CHAPTER- 3

Growth of Commercial Markets in Guwahati

“The city of Guwahati which is considered as the Gateway to North-East India is gradually becoming the commercial and industrial hub not only for the North East India but also a prospective hub for the entire South East Asian countries which is witnessed in the past few decades. Situated beside the impressively wide and muddy Brahmaputra River, Guwahati is Assam's sleepy capital. Once known as Pragjyotishpura (the Eastern City of Light) and mentioned in Mahabharta, it has long been the most important town in the state. At present, it is the premier centre for marketing of Oil and Tea products, the two most precious industries of the region. There are numerous ancient Hindu temples and churches in and around the town, but its beauty mainly lies in greeneries, hillocks, and the sprawling ground alongside the mighty river Brahmaputra. The name (Guwahati) is a combination of two words: "Guwa" [Google.com] meaning areca nut and "Haat"[Google.com] meaning market. Guwahati is the commercial nerve centre of the North-Eastern region. The city has undergone tremendous changes over the last four decades especially after occurrence of two of the mega events upon the socio-economic life of its citizen’s viz. the construction of the Saraighat Bridge in 1964 and the decision to shift Assam’s capital from Shillong to Guwahati in 1972. Although the city has experienced a tardy growth in its infrastructure, the unabated flow of migration of people across different neighbouring states and countries has put upon it a tremendous pressure on its land and other basic amenities of a civil society. By now it has developed as one of the greatest hub of the educational, commercial and industrial buoyancy of the region requiring extension of facilities for basic human needs. This city has developed markets not only for industrial and commercial goods and services but also for goods which are primary in nature. Different types of primary products are dealt in the daily/ weekly markets of the city which cater to the needs of the more than 2 million populations of the city and within its peripheral area. It is interesting to note that many a daily markets which were the centre of commercial activity once, either had disappeared, renamed or displaced owing to change in significance of places and environment where such markets were originally established. These were the trading points where petty vendors from the hilly areas adjacent to the city as well as from
nearby villages mainly attracted the elite buyers fulfilling their need for traditional and locally produced items.

The city of Guwahati possesses many whole-sale and retail markets at different corners all around the city. Retail markets of agricultural, livestock and aqua product are situated as a cluster market encompassing large areas of different localities. One such market which exist in the city today is the Paltan Bazaar market situated in the central part of the city. Vegetables, fruits, livestock, fish, commercial finished products, etc. are all available in the market at a retail rate. One of the largest wholesale fish market of the whole North-East is situated at Bealpar i.e. by the side of Borsola and Sarusola Beal. Polton or Paltan Bazaar is located in the central part of the city-centre, and is the hub for transportation and hotels industry in Guwahati as the Guwahati railway Station is also located nearby to this market. This market has been in existence since the British period. During the British period, the first official army (sepoy) camp was set up just in and around the present-day Paltan Bazaar, where it used to accommodate an entire ‘platoon of sepoys’. Moreover, a Bazaar was also located just adjacent to this camp, which used to cater to the basic needs of the sepoys, like rice, dal, oil, vegetables and other miscellaneous items. This trading point and its adjoining areas gradually came to be known as ‘Polton Bazaar’ or ‘Paltan Bazaar’ [Sabah Al], where the Indian word ‘Paltan’ seems to have been derived from the English word, ‘platoon’, in essence, implying the ‘platoon of sepoys’ who were housed in this camp. Today, transactions of both primary and secondary market products exceed transactions of several crores daily in which a few thousand of people find their daily livelihood as unorganized sector worker. The establishment of ASTC Head office and the Guwahati Railway Station as next door to the Paltan Bazaar have accentuated the flow of traveling public who constitute an important segment of daily buyers of the market. However, the present day Paltan Bazaar has witnessed the growth of many vices in its adjacent areas where the criminals also find their haven for many anti social activities.

Another leading retail cum wholesale market which has been in existence in guwahati since the British era is the Fancy Bazaar commercial market. Phansi or Fansi Bazaar [Sabah Al] of Guwahati is the hub for retail and wholesale-commercial market for the entire Northeastern region. Earlier during the British period the Britishers used to hang the hardcore criminals in front of a big tree where the Old
Guwahati Central Jail is located. The Fancy Bazaar market also embraces a daily wholesale betel nut market, fruit market and the wholesale markets of onions and potatoes. The market of olden Guwahati which used to be known as the “Sadar Market” [Sabah Al] in the early British period was located in front of Fansi Bazaar ferry ghat which was subsequently shifted to its present-day site i.e. near the jail, where the open hangings of criminals used to take place, conferring the name upon it as ‘Phansi’ or ‘Fansi’ Bazaar, where phansi or fansi implies ‘hanging’. “The present-day name ‘Fancy Bazaar’ is actually a grossly mis-spelt version of the original ‘Phansi’ or ‘Fansi’ Bazaar. In course of time the Fancy Bazaar has grown with almost all the necessary products of daily life with an unique specialty of variety and cost competitiveness. The pattern of business transactions have given rise to other subsidiary occupations like transportations, parking of vehicles, loading and unloading services, packaging, brokerage, etc. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation had built up a modern market on the place where the old vegetable market existed after the latter was gutted by a major fire three decades ago.

Another old retail market which still exists in the city is the Uzan Bazaar Market. Uzan Bazaar is another place of prominence of olden Guwahati. A residential-cum-commercial centre, Uzan Bazaar [Sabah Al] is located in the northern part of the city with the river Brahmaputra flowing alongside it. It happens to be one of the oldest settlements in the city. This market was too incepted during the early British period. Concurrently at that time, there was a Bazaar, known as ‘Chowk Bazaar’ [Sabah Al], located in and around the present-day Latasil Field. Although the Latasil field was a pond and yet with the filling up of the pond with river sand and turning it into a playground in the 19th century and also with the expansion of the ‘Chowk Bazaar’ the site for the market had to be ultimately shifted to the present day site, which in fact was the upper stream of the Brahmaputra. Consequently, it came to be known as Uzan Bazaar; the word ‘upper’ implying ujani or uzan in Assamese. The term Uzan Bazaar also owes its origin to the famous Naojan canal of the Brahmaputra. One of the reasons for its change in name is that the very market was located near the periphery of the canal, it so happened that the word ‘Naojan’ got changed to ‘Uzan’ and subsequently to ‘Uzan Bazaar’ by mere slip of tongue with vigorous repetition of the word ‘Naojan’ itself. Another reason is that, the ‘Naojan’ used to witness an unprecedented increase in the number of fishes,
implying ‘masor uzan’ (fishes moving upstream) in Assamese. So, as a consequence, Uzan Bazaar got its present name. Further, it is also believed that after the Burmese invasion of Assam (1817-1826), the modern-day Uzan Bazaar was largely inhabited by people, mostly from the areas of upper Assam. So, owing to its geographical and demographical location, it came to be known as Uzan Bazaar, where the word ‘upper’ implied ujani or uzan in Assamese. Another fascinating market for fish lovers of Guwahati is the Uzan Bazaar Nadi Ghat Market, where people rush in for all varieties of fish both on wholesale and retail terms.

The Kutchery (Court) Bazaar which presently exists beside the river Brahmaputra and in the adjoining area of the Guwahati High Court, was first started in the Church Field compound where it was an open land in front of the present Deputy Commissioner Office (Kamrup Metro) and the Meghdoot Bhavan. The market witnessed the participation of the villagers who came across from the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra, mostly on small country boats and also by road transport when Machkhowa was the terminal point for inter-district public bus services. In course of time the market was shifted behind the Bar Canteen alongside the river Brahmaputra. Finally, some three decades ago from now the Kutchery Bazaar was shifted to its present place where it has grown into a daily market for city dwellers and as a special market during festivities.

Another significant market for the people of a vast locality, was also set up during the period of growth history of the city is the ‘Chanmari Market’, which is currently situated at the Chanmari point beneath the Chanmari fly-over. Chanmari was considered as an added or extended part of the original old city-centre’s core area which today has a mixed combination of retail-commercial and residential activities. Initially, during the British days the sepoys used to assemble at the present-day All India Radio (AIR) site, which was more of a hillock at that point of time, and engaged themselves in the act of taking aim or practicing their shooting skills. Gradually, it is believed that this very act of the sepoys of ‘taking aim’, which implies nishan in Hindi, got changed to Assamese word ‘Chan’ and subsequently to ‘Chanmari’ or ‘Chandmari’[Sabah Al] by mere slip of tongue with vigorous repetition of the word nishan itself. Similar to the Chanmari market, the Ulubari Market too was set up during the Post Independence period and just like Chanmari it is also considered as an added or extended part of the original old city-centre’s core
area having a mixed combination of both retail-commercial and residential activities. Originally the present day Ulubari was an area which consisted mainly of small canals, drains, arid wastelands and most importantly had a profuse growth of thatched grass, which implies Ooluban or Ulubon in Assamese. In fact, so extensive was the growth of thatched grass in this very area that it gradually came to be known as ‘Ulubonor Habi’ and subsequently got its modern-day connotation Ulubari. This market is situated just alongside to the road which leads to the Sarania hills with its splinter spread out to near Kachari basti.

During the decade of fifties, a new trading point of mostly agricultural produce was developed under the Government sponsorship specially to rehabilitate the refugees of East Pakistan at the present I.T.I. complex of Rehabari which was known to be “Refugee Market”. However, the Refugee Market did not become commercially viable and was abandoned by its occupants owing to the popular existence of Paltan Bazaar market and also for demand of daily market products by the limited inhabitants of the then Guwahati. In the subsequent years the occupants of this market who were mostly Bengalee Hindus got themselves settled in the extended township of Guwahati viz. Fatasil Ambari, Dhirenpara and present Barsapara area following which the Government had allocated the premises to the establishment of a new Industrial Technical Institute.

Another noteworthy market of petty traders and vegetable vendors took its growth in the early history of Guwahati beside the River Bharalu and the wooden bridge of Bharalumukh area which was popularly known as “Dolong Bazaar”. The market mainly served to the daily necessity of the people of the western edge of the city particularly in the form of an evening market. However, this market does not have any relic as on today, since several adjoining markets viz. Machkhowa wholesale market (now defunct), Fatasil Ambari market, etc. have been newly developed in course of time.

The other significant retail market which is not so old but situated at the state capital is the Ganeshguri Commercial Market. This market existed as a trading point much before the capital was shifted to Guwahati and finally taken its growth in the late 1980’s i.e. after the state capital was shifted from Shillong to Dispur. Even today tribal vendors with their traditional dresses are seen doing their
trading business beside the road and pavements of this centre of capital place. The other market which was developed in the 1950’s around present day Beltola area was popularly known as Gahari Bazaar, where the tribal people used to sell pork or pig meat, a popular item of food for themselves. One key feature of this market was that the vendor of this market was that the vendors of this particular market mainly constituted the tribal people. Here, the sellers used to bring the country liquor produced at their home together with many agricultural products of both fruits and vegetables for trading purpose, which used to draw large customers for the then market.

There are some other retail markets which were also set up in the city in the decade of post Seventies. The Colony Bazaar market situated in the area of Kalapahar was set up during the 1970’s, and is one of the main retail markets in the locality stretching from Birubari to Lal Ganesh. Initially when started, this market was a very small one and very few traders used to trade their goods in this market. Gradually, with the development of the nearby areas this market slowly gathered momentum and developed into a big retail market with myriad of traders trading innumerable goods in the market. Retail markets are also situated in the Maligaon and Pandu areas. The majority markets situated in these areas have been in existence over the last fifty to sixty years i.e. before 1960’s. One of the oldest markets of the city localities is the Maligaon Shuttle Gate Market, which is situated just opposite to the North East Frontier Railway Headquarter and has been in existence for more than 50-60 years. All commodities except clothes and dress materials are sold in this market. In the same Maligaon area there also exist a ‘Haat’ which is regularly held on every Friday and its location is also nearby the Kamakhya Railway station. This ‘Haat’ has been in existence in the same location on each Friday for more than 70 years. All the goods that are bought and sold in the ‘Haat’ are the goods that are locally produced in the villages, or agricultural goods, livestock, handicraft items, etc. These markets are very old in the local areas of Pandu and Maligaon. Some other markets which also existed in this area are the Rest Camp BaraBazaar which is also around 40 years old and where all the different commodities are sold.

Apart from above noted retail markets in the city there are some small retail markets which are also carrying on trading in either primary goods or different types of other commodities. These markets are viz. Silpukhuri Bazaar, Kacharibasti
Bazaar, Athgaon Bazaar, Sarapbhati Bazaar, Pandu Bazaar, Anandanagar Bazaar, Ada Godown Bazaar, Katia Dalang Bazaar which is commonly known as Adabari bus stand market and many more small retail markets exist in almost every localities of the city. The Lokhra Bazaar is also one of the growing retail markets in the city, and this market is held on every Sunday as a ‘Haat’ in the city. The Lokhra Market is a newly grown market which can be said to originate from the Beltola market as an extension when the latter failed to bear with its capacity to fulfil the need of an ever increasing population of the new localities of its area. There has also been growth of small market place at the square place of connected localities with the national highway such as the Gorchuk Market, the Boragaon Market, Chaukuchi market, etc. A few of the markets grown up in the outskirts of the city area are seen as Dharapur Market, Azara Gadhuli Bazaar, Changsari Market, Singhimari Market, etc.

Among the emerging markets in the eastern part of the city, the New Guwahati Market has developed a unique identity which is considered as one of the cheapest markets for buyers of today’s Guwahati. The market serves the population of a large area owing to its special advantage of being the point of unloading vegetables and food stuff as the main godowns centre where FCI (Food Corporation of India) godowns are located. However, there is common allegation that certain pilfered goods from railway wagons are also sold in this market. It is no denying of the fact that certain criminal dens have taken growth around the market area, adding veracity to the belief. The eastern periphery of the city which was closed at Noonmati point a few decades ago has witnessed several markets beyond these trading points covering many new localities which were developed subsequently due to extension of industrial and commercial activities. This markets are viz. the Noonmati Daily market, Narengi Bazaar, Panikheti Bazaar, Satgaon bazaar, Govardhan Bazaar, Basanti Bazaar, Kolongpar Bazaar, etc. Some of the above markets are of the nature of weekly markets in spite of the fact that a skeletal of such market is always seen in daily course too for local needs.

Guwahati also possesses some of the big wholesale markets within the city and from where commodities are sold and distributed to the entire region in bulk quantities. A few of those wholesale markets in the city are the Wholesale Fish market which is popularly known as the Paltan Bazaar Wholesale Fish Market being founded in the city in 1985 and got registered in the year 1997-98.
The Paltan Bazaar Wholesale Fish Market is one of the largest wholesale fish markets of the North Eastern region. At present there are 120 registered traders in this market and around 20-40 unregistered traders doing business in the fish market. One of the oldest wholesale as well as retail fish market of Guwahati is the Uzan Bazaar Riverside fish market popularly known as “Nadi Ghat Market”. The locality once settled by fisherman community has now grown into a posh locality with several socio cultural organizations being set up in the area besides Raj Bhawan. People of Guwahati make a mad rush to the market especially on the occasion of “Bhogali Bihu” in which community feast are organized in many places to celebrate the Makar Sakranti. Moreover, the Guwahati city also has a Wholesale Goat Market in the Santipur riverside area of the city. This market was an unorganized market when it was established in the Machkhowa area however it became a registered market subsequently and is presently being located at the above said site. The Goat Market has been in existence for more than four decades in the city and it has been at its present place for more than 15 years or so.

Situated just near to the Goat Market is another wholesale market existing in the city is the Wholesale Bamboo Market situated in the Santipur riverside area. This market has been in existence for more than four decades in the city. Right from its early trading days the market has its location near the bank of the River Brahmaputra. A special reason for the growth of this bamboo market in the banks of River Brahmaputra is that the bamboos are transported through river from upper Assam region in a cluster which is used as vessel by the growers who sell it to traders at Santipur trading point. This gives them the advantage of cheap transportation and easy movement to the city. The market holds around 30 registered traders, and bamboos are supplied to all around the city mainly for construction activities. The other most important wholesale market which is very popular in the entire region is the Machkhowa Wholesale Vegetable Market (now defunct), established in the year 1989. The market has presently been shifted to Gorchuk area where the Government have constructed sheds for the wholesale traders. This is the largest “Sabji- Mandi” in the entire region. Around 1000-1500 traders are daily engaged in this market, which also includes traders from outside the state.

The charm of Guwahati as a treasure of tourism beauty is always accentuated by the simplicity and hospitality of the Assamese community; a nature,
which is well acclaimed all over the country. The elder citizens of Guwahati today express their profound anguish against the systematic depletion of natural environment in which wetlands, natural streams and beautiful hillocks have been reduced to inputs of industrial and commercial production. The reminiscence of the past scenario of this historic city reminds us in down the memory lane how a young city has transformed leaps and bounds into a mega trading centre with its bright prospect of linkage with the South-East Asian region.”[Barua, Bhattacharjee]

The city of Guwahati in modern times has witnessed massive changes or transformation of different markets set up in different localities over the last four decades or so. These changes have not only affected the lifestyle of the urban population but with the adoption of modernization in markets setup all around the city it has largely helped transforming the city into a modern centre of markets for the people of the entire North-Eastern Region. The different markets which were established after independence in and around the city have taken different shapes. Insights of the growth of different trading centres in and around the Guwahati city since the post-independence period are briefly outlined below.

Guwahati the city considered as the Gateway of North-East, does possess few trading centres or markets which have been in operation since very olden times. One of the popular market place which is mostly known for having different retail outlets of varied goods is the ‘Fancy Bazaar’ market. The Fancy Bazaar market is very well recognized for being a market having shops operating since very olden days. The inclusion of the modern trading practice has made this market the most popular market of the city. The Fancy Bazaar market which was popular for having a vegetable market near the Central Jail complex during old days, has now being equipped with big shops of branded garment, shoes, electric appliances, modern lightning, traditional garments, bell metal products, fireworks, confectionaries, houses of sweets, restaurants, etc. The market also have shops of other products such as hardware materials, furniture, stationery shops inclusive of both wholesale and retail, along with large numbers of petty vendors scattered all around the market selling different products or commodities which are used for the daily needs of household. The development phase of the fancy market into a modern trading centre has come around many odds in the past. Having all the modern retail outlets in the fancy bazaar market area, yet the market do possess
many vintage shops which has been functioning and doing business in the city since the last four or more decades. The history about the development of the fancy bazaar since its early days has been elaborately discussed earlier from the research article ‘Evolution of Trading Points in Heritage Guwahati’ and even can also be briefed from the book titled “Itihaxar Cha Pohorot Purani Gauhati” written by the noted author Mr. Kumudeswar Hazarika, published by the Assam Publishing Company, January 2013. The history relating to the growth of the fancy bazaar is connected with the development of its peripheral area, another market though not specialized in having huge retail outlets but the development of the fancy market begins with the inception of the Pan Bazaar market. Pan Bazaar, the market area is the one place in the Guwahati city which is considered as the oldest market and it is this market which provided the platform in the past to establish few important business outlets which has left its evidence in the books of history towards development of the markets in the city. It is in the Pan Bazaar area where the first Garment retail outlets were opened and two shops which were commonly known are the famous shops of Barua Brothers who were from the North Guwahati and the other shop was Harimal Barman and Sons, who belonged from a place called Samta in the state. Both the shops were situated near the presently situated Ashoka Restaurant and were established prior to independence. Few shops in the Pan Bazaar area still exists which were established before independence and continued doing business in the city till date at its place of origin where it started and being controlled by their next generations. Among such shops the common and famous shop is “The Shaikh Brothers” which was established in the year 1855 still continues its business in confectionaries and bakery items with the same old name since its inception. Yet, along with the Shaikh Brothers few other business establishment were also set up before independence but few abolished and few stopped trading in the market.[Hazarika]

The fancy bazaar market till date witness the existence of few old shops set up in the Kamarpatty area of the market. Few establishments such as the Khubchand & Son’s, Dev Brother’s, Mitra & Company, etc. are among the few who has been doing business since the last three decades or more. Other establishments which were also set up during that period have vanished due to a major fire which gutted few shops and the rest abandoned their trade too. The
Mitra & Company are the ones who were the only formal agent of the Dhakeswari Mills, who belonged from the neighbouring country Bangladesh. Along with the development of shops during the olden days few film talkies were also established. One popular and very old film talkies was the Rupayan Talkies set up in the middle of the market, yet it disappeared and finally shut down its business due to the earning losses and stiff competition faced with the modern film talkies. Another business establishment in the Fancy Bazaar market area was set up by the name of K. K. Sen Ltd. which was a motor workshop, and it was the same owner who set up one of the two petrol pumps in the city and along with a Car Showroom of the famous company named ‘Maris’. Relating with the development phase of the fancy market two other famous motor business establishments used to reside known as P. Sen and Company and the other was Eastern Motors. The Eastern Motors were the dealers of the Ford Company and commonly people named the shop as Ford Company. These establishments used to reside near the road side near Rupayan Cinema Hall straight from the Sikh Temple. [Hazarika]

The market also has few religious establishments which are been served as landmarks or sign of address since very old days. The popular religious establishments surrounding the market area are the Fancy Bazaar Kali Mandir, the Sikh temple, the Masjid, the Baptist church, the Jain temple, etc. Along with the said establishments the fancy market is full of commercial outlets which are very old in the market. The market has also witnessed very large incidents of fire around three decades ago which has gutted many shops, yet, few has recovered and carried on with the business. Few old shops which still exist and form a part of the heritage trading centres are viz., The Shalyagram Rai, The Chuni Lal Bahadur Achowal, The Ganpat Rai Dhanuka, The Ramlal Lalchand, The Dasuram Mirzamal, The Sundaram GauriShankar, The K.C. Trunk Factory, The Ramji Das Mukundiram, The Kunja Thakur Shop, The Deka Hardwares of the Narpeti Deka, New Lakhi Cabin, etc. could be all listed as the old shops of the fancy market area which still holds the heritage of the fancy market. [Hazarika] It can also be witnessed in the modern day trading that majority of the shops or retail outlets these days belongs to the Marwari community which were used to be mostly run by the local Assamese traders but currently only a number of shops are owned and
managed by the Assamese people these days, as change of the owners community had gradually taken place with the passage of time.

Along with the different shops all around the Fancy Bazaar market area the market also used to have a big wholesale vegetable market set up near the ferry ghat beside the mighty Brahmaputra River. This market was very popular to those people who were service oriented and used to travel to the city from the outskirts of the city through the river routes. While returning from their respective jobs, people used to purchasing their daily needs of vegetables from this market due to which this market gain popularity during the olden days and has left a key presence in the history of modern trading in the Guwahati city. Presently, the same market has been shifted to the new GMC building where vegetables are sold both in wholesale and retail and yet, with the flow of time the market has lost its old ferry ghat customers. As mentioned above that with the passage of time over the last one and half a decade the fancy bazaar market has witnessed tremendous transformation to a modern marketing centre. With the arrival of modern shopping malls, departmental stores, branded retail outlets loaded with branded materials, which tend to provide better services, ultra modern looks, has gradually replaced the old small shops by replacing them into big buildings with all the modern facility equipped are being forwarded towards the modern day consumers. The Shopper’s Point, The A.C Market, The Annapurna Plaza, The Bazaar Kolkata, etc are quite a few one which are very popular among the masses. These buildings provide range of private retail shops with different product or commodity as well as providing everything under one roof with different variety of sellers. One major transformation or change which took place in the fancy bazaar market over the year was the shifting of the Central Jail to the outskirts of the city near the Sarusajai Stadium beside the NH- 37. The Guwahati Central Jail used to be known and served as one of the prime landmark in the city fancy bazaar market area. Currently, with the shifting of the central jail from the market, the entire vacant compound of the jail is being used for the Municipality car and bike parking to ease the traffic congestion in the market area. Yet, with the passing of time the Fancy Bazaar has changed and ornamented itself with modern retail outlets all around its corner but still with the existence of few old shops and their history the market still rejoices the feeling of being the oldest market in the Guwahati city.
Another market which is also known for its primitive and heritage shops is the Uzan Bazaar market where many old shops exist over the last four decades or more. The Uzan Bazaar market is considered as one of the place which was developed just after the famous Fancy Bazaar. The market also possesses few shops which are very old and have witnessed the development of the market since the last four decades. Quoting from the book written by Mr. Kumudeswar Hazarika, he mentions that, among all the old shops which used to reside in the Uzan Bazaar area, one of the famous old shop which is no more in existence in the same area was the Rameswar Kachori shop. The shop was famous for one of its item which was the Kachori, an eatable item along with its variety of sweets. The shop used to exist more than hundred years ago. Though, it was a not a very big shop at that time but it was famous for its special Kachori item, and with this it do marks an important place in the history of the market in the Uzan Bazaar area. The Uzan Bazaar area also used to have two photo studios which were viz. the Oakt Studio and the City Studio. Both the photo studio was recognized as two important old establishments in the locality of Uzan Bazaar area. It can be said that both the photo studios were among the few oldest photo studio in the Guwahati city. It was in the Uzan Bazaar where one of the first mini departmental stores was opened in the city. The store was resided near the city bus stop and it was named as “Barthakur Stores and Company”. The departmental store was started by late Bhubaneswar Barthakur but the store could not sustain for a long period thus resulting in the shutdown of the store. The Uzan Bazaar area apart from the above few old establishments also has many old shops which have been doing business in the same locality for a long period till date. The names of few of the shops which are spelt locally by the people are the Uzan Bazaaror Ganir Shop, Atir's Shop, Dasi Barman Barman Stores, Ahmed Hussain Stores, Dwijen Bhuyan’s shop, etc. In relate to the above another few shops which has been in existence in the area for more than four decades are the Shanti Bhandar, which is a grocery shop, and the Razaak Tailors are also considered as few old establishments in the Uzan Bazaar area. Few other establishments or shops which were also set up during that time were the Ramani Mithaiwala or Sweet Shop; the Sabitri Stores which was resided just adjacent to the connecting road between Uzan Bazaar and Silpukhuri are few old shops which are very popular since the old days among the masses of the city. [Hazarika]
Though, the Uzan Bazaar area is considered to be holding one of the oldest market which has developed just alongside the fancy bazaar market, yet it consist of few old shops which are considered as a part of the development or transformation of modern market in the area. Though, many old shops have reserved their existence in the market and has been doing business over the years but, the main attraction for which the Uzan Bazaar is popularly known are two basic factors are- first, the Locally Produced Fish market which is situated just near the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra river and Secondly, the development of the entire area into a Porsche colony as the entire Uzan Bazaar area is situated alongside the banks of the Brahmaputra river, which has served and helped the place to transform into a high demanding residential area.

During the development of the markets all around the city few localities such as the Silpukhuri, Chandmari, and Guwahati Club areas also had few old establishments who had been doing business since very old days. A list of few shops which are popular among the people and known to many are namely the Rongili Electrical Shop at Silpukhuri, the Kopili Restaurant in the Silpukhuri area, the Benaras Dyeing Centre, the ABM Books shop at Guwahati Club, the Abhijatri Grocery shops at Chandmari are few of the shops who has witnessed the development of the shops in these areas for more than four decades or so.

With the passing of time over the years it was observed that the locality of Silpukhuri, Chandmari, Guwahati Club, which were basically considered as residential societies in the past and families has been living in these localities since ages, now has turned itself into as prominent commercial centres. These localities have transformed into modern commercial points over the passage of time. Big modern shopping malls, showrooms of branded Cars, educational institutions comprising schools, colleges, etc. head-office of few organizations, etc. along with the old establishments exist till date in these localities of the city which has evolved this localities as prime centres of commercial activity in the city. With the establishment of the Gauhati Commerce College in the Chanmari area in the year 1962, around five decades ago had played a major role in the development of not only the Chanmari area but also its neighbouring localities which includes the areas covering Silpukuhri, Guwahati Club, and few others.[Hazarika] These localities were also considered as important places as
many famous personalities of Assam used to reside all along these localities from Guwahati Club to Chanmari area which covers the Silpukhuri area in the middle too. In recent times these places of the Guwahati city has transformed itself into great commercial points having all establishments of modern days thus considering it as places of importance in the city.

Another important place or locality which cannot be avoided while discussing the modern growth and development of the markets in the city is the Paltan Bazaar area or market. This market or place has been mentioned in the history of heritage Guwahati how and for what purpose the market has developed or started in this place. The Paltan bazaar market is constituted at the centre of the city which is situated opposite to the Guwahati Railway Station. This market has assumed great importance over time due to its place of inception and is considered as the heart of the city. The Paltan Bazaar market is totally crowded up with commercial establishments all around the area. As the market is situated nearby the Railway Station thus the hotel industry or the hotel business in the area has been quite impressive since the olden days. The area of Paltan bazaar is surrounded with hotels since the development and shifting of the Railway Station from the Pandu area. The hotel industry in the Paltan Bazaar is at high all around the year due to the regular movement of passengers at the railway station. Another reason for the development of the Paltan Bazaar area as hub of hotels is due to the setting up of the Tourist Taxi Stand in this area near the Paltan Bazaar Police Station. The tourist coming from the neighbouring states in the city considers the Paltan Bazaar market as the main market in the Guwahati city. Along with the hotels in the Paltan Bazaar market, it is also filled up with retail establishments selling different commodities in the market. The market here is also vested with a vegetable market, fish market; markets of live stocks, etc. all located under one roof residing just near the railway station. Thus, it can be witnessed that tourists who arrives in the city through train, buses or taxi’s from all around the state or other parts of the country do get a perfect market to purchase different commodities in one market and which is just resided near the hotels where the tourists could lodge for few days in the city. The main customers of the market are basically the fly-by customers who generally come or stays in the area for a day or two and for shopping pleasure do purchase product from the market.
The Paltan Bazaar market in accordance to past days has developed as the key centre for hotels and lodges only after the development of transportation in the city. One important fact regarding development of transportation in the city was due to the development of ASTC (Assam State Transport Corporation) in the year 1970, and with the development of bus services all around the state from the city, the bus terminal for the ASTC was set up near just adjacent to the Guwahati Railway Station. Another reason for the development of Paltan Bazaar as hotel centres which are situated all around the corner of the market was due to setting up of the Guwahati Shillong road popularly known as G S Road, which attracted in abundance large amount of tourist in the city. Lists of few old hotels which were developed after independence, which were also considered as the popular hotels in the early days were the Hotel Prabash Milan, Hotel Bholanath, Hotel Hapils, and Hotel Hindu Niwas. These few hotels were the ones which were very popular during the early days and can be said as the ones who set the stones for the development of hotels in the market. Few other small tea shops or tea restaurants which were also popular during the early times and few of which still exist in the market are the Hotel Mahamaya, Barman Cabin, Guwahati Diary, The City Grill, The Café Deluxe, etc. Among all the restaurants, Hotel Mahamaya and Guwahati Diary still exists in the market and are quite popular among the masses of the city. The Paltan Bazaar market along with the locality has developed and transformed with the passage of time but one interesting fact about the market is that the market is mostly filled up with temporary petty traders who do not have a permanent place of establishments. These traders sell different commodities in the market without any permanent place of existence. They do their trading either by putting their temporary stalls or hanging around with their commodities all around the market during the trading hours. This peculiar feature and involvement of petty traders can be only witnessed in this market as there is no restriction for the entry of petty traders in this market and only a few traders can be witnessed to have permanent places for trading. A large chunk of traders does trade in this market in this form and thus from far side this market can be seen as very crowded one all as the traders settle their stalls in the footpaths of by the road side of the market. This market is considered as one of the popular market in the city and busiest too as the majority of the traffic is created all around the market. This market clearly shows
the development of the varied trading communities all around the city. In the recent years of development to curb the traffic problems and nuisance in the area the Government has also taken few steps among which the primarily was the shifting of the ASTC Bus Terminal to the outskirts of the city. The Paltan Bazaar market also used to have few private bus terminals which were also shifted to the outskirts of the city. The construction of the recent Multi Level Parking in the Paltan Bazaar area near the previous ASTC bus terminal has come as a great relief to the rescue of traffic congestion and parking problems in the market. The market over the last decade has witnessed the modern entrance of trading in the market, with the opening few shopping malls in the market. It has been witnessed that the advent of the shopping malls has sensed to distribute the customers of the market who used to deal with the petty traders in the market. But amidst all, the petty traders do continues to exist in the market as dealing with the petty traders gives the key opportunity of performing negotiation with the traders in the market which is far not possible while shopping in the big malls. The Paltan Bazaar market has been going great changes recently with the opening up of Three Star and Four Star hotels in the area, which gradually seems to have developed the market and it’s localities as one of the prime attraction of the city.

In addition to the above markets another market or locality which has gradually developed as a key centre for commercial buildings and medical shops is the Ulubari area of the city. The Ulubari area of the city which has developed over time as a complete market, posses three small markets where vegetables, fish, livestock, meat, etc. are all available and is quite popular among the residents of the area. The Ulubari area is surrounded by big apartments and buildings where big corporate are having their offices and recently it has become more popular with the establishment of two offices of News Channels in the city. Thus, with the establishment of these two media offices in the Ulubari area, the entire area can be witnessed as a busy centre and slowly other establishments such as small shops, hotels, restaurants, etc. gradually observed the route of development over the years. The area is also popular for another reason i.e. for medical shops, which are scattered in the entire area and it do played an important role in the development of the locality of the Ulubari area. The whole Ulubari area is situated just along the road of G. S. Road hence as a result the area was popular from the
very early days. But, the existence of a large number of medical shops in the area over the years has played key significant role in the development of the Ulubari Market area. With the shifting of the District and Transportation Office from the area and the construction of the Bishnuram Medhi flyover through the Ulubari area, the market at some point of time has faced a great set back as many establishments were forced to shut down due to lack of required customers but with the passage of time the entire Ulubari area is now slowly converted into a hub of big corporate offices and media centre, which marks the development of the area over the years.

With the growth and modernisation of the above mentioned markets within the city a few of other markets residing at different corners of the city have gradually turned into big markets and tend to satisfy the needs of the locals. These trading centres at different localities had left significant mark in the history of development of trading centres in the city. The Ganeshguri Market, the Beltola Market, the Colony Bazaar Market, the Maligaon Chariali market, the Adabari market, etc. are few of the important markets which has developed with the passage of time and presently attract huge customers in the markets from the nearby localities situated. The Ganeshguri market is situated near the state capital Dispur, and has gained popularity and attraction of the people working in the State Secretariat, thus can be cited as one of the reasons for the development of this market. Another reason for the growth of the market is that the other big markets such as the Paltan Bazaar, the Fancy Bazaar, the Ulubari market, the Chandmari markets, are situated very far from the Ganeshguri area, thus for the locals of the area as well for the locals of the nearby areas this market serve as the centre for the availability of all commodities. The same scenario is also shared by the Beltola market which is situated far at the outskirt of the city near the National Highway-37. This market also fulfill the local demand of the people residing nearby and also serve as one of the market for the drivers of the truck who by passes the market through the NH-37. One special feature of the market which has been mentioned earlier too is that the market consists of vendors not only from the nearby locals of the city, but also has vendors coming from the nearby hills of the Meghalaya who sell different commodities in the market. Few commodities of primary nature such as fruits, vegetables, livestock etc. are found cheaper in
compare to the other markets in the city. The other market which was referred earlier above is the Colony Market in the kalapahar area of the city. This market serves as one of the main market in the entire area of kalapahar and satisfies the demands of the local consumers. This market too have developed over the passage of time in the likes of the Ganeshguri market, Beltola market and the commodities sold here are basically fruits, vegetables, livestock, etc. for the daily consumers. Even few modern shops and retail establishments had set up over the years in adjacent to the market which have finally converted and gave a modern shape of market for the locals of the area. And with the recent establishment of the Cricket Stadium in the Barsapara area by the Assam Cricket Association has added an extra point into the development and popularity of the market as well to those localities of the kalapahar area. The other popular market known for its locality is the Maligaon Chariali Market which is spread and scattered all over the Maligaon area. The maligaon market is also termed as the chariali market by the local residents of the maligaon because it is situated over the two sides of the four byelanes which by crosses the main road of the maligaon area and can be observed as one of the popular market in the city. This market has got great significance since the early days when maligaon area or the pandu area was served as the main centre for movement of people to and from the city towards the North Guwahati by boats and steamer over the mighty Brahmaputra River. Even in the early days as mentioned, the railways started their first services of the railways from this place in the city thus leading to the growth and popularity of the market. But the development of the market in the modern days took a great shape due to the development of locals and crowding of the nearby areas. The maligaon area is commonly known for the residing of the Headquarters of the North East Frontier Railways, thus leading into establishment of employee’s quarters all around the maligaon area and pandu area in both. Thus, with establishment of the Railways quarters, Kendriya Vidyalaya School, Government schools, Railway stations, etc all lead to the development and growth of the market over the last two decades or so. The market has turned itself into a big commercial place in the entire area, and even with the setting up of the Gauhati University nearby to the maligaon area just a few kilometres ahead can also be seen as the reason for the development of this market. This market does not only serve the whole maligaon area but event it extends it services to the locals of the jhalukbari area and specially to the
employees of the University who resides in the University quarters and this market thus serve as a lifeline for meeting the demand of different commodities of the locals in the mentioned areas.

Another market which is not yet big but popular and is situated just a few kilometres away from the maligaon market is the Adabari Market. This market though is not big as it is situated near the adabari bus terminal and hence its main customers the passengers or commuters who travels from this terminal. The adabari bus terminal is situated just at the edge of the city and importantly this terminal is basically used for the interstate transport of the passengers to different places which can be reached within a hour or three. An important feature of this market is that this market does not sell all commodities and thus petty vendors can be witnessed selling commodities of perishable nature mostly fruits and vegetables a few, which are brought out from the villages of the state by busses in the morning and sell the goods all long day both at wholesale and retail rates and then by evening the retailer move back to their own destinations. This peculiar feature of the vendors’ marks the identity of the adabari market and with the passage of time few wholesalers have also set up their establishments in the hugely crowded market and specially wholesalers of fruits, betel leaf are few of them.

Apart from the above mentioned different markets of the different localities in and around the Guwahati city, it can be seen and observed that many small markets are scattered all around the city. Even few traditional haats, can also be witnessed at different places on different days of a week where consumers flock from different places to buy locally produced goods of varied nature. Transformation has taken place in the different markets but the old traditional market such as the haats still possess great significance in the life for the people of the city. Yet, the transformation of the different market in the city can hardly be measured over the last four decades but huge changes and development of markets has clearly left a great picture through which the Guwahati city can be considered as the Metro hub of the entire North Eastern Region.

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