SOCIO-ECONOMIC EFFICACY OF MAHILA BAZAAR

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

Mahila Bazaar is a women-only street vendors’ market in New Delhi, India. A non-government organization, SEWA Delhi, set this market up in the nation’s capital in 2009. It is a unique experiment and the first of its kind in the country where a vendors’ market is legally set up and reserved exclusively for women vendors.

In the social context of the country, where gender segregation is high, this gender-specific market aims to provide safety to the women vendors who face harassment and abuse in other mixed-gender vendor markets of the city. Male vendors and public officials often cause this harassment. Besides, these markets lack infrastructural facilities such as lack of toilets or access to healthy meals and potable water. These issues add to that abuse making it difficult for women to earn their living peacefully.

The study questions whether or not the exclusive women’s market, improves the lives of its women vendors. It starts with the premise set forth by the core objective of designing the Mahila Bazaar. As described by SEWA Delhi, the market provides women vendors, safety from the harassment and abuse that they otherwise face in traditional mixed-gender markets. The market also eliminates eviction and threats of confiscation of goods for vendors by legitimizing the vending spaces. The second premise on which the study builds is the perception of the Bazaar’s success in achieving SEWA’s intended objective. According to the previously conducted studies and the reports generated by the media, the Bazaar successfully achieves its aim- the women in this market feel safer and no longer face any sexual harassment. They do not face any eviction threats, either.

Despite the perceived success of this market model, it did not succeed in getting implemented at ten other locations across the city by the year-end of 2017, as intended by SEWA Delhi. The previously conducted academic study, too, pointed out that the Bazaar was a successful social experiment but could not generate enough economic profits for its women vendors as compared to the other mixed-gender markets.

The research attempts to investigate possible reasons for the socio-economic malfunction of Mahila Bazaar, if any, and to build a framework of recommendations that can be used to design safer, more inclusive, and economically efficient markets for women street vendors.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ILO International Labor Organization
MCD Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NASVI National Association of Street Vendors of India
NGO Non-Government Organization
NPUSVI National Policy on Urban Street Vendors of India
RTI Right to Information
SEWA Self Employed Women’s Association
TVC Town Vending Committee
UN United Nations
WEIGO Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

Note: The terms “Bazaar” and “Market” are used interchangeably throughout the study, especially in reference to Mahila Bazaar.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO MAHILA BAZAAR

Mahila Bazaar is a women-only street vendors’ market in New Delhi, India. A non-government organization, SEWA Delhi, set this market up in the nation’s capital in 2009\(^1\). It is a unique experiment and the first of its kind in the country where a vendors’ market is legally set up and reserved exclusively for women vendors.

In the social context of the country, where gender segregation is high, this gender-specific market aims to provide safety to the women vendors who face harassment and abuse in other mixed-gender vendor markets of the city. Male vendors and public officials often cause this harassment. Besides, these markets lack infrastructural facilities such as lack of toilets or access to healthy meals and potable water. These issues add to that abuse making it difficult for women to earn their living peacefully.

1.1 Birth of Mahila Bazaar\(^2\)

SEWA set up this market to improve the lives of the vendors occupying this market. After struggling for four years, the organization was successful in setting up India’s first gender-specific market exclusively for women vendors. The proposal for this market gathered support from the Supreme Court of India before its implementation. The organization liaised with government agencies, MCD, and the Police Department, conducting meetings and following them up to obtain no-objection certificates for setting up this market. This market now sets up at Tagore Road in New Delhi every Sunday and serves more than 200 women vendors who come to the market from different neighborhoods of the city. The market is said to have provided women a space to earn their livelihood with dignity and minimal interference from other actors like MCD, police officials, and male vendors. The vendors pay a minimal weekly fee enabling the MCD to earn its revenue.

The organization mobilized over 200 women vendors encouraging them to sell their goods in this market. The vendors in this market are members of the organization now identified and registered as legal street vendors. The organization’s officials often visit this market and

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\(^2\) “Street Vendors | SEWA Delhi.”
street vendors’ homes since its inception to make sure that the market is functioning well. The
market now claims to be selling a variety of articles like clothes, shoes, and handicrafts. The
organization also makes efforts to publicize the market through media coverage, banners, word
of mouth, and pamphlets distribution. It builds contacts with students of the Delhi University, the
tourism department, embassies, and Resident Welfare Associations across Delhi. It claims to
have worked with architects to beautify the site and providing adequate infrastructure for toilets
and drinking water.

1.2 Literature Review concerning the Bazaar’s Efficiency

A search for the academic literature discussing this market yields a single study to date. In November 2017, some students and faculty from the Department of Economics of Sri Venketeshwara College, Delhi University, published a study discussing the efficacy of this exclusive women’s market and testing the validity of the logical conclusions drawn from the objectives of setting up Mahila Bazaar as discussed below.

Women often enter the vending profession as it poses low barriers to entry. However, they face multiple challenges as they operate their business in the traditional mixed-gender vendor markets like facing sexual harassment, abuse, evictions, or having to pay bribes, among others. These threats often originate from male vendors in the market, police, and other municipal officials. Thus, logically, the properties of a formally set up gender-specific market should result in the elimination of these threats. First, the formal set up saves vendors from being asked to evict the market or pay bribes to occupy the vending space. Second, restricting entry of male vendors provides safety to women vendors from sexual harassment and abuse.

Study findings indicated that income levels for vendors at Mahila Bazaar were significantly low as compared to mixed-gender markets. While women at Mahila Bazaar reported average monthly income in the range of Rs.1000- Rs.5000, the range for mixed-gender markets was Rs.5000- Rs.10,000. It is to be noted here that the markets in comparison here are all Sunday markets. Of the 30 respondents from the women-only market, 28 women reported making much fewer profits as compared to their women counterparts in mixed-gender markets or

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as compared to their previous earnings when they were still in mixed-gender markets. In both types of markets, however, income levels could not keep up with the expenditures incurred. Nearly 45% of women in mixed-gender markets and 56% of women in Mahila Bazaar reported being in debt. Important factors impacting the income levels were the number of vending hours, the profile of goods, customer foot traffic, and women’s bargaining capacity. Overall, vendors at Mahila Bazaar seem to be doing worse economically as compared to vendors at mixed-gender markets.

To investigate the social effects of the study, the researchers asked questions concerning financial independence, decision making in family matters, increased confidence, and greater respect in households. In both types of markets, women reported that being able to earn has given them more say in family matters when important decisions are taken, financially or otherwise. In terms of workplace security, the vendors in mixed-gender markets were most threatened by possible evictions at any given time, leading to loss of income and distress sales. Issues of bribery and thievery follow eviction threats. Mahila Bazaar produced a more conducive work environment for women vendors. The market reported no evictions or women having to pay bribes to municipal officials for keeping their place in the market. However, the isolated location of Mahila Bazaar did make some vendors feel insecure. Accessibility to food and water was relatively better in mixed-gender markets as compared to the gender-specific model. On the other hand, accessibility to vital infrastructure such as toilets was more satisfactory at Mahila Bazaar.

1.3 Media-generated Perception of the Bazaar’s Social and Economic Success

Apart from SEWA Delhi mentioning the Mahila Bazaar as one of its core initiatives in the upliftment of women street vendors of Delhi, a general search for news or advertisements about the market brings up few blog articles and videos made by news channels. This limited media coverage displays the market, discussing its purpose and success in achieving its core objective- women's safety. The media also explains how women are better off economically in this market and are satisfied with the profits that they earn here. Mention of market location in Delhi as well as access to any linkages to it (email or phone contact of any authorities/ vendors in charge of handling the market operations or responsible for publicizing the market) are noticeably missing from SEWA’s website and elsewhere.
This media publicity lacks in critical analysis of the market. Yet, it covers vital aspects of the market that makes it an integral part of the discussion for determining if the NGO’s principal objectives of designing and operating the market have been met, thus establishing the extent of its efficacy. A brief discussion of these aspects follows in the sub-sections below.

1.3.1 Market Location

The author of an article\(^4\) starts by taking note of this market location. Every Sunday, the market sets up in the vicinity of the tallest government building in the city- Municipal Corporation of Delhi’s Civic Center, where over 100 women set up their shops. The author reports vendors in the market to be selling shoes, clothes, and electronics. He makes no mention of any handicrafts being sold in the market as envisioned by SEWA while setting up the market. He quotes a woman vendor who says that she has been visiting the market since 2007 and claims the market is economically profitable for her despite the lack of its publicity. She says that she makes a profit of nearly Rs.800 on a productive day after selling goods worth Rs.1000 and spending Rs.150 to Rs.200 on the commute to and from the market.

1.3.2 SEWA’s Future Plans of Setting Up Ten Gender-specific Markets

The author further discusses how the market was set up by SEWA Delhi, a trade union organizing female workers across the city. According to the article, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, SEWA Bharat’s (National Federation of all-India SEWA organizations) Director, the organization intended to establish ten such gender-specific vendor markets across Delhi by 2017 year-end. For this purpose, the organization picked four locations across Delhi, one in the north, one in the west, and two in east Delhi. It was approaching women interested in being a part of the organization to fill up applications forming a basis of their petition to authorities for setting up more such markets. However, as of March 2020, the organization has not yet proceeded with setting up gender-specific markets. Possible factors for this delay in action are unclear at the moment.

1.3.3 The Primary Focus of Future Markets

The primary focus of this initiative remains the same—establishment of safe and secure vending spaces for women vendors in response to the complaints of sexual harassment, derogatory behavior, and intimidation caused by fellow male vendors and public officials. One of the vendors in the market reports hooliganism in the vendor markets, making the space inhospitable for them. She says that markets set up early in the morning and carry on till late in the night. Such odd hours make the women more vulnerable, making safety a cause of concern. Dr. Kumar believes that the gender-specific model of vendor markets solves the problem of harassment by the administrative authorities, such as payment of bribes to municipal and police officials. He believes these markets can provide safe and dignified spaces to thousands of women vendors to earn their livelihood.

1.3.4 The Permanence of Vending Space

The woman vendor says that she is happy with the place as she no longer faces harassment or pays bribes in this market, and neither does she have to compete with other vendors for a space to vend. Having a permanent place in the market makes sure that she gets to sell her goods every Sunday.
CHAPTER 2: THE RESEARCH

2.1 The Premise of the Research

The study questions if the exclusive women’s market improved the vendors’ socio-economic status in society. It started with the premise set forth by the core objective of designing the Mahila Bazaar. As described by SEWA Delhi, the market provides women vendors, safety from the harassment and abuse that they otherwise face in traditional mixed-gender markets. The market also eliminated eviction and threats of confiscation of goods for vendors by legitimizing the vending spaces. The second premise on which the study builds is the perception of the Bazaar’s success in achieving SEWA’s intended objective. According to the previously conducted studies and the reports generated by the media- the Bazaar successfully achieves its objective- the women in this market feel safer and no longer face any sexual harassment. Neither do they face any eviction threats in this market.

Despite the perceived success of this market model, it did not succeed in getting implemented at ten other locations across the city by the year-end of 2017, as intended by SEWA Delhi. The previously conducted academic study, too, pointed out that the Bazaar was a successful social experiment but could not generate enough economic profits for its women vendors as compared to the other mixed-gender markets.

The research attempts to investigate possible reasons for the socio-economic malfunction of Mahila Bazaar if any.

2.2 Research Questions

The contradictory evaluations of Mahila Bazaar’s success set forth the basis of the following research questions that this study attempts to answer. The overarching question is-

Is gender-specific market an ideal solution for addressing issues of women safety in a highly gender-segregated social context, or would they only add to the already widening gap between the genders, making the environment more inhospitable for women?

This broader inquiry can be further broken down into more concise queries that the research answers through a critical qualitative analysis based on the fieldwork. These questions
challenge the existing perception of the Bazaar’s success, compare it to the traditional mixed-gender markets, and focuses on the role of other actors in vendor markets in contributing to safer, inclusive, economically efficient, and gender-sensitive vendor markets for women.

i. Does the previously constructed perception of Mahila Bazaar’s success draw a complete picture of the market? How close is this perception with the actual conditions on the site?

ii. How does Mahila Bazaar compare to other mixed-gender markets of the city? Is this market improvement over the traditional mixed-gender markets?

iii. How can market designers and policymakers such as street vendors - both women and men, shopkeepers, buyers, public officials - police and municipal authorities, local government leaders, and other users of the public space play a more significant role in incorporating gender sensitivity in the process of designing inclusive, safe and economically efficient vendor markets for women? It is important to note here that this study does not advocate or reject the idea of gender-specific markets. Instead, it merely investigates the possibility of designing better spaces for women vendors, whether they are situated within mixed-gender markets or women-only markets.

2.3 Research Design

The first chapter in this research introduces Mahila Bazaar identifying the core objectives behind its origin, the conflicting arguments of its success based on publicly available news, and a previously conducted study by Delhi University faculty and students discussing the economic efficacy of this women vendors’ market. The inconsistent results about the Bazaar’s efficiency prompted me to study the socio-economic efficacy of this market and examine the key factors causing the market to fall short of providing the promised livelihood to its women vendors.

The second chapter investigates the role of women street vendors in the Indian informal economy, the importance of studying their livelihoods, and the issues they face in earning their living, thus, emphasizing the need to investigate Mahila Bazaar’s success in addressing those problems.

The next chapter identifies the core objectives of the gender-specific vendor markets, which can help determine their efficacy depending on the fulfillment of the goals.
The study further identifies the national and local authorities and organizations actively involved in making provisions, policies, and regulations for street vendors in the country. This section assesses the presence or lack of gender-sensitive discussions around the existing infrastructure and policy framework for street vending in the nation.

Learnings from all of the chapters mentioned above lead to the primary research conducted at Delhi, India, in Mahila Bazaar and two other mixed-gender markets, namely, Qutub Road Market and Lal Qila Market. This chapter draws a comparative analysis of the three markets using the framework for discussing the efficacy of all three markets for women vendors and based on semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty-two women vendors across the three markets.

The study further identifies the gaps in the narrative of the comparative study. It fills in those gaps using secondary case studies, thus concluding the study with a more robust framework and critical recommendations for examining the efficacy of vendor markets for women.

2.4 Research Methodology

The research is based on observations and interviews with twenty-two women vendors in Mahila Bazaar at Tagore Road, Delhi, and two other mixed-gender markets, namely, Lal Qila Road Market and Qutub Road Market. I conducted the fieldwork for this study in a span of three weeks- December 25, 2019- January 11, 2020.

2.4.1 Identifying the Markets’ Physical Location in the City

It began with locating the markets in the city. The location of informal markets is not always specified owing to the illegitimacy attached to them, making the vendors shift sites rapidly when they are threatened or forced to evict the markets. They also lack any visibility on popular online resources such as Google Maps. Thus, ascertaining the physical location of the markets with the help of the locales was the first task. Through this, I identified the targeted market- Mahila Bazaar on Tagore Road in New Delhi and two comparable mixed-gender markets- Lal Qila Road Market and Qutub Road Market, both located in Old Delhi.

The fieldwork for the study began with taking in some general observations- markets’ location in the city, urban characteristics of the street, nearby transit facilities, foot traffic in the
markets on both weekdays and weekends, the status of cleanliness and hygiene of the market streets, neighboring land use, location of the vital infrastructure for sustaining markets such as toilets, water points and food sources around the sites, presence of vehicular traffic on the streets- heavy or light, etc.

2.4.2 Recruiting Interview Participants:

After recruiting the first few interview participants randomly, I continued recruiting the subjects through snowball sampling, breaking up the process after every few interviews, and starting at random sampling again each day. It was an effective strategy because women vendors would introduce me to only other members of their family. The latter had similar experiences in the market and were less likely to add new observations to the study. In the interest of gaining diverse perspectives on the same questions in the markets, I relied on random sampling mainly to recruit interview participants through the fieldwork.

However, the first few interviews in each of the three markets helped me in refining the questions relevant to the site of the study and gain a deeper understanding of the issues that women faced.

2.4.3 Interviews with Women Vendors

Next, I made contact with the women vendors in the three markets for conducting interviews with them. I approached potential interview participants through random sampling. I introduced myself and explained to them the reason for my presence in the market.

Initially, most women refused to participate in the interviews or say anything about the market or their problems. It was particularly true of the younger women vendors. They were more apprehensive of the conversations than the older vendors in the market. On the first day, only one vendor at Qutub Road Market agreed to speak to me. I returned to the market several times until women vendors understood that I meant no harm and that no damage had been done to the vendor who spoke to me on the first day of my visit to the market.
I started conversations with them about their work and life— their hometowns, the number of years that they have been in the city and worked in the market, the goods they sold, their family structure, their responsibilities at home, etc. As I gained their trust and the conversations became more intimate, they were comfortable sharing the details about their families, their problems, their reactions, and whether or not there were any leaders or organizations that they could approach with their concerns.

The women in the mixed-gender markets were particularly conscious of naming any local political leaders, and the women in Mahila Bazaar did not want to say anything negative about the Bazaar either. Even while they discussed their problems in the market, they always reassured me that SEWA had given them a comfortable space to vend where they don’t face eviction threats continuously.
Before starting interviews with women vendors, I explained to them the purpose of the study and asked for their consent to document my conversations with them as per the protocol. I was not surprised that of all the women in the market, very few knew how to sign their names. Interestingly, some had trained themselves only to sign their names but did not know how to read. Some others asked the male members of their families to read and understand the content of the consent form to make sure it matched with what I explained to them. It showed extremely low levels of literacy among the women in the market.

My own experience of spending some time in Mahila Bazaar confirmed the inhospitable environment of the market for women. There were several incidences where male strangers gathered around me and demanded to know what I was doing in the market as I spoke to women vendors. They either tried intimidating me into giving up the interviews and leaving the market or listened intently to the conversations making it impossible for women vendors to speak openly.

On the other hand, I witnessed the women vendors in the mixed-gender markets getting evicted every few minutes. This often ensued physical violence and confiscation of their goods. All through the interviews, they remained on their guard for any sight of police or MCD officials. In such a scenario, the women were also scared of talking about their ordeals with the local authorities.

2.5 Conclusion

The study attempts to build a framework of recommendations for designing safe, inclusive, and economically efficient vendor markets for women street vendors through the process of answering the research questions central to this study. These recommendations are built on my observations during the fieldwork and the analysis of the interviews with women vendors.

2.6 Limitations and Scope of the Study

The location and the current status of informal markets in the city are not easily accessible online or through any formal literature. I relied on recent news articles or old information available on SEWA Delhi and NASVI websites for this data. Lack of relevant
information resulted in a dead-end search for the selection of specific case studies. For instance, based on the news and information on the SEWA Delhi website, I could not locate the Vellodrome Market in a functioning state on the market site, which would have made another highly relevant case study for this research, in addition to the three studied cases.

Mahila Bazaar and both other mixed-gender markets are set up only on Sundays. Therefore, access to women vendors for interviews was limited to only three days in three weeks of primary research in India. Towards the end of the field research duration, there was a possibility of obtaining detailed information on individuals and organizations in leadership roles in the markets. However, time constraints limited the amount of data collected on the subject.

This research touches upon the subject of women’s access to public spaces. This aspect of the study is a much-discussed issue in academic discourse and deserves more consideration. However, the study limits itself to a light discussion of the topic to be followed up on in greater detail in future continuation of this research.
CHAPTER 3: INDIAN INFORMAL ECONOMY AND WOMEN STREET VENDORS

Approximately 81% of all employed persons in India earn their living through the informal sector, with only 6.5% working in the formal sector. The country has one of the highest percentages of formalization of labor among South Asian countries, with 81.6% of women and 80.7% of men forming a part of the informal sector\(^5\).

Most women in the informal sector find employment as construction workers, domestic workers, or street vendors. Street vendors comprise a significant share of the overall employment in this sector and are responsible for making a substantial contribution to the nation’s GDP. The fact is especially valid for developing countries like India. In general, women account for more than 50% of informal trade employment, except for countries where socio-cultural norms restrict women’s mobility in society outside of their homes, such as in India. In any town or city in the country, approximately 2.5% of the population works as street vendors\(^6\). According to Arbind Singh, National Coordinator of NASVI, this is a conservative estimate, and the numbers are most likely higher than this percentage. Rapid urbanization in the country is one of the primary reasons for an increase in this estimate.

There are nearly 300,000 street vendors in Delhi alone.\(^7\) MCD estimated this statistic to be only 125,000 in the city taking account of only legal\(^8\) street vendors or those registered with recognized trade unions. The corporation also expected 30% of this sector to be the female labor force. However, it is essential to note that women’s participation in their share of informal sector employment is more complicated. A recent estimate by the World Bank suggested that 90% of

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\(^6\) According to the Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation’s (Government of India) Street Vendors’ Bill of 2014, All identified street vendors are to be accommodated in the vending zones subject to 2.5% of the population of the ward/ zone/ town/ city.


\(^8\) It is important to note that there is significant gap in the number of street vendors connected to registered trade unions in the country and those actually earning their living through street vending.
the women in the informal sector do not feature in the official statistics, as their undocumented work is often considered low paying, unskilled, and not beneficial to the workers.9

3.1 Why are Street Vendors Vital to the Cities?

Street vending plays an important role in improving not only the economy but also urban spaces. Since generations, the Indian cities have reaped the benefits of street vending as vendors continue contributing to urban life. They generate demand for actors working in both the formal and informal sector services like transportation workers, tea-sellers, garbage collectors, formal shopkeepers, etc. The Supreme Court of India recognized that street vendors make many services like access to fresh food and dairy products conveniently and locally available to the urban poor at affordable prices adding to the urban food security in the cities.10

An argument against street vending states that it contributes to the addition of criminal activities in residential spaces. In multiple studies, however, street vendors were often noted to be “the eyes on the streets.” They made urban spaces lively and safer for city residents. The secluded streets in the cities that often make spaces for criminal activities were made secure by the presence of street vendors.

Street vendors also make a significant contribution to the economy. Despite the conventional belief that vendors do not pay taxes, they often pay a variety of fees levied on them for licensing, gaining permits, or accessing the public spaces for street vending.11

Vendors also incur expenses in other forms, such as bribes retaining their vending spots or fines for getting their confiscated goods back. Even those who are registered with the local authorities are often subject to different types of fines, such as for placing the carts too close together.


3.2 Importance of Recognizing Gender Issues in Street Vending

The majority of the female labor force in the informal sector is unregulated and unprotected. Informal women workers in the national capital contribute to approximately 80% of the city’s growth. This development, however, does not directly translate to the betterment of the women responsible for it. They still lack basic necessities such as social security, healthcare facilities, and have limited access to financial services.

They often enter street vending as a profession due to low barriers of entry. It does not require any formal education or training and helps women gain financial independence. However, the challenges faced by women vendors in these markets are more acute than those faced by the men. Yet, they do not form a part of the public discussions in general. There is a need to prioritize and design markets in a way that addresses these challenges.

In addition to unstable income, poor working conditions, and threats of evictions, the challenges of physical safety in public spaces are more pronounced for women vendors and their dependent children who often accompany their mothers to the markets. Within the population of women vendors, sole household earners are the most vulnerable of the group. They are not only responsible for earning for the family but also taking care of the household.

Lack of basic infrastructure such as clean toilets, street lights in the market places, transportation facilities also poses higher risks to the safety and health of women as compared to men. Therefore, their participation in the process of planning safe and inclusive spaces in the vendor markets is of prime importance.

Currently, the markets lack evidence of women’s participation in the process of designing and planning street vendor markets in the city.

CHAPTER 4: RELEVANT EXISTING ORGANIZATIONS AND POLICIES

This chapter briefly reviews the initiatives, provisions, policies, or regulations enacted by the existing well-known organizations in India working to improve the livelihoods of street vendors in the country and their focus on women street vendors in particular. It assesses these initiatives for their impact on street vendor market design and for their gender-sensitive approach in doing so.

4.1 SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association)\textsuperscript{15}

SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) is a trade union for women that came into existence in 1972 to address the issues of discrimination in wages, benefits, food security, and social security (childcare, health care, and shelter) that female labor force of the country faces.\textsuperscript{16} This organization is the only registered trade union in India that works for the benefit of informal women labor force alone. The organization focuses on enabling poor working women in the informal sector to achieve full employment (work to attain economic security, food security, and social security) and self-reliance (attainment of autonomy and self-reliance in both decision making and economically). Some of the organization’s strategies aimed at the upliftment of the women street vendors are as follows:

4.1.1 Organizing

SEWA Delhi gains from its location in the political capital of the country. It gives the organization better access to legal and legislative institutions of the country while they demand the rights of women workers of the informal sector. It engages in organizing women workers through the following initiatives-

**Ideology training:** The organization aims to strengthen the women workers' community by engaging them in the organization’s value education and encouraging them to share their problems with other members of their community.


Mohalla meetings: Community meetings bring together community workers to set agendas and to train women leaders.

Legal Training: This initiative trains women in recognizing their legal rights as women workers (FIRs, reporting violence, right to information and property matters), keeping up with the government’s regulations, providing women with legal knowledge and awareness through SEWA Shakti Kendra.

4.1.2 Health and Social Security Initiatives

The initiatives aim to provide women workers with health education and awareness, reduce their expenditure on health through referrals, and to strengthen women’s linkages to the Government of India’s social security schemes. SEWA accomplishes this through SEWA Shakti Kendras, where community members can gather information about SEWA’s initiatives, departments, and schemes. Jagriti Sessions educate women on preventive care and Kishori Sessions to educate young women (ages 11 to 21) about health, nutrition, and hygiene through community outreach programs.

4.1.3 Community Microfinance

SEWA Delhi’s microfinance program started in 1999. The initiative aimed to make women workers financially independent by providing them access to loans and savings for working capital and prevent their exploitation by moneylenders. SEWA Delhi started Mahila SEWA Urban Cooperative Thrift and Credit Society in 2007, a financial institution run by poor women for their community. The Cooperative introduced two types of loan services-

Group Loan: This service is available only to new members who organize themselves in groups of five with a leader. The loan limit is Rs.75,000 for the group and Rs.15,000 for each of the individual members. Group members are each other’s loan guarantor’s and ensure that the loan is paid on time. Some preconditions for availing this loan include payment of admission fee, mandatory savings, and a share fee.

Short Term Loan: This service is available for employment purposes only. It acts as a supplement for members already receiving loans and have no pending installments on it. The loan limit, in this case, is Rs.10,000. Those availing it should repay the loan within six months duration at a two percent monthly interest rate.
The initiative also provides other services and benefits like Bank Saathis (bank agents who offer door to door service for collecting savings, interest dues, and loans), gold loans, and financial literacy training.

4.1.4 Advocacy Program for Street Vendors

SEWA Delhi works at the grassroots level working with women vendors to understand their issues, then presenting those issues at the national level for policy formation and implementation. The organization provided vital inputs and recommendations for National Street Vendor Bill passed in 2014. It plays a significant role in engaging with MCD and police officials, advocating with the judicial authorities, connecting with media, and networking with organizations. Its principal activities in the implementation of the advocacy campaigns for women street vendors are-

Organizing Women Street Vendors: SEWA has organized 6,000 women vendors in Delhi, developed leaders among them, and empowered them with bargaining powers to advocate their rights at the municipal level.

Advocacy Strategies: It ensures the fair application of the National Vending Act and participation of women vendors in its implementation. The union is a member of various vending committees across the city. It liaises with police officials to make sure women are not harassed or evicted from the markets. It represents women at judicial levels as well and advocates through media to gain visibility for women vendors. It invoked RTI demanding information about Zoning Vending Commissions’ chairpersons of twelve MCD zones in Delhi for addressing their concerns.

Preventing closure of vendor markets: The organization was successful in reinstatement and protection of three mixed-gender markets in Delhi- Vellodrome Market, Qutub Road Market, and Daryaganj Book Bazaar, preventing the closing of these markets and eviction of street vendors from these areas. It also set up Mahila Bazaar- India’s first-ever street vendor market reserved for women vendors only as discussed in section 1.1.
4.2 **NASVI (National Association of Street Vendors of India)**\(^\text{17}\)

NASVI advised the motion for the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors of India. The bill was passed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in 2009. The policy highlights the importance of legitimacy in designing vendor markets. Some key points from NPUSVI are as follows:

**4.2.1 National Policy on Urban Street Vendors of India (NPUSVI), 2009**

**Norms for Spatial Planning:** Spatial planning of cities should include and reserve street vending spaces according to the current population of street vendors, their projected growth, their growth rate in the previous years, and the number of customers estimated who visit the informal markets.

**Vending Zones Demarcation:** Cities should demarcate different types of vending zones-free vending, restricted vending, and no vending zones, and they should be made city or town specific.

- Spatial planning should resonate with natural, informal markets.
- Municipal Authorities to regulate street vendors' entry on a time-sharing basis in vending zones.
- Municipal Authorities are required to allocate space for temporary vendors' markets (e.g., Haats, Rehri, Night Bazaars, temporary Festival Bazaars, Food markets, etc.).
- Authorities to permit mobile vending in areas outside the designated vending spaces unless they are a part of the no-vending zones in the zonal/master plans.

**Civic Facilities Provision:** Municipal Authorities should provide basic infrastructural facilities in the vending zones such as waste disposal, clean toilets, potable water, and goods storage facilities.

4.2.2 Street Vendors Bill, 2012

The bill aims to protect the vendor’s right to earn their livelihood and social security. It regulates street vending across the country and ensures a uniform regulatory framework for the implementation of the bill in all the states and union territories.

Street Vendors Registration: This part of the bill specifies the age at which registration for street vending can be obtained, the process of registration, the time validity of the registration, and the issuance of identity cards to registered street vendors.

Street Vendors’ Rights & Obligations: It specifies that street vending is allowed to be carried on in the vending zones according to the terms of vending, as mentioned in the vending certificates. Possession of vending certificates would allow vendors to relocate to new zones to continue vending. The vendors are expected to maintain proper hygiene and cleanliness in the vending zones.

Street Vending Plan: Once every five years, the local authorities should plan a support system for the urban street vendors in the city/ town along with the Planning Authorities. The street vending plan ensures that street vending does not lead to unsanitary conditions in public spaces, overcrowding, or congestion at the vending sites. The plan requires vending sites to be consistent with the existing natural markets as well. It takes into account the infrastructural provisions, spatial planning norms, free to no-vending zones, estimated growth in the number of street vendors, and accommodating these in the city/town master plans, zonal plans, development plans, or layout plans.

Town Vending Committees: Every town/ city should have a Town Vending Committee (TVC) that should maintain a record of all registered vendors. The records should contain the name of the registered vendor, the allotted vending stall, the nature of his/ her business, and other details pertinent to the vendors. TVCs should also conduct social audits of their activities and rules and regulations formed under the Act.
CHAPTER 5: PRIMARY RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter comprises of a comparative study of the Mahila Bazaar and two mixed-gender markets. This comparison builds on the interviews’ analysis with women vendors in the three markets conducted in December 2019 and January 2020. This part of the study is essential for determining the characteristics of Mahila Bazaar that distinguish it from the other mixed-gender markets and determine the extent of the success of this gender-specific model of markets.

5.1 Case Studies Selection Criteria

The sites selected for the study were chosen based on the following criteria. All three of these markets have seen SEWA Delhi’s involvement in some way or the other. Thus, comparing these markets also helps us understand the extent of influence that the organization sustained after completion of its interaction with these markets. The trade union set up Mahila Bazaar, which is the focal point of this study. Qutub Road Market saw SEWA’s involvement when the organization fought a case for the market to stay and won the legal battle.18

5.1.1 Mahila Bazaar at Tagore Road, Delhi

The study of this gender-specific market forms the focal point of this study since it the only and first-ever vendors market in India, legally set up by an NGO. According to the National Director of this NGO, the organization wanted to replicate this model of a vendors’ market throughout ten different locations in the city by 2017. However, its impending application necessitates a discussion of its efficacy for women vendors before its widespread application in the national capital.

5.1.2 Lal Qila Market

I selected Lal Qila Market as a site for this study because of its comparability to Mahila Bazaar. Like Mahila Bazaar, this market, too, is set up on Sundays only. Most vendors in this market come from the same neighborhood as those in Mahila Bazaar. Consequently, it can be assumed that they belong to a socially and economically similar demographic background. Since most vendors in this market have acquaintances or neighbors working in Mahila Bazaar, they are aware of the existence of Mahila Bazaar but chose to continue selling in their current location—Lal Qila Market, decisively. Goods sold in this market are similar to those sold in Mahila Bazaar. Both markets sell used clothes. The vendors get clothes in exchange for new steel utensils that they sell during the rest six days of the week, working as street peddlers in other parts of the city.
5.1.3 Qutub Road Market

While this market is not specifically a Sunday Bazaar and runs through the week, the Sunday Market is a much bigger affair and transforms the street, drastically. On Sundays, the vehicular traffic is prohibited, and only pedestrian traffic is allowed, facilitating this huge vendor market thriving with commercial shops. The vendors interviewed in this market set up shops on Sunday and struggle through the rest of the week to find a space in it. Goods sold in this market are similar to those sold in Mahila Bazaar. Women here sell new women’s underclothes. The market makes for a decent case study because of its distinguishing characteristics of social capital and the availability of infrastructure like storage facilities. These factors seem to be missing from the other two markets, making it a viable case study to understand how the presence of these factors impact women vendors socially and economically.

Figure 3 A view of Qutub Road market
5.2 Defining Efficacy of Vendor Markets

The efficacy of vendor markets is based on how well markets perform their three core functions-

- Inviting vendors, buyers, and leaders into the markets.
- Promoting economic activities, such as buying, selling, and recreation.
- Allocating resources to support the above two functions.

It is important to note that the functioning of the vendor markets is highly gendered. Thus, all the factors that impact the successful implementation of these three functions for women vendors are used to design the interview questionnaire and to develop a comparative analysis framework for evaluating the three markets.

5.3 Interview Design and Guideline

For primary research component of this study, I conducted one on one interviews with twenty-two women street vendors across the three selected markets. The interview questions were semi-structured and open-ended, prompting respondents to engage in informal conversations as opposed to proper interviews to gain a better understanding of their lives in the market. The interview questions covered essential aspects of the social and economic lives of women vendors.

5.3.1 Introductory Demographic and Occupation-related Questions

The first set of questions helps gather general demographic information of women vendors in the markets. It asks respondents about their age, residential location, number of family members, whether or not they are the sole earners in their family, the number of dependent family members, whether their children are getting educated, and their major monthly expenditures. Some introductory questions about the vendors’ work-life included the number of years they worked in the market, their commute mode, and their daily work hours. This part also included taking note of the products sold by the vendors.

5.3.2 Economic Efficacy of the Markets

Queries relating to economic efficacy ask the respondents about the type of products they sell in the market, their average daily income, the amount of money spent on food and commute,
their work on six other days of the week, their approximate monthly expenditure on family’s rent, healthcare, education, and other such necessities. I enquire respondents about the payment of bribes or any other illegal expenses they incur to vend at the market. I further ask the respondents about the sources of money for buying goods for their shop - whether they avail SEWA’s financial services, take loans from elsewhere, or only using their savings from the previous sale.

5.3.3 Social Efficacy of the Markets

Social efficacy can be categorized in the following types -

a) Attributes of market location - issues related to low/high foot traffic in the market, traffic congestion on the street, issues of vehicles parked on streets blocking the sidewalks where vendors sit, lack of cleanliness and hygiene at the vending location.

b) Presence/ lack of infrastructure in the market - storage facilities in the market, lack of clean toilets, access to decent, hygienic and affordable food and potable water, shade for unfavorable weather conditions.

c) Issues of physical safety and security - Questions about eviction threats or confiscation of goods from police or other public officials, threats of sexual harassment, and personal safety from male customers and fellow male vendors as well as issues of thievery in the markets.

5.3.4 Leadership Structure in the Markets

This set of questions directly follows from the sections above, enquiring about the socio-economic efficacy of the markets. They enquire respondents about their response to the problems they face in the market. These questions aim to identify individuals/organizations within or outside the markets who the vendors can reach out to for assistance in resolving their problems. I enquired respondents about the individuals’/organizations’ responses to addressing their concerns and whether or not their issues addressed, resulting in better working conditions for them.

5.3.5 Choice of Vending Location

This set of questions asked the vendors if they were aware of Mahila Bazaar. I further asked the vendors to reflect on the reasons for deciding to stay in their current vending location as opposed to Mahila Bazaar, in cases where they were aware of its existence.
5.3.6 Vendors’ Aspirations and Participation

In the conclusion of the interviews, I asked the vendors to reflect on the improvements in their markets, their surrounding environment, the organizational structure within the markets, or any related market regulations that would improve their economic prospects or make the physical space safer for them.
CHAPTER 6: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED MARKETS

This section of the study compares Mahila Bazaar against the mixed-gender markets using the interview guideline discussed in section 5.3 above.

6.1 Demographic and Work Analysis

6.1.1 Age

All three markets engage women of all ages, from young adults (18 years of age) to middle-aged women in their 40s and older women over 60 years of age. These markets, however, have the presence of many young children as well. Some of them come along with their mothers to assist them in making more sales. Others come to the market because there is no one to take care of them back home while their mothers work in these markets, and so the women bring them along. One of the vendors in Lal Qila Market said that her teenage son comes to the market so he can help her in making sales by running around when she has to evict her spot in the market or merely to add to the deals she makes on her own. Perhaps, the vendor markets could incorporate strategies for engaging and educating children spending long hours in the market, in turn reducing the financial burden on their mothers.
6.1.2 Residential Location

In Mahila Bazaar and Lal Qila Market, 75% of women interviewed live in a neighborhood called Raghubir Nagar. This neighborhood is approximately 9 and 11 miles away from both the market locations, respectively. The remaining 25% of women come from different places in the city, some living as close as 3 miles to the market location. All women vendors interviewed at Qutub Road Market come from Holambi Kalan neighborhood, which is approximately 18 miles away from the market. In general, it would be safe to say that women vendors come to these markets from relatively far off locations, often translating into time and cost burden for them.
6.1.3 Sole or Additional Earners

Of all the respondents in Mahila Bazaar, 34% said that they were the sole earners in their family. In contrast, these estimates were 100% and 75% vendors in Qutub Road Market and Lal Qila Market, respectively. These percentages suggest a significant financial burden on women vendors in mixed-gender markets. It may also result in the tendency to trade physical safety for better economic opportunities with the rise in financial hardships.

Figure 5 A sole household earner in Mahila Bazaar
6.1.4 Dependent Children

All but one vendor among twelve respondents in Mahila Bazaar have dependent children who they are earning to feed, educate, or to get them married in case of female children. This assessment is 80% for Qutub Road Market and 75% for Lal Qila Market. One respondent in Lal Qila Market didn’t yet have any dependent children but was expecting the birth of her first child at the time of the interview. On further discussions with women vendors, they revealed a trend of educating their male children while female children were expected to help their mothers out. Assuming continuity of this bias, promotion of gender-specific markets across the city may push this prejudice of low preference of educating female children towards a negative extreme among street vending households.

6.1.5 Goods sold at the market

Comparatively, the variety of products sold at Mahila Bazaar is wider than those sold at either of the mixed-gender markets. At Mahila Bazaar, women majorly sell used clothes and new pairs of shoes. A few vendors also display some other second-hand goods like watches and handicrafts. Vendors at the Lal Qila market sell only old used clothes while vendors at Qutub Road sell only new women’s underclothes. In general, the collection of goods displayed at Mahila Bazaar by each of the vendors is more extensive as compared to the display of goods in the other two markets. This is a result of vendors having to be prepared to leave their vending spots in seconds due to constant threats of eviction. Thus, legalizing the vending space for vendors will allow them to display their goods more extensively, resulting in better sales for them.
6.1.6 Years worked in the market

Of the eleven vendors enquired about the duration for which they have worked in Mahila Bazaar, ten responded that they have been in the market for more than a decade since the market first opened up. Only one vendor said that she has been in the market for the past six years. All five vendors interviewed at Qutub Road Market, have been vending at the market for more than a decade, two of them have been working there for more than two decades. Of the four vendors interviewed at Lal Qila Market, three have been vending at the site for more than fifteen years, while only one of them started vending at the current location in the past two years. Thus, all women vendors have long experiences of selling at their current locations, and therefore, their inputs about the market are comparable.
6.1.7 Hours worked each day

All respondents at Mahila Bazaar reported vending for at least seven hours every Sunday. Respondents at Qutub Road Market reported working for only 3 to 4 hours on a Sunday. Two of the vendors enquired about their work timings at Lal Qila Bazaar said they work for approximately 12 hours every Sunday. Longer vending hours at the markets are likely to result in better sales and more income for women vendors. On the other hand, vendors commuting before sunrise or after dark raises safety concerns for them unless they have access to reliable and convenient transportation during odd hours of the day.

6.2 Economic Efficacy Analysis

6.2.1 Daily Income

Of all the respondents selling old clothes in Mahila Bazaar, 89% reported earning in the range of Rs.1000- Rs.2000 in 7 to 8 hours on a Sunday. All of the vendors selling new pairs of shoes in the market reported earning approximately Rs. 500- Rs.800 in a day. All of the interview respondents in the Qutub Road market reported being able to earn Rs.500- Rs.600 in 2 to 3 hours on a Sunday. 75% of the respondents in Lal Qila Bazaar reported receiving Rs. 2000-Rs.4000 in approximately 12 hours spent in the market. The locations of Mahila Bazaar and the mixed-gender markets have extremely different urban characteristics, which likely results in the comparatively lesser earnings for the vendors in Mahila Bazaar.

6.2.2 Daily Expenditure on Commute and Food

All of the respondents in Mahila Bazaar reported spending Rs.400- Rs.500 on commute and Rs. 100- Rs.150 on food in the market. Overall, vendors in this market spend at least Rs.500 on food and commute in a day. All the vendors enquired about daily expenditure in Qutub Road Market reported spending nearly Rs.100 on food and commute, combined. Of all the respondents in Lal Qila Market, 75% reported spending approximately Rs.500- Rs.600 in a day.

6.2.3 Work on six other days of the week

All nine clothes vendors work as street peddlers selling new steel utensils in exchange for some money and old clothes for the rest six days of the week. They then sell those old clothes on Sundays at Mahila Bazaar. Two vendors reported being able to make Rs.2,000- Rs.3,000 during
the rest of the week selling utensils. All the respondents in Qutub Road Market reported vending at the same market for the rest six days of the week.

6.2.4 Financial Loans or Borrowed Money

Of all the interview respondents at Mahila Bazaar, 83% reported not availing SEWA’s financial services for women vendors. 75% of the vendors said that they took loans from other local financial organizations who loaned smaller amounts for smaller durations or that they borrowed money from relatives or acquaintances in their community based on good faith. Two of the vendors reported that having to pay Rs.100- Rs.200 every week for six months to SEWA as a sign of their credibility and ability to pay back loans before they are eligible to access Rs.10,000- Rs.15,000 loans from the organization is a difficult task for them. They said that their sustenance without borrowing money or taking loans for six months would be challenging. Hence, they prefer borrowing smaller amounts for smaller durations.

Of all the vendors at Qutub Road Market enquired about the source of money for buying goods for their shops, 60% reported borrowing money from local lenders/ companies like Lakshmi or other acquaintances in their community, such as local jewelers in their neighborhood. One of the vendors said she took a loan of approximately Rs.20,000 once a month while two other vendors said they took loans worth only Rs.500- Rs.600 once a month and borrowed the rest of the amount from their contacts.

All respondents in the Lal Qila Market preferred not taking loans from any organizations, instead said that they often borrowed from family and relatives.

6.2.5 Goods’ worth on Display

Only 25% of the vendors at Mahila Bazaar said that they had goods worth Rs.15,000-Rs.20,000 on display at the time of the interview. One of the vendors at Qutub Road Market reported having goods worth Rs.15,000 on display at the time of the interview, while two of the vendors at Lal Qila Bazaar said that their display was worth approximately Rs.2,000- Rs.4,000.

6.2.6 Additional Expenses

Vendors in Mahila Bazaar reported spending Rs.5 on single-use of toilet facilities in a nearby school. They paid the organization Rs.10 every Sunday to vend at the market. None of the vendors reported paying any bribes to public officials in this market.
None of the vendors in the mixed-gender markets reported paying any fee for accessing toilets in the markets, if available. Vendors at Qutub Road market reported frequent payment of bribes to public officials to avoid eviction from the market and get their confiscated goods back. They also reported paying Rs.500 every month for availing goods storage facilities in this market. Vendors at Lal Qila Bazaar, too, reported spending somewhere between Rs.100 to Rs.1,500 to police and MCD officials to let them vend at the site or to get their confiscated goods back.

6.3 Social Efficacy Analysis

6.3.1 Market Location- Urban/ Street Characteristics

Mahila Bazaar is located in New Delhi. It is adjacent to a high-rise government office building, a university, and a school. Administrative and educational buildings largely govern land use near the market. The street is usually devoid of any foot traffic during the rest of the week when there is no market. It lacks any other commercial area in its proximity. On the other hand, Qutub Road is highly commercial and has high foot traffic even during the weekdays. The women vendors set up in the middle of the road in this market. Shops line both sides of the street. Similarly, the Lal Qila Market is in a heavily commercial area. Formal shops line the street that remains functioning throughout the week, attracting customers.
Figure 7 A view of Mahila Bazaar street on weekdays

Figure 8 A view of Qutub Road market on weekdays
6.3.2 Market Location - Street Congestion

None of the twelve vendors interviewed at Mahila Bazaar reported congestion being a problem in the market, even on Sundays when the market is functioning. All vendors interviewed at Qutub Road Market said that street congestion is a problem in the market, and it impacts their earnings negatively. Lal Qila Market sets up on the sidewalk of a wide vehicular road. Usually, congestion does not affect the street vendors in this market.

6.3.3 Market Location - Road-side Parking

All vendors asked about car parking on street sides said that it hampered their business by blocking access to their assigned vending spaces on the sidewalk. This forces vendors to set up shops on the street instead of pedestrian paths. Police restrict vendors from setting up shops on the street and threaten to evict them from the market if they continue doing so. Street side car parking does not happen at either Qutub Road Market or Lal Qila Market and has no impact on the livelihood of vendors in these two markets.

Figure 9 A view of a car parked on the side of the road blocking allotted vending spots at Mahila Bazaar
6.3.4 Market Location- Cleanliness of Market

Mahila Bazaar seemed cleaner when compared to both other mixed-gender markets. Some women said that they cleaned their vending spots every morning before setting up shops there. I could not see any trash or puddles in the area. All vendors interviewed at Qutub Bazaar said that the market is cleaned every morning. However, on observing the market, it seemed dirty and unhygienic with trash lying around and small puddles of dirty water in the area where women set their vending shops up. Cleanliness and hygiene are severe issues in the Lal Qila market due to open urination and littered garbage around the market.

6.3.5 Infrastructure/ Facilities- Storage for Goods

Mahila Bazaar does not provide any goods storage facilities to the vendors in this market. All of the respondents in this market said that having to carry the considerable load every Sunday adds significantly to their commuting expenses. The more luggage the vendors have to move, the lesser their power in bargaining the cost of their commute. All vendors interviewed at Qutub Road Market reported availing the storage facilities for Rs.500 a month. In the Lal Qila market, too, all respondents reported a lack of any storage facilities resulting in high commuting costs, as is the case for Mahila Bazaar vendors.

6.3.6 Infrastructure/ Facilities- Toilets

All respondents enquired in Mahila Bazaar confirmed access to toilet facilities in a nearby school for the last 4 to 5 months. There is some contradiction in the timeline of when toilet facilities were made available to women vendors in this market. The research study published by the students and faculty of Delhi University in November 2017, mentions the access to the school toilets then. However, the NGO did not factor in, toilet infrastructure, to be an essential consideration while setting up the market. Even today, one of the vendors said that there had been occasions when they did not have access to the toilets at times when the school had any events happening on its campus.

Of all the respondents at Qutub Road Market, 90% reported that they had access to clean toilet infrastructure in the market. On the other hand, all the respondents at Lal Qila Market

reported a lack of any such infrastructure. It forces the vendors to resort to alternatives that are unsanitary and pose potential health risks to vendors.

### 6.3.7 Infrastructure/ Facilities - Hygienic and Affordable Food and Potable Water

Some vendors in Mahila Bazaar said that while decent food is available at some distance from the market, it’s costly and not easily accessible. It usually takes vendors approximately 40 minutes to 45 minutes to get the food during which they leave their shops unattended or have to ask their fellow vendors to keep an eye on their goods. They said that potable water isn’t easily accessible as well. They either get water from the school or a recently installed municipal tap in the market.

One of the vendors at Lal Qila Market, when asked about this issue, reported that they don’t have accessibility to hygienic and affordable food. She said that the only other alternative to the food available in the market is to prepare her meals and bring it with her to work. However, along with long working hours and many other household responsibilities, it is usually not possible to cook for herself.

### 6.3.8 Infrastructure/ Facilities - Shades for Unfavorable Weather Conditions

None of the three markets have any provision of shades for unfavorable weather conditions. In summers, the temperatures in the city soar as high as 45 degrees Centigrade. Staying out on the streets the entire day in extreme heat with no shade or access to proper food and water can result in life-threatening situations for the vendors. In winters too, the temperatures in the city can drop as low as 5 degrees Centigrade.

Some vendors in Mahila Bazaar said that initially when the market was set up, the NGO promised this infrastructure to them. However, it never came to be implemented. They said that they often fall sick during such weather due to inadequate infrastructure to protect them from the summer heatwaves.

The uncertainty of the vendors’ location in Qutub Road and Lal Qila Road markets makes it impossible for them to have any permanent facilities or infrastructure to be constructed for them.
6.3.9 **Infrastructure/ Facilities- Mode of Commute**

Of all the Mahila Bazaar respondents, 92% reported using autorickshaw for commuting. This mode of commute is the only viable option for Mahila Bazaar vendors due to the large amount of luggage that they carry to and from the market every Sunday. Other modes of passenger transit systems do not allow carriage of such large amounts of luggage with passengers. Of all the respondents in Qutub Road Market, 60% take trains to travel while 20% said that they live close by and thus don’t require transit for commuting.

6.3.10 **Safety and Security- Threats from Male Customers**

Of all the vendors questioned about safety issues in Mahila Bazaar, 91% of vendors reported male customers coming to the market drunk, misbehaving with women vendors, and creating a nuisance. They said that the absence of any males in the market was one of the primary reasons for male customers misbehaving with women and that they would feel much safer if men from their families were allowed to vend at the same market. Only 9% of vendors denied any issues of physical safety in the market. They said that SEWA and police officials take care of these issues and so it’s not a problem in this market. This small percentage of vendors seemed to be avoiding any negative conversations about the market. They did not want to offend any public officials or the NGO that set up this market for them. However, the interviews revealed the severity of the matter in this women’s market. One of the vendors described an incident a few years prior when some men tried to abduct a young girl from the market. According to the women, lack of safety here necessitates the presence of the women’s male family members.

Similarly, 67% of the vendors in Lal Qila Bazaar reported being mistreated by drunk male customers. Only 33% of vendors denied any such problems in the market.

On the other hand, all vendors at Qutub Road Market denied facing any threats from male customers. The women in this market seemed very comfortable with the men around them. They seem to have developed close personal connections with the customers and male vendors in the market.
Despite Mahila Bazaar being designed exclusively for women, there were many male vendors present in the market, vending alongside female vendors. On further examination, the women vendors revealed that all the male vendors in the market were family members or relatives of the female vendors. According to the vendors, their presence in the market was illegal but necessary to ward off any unwanted advances by misbehaving male customers. Of all the respondents in Mahila Bazaar, 50% said that they prefer having male members of their family around as it makes them feel safe from the harassment they otherwise face in their absence. 17% said they also preferred having male members of their family in the market for other reasons. They said that it helps them take a break to get some food or use restrooms if they have someone else from their family who can conduct sales in their absence.
Neither of the other two markets- Qutub Road Market or Lal Qila Road Market reported any threats of physical safety or harassment from fellow male vendors in their market.

6.3.12 Safety and Security- Threats of Eviction and Confiscation of Goods

Mahila Bazaar has fixed vending spaces for all vendors. None of the vendors reported any incidences of eviction threats from MCD officials or police. The only time police officials threaten to evict the vendors is when they set up shops on the street instead of sidewalks when their vending spots are blocked by the cars parked on the side of the street. One of the vendors who earlier worked at Lal Qila Bazaar said that not being consistently threatened by possible evictions makes the market quite comfortable. She said that having legitimised vending spaces and allotted spots in the market is also important as she doesn’t have to compete for space for vending in the market every Sunday.

Figure 11 An evicted woman vendor carrying her goods on her back in Lal Qila Road market
6.3.13 Safety and Security - Theft of Goods and Money

All vendors enquired about thievery in the three markets said that thefts of goods and money are a persistent problem. These incidents usually happen when vendors leave their shops to use restrooms or to buy food. It also occurs when there are too many customers in one shop at the same time, and the vendor is busy conducting sales.

6.4 Leadership Structure Analysis

This section analyzes the presence of leadership within and outside the markets and their efficacy in resolving issues that vendors face in the markets.

6.4.1 Vendors’ response to safety threats from male customers/ fellow vendors:

Of the ten vendors who agreed that male customers are a problem in the market, eight vendors were asked about their responses to such situations. Three said they have complained about the situation to SEWA. However, the organization never took any action regarding this problem. Three others said they simply ignore or refuse to engage with such customers, which requires them to leave their shops unattended till those customers leave. One vendor said she tackles the problem herself - often by calling out such customers publicly and making them leave the market with the assistance of fellow women vendors. One of the others said she is not bothered by such customers.

Of the twelve vendors in Mahila Bazaar, when asked about the presence of male vendors in the market, six of them said they prefer having male members of their family around as it makes them feel safe from the harassment they face from the male customers. Two vendors said they, too, would prefer to have male members of their family around for different reasons. However, one of them mentioned that having male family members around makes it easy for her to leave her shop when she needs to buy food or use restrooms during the day while the other vendor said that she is old, and it would be beneficial if her son could help her out with vending at this market.

None of the five vendors in the Qutub Road market reported facing any harassment from the male customers. On the other hand, all vendors said they were very comfortable with the situation of physical safety in this market and that they had come to built social relations with
many customers and shop owners and other stakeholders in the market. Thus they never felt unsafe in the area.

Two of the vendors in the Lal Qila Road market complained of harassment by drunk male customers. One of these vendors said that the market is risky not only for female vendors but also for their young children. It raises concerns about how single mothers who work as vendors can take care of their children as they bring them to work with them.

None of the vendors in the Qutub Road market or Lal Qila Market reported facing any threats from male vendors in the market.

6.4.2 Vendors’ response to eviction threats:

None of the women vendors in Mahila Bazaar reported being subjected to eviction threats. Hence, they had no complaints regarding the issue. Police threaten vendors of eviction who put up their shop on the street instead of the sidewalk due to cars being parked on the streets and blocking the sidewalk accessibility.

The vendors in the mixed-gender markets said they simply abandon their vending spots when they see the police or MCD officials approaching them or threatening them with physical violence or by confiscating their goods. They then wait for the authorities to leave before returning to their vending spots. None of the vendors reported raising their concerns about eviction threats to any organization or leader within the markets.

6.4.3 Leaders and their efficacy in resolving issues:

Most vendors prefer handling such situations passively. SEWA's non-participation in handling the issue is quite noticeable. Some vendors show no faith in taking their problems to the organization as they don't believe that such an engagement would yield any fruitful results for them. 80% of all the women asked about the existence of an authority in the market which they can take their complaints to, either reported that there is no one to address their concerns or that even when they have the opportunity of discussing their concerns, it does not yield any positive results. 10% of the vendors said that SEWA assists them in getting their identification documents made. Another 10% of the vendors said that she has never faced any problem in the market, so she never had to make a complaint.

The mixed-gender markets typically lack any organizational or leadership structure.
50% of the vendors in the Qutub Road market said there was no one who they could address their concerns to. The rest of the 50% reported that they could address their concerns to the local political leaders. However, the vendors who showed faith in the local political leaders could not substantiate their faith in the local political leaders with any incidents when they might have helped the vendors with issues regarding eviction threats in the market.

One of the vendors said that she once discussed her problems with a local NGO who promised help, but it was not fruitful. Three other vendors said that there is no one who they can address their concerns to. Two of the women vendors interviewed said that they do not want to move to Mahila Bazaar because it is equally unsafe as their current location. At least their earnings are better in this market.

6.5 Vendors’ Priorities

Vendors in Mahila Bazaar said they would prefer to have male members of their family be allowed to vend in the market with them. They said it would make them feel much safer from the male customers who come to the market and misbehave. They also suggested that having a storage space for their goods would greatly reduce the burden of having to carry their goods back and forth from home and would make their commute much cheaper. Low foot traffic in the market was also one of the vendors’ primary concerns about the market.

Frequent vehicular congestion seems to be a problem at the Qutub Road market. At the moment, vendors vend in shifts of 3 to 4 hours on a Sunday and 8 hours on a weekday. They say their earnings could improve provided they are given a space where they could vend for the entire day. Eviction threats and confiscation of goods were other major concerns raised during the interviews. None of the vendors interviewed in this market had ever heard of SEWA or Mahila Bazaar.

The vendors in the Lal Qila market suggested that having a permanent and legal place to vend and being able to vend for longer hours would be helpful in boosting their earnings substantially.

Most women vendors interviewed in the three markets wanted to leave the profession for better opportunities and consistently reported that lack of education was the primary reason why they were held up in this profession unable to find jobs in the formal sector.
CHAPTER 7: FRAMEWORK OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING SAFE
AND INCLUSIVE MARKETS FOR WOMEN STREET VENDORS

7.1 The Framework of Recommendations Overview

This chapter builds a framework of recommendations for designing safe and inclusive markets for women street vendors of India. It is based on a critical analysis of the various aspects of socio-economic efficacy analyzed for three chosen vendor markets in the city of Delhi, India. The impacts (both positive and negative) of these aspects on the markets generate a series of learnings for building the said framework.

In addition to the takeaways from the comparative analysis of the market case studies, the framework attempts to incorporate recommendations for addressing various other concerns in the markets observed during fieldwork but could not be explained through interactions and interviews with women street vendors.

7.2 Recommendations for Strengthening Economic Efficacy

Table 1 Overview of Recommendations for Strengthening Economic Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Gains and Savings</th>
<th>Increase daily income.</th>
<th>▪ Train women in selling and bargaining techniques.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce daily expenditure on food and commute.</td>
<td>▪ Provide storage spaces for goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Locate markets close to residential locations of vending communities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase vendors’ visibility in the market.</td>
<td>▪ Extend the days and timings of the operation of markets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce financial debts.</td>
<td>▪ Increase financial help or money borrowing among vendors based on good faith.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the worth and variety of goods on display.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1 Overview of Recommendations for Strengthening Economic Efficacy (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extend market operation timings.</th>
<th>▪ Legitimize vending spaces to avoid eviction or goods confiscation threats, in turn, reducing additional expenditure on bribes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce additional expenditure.</td>
<td>▪ Encourage sustenance of &quot;natural markets.&quot; ▪ Establish vendor markets in proximity to existing commercial uses. ▪ Ensure sufficient pedestrian access to the market site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise market through media.</td>
<td>▪ Sell goods of daily household consumption. ▪ Restrict or regulate vehicle usage and parking in the markets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Market Location Characteristics |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Locate new markets near areas of high pedestrian activity. | ▪ Encourage sustenance of "natural markets." ▪ Establish vendor markets in proximity to existing commercial uses. ▪ Ensure sufficient pedestrian access to the market site. |
| Increase foot traffic on the street/ in the market. | ▪ Sell goods of daily household consumption. |
| Prevent vehicular congestion and roadside parking on the market streets. | ▪ Restrict or regulate vehicle usage and parking in the markets. |

### 7.2.1 Financial Gains and Savings

**Increase daily income**- Train women in selling and bargaining techniques.

**Reduce daily expenditure on food and commute**- Reduce expenditure on commute by providing spaces for goods storage so that vendors do not have to commute with luggage every time. Locate vendors' markets close to the residential location of a community of vendors. In cases where that is not possible, the market location should be well accessed by safe public transit.
Increase vendors’ visibility in the market: Promote vendors' occupation during the rest of the week in the same market location to increase their visibility in the market. Vendors who work in the same market throughout the week have better opportunities for building social capital with other actors in the market as compared to those who vend at a site only on one day of the week.

Reduce financial debts: Increase financial help or money borrowing among vendors based on good faith. Most vendors tend to avoid formal financial institutions citing that it is difficult for them to fulfill the strict preconditions of getting loans from such institutions. For instance, most women in Mahila Bazaar said they couldn’t afford to avail loans from SEWA as the organization offers larger amounts for a longer duration. They instead, prefer borrowing smaller amounts from relatives or acquaintances for smaller durations in quick succession.

Increase the worth and variety of goods on display.

Extend market operation timings: Extend timings of market operation, making the markets more profitable for the vendors. However, this provision must be accompanied by adequate physical safety measures for women vending in the early morning or after dark hours.

Reduce additional expenditure: Legitimize vending spaces to avoid eviction or goods confiscation threats in the markets. However, it is to be noted that legitimizing vending spaces alone has no value if the market is relocated to unsuitable vending locations with low footfall, as seen in the case of Mahila Bazaar. Moving the vendors even a few feet away from their natural vending location can have drastic effects on their income.

Advertise market through media: While advertising informal markets or their products is important, it can lead to either wanted or unwanted political attention. This delicate balance is hard to achieve and is often dependent on the political and social climate of the market context.

Advertising Mahila Bazaar for overcoming economic failure could be achieved through the process of a marketing strategy like “Brand Development.” Making certain kinds of products exclusive to the market and developing a brand name for them instead of advertising the market itself could be a more effective strategy. While this type of advertising may work for legally set up markets like Mahila Bazaar at Tagore Road, it may have adverse impacts on natural or organically originated “illegal” markets. It is important to note that visibility from policymakers
is not always beneficial for street vendors. Unwanted publicity may draw lawmakers’ attention to the “illegal” occupation of a costly commodity like public land by a community, making it a fresh battleground between the vendors of the market and the state.

### 7.2.2 Market Location Characteristics

**Locate new markets near areas of high pedestrian activity:** Encourage sustenance of "natural markets." Natural markets are public places in the city that have high street vending potential because of high foot traffic in the area. These spaces could be train stations, bus terminals, religious centers, or any other place that attracts pedestrians in large numbers. Relocating vendors from such locations are difficult, but resolving spatial conflicts common at these informal markets is crucial.\(^{20}\) Establish vendor markets in proximity to existing commercial uses to utilize existing infrastructure in such areas. Ensure sufficient pedestrian access to the market site. Pedestrians in the neighborhood usually form the largest percentage of customers in a street vendors' market.

**Increase foot traffic on the street/ in the market:** Selling goods of daily household consumption can increase the pedestrian flow to the markets.

**Prevent vehicular congestion and roadside parking on the market streets:** Restrict or regulate vehicle usage in the markets. Allocate limited roadside parking, making sure that they are not blocking vending spaces on the sidewalks.

### 7.3 Recommendations for Strengthening Social Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Overview of Recommendations for Strengthening Social Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide for vendors of different ages and physical abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate markets close to vendors' residential location if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide for single women headed vendor households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide for vendors' dependent children.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Infrastructure/Facilities in the Market | Ensure cleanliness and hygiene of physical space. | ▪ Ensure proper drainage, waste disposal, or litter collection facilities in the market.  
▪ Prevent open urination and defecation in the market. |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Provide access to storage facilities for goods. | ▪ Use social capital to generate storage spaces.  
▪ Use urban design innovations for designing space-efficient storage. |
| Provide access to clean toilets. | ▪ Locate new markets in proximity to existing markets and their infrastructure. |
| Provide access to hygienic & affordable food and potable water. | ▪ Ensure the upkeep of basic hygiene and sanitation in the market where food is prepared. |
| Provide shaded vending spaces for unfavorable weather conditions | ▪ Set up vending spaces at naturally shaded places.  
▪ Design permanent shade structures.  
▪ Use incidental shaded spaces. |
| Provide adequate streetlights and electricity to the markets. | ▪ Aim for space efficiency by redesigning vending carts, stalls, or display spaces.  
▪ Set standards for the street and pavement widths.  
▪ Explore space sharing, time-sharing, use of incidental and alternative spaces. |

**Table 2 Overview of Recommendations for Strengthening Social Efficacy (continued)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety and security issues</th>
<th>Ensure safe modes of commute to and from the market.</th>
<th>▪ Locate new markets in central city locations that are well connected to the rest of the city through transit.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the safety of women vendors from misbehaving male customers or male vendors.</td>
<td>▪ Provide opportunities for building social capital in the market.</td>
<td>▪ Attract more female customers to the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Establish protocol, regulatory framework, and a leadership structure dedicated to dealing with the issues of harassment and abuse.</td>
<td>▪ Prevent crime through environmental and urban design</td>
<td>▪ Prevent eviction threats or confiscation of goods from police and MCD officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevent the thievery of goods and money in the market.</td>
<td>▪ Encourage legitimizing vending spaces in the city.</td>
<td>▪ Increase “eyes on the street.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate women with basic, financial, and legal literacy.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 7.3.1 Provisions for vendors of different ages and physical abilities.

Women of all ages vend at these market sites— from those still in their teens to those over the age of 65 years. These provisions could range from amenities for young pregnant women to those for older women. Physical accessibility for the disabled should also be an important consideration while designing vendor markets.
7.3.2 Locate markets close to vendors' residential location if possible.

Women of the household tend to take care of multiple tasks- taking care of the children and the elderly in their families, cooking and cleaning for them along with earning for them as street vendors. Locating markets close to a street vending community would not only reduce the travel costs greatly but could also result in vendors setting up a larger display of goods, consequently increasing their income.

7.3.3 Provisions for single women headed vendor households.

Single women household heads are the most vulnerable of the group of women vendors. They are likely to be burdened with more than just earning for the entire family when they are the sole earners. They are single-handedly responsible for taking care of sick family members, cooking for them, cleaning the house, upbringing children, and pay for all of these, including their rented accommodations. They are likely to carry some of the household chores to the market and have no other option but to bring their young dependent children to the market even if the spaces are unsafe for them. Therefore, it is specifically important for this section of women vendors to have a voice in the process of designing markets.

7.3.4 Provide for vendors' dependent children.

In nearly all cases, women are responsible for taking care of the children in the family, often bringing them to work with them when there is no one at home to take care of them. For instance, could there be literacy programs for both women vendors and their children? This will ensure that children, particularly females who are traditionally not educated and are expected to help their mothers out in the markets, are not missing their education.

7.3.5 Infrastructure/ Facilities in the Market

**Ensure cleanliness and hygiene of physical space:** Ensure proper drainage, waste disposal, or litter collection facilities in the market. Prevent open urination and defecation in the market, especially by the male population. Women vendors are forced to resort to such measures only when the markets lack adequate toilet infrastructure.

**Provide access to storage facilities for goods:** Use social capital to generate storage spaces. The provision of storage spaces could be both formal and informal in nature. In a formal process, such spaces could be reserved for vendors. In an informal process, vendors may be able
to store their goods in nearby formal shops depending on their relationship with the shopkeepers in the markets. Such provisions could come at a reasonable fee to be paid by the vendors to the shopkeepers making the process mutually beneficial for both.

Use urban design innovations for designing space-efficient storage. Storage spaces could also be designed as part of the vendor markets. The seating spaces designed for vendors could incorporate lockable, fixed lockable storage facilities.

**Provide access to clean toilets:** Provide toilet infrastructure by locating new markets in proximity to existing markets whose infrastructure could be shared by the new set up. While employing this approach, it is important to ensure that toilet infrastructure is not overused or located too far from the new market. The longer the vendors are away from their shops, the larger the loss of customers and income for them.

**Provide access to hygienic & affordable food and potable water.**

**Provide shaded vending spaces for unfavorable weather conditions:** Vending spaces could either be naturally shaded by trees, or they could be provided with temporary shades like umbrellas. Vending spaces could also be designed with permanent shade structures along with display area, seating space, and storage spaces. For this particular provision, product or industrial designers could be engaged in designing space-saving multi-use carts. Use of incidental spaces such as spaces beneath highways and flyovers in cities could act as shaded seating spaces for vendors.

**Provide adequate streetlights and electricity to the markets:** Markets require electricity for flexibility of their operation before dawn and after dusk. Adequate street lighting can also make the markets much safer for women vendors.

**Ensure space efficiency in vendor markets:** Explore space-saving methods of setting up vending spaces in the market, such as the use of carts or vertical display areas instead of occupying space on the ground. Vendor markets are often considered a nuisance if they block pedestrian or vehicular access. Efficient space management in vendor markets could potentially reduce the conflict of space between vendors, pedestrians, and vehicles.

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Set urban design standards for sidewalks or service lane widths in the physical planning of the cities while taking into consideration the eventual occupation of some space by the street vendors in the city. According to Street Vendors’ Bill of 2014, nearly 2.5% of the city population is engaged in street vending as their occupation. Keeping in mind that this is a conservative estimate, architects, urban designers, and city planners should design street widths and other space standards in accordance with this percentage.

Ensuring space efficiency invites urban design innovations and exploration in terms of space sharing, time-sharing, and use of incidental and alternative spaces of vending in the cities. However, all urban interventions should be employed, keeping in mind that moving vendors even a few feet away from their natural vending spaces can make a large impact on their earnings. Thus, it is essential to keep the vendors' accessibility and visibility in the market a factor of prime importance while designing spaces for them.

7.3.6 Safety and security issues

Ensure safe mode of commute to and from the market: Set up markets in well-connected central locations accessible from most parts of the city. This will allow vendors the flexibility to work longer hours if they have access to safe and reliable modes of transportation at odd hours of the day.

Ensure the safety of women vendors from misbehaving male customers or male vendors: The role played by ancillary agents like police officials, customers, tea sellers, auto-rickshaw drivers is equally important in building social capital as that played by vendors and shopkeepers. This bonding is a result of long-term cultivation of relationships developed over the years and manifesting in forms like customers’ loyalty to specific vendors. Such unspoken non-binding mutual commitment developed between the vendors and their customers over the years can make a significant contribution to not only improving their sales but also deterring misbehaving customers from staying away. For instance, in the case of Mahila Bazaar at Tagore Road, the market is situated at a site that has no commercial spaces around to facilitate interaction between shopkeepers and vendors, vendors and tea sellers, or vendors and public officials. Even communication with customers is limited and sometimes unwanted. The market thus fails to build on social capital for its successful functioning.
Attract more female customers to the market: The success of street vendor markets is substantially dependent on the customers the markets attract. The current customer base for Mahila Bazaar is mostly made up of the male population of the city, as observed during fieldwork in the Market. There is value in attracting more female customers to this market which can make the markets safer for women vendors.

It is worth noticing that in day to day life, women of the households are usually the ones who are in charge of spending on the essential needs of the family and are most likely to be the potential shoppers of such items in these marketplaces. Therefore, if the Mahila Bazaar were to sell a wider variety of household items or items of everyday use along with old clothes and shoes, it may attract more women buyers to the market. Even though the women vendors at the other mixed-gender markets sell similar goods, they are situated in a marketplace that satisfies the condition for a variety of household products to be sold at the same place. Thus, the gender-specific model of markets may not necessarily be insecure for women vendors if they could attract a stable female customer base depending on the goods sold in the market.

Prevent eviction threats or confiscation of goods from police and MCD officials: Providing legitimacy to vendor markets greatly reduces the chances of harassment that vendors otherwise face in the informal markets. However, it is essential to take note of the unintended consequences of legitimizing vendor markets. For instance, the Street Vending Act of 2014 mandates local governments to include street vendors in their rules and regulations of urban planning. Though, the method of its implementation has resulted in increased evictions and incidences of violence in some places. A Special Task Force was created in Delhi to attend to cases of non-conforming land uses according to the 2021 Master Plan of the city. The implementation of the Master Plan continues to evict vendors throughout the city. To provide some relief from these rampant evictions, the Supreme Court of India instructed state governments to layout their street vending rules.22 Thus, in addition to defining rules and regulations for legitimizing street vendor markets, it is equally important to define the process of their implementation.

Also, sudden transformations in the structure or management of the markets have negative impacts on the vendors’ mental well-being, physical health, and incomes. Women, in particular, are more sensitive to such rapid changes.

**Prevent the thievery of goods and money in the market.**

**Educate women with basic, financial, and legal literacy:** Most women interviewed in the markets were unable to read, write or even sign their names and often looked for support from their male family members or other acquaintances to help them understand any written document. Equipping women with basic literacy skills will make them more independent and provide them more control and access to better resources to respond to any issues of harassment.

### 7.4 Recommendations for vendors’ participation and leadership structure in the market

*Table 3 Overview of Recommendations for Vendors’ Participation and Building Leadership in the Markets*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritize Vendors’ Participation</th>
<th>Recognize the contribution of vendors to the cities.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasize participatory planning in the design and implementation of spatial design standards and policy regulations.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build horizontal and vertical leadership structures within the markets</th>
<th>Organize vendors among themselves.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Train leaders in negotiation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value the informal agreements between vendors and other actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set up timely evaluations for testing the functionality of the markets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7.4.1 Prioritize vendors' participation

**Recognize the contribution of vendors to the cities:** Persisting negative portrayal can prevent other city residents and policymakers from resisting the inclusion of street vendors in the planning of the cities. Media and academic research could play a significant role in altering this general perception.
Emphasize participatory planning in design and implementation of spatial design standards and policy regulations: It is extremely important to have women representatives in the process as their experience of a space is often vastly different from their male counterparts. Women's participation is not only important in defining rules and regulations but also their implementation. Value vendors' experiences of working in the market for a number of years, taking advantage of the precise knowledge that they have about the customers in the market, their flow through the market, and the optimal vending spots. This experience could be used in a number of ways - to build social capital in the market, to gather information about the history of the site or the market in question to be able to develop better regulations for the place, provide infrastructure in the market or to locate a new market itself.

7.4.2 Build horizontal and vertical leadership structures within the markets.

Organize vendors among themselves: This is the first step towards building a horizontal leadership structure in the market and engaging in participatory planning. The vendors should organize and pick leaders among themselves.

Train leaders in negotiation skills: Training leaders among organized vendor groups would empower them to present their concerns in front of the authorities with greater confidence. They would be responsible for building relationships with local municipal authorities and police working out details of when and where the vendors can operate and how they could maintain cleanliness in the vending areas. The idea is to disassociate informal markets with negative impressions of unclean, unorganized, and crime breeding spaces in the city by maintaining them up to city standards, in turn leading to less resistance in the process of their legitimization in the longer run.

Value informal agreements between vendors and other actors built on social capital: It is essential to understand the power of informal pacts between vendors and political or administrative leaders. While these unwritten agreements may not be sustainable in the longer run, they set the cornerstones on which long-term legal agreements can build over time.
Making of vendor markets requires an “inside-out” approach. Ideally, a community designs the markets from within, through the commitment and involvement of the people engaged in them. It can be facilitated by situating the idea of social capital in the place making of a street vendors market. It builds on value introjection, transactions of reciprocity, solidarity, and enforceable trust in a community. These sources are central to the idea of place-making.

In India, natural markets were not formed or sustained by the formal city planning processes by the social, spatial, and economic conditions within a constrained geographical space developed by complex interactions between the users of that space. Some of the main actors in a vendors’ market are street vendors, customers, shopkeepers, and service providers. They often function within a context set up by local authorities, police officials, planning professionals, and other market visitors.

Bonding between Vendors and Shopkeepers through Spaces of Informal Communication: In this scenario, shopkeepers and vendors do not see each other as adversaries or nuisance but realize the importance of building long term relationships with each other for the beneficial survival of both the groups. They share physical spaces around and within the market, mingling and socializing, sharing news, and catching up with each other.

In certain cases, vendors often request shopkeepers to allow some space in their shops to store their goods overnight or for longer durations when necessary. While it is a monetized relationship, it is an example of two sets of actors, traditionally known to be contestants of physical spaces, may share a mutually beneficial connection. However, it is essential to note that such relationships do not grow from any legal or policy enforcements and are a result of organically built social capital. The investment thus made in the building of social capital manifests itself in the generation of otherwise unavailable infrastructure for vendors in the market, such as storage facilities. It may result in mutual safety and protection of goods from


thievery and vandalism as well, for both vendors and shopkeepers. During fieldwork, I observed that women vendors, in their absence of fellow vendors, were conducting sales on their behalf. In the case of Mahila Bazaar, while this active approach was evident among vendors, the market lacks the presence of shopkeepers or any other actors for such interaction to happen.

The collective efforts of social capital can result in the maintenance of infrastructures such as toilets as well as the general maintenance and hygiene of the market places. In a particular study of a market in Ahmedabad- Manek Chowk, the alliances between the vendors and the shopkeepers resulted in the construction and upkeep of public toilets along with sanitation of streets and pavements promoting cleanliness around the market.

The actors in a physical space often identify with the heritage around which they have lived and worked collectively for generations. For organically located vendor markets, that have been active over decades such as Qutub Road Market and Lal Qila Road Markets, vendors often consider street vending to be a part of their own identity as their ancestors established their roots in it. The sense of identification with the place is so strong that several vendors and shopkeepers continue inhabiting the site despite having the opportunities to move elsewhere. They maintain the tradition of place-making through the social capital building.

Another important factor that adds to the social capital building is Collective Memory. It is a construct that arose out of communities exhibiting robust social capital, trust, and cohesion. For instance, most women in Mahila Bazaar are immigrants from the state of Gujarat. My interaction with them revealed their preference for interacting in their local language with each other. When asked if they knew other women in the market, they confidently said that they knew most other women in the market, since they came from Gujarat and were now staying in the same neighborhood (Raghubir Nagar) in Delhi after immigrating to the city. Such shared local origins, local languages, and dialects add to building hospitality among users of a space.

Set up timely evaluations for testing functionality of the markets: Such evaluations would not only test the success of the markets in meeting their core objectives but also examine


the competence of the leadership structure or organizations responsible for ensuring efficient functioning of the markets.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

Recommendations made above for fostering social and economic efficacy in street vendor markets for women are not mutually exclusive. Most recommendations for strengthening social efficacy reinforce economic efficacy as well and vice versa.

As observed in the case of Mahila Bazaar, reserving a space exclusively for women in the city has unintended consequences. My interviews with the women vendors revealed that incidences of harassment and abuse are quite common in the market, making the women uncomfortable. While the entry of male customers into the market cannot be restricted, the inability to restrict certain customers seems to impose threats to the safety and security of the women vendors. However, if this restriction were to be imposed, it would significantly reduce their earnings as the male population of the city forms a major part of the market’s customer base. If women vendors were not forced to abandon their shops unattended while waiting for misbehaving customers to leave, they could potentially improve their sales and daily income in addition to feeling secure in their workplace. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that attributes of social and economic efficacy contribute to strengthening each other, either directly or indirectly.

Exceptions also exist for the above-mentioned overview. Some recommendations can stand in conflict with each other, and both may not be simultaneously applicable to a given context. A few others could impact the markets either positively or negatively, given the degree and method of their implementation and the social, political, and cultural climate of the place.

For instance, advertising the markets and drawing political interest may not always be positive influences on the informal markets. While these recommendations could draw attention to the inadequacies in the markets, they could also draw attention to the illegal occupation of a highly-priced public land by street vendors. Therefore, these recommendations require careful analysis of the socio-political climate of the place and an understanding of the actors involved before their application to a site.

Some questions remain being answered, still creating doubts about the efficacy of the gender-specific vendor markets. My interviews with women vendors revealed a general trend of the preference of educating male children over female ones in low-income vendor households. It
raises another critical concern as SEWA, and other non-government organizations plan on setting up more gender-specific markets for women street vendors in Delhi. Would such initiatives further encourage the vendor households to only educate their male children while expecting female children to help their mothers out and then continue vending as their occupation? Policymakers and leaders must consider the future social implications of such ventures, which do not form a part of this study.

As stated earlier, this study does not advocate or reject the idea of gender-specific markets. Instead, it merely investigates the possibility of designing better spaces for women vendors, whether they are situated within mixed-gender markets or women-only markets.

Lastly, one size does not fit all. This framework of recommendations is a compilation of the best practices for designing inclusive and safe vendor markets for women in the Indian context that is an amalgamation of a variety of socio-cultural and geographic sub-contexts. For the application of this framework to different regions across the country and beyond, these practices can be dissected and studied in greater detail on a case by case basis maintaining the underlying principles on which this framework builds. In addition to the distinct social and cultural practices, the exclusionary practices against street vendors diverge significantly from one region to another. The severity of enforcement of such practices (use of physical violence, sexual harassment, or legal allegations involving court cases) also demands remodeled recommendations while keeping in sight the core objectives of this framework of recommendations. Therefore, while some of the proposals might be more meaningful in certain locations, they could have little or no impact on others.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A. Introductory Questions

▪ How old are you?
▪ Where do you live?
▪ How do you travel to this market?
▪ How many hours do you work, each day?
▪ For how long have you worked in this market?
▪ Where did you work before this and for how long?

Part B. Questions for Vendors in Mahila Bazaar.

▪ Did you sell the same product in both markets? If not, what were you selling before and what are you selling now?
▪ What made you shift to Mahila Bazaar?
▪ How convenient is it for you reach this market from your home using transit? Contrast it with your experience of traveling to the other markets.
▪ Was there a lack of infrastructure such as toilets? How is Mahila Bazaar different (better or worse) than the other market?
▪ Were there issues of personal safety? How is Mahila Bazaar different (better or worse) than the other market?
▪ Did you have more customers in the previous market, on average? Approximately how many customers do you get in a week now?
▪ Do you face threats of eviction at this market? What was the situation like at the previous market?
▪ Are there individuals or organizations that protect your right to vend here at this public place? If yes, who would you reach out to, in case of violation of your rights or in situations of harassment/abuse? What was the situation like at the previous market?
▪ Have you been in situations before where you had to complain to reach out to such individuals or organizations? What was their response? Was it helpful in resolving your problem?

Questions about Economic Efficacy of the Market.

▪ What is average daily/weekly income from Mahila Bazaar? Contrast it with your earnings in the previous market.
▪ What are your expenses (daily/weekly) of procuring/making these products?
▪ What are you other expenses (daily/weekly) for setting up shop at this market (transportation, rent, bribe etc.)?
▪ What is your approximate daily/weekly expenditure on basic necessities such as food, shelter, healthcare, education etc.?
Overall, do you prefer this market over other markets, why or why not?
What other improvements would you like to be made to this Bazaar?
Any there any other problems related to this space that we have not discussed yet?
Additional questions, if any, to follow from the answers to the questions above.

Are you aware of Mahila Bazaar and do you work there currently?
Why did you prefer to stay here and not shift to Mahila Bazaar?
What problems do you face in this market? (An overview of the problems faced.)
(Questions similar to the ones asked above, except there would be no contrast drawn between the vendors’ current and previous markets.)
Additional questions, if any, to follow from the answers to the questions above.
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 W. Pennsylvania Ave., MC-095
Urbana, IL 61801-4822.

Notice of Approval: New Submission

December 12, 2019

Principal Investigator: Marc Doussard
CC: Swati Rastogi
Protocol Title: Efficacy of Mahila Bazaar (Women Vendors- only Market) in Delhi, India
Protocol Number: 20376
Funding Source: Unfunded
Review Type: Expedited 6, 7
Status: Active
Risk Determination: No more than minimal risk
Approval Date: December 12, 2019
Closure Date: December 11, 2024

This letter authorizes the use of human subjects in the above protocol. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved the research study as described.

The Principal Investigator of this study is responsible for:
- Conducting research in a manner consistent with the requirements of the University and federal regulations found at 45 CFR 46.
- Using the approved consent documents, with the footer, from this approved package.
- Requesting approval from the IRB prior to implementing modifications.
- Notifying OPRS of any problems involving human subjects, including unanticipated events, participant complaints, or protocol deviations.
- Notifying OPRS of the completion of the study.

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