vans. Many vendors took a boat from their village to the city before taking an auto rickshaw to reach the market. Many vendors started living in the city, near the market in cheap rented accommodation so that they could sell their commodities till late evenings regularly. Interviews with elderly vendors of Ulubari and Beltola markets revealed that it took a lot more time now to completely sell off their wares as compared to around 20 years ago. While they were able to sell their entire wares by afternoon earlier, now they were forced to sell till late evenings and sometimes even on the following day in order to recover their initial investment. This led to conflicts that were often along gender lines. Tribal women vendors usually came from locations like Sonapur, Bornihat and Boko which were closer, whereas vendors coming from farther locations like Naogaon, Kharupetia and Barpeta were mostly male. Male vendors came by

trucks with huge quantities of produce to markets and needed on average, more space than their female counterparts (Picture 2). Consequently, there were conflicts between male and female vendors. There were other conflicts between regular vendors and others who came less frequently. These conflicts and other conflicts are discussed in detail in a subsequent section.

Picture 1: Farmers on their way to Barpeta wholesale market in the early morning



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 2: Male vendors need large space than most of the female vendors in Beltola market



Photo credit: Authors

3.1. Traveling to the Markets from the Villages

Since the place of origin of the agricultural produce and their sellers in Guwahati's markets was as far as 80 to 200 kms from the city, it was decided to visit these places and understand how the produce is brought to the city. Two such settlements namely, Barpeta Road and Bornihat were chosen on account of their geographical location and variety of transportation options available. Barpeta Road is a small town about 80 km away from Guwahati. The majority of vendors who came to Guwahati from this location lived in villages within 10 to 15 kms from Barpeta road. They bought vegetables either from the *haat* market at Goberdhana or from the wholesale market at Barpeta Road. In Bornihat, women vendors accessed the hills to collect vegetables which were then prepared for the journey to Guwahati. Both these cases are discussed below.

Barpeta Road: Vendors prepared for the journey to Guwahati a day before the appointed day itself. Vendors made such trips once or twice every week. Vendors who lived in villages near the town came early to the market and bought large quantities of vegetables before returning to their villages. The vegetables were kept in the market till night when the vendors returned from the villages to continue their journey to Guwahati. Vendors used either late-night trains or trucks to get to Guwahati with their vegetables. The vendors revealed that taking the train made more economic sense over engaging a truck as they seldom paid for the railway ticket. However, it also meant having to deal with the railway police that was a major botheration for male vendors. They felt that it was easier for women to deal with those in uniform. Therefore, most male vendors sent their vegetables to Guwahati by trucks while themselves travelling to the city by train.

Picture 3: Vendors buying vegetables in Goberdhana *haat* market (left) and Barpeta Road wholesale market (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Vendors who took the train around midnight would hardly get a chance to sleep overnight. The distance of 95 kms between Barpeta Road and Guwahati was covered in close to 3 hours. On arrival in Guwahati, the vendors would engage handcart pullers to reach the market. On the return leg of the journey, the vendors sometimes reached Barpeta road late in the evening. If their home in the villages was far from the town, they were forced to spend the night on the railway platform and return home in the morning. Sometimes, they would lose their cash to thieves in the process.

Picture 4: Vendors loading their vegetables into truck (left), Vendors waiting for train at night at Barpeta Road railway station (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Dehal Bagan, Bornihat: Dehal Bagan is a village in Meghalaya located around 50 kms away from Guwahati. The nearest town of Bornihat is around 8 kms away from the village. It is one of the many villages in Meghalaya from where women come to Guwahati in order to sell rich varieties of leafy vegetables, bananas, bamboo shoots and other indigenous species. Most residents of the village belong to the Garo community. The vegetables are either grown in the homesteads or are sourced from the hills, which involves considerable hardship. Women must fulfill their traditional role as a caregiver for the family in addition to foraging for the vegetables in the hills. Since more and more people are seeking these vegetables, women must travel as far as 10 to 15 kms deep into the hills over 7 to 8 hours from early morning to afternoon. While returning, they carry loads as heavy as 30 to 40 kgs over their backs while traversing steep slopes and negotiating poisonous plants. They are exposed to risks of injuries owing to accidental falls and chance encounters with poisonous flora and fauna. On reaching home, they must cook for the family before getting the vegetables ready for the journey to Guwahati's markets. On the following day, four to five such women hire an auto-rickshaw together to take the vegetables to Guwahati while themselves hanging on the autorickshaw. After selling the vegetables over the day, they return home by bus in the evening. This journey is made twice a week.

Picture 5: Vendors unloading their vegetables from train at Guwahati railway station (left), vendors marching towards market with handcarts in early morning (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 6: Vendors climbing steep slopes (left), searching for vegetables (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 7: Vendors coming down from hills (left), and wrapping leafy vegetables in banana leaves to protect them (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 8: Vendors reach the market next day early morning by auto van (left), vendors acquiring their space to make stall (right)



Photo credit: Authors

3.2. Categories of Markets in the City

There are three major types of markets in Guwahati city that have been considered as part of the research (Map 2). There are daily markets whose land and the buildings on them are owned by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC). These are either rented out to shopkeepers or leased out to lessees through annual bidding (See Box 2 below). Additionally, there are daily markets functioning on open plots or road sides. Here, the taxes are collected by the GMC (Kacharighat market, for example) or through lessees. Finally, there are also bi-weekly markets functioning on open plots or road sides. Table 1 lists the markets in Guwahati:

Table 1: Various categories of markets and their examples

Sl. No.	Type of market	Example
1	(Markets owned by GMC but rented out to shopkeepers or leased out to lessees)	Fancy bazar market
2		TRP road market, Machkowa
3		Kedar road new market, Machkowa
4		Fatasil market
5		Paltanbazar market
6		Sola <i>bee</i> / wholesale fish market
7		Chandmari flyover market
8		Chandmari Colony market
9		Ulubari market (also has tribal women vendors coming in bi-weekly)
10		Ganeshguri market
11		Dispur supermarket
12		Uzanbazar market
13	Daily market (lease markets)	Kacharighat market
14		Bhutnath goat market
15		Beltola evening market
16	Bi-weekly market	Beltola market (lessee market)

Source: GMC, See Annexure-2

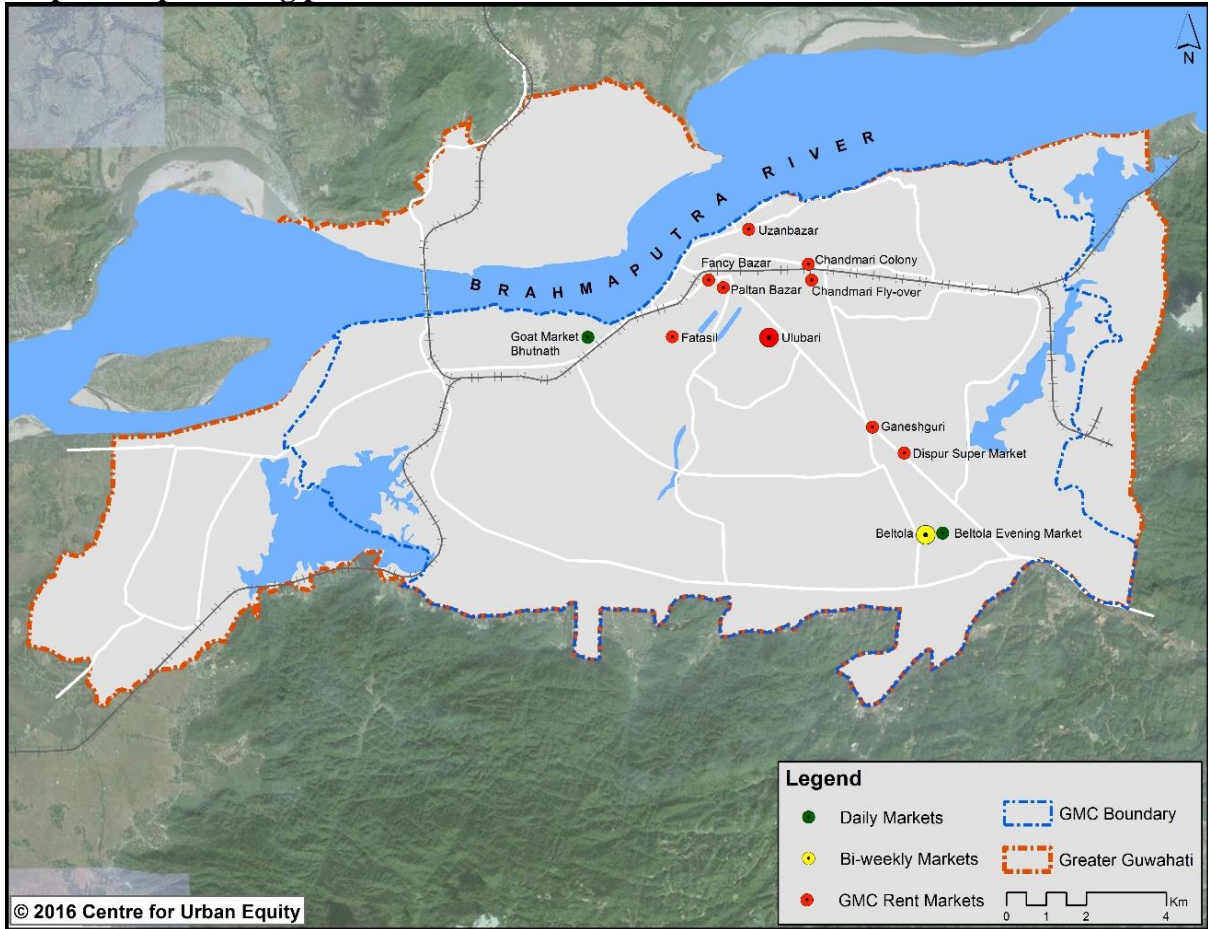
Box 2: The lease system adopted by GMC for markets

The GMC leases out markets and parking spaces through a process of competitive bidding on an annual basis under the provisions of the GMC (Lease of parking Places and Markets) Bye-Laws, 2009. The highest bidder deposits 30 per cent of the settled value as advance payment within 24 hours after receipt of a written order. The lessee must pay the remaining 70 per cent of the bidding amount in nine monthly installments within a year. The lessee deploys his own employees to collect money from the vendors. The lessee tries to recover – sometimes through force and arm-twisting - the bidding amount, expenses incurred to collect the amount and a profit within a year from vendors.

Apart from the markets listed in Table 1, there are markets run and managed by *Unnayan Samitis* as well as local youth clubs. For example, the market in Lakhra is managed from 2000 onwards by the Khipinijal Dehalpuja Aru Bazar *Unnayan Samiti* which collects charges from the vendors who sell their wares on the roadsides, community-owned/public land and semi-permanent kiosks (See Picture 9 and Picture 10). The market operates on all days, but the number of vendors on weekdays is much smaller than that on Sundays when close to 200 vendors descend on the market. These vendors are mostly indigenous women who come from Garbhanga (15-20 kms away), Dhupdhara and Goalpara. The men come from Kharupetia to sell their wares. The market is spread over an area of 9 *bighas*² bought from a local landlord by the committee. Using daily charges collected from vendors (INR 20-100 based on size of stall and nature of commodity sold), the *Unnayan Samiti* maintains lighting, cleanliness and other developments in the market. It also pays a sum of INR 10,000 as tax to the GMC every quarter.

² 1 *Bigha* (Assam) = 5 *Katha* = 100 *Lessa* = 14,400 square feet = 1,338 square metre.

Map 2: Map showing prominent markets in Guwahati



Picture 9: Vendors in open plot (left), vendors along the street in Lakhra market



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 10: Permanent kiosks in Lakhra market



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 11: Office of Garchuk Milan Sangh that collects tax from vendors (left) and vendors selling vegetables in one of the service lane (right)



Photo credit: Authors

The Garchuk Milan Sangh – a local youth club – manages the Garchuk market and collects charges from vendors (Picture 11). There are markets running on the land of the Indian Railways such as those in Bamunimaidan, Maligaon and Pandu (Picture 12 and Picture 13). The vendors are charged INR 5 on a daily basis. There are also other small markets that function on private plots. The plot owner collects a small amount from each vendor on a daily basis in lieu of allowing them to vend in his plot. There are other markets located along roadsides where GMC collects INR 20 per stall as scavenging tax. The informal shops along the road from GNB road to GS Road through Paltan Bazar, come under this category. Vendors in Ulubari market reported that they gave INR 10 to the tax collectors as scavenging tax without receipt. It was assumed that the collectors pocketed the amount.

Picture 12: Vendors selling goods on Railway land in Bamunimaidan (left) and receipt of INR 5 which is being collected by N.F. Railway from each vendor/day

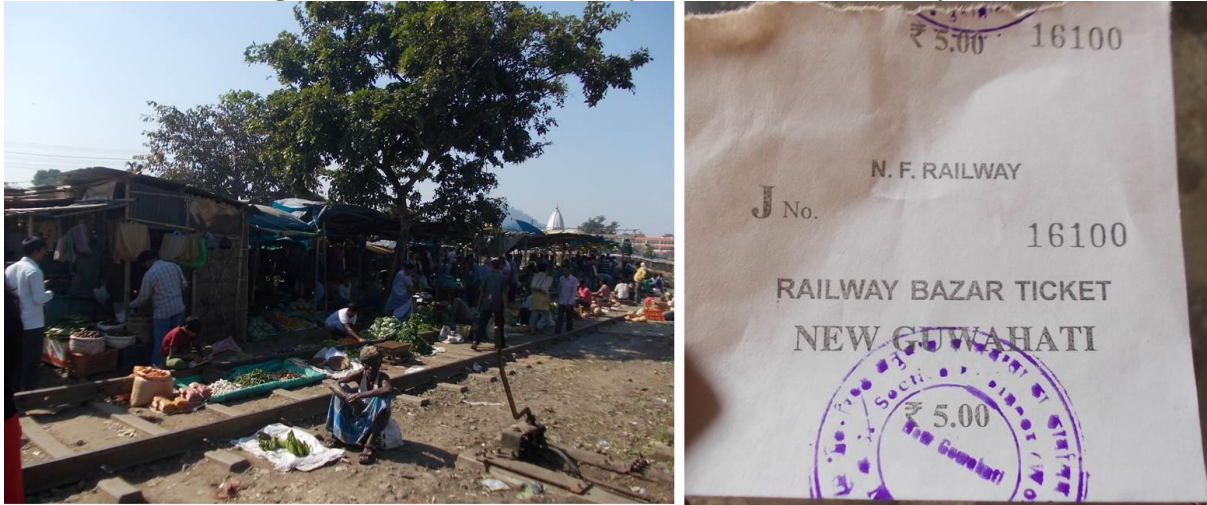


Photo credit: Authors

Picture 13: Maligaon Shuttle Gate Market



Photo credit: Authors

3.3. Civil-society and Judicial Activism Protecting Vendor's Rights

Unsurprisingly, street vending is not viewed favourably by the GMC, which constantly makes efforts to discourage such activity. This is despite the widely accepted notion that the presence of vendors on the streets makes them safer to use. During our research, vendors reported the following as major challenges: a) forced and often violent evictions by GMC personnel, policemen and lessees (or their *goondas*) on a regular basis, b) harassment and extortion by the same actors, and c) absence of demarcated vending areas in areas viable for street vending in agreement with the provisions of the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, 2009³. Many organizations, activists, and lawyers have been fighting for the legal rights of street vendors. Since 2002, the Society for Social Transformation and Environment Protection (sSTEP) has played a major role in organizing the vendors and supporting them to fight for their rights. Two major organizations of vendors that have been fighting on their behalf are Greater Guwahati Street Vendors Association (GGSVA) and Greater Guwahati Women Vegetable Vendors

³ It later made way for Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.

Association (GGWVVA). All Assam Street Vendors Association (AASVA) is a state-level association of vendors with a similar mandate. These associations are supported and guided by sSTEP and National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) as well as international organizations like Action Aid, Oxfam and Indo-Global Social Service Society (IGSSS). On numerous occasions, civil society organizations and activists have sought the intervention of a rather sympathetic judiciary to counter the efforts of the GMC and police to evict and discourage street vending.

Picture 14: Protest organized by GGSVA for implementation of Street Vendors’ Policy, 2004 at Diapur Last Gate in 2007 (left), demonstration against eviction in 2014



Photo credit: GGSV

A petition was filed in the Guwahati High Court (GHC) as early as 1996 by the Greater Guwahati Hawkers Association to protect the street vendors from eviction across the city. In response, the GHC directed the state government and GMC to stop all eviction related activities. The vendors were told to ply their trade while maintaining cleanliness and by not blocking the roads – thereby taking care of the GMC’s concerns as well⁴. The SS Road Hawkers Association⁵ made use of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) as an instrument in 2010 to draw the attention of the HC to the GMC’s failure in implementing the well-meaning provisions of the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, 2009. They also brought it to the GHC’s notice that the GMC officials and police routinely harassed vendors while collecting bribes in exchange for their safety. They also pleaded for quashing the order of 2010 under which each vendor was asked to pay an exorbitant sum of INR 600/- per month as ‘Special Scavenging Charges’. The GHC responded sympathetically to the concerns of the vendors. However, even as of 2013, a PIL filed by Mr. Pargamoni Kakati revealed that a) GMC did not have any regulatory framework in place for street vending activities in the city, b) GMC had not adopted any street vending guidelines, c) no vending licenses had been issued and no areas had been identified by GMC for earmarking as hawking zones, and d) GMC routinely conducted eviction drives to free street space and enable “free-flow” of traffic, among other things. Also, in the meantime, more violent action (including the seizure of handcarts and goods) was taken by the GMC and police against vendors who sought refuge in the GHC for protection against eviction. Though these multiple petitions and PILs were filed over the years, the GMC and police kept ignoring court orders and did not take any steps to include them in

⁴ Based on a conversation with Mr. Utpal Das – a prominent advocate and RTI activist in Guwahati.

⁵ An association of street vendors plying their trade at Fancy Bazaar for more than thirty years, primarily dealing in readymade clothes and portable domestic accessories.

town planning until the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 was promulgated by the Parliament. In mid-2014, the GMC formed Town as well as Zonal Vending Committees by circulating notices and organizing a meeting where various government departments and non-government organizations were invited (Refer Annexure-1). In early 2015, the GMC undertook a city-wide vendor's survey through the involvement of Scorpion, a local NGO which engaged students of Guwahati University and Don Bosco School.

4. Research on Street Vendors in Guwahati

4.1. Research Questions

The following research questions were explored as part of this study:

- a) Given the withdrawal/absence of the state from the governance of informal markets, what are the problems faced by street vendors in plying their trade?
- b) Does the absence of the state create and encourage conditions of conflict and possibly, violence?

Under the larger purview of these questions, the research is interested in the factors responsible and actors involved in creating as well as resolving such conflicts. The research is also interested in understanding the impacts of the conflicts on vendors' livelihoods. Finally, this research also seeks to understand how urban planning and governance can respond towards discouraging the rise of such situations of conflicts.

4.2. Venues for Research

As discussed in Section 2, the markets in Guwahati have been marked by a partial withdrawal of the state from governance. As a result, private parties (in the form of lessees and market management committees) have stepped into the governance vacuum with little accountability to the vendors who sell their wares in the markets. To understand the differences of the vendors in the lease markets vs informal markets, Beltola (lease market) and Ulubari (informal market) have been selected as venues for this research.

Beltola Market: Beltola is a traditional market that was earlier a small *haat* market when it was part of the Beltola kingdom. Today, it is a large market that hosts vendors coming from distances as far as a hundred kms. Prior to 1980s, this market operated on a public plot under temporary structures. When a large number of vendors started coming to this market, there was a gradual spillover on to the roads nearby. Since the GMC was building a multi-storey market, the vendors that once sold their wares inside had now started vending on the streets. Before the 1990s, the GMC directly collected taxes in Beltola market. From the early 1990s onwards, the GMC assigned this work to lessees through a competitive bidding system. Apart from the bi-weekly market, some permanent vendors also vend regularly in this market in the evenings. The GMC invites separate bidding for the evening market. Thus, it is not necessary that the same lessee collects tax from both markets. A constant tension was experienced between the lessee and vendors on the question of the amount of tax.

Ulubari Market: There are two markets in Ulubari. The older one is known as Kachari Basti market and the newer one is known as Ulubari market. The Ulubari market was set up by vendors who were earlier active in Kachari Basti market but were evicted by the police. Initially, they were vending on one of the internal lanes linked to the BK Kakati Road.

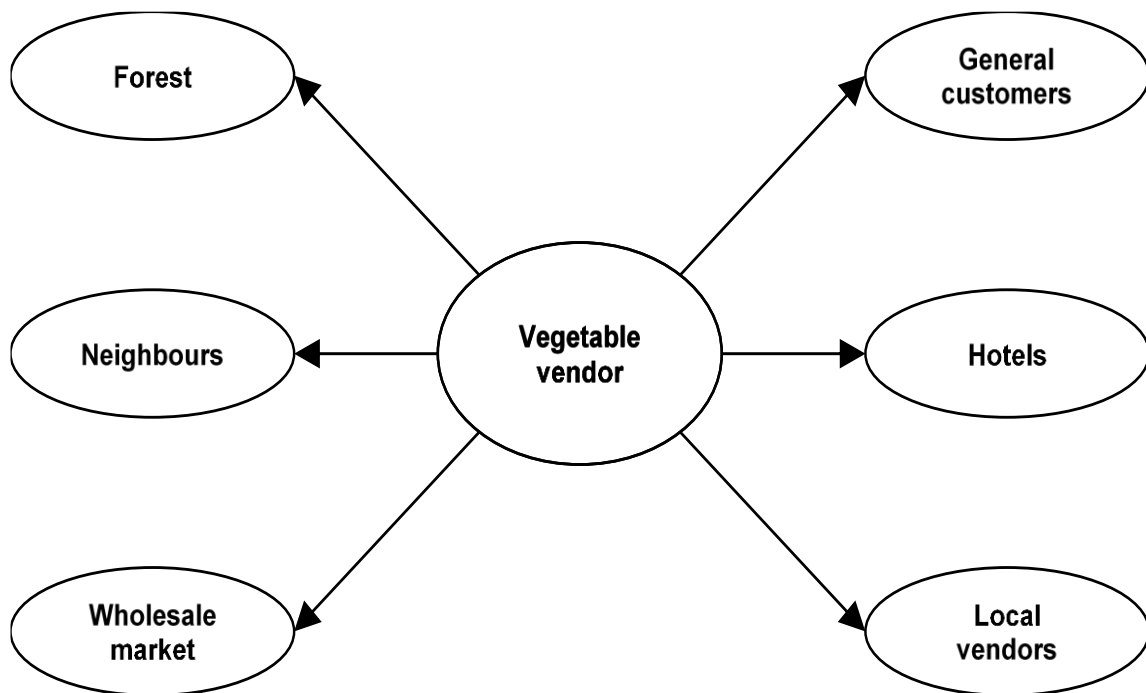
However, they were evicted by the local residents and police and relocated along the Bharalu drain on BK Kakati Road. In 2006, sSTEP, with the help of ActionAid, built a women’s market that was later demolished by the GMC and Police before the market achieved the current form.

4.3. Methodology

The research work started with preliminary visits and informal conversations with vendors in order to know about the composition of vendors, history of markets, space arrangements and management. Two visits were made outside Guwahati to the vendors’ villages to understand their travel pattern to Guwahati as well as the manner in which they sourced and prepared the agricultural produce. After these visits and informal conversations, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured questionnaires were designed in a way that kept the research questions in focus (Refer Annexures 5 & 6). Below, steps and tools used for conducting the FGDs with vendors have been elaborated below.

Step I: Introduction: The facilitator of the discussion introduced herself/ himself and the purpose of the study. The facilitator asked for the participants consent and informed them that they were free to withdraw at any point if they were not comfortable in participating any further. The participants were asked to introduce themselves giving the following information, a) name, b) age, c) type of commodity sold, d) place of origin, and e) duration for which they had been vending in the market.

Figure 1: Sample of economic linkages



Step II: Economic linkages: The participants were asked to identify the source as also the destination of their products. They were also asked about the production and transport costs involved and mark the same on a graphic shown in Figure 1.

Step III: Listing and ranking of experiences of conflict in last two years: The participants were asked to list conflicts experienced in the period spanning two years prior to the day of the

discussion. Also, they were asked to list the factors that caused the conflict along with their ranking and prioritization of the conflicts (Table 2).

Table 2: Conflicts experienced over previous two years (sample)

Conflict points/problems faced while vending in the market	Factors	Ranking	Prioritization
Conflict with lessee	High amount charged as tax		
Conflict with fellow street vendor	Scarcity of space/more vendors		
.....		

Step IV: Impacts of the conflicts: The participants were asked to reflect on the impacts of the conflicts listed above on their day-to-day life and livelihoods. They were also asked to list their coping measures to conditions arising out of such conflicts (Table 3).

Table 3: Impacts of the conflicts and coping measures (sample)

Conflict points/problems faced while vending in the market	Impact on the sector	Coping measures
Conflict with lessee		
Conflict with fellow street vendor		
...		

Step V: Actors and institutions that help/hinder vending activity: The participants were asked to identify the various actors and institutions that encouraged or hindered vending activities. They were also asked to list out suggestions for these actors and institutions (Table 4).

Table 4: Actors and institutions that help or hinder street vending (sample)

Actors/institutions	Help/ hinder	Suggestion
Lessee		
Market Committee		
sSTEP		
GMC		
...		

A total of 108 semi-structured interviews and 9 FGDs were conducted with vendors of Beltola and Ulubari markets which host an estimated average of 750 and 240 vendors on the busiest days (Table 5). With regard to Beltola market, where vendors came from villages as far as Barpeta (95 kms away), Kharupetia (94 kms away) and Naogaon (113 kms away) once or twice a week (See Section 3.1 and Map 1 in particular), some interviews and FGDs were conducted in these villages for the convenience of the vendors and to ensure that the presence of the lessee in the market did not influence their responses. The local research partner sSTEP also helped organize discussions and interviews at their office in Guwahati especially for local regular vendors. Detailed market-wise break-up of semi-structured interviews and FGDs is presented in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 5: Market-wise break-up of semi-structured interviews and FGDs

Sl.	Name of the market	Estimated no. ⁶ of vendors	No. of interviews with vendors	No. of FGDs
1.	Beltola	~750	78	6
2.	Ulubari	~240	30	3
	Total	~990	108	9

Source: Authors

Table 6: Break-up of semi-structured interviews and FGDs organized with vendors of Beltola market

Sl.	Place of origin	Estimated no. of vendors	No. of interviews with vendors	No. of FGDs
1.	Villages outside Guwahati			
a.	Barpeta/Nalbari/Rangia	100	9	1
b.	Nagaon	100	10	1
c.	Kharupetia	150	15	1
d.	Sonapur	100	10	1
e.	Boko	150	15	1
f.	Bornihat	30	3	
2.	Locals (within Guwahati) selling			
a.	Vegetables	50	5	
b.	Second-hand clothes (Gujarati origin)	70	7	1
c.	Other item such as shoes, cutlery, broom, plastic goods, juice and ice-cream, sellers etc.	30	4	
	Total	780	78	6

Source: Authors

Table 7: Break-up of semi-structured interviews and FGDs organized with vendors of Ulubari market

Sl.	Places from where vendors come	Estimated no. of vendors	No. of interviews with vendors	No. of FGDs
1.	Villages outside Guwahati			
a.	Barpeta Road	25	3	1
b.	Sapori & Kurua	15	2	
c.	Rangia	15	2	
d.	Shipajhar	10	1	0
e.	Kushvihar/Alipurduar	10	1	
f.	Sonapur	35	5	1
g.	Bornihat	30	4	
h.	Boko & Singra	30	4	0
2.	Locals (within Guwahati)	70	8	1
	Total	240	30	3

Source: Authors

⁶ The expected numbers of vendors in each market as well as numbers of vendors who come from different places are based on conversation with vendors and observation during 3-4 months of regular market visits.

Picture 15: FGDs featuring Beltola market vendors from Barpeta (left) and Kharupetia (right)



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 16: FGDs featuring Ulubari market vendors from Sonapur and Boko (left) and Beltola market vendors from Bornihat and Boko (right)



Photo credit: Authors

5. Introduction to Vendors of Beltola and Ulubari Markets

The vendors of Beltola market mainly come from Kharupetia, Naogaon, Barpeta, Nalbari, Sonapur, Boko, Bornihat and Singra. Apart from these, a few vendors who live near the market on rent, also use Beltola market regularly (Table 6). Regular vendors have made temporary projections on the road side to sell their wares. A significant proportion of vendors of Ulubari market come from Rangia, Nalbari and Barpeta Road as this route is well connected by train to Guwahati. The railway station is only 2 kms away from Ulubari market. Some vendors also come from much away places like Kushvihar and Alipurduwar (Table 7). Regular vendors live on rent in nearby areas like Pukhripur and Birubari. A break-up of vendors on basis of the commodity sold by them in the market is presented in Table 8 below. Most vendors in either markets sold vegetables for a living. Vendors who sold dry fish, handmade towels, bed sheets, betel nuts, cutlery and iron equipment were common in Beltola market. Regular male vendors in Ulubari market and those in Beltola from Barpeta, Nagaon and Kharupetia in Beltola market did not sell hill produce. They bought vegetables from the local wholesale market and sold them on market days. Tribal women vendors came with hill produce and other indigenous vegetables to sell in the markets.

Table 8: Break-up by commodity sold of vendors in sample

Sl.	Commodities sold by vendors	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Vegetables	55	70.5	28	93.4
2.	Vegetables & seasonal fruits	4	5.1	1	3.3
3.	Old clothes	6	7.7	-	-
4.	Others	13	16.7	1	3.3
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

The proportion of female vendors was found to be relatively higher in Ulubari market as compared to Beltola market (Table 9). A large number of Muslim male vendors came from places like Nagaon, Kharupetia and Barpeta to sell vegetables in Barpeta. In Ulubari market, a large number of female vendors came from Sonapur, Boko, Barpeta Road and Bornihat on market days. On other days, however, Muslim male vendors who regularly sold their wares in Ulubari were found to be in majority.

Table 9: Break-up by sex of vendors in sample

Sl.	Sex	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Male	40	51.3	13	43.3
2.	Female	38	48.7	17	56.7
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 10 below shows the distribution of the vendors based on their religion. In both markets, Hindu vendors were found to be in majority, followed by Muslim vendors. Those following Christianity were largely Garo women coming from Meghalaya.

Table 10: Break-up by religion of vendors in sample

Sl.	Religion	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Hindu	41	52.6	18	60.0
2.	Muslim	28	35.9	8	26.7
3.	Christian	9	11.5	4	13.3
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 11: Break-up by ethnicity of vendors in sample

Sl.	Ethnicity	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Assamese-Hindu	15	19.2	5	16.7
2.	Assamese-Muslim	8	10.3	1	3.3
3.	Bengali-Hindu	-	-	3	10.0
4.	Bengali-Muslim	19	24.4	7	23.3
5.	Tribal	26	33.3	14	46.7
6.	Others	10	12.8	-	-
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Within Hindu vendors, Assamese-Hindus and tribal communities were found to be in majority in both markets (Table 11). It is important to distinguish between Bengali-Muslim and Assamese-Muslim ethnicities. Bengali-Muslims are supposed to be migrants from Bangladesh whereas Assamese-Muslims have lived in Assam since a long time. Nearly one-fourth of the

vendors in Beltola market were found to be Bengali-Muslim. They live in vast rural tracks of land along the Brahmaputra River. The main reason for their involvement in vending in these markets was the absence of employment opportunities in the rural hinterland. Many Bengali-Muslim vendors, who vend regularly in Ulubari market, lived on rented accommodation in nearby areas. A large proportion of vendors are under the age-group of 30-44 and 45-59 (Table 12). This indicates that young people do not want to take up this profession but when they have families, they require stable livelihood means and vending provides such stability. Young men could seek employment in construction and other such hard labour jobs.

Table 12: Break-up by age of vendors in sample

Sl.	Age group	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	15-29	13	16.7	4	13.3
2.	30-44	36	46.2	17	56.7
3.	45-59	19	24.4	6	20.0
4.	>59	10	12.7	3	10.0
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 13 shows that 40 to 42 per cent of vendors in both markets had 6-9 members in their families. 47.4 per cent vendors of Beltola market and 60 per cent vendors of Ulubari market had a family size of 2-5 persons. Table 14 shows that about 50 per cent vendors had only one working person in their family. In other words, the vendor was the sole income earner in the family and street vending enabled them to feed their families.

Table 13: Break-up by family size of vendors in sample

Sl.	Family size	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	2-5	37	47.4	18	60.0
2.	6-9	33	42.3	12	40.0
3.	10-13	7	9.0	-	-
4.	>13	1	1.3	-	-
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 14: Break-up by number of working members in the family of vendors in sample

Sl.	No. of working members	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	1	42	53.8	15	50.0
2.	2	23	29.5	10	33.3
3.	3	9	11.5	3	10.0
4.	4	2	2.6	2	6.7
5.	5	2	2.6	-	-
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Beltola is one of the oldest markets in Guwahati. About 40 per cent vendors had been vending here for more than 10 years whereas about 45 per cent vendors had been selling in this market since last 5 years (Table 15). Out of 78 surveyed vendors, 12 vendors responded that they had vended in other markets of Guwahati like Machkowa, Ganeshguri, Kacharighat, Paltanbazar, Maligaon and Bhangagarh before shifting to this market. The reasons for leaving those markets were low sales, harassment by police and bomb-blast under the Ganeshguri flyover in 2009. However, only a few of them were able to recollect how long they had vended in those markets

before shifting to Beltola market. Ulubari market was set up at its present location in 2005-06. Around 50 per cent of vendors replied that they had been vending here for the past 6-10 years. A large proportion of this 50 per cent consisted of tribal women vendors. Many of them were vending in Kachari Basti market in the past, before they started vending at the present location.

Table 15: Break-up by years spent at market

Sl.	No. of years	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	0-2	15	19.2	7	23.3
2.	3-5	20	25.6	8	26.7
3.	6-10	12	15.4	15	50.0
4.	11-20	15	19.2	-	-
5.	21-30	11	14.1	-	-
6.	31-40	4	5.2	-	-
7.	>40	1	1.3	-	-
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 16 presents a break-up of the vendors by the days on which they vended at the markets. Since Beltola functioned as a bi-weekly market functioning on Thursdays and Sundays, a majority of vendors came only on those days. A few vendors sell their wares on all days regularly as well. Ulubari was also a bi-weekly market in the past that functioned on Wednesdays and Sundays. During the course of this research, it was found that women vendors who came from outside, started coming on either Tuesdays and Thursdays or Wednesdays and Fridays, as per their convenience, apart from Sunday. Thus, the market started functioning on these days as well. Around 75 per cent vendors in Beltola market and 93 per cent vendors in Ulubari market sold vegetables only in their respective markets. The rest of the vendors from Beltola market also went to other weekly markets around Guwahati like Maligaon and Jorabat markets (Fridays) and Katabari market (Tuesdays). Only 7 per cent vendors from Ulubari market sold their wares in Beltola market (Thursdays) and Sawkuchi market (Wednesdays).

Table 16: Break-up by days of presence in market by vendors in sample

Sl.	Days	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Sundays only	2	2.6	9	30.0
2.	Sundays and Thursdays	71	91.0	-	-
3.	Sundays, Tuesdays & Fridays	-	-	6	20.0
4.	Sundays, Wednesdays & Fridays	-	-	5	16.7
5.	Daily	5	6.4	10	33.3
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Truck and goods carrier van (medium size) were found to be the main modes of transport for vendors of Beltola market (Table 17). Vendors who came from distant places like Kharupetia, Barpetta and Nagaon came mainly by trucks hired on sharing basis. Vendors from nearby places like Bornihat, Sonapur and Boko came by goods carrier van hired on sharing basis. Since Beltola market was far from the Guwahati railway station, only two vendors came by train. Also, one particular vendor living in Guwahati, bought his goods from Dispur Last Gate and transported them by bicycle. The vendors who lived nearby came by walk. Their goods were either delivered by suppliers or bought from the Beltola market itself. Though a large proportion of vendors came by goods carrier van, bus and train were also found to be preferred by vendors of Ulubari market. Many vendors from Barepetta Road and Boko came by trains.

Vendors, who reached Maligaon Station by train took the auto van while those who reached Guwahati railway station came walking with their goods transported by handcart. Vendors from Kurua (rural Kamrup) came by boat before hiring an auto van to reach the Ulubari market.

Table 17: Break-up by modes of transport used to reach market by vendors in sample

Sl.	Mode of transport	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Walk	3	3.8	-	-
2.	Bicycle	1	1.3	-	-
3.	Truck + walk	25	32.1	2	6.7
4.	Goods carrier van + walk	43	55.1	12	40.0
5.	Bus + walk	4	5.1	6	20.0
6.	Train +walk	2	2.6	-	-
7.	Train + handcart	-	-	6	20.0
8.	Train + auto van	-	-	2	6.7
9.	Boat + auto van	-	-	2	6.7
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 18 presents a break-up by source of commodities sold by vendors of Beltola and Ulubari markets. There are several wholesale vegetable markets in areas beyond Guwahati such as those in Barpeta road and Kharupetia. One-third of the vendors from Beltola market bought vegetables from the wholesale markets in their towns. About 28 per cent vendors bought vegetables from other households in their village. The old cloth sellers roamed in various residential localities of the city and exchanged new utensils in lieu of old clothes. About one-fourth of vendors of Ulubari market bought from neighbours in their villages. Many vendors grew vegetables in their farms and also bought from their neighbours. Indigenous women vendors relied on hill produce as well as on their neighbors who grew vegetables but could not make it to Guwahati. In both markets, a small proportion of vendors went to markets like Dimapur (Nagaland), Shillong (Meghalaya) and Alipurduar (West Bengal) to source their commodities. The regular vendors in Ulubari bought vegetables from Garchuk and Fancy Bazar wholesale vegetable markets.

Table 18: Break-up by source of commodities sold by vendors in sample

Sl.	Source of commodities	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Local wholesale market only	26	33.3	5	16.7
2.	Own farm only	1	1.3	-	-
3.	Own farm + local wholesale market	1	1.3	-	-
4.	Own farm + others in the village	3	3.8	4	13.3
5.	Others in the village only	22	28.2	8	26.7
6.	Other vendors in the market only	4	5.1	-	-
7.	Outside Assam only (Dimapur, Shillong, Alipurduar etc)	3	3.8	1	3.3
8.	Hills + others in the village	2	2.6	4	13.3
9.	Others in the village + local wholesale market	3	3.8	1	3.3
10.	Wholesale markets in Guwahati	3	3.8	7	23.4
11.	Residential localities in Guwahati	8	10.4	-	-
12.	Local wholesale market + outside Assam	2	2.6	-	-
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 19 shows that a majority of vendors sold their commodities at dirt cheap rates in both markets if they were unable to sell their goods by evening. Many vendors sold their remaining vegetables to the local vendors at a certain low amount. However, selling commodities at cheap rate minimized their profit. A large proportion of vendors, who came from Boko and Sonapur to Beltola market, replied that they took back their commodities home. They hired an auto van for the entire day so that they could easily return home with the remaining unsold commodities in the evening. They sold their remaining unsold goods in their respective village markets next day. Regular vendors of Ulubari market kept their remaining vegetables behind their vending space and sold them on the next day. Irregular vendors sold their remaining commodities at cheap rates and returned back to their villages. A few of them stored it in the office-cum-storage space rented by the women vendors' committee. Around 10 per cent women vendors who came with indigenous vegetables did not face any problem in selling their goods as there was always a high demand for these commodities.

Table 19: Break-up by alternative measures taken when commodities are left unsold

Sl.	Alternative measures taken	Beltola market		Ulubari market	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	Never faced such a situation	2	2.6	3	10.0
2.	Sell off at dirt cheap rates	32	41.0	11	36.7
3.	Sell next day in other markets	4	5.1	1	3.3
4.	Store at common rented room	2	2.6	-	-
5.	Carry back home	34	42.3	1	3.3
6.	Carry back home or give away to other vendors	2	2.6	4	13.3
7.	Store at vending space	-	-	6	20
8.	Store at vending space in market or store at rented room	2	2.6	2	6.7
9.	Store at nearby house	1	1.3		
10.	Store at women's committee room	-	-	2	6.7
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

6. Income and Expenditure Pattern

Table 20 below shows the daily earnings of street vendors in Ulubari market were lower than that of those in Beltola market. While the daily earnings of 42 per cent of the vendors interviewed in Beltola market fell between INR 501-800, around 63 per cent of those interviewed in Ulubari market earned between INR 301-500 per day. The average daily earning per vendor was found to be INR 704 and 610 respectively for Beltola and Ulubari markets.

Table 20: Daily earning of street vendors in Beltola and Ulubari markets

Sl.	Daily earning in INR	Beltola		Ulubari	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1.	150-300	7	9.1	2	6.7
2.	301-500	23	29.9	19	63.3
3.	501-800	32	41.6	5	16.7
4.	801-1200	9	11.7	1	3.3
5.	1201-1800	4	5.2	2	6.7
6.	1801-2500	2	2.6	0	0.0
7.	2501-3000	0	0.0	1	3.3
	Total	77	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

This is owing to the nature of the goods being sold in the market and the clientele it attracts. It is important to note that the vendors' earnings are often a result of two to three days of work. Therefore, their net earnings per day would be far lesser than that of even a casual labourer in Guwahati. The vendors reported that their earnings dipped further when the weather was inclement.

Table 21: Gender wise daily earning of street vendors in Beltola market

Sl.	Daily earning in INR	Male		Female	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	150-300	1	2.6	6	15.8
2.	301-500	9	23.1	14	36.8
3.	501-800	20	51.3	12	31.6
4.	801-1200	6	15.4	3	7.9
5.	1201-1800	3	7.7	1	2.6
6.	1801-2500	0	0.0	2	5.3
	Total	39	100.0	38	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

From the survey, it was found that earnings of male vendors were more than women vendors in Beltola market. About 51 per cent of male vendors earned between INR 501 to 800 (Table 21) whereas only 32 per cent women vendors earn up to that level (Table 22). About 37 per cent women vendors earn between INR 301-500. In Ulubari market, not much difference was found between earnings of men and women vendors. About 65 per cent women vendors earned INR 301-500 and about 62 per cent male vendors earned the same amount. About one-fourth male vendors earned INR 501-800 whereas only 12 per cent women vendors earned that much.

Table 22: Gender wise daily earning of street vendors in Ulubari market

Sl.	Daily earning in INR	Male		Female	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	150-300	0	0.0	2	11.8
2.	301-500	8	61.5	11	64.7
3.	501-800	3	23.1	2	11.8
4.	801-1200	0	0.0	1	5.9
5.	1201-1800	2	15.4	0	0.0
6.	2501-3000	0	0.0	1	5.9
	Total	13	100.0	17	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 23: Daily expense incurred by vendors

Sl.	Expenditure in INR	Beltola		Ulubari	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	150-500	0	0.0	1	3.3
2.	501-1000	3	3.8	3	10.0
3.	1001-2000	16	20.5	10	33.3
4.	2001-4000	21	26.9	6	20.0
5.	4001-8000	11	14.1	9	30.0
6.	8001-12000	19	24.4	1	3.3
7.	12001-16000	3	3.8	0	0.0
8.	16001-30000	5	6.4	0	0.0
	Total	78	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

The daily expenditure shown in Table 23 includes all the expenses incurred by a vendor to vend in the market for a day. In Beltola market, male vendors' expenses are high because they

cover long distance to transport their goods as well as come with large amount of commodities. However, about one-fourth of the Beltola vendors' total expenditure varies between INR 1,000 to INR 4,000 whereas around 53 per cent Ulubari market vendors spend the same amount to vend for a day. Vendors incur expenditure on purchasing commodities and transportation. The expenditure incurred by Beltola vendors on purchasing goods is slightly higher than the vendors of Ulubari market. This is because the male vendors from Kharupetia, Nagaon and Barpeta come with huge amount of vegetables by truck. It is very difficult to find large sized vending stall in Ulubari market but vendors having large stalls can be easily found in Beltola market. However, about 31 per cent and 17 per cent of Beltola market vendors' expenditure incurred on goods varied between INR 1,001 to INR 3,000 and between INR 3,001 to 6,000 respectively (Table 24). In Ulubari market, more than one-third vendors' expenditure incurred on purchasing commodities varies between INR 400 to 1,000 because many tribal women vendors suffer manual labour to obtain the hill produces.

Table 24: Expenditure incurred on commodities sold by vendors

Sl.	Expenditure in INR	Beltola		Ulubari	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	400-1000	14	17.9	10	34.5
2.	1001-3000	24	30.8	7	24.1
3.	3001-6000	13	16.7	8	27.6
4.	6001-12000	21	26.9	4	13.8
5.	12001-18000	5	6.4	0	0.0
6.	18001-25000	1	1.3	0	0.0
	Total	78	100.0	29	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Also, expenses incurred on transport by Beltola market vendors are slightly higher than the Ulubari vendors. About 45 per cent Beltola market vendors' expenses on transport vary between INR 201 to 500 for per market day (Table 25). Ulubari market vendors' expenditure on transport is much lower as about 63 vendors spend up to INR 200 for a market day. This difference in the transportation expenses between both the markets is due to the fact that Beltola market vendors hire truck on sharing basis and come from away places like Naogaon, Kharupetia and Barpeta and tribal women vendors usually hire goods carrier van on sharing basis. Whereas in Ulubari market, a considerable number of women vendors from Barpeta Road come by train, from Sonapur and few other places by bus to Ulubari market. Therefore, Ulubari market vendors' expenses on transportation are comparatively lower than Beltola market vendors.

Table 25: Expenditure incurred on transportation by vendors

Sl.	Expenditure in INR	Beltola		Ulubari	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	40-100	9	12.0	8	26.7
2.	101-200	14	18.7	11	36.7
3.	201-500	34	45.3	9	30.0
4.	501-800	14	18.7	2	6.7
5.	801-1200	4	5.3	0	0.0
	Total	75	100.0	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Apart from expenses incurred on purchasing goods and transportation, vendors also spend money on food and potable water. Few vendors spend money on storage facility, which they usually rent on sharing basis. Tax to lessee is another major expenditure for Beltola vendors

whereas regular male vendors of Ulubari market pay around INR 30 and INR 20 to local goons on bi-weekly market days and other days. They also pay INR 10 to GMC as scavenging tax and INR 10 to the police. The tribal women vendors do not pay INR 10 to police, but some of them pay INR 10-20 to local goons and INR 10 to GMC. The Beltola market vendors who come one day before the market day from Nagaon, Karupetia and Barpeta Road also pay fees for parking, local goons and police at night.

7. Space Management

Space in the market was found to be always at a premium given the arrival of new vendors and their contestations (overt and otherwise) with existing vendors over who gets to vend where. Beltola market is one of the older markets in Guwahati and experiences high rush among the vendors mainly due the large number of people that throng this market on operational days. Experienced vendors recollected that the present levels of crowding are unprecedented. They remembered being able to find vending space in the main market easily earlier. Today, if you did not have a space identified with yourself among the vendors, one was forced to sit in one of the by-lanes where your exposure to the clientele was slightly reduced. In terms of the means by which one could ‘acquire rights’ to vend in the market, it was found that 41 per cent respondents had found a vacant space in the market initially and stuck to it for vending purpose. Another 26.9 per cent of the vendors came to the market and convinced the existing vendors to allow them to make a stall and sell their wares. The lessees helped another 21.8 per cent vendors to identify a space for vending. A few residents and shopkeepers in the area have also jumped to grab the opportunity and ‘reserve’ the space in front of their house/shop for vendors of their choice. In return, they seek rent from the occupying vendors. Only 1.3 per cent of the interviewees were found to operate in this manner (Table 26).

Map 3: The stretch from Beltola Tinali to Jainagar Charali where vendors sell vegetables and other goods along the both side of the road



Source: Map prepared by CUE

Several vendors reported that they had been vending at the current space for a long time. In case, a vendor who vends regularly on a particular patch of does not turn-up for one or two market days, adjacent vendors respected the vendor’s ‘informal claim’ on the space. If at all

other vendors sat there and sold their wares, they would have to vacate the space once the original vendor returns. These informal relations helped in the space management in the market. There were other ways who had no claims over any space in the market. These vendors were forced to compete among themselves for the limited free spaces in the market. They responded by coming early to the market and conflicts over space were frequent. These have been discussed in a consequent section.

Table 26: Means of acquiring vending space in Beltola market

Sl.	Means	Number	Per cent
1.	Found a vacant space to vend and stuck to it over time	32	41.0
2.	No permanent place; keeps changing every time	1	1.3
3.	Managed to get a space by self by convincing others	21	26.9
4.	Lessee arranged space for vending	17	21.8
5.	Comes early morning to get a space	2	2.6
6.	Pays the owner of the house behind vending space	1	1.3
7.	Fellow-vendor helped arrange current space	4	5.1
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

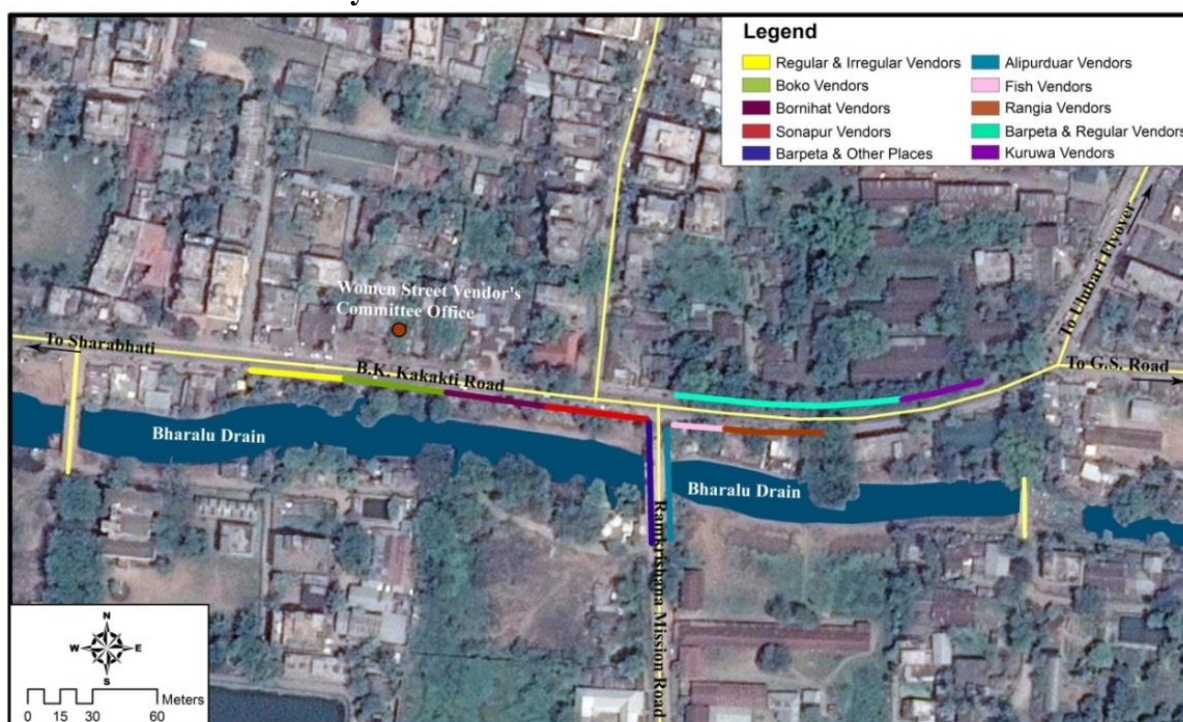
In the case of Ulubari market, around 53.3 per cent of the vendors reported that they had found a vacant space in the market and stuck to it over time (Table 27). The women vendors' committee in Ulubari market organizes space for women vendors, especially for tribal women vendors. Some 20 per cent vendors claimed to have acquired their vending space in this manner. Additionally, there are patches of space in this market over which vendors coming from different areas have 'informal claims.' Some 13.3 per cent vendors claimed to have acquired their space in this manner. Women vendors came to the market from areas like Bornihat, Naziraghat, Thepicia, Jokdal, Barpeta road and Boko. The first rights over these spaces were claimed by vendors from Bornihat and Sonapur. Once they occupied their spaces, other women vendors from Barpeta Road and other places could make their stalls (Map 4). Muslim male vendors were the last ones to erect stalls on the remaining space. Regular male vendors had to leave their regular spaces on Sundays for tribal women vendors who came from outside the city.

Table 27: Means of acquiring vending space in Ulubari market

Sl.	Means	Number	Per cent
1.	Found a vacant space to vend and stuck to it over time	16	53.3
2.	Managed to get a space by self by convincing others	1	3.3
3.	Fellow-vendor helped arrange current space	2	6.7
4.	Dedicated patch on footpath that 'belongs' to the vendors who come from an area	4	13.3
5.	Took help of Women Vendors' Committee	6	20.0
6.	Local youth (collect money regularly) arranged space	1	3.3
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Map 4: Map showing the sitting arrangement of vendors coming from different places in Ulubari market on Sundays



Source: Map prepared by CUE

8. Issues Faced by Vendors: Potential Points of Conflicts, Violence

Six focus group discussions were conducted in Beltola market while another three were conducted in Ulubari market. Table 28 and Table 29 present the issues faced by vendors that lead to conflicts in Beltola and Ulubari markets, respectively. The participants in the discussions were asked to give points to issues identified them and these were then ranked to arrive at the ranking presented in the tables. In both markets, the lack of adequate space for vending and the resultant crisis was reported as the issue with most intensity. Additionally, the absence of public conveniences was perceived as a major issue.

Table 28: Issues faced by vendors in Beltola market that lead to conflicts

Driving force	Issues faced by participants	Intensity	Ranking
Urban planning	Vending space crisis	14	I
	Lack of shaded vending spaces	2	
	Absence of public toilets	12	II
Governance	High amount of tax charged by lessee	1	
Other	Forceful extortion of <i>Chanda</i> by local youth club	7	III

Source: Focus group discussions, 2014

Table 29: Issues faced by vendors in Ulubari market that lead to conflicts

Driving force	Issues faced by participants	Intensity	Ranking
Urban planning	Vending space crisis	9	I
	Absence of public toilets	4	II
	Lack of space for storage and overnight stay	2	III
Other	Local goons/youth collect/extort money	1	
	Harassment by train passengers	2	

Source: Focus group discussions, 2014

Other issues that found mention were the forceful collection of *Chanda* by local youth clubs and bribes by police in addition to high rates of tax collected by the lessees. These issues are discussed in detail in the subsequent section

8.1. Space Crises

Beltola market vendors: The absence of demarcated spaces for individual vendors, led to chaos on market days when large number of vendors arrive to setup their stalls. Our discussion with Sonapur women vendors revealed that when the number of vendors increased during a particular season in the year (June-October), they found it difficult to acquire space and display their vegetables for sale properly. One participant said,

8.1. A

“We are some of oldest vendors in the market, but sometimes lessee tries to provide our space forcefully to new vendors in the market.”

Another participant said that while they usually arrived at the market by 6 to 7 am, male vendors from distant places like Nagaon, Barpeta and Kharupetia would have already arrived the previous night and appropriated all prime vending spaces. This became a cause for much resentment leading to arguments between the vendors. These arguments would sometimes result in verbal and physical fights. One participant narrated the following incident:

8.1. B

“Once, I was not able to come to the market for a week owing to illness. On my return, I found that my space had been occupied by another vendor. I asked him loudly to leave upon which he vacated my space because [he realized] that I am one of the oldest vendors in this market and that space belonged to me.”

Another vendor said,

8.1. C

“Usually when we find that other vendors have put their goods and occupied our spaces in the market, we reclaim our space by speaking loudly and behaving rudely. Then, they adjust their wares and leave some space for us to vend.”

This kind of problem, we were told, occurred more often in the peak season. Women vendors from Boko and Bornihat shared that they reacted very strongly when other vendors attempted to occupy their space. A tribal women vendor from Boko said,

8.1. D

“In case, someone occupies my space, I ask him to leave my place. And if that doesn't work, I throw away his vegetables.”

Another tribal woman vendor from Bornihat said,

8.1. E

“We usually fight [verbally] with our neighbouring Muslim vendors as they always try to occupy our space. They think that we are scared of them because we come from Meghalaya. But we do not get scared that easily.”

Some of the women vendors were more assured about getting their space to vend as they depended on local actors who would guarantee their space. A tribal woman vendor from Boko said,

8.1. F

“I vend in front of a formal shop and the shopkeeper secures my space for us. He does not allow other vendors to vend on that place.”

Table 30 makes it evident that a larger proportion of male vendors used higher larger area than female vendors in Beltola market. While 50 per cent women vendors occupied only 6-12 square feet space for their stalls, 27.5 per cent male vendors had a stall size of 13-24 square feet. Another 22.5 per cent male vendors had a stall size of 35-44 square feet. Tribal women vendors felt aggrieved that often they faced difficulties in acquiring even 6-12 square feet of space in the market and blamed the Muslim male vendors for their troubles. Incidentally, as Table 10 shows, Muslim vendors formed only around 36 per cent of vendors in the market.

Table 30: Gender wise use of vending space in Beltola market

Sl.	Size of stall (in square feet)	Male		Female	
		Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
1.	6-12	2	5.0	19	50.0
2.	13-24	11	27.5	12	31.6
3.	25-34	6	15.0	0	0.0
4.	35-44	9	22.5	1	2.6
5.	45-54	7	17.5	5	13.2
6.	>54	5	12.5	1	2.6
	Total	40	100.0	38	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Many male vendors from Barpeta, who used to vend on the municipal ground, were displaced in 2013 in order to facilitate the construction of a multi-storey market. GMC had not made any alternative arrangements for these vendors. Some local residents and shopkeepers “rented out” the space in front of their house/shop to these vendors. Some of these vendors shared experiences of harassment at the hands of a hotel owner who had “rented out” the space in front of his establishment. He had started demanding vegetables daily in addition to the rent, which was as high as INR 50 per day.

Another vendor from Barpeta narrated a similar incident which made him leave his previous vending space. One day the hotel owner took vegetables from him without paying money. When he came back to demand rent, the vendor refused and was slapped in return. The commotion that followed was sorted only after the other vendors intervened. The police did not act despite a verbal complaint by the vendor against the hotel owner. Even the lessee advised him to forget the matter as these, he was told, were “normal things” which should not be paid much attention.

A group of vendors dealing in old clothes and who had lost their vending space following the construction of the multi-storey market described their problems in accessing vending space. One of them said,

8.1. G

“When we reach the market, we talk with other vegetable vendors and request them to make their stalls smaller so that we can also do our business. It all depends on their mood. If we

succeed in convincing them, we make our stall. If we don't, we return home. When we request GMC or lessee for space, they say that there is no space in the market. They ask us to find space ourselves. When we try and put our stall in front of formal shops, we are asked INR 50 to INR 100 for a market day. We pay them and make our stall. We also pay tax to the GMC or the lessee [despite receiving no assistance].”

Picture 17: Vendors selling old clothes fighting for vending space in Beltola market



Photo Credit: Authors

Another participant narrated his predicament:

8.1. H

“When we were selling in the municipal market, we were only paying tax to the GMC or the lessee. But now we also have to pay INR 100-200 to the space owner. If we do not find space, we return home. The space where I am vending belongs to a Bihari guy who has gone to his village to attend a marriage. Once he returns, I would've to pay him INR 150 for each market day. I must find another space quickly.”

It was interesting to note that shopkeepers disallowed vendors from occupying the space in front of their shop if they did not pay them in return. Owing to the severe space crunch on market days, vendors did not mind paying the shop owner in addition to the tax to GMC/lessee. In all six FGDs with Beltola market vendors, participants ranked space crunch as the biggest issue for them. Vegetable vendors who did not have enough space to display their goods often kept only a part of the vegetables outside. The remaining vegetables remained in the bags for long periods of time and would get damaged, thereby causing monetary losses.

Ulubari market vendors: Three FGDs were organized with vendors in the Ulubari market including two with tribal women vendors and one with regular male vendors from Ulubari market. These revealed the nature of conflicts faced by both of them. The contestation for vending space in Ulubari market is of a slightly different than Beltola market. As discussed earlier, there were regular vendors and other vendors who come twice or thrice in a week to sell goods in Ulubari market. Regular vendors would leave space for tribal women vendors on Sundays. On other days, there were conflicts between tribal women vendors and regular vendors. Since a majority of the regular vendors are Muslims, ethno-religious tensions often came to the fore. There were conflicts over space among tribal women vendors themselves.

Seasonality: Tribal women vendors considered the lack of space as their biggest problem. The number of vendors had increase over time whereas available space had remained constant. In the absence of permanent vending space, vendors could not make sheds or organise other facilities. A tribal women vendor from Bornihat stated that, once a few Muslim vendors had occupied her space and were not willing to leave her space. She managed to get her space back with great difficulty. Another participant from the same place reported that verbal conflicts for space were routine. She said that new vendors found it extremely difficult to find a new space. Mamuni Bordoloi (President, GGWVSV) and a local resident revealed the seasonal variations in the number of vendors in Ulubari market. She mentioned that the tribal women vendors did not come regularly to the market. In their absence, other vendors occupy their space and conflicts happen on their return. A vendor from Sonapur said,

8.1. J

“Many vendors do not come in off-season but come only in the season and start fighting for space by claiming their earlier space; whereas we come throughout the year.”

Ethno-religious issues: Participants also blamed Muslim male vendors who they felt, constantly argued with the tribal vendors for space. They felt that their business was running smoother earlier when the Muslim male vendors had not arrived. One of the participants stated that unlike now, she was able to exhaust her goods by 11 am. She felt that the market had been “captured” by Muslim male vendors who had rented rooms near the market. By coming regularly to the market, they had converted the bi-weekly market into a daily market. The customers had also started coming on all days and at all times affecting the business of the bi-weekly vendors.

Other participants revealed that when they arrived at the market, they would find their places occupied by daily vendors who would have already spread their *soti* (plastic sheet) and displayed their vegetables. Requests for making way were not entertained and quarrels were common. A woman vendor from Barpeta said,

8.1. K

“They never leave our place until we quarrel with them. Sometimes I have to threaten them that I will throw their vegetables away.”

The Muslim male vendors would argue that the market is a public space and belongs to them too. As far as possible, they avoided getting into arguments as the other vendors would bring

their citizenship into question⁷. Another tribal women vegetable vendor shared her experience of harassment,

8.1. L

“Once, I came late to the market because my vegetables were coming by bus, while I was coming by train. After reaching Maligaon Railway Station, I went to Adhabari bus stand to collect my vegetables. When I arrived at the market, I found that a vendor named Krishna, who usually sits beside me, had occupied the entire space by spreading his vegetables. A verbal fight ensued between us. Eventually, I managed to make a small stall beside his stall. He fought with me the whole day.”

Discussions with regular male vendors exposed the other side of the problem. Male vendors said that they did not have a permanent space to vend. They had to make space for other vendors on market days. A Bengali-Hindu vendor stated,

8.1. M

“We are permanent vendors who have been here for a long time; but when vendors from Barpeta Road come, we have to make space for them. Otherwise they behave badly and abuse us. Since we don’t wish to get into a quarrel, we leave our vending space for them.”

As evident from the discussions, both parties i.e the vendors who came to the market regularly and those that came only on market days tried to avoid conflicts. Regular vendors made space for both indigenous women as well as men. However, sometimes when regular vendors established their claim to a space by placing their plastic sheets and weighing machines, conflicts arose which sometimes resulted in physical fights.

Impact and Response: Since the amount of space available in the market was limited, and vendors were not very keen on fighting, they were forced to use the footpath to sell their wares. There was always a threat of eviction. Vendors often fell ill because they were exposed to the elements of weather constantly. They also suffered losses as they were not able to display their wares properly. A woman vegetable seller from Barpeta stated,

8.1. N

“Vegetables can’t be arranged properly. Various items are kept merged with each-other. Hence, customers face difficulty while choosing good pieces of vegetables.”

She further added that their business was better on days when they were able to arrive at the market early. Sometimes, they were unable to unpack their vegetables from the bags on account of lack of space due to which they got damaged. Damaged vegetables fetched much lesser prices. The losses thus incurred often translated into debt which was from their co-vendors or from village-level financial institutions (*gaolia* bank) on 10 per cent rate of interest. As a result, vendors faced difficulties in taking care of their family needs. One of the participants said,

8.1. O

“When losses are incurred, we have to come for more days in a week than usual, with more quantity of vegetables and spend more time vending so that we can compensate for the loss.”

⁷ At least some of the Muslim male vendors were found to be migrants from neighbouring Bangladesh having made Assam their home for several years.

In order to claim and occupy a vending space in the market, vendors came as early as 4 am on Sundays. They put a piece of plastic sheet and went to the wholesale market to buy vegetables. But sometimes, they were displaced by the indigeneous women vendors. In that case, they look for other spaces. If they are unable to find space, they wait till the indigenous vendors are done for the day and sell their vegetables after that. One of the participants said,

8.1. P

“If we are unable to get a suitable space on Sunday for vending, we face losses as we are forced to sell our vegetables in the late evenings at much cheaper rates. We can only sit for four days in a week at our regular space. On other days, we have major issues.”

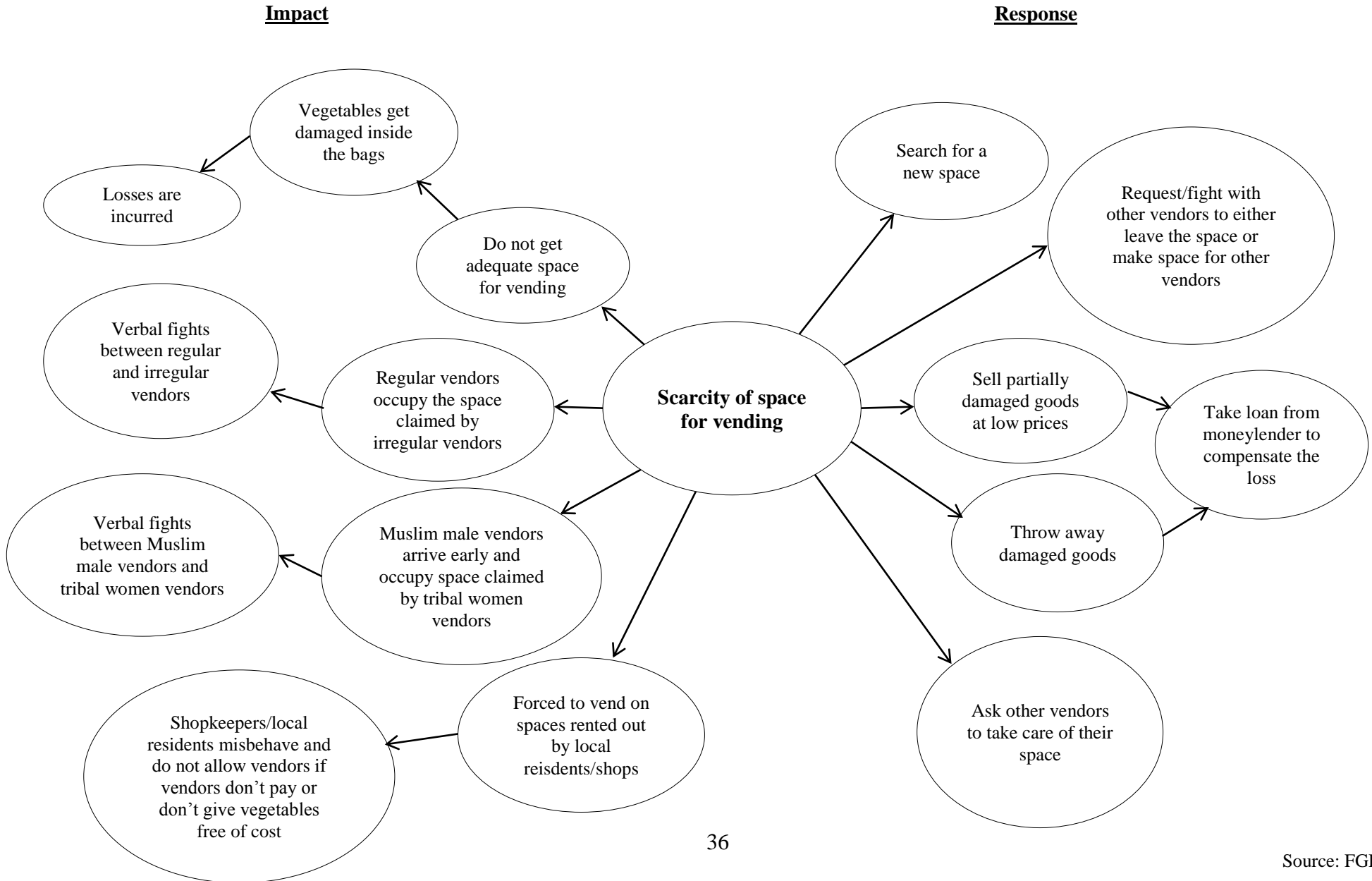
Some vendors also bought off the entire stock of the vendor occupying a space in the market in order to get space for themselves. This caused additional financial burden on them. A regular male vendor said,

8.1. Q

“Last Sunday, I was not able to get a space for vending. I kept my vegetables in a bag behind my regular vending space where a male guy from Barpeta was selling his vegetables that day. When he was left with only a few vegetables, I asked him to make some space so that I could set up my stall. He refused and asked me to wait till he had sold his entire stock of vegetables. Since I feared that my vegetables would get damaged inside the bag, I bought his remaining stock of vegetables. In effect, not only did I buy his goods but also space for vending.”

The above discussion summarized the impacts and responses of the vendors on account of the space crisis in the markets. Figure 2 presents these impacts and responses in a graphical form.

Figure 2: Impacts of the space crisis on vendors and their response to the situation



8.2. Absence of Public Toilet, Potable Water and Storage Space

Beltola market vendors: The absence of public toilet was considered as second major problem after space crunch for vending. It's very difficult for a women vendor to manage this problem when she has to vend for entire day in the market. The male vendors who come one day before at night from Kharupetia, Nagaon, Barpeta and few other places also considered this as a major problem for them. Women vendors from Sonapur revealed that they need to go to either nearby or distant houses where they can use toilets. When they go for urinating or have toilet, their business stops for a while. They ask the nearby vendors to take care of their goods but still there is risk to leave the vegetables as the nearby vendor is also busy in vending. They develop the habit of consuming less water. This causes urinary infections. One of the participants stated,

8.2. A

"If I consume more water, I need to go to urinate frequently, thus I take less water as far as possible."

Another participant shared that there are both kind of residents; some who allow vendors to use their toilets whereas some misbehave and abuse them. Hence, to avoid this kind of misbehaviour and abuse, they go to far places where they can urinate or have toilet but it again affects their vending time, selling as well as earning.

Women vendors from Boko and Bornihat revealed that this is a very big issue for all women vendors in the market. They need to go either nearby or distant houses where they can use toilets. When they go for urinating or have toilet, their business stops for a while. That time, there is a high risk of vegetables being stolen by thieves. They have to find out less crowded areas and use the drains as toilet. They develop habit of consuming less water. It causes urinary problem. The houses where they go for toilet, every time the owner do not entertain them nicely, they have to listen many unpleasant words. One of the participants stated,

8.2. B

"Even we get abused but still keep using toilets of nearby houses because we do not have any option."

Another woman participant said,

"In case, we feel acute need for toilet, we go towards the drain. At that time, we do not think about our self-prestige and dignity. I mean, if men would see us."

During the discussion with Barpeta vendors, they stated that Beltola Market is a famous market of North East, but there are no basic facilities that a market should have. There is no public toilet. Vendors reach market at night one day before the market days. In the morning, they face difficulty to access toilet. They go to nearby shops or garages and request the owner for using toilets, sometimes they need to pay money and sometimes they manage by offering them vegetables. Sometimes at night they take the advantage of darkness and use the adjacent drains for toilet (Table 31). An old age vendor from Barpeta shared an incident when he was urinating on the road side and he got abused.

8.2. C

"One day, I sat on the road corner for urinating. One boy who usually comes to take Chanda scolded me by saying, 'this road is constructed by investing huge money. You Bangladeshi people are urinating here and there. I will beat you.' I was very angry but didn't say anything."

Another participant stated that,

“We agree that road is not for urinating, but where we will go if there is no toilet. When we go to nearby houses, for using toilets, residents misbehave us.”

In Beltola market, larger number of vendors either approach nearby households to use their toilet or use the drains or an open plot, which belongs to a school. The regular vendors who live in the rented house near to the market use their house toilet. A large proportion of vendors consisting both men and women, use roadside space for urinating.

Picture 18: Open plot and drain which used by vendors for defecating and urinating by vendors in Beltola market



Photo credit: authors

Table 31: Ways in which vendors access toilets in Beltola market

Sl.	Ways to access toilet	Number	Per cent
1.	Nearby house	22	28.2
2.	Own or other vendors rented house near market	13	16.7
3.	Defecate in nearby open plot	13	16.7
4.	Resist going to toilet	3	3.8
5.	Use road side space	22	28.2
6.	Use nearby garage / hotel toilet	3	3.8
7.	Go to far known places by rickshaw / auto	2	2.6
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Ulubari market vendors: There is no public toilet in the Ulubari market also. Women vendors are using the toilet rented by women vendors committee for them. Due to the absence of public

toilet in the market, vendors face difficulty. A group of women vendors informed that as there is no public toilet, vendors avoid going for urinate and toilet for long time. They consume less water to avoid the use of toilet frequently. Hence, they have urinary related diseases and often become sick. If they go to nearby houses, they are even charged money for using the toilet. For them it is an extra expense. Households also abuse them for using toilet. Women Vegetables Vendors Committee has rented a toilet but sometime vendors do not get access to its key, when desired. The two or three-seater toilet, which has been rented by sSTEP, is also insufficient for large number of women vendors.

As male vendors cannot access the toilet rented by women committee, one can observe vendors urinating on Bharalu drain, behind their vending stall. Nearby houses do not allow them to use their toilet; hence they go back to their rented houses. One of the percipients shared,

8.2. D

“Once, a vendor, who vend in this market had bad stomach. As there is no public toilet, he was going back to his rented room in Pukhrigar, which is near to the market (about 1 km) but he could not stop and spilled out on the way.”

Maximum women vendors use the toilet rented by the women committee. About 47 per cent vendors replied that they use toilet rented by women vendors’ committee (Table 32), which provides service to mainly women vendor. One-fourth of the vendors who live near the market on rent use the toilet provided by their landlord. Other vendors also use their toilet in case they need. About 13 per cent vendors use the toilets of local residents.

Table 32: Ways in which vendors access toilets in Ulubari market

Sl.	Ways to access toilet	Number	Per cent
1.	Nearby house	4	13.3
2.	Own or other vendors rented house nearby the market	8	26.7
3.	Defecate in nearby open plot	1	3.3
4.	Use road side space	1	3.3
5.	Toilet rented by Women Vendor's Committee	14	46.7
6.	Public Toilet below the Ulubari flyover	2	6.7
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Absence of potable water and storage: Another major concern revealed by vendors was unavailability of potable water in both markets. About one-third of Beltola market vendors bought packaged water for drinking (Table 33). About one-fifth of Beltola market vendors carry water from their homes whereas the same proportion of vendors bring water from home but also buy water sometimes in order to fulfill their requirement. There is a private tank water supplier in Beltola. He allows vendors to fill water free of cost for drinking from his premise. Few vendors get water from hotel and temples adjacent to their stalls.

Table 33: Ways in which vendors access drinking water in Beltola market

Sl.	Ways to access water	Number	Per cent
1.	Buy packed water	24	30.8
2.	From leaking underground water supply pipe line	3	3.8
3.	Bring from home	15	19.2
4.	From hotel / temple	10	12.8
5.	Fills water from private tap	10	12.8
6.	Bring from home but also buy sometimes	16	20.5
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Ulubari vendors are also suffering from access to potable water. Apart from water for drinking, vendors also need water to sprinkle water on vegetables to keep them fresh. Around 43 per cent vendors bring potable water from their homes (Table 34). Another about 27 per cent vendors though bring water from home also buy it in the market because home water quantity is not sufficient. Few vendors fill water from a pipeline having leakage issues which passes under the bridge for external uses.

Table 34: Ways in which vendors access drinking water in Ulubari market

Sl.	Ways to access water	Number	Per cent
1.	Buy packed water	1	3.3
2.	From leaking underground water supply pipe line	2	6.7
3.	Bring from home	13	43.3
4.	From hotel / temple	3	10.0
5.	Fills water from private tap	2	6.7
6.	Bring from home but also buy sometimes	8	26.7
7.	Women Vendor's Committee Office	1	3.3
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

In both markets, vendors face problem not only in storing their remaining goods but also to store the weighing instrument, plastic sheet used for sitting as well as roof cover as protection against sunlight and rain. About 72 per cent and 47 per cent vendors in Beltola market and Ulubari market do not store their goods (Table 35 & Table 36). They sell it anyway by the end of the day. In both markets, many vendors have rented a room near the market for use for living as well as for storing the unsold goods. About 17 per cent Ulubari market women vendors use the storage rented by women vendors' committee whereas about 27 per cent vendors, that constitutes large number of male vendors who vend regularly, keep their remaining goods at the backside of their vending space and sell it the next day.

Table 35: Storage options for unsold goods in Beltola market

Sl.	Ways to access storage	Number	Per cent
1.	Do not store	56	71.8
2.	Have rented room	6	7.7
3.	Take back to home	11	14.1
4.	Other	5	6.4
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

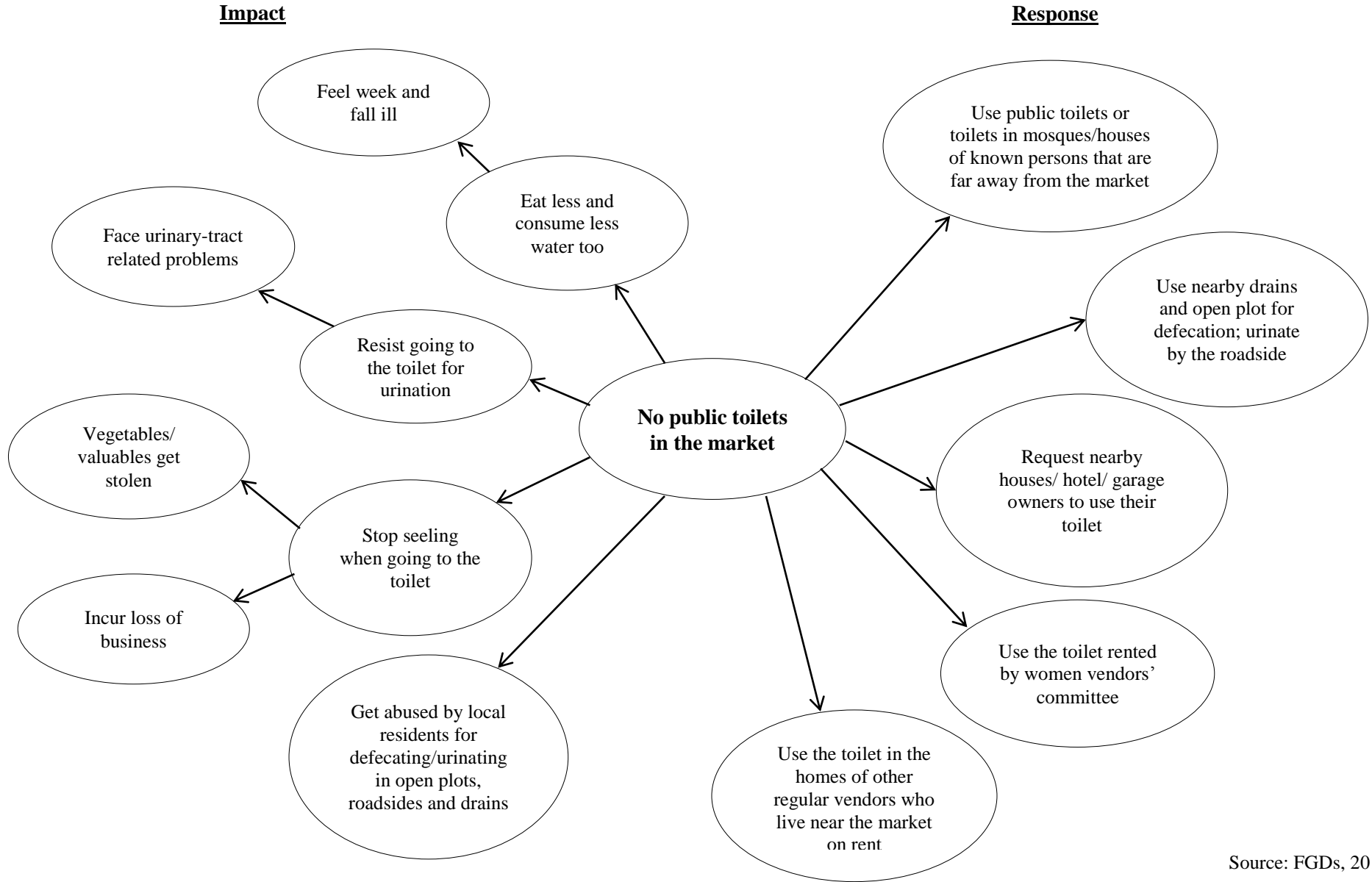
Table 36: Storage options for unsold goods in Ulubari market

Sl.	Ways to access storage	Number	Per cent
1.	Do not store	14	46.7
2.	Have rented room	3	10.0
3.	Store at vending place	8	26.7
4.	Store room rented by women vendor's committee	5	16.7
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Figure 2 presents the impacts of the absence of public toilets in the markets on vendors and their response to the situation in the form of a graphic.

Figure 3: Impacts of the absence of public toilets in the markets on vendors and their response to the situation



Source: FGDs, 2014

8.3. Other Conflicts

High tax collected by lessee in Beltola market: During our research in the Beltola market, many vendors reported that the lessee charged high tax than the tax collected by GMC during the recess period (the period when lessee's contract period lapses and fresh tenders are invited by GMC for bidding). Here, it is important to note that lessee should collect toll as per the toll rate list prescribed by the GMC for its markets (Refer Annexure-3). Clause 22 of terms and conditions for the settlement of the markets of GMC for the year 2013 states that the lessee shall collect toll at the prescribed rates only. In the case of any complaints against demanding excessive toll, either by the lessee himself or by their agents or employee, the lessee shall be liable to be prosecuted U/S 384 of I.P.C. and lease shall be terminated forthwith. Clause 35 of the same terms and conditions states that lessee shall display a signboard of the approved rates of toll at a prominent place in the markets at their own cost, risks and responsibilities (Refer Annexure-4). However, vendors revealed a clear violation of the clause 22 by the lessee. The survey reveals that more than 60 per cent vendors paid up to INR 50 to the GMC as toll but when lessee collected the tax, 42.3 percent vendors had paid up to INR 100 to the lessee. The maximum tax imposed by the GMC is INR 70 (Table 37). The GMC does not collect more than INR 70 per vendor per day but lessee collects up to INR 300 per vendor per day (Table 38). Therefore, 41 per cent and 15.4 per cent vendors responded that the last time they had paid INR 101-200 and INR 201-300 to the lessee. However, the lessee is supposed to collect the same toll which is collected by the GMC as per the terms and conditions between the lessee and the GMC.

One of the vendors, who sold tea only for few hours during the morning, does not pay tax either to the GMC or lessee. The problem is not only limited to charging high tax but in case, any vendor denies giving the excessive tax there are chances of being beaten up by the lessee and the employees of lessee forcefully snatch the desired amount. Vendors face many atrocities by the lessee and the GMC never intervenes in this matter.

Table 37: Tax paid by vendor to GMC the last time

Sl.	Toll in INR	Number	Per cent
1.	0	1	1.3
2.	20	14	17.9
3.	30	2	2.6
4.	40	13	16.7
5.	50	19	24.4
6.	70	29	37.2
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 38: Tax paid by vendor to the lessee the last time

Sl.	Toll in INR	Number	Per cent
1.	0	1	1.3
2.	30-50	21	26.9
3.	51-100	12	15.4
4.	101-200	32	41.0
5.	201-300	12	15.4
	Total	77	98.7

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

GMC has listed 34 items in its rate list and has fixed different rates for different kinds of produces and stalls. This long list of items and different rates for different products may give an unclear understanding amongst vendors. At the same time, nowhere this rate list has been displayed in the market. During discussions, participants spoke that the GMC charges tax for

different items separately and vendors have to pay for every item. A woman vendor from Boko said,

8.3. A

“I bring bananas to the market and I pay a tax of INR 5 to 10 to the GMC for each thuk (bunch) of banana, but lessee charges more for each thuk.”

Vendors find it difficult to calculate the total tax as the GMC has different rates for different items, therefore, the GMC employees do not charge same tax every time from a vendor. Participants informed that lessee’s tax is high and also not fixed - it varies from one vendor to another. Another woman vendor from Boko said,

8.3. B

“If we don’t pay tax, lessee throws our vegetables away and gives our space to other vendors.”

When the lessee starts collecting the tax, the tax amount rises. Vendors stated that often the lessee raised the tax within a year. When lessee is assigned the work of tax collection, first few months they charge INR 100 after that they gradually increase the tax to INR 150, 200, 250 and by the end of the year, it becomes INR 300. To the vendors, this escalation of tax appeared as illegal. When lessee collects the tax, he also collects INR 200 from each truck at night as parking fee. Most importantly, when the GMC collect the tax, they do not charge any fee as parking / entry fee from vehicles which comes with vegetables. Even terms and conditions for the settlement of the markets does not suggest anywhere that the lessee has to collect parking / entry fee from vehicles. An old cloth seller stated,

8.3. C

“Lessee starts tax with INR 100 but over the year, gradually he increases tax up to INR 200 whereas the GMC only takes tax of INR 50. Lessee clearly states us that he is not bothered whether our goods are sold or not. We should come with INR 200 from the home to pay the tax. In case, any vendor refuses to pay him, he has to die.”

Other vendors informed that lessee would throw their goods if they refuse to pay tax or argue with him on the issue of collecting the high taxes. A large number of vendors revealed that they do not have good relations with the lessee and high tax collection by force was the main reason behind it (Table 39). About one-fourth of the vendors responded that they have good relations with the lessee. This is because the large-scale vendors making a good profit may not face much difficulty in paying up to INR 300 if lessee helps them to arrange the space. At the same time, the lessee does not charge high to the women vendors having a small-scale business.

Table 39: Nature of the vendor’s experience with the lessee as qualified by the vendor

Sl.	Relation / experience	Number	Per cent
1.	Bad	50	64.1
2.	Neither good nor bad	10	12.8
3.	Good	18	23.1
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Vendors are scared of lessee because he is a powerful person and has hired a large number of strong youths to collect the money. Therefore, out of fear, about half of the vendors surveyed refrained from answering to our question on what happened to them if they did not pay demanded tax to the lessee. But some did reply to our query. About one-fifth vendors replied

that the lessee beats / fights /throws their goods away if they did not pay the tax demanded (Table 40). 15 per cent vendors informed that lessee misbehaves and abuses them whereas 10 per cent vendors replied that the lessee forcefully snatches money from their pocket in case they refuse to pay him the taxes.

Table 40: Experiences of the vendors on refusal to pay tax

Sl.	Experiences	Number	Per cent
1.	Lessee beats / fights / throws goods away	16	20.5
2.	Lessee engages in quarrel and snatches money from vendors	8	10.3
3.	Not experienced so far	4	5.1
4.	Lessee misbehaves & abuses	12	15.4
5.	Verbal fight takes place	2	2.6
6.	N.R.	36	46.2
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

About 80 per cent vendors were not happy with the lessee system of tax collection as they found tax to be too high and misbehaviour and abusive language of the tax collectors recruited by the lessee. Vendors (12.8 per cent of them) stated that the lessee collected tax twice per day - during day-time as well as in evening again (Table 41), particularly in the bi-weekly markets. The vendors who are able to sell by evening do not have any problem but the vendors who sell till late evening face problem during tax collection in the evening. The evening tax collected by the lessee is a clear violation of sub-clause 26 (ii) of terms and conditions for the settlement of the markets that states, the evening markets at Beltola sit for five days in a week excluding Thursday and Sunday. The only one advantage of having the tax collected by the lessee, as stated by the vendors, was that harassment by local goons reduced. Who is collecting the tax does not matter much for the small vendors who come with a small quantity of vegetables because both lessee and the GMC collects more or less same amount of tax from them.

Table 41: Reasons behind the vendors' unhappiness with the lease system for markets

Sl.	Reason	Number	Per cent
1.	Takes high tax	27	34.6
2.	Takes high tax and two times in a day	10	12.8
3.	Other (High tax / misbehaves / throws goods away / does n'o give tax receipt / fights with vendors)	21	26.9
4.	Local goons do not harass when lessee collects tax	2	2.6
5.	Lessee's taxation system is not fair	8	10.3
6.	Both systems are same	3	3.8
7.	N.R.	7	9.0
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Though a large number of vendors do not feel the lease system of tax collection convenient but only a few of them have opposed this system and the majority of them do not dare to oppose. As vendors come from various places just for two days in Beltola and after selling goods they try to leave the market as soon as possible, the vendors from various places do not know each other well. Another problem is that their main objective of coming to the market is to sell their goods, make a profit and return to their homes. They do not want to engage themselves in any kind of dangerous situations for a few hundred rupees. Hence, more than one-third vendors replied that they do not oppose the high tax imposed by lessee because there are chances of facing physical harassment and no one would support them because there is no unity amongst the vendors who come from different places (Table 42). Here it is important to note that unlike other markets of Guwahati, Beltola vendors do not have a union. Though tribal women vendors

are unionized but their activities are very limited as they also come from different places. It is very difficult to organize vendors who come from different places. About 17 per cent vendors had opposed the high tax charged by the lessee in the past at personal level but nothing happened, hence they stopped opposing it after some time. Another common response of vendors was that they are not local whereas the lessee was a local and powerful guy, thus if they would oppose them, they feared of being harmed. There will be no action against the lessee.

Table 42: Reasons given by the vendors for not opposing the high tax charged by lessee

Sl.	Response / reason	Number	Per cent
1.	No result hence stopped protest	13	16.7
2.	Because they are not local	8	10.3
3.	No unity among vendors / fear of being more harassed	29	37.2
4.	Because opposing lessee would not make any difference	4	5.1
5.	Have good relation / no problem with lessee	3	3.8
6.	N.R. (Not Replied)	11	14.1
7.	N.A. (Not Applicable because they never opposed)	9	12.8
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

During FGD with Barpeta vendors, a participant stated,

8.3. D

“Particularly, we the Sorbhog vendors always protest on the issues of high tax with the GMC and lessee. We face lots of difficulties in traveling more than 100 km distance from our house to Beltola market. We often have verbal fights and once I had been beaten by one of the lessee’s employee.”

Another vendor in the same discussion said,

“Due to fear, we would not raise our concerns before the lessee, when the lessee was assigned the work of tax collection in the market.”

Participants informed that lessee gets the work of tax collection on a contract basis but he further leases it out to other parties on the sub-contractual basis. It ultimately increases the tax burden on vendors further. Another participant revealed the reason for not opposing the high tax collected by the lessee.

8.3. E

“Actually, we come with vegetables worth INR 10,000- 12,000 and our main focus would be on selling. Therefore, we avoid all kinds of conflicts and even pay local goons INR 400-500. Firstly, as we buy vegetables on interest money, we do not want to lose our goods. Secondly, we come from outside, hence, we get scared easily. We are also weak to fight with these local goons. We belong to the poor families. These circumstances push us to pay them.”

However, 88 per cent vendors realized that tax collection by the GMC is a far better option than the tax collection through lessee. Overwhelming 89 per cent stated so. Another 10 per cent did not reply.

Box 3: Experience - 1

Ashok Gupta, a 48 years old pickle seller, came from Balia, Uttar Pradesh to Guwahati with his father during his childhood. His father used to make pickles. Ashok picked up the skill to make pickles from his father. He lives in a 10'X10' room for rent in the railway market at Pandu.

Ashok used to sell pickles in Beltola market but five years ago, the lessee slapped him because he was for inability to pay the asked amount of tax. Henceforth, he stopped selling in Beltola market. Ashok said, "He asked me for INR 150 for a basket of pickles, who would give them? I give INR 10 in Bihata Charialai market. See, if they would ask for INR 20- 50, there is no problem. But if they would ask for INR 150- 200, how we can give them? If we do not pay, they abuse us. Then who will go to the market?" He further stated, "Once, he slapped me twice at a time. Why would I go? He asked me for INR 150. I gave him INR 50, and then he insisted for INR 100 more. I again gave him another INR 50 and tried to convince him but he told me that this is not a fish market. He slapped me. I gave him INR 150, picked my basket and came back to home as I felt ashamed." After this incident, Ashok started selling pickle in different markets like on Tuesdays in Narangi market, which is also known as Basanti market, on Wednesdays in Satgaon market and on Thursdays and Sundays in Bihata Chariali.

Ashok informed that many people who sell in Beltola are from Pandu like manihari vendors (vendors who sell bangles and other cosmetic products such as nail polish, lipstick etc.), cloth and vegetable sellers. He said that half of the Pandu Bazaar vendors including the vegetable vendors used to sell in Beltola market earlier but due to abuse, harassment and dadagiri they stopped vending there. Earlier, about 200 vendors were going to vend from this area. Now, no one goes there. Now they go to nearby Gowerdhana market. He said, "If I will come to your home and you abuse me, how will I come to your home again? I did not go to sell in Beltola market from the day they abused me. I used to sell pickles in a small basket in Beltola. They were asking for INR 150 in the day-time then again they used to come in the evening and collect INR 50. I earn INR 200- 300 in a day and if he would take INR 200- 300, how could I make a profit? Now I sell at Bihata Chariali in Amingaon."

Ashok said that lessee had recruited 20- 25 big, fat, dada type people who collect tax. They have such a personality, that people get scared and give money. They also give money to the police to not come in the market.

-This interview was held at Ashok Gupta's rented room on June 08, 2014 in Pandu Railway market.

Box 4: Experience- 2

She is a 55 years old widow who sells herbs, observatory stones and pieces of metal which people wear to keep themselves away from devils. She knows the quality and use of these herbs because it was a traditional business of her in-laws. Her husband was also doing the same business. Around seven-eight years ago, when her husband passed away, she started vending here. Now, she has a *Gumati* (a small shop built by wooden slabs) and vends here on daily basis. Originally she belonged to Ellaysipara, Dhubri. Here, she lives in Hatigaon.

About 15 years ago when her husband has started vending here, the tax was only INR 5 per day. Gradually, it has increased and now she is paying INR 20 /- per day except two bi-weekly market days in a week. She informed that lessee system was there when she started vending here. She said that when the GMC collects the tax, they collect it once on a day like today they have taken INR 20 but when lessee collects the tax, he collects it twice a day. On market days, lessee collects INR 20 in the day time and again INR 20 in the evening. Rest of the days, he collects INR 20 only once. She claimed that tax is still high for her as she pays INR 180 per week in this way. She said,

"Hate me 180 rupya dene se hum log ko kya bachta hai. Her cheez mehnga ho gaya hai na."

Probably lessee takes less money from her because she is an old, female and regular vendor. We were at her shop for an hour but she did not have any selling during that period. It was evident that her earnings were also low.

When she was asked what she thinks about vegetable vendors who pay INR 200 as tax, she said, "Yes...this is too much. They ask INR 200 in daytime and INR 50 at evening. Now the GMC is collecting. When the lessee collects, some vendors do not come."

Fatima informed that 2- 3 times, vendors created a huge ruckus when they had been beaten. This news reached the government who did not extend the lessee's contract. After that, the GMC has been collecting tax for two years in this market. This happened few years ago. The lessee often gets contract in a new name if his name is blacklisted. Also, the lessee or his men do not directly come to collect tax. They have recruited employees who come to collect the tax and they sit in the club.

She said that now the number of vendors has been reduced. The number of vegetable vendors has increased but vendors selling clothes, iron equipment, and utensils have reduced drastically. The vegetable market is still running but clothes market has gone (*Sabji dukan zinda hai per kapda dukan mar gaya hai*). There were many clothes vendors who used to sell in this market, both old and new clothes. 75 per cent clothes vendors have reduced. Only 25 per cent clothes vendors come here now (*Bola na abhi sirf char aana hai ek rupaiya me*). Vegetable vendors are still here because they are constantly in demand.

In response to the question, if lessee collects higher tax than the prescribed tax why do not the vendors make complaints and approach the GMC, she said, "Vendors do not complain because if lessee gets to know who has made the application, they would come and beat the vendor. And the majority of vendors come from outside. Lessee does not respect the old vendors even. They slap them immediately. They only give some consideration to local vendors, regular vendors. In her words, "Ye log Beltola ke logo ka wazan leta hai. Lekin en logo ka haalat theek nahi hai. Cahe burha ho ya jawan ho, koi baat nahi hai, phatak se haath utha deta hai." She stated, "As lessee collects high tax, vendors also sell vegetables at high price. They have their own expenses. As they devote 2-3 days for selling one day in the market, they have to earn at least three days daily-wages. What would vendors earn if they pay INR 300- 400 as tax. Whenever Bihu comes, they collect INR 800-1,000 from each vendor. If someone would give INR 50 less, he would get beaten. They do not even listen to the vendors' problem - why he is not able to pay. They come directly and ask, 'Give us INR 1,000.' If vendor would say that he is not able to pay because the selling is not good and gives INR 50 less. The tax collector would say, 'No...no....You must pay this much money.' If still, the vendor does not give, they start beating them."

(Baat-cheet nahi. Paisa do. Kitna? 800-1000. Agar bolo 50 rupya kam lo, bikri nahi hai to bolega, nahi hoga...nahi hoga....ek do baat bolne ke baad hi phatak se haath utha deta hai. Kya kare ga....Ku baki market me sabji sasta hai. Ku...Kuki waha pe khazana nahi hai. Hisab se bikri hota hai. Koi behisab se nahi hota hai. Bag leke aata hai...ye dukan ka du tho, wo duka ka du tho, wo dukan ka char tho utha leta hai. Khan eke leye bina paisa. Saam ke time me aata hai, do 50 rupya. Nahi deta hai. Nahi deta hai to maar khata hai.)

If government would not take action, what can we do. The main problem is that, vendors do not come here from one place. They come from different places. Unless everyone comes together, they cannot not be powerful. There are five fingers. When all become equal, then only it becomes powerful. If there are five fingers and one is cut down, how would it become powerful?

(Eska upay, agar sarkar nahi karega to public kya kare ga. Ek jagah ka public nahi hai na. Har jagah ka public hai. Sub mil ke eketha hoga na tub shakati aa jayega. Paanch tho ungali hai. Ek tho cut jayega to kais ek hoga.)

-This interview was held on June 08, 2014 in the Beltola market.

Box 5: The case of Kacharighat market

The Kacharighat market was also a lease market few years ago but vendors in this particular market opposed the excessive tax collected by lessee, organized prolonged strikes, closed down the market for weeks, filed a court case in the GHC against excessive tax collected by lessee. They did this continuously for two-three years just after awarding work of tax collection to the lessee. Every year when vendors start protesting against lessee, the GMC starts collecting tax for one year but then next year again they give the task to lessee for tax collection. After continuous opposition by the vendors every year, last year the GMC did not invited tender for this market. But it happened only because vendors in this market were unionized. Now, the GMC collects tax of INR 20 per vendor per day and the vendor's committee collects INR 10 per day from vendors. Vendor's committee has laid down internal lanes, drains, built a temporary toilet in the market with its collection. They also organize festivals and other religious activities in the temple built within the premise of the market.

During discussion with Nagaon vendors, participants informed that they take loan at 10 per cent interest rate for vending from the moneylenders in their village market. It means that if a vendor takes loan one day before the market day, when he returns after selling his vegetables, he/ she has to repay the loan with 10 per cent interest. Suppose, today a vendor borrows INR 1,000 from moneylender, just after the market day, he has to return INR 1,100 to the moneylender. Almost every vendor in this village (the village where FGD was organized) had taken loan from Bandhan (a micro-finance institution). They repay it in weekly installments. To recover the loss, sometimes vendors also sell their valuables. A vendor from Nagaon shared that once he sold his three cows to repay the money that he had lend for vending. He had loss and had no other option but to sell cows and repay the loan.

8.4. Extortion by Local Goons

Beltola market vendors: In the market, teenage boys from local club harass vendors by asking money and threatening them. A tribal women vegetable seller from Boko, who comes with relatively more vegetables than other tribal women vendors, shared her experience of harassment. She said,

8.4. A

“Once, a group of boys from local club came to me and asked for INR 500 as chanda for celebrating Bihu. I refused them to pay by saying that Muslim vendors can pay you INR 500 but I cannot. Then, they started forcing me for giving INR 500. I again told them that I am unable to give INR 500. Then they threatened me that I would not be able to sell goods from next time in this place. I have also threatened them by saying that you could not stop me to vend here, even nobody's father could dare to stop me to vend here.”

The vendors get harassed by local goons for money when they come late, a night just before the market day. Besides local goons, different groups of local boys also harass them by asking huge amount starting from INR 500 to INR 1,000 for celebrating Bihu, Durga Puja and other local festivals. Vendors from Barpeta and Nagaon shared openly about the problems they face from local goons in the market.

A group of vendors from Nagaon stated that due to police and local goons extra expense incurs. To minimize their loss, they have to increase the rates of vegetables and ultimately it affects their business as customers start buying less. Local goons ask for huge amount of money from them and if vendors dare to deny them, they face physical harassment from the local goons. One of the participants shared,

8.4. B

“Once, we reached Beltola market at 2 am in the night and were unloading our goods from the truck. Some drunken local goons reached there. They asked for INR 1,000 from us. When we refused to pay, he kicked me and also fell down, as he was drunk. We pay them and they beat us in return. When, we take time in giving them money, they start beating us and grab our cell phone. Only police can help us in this kind of situation. In Beltola market, if lessee and local goons would beat us, no one would come forward to rescue us.”

They informed that few local goons, who previously came to the market and collected money from vendors, now do not come personally but send their employed boys to collect vegetables and money. These boys come and collect money and vegetable on their boss name. Due to fear, vendors give vegetables and money to them. Participants stated that they give because they do not want to face any problem further. As this market is too far from their homes, they leave their families at home and come to market; they do not want to expose them in any kind of conflict and problem. One of the participants revealed his fear by stating that,

8.4. C

“If I will die, who will look after my family and kids?”

Barpeta vendors stated that harassment by local goons is a disturbing factor for the vendors. According to them, there are 5 to 10 groups of local goons in the Beltola market, the main leader may be from Beltola and others assist them in collecting *goonda* tax during night when the vendors unload their vegetables from truck. They can not identify those goons in front of police because they fear that after coming back from police lock up there would be threat of life to the identifier. According to the participants, police also fears from them and there may be some nexus between police and local goons. Vendors revealed a recent incident where a local goon had been caught by police and arrested while taking *goonda* tax from vendor. Vendors got information that now other members of group are trying to identify the informer.

Participant stated that harassment by local goons was much higher previously than the present time. Few years ago, an indigenous women vendor was slapped by a local goon for not giving *goonda* tax. Fortunately, on the same day, Himanta Biswa Sarma, Health and Education Minister had come to attend a function in nearby school and got information about harassment of vendors by local goons. Then, he had deputed few policemen in the market to prevent the harassment of vendors. Participants also shared that over the years, the number of local goons has decreased in the market because many young boys have got jobs. Akon Bora, NCP MLA, help them to get jobs.

A group of vendors from Kharupetia also revealed more or less a similar experience of local goons. They reach the market one day before the market i.e. on Wednesday and on Saturday nights. While vendors park the truck and unload their vegetables, local goons come and asked money. They asked for INR 200 to INR 500 from each truck. After purchasing vegetables and paying the transport fare, hardly any money was left in their hands. In this situation, when goon asks money, they find it very difficult to pay them. If vendors do not give local goons, he abuses them and sometimes beats them. As vendors do not want to involve themselves in any kind of violence, they pay the desired amount to goons and keep away themselves. One of the participants stated,

8.4. D

“When we reach market at night, we unload our goods, pay goonda tax and then sleep. We do not even try to interfere, in case there is any fight between vendor and lessee on the issue

over tax. As we fear the local goon, if we go to resolve or interfere in such situations, there is chance of being harmed physical.”

Vendors shared that they pay to local goon, whenever he asks because if they do not give, they get slapped. To save their dignity, vendors pay to local goon immediately. Collecting *chanda* by boys from local clubs was another major problem revealed by vendors. Local goons ask for a huge amount from vendors to celebrate all kind of festivals. They ask for INR 400-1,000 from each vendor. A Muslim vendor from Kharupetia revealed that he earns profit of INR 200-3000 by selling vegetables worth INR 2,000-3,000 and he is the sole bread winner in his house. When he gives *chanda*, he finds it difficult to fulfill his family’s basic needs. One of the vendors asked,

8.4. E

“Should I run my family or give chanda from my income? For any festival, chandas can be given once but in Beltola market, every market day local boys collect chanda. On the first market day, local youths take INR 600, then on second market day INR 200 and then INR 300 on third market day and so on.”

This happens because there are many *Puja Samitis* in Beltola area, and everyone comes to collect the *chanda* on different market days. During last festival, 4- 5 times, different *puja samiti*’s had asked for *chanda* on different market days. One of the vendors had shown his pain while discussing to what extent they get harassed by lessee and local goons. He stated,

8.4. F

“We are poor vendors but they think that we make good profit by vending. Would not we invest money to buy vegetables? Even, they do not think about the pain we bear while vending and commuting.”

Goons come at night and ask for money from vendors. They charge INR 200-500 from each truck. Another vendor from Kharupetia stated,

8.4. G

“We regularly give money to the local goons. We don’t want to engage ourselves in any kind of quarrels. I am an aged person, the goons come in drunken state, if they beat or slap me, the question of my self-respect arises.”

Another participant stated,

8.4. H

“In case, he shows dadagiri, vendors would give him the asked amount. If, I will oppose him and others will give, he will be encouraged to collect more money and at the same time I will get discouraged to oppose him. He knows very well if he shows dadagiri, he can easily get money from the poor vendors.”

He further stated,

8.4. J

“When, they come and ask for huge chanda, we start thinking, how much can we afford but meanwhile they start abusing us by calling us foul words and forcefully snatch money from our bags where we keep money while doing vending.”

Ulubari market vendors: Vendors are facing the problem of collection of money by local goons. They ask for INR 30-50 per day. Few of these local goons take vegetables away without paying money and in case vendors ask money, they abuse and beat the vendors. In a discussion with regular vendors, local goons usually take vegetables without paying money in late evening when there are few customers in the market as well as few commuters on the road. Vendors fear to oppose these goons because they abuse them and are stronger than vendors who are not local. In response to the question, why they do not they complain to the police about this, a Muslim regular vendor said,

8.4. K

“Police is just like a white elephant. Sometimes, we discuss amongst ourselves that if we engage in a fight with local goons and if they kill us, who would take care of our families. Our kids would die without food.”

Hence, instead of resisting or complaining to police, they pay them goonda tax. He shared a recent experience of harassment by a local goon, when a local goon was arguing with a vendor over the rate of capsicum. Local goon wanted to buy the capsicum lesser than the price on which vendor had bought. When the young vendor refused to give the vegetables asked by the local goon, the goon attempted to beat him. Then he intervened in this matter and asked the young vendor to run away from the market. This act of intervention by the other vendor made the goon angry and he started abusing him.

The goon said,

8.4. L

“I will see, how these miya vendors will vend in this market.”

Vendor did not reply him back. The goon also threatened other vendors to abduct him sometime. Another group of participants revealed more or less similar kind of harassment by local youth clubs who collect chanda every now and then, which is a disturbing factor for all the vendors in Beltola. There are various parties who collect chanda for every small and big festival. These parties (4-5 in numbers) are basically from various youth clubs located in places like Beltola Tinali, Joyanagar Tinali, Khanapara, Basistha Chariali etc. These are the names of surrounding places of the market. Participants expressed their doubt about whether the chanda actually goes to the Puja samiti or not, as sometimes they are given receipt against the chanda and sometimes are not. These puja samiti's have tie-up with local clubs who help them in chanda collection.

Box 6: Experience – 3

Raju is from Chapra, Bihar and has been vending in Guwahati since past 15 years. He sells socks, handkerchiefs and caps in the Beltola market but he did not go to sell in Beltola since last few weeks because lessee (it is not clear that whether lessee collects chanda for puja or a group of local boys, but it is clear the lessee supports the local boys or maybe these local boys are part of lessee's team who help him to collect the chanda) is collecting chanda for puja these days. If he would go, he has to pay INR 1,000 to them. He said, “There is no system of tax collection in Beltola. Sometimes, they take INR 150, sometimes INR 200 and sometimes INR 250. Now they are collecting INR 1000 for the navratri puja. Therefore, nowadays, I am not going to Beltola market.”

Apart from Beltola market, he also vends in other markets on other days like in Satgaon market on Wednesday, in Bornihat market on Friday and in Sonapur market on Saturday.

He said that 15 years ago, when he started vending in Beltola market, lessee was charging only INR 20 from each vendor. Akon Bora's nephew and brother are part and parcel of the lessee team. Thus, when any boy (who collects tax forcefully or misbehaves with vendors) gets detained by the police, Akon Bora calls the local police and gets them released. Vendors know that if they will deny giving tax, they will be beaten and their money would be snatched. Thus, there is no use of resisting.

In response to the question about whether he would get space in proposed municipal market or not, he said that he does not know about who will get space but probably the rich vendors would get space. Arup Da informed that there is a two-storey wholesale market in Fancy Bazar but vendors only sell on the ground floor and no one sells on the first floor. Large number of vendors sell outside the market on the road and footpaths. All he was trying to say that the usefulness of these kind of multi-storey markets is doubtful.

- This interview was held in October, 2014 at Lakhra market.

8.5. Atrocities by Police

Beltola vendors: Sometimes police also harass them in the name of routine checking. There are quarrels between vendors and police as women vendors resist police to arrange their packets of vegetables as these have been put before the checking in the cab. A woman vendor from Boko said,

8.5. A

"I find it very difficult when police check my bags full of vegetables and sometimes asks for money also while coming to the market. Because of such checking, I reach late to the market."

Often the vendors come by goods carrying van, but sometimes if they miss the tempo they come by bus but get dropped at Khanapara, and then they take a cycle rickshaw. But sometimes police also harasses them by removing air from the tyres of cycle rickshaw. Police argue that if they allow them, there are traffic-jams and they could not allow them to get into the market with vegetables. Once, all the women street vendors did *gherao* (protest) of one of the cops against removing air from the tyres, that time due to protest, the cop ran away. After that incident, cops generally do not remove the air from tyres.

Vendors who reach one day before at night get harassed by police patrolling cars. Police patrolling van from various police stations roam in night and every time vendors have to give INR 20 to each police van. Police takes INR 20 from each truck. A participant from Kharupetia said,

8.5. B

"Two police cars come and take INR 20, after some time two other cars come from Dispur thana and take INR 20, then police van from Basistha thana comes and we give them also. This happens many times during the entire night."

He further revealed that police also helps them. When police come, goons go away. In case, vendors complain that local goons are harassing them for money, they scold goons and direct them not to ask money from vendors but at the same time they also harass them as described by a vendor,

8.5. C

“If we don't get 6 chakka (wheeled) truck, we come by 10 chakka truck. Then we have to give INR500-600. Police argues that entry of 10 chakka trucks is prohibited in the market area.”

Ulubari vendors: It was a common complaint by Ulubari vendors that police do not allow them to vend when any minister is supposed to pass through B.K. Kakati Road. They informed that police harassment was more in the past but now it has decreased.

Conflicts during train travel: While commuting by train, Barpeta Road vendors face lots of problem. They wait for train with their vegetable bags at railway station. Train stops only for few minutes and they have to load their vegetable bags in the train within this short duration. These women vendors find it difficult to load the bags within a short duration and they do this in a group. Sometimes they take help of manual labors but for this service they have to bear extra expenditure.

Passengers sometimes do not allow the vendors to get into the train. Passengers lock the door from inside, so that vendors could not enter the train. As a result, sometimes they miss the train and have to wait for next train. In this case, they reach late to the market and this ultimately reduces their duration for selling vegetables for that day. Hence, sometime they could not manage to sell entire commodity that day and they are forced to stay for next day and sell the remaining vegetables.

When passengers behave with them badly, they get into arguments with the passengers most of the times. A woman vendor from Barpeta shared an incident when her son was beaten by one passenger. She said,

8.5. C

“Two years ago, my son was beaten by one passenger when we were trying to get into the train with our vegetable bags against desire of one of the passenger. We had tolerated this brutal act of the passenger and didn't say anything.”

Participants informed that verbal conflicts often occur with passengers. They always try to convey to the passenger that they have to get into the train like this because it is essential for them to run their house. Sometimes, passengers also damage their vegetables crushing by their feet. Vendors try to convince the passengers to allow them to travel by stating that,

8.5. D

“This is our livelihood and hence we have to go by train. We do not have any other work to do. We are doing this work due to extreme poverty and have only this option for our survival.”

In case the train is crowded, few vendors go and rest of them wait for the next train. When train starts before loading all the goods, the remaining goods come by next train by other known vendors. Sometimes they load few commodities in one coach and rest in another coach in the same train. When vendors do not listen and try to resist or, the passengers complain to Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Ticket Checkers (TC) against vendors.

In order to allow them traveling with lot of vegetables, the RPF and the Government Railway Police (GRP) ask money from vendors. They give INR 20-30 at various stations to the RPF

and GRP cops. A brave women vendor from Barpeta Road shared an incident when she had a fight with a RPF cop. She said,

8.5. E

“One day, a RPF cop asked INR100 from me. When I couldn’t give the money, the cop kept one bag of vegetables with him and allowed me to load the remaining bags inside the train. Then, I became furious and shouted at him. But he still did not returned my bag. At last, when I lost my patience, I caught his shoulder, and his badge came into my hand. He became scared and immediately returned my bag of vegetables.”

Accommodation problem: Ulubari vendors, especially women vendors, face the problem while staying in Guwahati. They need to stay back for several reasons. If their vegetables are not sold in a day, they have to stay back for the next day or sometimes when they miss their scheduled train and travel by other train and reach late to Barpeta Road railway station. Sometimes they stay at their relative’s house but mostly at Guwahati railway station, though staying at railway station is not a safe option. If they reach Barpeta Road railway station late night, they do not get any conveyance for their destination and have to stay at platform till morning. A women vendor shared an incident when they reached late at Barpeta Road station from Guwahati by Kanchenjunga Express. A thief had stolen INR 4,000 from one of the companion vendor. Most of the times, their money and valuables are stolen when they stay at railway station at night.

Shade: The absence of shade over vending space was considered as a big issue by vendors in many group discussions. The market place where they vend is an open space. Doing business under the open sky is hazardous for their health. Very often, they have to visit pharmacy and purchase medicine. Most of the vendors stated that their health condition has been deteriorated over the time because they toil hard work while collecting forest produce and sell it in adverse weather conditions like summer, rains and cold without having any shade facility. Vendors have headaches as they constantly sit under the scorching sun. One of the participants stated,

8.5. F

“Last Sunday, I had severe headache and pain in my waist. Hence, I gave all my vegetables to another vendor and went back to home.”

Because of no shed, their business stops when it rains. They have to wait till rain stops. Someday if it is raining, they can not sell the entire day.

Picture 19: Tribal women vendors using umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun, (left), male vendors with large stalls using tarpaulin roofs (right) in Beltola market



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 20: Vendors stop selling during heavy rains (left), while customers also take shelter under tarpaulin sheets during rains (right) in Beltola market.



Photo credit: Authors

9. Intervention by Various Institutions, Actors

In Beltola market, large number of vendors stated that the not just the lessee but also other local goons (18 per cent stated so; Table 43). Local goons do not only harass male vendors but also women vendors. They steal goods from their vending stalls and sometimes when vendors roam in the market, thieves snatch their purses and run away. Mostly, vendors help each other for securing their space and goods. When someone wants to leave their stall for some time due to various reasons, their neighboring vendor takes care of the companions stall. Lessee collects high tax but few vendors had also reported that lessee helps them to acquire or get space for vending. In case, there is fight between two or more vendors, lessee also mediates and sorts out the issue. In some cases, formal shopkeepers and local residents also help vendors to sell their goods in the market by helping them to acquire space for vending (Table 44).

Table 43: Actors who harass vendors in Beltola market

Sl.	Actors	Number	Per cent
1.	Lessee	29	37.2
2.	Police	4	5.1
3.	Local Goons	5	6.4
4.	Lessee & Local Goons	14	17.9
5.	Lessee & Police	1	1.3
6.	Lessee, Local goons & police	2	2.6
7.	Police & Local goons	2	2.6
8.	No harassment	16	20.5
9.	N.R.	5	6.4
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 44: Actors who help vendors in Beltola market

Sl.	Actors	Number	Per cent
1.	Vendors help each other	6	7.7
2.	Lessee	5	6.4
3.	Formal shopkeeper	5	6.4
4.	GMC	1	1.3
5.	Local residents	4	5.1
6.	Police	1	1.3
7.	Customer	2	2.6
8.	No one helps	28	35.9
9.	N.R.	26	33.3
	Total	78	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

A large number of vendors revealed that there is no harassment in Ulubari. This consists of large number of women vendors who are unionized. About 47 per cent vendors, who are either facing harassment by local goons or police or by both, consists of a large number of regular male vendors (Table 45). The condition of Bengali-Muslim male vendors is more vulnerable than anyone else because of their migratory status. During group discussions, participants revealed that they have good relations with nearby people and families. People help them in selling whenever they get time. Sometimes vendors also keep vegetables in their houses. Nearby formal shopkeepers were also considered as a supportive actor for them. Shopkeepers provide some space in-front of their shop where they can sit, rest and take their home-made food. They opined of always trying to maintain healthy relations with them. Vendors help each other by guarding the vegetables of their companion vendor, in their absence. A woman vendor stated,

9. A

“Sometimes when I reach the market, I would not have money to pay for the handcart. In that case, companion vendors help me to pay for the handcart.”

The sSTEP and women vendors’ committee are the main actors who support vendors especially women vendors (Table 46). They provide them umbrellas to save them from sunlight and adverse weather conditions. Apart from this, Women Committee with support of sSTEP has rented out a toilet, filtered water and office-cum-storage. Recently, a night shelter has also been constructed on a rented space by sSTEP and Women Vendors Committee.

Table 45: Actors who harass vendors in Ulubari market

Sl.	Actors	Number	Per cent
1.	Police	1	3.3
2.	Local Goons	8	26.7
3.	Police & Local goons	6	20.0
4.	No harassment	14	46.7
5.	N.R.	1	3.3
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Table 46: Actors who help vendors in Ulubari market

Sl.	Actors	Number	Per cent
1.	Vendors help each other	4	13.3
2.	Local residents	2	6.7
3.	sSTEP & Women Vendors Committee	11	36.7
4.	No one helps	13	43.3
	Total	30	100.0

Source: Primary Survey, 2014

Picture 21: Umbrella provided to vendors (left), and water filter provided by sSTEP to vendors (right) in Ulubari market



Photo credit: Authors

Picture 22: A night shelter run by Women Vendor's Committee (right) in Ulubari market



Photo credit: Authors

Suggestions by vendors: Participants from Beltola market suggested that the GMC should not award tax collection through bidding process because it is based on competition amongst the bidders. Hence, the bidding price which should be INR 20 lakh, increases up to INR 60-70 lakh. After awarding the bid, lessee has to recover this money from vendors. This ultimately increases the tax amount to be paid by each vendor. One person cannot pay this huge amount; hence a group of people make investment collectively. After being awarded the work of tax collection, everyone wants to make maximum profit from his investment and it ultimately increases the tax burden on vendors.

To deal with the problem of harassment by local goons, participants suggested that there is need for a strict vigilance by police. They stated that during the market day, there is a huge collection of money by the lessee or the GMC, so why should not the government depute police force for their security. Most importantly, they require police force during the night hours. According to them, some years back CRPF persons were deployed to maintain peace in the market. Vendors were not sure but one of them said that it was an initiative by Himanta Biswas Sarma after knowing about the conflict.

To avoid the conflicts between regular and irregular vendors in Ulubari market, participants suggested that on market days the vending space should be divided for regular male and irregular tribal women vendors separately. Also this market should be declared as a bi-weekly market, instead of daily market. Participants revealed that they needed a night shelter where they can stay. They also needed a dedicated / permanent market especially for women vendors near to this market but along the road as they did not considered footpaths as a secure space for running business for longer time. The Muslim regular vendors also get harassed by the vendors coming from Barpeta as they occupy their space on bi-weekly market days. Due to this, regular vendor have to search for alternate space on these days. The regular vendors suggested that the vending space should be fixed for each of them so that there would be no conflicts over space with the vendors who come from outside.

10. Findings from the Study

10.1. Overall Findings

Different kinds of conflicts and violence have been reported in both markets. In both markets, the vendors are struggling to acquire a decent space where they can vend. Although, space is the common problem for the vendors in both markets but drivers are different. Vendors in Ulubari are selling goods on footpath, which is supposed to be illegal, while the vendors who are selling on the roadside in Beltola have legitimacy because they are paying tax against their trade. But vendors are facing problem in occupying the space in the market because there is no mechanism to deal with the issue of space. Even the terms and conditions with lessee do not specify anywhere how the space would be allocated in case conflicts arise amongst vendors over the space. Now, vendors sort out the conflicts around space by themselves, at their own level because they know that everyone is here to vend and the vending space is not inherited. Some of the formal shopkeepers and local residents are making money out of this problem of scarcity of the space.

Since last few years, Muslim vendors from Kharupetia, Nagaon and Barpeat are coming with large quantity of vegetables. This creates another conflict point between tribal women vendors and the male Muslim vendors. The tribal women feel that they are here since a long time and are from Assam but these *miya* vendors have gradually captured the market space. They also feel that the lessee supports these *miya* vendors because they pay much higher tax than these tribal women vendors who come with comparatively less amount of goods.

Ironically, though all the vendors are paying considerable amount of money as tax but there are no provisions of toilet, potable water, storage and shade. This creates the conditions where vendors are forced to endure physical pain by consuming less water or vending under the scorching sunrays. The terms and conditions with lessee do not include provision of these essential amenities and services except waste management. Hence, this is clear that GMC is not interested to provide conducive environment for vending in these markets but just extract rent from the vendors.

Another major conflicting issue revolves around the excessive tax collected by the lessee. As lessee uses muscle power to collect the tax sometimes this creates a situation where physical violence occurs. Vendors are poor and do not belong to the city which restricts them to oppose the high tax. The lack of monitoring of the lessee by the GMC is one of the major problems and because of which vendors have to pay three to four times more amount of tax than the prescribed amount. It ultimately affects the earning of the small vendors. Last but not least, the local goons also harass the vendors at night, mainly those who reach market a day before the market from far places. These vendors have to spend the entire night in fear. They do not have any option but to pay the asked amount to the local goon to save their life and to avoid unwanted situations. The forceful collection of *chanda* by local youth clubs in the name of celebrating festivals is another disturbing element for street vendors. If a vendor gives INR 500 or 1000 as *chanda*, who earn INR 700 in a day after having hard work of 2-3 days in Beltola market, nothing remains in his hand to take back to his home.

Ulubari market faces slightly different kind of situations due to various reasons such as it is not an old market like Beltola, it has not been covered under the GMC market and here tribal women vendors are well organized. The Women Vendors' Committee collects fee from each women vendor once in a week. They have created and are managing some basic services like provision of umbrellas to vendors, filtered water, small night shelter, office cum storage room and toilet. But these services are limited only for women vendors. sSTEP is supporting the women vendors in this market, not only to organize them but also in the provision and maintenance of the above mentioned basic amenities. sSTEP is getting financial support from Oxfam to support vendors in this market. However, conflicts still exist over vending space not only between regular Muslim vendors and tribal women vendors but also amongst the tribal women vendors who come from different places such as between those who come from Sonapur and Bornihat. Often, conflict for space takes place between regular male vendors and irregular women tribal vendors from Barpeta Road because of the proximity of the space from where they vend.

Regular vendors leave the space by themselves for tribal women vendors on Sundays considering that they are vending here before them but on other days such as on Wednesday, regular vendors are reluctant to leave their space for them. At the same time, now, irregular women vendors do not stick to any particular day when they come - except Sunday. They could also come on alternative days or after every couple of days. Now, regular vendors are leaving the market for outside vendors themselves on Sundays. It is unthinkable about the situation that would occur 5 or 10 years later when more vendors may flock to the market and there are conflicts over space. It is the regular vendors who are paying regularly to the police and local goons, not irregular tribal women vendors, hence regular vendors may get support from local goons and police to do their business more regularly. However, the regular vendors have fears because they have not been unionized yet, but irregular tribal women vendors are.

As women vendors are unionized, they are able to sort out their problems regarding temporary shade by using umbrella sponsored by Oxfam, potable water, a toilet having one seat, storage

etc. They are also able to oppose the evictions by police and GMC but the conditions for regular vendors are worse because most of them are migrated Muslim and are considered to have second right of using resources in Assam. Thus, regular vendors give money to the local goons and police to vend in the market. One could say that there are lots of conflicts in both markets, which need to be addressed before it reaches to the tipping point after which the situation could become worse. Right now, vendors are dealing with all these conflicting issues at their own risk and costs like they vend under the sun and rain which is physically challenging for them, pay money to the lessee, local goons and police which minimizes their profit etc. Usually they are trying to cope with these problems because this work is linked with their livelihood and their family's survival is linked with their earning.

10.2. Initiatives taken by GMC for Street Vendors in Guwahati

In a conversation with an official at Market Branch, GMC, it was informed that a multi-storey market having capacity for 400- 500 vendors has been proposed in Beltola market. GMC has also bought 2 bigha land near the agriculture office in Ulubari to construct a market for the vendors who are at present vending from Ulubari flyover to Aathgaon flyover. The construction of the multi-storey market has started last year but no initiative has been taken on the land bought by the GMC in Ulubari so far. But when vendors were asked about the municipal market that is under construction in Beltola, they revealed that they were unaware about who will get the space in the market and the procedure to be followed in order to apply for the space in the market. However, no vendor was willing to vend on the upper floors of the market even if they get the space.

The GMC has also constituted the Town vending Committee and Zonal vending Committee's in the city after enactment of Street Vendors Livelihood Protection Act by the central government last year. Recently, the survey of street vendors has also been completed in the city. But it is not clear what actions would be undertaken next.

11. Recommendations

11.1. Overall Recommendations

The state's withdrawal from governance of the markets has left the space open for exploitative private parties to conduct their business. GMC should ensure that its withdrawal from the markets must be accompanied by the creation of representative market management committees that can safeguard the interests of the vendors. At the same time, the GMC should also assume planning for spaces for the vendors in the city.

The development plan mechanism must identify and reserve spaces for local markets as recommended by the Street Vendors' Act of 2014.

GMC has completed street vendor surveys in Guwahati. The formation of street vending committees and zonal vending committees in all markets must be expedited.

GMC must delineate a) free vending areas - where street vending is allowed without restrictions, b) restricted vending areas - areas where vending is permitted on specific days or time or by trade, and c) no-vending zones - streets having arterial/heavy traffic. Vendors affected by the creation of no-vending zones must be accommodated in vending zones nearby through the use of measures like time-sharing that can be implemented using the TVC/ZVC mechanism.

The process of issuing licenses to street vendors must be expedited. These licenses must include names of beneficiaries, name of the market, timings and charges to prevent harassment by various state and non-state actors.

Street vending schemes must by virtue of their design exhibit sensitivity to the needs of the vendors and their customers, especially women, children and differently-abled.

GMC must contribute towards building the capacities of the vendors so that they can come together and form market management committees for their governance.

GMC must help prevent exploitation of vendors by lessees, private plot owners and vendor committees. In lieu of a nominal tax collected from the managing body, the vendors and their customers must be given access to clean and safe markets.

The state must ensure the safety and security of women vendors who feel threatened by their male counterparts and unwelcome owing to the lack of basic facilities like sanitation, storage and night shelters. Access to basic services such as shade, potable water, well-lit and clean toilets must be ensured. In addition, facilities like night shelters and storage spaces for vegetables and other belongings of vendors need to be provided.

More needs to be done to ensure access to formal credit facilities among street vendors to prevent their exploitation by moneylenders. The state must extend welfare measures like insurance to those at risk of exclusion.

11.2. Specific Suggestions for Beltola Market

The tax collection through lessee was revealed as an exploitative and unfair system by the vendors of Beltola and few other markets. Hence, it is suggested that either the GMC should collect toll by engaging their own employees or strictly monitor the work of toll collection by the lessee and ensure that the lessee collects the tax as per the rate list prescribed by the GMC for tax collection.

As per rough estimate, the GMC earns revenue of INR 26 lakh per year from Beltola market (If there are minimum 500 vendors and each vendor pays INR 50 per market day). Looking at the amount of revenue earned by the local government, it is imperative for the local authorities to provide basic amenities such as shade, potable water, public toilet, storage and a night shelter to the street vendors of Beltola market.

To minimize the conflicts between tribal women vendors and male Muslim vendors, a particular proportion of space - after calculation of number of women vendors and the need of space for them - should be reserved for women vendors.

Though a multi-storey market is under construction for vendors in Beltola, it is very difficult to tell that both vendors and customers would go for trade. The capacity of this multi-storey building to accommodate 700-800 vendors is also skeptical. As Beltola is an old, traditional and historic market, the entire stretch from Beltola Tinali to Jainagar Charali should be declared as heritage market by the GMC and traffic should be diverted towards Beltola Chariali from Beltola Tinali and towards National Highway from Jainagar Tinali on bi-weekly market days i.e. on Thursdays and Sundays. The Street Vendors Act (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of the Street vending), 2014 also suggests, "natural markets where street vendors have conducted business for over fifty years shall be declared as heritage market, and the street vendors in such markets shall not be relocated."

11.3. Specific Suggestions for Ulubari Market

As this market is set up along the Bharalu drain, it is possible that they would become part of the Bharalu front development project. If a concrete patch constructed along the drain, each vendor can be allotted minimum space for vending. Vendors should be prohibited to dump or throw waste into the drain.

To minimize the conflicts between tribal women vendors who come from outside and regular vendors, the vendors should be allowed only on particular days like tribal women vendors should be given license for Wednesday and Sunday whereas regular vendors for rest of the days.

11.4. Specific Suggestions for Both Markets

Police patrolling should be encouraged to stop the extortion of money by local youth clubs in the name of *chanda* for celebrating festivals and extortion of money by local goons. Police patrolling for Beltola market at night, the day before the market is highly recommended.

Though it is very difficult to organize vendors who come from different places to vend in Guwahati, non-government organization like sSTEP should try to organize the vendors into groups and protest against the local goons and local youth clubs. Citizens should be sensitized towards the contribution made by the vendors and in spite of the difficulties faced by them, the essential services provided to citizens. This can be done through jingles on radio, advertisements in newspapers etc. In this way, vendors may get support of the local people to drive out these anti-social elements from the market.


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Annexures:

Annexure -1

Letter circulated by GMC to various organizations regarding formation of Town Vending Committee on July 16, 2014


**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
GUWAHATI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
PANBAZAR: GUWAHTI-01**

No. GCS /NURM /343 /14 / 17

Date: 16 /07/2014

To:

1. The Hon'ble Mayor, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, Guwahati.
2. The CEO, Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) Bhangaghar, Guwahati
3. The Senior Superintendent of Police, Guwahati City
4. Dy. Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Guwahati Development Department Dispur, Guwahati -06
5. The Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Guwahati City
6. The Joint Director of Health Services, Kamrup (M), Saikia Complex, Christian Basti, Guwahati - 06
7. The Chief General Manager, State Bank of India, Local Head Office, Dispur, Guwahati-06.
8. The Divisional Manager, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Guwahati Division, Fancy Bazar, Guwahati.
9. The Div. Engineer, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, All Divisions.
10. The Secretary, SSTEP (NGO)
11. The Secretary, Greater Guwahati Street Vendors Association
12. The President, Greater Guwahati women Street Vendors Association
13. The President, All Assam Street Vendors Association

Sub: Regarding formation of Town Vending Committees under Guwahati Municipal Corporation

Ref: No. GDD.7/2013/403 Dtd. 21st June, 2014

Sir,

In inviting reference to the above, I would like to inform you that in pursuance of the Govt. order vide letter under reference, Guwahati Municipal Corporation is proposing to form draft Town Vending Committees within the jurisdiction of the Corporation. The policy on urban street vendors envisages a multi stakeholder's involved committee including representatives from Vending Association, Police, Traffic Police, Local Body, planning Authority, Doctors, Lawyers association, NGO, CBO and resident welfare association to look into various aspects of development/issues of the urban street vendors. In this context a meeting with major stakeholders is scheduled to be held on the below mentioned date, time and venue.


You are requested to make it convenient to participate in the said meeting as per the date and time mentioned with your valuable inputs and suggestions. Look forward to work in collaboration for greater interest of the urban street vendors of the city.

Date: 21/07/2014

Time: 11 A.M

Venue: Conference Hall, Guwahati Municipal Corporation, Panbazar, Guwahati -01

Yours faithfully,


Commissioner,
Guwahati Municipal Corporation
Guwahati -01

Memo No: GCS/NURM/343/14/

-A

Date: /07/2014

Copy forwarded to:




1. The Nazir, GMC. He is directed to arrange light refreshment for the meeting.

/
Commissioner,
Guwahati Municipal Corporation
Guwahati -01

Annexure- 2

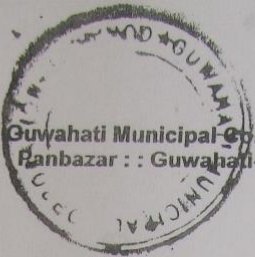
List of markets under GMC (2014)

List of Markets under Guwahati Municipal Corporation

<u>GMC Rent Markets:</u>	<u>Name of Markets</u>	<u>Location</u>
1.	Fancy Bazar GMC. Market	Fancy Bazar
2.	T.R.P. Road GMC. Market	Machkhowa
3.	New Market	Kedar Rd., Machkhowa
4.	Fatasil Market	Fatasil
5.	Paltan Bazar GMC. Market	Paltanbazar
6.	Wholesale Fish Market	Solabeel
7.	Chandmari Fly-over Market	Under Chandmari flyover.
8.	Chandmari Colony Market	Chandmari Colony
9.	Ulubari Market	Ulubari
10.	Ganeshguri Market	Ganeshguri
11.	Dispur Super Market	Dispur
12.	Uzanbazar Market	Uzan Bazar
<u>Daily Markets:</u>		
1.	Kacharighat Market.	Kacharighat
2.	Goat Market	Bhutnath
3.	Beltola Evening Daily Market	Beltola
<u>Bi-Weekly Market</u> :-	Beltola Bi-Weekly Market	Beltola
		
Supdt. Market Branch G.M.C.	Asstt. Commissioner Market Branch G.M.C.	Branch Officer Market Branch Guwahati Municipal Corporation

Annexure- 3

GMC approved rates for collection of toll from markets under the urban local body


Office of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation :: Guwahati
:: Panbazar :: Guwahati-781001 ::

No. GLS/52/173/PV/96-97/41 Date:31-07-2008

O R D E R

As per approval of the Administrator, GMC as well as Govt. vide letter No. GDD.100/94/PV/57 dated 25-07-2008 and in exercise of powers conferred upon the Commissioner under Section 315 of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation Act, 1971, the charge on Stallages, Rents or Fees as mentioned herein below are revised at the scale described herein.

Rate of Toll of Market under GMC

<u>Sl.No.</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>New Rate (in Rupees)</u>
1.	Vegetable Stall	20.00
2.	Per Tukri / Bag	10.00
3.	Per Stall (Fish)	50.00
4.	Fruit Stall	20.00
5.	Per Horse Cart (Loaded)	20.00
6.	Per Mini Truck	70.00
7.	Per Big Truck	100.00
8.	Per Thela Handcart & Rickshaw etc. only for wholesale market.	20.00
9.	Rice Stall	50.00
10.	Murgi Stall	50.00
11.	Meat Stall	50.00
12.	Egg Stall	20.00
13.	Cloth Stall (Small)	40.00
14.	Cloth Stall (Big)	80.00
15.	Per Goat or Sheep (only for Goat Market)	25.00
16.	Per Tea Stall	30.00
17.	Grocery / Stationery /Shop & Masala Stall	50.00
18.	Sugarcane per Bundle	15.00
19.	Per Pan Shop	20.00
20.	Per Chana / Sugarcane Juice (Per Thela)	20.00
21.	Per Pig	50.00
22.	Per Hawker	25.00
23.	Banana (Per Thook)	10.00
24.	Bamboo per piece	10.00
25.	Thatch per Bundle	1.00
26.	Broom per piece	2.00
27.	Bamboo / Cane Product (Stall)	20.00
28.	Iron / Stell / Metal / Utensil 9Stall)	20.00
29.	Nursery Stall (Flowers)	20.00
30.	Medicine etc. (Kabiraj)	20.00
31.	Book Stall (open)	10.00
32.	Sweet / Namkin Stall	20.00

D:\Collector\Market\Stallages rents or fees.doc Page 1 of 2

(2)

<u>Sl No.</u>	<u>Items</u>	<u>New Rate (in Rupees)</u>
33.	Shoe stall	30.00
34.	Stationery Stall	20.00

Sd/-
(Manish Tahkur) IAS.
Commissioner
Guwahati Municipal Corporation
Guwahati.

Memo No. GLS/52/173/PU/96-67/47-A


Date:31-07-2008.

Copy to:-

1. The Administration, GMC. for favour of information.
2. The Secretary to the Govt. of Assam, Guwahati Development Department, Dispur, for favour of information.
3. The P.S. to the Hon'ble Minister, Guwahati Development Department for kind information of Hon'ble Minister.
4. The Branch Officer, Market Branch, GMC, for information and necessary action .
5. The Collector,GMC., for information and necessary action.
6. Notice Board of Head Office / Market Branch / Enforcement Branch, GMC.
7. File

Sd/-
(Manish Tahkur) IAS.
Commissioner
Guwahati Municipal Corporation
Guwahati.

Forwarded by:-


Collector,
Guwahati Municipal Corporation,
AM Guwahati

Annexure-4:

Terms and conditions for settlement of GMC markets (2013-14)

OFFICE OF THE GUWAHATI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION :: GUWAHATI
:: PANBAZAR :: GUWAHATI-781001 ::

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR SETTLEMENT OF THE MARKETS OF GUWAHATI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION FOR THE YEAR 2013-14

1. The complete tenders are required to be submitted in sealed envelope super scribing on the envelope indicating as follows :
 - (a) To,
The Commissioner,
Guwahati Municipal Corporation,
Panbazar, Guwahati -781001.
 - (b) "Tender for settlement of market of
Guwahati Municipal Corporation."
 - (c) The Envelope shall indicate the name and address of the tenderer. Incomplete or late received tenders without Earnest Money deposit (For short, EMD) and the details as asked in the tender documents will not be considered.
2. The Tenderer in person or representing any firm, co-operative society or company shall be termed as "lessee" at all times and for all purposes of the tender works.
3. The name of the market, estimated value for settlement (market wise), EMD etc. as required for the tendering are shown and prescribed in Annexure- "A" being enclosed herewith.
4. The lease period in this instant case shall be for maximum 1 year i.e. 2013-14 upto 31st March'2014. The Commissioner, Guwahati Municipal Corporation however reserves the right to grant extension of the lease period, under special circumstance subject to approval of the Corporation or the Administrator and subject to satisfaction in fulfilling terms & condition by the lessee. In such case lessee has to offer enhanced value of 20% per annum over the settled value of the market.
5. All corrections in the tender papers shall be attested by the dated signature of the tenders. The tenders not intending for the work after purchase of the tender documents are advised to return the tender document within one week after its purchase. However the cost of tender will not be refunded.
6. Tenders not accompanied by the following would liable to be rejected:-
 - i) Earnest money @ Rs.2% of the estimated value (for SC/ST @ 1% of the estimated value) of the concerned market be deposited in the form of Deposit at Cell/ Crossed Demand Draft/ Banker's Cheque payable in favour of Commissioner, Guwahati Municipal Corporation.

Contd. 2

- ii) PAN Card with up to date copy of the authorized Income Tax payment statement.
 - iii) Valid VAT clearance Certificate.
 - iv) Up-to-date Trade licence of GMC.
 - v) Valid Caste Certificate issued by the Competent Authority.
 - vi) Attested copy of Registration Certificate of the Firm. Co-operative Society of Company as the case may be, issued by the lawful authority.
 - vii) Financial Soundness Certificate from nationalised Bank.
 - viii) No dues certificate from GMC.
7. The tenderer whose tender is accepted will be required to furnish the following:-
- i) 30% of the settled value shall be deposited as an advance payment for settlement within 24 hours after receipt of the written order / L.O.I. The amount may be paid by way of Cash or Bankers Cheque, or Demand Draft etc. In case of failure to deposit 30% of the settled amount in due time, the EMD shall stand forfeited. This advanced deposited will be adjusted in monthly instalment for the last month of the list period upto 31st March.
 - ii) An agreement has to be signed for fulfilling all terms & conditions and proper performance of the contract in prescribed format, prior to final settlement of the market.
8. The Commissioner reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof recording in writing or verbal. The highest tender may not necessarily be accepted. The decision of the commissioner, GMC in the matter of acceptance or rejection of tenders shall be final and binding on all concerned.
- Tenders which do not fulfil any one or more prescribed conditions or are incomplete in any form will be liable to be rejected forthwith.
9. Canvassing in any form will be a valid reason for rejection of tender.
10. On acceptance of any tender the tenderer may engage on accredited representative with duly authenticated bio-data submitted to Office of GMC for taking instructions from Commissioner, GMC as may be required from time to time. The lessee shall forward the name of his accredited representative (s) who would be responsible for taking instructions from the Commissioner, GMC as may be required from time to time. Such representative must carry an Identity Card during the valid period of lease.

(3)


11. On acceptance of any tender the tenderer shall be liable to pay any or all lawful taxes including turnover tax as per Contract Act. And the Corporation will not entertain any of such claim whatsoever in this respect.
12. No person, firm, co-operative society or company will be allowed to participate in the tender process who was either convicted by any Court of law at any point of time or blacklisted by the Corporation in connection with any contract or held irresponsible in any, matters of the Corporation. The previous conducts or records of any such tenderer, if any shall work out as basis for all actions of GMC for any such purpose.
13. Any tenderer who withdraw his tender after submission of the tender but before opening of the same for such modifications which are not acceptable to GMC, then the Commissioner, GMC without prejudice to any other right or remedy, will be at liberty to forfeit 50% of the said earnest money absolutely.
14. It would be obligatory on the part of the tenderers to signed the tender documents on all pages and for all component parts thereof.
15. If any financial loss or damage is caused to the Corporation for any such act of Tender (s), then at his own risk and cost, the tenderer shall be liable to pay all such compensation as may be determined by the Commissioner, GMC. However, on his failure in ,making such payment for time to time, The Commissioner, GMC reserves the right to realize such amount as the arrear on municipal taxes by way of drawing up a Recovery Proceeding against him under Chapter XX of the GMC Act.
16. On the satisfactory completion of the period of the lease if not otherwise found unfit, the Commissioner, GMC shall return the amount of EMD to the lessee.
17. If the selected tenderer declines to accepted the settlement within prescribed time, then without any prejudice to him, the Commissioner, GMC shall be at liberty to offer such settlement with the next qualified tenderer (s) either on his own quoted rate/ amount or at the rate/ amount of the highest one, as he may deen fit and proper. Any such other tenders who have offered the settlement but declines to accept the same shall get EMD forfeited without any responsibility or any claim on the part of GMC.
18. If any bids submitted for settlement of the markets under the Guwahati Municipal Corporation appears to be unreasonably high, reckless and highly disproportionate in comparison to the estimated value and/ or if there is probability or apprehension of indulgence of extortion activities to realize such settled value and Commissioner GMC shall have every right to reject such offer.
19. If it appear to the Commissioner that acceptance of any tender may cause financial lose or administrative disadvantage to the Corporation, he shall have the right to reject any such tender.
20. The earnest money of the unsuccessful tenderer shall be released only after completion of the lease settlement against their individual applications.

(4)

21. The lessee shall have to pay the remaining 70 % of the settled value minimum 9(nine) equal monthly instalments shall be started w.e.f. 01-04-2013. The lessee have to pay equal monthly instalments within 5 (five) days of the beginning of every month. Failing which lease would be terminated and earnest money and the advance payment so deposited shall be forfeited declaring the lessee as defaulter. The advance amount of 30% of the settle value of the tender paid by the lessee shall be adjusted against equally monthly instalments for the last period or the month in the end of the lease period.
- Defaulting lessee shall be liable to be blacklisted and shall be prohibited from participating in any tender of the Corporation any time there after. Any arrear due to the Corporation by the lessee, shall be recovered either under the provisions of the Chapter XX of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation Act. 1971, or as the Commissioner may decide in his behalf.
22. The lessee shall collect toll at the prescribed rates only. In case of any complaint of demanding excessive toll, either by the lessee himself or by their agents or employee, the lessee shall be liable to be prosecuted U/S 384 of I.P.C. and lease shall be terminated forthwith.
23. The lessee shall have no right to remove or install any person beyond the demarcated boundaries of the market as scheduled by the Corporation. However, if such report is received then the Commissioner or his authorized officer shall take appropriate actions on the lessee for so doing, in the manner as deemed fit.
24. The lessee shall not allow to open any shop on the roads or drains and shall not allow dumping of the materials on the roadside or drains or any other places except than specified places for dumping of garbage & provide necessary manpower for clearance of garbage at the disposal of conservancy staff including deduction of cost of conservancy service for the security deposit. If such report is received to the Commissioner, GMC he may proceed to take action against the lessee as he deemed fit.
25. The lessee shall not allow his tenants or against or, employees to prevents the free movement of the people within market areas and movement of vehicles on the roads passing through market. Otherwise the lessee shall be liable to face action as per law.
26. i) The Beltola Bi-weekly market shall sit only on Thursday and Sunday
Lessee shall not encourage opening of market other than the specified day.
ii) The evening markets at Beltola hall sit for five days in a week excluding Sunday and Thursday.
27. The lessee shall keep the market areas clean at his own cost. He shall also keep the area hygienic and pollution free For this purpose, the lessee will engage sweeper and tie up with Ramky or any other agency which GMC will suggest.

(5)

28. In case of dispute in collection of the toll between the lessee and the traders the Commissioner will act as sole arbitrator and his decision on the matters shall be binding on both the parties.
29. Collection receipt books of the toll will be printed by the lessee at his own cost and in his own name and separate receipt books shall be printed for different denominations of toll. However any such receipt book cannot be allowed to be used for the collection of tolls in the market unless it is endorsed by the Commissioner or by his authorized officer. The lessee therefore shall submit the printed toll receipt book in advance for authentication by GMC Officer.
30. The lessee can take help from the nearest Police Station, of any tender refuses to pay the prescribed tolls.
31. No application for remission or exemption, under any circumstances will be entertained by the GMC due natural calamities, bandhs, flood eviction by other local authorities or any other disturbances or any shortfall in collection.
32. The successful tenderer shall have to execute an agreement before taking the over possession of the market on non-judicial stamp papers of Rs.100/- only with the Commissioner, GMC.
33. If the lease violates any of the terms and conditions as mentioned above then the lease Settlement will be cancelled immediately. The Commissioner shall have the full rights to Invite fresh tenders or settle the lease with any other party as he deems fit. In such event, the outgoing lessee shall not be entitled to any relief leading cancellation of the lease.
34. Two copies of recent passport size photographs of the tenderer or the person signing the tender on the behalf of the firm, duly attested by gazetted officer, must be affixed at the respective places of the tender documents.
35. The lessee shall display a signboard of the approved rates of tolls in a Prominent place in the markets at their own cost, risks and responsibilities.
36. If any management is reported in the market effecting interest of the public or Government or Corporation adversely, the Commissioner shall have the power to terminated the lease by serving a prior notice of 2 (two) days only on the lessee and in that event the compensation whatever it may be.
37. Each tenderer must sign the declaration, attached to the tender form, and must accompany the same with tender.
38. Non-fulfillment of any of the terms and conditions as made herin above shall invite rejection of the tender without any further reference.


Commissioner

Guwahati Municipal Corporation

Am

Annexure-5

Questionnaire for Street Vendors in Beltola Bi-Weekly Market

0.1 Name of Interviewer _____

0.2 Date of Interview _____

0.3 Commodity sold _____

0.4 Size of stall (____feet by ____feet)

1. Personal Detail

1.1 Name of Respondent _____

1.2 Age of Respondent _____

1.3 Sex Male/ Female

1.4 Religion _____

1.5 Caste Assamese-Hindu, Assamese-Muslim, Bengali-Hindu,
Bengali-Muslim, Tribal, Other _____

1.6 Family Size _____

1.7 How many people work in your house? _____

1.8. How long are you vending in this market? (And in Guwahati, in case he/ she was selling somewhere else but later started selling here. Reason for shifting in this market should be mentioned).

1.9 How often do you vend in this market in a week? (Mention days like Thursday & Sunday)

1.10 If you vend in any other market, mention where and on which days of the week:

1.11 Where do you come from?

1.12 How do you come here?

1.13 Where do you get your goods from?

1.14 If you are not able to sell all your goods in a day, what do you do?

2. Access to vending space

2.1 How did you manage to get space in the market?

2.2 Do you vend in the same place every time? Yes/ No

2.3 If yes, how do you get the same place every time?

2.4 If no, then explain why you do not get the same place every time?

2.5 Is there any specific month when you do not come? _____

2.6 If Yes, then reason?

2.7. Time period _____

2.8 If you do not come for many days, how do you secure your space?

2.9 What was the most recent amount of tax paid by you to lessee to vend here?

INR _____

2.10 What was the most recent amount of tax paid by you to GMC to vend here?

INR _____

3. Basic services related information

(For each question below, researcher should gather information on: Which kinds of problems does the vendor face to access the below mentioned services and how does he/she respond to these problems? What is the cost, if any, incurred by the vendor to access these services? Does this problem create any kind of conflict?).

3.1. How do you access water?

3.2 How do you access toilets?

3.3 How do you access storage?

3.4 How do you access food?

4. Vending system

4.1 How is your relationship / experience with lessee?

4.2. If someone resists paying tax asked by lessee what happens? Do you have experience or witnessed this kind of situation? If yes, please explain.

4.3. Do you think the lessee system is convenient/ beneficial? If yes, why? If no, why?

4.4. Have vendors ever opposed the lessee system in this market? If yes, what happened? And if no, why?

4.5. Do you think there should be another system for tax collection? If yes, what?

5. Conflict and shocks

5.1. Are there fights between vendors in the market? Is there inter-group rivalry among them? If yes, describe.

5.2 Have you ever experienced any of the following? (1. Harassment 2. Confiscation of goods 3. Fines 4. Eviction 5. Conflicts/ fights. 6. Others). If yes, what happened?

5.3 Have other vendors in this market suffered from the above mentioned shocks? If yes, please explain.

6. Institutional influence

6.1. What are the institutions/ actors who harass you and how (police, GMC, lessee, local goon, local residents, shopkeepers etc)?

6.2. What is your response to the harassment?

6.3. What are the institutions / actors that help you and how (police, GMC, lessee, vendors organisation, local residents, shopkeepers etc)?

6.4 Do you know any vendor's organisation? Are you a member of any of them? What does it do?

7. Income and Expenditure

7.1. What is your daily earning? _____

7.2 Daily expenditure pattern:
Transportation _____

Commodities being sold	_____
Parking/ entry fee	_____
Carry bag	_____
Food/ refreshment	_____
Storage	_____
Fee to lessee/ GMC	_____
Fee to local goon/ boys	_____
Fee to police	_____
Other	_____

8. Are you linked with any kind of social security scheme/ programme such as BPL card, RSBY/ any other state sponsored health programme, IAY, widow pension, MGNREGA, or any other? State all.

9. Any other issue you would like to discuss?

10. Contact No, in case vendor is willing to share with us _____

Note:

*Interviewer must say thanks to the vendor after interview.

**Interviewer should keep extra pages in case vendor reveals many things or tells detailed stories.

Annexure- 6

Questionnaire for Street Vendors in Ullubari Bi-Weekly Market

0.1 Name of Interviewer _____

0.2 Date of Interview _____

0.3 Commodity sold _____

0.4 Size of stall (___feet by ___feet)

1. Personal Detail

1.1 Name of Respondent _____

1.2 Age of Respondent _____

1.3 Sex Male/ Female

1.4 Religion _____

1.5 Caste Assamese-Hindu, Assamese-Muslim, Bengali-Hindu,
Bengali-Muslim, Tribal, Other_____

1.6 Family Size _____

1.7 How many people work in your house? _____

1.8. How long are you vending in this market? (And in Guwahati, in case he/ she was selling somewhere else but later started selling here. Reason for shifting in this market should be mentioned).

1.9 How often do you vend in this market in a week? (Mention days like Thursday & Sunday)

1.10 If you vend in any other market, mention where and on which days of the week:

1.11 Where do you come from?

1.12 How do you come here?

1.13 Where do you get your goods from?

1.14 If you are not able to sell all your goods in a day, what do you do?

2. Access to vending space

2.1 How did you manage to get space in the market?

2.2 Do you vend in the same place every time? Yes/ No

2.3 If yes, how do you get the same place every time?

2.4 If no, then explain why you do not get the same place every time?

2.5 Is there any specific month when you do not come? _____

2.6 If Yes, then reason?

2.7. Time period _____

2.8 If you do not come for many days, how do you secure your space?

3. Basic services related information

(For each question below, researcher should gather information on: Which kinds of problems does the vendor face to access the below mentioned services and how does he/she respond to these problems? What is the cost, if any, incurred by the vendor to access these services? Does this problem create any kind of conflict?).

3.1. How do you access water?

3.2 How do you access toilets?

3.3 How do you access storage?

3.4 How do you access food?

4. Conflict and shocks

4.1. Are there fights between vendors in the market? Is there inter-group rivalry among them? If yes, describe.

4.2 Have you ever experienced any of the following? (1. Harassment 2. Confiscation of goods 3. Fines 4. Eviction 5. Conflicts/ fights. 6. Others). If yes, what happened?

4.3 Have other vendors in this market suffered from the above mentioned shocks? If yes, please explain.

5. Institutional influence

5.1. What are the institutions/ actors who harass you and how (police, GMC, lessee, local goon, local residents, shopkeepers etc)?

5.2. What is your response to the harassment?

5.3. What are the institutions / actors that help you and how (police, GMC, lessee, vendors organisation, local residents, shopkeepers etc)?

5.4 Do you know any vendor's organisation? Are you a member of any of them? What does it do?

6. Income and Expenditure

6.1. What is your daily earning? _____

6.2 Daily expenditure pattern:
Transportation _____

Commodities being sold	_____
Parking/ entry fee	_____
Carry bag	_____
Food/ refreshment	_____
Storage	_____
Fee to lessee/ GMC	_____
Fee to local goon/ boys	_____
Fee to police	_____
Other	_____

7. Are you linked with any kind of social security scheme/ programme such as BPL card, RSBY/ any other state sponsored health programme, IAY, widow pension, MGNREGA, or any other? State all.

8. Any other issue you would like to discuss?

9. Contact No, in case vendor is willing to share with us _____

Note:

*Interviewer must say thanks to the vendor after interview.

**Interviewer should keep extra pages in case vendor reveals many things or tells detailed stories.

Centre for Urban Equity (CUE) advocates a human-centered and equitable urban development paradigm. The activities of CUE are research, policy advocacy, training and capacity building and data documentation and dissemination. The centre is a National Resource Centre of Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation,



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