

# IMPORTANCE OF ODISHA'S HAATS FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

**Yajnya Dutta Nayak, Khallikote Unitary University  
CMA Rajendra Gouda, Aska Science College**

## ABSTRACT

*Haats, also known as weekly markets or periodic markets, provide goods and services to rural communities on a regular basis by setting up shop at predetermined times and locations on specific days of the week. The rise in the purchasing power of the rural masses due to the expansion of the economy as a whole has contributed to the haats' rising profile in recent years. Reaching rural consumers is difficult because of the market's dispersed demographic. People in rural areas are unable to sell and acquire goods and services in urban areas due to poor infrastructure and transportation constraints, thus their needs must be supplied elsewhere. Finding solutions to agricultural production and marketing difficulties in Odisha via the lens of Haats is the mission. Policymakers, social reformers, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), corporations, universities, and other academic institutions are just some of the groups who stand to benefit greatly from this study, whether by using its findings to launch new studies in this field or by putting them into practise immediately. The results of this research could inform policymakers' decisions about how to increase revenue and improve infrastructure at periodic haats. In addition, it may aid corporations in developing and implementing individualised policies and strategies to reduce the sale of identical goods and services in rural haats, thereby enhancing people's quality of life.*

**Keywords:** Haats, Rural Agro-Marketing, Agri-Products, Odisha Market.

## INTRODUCTION

Haats, often referred to as weekly markets or periodic markets, are regularly held on some designated days or a day of the week at some established locations and supply the rural settlement with goods and services. Haats have become more significant in recent years as a result of the huge increase in the purchasing power of the rural masses brought about by the overall growth of the economy. Rural markets in and of itself have a dispersed population, making it challenging to reach this market. Due to weak infrastructure and transportation constraints, people in rural areas are unable to reach urban areas to sell and buy goods and services, thus their requirements must be appropriately met. Haats, which take the shape of weekly bazaars or recurring markets, are India's oldest form of alternative marketing. They still serve a crucial role in the rural economy by giving individuals the chance to sell excess agricultural and related products in addition to buying consumer goods (Khan et al., 003).

Population dispersion in rural marketplaces makes it challenging to reach this sector. As individuals in rural areas cannot travel to urban areas to buy goods and services, these people's needs must be met appropriately and effectively, yet this comes at a great cost and requires a lot of work. To reach rural consumers, fixed-location retail stores are primarily used. Alternative channels are utilised to reach rural consumers since the marketer must bear substantial costs.

The earliest form of advertising in India is haats. They still serve a crucial role in the rural economy by giving individuals the chance to sell excess agricultural and related products in addition to buying consumer goods. (Kashyap & Raut, 2010). India has 47,000 haats, which serve over 50% of the country's population (Fagerland & Smith, 1970). Each haat draws over 4000 people who come to buy and sell a variety of everyday commodities and services, serving the needs of at least 10 to a maximum of 50 villages. Haats take place every week. The weekday haats are the least frequent, and Sunday marketplaces are the most well-liked. (Kashyap & Raut, 2010; Rajagopal, 1993; Velayudhan, 2017).

The day after selling in one haat, vendors move on to another. This is due to the fact that Indian rural villages receive weekly wages. Employees often receive their "*hafta*" on the day that haats are scheduled. Everything is offered in a wide range and is sold on the ground. Haats offer more than just loose goods; they also offer a significant selection of packaged goods. It was discovered that all states in the nation held haats, with the exception of Haryana, Western Rajasthan, and few North Eastern states. The exceptions are made because the north-eastern states are inaccessible, Western Rajasthan has a very low population density, and Haryana is almost entirely urban. (Fagerland & Smith, 1970). Haats provide a unique low-cost selling technique and have been around for 200 years. (MART's Marketing and Research Team).

The oldest profession on earth is growing crops for human use. Agriculture continues to be the foundation of the human economy, notwithstanding the enormous growth of other sectors. One of the numerous advantages of growing agriculture is that it may reduce poverty and ensure food security, to name just two. Furthermore, because it creates a market for agricultural products as well as demand for goods and services, the growth of the agricultural sector is essential for the growth of two nonfarm sectors. All of the aforementioned points are particularly pertinent to regions like Odisha, where 60% of the population is employed in agriculture and related businesses.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective is to identify the prospects of Haata for agricultural productivity and marketing challenges in Odisha. To measure the role of Haata towards marketing of Agricultural products in Rural Odisha. And to drawback the problems and prospects on marketing of agro-products in Odisha.

## METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The present study is innovative in its design and the query is primary as well secondary data based investigative in nature. The main purpose of this study is to find out the role of Haata towards marketing Agricultural products on Odisha. Besides, the common problems faced by farmers and the marketing support system they are enjoying are also analysed. The perception of farmers on different aspects was collected. For findings and conclusion, SWOT analysis has used in this study.

### Agriculture in Odisha

The state of Odisha is primarily agricultural. The majority of the state's population relies on farming for their livelihood. Despite employing over 70% of the population, agriculture accounts for only around 26% of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), leading to a low per

capita income in agriculture. As a result, the income gap between the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors is wide. Therefore, it is crucial to address the problems that reduce farmers' revenue. Sustainable annual growth in agriculture of more than 4 percent was the goal of the National Agriculture Policy announced by the Government of India in 2000. However, under the Ten Year Five Year Plan, average yearly growth was 2.3%. However, non-farming industries have expanded at a considerably quicker rate. Since GDP has been growing rapidly in recent years, a significant shift in policy is required to make this expansion more broadly shared. One of the main issues is the slowing expansion of the agricultural industry and the accompanying drop in profitability as the non-farm sector expands rapidly. The National Policy for Farmers, 2007 has planned to prioritise farmers' financial security over output alone.

One of the key reasons for low capital formation and falling productivity in agriculture is the reduction of public investment in the sector. Slow private investment in agriculture is another area where policymakers need to get creative to spur growth. Because about 70% of Indians still reside in rural areas, agricultural expansion will remain the driving force behind India's overall economic growth and development, conservation efforts, and even efforts to ensure food security and reduce poverty. The development of agriculture requires swifter investment.

Out of a total land area of 155.711 lakh hectares, roughly 41.16 percent is suitable for agriculture in the State. About 61.50 million acres are used for farming. Approximately 40.17 million acres of farmland have acidic soil, while another four million acres have problems with salinity. About 3,000,000 ha of farmable land is flooded every year. The agricultural sector accounts for around 26% of the state's GDP. Sixty-five percent of the labour force finds their livelihood in agriculture. The typical farm in the state is 1.25 hectares in size. About 83% of the farming population is made up of small and marginal farmers (Nayak, 2018).

### **Marketing of Agricultural Products in Odisha**

When compared to states with a more developed and controlled agricultural marketing system, Odisha's approach is unique. Physical markets are owned by many entities, including RMCs, Municipalities, Panchayats, and private proprietors, leading to inconsistencies in market ownership and operation. While the state has changed its Act, the changes are cosmetic rather than substantive because the marketing structure in the state does not have complete authority over the system. As a result, the change of the Act on paper has not had any influence on the ground, as the APMR Act is only loosely enforced in the state. Thus, it is believed that the provisions of the state APMR Act must be implemented in their true spirit in order to enable the state to reap the benefits of the wave of reforms now sweeping across the country.

### **The Major Issues and Challenges Faced by the Farmers of Odisha**

With the shifting demand for agricultural products, the state's agricultural production and marketing sector seems to have a promising future. Awareness of farmers on various concerns and adaption of new techniques and technology for agricultural production and sale, however, are issues that impede a smooth running of the agricultural sector. Small farm sizes, declining water supplies, and a lack of irrigation infrastructure are just some of the problems that Odisha's farmers confront on a daily basis. Due to an absence of marketing and business acumen, High-interest loans, Inadequate infrastructure, Price controls, excessive middlemen who drive up costs without providing much benefit, restrictive legislation, and inadequate research, development, and agricultural policy. The cost of inputs has been rising for the reasons stated above. Even if the retail price of agricultural goods goes up, just a small fraction of that gain will go to those

who actually need it. All of these problems make it less likely that young people will choose farming as a career.

### **Haat: Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure in Odisha**

It is possible to build village haats at the sites of existing markets, such as those hosting weekly haats. Gramme Panchayat/Government must possess the land for the planned Village Haat. No consideration will be given to weekly haats on private property. The Village Haat could be built in the beginning at the Panchayat Headquarters or some other location likely to draw many people.

The most important rural marketplaces in India and odisha are the periodic markets known as Haats and fairs (Melas, jatras). There are an estimated 21,000 to 47,000 rural primary markets in the country, the majority of which are the periodic markets known as haats, shandies, painths, and fairs; in Odisha alone, there are 15048 recognised rural haats. These remain vital to the rural economy despite the proliferation of permanent stores. They predate all other trade institutions by many decades. These marketplaces allow people to buy and sell both consumer goods and agricultural and associated products. Farmers market their wares to urban dwellers and independent shopkeepers in rural areas. Low-volume, low-quality commodities are sold at unsupervised, weekly flea markets. Most farmers, especially the small and marginal ones, rely on these marketplaces in rural and interior areas to sell their crops and to stock up on the goods they need for daily life.

The majority of the essential marketing infrastructure is absent from these markets, which serve as hubs for neighbouring secondary markets. To get to the final consumers, the commodities gathered here are sold to the wholesale assembly markets. There has been little attempt to create the necessary infrastructure or to grow the Haat or the rural market, despite large revenue collection through annual auctions or through the collection of fee from the participants. This is the primary location where a rural producer-seller can convert his agricultural sales into cash. When a farmer has a little surplus, it isn't practical to travel to far-off wholesale assembling markets. They lack even the most fundamental infrastructure, including places to buy and sell, places to get water, places to sort goods, places for merchants to set up shop, etc. People usually stand or sit outside, putting themselves and their wares at risk from weather extremes. This, in turn, reduces the freshness of their agricultural output and makes other foods unsanitary and perhaps dangerous for human consumption.

These flaws prevent potential buyers and dealers from participating in the market, which in turn prevents producers from receiving enough compensation for their goods. Haats necessitate the provision of a variety of infrastructural facilities, such as elevated platforms for displaying items, temporary covered structures, suitable storage facilities, public conveniences, drinking water, power, etc. The development of an agrarian economy is predicated on the provision of rural infrastructure at a level that will allow for the growth of a robust and productive agricultural sector. Small, marginal, and tribal farmers in rural and tribal areas sometimes rely on the price they earn at a weekly market as their sole source of financial income. It is estimated that these markets account for % of the overall marketable excess in these outlying areas. Streamlining the operations of these local retailers will allow for more accurate pricing setting, reduced overhead, and new product development. The majority of the populace shops for staples including soap, shoes, clothing, cutlery, and agricultural supplies at a weekly Haat. In addition to the monetary settlement of weddings, social information is also traded in such markets. Numerous studies have revealed that numerous issues, such as high levels of congestion

at market yards, a lack of traders, and the absence of supporting services, cast doubt on the efficacy of rural markets. In turn, this impacts sales in the marketplace (Nayak & Barik, 2018). Agricultural producers' decisions about which crops to cultivate and how to use their resources are influenced favourably by the effectiveness of rural assembly markets as a link in the marketing chain. The assumption underlying most RPM development programs—and this is especially true of tribal market development initiatives is that a rise in agricultural output would lead to a corresponding rise in farmers' household incomes.

While a rise in output may be a precondition for higher farm income, it is by no means a sufficient one. Improving access to markets is central to tribal development, which aims to raise people's standard of living by creating more jobs in the region. Government organisations and market authorities have made hardly any attempts to foster the growth of rural tribal marketplaces, weekly Haats, or shandies. A considerably more effective weapon for directly attacking poverty alleviation is a programme designed to boost tribal income and purchasing power through a competitive market network.

In rural and tribal regions, a well-organized and efficiently run market serves as the hub of economic activity. When farmers bring their goods to the Haat, they hope that they are sold quickly at a fair price, with minimal market fees and no trading fraud. Weekly Haats and Shandies can be used for effective credit distribution, input marketing, procurement, and other social and economic activities if they are provided with the necessary technical support. Instead of expecting people to travel to urban centres for these services, it is considerably more efficient to provide them to people in rural and tribal Haats. Now that the economy has shifted, markets in rural and tribal areas can function as a self-sufficient whole and generate revenue for funding development projects. Especially for small and marginal farmers like landless labourers, rural primary markets play a crucial role in the marketing of their goods. Most prosperous farmers sell their harvests at regional wholesale aggregation markets. Sometimes they'll buy up other small farmers' excesses and bring those along with their own produce to sell at gathering markets. The small farmers who produce only a tiny excess cannot afford to travel to the far-off wholesale assembling markets. There are about 21,000 primary rural markets in the country, including over 15048 alone in Odisha.

Since the private contractors' tenure in these markets is just for a year, they have little incentive to invest in the necessary infrastructure. Many shoppers (36%), especially those coming from neighbouring villages, make the journey to the Haats on foot. Only about a third of shoppers used to pedal there, with the remainder using motorised vehicles. At these Haats, you won't find any of the usual weights and measures. It is typical for traders to take advantage of indigenous people and farmers who lack formal education through deliberate overcharging and inaccurate price estimation. Government organisations and market authorities have barely made any headway in developing rural primary markets. Just 15% of these 73 marketplaces have been subjected to any sort of oversight. In order to aid in the growth of some wholesale regulated marketplaces across the country, the Central Sector Scheme was launched in 1972–1973. Different types of marketplaces in command zones, commercial crop growing zones, and fruit and vegetable terminal markets are now included in this plan as well.

### **Advantages of haats**

1. Convenience: Haats is comparable to big-box retailers where the benefit is a one-stop shopping experience. Haats, which provide customers things of their choice at reasonable prices, appear every week.

2. Availability: One can buy household items, clothing, durables, jewellery, animals, machinery, etc. at this market.
3. Attractive: Haats are a popular destination for people looking to acquire used durable goods and for those who prefer bartering. The people and the weeklong hardworking country inhabitants are drawn in by the freshness of the fruit, buying in quantity for a week, and the negotiating edge.

### **Tribal Haata**

In the Tibal district, haats serve as more than just a location to buy and sell goods; they also serve as a forum for rural residents to interact and exchange opinions, ideas, and information about their individual communities. To get to these haats, villagers must journey for many kilometres. These haats nevertheless preserve their distinctiveness in the age of modern communication devices since the majority of the distant locations where they are held are not yet connected to the telecommunications network.

The earthy, typical of rural life goods include rice, vegetables, tobacco, other forest products, tribal jewellery, brooms made of wild grass, and a few manufactured goods. "A haat is more than just a venue for selling or shopping. It offers opportunities for social interaction and recreation. The tribal members here communicate about family, weddings, and festivities. It is, in essence, a gathering place for the exchange of news and opinions. The heart of tribal life is the haat. In these haats, customers can enjoy the local cuisine.

Foreign visitors adore the alcohol and forest products. Tribal women dressed in their native garb bring colour to the crowd, and the entire haat has a joyful appearance. "*I bring my produce to the haat every week to sell it*". Small farmers like myself are unable to travel to urban regions to market our goods, thus the haat is our best alternative. A farmer selling vegetables at the Kumuliput haat, Kamulu Saunta, added, "*We could also buy products of our needs at the haat*".

Each week, the area accommodates roughly 200 haats. While the Ramagiri and Boipariguda haats are well-known for their rare forest products, foreign tourists are particularly drawn to the Onkadeli haat because it attracts ladies from the prehistoric Bonda tribe. The Pottangi block's Kunduli haat is well known for its vegetable trading. Truckloads of vegetables are removed from the haat every Friday by dealers from Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

"*Haat is a site where you can find a range of goods to purchase, and that, too, at a lower cost*". Everything is on exhibit at a haat, from vegetables to groceries to clothing, home goods, shoes, and watches to candies and snacks, according to Sanjay Pani, a buyer at Kumuliput haat. The Tuesday cattle market known as the Jeypore haat is well-known. If you enjoy music, the haat in Kakrigumma might be the best place for you to shop because there are so many different types of traditional drums and other musical instruments from many tribal groups to choose from. The markets incorporate some entertainment into their trading.

Foods like mudhi, muan, chuda muan, gaja, and gululla shouldn't be missed because they are so delicious, homemade, and fresh. Regular construction projects are done to improve the haats' infrastructure. These include drinking water amenities, but the vendors also have permanent concrete verandahs where they can advertise their goods. Although only a few haats in Odisha have been documented, attempts are being made to record all of the district's known haats.

### **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) Analysis of the Rural Haats in Odisha**

The local markets, commonly known as haats, have played a substantial part in fostering the economic growth and development of the state of Odisha. Hence, it is imperative to underscore the merits and demerits of the local haats in addition to their potential advantages and challenges. This would enable the relevant authorities to undertake supplementary measures aimed at fortifying the local haats of Odisha. The following section presents an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) associated with the haats Table 1.

<b>Table 1</b> <b>ANALYSIS OF THE STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS (SWOT)</b> <b>ASSOCIATED WITH THE HAATS</b>	
<b>Strengths:</b>	<p>Many different kinds of people from many kinds of different kinds of places have developed strong sentimental ties to their neighbourhood haats. The fact that thousands of people show up to each haat is the haats' primary strength. Thus, local haats serve as hubs for far-flung communities. Haats like these have been crucial in fostering peaceful coexistence between people of various backgrounds.</p> <p>The local haats play a crucial role in the distribution of both indigenous and imported items. Unlike traditional marketplaces, vendors in haats can set up shop whenever they're ready. Every booth has a steady stream of customers. Therefore, a substantial amount of sales money is made in a short period of time.</p> <p>Cash has replaced the barter system as the primary method of payment in the local haats for the sale and purchase of goods such as vegetables, tribal products, rural products, rice, pulses, chilli, etc.</p> <p>Shoppers in haats spend a lot of money on necessities and luxuries on a weekly basis, and even more on special occasions like family gatherings.</p> <p>The traders/sellers and agents of the Mahajans spend heavily in the haats in the hopes of earning a good return based on the volume of business they generate. In addition, there are lots of small businesses that can get going with almost no capital.</p> <p>Betel nuts, betel leaves, cashew nuts, chilli peppers, jackfruits, oranges, tapioca, arum, ginger, turmeric, squash, drumsticks, pumpkins, maize, jute, sasamum, and livestock are just some of the local agricultural items that can be found in abundance at the markets.</p>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<p>In most cases, local haats lack even the most fundamental of services, such as market sheds, potable water supplies, restrooms, paved parking lots, and areas for shouting sales. Temporary structures built of bamboo and thatch predominates among the haat's stalls, which are poorly organised.</p> <p>The local haats are hubs for undesirable pursuits including gambling and the sale of counterfeit goods. As a result, there needs to be law and order to prevent misbehaviour.</p> <p>The District Council's haat auctions and bids lack the necessary openness. Members of the MDCs' immediate families, extended families, and election campaign staff tend to dominate the haats.</p> <p>The undesired activities of traders are not brought under administrative control since there is no regular system of inspecting licences of the dealers or monitoring the sale of illegal fake products brought by the traders.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<p>Local haats are widely spread throughout Odisha. They are offering appropriate venues to traders from nearby states like Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, and Jharkhanda in addition to the local farmers and farmers' market vendors in the area. There are numerous opportunities for development organisations like the District Rural Development Authority, tribal development organisations, SHGs, and NGOs to teach farmers how to create micro businesses in the area.</p> <p>Through the local haat network connection with other states and bordering countries like Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric), there is potential for exports of diverse agricultural products. There is opportunity to set up storage facilities for sellers to reduce their costs and risk of carrying the goods because there is constant demand for certain a product like pumpkin, squash, betel nut, betel leaf, cashew nut, ginger, turmeric, jackfruits, arum, tapioca, banana, pineapple, and oranges in the neighbourhood haats. Participants in the neighbourhood haats may be encouraged to learn about government initiatives, programmes, and issues pertaining to banking, politics, medicine, children's rights, and women's rights. Members of Self Help Groups supported by the government</p>

	of Odisha may use these haats as a marketing hub for selling their goods.
<b>Threats</b>	If local haats aren't modernised to account for environmental changes, they risk being supplanted by newer, more imaginative marketing institutions. Shopping habits are changing, and competition is heating up in the haats. As a result, the sales of potentially lucrative locally made handloom products made by local merchants have been devastated by the arrival of mill-produced cloth into the local haats. Young people in the area are losing interest in traditional fields as a result of altering public sentiment. Their attention has switched to the government sector because of the greater stability of government jobs. If locals aren't inspired to seek out ways to make money, social unrest could result.

## FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

1. Availability of local agricultural products and transaction on cash basis in the haat bazaar are reckoned as major strength by the respondents. The haats also attract diverse ethnic groups.
2. Lack of transparency in the auction process and lack of practice of issuing receipts to the sellers in return of participation fees was rated as a major weakness.
3. The study found there is enough scope for developmental agencies like National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), District Rural Development Authority (DRDA) and Non-Governmental Agencies (NGOs), Self Help Group (SHG) to upgrade the local haat system (Thakur, 1997; Wanmali, 1981).
4. There is also a sustainable business scope along with opportunity for profit with the engagement in haats. The young generation can be enthused with the haat legacy with encouragement along with support by the authority in this regard
5. Government should provide the essential infrastructure based facilities for the seller and buyers for the local haats as well as it should take initiative to provide one day AHAAR meal @ Rs.5.00 for their necessities and motivation. Timely supply of PHE drinking water and organised toilet facilities in the haats also needs to be taken care of.
6. There is no uniform pattern of organisational and management set-up of the local haats in Odisha. The local autonomous administrative body is the controlling authority of these local haats including collection of revenue through imposition of taxes. However, there is no price control mechanism on the produce that is sold in the local haats. Adequate care should be taken in this regard.
7. The farm produce of the sellers is generally sold without any grading. The agents use to take advantage of the situation by paying lower price for good quality crops/produce. As such, the farmers need to be trained for grading of the produce and maintain quality to fetch a better price.
8. Government should create a web portal for local haats for their functionaries and management and marketing.

## CONCLUSION

Farmers provide the majority of the world's food supply and engage in the world's oldest occupation. Even if there has been significant development in other areas, agriculture remains the backbone of the human economy. Food security and poverty alleviation in rural regions aren't the only reasons why a thriving agricultural sector is vital to a thriving economy. In addition, the expansion of the agricultural sector, which generates demand for goods and services and a



market for farm products, is essential to the continued expansion of the secondary and tertiary sectors. These statements are even more accurate when applied to states like Odisha, where approximately 60% of the population relies on agriculture and related industries for financial support. The state's agriculture sector contributes to poverty reduction and the long-term health of the economy. However, a problem has recently arisen in the industry. Food security, availability, and accessibility have all improved thanks to agricultural development efforts, but the country still faces a daunting agrarian issue. A village haat is a public market where people from the surrounding community can come together to buy and sell goods. In order to market their grains, vegetables, and other locally produced goods, small and marginal farmers, self-help groups, and shops use it. Several factors have been taken into account in order to comprehend the haats' market mechanism: the haats' inception, distribution across districts, proximity to district headquarters, operations, market amenities, a wide variety of commodities traded, and the prevalence of digital transactions. The demographics of the agents, their experiences, the sources of the items, the commissions made by them from the local products, and, lastly, the challenges they encounter have all been explored in order to get insight into the market functionalities of the haats. Policymakers, social reformers, Different countries of the world, corporations, Agricultural universities, Business Institutions, Govt. Departments and other research and developmental Organisations are just some of the groups who stand to benefit greatly from this study, whether by using its findings to launch new studies in this field or by putting them into practise immediately. The results of this research could inform policymakers' decisions about how to increase revenue and improve infrastructure at periodic haats. In addition, it may aid Governments in developing and implementing individualised policies and strategies to reduce the sale of identical goods and services in rural haats, thereby enhancing rural people's quality of life.

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