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Functional Area of a Punjabi Vegetable Market: A Case Study of Tanda Urmar (District Hoshiarpur)



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Abstract

Vegetables and fruits are an essential part of the dietary system of Punjabi population. Since they are perishable in nature, therefore they require quick disposal from the farms to the consumers. An effective and specialized marketing system is needed to ensure their swift delivery. The present study explores the boundaries of the functional area (catchment area and service area) of the vegetable market of Tanda Urmar, which lies in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. The data and information for this study have been collected through intensive fieldwork done in 2012. Informal interviews of the concerned persons were conducted in the study area. It has been found that the functional area of the vegetable market of Tanda is spread widely. The vegetables and fruits for marketing are procured not only from the local villages, but also from far off places located within as well as outside the state of Punjab. On the other hand, the areas which are served by the vegetable market are mostly limited to the territorial extent of block Tanda.

Keywords : Vegetable Market, Functional Area, Marketing System

Introduction

Vegetables and fruits form an important part of balanced diet. Given their prominent role in maintaining good health of a community, it is essential to study the mechanism of marketing of vegetables and fruits in their particular micro-regional context. Vegetable markets have traditionally formed an important component of the larger system of marketing goods in a geographical setup. From olden times, these markets acted as a point of exchange of locally grown food items. What a household produced but did not consume was normally sold there, and what it consumed but did not produce was normally bought there (Skinner, 1964). Vegetables and fruits are an essential part of the dietary system of Punjabi population. Since they are perishable in nature, therefore they require quick disposal from the farms to the consumers. An effective and specialized marketing system is needed to ensure their swift delivery.

Scholars like Pyle (1971), Gandhi and Namboodiri (2004) and Ali and Khan (2007) have conducted studies on the functioning of vegetable markets. Pyle (1971) examined the kinds and functions of farmers' markets as they developed in the United States, compared their distribution in 1880, 1918, 1946 and 1969 and accounted for the decline or persistence of these markets as an institution. Gandhi and Namboodiri (2004) examined different aspects of marketing of horticultural crops in India, focusing particularly on the wholesale for fruits and vegetables which had been established to overcome deficiencies of the marketing system. The authors made several suggestions for improving the efficiency of marketing of vegetables and fruits. Ali and Khan (2007) attempted to understand the transactions of vegetables through rural markets in Jalalabad tehsil of Sahajahanpur district in Uttar Pradesh. The study was based on primary data collected through field survey in 2004. The results revealed that vegetables accounted for the highest proportion of the total marketable surplus in agricultural products. Potatoes and onions are the main vegetables transacted and their share remained uniform throughout the year. High demand of vegetables throughout the year made it a profitable activity with about 37 percent traders engaged in it. However, no study has focussed on finding out the expanse of functional area of a vegetable market. Therefore, the present study explores the boundaries of the

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functional area of the vegetable market of Tanda Urmur, which lies in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab.

The functional area of a vegetable market is demarcated on the basis of the farthest possible extent from where the market is able to fetch the farm produce (catchment area) and the areas which are served by it in terms of end-users (service area). The vegetable market of Tanda Urmur (District Hoshiarpur, Punjab) has shifted its location three times since its establishment after independence of the country. Its functional area has also expanded due to the development of the means of transportation and road network in the region during the post-independence period. In order to understand the zone of influence of this vegetable market, it is very important to delineate the expanse of its functional area.

Aims and Method

The present study has the following specific objectives: (i.) To find the catchment area of the vegetable market of Tanda; and (ii.) To identify the areas which are being served by this market. In order to achieve the above stated objectives the following research questions have been framed: (i.) What is the spatial extent of the area which supplies produce to this vegetable market? (ii.) What is the expanse of the area served by this market? The data and information for this study have been collected through intensive fieldwork done in 2012. Informal interviews of the concerned persons were conducted in the study area.

The Study Area

The study area selected for the present research work is the vegetable market of Tanda Urmur which is located in Dasuya Tehsil of district Hoshiarpur, situated in the north-eastern part of Punjab. The expanse of the vegetable market of Tanda Urmur stretches from 31° 40'22.67" N to 31° 40'24.34" N latitude and from 75° 38'55.05" E to 75° 38'58.00" E longitude. National Highway no. 1A connecting Delhi to Pathankot (via Jalandhar) runs just 100 metres west of the market. The vegetable market is situated at a distance of 2 km in the south-western direction from the centre of Tanda Urmur town. This urban centre lies on the National Highway 1A, 40 km North of Jalandhar and 70 km South of Pathankot. Topographically, the vegetable market is situated in the fertile alluvial upland plain of district Hoshiarpur and is gently sloping in the south-western direction. The market is bounded by village Rasulpur from the northern and eastern sides while it is bordered by the town Tanda Urmur from the west side and village Dhadiala is situated to the south of it. The other vegetable markets located near this market are those of Bhogpur, Hoshiarpur, Dasuya, Mukerian, Jalandhar and Hariana.

The vegetable market of Tanda Urmur has an area of 3121.31 square metres and consists of one big shed in the centre of the market under which the commission agents sell their products. These commission agents also own 8 store houses located on the periphery of the vegetable market. Apart from them, there are 8 wholesale shops. The office of

market committee is located in the north-western part of vegetable market. The office of water supply is also situated near to the marketing committee office. Big open spaces are found at many places in the vegetable market. According to the local market committee, there are 22 commission agents in the vegetable market at present. Approximately 50 farmers come to this market daily for selling their produce and around 100 retailers and local vendors/hawkers come to buy the vegetables and fruits for re-sale. This particular vegetable market has been chosen for study because the authors were familiar with the area and hence there was a greater scope of obtaining correct and detailed answers from the respondents during the informal interviews conducted for this research work.

Historical Background of the Vegetable Market

The location of vegetable market of Tanda Urmur changed over time. A look at the historical background of the market reveals that ever since the times of independence, it has shifted its position thrice. In 1947, it was initially situated in Urmur. At that time this market was also known as 'Main Bazaar Urmur'. All household articles were available in this market at that time. At the time of independence, the size of this vegetable market was considerably small. It was situated in the 'Gandhi Chowk' of Urmur. Many farmers of nearby villages used to come here for selling their seasonal vegetables. In those days, non-seasonal vegetables were not available in this market. Similarly, only local seasonal fruits were sold here and no fruits were brought from far off places for marketing in this market. The main buyers in this market were street hawkers who used to buy the seasonal vegetables and fruits from this market and sell them in the surrounding villages by loading them on their cycles, horses and mules.

By 1970, the number of shops in the 'Main Bazaar Urmur' increased tremendously and the size of the vegetable market also grew manifolds. Due to the development in the means of transport, many more people started coming to this market for buying and selling. This led to the problem of traffic congestion on the roads of Urmur. At that time, there was a small office of Market Committee which used to regulate the activities of this vegetable market. This office was located in a small room near the Gurudwara Dera Baba Balwant Singh in Darapur. When the congestion caused due to this vegetable market crossed the tolerable limits, the local residents lodged a complaint with this office for re-locating the vegetable market at a suitable alternative spot outside the Main Bazaar Urmur. Considering the popular demand of the people, the Market Committee shifted this vegetable market in 1972-73 to a vacant spot situated to the opposite of Block Development Office. There were three commission agents in this resettled market who had built their permanent structures at this new venue in order to store even the non seasonal vegetables. However, the rest of the sellers used to carry out their business in open stalls and they dealt with the local seasonal produce only. The

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office of the Market Committee was also shifted to a building near Gurudwara Mast Garh in Tanda.

By the year 1983, the problem of traffic congestion again started developing in the areas in and around this vegetable market and new shops were built in large numbers in close vicinity to this market. Consequently, in 1983 the vegetable market as well as the office of the Market Committee were shifted to a newly acquired vacant land near Jaja bypass. At this new location, a permanent shed has been constructed for the marketing of vegetables and fruits. At present the commission agents operating in this market are 22 in number. Most of them have permanent stores located within the premises of the vegetable market. They deal in both seasonal as well as non-seasonal vegetables and fruits. Many general stores have also come up along the boundary of the vegetable market and the adjoining grain market.

Functional Area of the Vegetable Market

The functional area of the vegetable market of Tanda consists of its catchment area as well as the area served by the market.

Catchment Area

The catchment area of a market can be defined as the area which supplies commodities for trading to the market. The vegetable market of Tanda is being

served by a very large area. Depending upon the type of commodity this area varies from a few kilometers to hundreds of kilometers. Normally the highly perishable vegetables such as green vegetables (spinach, coriander, fenugreek etc.) come to this market from nearby areas, while other vegetables are provided to this market by both local and distantly situated areas. On the basis of their location, the areas which serve this vegetable market can be studied under the following sub-headings:

1. Areas lying within Tanda block
2. Areas lying outside Tanda block but within the state of Punjab
3. Areas lying outside Punjab

Areas Lying within Tanda Block

The vegetable market is served by almost all the villages of Tanda block (Fig 1). Since it is the only vegetable market existing in this block therefore most of the vegetable growers of this block come here to sell their produce. In other words, the local farmers come to sell their vegetables in this market. These local farmers normally bring seasonal vegetables for marketing. Apart from the seasonal vegetables, some locally grown fruits like kinnows are also supplied to the market by this area.

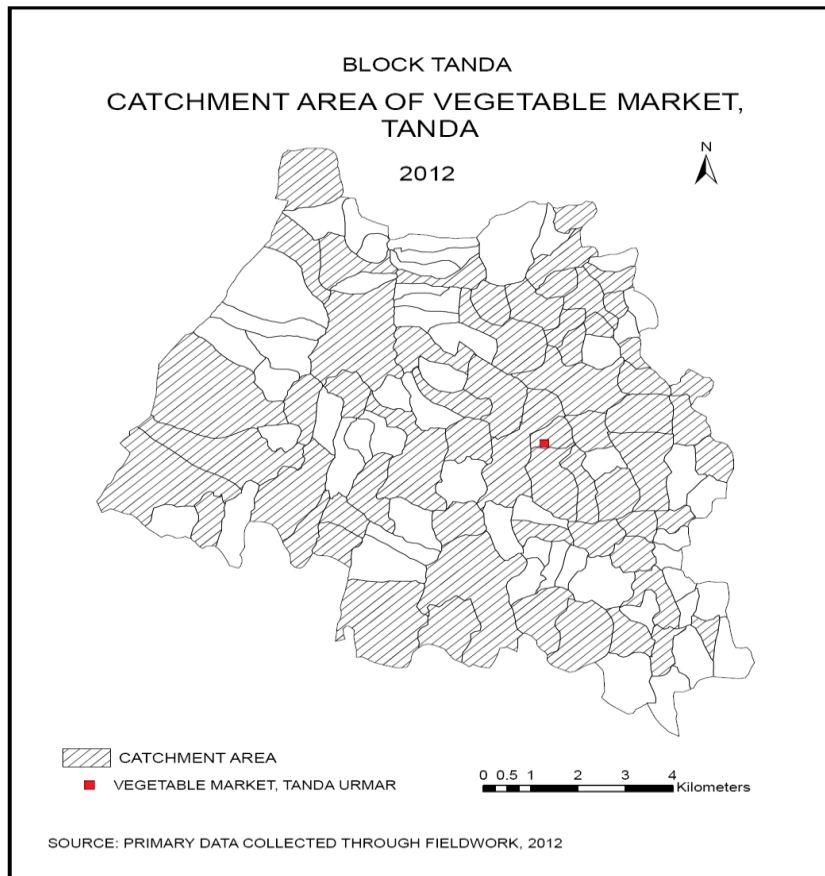


Fig -1

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Areas lying outside Tanda Block but within the State of Punjab

The fruit and vegetable market of Tanda is also served by the areas which lie outside Tanda block. Normally these are the other vegetable markets of Punjab which have direct interaction with the vegetable market of Tanda. These vegetable markets provide almost all seasonal and some non-seasonal vegetables and fruits to this market. The vegetable markets of Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Dasuya, Mukerian, Bhogpur and Haryana are the most important suppliers of fruits and vegetables to the market of Tanda. Apart from these, fruits and vegetables also come here from Malerkotla and Dera Baba Nanak.

Areas Lying outside Punjab

Fruits and vegetables come to the vegetable market of Tanda from other states of India as well. Among these Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Maharashtra are the most important states that supply vegetables and fruits to this market. Apples are brought here from different places of Himachal Pradesh such as Shimla and Kullu. Green peas and cabbage are also brought here from Kullu and Manali. The state of Jammu and Kashmir also supply apples to this market in large quantities. As far as Maharashtra is concerned, oranges from Nagpur are brought here for marketing. Bananas and mangoes are also brought from Maharashtra. The state of Uttar Pradesh also supplies fruits to this market. Mangoes are brought here from Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.

Thus it has been found that the vegetable market of Tanda has a large catchment area and the areas supplying fruits and vegetables vary with the type of commodity they provide to this market.

Service Area

The vegetable market of Tanda serves almost the entire block of Tanda which is comprised of 118 villages. Apart from it some other areas which fall outside the Tanda block are also served by this vegetable market. Therefore, the areas served by this vegetable market can be sub-divided into the following two categories:

1. Areas lying within block Tanda
2. Areas lying outside block Tanda

Areas Lying within Block Tanda

As described above, this vegetable market serves almost the entire area of block Tanda. But one important thing that can be noted here is that the serving capacity of this market decreases as one moves from the centre to the peripheral areas of block Tanda. This happens due to the moderating effect of other vegetable markets situated in the surrounding blocks.

Areas Lying outside Block Tanda

The vegetable market of Tanda also serves a few areas falling outside the boundary of block Tanda because they are situated in close proximity to this block. The most important among such areas are Begowal of Kaputhala district, Srihargobindpur of Gurdaspur district, Khudda of block Dasuya and Garhdiwala of block Bhunga.

It has been noted that the buyers which frequently come to this market on daily basis belong to the areas which lie within the Tanda block. But on the other hand the buyers coming from other blocks have a tendency to purchase commodities in bulk as they cannot afford to commute to this market on a daily basis. As far as the service area of the buyers is concerned 60% of the buyers sell their goods within a radius of 5 km of the market, while 28% buyers sell the vegetables and fruits in areas lying between the distance bands of 5 to 10 km from the market. The remaining 12% buyers sell their purchased vegetables and fruits beyond 10 km distance from the vegetable market.

Conclusion

In the end it can be concluded the functional area of the vegetable market of Tanda is spread widely. The vegetables and fruits for marketing are procured not only from the local villages, but also from far off places located within as well as outside the state of Punjab. On the other hand, the areas which are served by the vegetable market are mostly limited to the territorial extent of block Tanda. However, there are some exceptions where buyers from other nearby blocks and districts also come here for making purchases.

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