Urban Dynamics of Periodic Markets in Delhi: Historical Roots and Modern Influence

Rajshree Mathur
Research Scholar
TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi

Shaleen Singhal
Professor
TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi

Abstract
Periodic marketplaces have been instrumental in shaping urban development by serving as hubs for trade, social interaction, and economic sustenance. These markets have not only facilitated the exchange of goods but also functioned as vital public spaces that fostered community engagement. Over time, shifting urban needs and economic patterns have led to their transformation, influencing the spatial and economic growth of cities. This study explores the historical evolution of periodic street markets, focusing on global patterns and their development in India. Employing grounded theory and case study analysis, it identifies key locational parameters shaping market placement, applying theories of parallel and contingent evolution to assess their historical significance and contemporary relevance in Delhi.

Keywords: Periodic Markets, Vendors, Historical Evolution, Hafta Bazaars, Locational Factors

1. Introduction
Weekly markets, commonly known as *hafta bazaars* in India, are periodic markets which have been a longstanding tradition for buying and selling goods, a practice that dates back to ancient times. Historically, villages organised weekly or bi-weekly markets, which served as centres for the exchange of agricultural produce, artisan goods, and other essential commodities brought in by travelling traders. Beyond their economic role, these markets evolved into significant social spaces, facilitating communal gatherings and cultural interactions. Due to their periodic nature and convenient accessibility, these designated locations became hubs for social and cultural meetings in addition to trade activities (Stine, 1962; Hay, 1971; Alao, 1968; Skinner, 1964).

Evidence of these trading hubs and their routes can be found across continents in historical records of settlements. Literature suggests that periodic markets have undergone gradual evolution, exhibiting discernible patterns in their operation and spatial organisation. Many

settlements established structured marketing systems to ensure the smooth functioning of these periodic markets. The selection of market locations was influenced by multiple factors, including trade routes, population density, buyer and seller needs, and communication networks (Tamaskar, 1989).

Economic factors have also played a significant role in the development of cities around periodic markets. Various theories explain the emergence of urban centres, including the proximity to water bodies, religious theory, and military or fortification theory. In the context of periodic markets, one prominent perspective emphasises that surplus agricultural production from rural areas necessitated centralised trading venues. These periodic markets, serving as nodes of economic exchange, often evolved into permanent urban settlements. This underscores the crucial role of periodic markets in shaping patterns of urban development.

Today, these markets continue to attract a diverse range of people and offer a vast array of products, from fresh produce and household goods to utensils and daily necessities. Their physical form and operational dynamics have evolved over centuries, shaping their present-day existence and structure. Reflecting on these markets raises several pertinent questions: How did the concept of periodicity emerge? How were market locations and schedules determined—were they arbitrarily chosen, or did specific factors influence these decisions? These markets embody history, tradition, and cultural continuity.

To better understand the development of periodic markets, a literature review has been conducted to establish connections and link historical events, shedding light on their evolution and significance. This review is further expanded by examining historical periodic markets, which are then analysed through case studies from Delhi. By comparing past and present market structures, locations, and functions, the study aims to identify key parameters that have influenced their placement and operation over time.

It is structured into two sections: the global evolution of these markets, and their development within the Indian subcontinent. The study analyses key parameters influencing market locations and their impact on market functioning.

2. Research Methodology

Applying the parallel evolution theory (Bailey et al., 2015), which posits that similar patterns emerge due to adaptations rather than chance, the research integrates Gould's perspective (Gould,1969). that in spatial and socio-economic contexts of weekly markets, the current forms of weekly markets result not merely from functional necessity, but from a series of historically specific, contingent developments.

Various case studies are analysed to identify factors shaping market placement. This paper employs Grounded Theory and case study analysis to establish that specific key parameters influence market locations. Using inductive reasoning, it derives these parameters from historical case examples, supported by a literature review, and assesses their relevance in contemporary Delhi markets.

The methodology is structured as follows:

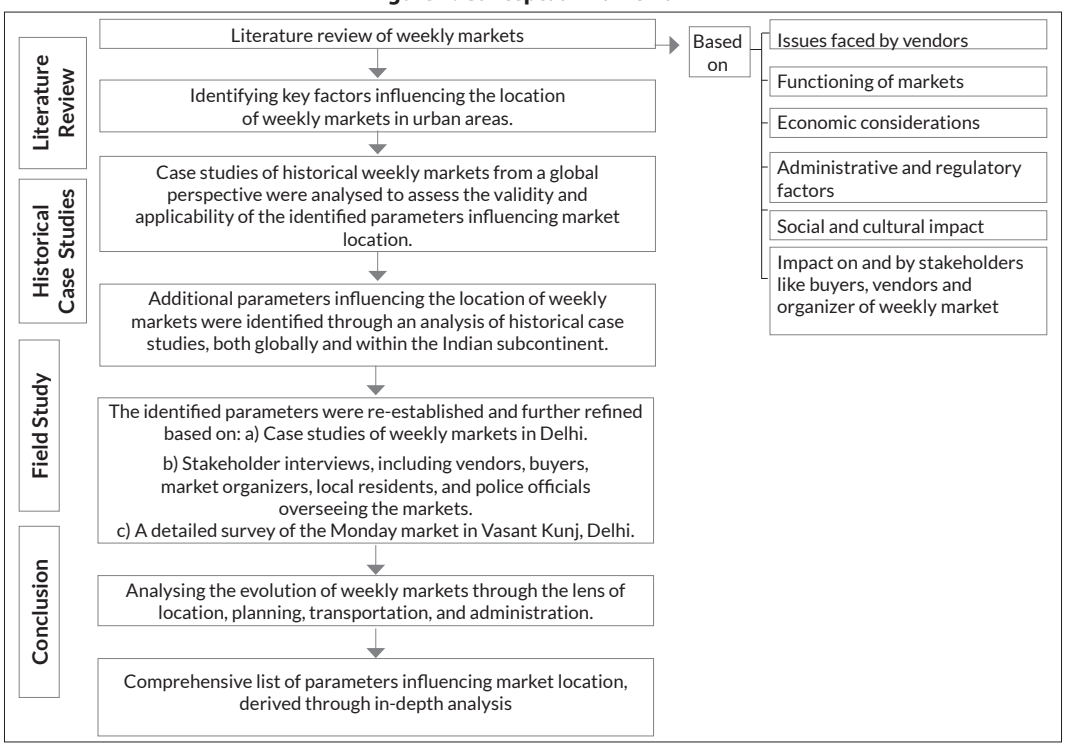
Literature Review – Analysing parameters affecting the location, placement, and planning of periodic markets, followed by the identification of key locational factors and an examination of their global evolution.

Historical Case Analysis – Investigating the evolution of periodic markets through historical case studies to validate the role of various parameters in their development and spatial organization.

Field Study – Assessing the contemporary relevance of these parameters through case studies of Delhi's markets. This involves a two-tiered approach: first, a broad examination of multiple markets in Delhi, followed by a detailed pilot study of a specific market to refine and enhance the identified parameters.

The study aims to highlight the similarities between historical and contemporary periodic markets, analysing their impact on market placement in modern urban settings. While market evolution encompasses multiple dimensions, this research focuses on key parameters observed globally, with a particular emphasis on their manifestation in the Indian subcontinent.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



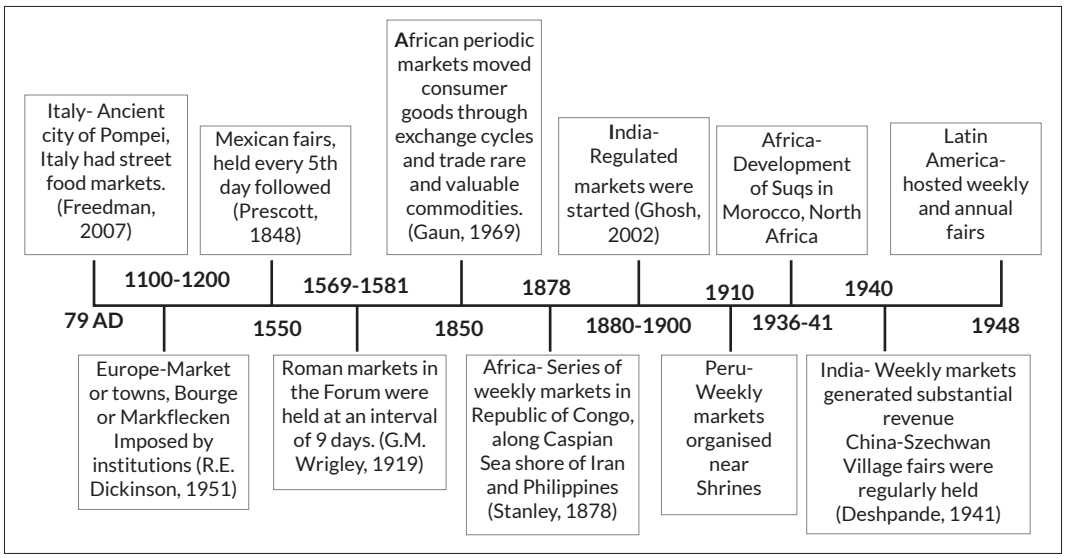
Source: Compiled by the authors

3. Findings

3.1 Historical Evolution of Periodic Markets

Periodic markets have historically played a crucial role in economic and social interactions across various regions. Their origins are rooted in subsistence farming, where producers relied on natural resources to meet basic needs. As agricultural communities began to produce surplus goods, the necessity to sell excess produce led to the emergence of periodic markets. These markets initially took the form of street food markets, organised at convenient locations, serving not only as retail hubs but also as platforms for social and cultural interactions (Belshaw, 1965; Lanaro, 2003; Stine, 1962; Hay, 1971; Alao, 1972; Skinner, 1964). Over time, with improvements in production methods, distribution systems, and transportation networks, periodic markets evolved into structured trade hubs, becoming key sources of revenue (Deshpande, 1941). They attracted traders from various settlements, facilitating a diverse range of goods and enhancing market accessibility for local buyers (Bromley, 1975).

Figure 2: Brief History of Evolution of Periodic Markets around the World



Source: Compiled by the authors

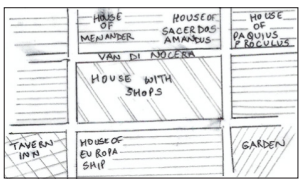
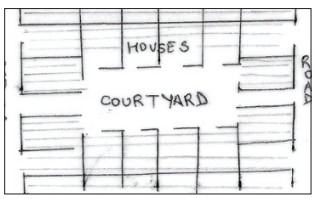
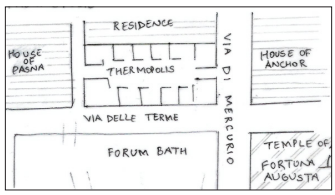
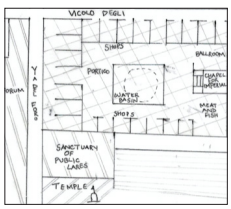
To improve efficiency, these markets were strategically planned in terms of location and trading days, making them truly periodic in nature (Bromley, 1975). Initially, transactions followed a barter system, but as trade expanded, currency was introduced to simplify exchanges (Belshaw, 1965). The expansion of transportation systems along roads and rivers further increased the scale of transactions between periodic markets. As industrial and technological advancements enabled mass production and specialisation of services, periodic markets played a significant role in distributing goods to regions that lacked self-sufficiency while also facilitating the exchange of artisanal products unique to specific locations (Berry, 1967; Gaun, 1969).

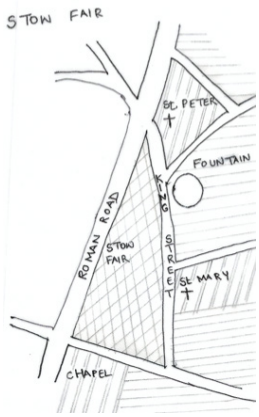
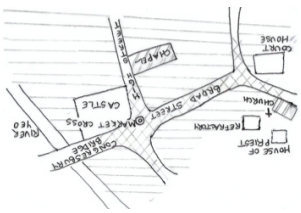
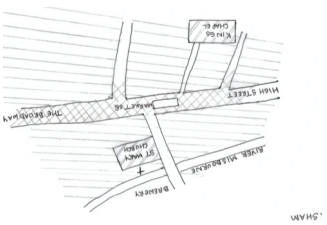
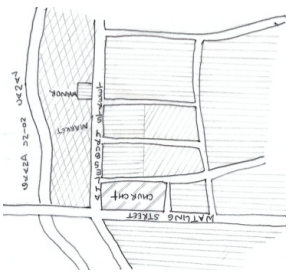
As these markets became more established, dedicated marketplaces were developed, with designated trading days and official regulations. Authorities granted specific market rights, ensuring organised operations and revenue generation. The socio-economic impact of these markets was so widespread that they continued to function even during crises, including wars (Ogot, 1850). In addition to their economic significance, these markets also fostered social bonds, as traders formed alliances to ensure safe trade routes and mutually beneficial exchanges (Uzoigwe, 1972). The continued expansion of transport networks facilitated the growth of periodic markets, solidifying their role as essential components of local and regional commerce. Figure 1 presents a timeline of the development of periodic markets.

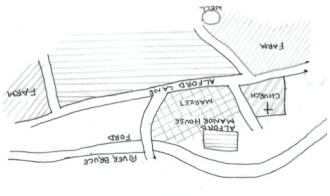
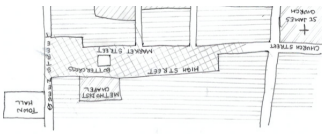
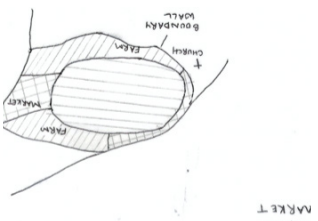
3.1.1. Historical Case Studies

In most cases, common factors influencing the placement of periodic markets were identified, including location and centrality, connectivity, and distance from key areas. Table 1 analyses these parameters through various case examples to provide a comparative understanding of their impact on market placement and functioning.

Table 1: Analysis of Parameters through Case Studies

	Market	Centrality and Location	Length of Market	Pattern of Movement	Conceptual Plans of Markets
1	Markfleken Bourg, Morroco	1 or 2 markets within tribe area, based on population density; placed on neutral ground	Based on area served, size of gathering	Convenience of access prioritised	
2	Markets of Pompei	Placed close to residences, church or temples; proximity to cultivation ground and open spaces, which were specially allotted for them	Markets were large complexes to accommodate all the needs, with detailed planning for various functions	Placed next to wide roads for easy access	 Setting of house with shops
	Conceptual Plans of Pompei  Internal planning of house with shops	 Thermopolium	 Macellum	

	Market	Centrality and Location	Length of Market	Pattern of Movement	Conceptual Plans of Markets
3a)	Markets of England, Stow Fair	Close to residential area, held in a manor	Placed on a large field, it could accommodate large no of vendors and space for religious & other festivals	Connected to major roads, the Roman road and Kings Road	 Stow Fair
3b)	Market in Manor of Congresbury Somerset, UK	Market held in centre of town, near high density residential area; proximity to church and chapel	Placed on open space of manor; the proximity to rivers provided good source of water to grow crops to be sold in the market	Excellent transport links connected the market; broad streets used to connect the market	 Market of Congresbury
3c)	Markets of Amersham, England	High density around the markets; market squares developed close to church and chapels	The length of road was used to expand the market as per needs	Well connected by major roads	 Market of Amersham
3d)	Fenny Stratford, England	Market town; high density around the markets and close to cultivation farms	Placed on major street, long enough to display various goods	Connected to the Roman road and well connected to neighbourhoods; close to railway station	 Market of Stratford

	Market	Centrality and Location	Length of Market	Pattern of Movement	Conceptual Plans of Markets
3e)	Alford, England	Close to high density residential areas and administration area; proximity to church	Size of market restricted by area in front of manor	Well connected by major roads; proximity to church and railway line	 Market of Alford
3f)	Spilsby, London	Centrally located in town, near chapel, town hall and church; served large density of population; structure called 'Buttercross' was focal point of market	Market held along the widest road of town and provided ample space for vending and movement	Connected to various blocks, provided easy access for pedestrians	 Market of Spilsby
4	Markets in Mexico	The market being placed on the edge of the city, was close to residential areas	Outer court was designated for market and had easy movement for people	Market was connected by a peripheral road to the residential area	 Market of Mexico
5	Manya Krobe Territory Ghana	Markets located close to residential and agricultural areas; they were also close to shrines or consecrated trees	Similar goods were assembled in a particular sector and market length was on need basis	Markets were well connected by major locations and had motorable roads	

Source: Compiled by the authors

3.2 Location of Periodic Markets

Existing literature indicates that multiple factors influence the location of periodic markets. Two primary determinants for market establishment include: (a) a relatively high population density, with a threshold of 50 people per square mile, as observed in a study of Yorubaland (Hodder,

1965); and (b) the presence of a political organisational structure capable of ensuring market security (Smith, 1962; Mossi, 1962; Vansina, 1962). To reduce travel costs, traders follow a predefined sequence (Hill & Smith, 1972) and adhere to free market principles, which determine vendor placement, the number of vendors at each location, and the types of services offered. The following table outlines through existing literature on the subject the various parameters influencing market location.

Table 2: Parameters Influencing Location of Periodic Markets

1	**Centrality**	a) Distance from nearby residential area/ land use composition around area (Ray, 2017)
	(Jackson, R.T., 1971; Sales, 2018; Lussault, 2003; Hodder, 1961; Frohlich, 1940; Escada, G. & Fuertes, 2020)	b) Modes of connectivity (Hart, D.M., 1955; Mikesell, 1958; Berry, 1967; Stanley, 1878; Wrigley, 1919).
		c) Location of market w.r.t. major roads
		d) Location of high density areas (Skinner, 1964)
2	**Location of Market**	a) Placed on neutral ground or open space or location of the markets or a religious place (Jackson, R.T., 1971; Francis, 1910)
	(Chowdhary, 2017; Ray 2011; Sales 2018; Spencer,1940; Faster,1948; Berry,1967)	b) Traffic or pedestrian movement (Bhowmik, 2011)
		c) Proximity to a market place and water body (Montagne, 1930)
		d) Communication nodes (Mintz, 1960; Bromley, 1975; Hart, 1975)
		e) Location of village (Mikesell, W., 1958)
		f) Fairs at close distance on different days provide access to buyers and vendors almost daily and cater a large population
3	**Length of Market (Distance)**	a) Length of market has an impact on its location (Braun, M., Fricke, W. and Malchau, G., 1998; Smith, R.H.T. (ed.), 1978; Mikesell, 1958)
	Bromley & Symansky, 1974	b) Distance between various markets (Wrigley, 1919)
		c) Location and nearby land use mix has an impact on length of market (Shreya, 2014; Shweta Sharma, 2015)
4	**Movement Pattern/ Connectivity**	A) Vehicular Movement/ Transportation
		a) Access to market and major roads connecting the market (Basu, 2016; Bhowmik, 2011; Sharma, 2015)
	Berry, 1967; Jackson, R.T., 1971; Mikesell, 1958; Foster, 1948; Fogg,1941; Bromley & Symansky, 1974	b) Modes of transport available to access the market
		c) Road widths within market (Verma, 2014)
		B) Pedestrian movement—Pedestrian footpaths to access and move in market

Source: Compiled by the authors

3.2.1. Parameters Influencing Location of Periodic Markets

Based on the study of historical markets, it can be derived that the following key parameters influenced the location and placement of periodic markets:

Centrality and Location

- Markets were strategically placed near high-density residential areas to attract maximum footfall.
- Proximity to important structures such as temples, churches, or sanctuaries was a common locational preference.
- They were established on vacant land or along wide roads connecting key urban landmarks, ensuring space for vendors and pedestrians.
- Accessibility was a critical factor, with markets either being well-connected via major roads or located at the town periphery for convenience.
- In agrarian towns, markets were positioned close to arable lands for efficient transportation of produce and often near water bodies like rivers, which facilitated trade.

Length of the Market

- Market boundaries were often defined by significant structures such as churches or manor houses, marking the start or end points.
- The length of the street directly influenced the size of the market in urban settings.
- In open fields, the market size was flexible, expanding based on vendor requirements and available space.

Movement Patterns

- Markets were well-integrated with major roads, ensuring the smooth flow of goods and people.
- Strategic connectivity allowed for efficient transportation and accessibility, benefiting both vendors and buyers.

3.3 Periodic Markets in the Indian Subcontinent

Indian societies, shaped by diverse climatic conditions and soil types, were primarily agrarian. Different regions specialised in cultivating crops suited to their environment, necessitating the sale of surplus produce and the purchase of non-local goods (Hall, 1977). This exchange led to the emergence of periodic markets as essential trading hubs.

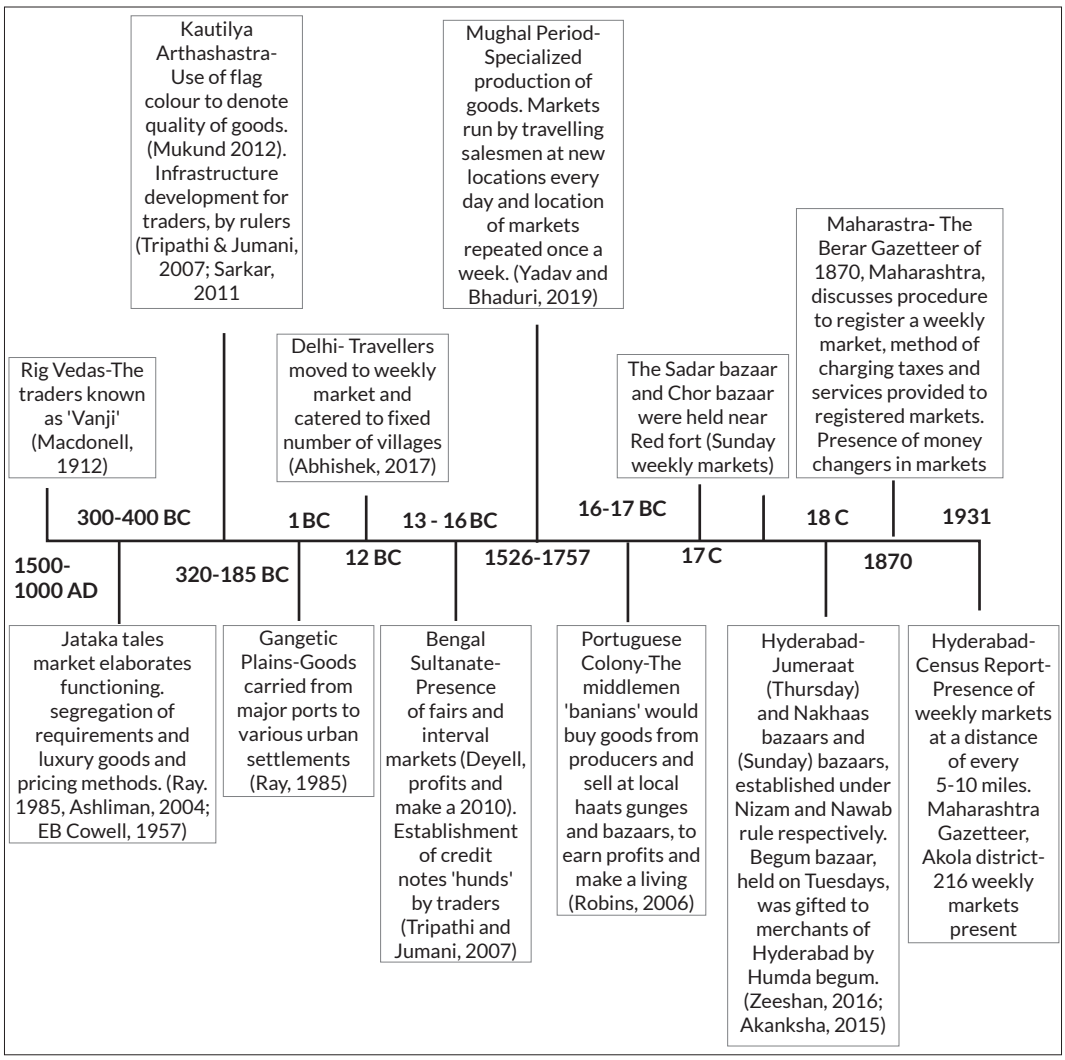
3.3.1. Formalisation and Planning of Periodic Markets in India

As periodic markets became integral to settlements, designated centres for these markets emerged. The expansion of bazaars and the introduction of traders who transported goods across villages led to the rise of middlemen. Periodic markets were primarily operated by travelling salesmen who visited different locations each day, following a weekly cycle and covering six to seven villages (Yadav & Bhaduri, 2019; Robins, 2006). Since traders had to travel long distances, they often moved in convoys to safeguard themselves from theft and robbery. To encourage trade, rulers invested in infrastructure development, which influenced the routes and locations of these markets (Tripathi & Jumani, 2007; Sarkar, 2011). Markets were also established under royal patronage to provide designated trading spaces.

Before 19th century, bazaars and haats were the primary retailing structures in India (Banerjee, 1966). The Berar Gazetteer of 1870 documented the formalisation of markets in the Akola District, Maharashtra, detailing the procedures for market registration, taxation methods, and charges imposed on periodic markets. Once markets were incorporated under a tax system, they were provided with essential infrastructure and facilities to ensure smooth operations.

The following timeline categorises the evolution of periodic markets based on time periods and their geographical distribution across the Indian subcontinent.

Figure 3: Evolution of Hafta Bazaars in India



Source: Compiled by the authors

3.3.2. Parameters Influencing Placement of Periodic Markets in the Indian Subcontinent

Table 3 examines selected examples based on key parameters influencing the placement of periodic markets in the Indian subcontinent

Table 3: Analysis of Parameters through Indian Case Studies

Sr. No.	Market	Centrality and Location	Length of Market	Pattern of Movement
1	Gangetic Plains 1 BC	Merchants known as vanjis. Ports connected to major cities. Major ports like Baruch in western India and Konkan region facilitated trading with the Persian Gulf (Ray, 1985).	Internal planning: Segregation based on type of goods and cost (Jataka Tales, Ray, 1985; Ashliman, 2004; E.B. Cowell, 1957).	Travelling done from ports to cities by trade routes to carry goods to periodic markets (Macdonell, 1912).
2	Tavallam –Market centres in Tamil Nadu and nearby regions	Merchants travelled to various markets to sell goods.	Multiple centres in cities for holding markets. The markets were segregated w.r.t. distance, as per requirement of goods.	Travelling merchants through major roads would access these centres.
3	Mehrauli, Delhi 12th century	Markets held outside village boundaries. Various villages in close proximity organised markets on different days.	Same vendors catered to multiple villages.	Well-constructed roads between villages enabled the traders to navigate to all villages to sell their goods.
4	Centres of Sagar-Damoh plateau, Madhya Pradesh, 1901	Large number of markets primarily served remote locations, where fixed shops were unavailable. Vendors typically operated in multiple markets to sell their goods.	Medium size markets catered to a radius of about 8-13 km and small market centres catered to about 5 km.	Markets in remote locations were well connected by major roads.

Source: Compiled by the authors

To gain a deeper understanding of the functioning and spatial distribution of markets, all historical case studies are evaluated against a detailed structured checklist of parameters identified through the above literature review. The following table presents a comparative analysis of key parameters across various historical case studies, highlighting the factors that influenced the placement of periodic markets. This examination provides insights into the evolving spatial, economic, and social considerations that have historically shaped market locations within urban contexts.

Table 4: Analysis of Historical Cases

Sr. No.	Markets	Well Connected	Close to High Density	Pattern of Movement		Proximity to Markets	Placed On Vacant or Neutral Ground	Space for Social Interaction	Planned near Important Structure	Dedicated Space allotted for Market	Additional Information
				Pedestrian Friendly	Good Road Connectivity						
1	Markfleken Bourg, Morocco	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	Specially planned markets with dedicated areas.
2	Markets of Pompei	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	Markets planned near important structures like churches, manors etc.
3	Markets of England a) Stow Fair	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	Special spaces provided by rulers for market and revenue generated was partially given back as cess. Development of connecting roads for ease of movement.
4	Market in Manor of Congresbury, Somerset, UK	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	
5	Markets of Amersham, England (9 markets)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6	Fenny Stratford, on Old Roman Road, England	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	Markets were shifted from dedicated spaces to streets
7	Alford, England	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	Addition of market squares
8	Spilsby (10 miles from Alford and 131 miles from London)	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	Addition of structure called Buttercross in the market
9	Markets in Mexico	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	Placed on outskirts of city, leftover space
10	ManyaKrobe Territory, Ghana	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	Most of the markets were prime locations for selling and were never close to another market
11	Huancayo Fair, Peru	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×	×	

Sr. No.	Markets	Well Connected	Close to High Density	Pattern of Movement		Proximity to Markets	Placed On Vacant or Neutral Ground	Space for Social Interaction	Planned near Important Structure	Dedicated Space allotted for Market	Additional Information
				Pedestrian Friendly	Good Road Connectivity						
12	Markets in Gangetic Plains, 1 BCE	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	Connectivity between markets was of importance
13	Tavallam – Market centres in Tamil Nadu and nearby regions	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	
14	Mehrauli, Delhi, 12th century	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	
15	Centres of Sagar-Damoh plateau, Madhya Pradesh, 1901	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Source: Compiled by the authors

3.4 Selected Periodic Markets in Delhi

Delhi, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, has long been a hub of trade and commerce. The city's markets have evolved over centuries, adapting to changing urban structures, economic demands, and consumer behaviours. From traditional bazaars to contemporary weekly and commercial markets, Delhi offers a diverse marketplace landscape that caters to various economic and social needs. The city hosts a mix of permanent and periodic markets, each serving distinct functions. The interplay between historical significance and modern urban requirements continues to shape the city's vibrant marketplace ecosystem and indeed its entire urban landscape.

Studying Delhi's markets would provide valuable insights into their evolution, spatial organisation, and economic relevance, offering a comprehensive understanding of how they adapt to changing urban dynamics while maintaining their core commercial functions. To analyse this evolution of periodic markets and understand their present-day functioning, it was essential to examine existing markets. Therefore, a selection of markets in Delhi from different zones was studied to facilitate a deeper analysis of their spatial and economic dynamics, comparing them against the parameters identified in historical markets.

The analysis of case examples reveals that the contemporary markets often lack dedicated spaces, leading them to occupy open areas, leftover spaces, or roads with low traffic that are temporarily closed on market days. These markets are strategically located near high-density residential areas to maximise footfall, prioritising accessibility over proximity to historical landmarks or important structures. Unlike traditional markets, which facilitated social interaction, the primary function has shifted towards providing affordable goods. However, peak market hours result in significant pedestrian congestion, reducing convenience and limiting interaction opportunities. Additionally, some markets face accessibility challenges, making it difficult for people to reach them by various modes of transport or on foot.

Table 5: Analysis of Markets in Current Scenario in Delhi, India

Sr. No.	Markets	Well Connected	Close to High Density	Pattern of Movement		Proximity to Markets	Placed on Vacant or Neutral Ground	Space for Social Interaction	Planned near Important Structure	Dedicated Space allotted for Market
				Pedestrian Friendly	Good Road Connectivity					
1	Budh Bazaar, Near Timarpur Police Station, Indra Basti	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
2	Sunday Market, Nehru Vihar Road, Nehru Vihar, Mukherjee Nagar	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
3	Friday Market, Malka Ganj	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
4	Ghanta Gharsabzi Market, Near Gt Karnal Road	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
5	Patel Nagar Sabzi Market, Block 29, Baljit Nagar, Patel Nagar	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
6	Arya Samaj Road, Karol Bagh	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
7	Mata Sherawali Mandir Market, Chandni Chowk	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	×
8	Monday Market, Vasant Kunj	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
9	Friday Market, Vasant Kunj	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×
10	Saturday Market, Vasant Kunj	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
11	Sunday Market, Mahipalpur Extension	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×
12	Tuesday Market D Block, Chattarpur	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×

Sr. No.	Markets	Well Connected	Close to High Density	Pattern of Movement		Proximity to Markets	Placed on Vacant or Neutral Ground	Space for Social Interaction	Planned near Important Structure	Dedicated Space allotted for Market
				Pedestrian Friendly	Good Road Connectivity					
13	Friday Market, Neb Sarai, Saket	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
14	Sunday Market, RK Puram	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
15	Monday Market, Pushpa Vihar, Saket	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
16	Friday Market, Dakshinpuri, Saket	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×
17	Friday Market, RK Puram	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×	×	×

Source: Compiled by the authors

To gain a deeper understanding of the functioning of weekly markets, a detailed questionnaire was developed for various stakeholders. The vendor questionnaire covered multiple aspects, including: socio-demographic profile; economic details (e.g. expenditure for setting up the market, income generated, sources of capital); operational aspects of vending units; challenges faced in running the market. Additionally, discussions on the difficulties encountered by vendors provided valuable insights into the broader factors influencing market operations and sustainability.

3.4.1. Case Study: Monday Market, Vasant Kunj

To analyse the physical planning of the market, a separate detailed questionnaire was developed for various stakeholders, including buyers, vendors, the pradhan (market organiser), and local residents. This questionnaire was utilised in a pilot survey and the study was conducted at two levels:

Macro-level – Examined the proximity to established markets, open spaces, residential areas, and urban villages. Land use mix and circulation patterns within and around the market site;

Micro-level – Focused on vendor types based on goods sold and their distribution within the market; market area coverage and spatial organisation; existing road/plot usage and its adaptation for the market, and; approximate number of vendors and ancillary space requirements.

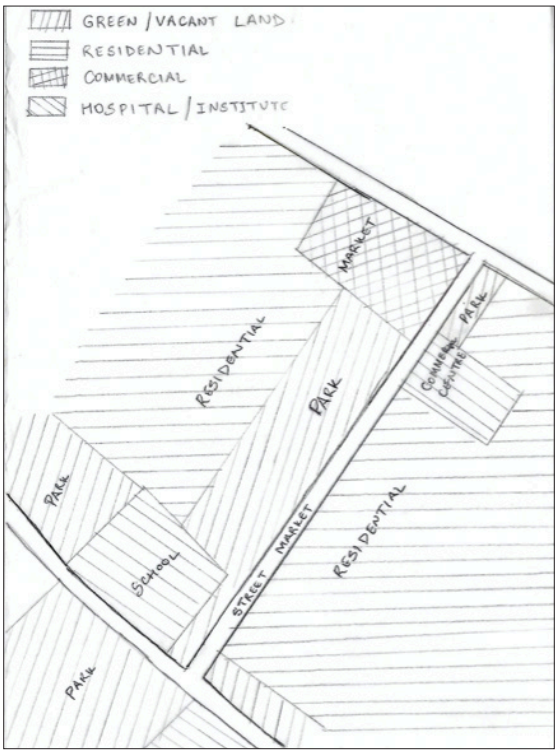
The responses from the detailed surveys provided an in-depth understanding of market functioning, the roles of various stakeholders, and their perspectives. This pilot study helped identify key relationships between markets and their locations within a city, including:

- **Proximity of Markets:** Relationship between the distance of two nearby markets from each other and their respective lengths.

- **Market Composition:** Correlation between market length and the proportion of different market categories or typologies.
- **Market Location and Schedule:** Connection between the market's location and the day it operates.
- **Market Day Analysis:** Impact of the market day on:
  - Number of tables used and vendors placed on the floor.
  - Overall market length.
- **Vendor Space and Costs:** Relationship between the space occupied by vendors and the payments made to various stakeholders.
- **Vendor Distribution:** Proportion of different types of vendors in a market and potential links to market characteristics (e.g. day, length, expenditure).
- **Accessibility and Travel Patterns:** Preferred distances travelled by vendors and buyers to reach the market.
- **Market Day Preferences:** Vendor and buyer preferences regarding market days.

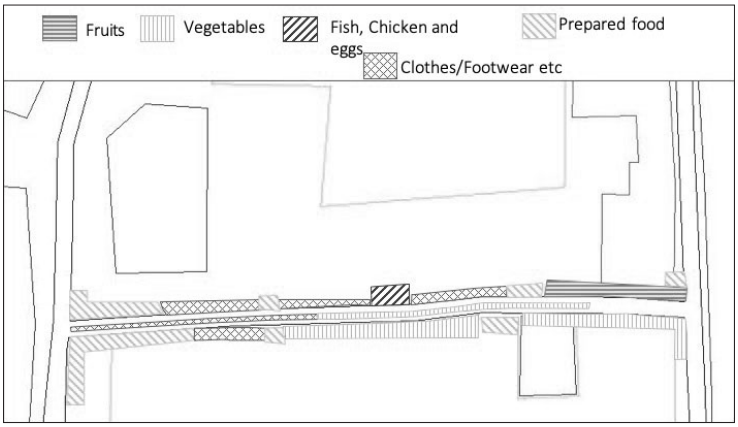
These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of how periodic markets operate and the factors influencing their spatial placement and organisation.

Figure 4: Pilot Study: Monday Market—Building Use Map



Source: Compiled by the authors

Figure 5: Monday Market—Details of Vending Commodity in Weekly Markets



Source: Compiled by the authors

4. Discussion

Through literature research and ground study factors that have historically influenced periodic market locations, including political decisions by rulers and geographical considerations have been identified. Centrality ensured accessibility for traders and buyers, while space availability attracted higher footfall and facilitated expansion. Buyer needs also shaped market size and layout based on spatial constraints. A comparative analysis of historical and contemporary markets confirms the continued relevance of these factors, which are further explored under major thematic categories:

4.1 Location of Markets in a City

Table 6: Comparative Analysis of Factors Affecting Location of Markets

Historical Scenario	Current Scenario
Markets were traditionally located within small villages, eliminating the need for extensive travel.	Markets were strategically placed near existing markets to ensure good connectivity, facilitating easier commutes for vendors and buyers while streamlining the transportation of goods.
Markets were initially held in large open spaces or government-controlled areas, where officials had significant authority over their location and operation. Over time, streets were also utilised for markets, allowing for their expansion to accommodate the growing population.	Markets are now primarily held in public spaces such as parks and streets, as their functioning is not a government priority. This has led to a shift in their locations, influenced by space availability, public needs, and the level of administrative interest in their operation.
Markets were preferably located near agricultural lands to facilitate: Efficient transportation of goods Easy access to fresh produce Reduced transportation costs and time	With the expansion of cities, the supply chain for goods has become increasingly complex, making the process more time-consuming and costlier for vendors.

Source: Compiled by the authors

4.2 Planning of Markets in a City

Table 7: Comparative Analysis of Factors Affecting Planning of Markets

Historical Scenario	Current Scenario
Markets in England, such as Stow Fair and the Manor of Congresbury, were key urban centres where kings granted permission for weekly markets. Their regional significance eliminated the need for additional commercial developments to draw crowds. Instead, they served as major hubs for cultural and religious gatherings.	Weekly markets serve as an extension of existing markets, enhancing their visibility, attracting more buyers, and increasing footfall.
Weekly markets were key hubs for both commerce and social interaction. Central market junctions, known as Market Squares, connected major roads and served as focal points within cities, with markets developing around them. These junctions received royal support, often featuring physical structures called Buttercross, which enhanced their visibility even on non-market days, reinforcing their significance.	Market streets are now fully cleared and cleaned, leaving no landmarks to indicate their presence. As a result, on non-market days, it becomes challenging to identify the exact location and extent of the market.

Source: Compiled by the authors

4.3 Transportation of Goods and Movement of Vendors and Buyers

Table 8: Comparative Analysis of Factors Affecting Transportation of Goods and Movement of Vendors and Buyers

	Source of products to be sold	Distance travelled by vendors	Distance travelled by middlemen to carry the goods	Distance travelled by buyers	Reason
Historical Development	From agricultural land to market	Within the village	No middle men	Within the village	In beginning they were only a platform for exchange of goods
	From agricultural lands and nearby settlements	Between villages	From one village to another	Within the village	Due to improvement of connectivity and transportation
	From far off places and from within the village	From large distances From agricultural land	Long trade routes were developed by rulers/administration to invite the traders to their settlements	Within the village and nearby villages	Further improvement of connectivity and Kings would provide facilities to traders to come to their villages
Current Scenario	Generally procured from mandis held on the outskirts of the city. Or bought from large wholesalers	For procuring goods 15 to 30km away For reaching the market- around 8 to 10km	No middlemen	Maximum 5-8 km	The markets are generally held at regular distances. So the buyers prefer the ones near them or the choice is based on convenience of day

Source: Compiled by the authors

4.4 Administration

The formalisation of markets began early with the appointment of officers for regulation. In Delhi, this responsibility now lies with the market pradhans. Historically, markets operated under royal patronage or were included in charters, ensuring support, maintenance, and efficient operations. Today, this role is fulfilled by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, overseeing market management. The perceived importance of markets has significantly influenced the functioning and location of periodic markets over time. In the modern context, their relevance has diminished, leading to the perception that these markets are optional or unnecessary. They are often viewed as visual clutter, causing disruptions in movement and contributing to an unhygienic environment.

Table 9 presents a comparative analysis of various aspects of weekly markets, drawing from historical case studies and contemporary market examples.

Table 9: Comparison of Criteria for Choosing the Location of Markets

Historical Examples	Current Scenario
Placed at central locations	Located on empty or unused streets or parks
They were integral part of development	City planning does not include periodic markets. They are an addition as per availability of space and permissions by nearby residents
The kings or the administration supported their development and provided services, space and facilities to promote them	Markets were looked down as encroachments and now are being regularised by MCD
Vendors paid cess to hold shops in markets and in return had complete support to run the markets	Vendors have to pay to multiple sets of people to set up their shops and for basic infrastructure. Yet they do not receive any benefits in return and have to get themselves enrolled for the markets themselves, with help of the pradhans
The periodic markets were the only source to procure goods and hence were of great importance, thus being provided well-connected sites	The markets are generally an extension to existing markets and need to keep their costs low enough to attract buyers. So, location of existing markets becomes important for deciding their locations
The markets were also a place for social interaction. Hence, they were generally placed near important landmarks like churches, chapels etc.	Mostly these markets only provide a place for buying affordable goods. So, they prefer proximity to high density residential areas, to maximise their sales

Source: Compiled by the authors

5. Conclusion

While the role and placement of markets have evolved over time, certain fundamental principles continue to shape their existence. Historically, markets were central to urban development, strategically located near significant landmarks. Today, their primary function is commercial, prioritising accessibility, consumer convenience, and vendor profitability. Despite these shifts, proximity to high-density residential areas and connectivity remain crucial factors in determining market locations. Insights from the study of weekly markets from Delhi, combined with historical analyses and literature reviews, highlight key parameters influencing the spatial distribution

of weekly markets. Factors such as market frequency, travel distances, population density, land value, vendor numbers, pedestrian footfall, operational costs, and spatial organisation all contribute to their placement within urban landscapes. Understanding these dynamics provides a comprehensive framework for analysing market evolution and informing better urban planning strategies to accommodate both economic and social needs.

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