

# **Essays on bazaar: An Indian perspective**

## **Submitted by**

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## **Abstract**

The thesis, grounded in qualitative methods, investigates the evolution of the bazaar, the entrance and sustenance of new sellers in the bazaar and intra-seller dynamics within the boundaries of the bazaar. In situ, the thesis enhances the understanding of governance, contestation of space and spatial politics within the bazaar and challenges the existing premise of the strength of weak ties.

Bazaar, as a form of informal market, has hardly been the centre of research in the marketing domain in India. The positioning of the thesis is done so that its scope lies within the intersection of fields of political economy and economic sociology and contributes to the theory of markets and sociology of bazaars.

The first study discusses the role of political actors, within and outside the boundaries of a bazaar, in its evolution. The essay captures the oral history of sellers in the bazaar to synthesise multiple microhistories. The oral histories were compared for triangulation in the absence of secondary data in any form. Later these microhistories were analysed together to construct the history of the context to understand its evolution. Our findings suggest that political actors at micro, meso or macro levels, within and outside a bazaar's boundaries, influence the evolution of a bazaar.

The second study proposes a new retail development model for informal markets applicable to developing economies using the lens of social network analysis. The qualitative data was collected over two years from fifteen retailers based on purposive sampling in a bazaar with participants from a similar socio-economic background, same religion, and speaking the same language. The data was analysed, and the role of social ties was found evident in the entry and sustenance of retailers. Bazaar Samiti, a retailer's association, acts as a significant formal institution that mediates both the process of entry and sustenance of new retailers. The paper also comes up with a process model of entry and sustenance within the boundaries of Bazaar.

The third study accentuates how spatial politics and norms under the layers of social and interpersonal trust results in contestation and further marginalisation of a retailer in the context of an informal marketing system. The paper completes the triad of the phenomenon of cooperation, competition with contestation. We offer insights by pointing to socio-economic, institutional mechanism and trust that turns Bazaar into a system of unorthodox transactions. The paper contributes to a deeper understanding of cooperation-competition-contestation, which results from a complex social hierarchy that reflects and supplements mainstream systems. This process is integrated through the implementation of a purely trust-based mechanism. This paper helps to challenge the singular emphasis on institutional mechanisms to understand parallel market systems. Moreover, by focusing on such market practices, this study adds to the sociology of Bazaars in a meaningful manner. We look beyond the usual seller-consumer relationship and study a traditional Bazaar-market that has its widespread existence in the contemporary Asian and Indian economies.