

Plan for vending zones in GHMC areas yet to take off

Though GHMC issuing identity cards to street vendors, it failed in setting up special zones

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Hyderabad: The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) may be leading in terms of issuing identity cards to street vendors, but the same spirit is missing when it comes to setting up vending zones for street vendors.

Till date, the municipal corporation has identified over 1.56 lakh street vendors in its limits and issued identity cards to nearly 1.44 lakh of them. But most of the vendors are conducting their business on the roadside and other public places, despite the municipal corporation identifying exclusive vending zones.

The idea behind setting up vending zones was to facilitate street vendors to conduct their business comfortably following guidelines, especially those related to hygiene. This was also to avoid any inconvenience to the general public and to enable a smooth flow of traffic.

Municipal Corporation officials claim there are 123 vending zones across its limits. The demand for setting up new vending zones keeps increasing with the identification of new street vendors.

Setting up new vending zones is a challenging task as a few crucial factors need to be considered. Among all, permission from the traffic police is important as there should be no hindrance to traffic flow. Similarly, when a few locations are identified, most street vendors are against in operating in such zones, citing poor scope for business, explains a GHMC official.

However, instructions have been issued to Zonal Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to identify suitable locations for setting up new vending zones within their limits by March-end, he says.

Every year, the Centre promotes setting up vending zones in cities and sanctions funds for the same to municipalities. GHMC is lagging in utilising those funds for promoting and improving street vendors' business.

Food zone at Shilparamam gathering dust

The GHMC had set up an exclusive street-food zone opposite Shilparamam with about 50 outlets. All the outlets were constructed with recycled plastic and they were allocated to vendors identified by the corporation. The street vendors were trained by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and were even awarded certificates. Yet, there are no operations in the zone and the outlets are gathering dust.

“It is in such a prime locality. It will be good both for vendors and food lovers as many restaurants in this part of the city fleece customers with exorbitant charges,” says Rakesh Reddy, a sales executive.

A court case is pending regarding the land-use issue, an official said.