



Consumer Behavior And Traders Travel Pattern Of Periodic Markets In Belgaum District - Karnataka State

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Abstract

The attempt has been made in this paper to discuss the consumer behavior and traders travel pattern of periodic markets in Belgaum District of Karnataka is the main consideration in this investigation of Belgaum District as a study area. It is located in the north-western part of the Karnataka State and falls within the northern maidan region. It lies between 15⁰23' to 16⁰58' North latitude and 74⁰05' to 75⁰28' East longitude has geographical area of 13,415 square kilometers with population of 42,14,505 (as per 2001)

The spatial movement of consumers and traders and their behavior has been examined on the basis of the functions of 181 periodic markets have been observed in the study area. The importance of markets tended to get reflection in the number of settlements and people, served by each one of the periodic markets. It is also seen that the majority of the settlements in the study area were in the service area of more than one periodic market during the market week.

In addition, socio-cultural factors and religious attitude also influence the behaviour of people. Therefore, the behaviour pattern has been analysed mainly in the context of movement and through the proper means of communication used by the consumers.

Keywords : Consumer Behavior, Traders Travel pattern and Spatial Pattern.

Introduction:

Markets play an important role in the rural areas where farmers are performing their role as a producer seller as well as consumer. It has been noted that, farmers and labourers attend the nearest market centres for purchase of their requirements as per their convenient. The consumers are aware about the market day and participating in the market and purchasing their choices according to their need purchasing capacity. It is only on the special occasions that the consumers travel distant market centre for meeting their requirements for social, cultural, religious and administrative needs.¹

It is well known fact that, consumers wish to bargain the commodities and buy in a cheaper rate. Therefore, their behavioral aspects is a matter to study by the marking geographers. The consumer behaviour pattern in Indian context, has been studied by Tamasker (1979), Saxena (1975), Shrivastava (1978) and Vishwanath (1975) etc. The study of these marketing geographers reflects that in developed countries consumer prefer higher market centres for the requirement of a higher needs and special quality goods. Consumer mobility is restricted due to low per capita income, limited needs and low accessibility of market centres, higher order goods trickle down to middle and lower order market centres from higher order market centres. Higher order goods are thus, also available at lower market centres in undeveloped countries.²

Periodic markets are an authorised gathering of buyers and sellers meet at a particular place and time and exchange their commodity. Thus, its main participants are consumers and traders. Consumers are the main participants in the periodic market and they visit it regularly for the purchase of daily consumable goods and other items. The consumers include the residents of the settlement where the market is held as well as the surrounding region up to a radius of 10 to 15 kilometers. Some of the consumers also bring some products, especially farm products, for sale and purchase latest things they need.

The spatial behaviour of consumers and traders have been examined with an observation made in 181 periodic markets from the study area. The importance of markets tended to get reflection in the number of villages, and people, served by each one of the periodic markets. It is also seen that the majority of the villages in the study area were in the service area of more than one periodic market during the market week.

In addition, socio-cultural factors and religious attitude also influence the behaviour of people. The behaviour pattern has been analysed mainly in the context of mobility and means of communication used by the consumers.

Study Area :

The study area has attracted by the researcher due to its physical setting in a typical nature. It has three different regions in the study area, i.e., Malnad, Semi-Malnad and Maidan. These geographical regions are responsible for the marketing activities. The locational advantages and dis-advantages of the markets are the main consideration in the present study and accordingly conducted an investigation.

¹ Skinner, G.W., Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China, Part-I, Journal of Asian Studies, 24, (1964).

² Shrivastava, V.K., Geography of Marketing and Rural Development, Inter -India Publications, New Delhi, pp. 181-190, (1976).

Belgaum district is located in the north-western part of the Karnataka State and falls within the northern maidan region. It lies between $15^{\circ} 23'$ to $16^{\circ} 58'$ North Latitude and $74^{\circ} 05'$ to $75^{\circ} 28'$ East Longitude. It has been surrounded by two states i.e., Maharashtra and Goa on the west to north. The Ratnagiri district on the west, Kolhapur on the north west and Sangli district in the north of Maharashtra state. In the Eastern portion, It has bounded by Bijapur district on the east, Dharwad district and North Canara district are in South, the Goa state is south west. It has a maximum length of 160 kms north to south and 130 kms from East to West, covering a geographical area of 13,415 Sq. Kms, which is 6.99 per cent of the total geographical area with a population of 42,14,505 persons. (Fig.1)

Objective :

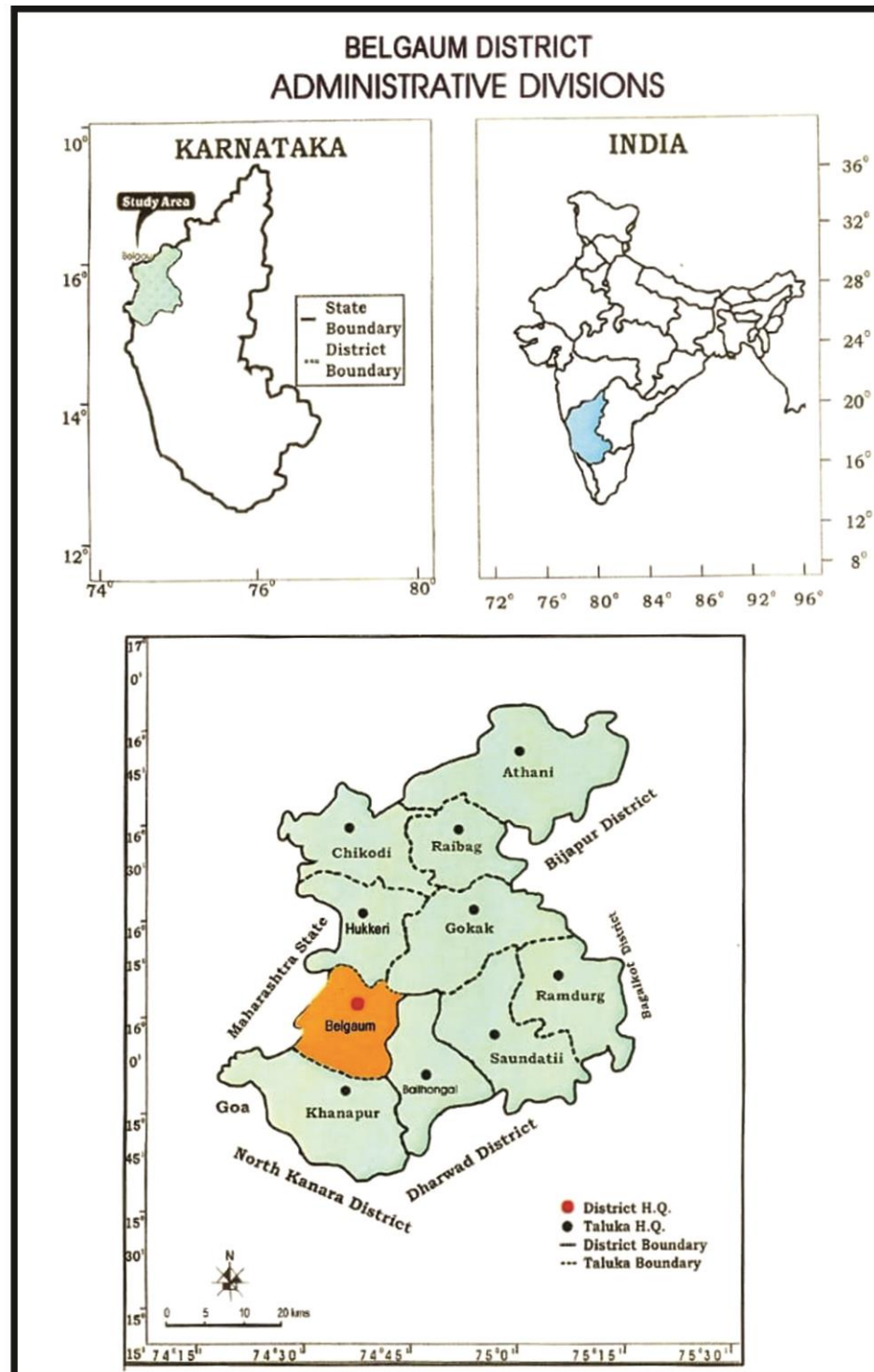
1. To study the mean moving capacity of consumers in the study area.
2. To analyse the traders travel pattern in the study area.

Database :

The present study is depends upon both primary as well as secondary source of information. The primary information has been collected from field survey and visited 181 periodic markets, 10 regulated and 34 sub-regulated markets and collected the relevant information through questionnaire and interview method.

Methodology :

The traders travel pattern has been discussed with transport network of the study area, with movement between the markets and origin of the traders /consumers on the market meetings. The simple statistical tolls have been employed and accordingly analytical method has been used.

**Fig.1**

Mean Moving Capacity :

The average distance traveled by the consumers is based on the distance up to which the consumer can go to the market centres by available means of transportation and can come back to their origin village in a day. Christaller (1966) has assumed that the distance to be 4 kilometers. In Indian conditions Walter Neale (1965) determined that the distance is 6 kilometers and Shrivastava (1976) found out an average distance of 5 kilometers in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Majority of the consumers of the study area are visited different available means of vehicles . The average distance traveled by the consumer in the study area is 6 kilometers. It is also observed that the frequency of consumer decreases with increasing distance from market centres.

Means of Communication :

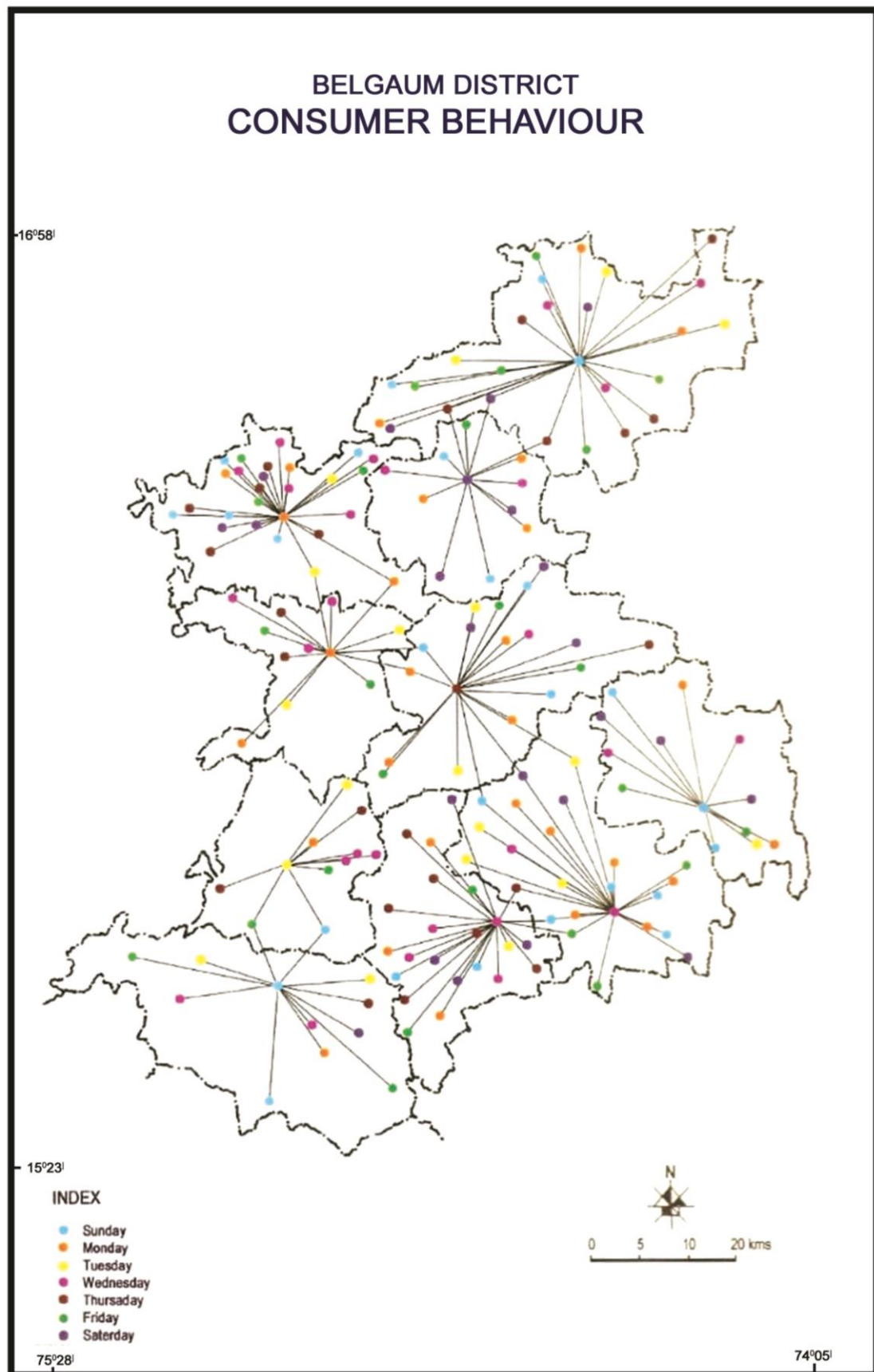
The 50 percent of the total consumers visit the market centres on private buses. Rest of the consumers use other means of communication like bicycle, bus, bullock carts etc. bullock cart is generally used by those agriculturist whose agricultural production is large. It is observed in the fourth order market centres.

The consumer behaviour pattern is also influenced by the mode of transport, quality, and availability of goods in the market region. In contrast to the assumptions of many studies, the consumers from the study area not only have a choice of more than one market during the market week but they appear to act on that choice also. Similarly, the consumers appeared to be aware of the space-time and the hierarchical arrangement of markets. Both these aspects have been responsible in shaping the behaviour of consumers in the study area. (Fig. 2)

Traders Travel Pattern :

The periodicity of market centres is related to the threshold of population or demand for the goods. Since in-sufficient threshold is a feature, generally, in rural area the traders have to become itinerant for their subsistence. They move from market to market in a week. At certain places, traders instead of moving from market to market they come back at home for rest at night. The next morning they visit the other market and so on.³

³ Dixit, R.S., (1985) : Market Centres of Backward Economy Hamirpur District (u.P.) India, Cronological Perspective, The Deccan Geographer, Vol. 23, No. 3, pp. 132-45.

**Fig. 2**

The traders were categorised into two classes part time and full time. The farmer were further subdivided into two; the producer seller and the collector seller. The fulltime traders were subdivided into three classes; the selling traders, the buying traders and the service traders.

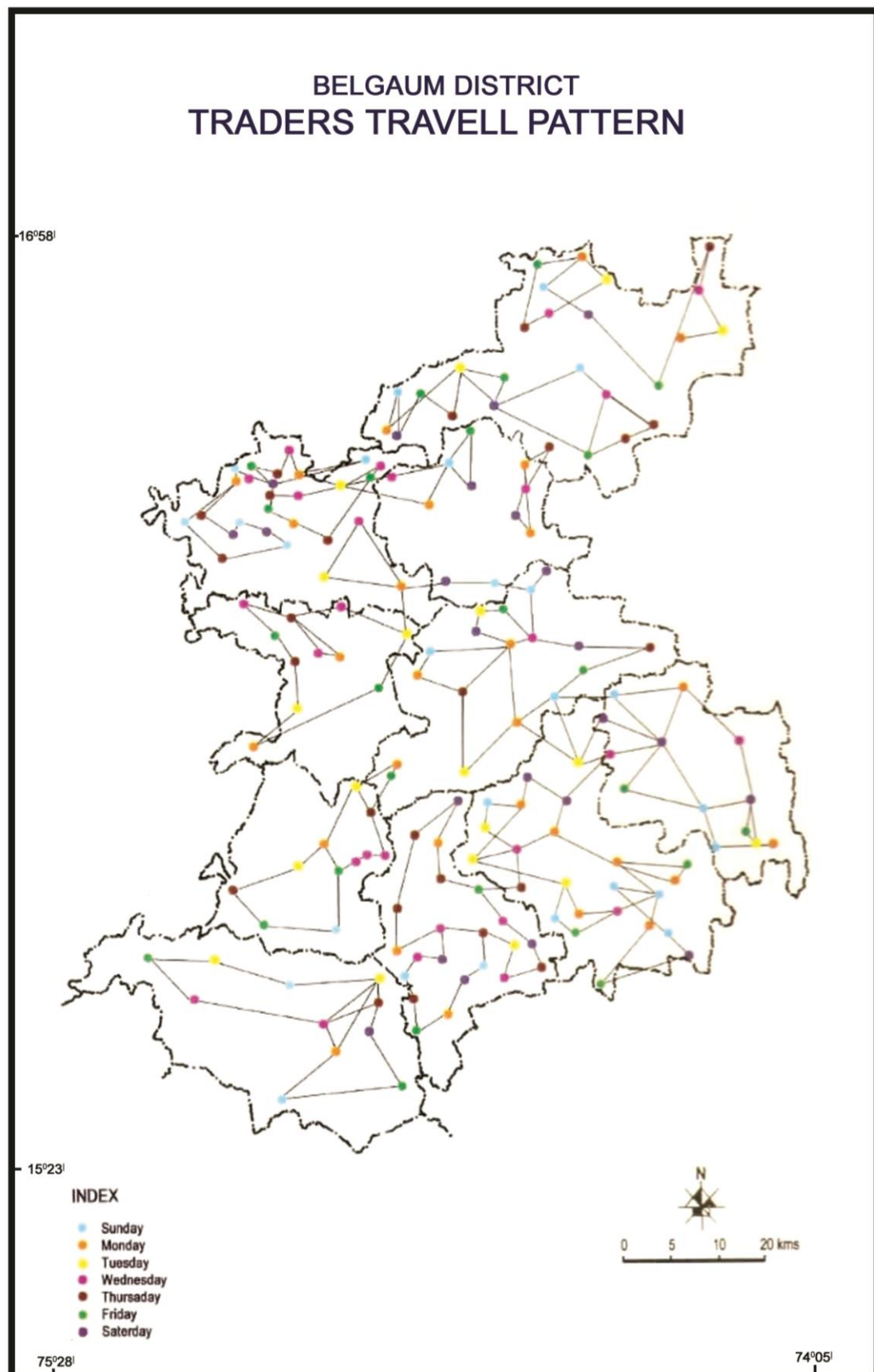
The part time traders sell the items such as vegetables, fruits, village handicrafts, poultry products and forest producers. They operate from their home base visiting up to six markets in a week and return home base every day. For almost all part time traders, the act of selling is a natural extension of the act of production or collection. They are both traders and consumers at the same markets.

The full-time traders are the most extensively traveled group of people in the periodic markets. The full time traders of one system do not trade in another system; the full time traders whom they meet at these markets are the same people. The prices which full time traders change, for various goods and services are almost the same, not only within a system of markets but also between the systems; It was seen that this is made possible by the facts that the traders serve the markets jointly, that the source (for selling traders) and destinations (of the buying traders) of their goods are similar, and that the traders of different types of goods appear to have agreed upon an acceptable 'range' of prices increases which is never violated unilaterally by any single trader within a particular line of business.

As far as the study area is concerned, the movement of traders in the district (Fig. 3) has been observed that the traders follow some sort of patterns while they move from place to place for making business. Various modes of transportation are used as convenience in the movement such as bicycle, motor cycle, mini goods, vans etc. Many of the traders use public transport like buses and private buses, lorries etc.

The range of travel of itinerant traders in the study area varies approximately between 6 to 35 kilometers a day, with the round trip totaling up to 50-150 kilometers, through out the week. They transport their goods by trucks, private buses, Government buses, railways and most of them use their own vehicles. Most of the traders in this region return home at night.

Vendors sell the seasonal fruits, such as melons, water melons etc., may be called as seasonal sellers. Such vendors are accompanied by members of their families to sell these fruits at the nearest periodic market places.

**Fig. 3**

The service sellers are also itinerant traders; they sell their commodities like 'Bhaji and Mithai' (sweets) etc. The service sellers are common in periodic markets of the study area.

Conclusion:

In the study region the socio-economic factors and religious attitude also influence the behavior of the consumers. The movement of the traders in the study area has been observed that the traders follow some sort of patterns while they move from place to place for making business.

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