The word 'market' is a derivative of the Latin word *Marcatus* meaning thereby merchandise, ware, traffic, trade or a place where business is conducted. Originally market was a public place in a town where provisions and other objects were exposed for sale, but the world has been generalized so as to mean any body or persons who are in intimate business relations and carry on extensive transactions in any commodity. By the term 'market' it is understood that it is not any particular market place in which things are bought and sold but it covers a region in which buyers and sellers are in free intercourse with one another that the price of the goods tends to be equal and reasonable.

Marketing is a process which starts with a decision to produce a saleable firm commodity and it involves all aspects of market structure. Marketing has changed the nature of business in recent years. This is due to opening up of economy and large number of products varying with each other for market share. Those days are gone where producers with substandard products are sold and no competitions were existed in the markets. However, in the present time, the entire dynamics of production has been changed. The traditional decision making process of what to produce, how much to produce, how to produce and for whom to produce has been introduced by issues like how to market, where to market and for whom to market.

Economic development of any country depends on the development of the rural economy of that country. The standard of living of the rural people is the major factor on which the development of rural
economy depends. The major avenue of earning for the rural people is rural markets as they sell their surplus products in these markets. So, the rural markets are providing a platform for the rural people for their livelihood. Hence, rural markets are playing a pivotal role in bringing economic development to a country. Therefore, it is essential to modify the rural market network system along with the development of its infrastructure facilities. The transport and communication bottleneck is the major cause for the backwardness of the rural markets.

It is felt that the study entitled “Rural Markets in West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya – An Analytical Study” will help to understand the functions of rural markets in the district and to identify the marketing practices adopted in the markets. Moreover, the study will also help in finding the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of the rural markets.

This thesis is intended to serve as an important document for rural market management. Besides, it is also hoped that the thesis will provide a vista of new initiatives to the further researchers on the related area. This thesis is in fact, a humble attempt on my part to show the impact of rural markets in economic development and also to provide avenues for further improvement of the rural markets.

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