



# "From Shadows To Spotlight: The Role Of The Tiger Operation In Elevating Mangalore's Street Vendors"

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the ways in which the "Tiger Operation" changed the social and economic landscape of Mangalore by moving street sellers from the periphery to the heart of the city. The Tiger Operation was first designed as a city beautification and regulation project to address problems with urban congestion, encroachment, and illegal street selling. However, by formalising their commerce and increasing their visibility, the operation unintentionally contributed to the empowerment of street sellers. Through an analysis of the policy's execution, the socioeconomic ramifications for vendors, and the ensuing public opinion of street vending in Mangalore, this paper demonstrates how the initiative promoted a change in both public perceptions of the government and community involvement with informal economies. The paper explores how this shift helped move street vendors out of the shadows and into the public eye by improving their standard of living and reshaping the city's urban planning strategy to accommodate the expanding informal sector. This study clarifies the complex role of state intervention in urban informal economies and its long-term ramifications for social inclusion and city governance through policy analysis, interviews, and data on urban growth.

**Keywords:** Informal economy street vendors, tiger operation, vending zone

**INTRODUCTION:** This street vending is the part of Urban Economy Street entrepreneurs are an energetic and vital component of the urban environment, with a diverse range of goods and services to supply, they contribute to the cultural mosaic of cities from all around the world. Street vending is one of the most accessible means of earning a living because it has low barriers in entry, giving people a chance to engage with business. Street vendors work in public areas selling items such as food, drinks and handmade crafts or clothing. Much of their carts has layers of regional flavours and are unique artisanal goods inspired by how life is around it. Apart from the economic benefits, street vendors create colourful streets that incite social interaction and neighbourhood activity. All in all, street vendors are one of the

Mangalore, officially known as Mangaluru, is a charming seaside city located in the Indian state of Karnataka in the south. It is well-known for its breath-taking scenery, lively culture, and extensive history. It is tucked away between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. Serving as a major port city for centuries, Mangalore has developed into a major hub for industry, education, and the economy in the area. The city is well-known for its varied culinary scene, especially for its mouth-watering seafood and distinctive regional cuisine that draws inspiration from Tulu, Konkani, and Beary traditions. Mangalore is

known for its blend of traditional and colonial architecture, which can be seen in places like the illustrious St. Aloysius Chapel and the ancient Kadri Manjunath Temple.

Mangalore is well-known for its flourishing industries, particularly in sectors like agriculture, fishery, and food processing, Mangalore is also home to a substantial manufacturing industry that includes production of chemicals, electronics, textiles, shipbuilding which leverage the rich natural resources of the coastal region. The growth of the information technology sector has been fuelled by the spread of educational institutions, which has attracted start-ups and digital firms. The city is a popular tourist destination for both locals and visitors because of its festivals, music, and artistic manifestations, which reflect its rich cultural past. The economy of Mangalore is distinguished by a fusion of modern businesses and traditional industries, which greatly influences the state of the Karnataka economy as a whole. The city's lively marketplaces and street sellers also add to its economic vibrancy by creating jobs and encouraging regional entrepreneurship.

Even though Mangalore is a thriving economic centre with a variety of industries including manufacturing, information technology, and agriculture, the city has variations in job possibilities, especially for its young and immigrant communities. The impact of seasonal work in agriculture and fishing, as well as a mismatch between job seekers' abilities and the demands of the local job market, are factors that contribute to the high rate of unemployment in Mangalore. Additionally, the recent economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated job losses, leading to increased competition for limited positions. Various educational institutions in Mangalore generate a qualified labour force, yet many of their graduates have difficulty in finding acceptable jobs. Dealing with unemployment and producing enough jobs to match the city's economic potential is the biggest challenge of administration. To effectively address unemployment in Mangalore, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates skill development, industry support, and employability enhancement techniques is needed. By doing this, the city would be able to maximise its potential and resources.

Due to a dearth of formal job possibilities, Mangalore's informal sector is vital to the city's economic and social structure. This sector includes a broad range of activities such as street vending, construction, domestic services, and artisanal crafts. It is typified by small-scale, unregistered enterprises and casual labour. As a coastal city with a rich cultural heritage, Mangalore's informal sector reflects the entrepreneurial spirit of its residents, often serving as a critical entry point for many individuals, especially migrants, seeking economic opportunities. The unorganised sector plays a crucial role in Mangalore's economy by promoting the local way of life and culture and highlighting the need for legislation that encourage it to grow and endure.

Mangalore's streets are particularly known for their street sellers, who provide a variety of handicrafts, fresh fruit, and local specialties. These sellers not only offer reasonably priced goods and services, but they also make cities livelier by bringing vibrant marketplaces that foster better relationships between neighbours. Street vending has gained prominence in Mangalore due to a confluence of social, cultural, and economic factors. Compared to starting a formal business, street vending has less regulatory obstacles and requires less capital investment, which is one of its main draws. It is a desirable alternative for people with little financial or expertise resources because of its accessibility. Additionally, the flexibility given by street vending allows individuals to adjust their work hours, enabling them to combine family commitments or pursue other employment. Street food vendors can benefit from Mangalore's rich culinary legacy and attract both locals and tourists by showcasing the region's specialties. The social networks formed among vendors also play a critical role, fostering a sense of community and support that encourages new entrants into this informal sector.

A combination of opportunity and necessity drive people to decide to go into the street vending business as they try to make their own way in a fast-paced urban setting. This tendency emphasises the entrepreneurial spirit of Mangalore's citizens as well as the significance of street vending to the city's economy and culture. In Mangalore, street sellers are an essential part of the lively street life and thriving economy of the city. By locating their business near busy streets, markets, beaches, and near popular landmarks, street vendors attract both locals and tourists, creating lively gathering spots that foster community interaction. These vendors offer a distinctive window into the flavours and artistry of the area, from the fragrant stalls selling seafood and neer dosa, to those selling fresh fruits, snacks, and handcrafted

craft items. Many locals consider street vending to be an indispensable aspect of their everyday lives since it provides them with quick, tasty, and inexpensive food options.

Street vendors often operate in precarious conditions, facing challenges such as lack of secure space, limited access to financing, and regulatory hurdles. Just as in many cities, Mangalore's street sellers have to contend with obstacles like formal establishment rivalry and regulatory problems. It is the responsibility of local authorities in ensuring that street vendors can operate safely and legally. This includes implementing policies that recognise their rights, providing designated vending zones, and facilitating access to essential services such as sanitation and waste management. Furthermore, local authorities can help street vendors improve their livelihoods through training programs, financial support, and better infrastructure.

### Objectives

- To understand the goal and framework of tiger operation.
- how the Tiger Operation positively impacts the economic condition of street vendors.
- to examine how the Tiger Operation ties into broader urban planning and governance in Mangalore.

### Review of literature:

(Bhowmik, 2005) A street vendor is someone who sells goods without a permanent structure, either stationary or mobile. They can be stationary or mobile, carrying their goods on push carts or baskets. The term 'street vendor' includes both stationary and mobile vendors, and 'hawker' and 'street vendor' are often interchange

(Panwar & Garg, 2015) Street vendors face challenges due to increased traffic and pollution, affecting their health and mobility. They must clean their workplaces, causing excess dust and increasing the risk of diseases like asthma. Road widening projects pose a threat to street vendors, as they lack proper relocation and compensation measures. They often receive bribes from the police and face harassment from authorities.

(Dimas, 2008) examined the fundamentals of road distribution and suggested a few administrative setups for road distribution based on global best practises. The study found that street vendors posed a significant challenge to urban management. The study suggested that urban choice producers adopt a different mindset. Road vendors would be encouraged to make profitable contributions to the public if a good strategy was described, such as using the "trickledown effect" in road distribution, allocating alarm capital in urban areas to reduce poverty, miniaturised scale financing, the enrolment process for private ventures, and so on.

(Okoye, 2020) By excluding the street vendors from the planning process, from the registration exercise, and by relocating, local and national authorities are refusing to provide adequate, convenient, and decent commercial spaces in which vendors can operate with state authorization. These practises and exclusions play a critical role in re-creating statuses of illegitimacy, despite street vendors' demonstrated desires to achieve government recognition and correlate support for their livelihoods.

(Weng & Kim, 2016) The Hsinchu municipal government in Taiwan successfully relocated street vendors into thriving public markets, Zhu Lian and Guan Dong, but failed to replicate this success in Guan Dong. The research found that street vendor organizations play a crucial role in the relocation process. The article highlights the potential pitfalls of relying on strong vendor organizations, as they can bypass lower-ranking officers and foster a political patronage system in the city.

(Zhang & Shao, 2024) The study promotes a dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable urban planning approach by integrating street vending into public spaces. It emphasizes the need for integrated management strategies to ensure sustainable development, stimulate employment, and contribute positively to urban fabric and well-being.

(Zhang & Shao, 2024) Urban street vending spaces require proactive planning to provide economic vitality and mitigate safety and hygiene issues. This shift from passively accommodating to

actively planning is crucial for policy decisions and public space management. Thus, this study focuses on two main research questions:

- In what ways did the Tiger Operation contribute to increasing the visibility and recognition of street vendors in Mangalore?
- How did the Tiger Operation impact the economic livelihoods of Mangalore's street vendors in terms of income, sales, and access to markets?

## THE "TIGER OPERATION"

In urban planning, determining the elements that affect street vending is essential for analysis. Some of the primary foundations for influencing elements include planning concepts and national or local policy orientations, which are reflected in policy papers. These publications not only provide the policy framework for promoting the growth of the street vendor economy, but they also provide insight into the views and expectations of policymakers regarding this sector.

The Mangalore-based "Tiger Operation" is the major project planned to restrain street vendors in the bustling city and ensure discipline. The local administration launched this endeavour seeking a middle-ground between the need to maintain orderly cities and the survival of street vendors. Street vendors are an important feature of Mangalore, offering culturally specific regions of locally produced foods and products that contribute to the lives of many residents. But since they often happen in high-density areas, they cause issues such as city jams and public risks.

Tiger Operation has three main objectives: to identify and designate vendors; regulate compliance with applicable health and safety standards; and publicize designated vending areas. This systematic approach is intended to uphold street vendors' right to a liveable income while also enhancing the general street milieu. By encouraging communication between vendors and local officials, the programme seeks to create a healthy urban ecology that allows street vendors to thrive alongside the city as it grows and develops. Mangalore Tiger Operation is an initiative showing Mangalore's determination to help street vendors through urbanisation driven problems and such steps towards sustainable urban management.

Due to lack of legal recognition and protection, which often leaves vendors vulnerable to harassment from authorities and eviction from their selling spots. they also face challenges, including regulatory hurdles, competition, and concerns about health and safety standards. Difficulties related to health and safety regulations, as compliance can be costly and complicated for small operations. They also face intense competition from both formal retail establishments and other vendors, which can affect their sales and income stability. Inadequate access to basic facilities such as water, sanitation, and waste disposal, which can compromise hygiene and customer safety. Economic fluctuations and the recent impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have further exacerbated these issues, highlighting the need for supportive policies and programs that ensure the rights and livelihoods of street vendors are protected.

The Tiger Operation is a comprehensive urban management program initiated by the Mangalore City Corporation (MCC) with the aim of regulating and organizing street vending. The program seeks to bring together vendors, local authorities, and law enforcement in an effort to balance the needs of public order and the economic contributions of street vendors. Originally designed to curb illegal street vending activities, the operation has evolved into a vehicle for empowerment, infrastructure development, and social inclusion for Mangalore's informal economy. Tiger Operation, a program aimed at protecting public spaces and street vendors' livelihoods, provides them with designated zones, identity cards, legal protection, street beautification, traffic management, and public health measures, thereby increasing the visibility and legitimacy of street vending in the city.

## THE STRUGGLES OF STREET VENDORS IN MANGALORE

The street sellers in Mangalore were not given much consideration in urban planning prior to the Tiger Operation. Due to traffic, filthy conditions, and the unauthorised use of public areas, street selling was frequently viewed as an annoyance. With little to no recourse for maintaining their livelihoods, vendors operated on the margins and faced arbitrary eviction from their vending locations by municipal authorities.

Due to the lack of a formal framework, vendors were forced to operate in dangerous environments without access to necessities like potable water, a place to dispose of garbage, or protection from the weather. Despite being essential to the local economy, their financial contributions were frequently disregarded. Vendors lived in fear of fines, confiscation of goods, and loss of income due to unplanned and frequent demolitions of their makeshift stalls.

### HOW THE 'TIGER OPERATION' HAS HELPED VENDORS

Mangaluru City Corporation (MCC) has already identified 33 vending zones within the city limits, where 93 street vendors will be accommodated. Vending zone has electricity, drinking water, and other facilities for the convenience of vendors and visitors. While the MCC has identified 667 vendors, the city corporation will issue identity cards and allow them to carry out business in vending zones once they submit the affidavit to the city corporation. At present, only 10 street vendors have been given identity cards," zonal commissioner, said that separate space will be allotted to vendors who sell flowers, food, fruits, and vegetables. The Tiger Operation has revolutionised Mangalore's street sellers, turning them from disenfranchised workers into acknowledged participants in the city's economy. A number of the initiative's essential components have helped bring about this change.

#### 1. Designated Vending Zones

Establishing specific vending zones across the city has been a key component of the Tiger Operation. Now, vendors are given designated spots in places that don't obstruct traffic for cars or pedestrians. These zones are equipped with basic infrastructure such as waste bins, benches, and often, public restrooms, creating a cleaner, safer environment for both vendors and customers.

#### 2. Legal Recognition and Protection

Identity cards are given to street vendors who participate in the operation, providing them with legal status and legal protection. In order to ensure that vendors can operate without fear of intimidation and to prevent arbitrary eviction, this has proven crucial. Legal recognition also makes it easier for vendors to access government health and welfare programmes.

#### 3. Capacity Building and Training

In order to guarantee the operation's success, the MCC has collaborated with a number of non-governmental organisations and community groups to train vendors in fundamental entrepreneurship, financial literacy, hygiene, and customer service. Vendors have benefited from these initiatives by raising the calibre of their goods and services, which has improved client satisfaction and boosted sales.

#### 4. Integration into the Formal Economy

The operation has facilitated the integration of street vending into Mangalore's formal economy. By organizing street vendors and bringing them into the fold of regulated urban commerce, the initiative has helped to elevate their social status. Vendors are now seen not just as informal laborers, but as legitimate contributors to Mangalore's economic fabric. This shift in perception has had positive ripple effects across the city, including increased tourism and patronage for local businesses.

#### 5. Improved Urban Aesthetics

Enhancing Mangalore's general urban aesthetics has also been a priority for the Tiger Operation. The city's streets are now more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian-friendly thanks to the cleanup and more systematic arrangement of unofficial vending locations. By bringing street vending into line with the city's larger

objectives of sustainability and urban beautification, this has assisted in dispelling unfavourable misconceptions about the activity.

## **IMPACT OF THE TIGER OPERATION ON ECONOMIC LIVELIHOODS OF MANGALORE'S STREET VENDORS.**

The effectiveness of the Tiger Operation is evident in the enhanced standard of living for street sellers as well as in the wider benefits to Mangalore's community and economy. For many low-income households in Mangalore, street hawking has long been a substantial source of income. Vendors now have the stability to expand their enterprises and make investments in high-quality products thanks to the formalisation of vending spaces and the security of their operations. Street food has emerged as a key draw for tourists in Mangalore, which is also renowned for its expanding tourism sector. Vending areas that are secure, orderly, and clean have increased the city's appeal to visitors looking for genuine local experiences. Due to the Tiger Operation's effectiveness, a sense of cooperation and respect has been fostered among multiple community groups, including the vendors, locals, and municipal authorities. Mangaloreans now view street sellers as essential to the city's cultural and economic identity, feeling a sense of pride and ownership as a result of the programme.

## **DRAWBACKS OF THE TIGER OPERATION**

"Tiger Operation" in Mangalore that specifically targets street vendors or informal businesses, this could be part of law enforcement efforts to regulate street vending, curb illegal activities, or maintain order in certain areas of the city. While "Tiger Operation" isn't a commonly recognized term for street vendor operations in Mangalore, let's assume you mean a crackdown or aggressive action aimed at controlling street vendors, either to regulate urban spaces or eliminate illegal vending. Following are the important drawbacks of such an operation on street vendors:

- **Loss of Livelihood:** Street vendors, who frequently operate in unorganised sectors, depend on their daily income to sustain their families and themselves. Vendors may be forced to cease operations due to a crackdown, resulting in an abrupt and catastrophic loss of revenue.
- **Increased Vulnerability:** Due to their economic marginalisation, many street sellers might not have the funds or resources to endure extended periods of business closure. Their family would suffer greatly if they don't have other means of money.
- **Disruption of Local Economies:** Because they offer both locals and tourists reasonably priced goods and services, street vendors are vital to the community's economy. The informal sector might be disrupted by a harsh operation, which would limit access to everyday necessities, especially for those with lesser incomes.
- **Loss of Affordable Goods:** Local communities frequently receive reasonably priced, easily accessible food, clothing, and other items from vendors. Local customers may pay more if they are removed from public settings, particularly in places where formal retail establishments are few.
- **Community Backlash:** Any operation that forcibly evicts or punishes street vendors may spark demonstrations or public discontent because they frequently play a vital role in the community. Relationships between local government and citizens may become strained as a result, especially in places that are economically underdeveloped or heavily populated.
- **Decreased Trust in Authorities:** Some vendors may feel unfairly singled out by local authorities, particularly those who rely on their stalls for their livelihood. The government and the unorganised sector may lose trust as a result, which would make future collaboration more challenging.
- **Reduced Vibrancy and Street Culture:** Street sellers give public areas colour, personality, and vitality, which enhances a city's vibrancy. Their elimination could result in a more sterile, less dynamic urban setting, which would reduce Mangalore's allure for both residents and visitors.
- **Empty Streets and Decline in Foot Traffic:** Numerous street sellers draw foot traffic, which helps local companies. The removal of these vendors or disruption of their operations may result in a drop-in customer for nearby stores, cafes, and shops, which would ultimately hurt the urban economy as a whole.

- **Push to Underground Markets:** If vendors are evicted from public areas, they may just relocate to less visible, riskier areas where they are more difficult to control. Unregulated products, unsafe conditions, and other problems may worsen as a result.
- **Heightened Risk of Exploitation:** When street vendors are forced out of official marketplaces or areas under government control, they lose the relative safety that public areas can offer, making them vulnerable to extortion or exploitation by criminal forces.
- **Marginalization of Vulnerable Groups:** In Mangalore, a large number of street sellers are members of underprivileged or marginalised groups, including as women, migrants, and low-income labourers. These populations might be disproportionately impacted by a crackdown, which would exacerbate already-existing socioeconomic injustices.
- **Limited Access to Social Services:** Benefits including social safety nets, government pensions, and health insurance are frequently unavailable to street vendors. They become more vulnerable and lack a social safety net when they lose their source of income.
- **Strain on Welfare Systems:** Vendors who lose their jobs could have to depend more on government aid programmes, which would put further pressure on public welfare systems. In the long run, this might not be viable, particularly in urban areas where workers in the unorganised sector have little social support.
- **Escalation of Poverty and Informal Housing:** If street vendors cannot afford rent or find alternative means of survival, they may be forced to live in informal settlements or slums, which could contribute to further urban overcrowding and social instability.
- **Lack of Viable Alternatives:** Street sellers might be forced to relocate without any practical means of carrying on their businesses if authorities don't give them other locations to work. It is more difficult for vendors to lawfully resume their operations when there are no suitable and reasonably priced vending zones or relocation choices available.
- **Overcrowding in Relocated Areas:** Vendors may become crowded and unhygienic if they are relocated to approved vending zones, which could cause additional logistical and health problems. This may exacerbate urban planning issues rather than resolve them.
- **Exclusion from Urban Planning:** It is common practise to remove street vendors from official urban planning procedures. Street sellers may continue to be excluded from the social and economic life of the city if a "Tiger Operation" or similar crackdown does not involve their consultation or provide alternate solutions.
- **Lack of Public Engagement:** When street vendors or their representatives are not included in the regulation process, a top-down approach may lead to sentiments of disenfranchisement and alienation. Urban governance's inclusion could be jeopardised if policies fail to take into consideration the reality of informal labour.
- **Bribery and Extortion:** Corruption is more likely to occur in settings where street vending is strictly restricted or illegal. A cycle of unofficial, corrupt practises may be created when police officers or municipal officials demand bribes from street sellers in order to allow them to continue operating.

The negative effects on street vendors and their communities in Mangalore can be severe, even though the purpose of a "Tiger Operation" targeting them may be to improve urban planning, decrease illicit vending, or boost municipal revenue. Economic difficulty, social instability, a rise in informality, and a worsening of poverty and inequality are among these disadvantages. Authorities must strike a balance between enforcing the law and implementing humane urban policies that give unorganised labourers authorised vending locations and alternate sources of income in order to address these problems. In the absence of this, harsh crackdowns may have unforeseen, protracted detrimental effects on the city's administration, social cohesion, and economy.

## CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Even though the Tiger Operation has accomplished a lot, there are still difficulties. The requirement for continual infrastructure investment, especially in the areas of waste management and sanitation in vending zones, is one of the persistent issues. Furthermore, more thorough enforcement of health and safety regulations is required to guarantee that merchants uphold strict hygienic standards. More vendor participation in decision-making procedures and a stronger emphasis on increasing access to insurance and microcredit programmes could be advantageous for future iterations of the programme. Increased cooperation with regional companies and tourism bureaus may also open up new avenues for merchants to expand their product lines.

## CONCLUSION

The Tiger Operation in Mangalore is a prime illustration of how inclusive and proactive local government can create an atmosphere that promotes social justice and economic development. By elevating Mangalore's street sellers from the background to the fore, this project has enhanced not only the lives of individual vendors but also the general health of the city's community and economy. To sum up, there is no denying that the Tiger Operation has significantly changed the lives of Mangalore's street sellers. This programme has changed the focus from the difficulties they experience to the crucial role they play in the local economy by giving them much-needed security, assistance, and a platform to operate more freely. A thorough attempt to empower street sellers has grown out of what started as a move to regulate the industry, guaranteeing their survival and expansion in a setting that is becoming more urbanised. A more structured, secure, and long-lasting street vending ecology has been facilitated by the operation's emphasis on cooperation between vendors, local government, and community organisations. Finally, the Tiger Operation has not only increased street vendors' visibility but also reaffirmed their importance in Mangalore's social and economic fabric, demonstrating that underprivileged groups can flourish in the spotlight with the correct structure and assistance.

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