

DELIMITATION OF COMMERCIAL CENTRES : A CASE STUDY OF SRINAGAR CITY

ABDUL KAYOOM KHAN, Srinagar

ABSTRACT : The paper reviews the techniques hitherto followed in delineating commercial areas and shopping centres. Break in continuity and the density of shops are adopted as valid criteria for the demarcating of commercial streets. Usually a frequency of less than 25 shops per 1000 feet of frontage marks the extremity of the shopping street.

INTRODUCTION

The market centres are always in the central parts of the cities where goods are exchanged. At one time the farmers and craftsmen brought their products and bartered them in open places. Before the industrial revolution, traders and merchants gathered in such market centres or along the main streets of a town, where their stalls and shops were accessible to the local people. Such market centres continue to exist in the rural areas of India as they are convenient meeting places for the traders and the local people. Some times, they are held periodically, some of them specialising in transactions of particular goods. Such markets are known as "Hats". Quite often towns take their origin at important road crossings and points of exchange. They attract large number of traders and grow rapidly in importance as the population increases. Towns, road junctions and market places, form the nucleus of main business today.

Many changes came with the industrial revolution in the 18th century. The craftsmen who produced goods sold them not to the consumers, but to the middlemen, who acted as wholesalers and retailers. With the growth of population supply and demand both increased and besides these the co-operative stores and the multiple shops emerged. In areas of high density, corner shops came into existence. Mixed residential colonies allowed establishment of corner shops and their dispersal. They sold a wide variety of goods of daily use to the people of neighbourhood. At the same time new shops were added to the establishment shopping centres of the main roads and assumed linear former or concentrated core areas of the junction of main roads.

In planned urban centres, the shops were grouped together in sites easily accessible from all parts of the neighbourhoods. The enhanced traffic flow in the cities greatly influences the design and location of shopping centres. They seek traffic-free localities and adequate parking space.

Specialist traders tend to concentrate only in the larger centres because their limited clientele needs larger population to support them. Small business frequently locate on the fringe of main shopping areas, where they can operate with lower overheads because of lower rental value of the site.

In the Srinagar city, the commercial activities multiplied several times in the last few decades, partly because the city is the capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and partly because its central location enables it to serve the vast valley region. It has an efficient network of transport and communication connecting it with different parts of the Kashmir valley.

The commercial activities of Srinagar have developed in phases: The unplanned growth of the city has led to the haphazard development of the city settlement area and the whole town has lost its physical coherence. The growth and development of shopping areas of Srinagar have taken the form of strip development along one or both sides of the roads with intermittent breaks. Not a single market of Srinagar had been planned properly, before the development of the Lal Chowk area.

Till recently, Nowhatta, Zaina Kadal and Haba-Kadal were the main shopping centres. The Lal Chowk and Government Central Market are the products of recent commercial development.

At present the concentration of commercial activities is found on about all major roads up to Soura and Hazratbal. On Srinagar - Ganderbal and Ghulam Mohd Ashai roads on the north, up to Chhanapura and Pantha Chowk on the Srinagar - Chanapura and Srinagar - Jammu roads (N.H.I A), on the south and south-east on the Baramulla road upto Parimpura fruitmandi on the west and on the Boulevard in the east.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Market Geography carries the retail interest of Geographers into practice within the metropolitan areas in the service of private business enterprises (B.J.L. Berry 1967). The preliminary task before the market Geographers is to demonstrate and delimit the different market centres existing within the city. Previous researchers have relied generally, upon self perception and extensive field work (B. J. Garner 1966). However, delimitation of market centre should be done scientifically and uniformity must be maintained in this task. Generally speaking the early studies of the central places and market centre systems seem to have avoided this. The 1961 census of distribution (British) defined the limit of a central shopping area as the point where the ratio of shops to all properties fell below one in three (F. A. Leeming 1959).

Loams describes it as a fairly liberal definition (G. M. Loam, 1964). Davis used a slightly broader definition. He considered a shop having been included in a centre if it lay within a distance equal to the frontage of four terraced houses (W.K.D. Davis 1967). According to a precise definition it is a contiguous group of retail stores, usually, more than four or five in number, having at least two kinds of retail shops (E. Schell, 1964).

All the above definitions have their limitations. Not one of them is applicable to commercial ribbons. Ribbon development needs to be systematically surveyed. Similarly major shopping streets are often separated from one another by retail establishments and no definition suits such situations.

Shopping centres may also be delimited on the basis of customer movement. Brennan delimited the centre of Wolverhampton at the point where the shops did not perform central functions as determined by the customer origin (T.

Brennan, 1948). He had access to data on customer registration. Such data are not available here. Carol, who used an easy and subjective procedure to delimit the C.B.D. of Zurich, advocated theoretically, an enquiry into the individual service area of every establishments (H. Carol, 1960).

Hayes and Schull used pedestrian count for delimiting both the periphery, outer and inner retail cores of Greensboro in north Carolina (C. R. Hayes and N. W. Schull, 1965). This method seems to be less satisfactory, equal, arbitrary is the delimitations of shopping centres on maps of land value by the subjective choice of minimum value as has been done by (H. M. Mayer, 1942). Garner has overcome this by arranging profiles of landscape, but here the problem of subjective judgement of threshold values remain in existence (B.J. Garner, 1966).

Any technique of delimiting a commercial centre or its core will depend on the circumstances of its use. It is not proper to say any method is appropriate without probing the specific conditions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

It is the purpose of this study to identify and study the various market centres of the Srinagar city. These objectives of the study may be put in question form as follows :

1. What should be the criteria for the identification of the retail nucleations of the city of Srinagar?
2. What is the distributional character of the different markets of the city of Srinagar?

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

A major difficulty faced by the present study is that the published material is meagre. The work was made doubly difficult because of

general reluctance of the tax paying shopkeepers to disclose the size of their turnover, cost and profits. They gave vague replies of the questions on the consumer area served by them. Unlike western countries no census of shops or retail trade has been conducted by the local authorities of Srinagar. These handicaps have to be surmounted by the suitable modification of the research techniques and adoption of methods which suit local conditions.

SOURCES OF DATA

An invaluable prelude to all research is intensive review of the past literature which provides the background information on the subject. This is supplemented by the field survey conducted by the author in July 1987 which forms the basis for the identification of retail nucleations. The authors traversed all the major roads of Srinagar city on foot. The yield data were computed and plotted on a large scale map obtained from the town planning wing of Srinagar development authority. The density and clustering of the shops on the map and the field observations helped in identifying the retail nucleations.

THE STUDY AREA

Srinagar is the Chief town and the capital of Jammu and Kashmir State. It has settled on both the banks of the river Jhelum, extending from 34° 0' to 34° 14' north latitudes and 74° 43' to 74° 52' east longitude at an elevation of 5250 feet above the mean sea level.

Srinagar is at the foot of the Zabarwan and Takth-i-Suleman hills along the river Jhelum and beside the Dal lake which combine to give it an extremely pleasant and charming situation. The outer boundary of Srinagar city is roughly 109.43 kilometres long. The town has an area of 157 square km. This includes area under the cantonment and water bodies.

The city of Srinagar as a tourist spot has acquired considerable commercial importance. With rapid growth of population it has witnessed during the last three decades, the city has experienced unprecedented expansion in its commercial activities.

Demarcation of commercial streets. In the present study, the boundaries of the retail centres have been drawn mainly on the basis of the distribution of shops, their compactness, and breaks in the continuity such as presence of river bridges, the presence of open spaces, and dominance of non-commercial landuse as observed in course of the field work. At a few places, the market centres have been demarcated simply on the basis of the nomenclature of the markets. Though there is an apparent continuity of shops along one road, it is actually two markets merging in a ribbon development, with two separate nuclei, in which there is a marked difference in their functional character as well as in the density of shops at their mutual junction. These two different markets take the name of the respective roads, streets or *mohallas*. Unlike other cities and towns of India, Srinagar does not have street hawkers. However, a few shops are found on the footpaths in Lal Chowk, Batmaloo and Nowhatta. These are mainly fruit, fur and leather goods garment shops. Neither their number nor their type is fixed. Obviously, they are temporary in character and have been omitted from the present study.

Every permanent shop whether it is a *pucca*, a *kutchi* building or a stall or is located on the ground, first, second or third floor has been taken as one unit. In case of shops selling a variety of articles, the dominant item (article) has been taken to determine their type. After collecting the relevant information from the field, the retail establishments were plotted on a large scale road map of Srinagar city using separate symbols for their types.

While making the use of break in the continuity of shops as a basis for delimiting the boundary of the market centres a linear scale has been fixed. Approximately fifty shops or more per thousand feet of street frontage has been taken as the limiting factor for identifying individual market centres. It is found that the number of shops rises towards the market centre but falls to around 25 shops or less per thousand feet of frontage towards the margin or the boundary between two markets. In most cases this transition is most sharp and clearly discernible. At the same time, there is a marked change in the functional character of shops, (lower order functions) and landuse (non-commercial landuse is predominating). Even in areas of ribbon development, sharp change in number and functions is obvious and cannot be missed. The question, of course, does not arise in the case of smaller and newer markets which constitute a different commercial nucleus. In this way 42 market centres have been identified within the boundary of the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (Fig. 1 and Table 1).

The greatest concentrations of shops are in Zaina kadal, Habakadal and Lal Chowk areas. The arrangements of shops on the different projecting roads presents a picture of radiating ribbons which combine to form a clear nucleus. Such nuclei are in Batmaloo, Chota Bazar, Karannagar, Qamarwari, Safa kadal, Rajouri Kadal, Nowakadal, Zainakadal, Bohri kadal, Nowhatta, Zadibal, Khanyar Chowk, Khyam Chowk, Barbar Shah, Lal Chowk and Jawahar Nagar.

Spatial Structure of Shopping Centres. Most of the shopping centres are formed in the form of strips and ribbons along the main roads of the city. In a few areas, the ribbons are very long and continue up to the next intersections and parallel roads of the same area. Such continuity is observed along the Habakadal,

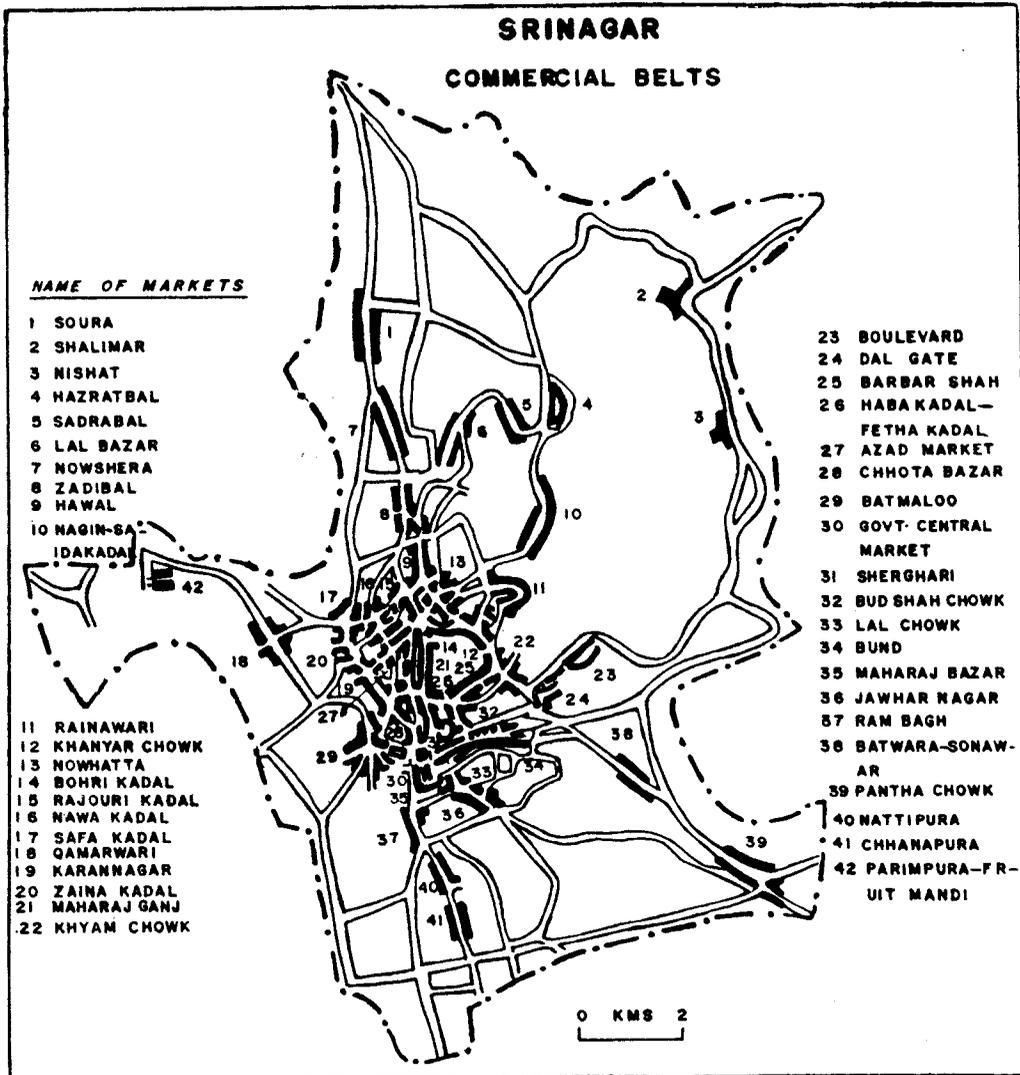


Fig. 1

Table 1**MARKET CENTRES IDENTIFIED IN SRINAGAR**

S. No.	Name of the Market	No. of establishments	Types of establishments	%age
01	Lal Chowk	1414	51	11.77
02	Bund	82	16	0.69
03	Bud Shah Chowk	805	47	6.70
04	Sher Ghari	248	20	2.07
05	Maharaj Bazar	1066	50	8.87
06	Govt. Central Market	180	5	1.09
07	Nowhatta	649	44	5.40
08	Bohri Kadal	344	35	2.87
09	Maharaj Ganj	474	33	3.94
10	Zaina Kadal	433	41	3.60
11	Rajouri Kadal	120	27	1.00
12	Habakadal Fetha Kadal	794	43	6.60
13	Azad Market	250	31	2.08
14	Chota Bazar	353	39	2.93
15	Jawhar Nagar	386	37	3.21
16	Rainawari	329	36	2.73
17	Karan Nagar	326	41	2.71
18	Nawa Kadal	278	32	2.31
19	Batmaloo	259	32	2.16
20	Khanyar Chowk	244	33	2.02
21	Dal Gate	222	31	1.84
22	Khyam Chowk	221	31	1.83
23	Chhanapura	211	31	1.76
24	Safa kadal	202	34	1.64
25	Hazratbal	198	25	1.64
26	Qamarwari	197	32	1.63
27	Barbar Shah	194	30	1.61
28	Pantha Chowk	179	21	1.49
29	Ram Bagh	150	28	1.24
30	Hawal	132	28	1.10
31	Natti Pura	127	25	1.05
32	Nagin-Saidakadal	122	21	1.01

33	Hatwara-Sonwar	117	23	0.98
34	Lal Bazar	83	17	0.70
35	Zadibal	81	20	0.68
36	Nowsher	70	21	0.64
37	Soura	77	21	0.64
38	Sadrabal	36	08	0.30
39	Boulevard	231	20	1.92
40	Parimpura-Fruit Mandi	95	01	0.80
41	Shalimar	49	06	0.40
42	Nishat	36	04	0.30
Total		12022	53	100

Source : Field work

Fetha kadal, Nalamar and certain other arterial roads. The identified centres of these areas form large clusters. They appear to be parts of each other and present a picture of one shopping centre; but locally they have different nomenclature and hence the designation of shopping centres in these areas is based on local names (Fig. 1).

The central, north-central, south-central and eastern parts of Srinagar are the important commercial areas of the city. The northern part includes, Soura, Nowshera, Zadibal, Nagin - Saidakadal, Lal Bazar, Sadrabal, Hazratbal, Nishat, and Shalimar markets which contain 6.30 per cent of the total number of shops of the city. The north-central part includes Hawal, Nowhatta, Rainawari, Khanyar, Chowk, Bohri Kadal, Maharaj-Ganj, Zainakadal, Safakadal and contain 26.66 per cent of the total number of shops of Srinagar city. The central part shares 17.76 per cent of the shopping units. This includes Habakadal, Fethakadal, Azad Market, Chota Bazar, Barbar Shah, Khyam Chowk and Karan Nagar.

The south-central part has 36.56 percent of the total number of the shops of Srinagar. It includes Lal Chowk, Bund, Budshah Chowk,

Sher Ghari, Maharaj Bazar, Govt. Central market, Batmaloo and Jawahar Nagar.

The southern eastern and western parts of the city contains 6.32, 3.76 and 2.43 per cent of the total number of the shops of the city respectively.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is observed that there are in all 12022 establishments in the above mentioned 42 commercial centres of Srinagar. The scattered shops and establishments situated on different roads and *mohallas* do not form any belt or nuclei. These have been by the present study. The maximum concentration of commercial activities is found in the north-central, central and south central parts of the Srinagar city. It may be noted that relating is not fully developed in the extreme southern, western and northern parts of the city because of lower density of population and lower purchasing power. With the expansion of the city on the west and south-west, new colonies are developing. These colonies may attract the shopkeepers and the present situation may change. New commercial development is already taking place at Rajbagh, Shivpora, baghat-i-

Barzalla, Rawalpura and Bemina areas of the city.

P.S. The spatial structure of retailing units has, obviously, a degree of permanance, but the volume of retailing is likely to have undergone a drastic negative change as a result of the decline in Tarrism, following disturbed conditions in Srinagar during the last few years.

REFERENCES

- Berry, B.J.L. (1967). *Geography of Market Centres and Retail Distribution*. Prentice Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., USA. p. 125.
- Bonhert, J.E. and Mattingly, P.F. (1964). Delimitation of C.B.D. through time. *Economic Geography*, Vol. 40, pp. 337-47.
- Brennan, T. (1948). Wolverhampton : Social and Industrial Survey, 1945-46. London. pp. 110-14.
- Carol, H. (1960). The Hierarchy of Central functions within city. Lund, Studies in Geography. *Proceedings of IGU Symposium in Urban Geography*, Lund. The Royal University of Lund, Sweden. Department of Geography. p. 565.
- Davis, W.K.D. (1967). Centrality and central place Hierarchy. *Urban studies 4*, pp. 61-79.
- Garner, B.J. (1966). *The internal sturcture of retail nucleations*, Department of Geography. North-Western University. Evanston Illinois p. 29.
- Hayes, C.R. and Schull, N.W. (1965). Greensobore Retail Core Analysis. *Greens above*, N.C.
- Khan, Abdul Qayoom (1991). Functions and Hierarchy of Markets in Srinagar city. *Unpublished Ph.D. thesis*, Department of Geography. Patna University, Patna, Bihar (India).
- Leeming, F.A. (1959). An experimental survey of retail shopping and service facilities in part of north Lees. *Translation and paper on the Institute of British Geographers*, 26, p. 140.
- Loam, G.M. (1964). Retail trading centres in the Midlands. *Journal of the town planning institute*, 50, pp. 104-9.
- Mattingly, P.F. (1964). Delimitations and movements of C.B.D. Boundaries through time. The Harrisburg example. *Professional Geographers*, 16, pp. 9-13.
- Mayer, H.M. (1942). Pattern and recent trends of Chicago outlaying business. *Journal of Land an public utility Economics*, 18, pp. 4-16.
- Murphy, R.E. and Vance, J.E.J. (1954). Delimiting the C.B.D. *Economic Geography*, 30, pp. 89-222.
- Schell, E. (1964). *Change in Bustons, Retail Landscape : A Geographical Studies of fourteen years Change in retail distribution pattern*, New York. p. 14.

ADDRESS OF THE AUTHOR

Abdul Kayoom Khan,
 Department of Geography,
 Kashmir University,
 Srinagar - 190006.