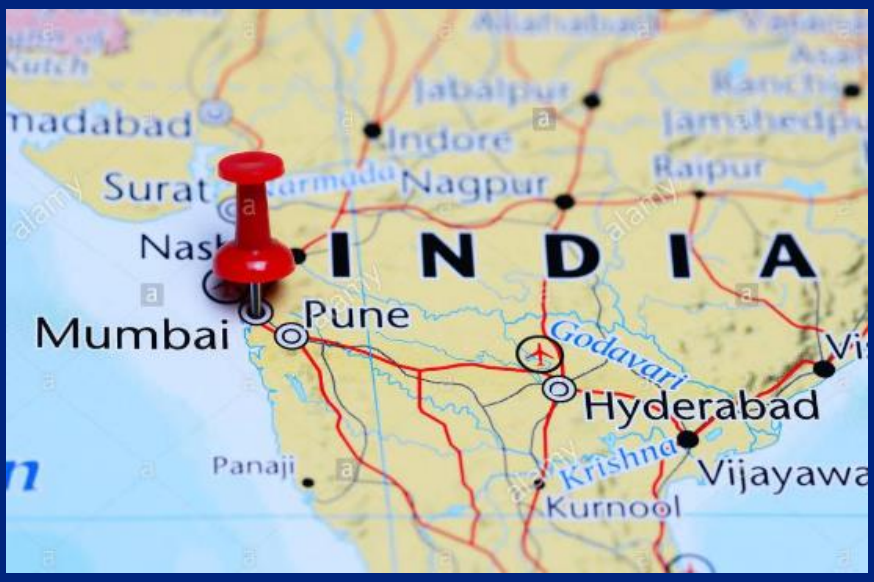

Policy Options for Pune Municipal Corporation

for supporting citizens to eat nutritious diets when outside of their homes

This report lays out a series of policy options that could be considered by Pune Municipal Corporation in India to support the citizens of Pune to make healthy food choices when they are eating outside of their homes

Anna Taylor,
The Food Foundation

2019

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Introduction

This paper lays out a series of policy options that could be considered by Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) in India to support the citizens of Pune to make healthy food choices when they are eating outside of their homes, whether at school, at work, on the move, or when eating in a hotel or restaurant. These proposals are drawn from an initial workshop with stakeholders in July 2018 and follow-up meetings with them in March 2019.

The paper considers how each of these options might be delivered in a manner that draws on smart technology. The options were compiled from detailed discussions with PMC officers in various departments (Encroachment Removal, Sky Signs, Urban Community Development, Education and Women and Child Development) and key stakeholders who work closely with PMC. They demonstrate the extent of power municipal authorities in India have to influence the food environment of their citizens.

This paper was produced as part of the process of developing a partnership between Birmingham, United Kingdom (UK), and Pune on Smart food and nutrition approaches. Both cities are exploring which policies they wish to pursue to help their citizens eat healthy and sustainable diets. The partnership is being supported by the Food Foundation with funding from the Tata Trusts and the UK Department for International Development through its Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+) programme.

1. Street and Hotel Food: How Can It Be Made Healthier and Safer?

1.1 Policies currently in place

Food businesses require a number of different licences to trade, including a Shop and Act Licence (issued by PMC), the licence to serve food (issued by the Food and Drug Administration/FDA), a solid waste management licence and others.

Figure 1. Wada Pav—a famous Pune snack.

The FDA is the authority responsible for implementing the Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 and Rules and Regulations 2011. Licences are issued on a two-tier basis depending on the size of the business. Small businesses simply have to register, whilst larger businesses require a licence to sell food. Between 2011 and early 2018, The FDA issued 21,356 licences and a further 37,237 small businesses were registered in Pune City. The Administration gathers samples from businesses to check food safety and responds to consumer reports about the quality of food. Over the period April 2017 to April 2018, a total of 1,410 inspections were made. The FDA has also been doing considerable awareness-raising amongst street vendors. The

Administration is currently introducing a new hygiene rating scheme (with 50 criteria) and is inspecting 1,000 restaurants and hotels to issue them a rating. Of these, a further 250 will be declared as responsible places to eat based on six criteria, which go beyond hygiene and include the nutritional quality of the food offered.

PMC has a responsibility to implement the Street Food and Protection of Livelihoods Act 2015 and works to protect street vendors from actions that may disrupt their business opportunities. PMC requires all street vendors (both mobile and static, and regardless of what they sell) to register online. Currently, 21,000 are registered (all businesses, not just food businesses) and each has a geotag; approximately 5% of these are mobile (last surveyed in 2014 and due to be re-surveyed in 2019)[a]. An estimated 5,000 to 6,000 are not registered. PMC requires all street food vendors to trade only within 50 designated food zones across the city; in turn, PMC provides designated space and amenities for them to trade successfully. PMC convenes the Town Vending Committee, which periodically meets to support the implementation of PMC objectives and includes representation from a number of street vendors as well as their trade associations.

1.2 Policy option 1: Stop dangerous use of cooking oil

There is a concern that the same oil is used repeatedly to fry food ('it looks black'). Oil that has been repeatedly used, or heated to high temperatures, contains high levels of trans fats, which are associated with increased risk of heart disease, insulin resistance and diabetes (Micha & Mozaffarian, 2009). Oil should not be reused more than two or three times. If oil is fried continuously for about two hours, then it should not be reused for frying.

Is there a Smart solution?

- Consider whether 'gutter oil' can be sold by food businesses to recycling companies as in the United Kingdom or used to fuel trucks as in Shanghai (Shanghai.gov.cn, n.d.).
- Investigate the feasibility of whether sensors can be used/built into cooking pots to communicate to consumers the likely levels of trans fats in the oil.

1.3 Policy option 2: Develop a certification for street and hotel food for health and safety and/or calorie labelling of menus

Currently, it is difficult for consumers to distinguish between vendors who are selling safe and healthy food and those who are not. Developing a consumer-facing certification scheme for health and hygiene would need to build on the FDA's work in this space. By making it consumer-facing, consumers will begin to recognise the certificate as a quality mark. This process could also involve mandatory calorie labelling on hotel and restaurant menus.

Is there a Smart solution?

Vendors could display quick response (QR) codes, to allow digital access to the health and hygiene rating of each vendor.

a. For more details, please see https://gis.pmc.gov.in/.

1.4 Policy option 3: Provide training on improving the healthiness and safety of street food

Street food is generally high in fat, sugar and/or salt, of low nutrient diversity and may also be unsafe. Stakeholders suggest street food snacking is replacing conventional/traditional meal times.

Skills training could be offered to existing vendors and those who want to enter the marketplace. Young people interested in food issues could be encouraged to take part in the training, to increase its reach into slum areas. The training could be launched via a city-wide, celebrity chef–endorsed competition. Citizens could also be engaged by nominating their favourite healthy street food vendors or participating in a street food festival offering healthier options.

Is there a Smart solution?

Work with online ordering platforms to include greater filtering options for healthier options and calorie labelling (see below).

1.5 Policy option 4: Stimulate a wider range of healthy options

Licensing could be more directly linked to the healthiness of the food offered. Some stakeholders suggest banning 'unhealthy vendors', but as the marketplace is saturated and informal, this would be challenging. Providing vendors with incentives to sell healthier foods is preferable.

Key actions could include identifying a healthy versus unhealthy list of street foods. Price matching and consumer taste testing may be required. The FDA may be able to support this. Recipe development may be required to modify popular street foods and make them healthier (e.g. gradually reducing sugar and salt). Licensing could in time be linked to vendors selling healthier options.

Is there a Smart solution?

- Create an online recipe checker where vendors can insert the details of their recipe; it could provide calorie counts as well as other markers of healthiness and suggestions for how the recipe could be made healthier.
- Use social media and collaborate with online influencers to generate greater demand for healthier options.

2. Food Retailers in Low-Income Communities

2.1 Policies currently in place

The partnership conducted a very rapid assessment of food available in the Mandai (market) and adjacent slum areas. Fruits and vegetables in slum communities tended to be of poorer quality with fewer choices offered. Savoury and sweet snacks were very inexpensive (5 rupees); and whilst comparable to the cost of bananas, were considerably less expensive than apples and other fruits.

Figure 2. Maggi noodles for 10 rupees.

The Encroachment Removal Department has geotags for all food vendors and data showing 8,044 fruit and vegetable vendors, 3,978 food vendors, 621 ice cream vendors and 243 tea vendors.

The Markets Department has reported that, in addition to the 30 Mandais across the city, 70 other markets are held on particular days of the week. These markets let farmers sell directly to consumers, allowing them to receive greater profit from their products (because of the absence of the middle man's margin) and offering consumers a more competitive price. PMC's ambition is to grow the number of these markets.

2.2 Policy option 1: Stimulate the supply of healthier retail food

Crisps (chips), snacks and Maggi noodles are popular choices in low-income communities. Fresh produce and home cooking are slowly being replaced by these choices. Healthier alternatives need to enter the marketplace, and businesses need to be offered incentives to offer and promote these options.

Taxes can be considered on unhealthy foods (such as sugar or salt) (Hagenaars, Jeurissen, & Klazinga, 2017), and businesses can be stimulated to develop new healthy products that are affordable, attractive and tasty for people on a low income.

Is there a Smart solution?

Smart solutions will reside in bringing together businesses with public policymakers to identify the best instruments to support companies to develop new products. This could include business incubation, research and development investment, etc.

2.3 Policy option 2: Set up a smart card/healthy voucher scheme for low-income mothers to encourage the purchase of fresh fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetable consumption may be lower amongst poorer socioeconomic groups, and targeted interventions to support increased fruit and vegetable purchasing could be considered. In the United Kingdom, the Healthy Start scheme provides fruit and vegetable vouchers for low-income mothers of young children, and in the United States, the national government releases funds when local authorities also make funds available for low-income groups to purchase fresh produce from shops and farmers markets.

Is there a Smart solution?

This proposal could build on existing work using smart cards to make benefits transfers.

2.4 Policy option 3: Establish 'crop shops' in slum areas

Eighty percent of Indian farmers have a smallholding of two hectares or less (Nagayets, 2005). On their own, they are not able to earn a sustainable living from farming, but by aggregating their produce, they have a better opportunity to earn a living. The aim of the co-operative movement was to support farmers to come together, organise a collection point for their produce and transport to an outlet for sale. Progress setting up farming co-operatives was slow until the Companies Act in India permitted producer groups to come together to form a company. A minimum of ten members is permitted, and there is no maximum. Farming co-operatives are registered under the Companies Act and answer to the government for audit, etc. There are about 4,000 co-operative groups in India—50% of which have more than 100 members.

The principle for the farmer-producers organisational group is to ensure management of the supply chain to the market. Members (farmers) contributing produce are also company shareholders. They, therefore, receive dividends (i.e. whatever profit is made is distributed). In some states, 5,000 farmers are aggregating under the same co-operative (Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, for example), and these are highly profitable.

The Pune crop shop is an example of an outlet supplied by a co-operative. Ganesh Sunone is an Assistant Commissioner at PMC and originally from a farming background. The Lonar Agro Producers Group is a co-operative of 100 farmers based in and around Ganesh's village, about 400 km from Pune. Ganesh set up the crop shop in the complex where he lives, called Pebbles II Society. Societies are large apartment complexes, which are home to hundreds of middle-class families. This particular complex includes a sports centre, community centre, outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts and a beautiful orchard.

Before opening, Ganesh discussed the idea of the co-operative with Society members/residents. Members were supportive; they liked the idea of purchasing good-quality produce on their doorstep, including food, vegetables, grains and pulses, so they introduced a resolution to support the crop shop.

At first, the plan was to sell vegetables/fruit on a daily basis; this was reduced to twice per week to match resident shopping habits. Milk, spices and oils (sunflower and groundnut) are also sold. A grinder is available for oil production and a mill for flour production. Sugar cane juice is made

at the market, as well as kulfi (ice cream) and yoghurt prepared from ‘waste’ milk. Kulfi is sold on a daily basis. Non-timber forest products are also sold, including wood apple, ber (ziziphus jujuba) and tamarind. The crop shop also has a book corner and plant nursery and provides a gathering place for the community.

Is there a Smart solution?

An online platform could help match crop shop entrepreneurs with producers. Crop shops could also consider Smart approaches to chilled distribution and waste reduction.

Figure 3. Crop shop in Pebbles II Society in Pune, where people purchase fresh produce directly from farmers close to their homes.

3. Advertising

3.1 Policies currently in place

The State government is responsible for the advertising framework that provides controls and restrictions (e.g., minimum distance from road), as well as setting user charges. PMC rents advertising space at 222 rupees/square foot per year (approximately US$7)[b]. This legislation is captured in the Maharashtra Municipal Corporations Act (modified in 2014). Free slots are reserved for public service advertisements, including health and education campaigns. The decision to restrict advertising (e.g., of junk food) and use advertising space for health promotion can take place at the PMC level.

Figure 4. Soft drink advertising in Pune.

3.2 Policy option 1: Ban junk food advertising on public transportation and Pune Municipal Corporation billboards

Banning junk food advertising on public transportation and billboards is currently being pursued by the mayor of London, who implemented the policy in February 2019 as part of the London Food Strategy. In addition, draft regulations in the United Kingdom restrict the marketing of junk food to children through television and digital media, but many of these regulations have loop-holes and so children's exposure to the messages remains high. It is important to learn lessons from this for any new policies in Pune. An interim step could be to have obligatory warning information on these advertisements about the damage to health or calories associated with eating junk food.

Is there a Smart solution?

There may be an opportunity to promote messages about healthier foods (e.g. importance of restricting sugar, being aware of how much sugar is in popular foods, being aware of hidden salt/sugar in common foods and the role of fresh produce). A campaign to complement one of the initiatives highlighted above (e.g. healthy vouchers) could take place. Digital advertising offers a Smart solution.

b. Currently, charging for advertising is suspended because of a court case, but this is expected to be resolved after the election.

4. Food in Schools and *Anganwadi* Centres

4.1 Policies currently in place

Mid-day meals are available in lower primary (years 1 through 5) and upper primary (years 6 through 8) PMC schools, but not in secondary schools (years 9 through 12), when all children are expected to provide their own lunch. The State decides the menu for mid-day meals and parents of non-PMC school children are provided with a menu. The meal currently comprises rice and dahl (prepared as kitchuri) with no vegetables. Biscuits are provided at break time. In the past, there were initiatives to include fruit in mid-day meals and an additional portion on one day of the school week. The State would need to be consulted regarding any changes to the school menu (including a free fruit portion).

Anganwadi centres are run through the Women and Child Development Department at the State level. *Anganwadi* children receive a mid-day meal and rations. The head of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) reports to the State office and will need to be consulted on the delivery of any policy recommendations. The Education Department is the official link between PMC and ICDS.


Figure 5. School meals in Pune.

The State also sets the curriculum in PMC schools. PMC can organise workshops in schools as part of special campaigns but not change the curriculum. In the past, selling cigarettes was banned within 100 meters of schools. There are no such restrictions for junk food.

4.2 Policy option 1: Increase nutrition diversity in school food

Increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables that children eat in school will support the development of healthy taste preferences and help to ensure overall consumption reaches recommended levels (Kähkönen, Rönkä, Hujo, Lyytikäinen, & Nuutinen, 2018; Ransley et al., 2007). A new initiative will start soon in 25% of schools in Pune when Akshaya Patra takes over the mid-day meal scheme, which will provide for a more varied menu, including more vegetables, through a central kitchen. In England, children aged 5 to 7 years are entitled to a free piece of fruit or vegetable at snack time during the school day.

Is there a Smart solution?

PMC could consider engaging local businesses with corporate social responsibility funds to support the provision of fresh fruit and vegetable snacks for all school children.

4.3 Policy option 2: Introduce nutrition, food and health curriculum links, including the development of food competency skills (cooking, purchasing, food safety, diet and health)

Prof. Jayshree, founder of the Jayshree Foundation set up to tackle obesity, has started the process of trying to introduce obesity-related curriculum material and drawing competition within schools in Maharashtra. She has asked for support to take this to scale.

4.4 Policy option 3: Train *Anganwadi* coordinators to train mothers to prepare a broader range of healthy, tasty recipes (incorporating take-home rations)

There is a concern that rations are not being used—as children find them tasteless—and are instead being sold. Mothers need advice on how to incorporate the fortified porridge into recipes that children will enjoy eating.

5. Employee Well-Being

5.1 Policy option 1: Create a policy for employee well-being in Pune covering nutrition, mental health and addiction services

Low-income adults may be working for big businesses and can benefit from support in the form of employee well-being programmes. PMC can encourage adoption of a PMC-led employee well-being policy framework.

As more women begin to work outside of the home, there may be some disruption of mealtimes at the household level. Breastfeeding may also be disrupted. Both men and women need to be encouraged to make healthier food choices for themselves and their families. Poster campaigns in factories, offices, etc. can encourage behaviour change. This could build on the Health Camps Prof. Jayashree has been running. Solid Nutrition Education and Health Foundation may want to get involved through their existing relationship with Tata Motors. In addition, the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics has developed relationships with a number of city-level employers who are interested in worker well-being.

Employers can offer space to healthier street food vendors and review the food prepared in workplace canteens. Employers could consider making fresh fruit freely available to staff instead of biscuits.

Conclusion

There is a wide range of policy and investment options for PMC to consider, which are fully within their devolved powers and may be much easier to implement at the city level than at the State or federal level. Action within these areas would also represent a substantial contribution to the policy priorities of the Federal Food Safety and Standards Authority in India. The next step for Pune will be to consult citizens on their experiences of food in the city to determine the areas of policy to be prioritised.

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This report was produced by the Food Foundation under the MQSUN+ programme.