



RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES: "A MYTH OR MIRAGE"- Evidence from Rural Markets in Eastern Sri Lanka

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1. Introduction

Growing recognition that rural and urban areas- increasingly interconnected.

"Rural-Urban linkages"- flow of capital, people and goods (trade) between rural and urban areas (Galle,1992).

Rural markets in Sri Lanka facilitate the interaction between Producers and Consumers to dispose farm products and act as service centers.

Rural market study - conducted in Eastern Province,Sri Lanka

Aim: To ascertain the geographical coverage and their links with urban markets/centers.

To verify von Thunen's Spatial Land Use and service centers theory.

Question: Are rural & urban markets linked in Eastern Sri Lanka??

Markets coverage - geographical area- average radius

- 6 kms and 6 villages -Ampara District
- 4 kms and 5 villages -Batticaloa District.

Many Periodic rural markets had linkages within themselves- traders moving to closeby markets.

Only rural markets close to urban areas had links with urban centres.

Rural farm products were sparsely moving to outside urban centres.

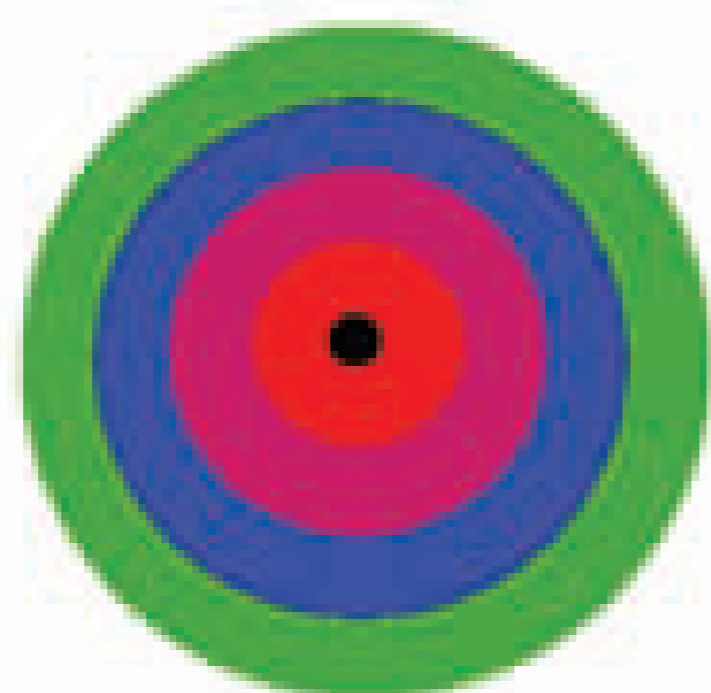
Products from other district urban markets were transported to rural markets.

Reason- weak transport facilities in rural areas and poor link roads with rural market places and urban centers.

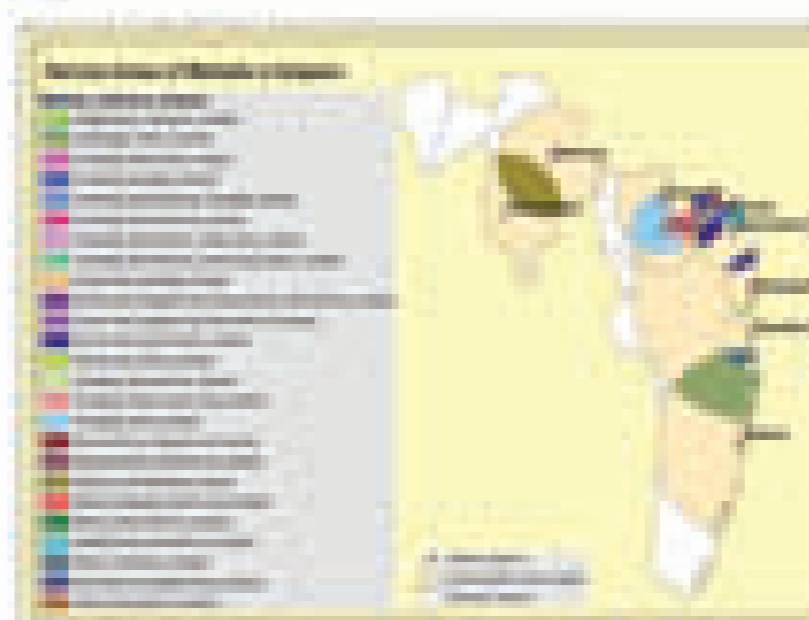
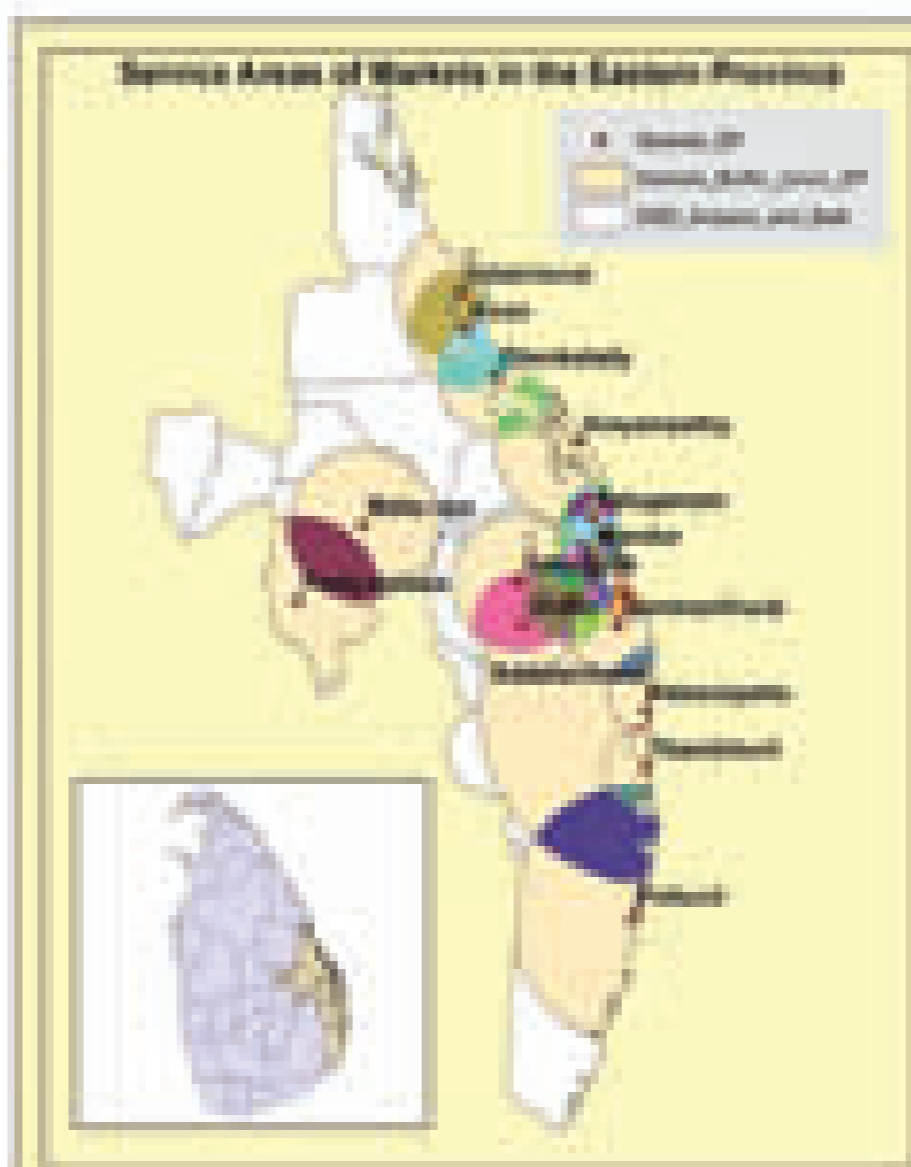
Most rural markets operating periodically -causal agent for lack of strong rural-urban linkages.

Von Thunen Model

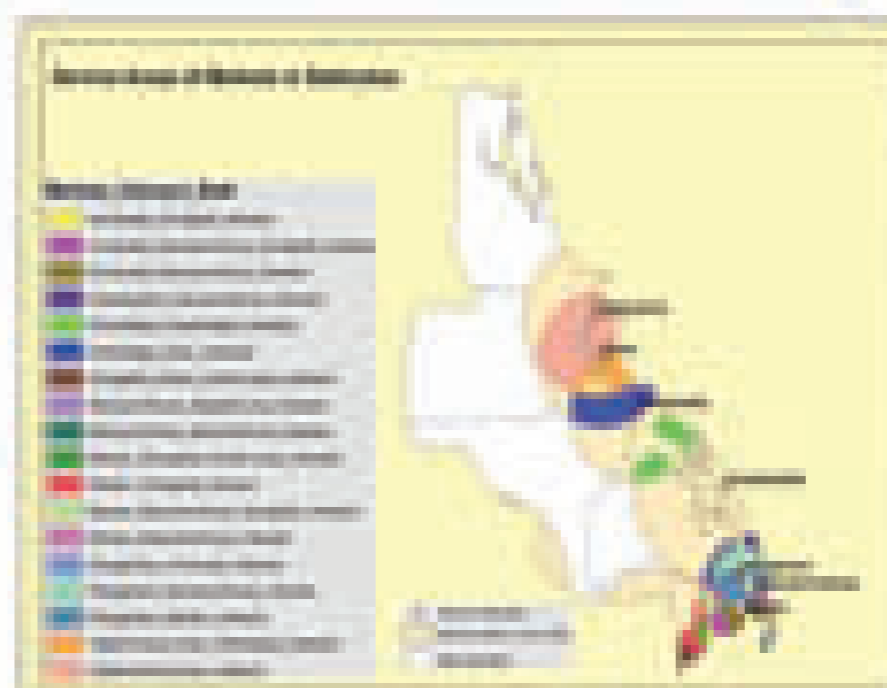
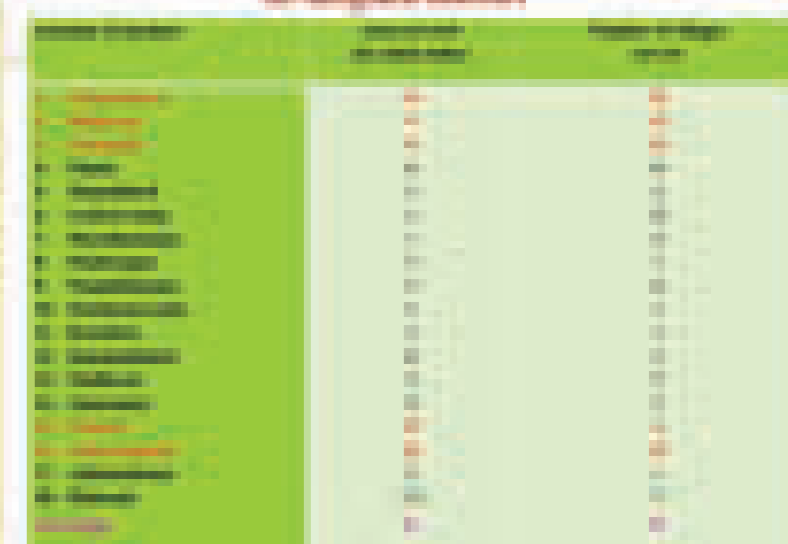
1. Proposed in 1826 by German farmer Johann Heinrich von Thunen - farmer and economist
2. Helps explain the importance of proximity to market in the choice of crops and animals on commercial farms



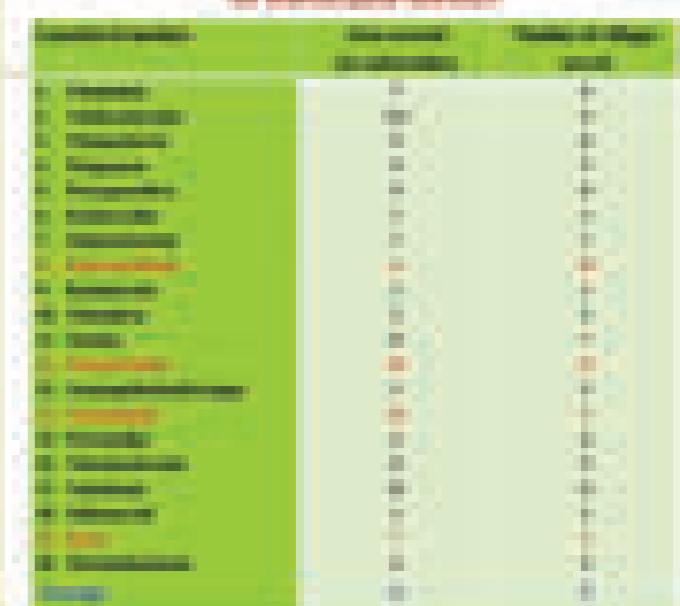
Central City
Intensive Farming/Dairying
Forest
Extensive Field Crops
Ranching/Animal Products



Area and number of villages covered by rural markets in Ampara District



Area and number of villages covered by rural markets in Batticaloa District



2. Study Design

Market survey conducted - Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. Randomly selected 30 rural markets, both Periodic & Non-Periodic markets, were studied in Ampara & Batticaloa districts.

GIS ARC-Info software was used to ascertain & map coverage of rural markets.

3. Results

Types of Rural Markets identified: Periodic & Non-Periodic markets

Periodic markets (operate weekly) -85.5% Ampara District & 28% Batticaloa District

Rural markets act as 'central places'/ Service Centers in both districts - Producers & Consumers

Conclusions

Evidence of some degree of links among rural markets (Periodic)
No strong evidence for von Thunen theory of spatial land use.