

(Original Kannada text on letter head also attached with email)

Translation of the submissions on draft Ecommerce Policy made by Bengaluru Jilla Beedhi Vyapari Sanghatnegala Okkuta

To,
The Secretary,
Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
New Delhi

March 30, 2019

Copy to,
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Karnataka

Dear Madam/Sir ,

Sib : Our suggestions and objections on the draft Ecommerce Policy

Bengaluru Jilla Beedhi Vyapari Sanghatnegala Okkuta, is KArnataka's only registered federation of street vendor unions. Our members ocnsist of street vendors unions of different parts of Bangalore

Street vendors are an important part of our urban areas. We make good quality goods and services accessible at low prices to the urban poor and middle class. But Street Vendors always fear the threat of evictions. Even after the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihoods and regulation of Street Vending)Act, 2014 has been enacted, evictions continue.

While we are already in trouble , we are further troubled by the losses caused due to ecommerce companies. We cannot match the deep discounts they offer. Our business is declining day by day. In this situation we are pained to see that the draft ecommerce policy seeks to encourage ecommerce in India. In the draft policy, you talk of providing a level playing field to foreign and indian ecommerce companies. But we street vendors are not even able to enter this field. Ecommerce has hurt our business badly. We have suffered more due to foreign companies with deep pockets giving big discounts but we have suffered loss of business due to indian companies too.

Whether a foreign ecommerce company does good business or an indian ecommerce company, how does it benefit us poor street vendors? Therefore any efforts by you to further encourage ecommerce will only hurt us and its important you explain to us how you will stop losses we are incurring. Your department is for the promotion of internal trade , therefore you must bring out a policy to encourage our business as well.

Your policy also speaks of Data. It says data will be as important as oil and all business will be data-centric. It also says data is a national assett and is like mines. We dont understand much about data. But we understand mines. Earlier, we were of the opinion that it is best for mines to stay with the government control. But of late we have seen that nationwide, the policy is to allow private people to exploit mines. therefore communities are now talking of communities themselves retaining ownership of minerals below the earth.

As far as data is concerned, data about us should not be only with government or only with private companies. Why do others need to have information about us? Private companies profiting from our data like How much business we do, what websites we browsed on our phones, whether we purchased anything is wrong. that data being only with the government is also wrong. We ask that there should be widespread discussions about data ownership, concept of data in all indian languages in a manner that ordinary people can understand. Data policy should be finalised only after this.

The draft policy talks of regulation. You say that there should be regulations such that no forms monopolies and oligopolies. But there is no regulation of existing violations by large companies like amazon and flipkart who freely violate regulations and offer deep discounts etc. When you don't act against this, how do we believe you? You please act on existing violations and show us how regulation actually can be done or not.

The demands we place before you are -

1)Your department should meet and speak to street vendor unions about the losses we have suffered due to eCommerce, GST . Please aLekha KG
9686757053

On behalf o Bengaluru Jilla Beedhi Vyapari Sanghatanegala Okkuta
Iso set up a commission or committee to look into how livelihoods are badly affected in street vending and small retail and prepare a report.

2)the draft eCommerce policy should be translated into all Indian languages and there must be public discussions about this, only then can it be finalised

3)Discuss with us how you can steps to improve our business, please release a draft policy on how business of street vendors can be improved. This should cover accessible credit, ease of access to goods and improvement of basic facilities at our markets.

If you think only of encouraging eCommerce companies and not about us, it will be a grave injustice to crores of street vendors and their families. Encourage us, dont cheat us. We believe that our government will protect the street vendors, of the working class of this country.

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Lekha KG
9686757053
On behalf of Bengaluru Jilla Beedhi Vyapari Sanghatanegala Okkuta