

Dynamics of Phagwara Local Urban Market

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Abstract

The growth of market towns locally known as Mandis along with the port towns were the improved feature of the market in medieval period. However, it was only during the British period that the market system in India was given a new direction in its exchange system. This period is considered as a period of development in all aspects of industry, agriculture, transportation and marketing. Indian market during this period made a significant progress not only in the field of agriculture marketing but also in other products which later progressed systematically after independence. Rapid transformations in the Indian marketing system were seen after the independence. Thus, there rose the need of established regulated market to make a progress from traditional form.

Keywords: market, urban market spaces, mandis, market dynamics, unorganised market

Date of Submission: 26-03-2023

Date of Acceptance: 08-04-2023

I. Introduction

Market spaces are of great public spaces, where the life of the village/town/city is visualised. Markets encourage a broad range of density, diversity encounters of social interaction and economic exchange of the city through its people, information, culture and the generated demand for the trade of goods and services reducing societal antagonism and developing a community's individuality. While the fundamental function of markets as a trading space has not changed for centuries, they are also regarded as a cultural space where a glimpse of the local lifestyle can be seen (Ashworth, 2000; Crespi & Perez, 2015)

The idea of a public market creates positive associations for many people, but a concrete common definition of a public market can sometimes be elusive. For some people, the iconic image of a public market is the line of tents covering vendors in an open-air market; for others, it is the colourful display of food and crafts along the stalls of a market hall. In fact, a rich diversity of public markets exists around the country and around the world; and while sometimes confusing, this broad range of market types is ultimately an asset, allowing markets to meet a wide variety of needs for vastly different communities.

The physio-socio-economic and administrative factors existing over a region plays an important role in the evolution of types of market that exist within the region. On the basis of time duration market can be categorized as 'daily market' and 'weekly market'. Another type of market locally known as 'Mela' (fair) is also common in rural as well as urban India.

Study Area

Phagwara is a city and it recently became municipal corporation in Kapurthala district in the central part of Punjab – located in the Doaba region – the Sutlej and the Beas River of the Indian state of Punjab. The city is internationally recognized because a large NRI (Non-resident Indian) population belongs to this city. The Phagwara has population of 97,864 of which 51,386 are males while 46,478 are females as per the Census of India 2011. In 1981 the town had a total population of 75961 persons. The total area under the town/municipal limit in 1976 was 1001.598 hectares (approx.) which expanded to 2409.51 hectares (approx.) in 2022. The low rate of population growth may be attributed to the large number of NRI. Phagwara was built as a market town. Over time, some people of Phagwara started farming and Phagwara took on a rural character. Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in Punjab and in Phagwara presence of industries and mills plays an important role in its economy such as Wahid Sandhar Sugar mills and Jagjit cotton mills. The importance of the town is also linked with the potential of more than 800 small scale units situated in the streets of this town producing export quality products and sharing the country's export in respect of Diesel Engine spare parts. There has been rapid industrialisation in this town which generated more employment facilities in a comparatively shorter period. Another important aspect contributing to Phagwara's economy is the establishment of educational institutes and universities. Infra-structural facilities like railway junction, being nodal point of National as well as State

highway roads along with ideal location, plain area, abundant underground water in the hinterland helped the town to grow at a faster pace.

In the district of Kapurthala, the Phagwara market area is well known as a popular tourist destination for clothes and garment. It serves as a reflection of tradition and culture of Phagwara. Phagwara main market is mostly known for its vegetable market and availability clothes at cheaper prices, it is the busiest market in Phagwara. Shops here are small and vegetable market is crowded all day.



Fig.1. Phagwara Urban Landuse 1981

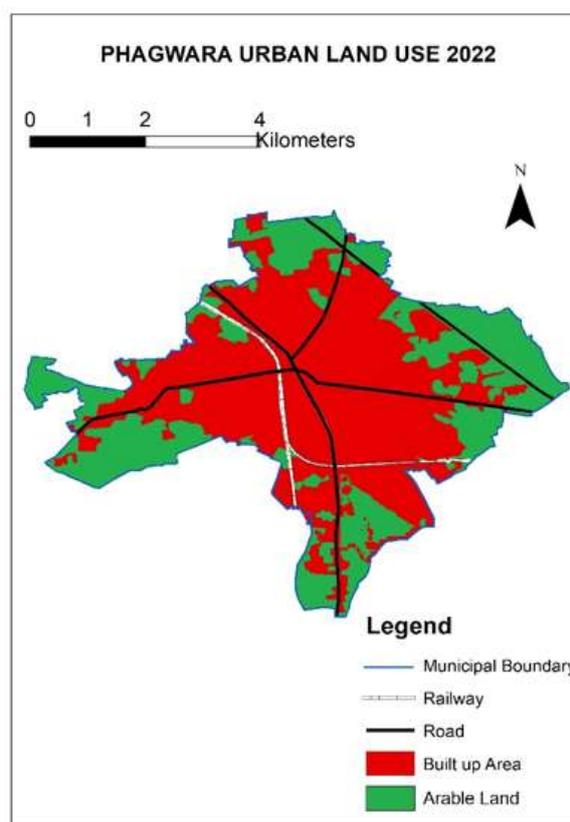


Fig.2. Phagwara Urban Landuse 2022

Some major markets in Phagwara are:

- Hargobind nagar market: this market is mostly famous for its malls and showrooms, and the most important feature of this market is the presence of modern restaurants. Shops here are well developed and mostly consist of large storeyed buildings.
- Chadda market: Chadda market is widely known for providing the facility of travel booking. This market too is crowded all day long and shops are generally close to one another. This often leads to the problem of overcrowding.
- Other small markets such as Bansanwala market, Sarfan Bazaar and Gaushalla Bazaar are greatly attracted to NRI people for its clothing and jewellery.

Dynamics of Unorganised Market

Unorganised markets are those markets which are not registered to the government and there exist no rules and regulation. In such unorganized market there exist no security for the employed worker and they do not enjoy any benefits from the government. These markets generally include vegetable mandis, street vendors, workers in construction and trade, and rag pickers. Unorganised markets are old and ubiquitous institution generally found in almost all the states of India, they constitute an important part of Indian economic life, may it be major cities or small rural areas. According to the survey there are about 7500 unorganised markets in India based only on agricultural products. Unorganised market at present is a dominating sector in India, as they are an easy way to generate employment. They require limited capital investment, labour and land and most commonly these markets are family run business.

In an unorganised market, key participants in the functioning of this market are generally the low and lowermiddle-class people and the local residents involving in the day-to-day activities. They are engaged in markets either due to lack of education or due to inheritance. The ownership structures in the unorganised

market are sometimes rental while in most cases they are self-owned. The garment shops, stationeries and some other shops were of rental basis, while the vegetable mandis are mostly self-owned. The government institutions or local authorities merely manage these mandis, they mostly follow their own rule and, on some occasion, they set up their own management committee. Generally, the prices of goods in such mandis are set by the seller themselves viewing the scenario of the amount they had to pay to their suppliers and according to the demands of the goods

Phagwara Market Sabji Mandi

The socio-economic aspect such as the age group of major working population, their educational level, their monthly income, family status and number, their religion, of the sabji mandi have been discussed below.

Table 1. Socio-economic attributes of Phagwara vegetable market showing age group, religion and monthly income.

| Age Group | Total | Religion | Total | Monthly Income | Total |
|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|----------------|-------|
| 10-20 | 7 | Christianity | 0 | 0-5000 | 30 |
| 21-30 | 14 | Hindu | 31 | 5000-10000 | 9 |
| 31-40 | 18 | Sikh | 1 | 10000-20000 | 1 |
| 41-50 | 1 | Muslim | 8 | | |

Age group of major working population: Through enquiry of randomly selected 40 sellers in the mandi area it was found that of the total sellers 18 of them were under the age group of 31 to 40 years, followed by the age group of 21 to 30 (14 person), whereas 7 person of age group 10 to 20 and only one person of 41 to 50 age group.

The above data collected through the method of questionnaire suggest that the majority of the working population belong to the adult category i.e. 21-30 which constitutes 35% of the total seller and 31 to 40 age group constituting 45% of the total seller, these two category constitutes nearly 80% of the market seller suggesting that the child labour is minimum in the market i.e. 17% of the seller and that too according to personal survey these were mostly those seller working as a part time as a replacement for their parents. The survey also shows that the minimum working population belongs to the age group of 41 to 50 constituting only 3% of the seller population.

Monthly income of the working population: The seller in the mandis had no other means of income other than the vegetable stall, majority of the seller population, of almost 75% had monthly income of less than 5000 rupees since they had no other alternate source of income besides selling vegetable. While those seller with alternate sources of income such as tea stall and other shops which constitutes 22% earns up to 5000 to 10000 rupees monthly, these sellers are those in which they had more than one working family member.

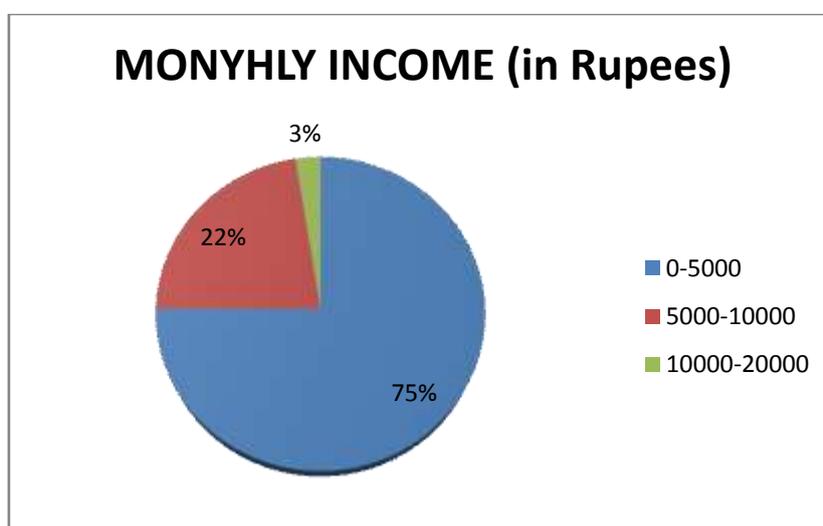


Fig.3. Monthly income of the seller in the market (%).

Lastly very few sellers 3% had monthly income ranging from 10000 to 20000 rupees, in whose family the earning member consist of either two or three members engaged in stationary shops and pulling rickshaws. According to the survey about 28 of the sellers were the only working person in their family thus making it hard to have multiple jobs and find an alternate source of income whereas 12 of the sellers had two or more earners in their family, thus these group had a monthly income ranging from 5000 to 10000 and 10000 to 20000 rupees. Most of its seller includes the migrants from the Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who came in search of jobs lacking in educational qualification thus, the number of uneducated sellers constitutes the majority of the working population. The uneducated population comprises of about 65% of the seller population mainly comprising of the Hindu migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. From the remaining 35% of educated population 32% are those who had an education qualification up to 7th standard and only 3% of seller population having education qualification of up to 12th standard. Important information drawn was that from 35% of the literate population of the seller majority were those minor sellers working as a replacement or part time for their parents or those who had inherited the business as a vegetable seller from their father.

Table 2. Dynamics attribute of the Phagwara vegetable market.

| Reasons for becoming a vegetable trader | Total no. | Problem encountered in selling vegetable | Total no. | The major trader or buyer | Total no. |
|--|-----------|---|-----------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Unskilled/lack of academic education | 12 | Lack of supply | | Govt. agencies | 0 |
| Marketing skills | 0 | Limited suitable display areas | 9 | Regional processor | 40 |
| Plenty of supply from own vegetable farm | 0 | Oversupply | 0 | Multinational corporation | 0 |
| Because of view that selling vegetables is a good business | 24 | None | | | |
| Marketing is an inherited livelihood | 4 | Capital | 2 | | |
| | | Dictation of price by the buyers | 0 | | |
| | | Maintenance of trader relation | 0 | | |
| | | Bargaining of price | | | |
| | | Poor storage facilities | 28 | | |
| | | Transportation | 1 | | |
| | | Lack of knowledge on post-harvest practices | 0 | | |

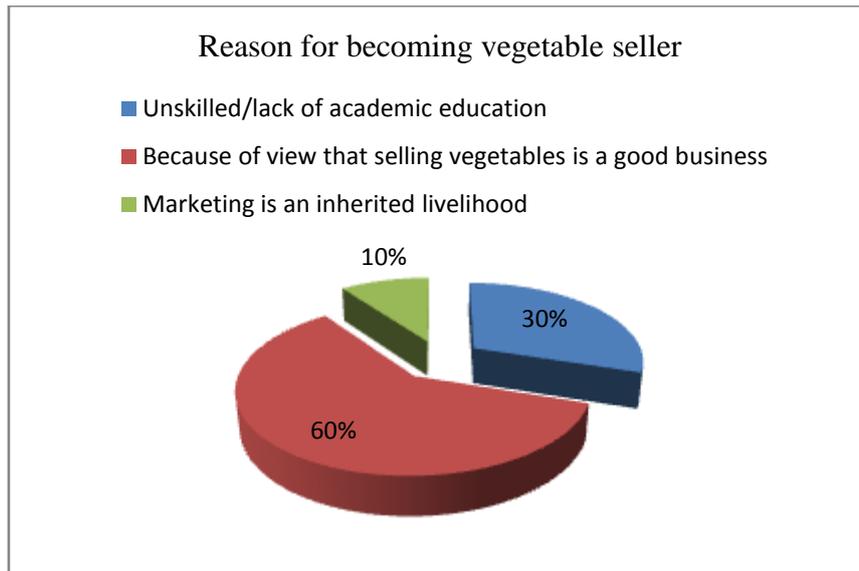


Fig.4. Reason for becoming vegetable seller (%).

The above figure suggests that majority of the seller 60% in the market views selling of vegetable as a good business, followed by due to the lack of academic qualification 30% while only 10% suggested they took the business as it were inherited by their parents. High percentage of seller that opted selling of vegetable could also be due to their lack of educational qualification as according to the fig.4.65% are uneducated in the market and they were mainly migrants from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. The 10% of the seller that inherited the business from their parents were generally the minors helping their parents as a part time job. Another dynamic aspect of the market observed was that in the market system 38 sellers said that they themselves were responsible for fixing the prices of the commodities and only two sellers, who said their commodities prices weren't set by them. This also clearly shows the ownership structure of the market, which suggest that of the total 40 sellers only 2 had their business on rental basis while the remaining 38 sellers were self-owned of their business however almost all of the seller suggested a very much increase in the competition in the market in past few years.

The data gathered also shows its major buyers being the local regional processor mainly for the daily household use. Almost entire seller in the market suggested the local regional processor as their daily customer and hence developed a friendly relation between the seller and the buyer.

The vegetable market area being most crowded throughout the day keeping in view its location and setting of the market it faces many problems. According to the survey conducted almost all the sellers considered the market area as an unorganised. Each seller had certain views regarding the problem and what they think should be done for the betterment of the market which could help them as well as make the buyer comfortable, which in return would help in the proper functioning of the market area. Some of the problems as stated by the sellers were:

Poor storage facilities

The most common problem faced by any unorganised market is the problem of storage facilities. Here too 70% of the seller complained regarding the poor facilities for storage of the vegetable. As there exist high competition in the market vegetables soon began to degrade or spoiled due to lack of storage facilities, as a result this affects their business and those spoiled vegetables had to be disposed due to its no further use.

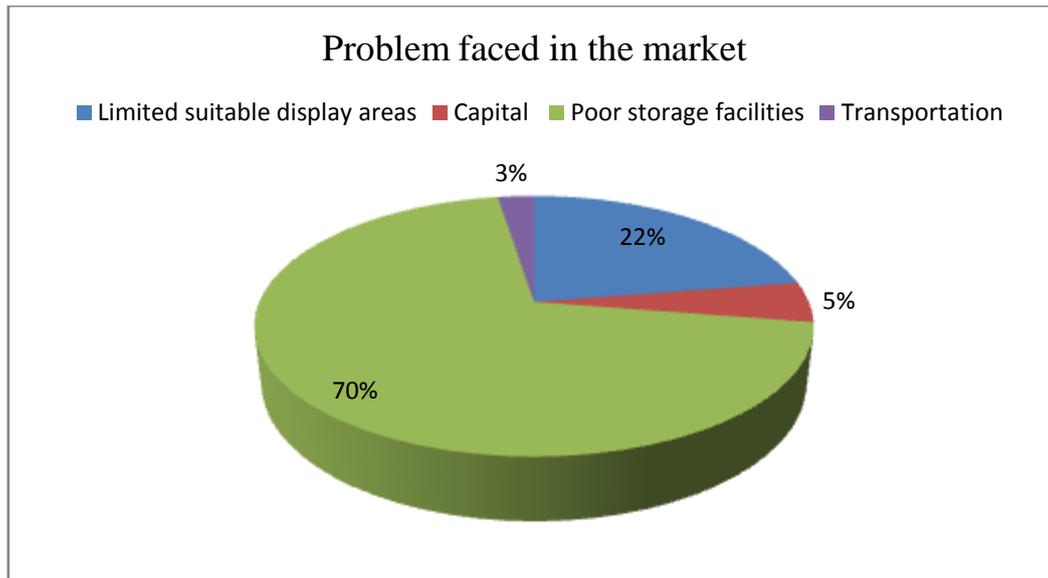


Fig.5. Problem faced in the market (%).

Limited suitable displays area

Being mostly crowded and out of space for movement of carts and people the seller also face the problem of display area for their goods as most area in the market are crowded and due to high competition most places have been occupied by many other competitors. According to the survey 22% of the seller reported to have been facing this problem due to which fewer buyers are attracted as it seems lesser number of choices to them.

Capital

Capital here means the income they get through their business. This problem arises when they do not get sufficient return from the selling of vegetable. Reportedly 5% of the sellers in the market are facing this situation. This might be due to increasing competition in the market as more migrants migrate to the city and view vegetable selling business as easy means of earning. This can be supported from the fact that almost every seller reported on behalf of the increasing competition in the market.

Transportation

Transportation here refers to the movement of goods from one place to another. Reportedly only 3% of the seller population had an issue related to movement of goods; these include those selling vegetables by cart or pulley. Being over crowded it becomes difficult for those sellers using cart to sell their vegetables. The entering of four-wheeler vehicles in this market creates slow traffic flow and congestion.

Suggestive measure suggested by the seller: To make the market more organised and for proper functioning of the market more smoothly almost all the seller suggested their view point. Through the suggestion obtained from the questionnaire two main suggestion tops the list, they were-

Widening of road for more space

The market often gets crowded and the roads being small it becomes problem for the buyers to move along in the market, the view of the market itself shows narrow road and people hustling through it. This problem further worsened when any vehicle specially 4-wheeler enters the market area.

No entry of the vehicle

The problem of congestion is one serious problem that almost all sellers are concerned of and due to its narrow road, the entry of vehicle should be prohibited specially the 4-wheeler, a proper parking space is ought to be prepared a bit far from the market. The presence of this market near the NH-1 has also created congestion and problems of slow traffic movements. The smoke emitted by the vehicles also affects the vegetable at display, thus affecting the business of the seller and with no proper storage facility it becomes harder for the seller to maintain the quality and freshness of the vegetable.

II. Conclusion

The following study of the Phagwara market sabji mandi reveals the dynamic structure of the market, and its importance on the landscape of Phagwara city. It throws light on the market structure showing the socio-economic aspect such as the age group of major working population, their educational level, their monthly income, their religion. Some section of the study also gave importance towards the problem and prospect faced

by the seller in the market such as the problem of congestion and entry of four-wheeler vehicle in the market causing problem in the market both for the seller and buyers. Such entry of vehicle needs to be stopped as they not only create the problem of congestion but also affects the vegetables from the smoke emitted by them.

Being situated at the heart of the city with other stores nearby it plays an important role in providing items for household. This market serves a large region within the city and acts as a nodal region for Satnampura, Santokhpura, Subhash Nagar, Patel Nagar, and Nehru Nagar to name few. Another important role of this market is that it provides employment to many uneducated and unskilled labourers. The study of the market clearly depicts the importance it has on the settlers in the city area, it has also become an important place for the migrants to look for jobs as many migrants are engaged and employed in some way or another in the market area as it is a suitable location for carrying out business of any kind this can be seen through the fact that many of the sellers in the market are people from Bihar and other states.

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