

**PM STREET VENDORS ATMANIRBHAR NIDHI
(SVANIDHI) YOJANA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION
A CASE STUDY OF VARANASI**

Dissertation Submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh for the
award of degree of Executive Masters in Public Administration and
Public Policy, in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Advanced
Professional Programme in Public Administration (2023-24)

Submitted by

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**49TH ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC
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NEW DELHI

CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that **Brigadier Rajesh Sihag**, has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titled '**PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) Yojana and its Implementation : A Case Study of Varanasi**', under my guidance and supervision. The same is the result of research done by him and to the best of my knowledge; no part of the same has been part of any monograph, dissertation or book earlier. This is being submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh, for the purpose of **Executive Masters in Public Administration and Public Policy** in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA) of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi.

I recommend that the dissertation of **Brigadier Rajesh Sihag** is worthy of consideration for the award of Executive Masters degree of the Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Date March 2024

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the dissertation titled '**PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) Yojana and its Implementation : A Case Study of Varanasi**' is my own work and that all the sources I have accessed or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of completed references and bibliography. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or elsewhere.

New Delhi

March 2024

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Abbreviation</u>	<u>Full Form</u>
AKAM	Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
ALF	Area Level Federation
BC	Business Correspondent
BHIM	Bharat Interface for Money
BOCW	Building and Other Construction Workers
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CGTMSE	Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises
CIG	Common Interest Group
CLF	City Level Federation
CSC	Common Services Centre
CoV	Certificate of Vending
CPC	Central Processing Centre
D2D	Door to Door
DBT	Direct Benefit Transfer
DPA	Digital Payment Aggregator
DUDA	District Urban Development Authority
EDT	Eligible Digital Transaction
eKYC	Electronic Know Your Client
EMI	Equated Monthly Instalments

EO	Executive Officer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ID	Identification
IT	Information Technology
JLGs	Joint Liability Groups
LI	Lending Institution
LoR	Letter of Recommendation
LUC	Loan Utilisation Check
KYC	Know Your Client
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MoHUA	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
NASVI	National Association of Street Vendors
NBFC	Non-Banking Finance Company
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NPA	Non Performing Asset
NPCI	National Payments Corporation of India
NULM	National Urban Livelihoods Mission
OTP	One Time Password
PM	Prime Minister

PMS	PM SVANidhi
P2PM	Peer to Peer Merchant
QR	Quick Response
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RRB	Regional Rural Bank
SFB	Small Finance Bank
SHG	Self Help Group
SIDBI	Small Industries Development Bank of India
SVANidhi	Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi
SV	Street Vendor
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
TVC	Town Vending Committee
ULB	Urban Local Body
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UT	Union Territory
WC	Working Capital
VPA	Virtual Payment Address

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ABSTRACT

Street vendors constitute a vital component of the urban informal economy, yet their livelihoods were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the Prime Minister Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Yojana was launched to provide support to street vendors, offering working capital loans, promoting digital transactions, and incentivizing repayment. The scheme, extended until December 2024 with enhanced features, aims to address the economic challenges faced by street vendors. This study evaluates the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi, offering insights into its impact, effectiveness, and areas for improvement.

The research aims to assess the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi, identify strengths and shortcomings, and provide evidence-based recommendations for policy improvements. Specifically, the study focuses on analyzing institutional arrangements, evaluating benefits for street vendors, assessing scheme performance, examining integration into digital payment systems, identifying enabling factors, and deriving lessons for enhancing effectiveness.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Structured interviews were conducted with 75 street vendors in Varanasi to assess scheme implementation. Additionally, questionnaires were administered to bank officials involved in the scheme, and focus group discussions were held with both street vendors and bank officials. Furthermore, responses to a questionnaire from the District Collector of Varanasi were analyzed to capture diverse perspectives and experiences.

The study has brought out that majority of street vendors in Varanasi were male, married, with children, and had relatively low education levels. All vendors availed loans from banks under the SVANidhi Scheme, resulting in a significant increase in daily incomes and high adoption rates of digital transactions. Vendors expressed satisfaction with accessibility and assistance, while recommending enhancements such as reducing interest rates and increasing loan amounts. While the scheme benefited vendors, challenges such as loan processing issues and high NPAs were reported, necessitating improvements in interest rates, subsidies, and infrastructure. Banks emphasized efforts to streamline processes and borrower education, suggesting simplification of loan rejection mechanisms and addressing anomalies in disbursement.

Varanasi implemented various initiatives including awareness campaigns, registration drives, and grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure effective scheme implementation. Digital platforms and partnerships with technology firms facilitated registration, loan applications, and digital payments, contributing to the scheme's success. Innovative approaches such as vendor associations and grievance redressal committees further enhanced implementation effectiveness.

While the PM SVANidhi Scheme has provided substantial support to street vendors in Varanasi, there are opportunities to enhance awareness, streamline processes, and address challenges. Collaboration between stakeholders is crucial for effective implementation and sustained support to street vendors, ensuring their economic empowerment and resilience in the face of adversities.

DISSERTATION

PM SVANIDHI YOJNA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION : A CASE STUDY OF VARANASI

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Background

Street vendors are integral to the urban informal economy, ensuring the accessibility of goods and services at affordable rates to city dwellers. Known by various names like vendors, hawkers, thelewala, and rehriwala, they supply a diverse range of goods and services, including food, apparel, and various daily necessities.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns severely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors, many of whom operate with minimal capital. The need for immediate credit to restart their businesses became urgent. In response, the Government of India launched the PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) Yojana in June 2020. This flagship initiative aims to provide affordable working

capital loans to street vendors, supporting their livelihoods amidst the pandemic and facilitating their integration into the formal economy.

A critical component of the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation is its focus on digital payments and good governance, ensuring transparency and efficiency in operations. By promoting digital transactions, the scheme aims to enhance inclusivity and modernize street vendor operations.

This study seeks to explore the context and background of the PM SVANidhi Yojana by reviewing existing literature on street vendors in India, their challenges, relevant legislation, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and key aspects of the scheme and its implementation. With a specific focus on Varanasi, the research aims to analyse the effectiveness of the scheme in the district.

Drawing upon primary and secondary sources, including surveys, interviews, and data analysis, the research comprehensively evaluates the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation in Varanasi. By examining the provision of micro-credit to street vendors and the promotion of digital payments, the study provides valuable insights into the scheme's impact and identify areas for improvement.

The findings of this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on street vendor policies in India, offering recommendations for future interventions in similar contexts. By critically assessing the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana, the study generates insights that can inform the refinement and enhancement of programs for street vendors nationwide.

Rationale for the Study

Evaluation of Program Implementation. The critical analysis of the PM SVANidhi Yojana aims to assess the implementation of the scheme and its effect on the livelihood during and post COVID on the street vendors in Varanasi and its effect in ushering digital payments among them. This evaluation is crucial to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the initiative, its implementation and provide evidence-based recommendations for improvement.

Policy Implications. The findings of this critical analysis can have significant policy implications. By understanding the extent to which the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana has been successful in addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by the street vendors due to COVID 19 pandemic in Varanasi and the shortcomings if any in its implementation, policymakers can make informed decisions to effectively achieve better outcomes.

Chapterisation Scheme

The chapterisation scheme for the research report is given below:

Chapter 1 - Introduction. Provides an introduction to the research topic, objectives, and the rationale for conducting a critical analysis of the implementation of PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi. The chapter also highlights the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review. Reviews existing literature on street vendors in India, policies related to them, effect of COVID 19 pandemic on the livelihood of the

street vendors, the PM SVANidhi Yojana its implementation and effect in various parts of the country.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology. Describes the research methodology, including the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques for the critical analysis. It explains the rationale for employing a mixed-methods approach.

Chapter 4 - Program Overview. Provides an in-depth overview of the PM SVANidhi Yojana. This Chapter discusses the goals, objectives, implementation strategies, and target population of the initiative.

Chapter 5 – Study Area and Findings. Includes introduction about Varanasi as the study area and discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 6 – Analysis and Recommendations. Analyses the implementation of the scheme in Varanasi, challenges faced and shortcomings of the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana. Provides recommendations to overcome these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of the program.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As per “The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act 2014” of India, a street vendor” means a person engaged in vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street, lane, side walk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place and includes hawker, peddler, squatter and all other synonymous terms which may be local or region specific; and the words “street vending” with their grammatical variations and cognate expressions, shall be construed accordingly.

Saha (2017) extensively explores the survival strategies employed by street vendors across 17 cities in India and analyses the complex dynamics surrounding self-established markets, livelihoods, and political engagement within public spaces. Employing a mixed-methods approach, including descriptive and exploratory techniques, the book provides a comprehensive examination of various socio-economic and policy challenges associated with street vending in the country.

The research offers a conceptual and theoretical framework to understand the diverse issues faced by street vendors, highlighting their resilience in the absence of legal frameworks and institutional support. It illustrates how these informal workers navigate their livelihoods through improvisation, informal institutions, and negotiations with both formal and informal stakeholders in the market.

Furthermore, the study scrutinizes the effectiveness of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, in providing legal recognition and protection to street vendors. It assesses the inclusivity of the legal framework and its implications for workers in the informal economy.

The author identifies emerging challenges, such as new forms of illegality, the persistence of informality, the potential impact of corporate investment, and limited access to formal institutional credit, as areas requiring further investigation. These issues underscore the complexity of street vending dynamics and the need for continued research to address the evolving needs of street vendors and inform policy interventions.

Bhowmik S. K. and Saha D. (2011) conducted a study in partnership with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to shed light on the challenges encountered by street vendors in their daily operations and explore avenues for integrating them into the financial system, particularly through banking institutions. The research gathered perspectives from street vendors, banks, and micro-finance institutions (MFIs), among others, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

Data was collected from a representative sample of 50 street vendors (comprising both male and female vendors) in each of the 15 cities nationwide, including Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna, Ranchi, and Vijaywada. The study

highlights the significance of financial inclusion for street vendors, emphasizing its implications for the growth and sustainability of the informal sector.

Additionally, the research examines the initiatives undertaken by municipal authorities in each city, both supportive and adversarial, toward street vendors. It underscores the potential of financial inclusion programs to integrate street vendors into the formal financial framework, thereby enhancing their access to finance and securing their current livelihoods and future income prospects.

Bhowmik, S. K., and Saha, D. (2012), in collaboration with the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), undertook a study examining street vending practices across ten cities in India, including Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Indore, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mumbai, and Patna. Their research employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to investigate the financing sources of street vendors.

The study revealed that a minority (25.5%) of street vendors relied on their personal savings as a source of funding, particularly those operating smaller businesses. Conversely, the majority (74%) resorted to loans from money lenders, relatives, or friends, often at exorbitant interest rates. Surprisingly, only a minimal fraction (.5%) availed institutional credit, primarily from cooperatives. This underscored a pressing need to facilitate access to institutional credit for street vendors to expand their enterprises.

Furthermore, the research uncovered a significant lack of awareness among street vendors regarding support measures available to them. Merely one percent of the

surveyed vendors were cognizant of designated hawking zones, and none were aware of the National Policy for Urban Street Vendors, highlighting a critical gap in communication and outreach efforts aimed at assisting this demographic.

Panwar, M. & Garg, V. (2015) conducted a study focusing on Sonipat, where they examined the challenges faced by street vendors. The authors advocate for measures to formalize street vending activities, proposing that the district administration issue vending licenses and identity proofs for vending in designated areas, thereby legalizing vending practices. They recommend the provision of skill training and access to credit facilities to enable street vendors to make initial investments. Additionally, they suggest extending welfare schemes such as pensions and healthcare to street vendors. The authors propose the establishment of town vending committees in each ward, tasked with formulating location-specific policies aligned with the National Street Vendor Policy to regulate street vending effectively.

Priya, A. & Meenachi, T. (2022) conducted research focusing on the challenges encountered by street vendors, with a particular focus on Coimbatore District. The study aimed to gain insights into the professional lives of street vendors, considering factors such as financial accessibility, social security, occupational well-being, and working conditions. The findings of the study indicate a necessity to enhance the economic status of street vendors. To address this, the recommended government to implement educational awareness programs and facilitate access to banking services for street vendors.

Jaishankar, V. & Sujatha, L. (2016) conducted a study focusing on several aspects related to street vending. These include the underlying reasons for engaging in street vending, the challenges encountered by street vendors, their significance in urban areas, government interventions aimed at preventing harassment by law enforcement agencies, enhancements in working conditions, and initiatives for social protection and skill development to enhance profitability levels. The research adopts a descriptive approach and encompasses the entire population of Tiruchiappalli city. Sampling was carried out using convenience sampling, with a total sample size of 90 participants. The authors contend that street vendors contribute not only to their own livelihoods but also provide essential services to urban residents. Consequently, it is imperative for state governments to safeguard the rights of this demographic to earn their livelihoods, as enshrined in Article 39(a) of the constitution, which guarantees every citizen, regardless of gender, equal access to adequate means of livelihood.

Vijaybhaskar, N. & Kumar, G. A. (2021) conducted a study aimed at examining the extent of financial inclusion among street vegetable vendors. Street vendors encounter numerous challenges when attempting to access banking services, including a lack of identity documentation, financial illiteracy, income uncertainty, minimal savings, inability to provide collateral for credit, and lengthy bank procedures. The study highlights that the Government of India allocated ₹5000 Crore to street vendors through the PM SVANidhi Fund in September 2020. However, only 12,15,000 street vendors applied for microloans under this scheme. Although banks sanctioned ₹825 Crore under the scheme, only ₹600 Core was disbursed to eligible street vendors, leaving ₹4400 core unutilized for six months. The paper suggests that relevant

authorities and the government should conduct awareness campaigns regarding financial inclusion schemes to address this issue.

Meher, S. et al. (2020) conducted a study with the aim of investigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown on the livelihoods of street vendors in Maharashtra, India. Telephonic in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 street vendors who primarily sold perishable goods for their livelihood, spanning from 16th May to 1st June 2020. The interviews were transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis to extract meaningful insights from the data. The study revealed that the lockdown had a multifaceted impact on street vendors, leading to many ceasing their operations entirely or transitioning to selling fruits and vegetables within restricted timeframes, which had its own set of challenges. Prior to the lockdown, a significant portion of the vendors had relied on loans to sustain their businesses. However, the abrupt imposition of the lockdown brought forth considerable hardships for street vendors, raising pertinent questions for the government. The study observed that street vendors were hesitant to rely on government schemes due to perceived inadequacies, uncertainties, and bureaucratic hurdles within the system. As a recommendation, the study proposed that for the assistance to effectively reach those in need, the government should consider providing direct benefits such as grants or interest-free loans.

Sharma, S. et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the strategies adopted by street vendors in North Bengaluru to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic, as well as to identify the obstacles and difficulties they encountered. The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of the newly introduced scheme, "Pradhan Mantri Street

Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi Yojana," initiated by the central government. It also sought to analyse the challenges faced by street vendors during and after the lockdown period, along with examining the impact of relevant schemes and legislation designed to support street vendors during times of uncertainty. Employing a mixed research approach, the study collected primary data from 51 street vendors through personal interviews conducted using a structured questionnaire. Additionally, personal interviews were conducted with 5 bank managers from public sector banks participating in the government loan scheme for street vendors. The exploratory study revealed that a majority of street vendors had low levels of education and income, coupled with limited awareness about government-sponsored schemes. Furthermore, despite the lifting of the lockdown, many vendors expressed dissatisfaction with their businesses. The study underscored the importance of promoting and raising awareness about all government schemes among street vendors to enhance their participation and benefit from such initiatives.

Devi, A. (2019), conducted a study to assess the level of awareness among street vendors regarding government policies aimed at their welfare and development. Employing a mixed research strategy, the study utilized both primary data obtained from 396 beneficiaries and secondary data. Statistical tools such as averages and Anova were employed for data analysis. Focusing on the situation of street vendors in Bengaluru, the study aimed to determine their awareness of government policies and benefits. The findings revealed that a majority of the respondents had lower levels of education, leading to limited awareness of the schemes and policies formulated by the government for the welfare of street vendors.

Reddy, B. A., & Polu, P. (2021), conducted a study aimed at understanding the challenges encountered by street vendors, including the impact of COVID-19 shutdowns, eviction, rent payment, and the acquisition of ID cards, as well as the beneficiaries of the PM Street Vendor AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) Yojana. Employing a mixed research approach, the authors utilized quantitative questionnaires through surveys and qualitative research via freewheeling discussions following the questionnaire to capture diverse perspectives. The study provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by street vendors and the effectiveness of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in disbursing loans to them. By offering microfinance to street vendors without requiring collateral, the PM SVANidhi Yojana successfully reduced their reliance on private financiers who often charged exorbitant interest rates. A significant finding of the study is the widespread lack of awareness and organization among street vendors, with 90 percent unaware of their legal protections. Additionally, 10 percent of street vendors had not even heard of the PM SVANidhi Yojana and therefore did not apply for loans, indicating a need for government efforts to disseminate information effectively to this demographic.

Mamniktala, N., & Jain, T. (2020) observed that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the challenges faced by street vendors. Their study aimed to assess the condition of India's street vendors by examining the measures implemented by governments and institutions to aid them, both before and after the pandemic. Additionally, it sought to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of public policies concerning street vendors. While the PM SVANidhi scheme was introduced to address these challenges by providing credit-based support to revive their livelihoods,

the authors contend that there is a pressing need to simplify the complexities of laws and schemes associated with it. This simplification would enable beneficiaries to access the incentives offered by public policies more effectively. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of enhancing digital and financial literacy among street vendors. The study highlights the scheme's shortcomings in terms of execution, particularly concerning the irregular and improper handling of data, which undermines its effectiveness.

While the existing literature offers valuable insights into the PM SVANidhi Yojana initiatives, there is a notable research gap concerning the detailed examination of its implementation and effectiveness specifically in Varanasi. Hence, it is imperative to conduct a rigorous critical analysis of this initiative to bridge this gap and enrich the current knowledge base. By critically analyzing the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi, my objective is to expand upon the findings of previous studies, delve into the unique challenges and opportunities within this particular region, and provide valuable insights that can inform policy-making, program design, and the overall execution of the scheme.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research focuses on the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi, a city in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Varanasi, situated on the banks of the Ganges River, is known for its cultural and religious significance, and it represents a dynamic urban environment with a diverse street vendor community.

A structured approach was employed to select participants for the study. A total of 75 street vendors were interviewed. Additionally, responses were obtained from lending banks, with a questionnaire distributed to bank officials involved in the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana. Furthermore, focus group discussions were conducted with 20 street vendors and 17 bank officials to gather qualitative insights. Moreover, a detailed questionnaire was submitted to the Divisional Commissioner of Varanasi to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the administrative perspective.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To analyse the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi.
2. To identify strengths, shortcomings, or gaps in the scheme and recommend policy interventions or changes for improvement.

A mixed-methods research design was employed to ensure a comprehensive examination of the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi.

Quantitative Approach. Quantitative data collection involved structured interviews with street vendors, questionnaires distributed to banks and the Divisional Commissioner of Varanasi, and focus group discussions with street vendors and bank officials. The interviews and discussions encompassed various aspects, including background information, pre-COVID employment and income, utilization of the PM SVANidhi Yojana credit facility, inclusion in digital payments, and effectiveness of the scheme. Statistical analysis will be performed on the collected data to derive meaningful insights.

Qualitative Approach. Qualitative data collection aimed to capture the inadequacies, experiences, perspectives, and recommendations regarding the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana. Structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions were conducted with street vendors and bank officials. These qualitative methods provide valuable insights into the contextual nuances of the scheme and help understand the subjective experiences of stakeholders.

Data Analysis. Quantitative data has been statistically analysed, utilising techniques such as descriptive statistics and correlations. Qualitative data has been analysed through content analysis and thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns across responses.

Research Questions. The research seeks to address the following questions:

1. What institutional arrangements are being utilized for the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi?
2. What are the benefits of the scheme for street vendors in Varanasi?
3. How has the scheme performed in Varanasi?
4. Has the scheme facilitated the integration of street vendors into digital payment systems?
5. What were the enabling factors or shortcomings in the implementation of the scheme?
6. What lessons can be learned from the implementation of the scheme in Varanasi to inform policy interventions or changes aimed at enhancing its effectiveness?

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW OF PM SVANIDHI SCHEME

Street vendors play a vital role in the urban informal economy by providing essential goods and services to city dwellers at affordable rates. They operate under various names such as vendors, hawkers, thelewala, rehriwala, theliphadwala, and their offerings range from vegetables, fruits, and street food to barber services, cobblers, and laundry. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns significantly affected the livelihoods of street vendors, prompting the need for immediate financial assistance to help them resume their businesses. In response, the PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) Yojana was launched on June 1, 2020, with the aim of addressing the challenges faced by street vendors.

The PM SVANidhi scheme, a Central Sector Scheme fully funded by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, has the following objectives:

- Facilitate working capital loans of up to ₹10,000 (amount later amended) for street vendors.
- Incentivize regular repayment of loans.
- Promote digital transactions among street vendors. The scheme aims to formalize street vendors' businesses, thereby creating new opportunities for economic advancement within this sector.

The scheme is available to street vendors in urban areas who were engaged in vending on or before March 24, 2020. (Later this cap was removed). Eligible vendors are identified based on the following criteria:

- Possession of a Certificate of Vending or Identity Card issued by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- Inclusion in ULB-led identification surveys or issuance of a Letter of Recommendation by the ULB or Town Vending Committee (TVC).
- Vendors from surrounding rural or peri-urban areas vending within ULB limits and endorsed by the ULB or TVC.

Under the PM SVANidhi scheme, there were significant amendments made regarding the loan provisions and conditions to better support street vendors. Initially, the scheme provisioned a loan of ₹ 10,000 for eligible vendors. However, recognizing the need for increased financial support, the scheme was amended to offer loans up to ₹ 20,000 as well. This enhancement aimed to provide vendors with more substantial capital to invest in their businesses and improve their livelihoods.

Furthermore, a third loan option was introduced under the scheme, allowing eligible vendors to access loans of ₹ 50,000. This additional loan provision was designed to cater to vendors who required larger sums of capital to expand their businesses or address specific financial needs. The introduction of this third loan option broadened the scope of financial assistance available to street vendors, enabling them

to undertake more significant business initiatives and contribute more substantially to the local economy.

In terms of conditions for accessing these loans, several key provisions were put in place to ensure responsible borrowing and effective utilization of the funds. Vendors applying for the PM SVANidhi scheme loans were required to meet certain eligibility criteria, including proof of vending activities, Aadhaar card, and bank account details. The loans were provided at affordable interest rates, with a focus on facilitating easy repayment for the vendors.

Additionally, vendors were encouraged to repay their loans in a timely manner to maintain a positive credit history and become eligible for subsequent loan options. The scheme also emphasized the importance of financial literacy and capacity building among vendors to ensure they could manage their loans effectively and make informed financial decisions.

To identify vendors not covered in surveys or from rural areas, ULBs or TVCs could consider various documents, including lists of vendors provided by certain states or UTs, membership details with vendor associations, or local inquiries conducted with the involvement of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) or Community Based Organizations (CBOs). ULBs have been mandated to complete the verification process and issue Letters of Recommendation within 15 days of application submission.

Street vendors who left urban areas due to the COVID-19 pandemic and intended to resume vending upon returning were also eligible for the scheme, provided they met the aforementioned eligibility criteria.

State, UT, and ULB-wise lists of identified street vendors were made available on respective government websites, ensuring transparency and accessibility to information about the scheme.

Urban street vendors can avail a Working Capital (WC) loan of up to ₹50,000. No collateral is required, and vendors are eligible for enhanced loan limits upon timely repayment. Additionally, no prepayment penalty is charged for early repayment. Interest Rates and Subsidy Interest rates vary depending on the lending institution, with subsidy provided at a rate of 7% for eligible borrowers. The subsidy is credited quarterly into the borrower's account and is available until Dec 31, 2024, for both initial and subsequent enhanced loans.

The PM SVANidhi scheme aims to promote digital transactions among street vendors to enhance their financial inclusion and credit worthiness. To incentivize vendors to adopt digital payment methods, the scheme offers a cashback facility. This initiative is designed to create a transaction trail that can contribute to building the credit score of vendors, thereby facilitating their access to future credit. The scheme leverages a network of lending institutions and digital payment aggregators, including NPCI (for BHIM), PayTM, GooglePay, BharatPay, AmazonPay, and PhonePe, to onboard street vendors for digital transactions.

Under this incentive scheme, on boarded vendors are eligible to receive monthly cashback rewards based on their transaction volume, subject to certain criteria:

- A cashback of ₹50 was provided upon executing 50 eligible transactions in a month.

- An additional cashback of ₹25 was offered upon completing the next 50 eligible transactions, totalling ₹75 for 100 eligible transactions.
- A further cashback of ₹25 was granted upon reaching an additional 100 or more eligible transactions, totalling ₹100 for 200 eligible transactions. Eligible transactions refer to digital pay-outs or receipts with a minimum value of ₹25.

An illustration demonstrating the potential benefits of this scheme is provided in Table 1, which showcases the cashback and interest subsidy received for a loan amount of ₹10,000 at a 24% rate of interest, along with the maximum cashback amount received as an incentive.

Table 1: Scheme Guidelines for PM SVANidhi. Illustration of Cash-back and Interest Subsidy for a Loan Amounting to ₹ 10,000.

https://www.pmsvanidhi.mohua.gov.in/Default/ViewFile/?id=Guideline_English_Svanidhi.pdf&path=MiscFiles.

Month	Principal	Interest @ 24%	EMI	Interest Subsidy (7%)	Cash back Incentive	Total Benefit
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(D+E)
1	₹746	₹200	₹946	₹58	₹100	₹158
2	₹761	₹185	₹946	₹54	₹100	₹154
3	₹776	₹170	₹946	₹50	₹100	₹150
4	₹791	₹154	₹945	₹46	₹100	₹146
5	₹807	₹139	₹946	₹42	₹100	₹142
6	₹823	₹122	₹945	₹36	₹100	₹136
7	₹840	₹106	₹946	₹32	₹100	₹132
8	₹856	₹89	₹945	₹27	₹100	₹127
9	₹874	₹72	₹946	₹22	₹100	₹122
10	₹891	₹55	₹946	₹17	₹100	₹117
11	₹909	₹37	₹946	₹12	₹100	₹112
12	₹927	₹19	₹946	₹6	₹100	₹106
Total	₹10,001	₹1,348	₹11,349	₹402	₹1,200	₹1,602
% w.r.t interest		100%		30% of Interest	88% of Interest	118%

"Thus, the Maximum Cashback amount and the Interest subsidy amount would sum up to ₹1,600 (₹1,200 as cashback and ₹400 as interest subsidy), which is 118% of the total interest of ₹1,348 on a loan of ₹10,000 with an interest rate of 24%".

Various financial institutions play a crucial role in implementing the PM SVANidhi scheme, including Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Cooperative Banks, Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), and SHG Banks like Stree Nidhi in some States/UTs. The lending institutions were encouraged to maximize

coverage by extensively utilizing their network of field functionaries, such as Business Correspondents (BCs), Constituents, and Agents.

States such as Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, lacking Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), rely on a robust network of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their Federations to complement the efforts of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Small Finance Banks (SFBs), NBFCs, and Cooperative Banks. These States were encouraged to establish a suitable incentive mechanism for SHGs to facilitate loan applications for street vendors.

The scheme incorporates a Graded Guarantee Cover for sanctioned loans, administered by the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE), operating on a portfolio basis. The guarantee coverage includes:

- First Loss Default (Up to 5%): 100%
- Second Loss (Beyond 5% up to 15%): 75% of the default portfolio. The maximum guarantee coverage is limited to 15% of the year portfolio. All loans granted by participating lending institutions under the scheme qualify for coverage under the guarantee. Quarterly filing of claims by lending institutions is required, and the guarantee is available without charges.

The Town Vending Committee (TVC) plays a crucial role in beneficiary identification, composed of a maximum of 18 members as per the Street Vendors Act, 2014. The TVC's composition includes the Municipal Commissioner or Chief Executive Officer of the Urban Local Body (ULB) as Chairperson, representation from

local authority departments, police, street vendors, traders' associations, and members nominated from NGOs/CBOs.

Lending institutions could form Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) of eligible vendors, utilizing the existing Common Interest Groups (CIGs) formed by States. ULBs were encouraged to promote the formation of CIGs among street vendors. While forming collectives was preferred, individual vendors were not precluded from availing the loan.

States/UTs were advised to develop a roadmap for enhancing the capacity of street vendors to conduct e-commerce and obtain necessary quality certifications from relevant agencies like FSSAI.

A comprehensive capacity building plan was devised to enhance the capabilities of stakeholders, including BCs/Agents of lending institutions, SHGs/Federations, ULBs/TVCs, and digital payment aggregators. Digital payment aggregators such as NPCI were instructed to leverage their capacities to impart financial literacy to street vendors, encouraging their on boarding on digital platforms.

Effective communication of the scheme to stakeholders, especially beneficiaries, was to be facilitated through a standard Branding and Communications Guidelines. The use of various platforms, including local and social media, was encouraged for reaching beneficiaries. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) and capacity building modules were provided by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

The Ministry developed an Integrated IT Platform along with a Mobile App for scheme administration. This portal serves as a one-stop solution, integrating vendor databases across States/UTs, BCs/constituents/agents of lending institutions, digital payment aggregators, and relevant portals managed by MoHUA and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

To initiate the scheme's implementation, the Urban Local Body (ULB) were to organise a kick-start meeting involving Town Vending Committee (TVC) members, Business Correspondents (BCs)/constituents/agents of lending institutions, vendors associations, and SHG Federations. During this meeting, pertinent information concerning street vendors and field-level functionaries of lending institutions were to be disseminated.

Applicants (street vendors) possessing a Certificate of Vending (CoV)/ID Card issued by the ULB or those identified in the ULB-led survey could approach or be approached by representatives of banks, NBFCs, and MFIs. These lender representatives, including BCs and agents, would input relevant details into the search engine of the IT platform/mobile App. Upon successful validation, beneficiary verification would occur through an OTP sent to the beneficiary's mobile device.

The IT application would include a provision to generate a provisional CoV/ID for street vendors covered in the identification survey but not issued a CoV/ID. After verification, the BC/Agent were to complete the application form and upload the necessary documents. This information would then be electronically forwarded to the

ULB/TVC. The ULB/TVC would have a fortnight to verify the details before forwarding the application to the relevant lending institution for approval.

Street vendors not covered in the identification survey could approach the BC/Agent with the required documents. The Agent would ensure the upload of identification documents for these beneficiaries, followed by a similar process as outlined above. The ULB were to verify the details and provide a letter of recommendation before forwarding it to the lender. A copy of the letter of recommendation was also to be provided to the applicant.

Preparatory activities were to be conducted during June 2020, with loans commencing from July 2020, including:

- Dissemination of information on the scheme and related activities to states/UTs and other stakeholders.
- Issuance of operational guidelines.
- Mapping of BCs/constituents/agents of respective lending institutions.
- Organizing kick-start meetings by the ULBs involving TVC members with BCs/constituents/agents of lending institutions, vendors associations, SHG Federations, etc.
- Capacity building for all stakeholders, including ULB/TVC functionaries, BCs/constituents/agents of lending institutions, digital payment aggregators, SHGs, their federations, and DAY-NULM functionaries, etc.

- Formation of Common Interest Groups (CIGs) of street vendors by the ULB.
- Notification of Rules/Scheme by the States/UTs as per the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014.
- Identification of vendors left out of the survey or vending in the city from surrounding/developmental/rural areas through quick surveys by ULBs or inviting applications.
- Issuance of Letters of Recommendation for the mentioned vendors.
- Issuance of Certificate of Vending (CoV)/Identity Cards (IDs) to all street vendors covered in the surveyed list.
- Commencement of formation of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) by BCs/agents of lending institutions.
- Collection and processing of loan applications.

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) was to serve as the implementation partner for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for scheme administration. SIDBI would leverage the network of lending institutions, including SCBs, RRBs, SFBs, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs, and MFIs for scheme implementation.

At the Central level, a Steering Committee was established under the chairmanship of the Secretary, HUA, with the following composition:

Table 2: Scheme Guidelines for PM SVANidhi. Steering Committee.

https://www.pmsvanidhi.mohua.gov.in/Default/ViewFile/?id=Guideline_English_Svanidhi.pdf&path=MiscFiles.

Sl. No.	Designation	Role
1	Secretary, HUA	Chairperson
2	Secretary, MSME or his nominee	Member
3	Secretary, DFS, or his nominee	Member
4	ED, Deptt of Non-Banking Regulations, RBI	Member
5	CMD, SIDBI	Member
6	Principal Secretaries (UD/LSG) from three states to be nominated by Minister, HUA	Member
7	CEO, Indian Banks' Association (IBA)	Member
8	CEO, MFIN	Member
9	ED, Sa-Dhan	Member
10	Joint Secretary and Mission Director (DAY-NULM)	Member Convenor

Note: Ministry may co-opt any other member as per need.

At State/ UT level - a Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/ Secretary of Urban Development/ Municipal Administration (composition of the committee is given below), met at least every three months.

Table 3: Scheme Guidelines for PM SVANidhi. Monitoring Committee.

https://www.pmsvanidhi.mohua.gov.in/Default/ViewFile/?id=Guideline_English_Svanidhi.pdf&path=MiscFiles.

Sl. No.	Designation	Role
1.	Principal Secretary/ Secretary, Urban Development/ Municipal Administration	Chairperson
2.	Principal Secretary/ Secretary, Finance	Member
3.	State Representative of RBI	Member
4.	State representative of SIDBI	Member
5.	Convenor of the State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC)	Member
6.	Up to 05 Municipal Commissioner(s)/ EO (s), to be invited on rotation basis	Member (s)
7.	Up to 02 special invitees from NBFC/ MFI (nominated by Chairperson)	Special Invitee
8.	Project Director - SUDA/ Mission Director - MEPMA	Member Convenor

At ULB level, there was a Committee headed by the Municipal Commissioner/ Executive Officer (EO) and supported by the Town Vending Committee to sponsor loan applications and monitor implementation of the scheme (composition of the committee is given below). This committee was required to meet every month.

Table 4: Scheme Guidelines for PM SVANidhi. Composition of City/ ULB Level Committee. https://www.pmsvanidhi.mohua.gov.in/Default/ViewFile/?id=Guideline_English_Svanidhi.pdf&path=MiscFiles.

Sl.No.	Designation	Role
1.	Municipal Commissioner (MC)/Executive Officer (EO)	Chairperson
2.	Lead District Manager (LDM)	Member
3.	Up to 03 non-official representatives of TVC/ provisional TVC, as nominated by the Municipal Commission/ EO [Where even provisional TVC is not available, upto 3 members from street vendors association (s) in the town to be nominated by the MC/EO]	Member (s)
4.	Representative of NBFC/ MFI [One each to be nominated by MC/ EO]	Member (s)
5.	Representative from CLF/ ALF	Member
6.	Project Officer DUDA/ MEPMA or equivalent officer from ULB	Convener

Modifications / Clarifications in the Scheme Guidelines

Some changes and modifications were necessitated in the implementation of the scheme based on the issues noticed and feedback received from the stakeholders. These are enumerated to show how the scheme matured over a period of time.

MoHUA Circular dated 06 Aug 2020

- The instruction concerning the ceiling of the loan in the subsequent cycle (₹20,000) was withdrawn.

- It was reported that certain LIs did not accept the Certificate of Vending (CoV)/ID Cards issued to the Street Vendors after March 24, 2020. It was clarified that the issuance of CoV/ID cards was the sole prerogative of the Urban Local Body (ULB), which conducted due diligence, including the date of vending before issuance. Therefore, LIs were not required to conduct any further checks if a vendor presented CoV/ID card for availing a loan issued by the ULB.
- It was observed that certain banks prescribed multiple documents before disbursement for sanctioned loans. Banks were advised to reconsider it to minimize the number of documents.
- The following fields were made mandatory:
 - Voter ID No (To facilitate the credit score of every applicant).
 - Minority status.
 - PWD status.
 - Benefits availed under Central Government schemes (an additional field 'None of the above' was added there).
- For applicants outside the surveyed list of vendors, LIs were instructed to either process the application based on their inquiry and send sanctioned applications to ULB for the issue of Letter of Recommendations (LoR) or ask the Vendor to produce a System-generated LoR. Manual LoR was not to be entertained.

MoHUA Circular dated 14 Oct 2020:

- Aadhar Number was not required. The PMS Number generated after the successful submission of the application by an eKYC verified Street Vendor was used as the unique identification number.

MoHUA Circular dated 19 Oct 2020:

- Regarding the Digital Cash Back Incentives, it was clarified that all types of VPA (Virtual Payment Address) were allowed for the purpose of PM SVANidhi and were not restricted to the P2PM category.
- In addition, the following changes were implemented:
 - Voter ID was made non-mandatory with effect from September 11, 2020.
 - An additional field "Minority status" was introduced in the Loan Application with effect from October 7, 2020, to give effect to the RBI Master Circular on Credit Facility to Minority Communities dated July 01, 2019.

MoHUA Circular dated 09 Apr 2021:

- It was decided, to fix the enhanced limit of up to ₹20,000 for the second tranche and up to ₹50,000 for the third tranche, on timely or early payment of the earlier loan.

Min of Finance Circular dated 29 Jun 2021:

- Lending Institutions were advised to sanction/disburse loans with the bare minimum documents and also not to insist on additional documents other than what was prescribed in the checklist issued by MoHUA.

Min of Finance Circular dated 16 Jul 2021:

- It was observed that a number of loan applications were being returned by Lending Institutions (LIs) on the grounds that there were small variations in the names in the ID proof of the street vendors availing loans under the PM SVANidhi Scheme. In this context, lending institutions were requested to follow the existing guidelines as applicable for opening savings and current accounts in case of name mismatch.

MoHUA Circular Dated 18 Aug 2021:

- Guidelines for the enhanced loan limit of up to ₹20,000 on the repayment of the first loan under the PM SVANidhi Scheme were provided:
 - LIs were required to mark the 1st loan as closed for processing of the 2nd loan. The loans settled by CGTMSE were not eligible for the 2nd round and were not closed on the Portal by the LIs.
 - It was decided to fix the minimum amount of the loan for the 2nd tranche at ₹15,000.

- It was decided to fix the tenure for the 2nd tranche of loan up to 18 months.
- The street vendors were eligible for interest subsidy @ 7% on 2nd tranche loans up to March 31, 2022.
- Cashback on digital transactions was available for the beneficiaries of 2nd loans.

MoHUA Circular dated 03 Sep 2021.

Ministry decided to make the following changes in clause 8.3 - Promotion of Digital Transaction on cash back facility under PM SVANidhi Scheme:-

Prevalent Conditions of the Scheme	Modified Conditions of the Scheme
Eligible Digital Transaction (EDT) of minimum ₹25.	EDT to be digital transaction of any value.
₹50 cashback on conducting a minimum of 50 EDTs. No cashback is paid even if the SV conducts 49 EDTs in a month.	₹1 cashback per EDT till the first 50 EDTs.

₹25 cashback on conducting next 50 EDSTs	₹0.50 per EDT for the next 50 EDTs
₹25 cashback on conducting next 100 EDSTs	₹0.25 per EDT for the next 100 EDTs
A maximum of 5 transactions on a day from / to the same mobile number were allowed. This was put in place to avoid gaming of the system by the SV.	This limit was removed so as to encourage the SVs to get more acquainted with the conduct of Digital Transactions.

MoHUA Circular dated 01 Jun 2022

In its meeting held on 27 Apr 2022, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the proposal for the continuation of the PM SVANidhi scheme 2.0 beyond March 2022. The details of the proposal were as follows:

- The lending period was extended from March 2022 to December 2024.
- Provision was made for a 3rd loan of up to ₹50,000 with a term of 36 months, in addition to 1st & 2nd loans of ₹10,000 and ₹20,000 respectively.
- Modification of Credit Guarantee cover for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd loans: The effective credit guarantee on the 1st loan was enhanced from 12.5% to

31.875%; on the 2nd loan, it was reduced from 12.5% to 8.25%; and on the 3rd loan, it was reduced from 12.5% to 6%.

- Payment of Interest Subsidy and Credit Guarantee claims on all loans was extended until March 2028.
- The 'SVANidhi Se Samridhi' component was extended to all beneficiaries of the PM SVANidhi scheme across the country.

MoHUA Circular dated 27 Jul 2022

The Ministry received requests from stakeholders to amend the existing eligibility criteria of the beneficiaries under the PM SVANidhi scheme by extending it to street vendors who had taken up street vending after March 24, 2020. The matter was examined, and it was decided to consider the request. The Scheme was now available to all street vendors engaged in vending in urban areas.

MoHUA Circular dated 21 Feb 2023

The Ministry decided to make the following changes in clause 8.3 (Promotion of Digital Transaction on cash back facility) of the guidelines under PM SVANidhi Scheme:-

Existing Guidelines	Revised Guidelines
₹1 per EDT till first 50 EDTs	₹1 per inward / outward first

₹0.50 per EDT for next 50 EDTs	100 digital transactions subject to a maximum of ₹100 in a month i.e. ₹1200 in a year w.e.f 01 Feb 2023
₹0.25 per EDT for next 100 EDTs	

Jt Secy MoHUA letter dated 02 Mar 2023

The Ministry put in renewed thrust to improve the performance with the aim of on-boarding and training all PM SVANidhi beneficiaries for digital payments. In this context, the Ministry decided on a series of incentives to stakeholders to improve digital on boarding. These included:

- Incentives of ₹300 for Digital Payment Aggregators (DPAs) and Banks to digitally on board targeted digitally inactive beneficiaries.
- Incentives for Banks and DPAs for providing sound box/ smart speaker to SVs under the Scheme.
- Incentive structure for providing sound box on rental to SVs for a period of the next 6 months.
- Enhanced cashback incentives to SVs for digital transactions.
- States/ULBs organized "Mai Bhi Digital" campaign along with "SVANidhi se Samridhi" camps every month for a week.

Table 5: Targets and their Revisions

Date of Notice	Target Up to	Category	1st Loan	2nd Loan	3rd Loan
	31 Mar 22	Large States	46,65,000		
		UT/ Small States	44,200		
		Hilly NER States	1,21,000		
		Total	48,30,200		
3 Sep 22	31 Mar 23	Large States	48,15,000	8,70,100	23,480
		UT/ Small States	27,900	9770	255
		Hilly NER States	1,34,000	18,700	505
		Total	49,76,900	9,11,270	24,240
4 Jul 23	31 Dec 23	Large States	60,99,000	21,80,430	2,84,950
		UT/ Small States	34,990	16,360	2,550
		Hilly NER States	1,66,200	66,600	5,570
		Total	63,00,190	22,63,390	2,93,070
10 Nov 23	31 Mar 24	Large States	72,61,335	21,80,430	2,84,950
		UT/ Small States	43,714	16,360	2,550
		Hilly NER States	1,91,454	66,600	5,570
		Total	74,96,503	22,63,390	2,93,070

CHAPTER 5

STUDY AREA AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Varanasi, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, holds immense historical and cultural significance in India. Situated on the banks of the sacred river Ganges in the state of Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi, also known as Kashi or Benares, is revered as a spiritual hub and a centre of learning and culture.

The city boasts a rich tapestry of religious traditions, with thousands of temples, ghats (riverfront steps), and ashrams dotting its landscape. Pilgrims flock to Varanasi to perform sacred rituals, seek spiritual enlightenment, and immerse themselves in the holy waters of the Ganges, believed to cleanse one's sins and bestow liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Aside from its spiritual significance, Varanasi is renowned for its vibrant street life and bustling markets. Street vending forms an integral part of the city's economy and culture, providing livelihoods to thousands of individuals and contributing to the city's unique charm.

The organization of street vending in Varanasi is structured around the municipal boundaries and ward divisions. The Municipal Corporation oversees the management and regulation of street vending activities, with designated zones and areas allocated for vendors to conduct their businesses. Over time, efforts have been made to

streamline the organization of street vending, improve infrastructure, and address the needs of vendors through various initiatives and schemes.

To gain insights into the dynamics of street vending in Varanasi, surveys have been conducted periodically to assess the number of vendors, their socio-economic profiles, and the challenges they face. These surveys provide valuable data for policymakers and stakeholders to understand the evolving landscape of street vending in the city and formulate targeted interventions to support vendors and enhance their livelihoods.

In recent years, Varanasi has witnessed significant developments aimed at promoting the welfare of street vendors and improving their living and working conditions. Government schemes such as the PM SVANidhi Yojana have been instrumental in providing financial assistance and support to street vendors, empowering them to thrive in a rapidly changing urban environment.

As Varanasi continues to evolve and adapt to modern challenges, the preservation of its rich cultural heritage and the sustenance of its vibrant street life remain paramount. By understanding the complexities of street vending in Varanasi and addressing the needs of vendors, policymakers can ensure the city's continued prosperity while honouring its timeless traditions and values.

This chapter presents the findings of the comprehensive study conducted to evaluate the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi. Through structured interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions, insights were

gathered from street vendors, bank officials, and key stakeholders involved in the scheme's execution.

Street Vending in Varanasi

A structured interview was conducted with 75 street vendors in Varanasi to ascertain their perspectives on the adequacy and shortcomings of the PM SVANidhi scheme. The questionnaire, detailed in Appendix A, elicited valuable insights into the experiences and challenges faced by vendors in accessing and benefiting from the scheme.

Gender, Domicile and Marital Status

Table 6: Gender, Domicile and Marital Status

Gender	SVs Interviewed	Domicile District (Varanasi)	Marital Status		
			Married	Not Married	Total
Male	61	61	48	13	61
Female	14	14	12	2	14
Total	75	75	60	15	75

A total of 75 SVs were interviewed out of which 61 were male and 14 were female. All the SVs belong to Varanasi District and no SV has migrated from outside

Varanasi. 60 of the SVs are married and 15 are not married. Percentage of unmarried males is more than female vendors.

Dependent Children

Table 7: Dependent Children

Number of Children	Number of Street Vendors
5	6
4	19
3	12
2	11
1	5
Nil	22
Total	75

Although the national policy encourages up to maximum of 2 children, out of 60 married SVs a large number (37) have 3 or more children which is 61 % of the SVs interviewed. There is a definite need to look into this aspect and ascertain reasons for the same as also take measures to educate the SVs on the aspects of family planning.

Total Dependents

Table 8: Total Dependents

Number of Dependents	Number of Street Vendors
7	4
6	10
5	6
4	19
3	10
2	21
1	2
0	3
Total	75

There are a substantial number of SVs (39 out of 75) who have 4 or more dependents. The expenditure on taking care of large number of dependents has an adverse effect on his / her savings.

Education Standards

Table 9: Education Standards

Education Standard / Class	No of SVs
2nd	1
3rd	4
5th	20
7h	3
8th	19
10th	12
12th	12
Graduate	4
Total	75

47 SVs (63%) of the SVs have studied at least till Class 8th.

Living Arrangements

Table 10: Living Arrangements

Living Arrangements	Number of SVs
Own House	56
Rented	19
Total	75

56 SVs (75%) of the SVs have their own house for living and only 19 (25%) SVs are living in rented accommodation.

Distance from Residence to Place of Work

Table 11: Distance from Residence to Place of Work

Distance from Residence to Place of Work	Number of SVs
Less than 500 mtr	12
500 mtr to 1 Km	18
1 Km to 2 Km	11
2 Km to 5 Km	17
5 Km to 10 Km	16
More than 10 Km	1
Total	75

Majority (58) of the SVs travel 5 Km or less to reach their place of work and only 17 SVs (23%) of the SVs travel for more than 5 Kms.

Mode of Travel

Table 12: Mode of Travel

Mode of Travel	Number of SVs
Auto	12
Motorcycle	2
Cycle	9
Rickshaw	1
Walk	51
Total	75

A large Number (51) of SVs (68%) travel to their place of work on foot.

Profession Before COVID

Out of 75 SVs interviewed 74 were in the business of street vending prior to COVID and only one person changed to street vending after COVID.

Number of Years in Business of Street Vending

Table 13: Number of Years in Business of Street Vending

Years in Street Vending	Number of SVs	% of SVs
0 to 5	22	29
5 to 10	25	33
10 to 15	14	19
15 to 20	4	5
More than 20	10	14
Total	75	
Average Years	11.26	

Majority of the SVs have been in the business of street vending for more than 5 years and only 29% are in this profession for less than 5 years

Time Spent on Street Vending

Table 14: Time Spent on Street Vending

Time Spent on Street Vending Per Day	Number of SVs	% of SVs
Less than 4 hrs	2	3
4 to 8 hrs	41	54
8 to 12 hrs	32	43
Total	75	

Majority of the SVs spend more than 4 hours on street vending every day

Affiliation with SV Association

Table 15: Affiliation with SV Association

Affiliation with SVs Association	Number of SVs	% of SVs
Bhartiya Path Vikreta Sangh	23	30

Feri Patri Thela Vyavsai Samiti, Varanasi	26	35
No Affiliation	26	35
Total	75	

65% of the SVs are associated with a SVs association and only 35% of the vendors are not associated with any association.

Effect of COVID on Income

Table 16: Effect of COVID on Income

Income	Number of SVs	% of SVs
No Income During COVID	36	48
Reduced to 25%	2	3
Reduced to 50%	37	49
Total	75	

48% of the vendors had no income during COVID and were thus badly affected financially. Even those who were able to run their businesses had a substantial decrease in their income.

Availability of Capital

Table 17: Availability of Capital

Capital on Daily Basis (₹)	Capital Availability Number of SVs Prior to COVID	Capital Left During COVID
No Capital	0	25
0 to 500	7	4
500 to 1000	15	16
1000 to 2000	8	11
2000 to 3000	13	12
3000 to 4000	5	5
4000 to 5000	4	2
5000 to 10000	14	
10000 to 20000	7	
More than 20000	2	
Total	75	75
Average Capital (₹)	5294	1272

There was a substantial decrease in the capital available with the SVs during the COVID. The average capital available prior to COVID was ₹ 5294 which reduced to ₹ 1272 during COVID, a reduction of 76% in their capital which is substantial with 25% of the vendors left with no capital.

Number of Loans Availed under SVANidhi Scheme

Table 18: Number of Loans Availed under SVANidhi Scheme

No of Loans Availed Under SVANidhi Scheme	No of SVS	% of SVs
Only Once	56	75
Twice (1st & 2nd Tranche)	8	11
Thrice (1st, 2nd & 3rd Tranche)	11	
Total	75	14

19 SVs (25%) have availed the loan under PM SVANidhi scheme more than once.

Awareness about Scheme

Table 19: Awareness about Scheme

Awareness of SVANidhi Scheme Through	No of Street Vendors
ULB Campaign / Mela	73
Word of Mouth	1
Friends	1

73 of the 75 SVs interviewed became aware of the scheme through various initiatives taken by the Varanasi ULB.

Ease of Availing Loan

All the 75 street vendors interviewed have availed the loans under PM SVANidhi Scheme and are well aware of the scheme. They were assisted by the District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), Varanasi which is the lead agency for implementing the scheme in Varanasi. They faced little or no problems in availing the loan. The DUDA office assisted the individuals in filing the online forms and processing their applications to the banks. None of the SVs were denied any loan. Out of 75 SVs 23 SVs had faced some problems in availing the loan but 52 SVs have responded that they did not have any problems. All the 75 SVs have responded that the

banks were helpful in disbursing the loan. However 55% of the SVs had to make 3 or more visits to the bank to avail the loan which could be avoided.

Number of Visits to Bank for Availing Loan

Table 20: Number of Visits to Bank for Availing Loan

Number of Visits to the Bank for Availing Loan	No of SVs	% of SVs
1	4	5
2	30	40
3	18	24
4	10	13
5	10	13
6	3	4
Total	75	

41 SVs (55%) made 3 or more visits to the banks to avail the loan.

Effects of SVANidhi Scheme

Effect on Customer Footfall due to SVANidhi Scheme

Table 21: Increase in Customer Sales

Increase in Customers or Sales	No of SVs	% of SVs
Yes	72	96
No	3	4

72 SVs (96%) had in increase in their customers / sales due to the scheme.

Lending Institution for Capital to SVs

Table 22 : Lending Institution for Capital to SVs

	Capital Aailed from Prior to COVID) No of SVs)	Capital Aailed from After COVID (No of SVs)
Banks	15	75
Family	13	0

Friends	39	0
Money Lender	3	0
SHG	1	0
Own Saving	4	0
Total	75	75

Only 15 SVs (20%) had availed loan from banks for their capital prior to the scheme but 100% of the vendors interviewed have availed loan form the banks under the PM SVANIdhi Scheme.

Comparative Income Per Day before COVID and Now

Table 23: Comparative Income Per Day before COVID and Now

Per Day Income Bracket (₹)	Number of SVs Before COVID	Present Number of SVs
No income	2	0
0 to 100	1	0
100 to 200	21	3
200 to 300	18	10

300 to 400	22	9
400 to 500	6	26
500 to 600	1	14
600 to 700	2	5
700 to 800	2	5
800 to 900	0	1
900 to 1000	0	2
Total	75	75
Average Income (₹)	325	515

While only 5 SVs (7%) had income of ₹ 500 or more per day prior to COVID, this number has increased to 25 (36%). The average income has increased from 325 to 515, an increase of 58% in their income.

Use of Digital Transaction

Table 24: Use of Digital Transaction

Use of Digital Transaction by Number of SVs		
SV Used Digital Transaction	Prior to COVID	NOW
Yes	18	75
No	57	0

Only 18 SVs (24%) had used digital transactions prior to COVID, 100% of the SVs are using digital transactions now.

Promotion of Digital Transactions

Table 25: Promotion of Digital Transactions

Migration to Digital Transaction Because of SVANidhi Scheme		%
Yes	72	96
No	3	4

96% of the vendors have migrated to digital transactions because of the incentives in PM SVANidhi scheme.

Utilisation of Cash Back Facility

Table 26: Utilisation of Cash Back Facility

SVs Utilised Cash Back Facility	
Yes	72
No	3

Preferred Mode of Payment by SVs

Table 27: Preferred Mode of Payment by SVs

	No of SVs	% of SVs
Cash	25	33
Digital	44	59
Both	6	8
Total	75	100

Only 25 (33%) SVs have indicated their preference for cash transactions in their business while 50 SVs (73%) of the SVs have preferred for digital transactions or both.

Problems of SVs, Shortcomings of the Scheme and Recommendations / Suggestions

The SVs have not indicated any shortcomings of the scheme but have indicated certain recommendation which they aspire or expect from the government. These are indicated below.

- Reduce interest rates on the loans being provided under the scheme.
- Waive off interest on the loan under the scheme.
- Increase the subsidy amount.
- Increase cashback amount.
- Provide 4th loan of ₹ 1,00,000/-
- Provide water arrangements, street lighting and electricity connection arrangements for the street vendors in the vending zones.
- Road widening be undertaken in the vending zones to provide adequate space for vending and allow uninterrupted flow of traffic.
- Permanent vending zones be created. Permanent shops be allotted to the SVs in these vending zones.
- More number of vending zones be created.
- Undertake beautification of the vending zones.
- Improve sanitation / cleanliness in vending zones.
 - Provide benefits from other schemes also.

Lending Institutions Participation in the Scheme

The questionnaire was dispatched to five prominent banks. Their diverse backgrounds and operational structures provided a comprehensive view of the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme from the banking perspective. The questionnaire for the interview is attached at Appendix B. The responses by the banks to the questions are discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

The questionnaire was responded by the following 5 banks:

- Union Bank of India.
- Utkarsh Small Finance Bank.
- Baroda UP Bank.
- Bank of Baroda.
- State Bank of India.

All the 5 banks have participated in the PM SVANidhi Scheme since its inception.

Loan Applications Processed

Table 28: Loan Applications Processed by Banks

Name of Bank	No of Applications Processed
Union Bank of India	10262

Utkarsh Small Bank	2600
Baroda UP Bank	4995
Bank of Baroda	9465
State Bank of India	5500

Steps Taken to Facilitate Loan Application

Applications were picked up from the portal, and vendors were contacted. The applications were pre-processed to sanction and disburse the loan at the earliest. Dedicated staff members were assigned by banks specifically for the scheme. Banks reached out to vendors at their vending locations and processed loans on-site. Vendors only needed to make one visit on the day of disbursement. Loan melas and camps were organized by banks to facilitate the process.

On average, it took between 2-3 hours to 2 days to process and approve a loan application.

Special Measures or Procedures to Expedite the Loan Application Process for Street Vendors During the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, special measures and procedures were implemented by banks to expedite the loan application process for street vendors:

Union Bank of India: Established dedicated counters in every branch to streamline the application process.

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank: Assigned dedicated staff at branches to handle the PM SVANidhi scheme. They managed the entire process from start to finish, including assisting street vendors who couldn't visit the branch by going to their shops. The documentation process was completed without vendors needing to visit the bank branch, with only one visit required on the day of loan disbursement.

State Bank of India: Made personal calls and visits to vendors while adhering to COVID-19 safety measures to expedite the process.

Challenges Faced in Disbursing Loan to the SVs

One of the challenges faced in disbursing loans to street vendors is the delay caused when vendors fail to visit the bank for formalities and signing of documents.

Ensuring Timely Disbursal of Loan

To ensure timely disbursal of loans, several measures have been implemented:

The Nodal Officer of the Regional Office conducts regular follow-up and monitoring activities to ensure timely disbursal of loans.

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank has established two types of teams for the PM SVANidhi scheme. One team consists of dedicated staff working on documentation and field activities at the branch level. The other team, called the PM SVANidhi Support, operates at the central Head Office level and is responsible for coordinating

and following up with PM SVANidhi staff and the Central Processing Centre (CPC) for disbursement.

Branches maintain proper follow-up with Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and borrowers to ensure that the necessary steps are taken promptly for loan disbursal.

Monitoring Loan Utilization by Street Vendors

Banks employ several methods to ensure that disbursed loans are used by street vendors for the intended purposes outlined in the scheme:

Banks conduct post-sanction visits to the vendors in their vending areas to verify that the disbursed funds are being utilized appropriately.

Loan Utilisation Check (LUC) by Utkarsh Small Finance Bank: Within 14 days of loan disbursement, PM SVANidhi relationship officers conduct a Loan Utilisation Check (LUC). During this check, officers verify that the beneficiaries are using the disbursed amount in their business as intended. They also motivate beneficiaries to invest the disbursed amount in their business, emphasizing that failure to do so may affect their eligibility for future loans. The officers stress the importance of a thriving business for making timely EMI payments.

Measures Taken to Ensure Timely Repayment of PM SVANidhi Loans

To ensure timely repayment of PM SVANidhi loans, the following measures are taken:

Borrowers receive SMS reminders before the due date of EMI payments, serving as a proactive reminder to facilitate timely repayment.

Officers responsible for PM SVANidhi engage with beneficiaries consistently through phone calls and SMS messages. This engagement helps maintain communication with borrowers, reminding them of their repayment obligations and addressing any concerns or queries they may have.

Banks conduct follow-up with borrowers to remind them of upcoming EMI payments and ensure that they are aware of their repayment responsibilities. This proactive approach helps in minimizing delays and encourages timely repayment of loans.

Default Percentage of Loans in Repayment

Table 29: Default Percentage of Loans in Repayment

Name of Bank	Default Percentage of Loans
Union Bank of India	3-4 Percent.
Utkarsh Small Bank	3-4 Percent.
Baroda UP Bank	14.75% annual
Bank of Baroda	5-6%
State Bank of India	12.4-%

Issues or Challenges Encountered in the Collection of Loan Repayments from Street Vendors

The collection of loan repayments from street vendors presents several challenges:

Street vendors often migrate due to seasonal factors or economic opportunities in other locations. This mobility makes it difficult for banks to track them down for loan repayments, resulting in delays or non-payment.

In cases where vendors relocate or change their contact information, banks face challenges in tracing them to collect loan repayments. Lack of updated contact details complicates the collection process.

High levels of NPAs pose a significant concern for banks. When street vendors default on loan repayments, it not only affects the bank's financial health but also hampers the sustainability of the PM SVANidhi scheme. Efforts are required to minimize NPAs and ensure the effective collection of loan repayments from vendors.

Collaboration with Urban Local Bodies

The collaboration between banks and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) plays a crucial role in the successful implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi:

A committee, chaired by the municipal commissioner, has been established to oversee the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme. This committee conducts

regular review meetings to assess the progress and address any challenges encountered during the execution of the scheme.

Monthly review meetings are conducted under the auspices of the municipal commissioner to evaluate the performance of the scheme. These meetings serve as platforms for stakeholders to discuss issues, share best practices, and devise strategies for improving the implementation process.

Collaborative efforts between banks and ULBs involve organizing camps aimed at facilitating the participation of street vendors in the PM SVANidhi scheme. These camps provide a centralized location for vendors to gather information, receive assistance in completing application forms, and address any queries they may have regarding the scheme.

By fostering strong ties between banks and Urban Local Bodies, Varanasi ensures efficient coordination and execution of the PM SVANidhi scheme, ultimately benefiting street vendors and contributing to the city's socio-economic development.

Enhancing PM SVANidhi Scheme Implementation from: Banks Perspective:

Granting banks the authority to issue LoRs would streamline the application process and expedite loan approvals for street vendors.

Provide comprehensive training sessions to SVANidhi beneficiaries on digital payment methods. This will not only enhance their financial literacy but also encourage the adoption of digital transactions, contributing to a cashless economy.

Implement a system where SVANidhi beneficiaries can display a designated sticker on their stalls, indicating their participation in the scheme. This visual recognition would boost their credibility and instil confidence among customers, potentially attracting more business.

Enhancing Bank Support for Street Vendors under the PM SVANidhi Scheme:

Banks should actively promote the PM SVANidhi Scheme through various channels to ensure maximum visibility and reach among street vendors. This could involve advertising campaigns, information sessions, and collaboration with local authorities for targeted outreach efforts.

Banks can organize workshops, seminars, and training sessions to educate street vendors about the benefits, eligibility criteria, application process, and repayment terms of the PM SVANidhi Scheme. By providing clear and accessible information, banks can empower vendors to make informed decisions and take advantage of the scheme's offerings.

Engaging Street Vendors: Insights from Focus Groups:

During a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 20 street vendors in Varanasi, insights into the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana were gleaned. The list of participating street vendors is detailed in Appendix C.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, all participants were engaged in street vending. However, the pandemic severely impacted their businesses, forcing many to close their

shops for nearly 18 months. Some adapted by selling goods from home or for limited hours, while others had to switch to manual labor.

A vendor, who recently started street vending, mentioned having around ₹2000 for business and expressed interest in registering for the PM SVANidhi Yojana loan.

All vendors reported repaying their loans on time, with some even taking second and third loans. They utilized digital payments and cashback incentives, with some expressing interest in a larger loan after repaying previous ones.

Regarding registration under the Street Vendors Act, the 2017 survey identified approximately 24,000 street vendors, but only a few had certificates before 2020.

Challenges in accessing PM SVANidhi Yojana loans included initial awareness gaps and complex application procedures. Assistance from SVANidhi Mitra and DUDA facilitated the loan process, but some banks demanded excessive documentation and conducted intrusive checks at vending locations.

Loan processing times varied, with some vendors reporting delays due to formalities. Initial skepticism about bank loans stemmed from fears of home possession in case of non-repayment.

Awareness camps faced challenges in Aadhar linking, and vendors were apprehensive about potential bank-related issues post-loan disbursal.

Vendors preferred money lender loans due to minimal paperwork, despite exorbitant interest rates. SVANidhi Yojana loans offered relief from money lender debt, with automatic monthly repayments via bank deductions.

Vendors expressed interest in fourth-tranche loans, albeit with subsidy or lower interest benefits.

Operational challenges included insufficient vending zones, VIP area restrictions, lack of identification cards, water and toilet facilities, and electricity access. Unauthorized vendors in designated zones were also a concern.

Despite challenges, SVANidhi Yojana led to a 50% income increase for most vendors, freeing them from money lender debt.

Digital payments, particularly QR codes, were preferred over cash due to convenience.

Suggestions for SVANidhi Yojana improvement included pension schemes, inclusion in BOCW schemes, and free private school education for vendors' children.

In-depth Conversations: Understanding Bank Officials' Views:

In Varanasi, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) convened with 17 bank officials of following banks highlighted crucial insights into the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana and its implications for street vendors. The discussion revealed various challenges and strategies employed by banks to facilitate loans and address defaults.

- Union Bank of India
- State Bank of India
- Bank of Baroda
- Bank of India
- Baroda U.P. Bank
- Cashpor Micro Credit
- Indian Bank
- Punjab National Bank
- Utkarsh Small Finance Bank
- SATYA Micro Capital Limited
- Bank of Maharashtra
- Canara Bank
- Central Bank of India
- Indian Overseas Bank
- Punjab and Sind Bank
- UCO Bank

Initially, misconceptions among street vendors regarding interest rates and repayment obligations posed significant challenges for banks. Many vendors were unaware of the subsidy and cashback benefits provided under the scheme. Furthermore, the requirement to open digital accounts added complexity for both borrowers and lenders.

NPA accounts, especially from the first tranche of loans, emerged as a concern for banks. Factors such as vendors migrating or misusing funds contributed to the high NPA rates. To mitigate defaults, banks implemented strategies such as personal visits, follow-ups, and dedicated staff for the SVANidhi Scheme. Educating vendors about timely repayments and the potential for second loans was crucial in reducing NPAs.

Efforts to streamline loan processing were evident, with banks introducing digital platforms and simplifying documentation procedures. Some banks adopted innovative approaches like mobile form-filling and doorstep services to enhance accessibility for vendors.

Repayment mechanisms have transitioned to digital channels, eliminating the need for vendors to visit banks physically. Loan disbursement times have also improved, with funds being transferred within 2-3 days of approval.

Suggestions for scheme improvements included granting banks authority to recommend loans, addressing resubmission loopholes, and ensuring eligibility criteria alignment for subsequent loans. Additionally, implementing time-bound visit requirements for vendors could streamline the application process and reduce pendency.

The FGD underscored the importance of ongoing collaboration between banks and government agencies to refine the PM SVANidhi Yojana. By addressing challenges and incorporating feedback from stakeholders, the scheme can continue to empower street vendors and foster economic growth in Varanasi.

Administrative Perspectives: Insights from DC Varanasi:

Furthermore, a questionnaire was administered to Shri Kaushal Raj Sharma (IAS), Divisional Commissioner Varanasi, who played a pivotal role in implementing the PM SVANidhi scheme in the city. His insights, detailed in Appendix E, offer valuable insights into the administrative intricacies and success factors underlying the scheme's implementation.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns adversely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors. The PM SVANidhi Yojana is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of India in June 2020 with the objective of providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors. The scheme aims to support the livelihoods of street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate their integration into the formal economy. One crucial aspect of the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation is the emphasis on digital payments and good governance, which play a significant role in ensuring transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the scheme's operations.

The review of literature and discussions in the previous chapters provide an insight into the scheme and its implementation in Varanasi. These are discussed in subsequent paragraphs. The findings gleaned from the diverse sources have been analysed and synthesized to distil key insights and lessons learned. Based on this analysis, actionable recommendations have been proposed to enhance the effectiveness and impact of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi, contributing to the welfare and empowerment of street vendors in the city.

The PM Street Vendors Atmanirbhar Nidhi (SVANidhi) Yojana, launched on 01 Jun 2020, aimed to alleviate the challenges faced by street vendors by providing

working capital loans, incentivizing regular repayment, and promoting digital transactions. Over time, the scheme underwent several modifications and clarifications to enhance its effectiveness and address emerging issues.

Launch of the Scheme, Modifications and Enhancements

Initially, the scheme required an Aadhar number for registration, which was later replaced by a unique identification number generated through eKYC verification. Moreover, the mandatory requirement for a Voter ID was eliminated, and an additional field for "Minority status" was introduced in loan applications to align with RBI guidelines.

Institutions were advised to streamline loan sanctioning processes, minimizing documentation requirements and eliminating additional demands beyond the prescribed checklist. Additionally, the scheme's loan ceiling was adjusted, and the lending period extended to December 2024.

Enhancements were made to the credit guarantee cover, with modifications in effective percentages for first, second, and third loans. Furthermore, the payment of interest subsidy and credit guarantee claims was extended till March 2028, providing long-term support to beneficiaries.

To encourage digital payments, modifications were made to the cashback facility under the SVANidhi Scheme. The conditions were revised to provide cashback for digital transactions of any value, with incentives linked to the number of transactions

conducted. Additionally, restrictions on the number of transactions per day were lifted to promote digital literacy and usage among street vendors.

In February 2023, further revisions were implemented, offering increased cashback incentives for digital transactions. These adjustments aimed to boost participation in digital payment systems and enhance financial inclusion among street vendors.

The scheme's implementation was closely monitored by the central government, with regular assessments of progress and outcomes. Flexibility was maintained to accommodate changing circumstances, allowing for timely interventions and corrective measures to address challenges and optimize impact. Ongoing monitoring and proactive interventions will be essential to sustain the scheme's positive impact and drive further improvements in the future.

Demographic Insights of Street Vendors

60 out of 75 vendors interviewed are males. Even percentage of unmarried males is more than female vendors.

Although the national policy encourages up to maximum of 2 children, out of 60 married SVs a large number (37) have 3 or more children which is 61 % of the SVs interviewed. There is a definite need to look into this aspect and ascertain reasons for the same as also take measures to educate the SVs on the aspects of family planning.

47 SVs (63%) of the SVs have studied at least till Class 8th. Majority of the street vendors are literate and hence it is easier for the government to explain the

policies and their benefits to the vendors as also incorporate them in the formal economy including digital transactions.

65% of the SVs are associated with a SVs association and only 35% of the vendors are not associated with any association. It is likely that the SVs not associated with any association do not have proper representation to voice their issues.

All the participants were working as street vendors during onset of COVID 19. Because of COVID many of them had to close their shops almost for 18 months. Some of them who were in the business of selling fruits and vegetables carried out their business from homes or for restricted hours they were permitted. Some of them who were doing business of handicrafts had to close the business and undertake the job of a labourer.

Impact of COVID-19 on Street Vendors in Varanasi

48% of the vendors had no income during COVID and were thus badly affected financially. Even those who were able to run their businesses had a substantial decrease in their income. There was a substantial decrease in the capital available with the SVs during the COVID. The average capital available prior to COVID was ₹ 5294 which reduced to ₹ 1272 during COVID, a reduction of 76% in their capital which is substantial with 25% of the vendors left with no capital. Thus PM SVANidhi scheme was a very helpful scheme in providing the much required capital to the street vendors financially affected by COVID.

Utilisation of PM SVANidhi Yojana and its Impact

19 SVs(25%) have availed the loan under PM SVANidhi scheme more than once. All the 75 street vendors interviewed have availed the loans under PM SVANidhi Scheme and are well aware of the scheme. Prior to PM SVANidhi scheme, some of the vendors had taken loan from money lenders at very high interest rates. Only 15 SVs (20%) had availed loan from banks for their capital prior to the scheme but 100% of the vendors interviewed have availed loan from the banks under the PM SVANidhi Scheme. Thus SVs have migrated to formal lending channels instead of the informal ones for their capital requirements.

96% of the SVs have indicated that there has been an increase in customer footfall / sales. This has been attributed by the SVs on the PM SVANidhi scheme. While only 5 SVs (7%) had income of ₹ 500 or more per day prior to COVID, this number has increased to 25 (36%). The average income has increased from 325 to 515, an increase of 58% in their income.

All the vendors in the group had returned the loan in the stipulated time. Some of them had taken the second and even the third loan. They were also utilising the facility of cashback by undertaking digital payments. Some of the vendors expressed their desire avail of another loan of ₹ one lakh after they had repaid the third loan of ₹ 50,000/-.

Majority of street vendors have had an increase of additional 50% income due to SVANidhi Yojana. They have also got rid of the debt trap under the money lenders.

All the SVs are of the opinion that government should extend this scheme by providing a fourth loan of up to ₹ 1 Lakh.

Digital Integration

Only 18 SVs (24%) had used digital transactions prior to COVID, 100% of the SVs are using digital transactions now. 96% of the vendors have migrated to digital transactions because of the incentives in PM SVANidhi scheme. Only 25 (33%) SVs have indicated their preference for cash transactions in their business while 50 SVs (73%) of the SVs have preferred for digital transactions or both. Thus PM SVANidhi scheme with associated incentives for digital transactions have ushered a big revolution in digital transactions among the SVs. The SVs prefer payments through digital transactions and not through cash. The SVs are of the opinion that the payments through QR Code are much easier and the speaker tells the amount received also.

IEC Initiatives

The SVs came to know about the PM SVANidhi scheme through the announcement in the vehicles collecting waste and also in papers they did not know how to take the loan and whom did they needed to approach for taking the loan? DUDA organised camps and educated the SVs about the process of taking loans and facilitated in processing their papers for loan. There are about 100 street vendors who were made SVANidhi Mitra who would get camps organised in their areas and helped others in availing the loan. New vendors were not aware of the procedure of taking loans and SVANidhi Mitra or their friends helped them in getting the loan.

Lending Institutions and their Role

Initially the vendors were under the impression that since it was a loan under a government scheme, there was no requirement to return the loan. The banks had to make the vendors properly aware about the scheme.

The banks would ask for lot of papers and would come to check the vendor at the vending location. The vendors had to pay stamp duty while availing the loan. Some of the banks have waived off the requirement of stamp paper but not all. The SVs opined that the requirement of Stamp Paper for availing loan under the PM SVANidhi scheme should be waived off. There are certain problems in availing loan from UP Baroda Bank but in other banks the procedures are simpler and easier.

Many of the SVs faced difficulties in linking the Aadhar Card with the scheme. The street vendors were apprehensive of taking the loan from bank and were afraid that they may face problems after the bank had given the loan. The SVs were comfortable taking the loan from the money lender since there are hardly any paper formalities or documentation and since most of the vendors are not that literate, they were not comfortable with large number of documentation for the loan as is the requirement from banks.

Out of 75 SVs 23 SVs had faced some problems in availing the loan but 52 SVs have responded that they did not have any problems. All the 75 SVs have responded

that the banks were helpful in disbursing the loan. However 55% of the SVs had to make 3 or more visits to the bank to avail the loan which could be avoided.

The banks have made significant strides in simplifying the loan application process for street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme. Various banks, including Union Bank, Canara Bank, Utkarsh Bank, and Bank of India, have implemented innovative methods to streamline and expedite the loan disbursement process.

Union Bank introduced a user-friendly mobile app that sends a link to borrowers, allowing them to verify their identity and receive loan disbursement without visiting the bank physically. Canara Bank automated its system, requiring customers to visit the bank only once to sign digitally printed documents, after which the loan is swiftly disbursed. Utkarsh Bank took a proactive approach by sending officials directly to the vendors' locations, simplifying the application process and eliminating the need for vendors to visit the bank. Bank of India streamlined the SVANidhi loan process, separating it from regular loan procedures for faster processing.

To further accelerate loan approvals, banks adopted several measures. Applications were picked up from the online portal, and vendors were promptly contacted for pre-processing and timely disbursement. Dedicated staff members were assigned to handle SVANidhi scheme applications, ensuring efficient processing and disbursement. Banks also reached out to vendors at their vending locations, reducing the need for multiple visits to the bank.

Additionally, banks organized loan melas and camps to facilitate easy access to loans for street vendors. The average time taken to process and approve a loan

application ranged from 2-3 hours to a maximum of 2 days, reflecting the banks' commitment to expedite the loan application process.

Banks took further steps to support street vendors. Union Bank of India established dedicated counters in every branch for SVANidhi applications. Utkarsh Small Finance Bank deployed dedicated staff at branches to handle the scheme, assisting vendors who couldn't visit the branch by completing the documentation process at their shops. State Bank of India implemented personal calls and visits to vendors, adhering to COVID-19 safety measures, to ensure continued support and assistance during these difficult times.

These initiatives collectively demonstrate the banking sector's commitment to simplifying loan processes, reaching out to street vendors, and providing timely financial support, especially during challenging periods like the COVID-19 pandemic. Sometimes the disbursement of a sanctioned loan is delayed as the SVs do not visit the bank in time for formalities and signing of the documents.

In order to ensure timely disbursement of loan by banks, regular follow up and monitoring by the Nodal Officer of Regional Office is undertaken. Utkarsh Small Finance Bank has formed two types of teams for the PM SVANidhi scheme. One is of dedicated staffs who work on documentation and field activities at the branch level, and another is the PM SVANidhi Support at the central Head office level, responsible for coordinating and following up with PM SVANidhi staff and CPC for disbursement.

In order to ensure that the disbursed loans are being used by street vendors for the intended purposes outlined in the scheme, the banks ensure post sanction visit to

the vendors in the vending area. In Utkarsh Small Finance Bank, the PM SVANidhi relationship officers conduct a Loan Utilisation Check (LUC) within 14 days of disbursement. They motivate the beneficiaries to utilize the disbursed amount in their business. They emphasize that failure to invest the disbursed amount in their business may lead to difficulties in obtaining the next cycle loan. It is emphasized that a thriving business is necessary to make timely EMI.

The banks have encountered issues or challenges in the collection of loan repayments from street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme due to migration of vendors which leads to difficulty in tracing these vendors.

There are a substantial number of NPA accounts. Approximately 22% (Utkarsh Bank), 35% (Indian Bank), 12-14% (Union Bank), 47% (123 out of 260 (Punjab and Sind Bank) accounts are NPA. Many people had come for street vending from outside Varanasi in the initial borrowers and they have gone back without repaying the loan or have migrated to some other place. Many of them are not traceable. The NPA are mostly from the 1st Tranche loan and those who had taken in the initial part of the scheme. Some people took the loan but did not utilise it for the purpose of street vending business and were not able to repay the first loan. There are very few NPA in the current borrowers. The street vendors are being educated that if they return the first loan in time they would be eligible for the second loan of higher amount.

To ensure prompt repayment of PM SVANidhi loans, banks have implemented several proactive measures. They send SMS reminders to borrowers before the due date of their EMIs, keeping them informed and accountable. Additionally, the PM

SVANidhi relationship officers maintain constant engagement with beneficiaries through phone calls and SMS, providing personalized support and guidance. Moreover, banks follow up with borrowers to track their repayment progress and address any challenges they may face. In tackling non-performing assets (NPAs), banks conduct personal visits and follow-ups at the addresses provided by street vendors. However, tracing mobile street vendors can be challenging, requiring multiple visits by bank officials to follow up with a single default borrower. To streamline these efforts, banks have dedicated staff for the SVANidhi Scheme, focusing on effective follow-up and resolution. Through awareness campaigns and education initiatives for vendors, banks have seen positive results in loan repayments. They also incentivize timely repayments by informing vendors that successful repayment makes them eligible for a second loan and potentially for other schemes like the "Mudra Scheme." These efforts reflect a comprehensive approach to loan management and borrower support under the PM SVANidhi Yojana.

The banks enumerated the following problem areas:-

- On the portal once an application has been rejected on certain grounds, it has been seen on a number of occasions that the application is resubmitted by ULB the very next day. Thereafter the banks cannot reject the application once it has been resubmitted and it keeps lying for three months and is counted in pendency. This is a serious drawback.
- In some cases a perspective borrower was sanctioned the first loan but he did not take the loan and the loan was not disbursed but now his application has come for the second loan and he has been found eligible. This anomaly needs to

be removed and the second loan needs to be sanctioned only once a vendor has availed the first loan and satisfactorily repaid the loan.

- To reduce the pendency at the bank's end there should be a time period within which the vendor has to visit the bank and else the application should be rejected. Now it stays in the pending list for three months and there is a pressure on the bank officials to reduce the pendency.

Institutional Arrangements and Governance: Role of Administration

The background of vending in Varanasi sheds light on the historical challenges faced by street vendors and the significance of the vending sector in the city's economy. The lack of authentic data for vendors underscored the challenges in comprehensive monitoring and support for the entire vendor population. However, organized vending initiatives commenced in June 2020, signifying a shift towards structured and regulated vending practices. The establishment of vending zones and integration into the PM SVANidhi scheme reflected a holistic approach towards empowering vendors and fostering socio-economic prosperity.

In Varanasi, the COVID-19 lockdown during its first wave presented unprecedented challenges for street vendors, who form a significant part of the city's economy. However, amidst these challenges, various forms of assistance were extended to support them. The State Government played a crucial role by providing a one-time Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of ₹1000, offering financial relief to street vendors grappling with the economic impact of the lockdown. Additionally, to ensure the availability of essential goods, fruit and vegetable vendors, numbering over 400,

were organized and mapped according to their respective wards. This initiative facilitated the efficient distribution of fresh produce to citizens, alleviating concerns about food accessibility during the lockdown period.

Furthermore, the State Government took measures to stabilize prices, providing citizens with assurance and consistency in their purchases during a time of uncertainty. Essential grocery items were also delivered directly to citizens' doorsteps, minimizing their exposure to the virus while ensuring access to necessary goods. Critical information and updates regarding COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines were disseminated through platforms such as the Safe Kashi mobile application. This initiative enhanced awareness and promoted adherence to health measures among street vendors and the general public alike.

To ensure the seamless integration of street vendors into digital platforms for transactions, a comprehensive set of initiatives was undertaken. These initiatives included the launch of early initiatives to encourage street vendors to register for digital on boarding, prompt provision of essential documentation such as ID cards and vending certificates, and establishment of dedicated teams to facilitate eKYC processes. Collaboration was also maintained with banks and payment aggregators to streamline digital on boarding processes and expand the range of digital payment options available to street vendors.

The SVs were assisted by the District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), Varanasi which is the lead agency for implementing the scheme in Varanasi. They faced little or no problems in availing the loan. The DUDA office assisted the

individuals in filing the online forms and processing their applications to the banks. None of the SVs were denied any loan.

Several eGovernance initiatives were implemented to support the effective implementation of the scheme and promote the interests of street vendors. These initiatives included collaboration with food delivery platforms to facilitate the registration and sales of street vendors, development of a dedicated web portal to streamline various processes related to street vendors, and deployment of a dedicated team to manage the operations of the e-portal efficiently. These eGovernance initiatives facilitated the efficient management of street vendor activities, improved their access to digital platforms, and enhanced their overall economic prospects.

To bolster the sales of street vendors and create a conducive environment for business growth, several promotion activities were organized. These activities included the organization of melas and cultural programs to stimulate sales, create visibility for vendors, and attract a larger audience. The success of these promotion activities was evident in the substantial number of beneficiaries receiving loans, high loan disbursement rates, and widespread digital engagement among vendors.

The implementation of the PM SVANidhi Scheme in Varanasi has yielded significant outcomes, showcasing the success and effectiveness of the initiative. A substantial number of beneficiaries have received loans, and Varanasi has been nationally ranked #1 in terms of the percentage of loan disbursement. Additionally, a commendable achievement of issuing vendors' certificate ID cards indicates the extensive coverage and documentation of street vendors, facilitating their formal

recognition and participation in the scheme. The successful implementation of the scheme in Varanasi underscores the importance of concerted efforts in supporting street vendors and fostering socio-economic prosperity. Through a combination of awareness initiatives, good governance practices, digital integration, and promotional activities, street vendors have received significant support, contributing to their livelihoods and overall well-being.

Future Prospects and Recommendations by Stakeholders for Continued Success

Street vendors (SVs) have voiced several recommendations and expectations they hope to see addressed by the government under the SVANidhi scheme:

Firstly, they urge for a reduction in interest rates on the loans provided by the scheme, along with a complete waiver of interest. They also seek an increase in the subsidy and cashback amounts associated with the scheme. Furthermore, they propose the introduction of a fourth loan option of ₹1,00,000/- to support their businesses effectively.

In terms of infrastructure, SVs highlight the need for water arrangements, street lighting, and electricity connections in vending zones. They emphasize the importance of road widening in these zones to ensure sufficient space for vending and smooth traffic flow. Additionally, they advocate for the creation of permanent vending zones with allocated shops for SVs, along with the expansion of the number of vending zones across the city. Beautification efforts and improved sanitation/cleanliness in vending zones are also recommended.

SVs also suggest practical measures for their convenience and business operations. They call for the opening of more vending zones, including in VIP areas, and express concerns about vending zones being closed during VIP movements. Some SVs have not received identification cards, which they emphasize should be promptly distributed. They highlight the need for water facilities, toilets, and electric connections in vending zones, as many vendors rely on batteries for lighting.

Moreover, SVs express their desire to conduct business in areas where they can maximize sales, even if it means not adhering strictly to designated vending zones. The influx of new vendors due to the availability of loans under the SVANidhi Yojana has led to unauthorized vendors operating in vending zones, prompting the need for monitoring and regularization.

Beyond financial and infrastructure support, SVs advocate for inclusion in pension schemes, benefits akin to those provided to Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW), and free education for their children in private schools.

These recommendations and suggestions from SVs underscore the diverse needs and aspirations of street vendors, emphasizing the importance of holistic support and tailored interventions to empower them economically and improve their quality of life.

The banks have suggested following measures to improve the scheme:

- Banks should also have the authority to issue LOR.
- SVANidhi beneficiary vendors should be trained for digital payments.

- Display Beneficiary of PM SVANidhi Scheme sticker on their stall to recognise them.
- More publicity of the scheme and its benefits is required. Vendors should be educated about the scheme.

Answers to Research Questions

Institutional Arrangements for PM SVANidhi Scheme Implementation in Varanasi.

In order to implement and monitor the scheme, a Steering Committee was established under the chairmanship of the Secretary, HUA, at the Central level. At State/ UT level a Monitoring Committee under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary/ Secretary of Urban Development/ Municipal Administration was established to meet at least every three months. At ULB level, there was a Committee headed by the Municipal Commissioner/ Executive Officer (EO) and supported by the Town Vending Committee to sponsor loan applications and monitor implementation of the scheme. This committee was required to meet every month. .

In Varanasi the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme has been facilitated by robust institutional arrangements and governance initiatives, aimed at ensuring effective outreach, engagement, and support for street vendors. The following key components constitute the institutional framework:

Survey and Registration Process: Teams comprising ULB employees, CSC operators, and TVC members/SVANidhi Mitras were deployed to survey street

vendors across 90 wards of the municipal boundary, chaired by the Ward Councillor. Additionally, support from Self-Help Groups and Association of Livelihood Finance members assisted in surveying and mobilization/documentation of loan details. The creation of a user-friendly web portal by Varanasi Smart City allowed online registration for street vendors, issuance of street vending certificates, and identity cards.

Operational Deployment: Approximately 400 bank branches were strategically divided into 22 clusters, with dedicated teams deployed at both branch and cluster levels, including within the Municipal Corporation, DUDA staff, magistrate, and SVANidhi Mitra. Furthermore, camps for loan distribution were systematically organized in vending zones, wards, and zonal offices, ensuring accessibility and convenience for vendors.

Governance and Oversight: A complaint resolution committee was established to address grievances promptly, overseen by the District Magistrate and Municipal Commissioner. Regular meetings convened under their chairmanship, with participation from District Managers and Bank District Coordinators, ensured streamlined processes and easier availability of loans for SVANidhi applicants. The engagement of high-level authorities, including the Honourable Prime Minister and Chief Minister, further motivated and raised awareness among street vendors through direct interactions and digital onboardings.

Awareness and Training Initiatives: Varanasi undertook a multifaceted approach to raise awareness and provide training. This included organizing numerous

scheme awareness camps, conducting IEC and awareness activities, and facilitating digital literacy camps. Moreover, a range of awareness sessions, workshops, and foot marches were held at district and municipal levels, augmented by digital tools like the Safe Kashi app and WhatsApp groups for stakeholder coordination.

Innovative Strategies: Innovations such as the creation of a dedicated web portal for registration, formation of ward-level teams, and active involvement of Self-Help Groups and Livelihood Federations played a crucial role in achieving scheme targets and facilitating the application process.

Grievance Redressal Mechanisms: To address grievances effectively, formal grievance redressal committees were established, complemented by the deployment of SVANidhi Mitras and district-level officers at bank branches. Manual complaint registers and dedicated WhatsApp groups were utilized for lodging and resolving grievances in a timely manner.

Digital Onboarding and Transactions: A proactive approach towards digital onboarding and transactions was adopted, encompassing early registration exercises, extensive digital training sessions, and collaboration with various payment aggregators and micro-credit organizations to facilitate cashless transactions and enhance financial inclusion among street vendors.

Benefits of the Scheme for Street Vendors in Varanasi

The PM SVANidhi scheme has emerged as a crucial lifeline for street vendors in Varanasi, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings reveal

that a significant proportion of vendors, approximately 48%, faced complete income loss during the pandemic, while those able to continue operations experienced a substantial reduction in income. The scheme's timely intervention provided much-needed capital infusion to these financially distressed vendors, with an average capital availability decrease from ₹ 5294 to ₹ 1272 during COVID, representing a 76% reduction. Notably, 25% of vendors were left with no capital. Consequently, the scheme played a pivotal role in stabilizing their financial situation and preventing further economic deterioration.

Moreover, interviews with street vendors indicate a marked increase in customer footfall and sales, attributed to the PM SVANidhi scheme. Prior to COVID, only 7% of vendors earned ₹ 500 or more per day, whereas post-implementation, this figure surged to 36%. The average income witnessed a substantial rise from ₹ 325 to ₹ 515, reflecting a 58% increase. Most vendors reported an additional 50% increase in income, attributing their financial upliftment to the scheme. Furthermore, the scheme facilitated the alleviation of the debt trap under money lenders, offering vendors a pathway to financial independence and security.

Performance of the Scheme in Varanasi City

Varanasi has demonstrated commendable performance in the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme. As of January 2024, the city has disbursed the first loan to 52,295 beneficiaries, the second loan to 19,386 beneficiaries, and the third loan to 1,748 beneficiaries, showcasing the scheme's widespread reach and impact. Nationally, Varanasi ranks first in terms of loan disbursement percentage, securing the second

position overall. A total of 53,653 vendors have been issued certificates ID cards, with 48,987 loans disbursed against 49,652 sanctioned, surpassing the national average disbursement rate of 97.96% with a rate of 98.66%. Moreover, 50,768 vendors have undergone digital payment training and onboarded digitally, with 40,808 presently digitally active, facilitating an average of 303 transactions per vendor. Additionally, 39,302 vendors have received cashbacks amounting to ₹ 1.48 crore, further incentivizing digital transactions and enhancing financial inclusion among street vendors.

Incorporation of Street Vendors in Digital Payment Systems

The PM SVANidhi scheme has significantly contributed to the integration of street vendors into digital payment systems, catalyzing a paradigm shift in their transactional behavior. Prior to COVID, only 24% of vendors utilized digital transactions, whereas post-implementation, 100% of vendors have embraced digital transactions, with 96% attributing their transition to incentives offered by the scheme. While 33% of vendors still prefer cash transactions, 73% have either embraced digital transactions exclusively or in combination with cash. The scheme's focus on digital literacy and training has been instrumental in facilitating this transition, with 40,808 vendors presently digitally active and 39,302 vendors receiving cashbacks, underscoring the scheme's pivotal role in fostering digital inclusion and empowerment among street vendors in Varanasi.

Enabling Factors and Shortcomings in Implementation of the Scheme

The successful implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi can be attributed to various enabling factors, alongside a few identified shortcomings.

Enabling Factors

Revised Targets and Proactive Monitoring: The central government proactively monitored the scheme, revising targets upwards based on achievements and instituting necessary interventions and corrective measures, thereby ensuring flexibility and adaptability in implementation.

Support from District Urban Development Authority (DUDA): The DUDA, serving as the lead agency for scheme implementation in Varanasi, played a pivotal role in facilitating the process for street vendors. Assistance provided by the DUDA office in online form filing and application processing streamlined the procedure, ensuring minimal barriers to loan access.

Positive Loan Access Experience: Street vendors reported little to no difficulty in availing loans, with the DUDA office and banks offering essential support throughout the process. Notably, none of the surveyed vendors were denied a loan, highlighting the scheme's inclusivity and accessibility.

Bank Support and Adaptation: Banks demonstrated efforts to facilitate loan access, including nominating dedicated staff or counters and conducting personal visits to vending zones. Some banks have even streamlined the loan application process, allowing online submissions, thus enhancing convenience and efficiency for street vendors.

Timely Disbursal and Monitoring: Regular follow-up and monitoring by nodal officers ensured timely disbursal of loans by banks, contributing to the scheme's effectiveness in meeting its objectives.

Shortcomings

Multiple Bank Visits: A significant portion of street vendors, approximately 55%, reported having to make three or more visits to the bank to avail the loan, indicating potential inefficiencies in the loan disbursement process that could be mitigated to enhance vendor experience and streamline operations.

Despite these identified shortcomings, the overall institutional arrangements, governance initiatives, and proactive measures undertaken in Varanasi have significantly contributed to the successful implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme, underscoring its efficacy in supporting the socio-economic empowerment of street vendors in the city.

Lessons Learnt and Recommendations for Policy Interventions

The successful implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi has provided valuable insights and lessons that can inform policy interventions and improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

Regular Monitoring and Flexibility: It is imperative to implement government schemes with regular and rigorous monitoring, coupled with

flexibility to intervene and address challenges promptly, ensuring the scheme's success and effectiveness.

Family Planning Awareness: Given the prevalence of street vendors with three or more children, there is a pressing need to assess and promote family planning awareness among them. A dedicated survey should be conducted, and appropriate measures instituted to promote family planning within the street vendor community.

Encouraging Association Membership: A significant proportion of street vendors are not affiliated with any street vendor associations, potentially leading to inadequate representation of their interests. Efforts should be made to encourage these vendors to join organized associations that can advocate for their needs and concerns effectively.

Streamlining Loan Processes: Address the issue of multiple visits to banks by street vendors for loan approval by transitioning towards online loan sanctioning and disbursement processes. Initiatives such as those implemented by Union Bank of India can serve as models to expedite loan disbursement and enhance vendor convenience.

Scheme Extension and Enhancement: Extend the PM SVANidhi scheme beyond its current deadline and consider introducing additional provisions, such as a fourth loan option of ₹1,00,000, to provide continued support to street vendors and foster their economic empowerment.

Infrastructure Development in Vending Zones: Improve infrastructure in vending zones by providing essential amenities such as water arrangements, street lighting, electricity connections, sanitation facilities, and beautification initiatives to create conducive environments for vendors and customers.

Road Widening and Permanent Vending Zones: Undertake road widening initiatives in vending zones to ensure sufficient space for vending activities and smooth traffic flow. Establish permanent vending zones and allocate shops to street vendors to provide stability and improve their livelihoods.

Stamp Duty Waiver: Waive the requirement of stamp duty for availing loans under the PM SVANidhi scheme to alleviate financial burdens on street vendors and facilitate easier access to credit.

Utilization of SVANidhi Mitra Concept: Explore the application of the SVANidhi Mitra concept in other government schemes to enhance outreach, support, and effectiveness in implementation.

Reducing NPAs and Portal Enhancement: Implement strategies to reduce non-performing assets (NPAs) by enhancing communication and information dissemination to street vendors about the importance of timely loan repayment. Continuously improve the SVANidhi portal by soliciting feedback from stakeholders and incorporating suggestions for enhancements.

Increased Publicity and Vendor Education: Conduct extensive publicity campaigns to raise awareness about the PM SVANidhi scheme and its benefits

among street vendors. Provide education and training programs to ensure vendors fully understand the scheme and how to avail its benefits effectively.

Regular Educational Camps and Awareness Activities: Organize regular camps and awareness activities in vending zones to educate street vendors about the scheme and its procedures, as demonstrated successfully in Varanasi.

Periodic Surveys and Vendor Registration: Conduct periodic surveys and registrations to ensure comprehensive coverage of street vendors and address their evolving needs effectively.

Facilitation of E-commerce Collaboration: Facilitate collaboration between street vendors and e-commerce platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato to expand their reach and income opportunities in the digital marketplace.

Limitations of the Study

In conducting the research on the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi, several limitations were encountered that necessitate careful consideration when interpreting the findings.

One notable constraint was the sample size limitation, attributed to constraints in both time and resources. Given these limitations, the study acknowledges that the findings may not be entirely representative of the entire youth population in Varanasi. This recognition underscores the importance of exercising caution when generalizing the results beyond the study sample.

Moreover, the study was conducted within a restricted timeframe, which posed challenges in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the scheme's long-term impact. The abbreviated duration for data collection and analysis prevented a thorough exploration of the program's outcomes over time.

Furthermore, contextual factors inherent to Varanasi, such as its unique political environment and cultural dynamics, may have influenced the research findings. Consequently, the generalizability of the results to other regions may be limited due to these specific contextual nuances.

Additionally, the study acknowledges potential constraints related to data availability and quality. Insufficient or incomplete data documentation could have restricted the depth of analysis and accuracy of the findings, underscoring the importance of meticulous data collection and.

In light of these limitations, it is essential to approach the findings of the study with caution and to consider them within the context of the constraints and challenges encountered during the research process. By acknowledging these limitations, future research efforts can strive to address these constraints and enhance the validity and reliability of their findings.

Conclusion

The PM SVANidhi scheme has demonstrated significant success in Varanasi, with extensive efforts made to ensure its effective implementation and address the needs of street vendors. Various initiatives were undertaken, including structured

interviews, FGDs with street vendors and bank officials, and grievance redressal mechanisms, to assess the scheme's impact and identify areas for improvement. The findings indicate that the scheme has provided crucial financial support to street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to increased income and digital transactions. However, challenges such as loan defaults and the need for better awareness among vendors remain. Recommendations include extending the scheme, enhancing infrastructure in vending zones, simplifying loan procedures, and promoting family planning awareness among vendors. Overall, the scheme has made significant strides in empowering street vendors and improving their livelihoods, but continuous monitoring and flexibility will be essential for its sustained success.

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Appendix A**PM STREET VENDORS ATMANIRBHAR NIDHI (SVANIDHI)
YOJANA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION : A CASE STUDY OF
VARANASI****QUESTIONNAIRE****Introduction**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns adversely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors. The PM SVANidhi Yojana is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of India in June 2020 with the objective of providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors. The scheme aims to support the livelihoods of street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate their integration into the formal economy. One crucial aspect of the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation is the emphasis on digital payments and good governance, which play a significant role in ensuring transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the scheme's operations.

2. A research is being undertaken to analyse the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojna in Varanasi to include the following:-

- (a) Institutional arrangements being used for implementation of the scheme.
- (b) Benefits of the scheme for the street vendors in Varanasi.
- (c) Performance of the scheme in Varanasi city.
- (d) Role of the scheme in incorporating the street vendors in Digital Payment systems.
- (e) Enabling factors or shortcomings in implementation of the scheme.
- (f) Lessons learnt from the implementation of the scheme in Varanasi to help design policy interventions / changes in the scheme for improving effectiveness of the scheme.

3. This structured interview is being conducted to ascertain the response of the street vendors on the implementation and utilisation of the scheme by them.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Details

4. Details.

- (a) Name of Vendor -
- (b) Phone number -
(if willing to provide for follow-up)
- (c) Male Female
- (d) Age -
- (e) Native Place.
- (i) Town / Village -
- (ii) District -
- (iii) State -
- (f) Married. Yes
 NO
- (g) No of Children -
- (h) No of Family members being supported.
- (i) Children -
- (ii) Parents -
- (iii) Brother / Sister -
- (iv) Others -
- (i) Vocation of
- (i) Spouse -

- (ii) Father -
- (iii) Mother -
- (j) Educational Qualification -
- (k) What are your living arrangements in Varanasi?
- (i) Own house
- (ii) Rented
- (iii) Footpath
- (iv) Relative house
- (v) Friend house
- (vi) Others (Specify)
- (l) What is the distance from your residence to place of work?
- (m) How do you travel from residence to place of work?
- (n) What was your occupation prior to taking up street vending?
- (o) Profession before COVID (Mar 2020)
- (i) Street Vendor Yes No
- (ii) Other (specify) -
- (p) How many years have you been involved in street vending?
- (q) Are you registered for vending in the ULB and given certificate for vending by the Town Vending Committee?
- Yes No
- (r) Type of street vendor

- (i) Stationary
- (ii) Mobile
- (s) Type of goods you sell or services you provide.
- (i)
- (ii)
- (t) **Area of Street Vending.**
- (i) High Income Group houses area
- (ii) Medium Income Group houses area
- (iii) Low Income Group houses area
- (iv) Market
- (v) All types
- (u) How much time do you spend on street vending in a day?
- (v) Are you enrolled with any street vendors association?
Name of association.

Effect of COVID on Business

5. What was your average daily income as a street vendor before the COVID-19 pandemic?
6. How did COVID affect your business of street vending?
- (a) Did not affect.
- (b) Reduced income to 50%
- (c) Reduced income 25% or below.

- (d) No income.
7. Did you temporarily close your business due to the pandemic?
- (a) Yes
- (b) No
8. How much of capital did you have for your business prior to COVID?
9. How much money do you need for your business on a daily business?
10. How much Capital was left with you during COVID?
- (a) All the Capital was available
- (b) No capital was balance
- (c) Bal ₹ _____
11. Who provided the loan / Capital to you prior to COVID for your business?
- (a) Own savings
- (b) Friend
- (c) Family member
- (d) Moneylender
- (e) Banks
- (f) Self help groups
- (g) Others (specify)
12. What was the percentage of interest charged on the capital / loan provided to you?
13. What difficulties did you face in securing capital for your business?

Ans

Awareness About PM SVANidhi Yojana

14. Are you aware of the PM SVANidhi scheme?

(a) Yes

(b) No

15. How did you come to know of PM SVANidhi Yojana

(a) Do not know

(b) Politician

(c) ULB Campaign / Mela

(d) News paper

(e) Radio

(f) TV

(g) Advertisement

(h) Word of Mouth

(i) Friend

(j) Others – Specify

16. Are you aware of the loan amount and incentives provided by PM SVANidhi Yojana?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Ease of Availing Loan

17. Have you availed loan under PM SVANidhi scheme?

Yes No

18. Did you get any assistance from ULB for applying for the scheme? Have you received any assistance or support from local authorities or government agencies during the scheme's implementation? Please describe the role of local authorities or municipal corporations in the implementation of the scheme.

Ans

19. Were you informed about all the features of the scheme?

Yes No

20. If you have applied for the scheme, please share your experience with the application process (ease, challenges, documentation required).

Ans

21. When did you apply for your first loan under PM SVANidhi Yojana?

- (a) Date of application
- (b) Date of sanction
- (c) Date of disbursal

22. What documents were required by bank to be submitted along with application.

- (a)
- (b)
- (c)
- (d) .

23. How many loans have you availed till now and received the money?

- (a) Loan 1 amount –

- (b) Loan 2 amount -
- (c) Loan 3 amount –
24. Were you denied any loan under the scheme?
- Yes No
25. If yes, reasons for being denied the loan
26. Did you face any problem in getting the loan?
- (a) No
- (b) Yes – Indicate the problem
27. From which bank have you availed the SVANidhi loan?
28. Were the banks helpful in distributing the loan to you?
- Yes No
29. What problems did you face in availing the loan from the bank?
- Ans
30. How many visits did you make to the bank to get the loan?

Benefits of Availing Loan Under PM SVANidhi Yojana

31. How has the financial assistance from the scheme benefited your street vending business?
32. Have you noticed an increase in the number of customers or sales since participating in the scheme?
33. What is your average daily income and saving now?
34. What is your average monthly saving?

Incorporating Street Vendors in Digital Economy

35. Since when do you have a bank account?
36. Did you use digital transaction for your business or personal finance prior to COVID?
- (a) Business – Yes No
- (b) Personal finance – Yes No
37. Which mode of payment do you prefer?
- Digital Cash
38. Do you use digital transaction for your business or personal finance now?
- (a) Business – Yes No
- (b) Personal finance – Yes No
39. How much do you find digital payment to be convenient?
- Extremely Convenient Very Easy
- Easy
- Cumbersome Very Cumbersome
40. Did you migrate to digital transaction because of incentives in repayment of loans in the PM SVANidhi Yojana?
- Yes No
41. How much cash back have you received as incentive for incorporating the digital payments in your transactions?
42. How has the use of digital payments impacted your business?
43. How many customers do you get in a day?
44. How many of them pay by:-

- (a) Cash –
- (b) Digital payment -

Shortcomings of the Scheme and Recommendations

- 45. What are your expectations from the government?
- 46. What challenges or shortcomings have you encountered during the scheme's implementation?
- 47. What should be done to improve the PM SVANidhi Yojana?

Misc

- 48. What problems do you face in street vending or doing your business?
- 49. Are you harassed by the police or the municipality?
- 50. Do you have to pay bribe for street vending?
- 51. What help can the government provide to street vendors
- 52. Did you find the amount under the scheme adequate?

Yes No

Appendix B**PM STREET VENDORS ATMANIRBHAR NIDHI (SVANIDHI)
YOJANA AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION : A CASE STUDY OF
VARANASI****QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BANKS****(Minimum 5 Banks)****Introduction**

53. The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns adversely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors. The PM SVANidhi Yojana is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of India in June 2020 with the objective of providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors. The scheme aims to support the livelihoods of street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate their integration into the formal economy. One crucial aspect of the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation is the emphasis on digital payments and good governance, which play a significant role in ensuring transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the scheme's operations.

54. A research is being undertaken to analyse the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi to include the following:-

- (a) Institutional arrangements being used for implementation of the scheme.
- (b) Benefits of the scheme for the street vendors in Varanasi.
- (c) Performance of the scheme in Varanasi city.
- (d) Role of the scheme in incorporating the street vendors in Digital Payment systems.
- (e) Enabling factors or shortcomings in implementation of the scheme.
- (f) Lessons learnt from the implementation of the scheme in Varanasi to help design policy interventions / changes in the scheme for improving effectiveness of the scheme.

55. This structured interview is being conducted to ascertain the response of the banks on the implementation and utilisation of the scheme.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Details

1. Bank Name:
2. Branch Location (Varanasi):
3. Contact Person (if applicable):

General Information

4. How long has your bank been participating in the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi?

Ans

5. What is the total number of street vendor loan applications your bank has processed under the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi?

Ans

6. Are there specific officers or departments within your bank dedicated to handling PM SVANidhi scheme applications? If yes, please provide details.

Ans

7. Please describe the steps taken by your bank to facilitate loan applications from street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme.

Ans

8. What is the average time taken by your bank to process and approve a loan application under the PM SVANidhi scheme?

Ans

9. Has your bank established any special measures or procedures to expedite the loan application process for street vendors during the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, please describe these measures.

10. What are the eligibility criteria for street vendors to avail loans under the PM SVANidhi Scheme?

Ans

11. What kind of documentation is typically required from street vendors when applying for a loan under the PM SVANidhi scheme through your bank?

Ans

Loan Disbursement and Payment Collection

12. Please describe the process of loan disbursement to approved street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme.

Ans

13. What are the common challenges faced in processing PM SVANidhi loan applications?

14. Ans

15. Has your bank experienced any challenges in disbursing loans to street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme? If yes, please elaborate on the challenges and any measures taken to address them.

16. Ans

17. How do you ensure the timely disbursement of PM SVANidhi loans to eligible vendors?

Ans

18. How does your bank ensure that the disbursed loans are being used by street vendors for the intended purposes outlined in the scheme?

Ans

19. What is the repayment structure for PM SVANidhi loans?

Ans

20. What measures have you taken to ensure timely repayment of PM SVANidhi loans?

Ans

21. What is the default rate for PM SVANidhi loans in your bank?

Ans

22. Are there any issues or challenges your bank has encountered in the collection of loan repayments from street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme? If yes, please describe these challenges.

Ans

23. Does your bank have a tie-up with urban local bodies for the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi? If yes, please explain the nature of this partnership and its impact.

Ans

Experience and Feedback

24. From your bank's perspective, how would you rate the ease of availing loans under the PM SVANidhi scheme for street vendors in Varanasi?

- (a) Very Easy
- (b) Easy
- (c) Somewhat Easy
- (d) Difficult
- (e) Very Difficult

25. What has been the overall experience of your bank in participating in the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi? Please highlight any significant achievements or challenges.

Ans

26. Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme, particularly from a banking perspective?

Ans

27. How can banks play a more proactive role in supporting street vendors through the PM SVANidhi Scheme? Is there any additional information or feedback you would like to provide regarding your bank's involvement in the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi?

Ans

Thank you for your cooperation and valuable insights. Your responses will contribute to our research on the implementation of the PM SVANidhi scheme in Varanasi.

Appendix C**LIST OF STREET VENDORS PARTICIPATED IN FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSION ON 31 JAN 2024 AT VARANASI**

Sr. No.	Street Vendor Name	Mobile No
1	Mantosh Manjhi	8090236056
2	Surendra Kumar Rajbhar	8175861248
3	Shila Devi	7379784706
4	Shivkumar Jaiswal	9336360521
5	Ajay Kumar	7523015407
6	Subhash Kumar Bhardawaj	9889876687
7	Sunil Kumar Keshari	6306372485
8	Rajkumar	8953535521
9	SHASHI BHUSHAN	9415489743
10	Pappu Raw	9935446480
11	Pooja Ramrakhyani	7505459574
12	Manish Kumar Keshri	9838981390
13	Suraj Kumar	7236949280
14	Swet Gupta	7678827459
15	Vijay Kumar	9140147446
16	Vishnu Shankar Bharadwaj	8052746190
17	Meera Devi	7398518958
18	Lakkhu Sonkar	8726261166
19	Arvind Kumar Prajapati	8318083800
20	Pramila	8381829760

Appendix D**LIST OF BANK OFFICIALS PARTICIPATED IN FOCUS GROUP
DISCUSSION ON 31 JAN 2024 AT VARANASI**

Sr. No.	Name	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Bank Name</u>
1	Shri Prabhat Sinha	LDM	Union Bank of India
2	Shri Vivek Pandey	Manager	Union Bank of India
3	Shri Shanuvendra	DC	State Bank of India
4	Shri Subodh Singh	DC	Bank of Baroda
5	Shri pawan Gupta	DC	Bank of India
6	Shri Ajeet Kumar	Senior Manager	Baroda U.P. Bank
7	Shri Abhishek Shukla	DC	Cashpor Micro Credit
8	Smt. Pooja Praneta	DC	Indian Bank
9	Shri Rohit Singh	DC	Punjab National Bank
10	Shri Amrish Yadav	DC	Utkarsh Small Finance Bank
11	Shri Man Singh	DC	SATYA Micro Capital Limited
12	Shri Amandeep kaur	Branch Manager	Bank of Maharashtra
13	Shri Arvind Suman	DC	Canara Bank
14	Smt. Rashmi	DC	Central Bank of India
15	Shri Srinivas sharma	DC	Indian Overseas Bank
16	Shri MK Mishra	DC	Punjab and Sind Bank
17	Shri Ajeet Kumar Mishra	DC	UCO Bank

Appendix E

प्रेषक,

आयुक्त,
वाराणसी मण्डल वाराणसी।

सेवा में,

राजेश सिहाग
ब्रिगेडियर,
रक्षा मंत्रालय।

पत्रांक 1585 / वै0 सहायक-आयुक्त-2024

दिनांक: 23 फरवरी, 2024

महोदय,

कृपया अवगत कराना है कि आप द्वारा पीएम स्वीनिधी योजना के संबंध में एक भ्रमण जनपद-वाराणसी में किया गया है। उक्त भ्रमण में योजना से संबंधित कई बिन्दुओं पर केस स्टडी करते हुए इसकी आख्या चाही गयी है।

अतः वांछित आख्या संलग्न कर आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु प्रेषित है।

भवदीय,

(कौशल रोज शर्मा)
आयुक्त,
वाराणसी मण्डल, वाराणसी।

**PM STREET VENDORS ATMANIRBHAR NIDHI (SVANIDHI) YOJANA AND
ITS IMPLEMENTATION : A CASE STUDY OF VARANASI**

QUESTIONNAIRE : SHRI KAUSHAL RAJ SHARMA (IAS), DC VARANASI

Introduction

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns adversely impacted the livelihoods of street vendors. The PM SVANidhi Yojana is a flagship initiative launched by the Government of India in June 2020 with the objective of providing affordable working capital loans to street vendors. The scheme aims to support the livelihoods of street vendors affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate their integration into the formal economy. One crucial aspect of the PM SVANidhi Yojana's implementation is the emphasis on digital payments and good governance, which play a significant role in ensuring transparency, efficiency, and inclusivity in the scheme's operations.

2. Varanasi was awarded the PM Excellence Award for Digital Payments and good governance in April 2022 for PM SVANidhi Yojana for the year 2021 while you were the DM and spearheaded the scheme.. I am undertaking a research to analyse the implementation and performance of the PM SVANidhi Yojana in Varanasi.

Q1. What help was provided to the Street Vendors during Covid-19 1st Wave Lock Down.

Ans.

- Help During COVID-19:
 - DBT of Rs. 1000 by State Govt as one time help.
- Door to Door Essential Commodities Service:
 - Fruit & vegetable vendors mapped with Wards (400+ vendors).
 - Grocery items at door step.
 - Assured prices to citizens.
 - Information shared on Safe Kashi APP.
 - PA System- Used to broadcast while D2D delivery

- Few Vendors registered on online Portal kiranalinker.com.

Q2. Could you tell us about the PM SVANidhi scheme and how did you go about implementing the scheme in the initial phases?

Ans. The PM SVANidhi scheme was inaugurated on June 1, 2020. Under this scheme, street vendors who have been engaged in vending activities on or before March 24 are provided with a working capital loan of Rs. 10,000 without any guarantee by banks. This facility has been made available to all street vendors as per the revised guidelines of the scheme. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, the economic crisis deepened for the street vendors in the district, making their livelihoods quite difficult. In such times, the aforementioned scheme proved to be a boon for them.

PM SVANidhi management and monitoring:

Firstly, under the chairmanship of the Municipal Commissioner, a committee was formed at the municipal level for the official management, monitoring, and implementation of loan applications. The committee included prominent members such as the District Manager of TVC, members of micro-banking, and members of the regional committee, among others. Monthly meetings of the committee were held to formulate action plans and initiate applications.

- Progress Reviews through Physical Meetings
 - Bi monthly by Divisional Commissioner
 - Fortnightly by District Magistrate
 - Weekly by Municipal Commissioner
 - Daily review by Project Officer DUDA and Zonal Officers
 - Monthly Bankers Coordination Meetings
 - Trimonthly DLCC Banks Meetings
- Continuous monitoring Using
 - WhatsApp Groups
 - Virtual platforms meetings

Identification and Application Camps for Street Vendors:

A team of three members (ULB employee, CSC operator, TVC member/SVANidhi Mitra) was formed for surveying street vendors in 90 wards of the municipal boundary under the chairmanship of the Ward Councillor, with coordination and support received from social workers.

Support was obtained through Self Help Group/Association of Livelihood Finance members in conducting surveys and mobilization/documentation in loan details.

A web portal (<https://varanasismartcity.gov.in/e-services/estreet-vendor>) was created through Varanasi Smart City for the registration of identified street vendors, facilitating online registration for them and issuing street vending certificates and identity cards.

Approximately 400 bank branches were divided into 22 clusters, and dedicated teams were deployed on a branch-wise basis, including cluster-wise deployment in the municipal corporation, DUDA staff, magistrate, and SVANidhi Mitra.

Camps for loan distribution were organized in vending zones, wards, and zonal offices. Loan application camps in vending zones and special loan distribution camps in banks were organized every Friday.

Awareness marches with street vendors, web meetings, market-wise meetings, and mobilization of street vendor associations were conducted.

A complaint resolution committee was formed to register complaints and resolve them on a daily basis.

The District Magistrate and Municipal Commissioner ensured the distribution of pending applications by visiting bank branches.

Continuous dialogue was established by the Honorable Prime Minister, Chief Minister, and local representatives to encourage increased interest among street vendors in the scheme, leading to active participation.

SVANidhi Mitra were selected through street vending committees, city-level committees, and local street vending organizations.

Meeting with Bank Representatives for Loan Distribution:

Under the chairmanship of the District Magistrate and Municipal Commissioner, a meeting was convened every month with the District Manager and the Bank District Coordinator, resulting in easier availability of loans for SVANidhi applicants, and Varanasi district achieved its target. Honourable Prime Minister and Chief Minister interacted with vendors, encouraging them, and awareness was raised among street vendors by organizing camps for digital on boarding and digital transactions.

Second and Third Loan Distribution:

Under the government's SVANidhi scheme, provision has been made for a second loan of Rs. 20,000/- upon repayment of the first loan, and a third loan of Rs. 50,000/- upon repayment of the second loan.

Background of Vending in Varanasi:

Estimated Vendors Appx 37,500 as per MoHUA estimate

In Past till January 2020

Only 1538 registered active out of 3272

Only 354 Vendors given Vending ID/Certificates

No authentic data for rest of Vendors

Deprived of Social Benefits

Organised Vending started from June 2020

Combined financial pool created with VNN

66 Vending Zones Created (July 2020 – Dec 2021)

Unified Signage, Smart Vending Carts

SVs covered under PM SVANidhi and then from "Svanidhi se Samriddhi"

Prosperity through SVANidhi:

After benefiting from the PM SVANidhi scheme, beneficiaries were contacted through vending zone and camp mediums to understand their current situation and family status, and profiling was carried out through a computer operator.

Following profiling, a committee of nodal officers from relevant departments was formed to facilitate beneficiaries' enrolment in other schemes.

Zone-wise camps were organized to facilitate the processing of applications from eligible and ineligible beneficiaries by officials/employees of the relevant departments.

Achievements:

So far, the first loan has been distributed to 52,295 beneficiaries, the second loan to 19,368 beneficiaries, and the third loan to 1,748 beneficiaries.

40,808 street vendors are conducting digital transactions, out of which 39,302 street vendors are also receiving cashback. The average transaction per digitally active street vendor in the district is 303.

Approximately Rs. 1.48 crore cashback has been received through digital transactions, out of approximately Rs. 15.82 crore transacted digitally by digitally active street vendors.

66 vending zones have been identified in 08 zones of the city, with 2,883 street vendors shifted to these zones, and further identification of new vending zones is being carried out through the municipal corporation.

The location for a street food court has been selected from each zone in the city.

Q3. What are the good governance initiatives / activities undertaken for making the scheme successful?

Ans.

- 1518 Scheme awareness Camps.
- IEC and awareness activities.
- Survey of Street Vendors.
- 765 camps for PM SVANidhi applications.
- 1344 loan disbursement camps.
- 168 digital literacy camps.
- 168 QR Code, Sale Certificates and ID distribution camps.

Street Vendors welfare activities undertaken under Good Governance:

- Vending fees waived off for 6 months due to Covid waves for all Street Vendors of Varanasi Municipal Corporation
- Online Portal made by Varanasi Smart City to facilitate Online Applications by self or by Jan Sewa Kendra during Covid waves.
- To promote sale during Covid waves Street Vendors and Auto Rickshaw Association were brought together and issued Passes for street sales.

- Organizing Deepotsav Mela and other fairs to promote sales by Street Vendors.
- Identification of new Vending Zones and providing Model Carts.
- List of Vending Zones provided to Local Police to prevent harassment.
- SVANidhi Mitra appointed Bank branch wise to help Street Vendors.
- Formal grievance redressal mechanism.
- District level Officers and Nagar Nigam Employees appointed Bank branch wise to solve the problems of Vendors.
- WhatsApp groups of all Stakeholders created for coordination.

Q4. What positive changes have been seen in the Street Vending Ecosystem since the roll out of PM SVANidhi for accommodation of Vendors in the Vending Zones/Ease of doing business?

Ans.

Businesses of beneficiaries who had completely shut down due to the lockdown have been restarted with the help of the PM SVANidhi scheme.

Banks recognized borrowers for the first time without any conditions, which increased their confidence.

Issuance of identity and vending certificates has made it easier to organize street vendors in vending zones.

Street vendors have been covered under Social Security Schemes.

Distribution of identity cards and conducting digital transactions have boosted the self-esteem of street vendors.

Q5. What are the IEC and awareness activities which were undertaken? What is the impact of the IEC messaging initiatives in 100% coverage of Street Vendors and in adoption of digital transactions?

Ans.

IEC and Awareness Activities Undertaken:

- 818 physical and virtual meetings of Street Vendors.
- 795 market wise meetings of Town Vending Committees and Ward members.
- Announcements by Municipal Corporation's 40 PA Systems at crossings, 150 waste collection vehicles PA systems and E-Rickshaws.

- 66 Flexi Hoardings and Digital Display Hoardings at prominent places.
- Pamphlets distribution and News Paper Advertisements.
- Safe Kashi App.
- 5 WhatsApp groups of Stakeholders and Vendors.
- 95 Awareness Workshops at Municipal Corporation Zonal Offices.
- 723 Awareness sessions through Self Help Groups (SHGs), Area Level Federation (ALF), City Level Federation (CLF).
- 23 Foot Awareness marches.
- Projection of Scheme at prominent functions, trade fairs.
- Virtual interactions by Hon'ble PM (2) and Hon'ble CM (5).

After the distribution of loans under PM SVANidhi, banks provided each beneficiary with a QR code and also provided training through Penny Transaction.

38,113 street vendors are conducting digital transactions and receiving cashback.

QR codes have been made available to 90% of street vendors, and for those who haven't received QR codes, training is being conducted through Digital Payment Aggregators.

Q6. What are the innovations being adopted for achieving targets under the Scheme? A brief on the implementation at ground level may be provided.

Ans.

A web portal has been created through Varanasi Smart City for the registration of street vendors, where any vendor can register online. (<https://varanasismartcity.gov.in/e-services/estreet-vendor>)

After verification of registration, street vendors are issued a street vending certificate and an identity card.

Teams of three members are formed at the ward level to facilitate registration, application, and loan distribution.

Camps are set up cluster-wise in 05 zones of the city for application and loan distribution.

Self-Help Groups and Active Livelihood Federations play a proactive role in identifying street vendors and assisting them in loan applications.

Q7. What are the grievance redressal mechanisms that have been instituted?

Ans.

- Formal 3 members Grievance Redressal Committee under Municipal Commissioner to see all Grievance Redressal efforts.
- Identification of 100 SVANidhi Mitra and their Bank branch wise deployment for Grievance Redressal.
- District level Officers appointed Bank branch wise to solve the problems of Vendors.
- Nagar Nigam Employees appointed Bank branch wise to solve the problems of Vendors.
- Manual Complaint Register since June 2020 to lodge all Grievances and Complaints of Vendors and dispose them in Time bound manner.
- WhatsApp groups with all Stakeholders for coordination and solving the complaints.
- Thursday camps each Week to lodge all Grievances of Vendors and dispose them.

Q 8. How has the Scheme ensured dignity of Street Vending profession and legal recognition of Street Vendors as per the Street Vendors Act, 2014. How has been the experience of SVs with respect to ease of accessing loan, role of municipal administration, banks, digital payment aggregators etc.

Ans.

Street vendors identified through surveys conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014; were provided with identity cards and street vending certificates, thus ensuring their legal recognition.

The issuance of identity cards and street vending certificates to street vendors became easier with the assistance of the aforementioned Act.

Q9. What efforts were undertaken for digital on boarding and transactions?

Ans.

- Early start of exercise for Registration.

- 12613 registrations till July 2020.
- Timely provision of ID Card / vending certificate/ QR Code.
- 24 Dedicated teams for eKYC, Aadhar & Mobile linkage.
- Co-ordination with Banks, Bank Business Correspondents.
- Mapping vendors with banks through KICCC based teams.
- Digital trainings by Peni Transaction, Bank BCs.
- Digital On boarding by Collaborating with Payment Aggregators:
 - Banks
 - Phone Pe, Bharat Pe, PayTM
 - Micro Credit Organisations

Q10. How was eGovernance utilised for implementation of the scheme or promotion of street vendors.

- Varanasi has Country's highest No. of Vendors Registration and Sales through SWIGGY.
- Food Vendors collaboration with SWIGGY and ZOMATO.
- Food Vendors collaboration with Training for SWIGGY Mobile App.
- Collaboration for
 - Sales Promotions.
 - Enhanced Reach to customers.
- Dedicated portal developed by Varanasi Smart City.
- Registrations, Request for LoR, ID Card generation; Request for Loan through this portal. <https://varanasismartcity.gov.in/e-services/estreet-vendor>
- Dedicated teams of 12 Personnel deployed at Integrated Command & Control centre to operate this.
- Smart Kashi App also equipped with this facility

Q11. What promotion activities have been undertaken to promote Street Vendor's sales?

Ans.

- Support for Street vendors sales through 7 Days Mela before Deepawali.
- 272 Vendor Stalls Deployed.
- Rs. 39 Lac total sales.
- Kids Play area.
- Food Zone.
- Cultural Programs.

- Music, Dance, Play & Laser Show.

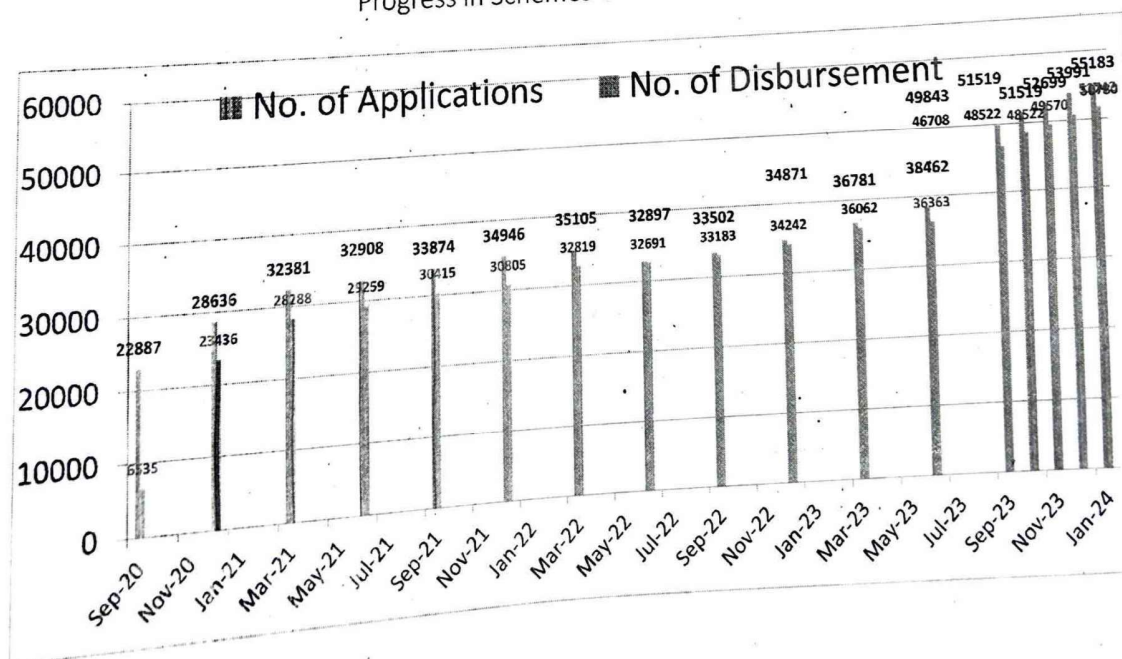
Q12. What outcomes have been achieved by Varanasi in the implementation of the PM SVANidhi Scheme?

Ans.

- Nationally Ranked #1 in % of Loan Disbursement
- Over All Ranking- 2nd
- 53653 Vendors Certificate ID Card issued
- 48987 loan disbursed against 49652 sanctioned
- Easy access to credit
- National Average - 97.96%
- Varanasi Average - 98.89%
- 999 Vendors on SWIGGY/ZOMATO
- 23+ Lac sales generated
- 50768 Vendors Digital onboarding
- 50768 Vendors Digital Payment Training
- 40808 Digitally active(80.38%), State Rank- 1st
- 303 per Vendor Average Transaction
- 39302 Receiving Cashbacks amounting 119.28 Lac
- 15.82 Cr. Total Digital Transaction.

Progress in Scheme:

Progress in Schemes Over Time



Status of Loans:

Sr.No	PMSVANidhi Report	
	Loan Term/Activity	Progress till 20.02.2023
1	Total Application	55258
2	1st loan disbursed	52295
3	1st Loans Repaid	24243
4	2nd loans Disbursed	19368
5	2nd Loans Repaid	2440
6	Total 3rd loans Disbursed	1748
7	Total digitally active	40808
8	Total No. of Transaction	15.95 Cr.
9	Total cash back	147.55 Lakh
10	Interest Subsidy	<u>110.00 Lakh</u>
11	Average Transaction per Vendor	303

Details of Vending Zones:

Vending Zone	
Identified Vending Zone	66
Active Vending Zone	53
Inactive Vending Zone	13
NOC From Traffic Police	23
Vending Zone Capacity	2450
Model Cart Provided by MSME by ONGC	100
Vending Zones Beautification	14
Barber's Kits Distribution	10