

**ROLE OF FAIRS IN RURAL MARKETING**  
(A case study of selected fairs in Aurangabad Dist.)

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In many parts of the world fair is an intimate part of the rural economy, especially in countries like India near about 75 percent population is rural. Fair is also a periodic market but with a different that their occurrence is occasional, may be once or twice a year and serve a wider are not only economically but socially, religiously and culturally also, the fairs are held in all part of India and in the area under study. Aurangabad District is more frequent and form in integral part of rural social life. Fairs in the district are not an exhibition event as fairs held in big cities but these are marketing occasions for the rural inhabitants. As deef (1937,139) has remarked, fairs have served as stimuli to trade upon which in many instances of economic welfare, at an entire community depends.

Fairs rank among the oldest as well as the most fascinating of trading institutions (cleef, 1937,139) the origin of fairs goes back to remote times. In the ancient world annual fairs were held up natural sites, in or near temples at the time of some religious festival and under the protection of local chiefs. Fairs also came into existence at places where merchant cravens had to haif to change their means of transportation, or where multitude of peoples assembled at particular times for a religious festival. In fact the term fair is derived from the lation word “ferial” meaning “feast”.

In Aurangabad district, fair seems to be the most ancient trading institution. Their initial growth was in the form of social gathering at the time of religious festival or at some holy place, but soon exchange of commodities and trade in small quantity has been started, in order to fulfil the needs of the people at the limited area. Aurangabad district from historical times has a long tradition of fairs. At present 78 fairs are held in various parts of the district. Since it was a social cum-religious-cum-commercial gathering, therefore, it was successful and become popular among masses.

Actually one day fair, are simply a gathering associated with festivals or at a holy place on a particular day such fairs are not having any commercial importance, but their social and religious importance is more. There are some very important fairs in the Aurangabad district which continue for morethan 20 dsys like Deolgaonraja fair.

## **CLASSIFICATION OF FAIRS**

Generally, all the fairs are multifunctional in nature and are held for more than one reason. Allix (1922, 568) was the first to identify the four types of fairs, viz. The commodity fair, the livestock fair, the country market and the sample fair. According to Cleef (1937, 141) the fairs may be classified on the basis of their primary function.

In Aurangabad district fairs are the integral part of the rural economy as well as of rural life. Their importance can be judged from their functional role. Fairs are important to rural people for their exchange of commodities, trade in cattle, social contact and entertainment. In Aurangabad district, annual fairs are not common throughout the district. In all taluka places annual fairs have their existence in the district.

With the change in rural economy, the pattern of shopping in fairs has also been changed. The development of permanent shops in rural areas and easy contact with cities have also changed the shopping practice of the rural people. But the importance of fair is still same, this is more because of the behavioral pattern of the rural people, who always visit for the purchase of many items.

### **RELIGIOUS FAIRS:-**

Most of the fairs in the region have taken their origin in religion or religious motives. This is because religion is a very strong motivating force in Indian culture and it has capability to attract more people. All the one day fairs in the state are religious fairs. Their total number is 78. These are held either on festival occasion or at some holy place like temple or tomb. There are several fairs held on Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Shivratri, Janmashtmi, Kartic purnima, Dasehra etc. or at the temples of Hanumanji, Mahadev, Ambamata, Tuljabhavani, Masoba, Vaijanath Maharaja, Khandoba, Dnyanoba mahuli yatra, Kalsubai yatra, Mukundraj yatra. All the one day fairs are local in nature and generally attract inhabitants at the same town or its surrounding villages. These are more for entertainment, although shops of sweets, toys etc. have also done some business.

### **RELIGIOUS-CUM-COMMERCIAL FAIRS**

In this category those fairs have been included which are religious in origin, but in these fairs commercial activities have also been done. In fact, most of the fairs which are of longer duration have multi-functional characteristics.

### **CATTLE FAIRS**

Aurangabad district is famous for its cattle wealth as well as for the cattle fairs. In which sale and purchase of cattle heads are performed at a wider scale. The cattle fairs are also religious or commercial in nature but because of trade in cattle is performed in these fairs, they are termed as cattle fairs.

## **SELECTION OF SAMPLES**

It was not possible within a limited time to survey and deal with all the 78 total fairs in the district. The following two sample fairs from Aurangabad district have been selected for analysis. The first fair is “Eknath Swami Paithan Fair”, and the second is “Mangir Baba” Shendra fair.

### **PAITHAN FAIR**

Fair or jattras are usually held once a year in connection with the local temple or on the anniversary of the death of a saint. The jattras are attended by agents or traders of leading native firms who generally transact a great deal of business on these occasions.

The jattras at Paithan is the most important in the district and is held in honor of St. Eknath. It is attended by pilgrims from Pune, Ahmednagar, Pandharpur, Kolhapur and Khandesh region etc.

The fair lasts for 05 days, during which time a great business is transacted in cattle, horses, silks, brocades, cotton stuffs, copper and brass utensils, grain, Bhora's, articles bangles, fruits etc. The city of Aurangabad has light fairs to different mahomedan saints, besides three or four Hindu jattras. The Dewalgaonraja fair is held at the conclusion of the dasera festival and lasts 15 to 20 days. The transaction of the Dewalgaonraja trade in 1996 was Rs. 12,19,746 in terms of money, of which Rs. 9,20,760 is from the Aurangabad District. Now fair is held more in the nature of a commercial activity. The turnover of such a fair is considerable as compared to that in a weekly bazaar, pedlars, hawkers, retail traders set up their booths at the site of the fair and do a flourishing business. However a large number of people even today visit the fair due to its religious significance. Aurangabad district. From historical times has a long tradition of fairs. At present 78 fairs are held in various parts of the district.

The jattras at Paithan is the most important fair in Aurangabad district. It is attended by pilgrims from Aurangabad, Pune, Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pandharpur, Kolhapur and Khandesh region. At present the fair lasts for 05 days, the average value of the Paithan fair trade in 1996-97 is Rs. 16,19,700 of which Rs. 8,17,450 is from the Aurangabad district (Table no 1.1). The fair is held more in the nature of a commercial activity. However, a large number of people even today visit the fair due to its religious significance as well as trade transaction. Total participants of the fair is near about 1,20,000 with saints.

### **SHENDRA FAIR**

The jattras at Shendra is the secondmost important fair in the District and is held to pay homage to “Mangir Baba”. It is attended by the pilgrims from Pune, Nasik, Kolhapur, Pandharpur and Aurangabad. The fair lasts for 07 days, during which time a great business is carried on in cattle, horses, cotton, copper and goats

especially. The shendra fair in transactions in 1996 amounted to Rs. 9,19,545 of which 4,19,769 is from Aurangabad district. The fair is commercial in nature. However a large number of people even today visit the fair due to its religious significance as well as trade transactions. Total participants of the fair are near about one lakh forty thousand peoples. It is observed from the table no 1.2 that, the sale of goat cattle is more in this fair. Total 48 goat traders are local sellers (26.08%) and (73.91%) are the outside traders were attended the fair. It means the sale and purchase of goats is more in this fair. Total 341 traders were attended the fair out of which 27.38% are local shopkeepers and 72.61% are from outside.

In brief, peoples from rural areas are fulfilling their economic and marketing needs from annual fairs. The total marketing system is still traditional, the weights and measures used are also not standard one. The exploitation of rural customers by retail traders and middlemen is a common still now. Thus, there is an urgent Need to regulate marketing in annual fairs, so the farmers/ producers can get suitable prices of their products in the market, with the change in rural economy, the pattern of shopping in fairs has also been changed. The development of permanent shops in rural market and contact with urban centers has also changed the purchasing habits of the rural people, but the importance of fair is still same.

## **REFERENCES**

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**TABLE NO 1.1**  
**AVERAGE SALE OF THE SHOP/STALL IN PAITHAN FAIR**

Sr No.	Type of shop	Local (Rs.)	Outside (Rs.)	Total Sale (Rs.)
1	Cloth	3500	4600	8100
2	Ready made Garments	2500	4500	7000
3	Sweet Marts/Prasad	3000	4000	7000
4	Tea/ Restaurant	2500	3000	5500
5	Haldi/Kunkum/Bucca	1200	1800	3000
6	Coconut(shriphal)	4400	4600	9000
7	Baloon/Basri and Toy	3000	3500	6500
8	Shoes and leather product	1800	2300	4100
9	Wooden articles	1400	2500	3900
10	Stationery/cutlary	2000	2800	4800
11	Hardware	3000	4500	7500
12	Bangles and others	2800	4000	6800
13	Entertainment	2500	4500	7000
14	Others	7400	6000	13400
Total		41000	52600	93600

Source:- Field Investigation (1996-97)

**TABLE NO 1.2**  
**AVERAGE SALE OF THE SHOP/ STALL LIN SHENDRA FAIR**

Sr. No.	Type of shop	Local (Rs.)	Outside (Rs.)	Total sale (Rs.)
1	Cloth	3400	4000	7400
2	Readymade Garments	2100	4800	6900
3	Tea/Restaurant	3000	4500	7500
4	Sweet marts/Prasad	2000	3500	5500
5	Goat/Hens	6000	8000	14000
6	Coconut(Shriphal)	1800	2400	4200
7	Baloon/Basri/Toy	2800	3900	6700
8	Shoes and leather product	1900	2100	4000
9	Wooden articles	1200	3000	4200
10	Stationery cutlary	1800	2000	3800
11	Hardware	2500	3400	5900
12	Bangles/other	1200	2800	4000
13	Entertainment	1100	3400	4500
14	Other	4000	6400	10400
Total		34800	54200	89000

Source:- Field Investigation (1996-97)