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PMC in haste to relocate vendors to footpaths: NSCC

PUNE: Members of the town vending committee appointed by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to facilitate and implement the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors have alleged that the civic body was being hasty in relocating hawkers to footpaths, despite opposition from citizens.

The National Society for Clean Cities (NSCC) has four members on the town vending panel. NSCC president Satish Khot has said in a letter to the municipal commissioner, "We notice that the PMC is being rather hasty in relocating hawkers to existing footpaths (even if they are wide)

. You are well aware that the roads and streets of the city are already overburdened with unmanageable traffic. Most parts of old Pune have almost no footpaths or parking spaces. Encroachments have already heavily eaten into the space on footpaths, even without relocating vendors. Taking into account the growing population and the need of wider footpaths ten years later, footpaths should be the last option to relocate hawkers."

The NSCC has demanded that the PMC should instead take urgent steps to acquire amenity spaces and open plots as per the development plan of 1987. "The existing 'ota' markets/shops need to be utilized first. At present, most of the

"ota' markets are full of illegal occupants, and the hawkers are pushed back on roads. The PMC must remove these illegal occupants," the society has said.

It added that some PMC properties have been allotted to organizations that conduct activities that are not beneficial or essential to citizens. These properties can be vacated and used to relocate vendors.

The TVC members said that waste generated by vendors will eventually land up on roads and footpaths, unless efficiently handled. Similarly, toilets and drinking water facilities must be arranged for vendors, close to their allocated spots. The civic body must plan a solid waste management system for hawkers' zones before allocating spaces to vendors.