CHAPTER - I

RURAL MARKETS
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Introduction

Age-old traditional rural markets which have been in existence even in the 21st century may be compared to the modern departmental store system which provides all types of products. These age-old institutions are not only providing the day to day requirements of the rural people but they also serve as the centers for socio-cultural and political exchanges. They have been acting as an exchange agents and role models to bring and sustain harmony and peace among various cross cultural segments of the North-East India. It is learnt that the regulated markets which are designed and implemented on scientific approach and methods, could not replace the existing rural markets. It is because these markets have some inherent strength. The rural markets are exchange centre of goods and services which flow from rural to urban, urban to rural and within the rural areas. The network system of the markets is very large and complex. The participants of this system are producers of agricultural products, traders of various manufacturers’ products, artisans, service providers, wholesale buyers, customer of both
rural and urban areas, facilitating agencies like transport organization, catering agencies, monitoring and supervising organizations like local self governments and other agencies.

However, the emergence of rural markets is not a new concept. Over the years it has been seen that the rural markets are used as meeting place of buyers and sellers of particular localities. Agricultural products, fruits, vegetables, products of cottage industries are generally exchanged in these markets. There are generally no big deals in these markets besides the products of the local producers. Urban based commodities meant for day to day use are not a daily affair. It is generally organized once or twice in a week and they are known as “Haats” in the local parlance. In India, the rural market centers are the farmer’s first contact point with the marketing channel. Therefore, rural markets are considered as the nerve centers of the economic activities of the rural life of the country. The producer farmers not only depend on these markets for disposal of their products for cash but also for the procurement of agricultural inputs as well as for the other non farm products which are not produced locally.

In Meghalaya, like other parts of India the goods and services of daily markets are not available to the majority of the rural consumers. Because, most of the villages are located far away from towns, the state
of agriculture being subsistence and having limited wants to satisfy. Thus, the rural markets have developed in order to provide opportunity to rural people to dispose off their products and to satisfy their demands. The rural markets are the public gathering of buyers and sellers of commodities and services meeting at an appointed or customary location at regular intervals. Such markets are not open everyday because, the per capita demand for goods sold in the market is small and the aggregate demand is therefore insufficient to support permanent shops. Businessmen thus sell their products by visiting several markets in the nearby areas on a regular basis.

In the West Garo Hills district, the rural market is the only economic institution through which the village economy percolates. The rural farmers and the rural artisans sell their products through these markets. The rural markets are of varying sizes and the annual tax collection by the government ranges from Rs.3250 to Rs.3,00,100 per annum\(^1\). It is observed that the rural weekly markets are facing problems due to number of factors which may cause progressive decline in their turnover. Change in consumer preferences, more demand for consumer durables, transport and communications, increasing mobility of

\(^1\) Report given by the Garo Hills Autonomous District council, 2003
population, entry of new products etc. have contributed to the decline of rural markets. It is also observed that these factors have also changed the product mix of Rural Haats. Functioning Haats' therefore, shows larger transactions of products which include local as well as other than local products coming from outside. Both rural based and urban based products used to come to the rural 'Haats'. All the 'Haats' dealt with fairly wide range of traditional and non-traditional products coming from rural areas and also from towns. These are local as well as non-local products although most of the products sold in a large majority of the 'Haats' were rural based.

Rural marketing is not an independent entity by itself. In fact there are logical and behavioral factors which affect the economy of rural markets. By and large, the rural marketing may be described as an environment of the hinterland and habitants thereof. The characteristics of the village may be geographical, socio-logical, economic or behavioral and that determines the functional pattern of exchanges in the market. The structure of rural markets has an indirect bearing on the socio-logical dimensions in a peasant oriented society and economic activities are mostly governed by the social power configuration. Since the rural market is a nerve-centre of economic activities, the intervention of rural power structure in its functional aspects is obvious and needs to
be examined. Rural market in a broad sense consists of trading in products of all sectors produced in the hinterland. Of these, agricultural, animal products, fish, minor forest products, rural industrial products etc. are commonly transacted in the rural markets. The nature of trade of different products is not the same as it differs according to the demand and supply structure and the trade practice dictated by the merchandise lobby to a large extent. Therefore, the exchange relationships of farm and non-farm products are observed to be complex, in rural periodic markets. The segmented market relationships of different sectoral products thus need to be understood in detail for careful examination of the economic dimensions of rural marketing.

**Concept of Market**

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 is 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. Economists understand by the term market not any particular market place in which things are bought and sold but the whole of any region in
which buyers and sellers are in such free intercourse with one another that the price of the same goods tends to be equal and reasonable.

Market includes both place and region in which buyers and sellers are in free competition with one another. The term market refers not to a place but to a commodity or commodities and buyers and sellers who are in direct competition. As a link between producer and consumer, marketing plays a very important role not only in stimulating production and consumption but also in increasing the pace of economic development. Marketing is a process which starts with a decision to produce a saleable firm commodity and it involves all aspects of market structure both functional and institutional, based on technical and academic considerations and includes pre and post harvest operations, assembly, grading, storage, transportations and distribution. In marketing we are concerned with demand and supply conditions, marketing operations including price fixation, market structure, etc. Marketing has changed the nature of business in recent years. This is due to opening up of economy and large number of products vying with each other for market share. Those days are gone where producers with substandard products and no competition used to enjoy the benefit of a seller markets. Today 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 preceded by issues like how to market, where to market and for whom to market. It is in this context, the need and emphasis on markets to be located at different places have been given prominence. Perhaps this has shifted the emphasis from urban market centers to rural market.

**Emergence of Rural Markets**

Emergence of rural market is not a new concept. Over the years, we have seen the development of rural markets which are used to be meeting place of buyers and sellers of particular localities. Agricultural produce, fruits, vegetables and products of cottage industries are generally being exchanged in these markets. There is no big deal in these markets but requirement of the people of the locality are being used from these rural markets. Besides the products of the locality, urban based commodities meant for day to day use are also transacted in these markets.

The rural markets have been playing a dominant role in the improvement of the economy, living standard and livelihood of the rural people. It is the basic channel for the rural people in marketing their own products and also the rural markets are the only source of income for the rural farmers. The rural market is quite an opportunity to tap. It is
essential to understand the rural mindset, social norms and culture specifics associated with the origin and emergence of this market. Though to some extent the exhibitions organized by different government and semi-government departments have a role in marketing the small-scale industrial products but the role and importance of rural market in this case cannot be minimized. The agricultural products and the industrial products which come to the urban markets, they also come through the channel of rural markets. It is in this context, a need for study of the origin, structure, development and economic importance of rural market was felt.

From time immemorial markets in the North-Eastern region have been playing a vital role in social and economic life of the people. They were the places where agricultural and other produces were being exchanged and sold. They serve as information centers and means of communication. They are also the centers where political ideas and views are being propagated. The socio-economic handicaps to which the Agriculturists of the country for the first time highlighted by the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1928. Among other things, the commission realized the importance of marketing in the prominently agricultural economy of the country. They observed that the marketing of produce is such an important matter from the cultivators' point of
view that we consider that an expert marketing officer should be appointed to the staff of Agricultural Department in all the major provinces\(^2\). A farmer is not only interested in increasing production, but he is equally interested in getting fair and remunerative price also. Marketing of goods produced being an economic necessity, has developed a certain framework of operations. The economic value of agricultural produce can be realized by producers only in an efficient agricultural marketing system. Such a system also enhances the purchasing power of poor rural people and thereby increases the demand for manufactured goods. At present, most of the areas are not covered with sufficient network of market as a result thousands of producers have to remain content with unsatisfactory outlets for their marketable surplus. In such circumstances, development of an efficient marketing system can act as a catalytic agent for increasing agricultural productivity and farm income.

**Rural Markets in Meghalaya**

There is no uniform pattern of organization and management of markets in the state of Meghalaya as it differs from one district to another, and a certain degree of difference is also present between

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different markets within the same district. However, in most cases the local autonomous administrative bodies and the controlling authorities over the markets and government have no hand at all in the management of these markets. In the East and West Khasi Hills districts, the local administrative bodies having control over markets are known as the ‘Syiem’, the ‘Sordar’ and the ‘Wahadadar’ which are subordinates to the District Council\(^3\). A portion of the income from these markets is shared by the District Council. The local bodies having control over some of the markets in the Jaintia Hills district is known as the ‘Dalois’\(^4\) while the rest are under the control of the District Council. In the East and West Garo Hills districts, most of the markets are under the control of the District Council with the exception of the Tura Market which is under the control of Tura Town Committee.

The concept of rural marketing began with the growing needs of population in rural areas. The exchange system initially started with barter deals which later transformed into monetary transactions. Agriculture has been the potential sector for marketing in rural areas and the whole market mechanisms have been created largely by the agricultural products. Agriculture has two fold phenomenons production

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3. Syiem, Sordars and Wahadadors are local Khasi which represent a group of local people organized under the Autonomous District Council to have control over the rural markets.
4. This is a Jaintia word. It is a local body which controls the rural markets.
and marketing. Both the factors are governed by different sets of attributes. The production is a resultant of physical and financial inputs and labours while marketing is an act of exchange of products for money or barter for income generation or fulfilling other requirements. In fact, exchange is an economic action in a product life cycle, which is performed by the buyers and sellers for mutual interests. Therefore, the exchange relations are not general but particular to the different types of economic conditions that exist. This is a fundamental economic concept and had also been theorized by the group of classical economists. The basic purpose of exchange may be defined in a simplified manner so as to enable each specialized producers to have accessibility for a wider range of goods through an established market. In brief, it is the doctrine of familiar 'gains from trade' having a scope of application either to two individuals or to two countries engaged in trade.

**Rural Markets in West Garo Hills District**

There are forty six rural markets found in the district including the small rural markets also. The management of the rural markets is generally in the hand of the local authority i.e. Autonomous District Council. But only Garobadha Cattle market is managed by the Meghalaya State Agricultural Marketing Board. All the markets are
primary markets except Garobadha Cattle Market which is a regulated market. The main agricultural products available in the rural markets of the district are paddy, mustard, moong, wheat maize, black gram, potato, radish, bringle, cabbage, tomato, beans, chilli, onion, ginger, turmeric, pineapple, orange, mango, lemon, litchi, banana, betel nut, betel leaves, jute, cotton, cashew nut etc. The periodicity of all the markets is weekly except Mahendraganj rural market which held twice in a week.

**Rural Markets and Periodical Markets**

It can be said that marketing in India started traditionally either in the village or in the nearest ‘Haat’ or ‘Shandy’ where goods and services are exchanged into cash. The All India Rural Credit Survey Committee pointed out that the Haats and Shandies are the markets which periodically held the former once or twice in a week and the latter either on longer intervals or on special occasions⁵. Agricultural products or livestock or both are sold in these markets. They are usually held on some piece of open land readily accessible to one or more villages. Generally, these markets are located mostly in the interior place of the country. But now a day these rural Haats and shandies are little

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⁵ Report of All India Rural Credit Survey Committee (1954).
developed. In the modern days these markets are located in a convenient piece of land where the buyers and sellers and other facilitators can meet easily and also the markets are constituted of minimum infrastructure facilities like thatched shed, tin shed, drainage system, road connection, toilet facility drinking water facility etc. But there are some small farmers who use to sell their products in the open air without having any shed facility and they come to the market for selling purpose whenever they have sufficient products for sale. Though the Rural Haats in the present scenario has improved in comparison to the older rural Haats, but still these markets are suffering from lots of limitations. The periodic markets may be explained as the agglomeration of buyers and sellers in villages, semi urban and some parts of urban areas for marketing of the produce grown in the hinterland at a given place, time and day. The periodic markets held weekly, bi-weekly for fortnightly according to local traditions. Weekly markets are the main channels of distribution of local products and goods brought from outside the area. In the weekly markets the farm, non-farm and manufactured goods bought from the areas of its hinterland and urban areas, are sold and purchased. The transactions in the markets are predominantly in cash, through barter system also co-exists; in case of sale and purchase of local products like pottery, ironware, minor forest products etc. The main unifying feature
of these markets is that they are attended by a common group of professional traders, mainly coming from urban places. Every weekly market exhibits almost common agricultural products and other commodities such as handicrafts and goods brought from urban areas. The quantity and quality of food grains, manufactured goods, etc. are demand-oriented and to analyse the exact nature of demand, studies may be taken separately. However, for the purpose of simplification, these shops are grouped into main categories as shown below:

a) Food grains  
b) Clothes  
c) Vegetables and fruits  
d) Cosmetics, Vessels etc.

The periodicity of weekly markets is a function of various modes of transportation available to the traders and visitors. The movement of traders in the rural weekly markets is in a hexagonal direction that covers the minimum distance between the two market villages and forms a network. In the rural weekly markets a farmer is really a buyer, not a seller. His main aim is to procure certain necessities which he cannot produce such as salt, kerosene, vessels, cosmetics and the like. For buying these commodities he has to part with certain portion of his produce which is homegrown, manufactured or collected from forests.

The rural sellers have no choice in the product market with regard to trade channel for various reasons. Thus, it shows an inefficient
marketing system causing low marketing efficiency of rural markets in the district.

**Literature Review**

Even though rural weekly markets have been in existence since time immemorial and sizable literature is in evidence on different research of social science, not much literature was published on this age old rural marketing in recent times. However, this researcher has come across certain publications published in the late seventies and eighties which have been reviewed in the following pages. Markets not always depend on local demands only but equally linked to external relations. Local markets are seen to originate from the stimulus of outside traders and the availability of non-local goods. It is widely accepted that most of the periodic markets in Africa support the exogenous theory of market origin. The various studies on the origin of weekly markets have brought out that the early markets were playing only a limited socio economic role. The sales in the markets were not the dominant source of material livelihood for the entire people of the area. It was felt that only a few people were engaged in producing for the market or selling in the market and those who were so engaged were only part time traders. Their livelihood comes largely from non-market spheres of economy.
From the above studies on the origin of weekly markets it can be derived that periodic markets originated in stratified societies with sharp divisions of labour and strong external links and influences. External traders play a predominant role in stimulating local markets and most of the local participants in the early markets were primarily engaged in the economic activities outside the market place.

R.J. Bromley expressed that weekly rural markets came into existence because many of the earliest local traders were producers seeking an outlet for their goods or the means to obtain other commodities. As a result, early markets had adapted to the requirements of producers, trading part time rather than to the needs of full time traders. Periodicity is an advantage for most market participants because their economic roles were very much diverse. The majority of the traders, even in many of the modern and ultra-modern markets, are part time and they have two or more different occupations and they are also engaged in some form of primary or secondary production. Hence, these factors contributed to the development of effective periodic markets.

H. James Stine in his study of weekly markets expressed his opinion that most of the explanations for periodic markets and mobile

trading have been developed in an economic pattern which is free from social and cultural factors \^8. He felt that weekly markets are no doubt developed on economic principles but, at the same time they are also influenced by the social and cultural factors of the people living in these settlements. Speaking in economic locations of periodic markets, Stine stated that Periodic marketing will result whenever the firm’s limit exceeds the range of goods produced or whenever the minimum number of customers required to support the firm is less than the number of potential customers living within the distance, a customer will travel to purchase the goods. The mode points out that the periodic markets for daily consumable goods will be replaced by permanent shops or daily markets where there is a high demand.

The application of economic location theory to explain periodic markets is not a new concept. G.W. Skinner had brought to light that even anthropologists have applied economic locations theory to explain periodic markets and the functions of different settlements within regional social system \^9. Some scholars have emphasized the social functions of market, trade and the role of local authorities and privileged trading groups. However, the emphasis of economic locations theory in

current thinking has not received sufficient critical evaluation. In view of the opinions and observations made by the above authors R.J. Bromley and others postulated that exchange system and patterns vary with the types of society and are found upon value systems that are shaped by cultural process\textsuperscript{10}. They further observed that exchange patterns are among the most important social relationship which binds society together and they make an impact on all aspects of social life.

S. Cyrill Belshaw was of the opinion that markets did not originate for local subsistence producers to dispose of their surplus productions. But, they were the result of increasingly specialized division of labour and growing exploitation of regional resources. Based on the postulates of R.J. Bromley and others, he expressed that trade is a concrete form of exchange and thus may serve as a major index of social structure\textsuperscript{11}. A full understanding of trading institutions must be based not only on the study of contemporary economic processes but also on the social context and historical development of commercial activity.

Most of the periodic markets are primarily rural in nature and perform the function of collection centers for local produce moving

\textsuperscript{11} Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1965
towards urban places. Shiw Mangal Singh expressed his observation that rural weekly markets frequently operate along with urban daily markets\(^\text{12}\). The co-existence of rural weekly markets and urban daily markets indicates a potential transition towards permanent commercial activities in modernizing urban areas. The logical end to this transition is the birth of a large daily market with permanent shops with retail and wholesale market areas. Even in the present day, it is not uncommon to come across periodic markets in towns and some of the cities which have got daily markets. It is interesting to learn that R.J. Bromley brought into light the continuation of periodic markets as weekly peaks of activity at daily market and mobile traders. The mobile traders have circular roots within the urban areas, visiting different markets on each day of the week. The growth of periodic markets seems to be influenced by the explosion of population, considerable improvement in the transport facilities and concentration on non food producing population at a particular place.

According to M. Good Charles the periodic market systems are significantly influenced by the development of infrastructural facilities like laying of new roads, communication facilities etc. in the area in

\(^{12}\) 'The stability theory of Rural Central place of development', Omson publication (1980).
which rural markets are located. He further observed that modernization of agriculture through scientific methods of cultivation, using of chemical fertilizers and pesticides would increase the productivity which in turn would enhance the purchasing power of the rural folk. Thus, to increase the marketing activity and make the marketing system more effective, measures to promote economic development to ensure a substantial rise in the incomes of the people is found to be highly essential.

Surajit Sinha explained how the physical and ethnic environment helps in the formation of a weekly market. As observed by him the market is principally a result of selective exploitation of the environment by the different communities with consequent interchange of goods. The location of a market is determined by the availability of specialized products which in turn are influenced by the traditional and cultural habits of different communities settled in different localities and the geographical situation of the village in relation to raw materials.

Nityananda Pattnaik dealt with the location of the market from the topological and geographical point of view. He analyzed that the people

of various communities engaged in the trading activities and the commodities sold by them. However, the study ignored to focus on the quantum of trade in the market, the nature of transactions and the number of surrounding villages to which the market catered.

C.D. Deshpande in his study has categorically explained how the market villages and periodic fairs play a fundamental role in a rural economy. He further observed that market villages and periodic fairs have played a significant role in the national economy of many countries when human contact was purely local, means of communications were inadequate and the rural economy was simple.

A. Smith Carol through his study has remarked that periodic markets exist because of the interaction between the forces of trade, marketing and authority. According to his study another major factor that favors the weekly markets to flourish even in the present days' developed economics, is the urban demand for rural products. This feature has helped in closely knitting a periodic marketing system of a region from being torn to pieces.

15. ‘A study of weekly market at Barpai’, Geographical Review of India (1953), Calcutta.
Tamaskar has discussed the settlement pattern, topography, the location of the market and the organizational pattern adopted by the sellers in establishing the shops according to the commodities sold\textsuperscript{18}. He also brought to light the maximum distance to which the weekly market catered and also the attendance of buyers and sellers during different seasons. The study however, did not reveal the infrastructural facilities at the market and the different trade practices adopted by the traders.

Rajagopal, in his book stated that the community of rural artisans has strong dependence on the elite group, may it be rural or urban and so it exercises the price levy on the artisans. According to his observation there is a talent device to dominate economically or to take aggressions out on others\textsuperscript{19}. In another book on Rural Market Administration he has mentioned that it is essential to evolve an appropriate distribution process to promote the demand which lead to rural development. Moreover, he observed during his study that major portion of financial requirement in the rural markets is met by the Commercial Banks and District Rural Development Authority under Integrated Rural Development Programmes in Maharashtra and Rajasthan\textsuperscript{20}.

\textsuperscript{18} Weekly Markets at Patharia, Indian Journal of Marketing, June, 2006
\textsuperscript{19} Indian Rural Marketing, Rawat Publications, Jaipur and New Delhi, 1993.
\textsuperscript{20} Rural Market Administration in India, Kaveri Books Delhi, 1995.
Saxena H. M., in his survey rightly expressed that the percentage of female participants in the rural markets are less but their participation is significant because, trading has become a monopoly of males in India. He also observed that the participation of female traders in tribal rural markets is more than the non tribal markets.

Mazumdar, D. N. in the article 'Marketing of Crafts Products in Garo Hills' clearly stated that craft products produced by craftsmen of Garo Hills have not acquired any large market value. The materials produced by the craftsmen are meant for the local purchase only. F. L. Mawnai in his article rightly mentioned that the basic problem of marketing in the North Eastern States relates to the long distances of the main consumption centre of the country which makes it risky for the marketing of perishable items in particular.

**Need and Importance of the Study**

More than 80% of Meghalaya population lives in the rural areas. Agriculture is the main occupation of rural people. Farmers sell their products in nearby rural weekly markets. Therefore, rural markets play a

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major role in the economy of Meghalaya. Rural markets determine the growth of the agriculture sector as well as village industrial sector. It has been observed that rice, horticulture crops, livestock, handicrafts, forest products and other locally available products are exchanged in these rural markets. In the rural markets, traders and middlemen in many cases, resort to involve in various malpractices such as manipulation of using monopsony power and non-adherence to any scrupulous standardization of products. The transportation and communication bottlenecks and inadequate market intelligence facilities stands in the way of development of the rural markets. It has been observed that money lenders and traders exploited the poor farmers. The commercial banks and the Gramin Banks are reluctant to provide any financial assistance to the farmers. No warehouse and cold storage facilities are available for farmers to preserve the surplus products.

Besides the above, the structural reforms that have been initiated during the last one decade have made market environment very dynamic. As a result, needs, wants, expectations and nature of relationships among various partners of the system have changed drastically due to information technology revolution. A number of studies reveal that any alternative model for existing local marketing system does not replace traditional system. It is because; the strongly
deep-rooted socio-cultural sentiments of the people of Meghalaya do participate actively as a system partner and not only in past but also in present. For the reasons stated above, it is felt that there is a strong need to analyse rural markets and its strength, weakness, threats and opportunities at this crucial juncture. The study may be useful in planning and implementation of several programmes for the following:

• To improve product quality and service quality in the markets.
• Strengthen better network with regulated markets to act as complementary system.
• Developing under-privileged segment of the society.
• Socio cultural and infrastructure development.

This study, it is hoped, will help the various segments like academics, policy makers, bureaucrats and social reformers, NGOs and academic institutions for making use of its results positively either for initiating further research in this area or implementing its results. It provides a bird’s eye view on the weekly market system from holistic perspective. It will inspire academics and consultancy organization to initiate further research on micro level issues of the weekly market systems. It is expected to guide the policy makers to design and re-design various Rural Development programmes to achieve integrated development specially in the rural sector of the economy of the country. This study may help the bureaucrats to take appropriate measures to
generate revenue and creation of better infrastructure to make weekly markets more dynamic and vibrant. Besides, it may help the corporate world to design and implement tailor-made policies and strategies for improving better quality of life by curbing duplicate products and services in the rural markets.

**Objectives of the Study**

The **basic objective** of the study is to examine how far the rural markets are contributing to the development of the economy of the district under study. The other objectives of the study are framed as follows:

1. To examine the existence of Rural Markets in West Garo Hills District and to identify the network of distribution and the existing infrastructure facilities of the rural markets in the district.

2. To find the strength, weakness, opportunities and threats of the rural markets of the district.

3. To provide the avenues for the further improvement of the rural markets.

4. To study the present marketing practices in the rural markets of West Garo Hills District.
Methodology

This is an analytical study of rural markets in West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya. A random sampling technique has been used in the selection of rural markets and also the respondents which comprise of sellers, buyers, mahaldars and facilitating agencies. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data are collected from various local Government offices such as Autonomous District Council, District Agricultural Marketing office, District Horticultural Marketing office, District Statistical Office, Office of the Municipality and from various Research Agencies like National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Tribal Research Centre and Indian Institute of Bank Management (IIBM). Books and articles published in various journals also constitute a major part of the secondary data.

Primary Data

For the purpose of collecting primary data on which the study is mainly based, a field survey has been conducted by taking 20 selected rural markets of West Garo Hills District as sample units. While selecting the sample rural markets the factors like size of the rural
markets (including big and small), distance among each market and period of existence of the markets are given due importance. Revenue generated from each market by the Government is also considered as an important criterion for the selection of the sample rural markets. The names of the selected markets are given below in which the ownership of management and the market days are mentioned.

**TABLE: 1.1: Names of selected Rural Markets in the Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Market Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Market Days</th>
<th>Ownership of Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ampati</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chibinang</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dalu</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dadengguri</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jengjal</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Garobadha</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kherapara</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mahendraganj</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Monday/ Friday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Purakhasia</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Rongram</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tura(Nazingbazar)</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rajabala</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Tikrikilla</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Selsella</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample Design and Collection of Data

A total of 400 respondents were covered in the survey, taking 10 (ten) each from among the sellers and buyers of the rural markets. Moreover, a few middlemen and facilitating agencies were also interviewed and their views were recorded. The individual respondents were selected by using judgment sampling technique from different strata. Prior to the selection of sample by judgment sampling a pilot survey was conducted. Schedule of questions were prepared for both the buyers and the sellers separately. The schedules of questions were filled up on the basis of the responses obtained from the respondents. Since all the respondents could not be covered in a day, some markets were visited more than once. The Survey was conducted during the month of January 2005 to September 2005.
Hypotheses

The following hypotheses have been examined during the course of the study:

1. Rural Markets have significantly contributed to the development of the economy of West Garo Hills District.

2. The rural markets serve as the only avenue for marketing the products of rural farmers.

3. The infrastructure facilities of the rural markets in the district are inadequate.

4. The urban sellers also actively participate in the rural markets.

Scope and limitation of the Study

The study is an attempt to cover various major aspects like marketing processes, entrepreneurial cognitive process of various partners which come under broader perspective of modern management. As part of marketing processes, market management, selling and buying processes were studied. Besides, entrepreneurial behaviour among sellers and service providers and cognitive processes of various partners involved in the markets were also studied. SWOT analyses of rural markets have been done in general and each participant in particular. This study is focused from holistic perspective of the market system rather than specific to any particular aspect of management. This is done because; major study on weekly market system has not been carried out
prior to this study in the district. Since, majority of the market partner respondents are illiterate and have rural background, the subjective nature of data collected may be biased in many respects. Despite several problems encountered during collection of data, a sincere attempt has been made to collect and present the data in a more scientific and systematic perspective.

Chapter Scheme

The study has been spread over in nine chapters. The first chapter cover introduction, concept of rural market and emergence of rural markets in Meghalaya. Importance of the study, literature review, objectives of the study, hypothesis and methodology has been discussed in this chapter. The second chapter gives the profile of West Garo Hills District in which Glimpses of Meghalaya including natural wealth, agricultural scenario of the district are discussed. The third chapter is formulated to highlight the market structure, marketing practices, primary and secondary market centers in West Garo Hills District, relationship between primary, secondary and wholesale market. The general information about the rural markets of the district is also given in this chapter. The fourth chapter has covered discussion about the market mechanism. It also has covered the discussion on the problems
faced in marketing agricultural products. Chapter five is formulated to
give the analysis of field survey. The sixth chapter includes the
discussion of role and importance of Mahaldars in rural markets,
selection procedure of mahaldars, socio economic profile of mahaldars
etc. The seventh chapter presents the discussion about the SWOT
analysis of rural markets and the study ends with chapter eight which
covers the findings and suggestions of the study.

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