PREFACE

Markets have been in existence since the early days of modern civilisation. The formation of markets has gradually begun since the days when goods used to be exchanged with another under the barter system and has gradually grown and developed with the passage of time. In the modern world markets have taken different shapes and are usually organised or located at places where large population resides. The growth of any market at any place does take its shape when trading is conducted regularly and also in bulk quantities. The importance of trading can also be understood from the fact that no region of any country is self sufficient in producing all the necessary commodities, thus commodities are needed to be both imported and exported from other regions to satisfy the local demands of the consumers. Such movement of commodities among regions both within and outside the country does give rise to the establishments of markets at different places.

Though, markets may be classified under different types, the first category of market which posses unique characteristics of trading in bulk quantities of commodities is the wholesale market. Wholesale markets of different commodities do play a significant role in the entire channel of distribution of commodities to the ultimate consumers. Wholesale market does play an important role in developing the shape of any city into a central market and transforming the city towards a prime trading point. Wholesale markets improve efficiency in food distribution by encouraging competition through creating conditions for transparent price discovery at relatively low cost and by enhancing access to market information for various market participants. Wholesale markets therefore play a crucial role in the vertical coordination of food markets, equilibrating supply with demand and facilitating price formation.

Being one of the major states of the North Eastern Region, Assam holds one of the key cities of the region viz. Guwahati, which is also known as the Gateway to the North East. Situated on the bank of the mighty river Brahmaputra, Guwahati is the legendary Pragjyotishpura or the City of the Eastern Light, the Gateway to the North Eastern India. Guwahati, in Assam is a bustling city shaped by the temperamental Brahmaputra River. Being the nerve centre of the North Eastern states the city is well connected by air, road
and rail. Guwahati also possess a thriving business class, comprising of people migrated from different states of India and settled here. The city has become the hub of industrial and commercial activities not only for Assam but also for the entire North Eastern part of India. It is also being contemplated to be the future gateway of India’s trade linkage with the South East Asia. Guwahati being the flourishing city of Assam’s commercial capital has unique characteristics of fostering the growth of commodity markets. The inflows and outflows of commodities are indicative of its demand which is important from the viewpoint of developing business activity for gainful employment and entrepreneurship development in the respective fields.

In the backdrop of the aforesaid factors, this research endeavour has been taken up undertaking a systematic study to analyse the commodity flow and the growth of different trading centres in the Guwahati city and special emphasis has been given to understand the different problems and prospects faced by the traders while undertaking their trading activities. The study is aimed to identify the flow of commodities, for the purpose of the study selected commodity markets dealing with primary or raw commodities were considered as markets for the study and wholesalers of those markets are also considered as pivot elements for the entire research. The thrust of the study is to highlight the wholesalers role in the movement of the commodities to and from the Guwahati city and in the due course also highlight the various hindrances faced by the traders. The present study here will also have a detailed study of the history of the various commodity markets existing in the city of Guwahati and also how the different commodities covered in the study will act as an important constituent for the economic development of the state. The study is unique in the sense that very limited literature of the kind is available for study purpose, and will help reflect the transformation of traditional markets into centres of modern commercial activities. The present study is basically undertaken to analyse the growth of the flows of commodities at various trading points and also how these trading points have developed into modern commercial markets. The subject matter was found very interesting and innovative because no such study had earlier been conducted on such issues and it also provided me enough opportunity to study the history of some old markets existing in the city.