

Report

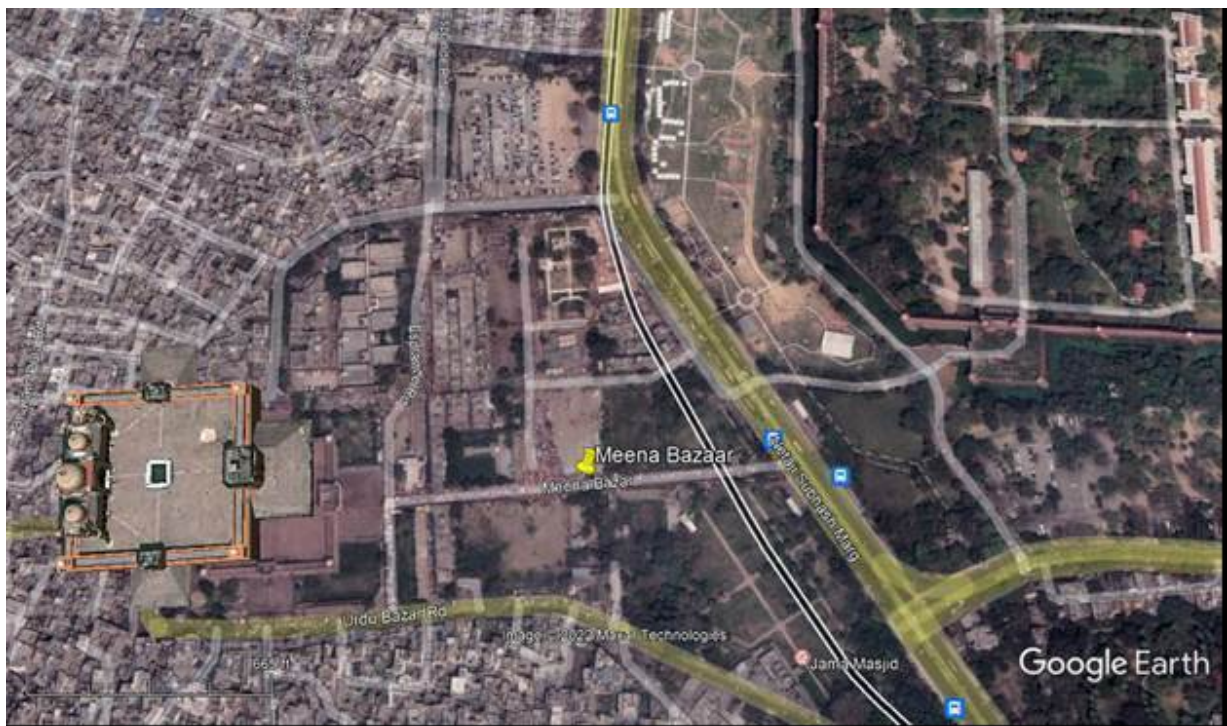
Training on Occupational Safety and Health with Street Vendors in New Delhi

Street vendors (Hawkers) are an integral part of any city infrastructure. They provide important services at low costs. Services they provide are used by all strata of life and the different services provided like grocery, electronics, food, fruits and vegetables etc. are extremely needed. Although they provide an invaluable service, their contribution is largely neglected and their welfare needs are not a priority for the government machinery. These workers perform their duties under open sky exposed to weather elements and experience exposure to vehicle exhausts, Road and construction dust, hazardous gases and smells emitted from open drains, garbage dumps, chemicals, rotten raw materials etc. All their needs viz health, social security, education, drinking water, hygiene etc. are largely neglected. Several laws and regulations have been made to improve their conditions but the implementation remains on paper and benefits do not reach those in need.

Vendor groups and associations have been in touch to help organize trainings on Occupational health and safety among their support base. An awareness training on Occupational health and safety was organized by Environics trust on 24 August 2022 at Meena Bazaar, New Delhi. About 48 street vendors participated in the training and learnt about the various hazards faced by them doing their jobs and how to protect themselves from the harms of such hazards.



Meena Bazaar is a bustling lane of street vendors between the historical buildings of Red Fort and Jama Masjid (Add Map). This small, busy and narrow street was originally meant to host shops for the entertainment of women folk. Today things have changed a little with Meena Bazar being held daily from afternoon till evening. Stalls sell all kind of items including clothes, luggage, electronics, footwear and numerous food stalls. Currently the bazaar has a presence of about 400 permanent stalls which employ about 700 people. About 95% of these stalls have been issued a vending license by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to sell their wares. The street has been marked as a NO Entry for motorized vehicles and only pedestrian traffic is allowed considering the size and business of the street. Almost all the vendors here are part of the vending association.





The training started with the welcome of the participants. After the welcome the vendors briefly spoke about the different types of vends. Problems of Long working hours, irregular working hours, different types of vends, unpaid assistance by family members, atrocities by authorities were highlighted by the participants. Training was held in Hindi.

The participants were informed about the findings of the survey done in 2019-20 where in the major health ailments identified were respiratory problems, eye irritation, Musko-skeletal problems. These were agreed upon by the participants. Other findings of the survey in terms of access to health facilities, access to government schemes, Health insurance, access to social security etc. were also discussed briefly with the participants.

Dr Ashish Mittal, medical practitioner and OHS expert discussed with the participants the concepts of OHS and the principles of identification of Hazards and prevention. The basic human body structure was explained with a description of important organs and processes. Important body parts were drawn on a T-shirt for better understanding of the participants.



The concept of OHS was introduced along with the various factors both occupational and environmental, which may affect the health. Difference between treatment and preventive health was explained with examples. The importance of prevention was stressed upon and there was a short discussion on this important point.

The hierarchy of controls concept was discussed with examples. Various types of exposures were explained along with examples for e.g. what are the various exposures for the doctor like Viruses, germs, nicks and cuts and etc. Participants were informed about the various ways to control dust / noise and to wear mask and ear muffs as a last resort. Various types of PPEs were discussed and shown like gloves, aprons, goggles, boots, Ear muffs, masks. Different types of PPEs, their correct uses were also explained and discussed. Diff types of gloves were shown to the participants.





Ergonomics was discussed as most of the vendors work in difficult and monotonous positions and experience chronic back and joint pains. The correct posture and ways to lift weights was demonstrated. It was explained to the participants how to reduce repetitive movements and to use the body as it was made to be used. Proper use of vending equipment like knives was also discussed with the participants

Care for eyes and correct ways for washing eyes was demonstrated as eye problems due to dust was a common issue. Simple to do eye exercises were taught.



Some common and easy to do exercises for different body parts were taught which can help in improving blood circulation and strengthen key body muscles. Finally, the different type of available masks, their utility and effectiveness were discussed. Certificate of participation in the training were awarded to participants.



Light refreshments were served after the meeting and the discussion continued even during the refreshments. This was a new concept for the participants but they listened attentively however it was clear that it will take effort and time for some change to occur.

There are very few studies conducted on the health impacts on street vendors esp. in India. In a report prepared by Mark Biedlingmaier, M.P.H. Candidate, Global Health and Environment, University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health for Environics Trust, it was found that most of the studies on street vendors focused only on the air pollution exposures from motorized vehicles. The report clearly found evidence of significant threats to the environmental and occupational safety of street vendor and a need for further research in the causal relationships of exposures as well as policy interventions to address pollutants. The report listed several recommendations which are being discussed along with the different stakeholders.

Even while there is a need for detailed studies and research to be done to gather information and data about number of street vendors and the health impacts faced by them, the next step of diagnosing the health impact needs to be tackled on a massive and urgent scale. There needs to be a mechanism where in the health impacts are not only detected early but the preventive aspects need to be focused on simultaneously. Safe working methods need to be developed in consultation with the vendors so that the methods can be readily incorporated in the way of work. Vendors who are most

interested in earning their daily livelihood, neglect their health which only causes more distress down the line.

Short videos on the Introduction to Human body and Control of Hazards have been created for circulation among vendor groups. The videos in Hindi Language with English subtitles can be found at links below

Part 1 - Human Body and Health - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oxu4ud8TH8g>

Part 2 – Hazards and their control – Editing in Progress

A short meeting was held with several vendor members of the Town Vending Committee of the area where in the way forward was discussed and plan for more such trainings and health camps for the vendors was discussed.

Way forward

1. More such trainings will be held to enforce the concept of preventive health. A team of 15-20 vendors from different areas will be trained on the Train the Trainer Methodology.
2. More short videos to be created.
3. Discussion with government authorities to conduct health camps for street vendors.
4. Environmental Air pollution monitoring can be done to ascertain individual exposure to pollutants for further discussion with the regulatory bodies.

The meeting ended with an expression of thanks to all the participants and gratitude to DWOI - AIHA, Maquiladora health & Safety Support Network who supported this program.

Some Photos from the meeting



Demonstration of exercises for back, shoulders



Neck and Shoulder exercises



Knee Exercises



Weight Lifting process demonstration



Discussion with participants



Participants during the Training



Certificates being distributed



More Photos of Training and Market