

The Kunduli Weekly Market of Odisha in Koraput District and its Impact on Tribes

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Abstract: Weekly market in a remote place like Koraput play crucial role in the socio-economic life of the tribal people. Here the tribes and non-tribe farmers come to this market as buyers and sellers and involve in the marketing processes. They sell their agriculture, horticulture, forest products and purchase their day to day requirements. They not only purchase their basic requirements like food grains and grocery items, vegetable but also purchase various consumer products like soap, oil, washing powder, cosmetics, dress, shoes, bag, sheet metal boxes, spices products, fruits, etc. They almost fulfil their weekly requirements from this market and hardly go to nearby urban centre to purchase the items which are not available in the weekly market.

It is a big market and thousands of involve in the marketing activities. The agricultural items flooded with seasonal products and largely sent out side Koraput and different urban centres by the middle man traders generating huge profits for themselves. Though the sellers get profits by selling their various items but sometimes get exploited by the brokers and middleman traders due to ignorance and lack of knowledge about actual market price of various products. They also use this market place as their platform for socio-cultural exchanges and carry out several communities networking like passing messages of importance to nearby villages regarding the fairs, festivals, family and other social functions like marriage, death, child birth and other ceremonies through oral messages.

Key Words: Weekly Market, Tribes, Buyers, Sellers, Goods, Produces, Middleman, Farmers.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The evolution of weekly markets is very closely associated with the evolution of human civilisation. Present day human civilisation has passed through different stages of social transformation. Perhaps the settled human habitations with agriculture practices and increased population has given rise to the need to have an exchange and redistribution of surplus produces responsible for the emergence of market. There are various types of market like daily market, weekly market, seasonal market, etc. However, this paper is an attempt to discuss a particular weekly market named Kunduli and its impact on tribes. The main objective of this study is to understand the role of Kunduli weekly market and its impact on tribes. The weekly market may be defined as the primary economic centre and a platform to enter into business of buying and selling goods. This centre mainly provides an opportunity to the people from approachable distance to buy and sell their products weekly once and get a chance to meet, interact, exchange their ideas and get information from outside their villages. Weekly market also provides an opportunity for wider social networking and promotes social integration. It is basically a place of exchange of goods and services with cultural contact to the residents of particular geographical area at a fixed period of time interval. Weekly markets are locally called as "Haat" in southern Odisha and in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh locally it is called as "Bazaar". [1]

Weekly markets are the centres of economic activities, there are specific allotment of sites for each kind of items. The sellers of similar kind of products are seat together in a particular place and with unstructured way. People coming there to sell particular products go and find a place for himself where fellow sellers are selling their products of similar nature. Nobody officially demarcate a particular place for the sellers but the sellers they themselves find a place where the similar kind of products are being sold. Similarly livestock and poultry item seat in a different place, potters find a separate place and assemble together. The vegetable sellers and the sellers of different manufacturing and consumable items, sellers of forest produces found in a particular place. There is no such rule or binding force for the sellers to seat in a particular place but for their own convenient they find a place where the similar products of theirs are being sold. The weekly markets are being monitored by the State Government's Regulating Market Committee (RMC) and they prepare a concrete cement block of rectangular and square size platform for the sellers. These platform are covered with temporary arranged bamboo and wood sticks tied with rope that could serve the purpose of selling on the market days. These have been dismantled and again taken back and preserve it for next market day. They don't leave it in a market place in fear of theft and damage. There are group of people engage in this profession and charge certain amount of money towards their labour made to arrange material and construct the polythene covered roof.

2. MATERIALS:

The major sources of material are obtained from text books, periodicals, journals, news papers, TV, and field based information visiting the weekly market. The field based observation and interaction with tribal farmers, buyers and sellers is a nice experience and a great sources of supply of material for writing this paper.

3. METHOD:

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Field visit has been done to understand the behaviours of buyers and sellers of the Kunduli weekly market. A systematic observation was made to know the role of middle man and functioning of the market.

4. DISCUSSION:

The Kunduli weekly market (Haat) is one of the oldest rural markets of Pottangi Block, Koraput hold on each Friday of every week. This is one of the biggest tribal weekly markets started and founded by the Sanaparaja tribes and the Mali communities in Kunduli Village. This market is located in the road side of the National Highway-26 making the place well connected to Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh State. On the Friday of every week huge numbers of outside traders come for buying and selling. They seat on the both side of the NH-26 passing through the market. Everyday several numbers of intra-state, inter-state Buses of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha government as well as private owners, private local Buses, many Pick up Vans, Tata Magic vehicles, Jeeps, Auto rickshaws frequently run in this route making the place well connected. People start moving to this place one day before and the buying and selling process start from the afternoon of Thursday. People engage in buying and selling even on Thursday night and very early morning from 4 am on Friday and continue till late evening. On market days people reach to the market early hours carrying their goods and produces by using the available transport facilities like Jeeps, Auto, Mini Vans etc. the villages like Kunduli, Pungar, Barigura, Hataguda, Deula, Sorimara, Thama, Kirajhola, Maliput, Sargiguda, Gadikhamara, Majhiput, Malkarbanda, Sipaput, Dusura, Kutugam, Ranikona, Gunja, Marua, Aligam, and Ranikona, etc including all the villages of Pottangi Block and part of Semiliguda Block do get service from this market. The major arrivals especially from the villagers in this market are vegetables, forest products, handicrafts, local beverage *mahua*, *salap*, *landa*, etc, and livestock, fish, and poultry. The manufacturing items like cloth, soaps, washing detergent, cosmetics, utensils, household item, plastic goods, etc also arrives in the market for selling. The blacksmith, potter, and carpenter come with their own products for selling. One can find variety and various ranges of products for different purposes in this market.

5. ANALYSIS:

Weekly Market and its Impact on Tribal Farmers and Mali Communities (Vegetable Growers)

The weekly market Kunduli being a centrally located village nicely connected with road, transportation and communication facility largely impacts on the socio-economic and cultural life of the surrounding villages. The market is well known for assembling large numbers of buyers and sellers, huge volumes and variety of products of different ranges, easy export facility, cheap prices fixed for goods and produces by the sellers, active role of agents (middleman traders) in distributing the buying goods and service has placed this market in a unique place in the rural weekly markets of Odisha. Looking into the bulk of products reaching to the market and unsold and sold items needs to be stored for safe transport to different places the Government of Odisha has constructed the storages places.

Any successful market largely depends on demand and supply side of the goods and produces. Looking into the demands of agricultural and horticultural produces particularly the tribal farmers and *mali* communities (vegetable growers) of Kunduli region have keep on producing the seasonal items regularly generating huge amount of profit. They even do not encourage their children to pick up other profession which may not support their livelihood pattern. Perhaps this is the reason for which people from the Kunduli region do not go outside state as an indenture labour or migrate to other places in search of livelihood opportunity. They have come up as a well equipped and organized workforce contributing to their sustainable livelihood and generating huge amount of revenue for the Government of Odisha. Thus weekly market centres play important role in accelerating rural development particularly economic and social life of people. [2]

The regular supplies of goods and produces impose a faith on the traders and buyers of self consumption that if they reach the market they will get their desirable items. Undoubtedly the tribal farmers and mali communities have got economic benefit by selling their products in the market but many of them are not the big farmers. They are the small farmers and whatever they generate income out of selling their agriculture produces that supports their livelihood system including expenses towards their, clothing, medicine, children's education, their fair festivals, and social functions and cannot save much money in the bank. Many of them also do not have a bank account but they have the mobile phones which facilitating them to remain in contact with the buyers and sellers. In general the primary producers sell in bulk to the middle man traders with whole sale retail prices rate which is cheaper than to sale directly to the consumers in a small amount. They do not have the patience to day long and wait for the petty customers to come and purchase their products. Many vegetable sellers basically sell their product in the weekly market because of the lack of transportation

facility, lack of exposure to urban centres, shortage of time, lack of contact with the middle man traders, etc. If they contact with the middle man to sell their products, there is the possibility of exploitation and the middle man bargains and would like to purchase with a very cheaper rate than the market prices. Undoubtedly, the weekly market occupy a central place for the socio-economic development of tribes as well as non tribes of the locality but illiterate tribal and *mali* sellers face crucial problem of exploitation at the hand of middle man because of their simplicity and honesty.

There have been both the positive and negative impacts of the weekly market in the daily life of the rural people. From positive point of view, the economic conditions of the people have been improved. If we visit to the nearby villages the dwelling pattern, clothing and life style, house construction, mobile hand set, furniture like TV, freeze, washing machines, motor vehicles, etc. acquired by the farmers have changed and they are no more living like in a deteriorate conditions. With the running of vehicles and goods carrier, the approached roads to the villages have been constructed and transportation and communication is improved. The major negative impact is that, market exposed them to the urban culture and with their exposure and imitation to urban life styles, there is the gradual decline of socio-cultural values, traditions, customary practices. Having money with the people the food habits including consumption of liquor has been drastically increased. It has been observed in these villages that many young rural youth are becoming vulnerable tobacco, country made unhygienic liquor and drug addiction. Many of them are meeting with untimely, premature, unnatural death due to their addictions.

6. FINDINGS:

Changing Weekly Market due to External Forces

There have been several changes taken place in the structure and functioning of the weekly market. Structurally the size of the market has been enhanced with bulk of goods and produces flow in the market and the increased population participation in the marketing activities. This is perhaps due to improved road and transportation facility. Functionally it brought the different section of the people together through trade and business, interpersonal relationship among the buyers and sellers have been improved. The trade and business is going on smoothly in the weekly market. Earlier the market place was looking deserted after the marketing is over on the market days but now people settled in the nearby market places breaking the place from age old traditional isolation. In other days if people visit the place, it seems to be crowded but no business transactions take place. Kunduli Market emerged as central place and many of the buses passing through this route stops there.

The Kunduli weekly market is not free from the impact of modernization, urbanization and globalization. The buyers and sellers of weekly market gradually delinked with the traditional bases of marketing due to the impact of modern marketing with the globalization process. The base of the market has been substantially increased due to coming up of urban centre in HAL Sunabeda, NALCO Damonjodi and Semiliguda. The urbanization took place in these places because of establishment of industries and emergence of trade and business centres. With the increasing commercialization, the price of the vegetable and other items brought to the market has been substantially increased. Traditional way of selling in a basket and bamboo made container has been gradually replaced by the digital weight measuring machines and common weighing balance. Both male and female do participate in the marketing processes.

For the rural community this weekly market serves multiple purposes here the focus is on mainly two purposes. Firstly, they got a platform to sell their goods and produces in the nearby their villages and generate income from themselves. Secondly, they also got opportunity to purchase their essential items ranging from food grains, vegetables, cloths and dress, grocery items, and other require household items. Sinha pointed out that, tribal weekly market act as an agent of cultural change. He further states that weekly markets in tribal areas form a network of socio-cultural ties among the people of their surroundings and give them a common base of regional character. Therefore, the regional weekly markets in tribal areas may be defined as the 'hub' of the region that serves as a platform to redistribution of resources of different occupational communities in the region. [3] The weekly markets give opportunities to increase social contacts and become a centre of economic and political activities for human being. It is a suitable and appropriate place for collection and distribution of goods.

The new trend of economic development based on natural resources in this era of globalization, increasing material aspiration among the people, craze to fulfil unlimited self centred desires, and quest for accumulation of wealth among the people in the mainstream society has its tremendous impact on tribal rural society and created a different kind of social situation. This new situation has directly reflected in the form of demand and supply chain of market forces. There is the increasing expansion and assimilation of markets all over the world today and changes in a market in one region have its reflection in far distance places as well. Therefore, the rural market is not exceptional to this and the whole environment of rural market conditions has undergone changes. There is the shift of community and individual interpersonal relationship based marketing activities to professional business oriented profit motive marketing activities. There is less time for social interaction, and less personal relationship existing between buyers and sellers. There is the shift in the availability and types of products in the market. The home based limited small scale production has turned into large scale mass production unit with availability and accessibility of machinery, equipment and advance technology applied in production processes. In the new market conditions the small traders find stiff competition from

the big manufacturing industries and business farms. The small sellers face another problem of exploitation from the middleman traders. All these above trends have brought a tremendous change in the social and cultural relations centring on traditional weekly market. However, even today rural society manages to maintain a balance between traditional and commercial bases of buying and selling products. But there is a stiff and fierce challenge to this traditional base because of linking of local to global market with consumer culture in the form of “glocalization”. [4] The goods and produces, what is considered as local today is also available in the global market and vice-versa. In this context Sujay Routray has pointed out that, globalization has made marketing a main point of attraction for rural activities to more profit oriented activity. In the socio-cultural space where market was operating earlier has gradually declining influence on the lives of rural people now. [5] With the changing time some of the changes also seen in the weekly market and help the tribal farmers and sellers to increase their marketing intelligence through public awareness due to information flow from others and their exposure to urban centres with changing outlook.

7. RESULT:

Kunduli Rural Weekly Market and Social Development

As important socio-economic institutions, the weekly markets are not only considered as the major indicator of economic development but also take as a major parameter for overall development of surrounding villages and of the region. Weekly markets directly contribute to the growth of the trade, business and commerce and development of agriculture based industries. Weekly market is a place that pulls buyers and sellers of having variety of interest at regular interval and those interests compels them to visit the market. The marketing activity in weekly market plays a major role for the creation of employment opportunities and infrastructure development. Being the important economic institution the weekly markets in the rural areas of Koraput district including Kunduli have a major platform for the exchange of goods and services by the tribal as well as non-tribal farmer. The weekly markets in Koraput are directly contributing to the growth of trade and development of agro based services. Weekly markets at present are specialized for certain commodities and Kunduli weekly market is a well known rural market and famous for its agriculture produces. The success in business by rural agriculturist and local villagers through trading in market created awareness among the people to shift from their traditional agriculture activities to cash crops vegetables and like horticultural produces and other non-farm activities to increase their income.

Other than the market day's people are inactive and found seating in tree shaded hamlets and the road side places appear completely deserted. The scene is something different on the market days and surrounding palaces of market appears with a completely different look. The whole area surcharges with active exchange of people about their goods, services, ideas, upcoming fairs and festivals, family and social functions, and news of their respective villages and specialized interests. The place becomes completely crowded with the large number of people wandering here and there with various purposes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is felt that there is the requirement of reformation because the presence of large scales corrupt agents in the market whose intention is to cheat the poor tribals. The district Regulating Market Committee (RMC) may initiate the reformation. The impact of weekly market is well felt because of the large gatherings of nearby villagers and outside urban population on the market day. Therefore, it becomes a priority and require due attention and planning for increasing production with better economic value so that the labour put on for production and money invested in production process matches with the selling and profit margin. Safety measure for buyers and sellers need to be taken care. The supply of drinking water, parking places, boundary walls to enclose the market place may be taken care. Market also needs to be well connected with road and transportation for smooth carry of goods and produces.

9. CONCLUSION:

The weekly markets which are held weekly in this district are the main socio-economic institutions. These markets give an opportunity to the villagers, not only to trade with their commodities but also to meet their relatives and to participate in the religious and social activities. Thus the weekly market in this tribal belt is characterized with the socio-economic and cultural interactions. Weekly markets in Koraput including Kunduli market not only serve the purpose of buying and selling the commodities alone. The weekly market also serve as a platform to exchange people's ideas, their views and share news of their respective villages.

It is quite interesting to see some people enter first in the area where country-made liquor including landa, mad *Mahuli*, *salap*, and *pendam* is sold. They enjoy these local beverage and move around gossiping or having some important issues of heated discussions. Some roam around to find the products of their choice, inquiring the rates and bargaining for purchasing the items. Men, women and children of all ages attired with their traditional costumes and dress from neighbouring villages belonging to different caste and tribes coming to the market place in a large numbers and making the market place like a colourful festive occasion. All the agriculture works, wage labourer, construction

workers and other economic activities of the locality are stopped on the market day because large numbers of people attend the market. On this day people get an opportunity to interact with their peer groups, relatives and other friends within their own groups and outside the groups.

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