CHAPTER - V
VILLAGE MARKETS

SYNOPSIS

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Introduction

India has predominantly been a country of villages, where cattle and buffaloes are reared, kept, and maintained in large numbers by thousands of individuals and organized and unorganized institutions and agencies, and are widely used for varied purposes. Therefore, villages are the
primary points where cattle and buffaloes originate. Thus, these are the markets where cattle and buffaloes are sold and purchased either at the doors of the sellers or at a fixed common ground in the villages. About 95 per cent of the cattle and the buffalo populations are in the villages or in the rural areas and thus supply and demand are mainly originated and met in rural areas. All transactions in regard to the sale and the purchase taking place in the villages are at village markets. Thus, for all practical purposes, every village is a market for cattle and buffaloes in our country and, accordingly, in Gujarat that has 18,275 villages, equal number of village markets for animals exist. Table 5.1 gives their district-wise distribution in Gujarat.

Table 5.1

Number of Village Markets in Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of village markets</th>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of village markets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kutch</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Amreli</td>
<td>595</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mehsana</td>
<td>1,084</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Banaskantha</td>
<td>1,351</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Panchmahal</td>
<td>1,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bharuch</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Rajkot</td>
<td>859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bhavnagar</td>
<td>879</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sabarkantha</td>
<td>1,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dang</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>1,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gandhinagar</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Surendranagar</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Jamnagar</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Vadodara</td>
<td>1,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Junagadh</td>
<td>1,092</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Valsad</td>
<td>823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kheda</td>
<td>957</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Origin**

It is not possible to give exact date when such markets came into being. But it can be said that they are the oldest forms of markets which have come into existence when the process of marketing of animal began. Their origin can be traced to the times immemorial. Necessity was the guiding force in the origin and the growth of such markets.

**Structure**

Unlike other types of markets for cattle and buffaloes, village markets have neither any constitution nor any structure as there does not exist any institution or organization which either regulates or looks after the purchase and sale of animals in the villages. However, the Author, during his field-work, could learn that there existed set practices and precedents which regulated village markets. All the buyers and the sellers in the markets follow the practices which are agreeable to both the parties and which are normally followed in the same tract or area.

**Coverage**

Marketing of animals including cattle and buffaloes at the villages cover four types of transactions:

(a) Sale of animals between the buyers and the sellers residing in the same village;

(b) Sale of animals between the buyers residing in one village and the sellers residing in the neighbouring or distant villages.
(c) Sale of animals by the nomadic cattle breeder-cum-traders to the village-buyers during their animal/cattle camps at the villages.

(d) Sale of animals by the village-sellers to the nomadic cattle-breeder-cum-traders/cattle-traders during the course of the latter's cattle camps at the villages.

Thus, with the interplay of the business activities of the nomadic cattle-breeder-cum-traders, village markets cover cattle and buffaloes of various breeds, types and places. Of course, the nomadic animal traders cannot bring in their fold all the villages of Gujarat. A large number of villages remained uncovered by them.

Market Layout

Since all the marketing transactions of animals are carried out by mutual understanding between the buyers and the sellers, either at the doors of the latter or at a common ground of a village according to their needs, there does not exist any permanent fixed market place for any village market. Where sellers are the local cattle-breeders, and the agriculturists and other local persons holding animals, their respective places of residence normally serve as the market places. However, one or more usually common places exist in the villages, which are used by the nomadic cattle breeders or traders, on their arrival to a village for keeping their animals and for market places. Of course, these places are not earmarked for this purpose and hence there does not exist
layouts for the cattle markets. Usually such place is open 
common ground often having some trees and is situated in the 
vicinity of a well, a pond or a river.

Market Amenities

As the village markets are the occasional markets, 
special amenities are non-existing there. As stated earlier, 
a common ground is generally being utilized by the nomadic 
cattle-breeder or traders when they visit a village and stay 
there for a day or two. Such places have no special amenities 
except an open ground, few trees for shades and for tying 
animals and water-troughs (normally used by village cattle), 
a river or a pond in its vicinity where animals can drink 
water. The cattle-breeder usually stay on this ground with 
animals, prepare the meals there, while the traders if they 
happen to halt at a village, they normally stay either with a 
local trader or with their local customers. Occasionally, 
they make use of the public places like Panchayat Offices, 
Dharmashalas, and rest houses where such facilities are 
available.

Seasonality of Markets

There is no special season or period for village 
marketing, as transactions take place in any season of the 
year. Usually, more transactions take place during April-May- 
June and November-December for bullocks and during calving 
periods in the case of cows and buffaloes. Nomadic cattle- 
breeders move from village to village with their animals
during early summer when there is demand for the bullocks. Demand for bullocks, cows and/or buffaloes may shoot up when deaths, of animals in large number on account of epidemics, diseases or floods and famines take place.

**Market Functionaries**

Normally, brokers and other intermediaries find no place in village sales. The buyers who are in search of animals find out through inquiries, the prospective sellers of cattle and buffaloes of their requirements and establish direct contacts with them. In exceptional cases, persons residing in the same or neighbouring villages act as intermediary between both the parties and at times charge brokerage or commission ranging between Rs. 5 and Rs. 50 per head. These persons introduce the prospective buyers to the sellers and help both the parties in settling the transaction. When both the buyer and the seller belong to the same village, they hardly need any assistance from outsiders.

**Working Hours**

Village markets do not have any fixed working hours. Any time when purchases and sales are made is considered as working hour. But normally business transactions take place during day time when it is possible to inspect the animal which is to be purchased and sold.
In case of solitary transaction, the question of arrival of any animal in the village market does not arise. Bullocks and/or buffaloes in large number are brought in the village markets by the traders and the nomadic cattle-breeders and/or professional traders who, with male-calves, bullocks, cows and/or buffaloes move from place to place in search of buyers and camp in the villages for a day or two. They sell and/or buy animals at the village level. Precise data in respect of village sale of cattle and buffaloes are not available. An attempt was made to ascertain such data for 1975 in the case of a few randomly selected villages in few of the districts of Gujarat (vide Table 4.2). The village sale varied between 2 and 25 in case of cattle and from 1 to 15 in case of buffaloes. The sale figures of cattle and buffaloes at the village level vary with, (a) the size of village, (b) the nature of tract of the village, (c) proximity of the village to cattle-fairs and cattle regulated markets, (d) surplus or deficit of cattle and buffaloes in the village, (e) economic condition of the villagers holding/owning animals, and (f) such other factors.

The average sale of cattle per village works out to nine and that of buffaloes five. If the logic of this study is extended to the entire area of Gujarat, yearly village sales of cattle and buffaloes could be estimated at 1,64,475 cattle and 91,375 buffaloes.

Thus, a large number of cattle and buffaloes are being sold at the village level which has been devoid of any organizational and regulatory set-up for cattle-marketing.
Table 5.22
Village Sale information of selected villages in Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of animals sold</th>
<th>Cattle</th>
<th>Buffaloes</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jasapar</td>
<td>Jamnagar</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Khirsara</td>
<td>Bhavnagar</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Rajkot</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mewasa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dolla</td>
<td>Surendranagar</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sapar</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Bhavnagar</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mokhadka</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Luni</td>
<td>Amreli</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vavdi</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Timbawadi</td>
<td>Junagadh</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kanzadi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>40</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kheda</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>52</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kothara</td>
<td>Panchmahals</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fofalia</td>
<td>Vadodara</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nikora</td>
<td>Bharuch</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Lanchhras</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Surat</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods of Sale

In majority of the cases, sales are effected through oral negotiations between the buyers and the sellers after

2. Based on the data collected.
the animals at the contract are inspected and the buyers are satisfied with the colour, age, health, appearance, behavior, temperament, etc. of cattle and/or buffaloes. In the case of both the parties residing in the same or neighbouring villages, negotiations may continue, intermittently, for more days. The practice of direct sale has also been widely prevalent in transactions involving sale of cattle and buffaloes by the cattle-breeders and/or cattle-breeders-cum-traders camping at the villages with the herds of these animals. However, in exceptional cases, the method of bidding under cloth is used by these cattle-breeders/traders where the prospective village-buyers obtain the free or paid services of the village or outside intermediaries.

**Inspection and Delivery**

Cattle and buffaloes are generally inspected as regards their work capacity and/or production capacity. Work capacity is inspected by their outward physical appearance, by estimating their age, and number of years spent under ploughing, by identifying their breed characters, and good and bad points and by drawing them on plough or cart. Milch animals are inspected by measuring their milk yield by actually drawing the milk. Occasionally, reports of milk yield are relied upon by the buyers but normally milk yield is measured. Delivery is usually given immediately after the sale is settled.

**Market charges**

In the absence of any agency organizing/controlling cattle sales at the villages, the market charges have no place.
However, the village leaders, at times, compel the cattle-breeders/traders camping at the village to pay in lumpsum certain amount to them for village common fund and then, allow them to camp with animals and do business at the villages.

Method of Payment

Two methods of payment are widely prevalent in the villages: (i) payment in cash at the time of delivery of the animal, and (ii) payment of cash in two or more instalments. The latter practice may be followed, (i) when village sales take place between acquantual/relatual persons, and (ii) when cattle-breeders-cum-traders and/or cattle-owners sell their animals to villagers. When payment is allowed to be made in instalments, certain amount is to be paid by the buyer at the time of taking the possession of the animal from the seller and the remaining amount is to be paid in one or two instalments, usually during crop harvest season. In the case of full or partial credit sale, the seller insists on one or two solvent surities from the buyers. The nomadic cattle breeders-cum-traders/traders normally allow two or three instalments and are very particular in their recoveries on the stipulated dates. If the village-buyers cannot honour their commitments, the nomadic traders do exercise pressures of all types from all directions on the buyers, and, as a last resort, do not hesitate to acquire the possession of the animals held by the village-buyers. Of course, such instances are rare, but they do damage the credit and cattle wealth of the village buyers.
Disputes and their Settlement

At the village level marketing of animals, after sale disputes may take place in regard to (i) supply of (a) animal of inferior quality or bad temperament, (b) animals with inauspicious marks, (c) older animals than actually needed, and (d) diseased animals; (ii) supply of milch animals with lower milk yield than actually assured of or orally told; and (iii) non-payment of instalments of the sale proceeds.

No machinery for settlements of much disputes exist at the village level. Normally, these disputes are settled by mutual understanding and negotiations and, at times, the assistance and good offices of village leaders and prominent persons of the villages are being used to settle these disputes.

Concluding Observations

Despite the unorganized nature of the village markets and their limitations and prevailing orthodox, age-old and traditions-bound practices, they are to stay in our economy for many years to come due to (a) the facility of easiness of direct contacts between the buyer and the seller, which eliminates the cost of marketing and the malpractices of the intermediaries; (b) the prevalence of normal mutual faith between the two parties at the contract in regard to the subject matter of the deal; and (c) permanancy of the residence of the seller (as in the case of a shop-keeper), which enables the buyer to contact the former in case of any material defect later on found in the animal and provides him an opportunity to settle the dispute amicably, even by
bringing moral and social pressures on the seller. It is, therefore, utmost essential to evolve some regulatory measures for the wide-spread village sales of animals. The author is confident that the following steps would go a long way in this direction:

(i) All transactions in regard to the purchase and the sale of animals in the villages may finally be settled at least in the presence of either the Sarpanch, the Deputy Sarpanch, the Secretary of the Village Panchayat or any respectable village leader.

(ii) The Village Panchayats should be empowered to record all these contracts with full details of the buyer, the seller, the description of the animal, the price, the mode of payment, and the commission, if any, charged by the intermediary and an authentic copy of this record should be supplied to both the parties on the spot either free of charge or on nominal charge.