

KRISHNA RAJ SUMMER TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2017



ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE WEEKLY BAZAARS IN DELHI

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

We aim to undertake an ethnographic study of community of vendors at the weekly markets in Delhi

RESEARCH METHOD

The methods we used to investigate the research question is that of participant observation and interviews. The questionnaire we made for the interviews were mostly structured and semi structured. The order of the questions varied depending on the flow of the conversation.

Participant observation is the process which enables researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. It provides the context for development of sampling guidelines and interview guides. (DeWALT & DeWALT, 2002)

Through participant observation, we get to know the about the various hierarchies within the market space, and how the market operates as a whole. Herein, the non-verbal communication and the social interaction that takes place among traders, customers, government officials is given importance.

Gill et al., (2008) define the interview approach as something that has several key questions which help to define the areas to be explored, but also allow the researcher the flexibility to pursue an idea in a response in more detail, this is a medium between structured and unstructured interviews.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Suvrata Chowdhury says that local weekly markets or ‘haat’ is a traditional style of retailing where on a particular day of a week petty traders display their commodities on a makeshift arrangement in places authorized by the state municipal authorities against payment of some fixed remuneration. Usually these markets are organised on pavements of the roads. Commodities sold in these markets range from small objects of daily use to vegetables, garments, toys, and small electrical gadgets and cost of most of these goods are cheaper when compared to the price of similar articles sold in established outlets or malls (Chowdhury 2015). To quote Tamaskar in this respect, “As against ‘fixed’ locations of trading firms (shops), with their openings on everyday of the week, except on the declared holidays, periodic marketing places meet once, twice, thrice or four times in a Market ‘week’. Periodic marketplaces may be defined as spots or sites at which buyers and sellers converge periodically to acquire and or dispose of locally produced and exotic goods and service exchange information with friends, relatives, and strangers and engage in recreational activities (Tamaskar 1993).

Clifford Geertz, in his essay based on the ethnographic study in Sefrou in Morocco, has pointed out that the key thing to note about the bazaar is that information is poor and inefficiently communicated (Geertz 1978). This leads to a client type relationship between buyers and sellers. Another important element of such a relationship remains the art of bargaining and haggling. Geertz states that individuals prefer to negotiate prices with an existing trade partner then look for better deals elsewhere. It is also imperative to note that the traditional mode of the weekly markets, despite being peculiar to the rural setting, has replicated itself in the urban realm. Bhowmik points out that, “Unlike other sections of the urban population they do not demand that government create jobs for them, nor do they engage in begging, stealing or extortion. They try to live their life with dignity and self-respect through hard work” (Chowdhury 2015).

“The unorganized sector is at best a loose way to describe a wide range of activities by small firm households, and individuals, which are to a varying degrees integrated with organized sector markets. At one end of the spectrum a family firm, for example, may be closely integrated with a large corporation in the organized sector through industrial subcontracting. At the other end, agricultural laborers and slum or shantytown dwellers could be securing their income earning opportunities solely within the unorganized sector” (Jagannathan, 1987). Jagannathan further says that the notion that poor have no motivation to make ends meet is a misconception instead the fact is that they cannot afford to sit and watch the world go by; they have had to identify every economic opportunity available and seek to earn income from them all. In these situations they also create newer ways of protecting their interests through implicit contracts among themselves in unorganized markets.

Informal sector in Delhi is wide and like in all other contexts here also it has successfully played a good buffer zone for the excess labour which fails to get absorbed in the formal organized sector. Kaveri Gill points out that the growth of informal Small Scale Industries in Delhi, since 1951, has been phenomenal making it one of the biggest centres of such type and scale of industrial activity in the country today. She has figured out the reason for the same, the city has many commercial centres, it has an estimated 24,600 wholesale shops and establishments, most of which are located in the older congested parts of the city and many of which date back to the late nineteenth early twentieth century. Registered retail shops in numbers are as many as 0.1 million, and it is home to some 1.4 million informal retail units (Gill, 2012). Local weekly markets in Delhi constitute a significant proportion of the informal retail market. In order to decipher the nuances of informal markets, local weekly markets provide the easiest route for this exploration (Chowdhury 2015).

PRE- FIELDWORK VISIT

In order to decide on the field of our study, we began visiting these Hafta Bazaars. We visited three markets, two on a Sunday and one on a Saturday. The markets we visited were quite distinct from each other in nature.

Daryaganj is a Sunday book market near Delhi Gate. There, we spoke to a few book vendors and understood that since this market takes place once a week, some of the vendors go to other places like CP and GK to sell the books and others have their own shops.

Mahila Market is a Sunday market and was started by SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) to promote entrepreneurship of female vendors in the Hafta Market setup. Since these women often face difficulties in the male dominated Hafta Markets, Mahila Market is an attempt to empower women and foster self-sufficiency. This market is barely visible to the local public. The location of the market makes it very difficult for people to spot it and hence there are barely any customers on a Sunday afternoon in the market.

Amar Colony is a Hafta Bazaar which takes place on Saturdays and is located opposite Kailash Colony near LSR college. Here we observed that the vendors sold all kinds of products. This market gave us perspective to narrow down on what we aimed to focus on, which included following the vendors across markets to make our understanding of the space more nuanced.

Mahila Market and Darya Ganj unlike Hafta Bazaars are not rotational in nature and the way they are organised are very different from the setup of the hafta bazaars. The hafta bazaars usually take place near residential complexes as they attract local customers and they sell all kinds of products, largely including daily use products. Daryaganj on the other hand, sells books

which are not exactly daily use products and the market is not located in a residential area. Since, it is one of a kind, this market attracts people from across the city. Mahila Market is similar to Hafta Bazaars since the products sold there are everyday use products. However, the market is part of a government initiative and is not located near a residential area which makes it very isolated in comparison to other Hafta Bazaars.

MARKET OVERVIEW

Hafta Bazaars are markets which constitute a traditional style of sellers who set up makeshift arrangements on one particular day of the week in a particular locality to sell their commodities. These Hafta Bazaars take place across Delhi on different days of the week and the most of the vendors move around these markets. These weekly markets have been functional in Delhi since the last 40 years and sell commodities ranging from vegetables, spices, pickles to clothes to shoes, bags etc.

The markets usually occupy two or three streets in a locality stretching up 700-800 meters or more. The streets are really busy on the day of the market. The vendors start setting their shops up by 1 pm in the afternoon. Due to the impermanent nature of the bazaar, sticks and plastic covers and tables are used to create a temporary shop. Since these are makeshift arrangements, vendors take atleast 2-3 hours to set up their shops. Some of the vendors either carry their products with them everyday and some store them a godown nearby for the ease in transportation. These vendors buy their products at various wholesale markets like Sadar Bazaar, Gandhinagar, Chawri Bazaar, Chandni Chowk and Azadpur Mandi. The products are usually carried either via metro or tempos or their own vehicles. These vendors have to move around through the week and hence they choose their markets wisely. The choice usually depends on the fact that the market gets a lot of customers or that these markets are closer to their home. The specific spots where the vendors put up their makeshift stall within these markets are allotted on a first cum first serve basis, and they remain fixed throughout. The class background of most of these vendors is lower class but occasionally one might come across a middle class vendor. Usually family members help out in the stall but there are also big stalls wherein helpers are employed.

The location of these markets are in the periphery of posh urban localities, and mostly right next to government colonies. None of these markets actually took place inside an elite colony or locality. The vendors feel that they cannot even think of setting up the market inside posh colonies as they will face objections from the Resident Welfare Associations. The possibility of attracting people is relatively more if the markets are set up in the peripheries of such localities. which draws people from the lower middle class and middle class. Most of the upper class and

upper middle class customers often send their servants to shop for fresh and cheap vegetables instead of going there themselves.

There are a lot of things happening in the market and the Pradhan is the one who is an elected head whose job is to make sure that the market functions smoothly. There are different pradhans for different purposes like renting of tables, lighting, security and cleaning staff (sweepers), all of them charge money ranging from Rs.30 to Rs. 250. After speaking to the vendors, we came across a recurring pattern that the pricing of these materials and resources are arbitrary in nature. Further, many vendors complained about the fact that the police and the Pradhan work together to exploit them due to their vulnerability. The Police ends up extorting money as bribes or alcohol and this money is collected by the Pradhan from the vendors. The market vendors also have to pay some amount of money to the MCD which usually takes Rs. 15 from every vendor for the space occupied.

The market is a place of constant negotiations with various agencies of power. A permanent shop would not have these kind of negotiations. The vendors have considered having a permanent shop but most of them cannot afford the capital required to invest in it hence they find weekly market as a convenient option. A few others felt that the weekly market is a better bet than the shop because they feel they make more profit at the market than they will if they had a permanent shop.

The experience of vendors differs from area to area as the Pradhans and other officials change. Some markets are known for extorting a lot of money from the vendors while some others are known to be functioning quite smoothly. One of the things which serves as a boon and bane for these vendors is the fact that their customer base is impermanent. This impermanence helps the vendors sell products in different markets and it works against them in a way because this makeshift arrangement makes them vulnerable to factors like weather conditions. In a way, the weekly markets have ensured livelihood and support to many.

LAWS PERTAINING TO THE WEEKLY MARKETS

In 1989, in the case of *Sodan Singh vs New Delhi Municipal Committee*, the Supreme Court declared street trading as a fundamental right under Article 19(1) (g). However, it is not possible for the traders to select the areas for street trading as it may violate the rights of other citizens to move freely. Therefore, it is up to the state to delineate the areas for such trade. In 2009, the court ordered the setting up of Town Vending Committees (TVCs) in urban areas as a part of the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors. The Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act in 2014 further iterated the same. However, the ground reality remains quite different. The *Sodan Singh* judgment included the plans to issue vending licenses

to weekly market vendors by the MCD which never worked out. In 2002, however, the Dilli Redi Patri Saptahik Bazaar Welfare Society sought formal approval of these weekly markets from the MCD and brought the parchi system in place where each vendor would pay Rs 15.

FIELDWORK

After visiting a few markets during our Pre-fieldwork visit, we realised that across Delhi, there are Hafta bazaars throughout the week for example: Mohammadpur market is on Fridays, RK Puram market is on Sundays, Pushp Vihar market is on Mondays. These vendors travel throughout the week across the city with their products.

We had a lot of doubts in the beginning with regard to following these vendors because all the markets seemed identical. However, we later found out that each market is structured differently in terms of space and social relations. The interactions of the vendors with their surroundings differ depending on the day of the week. In order to understand the different spatiality of these markets, to note the similarities and differences across markets and to build trust among the vendors, we needed to attend the same market and meet the same people a number of times.

We narrowed it down to these three markets namely, RK Puram, Pushp Vihar and Mohammadpur because we figured that these markets were the only common ground for all the vendors we had decided to follow.

1. RK Puram Market

The RK Puram weekly market is near Sector-7, opposite the Nivedita Kunj Complex on the right side of the road, and on the left side of the road are slum settlements. The market occupies one whole street, and as we walked through the market we could see the slum settlements on one side of the road. This particular market's customer base comes from the slum settlements next to it and also from the different government sectors in RK Puram.

2. Pushp Vihar Market (Saket)

The weekly market in Pushp Vihar is located in the streets which pass by Sectors 1, 3 and 5 of the area. Pushp Vihar is primarily a government residential locality where the buildings are marked out separately to make a distinction between the high level officials (BSF, ministry officials) and lower level workers (peons, clerks). There exists a distinct class divide in this locality which is also seen in the customer base of the market. Mostly the lower level workers visit the market and the orderlies and driver are sent by the high level officials, though there might be exceptions.

3. Mohammadpur Market

The weekly market in Mohammadpur is situated right across Safdarjung Enclave, which happens to be another upper class urban residential area. The trends which we observed in RK Puram and Pushp Vihar can be applied to Mohammadpur as well, as this is a recurring pattern we noticed in all the three Hafta Bazaars we focused on.

Interviews: Once we settled on the markets, we spoke to a wide range of people to get a sense of the weekly market. A market is a busy space and with the vendors constantly working, it was not possible for us to talk to the vendors for more than 15 minutes at once. Hence we decided to meet them at least three times in the markets to get a better understanding of the work and for them to trust us enough so that they would invite us to their home for a longer interview session. We roughly spoke to 30 vendors in three Hafta Bazaars.

Selection of people for case studies:

After visiting these bazaars a number of times, we observed that most of the vendors at these bazaars were mostly Hindu men. In order to get different kinds of experiential perspectives of the Hafta Bazaars, we decided to interview different kinds of people for our case studies.

1. Weekly markets have been in existence in Delhi for over 40 years. To get a more comprehensive view of the market, we decided to speak to someone who has been in the market for over 30 years and has a son or sons who are also in the same business.

2. There are barely any women vendors in the markets. The ones we saw were mostly with their husbands or sons. We decided to look for a woman who sits alone in the market as we figured that her experience would be drastically different from most of the men and women around her.

3. We also wanted to speak to a person in an official position within the organization of the weekly market. This would give us an insight as to how the officials see the space of the Hafta Bazaars and how this might stand in contrast to the experience of other people who are not in positions of authority.

4. In context of the present day political situation of the country, we decided to speak to Muslim vendors to understand if the political atmosphere has made any changes in the way they engage with the Hafta Bazaars.

CASE STUDIES

1. Ram Kishore

Mr. Ram Kishore is a 62 year old vendor who has been in the market for almost 32 years and is often accompanied by his son, Kaushik. He sells different kinds of bags which are on clear display in his stall, ranging from office bags, laptop bags, schoolbags, pouches, purses, travel bags, tiffin bags. Interestingly, he also supplements his earnings driving the auto-rickshaw during his off days.

The initial meetings with him lent insight into his day-to-day transactions with customers. The price of his products range anywhere from Rs. 25 to Rs. 850 and bargaining is quite rampant. He is open to exchange of products but not returns, and he receives a spike in his sales towards evening every day and whenever schools reopen.

The conversations that followed at Ram Kishore's house in Mehrauli, however, helped to better understand the more crucial details of his life as a vendor in these markets. He travels from the cramped residential clusters in Mehrauli where he lives to different weekly markets in south Delhi in his auto. His small two-storied house is home to him and his 8 family members, including grandchildren. Given his 32 odd years in the weekly markets of Delhi, he starts explaining that his father, who migrated from Allahabad, used to own a paan ki dukan but Ram Kishore himself was introduced to weekly markets by a friend. He started off by selling ladies cosmetic products like nail polish, lipstick, bindis, combs, mirrors, etc. for 12 years but later moved on to selling bags exclusively since the tiny products were hard to keep track of and were routinely stolen or lost. Further, it was inconvenient to carry these products around. Shedding light on how the market has changed over the three decades that he has spent here, Ram Kishore makes it clear the increased traffic has caused more congestion, especially since many customers now prefer to send their drivers or servants to run errands in these hafta bazaars. He further adds that the outlook of customers too has changed drastically. "Nowadays, customers don't even want to sit down to buy vegetables. They easily get attracted by fancy malls and stores." He says, adding that these customers prefer the "dikhawa" and fancy decorations instead of what products they buy. In fact, he believes that malls and online retail stores cannot compete with hafta bazaars, since at the end of the day urban customers will send their servants to these bazaars for weekly supplies like vegetables because they remain significantly cheaper.

While there is no limit to his earnings, unforeseen circumstances like bad weather can make it quite unpredictable. Deducting all the sundry expenses, his earnings per month usually fall

between Rs. 15000 to Rs. 20000. He usually buys his products from Sadar Bazaar and Chandni Chowk and pays Rs. 100 for his 2 tables and 2 lights everyday along with the Rs. 15 parchi to the MCD. Apart from table and lights, the pradhans also ask for money for the maintenance of the bazaar including money for tea at the end of the day. However, he mentions the rampant corruption among police officials who forcibly collect money from pradhans for their own alcohol consumption. When asked whether he ever considered owning a permanent shop, he says that such shops require a lot of monetary investment whereas setting up stalls in weekly bazaars are cheaper. Further, he mentions that he has more free time as he can take a day or two off which he wouldn't have been able to do as the owner of a permanent shop. After spending the better part of his life in these bazaars, Ram Kishore seems quite used to it.

2. Reena Rajput Chauhan

It is difficult to find female vendors alone in these markets unaccompanied by another man. However, Reena sits in these markets by herself, though her husband drops her and picks her up. Belonging to the Lohar community, Reena sells various utensils like khurpi, kadhais, belan, tawa, etc. which are sprawled on a little table in front of her. The lohaars don't have big stalls like the other vendors. Married at the age of 20, Reena has 2 children and has been in the market for almost 15 years. She lives in the slum area near RK Puram Sector 4 along with the rest of her community. Her house consists of a small kitchen and one room where the rest of the family stays. She is eager to talk and more adept at communicating with her customers, as opposed to her husband. Her husband, on account of not being literate, has a hard time with daily transactions. He usually makes khurpi, chimti and a few more products at home, and buys the rest of the products from wholesale markets of Chawri Bazaar. He has no job at the moment, and therefore, Reena is the sole breadwinner of the family of four. Given the lack of toilet and water facilities in these markets, women don't often sit in stalls. She says she hasn't faced any overt discrimination in the market area since she usually sits close to other people of her community who also sell utensils. Everyone in the market calls her "bhabhi" and helps out if she needs loose change. It is evident that in the Lohar community, married women usually go out to work whereas unmarried younger girls are often not even made to step of the house.

Reena barely manages to eke out a living in these bazaars especially since she sells non-perishable goods and therefore, finds it difficult to attract customers on a daily and regular basis. She usually gets more customers around Diwali and Karvachauth, while summer in general remains an off-season. Loha itself has gotten more expensive, from being Rs. 15/kg back in the day to Rs. 120/kg. The average monthly earnings remain close to Rs. 5000 per month and she complains about the extortion of money by the pradhan and the police. Sometimes, she ends up paying Rs. 500 per month as bribe to the police. Further, her community, which prides itself as descendants of the Rajputs from Udaipur, complains about the other castes that have also

began selling loha utensils. The adverse effects of GST and online shopping have hit her hard, and even the thought of owning a permanent shop seems far-fetched. She recounts that some members of her community did try to sell their utensils on a pavement near their locality but were quickly displaced by the police. Reena makes it clear that the hardships involved in her line of work have compelled her to make sure her daughter does not suffer the same fate. She wants her daughter to undergo a beautician course and work at the parlour, instead of remaining in this business like most of her family.

3. Ramesh Kumar

The president of the South Delhi Weekly Markets Association, Ramesh Kumar, has been in the weekly markets for three decades. He joined the association in 1995 and became the Pradhan in 2002. He attributes his long tenure of 15 years to the fact that other people remain reluctant to take up the responsibilities that his job entails. Kumar is 48 years old and migrated from Moga in Punjab to Delhi in 1985 during the aftermath of the Sikh riots. Fearful that violence had reached its peak, Kumar abandoned his general store in Moga and entered the weekly markets of Delhi where he initially began selling Ladies footwear. He later switched and now owns a chole bhature stall since its better money. While he does not sit at the stall himself, he has employed 3-4 people who help around including collecting money, preparing the food and washing the dishes.

Since he is the head pradhan, local pradhans of various markets work under him. His weekly negotiations include speaking to the association members, making sure the sweepers clean up once the market shuts down at night, and negotiating with the Police Personnel for the smooth functioning of various markets. According to him, the reason behind the arbitrary amount of money collected from the vendors is for the maintenance of market space which includes private security and sweeper charges. He also makes sure that after the market is over post-midnight, the benches and the stalls are removed and the area is cleaned up. The removal of these benches often garnered complaints from various residents and the Residents' Welfare Associations of various areas which led to him making sure that the stalls are removed early in the mornings instead.

He concedes that the lack of female vendors in the markets remains a major cause of concern since besides the lack of toilet facilities (to which he requested the MCD to take action build one in RK Puram) the physical labour that goes behind the setting up of these stalls and the transportation of products often acts as a deterrent for women. Further, weekly markets go on till midnight which again discourages women to participate. However, he also mentions the absence of any conflict or quarrels within the market. When asked about any communal tensions, he recalls one major incident when an upper caste Hindu vendor refused to sit next to Muslim

vendor. They resolved this issue by giving them an ultimatum to either to sit in the allotted space or leave. The escalation of this issue further would have caused the disruption of the entire market so both the parties complied. Since these markets are anyway quite disposable in the eyes of the authorities, according to Kumar, clashes like these are almost nonexistent.

The evolution of the market in his eyes has been tremendous, since there were barely 14-15 stalls when he started out. He staunchly believes that the existence of online shopping and retail stores do not provide any competition to these markets since bargaining here is so rampant that customers find the cheapest products here. Citing the example of vegetable vendors, he mentions that as the night progresses the vegetables are often sold for whatever price the customer quotes since the vendors want to do away with their stock as they have no place to store such perishable goods. However, these markets remain disposable in the eyes of the police and legal authorities, as he cites the example of the weekly bazaar at Sheikh Sarai Phase 1 which was shut down after 22 years. The police, Kumar concedes, does end up extorting money from the vendors by blackmailing them about blatantly false and alleged alcohol and drug abuse. Despite its problems, Kumar asserts that these bazaars provide all kinds of products at the cheapest rates.

4. Mahender Kumar

Mahendra Kumar is a senior member of the South Delhi Redi Patri Saptahik Bazaar Welfare Society. He has one stall consisting of a table and a light where sells plastic products like soap holders, hairbrush, etc. For him, working in these markets is more feasible since permanent shops do not attract enough customers and given the variety of products at cheap prices in the weekly markets, sales are usually higher and the margin is relatively better. He is more educated than other vendors and has a bachelor's degree from Motilal Nehru College, University of Delhi. He adds that despite having "connections" in other businesses, he chooses to work here because of the guaranteed sales and flexible hours. He has 3 members in his family, including one son who supplies wholesale products to Bikanerwala and one daughter who works as a bank manager at ICICI Bank, Shahadra.

It was his association, along with the South Delhi Weekly Market's Association, which helped these markets get formal approval by MCD and got the parchi system in place after staging protests in 2002. He adds that the association tries to make sure that the market runs smoothly which is why funds are collected from the vendors in case of any unforeseen circumstances, like accidents. While there is no limit to selling any product in these markets, the boundaries are often specified beyond which no stalls can be set up. According to him, the size of the market has increased drastically over time. He says that had witnessed a few minor squabbles back in the day, but such small fights don't take place anymore. Kumar, admittedly, considers the whole market as his "home" and after working here for almost 30 years, finds it quite feasible.

5. Rajendra Kumar

Rajendra Kumar sells saris in his stall which consists of 3 tables and 4 lights, costing him close to Rs. 150 every day. While he has been in the market for 10 years, Kumar also owns a permanent shop in Rohtak which also happens to be his hometown. He travels from Rohtak to Delhi every day and keeps his products in a warehouse near Ranibagh from where he catches his train to Rohtak. It takes him roughly an hour and a half to reach Delhi, and he usually sits in only 2 weekly markets in South Delhi while the rest of his route falls in Central and West Delhi. Kumar mentions that while his father sits in the permanent shop in Rohtak, it does not provide him with enough money which is why he travels to the city for 5 days a week. He buys his wholesale products from Rohtak itself which are significantly cheaper. Kumar presents an interesting case where a permanent shop does not provide with enough money to sustain his livelihood. Sitting at these weekly markets, however, come with its own sets of challenges. Talking about the rampant corruption by policemen, he details one incident where he was roughed up by what he presumed to be the pradhan's goons in order to extort more money from him. This incident took place at around midnight, right when the market was closing down and when he was packing up his stuff. Clearly, the nexus of corruption between the police and the pradhans affect these vendors' lives in more significant ways than imaginable.

6. Abid Malik

Abid Malik is a 26 year old weekly market vendor who sells jeans and shirts of men and children. He originally hails from Aligarh and has been in the weekly market business for 3 years. Although his father is also involved in the wholesale business in Agra and Mathura but he does not get the products he sells from his father, because they're expensive. Instead, he buys his products from wholesale markets at Gandhinagar. The tables and lights cost him about Rs. 150 every day, and he travels to different markets for 5 days a week. Despite being in the market for 3 years, he is still unaware of the pradhan's name. He says that he has never encountered any fights or quarrels within these market spaces. He lives in Delhi with his mother and his sister.

ANALYSIS

Through our fieldwork, we could understand and analyze a few things:

- We observed that the local weekly markets barely had any women vendors and there are some structural factors due to which the number of women in these markets are very few. The weekly markets mostly go on till late at night which becomes a major determining factor for women to not set up stalls here because it is not safe for them to be present till

late. Moreover, the setting up of the stall and carrying the products from their houses to the spot of the market requires a lot of physical labour which becomes a major hindrance for women per say. However, in contrast to the local weekly markets, Self Employed Women's Association(SEWA) has taken the initiative to start a Mahila market which only comprises of women vendors. The Mahila market takes place on every Sunday of the week during the afternoon which makes it easier for women to come and be part of the Mahila market even though it is not as large scale as the local weekly markets, but it is a step towards empowering women and making them more self sufficient.

- Even though the weekly markets form a part of the informal sector, they do have an internal structural organisation. The Pradhan makes sure that the market operates smoothly and makes sure that there are no disruptions caused in the functioning of the market. The Police makes sure that the market does not cause traffic and personal security guards are hired as well to make sure there is no theft and no fights which may ensue due to various reasons. The space which is allotted to vendors also remains the same over time and the vendors pay Rs 15 to the MCD for the space they occupy in the market. These different forces/ actors come together to make sure that the market functions properly which is what makes the market so organised.
- In theory, the Hafta Bazaars can be categorised in the informal sector because they are mostly regulated from within than without. However, in practice, we observed that there are various forces which function within the context of Hafta Bazaars. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the police and the Pradhans form a nexus who operate together in order to regulate these markets, even though the former two are a part of the formal sector and the latter belong to the informal sector. Due to this, these vendors are rendered helpless as these agencies remove them as per their whim mostly without giving them prior notices, especially during certain festivals and occasions or ongoing metro construction projects.
- GST and demonetization further added to the woes of these vendors by making their products not only more expensive but also causing their an increase in their expenditure making their earnings relatively lower. Further, the government's decision to demonetize the Rs 500 and Rs 100 currency notes in November 2016 adversely affected these markets. According to the vendors, the markets had to be almost closed down because of the lack of customers who themselves did not have enough cash in their hands. These vendors could not not afford to switch to online methods of payment or card machines. As a result, the operations of these markets bore the brunt of demonetization for almost a month where the livelihood of these vendors remained at risk.

- Over the past few decades the market has undergone drastic transformations. Certain policy level changes (Liberalization) has given rise to different kind of consumer culture. One of major reasons for this has been the outburst of malls, online shopping etc. which have become an extremely important part of the urban fabric due to westernisation and globalisation.

CHALLENGES/ LIMITATIONS:

- The fact that we were three urban upper class young women who were visiting these Hafta Bazaars on a regular basis also drew some attention from the people in these markets. A lot of these people thought that we were from the government and hence we reluctant to speak to us.
- We met a few Muslim vendors and spoke to them, but one major drawback was that some of them very reluctant to even talk to us. Even though some of them gave us their numbers they didn't receive our calls later, whereas, some of them dismissed us in the very beginning.
- Most of the women vendors we spoke to were hesitant to talk to us and wanted their husbands or sons to take charge of the conversation.
- All the Hafta Bazaars we visited were spread over a very vast area and initially it was very difficult for us to navigate our way through the market based on certain landmarks and locate some of the vendors we had spoken to
- The major limitation of our study was the paucity of time. It took us at least three meetings with the vendors to build our rapport and trust with them, because only then we could have asked them the questions we intended to but it could have been much more detailed and descriptive if we had more time in hand to interact with them further.

Examples of Questions we asked the vendors during interviews:

How has the market changed across the years they have been in it?

How did they get into the business of weekly markets?

Why did they decide to sell one product and not the other?

How has the change in governmental policies impact their work?

Have they considered owning a permanent shop?

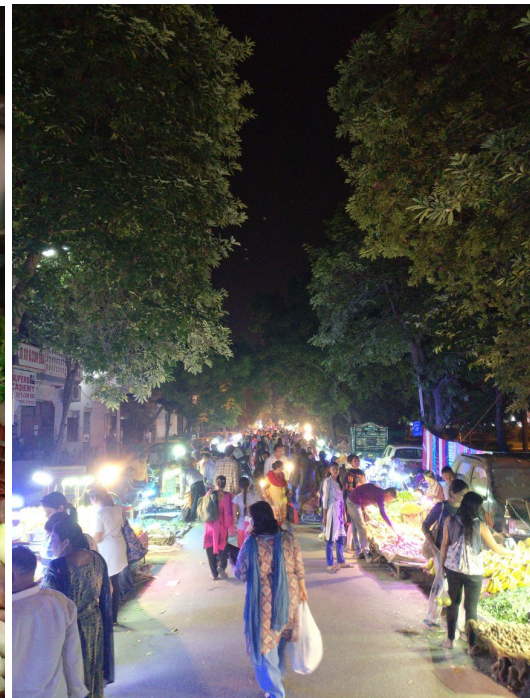
VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE FIELDWORK



Market in the afternoon



Market during the night





House of Reena, one of the weekly market vendors



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