

COMMERCIAL HINTERLAND OF GORKHA BAZAAR

Keshav Raj Dhakal

Lecturer
Department of Geography Education
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur

Abstract

Present study attempts to trace out the characteristics of Gorkha Bazaar and its commercial hinterland on the basis of flow of goods and commodities. The study is based on primary data collected through a field survey. Altogether 135 functional units (about 30 percent of the total) were sampled for data collection. Gorkha Bazaar, being the headquarters of Gorkha district is an administrative center as well as a commercial market center of peripheral villages. The commercial function dominates all other functions. Three of the most important functions are grocery store, catering and fancy and cloths store. The wholesaling and personal services are relatively low in the market. The hinterland of Gorkha bazaar is limited strictly within the boundary of the district.

Key words: Market center, hinterland, functional unit, haat, business unit, exchange, inflow, outflow.

Introduction

Market center is a place where exchange of goods and services takes place. In addition, it is a place for exchange of services and ideas; a place for agro-processing mills or small scale industries; a place for community and production services; a place for fair or haat or social gathering; and a place for transport services (Shrestha, 1973/74). In Nepal, traditional market centers in the hill region were located either at the break of bulk point or along the main trails (K.C & Pradhan, 1980/81). The extent of urban hinterland depends upon factors as the size, economic-social character and strength of urban settlement. Commercial hinterland is the most important factor in the study of an urban settlement. It influences the formation and development of a town.

Gorkha Bazaar, being the headquarters of Gorkha district is an administrative center as well as commercial market place of peripheral village like other district headquarter of Nepal. The origin of the town is influenced by the extent of commercial hinterlands. The surrounding villages are the main cause for the growth of Gorkha Bazaar. The surrounding villages purchase goods and services from it and sell several goods and services to Gorkha Bazaar. Consumers within the town are limited. Therefore, surrounding villages are important to trace out the commercial hinterland.

This paper attempts to analyze the major characteristics of Gorkha Bazaar and commercial hinterland area based on flow of goods and commodities of Gorkha Bazaar.

Materials and Methods

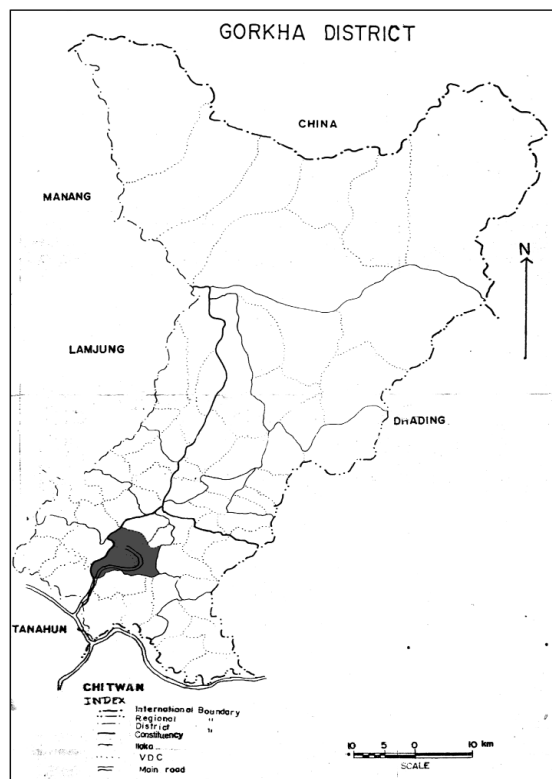
Present study is based on survey data collected from functional units from Gorkha Bazaar. Questionnaire survey and field observation techniques were applied for primary data collection. The other sources of information such as published and unpublished documents and reports of Gorkha Municipality as well as of Gorkha District Development Committee have also been used as ancillary sources.

The functional units located along of the main commercial thoroughfare and its adjacent streets were considered for recording. Temporary retail stalls or vending shops were also recorded. After that all functional units and their types were identified. This was done in order to select the sample units of all functional types. The selection of the sample unit was made using stratified random sampling. Altogether 135 functional units (about 30 percent of the total) were covered for data collection. The survey forms for shopkeeper were administered to the selected owners/ proprietors or managers of the concerned functional units at their place of activity. The study is descriptive cum analytical. Both statistical and non-statistical techniques are applied for data analysis. Simple statistical techniques like frequency, percentage and average are used.

Study Area

Gorkha Bazaar lies in Gorkha district, Gandaki zone in the Western Development Region of Nepal. It is the headquarters of Gorkha district (Figure 1). The Prithvi Narayan municipality was declared in February 1996 merging three VDC namely Gorakhkali, Taranagar and Raniswanra. The name

of municipality had changed from Prithvi Narayan to Gorkha municipality after the second people's movement.



The municipality has an area of 59.55 square kilometers. The municipal area is divided into eleven wards. According to 2001 census, the total population of the municipality was 25,014 (12,503 male and 12,511 female) with a density of 420 persons per square kilometer. The average family size was 5.91 persons. Out of total population, 67.21 percent are literate and 32.79 percent illiterate. The population is composed of different castes and ethnic groups such as Bahun, Chettri, Gurung, Newar and others.

Results and Discussion

Types of Business Units

There were altogether 135 business units in Gorkha bazaar. All the business units are classified into eighteen different types. Table 1 reveals the types of business units and their number. Groceries, fancy store and catering are the main functions totaling 37 percent of the total functional units. In the sampling, utensils comprise all types including plastic, earthen (pottery), copper and steel. Mustard seed pressing, rice, bakery, metal furniture and bamboo are all included in mills and factories group. Others include glass, painting, photo studio and tailoring.

Table 1: Types of business units

Types	Total	Percent
Grocery Store	18	13.33
Fancy Store	16	11.85
Catering	16	11.85
Cloth Store	13	9.62
Watch sale and repairing	12	8.88
Cosmetics	9	6.66
Electronic	9	6.66
Mills and factories	8	5.92
Jewellery	5	3.70
Hardware	4	2.96
Drug	4	2.96
Veterinary	4	2.96
Book and Stationary	3	2.22
Vegetables and Fruits	3	2.22
Utensil	3	2.22
Electric	2	1.48
Others	4	2.96
Total	135	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Functional Structure

The functional establishments of Gorkha Bazaar are grouped into two broad categories- commercial establishments and industry. These broad groups are further broken down into sub-groups. For instance, the commercial activity is further divided into five sub groups such as retailing, wholesaling, catering, personal service and professional service. Likewise, the industrial establishment is sub-divided into two major types- retail service and mill or factory. The number and types of functional units are shown in Table 2 (Figure 2).

Table 2: Number and types of functional units

Type	Percentage
Commercial	78.5
Retailing	54.54
Wholesaling	3.32
Catering	12.91
Personal Services	2.88
Professional Service	5.54
Industrial	21.5
Retail Service Industry	15.52
Industry/ Mill	5.98
Total	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2008.

The functional structure of Gorkha Bazaar is preponderantly dominated by commercial functions sharing almost four-fifths of the total functional units. Therefore, this town can be considered as a commercial centre. The relative share of industrial function appears to be 21.5 percent. While the centrality of these functions is measured in terms of

number of occurrence, the most important function is turned out to be the retailing, followed by retail service industry. The personal service is appeared as the least important function. In general, the nature of function provided by Gorkha Bazaar is chiefly the consumption and service oriented. The higher order functions such as wholesale, industry and professional services are limited in Gorkha bazaar.

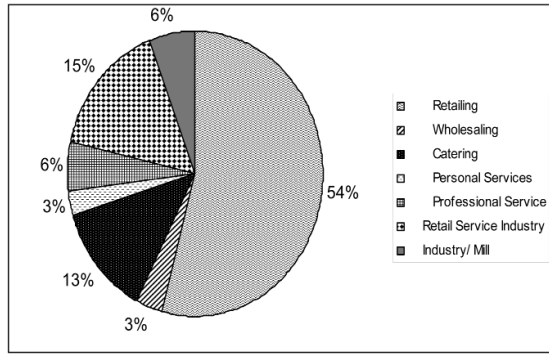


Figure 2: Number of functional units by types

Among commercial functions, the grocery store or *kirana pasal* is the most common feature. Other ubiquitous functions are fancy stores and catering (tea with snacks shop). The existence of high order shop type is limited. Retailing constitutes almost 55 percent of the functions. Catering is in the second position (12.91 percent) and professional service in the third position (5.54 percent). Professional services in this bazaar include photo studio, communication services, photocopy and typing institute. The occurrence of hotels and lodges is of particular importance. They signify the importance of Gorkha Bazaar as tourism, administrative and commercial towns in Nepal. The occurrence of bookstores, radio and video services of higher centrality indicates the importance of the communication function.

Industrial functions can be divided into two categories. One is retail service industry and the other is manufacturing industry. The retail service industry comprises repairing, workshop, tailoring, ornaments, shoes and the like. They perform services according to what customers demand, and the transactions between them occur in a piecemeal basis. Their occurrences in the town signify the role and demand of people in surrounding areas. Other functions available are little in number. The manufacturing industry can be divided into two broad groups: raw material-oriented (bamboo items, pottery, saw mills) and agro-based industries (rice mill, mustard oil press, flour and mixed grain mills). The main characteristic feature of these industries is that except agro-processing mills which serve basically farm households besides supplying their

produce to urban market, all others are primarily related to urban demand-oriented.

Hinterland

The hinterland or sphere of influence is defined as the area surrounding a town or city and within that urban center has major cultural, social, and economic influence. The resident of surrounding area has intimate association with the market centers for the shopping and selling of farm produce (Smalies, 1975). Those who are living in close proximity may have a close contact than others who are living in distance. There are two approaches to the identification of urban sphere of influence. The first looks outward from the town in order to identify the various areas, which are served by it. The second looks inwards from the countryside and has been more concerned with consumer behavior and the way in which people use various centers. In this study two indices namely inflow and out flow of commodities are considered for delimiting the sphere of influence of Gorkha Bazaar.

Inflow of goods to Gorkha Bazaar: The survey information provides the names of the centers that supply merchandise goods to Gorkha Bazaar. Table 3 shows the major supply centers for Gorkha Bazaar as identified by the sample shopkeepers.

Table 3: Inflow of goods to Gorkha Bazaar

Name of centers	Frequency	Percent
Narayanghat	90	35.29
Kathmandu	44	17.25
Birganj	37	14.50
Pokhara	34	13.33
Butwal	25	9.80
Anbu Khaireni	12	4.70
Gorkha	6	2.35
Others	7	2.74
Total	255	100

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Narayanghat and Kathmandu are the most important centers for supplying goods to Gorkha Bazaar. These two market centers occupy about 57 percent of total good supply of the Gorkha bazaar. These are the nearest big market centers. Likewise, Birgunj, Pokhara, Butwal and Anbu Khaireni are also the important supplying centers. Besides, many other market centers like Bhairahawa, Dumre, Damauli, Hetauda, Thimi, Ratna Nagar and Mugling are also supplying goods to Gorkha bazaar. Iron and steel, sugar, fertilizer, clothes, medicine, machines, construction materials, agricultural equipments, fruits and vegetables, kirana goods, household appliances, stationary and cosmetic goods come from these market centers. Local goods and commodities come from different part of the

district. These goods include vegetable, fruits, milk, ghee, pulses and bamboo products. There are some wholesale shops too in Gorkha Bazaar. These shops supply merchandise goods to smaller shops located within the market.

Outflow of goods from Gorkha Bazaar: The sphere of influence of Gorkha Bazaar can be identified by the outflow of goods. Larger sized market centers have wider hinterlands even covering VDCs of adjoining districts too, whereas medium sized centers characterize moderate and most of the smaller sized have smaller hinterland areas covering only certain parts of a VDC (Koirala, 2011). The outflow of retail and wholesale materials include hardware goods, medicine, clothes, stationary, cosmetic goods, hardware goods, household appliances, fruits and vegetables, pulse seed and agricultural equipments.

Table 4: Outflow of goods from Gorkha Bazaar

Places	Shopkeeper	Percentage
Within municipality	240	46.15
Within the district	250	48.07
Outside the district	30	5.7
Total	520	100

Source: Field survey, 2008.

Table 4 shows that almost 95 percent of the commodity of the market is consumed within the district and only 5.7 percent go outside the district. About 50 percent of the goods and commodities are consumed within the municipality. This clearly indicates that the hinterlands of Gorkha bazaar are strictly limited to Gorkha district.

Conclusion

Gorkha Bazaar, being the headquarters of Gorkha district, is an administrative center as well as commercial market place of peripheral villages. The functional structure of Gorkha Bazaar shows that the commercial function dominates all other functions. Three of the most important functions are grocery store, catering, fancy and cloths store. Of all functional type, retailing is the largest in number. The wholesaling and personal services

can be considered as important market functions are relatively low in this market. Narayangadh and Kathmandu are the most important centers for supplying goods to Gorkha Bazaar. Local goods and commodities come from different part of the district. The study shows that the sphere of influence of the Gorkha bazaar is limited within the boundary of Gorkha district.

Acknowledgements

Field survey was conducted by a group of students of Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) of Geography second year (2007-2009 batches) of Gorkha Campus under the field supervision of present author. The author sincerely acknowledges them.

References

- K. C., B. K. and Pradhan, P. K. (1980/81). A study of market centers in Siddhartha and Prithvi highways. *Geographical Journal of Nepal*, 3(4), 1-13.
- Koirala, H. L. (2011). Role of market centers in the rural development of Tanahu district. *Nepalese Journal of Educational Studies*, 1, 37-48.
- Pradhan, P. K. (1998). *Market center and hinterland relation in Lalitpur, Nepal*. Klagenfurter Geographische Schriften, Heft 17, Institute fur Geographie and Regional forschung der Universitaet Klagenfurt, Austria.
- Rizal, U.N. (1980/81). Spatio-temporal aspect of periodic markets in Sunsari district. *Geographical Journal of Nepal*, 3(4), 36-38.
- Shrestha, C. B. (1968). Changing pattern of sphere of influence of Bhaktapur: A case study. *The Himalayan Review, Special Issue*.
- Shrestha, C. B. (1973/74). The system of central places in Araniko Rajmarga area. *The Himalayan Review*, 5(6), 19-39.
- Shrestha, C. B., & Rizal, U. N. (1979). Spatial pattern of periodic and permanent market center in Nepal. *Geographical Journal of Nepal*, 2, 12-15.
- Smailes, A. E. (1975). The definition and measurement of urbanization. In J. Ronald (Ed.) *Essays on World Urbanization*. London: George Philip.