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**“STREET VENDORS: HISTORICAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGISLATIVE AND
JUDICIAL PERSPECTIVES IN INDIA”**

(RESEARCH PAPER)

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1.1 INRODUCTION

Street vending is one of the oldest and most significant informal sectors in India. It is not a recent development; it has existed since ancient times and helps millions of poor people in cities earn money to live. Street vendors, consisting of men and women, sell goods or services along streets, footpaths, markets, railway stations, and bus stands. They offer affordable services and products to the public and significantly contribute to the economy of cities.¹

In the modern context of India, factors such as rapid urbanization, unemployment, labour migration from villages, and poverty have increased reliance on informal jobs like street vending. Many individuals unable to find work in the formal sector turn to street vending for survival. Street vending requires low capital investment, making it an accessible employment option for marginalized groups, including the unskilled, migrants, and women.²

Despite their economic contributions, street vendors face numerous challenges, such as eviction, harassment from municipal authorities and police, confiscation of goods, lack of legal recognition, and absence of social security. Traditionally, they have been viewed as encroachers on sidewalks and deemed illegal traders. Historically, street vendors have been regarded as illegal encroachers instead of legitimate workers.³

Researchers argue that the conflict between street vendors and city officials shows a bigger issue between urban modernization and socio-economic rights. Urban planning policies that focus on beautification, commercialization, and infrastructure development often overlook the livelihood

needs of informal workers. As cities grow, public spaces become battlegrounds between formal business interests and informal activities like street vending.⁴

The Indian judiciary has played a crucial role in protecting the rights of street vendors by recognizing street vending as a fundamental right to livelihood under Article 21 and a right to trade under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution. Landmark cases like *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* and *Sodan Singh v. New Delhi Municipal Committee* laid the groundwork for legal protections for street vendors in India.

The Government of India passed the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, to create a comprehensive legal framework. The Act aims to protect the livelihood rights of street vendors and regulate vending activities. It establishes Town

¹ Sharit K. Bhowmik, *Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy* 45 (Routledge, New Delhi, 2010). ² Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, *Street Vendors Act and Urban Informal Economy Report* 25 (Government of India, New Delhi, 2019).

³ National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), *Status of Street Vendors in India* 34 (NASVI, New Delhi, 2018).

⁴ Jan Breman, *At Work in the Informal Economy of India* 88 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013).

Vending Committees, vending zones, certificates for vending, and safeguards against arbitrary eviction.⁵

This study aims to highlight the historical context of street vendors, constitutional and legislative provisions, judicial involvement, and the challenges they face in India. The effectiveness of the Street Vendors Act, 2014 in protecting the rights and livelihoods of street vendors will also be assessed, along with its role in balancing urban governance and public interest.

One of the most important aspects of the Act is its recognition of street vending as a valid economic activity instead of an illegal practice. The Act offers legal protection against unfair eviction and sets up Town Vending Committees to involve the community in decision-making. It also includes rules for vendor surveys, vending certificates, zoning laws, relocation processes, and ways to address complaints.⁶

The legislation reflects principles of social justice, equality, and dignity found in the constitution. By acknowledging the livelihood rights of street vendors, the Act aims to protect economically vulnerable groups from exploitation and exclusion in urban governance. The law recognizes that informal workers play a vital role in urban economies and deserve legal recognition and protections.⁷

However, even with its progressive goals, the Street Vendors Act of 2014 still faces many challenges. Many states did not conduct timely vendor surveys or properly set up Town Vending Committees. Eviction drives, corruption, poor administration, and strict zoning rules continue to weaken the effectiveness of the law. Scholars argue that truly knowing vendors' rights requires not just legal recognition but also strong administrative action and judicial oversight.⁸

This study looks closely at the law, judicial input, constitutional aspects, and the challenges of implementing the Street Vendors Act of 2014. It also explores whether the Act has

effectively balanced protecting livelihoods with regulating urban spaces and if it addresses the economic vulnerabilities that street vendors in India face.

⁵ Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, s 3. ⁶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, *National Policy on Urban Street Vendors*, 15 (Government of India, New Delhi, 2009).

⁷ M.P. Jain, *Indian Constitutional Law* 1367 (LexisNexis, Gurugram, 8th edn., 2018).

⁸ *Supra* note 4 at 25.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The key aims of the research are:

- i. To investigate the origin and development of street vending in India.
- ii. To explore the Socio-Economic role of street vendors in the Urban Informal Economy.
- iii. To examine the constitutional provisions on the rights of street vendors.
- iv. To study the legal framework of Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.
- v. To explore the importance of judiciary in safeguarding the livelihood rights of street vendors.
- vi. To find out the key issues of Street vendors in India. To assess the implementation of the Street Vendors Act 2014.
- vii. To recommend what should be done to ensure effective protection and regulation of street vendors.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The main research problem to be addressed by the study is: “Is the constitutional, legislative and judicial set-up in India truly effective in safeguarding the livelihood rights of street vendors, without compromising on urban governance and public interest?”

The following are also some of the issues that are considered in the study: Lack of implementation of the Street Vendors Act, 2014; Unpredictable evictions and harassment of vendors; Disagreements over land use and livelihood rights; Poor involvement of vendors in decision making procedures.

Street vending is one of the largest sources of self-employment in India’s urban informal economy. Millions of economically weaker individuals, including migrants, women, unskilled labourers, and marginalized communities, depend upon street vending for their livelihood and survival. Despite their important contribution to urban economies by providing affordable goods and services, street vendors have historically faced legal insecurity, social exclusion, police harassment, arbitrary eviction, confiscation of goods, extortion, and lack of social security.⁹

Prior to the enactment of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, there existed no comprehensive central legislation specifically protecting the rights of street vendors in India. Municipal laws primarily treated street vendors as illegal encroachers occupying public spaces rather than recognizing them as legitimate

workers contributing to urban economic systems. As a result, vendors remained vulnerable to arbitrary actions by municipal authorities and law enforcement agencies.¹⁰

Although the Indian judiciary recognized street vending as part of the fundamental right to livelihood under Articles 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution through landmark judgments such as *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* and *Sodan Singh v. NDMC*, practical implementation of these constitutional protections remained weak. The absence of proper regulatory mechanisms created continuous conflict between street vendors and urban authorities regarding use of public spaces, traffic regulation, sanitation, and urban planning.¹¹

To address these issues, the Government of India enacted the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 with the objective of balancing livelihood protection with urban regulation. The Act introduced important mechanisms such as Town Vending Committees, vendor surveys, vending certificates, vending zones, grievance redressal systems, and safeguards against arbitrary eviction.¹²

⁹ Sharit K. Bhowmik, “Street Vendors and Urban Governance in India” 51 (13) *Economic and Political Weekly* 67, 72 (2016).

¹⁰ Jan Breman, “Informal Sector and Urban Governance” 48(14) *Economic and Political Weekly* 45 (2013). ¹¹ *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) 3 SCC 545.

¹² The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, ss 3, 4, 18, 20, 22–24.

However, despite the progressive nature of the legislation, implementation of the Act remains inconsistent across different states and municipalities. Many local authorities have failed to properly constitute Town Vending Committees, conduct vendor surveys, issue vending certificates, or establish effective grievance redressal systems. Arbitrary eviction drives, corruption, administrative inefficiency, lack of awareness among vendors, and excessive restrictions through zoning policies continue to undermine the objectives of the Act.¹³

The central research problem therefore lies in examining whether the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 has effectively succeeded in protecting the livelihood rights of street vendors while simultaneously ensuring proper urban regulation and public convenience. The study further seeks to critically analyse the role of judiciary, municipal authorities, and policy frameworks in balancing constitutional rights with urban governance objectives.

The research also addresses broader questions concerning socio-economic justice, participatory governance, and inclusion of informal workers within urban planning systems. It examines whether the legal framework created under the Act adequately protects vendors from exploitation and arbitrary state action or whether implementation failures continue to weaken the practical realization of vendors’ constitutional and statutory rights.

¹³ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, *Street Vending Guidelines* 25 (Government of India, New Delhi, 2017).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent has the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 succeeded in balancing urban development with the livelihood rights of street vendors?
2. What are the major gaps and shortcomings in the legal and institutional framework governing street vendors in India?
3. How effective are the grievance redressal and dispute resolution mechanisms available to street vendors under the Street Vendors Act, 2014?
4. What is the impact of smart city projects, urban beautification drives, and redevelopment policies on the livelihood and rights of street vendors?
5. What legislative and policy reforms are necessary to strengthen social security, legal protection, and economic empowerment of street vendors in India?

1.5 HYPOTHESES

The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 is a comprehensive law to safeguard the right to livelihood of street vendors and to regulate the activities of street vendors in urban areas but it is not fully implemented and the administration is inefficient in India.¹⁴

Hypothesis 1

Street Vendors Act, 2014 is a very important act that provides a legal framework for street vendors which has been enacted with the aim of giving protection to their constitutional rights, including the right to livelihood as provided in Articles 19(1) (g) and 21 of the Constitution of India.¹⁵

Hypothesis 2

Street vendors are still being evicted, harassed, goods seized and the lack of proper rehabilitation facilities is a result of the poor implementation of the Street Vendors Act, 2014.¹⁶

Hypothesis 3

The Town Vending Committee mechanism, introduced by the Act, facilitates street vendors' participation in governance and enhances their representation in urban planning and decision making processes.¹⁷

Hypothesis 4

Livelihood protection on street vending is a poor second to public order, beautification and anti encroachment drives that form the thrust of municipal governance and urban development policies.¹⁸

Hypothesis 5

¹⁴ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 (Act No.7 of 2014). ¹⁵ *Sodan Singh v. New Delhi Municipal Committee* (1989) 4 SCC 155; *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) 3 SCC 545.

¹⁶ Sharit K. Bhowmik, “Legal Protection for Street Vendors in India” (2014) 49(29) *Economic and Political Weekly* 15 (2014).

¹⁷ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, ss 22–29. ¹⁸ Jan Breman, *At Work in the Informal Economy of India* 91 (Oxford University Press 2013).

Judicial intervention has played a major role in securing the rights of the street vendors and has played a significant role in crafting policies and legislation for street vending in India.¹⁹

Hypothesis 6

Lack of vendor survey, late certification and wrong demarcation of vending areas have a negative impact on the implementation of the Street Vendors Act, 2014.²⁰

¹⁹ *Gainda Ram v. Municipal Corporation of Delhi* (2010) 10 SCC 715.

²⁰ *Supra* note 13 at 25.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is doctrinal and analytical in nature. The study primarily examines the legal framework governing street vendors in India with special reference to the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. The research critically analyses the effectiveness of the legislation in balancing livelihood protection of street vendors with urban regulation and planning objectives.²¹

The study is based mainly on secondary sources of data. Various books, journal articles, research papers, government reports, committee reports, policy documents, statutes, constitutional provisions, judicial decisions, and online legal databases have been consulted for the purpose of the research.²² Important materials relating to the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2004 and 2009, parliamentary debates, municipal regulations, and reports issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs have also been examined.

The research adopts a qualitative method of analysis to understand the socio-economic and legal dimensions of street vending in India. The study analyses the historical development of street vending laws, constitutional protections available to vendors, and the role played by the judiciary in protecting livelihood rights under Articles 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution.²³ Landmark judicial decisions such as *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, *Sodan Singh v. NDMC*, and *Gainda Ram v. Municipal Corporation of Delhi* have been critically analysed to evaluate judicial contribution towards protection of street vendors' rights.²⁴

The methodology further includes a critical examination of the provisions of the Street Vendors Act, 2014 relating to Town Vending Committees, vendor surveys, vending zones, grievance redressal mechanisms, relocation procedures, and protection against arbitrary eviction. The study also evaluates the practical implementation of the Act across various states and identifies challenges such as corruption, administrative inefficiency, delayed surveys, lack of awareness among vendors, and weak institutional enforcement.²⁵

The research additionally examines the conflict between urban governance policies and livelihood rights of informal workers. Municipal laws, anti-encroachment drives, urban beautification projects, and zoning policies have been analysed to understand their impact upon street vendors and informal economic activities.²⁶

²¹ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, (Act No. 7 of 2014). ²² Sharit K. Bhowmik, *Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy* 34 (Routledge India 2010). ²³ M.P. Jain, *Indian Constitutional Law* 1367 (LexisNexis, Gurugram, 8th edn., 2018).

²⁴ (1985) 3 SCC 545.

²⁵ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, ss 3–6, 22–29. ²⁶ *Supra* note 4, at 91.

The study is descriptive as well as evaluative in approach because it not only explains the existing legal framework but also critically examines its strengths, weaknesses, and implementation gaps. The research attempts to provide suggestions and recommendations for improving implementation of the legislation and ensuring better protection of vendors' constitutional and statutory rights.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of street vending has been a hot topic in urban governance, the informal economy, and socio-economic rights discussions in India. Street vendors make up a large part of the urban informal sector and offer affordable goods and services to millions of consumers. Despite their economic contribution, vendors have faced legal uncertainties, harassment from municipal authorities, forced evictions, confiscation of goods, and a lack of social security. Scholars, researchers, policy experts, and judicial bodies have examined the legal status of street vendors and the effectiveness of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014. The existing literature highlights both the positive aspects of the legislation and the challenges in implementing it.²⁷

1. Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy – Sharit K. Bhowmik (2012)

Sharit K. Bhowmik research is considered a foundational study on street vendors in India. The paper analyzes the socio-economic conditions of street vendors within the urban informal economy and points out the conflicts between urban development policies and livelihood rights.²⁸ The author argues that municipal authorities often see street vendors as illegal encroachers, even though they play a crucial role in urban distribution systems. The study notes that rapid urbanization and commercialization have increased tensions between urban planning authorities and informal workers. According to the research, street vendors

significantly contribute to job creation, affordable retail services, and urban economic growth, yet they remain socially and legally marginalized.²⁹

The paper also discusses the failure of municipal authorities to create inclusive urban governance systems. The author criticizes policies focused on eviction and stresses that street vending should be regulated instead of banned. The research advocates for legal recognition, participatory governance, and rehabilitation options for vendors. This study significantly influenced policy discussions that led to the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors and, subsequently, the Street Vendors Act, 2014.³⁰

2. Legal Protection for Street Vendors in India – Sharit K. Bhowmik (2014)

This paper examines the law regulating the street vendors in Nigeria before and after the enactment of Street Vendors Act, 2014 with a critical evaluation. The author explores the history of the street vendors and how the legal environment was characterized by duality between

²⁷ Sharit K. Bhowmik, “Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy” 47(23) *Economic and Political Weekly* 34 (2012) .

²⁸ Sharit K. Bhowmik, *Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy* 56 (Routledge India, New Delhi 2014). ²⁹ Sharit K. Bhowmik, “Legal Protection for Street Vendors in India” 49(29) *Economic and Political Weekly* 15 (2014).

³⁰ (1989) 4 SCC 155.

criminal and constitutional dimensions of the street vendors, which legalized their transactions and activities as well as contravened them. The author explains how street vendors used to operate in the environment of legal uncertainty, with the municipal legislation criminalizing their transactions and the courts, on the other hand, recognizing their constitutional rights.³¹

The research points out that before 2014 there was no central legislation which led to arbitrary measures taken by local authorities. The author reviews how the judicial verdicts like *Sodan Singh v. NDMC* and *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* slowly came to embrace street vending as a fundamental right to livelihood as enshrined in Article 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution.³²

The paper also critically assesses the Street Vendors Act, 2014 and its progressive features including Town Vending Committees, protection against arbitrary eviction, vendor surveys and participatory urban governance. The author also identifies some practical issues such as the slow paperwork process, corruption, the absence of political commitment and the poor implementation of the surveys and vending certificates by local authorities.³³

3. Urban Governance and Informal Economy – Jan Breman (2013)

The informal economy and the street vending sector are the focus of Jan Breman’s research on the relation between urban governance and informal economy. The study suggests that urban development policies in developing countries tend to focus on commercialization, beautification and infrastructure development, neglecting to take into account the livelihood rights of informal workers.³⁴

The author provides a description of how the informal worker sector often remains invisible in policy-making though they are involved in urban economic activities. Anti-encroachment rules are applied selectively by municipal bodies on economically weaker sections and structural inequality within the framework of urban development is overlooked, the study said.

The study also asserts that criminalisation of street vendors is indicative of a wider socio economic injustice in the urban governance system. The author thus calls for inclusive planning policies that involve informal workers in city governance and not consider them as barriers to modernisation.³⁵

4. The Street Vendors and the Right to Livelihood Constitutional perspective, by Mitu Khullar, Advocate, Amicus Curiae for street vendors, Delhi.

³¹ (1985) 3 SCC 545.

³² Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, 12 *National Policy on Urban Street Vendors* (2009).

³³ S. C. Bhatia, *Urban Informal Sector and Street Vending in India* 112 (Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi 2010).

³⁴ Jan Breman, *At Work in the Informal Economy of India* 88 (Oxford University Press 2013). ³⁵ Jan Breman, "Informal Sector and Urban Governance" 48(14) *Economic and Political Weekly* 45 (2013).

Street vending has been analysed from the fundamental rights and socio-economic justice angle by a number of constitutional law scholars. It is important to stress that before the coming into effect of the statutory laws, the judiciary played a significant role in safeguarding vendors.³⁶

In *Sodan Singh v. NDMC*, the landmark decision, it was held that street vending is a part of fundamental right of trade under Article 19(1)(g). Likewise, in *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* the right to livelihood came under the right to life. These decisions together changed the status of street vendors from "illegal encroachers" to economically protected citizens through the constitution.³⁷

The researchers state that the Street Vendors Act, 2014 institutionalised these constitutional principles through provisions to protect against arbitrary eviction and procedural fairness and participatory governance mechanisms. But it is also noted that constitutional violations continue to occur in reality due to implementation failures.³⁸

5. Critical Analysis of the Street Vendors Act, 2014

The recent literature that is dedicated to Street Vendors Act, 2014 offers positive as well as critical viewpoints on the legislation. The Act is welcomed by researchers as it formally acknowledges street vending as a legal and viable economic sector that deserves legal protection.³⁹

The literature identifies a number of forward-looking elements of the Act as:

- Preparation of Town Vending Committees;
- Vendor surveys and certification; and

- Vending zones;
- Grievance redressal mechanisms;
- Immunity from eviction for any cause without due process.

The Act is said to be consistent with the values of equality, dignity and social justice of the Constitution. The act tries to strike a balance between livelihood protection and urban control.⁴⁰

But there are many barriers to implementation as noted in critical studies. Many states did not establish Town Vending Committees or perform a vendor survey even years after the law was passed, researchers note. Poor implementation continues to be hampered by corruption, political interference, and bureaucratic inefficiency and awareness among vendors.⁴¹

³⁶ M.P. Jain, *Indian Constitutional Law* 1367 (LexisNexis, 8th edn., 2018).

³⁷ *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) 3 SCC 545.

³⁸ *Sodan Singh v. New Delhi Municipal Committee* (1989) 4 SCC 155.

³⁹ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, 25 *Street Vending Guidelines*, 2017. ⁴⁰ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, (Act No. 7 of 2014). ⁴¹ Sharit K. Bhowmik, “Street Vendors and Urban Governance in India” 51 *Economic and Political Weekly* (2016).

There are also some studies that criticize the zoning structure provided for by the Act. Too many “no vending zones” can actually be counterproductive to the mission of livelihood protection if vendors are moved to areas that are not commercially viable.

6. Urban Planning and Vending Zones

Ajay Kaushal looks at how city planning policies relate to the Street Vendors Act, 2014, focusing on Patiala city. The study examines how urban local bodies include street vending regulation in their master planning systems.

The research points out that poor communication between city planners and municipal governance creates challenges in setting up vending zones and rehabilitation policies. The author believes that urban planning should include informal economic activities rather than push them out of public spaces.⁴²

The study highlights that informal sectors play an important role in creating jobs and boosting economic growth. Therefore, these activities should be part of urban development plans.⁴³

7. Women Street Vendors and Gender-Based Challenges

Research on women street vendors shows the gendered nature of informal work and public areas. Manasi Chaudhari analyzes the Street Vendors Act, 2014 from the viewpoint of women vendors and argues that the law does not adequately address their specific issues.

The study notes that women vendors often face harassment, insecurity, financial strain, and limited access to sanitation facilities. Besides economic struggles, women vendors also encounter gender-based violence and discrimination in public areas.⁴⁴

The author argues that the law does not fully recognize the unique social and economic situations of women vendors. They recommend stronger support measures, safety strategies, and inclusive policy plans.⁴⁵

8. Implementation Challenges and Symbolic Politics

⁴² Ajay Kaushal, “Coherence Among Street Vendors Act and City Planning Policies: Case Study – Patiala” 8 *Creative Space* 72 (2021).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Manasi Chaudhari, *Invisible Women Street Vendors: Lacunae in the Street Vendors Act*, 2014 25 (Christ University Law Journal, Bengaluru, 2021).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Philip Amis critically analyses implementation problems associated with the Street Vendors Act, 2014. The study explains that although the Act created a legally enforceable framework for regulation and protection of street vendors, actual implementation on the ground remained weak.

The author uses the concept of “symbolic politics” to explain how governments often adopt progressive legislation without ensuring practical enforcement. According to the study, many states formally adopted legal frameworks but failed to produce substantial improvements in the daily conditions of street vendors.⁴⁶

The research highlights issues such as administrative delays, weak enforcement mechanisms, and lack of political commitment as major obstacles affecting implementation of the Act.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Philip Amis, *Symbolic Politics, Legalism and Implementation: The Case of Street Vendors in India* 67 (Commonwealth Journal of Local Governance, London, 2015).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The present study is significant because street vending constitutes one of the largest forms of self-employment within India’s urban informal economy. Millions of economically weaker individuals including migrants, women, labourers, and marginalized communities depend entirely upon street vending for their livelihood and survival.⁴⁸ Despite their important economic contribution, street vendors have historically faced legal insecurity, police harassment, arbitrary eviction, confiscation of goods, and lack of social protection.

The study is important because it critically examines the effectiveness of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, which represents

the first comprehensive central legislation enacted specifically for the protection and regulation of street vendors in India.⁴⁹ The research analyses whether the Act has successfully achieved its objectives of protecting livelihood rights while simultaneously ensuring urban regulation, public convenience, sanitation, and traffic management.

The significance of the study also lies in its constitutional dimension. The research highlights the relationship between street vending and fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 19(1)(g), and 21 of the Constitution of India.⁵⁰ The study demonstrates how judicial activism expanded the scope of socio-economic rights and influenced legislative reforms protecting informal workers.

The research is further important because it contributes to contemporary discussions relating to urban governance, informal economy, socio-economic justice, and inclusive development. Rapid urbanization and commercialization have increased conflicts between municipal authorities and street vendors regarding use of public spaces.⁵¹ Therefore, the study helps in understanding how urban planning policies can balance development objectives with livelihood protection of economically vulnerable populations.

The study also possesses practical significance for policymakers, municipal authorities, urban planners, legal scholars, and researchers. It identifies implementation gaps within the Street Vendors Act, 2014 and provides recommendations for strengthening participatory governance mechanisms such as Town Vending Committees, vendor surveys, grievance redressal systems, and rehabilitation policies.

The research is socially significant because it focuses upon protection of marginalized and economically weaker sections of society working within the informal sector. By examining issues relating to dignity, livelihood, equality, and legal recognition, the study contributes

⁴⁸ National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), *Status of Street Vendors in India* 6 (NASVI, New Delhi, 2018).

⁴⁹ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, pmbl.

⁵⁰ *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* (1985) 3 SCC 545.

⁵¹ *Supra* note , 4 at 88.

towards broader debates concerning social justice and human rights in democratic governance systems.⁵²

The study additionally serves academic significance by contributing to legal scholarship relating to labour law, constitutional law, urban governance, administrative law, and human rights jurisprudence. It further provides a comprehensive understanding of the legislative framework, judicial contribution, and policy developments concerning street vendors in India.

⁵² Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India, *National Policy on Urban Street Vendors* 7 (Government of India, New Delhi, 2009).

1.9 SCHEME OF CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Research Methodology

This chapter deals with the introduction, objectives, statement of the problem, literature review, hypothesis, research methodology, significance of the study, and scheme of chapterisation.

Chapter 2 – Historical Background, Origin and International Framework

This chapter examines the historical evolution of street vending in ancient, medieval, and modern India along with the international framework relating to informal workers and street vendors.

Chapter 3 – Constitutional and Legislative Framework Relating to Street Vendors

This chapter analyzes the constitutional provisions, directive principles, and legislative framework under the Street Vendors Act, 2014, including Town Vending Committees, vending zones, surveys, licensing systems, and implementation challenges.

Chapter 4 – Role of Judiciary in Protection of Street Vendors' Rights

This chapter studies the judicial contribution in protecting the rights of street vendors through landmark judgments and examines the role of the judiciary in shaping policies and legislation.

Chapter 5 – Challenges , Critical Analysis and Suggestions for Reform.

This chapter discusses implementation challenges, corruption, eviction issues, urban planning problems, gender concerns, lack of social security, and provides suggestions and reforms for better protection of street vendors.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Street vending forms an essential part of India's urban informal economy and provides livelihood opportunities to millions of economically weaker individuals. Street vendors contribute significantly to urban economic development by supplying affordable goods and services to the public while simultaneously generating self-employment and reducing urban unemployment. Despite their socio-economic importance, street vendors have historically faced legal insecurity, social exclusion, police harassment, arbitrary eviction, confiscation of goods, and lack of institutional protection.⁵³

The chapter highlights that prior to the enactment of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, there existed no comprehensive legal framework specifically safeguarding the rights of street vendors in India. Municipal authorities largely treated vendors as illegal encroachers rather than recognizing them as legitimate contributors to urban economies.⁵⁴ The absence of legal recognition created continuous conflict between vendors and urban authorities regarding use of public spaces, traffic management, sanitation, and city planning.

The chapter further establishes that judicial activism played a transformative role in protecting the rights of street vendors. Through landmark judgments such as *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation* and *Sodan Singh v. NDMC*, the judiciary recognized street vending as part of the constitutional right to livelihood and freedom of trade guaranteed under Articles 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution of India.⁵⁵ These judicial developments compelled the government to adopt policy frameworks and eventually enact comprehensive legislation for protection and regulation of street vendors.

The introduction also explains the significance of the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors, 2004 and 2009, which laid the foundation for participatory governance, vendor registration, and protection against arbitrary eviction. However, weak implementation of these policies demonstrated the necessity for statutory protection through central legislation.

The enactment of the Street Vendors Act, 2014 represents a significant legislative development aimed at balancing two important objectives—protection of livelihood rights of street vendors and regulation of urban public spaces.⁵⁶ The Act introduced important institutional mechanisms such as Town Vending Committees, vendor surveys, vending certificates, vending zones, grievance redressal systems, and safeguards against forced eviction.

However, the chapter also indicates that despite progressive legislative intent, implementation challenges continue to undermine the effectiveness of the Act. Administrative inefficiency,

⁵³ Sharit K. Bhowmik, *Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy* 34 (Routledge India 2010). ⁵⁴ Jan Breman, *At Work in the Informal Economy of India* 88 (Oxford University Press 2013). ⁵⁵ (1985) 3 SCC 545.

⁵⁶ The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, (Act 7 of 2014).

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corruption, delay in surveys, lack of awareness among vendors, and arbitrary municipal actions remain major obstacles in realization of vendors' rights.⁵⁷

Therefore, the chapter concludes that the Street Vendors Act, 2014 constitutes an important step towards recognition of socio-economic rights and inclusive urban governance in India. Nevertheless, effective implementation, administrative accountability, judicial supervision, and participatory governance remain essential for ensuring meaningful protection of the constitutional and statutory rights of street vendors.

⁵⁷ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, *Street Vending Guidelines*, 7 (Government of India, New Delhi, 2017).