

**VILLAGE FESTIVALS AND URBAN FAIRS – POSSIBILITIES TO CREATE MARKET
FOR RURAL PRODUCTS**

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ABSTRACT

The middleman who is filling the gap between rural producers and urban consumers is gaining more profit and irritating both rural and urban community. Though production cost is increasing, rural community is selling the products for lower cost to middleman. Though actual price of the product is less, urban community is purchasing the products with highest cost from middleman. It is very much clear that product cost is fluctuating due to the existence of middleman in market. Is there a possibility to eliminate middleman in buying and selling process of the market to gain advantage for both rural sellers and urban buyers? The interest of rural visit is increasing among urbanites to come out of stress. Urbanites are expressing their willingness in agriculture tourism, rural tourism, medical tourism and rural stay. Urbanites are also expressing their interest to buy the products directly from the farmers. Since urbanites are expressing their interest in rural visit and buy the required products directly from the farmers, is there a possibility to attract urbanites to village festivals to get them out of stress and strengthen the rural market? Is there a possibility to sell the rural products in urban fairs for easy access of rural products in urban area? This research is conducted in eight selected villages of Ramanagara district and Bangalore, capital city of Karnataka state located in southern part of India to know the possibilities to attract the urbanites to rural festivals and possibilities to sell the rural products in urban fairs.

KEYWORDS: Rural Market, Village Festivals, Urban Fairs

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is huge difference between the products sold by the farmers and the same products purchased by urban consumers. The middleman who is filling the gap between rural producers and urban consumers is gaining more profit and irritating both rural and urban community. Though production cost is increasing, rural community is selling the products for lower cost to middleman. Though actual price of the product is less, urban community is purchasing the products with highest cost from middleman. Though problem of middleman in the market is not a current issue, the existence of middleman is directing to multidimensional disadvantages in recent days. Rural community is migrating to urban area due to non-profitability in production and urban community is suffering from increasing expenditure in day to day life.

It is very much clear that product cost is fluctuating due to the existence of middleman in market. Is there a possibility to eliminate middleman in buying and selling process of the market to gain advantage for both rural sellers and urban buyers? If that can be done, where should be the market place to link buyers and sellers directly? The interest of rural visit is increasing among urbanites to come out of stress. Urbanites are expressing their willingness in agriculture tourism, rural tourism, medical tourism and rural stay. Urbanites are also expressing their interest to buy the products directly from the farmers. Since urbanites are expressing their interest in rural visit and buy the required products directly from the farmers, is there a possibility to attract urbanites to village festivals to get them out of stress and strengthen the rural market? Is there a possibility to sell the rural products in urban fairs for easy access of rural products in urban area? This research is conducted in eight selected villages of Ramanagara district and Bangalore, capital city of Karnataka state located in southern part of India to know the possibilities to attract the urbanites to rural festivals and possibilities to sell the rural products in urban fairs.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on field study and field study is intended to carry in both rural and urban area. Random sampling method is followed while choosing the respondents. The total sample size is 340 and out of the total sample size 240 are rural respondents and 100 are urban respondents. Ramanagara, a district of Karnataka state located in southern part of India is chosen for rural field study. The

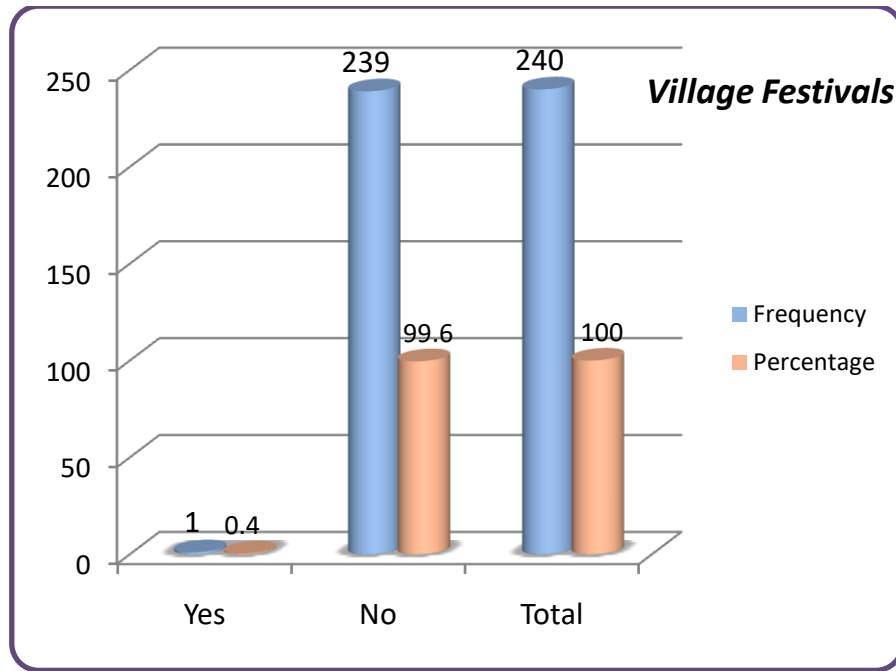
district has four taluks and two villages from each taluk were selected based on irrigation and dry land, totally eight villages were chosen for this study. The key parameters such as distance from urban area, population, income, caste structure, occupation, literacy rate, gender etc. were followed while choosing respondents of the villages. Bangalore, a metropolitan and capital city of Karnataka state, which is located in southern part of India, is chosen for the urban field study.

A structured interview schedule is used for this study. Two different set of interview schedules were prepared and used to collect the data from both rural and urban respondents. The schedule also prepared in bilingual (Kannada & English) mode for better operation in rural area. Statistical software is used for data analysis. Classification of data is made very carefully and statistical analytical methods such as percentage, frequency and average etc were used in calculation of primary data. Even though the primary data is collected with intensive care but reliability of primary data depends on accuracy and loyalty of the respondents.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

People of every village in India have their own cultural elements. Village festivals use to gives break to the routine life and makes the people to enjoy the occasion. Village festivals brings unity, enhances the bondage among the villagers and it is also an occasion to greet the friends and relatives. Village festivals are also a mechanism to balance the physical and mental stress of the villagers. Though migration rate is increasing, a portion of villagers are living in urban area for the sake of livelihood and good amenities, the swagger of village festivals is still exists. It is a trend that migrants of villages use to visit the villages on the occasion of festivals.

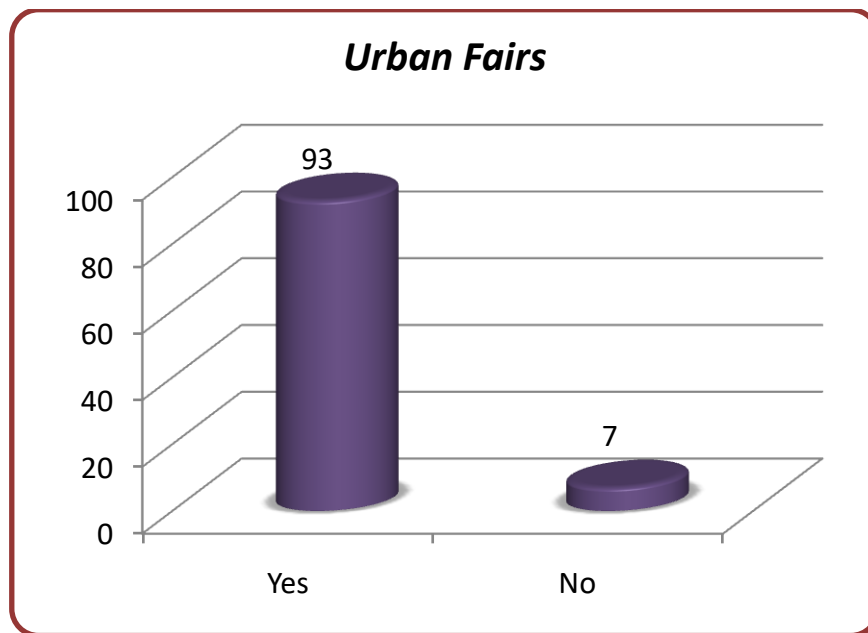
Urbanites who stressed with routine urban life are looking for the mechanisms to come out of stress. The way of celebration of village festivals, various cultural activities of the festivals, local village dish, village cosmetics, nature friendly environment etc can reduce the stress of urbanites if they participate in village festivals. Even after series of changes in rural life the 'we feeling' is still exists. The query arises at this moment is, does the village people have any objections if urban people wish to participate in the village festivals? The answer for this question in the villages of Ramanagara district is 'no'.



Among the 240 respondents of eight villages who participated in this study 99.6% (239) of them have no objections in participation of urban people in their village festivals. Village people can make use of this opportunity to sell their products to the urban people. Village festivals can act as a medium to connect both rural and urbanites, rural people can easily understand the demand of the urban people through this way.

Small scale sellers are vanishing in metropolitan city and a single mall is replacing hundreds of small scale sellers in city like Bangalore. The highest concentration of economic wealth is flowing towards the capitalists and most of the small scale sellers are working on daily wage or salary basis. The trend of increasing 'mall culture' among the urbanites is boosting the demand for more number of malls in the cities. Majority of the required products are available in a single place and this is the main reason behind increasing mall culture in urban area. Malls are working on their own business modules to attract the customers. Fairs on a weekly basis to buy and sell the products are still working in semi urban areas. Is it possible to organize the 'fair' in city like Bangalore to boost the village products? Since the geographical boundary of Bangalore city is very large, is it possible to organize fairs on area basis? Since urbanites are attracting towards mall culture, does the urban people wish to buy products in such fairs? Since the products which are available in the fairs are

lesser than the price of the products available in the malls, how frequently such fairs have to be organized in the city?



Out of hundred respondents of Bangalore city who participated in this study 93 of them expressed their interest to participate if a fair organized in their area to sell all kinds of village products and at the same time 07 of them are not interested to participate in such fairs. The result indicates that there are enough possibilities to organize fairs in city like Bangalore to sell all kinds of rural products. When it comes to the frequency of fair, the responses are classified as below.

Frequency of Fair	Number of Respondents
Every Day	1
3 days	1
Once in a week	37
8 Days	1
10 Days	2
15 Days	17
Once in a Month	14
2 Months	1
3 Months	4
4 Months	4

6 Months	3
Once in a Year	8
Total	93

The above table indicates the frequency of fairs which is demanded by urban respondents. Though the durations fix between every day to once in a year, 37 of them wish to have such fairs once in a week, 17 of them says once in fifteen days and fourteen of them wish to have fairs in their area once in a month. So the statistics revealed the possibility to organize the fairs on weekly, quarterly and monthly basis.

IV. CONCLUSION

The middleman who is filling the gap between rural producers and urban consumers is gaining more profit and irritating both rural and urban community. The increasing interest of urbanites towards rural visit can be utilized to avoid middleman in the market. This study revealed that rural people have no objection if the urbanites participate in village festivals. The participation of urbanites in rural festivals is not only bridge the connection between rural and urban people but also strengthen the rural market. This study also found that there are possibilities to sell the rural products in urban fairs. Urbanites are expecting the fairs frequently for easy access of rural products in urban area.

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