

Capturing Diversities of KR Market

A workshop facilitated by Mamta Sagar

Stephen G Samuel



Pick pocket in the market



This is an activity we did on the first day of our course (6th March).

We were told to think of some words that we thought about as soon as we heard the word market. I came up with the words cash, goods, crowded, trade, barter, bargain, trend, popular, pick pocket, groceries, sale, offers, shopping and transportation.

After that we made a story using any 5 words that were on our list that related to market in some way.

Pick Pocket in the Market- A Story about an unfortunate event

Ram had been looking forward to his trip to the market for days. He had been saving up his cash to treat himself to something nice, and he was excited to finally have a chance to go shopping. As he made his way through the crowded market, he couldn't help but feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of people and stalls around him.

Finally, he spotted an ice-cream stall and decided to treat himself to a chocolate ice-cream. He fished out his wallet, which contained all of his savings, and handed over the money to the vendor. As he was about to take his first bite, he felt a sudden jolt and realized that someone had bumped into him. He instinctively reached for his wallet, but it was gone.

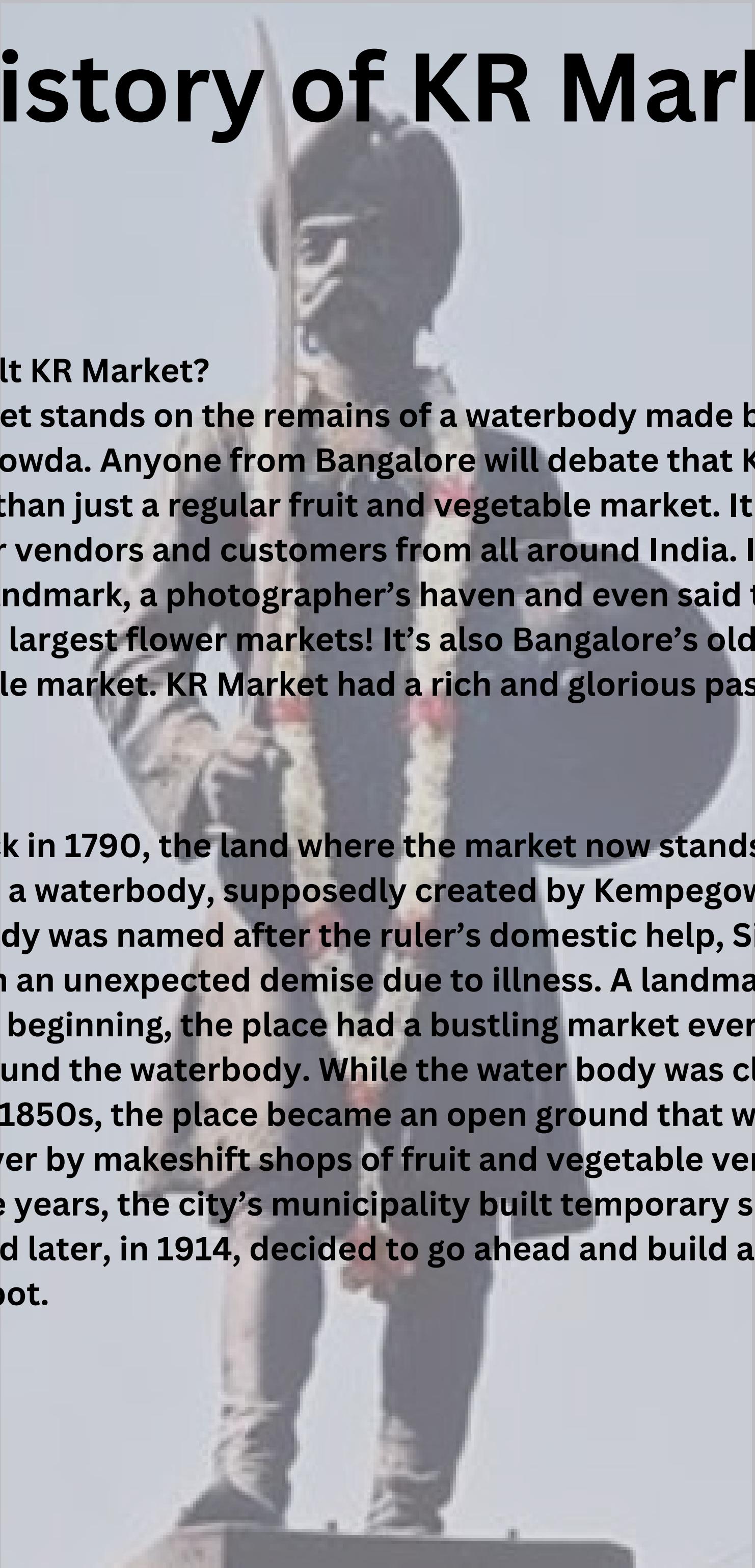
Panicked, Ram started to run after the pickpocket, who was just a small kid. The pickpocket was quick, and Ram struggled to keep up. As he chased the boy through the market, he noticed a nearby cycle and decided to use it to catch up.

The person who owned the cycle was furious and cursed in Hindi “Hey! That cycle is punctured.” Almost instantaneously, the air went out of the wheels, and he was thrown off the cycle. He landed on top of the pickpocket, who was still clinging onto his wallet. “Next time I will make sure not to use a cycle as my mode of transportation”, Ram muttered.

Ram demanded that the pickpocket hand over the wallet, but the kid refused to let go. Desperate to get his money back, Ram asked the pickpocket what he wanted in exchange for the wallet. The pickpocket thought for a moment and then replied, "I really like your shirt and glasses." Without hesitating, Ram handed over his shirt and glasses and walked into a nearby clothes shop, muttering to himself about the absurdity of the situation.

As he browsed through the shop, Ram couldn't help but feel frustrated and angry. He never thought that he would be forced to use the barter system again, but here he was, trading his clothes for his own wallet. Despite everything, however, he couldn't help but feel a small sense of admiration for the pickpocket's cunning and resourcefulness. He knew that he would have to be more careful in the future if he wanted to avoid being robbed again.

History of KR Market



Who built KR Market?

KR Market stands on the remains of a waterbody made by Kempegowda. Anyone from Bangalore will debate that KR Market is more than just a regular fruit and vegetable market. It brings together vendors and customers from all around India. It's an iconic landmark, a photographer's haven and even said to be one of Asia's largest flower markets! It's also Bangalore's oldest wholesale market. KR Market had a rich and glorious past.

Way back in 1790, the land where the market now stands was home to a waterbody, supposedly created by Kempegowda. This waterbody was named after the ruler's domestic help, Siddi, who met with an unexpected demise due to illness. A landmark spot since its beginning, the place had a bustling market every week, held around the water body. While the water body was closed in the late 1850s, the place became an open ground that was soon taken over by makeshift shops of fruit and vegetable vendors. Over the years, the city's municipality built temporary sheds for them and later, in 1914, decided to go ahead and build a market at the spot.

History of KR Market

Inspired by the architectural design of Calcutta's Sir Stuart Hogg Market (which is now New Market), the structure for KR Market was completed in 1921, a year or so after the construction began. It was a beautiful red colour structure with a row of large shops for vendors, a park for visitors, a water fountain with a sculpture of a woman imported from London in the middle and a bicycle stand with a fee of three paise.

The market even had an annual show to award the best fruits, veggies and flowers produced, with the Maharaja himself distributing prizes for some shows. During the 1990s, the place underwent renovation, destroying most of the heritage structure and leaving just the front and rear portions, which is what we see today.

Although it may not enjoy the kind of beauty or activity as it did previously, the marketplace will always be among the city's most iconic spots.

Flower vendors in KR Market



Food vendors in KR Market





IRON MERCHANT

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Hamid interviewed by Stephen

Interviewer: Hi, could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your shop and its history in KR Market?

Shop Keeper: Hi, my name is Hamid, and I am the owner of this shop which sells steel items like utensils in KR Market. We have been here for over 40 years and have been serving customers from all over.

Interviewer: That's great. Could you tell us about your personal life and how you got into this business?

Shop Keeper: I was born and raised in Bangalore. My father started this shop in the 1980s. He had experience in the steel industry. He taught me everything I know about steel and business. After I dropped out of college I came here and helped my father run the shop. I eventually took over the shop for my father in 1998. I work from 9 in the morning until 9 in the night.

Interviewer: Did you say you dropped out of college? Any reason why?

Shop keeper: Well, that's a difficult subject to talk about. I took up a 4-year B Com course, but in the middle of my second year my grades were dropping. I doubted whether I would pass my second year and I was spending a hefty amount on the tuition, so I decided to drop out. So, I came and helped my father with his shop. Occasionally I wonder what would have happened if I did complete my education.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Could you tell us a little about your interaction with the market and the community over the years?

Shop Keeper: Sure. I have been coming to KR Market since I was a child and have seen it grow and change over the years. It has always been a vibrant and bustling place, with a great sense of community. I have made many friends here over the years, and it has been a pleasure to serve the people of Bangalore with quality steel utensils at affordable prices.

Interviewer: That's great to hear. What sets your shop apart from others in the market?

Shop Keeper: Well, we pride ourselves on our quality products and customer service. We source our steel from trusted suppliers and make sure that the supply is the best quality. We also have a wide variety of products to choose from.

Interviewer: Hi Hamid, thank you for speaking with me today. I wanted to ask you, how has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your life and your business?

Shop Keeper: The pandemic has had a significant impact on both my personal life and my business. Personally, I have had to take extra precautions to keep myself and my family safe, which has meant limiting our movements and social interactions.

As for my business, it has been a difficult time. With lockdowns and restrictions on gatherings, foot traffic in the market has significantly reduced. This has led to a decrease in sales, and as a result, a decrease in income. I was also grateful for the support of my customers who continued to involve with my shop. It was a tough time, but I now business is back in full swing.

Interviewer: I'm glad you're doing well. Finally, what do you see for the future of your shop and the market?

Shop Keeper: We plan to continue serving our customers with the same dedication and passion that we have always had. As for the market, we are excited to see it continue to grow and evolve, and we hope to be a part of it for many years to come.

Flower, Flower from the Flower Market



Rajesh is a flower shop keeper who has been running his shop in KR Market for the past 10 years. Rajesh grew up in a small village in Karnataka and received a basic education before moving to Bangalore to pursue a career in the flower industry.

Rajesh's fascination with flowers began at a young age when he used to help his grandmother in her garden. She taught him about the different types of flowers and their meanings, and he fell in love with their beauty and fragrance.

After moving to Bangalore, Rajesh worked for several flower shops before deciding to start his own business. He rented a small space in KR Market and started selling flowers, hoping to make a name for himself in the competitive market.

Running a flower shop in KR Market is no easy feat. Rajesh faces several challenges on a daily basis, including stiff competition, rising rent costs, and a lack of space to store his inventory. However, he perseveres through these challenges, knowing that his passion for flowers and his loyal customer base will keep his business afloat.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant threat to Rajesh's business, as foot traffic in the market decreased significantly. However, he adapted to the situation by offering door to door services and expanding his reach, ensuring that his customers could still access his beautiful blooms despite the pandemic.

Rajesh's interactions with the other shopkeepers in KR Market are always friendly and cordial. He often trades flowers with neighboring shops and takes pride in being a part of the market community. He has even participated in flower arrangement competitions held in the market, showcasing his skills and talent.

Aside from his business, Rajesh is also a devoted family man. He has a wife and two children, and he often brings home beautiful flowers for them to enjoy. His daughter has shown a keen interest in flowers and has even started helping him in the shop on weekends.

In his free time, Rajesh enjoys taking long walks in the city's parks and admiring the beautiful flora that surrounds him. He dreams of one day expanding his business and opening a large flower shop that would be the pride of KR Market. Rajesh's story is one of hard work, passion, and dedication. Despite facing numerous challenges, he has managed to build a successful business and become an integral part of the KR Market community. His love for flowers and his commitment to his customers have earned him a reputation as one of the best flower shopkeepers in the market.

Capturing Diversities of KR Market

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This workshop looks at Creative Writing as a tool to imagine, respond, recreate, document and speak of parallel narratives.

KR Market provides Bengaluru city with supplies that keeps the city going on and hosts hundreds of vendors. The site also provides plots, characters and stories that can lead to the imagining of fictional narratives.

After connecting with one of the vendors from KR Market we had to document her/his engagement with the site. We also came up with fictional narratives. The final product involves a document that captures one of the vendors' engagement with KR Market and a fictional narrative capturing KR Market as a site of enquiry.

