

**The Periodic Market System :**  
A Comparative Study of Tribal And Peasant  
Economies, with Special Reference to N.E. India

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*Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)  
in Geography*



**NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES**  
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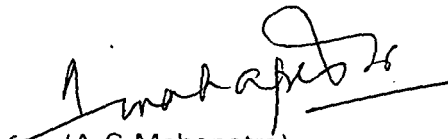
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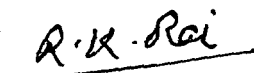
## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled " *The Periodic Market System : A Comparative Study of Tribal and Peasant Economies, with Special Reference to North East India*", submitted by Ms Manjula Borthakur for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Geography is a bonafide study to the best of my knowledge and belief. Studies of other scholars in the field has been duly acknowledged at appropriate places. The candidate has also completed other formal requirements of the University including the pre-submission seminar.

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Dated,  
The Twentieth September,  
Nineteen Hundred Ninety Three,  
SHILLONG.

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MANJULA BORTHAKUR

## PREFACE

The study of periodic market system is now a growing field of interest for all hues of social scientists, especially the geographers. The study of periodic market system has a great significance for rural development and planning. Usually the periodic markets have immense importance for rural as well as for urban masses. Periodic markets are the points through which the surplus produces of the rural areas are exchanged and some of the produces get on their way to the urban centres and the manufactured products from urban centres get distributed in the rural areas. In traditional societies, the periodic market brings a direct contact between producers and consumers. In a nutshell the periodic market in a traditional (peasant) society plays an all integrative role, economic and social for surrounding villages.

The objective of the present study is very specific; the main objectives are (1) to study the evolution and expansion of periodic markets in the North-East India with evidence from historical records, (2) to make a comparative study of the periodic market system between tribal and peasant economies, (3) to study the structure of the periodic market system of tribal and non-tribal areas, (4) to study the process of integration of the rural economy both in tribal and non-tribal areas with the over all economy, and (5) to study the consequences of periodic market system on rural economy.

In the First Chapter, the problem and the scope of the study, hypotheses and research issues, and introduction to the study areas have been outlined. The relevant literature on the subject have been discussed in the same chapter. The details of methodology, data base and data analysis - have been critically discussed in the Second Chapter. The evolution of periodic market system in the North East India with the help of historical records has been discussed thoroughly in the Third Chapter.

In the Fourth Chapter, discussion has been made regarding the 'periodic market system', their structure and functions in tribal and peasant economies. In the Fifth Chapter, analysis has been made on the spatial structure of periodic markets in tribal and peasant areas. In the Sixth Chapter a comparative study has been undertaken regarding the economic structure of periodic markets of tribal areas and peasant areas. The Seventh Chapter has been devoted to discuss periodic markets and the problem of integration with the larger economic system, the costs of integration to the rural economy.

In the Eighth Chapter, some tentative answers have been provided on a number of issues. This chapter is largely supportative and the arguments put forward are based on some of the findings of the author.

The study of the periodic market system of North East India provides a fertile area of further research. The researcher hopes that this attempt would both be of academic interest as well as practical utility.

Shillong  
The Twentieth September, '93

*Manjula Borthakur.*  
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# **CHAPTER I**

## **Introduction**

## INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1. Statement of the problem

Periodic markets are the points through which the surplus products of the rural areas are exchanged and some of the produce gets on its way to the urban centres and the manufactured products from urban centers gets distributed in the rural areas. The exchange system of the periodic markets operate in two ways, viz vertical and horizontal. In the exchange system, the rural agricultural and artisan products are distributed and exchanged within the surrounding areas and the exchange operates at the level of the hierarchy of settlements i.e from rural to urban centers and vice-versa. Periodic markets are the entry point for locally produced goods into the larger marketing network.

Throughout the underdeveloped world, periodic markets usually appear in areas with low purchasing power, poor transport system, poor or poorly utilized resource bases and low population density. The periodicity of markets is related to the mobility of individual firms. In the periodic market, artisans and repairmen carry their workshop with them and cater to the service needs of the villagers which would otherwise remain unfulfilled. Other services such as letter-writing to fortune-telling are also mobile because the total amount of demand encompassed by the marketing area of any single periodic market is insufficient to provide a profit level which enables the entrepreneur to survive. By repositioning himself at periodic intervals, the entrepreneur can tap the demand of several marketing areas and thereby attain the

economic viability of the enterprise and the survival threshold.

The traditional periodic market system, probably originated in the late Neolithic Age along with the emergence of the agro-pastoral revolution which generated surplus produce for exchange. In the initial stages when the self-sustained village economy was in vogue, the exchange of goods and services was carried out within the respective villages. But with the development of transport facilities (particularly riverine and marine), the scope for exchange of goods widened and periodic markets catering to the surrounding areas originated. With industrial and technological progress, increasing specialisations, supply of goods and services on a large scale and socio-economic development market, centres of different hierarchical orders and periodicity developed and ultimately the national economy was integrated into one market and further with the international exchange system and the "world market". This view finds support by Berry (1967) who has theorised the emergence of periodic markets in system of local trade and the establishment of fairs on long distances trade routes. He pleads for a three stages sequence;

" The first involves socially administered exchange. The next "barter" and later money provided and standard of value permitting market place transactions in peasant societies. Finally, the peasant dualism between subsistence and trade has been replaced in some part of the world by the specialisation of modern economy and periodic markets and fairs by highly articulated array of market centers".

Periodic markets in their varied forms have been common in Indian sub-continent for about past 4,500 years, i.e. from the

1. James .H. Stine (1962): Temporal Aspects of Tertiary Production Element in Korea, Eugene, Ore., pp.68 -78.

2. B.J.L. Berry (1967): Geography of Market Centers and Retail Distribution , Prentice Hall, New York.

3. Ibid., pp 106-107.

time of Harappan civilization. It also reflects the relative maturity of a sedentary agricultural civilization. There must be some agricultural and artisan surplus, crop specialization and at least quasi-monetization of the economy. In the context of the long history of peasant farming in India, periodic markets in the Indian sub-continent is as old as the farming system itself.

As stated earlier periodic markets are characteristics feature of all 'peasant societies'. By 'peasant society' we mean overwhelming dependence of the economy on agriculture, dominance of food production in agriculture, excessive land dependence, small holding sizes, petty commodity production and limited level of monetization of the economy. Therefore, in such societies the periodic market symbolises the 'direct contact between the producer and the consumer' characterised by traditional norms of exchange like barter, measurement by number or volume of goods, petty transactions, but also as a 'social gathering' where information related to daily lives of the surrounding settlements (villages), the vital functions (birth, death and marriage), transaction of 'usury' loans, marriage negotiation, dispensation of judicial functions by panchayats (in the Indian condition), transaction of domestic animals etc. are carried out. In a nutshell, the periodic market in a traditional (peasant) society plays an all integrative role, economic and social for the surrounding villages.

Some of the notable significance of the periodic markets are :-

1. These are centers where producer directly confronts the consumer for exchange of goods, services and information.

2. In the periodic markets producers are mainly peasants and

consumers are also the rural people or urban middlemen.

3. The periodic market centers are the growth points of the rural space, due to the nature of centrality of their location and optimal accessibility to the people living in surrounding areas.

The present study relates to the comparative study of the genesis, morphology, function and system of periodic markets in the tribal areas of the North East India, specially in the State of Meghalaya and the peasant society of Assam, (as a case study of) Jorhat district. In comparison with peasant societies, tribal societies being relatively subsistence based, have a low surplus base. Infact, many tribes may not have any periodic markets (specially in Manipur, Nagaland etc.) while they might participate in some markets.

But in Meghalaya there are a number of periodic markets which play a vital role in the lives of the people. The case study relates to the Khasi Schedule Tribes (Nongpoh P.S., East Khasi Hills District). Some of the notable significance of the periodic markets in the Meghalaya are as follows :

1. The periodic markets are of relatively of recent origin in the area due to the quasi-peasant and quasi-gathering type of economy.

2. High female participation in the market.

3. The (special) local calendar of eight day cycle is used for the determination of the market day etc.

4. Paucity of tradable goods but overwhelming dominance of forest produce in the basket of goods traded by the rural people emanating from gathering activities.

Though Jorhat is a vital cultural and administrative centre of Assam, its rural scene is in a deplorable condition. Growth of the tea gardens and prosperity did not bring much change in the lifes of people in rural Jorhat.

The comparative study of the periodic markets of tribal area and peasant society will be interesting as well as it will help in understanding the modus operandi of transaction in the tribal and peasant situation.

However, once one moves out from the peasant agricultural system to the tribal economy, all the logics of the genesis of the periodic markets get upturned. In a strict sociological sense tribal economy is a subsistence economy, whether sedentary or not (whether agricultural or nomadic), where the role of surplus (to be exchanged) is extremely limited, except for the purpose of gift, social status and rituals. They are also non-monetised. However, such a purely sociological category of tribal society is a rarity in modern times. In India, the nomenclature is the Schedule Tribes (ST), which at present we are dealing with. In many Scheduled Tribe areas, one thus finds periodic markets. In some cases the history of those markets is recent and in some cases, old. The pattern of development and expansion of these markets into tribal communities depended on to a great extent on their social history, particularly on the proximity and type of interaction with the neighbouring peasant societies, the nature of the periodic market system, its spatial and economic structure and functioning in the tribal and peasant economies, the commodities of exchanged, the modalities of exchange and the overall impact of these markets on those communities. It provides a fascinating realm of possibilities worth exploring. With this picture in mind, the present study is contemplated on the predominantly tribal State of Meghalaya and peasant society of Assam.

The main differences between the tribal and peasant systems

could be as follows :

1. Periodic markets of tribal areas started late because of the prevalent subsistence economy and lack of surplus for exchange. In these areas the role of (agricultural and artisan) surplus (to be exchanged) is extremely limited, the major purpose of exchange be of non-economic nature, especially for the purpose of gift, social status and rituals.

2. Periodic markets started at the border areas and interface between tribal and peasant societies. In the peasant societies periodic market have a long history although they originated in river banks. Now in the modern times, this spatial structure of the periodic market in the peasant societies or non-tribal areas more uniformly distributed following the Christaller's principle of central place. But in the tribal areas periodic markets are located along the main routes of transportation.

3. Conceptualization of trade and economic interaction between the peasant and the tribal culture groups, i.e. the hill regions and the valley regions in the context of the dualistic situation as stated, is to be viewed in the light of the nature of the economies, product specialisations and surplus generated in these economies. In response to emerging crop specialisation and surplus, some internal trade did emerge in the valleys, as evidenced from the number of periodic markets, observed in which the trade transactions were largely carried out by barter, but to some extent through money, under the supervision of the Ahom Kings. On the otherhand, in the hills within the cul-de-sacs of the tribes there was a complete absence of internal market, be it the Meghalaya plateau, the NEFA tribal areas or Lushai culture areas. This may be explained a posteriori<sup>4</sup> because of the complete absence of surplus in these economies.

In the economic aspects the periodic markets in the tribal society have a dependent structure in the sense that the major traders and commodities come from cities and from outside the regional economy.

In the tribal areas petty commodity production and limited level of transaction are the major limiting factors for development of a mature periodic market system.

4.A.C.Mohapatra (1990):" Location pattern of markets in Pre- & Early British period in N.E.India",Proc.of NEIHA, NEIHA, Shillong, pp.347-354.

4. In the non-tribal areas, there is a considerable balance of trade between urban and rural areas. In the plain areas, periodic market system is fully integrated with the urban hierarchy.

## 1.2. Objective

Periodic markets have been existing since long under different geographical and social environment. They have great potential for being used as centres of socio-economic transformation of the rural masses. Although there are numerous studies on periodic markets elsewhere, there is practically no systematic study on the North-East India.

It is proposed to probe deep into the nature of the periodic market system, the distributional pattern, zone of influence, nature of influence and impact upon socio-economic transformation of the rural areas etc. under the present study, as the traditional periodic markets act as the most important service centres for the rural masses. The village economy can be well understood through the study of the periodic markets.

Therefore, the main objectives of the study are as the following:

1. To study the evolution and expansion of periodic markets in the North-East India with evidence from historical records, in specific relationship to their genesis in the plains (peasant) areas and hill (tribal) areas.

2. To make a comparative study between periodic market systems of tribal economies and peasant economies in the North-Eastern region of India, specifically with reference to the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya and the peasant society of Jorhat district of Assam.

3. To study the structure of the periodic markets in relation to their morphology, commodity mix and transaction system and locational attributes.

4. To study the process of integration of the rural economy (both in tribal and non-tribal areas) with the overall economy through the possible mediation of the periodic market system.

5. Finally, to study the consequences of expansion of market system in the rural areas in form of periodic markets and its impact on rural economy.

### 1.3 Research Questions:

The study aims at understanding certain basic issues related to the periodic market system in North-Eastern region and therefore, would raise the following questions while studying the situations :

- (i) What is the nature of development of periodic market in the region? Are the historical and social forces similar to those operative in other parts of the sub-continent? What role did traditionally such periodic markets play in social and economic evolution of the region?
- (ii) Are there qualitative differences between periodic markets in the tribal and peasant areas? If so, what conditions and factors lead to such differences and what are their ramifications?
- (iii) What are the spatial and economic characteristics of the periodic markets in the region? Do they operate as a system of markets or independent of each other? What are the factors responsible for integrating the rural hinterland with the market system?
- (iv) What long term impact do periodic markets have on the rural economy, both in the hill areas as well as in the plains?

### 1.4 Hypothesis:

The following hypotheses are proposed to be tested while studying the problem:

1. In the existing literature, there are two major hypothesis regarding the origin of periodic markets (a) the 'evolutionary genesis' model and (b) the 'contactual genesis' model. It is proposed that " the contactual genesis model of evolution of periodic markets is generally applicable in the North-East region."

This is because of the co-existence of peasant and tribal economic systems in close proximity and interaction, the former with tradable surplus and the latter without any but the interface of the two areas provided opportunity of periodic exchange of goods and services.

2. It is proposed that "the areal extent of service limits of the periodic markets are closely related to the density of population within the given region".

This position will result in greater close spacing of periodic markets in plains than in the hills. Moreover, while some amount of uniform spacing could be expected in the plains, the location in the hills will ultimately depend on the nature of communication and accessibility to the people.

3. It is proposed to evaluate that "the 'travel distance' of buyers and sellers is directly proportional to the size of the market and its specialisation in goods and services".

This is because of the fact that the periodic market system captures a threshold market by adjusting the frequency (periodicity) and amplitude (the density of individual frequencies, i.e. the density of interaction between the buyers and the sellers). When the market increases in size, the frequency increases (decline in the time interval) leading finally to a permanent market.

4. It is proposed to evaluate that "the periodic markets integrate the space economy of the otherwise dispersed villages of the hinterland and form the first contact point of the rural economy with the overall economic system."

This may not be always beneficial to the rural economy, particularly in its early phases of integration due to possible 'backwash effect' of the advanced sectors within the economy. It is likely that the rural economy is trapped in a system of unequal exchange which has serious adverse impact on the rural economy and the people. This may, in fact, be what is actually happening in the region, especially in the S.T. dominated areas.

5. There is a considerable view currently debated in the country that "primitive accumulation" i.e. transference of value from

rural to urban areas has led to stagnation, even underdevelopment of the rural areas. If the forces are similar in the North-Eastern Region as elsewhere in the country, then a major hypothesis can be tested through the transaction of periodic markets in the region, since it is through these markets that the rural and urban produce get largely exchanged. Then the hypothesis can be framed in the following manner :

"Due to the dependence relationship of the village economy and its subservient position to the urban (modern) economy there is a considerable value transfer from the rural to urban, largely effectuated through the periodic markets of the region."

### 1.5 Survey of Literature

Over the last decade or so, Geography of Marketing has emerged as a sub-field of geography on its own right. Markets emerge as a specific locational feature in space in response to the level and nature of the economy. Therefore, the characteristics of markets are indicative of the level and pattern of interaction in the given economic space.

The need for a 'geography of marketing' has been discussed by William Applebam<sup>5</sup>. He argued that the study of marketing has been generally neglected by geographers inspite of the fact that a large section of the working populaion is engaged in marketing functions and large parts of the landscape are devoted to structure of wholesale and retail trade and the complex channels of distribution leading from the producer to consumer.

Broadly the field of Geography of marketing can be classified into two on the basis of location, i.e the urban and rural

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5. William Applebam (1954): Marketing Geography: American Geography: Inventory and prospect, Syracuse University, pp.245-251.

markets. Studies related to the location, retail markets and their structure in urban areas are within the scope of urban market studies. Studies related to periodic markets and distribution of retail outlets in the rural areas forms the other group.

6

B.J.L. Berry (1966) was one of the pioneers in the study of markets in the context of geographical space. Berry's work is mainly related to urban markets which is one of the pioneering studies in this field. Moreover, his discussions on Central Place Theory provides immense scope to study rural markets as central places.

7

8

R.J. Bromley & Richard Symanski (1974) and G.M. Good (1975) have developed models and believe that periodic markets result from and persist because of the need of producers, the organization of time inertia and comparative advantage. Their paper "The Rationale of Periodic Markets" focuses on society, custom and tradition to explain the existence and persistence of periodic markets.

9

Cyril. S. Belshaw (1965) defined that "Exchange pattern are among the most important social relationships which bind society together and they affect all aspects of social life". Trade is a concrete frame of exchange and thus may serve as a major index of social structure.

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6. B.J. Berry (1966), Op.Cit., pp 1-139.

7. R.J. Bromley and R. Symanski (1974), "Market Development and Ecological Complex", Professional Geographer, Vol- 26, pp.382-388.

8. G.M. Good (1975), "periodic Markets and Travelling Traders in Uganda", Geographical Review, Vol- 45, pp.49-72.

9. Cyril.S. Belshaw (1965): Traditional Exchange and Modern Markets, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, pp. 5-79.

10

J.H.Stine (1962) has provided the best theoretical statement so far for an understanding of the functional basis of a periodic market. He explains the nature of periodic marketing in Christallerian term. He also discusses the concept of maximum and minimum range.\*

Traders are as important as consumers in the periodic market system. The study of their behaviour is very important in any study of the marketing system. An extensive literature is found on periodic markets explaining some of the characteristics of traders specially their location, their cost of trading and pattern of their spatial behaviour. In addition to these, contribution of Hay (1977) and Weber and Symanski (1973) are also very important. Webber and Richard Symanski, on the basis of economic model, say that periodic marketing of frequently consumed goods will be replaced by permanent shops or daily market where there is a high density of demand and a low friction of distance.

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10. J.H.Stine (1962): "Temporal Aspects of Teritary Production Elements in Korea." in F.R.Pitss (ed.) Urban Systems and Economic Development, University of Oregon.

\* The "Maximum range" of goods is the distance at which the marginal consumer is located from central facility. The "minimal range" is an entirely different concept related to profit level of the farm.

11. A.M.Hay (1977): "Some Altrnatives in Economic Analysis of periodic Marketing, Geography Analysis," Economic Geography, Vol-49, pp. 72-79.

12. M.J.Webber & R.Symanski (1973), "Periodic Markets; An Economic Location Analysis." Economic Geography, Vol- 49, pp.213-227.

13: G.W.Skinner (1964), "Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China", Journal of Asian Studies, Part-I, Vol- 24, pp 5-31.

14. Carol A.Smith (1972), "Market Articulation and Economic Startification in Western Guatemala", Food Research Institute Studies, Vol -11, pp 203-233.

15. Stuart Planter (1975), " Rural Marketing Networks", Scientific American, Vol -232, pp66-79.

13 14

G.W.Skinner (1964), Carol A. Smith (1972) and Stuart Planter  
15  
(1975) have applied economic location theory to explain periodic  
markets and function of different settlements within the regional  
social systems.

16

Skinner (1964-65) made an extensive study of exchange system  
of rural China in the pre-communist take over period. He gave a  
great deal of attention to the central place theory of Christaller  
and tried to apply the basic principles of the theory to his  
analysis of rural markets of China.

17

Symanski (1973) in his study of internal and external  
organization of periodic markets, hypothesised that if periodic  
markets meet more than once during an interval, then it will  
exhibit a "Major Market Day" and a "Minor Market Day". He further  
hypothesised that within a market interval the "Minor Market Day"  
is located as to be midway between two "Major Market Day". At  
least two attempts have been made to test his hypothesis by Thorpe  
18 19  
(1974) in the Caspian Littoral and Bromley (1975) in Equador, but  
could only partially confirm them.

20

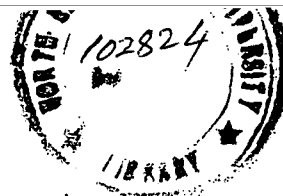
Fegerlund and Smith (1970) proposed on admirably simple  
16. B.W.Skinner (1964-65), "Marketing and Social Structure in  
China", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol- 24, pp195-228.

17. R.Symanski (1973), "God, Food and Consumer in Periodic  
Market System," Proceeding Associations of American  
Geographers, Vol-5 pp262-266.

18. K.J.Thorpe (1974), "Cyclic Markets and Central Place  
System: The Changing Temporal and Locational spacing of Markets in  
the Caspian Littoral of Iran", I.B.G. Study on Developing Areas.

19. R.J.Bromley (1975), "Periodic and Daily Markets of High  
Land Equador", University of Cambridge.

20. Vernon B.Fegerlund and Robert H.T.Smith (1970), "A  
Preliminary Map Market Periodicities in Ghana", Journal of  
Developing Areas, Vol- 4, pp 333-348.



working hypothesis that, proximity in space implies separation in time; put another way spatial and temporal competition are complementary; i.e. market located closer to each other are separated by time interval and vice versa.

21

Good (1972) noted periodism is a conspicuous and nearly universal characteristics of rural market place in traditionally agrarian society. Good demonstrated that inverse relationship between time intervals and physical spacing exists in periodic markets in Ghana and the Ancole region of Uganda.

22

B.W.Hodder (1965) in his "endogenous theory" sees market as originating from local exchange and demands. Eventually the scale of local trading activity increases and generates external relation and long distance trade.

23

24

Henri Pirenne (1925), Max Weber (1927) and Karl Polanyi, C.M.Arensberg & H.W.Pearson (1957), in their "exogenous theory" argues that trade and markets can not originate from local demands, but must be based on external relations, local markets are seen to originate from the stimulus of outside traders and availability of non-local goods.

21. Charles M. Good (1972), "Periodic Markets: A problem in Locational Analysis," The Professional Geographer, Vol- 24, pp.210.

22. B.W.Hodder (1965): "Some Comments on the Origins of Traditional Markets in Africa South of the Sahara", Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, No- 36, pp. 97-105.

23. Henry Pirenne (1925): Medieval Cities, Princeton University Press (1925), pp. 75-91.

24. Max Weber (1927): General Economic History, (London: George Allen and Unwin) pp 202- 222.

25. Karl Polanyi, C.M.Arensberg & H.W.Pearson (1957): Trade and Market in the Early Empires, Glencoe, Illinois; Free Press.

Periodic market in Europe and North America have been seen to rely on a seven day market intervals, there are some part of Asia and Africa where different lengths of market interval have also been noted (Skinner 1964-65<sup>26</sup> and Hodder 1961-65<sup>27</sup>). The frequency of the days on which the market meet can show whether or not any particular day within a market interval is favoured as the most convenient day for meeting. Some studies of the periodic market seem to be convinced that the frequency of the choice of the market day is a sufficient factor by itself in explaining the basis structure of periodic markets in a region (Hill and Smith 1922, Thorpe 1974)<sup>28</sup><sup>29</sup>.

However work of Good (1970)<sup>30</sup>, Jane Payre (1971)<sup>31</sup>, Murdi (1965)<sup>32</sup>, are also equally important in the study of periodic markets.

Studies on rural markets by Indian geographers is of only recent origin. S. Singh's (1965)<sup>33</sup> contribution on a central place approach to rural market is notable. Saxena's (1984)<sup>34</sup> Geography of marketing is a recent addition to this literature.

26. Skinner (1964-65), Op. Cit., pp 3- 45 & 195- 228.

27. B.W.Hodder(1961-65), "Rural Periodic Day Markets in a Part of Yorubaland." Transaction and Papers, I.B.B., Vol-29, pp149- 159.

28. Hill and Smith (1972), "The Spatial and Temporal Synchronisation of Periodic Markets : Evidence from four Emirates of Northern Nigeria", Economic Geography, Vol- 48, pp 345-355.

29. K.J.Thorpe (1974), Op.Cit., pp 150-159.

30.C.M.Good (1970), "Rural Markets and Trades in East Africa", Department of Geography, University of Chicago.

31.Jane Payre(1971): "Farmers Markets in the United States, functional Anachronism", The Geographical Review , Vol.LXY, No- 2, p-171.

32.A.R.Murdi(1965): "Cultural Diffusion in Consumers Travel", Economic Geography, Vol -41, No-1, p-211.

33. S.M.Singh (1965), " The Stability Theory of Rural Central Place Development", National Geographical Journal of India, Vol-4, pp 13-21.

34. H.M.Saxena (1984), Geography of Marketing, Delhi.

35

Shiw Mangal Singh (1965) defined that the co-existence of rural periodic and urban daily market indicates a potential transition towards permanent commercial activities in modernizing urban areas.

36

Tamaskar (1984) emphasized the importance of rural markets as centres of spatial diffusion. The work of Wanmali (1981) on periodic markets within a system of distribution of goods and services is noteworthy. He also suggests improvements on the existing system of distribution of goods and services in the rural areas.

38

A study by Borthakur (1986) on the rural markets of Assam is a welcome addition.

39

Singh's (1983) work on rural market is also worth mentioning.

40

Bromley (1973) classified all traders into eight categories on the basis of type of goods traded and time spent in the periodic market. Similarly, Wanamali who studied traders behaviour in the periodic markets of Singhbhum area. He however subdivided into major traders group into few other groups. Wanmali's work was carried out in an Indian situation and therefore, has some

41

35. Shiw Mangal Singh (1965), "The stability Theory of Rural Central Place Development", National Geographical Journal of India, Vol-11, pp.13-21.

36. B.G.Tamaskar (1984), "The Role of Periodic Market Places as Centre of Diffusion", The Deccan Geographer, Vol -xxii, 3, pp.520-525.

37. S.Wanmali (1981), Periodic Markets, Rural Development in India, New Delhi.

38. S.Borthakur (1986), "Rural Market of Plain Area: A Case Study of Jorhat District", Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation.

39. L.R.Singh (1983), "Spatial Planning of Rural Markets in India", National Geographer, Vol-xvii, No- 2, p 194.

40. Bromley (1973), Op.Cit., pp382-392.

41. S.Wanmali (1981): op.cit., p. 15.

relevance particularly with the behaviour of traders in the study area.

### 1.6 Introduction to the Study Area :

The area of the study of periodic markets are from the Jorhat district of Assam and the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. (Map 1.1. Shows the location of Assam and Meghalaya).

Assam is one of the important states of North-East India. It is bounded on the North by Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh and on the east by Arunāchal Pradesh. Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Meghalaya states lie on its southern boundary. The western boundary of Assam is bordered by Tripura, West Bengal, Bangladesh. It occupies an area of 78,438 sq. km. Assam is physiographically divided into three parts: - (i) The Plains, (ii) The Plateau and (iii) the Hill region.

The state is divided into twenty three districts. (Map.1.2 shows the administrative districts of Assam).

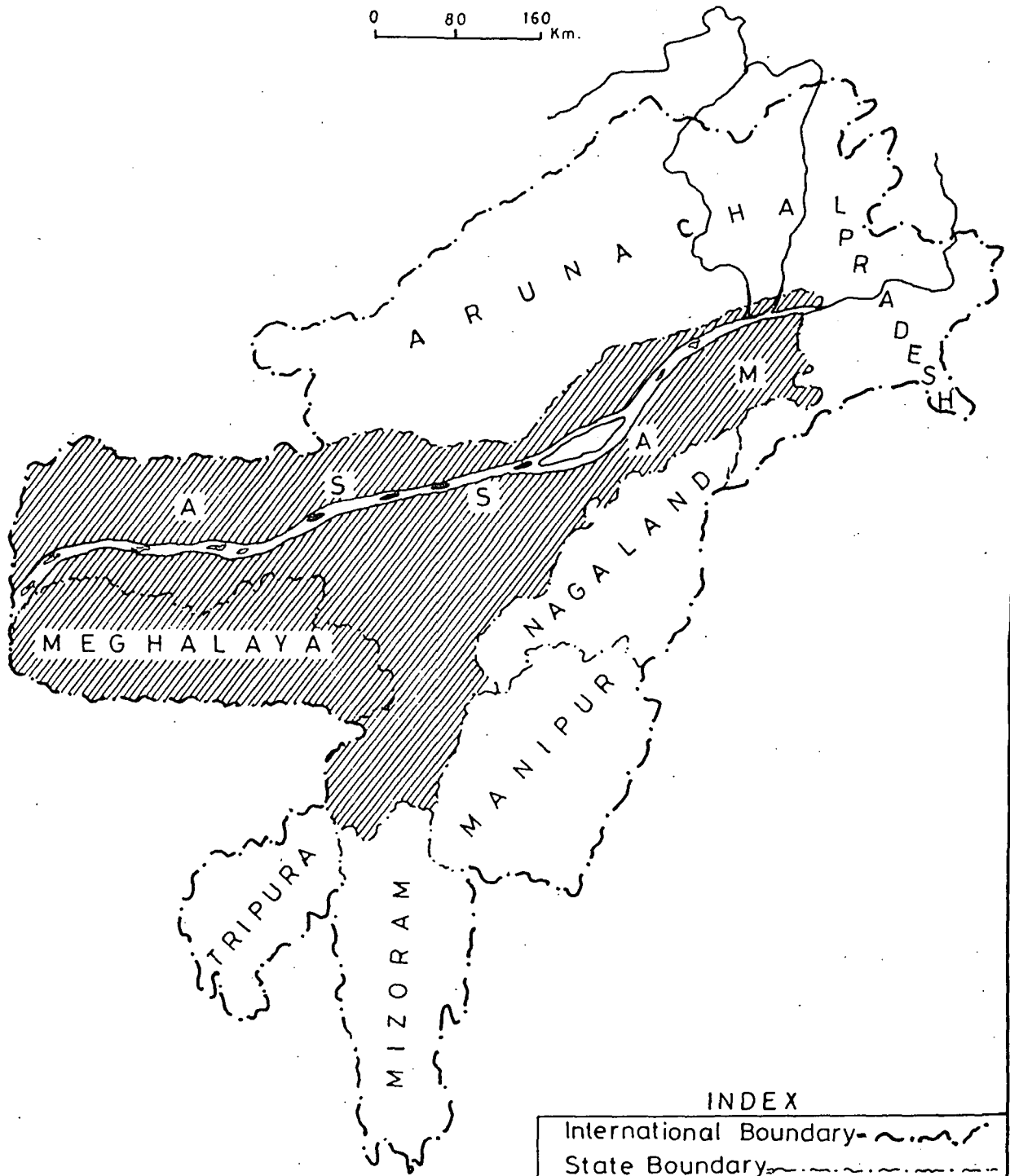
Jorhat is located in the central part of the Assam valley. The district is bordered by newly created Sonitpur and Lakhimpur districts in the North and Naga Hills in the south. In the western side of the district, there lies Golaghat district, while Sibsagar district is situated to the east. (Map 1.3 shows the location of Jorhat District)

#### 1.6.1 Historical Background :

The emergence of Jorhat as an important place in the history of Assam dates back to the eighteenth century. Prior to this, i.e. before 1790 it was only a rural market place with two hats (markets), namely Chakirhat and Macharhat, the former dealing in  
42  
42. Hiteswar Barbarua (1933): Jorhat Nagarer Katha, (Assamese pub) in Amar Desh Ist Vol.2 Jorhat, pp.140-150.

# NORTH EAST INDIA LOCATION OF ASSAM AND MEGHALAYA

0 80 160 Km.



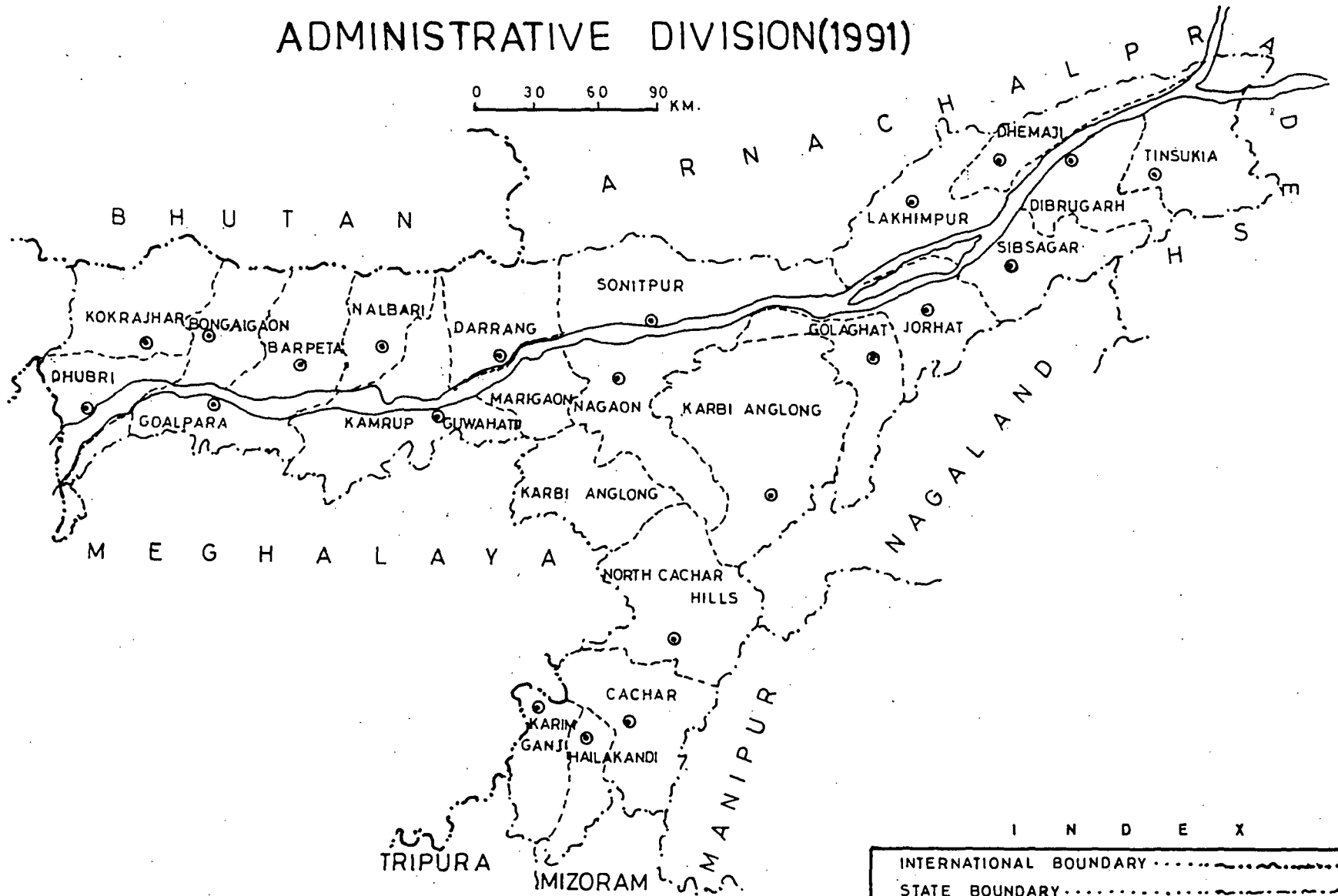
### INDEX

- International Boundary - - - - -
- State Boundary . . . . .
- River ————

Map. 1.2 /

# ASSAM ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION(1991)

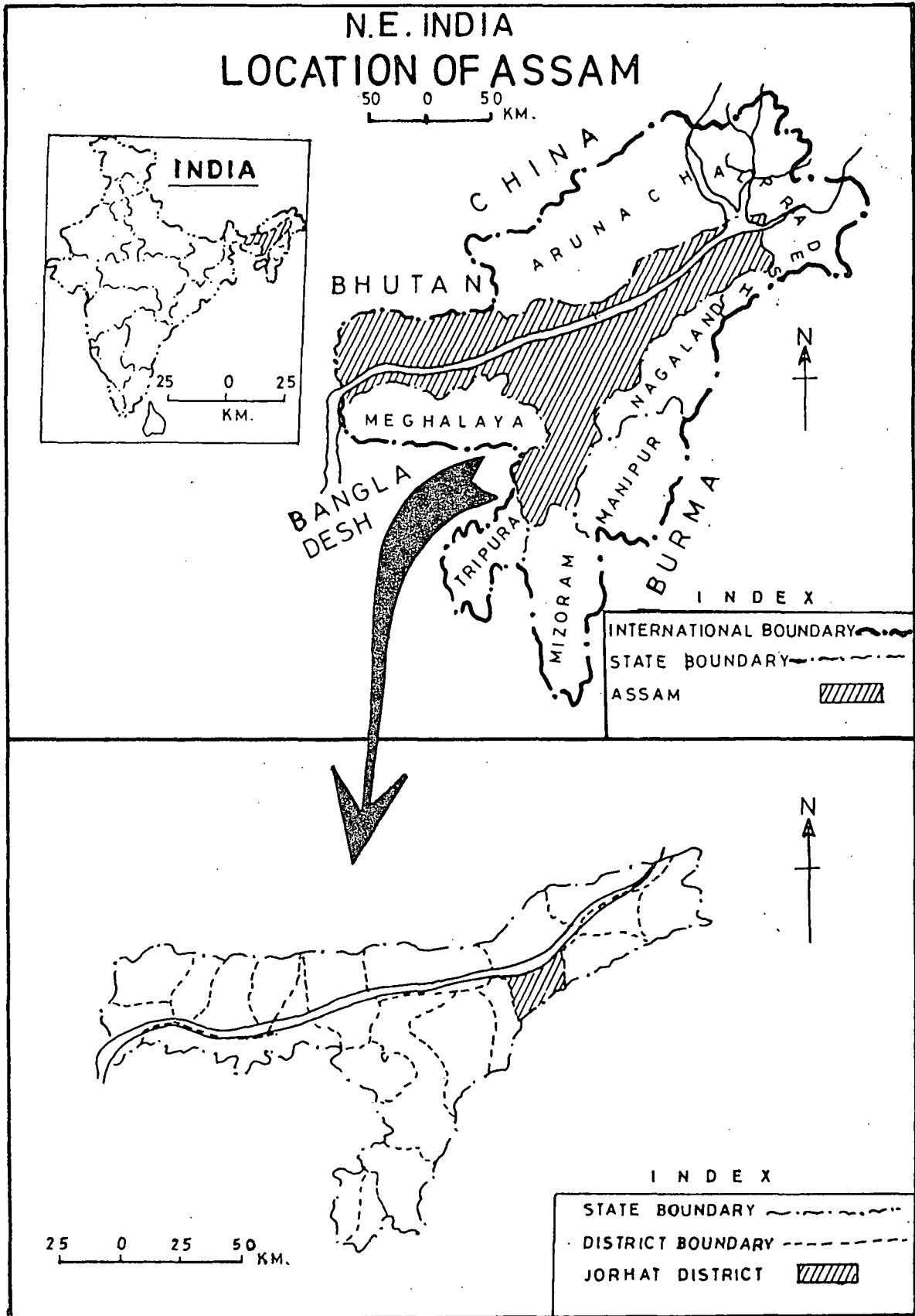
0 30 60 90 KM.



### I N D E X

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY	.....
STATE BOUNDARY	.....
DISTRICT BOUNDARY	.....
DISTRICT HEAD QUARTERS	..... ●

Map 1.2



Map13

general merchandise and latter in fish. The name 'JORHAT' (literally speaking, 'two markets') originated during the reign of Ahom King, Gaurinath Singh (1780-1795). Before it was popularly known as DESOIBAHAR, because it was a temporary rest place or 'Bahar' for the King Gaurinath Singh.

The history of Jorhat cannot be separated from the history of Assam. It was under the influence of Bodo Kings. The presence of Bodo words in the names of rivers like Di-sai, Di-hing indicates clearly the domination of Bodo group of people during the early pre-Ahom period.<sup>43</sup>

Jorhat district was the meeting ground for various tribal and non-tribal groups, coming from both the west and east and the hill tracts of south. The economy of pre-Ahom period was subsistence in nature. Shifting cultivation was prevalent in the region.

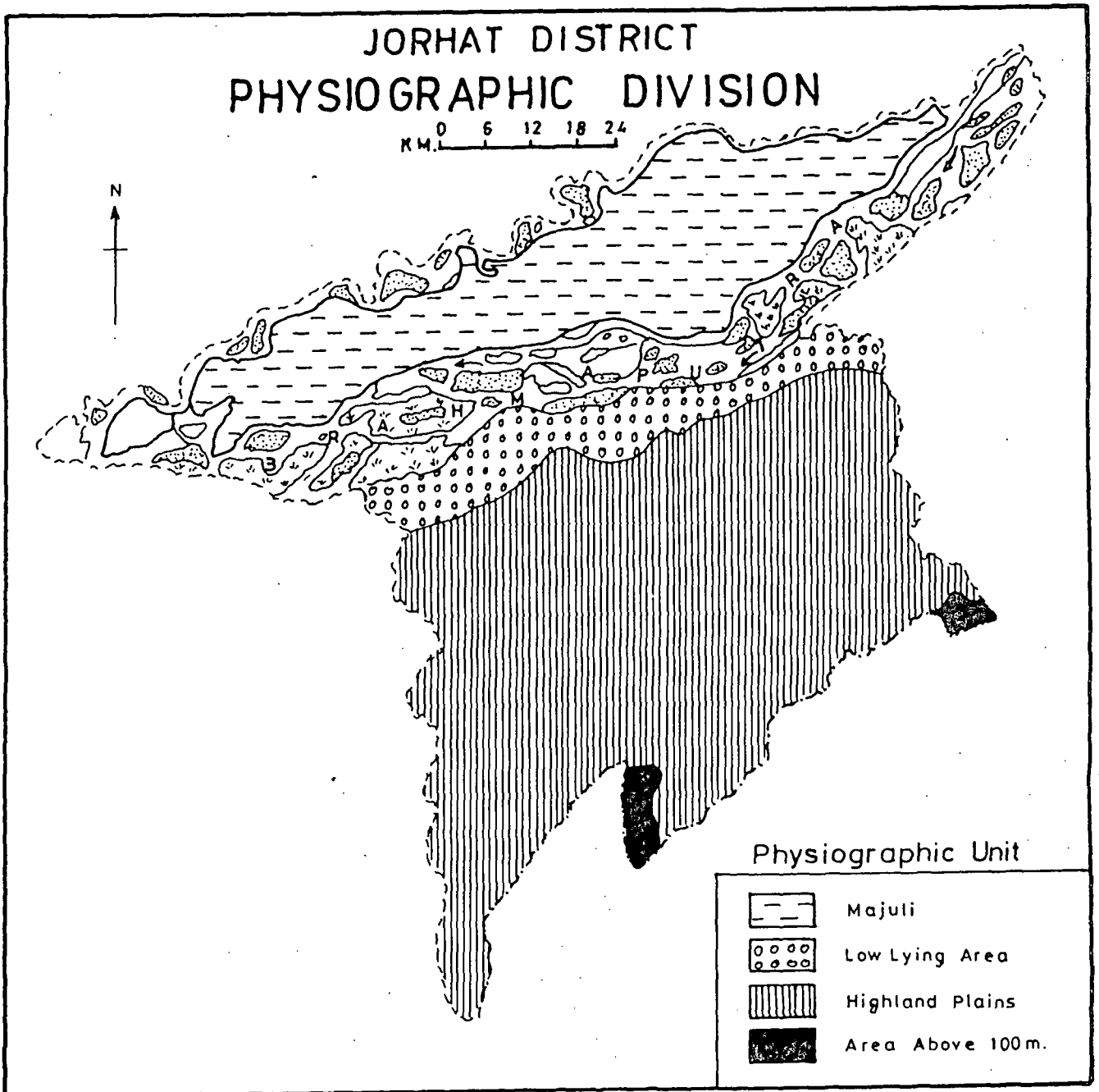
During the Ahom period, the people of the Brahmaputra valley developed both external and internal trade. Ahom Kingdom established a good relation not only with different tribes living within their territory but also with the surrounding communities. The power of Ahom King started declining from the Moamoria revolt and in 1862 whole territory of the Upper Assam was placed under the British administration.

#### 1.6.2 Physiography :

The whole of Jorhat district is physiographically a part of the riverine plain of the Brahmaputra and mainly composed of alluvial deposits. Physiographically the district can be divided into three regions. (a) Low lying areas to the North. (b) High land plains (older alluvium) and (c) Majuli( Island).Map. 1.4

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43. K.Tamuli Phukan (1906): Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, pp. 60-74.



Map.1.4

Shows the physiographic division of Jorhat District.

(a) Lowlying Areas to the North : Along the course of Brahmaputra, Jorhat district is bounded by depressed and low lying areas covered with several bills and shallow swamps. The adjacent low lying areas are thinly populated by Mishing and Nepali population.

(b) High Land Plains : It is situated in the southern part of the flood plain and low lying areas. The southern part is occupied by Naga hills. This is a wide homogeneous plain formed by depositional work of the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

(c) Majuli : To the north there lies the largest river island of the world, Majuli, occupying an area of 924.6 sq. km. The whole island is formed as a result of the depositional work of the river Brahmaputra and Subansiri.

#### 1.6.3 Soil :

The soil of Jorhat district is acidic in character. It can be divided into two broad categories - alluvial and lateritic. Alluvial soil can be further divided into two types - new alluvium and old alluvium.

#### 1.6.4. Climate :

The climatic condition of the Jorhat district cannot be separated from the Brahmaputra valley as a whole. Heavy rainfall takes place during the summer monsoons. Winter is cool and dry. January is the coldest month of the year (9.8 °C). The highest temperature occurs in July (31.8 °C). The average annual rainfall is 2,197.0 mm. per year.

### 1.6.5 Natural Vegetation :

The climate and soils of the district are suitable for plant growth. The vegetation can be grouped into three broad categories, i.e. (a) Tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests (eastern and southern parts) (b) Riverine forests (northern part specifically in Majuli Island) and (c) Swamp forests (southern bank of the Brahmaputra and some parts of the foot hill region).

### 1.6.6. Demographic Structure :

According to 1991 census the total population of Assam is 22,414,322 persons out of which 11,657,989 are males and 10,756,333 are females and in Jorhat district the total population is recorded as 871,206 persons. The rate of population growth in

Table 1.1  
Growth of Population in Assam (district-wise)

State/District	1971-1991
Assam	+ 53.26
Jorhat	+ 33.10
Dhubri	+ 56.57
Kokrajhar	+ 76.78
Bongaigaon	+ 64.64
Goalpara	+ 54.12
Barpeta	+ 43.02
Nalbari	+ 49.27
Kamrup	+ 65.72
Darrang	+ 55.63
Sonitpur	+ 54.14
Lakhimpur	+ 56.29
Dhemaji	+107.50
Morigoan	+ 50.90
Nagoan	+ 51.26
Golaghat	+ 58.12
Sibsagar	+ 38.76
Dibrugarh	+ 37.78
Tinsukia	+ 47.03
N.C.Hills	+ 38.30
Karimganj	+ 42.08
Hailakandi	+ 45.94
Cachar	+ 47.59
Karbi-Anglong	+ 72.79

Source : Collected from Census Office, Guwahati.

Assam during (1971-1991) is (+53.26%), the highest growth rate is in Dhemaji district (107.5%) and the lowest growth rate is in Jorhat district (+33.10%).

Table 1.1 Shows the Decadal Variation in Population (1971-1991) (in percentage).

Map 1.5. Shows the Decadal Variation in Population (1971-1991) (in percentage).

The density of population in the state is 286 persons per square km. Dhubri is the most densely populated district of Assam.

Table 1.2  
Distribution of Density of Population (district-wise)  
(1991 provisional)

District	Density (Per sq.km.)
Dhubri	467
Kokrajhar	N.A
Bongaigaon	N.A
Goalpara	N.A
Barpete	426
Nalbari	449
Kamrup	457
Darrong	370
Sonitpur	266
Lakhimpur	329
Dhemaji	146
Morigaon	N.A
Nogaon	N.A
Golaghat	229
Jorhat	305
Sibsagar	335
Dibrugarh	307
Tinsukia	254
Karbi-Anglong	63
N.C.Hills	31
Karimgonj	456
Hailakandi	338
Cachar	321

Source 1 Assam. Census of India 1991. Series-4.  
Provisional Population Totals  
N.A - Not Available

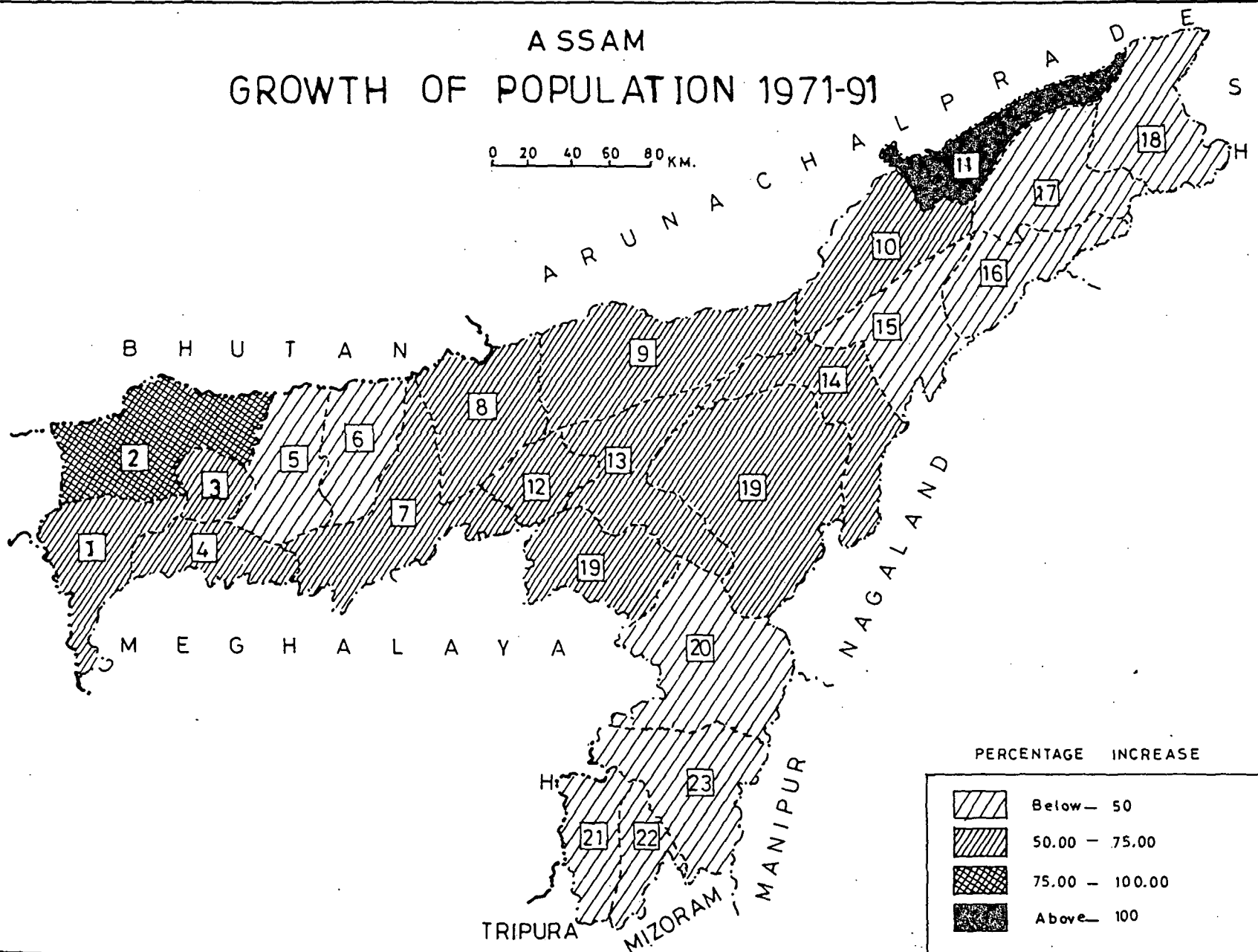
Map 1.6. Shows the District wise density of population of Assam.

The rate of literacy in the state is 52.89%, males 61.87% and

# ASSAM

## GROWTH OF POPULATION 1971-91

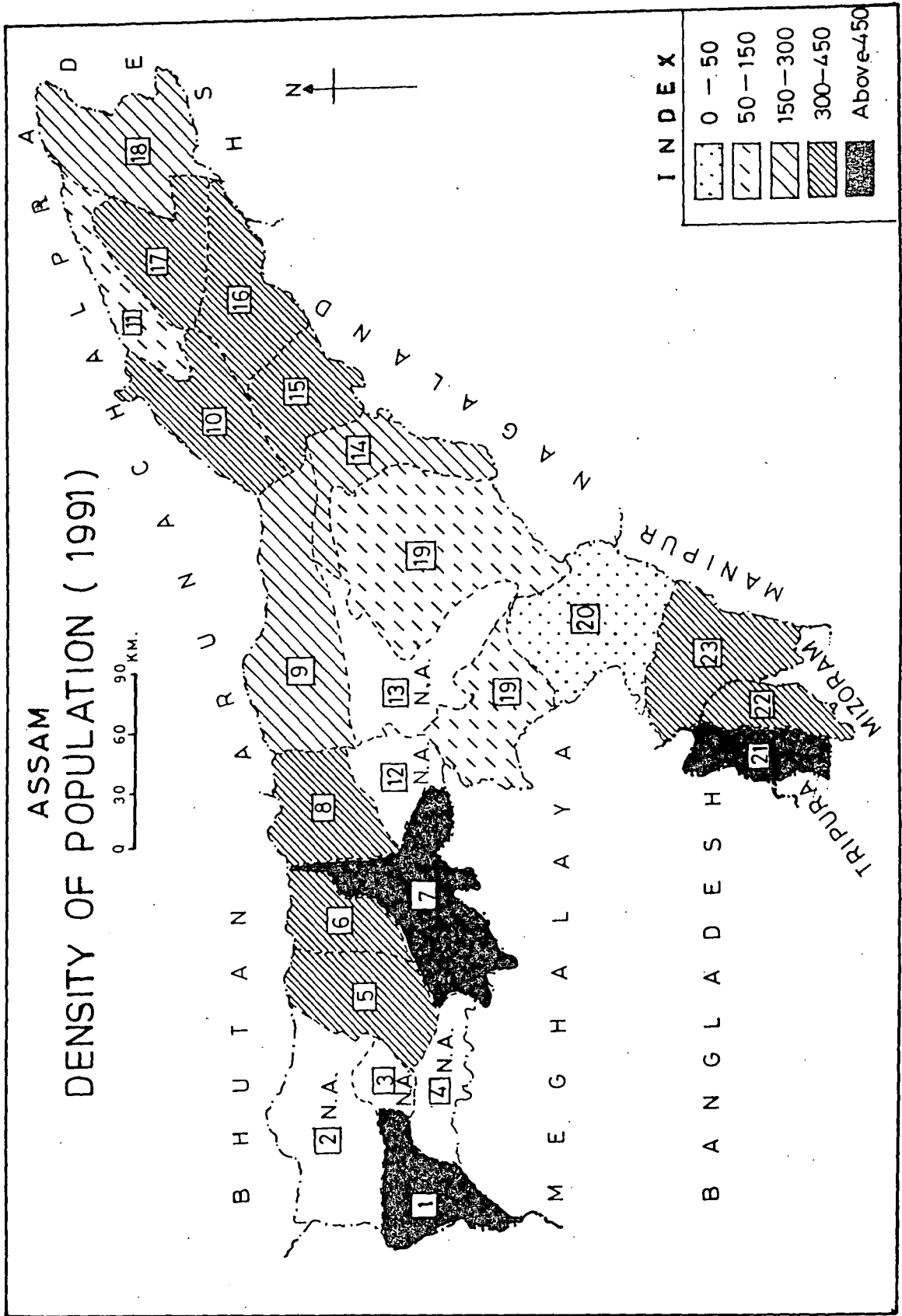
0 20 40 60 80 KM.



PERCENTAGE INCREASE

	Below - 50
	50.00 - 75.00
	75.00 - 100.00
	Above - 100

Map. 1.5



Map: 1.6

females 43.03%. Jorhat district has the highest literacy rate 65.51%, out of which males 73.29% and females 56.88%.

### 1.7 Introduction to the study area of Meghalaya:

Meghalaya literally known "the abode of cloud" (Meghalaya - megh-clouds, Alaya-abode) is one of the most beautiful States of North East India. It occupies an area of 22,429 sq. km. population is recorded 17,747,78 person according to 1991 census. The state of Meghalaya lies between 25 1' N and 26 5' N latitude and 85 49'E and 92 52'E longitude. Meghalaya was previously a part of Assam and came into existence on January 21, 1972. It is bounded on the North by Goalpara, Kamrup, Nowgong and Karbi-Anglong district Assam and on the east by the district of the east by the district of Cachar Hills also of Assam, to the South and West lies Bangladesh.

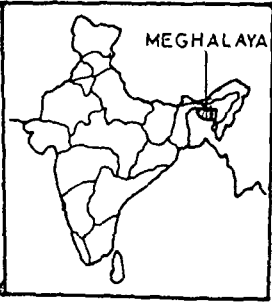
The State is divided into seven (1992) administrative districts. They are (1) Jaintia Hill district (2) East Garo Hill District (3) West Garo Hills (4) East Khasi and (5) Ri-Bhoi (6) West Khasi Hills district (7) South Garo Hills. (Map 1.7 shows the administrative division of Meghalaya)

Physiographically Meghalaya is divided into three physiographic divisions, they are-

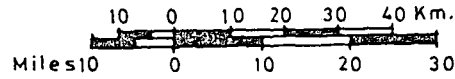
- (1) The central Highlands
- (2) The Southern slopes
- (3) Undulating Northern slopes

The principal rivers of Khasi Hills are Mynkhen, Umiam, Barapani flowing northwards, Umiam Mawphlang and Kynsi flowing southward.

The climate of Meghalaya is largely controlled and influenced by the seasonal winds of the south-west monsoon. The four seasons of Meghalaya are; Spring season - March and April, Summer



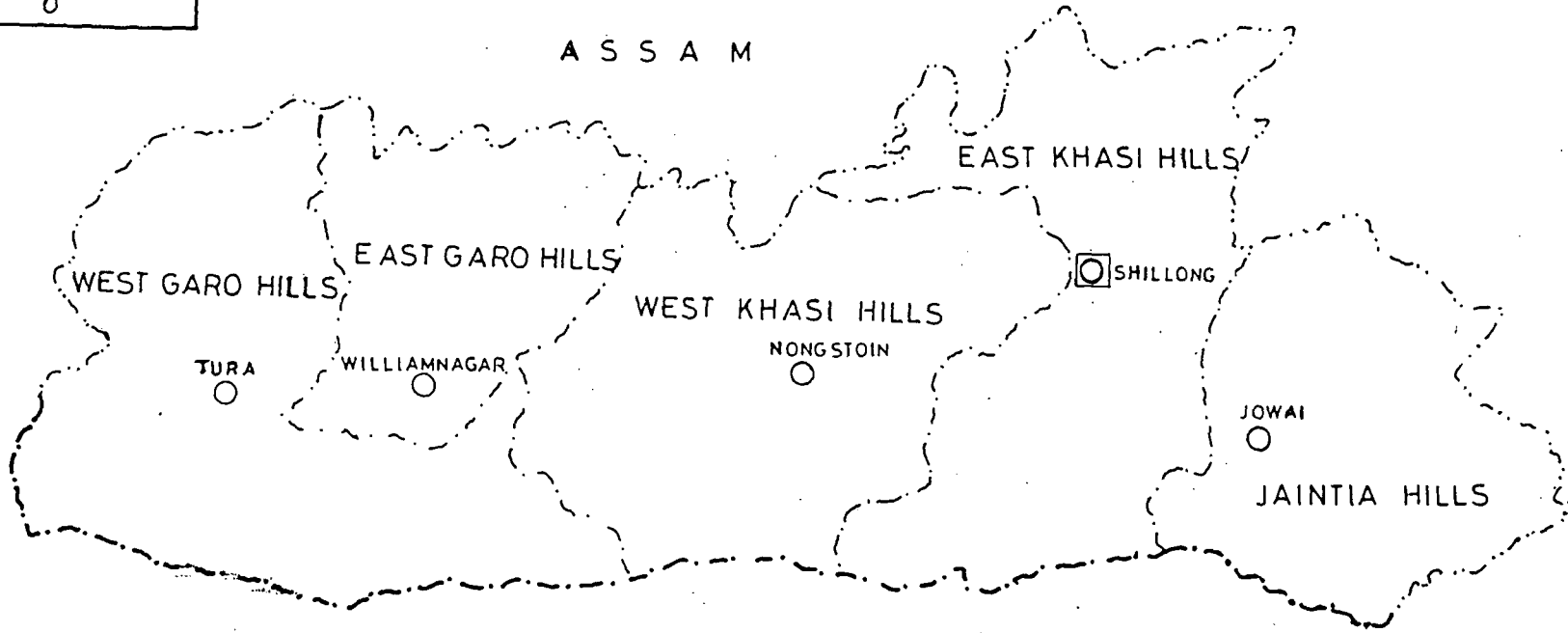
# MEGHALAYA ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS



1991



A S S A M



B A N G L A D E S H

Map 1.7

season -May to September, Autumn season-October and November and winter season- December to February.

The region experiences tropical monsoon climate. The summer temperature record as high as 25 C and the mean winter temperature falling down to 9 C with periodic deviation to below the freezing point. The average annual average rainfall in the state is 12000 mm. Shillong has an annual average rainfall of 2150 mm.

According to the 1991 census, (Final population totals) Meghalaya has a population of 17,74778 of which 9,04308 are males and 8,56318 are females and the total number of literate persons in Meghalaya is 689419, out of which 3,77281 are males and 3,12138 are females. In east Khasi Hills district, total population is 657,160 persons of which 3,41216 are males and 3,15944 are females. Total literate persons are 3,19878 out of which 1,72659 are males and 1,47219 are females. Literacy is the highest in East Khasi Hills district in Meghalaya. Meghalaya is predominantly rural. Over 83 per cent of the states population lives in over 4,902 villages, the average of 188 persons per village. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Meghalaya. The topography, physical features and land conditions as prevailing in the state provide extremely limited scope for extensive cultivation. In spite of all these difficulties, Meghalaya is steadily progressing in the development of agriculture. Rice and maize are the major food crops grown throughout the State. Wheat has been introduced recently and the result is quite encouraging. Potato, jute, mesta, cotton, mustard, ginger, turmeric, betel leaf, tejpata etc. are some of the important cash crops grown in the state.

Some of the important horticulture crops are orange, pineapple, banana, lemon, guava, jackfruit, plum etc. are grown in Meghalaya.

Apart from the above crops, the state has achieved success in the cultivation of tea, mushroom, and tomatoes.

Meghalaya is rich in forest resources. Total forest covered area in Meghalaya is 8510 sq. km.

Important towns of Meghalaya are Shillong, Tura, Jowai, Nongstoin, and Williamnagar, Cherrapanjee, Baghmara.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Database and Methodology**

## Data Base and Methodology

---

The study has been conceptualised at two levels :

(i) at the level of evolution (therefore, historical) of periodic markets in general and in the North-East Region and specifically, in the Plateau of Meghalaya in the 'Khasi cultural area' and the other, peasant areas of Assam in the Jorhat district. (ii) At the second level, the study is articulated on the contemporary periodic market system in the said cultural areas and attempts have been made to study the structure, morphology and economic significance of the periodic markets to the hinterland, the set of rural settlements it is catering to.

### 2.1 Data Base :

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, different sources have been used to collect information.

These are :

(i) Primary Sources : For evolution of trade fairs and origin of periodic markets data has been collected from historical records and other sources of significance. From the historical records five types of data had been collected evolution of periodic markets in North-East Region; (ii) emergence of periodic markets among contrasting cultural groups; (iii) origin of 'trade faires in N.E. Region and (iv) origin of periodic markets in Meghalaya.

The evolutionary approach to the study of periodic markets in the North-East Region demands historical data on the location, nature and volume of transactions of the periodic markets during the pre-British and British Period of the region. From a theoretic-

cal point of view, the emergence of periodic markets has been viewed through two hypotheses; (a) the endogenous, evolutionary route, and (b) the external, contactual genesis route, (these have been dealt in detail in chapter III. Both these models, however, need not be exclusive, while within a dominant peasant society periodic market may emerge as a point of exchange of surplus products in a gradually specialising agriculture. The external contact with another society at the interface of the two may lead to emergence of another set of periodic markets. Possibly, in the case of N.E. Region both are true. At the regional interface of the peasant valley culture and the non-surplus hill culture, a number of periodic markets exist in the Region. The foothills bordering the Arunachal Himalaya, the south of bank of Brahmaputra bordering the Naga Hills and border areas north and south of the Meghalaya plateau were dotted with number of such markets, even before and during the British regime in the area. This aspect of the study is dealt with data from historical sources as outlined earlier.

The second part of the study deals with the structure, Morphology and economic significance of periodic markets in the study area as is in the present time. Since, no systematic data exists on these markets, except their periodicity and location etc., relevant information have been collected through field study of two sets of periodic markets. Three aspects of the markets have been studied (i) The economic base of the markets and their structure which includes the participants of the market, the modes of exchange, the volume of exchange etc. (ii) The second aspect deals with the physical morphology of the market and 'space relations' between them etc. (iii) Finally, the interrelationship between the

market and the hinterland has been studied, particularly, the distance of interaction, periodicity of participants and economic integration of the hinterland brought about by the presence of the market.

The study of the participants in the markets has been dealt with the help of a schedule based interview. Five types of participants have been identified (by visiting the markets) and the schedules have been structured accordingly. The part A of the schedule deals with general information about all the participants. However, the other parts deal specifically with the type of participants. The five types of participants have been grouped first into two categories - (a) Sellers, (b) Buyers. The sellers have been classified into two groups (a)(i) The sellers of non-rural products, and (a)(ii) Sellers of rural produce. The buyers have been classified into 3 types : (b)(i) Buyers of the rural produce, to be transacted elsewhere, (b)(ii) buyers of manufactured produce and (b)(iii) buyers of rural produce for final consumption.

Since no layout map of the markets are available, sketches of the respective markets were thought adequate for the purpose of describing the physical morphology of the market.

The interaction of the market with the hinterland (of surrounding villages) was studied through the participant schedule, in terms of the distance covered, the mode of transport, the type of transaction, the frequency of visits etc. The essence of information was through interview method.

Data was collected from three sample markets in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. They are Nongpoh, Umsning and Iewduh

(Iewduh is considered as a both periodic and permanent market) and in Assam also three markets were taken up. They are : Mariani (which is a permanent market), Debarpara as typical rural market and Hemlai as a tea-garden market.

Next consideration is that in both the areas, markets are taken along the transportation routes.

To collect data from various participants, sample surveys were carried out at each market. Data collection from all the participants was not possible, since the buyers are more numerous than the sellers. An approximate ratio of buyers and sellers was adopted to be appropriately representative of the Universe. The total number of sample was 150 in Meghalaya and 100 in Assam for each markets (no. of sample is less in Assam because compared to Meghalaya buyers and sellers are less). In each market of Assam the distribution of schedules (for interview) was in the following manner a(i) 15, a(ii) 20, b(i) 15, b(ii) 25 and b(iii) 25 and in Meghalaya the distribution of schedules were a (i) 25 a(ii) 30 b(i) 25 b(ii) 35, b(iii) 35. It is thought that the distribution of schedule is representative for each market.

Data had been collected from secondary sources like information from the reports of decadal censuses, district statistical handbooks, and other governmental publications which has been used for analysing the spatial aspects of the periodic markets of the two contrasting areas.

## 2.2 Methods of data analysis

2.21. Geographers make use of statistical techniques for drawing graph, cartograms and maps showing distribution, variation and association of events. The method of representation will depend on

the types of data. For the present study an attempt has been made to use different methods in representing given data in the following way:

To show the density and growth of population choroplething method has been used.

Bar diagrams have been constructed to represent the data to show the number of periodic markets, percentage-wise distribution of periodic markets in both the study areas.

2.2.2. To show the distribution pattern of periodic markets the Nearest Neighbour Technique was applied, one of the most important geographical concepts in analysing spatial distribution. A uniform distribution is a theoretical concept and not a geographical reality, because physical homogeneity, the pre-requisite for a uniform distribution is rare. N.N. analysis was originally developed by plant ecologists Clark and Evans, who were concerned with the distribution pattern of various plant species over the surface of the earth. N.N.A. indicates the degree to which any observed distribution of plants deviates from what might be expected if the points are distributed in a random manner within the same area. The central concept of N.N.A. is randomness, "By definition complete randomness is the midpoint of a continuum of spatial patterns extending from complete clustering to complete uniformity. Losch has already shown that a completely uniform pattern is the same as an hexagonal pattern"<sup>1</sup>

The N.N.A. involves the calculation of a straight line distance from an individual point to its nearest neighbour

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1.M.F.Decay,(1961): "Analysis of central places and point pattern by N.N. method", Lund Studies in Geography, Vol.24, p.60

irrespective of direction. A series of such distances are measured in a given population using all the points, and the value of the mean distance to the N.N. is obtained for this set of observations. The mean distance to the N.N. that would be expected if the points were randomly distributed is also calculated. The ratio of the observed mean distance to the expected mean distance serves as the measure of departure from the randomness. The formula is given below :

$$R_n = \frac{\overline{D_o}}{\overline{D_r}}$$

Where,  $R_n$  is the measure of the degree to which the observed distances depart from or approach the random expectation.  $D_o$  is the observed mean distance to the nearest neighbour. This is obtained by dividing the observed total straight line distances between points.

$D_r$  = the expected mean distance to N.N. in a random distribution.

$$D = \frac{1}{\sqrt{\frac{\text{No. Of total points}}{\text{Area of the region in K.M.}}}} \quad \text{i.e. } \overline{D_r} = \frac{1}{2\sqrt{\frac{N}{A}}}$$

In the other words, the density of observed distribution is expressed as number of individual points per unit area.

The index 'R' can then be used as a measure of the degree to which observed distribution approaches or departs from random expectation. The 'R' value can range only between 0 and 2.1491. In a random distribution  $R = 1$ . Under the condition of maximum aggregation  $R = 0$ , Since all the points occupy the same locus and the distance to the nearest neighbour is 0. In the case  $R = 2.15$ ,

thus, R has a limited range with values indicative of perfectly uniform or random or completely aggregated pattern of distribution. R scale is given below.

Score	Pattern of	Description
0	Clustered pattern	Maximum aggregate and absolute clustering. i.e. all points are at same place, Maximum departure from theoretical randomness
1	Random pattern	No regular pattern of Distribution.
2.1491	Perfectly uniform pattern	Regular hexagonal distribution maximum spacing, highly dispersed, maximum departure from a theoretical random distribution due to regular geometrical planning or process.

2.2.3 : In order to identify, the hierarchy of commercial structure the following formula is used:

$$F1 = \sqrt{\frac{NS \times 100}{TS} \times \frac{NS \times 100}{TN}}$$

Where, F1 = Functional Index

NS = No of shops in a particular functional type at a market.

TS = Total no of shops in that particular function in the town.

TN = Total no of shops in a market.

With the help of functional indices of each type of shops in all markets the specialisation index was calculated for each market by using following formula:

$$SI = \frac{FI}{NF}$$

Where SI = Specialisation index  
FI = Various functional indices  
NF = Number of functions

2.2.4. Centrality analysis of the periodic markets :

With the help of Christaller's central place system hierarchial arrangement of the market system has been studied. Walter Christaller (1933) developed his theory on some basic

assumptions. It assumes that there exists an isotropic plane where population densities and the purchasing capacity of people are uniform.

The theory is based on two premises. One is a set of economic constraints operating on the nature and function of market places. The other is related to the structural regularities found in the optimum location of settlements which provide central functions. The economic constraints are based on what may be called the threshold and range of goods. There must be minimum level of demand for a supplier to survive. Secondly, the maximum distance that the consumers are willing to travel to come to a central place or the maximum distance over which goods and services can be sent and still be sold at a profit, determines the size of the trade area of market place. Following this, centres dealing with goods of daily needs tend to be more numerous and consequently more frequently distributed as they can survive on the more frequent visits of a few consumers. On the otherhand, centres dealing with specialised goods are less numerous and sparsely distributed as they can survive on visits of a large number of people with less frequency. Gradually if optimum conditions prevail, markets of similar type become equally spaced.

Assuming that the consumers may be influenced by the provision of transportation, Christaller developed the transportation principles. The assumption is that the transportation network is optimum and connects all the centres. In this case the smaller centres, instead of locating at mid-points of three larger centres (marketing principle) establish themselves

exactly at the mid-point of two larger centres on the transportation routes (Fig 2.1 D). The central places thus, get established on the sides of hexagons and not at their apexes (Marketing principle). The 'K' proportionality factor becomes four and frequency specifications for central places and trade areas follow the rule of four , (b) Losch's modification - Losch (1950) re-examined central place theory from the point of view of multiplicity of goods and their varying trade areas. He demonstrated that different goods commanded different areas and these would then dictate the locations actually occupied by centres. Thus, alternative trade areas become possible. Losch geometrically fitted and swivelled the entire range of different trade areas about a base set of the smallest centres till a maximum coincidence in location was achieved (Fig. 2.1 F). The stepped hierarchy of central places, as shown by Christaller changes to a size continuum. Lastly, it is not necessary that the centres of similar type will provide similar type of goods.

There is a direct relationship between population size and size of the markets and opposite relationship between number of markets and size of the markets. Large markets are always few in numbers.

#### 2.2.5. Zones of Influence :

Zone of influence is calculated by observation, because of lack of information it is not possible to develop any quantitative technique. In both the study areas, influence zone of a market is calculated in the following manner :

Market centres are plotted on a map and the direction of participants coming from different points is shown by straight

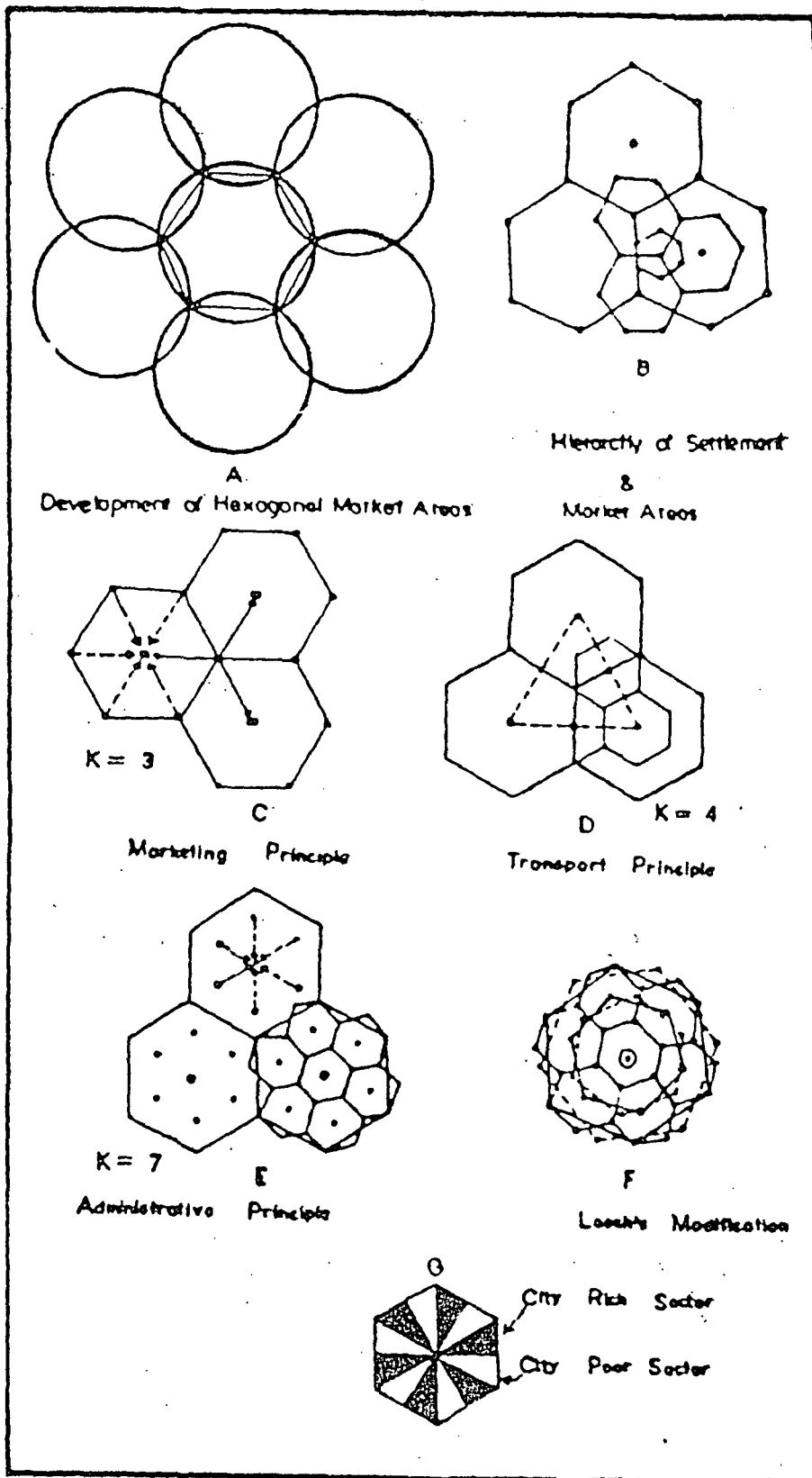


FIG. 2.1 : Central Place Theory

line and then it is covered by a circle. With the help of formula  $2\lambda r^2$ , the zone of influence is calculated. We know that  $r$  = radius of the circle and  $\lambda$  are constants. So zone of influence is  $2\lambda r^2$ .

## 2.2 Periodic Market System :

Two sequences of development of periodic marketing systems are identified by social scientists: 'the standard sequence' and 'Non standard sequence'.

The 'standard sequence' traces the development of market system from simple peasant local exchange to a complex regional commercial exchange. Non-standard sequence argues that the first market place does not emerge from peasant exchange but is rather a consequence of contrasting cultures brought together by long distance trade. The idea has got support from Hodder, also.

Three different structures of periodic markets are suggested so far, by different social scientists. i.e (a) Solar system (b) Dendritic system (c) Intermeshed marketing system.

The idea of the Solar system is put forwarded by Carol. A. Smith, as moon revolves round the planet and planets move round the 'sun', the trading activity is to be revolved around the hierarchically arranged system of markets. Here 'sun', is the regional administrative centre.

The Dendritic system is simple one in which, Johnson, shows that the spatial arrangement of market is such that, lower order

2. K. Polanyi (1957) : Trade and Markets in the Early Empire, Illinois.

3. B.W.Hodder ( 1961) : "Rural periodic Day Markets in a part of Yarubaland", Transaction and papers, I.B.G., Vol.29, PP. 149-159.

4. Carol A Smith (1974) : "Economics of Marketing System : Models from Economic Geography", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.3, PP 167-201.

markets are linked to a single highest order market through a few  
<sup>5</sup>  
intermediary markets.

The Intermeshed market system is suggested by Skinner during his study of rural markets in China. There he identified a system of three tier exchange, which is temporarily interlocking. The smallest unit being the standard rural market, intermediate market  
<sup>6</sup>  
and the central market.

### 2.3. Study of Participant Behaviour :

Traders are most complex group of people found in the periodic market. They came from various directions with their various types of goods, either produced by themselves or collected from others. They are generally two types of traders are found in the periodic market: (a) those who sell their own produces, (b) those who act as middlemen between producer and sellers. Similarly three types of buyers are found in the periodic markets, i.e (a) those who purchase for their own consumption, (b) those who purchase for re-sell in villages and (c) the wholesale purchaser from urban markets. In addition to these buyers and sellers, there are small groups of people found almost in all the market under study, who mainly come for re-creation or for social contact.

Analysis of attitude and behaviours of buyers and consumers is a neglected field of marketing geographers. It is observed that market characteristics often depend upon the attitude and behaviour of the buyers or consumers. The demand of the buyers or preference to certain commodities, their purchasing power etc. are

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5. E.A.J. Johnson (1965) : "Market Towns and Spatial Development in India", NCAER, New Delhi, PP 44-51.  
6. G.W. Skinner (1965-65) : "Marketing and Social Structure in China", Journal of Asian Studies. Vol.24, pp. 3-45.

some of the factors which help in identifying the consumers attitude and behaviour. It is observed that spatial movement as well as behavioural pattern of the non-producing traders are influenced by their economic status. With a view to analysing, their behavioural pattern, traders are divided into three groups depending on their capital investment, mode of transportation used and quantity of traded goods, i.e (a) small traders (b) medium traders and (c) wholesale traders.

Economic and social characteristics are interlinked. In the field survey, data on social conditions of the participants was collected. Data collected for social conditions were, like age and sex, language & religion etc.

#### 2.4. Measuring the nature of influence :

To study the zone of influence or actual command areas determined by using the formula :

$$d = \frac{1}{1 + \sqrt{\frac{M1}{M2}}}$$

Where d is the zone of influence, M1 and M2 are the mass of the market which include the number of available function, daily attendance, number of

days of marketing etc. The expected command areas of each market is thus obtained.

Though the above formula can be used to identify the zone of influence of a market, but lack of information it was not possible to use any quantitative technique during the analysis. In both the study areas zone of influence was assessed by observation.

Market centres were plotted on a map and shown with the direction of participants arrival from different points by straight line and then covered by circle.

### 2.5 Impact of Periodic Market on Rural Economy :

The economy of the rural areas are closely related to the periodic market centres. In the recent years, have stimulated the growers to commercialise their agriculture. It is also observed that most of the cultivators have changed their cropping pattern to meet the market demands of cash crops, e.g. potato cultivation in Meghalaya.

Increasing demand for consumer and luxury goods in periodic markets indicates improvements in purchasing power of the rural people. This is one of the reasons for which the number of non-producer sellers have increased in recent times.

### 2.5 Periodic Markets and Integration of over all Economy :

Periodic markets are the points where village economy is linked with the larger economic system. Urban consumer goods find their way to the lower order markets and ultimately, to the villages, through these periodic markets.

There are several small market centres, identified as 'terminal markets'. These are the centres which are well-knit with the periodic markets on one side and the sub-regional centre, on the other. These are the primary collecting centres for the rural product. Therefore, periodic markets provide a vital link between the rural economy and the hierarchically higher order regional centre.

## CHAPTER III

### Evolution of Periodic Markets in the North East India

## Evolution of Periodic Markets in the N.E.INDIA

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### 3.1. Emergence of Periodic Markets in the N.E.Region:

The genesis and development of periodic market is a long drawn process and involves interplay of a complexity of factors, historical, economic and social. As outlined earlier, there are two theoretical positions regarding the origin of periodic markets, i.e.(a) the 'evolutionary genesis model' and (b) the 'contactual origin model'. The evolutionary model, deals with the gradual emergence of surplus and crop specialisation in a peasant society leading to emergence of 'economic exchange'. The mode of exchange initially, could be in form of barter and latter, money economy. The 'contactual origin' model proposes the emergence of periodic markets as a product of periodic contact between two societies with different levels of economic development and societal evolution and basic parameters governing their economies. The essential logic in the system is that under a given socio-economic system, say the peasant formations, the subsistence requirements are met within the system and demand on additional goods and services are limited to the given level of knowledge and information. For example, there was no demands for firearms by the American Indians prior to the Europeans introduced them. It is at the contact points between different cultures, that new products and technologies are shown and demand for them are generated in cultures not producing them. And thus, trading operates between the two cultures, initially irregularly but later on a regular basis at

fixed locations. There exist ample historical evidences, world over, to prove this position.

The North Eastern Region of India provides a classic situation for study of the 'contactual origin' model due to the historical co-existence of a number of valley based peasant societies and the hunting - gathering and quasi- agriculture based tribal societies surrounding these valleys. Moreover, international trade in this area was also common due to the 'relative accessibility' of the Great Himalayas and evidences of long trade relations between Tibet, Burma and Thailand with the region are available.

In the North Eastern Region, there are four valley areas , i.e. Brahmaputra valley, Barak valley, Imphal valley and the Tripura plains. The total plain and valley areas account for about one third of the total geographical area of the region. The rest are, hills and plateaus. For the past one thousand years or so, the valleys were dominated by peasant societies, practising wet paddy cultivation, but at a subsistence level. Due to the dense jungle, inhospitable climate and inaccessibility, the rivers, particularly the great Brahmaputra provided possibly the only route of contact between the peasants of the valleys and also to some extent, with the hill tribes. The level of surplus generation was low and so also the level of monetisation. The valley societies were also frequently subjected to loot and pillage by many hill tribes and invaders from outside. This had led to instability in the population situation and level of production, although fertile land was available in abundance. Therefore, emergence of trade within and between the peasant societies was little and

if at all, occasional.

In the Middle Ages, some semblance of political stability, as was provided by the Ahom rulers, led to some prosperity of the peasants. On the other hand, the valleys which were earlier inhabited by various tribes of Indo-Tibetan, Indo-Burmese and Shan groups and were peasants, came under distinct Indo-Aryan cultural influences from the east, as was seen later by the conversion of the Ahom Kings into Hinduism. This also led to introduction of trade and money economy as was prevalent in the Pan-Indian peasant cultures, elsewhere. The Kings encouraged trade, since a portion of trade profits came to them too. Some international trade with the region, particularly by the Lamas from Tibet was going on. With coming of the Ahoms and the consequent political stability in the valleys, came gradual economic prosperity, generation of surplus and development of social institutions, township, taxation and trade. However, apart for sporadic conflicts, the hill tribes surrounding the valleys remained more or less in autarchy. These were simple societies under a transition from 'hunting-gathering stage' to sedentary farming (mostly shifting agriculture) and being essentially subsistence societies had little to trade. They could occasionally trade with forest produce like ivory or animal hides with the plains people in exchange for animals (meat) or salt and iron, which was gradually getting currency among the tribals in uses in arms and hand tools. This stage, from the point of view of development periodic markets may be called the first stage.

With the growing stability in the Brahmaputra valley under the Ahoms and therefore, prosperity in the volume of internal

trade increased and along with that the degree of monetisation in the economy (Silver was frequently used as a medium of exchange). The social evolution within the tribals and their gradual exposure to the riches of the Ahom and discovery of salt and limestone mines along borders of Ahom and Naga territories led to demands of various types within the tribal societies, particularly those of animals for meat and iron implements. Thus, at the geographical interface of these cultures started regulated and periodic transactions, later taking form of periodic markets. This may be called the second phase of the evolution of periodic markets in the region. In fact, some historical data is available on this stage and rightfully, anything for sure can be said from this period onwards.

However, all the tribal communities in the region were neither at the same stage of social evolution nor lived in similar environment conditions nor the technological level operative in these cultures were identical. For example, the tribes of Meghalaya, especially the Khasis being located in an easily accessible plateau in the interface of two great riverine-peasant societies, those of the Brahmaputra valley and the Surma valley (to the south) and were long exposed to other valley cultures, technologies and trade; the Khasis being the contact men between the two valley civilizations. They emerged as a substantial trading community. In fact, due to availability of iron ore (low grade) and charcoal from the plentiful wood, iron and steel became one of the chief export items of Khasi Hills to the entire region.

The third phase market development in the North Eastern

Region began with the entrance of (metropolitan) market economies into the region which also affected the patterns of the production, degree of monetisation and the nature of the space economy. In this phase, many commercial crops were introduced in the region (like potato) plantation agriculture, (the most modern form of agriculture) made inroads in a big way. Introduction of railways, increase in river transport and trading, opening of new road connections, stationing of British troops and development of garrison towns and emergence of a network of towns in the region led to increasing demand on the rural produce and thus, development of a network of rural of periodic markets in the region. With the consolidation of the British Rule in the region, and political stability due to extension of the colonial administration, trade flourished.

In the fourth and the final phase, markets were further consolidated after independence of the country. Though the colonial economic exploitation of the region was temporarily stemmed, the partition affected a large number of trading points and markets along the Indo-Bangladesh (erstwhile, East Pakistant) particularly affecting the farmers of the neighbouring areas. Meghalaya (erstwhile districts of Khasi- Jaintia Hills and Garo Hills) was specifically affected. Moreover, the colonial economic formation continued unabated. For example, the economics of a frontier economy, as was the case with Assam continued despite the political independence. The import dependence on manufactured products from the rest of the country and export dependence of essentially of primary produces like forest product, mineral oil, coal etc. continued without any great change in the susequent four decades.

### 3.2 Emergence of periodic markets among contrasting Cultural Groups:

The States with which Assam had political relations were Mugal India including the Subah of Bengal and the kingdom of Rangamati, Cooch Behar, Cachar, Jaintia, Dimarua, Bhutan, Manipur, Tripura, Nara, and the principal hill tribes were the Dufflas, Miris, Nagas, Khamptis, Singpohas and Misimis (Map 3.1 show the distribution of different tribes).

The Bhutanese kept up their intercourse with the plains through the usual duars of which there were eleven in Bengal and seven in Assam. There were two 'duars' in Darrang - Buriguma and Killing, and five in Kamrup, i.e. Gharkbla, Baksa, Chapaguri, Chap<sup>1</sup>akhamar and Bijni. East of Darrang there has another duar known as Kariapar Duar.<sup>2</sup> All the Assam trade with Tibet passed through Kariapur duar at a place called Chouna. The Assamese merchants used to be stationed with their commodities at Geegunesheer, at a distance of four miles from Chouna.<sup>3</sup> To the east of Kariapar duar, there were two other duars known as Char Duar and Na Duar which were<sup>4</sup> protected from the independent tribes, Bhutias and Dufflas. Eastern duars now form the Northern portion of Goalpara district. The people of Eastern duars were a purely rural community. There were no towns, nor even any villages with a Bazar, except Bijni which possessed a small bazar, nor was there even a period markets worth the name. The requirement of the people were very limited, their condition, abysmal.

1. S.K.Bhuyan (1949) : Anglo-Assamese Relation, (pub.) N.N.Dutta Boruah, Gauhati, Assam, pp. 23-66.

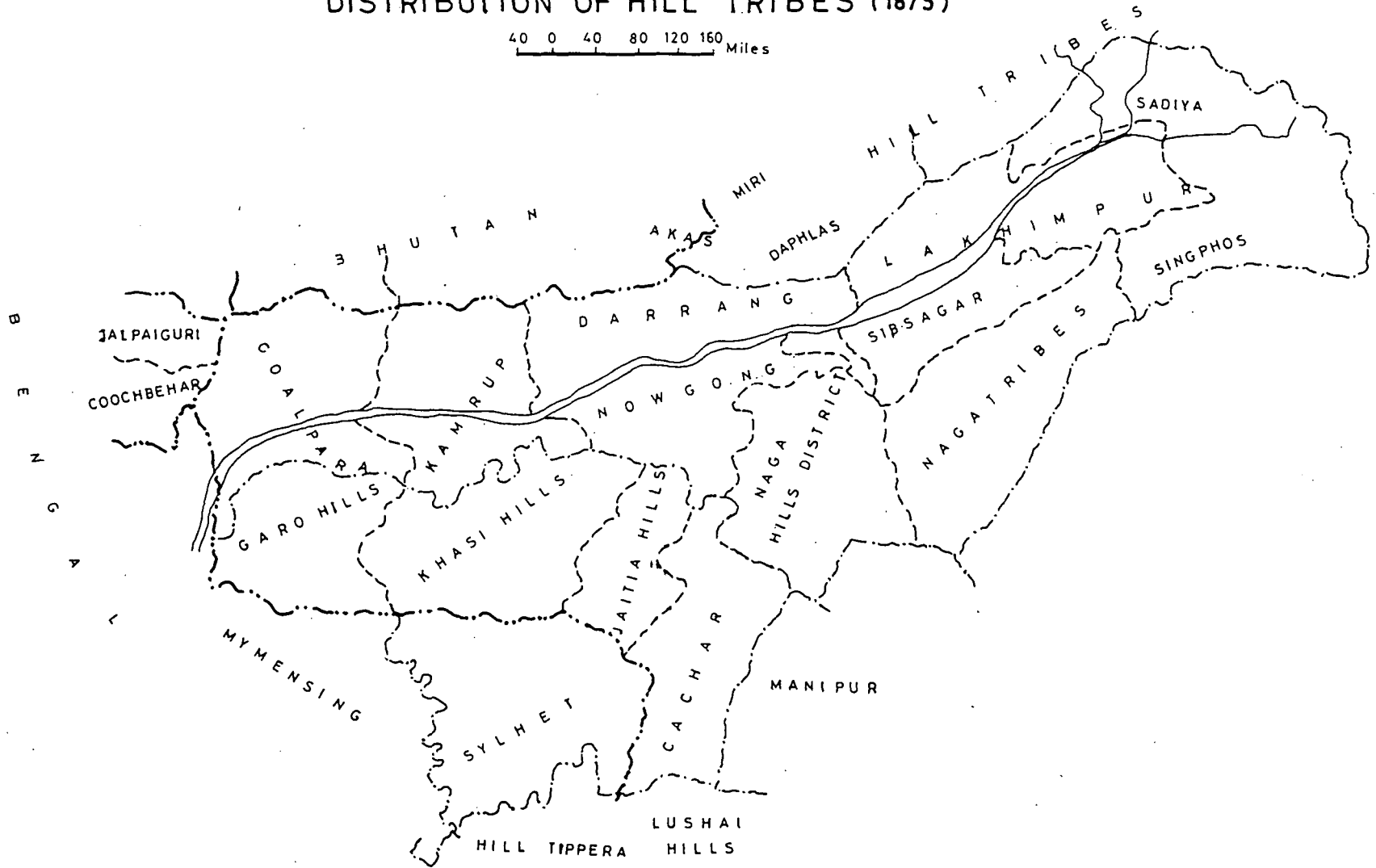
2. Ibid., pp 23-26.

3. Alexander Mackenzie (1884) : History of the Relation of the Government with the Hill Tribes on the North East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta.

4. Ibid., pp 26-27.

ASSAM  
DISTRIBUTION OF HILL TRIBES (1875)

40 0 40 80 120 160 Miles



Map-3.1

Trade Centres :

Goalpara on the south bank of the Jugighapa and Rangamati and on the North were the three eastern outposts of Bengal from where the merchants conducted their trade with Assam. Rangamati, situated at a distance of two miles from the bank of the Brahmaputra was a Mugal outposts of considerable importance.

Trade of Assam consisted of two blocks which has been shown in the trade map (Map 3.2). The area with the dotted boundary line shows the Surma valley trade block. The other was in the Brahmaputra valley between the Himalayas to the North, the Assam Range to the East and South, and to the west opened to Northern Bengal.<sup>5</sup>

According to statistics available, the total trade between the trade blocks of Assam was not considerable till the close of the last century. From the census of 1891, it became known that excluding very petty and minor hats a total number of 897 regular markets or bazars existed. Table 3.1 gives an idea about the magnitude of periodic markets in different districts of Assam.

The chief articles of trade in Goalpara were rice, pulses of different sorts, jute, lac, eri and muga silk, pipali or long pepper, wax, mustard seed, ivory, oil, tobacco, molasses, cotton, earthen pots, betel leaf, betelnuts, vegetables, and fruits, considerable numbers of animals etc. The principal seats of commerce and trade in the district were Goalpara, Bilasipara, Bijni,

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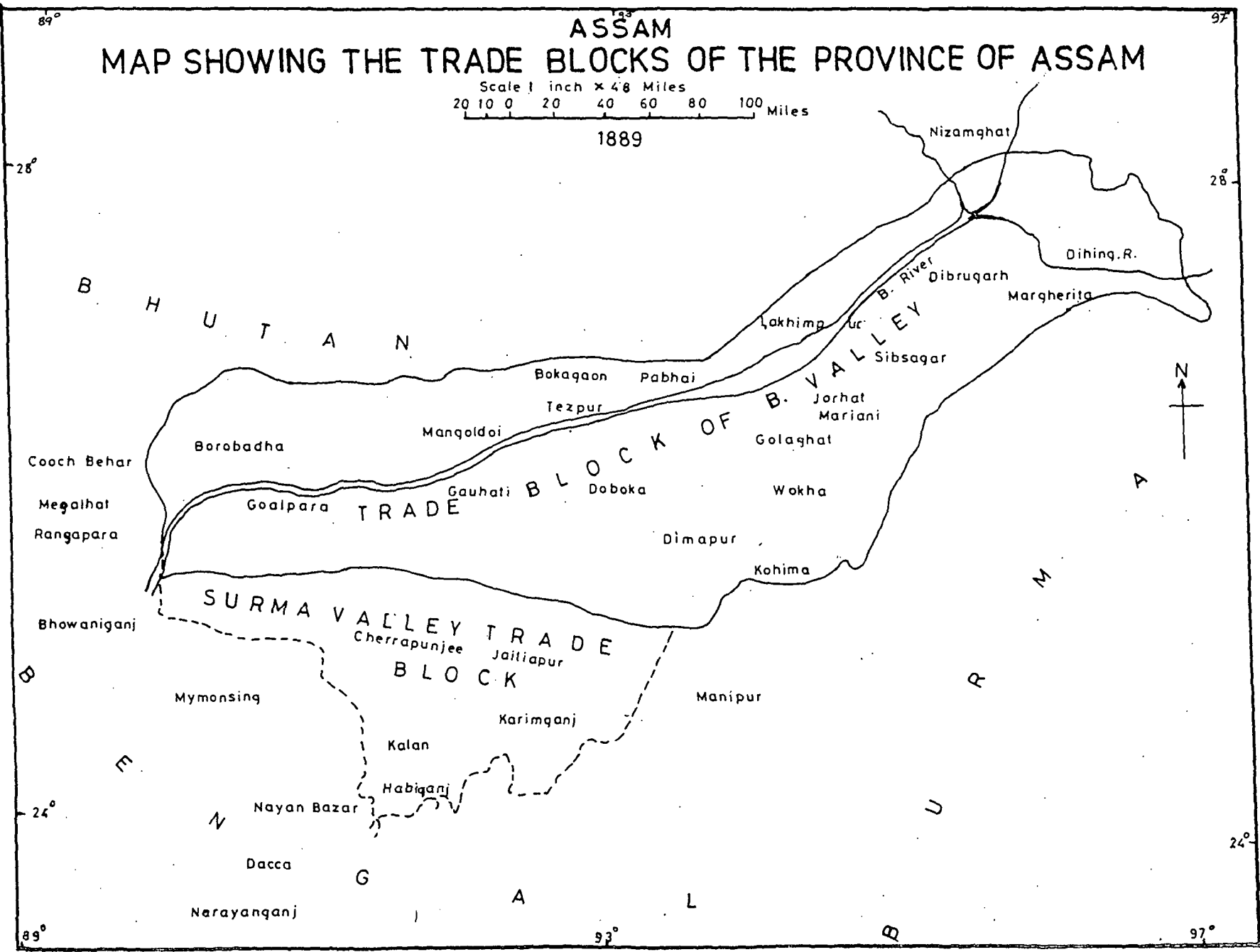
5. Tarasankar Benerjee (1986) : "A Note on the River Borne Trade of Assam during the last quarter of the Nineteenth century", Studies in the History of North-East India, North-East History Association, Shillong.

6. Report on Trade between Assam and Adjoining Countries 1890, Census Report of Assam, 1891.

# ASSAM MAP SHOWING THE TRADE BLOCKS OF THE PROVINCE OF ASSAM

Scale 1 inch = 48 Miles  
20 10 0 20 40 60 80 100 Miles

1889



57

Map 32

Table 3.1:  
Periodic Markets in Different Districts (1891)

District	Actual no. of markets	No of markets per 160000 population	Average number of sq miles served by a market
1. Goalpara	110	14	36
2. Kamrup	41	5	94
3. Darrang	57	12	51
4. Nowgong	43	11	86
5. Cachar Plain	118	24	17
6. Sylhet	313	15	15
7. Khasi and Jaintia	104	43	58
8. Garo Hills	27	15	116

Source: 1. W. W. Hunter: River Borne Trade of Assam 1900-01 : A Statistical Account of Assam, vol II, London.  
2. Report on Trade between Assam and adjoining countries, Census, 1891.

Dhubri, Jogigopha, Dumaria, Gauripur Patamari Agamani, Simlabari, Kherbari Dimakari, Bagraibari, Marnai, Rangjuli, Damara, Jira, Nibari, Singimari, Rajabala, Putimari, Mankachar, Karaibari and Dalu. Shops were held on certain days of the week in most of the villages. The markets in the small villages along the Garo frontier were, Damara, Tira, Nibari, Patamari etc. which were held generally once a week and were attended by numbers of Garos, especially in the winter season who brought down the produce of their hills for sale or barter and purchase in exchange other requisites which they were unable to obtain in their own villages. All the district trade were carried out in small markets situated at the passes leading to the plains. The principal markets were at Damara, Jira, Nilbari, Parakhasia, Dalu, Dhulbari, Ghosgoan, Durgapur and Nazirpur.

7. W. W. Hunter (1975) : A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, pp 168-169.

The Nagas occasionally frequented the markets at Nagura and Kacharihat and other spots along the borders, where they bartered their cotton and ginger for a few minor articles. The Naga trade according to Moffatt was: "The Nagas have lately manifested a great desire to trade and I would give encouragement to it by establishing a hat (market) at (Dimapur)."

The Mikirs lived mainly in the low forest-covered hills between the Kopili and Dhansiri rivers. They were thus, to be found in the district of Nowgong, Sibsagar and Kamrup and at the base of the Jaintia and Cachar Hills.

The Mishimi as a tribe occupied the hills to the east of the Abor country. They had some interest in trade. They produced Mishimhita, in return for which they obtained swords, wollen clothes and salt.

The old Assam government did hardly come in contact with the tribes now living in the Lushai Hills, though there is evidence to show that the Assamese did know the Kuki on their way to Tripura through the Cachar Hills. The Hills on both sides of the Barak river were inhabited by a tribe called the Kukis.

Trade and commerce in the cachar is carried mostly at bazars or permanent markets. At Barkhola, Udarkhand and Lakshimpur among the hills on the southern frontier there were bazars to

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8. W. Robinson (1841) : A Descriptive Account of Assam, Gauhati p. 244.

9. A. J. Moffat (1854), Mills Report on the Province of Assam, PP XII-iii.

10. S.K. Bhuyan (1949) : Op.Cit., p. 56.

11. J.B. Bhattacharjee (1980) : "The Eastern Himalayan Trade of Assam in the colonial period", Proc. of NEIHA, First Session, Shillong.

12. S.K. Bhuyan (1949) : Op.Cit.

which the hill tribes brought down caoutchouc, cotton and bee-wax to barter for salt and farm tools. Sonai on the Barak was the headquarters of the timber trade, there were small bazars on almost every tea garden. Custom duty was imposed only at the river ghats like Bikrampur, Barkhola, Gumark, Udharband, Madhureghat, Sonabarighat and Sialtekh. Sialtekh, on the Cachar-Sylhet border<sup>13</sup> was the most important transit station of cachar. Three bazars or markets were established at the most frequent hill passes:- (1) on the Dhaleswari River; (2) on the Sonai; and (3) on the Tipai. The<sup>14</sup> trade at these bazars was chiefly conducted by barter.

### 3.3. Origin of Trade Fair in N.E. Region:

North - East India had a large number of culture groups, many small, some living with limited external contacts and others in their cul-de-sacs. However, on the basis of their technological levels and types of social organization of Production, they could be grouped into two: (i) The Peasants in the great river valleys of Brahmaputra and Surma, with an established farming technology and crop based economy (and fishing as a subsidiary hunting activity), with some surplus, some crop specialisation, quasi-monetisation of the economy, incipient development of internal and external trade; (ii) on the other hand, the tribes inhabiting their little cul-de-sacs on the verdant hills and plateaus were till recently dependent on hunting and gathering activities, though crop culture was not entirely unknown or not practised.

13. J.B.Bhattacharjee (1985) : "The Nature of British objection to the trade Monoploy of the Raja of Cachar (1827-1830)", Proc. of NEIHA, Sixth Session, Agartala.

14. W.W.Hunter (1975) : A Statistical Account of Assam, Delhi Vol.II p. 429.

However, the degree of subsistence was far greater and surplus practically unavailable. The differentiation of these culture groups from valley civilizations was more a matter of degree of their crop dependence. Moreover, many of the hill tribes differ greatly among themselves in their level of technologies and material cultures and type of contact with other culture groups.

#### Origin of Long-Distance Trade and Development of Trade Fairs

Fair is a conspicuous institution in an agricultural economy. Usually the fairs are held at the end of the agricultural season farmers sell their surplus produce to exchange for other necessities of life, not produced by them both food and nonfood items. In all farming societies of the world, post-harvest jubilation and celebration is a common phenomenon. The origin of trade fairs dates back to the Ahom rule in Assam. The British government in their anxiety to exercise political control over the Bhutanese and the Arunachalis and to promote their commercial interests encouraged internal and international trade and popularised European goods and therefore, officially organised annual trade fairs at a number of places in the submontane areas. The hill people used to attend these trade fairs held in bordering areas (e.g. Kariapara and Diomara fairs). The Ahom rule in Assam was followed by the British annexation of Assam in 1826 A.D. This brought the British in contact with the tribes. The new government encouraged the already existing trade relations between Assam and

15. A.C.Mohapatra (1990) : Locational Patterns of Markets in Pre and Early British Period in North East India. (Specific reference to Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills)

Decennial Conference of N.E.I.H.A. Shillong. PP 347-352.

16. Report on Trade between Assam and the Adjoining foreign countries, 1890.

the bordering areas. The early years of British Rule in Assam valley served as a preparatory period when markets were established and trade fairs organised in the foot hill areas. In 1874 Assam became a Chief Commissioner's province. By that time annual trade fairs were held in Sadiya, Udalguri and Diomara, they had trade relations with Arunachal, Bhutan and Assam.

The British motives in organising the trade fairs was politically significant. The North-East Frontier attracted the attention of the British government as an important reason from the strategic point of view. At the same time, they were anxious to extend their political influence over the people of the region. The scarcity of some of the articles of daily consumption had kept the Arunachali's dependent on the plains. The demand for the essential commodities sometimes forced the hill men to raid the plain dwellers : The British administrators realised that well organised trade fairs would be highly appreciated by the hill people as an advantageous opportunity for disposal of their produces and procurement of necessities. The fairs would attract a large number of the hill people which could enable the British officers to exert political control which they could not do in the ordinary manner of functioning. The fairs would also promote close contact among the people in the hills and plains and ultimately result in influsing a new life style in the tribes. The British government wanted to keep friendly relation with these tribes and to use their territories for opening up trade routes to Burma and

17. W.W.Hunter (1975) : A Statistical Account of Assam, Delhi. Vol.II.

18. Sudatta Sikdar (1980) : "Trade Fairs in Arunachal Assam Border" (1874-1905) Proceedings of the North-East Historical Association, First Session, Shillong.

China. As a means of achieving these ends, the government encouraged trade fairs in places like Sadiya, Udalguri and Doimara.<sup>19</sup>

The origin of Doimara fair goes back to the Ahom Rule but Sadiya fair was organised by British in 1867.<sup>20</sup> During the Ahom period a fair used to be held at Kariapara Duar. The Burmese occupation of Assam put a stop to this annual fair. These fairs were officially held in the winter season for three days but trade transactions were carried on usually from January to March and sometimes from the end of December to the beginning of April.<sup>21</sup> The fairs catered to the needs of the different tribes of the Tibetan frontier. The attendance of the people in different fairs depended on the proximity of tribes to the places of fairs. The selection of site was based on the idea that each tribal group could visit at least one fair, easily. The Udalguri fair was the earliest and the largest in the whole frontier; Bhutanese, Tibetans and Assamese visited the fair. The next important site was the Sadiya fair introduced by the British in 1867, attended by the Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Khamptis, Singphos etc.<sup>22</sup> The Bhutanese Chief of Kherkaria in Kullingduar started a fair in 1874, which continued for many years.<sup>23</sup> The fair at Datma in Goalpara started by the British in 1873, attracted the Bhutanese. The Subankhatta fair

19. Report on the Trade between Assam and the adjoining foreign countries, 1890.

20. Assam Secretariat Records (A.S.R), Letter issued to the Government, Vol. 34 No.197.

21. Alexander Mackenzie (1884) : History of the Relation of the Government with the Hill Tribes on the North East Frontier of Bengal, Calcutta.

22. Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam, 1874-75 to 1943-'44.

23. Ibid, 1874-'75 to 1938-'39.

started in 1883, and Dewangiri about the same time.<sup>24</sup>

Table 3.2.

Shows the export and import items of the hill people at the three fairs.

(Export, import items of the hill people from Udalguri, Doimara, Sadya fair).

Udalguri		Doimara		Sadya	
Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
Pony	Paddy	Salt	Paddy	Rubber	Iron
Sheep	Rice	Chilly	Rice	Wax	Utensils
Dog	Ericloth	Spice	Cotton	Mishmitita	Salt
Yok's tail	Cotton cloth	Dye	Cloth brass	Mishmi cloth	Silver-carrying
Blanket	<u>Panleaf</u>	Blanket	Iron	Adicloth	Silver
Musk	<u>B.eatelnut</u>	Wax	Steel	Spear	Ankelets
Chilly	Molasses	Rubber	Dried fish	Dao	Muslin
Spice	Dried fish	Fowl	Mat	Knife	Iron
Orange	Tobacco	Madder		Basket	Broad cloth
Dye	Rap seed	Sheep		Bag	Opium
Lac	Bell-metal pot	Pony Bag		Mat	Buffalo
Needle	Bar iron			Elephant tusk	Cattle
Gold	Cotton thread			Boat	Bell-metal
Walnut	Ericloth			Ivory	Plates
Onion				Amber	Steel
Garlic				Honey	Tobacco
				Rice	Oil
				Rhino-ceros horns	English threads
				Rug	Handkerchief
					Tea, Sugar
					Molarses cup

Source : Sudatta Sikdar; "Trade Fairs in Arunachal-Assam Border (1874-1905)", Proc. of the NEIHA, Shillong, 1980. pp. 158-173.

The export items of the hill people at the fairs consisted mostly of forest resources and handloom and handicraft products. Sherdukpens and Monpas brought down domesticated animals in considerable numbers. In the absence of surplus production, agricultural produces played little role in export trade of the hill people. As far as imports were concerned, salt was in great

24. Report on the Administration etc., Op.Cit.

demand among the tribes who came down to Sadiya fair. The hill people also imported manufactured goods like utensils, ornaments etc. from these fairs. The two most valuable articles of imports of Assam at Udalguri were ponies and blankets brought by the Bhutias. In 1876 the sales of blankets and ponies amounted to Rs 15,174 and Rs 1,50,000, respectively. The next important item was salt the sale of which amounted to Rs 9,945. Though in 1877 there was a decrease in the import of ponies and blankets. The articles of Assam which were in great demand were rice and erifabrics. In 1882 the import figure market great increase. In that year the value of imports amounted to Rs 2,35,303.

During that period, at Doimara, the Sherdukpen carried on a good trade. The important articles of import of Assam at these fairs were rubber, salt, and dye. In 1883 the import of Assam from Doimara amounted to Rs 72,923 and export Rs 33,644. The important articles of export at Daimara fair were rice, paddy and erifabrics. In 1883 the total export figure rose up to Rs 33,644 but during the later period, there was a decline in both exports and imports.

There was not a place in Cachar of much commercial importance. An annual mela or fair was held at a section of Silchar on the 30th December, which lasted for ten or twelve days.

25. Assam Secretariat Records (A.S.R) : Foreign Proceedings, July 1876 No. 542.

26. Assam Secretariat Records (A.S.R) : Foreign Proceedings, April 1877, No. 107.

27. Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam for 1881-82, Op.Cit.

28. Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam for 1882-83.

29. Report on the Administration of the Province of Assam for 1882-83.

The attendance is estimated at about 20,000 persons and traders came from Sylhet and Dacca. In former days, buffaloes and ponies were brought from Manipur. A similar mela of less importance was held at Siddheswar, on the Barak River, near the Sylhet boundary. The date was the 18th or 19th March, and the fair only lasted for one day. It was held in connection with a religious gathering and bathing ceremony etc.

30

Sailent Features :

If one examines the trade structure of these fairs certain basic features of trade come to light :

(i) At these annual trade fairs, the hill people sold their surplus products and purchased their annual requirements. In such trade fairs, usually two or three staple items comprised the larger proportion of the export and import articles.

(ii) The production in the hill was carried on by primitive methods. Technology was very limited. The implements and tools used were indigenously produced and were very crude in nature. Consequently, the minimum necessities of life was raised with great difficulty. As a result of these small scale productions, the hill tribes could not bring much merchandize to the trading fairs. This naturally lowered their purchasing power.

(iii) The traders of the plains also could not show a display of articles on a larger scale as the hill men had not enough goods to barter and enough money to purchase. A serious problem for balancing trade between the hills and the plains was the 'terms of trade' which significantly affected the purchasing power of the tribes; their inexperience in bargaining or handling

30. W.W.Hunter (1975) : A Statistical Account of Assam, Delhi Vol.II, pp. 428-429.

money or barter effectively resulted in their being robbed by the traders from the plains. Only Sinphos and Khamptis who were the principal exporters of rubber, purchased such luxurious articles as tea, sugar, molasses, handkerchiefs, oil etc.

(iv) The production being less, the features of modern market like, a fair competition and determination of a reasonable commodity price were also absent in these fairs, though desire for profit attracted the Marwari traders at these fairs as the transactions were advantageous to them. The Marwari traders at Sadiya made large money advances to Mishmis (usury and crop advances) on account of rubber and other products which the Mishmis redeemed when they came down on their annual visit to the plains.<sup>31</sup>

From the commercial point of view the British government pursued a policy of popularising European goods like wine, broad clothes, handkerchiefs, scissor and glass, porcelain wares etc. Popularising European manufactured goods among the hill people through these fairs like imported clothes, metalwares etc. along with other articles of plains of Assam gradually gained a foothold in the hill areas. In their dealings with the people of plains the hill people had to deal mainly in cash. This naturally introduced cash economy among the hill people. Since their export items were not plentiful and a good amount of currency realised from export items being invested in articles of plains, sufficient money capital could not penetrate into hill areas. Most of the inter-

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31. Assam Secretariat Records (A.S.R) : Foreign Proceedings, June 1881, No. 784.

village trade was going on by the barter system. These trade fairs served as the meeting place of different tribes as well as the peasant product of the plains. On the socio-cultural side the effects were more disastrous to the hill people. Imported salt, mill-made clothes, imported dye led to the destruction of indigenous production. At the same time, it must be admitted that the fairs served as a link between traditional economy of the hill people characterised by barter, measurement by volume rather than by weight. They had a vague idea of weights and measures. The size of a thing is described by comparison. A basket of corn, with a bundle of cotton, was traded on barter. The articles of luxurious goods penetrated into hill areas and use of tea, sugar, molasses, oil etc. became popular among the Singphas and Khamptis. In the context of geographical isolation of the Arunachalis, these trade fairs played an important role in keeping them in touch with the people of Assam, thereby facilitating many socio-cultural exchanges.

### 3.4. Origin of Periodic Market in the Valley Area :

#### 3.4.1. Pre-Ahom Period:

Assam was best known for her forests, textiles and mineral products from ancient days. There are evidences of good trade relations between China, Burma, Tibet and Central India with this part of the country. The Brahmaputra and its tributaries and different mountain passes or duars were the main routes for commercial relations. The mighty river Brahmaputra not only facilitated trade, but it was also the medium for constant political, economic and cultural intercourse between the people of Brahmaputra valley with that of China, Burma, Tibet and rest of

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India. Assam was treated as a national highway between India and  
 32  
 China.

Trade and commerce was confined to the local barter activities on the basic needs. It is evident from the description of British observer like Buchanan - Hamilton (1809-'14), Fisher (1833), Hodgson (1897) and Dalton (1872) that the shifting  
 33  
 cultivation was present till as late as the 19th century.

#### 3.4.2. Ahom Period:

The 'TAI' Ahoms, who entered Assam in 13th century, brought with them their own economic and commercial systems. At that time, Assam was thinly populated and most of the areas were covered with thick forests. After introduction of permanent agriculture, it ensured better supply of food and led to rapid increase of population. But at that time, the scope for external and internal trade was extremely limited. Hats and marts were established under supervision of Ahoms in different parts of the country. These marts and the routes of communication facilitated both external and internal trade with neighbouring hill tribes and Bengal,  
 34  
 Bhutan, Tibet, Burma, China etc. Currency was unknown (there were only limited circulation of the Ahom and Koch coins), the trades of Assam has mainly by barter.

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32. S.K.Chattarjee (1970) : The place of Assam in the History and Civilization of India, Guwahati p. 15.

33. Amalendu Guha (1975) : "Geography behind History". An Introduction to Socio-Economic Study of North-East India, Calcutta. p. 100.

34. J.M.Cosh (1837) : Topography of Assam, Calcutta, pp. 7-12.

\* The main routes of communication were, route to Bengal by the water, through the Brahmaputra, Ganges by land via Murshidabad, Maldah, Dianjapore, Rangpore, Goalpara via Sylhet, Jaintia, Nurtung river Kalang; route to Bhutan via the hill passes to Kabul; route to Tibet; route to Burma and China through Hukang; route from the Brahmaputra to the Irrawadi via Noa-Dihing.

Dichai commanded a strategic importance and had two large marts, for which the place later came to be known as JORHAT, where two hats (markets), namely 'CHAKIRHAT' and 'MACHARHAT', the former dealing in general merchandise and the later in fish. These marts grew larger, following free commercial transactions between Assam and Bengal towards the later part of the 18th century. It was for its strategic importance that Dichai was selected by Purnanda Buragohain as the site for the last Ahom capital.

Besides a number of marts were opened by the Ahom government at places like Simalguri, Nazira, Titabar, Jangi, Bebezia where small township grew in course of time.

In the lower valley, the towns of Guwahati and Hajo were important trading centres which directly conducted with the Western gateway of Assam. Guwahati which was once the capital of the Kingdom of 'Kamrupa' and had several markets. It was from here, trade between Assam and Bengal was conducted. Hajo, which had been the Mughal headquarters till 1639, is referred to as 'a very populous and rich city'.

For conducting trade with Bengal, 'Chouki's or outposts were established at important centres and placed under the control of officers called Duarua Borua or Chakial Borua. The most important Chouki was Kandahar or Hadira, usually called Assam Chouki by the British.

For internal trade, marts were established at various places

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35. Hiteswar Barbarua (1933) : Jorhat Nagar Katna Vol.II, Jorhat. pp. 29-50.

36. Op.cit., pp. 436-438.

37. Op.Cit., pp. 390-395.

38. B.N.Puri (1968) : Studies in Early History and Administration in Assam, Guwahati pp. 58-65.

of the country like Dihing, Bakata, Kacharihat, Barhat, Namchang, Abbayapur, Narayanpur, etc. Different kinds of commodities including birds and animals and even slaves, were bought sold. To carry on trade with hill tribes, markets were established at the foot hills.

The Garohats in Kamrup, the Naga hats in Sibsagar and the Barhat in Dibrugarh were well-known centres of commerce, where the hill people of Assam traded with their plains counter parts early times.

Nagas or some of the hill tribes, who came down to plains, particularly in winter season with locally produced goods, visited almost all important towns and villages and exchanged their commodities with the plains people. They generally brought with them raw cotton, salt etc. The places or points where the hill tribes bartered their commodities with the plain people, became notable trade centres during the later part of the seventeenth century.

Nagas generally came down to the plains through several passes or 'duars'. Some of the important 'duars' were Hatigarh, Dayungia, Pancephat etc. They came down through Toratolee, Morseomee Bosa and Mokrong Pathar. Moreover, they took their way to north along the courses of different rivers to places like Sarupathar, Barpathar, Dakhin - Hangeras as centres of meeting point of traders from hill and plains.

39. Op.cit., pp. 439-440.

40. R.B.Pemberton (1972) : Eastern Frontier of British India, Guwahati.

41. J.M.Cosh (1975) : Topography of Assam, Calcutta, pp. 58-62 and p. 146.

42. S.E.Peal (1967) : Hill Tracts Between Assam and Burma, Delhi p. 306.

Some important hats during the Ahom rule were Kacharihat,  
<sup>43</sup>  
 Nagaphat in Upper Dayung, Kalarphat in the north of Kaziranga and  
 Khitaturphat on the bank of the river Diphalu. The exchange of  
 goods between the hills and plains was the beginning of the growth  
 of non-regulated markets which later on developed into periodic  
 markets from the early part of the 1800 A.D. Gradually, the  
 neighbouring villagers participated in these markets for bartering  
<sup>44</sup>  
 goods.

### 3.4.3. The Colonial Period :

The discovery of tea (1823) and petroleum (1825) had impres-  
 sed the East India Company, the prospects of the promotion of its  
 commercial interest in Assam. British encouraged development of  
 foot hill markets for the advantage of the hills and plains  
 people. Exploration of mineral resources and establishment of tea-  
 gardens were the important factors for the development of periodic  
 markets during the post-Ahom period. The establishment of these  
 industries, caused heavy migration from different parts of India.  
 The Marwaries entered Assam in the early part of the nineteenth  
 century, established Golas or shops almost at all the principal  
 parts of Assam. Growth of tea industry and introduction of  
 railways; in 1885, large scale migration took place and it necess-  
 itated the growth of periodic markets near the tea gardens. Most  
 of the present big markets originated in this way. The more promi-  
 nent among the periodic markets were at Subankhatta, Kherkaria,  
 Kalaigoan, Amratol, Lalukdoloni, Nizamghat, Saikhowaghat, Bomjur,

<sup>45</sup>  
Bhismaknagar, Silanimur, Orung, Lohabari, Balipara etc.

42(4) B. Boruah & N.N. Deodhai Phukan (1964) : Ahom Lexicon, Gawahati.

43. J.M. Cosh (1975) : Op.Cit., p. 63.

44. Dr. Ajit Kumar Dutta : Maniram Dewan and the Contemporary  
 Assamese Society, Jorhat, pp. 215-217.

45. S.K. Borthakur (1985) : The Rural Markets of Jorhat District A  
 Geographical Analysis, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation.

#### 3.4.4. Post British Period :

Some of the markets are now gradually becoming specialised with specialised items traded and attract visitors even from remote areas. Titabar market is famous for wholesdale rice trade. Similarly, the Dakhin Hengera market is famous for livestocks. The Sarupathar Barpathar and Dakhin Hengera market now occupy the position of interstate markets, because people from Naga Hills and Karbi-Anglong visit these markets. The Manipuris bring draught-cattle to Dekhin Hengera market regularly via Dimapur market road.

#### 3.5. Origin of Periodic Markets in Meghalaya:

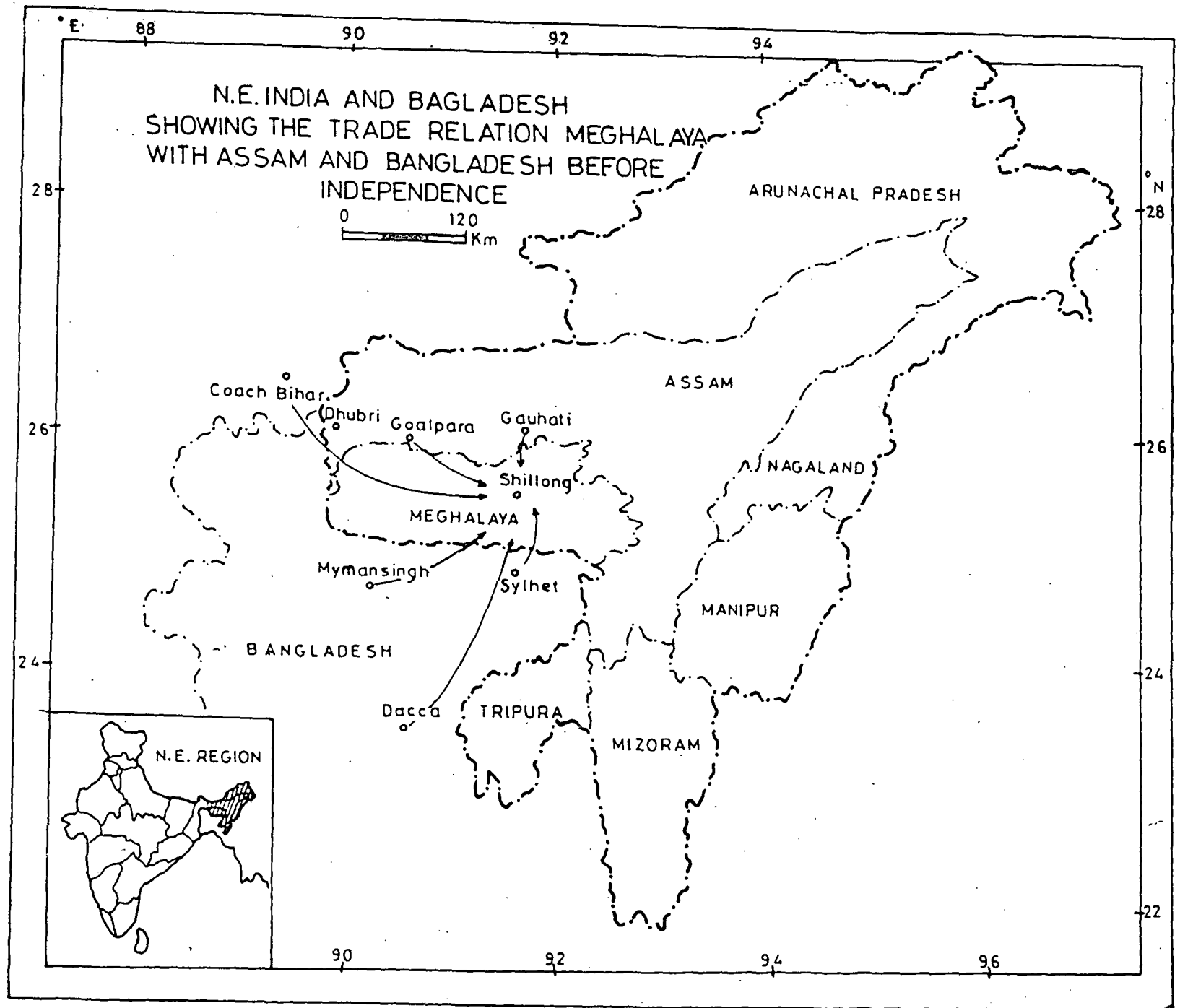
Meghalaya was best known for her forest, cotton and mineral products from the ancient days. There are evidences of good trade relations between Burma, Sylhet, Calcutta and Assam with Meghalaya. Different mountain passes or duars were the main route for commercial relations. (Map 3.3 Shows the Trade Relation : Meghalaya with Assam and Bangladesh, before independence)

The early trade relations offer a hazy picture, partly because of low density of population, quasi-nomadism and shifting cultivation. Tribal people preserved nomadism till early parts of the fifteenth century. Trade and commerce continued by local barter activities.

The principal items of daily necessities, rice and salt were scarce in the hills, because it was not produced locally and hence the tribes were entirely dependent on the trade with the plains and from where alone the supplies of those articles could be

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46. W.W.Hunter (1879) : Op.Cit., Vol. II, pp. 205-220.



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Map. 3. 3

obtained. The forest products had no local market and hence of very insignificant value in the hills, but in the plains they had demand.

Establishment of markets for exchange of articles was felt, therefore, necessary. Incipient trading emerged at the foothills of the plateau, both to the south of the plateau as well as along the Brahmaputra valley to the north. These markets were called 'hats' to which hill products were transported in basket, slung on human backs.

A.B.Lish observed that Khasi 'Merchant Kings' used to take up their residence in the villages near the frontier of Sylhet to take full advantage of trade with the plains. Such were the cases of the Chiefs or the Rajas of Jaintia and Khyrim, the largest of the Khasi states.<sup>47</sup> The principal markets in the plains of Sylhet to which the Khasis and Syntengs resorted for trade were Pandu, Punatit in the Lower Pargana and Jaintiapur. In the eighteenth century Pandu at the foot of the Khasi Hills was fast growing into a market for trade with the Khasis. On the Assam side of Khasi Jaintia Hills, the traditional market for trade with the hillmen were Burdwar, Rani and Sonapura.

At those markets, a brisk barter trade used to be carried on between the plains and hills. Currency was not totally unknown. On the Sylhet frontier, cowri shells were used as currency and employed as a medium of exchange.

But the Raja of Jaintia issued some debased money called Kattrataka (sword money) which was however, in very limited

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47. Promatha Nath Dutta : Impact of the West on the Khasi and Jaintias, pp. 13-15.

circulation. The bulk of the trade was therefore, carried out by  
48  
barter.

The foregoing narrative of the Khasi Jayantia economy revealed that it was in the simplest stage, scarcely above the subsistence level. The Jaintias were probably slightly better off because of their comparatively advanced agriculture, but Khasis had fewer opportunities.

It is not known when coins were for the first time used as a medium of exchange in North-East India. In early times, when the value of an article was measured in terms of commodities, all business transactions were carried out by a system of barter, and as in other parts of India (as shown by early literature), animals like cattle, animal skins, garments, rice, cowries, etc. were used for barter.

The evidence of trading relations through barter as the only medium of exchange are available. The people of the plains also were accustomed to carry on their commercial transactions with the help of barter even long after the circulation of coins.

The interior of the hills, the Garo clans were independent of one another and of any outside control; but those in the border areas were under the nominal control of the zamindars in the plains. The important estates bordering the Garo Hills were Karaibari, Kalumalpara, Mechapara and Habraghat in Rongpur and Susung and Sherpur in Mymensing districts of Bengal. Besides, there was Bijni in the Eastern Duars.

Cotton was the staple produce of the Garo Hills and the most important article of internal trade in Eastern India. The

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48. Promatha Nath Dutta, Op.Cit., pp. 21-23.

zamindars and the 'Bengalee' merchants carried on a lucrative  
 49  
 cotton trade with the Garos.

The interest of the zamindars was mainly economic. They established markets in the low lands. The trade in cotton, agar, elephants, timber and other indigenous articles was so lucrative that the zamindars had pitched a string of hats at the hill passes in their respective estates. Besides, periodic fairs were held to attract the hillmen as well as the 'Bengalee' traders. While the traders paid the tax in cash and kind, the Garos paid the duty only in kind.

Due to ignorance, absence of trading centres in the hills, difficulties of communication etc., the Garos continued to be dependent on the hats in the plains. They bartered the produces of their hills for daily necessities with the merchants of Bengal at the frontier hats. The important markets were located at Nibari, Luckichar, Jerrch, Singimiri, Damrah, Rangjuli, Rajaballa, Bengalkhatta, Tikri, Salmara, Mankachar, Bahadur Khatta, Putimari and Parakhaslana in Goalpara and Kakripara, Mahendraganj, Baigunbari, Nalitbari, Haluaghat, Phulbari, Dalu, Ghosegaon,  
 50  
 Durgapur and Nashipur in Mymensing.

The principal articles for export were cotton and lac. Besides, birds, monkeys, chillies, ginger and honey were also exported in limited quantities.

Markets played vital role in affecting the growth of the economy. They formed strong and stable centres for transactions and exchanges of goods. They had other cultural functions also.

49. J.B.Bhattacharjee (1978) : The Garos and the English, New Delhi pp. 18-21.

50. J.B.Bhattacharjee, Op.Cit., pp. 205-207.

Many markets sprang up since time immemorial. On the border, such as Borkhat, Khoroh, Moolagul, Majai or Bholaganj, Phali, Moheskhala, Balat, Ranikor, Nolikhata became the entrepots, while to the north, markets were situated at Gobha, Raha, Sonapur, Ranikudam, Lookie, Pantan, Bordwar, Boko and other places. They were either weekly or bi-weekly markets where plain traders visited them to supply goods to the hillmen while the latter, on their part, disposed of their goods which again were to be transacted near and far.

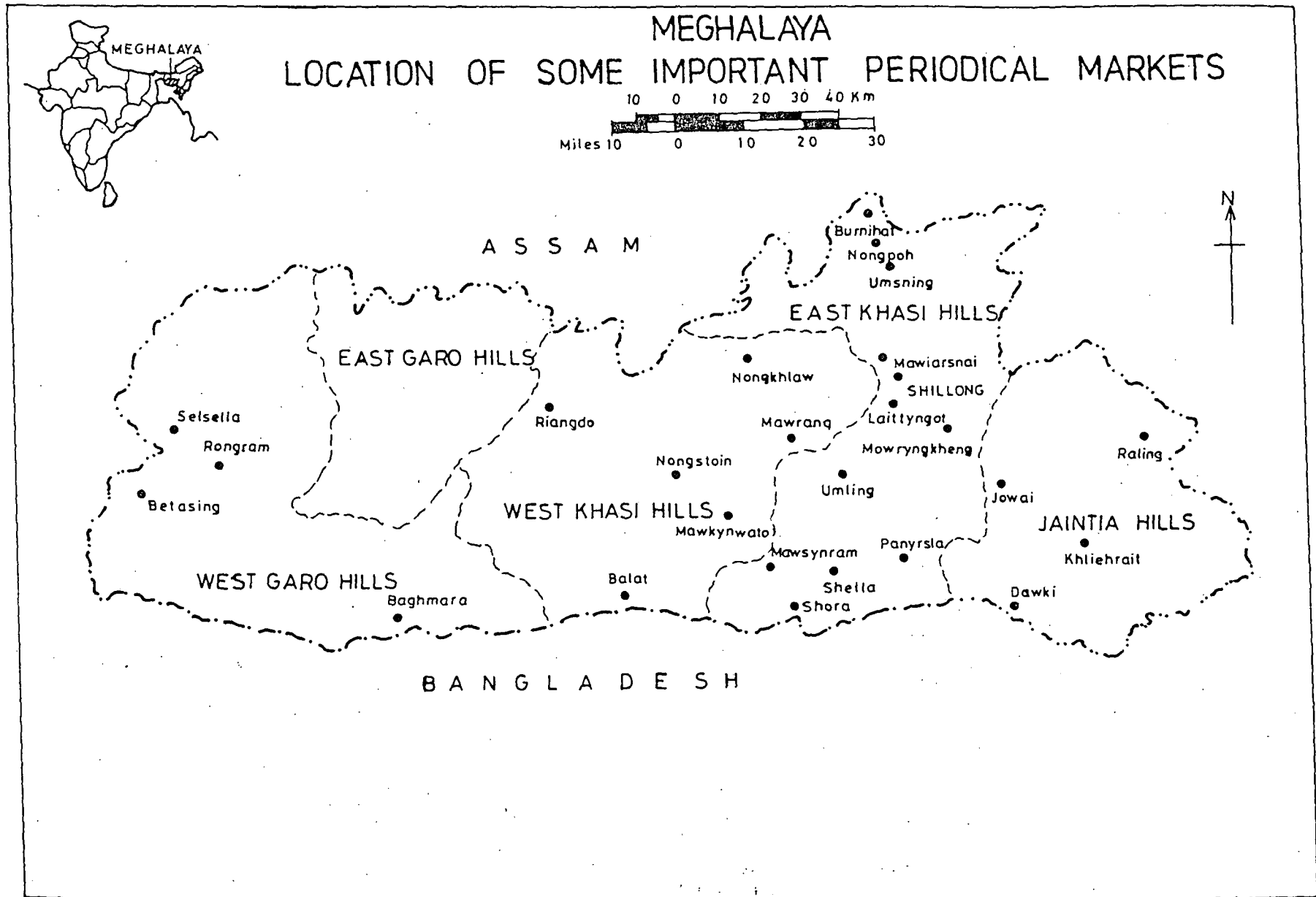
The most important markets located outside Shillong were - Mairang, Laitryngew, Borkhat, Mawhati, Rymbai, Mawsynram, Jowai, Laitlyngkot, Mynose, Muktapur, Nongjri, Nongstoing, Shella, Nartiang, Lyngkyrdem, Mawkyrwat, Mawryngkneng, Ritang, Rangblang, Satnga, Umden, Nongpoh, Mawdon, Shangpung, Pynursla, Smit, Tyrsad, Wahiajer, Lawbah, Laitkynsew, Iplem, Khuri, Langkhat, Rambrai, Markasa, Byrni, Dawki, Mawngap and Kynshi. (Map 3.4. Shows Distribution of some important Periodic Markets in Meghalaya.)

### 3.3 Development of Marketing during the Colonial Period:

The major impact of the Moghuls on the North East generated extensive trade with Bengal. The commercial treaty concluded by Captain Welsh with Gaurinath Singh in February 1793 was the confirmation of existing Mughal trade system by deploying Company's troops in the strategic commercial outposts of Assam.<sup>51</sup>

Among the frontier people, Khasis also maintained trade connections with Bengal through its southern borders. Unlike the Garos, the markets were under the control of Khasi Syiems or rulers, whose territories extended into Moghul Sylhet of Bengal

51. Sushil Ch. Dutta: The North, East and the Moghuls, pp. 168-176.



Map. 3.4

Subah. Further, the trading profession was carried both by males and females alike. Jayantiapur, the erstwhile capital of Jayantia rulers was the seat of distribution of all merchandise. Another commercial spot was Pandua in the Surma valley, close to the foothills of southern slope of the Khasi highlands. Agricultural products both from Jayantia kingdom and Khyrim state were carried partly by porters and then by country boats to many river ports. The Khasis were also probably tempted to utilise the river port of Laur that lay in the North-Eastern part of Sarkar of Sylhet. Laur was visited by the traders of northern India, too. The entire southern foothills of Jaintia and Khasi Hills and Garo Hills were capped with innumerable markets of which Bholaganj, Chattak, Bonatit (Laur), Malagul, Jagirpara, Halloghat etc., considered to be prominent.

The limestone and iron ore were the principal minerals that the Khasi-Jaintia hills possessed and traded extensively. Iron, steel and cotton of Garo Hills was supplied to the neighbouring areas. The traders in Bengal imported those profit earning items. The Moghul authorities took active interest in limestone quarries and in course of time, assumed the monopoly of lime trade. Private traders of different European nationalities - English, Greek, Dutch, Portuguese, French and the Americans - crowded Sylhet to take advantage of the lucrative trade with Khasi-Jaintias. Khasi Hills also had a big market in medieval Assam. The merchants of European nationalities as well as the Moghul India were engaged in trade with Khasi-Jaintia Hills and took the advantage of the market at Jaintiapur for trading with the adjoining territories.

Goalpara on the south bank and Jogighopa and Rangamati on the north, were the three eastern outposts of Bengal from where its merchants would transact their trade with the frontier officers of Assam. However, the Ahoms were always suspicious of foreign traders and as such, no undue privileges were accorded to the trading agents of the Moghuls. These trading centres were also visited by the European traders, mainly the Portuguese.

A liaison officer of the Ahom government, called Duarua Barua was posted at the Assam Choky (Khandhar Choky) which was situated at the mouth of Manas river. He was empowered with special rights and discretionary powers in regulating trade with Bengal Subahs.

Cachar had trade relations with Moghul Bengal through Sarkar Sylhet as the main trading route to that port town which passed through Moghul area, a few miles south-east of Jayantiapur. When the capital town was shifted from Maibang to Khaspur during the early decades of the eighteenth century, the volume of trade was augmented through the river routes of the Barak valley. The country was commercially important as the traders of Manipur, Mizos (Lushai) and Kukis would barter their respective products through the brokers of Cachar and the main venue of transaction was Jirighat and Sealtek.

There was brisk trade between Sylhet and Manipur through Cachar in wax, ivory, silk and cotton and duties were levied by the Raja on the merchandise at the ghats. In the northern frontier there was extensive trade with Assam and the Nagas. Col. James

53. Dutta, Op.Cit., pp. 184-185.

54. Ibid., pp. 186-187.

55. Ibid., pp. 189-191.

Ostend of the East India Company was the first European to trade with Assam. In 1755, the French East India Company undertook trade with Assam.

William Ford in May 1765, issued orders prohibiting the Company's servants indulging themselves in private trade. He also established a society of trade to deal in salt, betelnut and tobacco, the profits from which would be distributed among the Governor, Councillors and senior civil and military officers. However, in 1767, the Company relinquished its trade in betelnut and tobacco and confined itself to the salt trade. The Bengal salt had great demand in Assam and adjoining hill areas. A large number of European businessmen, visited 'markets' for the collection of cotton, and money economy slowly began to replace the barter system. The prices of the commodities rose steadily. Zamindars wanted a monopoly of the whole volume of trade through bulk purchase from the Garos and then disposing of the collection to the non-Garo traders in the frontier. To keep the Garos away from the merchants, some of the zamindars had also to take upon themselves the supply of the essential commodities to the Garo consumers by marketing purchases from businessmen in Bengal.

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The prospects of the cultivation of cotton in the Garo Hills had in the mean time aroused some interest of the authorities in Mymensing. They were anxious to come to terms with the Garos to obtain the supply of these articles of the East India trade. In addition, the hills were rich in mineral deposits and forest products. But since the zamindars were the actual collectors, the government could have only a portion of cotton through the Sezwal.

Not satisfied with the minor share, the local authorities wanted that the zamindars should be removed and the Sezwal should collect the public revenue of Garo Hills directly from the Chiefs. Accordingly, in the beginning of 1788, under instructions from the Governor General in Council, the collection of share of miscellaneous cesses were made illegal in Mymensing frontier. But, the government did not collect the dues from the 'markets', although the authorities had earlier demanded the Sezwal should collect the duties directly from the Garos. Consequently, the zamindars never ceased to collect the cesses, and in addition, they, levied Radhari or transit duties on every article of trade at all the passes leading to the markets of Mymensing.

For the protection of the adjacent plains from the predatory raids, check posts were established in all the passes to the hills and a frontier in all the passes to the hills and a frontier militia was raised from the tribesmen themselves. At the same time, several hats were established at the lowlands to promote intercourse between the people of the hills and plains.<sup>57</sup>

Cotton which was in larger demand in England, the government took upon itself the administration of the market and regulation of the border trade. Several cotton markets were established at the passes where Garos would sell and barter cotton under strict supervision of Mahurir appointed by the government.

The government took advantage of the Garo cotton for supply to England. Ever since the annexation of Garo Hills, there could be no difficulty on the part of the government to encourage

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57. Dutta, Op.Cit., pp. 35-48.

increased cultivation and to regulate the transactions through a well meaning - 'procurement policy'. On the other hand, supply of cotton from the Garo Hills got reduced in the later years. The export of lac was rather optimum in the seventies of 19th century, although the cultivation of lac was introduced by Williamson on an economic basis. The trade of lac was confined to markets at Damrah, Jeerah and Nibari.

The township of Tura gradually increased in size and developed as an important centre of trade in the hills. The bazar was capable of supplying the demands of the station and the adjoining villages. The dealers hailed from Dacca, Mymensing, Rangpur, Cooch-Bihar and Goalpara, and they occupied the better class of shops. The rest of the shopkeepers were the Nepalese, who carried on a good trade in rice, dried fish, pigs etc. The Garos of the higher ranges of the hills gradually stopped frequenting the markets in the plains. A few markets also emerged in the lower hills and notable of them were at Bahadurkata, Bakla, and Sarramphang. The importance of frontier markets could, however, never be depreciated.

The British contacts with the Khasis started with the accession to the Diwani of Bengal in 1765. Living as they did in comparative isolation in their mountain strongholds, little was known of them by outside world. However, the end of the 18th century saw raids and aggressions of these hillmen who harried the plains on the north and south of the district. Necessities of commerce arising from the Khasi monopoly of the lime quarries,

59  
 attracted European enterprise of Khasi Hills. These ultimately led  
 58. B.C.Allen: Imperial Gazetteer, Eastern Bengal of Assam, p.481.  
 59. W.W.Hunter : Op.Cit., Vol. II, pp. 205- 206.

to contacts of the Khasis with the English East India Company which resulted in a more active British interest in these hills. Goodwill and friendship were soon cultivated between the British and the Khasis as the commercial intercourse was found to be mutually convenient. This was further, necessitated by the involvement of the British in the Burmese War of 1824, in which British needed the cooperation of the Khasi states. By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century, Assam had become an integral part of the East India Company's territories. Through trade transactions and conquests, the Khasi settlements had extended to the plains of Assam and Sylhet. The Khasi Syiems exercised control over Duars, and some of the Khasi states covered extensive lands in the plains. By this time, David Scott, the British Political Agent of the North-East Province was impressed by the cool and healthy climate of the hills. He also soon found out that the hills are suitable for the cultivation of many European crops like potatoes, turnips, beet roots, wheat etc. But most important of all, David Scott felt the need of a proper road through the hills which will connect the two important British headquarters - Gauhati and Sylhet - for the smooth running of the British administration. Thus, he eventually, concluded a treaty with Tirot Singh, the Syiem of Nongkhlaw in 1826, the first treaty with a Khasi Chief, by which he obtained permission for the construction of this road through Tirot Singh's territory.

60. P.C.Chowdhury : The History of Civilization of Assam to the Twelfth Century, pp. 368-380.

61. S.K.Bhuyan : Early British Relation with Assam, p. 28.

62. A.J.M. Mills : Report on the Province of Assam, 1854, see letter from Lt. Col. Jenkins to A.J.M. Mills, No. 309 of 1853, Part II, pp. CXX and CXXI.

### 3.7. Expansion and Consolidation of Markets in the Modern Phase:

Trade incentives have considerably dwindled after the British occupation of Assam, more or so, after the inception of Shillong as the provincial headquarters, for since then, the new trade patterns have come to emerge and stayed on. Thus, the new landmarks were caused which emerged also from a network of buildings that came into existence. The principal economic pattern became drastically changed since the bulk of supplies was to be drawn from outside in respect of those not available locally. With these, came into picture the new food habits, new styles of buildings, new furnitures and household goods, new groceries and utensils, new dress patterns, use of textile products, other things of a wider range in which some of the old values became discarded to make room for new ones. A convergence of trade patterns, modern and traditional occurred in which this new capital attracted and housed streams of trading communities who were more skilled in operating inter-district trade, whereas a bulk of the local trade survived side by side. Thus, new factors of production and mode of distribution came into picture. The situation was that some local products enroute to Shillong were transacted outside by a trading community whereas, towards the south, local traders themselves (with a few exception) reached bulk of goods into the plain markets.

The system as it had come on to stay had not entirely squeezed out the local or traditional modes of production and distribution. To a new entreport at Shillong, came batches of local traders from all nooks and corners of this country to dispose of their products for both district and inter-district

trade, in the shape of timber, baskets and village crafts (implements, tools, accessories) fish, meat, turmeric, garlic, ricecakes, lac, various fruits and vegetables other hill products, and drew supply of things such as textile goods, groceries, utensils, foodstuffs, medicines, building materials, stationeries and others from Barabazar and Police Bazar; the local products at the same time being channelised for distribution through the various agencies. This occurred more on weekly market days. It can be seen that principal products including potato, broomsticks, 'tezpatta' (Bay leaf) and timber and daily deposited into the Shillong godowns and other merchants transact them in the town. These business transactions were accumulating force and reflected the new dimensions of the emerging economy.

Summary :

Marketing was carried usually through barter and the circulation of money was limited during the Ahom period. According to Shihabudin Talish, currency in the Ahom kingdom consisted of cawries, rupees and gold coins.

With the increase of external trade since the regime of Rudra Singha, there was a corresponding increase in the circulation of money. This leads us to conclude that the barter economy was in the process of being replaced by the money economy, which was the outcome of Assam's developing economic ties both with feudal India and the neighbouring countries of the North East. The total absence of initiative for the introduction of education or technology, left the area outside the scope of an alternative economy, although the increasing contacts with the plains and infiltration of finished products began to induct some

changes in the ideas and life style of the people.

The foregoing discussions indicate the nature of genesis and evolution of periodic markets and market system of Meghalaya. The paucity of written records and historical data on the Khasi trading system in medieval and colonial India makes it difficult to conclude anything positively about the nature and extent of trade. But, there are indications enough, to hold on to the 'contactual genesis' model of market development in the region. In summarising, few points need mention :

1. In the initial stages, periodic markets emerged at the 'spatial interface' of the two culture areas, the hills and the valley societies, both to the north and the south of the Meghalaya plateau.
2. Once the initial trading system got consolidated, the entire plateau became the interface between two great valley cultures, between the Brahmaputra valley and the Surma valley cultures. Therefore, the pattern of trading changed to a 'passage system' between the two valleys.
3. During the colonial period, the hill was opened up and new products and crops were introduced, but many of the older products disappeared, like the iron making by the Khasis, due to cheap availability of the British steel. Trade was considerably internalised and monetised. This led to integration of the traditional tribal society with the larger world economy.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **The Periodic Market System**

## PERIODIC MARKET SYSTEM

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In the previous chapter, evolution of Periodic Markets and specifically the emergence of a market system in North East India has been discussed. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to study the structure of the 'Periodic Market System' as will be revealed through the study related to periodic markets of Meghalaya namely in the East Khasi Hills District and Assam in the Jorhat District.

Periodic market is characterised by a regular meetings of rural producers and buyers at a fixed location in regular intervals since the (i) the per - capita consumption demand for goods sold in the market is limited, the market area is limited by the primitive transport system, and the nature of commodities traded are largely low value goods often of perishable nature and the consumers and producers can meet once or twice a week to transact the goods and services. Traders adjust to several market on a regular basis in rotation within the week days and within geographical proximity of each other in fashion of a network, around a central market (often, a regular one) which may be called a "system of periodic markets".

#### 4.1 Genesis of Periodic Markets :

The periodic markets spontaneously evolved perhaps during the late Neolithic Age with the Agro-Pastoral revolution, which brought surplus production as well, as stability to the nascent economics of the early farming communities. The barter system was the starting point of the traditional exchange system, developed

village exchange system. Along with the introduction of division of labour and specialisation in the crop-economy and invention of the wheel and animal use, transport facilities improved considerably : Gradually money economy emerged and the volume and complexity of the markets increased substantially.

On the genesis of periodic markets there are two contracting views. The Orthodox Theory approaches the problem from an 'evolutionary' point of view. In a Isotrophic situation, with emergence of social surplus and some level of crop specialisation, low level of economic exchange may have started the within peasant societies. A group of few villages may operate such a market periodically, either through barter or quasi-monetised exchange system.

As observed throughout the world, all peasant societies has some form of periodic market arrangement, whether in medieval Europe, South America, Africa or the great peasant traditions of China and India . Gradually, there was a horizontal spread of the marketing network as well as the vertical integration to the overall economic system, including the levels of monetisation, market specialisation, commodity diversification and other complexities and hierarchies.

The second hypothesis can be termed as 'contactual' genesis of periodic markets, particularly the early exchange systems between two neighbouring societies of contrasting structures of the economy, say for example, between a peasant society and a tribal society or a nomadic herding society.

Hodder,<sup>1</sup> assumes that the market begins with small scale or horizontal exchanges<sup>2</sup> in between two groups of people belonging to contrasting environments. But along with the growth of population increase in density and specialisation in economic activities the smaller exchange systems culminated in international trade.

The second set of Orthodox theory follows the idea of Polanyi (1957)<sup>3</sup> and Pincence (1936) and gives stress on population density, effective political administration to maintain physical security, and long distance line of external contact specially good trunk roads for origin and development of markets. Berry (1967)<sup>4</sup> who is a supporter of this group, pleaded for three stages of sequences; (i) the first stage involves socially administrated exchanges, (ii) in the second stage, barter and later money provided the standard of value, permitting market place transactions in peasant societies and (iii) finally, the peasant dualism between subsistence and trade has been replaced in some parts of the world by the specialisation of modern economies and periodic markets and fairs, by the highly articulated array of market centres.

From the above formulations it can be derived that the genesis of the market system lies in the given socio political and

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1. B.W.Hodder(1974)."Some Comments on Origin of Traditional Markets in Africa, South of Sahara", Transactions and Paper, IBG, Vol.36.

2. Pale, Jane (1971)."Farmers Market in the United States:Functional Anachronism", The Geographical Review,Vol.LXI, No.2, p.171.

3. K.Polanyi (1957) and Pincence (1967). Trade and Market in the Early Empire. Illinois.

4. B.J.L. Berry. Op.cit.,p.106.

economic order of the society. Markets, it can be observed, emerged out of the necessity of exchange between surplus communities/areas and deficit communities areas at fixed locations and times. This location could be either the surplus areas or the deficit areas or any other suitable location.

#### 4.2.Spatial Structure of Periodic Markets

The periodic markets have definite spatial structure. The systematic analysis of periodic market system mainly comes from social scientist like social anthropologists, economists, historians and geographers. The three different structures of periodic markets have been suggested so far by different social scientists, i.e. (a) Solar System, (b) Dendritic System, (c) Intermeshed Marketing System.

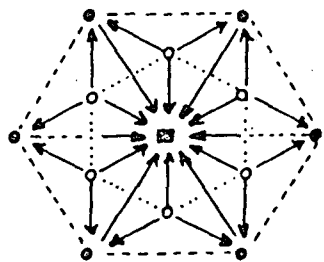
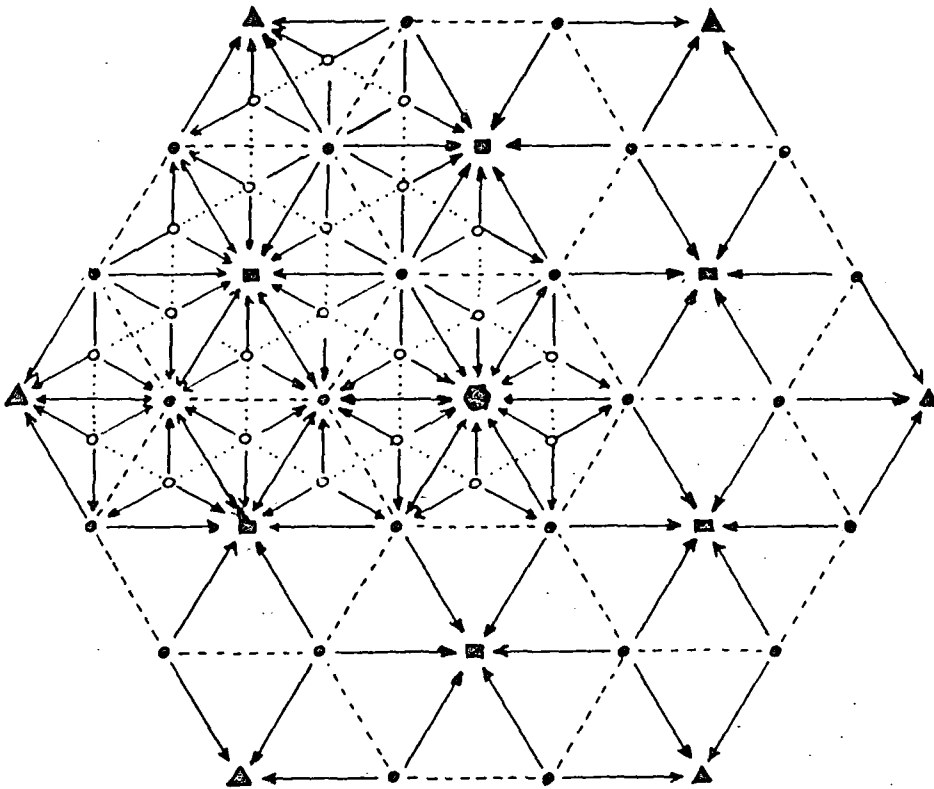
(a) The idea of 'solar system' is primary a concept of social anthropologists who worked in the field of marketing particularly in Nigeria, Mexico, and Guatemala (Smith: 1972).<sup>5</sup> The analogy of solar system reflects both hierarchial arrangement as well as functional specialisation of periodic markets. The main basis of this system is the natural law of the solar system; i.e. as planets revolve round the Sun, the trading activity revolves around hierarchically arranged system of markets. Here, 'Sun' is the regional administrative centre. (Fig.4.1).

(b) The 'Dendritic System' is a simple one in which, Johnson shows that the spatial arrangement of market is such that,

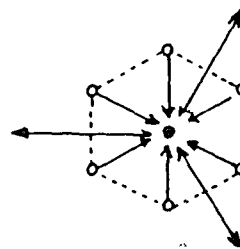
5. Carol A. Smith, "Economics of Marketing System: Models from Economic Geography", Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.3, pp.167-201.

6. Johnson E.A.J. (1965). "Market Towns and Spatial Development in India", NCAER, New Delhi, pp.44-51.

# THE SOLAR SYSTEMS



**Level 2 Centre System**  
Market Town



**Level 4 Centre System**  
Bulking Centre

- Level 1 Centre
- Level 2 Centre
- ▲ Level 3 Centre
- Level 4 Centre
- Level 5 Centre

- Boundary of major market town
- Direction of trade

Source: Carol A. Smith (1972 b)

Fig.4.1

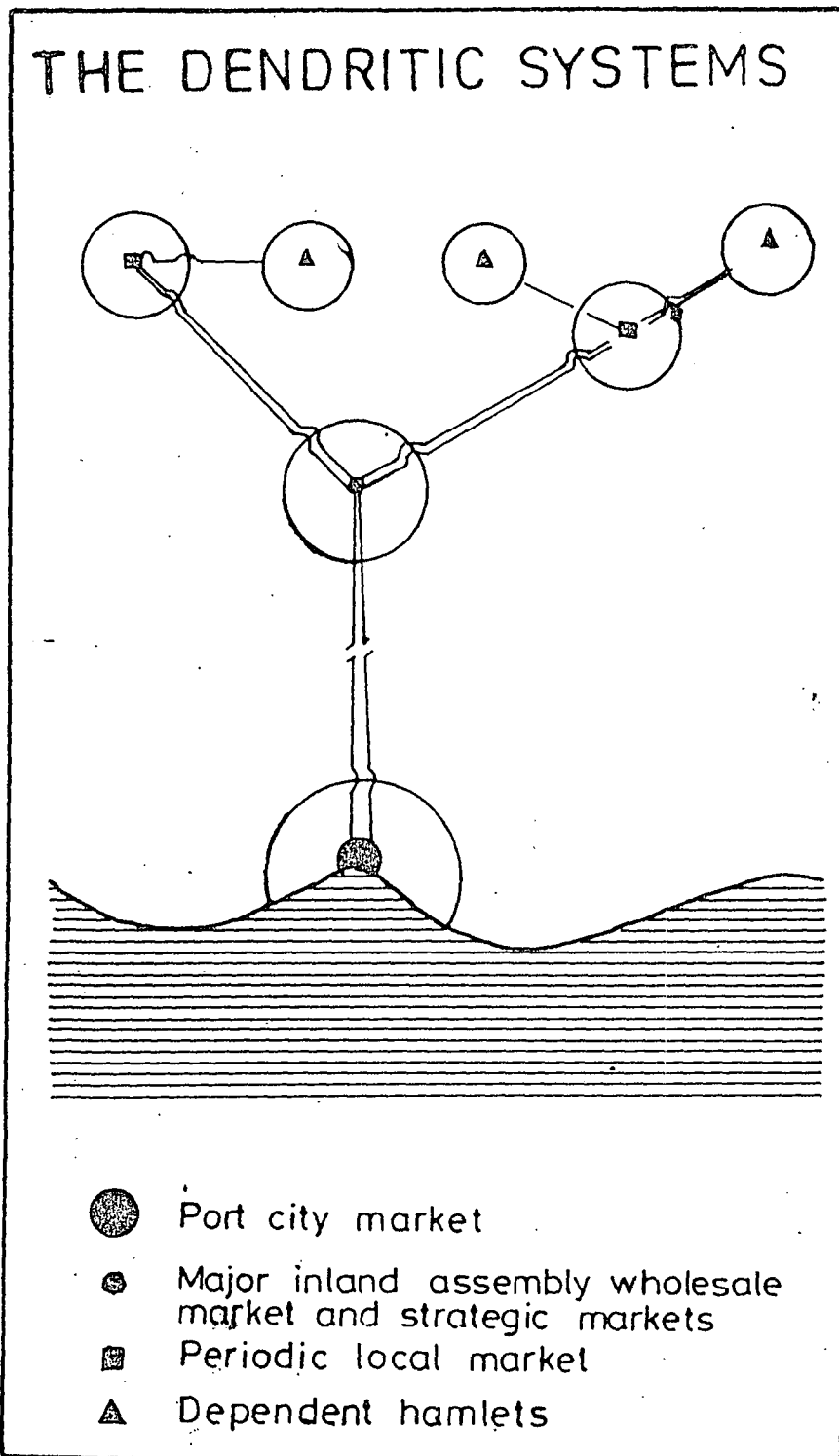
lower order markets are linked to a single apex order market through a few intermediary markets. Johnson, on the basis of his study of Mitz, Haitian markets suggested that higher order markets are both export-import point and centres of regional consumption and distribution. The intermediate 'Strategic' markets are interwoven with the highest order markets by some form of quick transport. These points are so located, that it can be convenient for bulk export of rural products and breaking point of urban consumer's goods for distribution to rural areas, through rural order markets. (Fig.4.2).

(c) 'The Intermeshed Marketing System' is suggested by Skinner <sup>7</sup> during his study of rural markets in China. There, he identified a system of three-tier exchange which is temporarily interlocking ; the smallest unit being the standard rural market, there are two other units located above it are the 'Intermediate market', and a 'central market'. Skinner observed that, (a) there is a direct relationship between the levels of marketing activity and the size of population of a market, (b) raw materials in the marketing system moves up to the level of the hierarchy, whereas the consumer goods move down from the urban centres. The 'standard market' is the point, where upward movement starts and downward movement terminates. (Fig.4.3).

#### 4.3. Sequential Development of Periodic Market System :

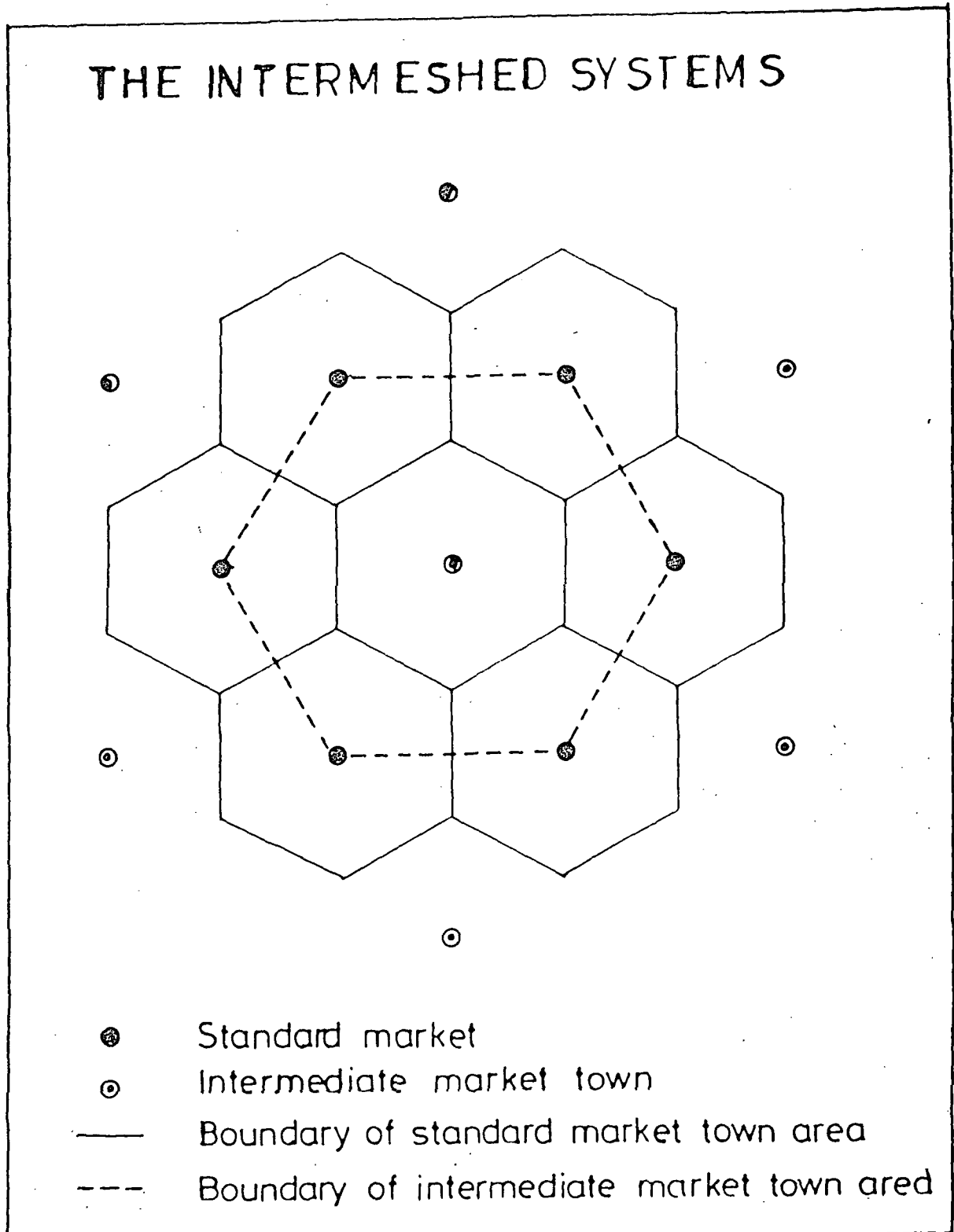
Social anthropologists, economists, historians and geographers working on periodic markets have postulated two sequences for the development of a periodic market system, the

7. G.W. Skinner (1964-65). "Marketing and Social Structure in China", Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.24, pp.3-45.



Source E A J Johnson (1970)  
Fig.4.2

# THE INTERMESHED SYSTEMS



Source G W Skinner (1964-65)

Fig. 4.3

'standard sequence' and the 'non-standard sequence'.

The 'standard sequence' traces a market system developing from a simple peasant exchange economy to a complex regional commercial exchange system (Bohman and Delton:1965)<sup>8</sup>. Effects of this transition from simple to complex systems on the regional economy and the people have been elaborated. The proponents of the Standard Sequence hypothesis assume that investment in marketing infrastructure will automatically lead to a greater articulation of the regional economy with greater benefits to all. But, the process of transition from one stage to another is not a simple one. It has been noted that any improvement in the system has tended to benefit the more advantaged sections of the society.

The proponents of the 'Non-Standard' sequence argue that at first, the market place does not emerge from local peasant exchange but is rather a consequence of contrasting cultures<sup>9</sup> brought together by long distance trade (Polanyi 1944, 1957)<sup>9</sup>. In this view of development of marketing system, the periodic markets emerge along contact zones of an ethnic and economic nature, but along trade routes in such zones and also involve from very early<sup>10</sup> stages an exchange of non-local Products. (Hodder:1961,1965a,1966b

8. Bohannan, P and Q Dalton G.(edn)1965: Market in Africa, Garden city.
9. Polanyi K. (1944): The Great Transformation, New York and Polanyi K. (1957) (ed): Trade and Markets in the Early Empires Illinois.
10. Hodder B.W. (1961): Rural Periodic Day Markets in a Part of Yorubaland, Transactions and Papers IBG. Vol. 29 pp 345-355.  
Hodder B.W.(1965a): "Distribution of Markets in Yorubaland Scottish Geographical Magazine, Vol.81.pp.48-58.  
Hodder B.W. (1965b): "Some Comments on the origin of traditional Markets in Africa South of Sahara", Transactions and Papers IBG. Vol: 36. pp.97-105.  
Hodder B.W. (1971): "Periodic and Daily Markets in West Africa" in C.Meillassoure (ed), The Development of Indigenous Trade and Markets in West Africa, Edinburgh.

and 1971).

The fact that most of the systems are found in highly stratified societies seems to have been overlooked by both Standard and Non Standard Schools of thought (Carol A. Smith 1974<sup>11</sup> a). She believes that market system are instituted by class stratification. According to her, it is necessary to separate the analysis of the evolution of market systems from that of market origins, because to her, the former suggest a distinctive kind to interplay between trade, marketing and authority (Carol A. Smith: 1974a; Plattner: 1973)<sup>12</sup> and Smith propose a special model for colonial areas where periodic markets are seen to have developed as a consequence of urban demand for rural products. The standard sequence begins with an urban centre of demand and works its way downward into a system of markets to create a Periodic Market System.

#### 4.3.1. Periodic Market System in the Study Area :

On the basis of evidence produced in the preceding paragraphs it can be said that study area of peasant society (Assam) provides one of the best empirical examples of standard sequence of development of Periodic Market System. This evidence is enough to support the point of view that initially, the periodic markets emerged as centres of administrative power of

11. Smith Carol A. (1974 a): Economic of Marketing Systems: Models from economic Geography, Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol.3, pp.167-201).

12. Plattner, S.M. (1973): "Periodic Trade in Developing Areas without Markets" Paper Presented at the Conference on Formal Methods of Regional Analysis.

non-food producing demand i.e. from quasi-urban centres. In Jorhat district most of the periodic markets have emerged due to tea cultivation. The evidence from the study area supports the contentions of Plattner (Plattner 1973) and Smith (Carol A. Smith 1974 a) that urban demand for rural products are responsible for knitting the periodic markets together in a system.

Non-Standard sequence of development of a periodic marketing system is applicable in the study area of tribal society (i.e. Meghalaya). This theory argues that the first market place does not emerge from a local exchange but is rather a consequence of contrasting cultures brought together by long distance trade (Polanyi, 1944, 1957)<sup>13</sup>. In this view of the development of the marketing system emerge along contact zones of the ethnic and economic nature but along trade routes in such zones.

#### 4.3.2. Hierarchical Arrangement of Periodic Market System :

There are several small market centres identified on 'Terminal Markets'. These are the centres which are well knit with the periodic market on one side and sub-regional centre on the other. These are primary collecting points for the rural products, where all the goods are stored, packed and despatched to the sub-regional centre. These are also important break point for downward flow of consumer goods. The movement of commodities, though appear to adjust to the spatial hierarchical arrangement varies from one market to another. Destination of forest products and agricultural products are not the same.

The perishable commodities like vegetables generally pass through all the levels of the markets but rarely reach the regional centre.

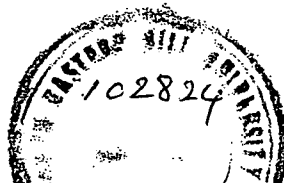
13. Polanyi K (1944), Op.cit.; Polanyi K.(1957) (ed) Op.cit.

Likewise agricultural products like jute, rice, mustard seeds, various kinds of pulses rarely enter to the periodic markets but reaches the regional and sub-regional centre directly. The downward flow of goods passes through all the important levels of marketing system, but their arrival of the periodic market varies from product to product depending on travel pattern of the traders. (Fig.4.5.)

The whole system is thus an interdependent system with exotic goods sold in the central market and itinerants circulating in lower level markets. Merchandise produced in the central town is distributed downward by the itinerants. Both regional and terminal markets have a variety of producers distributors. Merchandise consumed by the peasantry or required by petty craftsmen flows down to every market. The upward flow of goods begins with the peasant selling his produce to local consumers or the dealers who process and handle back the products.

#### 4.3.3. Periodic Markets and the Central Place System:

Empirical studies of marketing systems elsewhere in the under-developed world demonstrate a number of regularities that generally conform to what is predicated by central place theory. First, the longer the market place or the settlement containing it or more populous the hinterland of this place, the greater is the distance between market places or settlements and another of the like size; conversely the smaller the market place or settlement the less is the distance between markets of this size. This relationship obtain because, large markets have higher demand threshold than is true for smaller markets. Demand in the simple case is a function of population size; in reality it is also



MOVEMENT OF CONSUMERS PRODUCT FROM REGIONAL CENTRE TO THE VILLAGES

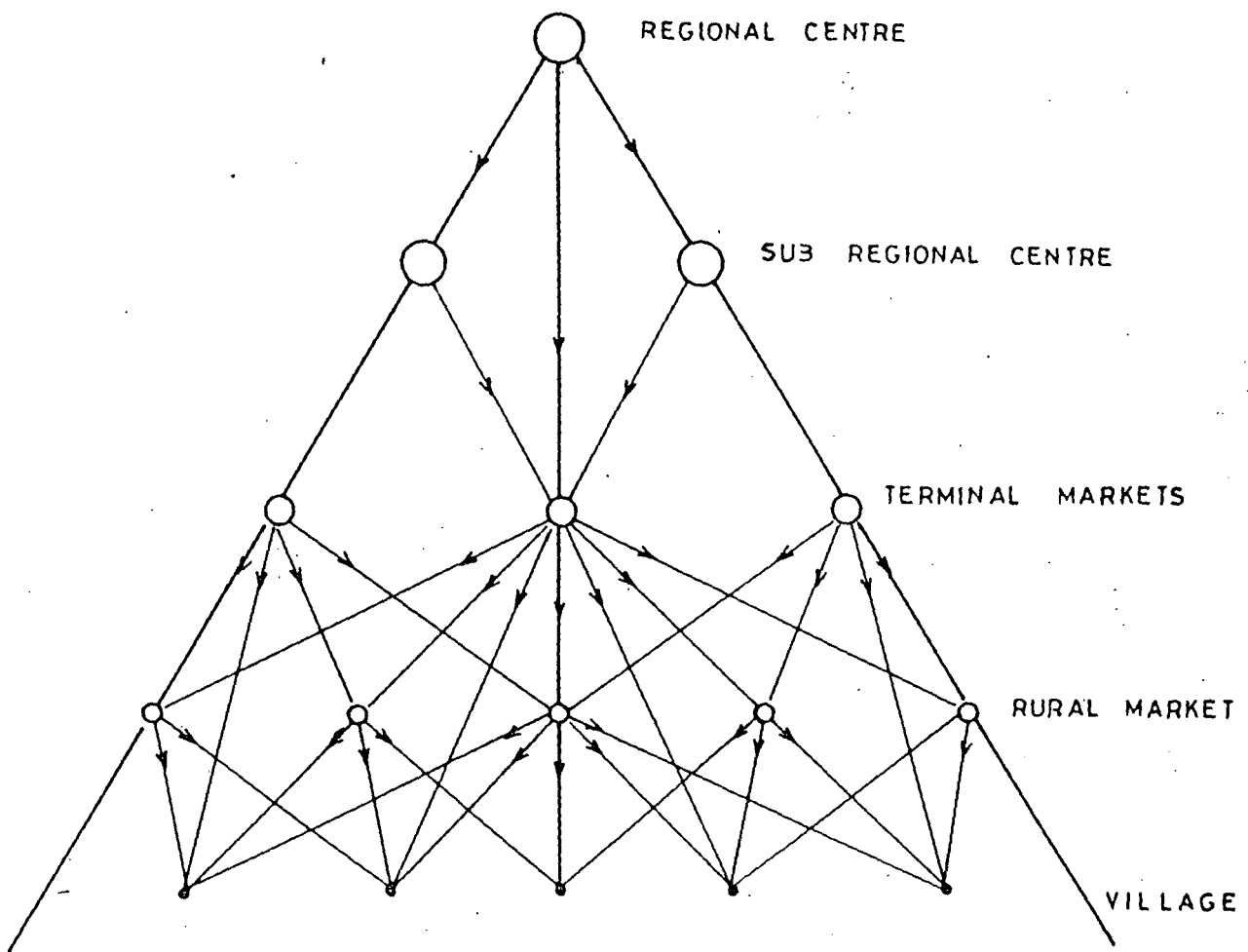


Fig 4.5

related to disposable income and accessibility to market. A higher disposable income in a population of a given size can support a larger market, whereas a decrease in transfer cost or increased accessibility has the effect of increasing the drawing power of a given market. Where population density is high, other things being equal one will expect large markets to be close to one another.

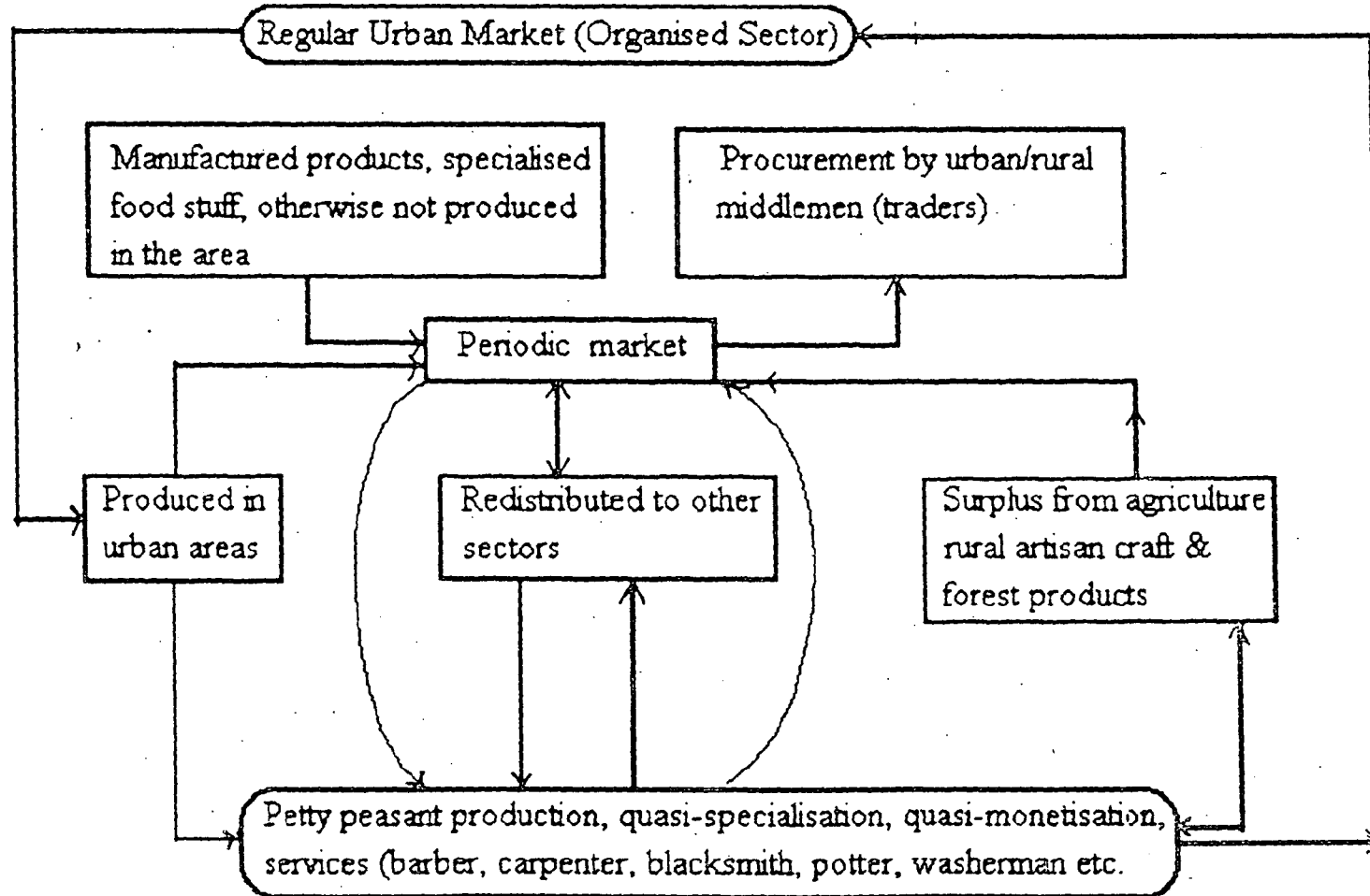
A second regularity is that because of total demand, large markets invariably offer a greater range of goods than small markets do. Because consumers who live in the vicinity of small markets cannot buy all the goods they would like; they are generally willing to travel greater distances, though with less frequency. Thus, large markets are frequently said to nest small markets since the trade areas of the latter are included in the trade areas of the former. Third, the numbers of markets usually increases as one moves down the hierarchy from large or high order markets to those the small or low - order. This follow logically from the relationship between the size of market and demand required to support a market of a given size.

Fig:4.6 On the position of periodic market in a traditional economy.

From the diagram it shows that regular urban markets are of a higher order. From these urban centres, manufactured products and specialised food-stuff which are not produced locally enter into the periodic market for further transmission to the consumers in the villages. In the villages also the cultural products, forest products, collection of materials from hunting and gathering etc. enter the urban markets, via periodic markets. So, the periodic markets are the exchange points for upward and downward movement of goods.

Fig. 4.6

Position of the Periodic Market in a Traditional Economy



## CHAPTER V

**A Comparative Study of the Spatial  
Structure of Periodic Markets of Tribal  
and Peasant Areas of North East**

• Comparative Study of the Spatial Structure of  
Periodic Markets in Tribal Areas and Peasant Areas

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In the previous chapter, periodic market system of Assam and Meghalaya has been discussed. In the present chapter an attempt will be made to study the spatial structure of the periodic market system as will be revealed through the study related to periodic markets of Meghalaya, namely Nongpoh, Umsning and periodic markets of Assam, namely Hemlai and Debrapara and Mariani.

Broadly, the structure of periodic market system can be viewed as having four identifiable components, namely the spatial structure, the economic structure, the social structure and the hierarchical structure (Fig.5.1). These components interact within each other as well as are supported by other components and concepts. Components like participants on the market and the mode of exchange and finally the entire structure is integrated with the hinterland with which the market system interacts intimately. The morphological structure means here the physical form and arrangement of the periodic markets as a spatial expression of the economic and social interaction in the system. The economic structure includes the commodity structure of the market as well as the medium of exchange and exchange relation between the participants in the market system. The social structure includes the social composition of the participants as well as relations within various interactive groups in the market in a process of social integration. The hierarchical structure means a generic ordering of the periodic market system and their economic significance.

# STRUCTURE OF PERIODIC MARKETS

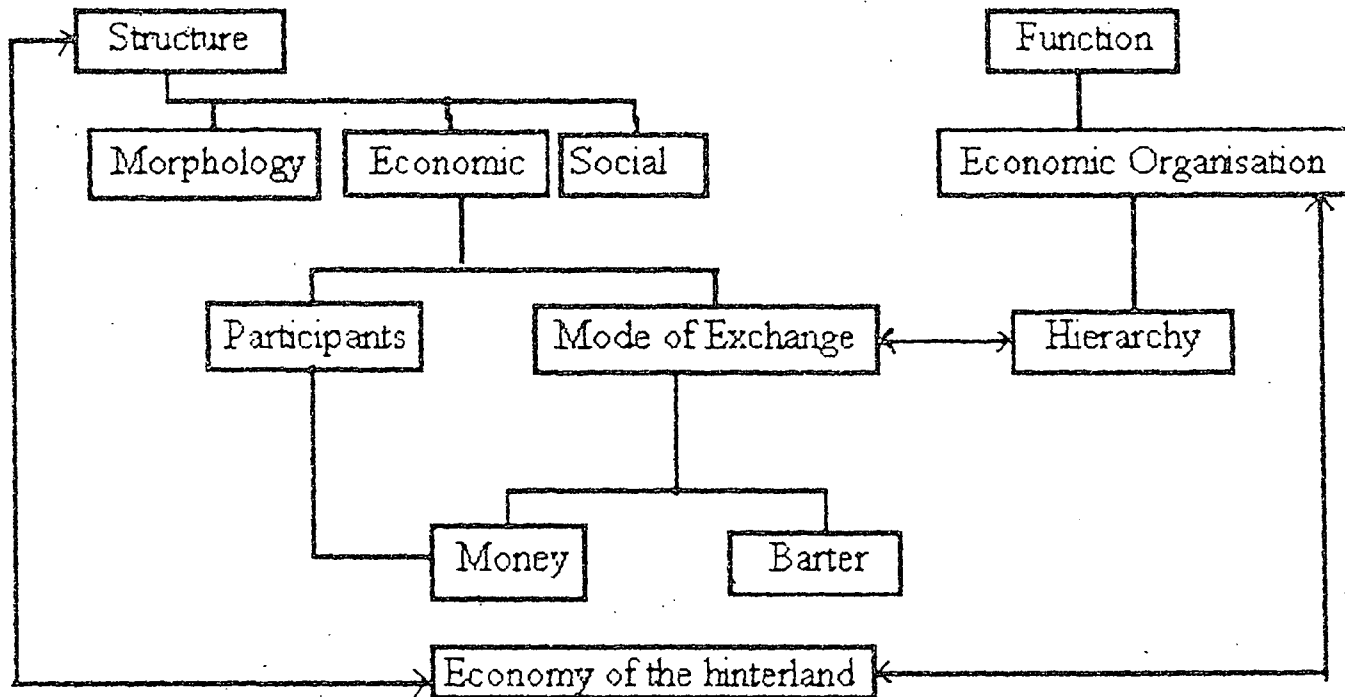


Fig. 5.1

In this chapter, spatial structure is going to be discussed.

### 5.1. Composition of Periodic Market.

Periodic markets remain deserted on rest of the days, other than the traditional market day, when various activities are performed. Within the market, the activities differ according to the temporal setting. The whole area gets a dynamic look with both horizontal and vertical activities and a heavy spurt of temporary population takes place during market day.

#### 5.1.1. Market Week

Generally market varies from ten to twelve<sup>1</sup> days. There are about 60 periodic market centres in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. Except in Bara Bazar, the other markets follow 'the eight day' market week cycle. For example, if one week, the market is held on Monday next week same market will be held on Tuesday. Bara Bazar has two market days - one held the last day of the eight day cycle known as Iewduh and other held on sixth day known as Iewpamtiah. In Meghalaya market day is based on the Khasi calendar.

But in the peasant area of Jorhat district, the seven day week of the Gregorian calendar is followed. Sunday is the rest day so most of the village periodic markets of Jorhat district are held on Sundays. Table 5.1. shows the distribution of periodic markets in Jorhat district.

### 5.2. Spatial Distribution Pattern of Periodic Market.

1. The spatial distribution pattern of periodic market is closely comparable to the distribution pattern of population in the

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1. B.W.Hodder, (1961) : Op.Cit, P.P. 149-159.

hinterland. Spatial density of population has a direct relationship with the location of periodic market.

2. One may venture also of examining the hypothesis that the development of the most of the markets takes place along transportation routes.

Table 5.1.  
Distribution of Periodic Markets in Jorhat District  
(Thana-wise)

SL.No.	Name of the Thana	Number of Periodic Markets.	% of market (Thana wise)
1.	Majuli	11	10.28
2.	Jorhat	18	16.82
3.	Teok	23	21.49
4.	Mariani	29	27.10
5.	Titabar	26	24.29
Total		107	

Source: 1989 Mahkuma Parishad Office

Table 5.2.  
Distribution of Periodic Markets in East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya (C.D. Block).

East Khasi Hills District C.D. Block	No. of Periodic Markets	% distribution
1. Nongpoh	12	19.67
2. Bhoi Area	11	18.03
3. Mawryngkneng	2	3.27
4. Mylliem	1	1.63
5. Mawphlang	5	8.19
6. Pynursla	10	16.39
7. Shella-Bhologanj	7	11.47
8. Mawsynram	10	16.39
9. Mawkynrew	3	4.91
Total =	61	

on routes.

The spatial distribution pattern of periodic market is related to the distributional pattern of population. Generally, where density of population is high, other socio-economic and transportation factor are uniform, then their density influences the distribution.

ibution of markets.

Table 5.3.  
Density of population in Jorhat district and No. of Periodic Markets

Sl.No.	Thana	Density	No of periodic markets
1	Majuli	101	11
2	Jorhat	370	18
3	Teok	276	23
4	Mariani	181	29
5	Titabar	297	26
Total			107

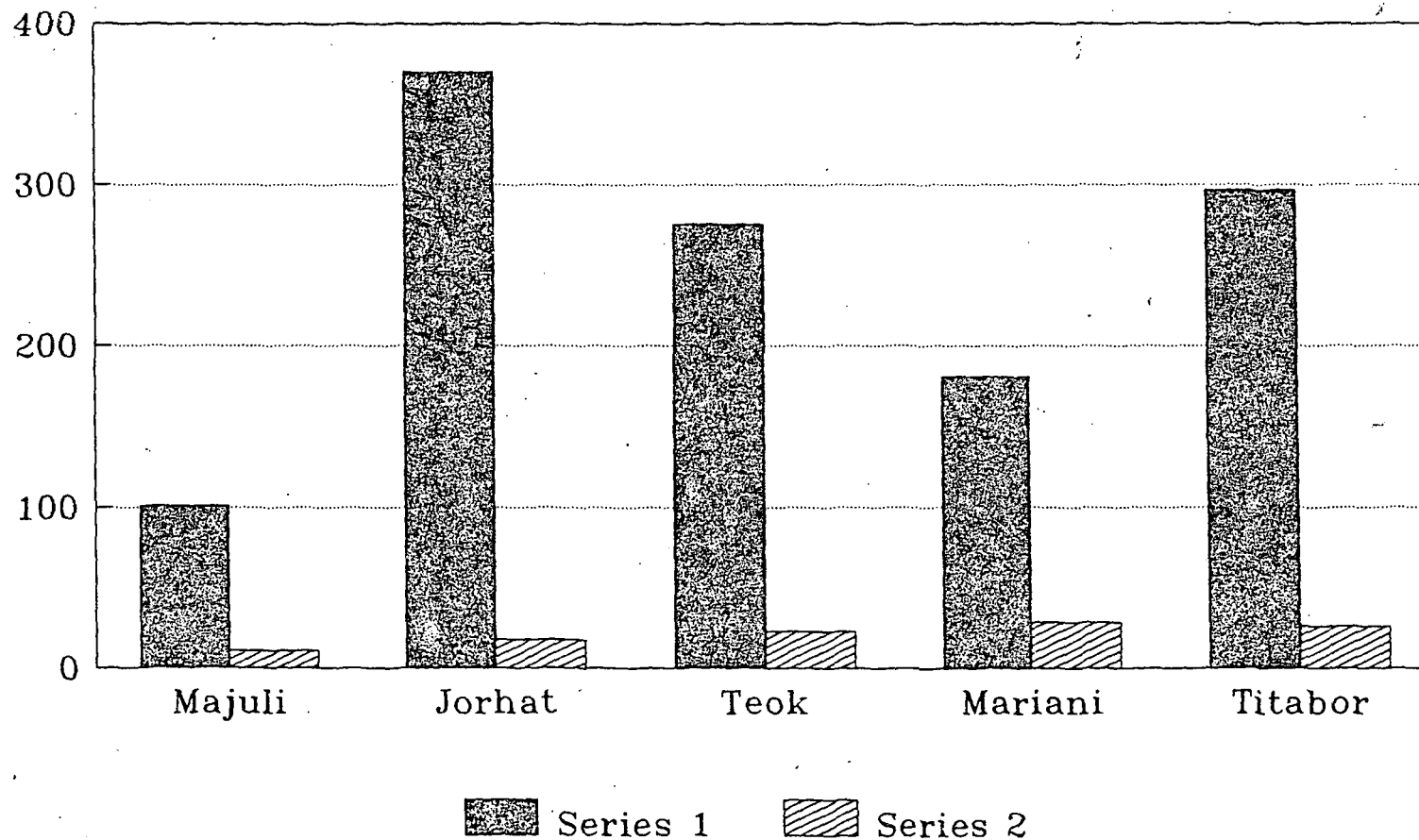
From the Table 5.3 and diagram 5.2 it can be seen that there is a relationship between density of population and number of periodic markets. Population density of an area influences the number of markets. But in Jorhat and Mariani, the opposite is the case. Though the density of population in Jorhat thana is higher, the number of periodic markets are less, because the area of Jorhat is mostly urbanised and instead of periodic markets, daily markets are seen. Though the population density is less in Mariani thana, the number of periodic markets are high, because a large number of tea-gardens are located in Mariani thana. Every tea-garden has its own periodic market.

In addition to the density of population, market sites and their communication linkages are additional variables in the locational spacing of market centres and their spatial organization.

In the existing state of underdevelopment & communication linkages and networks, transport facilities influence the sites of market centres which tends to seek the available catchment area in the trijunctions of cart tracts, cross routes, or similar

# Fig.5.2

## Population Density & Periodic Market



Source: District Statistical Handbook.

convergences of routes, motorable embankments of canals, ferry points etc. Their alignment to roads and railways are the most suitable points for periodic market locations.

For example 90 per cent of periodic markets of East Khasi Hill district are located along the transportation routes, e.g. Barnihat market, Nongpoh market, Umsning market, Bara Bazar market are all important markets that are situated along the main arteries of roads.

The factors behind the distribution of periodic markets in Assam are (i) Transport & Communication, (ii) density of population and (iii) physiography.

In Assam, periodic markets are also along the important roads.

Physiography also influences the location of periodic markets. Northern part of Jorhat and Teok is low-lying area, where population density is also very low; so the location of periodic markets to the northern part is almost absent.

In the Majuli markets are mostly developed in the contrasting cultural zones i.e. Mishing and Assamese.

Some regularity can be observed in the periodic markets of both study areas.

(1) The areal extent of service limit of markets in the low-land plains are small because of their close spacing.

(2) A small subset of markets has large service areas located in thickly forested tracts of sparse population. The areal extent of service limits of markets in the hill area of Meghalaya is relatively larger than the plain areas of Assam because of their wide spacing.

(3) Another regularity often noted is that between the population size and the number of market days in a week. As the population of a place and its hinterland increases the number of market days usually increases.

As trade continues to prosper market locations were increasing based on centrality, accessibility and proximity to other services with construction of roads and railways, which by slow degree broke down the traditional isolation of the village communities to a large extent. From time immemorial, markets are situated at communication nodes in the vast majority of rural areas, spread out in settlements of varying sizes. Outside traders passed through these traditional settlements to buy and sell, as they traded and obtained commodities from areas through which they passed on their trade journeys. This induced local demand for exogenous goods and encouraged local potential traders to collect and distribute the goods brought by the long distance travelling traders.

### 5.3 Classification of Periodic Market:

There are three types of periodic markets. They are: (1) Regular (2) Linear cluster (3) Random.

In Assam above three types of markets are seen. But in Meghalaya spatial distribution of periodic markets are mostly of random type.

With the help of Nearest Neighbour technique, distribution of periodic markets in Mariani Thana (Jorhat district) has been calculated. The details of the technique has been discussed in Chapter-II.

Most of the market are approaching cluster is Assam because of the physiography of the region. But in Meghalaya most of the markets are randomly distribution. ( Map 5.1. Location of Markets for N.N. Analysis, Mariani and Teok thanas).

The growth of markets in the district is not dependent upon the density of population. The establishment of tea-gardens, irrespective of population density which has considerable influence in this respect.

#### Classification Based on Location

Periodic markets may be classified into three different categories : (1) Tea-garden market (2) Tea-garden cum village market (3) Village market.

Tea garden market are located within the garden area itself. Here buyers are mostly tea-garden labourers (90% and above).

Tea garden cum village markets are found to be located in the tea garden but they not only serve tea garden population but village people equally.

Village markets are located in the village areas, specially in both large rural settlements; consumers are mainly the village people (80% and above).

From the location point of view, in Assam, the above mentioned three types of markets are seen.

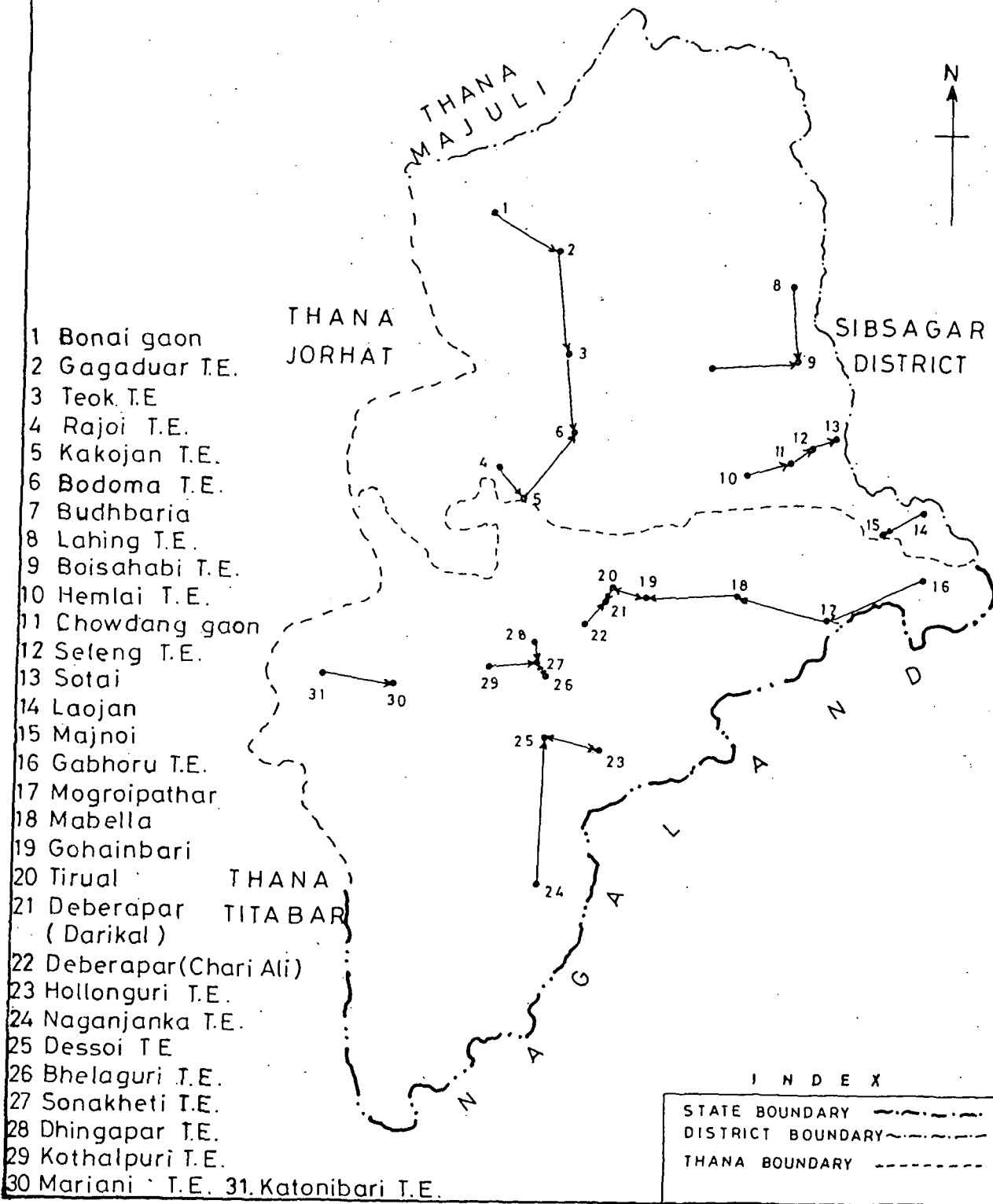
But in Meghalaya only village markets are found. It is widely distributed all over the East Khasi Hills district.

#### 5.4. Temporal and Spatial Aspects of Periodic Markets.

It is generally accepted that periodic market meetings are organised in space and time in such a manner as to achieve an

## THANA MARIANI & TEOK LOCATION OF MARKETS FOR NEAREST NEIGHBOUR ANALYSIS

2.5 0 5 KM.



Map 5.1

Table 5.4.  
Classification of Markets according to periodicity.  
(Jorhat district)

Class of Markets	Periodicity		Total
	Weekly	Bi-weekly	
Tea-garden	36 (33.64%)	4 (3.73%)	40
Tea-garden-cum- village	20 (27.10%)	9 (8.41%)	29
Village	30 (28.03%)	8 (7.47%)	38
			Total = 107

Source : Field Survey 1991.

optimal convenience to those who used them. This is so, in order to avoid unnecessary spatial competition. Smith remarks that when both accessibility and disposable income are limited, there is little point in contiguous markets holding meetings on similar days (Smith 1972)<sup>3</sup>.

Most of the studies conducted in Meghalaya recognised the data problems involved. Absence of accurate maps of the locations of periodic markets make the task evenmore difficult.

The day-wise classification of markets, however, seems to have some significance. It has been already discussed that in Assam follows the seventh day week and market follows the seventh day. The Sunday is the most preferred day for village markets. The British administrator recognised Sunday as the rest day for all their employees. Sunday being the holiday for all the urban markets, facilitates urban sellers to collect their goods from the periodic markets or to sell goods.

3. Carol. A. Smith (1972a): The Domestic Marketing system of Western Guatemala, Ph.D dissertation, Stanford University, Stanford.

Table 5.5.  
Temporal Distribution of Periodic Markets in Jorhat District.

Market Day	No. of Markets held	% total No. of markets
Sunday	30	28.03
Monday	6	2.80
Tuesday	7	6.54
Wednesday	7	6.54
Thursday	5	4.64
Friday	38	35.51
Saturday	17	15.88
Total	107	

From the ~~table~~ it is seen that quite a good number of markets are held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Only a very small number of markets are held on Mondays and Thursdays. (Tables 5.6 and Map 5.2)

#### 5.5 Classification of Periodic Markets

Periodic market in the study area are not equally important. Three best indicators of the importance of periodic markets are (1) population served by a market, (2) the auction value of the market and (3) the influence zone of the market.

In Meghalaya market size is mainly based on population served by a market. From the population served by a market, it is considered that six categories of markets can be seen. (Table 5.7.)

But in Assam, population served by a market and auction value is the main basis for selection of market size (Table 5.8) The size of the market has been evaluated according to population served and classified to various size class as shown below.

Table 5.6.

## Temporal Distribution of Periodic Markets in Mariani and Teok Thana

Sl. No.	Name of the Market	Market Day	Periodicity
1.	Nampupia Gaon.	Saturday	Weekly
2.	Tatakia	Sunday, Saturday	Bi-Weekly
3.	Tirual	Sunday, Wednesday	Bi-Weekly
4.	Mogroi Pathar	Saturday	Weekly
5.	Maibelia	Saturday	Weekly
6.	Daklangia T.E	Thursday	Weekly
7.	Dhekiajuli T.E.	Friday	Weekly
8.	Katonibori T.E.	Friday	Weekly
9.	Sarsaikata T.E.	Friday	Weekly
10.	Rangajan T.E.	Friday	Weekly
11.	Mariani	Sunday	Weekly
12.	Hilikha T.E.	Sunday, Friday	Bi-Weekly
13.	Kheremia T.E.	Thursday	Weekly
14.	Nagajanka T.E	Saturday	Weekly
15.	Kaliapani T.E.	Tuesday, Saturday	Bi-Weekly
16.	Hollonguri T.E.	Friday	Weekly
17.	Desoi T.E.	Friday	Weekly
18.	Kathalguri T.E.	Friday, Saturday	Bi-Weekly
19.	Dihingiapara	Friday	Weekly
20.	Bhelaguri T.E.	Friday	Weekly
21.	Sonowal T.E.	Thursday	Weekly
22.	Balijan T.E.	Friday	Weekly
23.	Naginijan T.E.	Saturday	Weekly
24.	Gabharu T.E.	Saturday	Weekly
25.	Greenview T.E.	Friday	Weekly
26.	Hemlai T.E.	Tuesday	Weekly

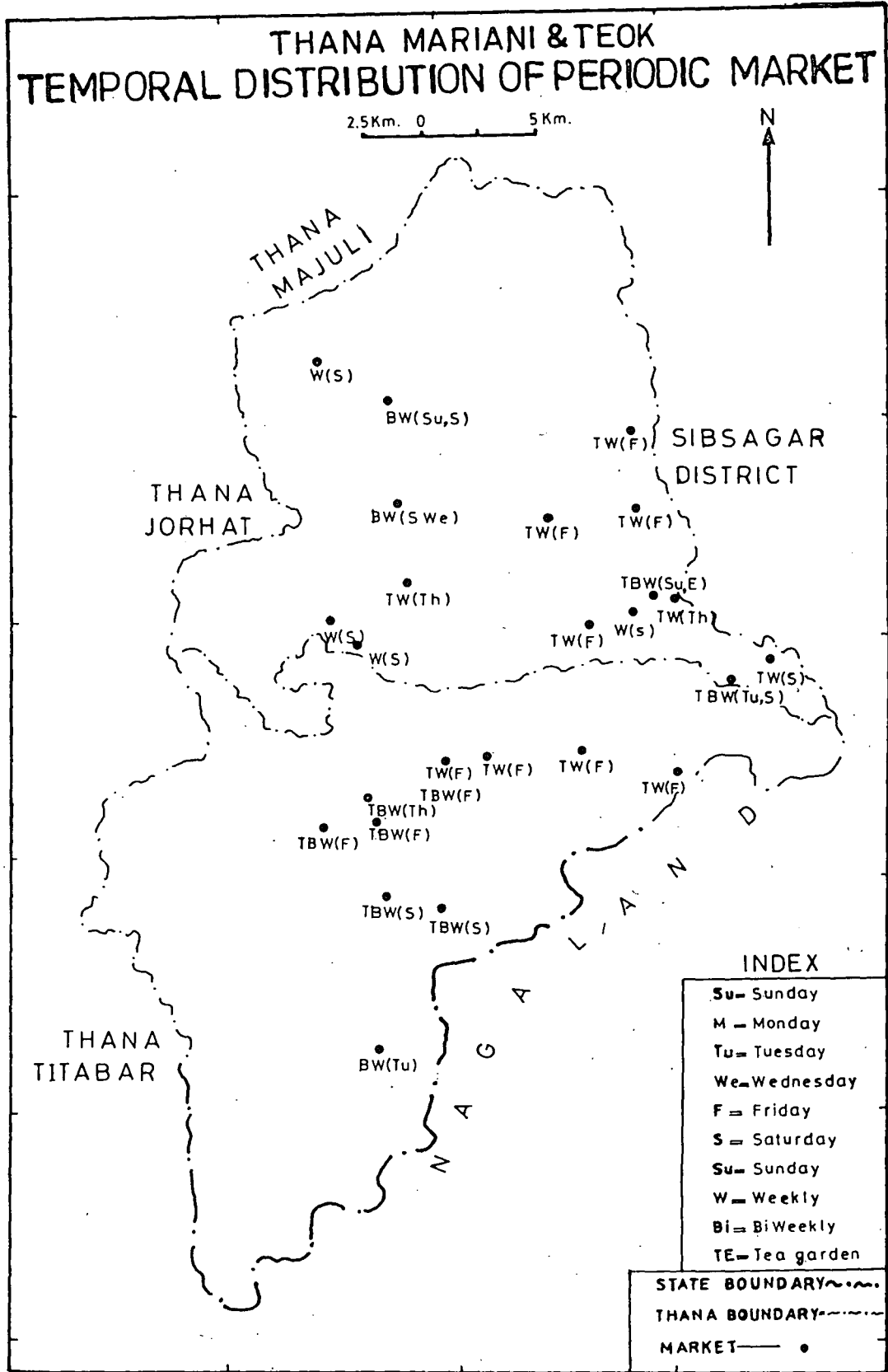
Source: Field Survey 1990.

Table 5.7

Classification of Market on the basis of population served  
(East Khasi Hills district)

Class	Size	Population served	No. of markets	%Total markets
VI	Very small	0-300	15	24.59
V	Small	300-600	13	21.31
VI	Medium	600-900	10	16.39
III	Medium	900-1200	11	18.03
II	Large	1200-1500	9	14.75
I	Very large	Above 1500	3	4.91

Source : Field Survey 1990.



Map 5-2

Table 5.8  
Classification of market on the basis of population served  
(Jorhat district)

Class	Size	Population served	No of market	% of total market
I	Very large	Above 600	3	2.80
II	Large	500-600	4	3.73
III	Madium	350-500	10	9.34
IV	Medium	200-350	15	14.01
V	Small	100-200	40	37.38
VI	Very small	0-100	35	32.71

107

Source: Survey in 1991-92

From Table 5.8, very large, and large markets serve a considerable mass of consumers. The medium size markets (III,IV) are comparatively large in number (23.35%). The small sized markets (class V) and (class VI) are widely distributed all over the region. It constitutes 70.09 per cent of the total markets. The presence of large number of small size markets clearly indicates the backwardness of marketing activity in the study area.

If one observes the geographical distribution of periodic markets and their auction values, a further interesting pattern emerges. Some periodic markets are located on major roads, some of those periodic markets which are not advantageously located also tend to have high auction value. This is because, these markets command a very large hinterland for which many types of perishable goods and forest products are brought for sale both to consumers and wholesale buyers from the urban areas. Such trade potential was seen as being responsible for high auction values. (Table 5.9)

#### 5.6 Influence Zone of the periodic markets

Periodic markets have intimate relation with their

Table 5.9

Auction Value of a few selected Periodic Markets of Jorhat District  
(in Rupees)

Name	Auction (1975-76)	Value (1984-85)	Auctioneer
Mariani	12,000.00	13,501.00	Jorhat Mahkuma Parishad
Deberapar	901.00	4,031.00	- Do -
Duklangia T.E.	650.00	1,500.00	Duklangia T.E.

Source: Mahkuma Parishad's Record 1985.

pective hinterlands. Christaller's model shows, how the functional region emerge in a 'honey comb' arrangement of the settlements can emerge.

Central place theory was put forward by Walter Christaller. Central places are broadly synonymous with central settlements (markets) that serve as the centre for regional communities by providing them with central goods and central services. Higher order centres stock a wide services (functions). Higher order centres stock a wide array of goods and services, i.e, some limited part of the range offered by the higher order centre and complementary regions served by each central place, they exist for both higher and lower order centres and are defined by town-country relationships .

Christaller defined the centrality of a centre as the ratio between the services provided and the local needs of its inhabitants.

The market area's lower limit is determined by the threshold limit, and its upper limit is defined by distance beyond which the central place no longer is able to sell the goods and services. If

we assume that travel is equally easy in all directions, the range of good will be a perfect circle which is the outer limit of a demand cone in which the quantity of a central good consumed decreases with distance from the central place because of increased transport cost.

Travel pattern and distance is one of the important considerations to choose the market. From the field study, it is seen that buyers from rural areas and farm-goods sellers are coming from short distances. They are poor, so they can not afford for higher transportation cost and thus, long distances. They usually travel by foot.

But the middlemen set of buyers and non-farm goods sellers come from distant places. They add transportation cost when selling or buying the goods. Middle men buy goods from different periodic markets at low prices and resell those in other market.

The Zone of influence or actual command areas of the markets can be determined by the formula discussed in Chapter-II. (Maps 3 and 5.4)

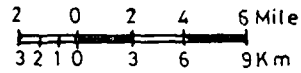
### 5.7 Morphological Structure

Periodic markets of both the study areas have definite internal structure. Most of the markets sites have been found to be located on the (1) side of the main roads, (2) on the cross-road point and (3) open space found in between two big settlements.

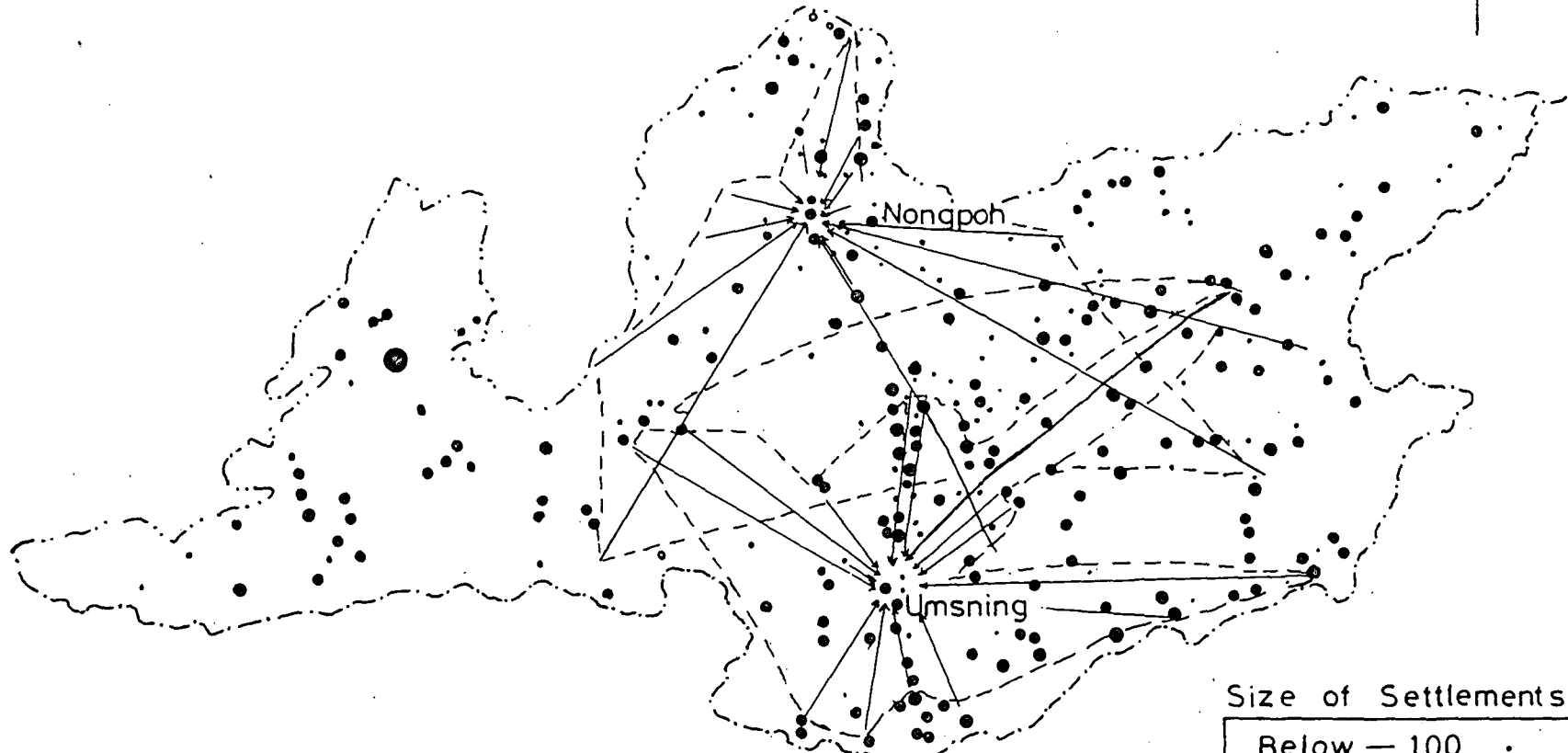
The morphology of the periodic market emerges in response to the economic and social interactions of participants and takes specific spatial forms; for example, the location of shops /vendors might be random or their organization will depend on some classification of the basket of goods and services traded.

The Nongpoh market (Meghalaya) is situated at a distance (

# INFLUENCE ZONE OF NONGPOH AND UMSNING MARKET



A S S A M



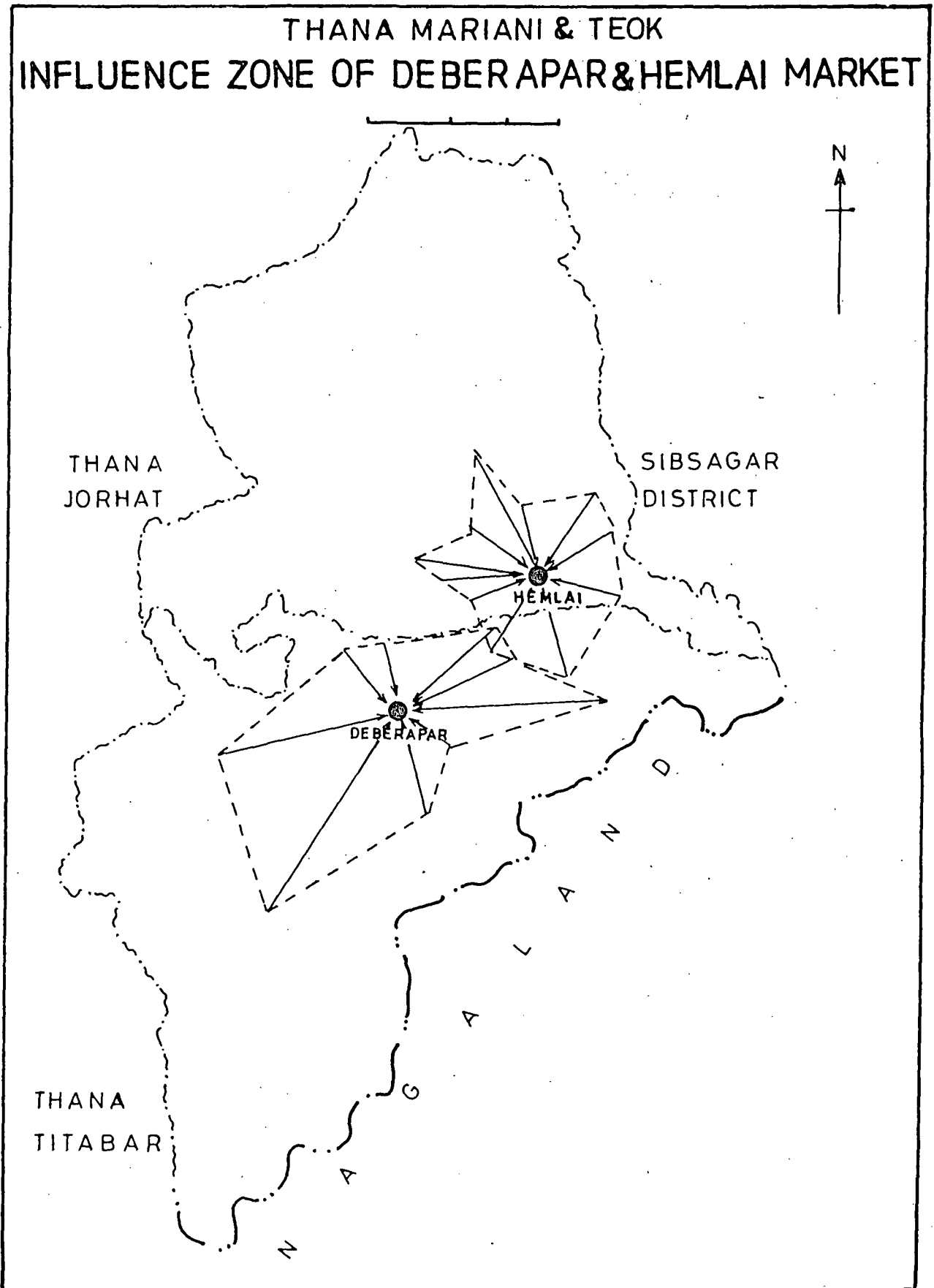
THANA SHILLONG

Size of Settlements

Below	— 100	•
100	— 249	•
250	— 499	•
500	— 499	•
1000	— Aove	•

Map. 5.3

# THANA MARIANI & TEOK INFLUENCE ZONE OF DEBERAPAR & HEMLAI MARKET



Map 5.4

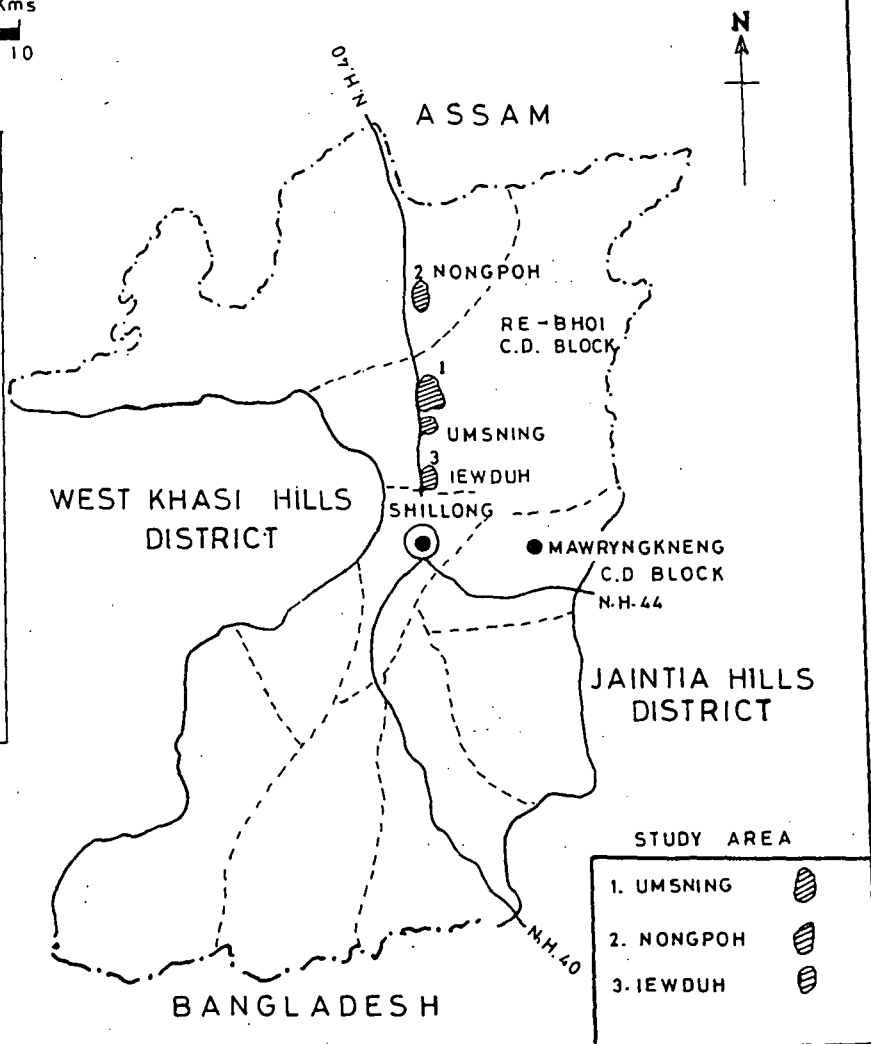
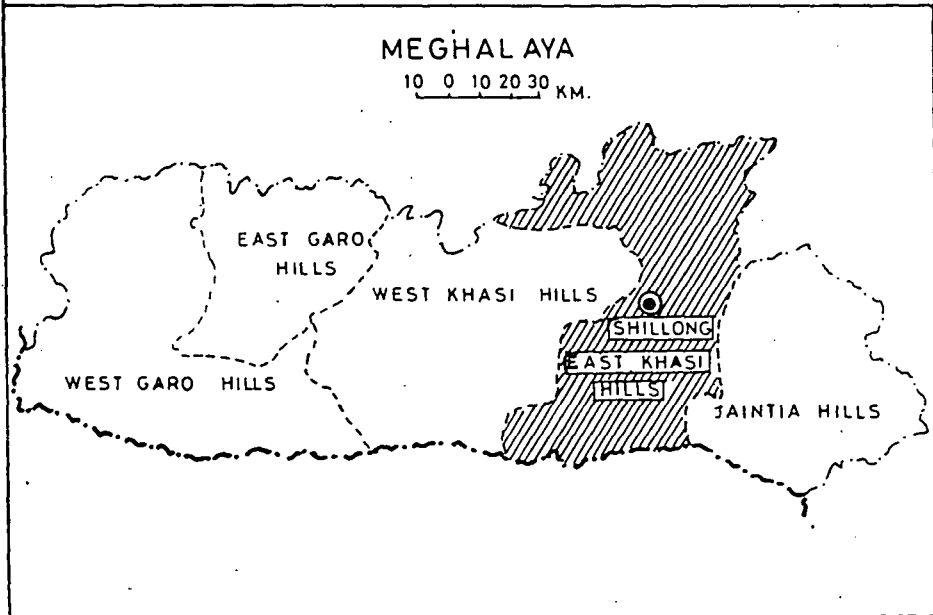
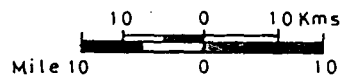
of about 200 meters from) the National Highway No.40 and the Umsning market adjacent to the same National Highway at distance of 51 and 31 km. from Shillong, respectively. (Map 5.5 shows the study area of Meghalaya).

In the peasant areas of Jorhat district, the seven day cycle is followed. Market day for Deberapar is on Sunday and Hemlai, on Tuesdays and Mariani on Sunday. Deberapara and Hemlai, both markets are situated besides the Dhundar Ali (Map 5.6 Location of Study Area of Assam).

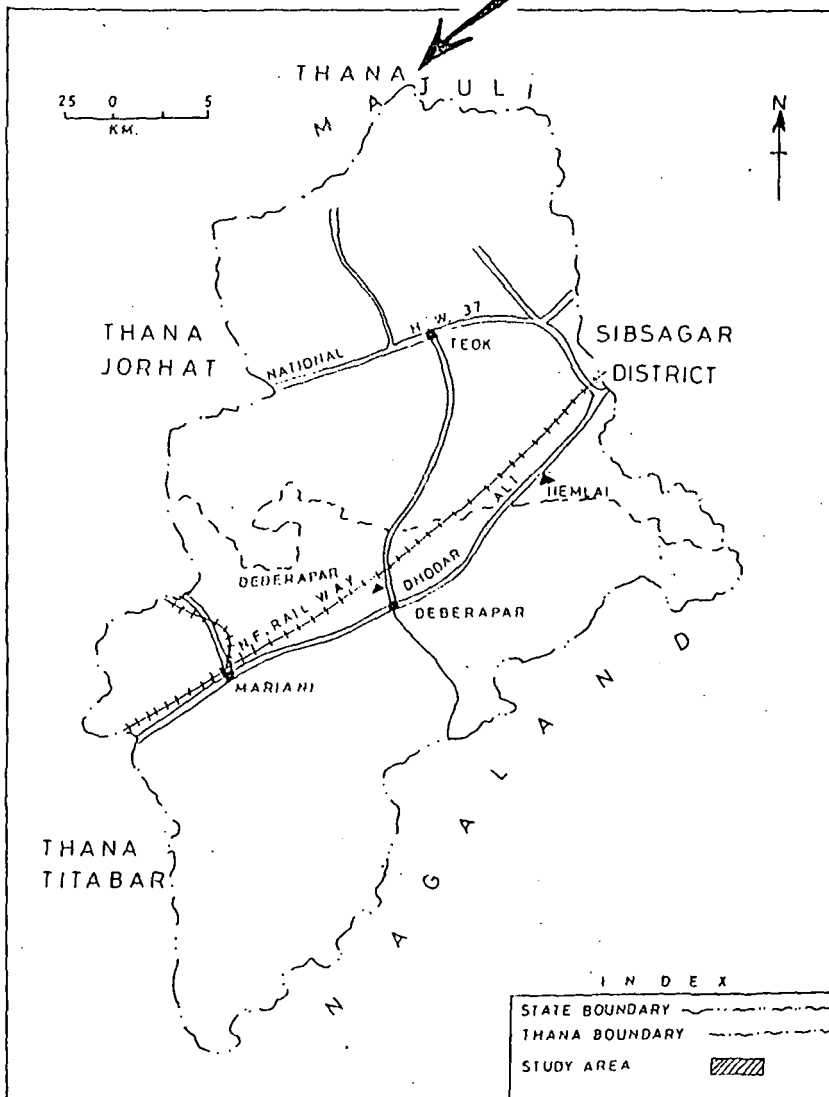
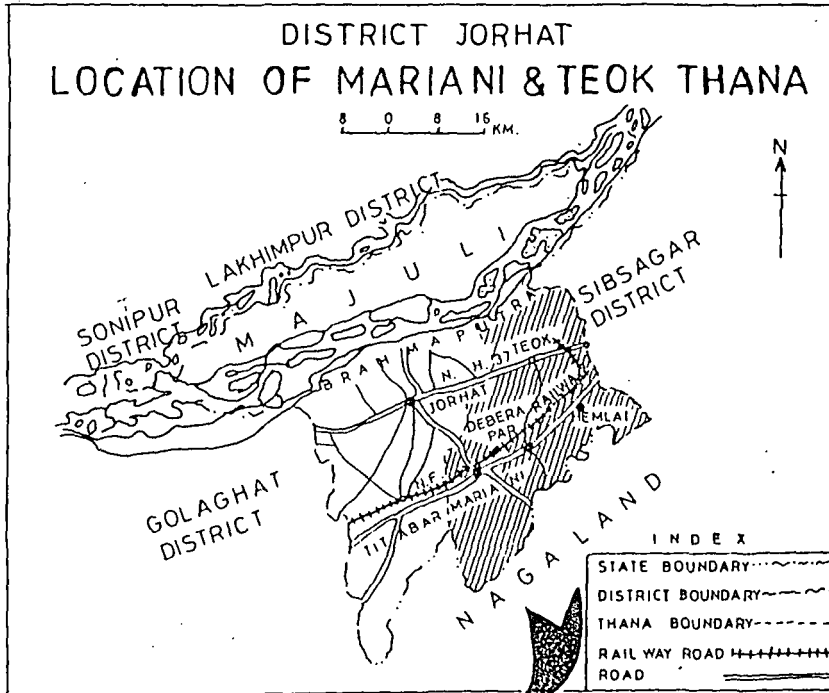
There are identifiable variations in the operation in both the study areas. Operation of the periodic markets with peak and trough periods are also different. Generally in Meghalaya, markets open in the morning from 6.30 A.M. by assemblage of participants, i.e. sellers and buyers and even small groups of people who may be called as visitors with the sole purpose, the markets providing the venue of entertainments. But in Assam markets generally start from 9 A.M. and the peak timing is from 11.00 A.M. to 12.00 noon. But in Meghalaya as the day proceeds the activity of the market increases and takes a peak hour between 8 to 10.0'clock and finally, dispersal of the participants starts from early afternoon till the evening (Nongpoh by 12 noon and Umsning by 2 P.M.)

The organisation of the shops/stalls are on the basis of the aggregative principle of groups of commodities and services. The main commodity/services grouping are on the basis of their organization in the space as is given in the Table 5.10 and the sketches (5.4).

# EAST KHASI HILLS LOCATION OF STUDY AREAS



Map 5.5



Maps 6

Table 5.10  
Commodity basket in periodic markets

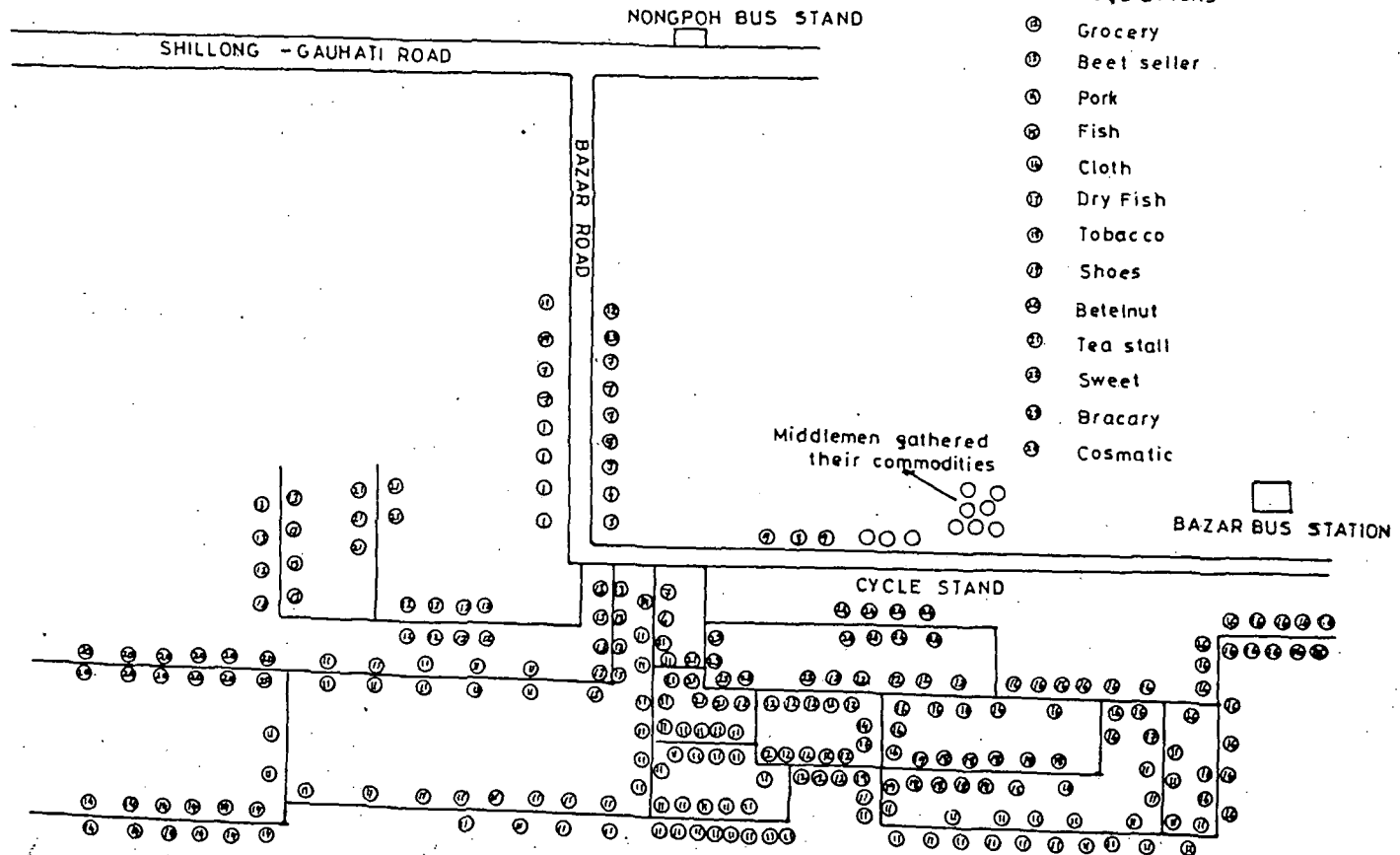
Main Groups	Commodities	Remark
1	2	3
i)	1) Grocery	Organized in the middle part of the market.
	2) Green Grocery	Some are organized and some are unorganized.
	3) Meat/Fish	Organised in one corner.
	4) Tobacco/Pan	Middle space.
	5) Cooked food/tea	Front space and periphery.
ii) Clothing	Same	Organised at one corner.
iii) Books and Stationery		Mainly front space.
iv) Hardware	1) Utensils	Steel and pottery are located mainly in front space, Alluminium in middle.
	2) Construction material	Organised in front space.
v) Fuel	1) Kerosene	Organised in front space.
	2) Charcoal	Organised in periphery.
	3) Wood	Negligible.
vi) Sundry Items		Organised in middle.
vii) Agricultural inputs	1) Only seeds	Negligible.
viii) Services	1) Barber, carpenter, blacksmith, fortune teller, shoemaker etc.	Mainly from space both sides of the market entrance.

Source: Surveys, 1990-92

The morphology or internal structure of a periodic market evolves an interesting picture, which can be well identified from the study of the Nongpoh and the Umsning markets. Stalls which are found in the periodic markets are two types, i.e. locationally 'fixed' and locationally 'floating' stalls. The locationally fixed

# A SKETCH MAP SHOWING THE MORPHOLOGY OF NONGPOH MARKET

- ① Utensil (Aluminium)
- ② Utensil (Steel)
- ③ Pottery
- ④ Darab
- ⑤ Shoemaker
- ⑥ Fortune teller
- ⑦ Book Stall
- ⑧ Barbar
- ⑨ Kerosine seller
- ⑩ Equipment (Steel)
- ⑪ Veqs & Fruits
- ⑫ Grocery
- ⑬ Beet seller
- ⑭ Pork
- ⑮ Fish
- ⑯ Cloth
- ⑰ Dry Fish
- ⑱ Tobacco
- ⑲ Shoes
- Ⓜ Betelnut
- Ⓝ Tea stall
- Ⓞ Sweet
- Ⓟ Bracary
- Ⓠ Cosmatic



Map 5.7

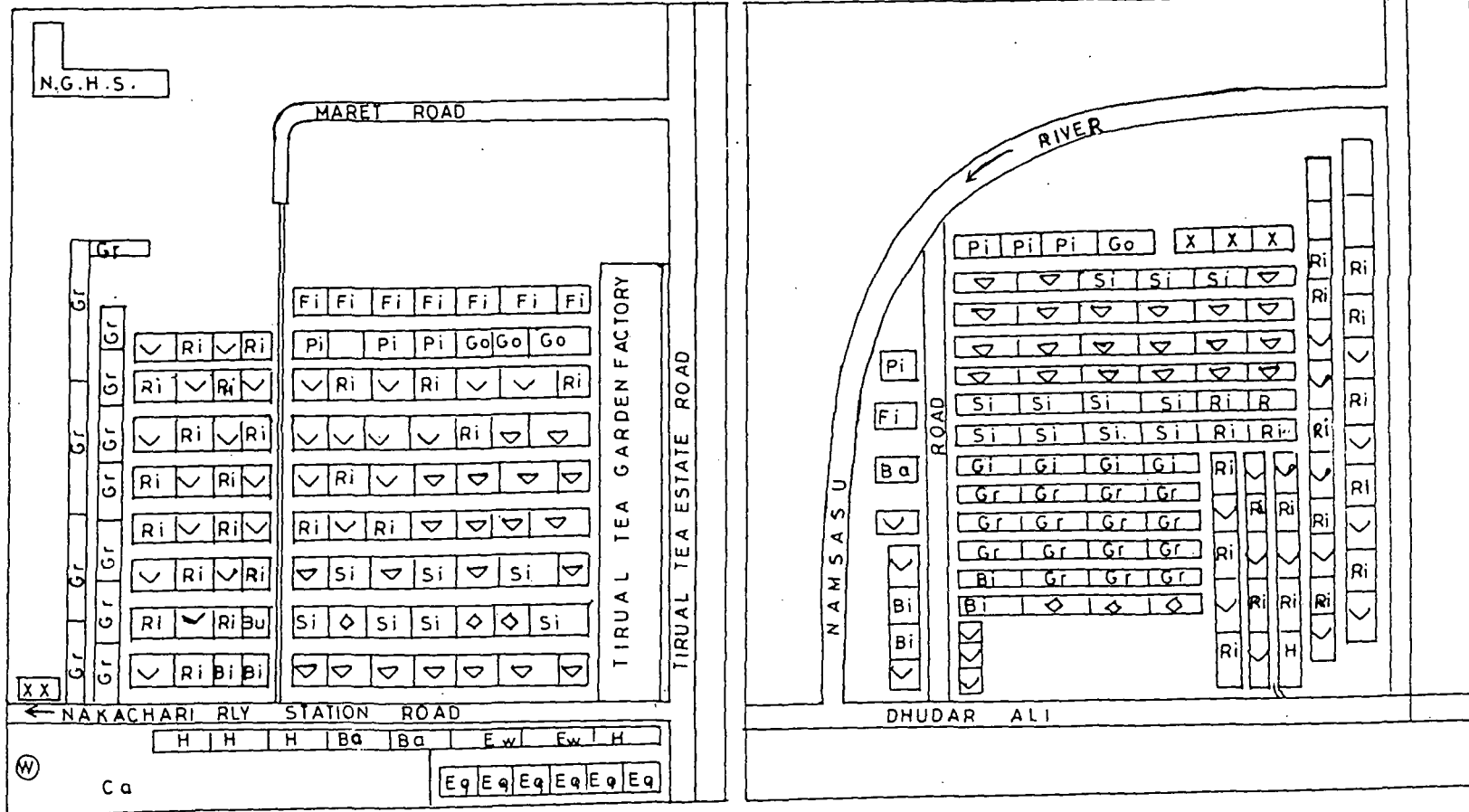
stalls are orderly arranged and mostly are occupied by the regular traders. Stalls are found in various sectors are allotted for particular commodity. This locationally fixed sectors are found to be at the central area of the market and are surrounded by locationally 'floating' stalls. In Nongpoh and Umsning markets, sectorwise arrangement of stalls are well noticed. The front space of the market is mostly occupied by the service traders (barbers, shoemaker etc.), fuel traders (mainly kerosine), utensil traders mainly (steel made). One or two cosmetic good dealers, dealers of the house repairing materials etc. Vegetables and fruit stalls are located in the middle portion of the market. Tea stalls are in the front rows and on the periphery, the middlemen buyers gather their goods in the Umsning market in the backside and Nongpoh they gather on the front side. The locationally fixed stalls are arranged on a sector to sector basis. They are cloth sectors, grocery sectors, utensil sector and stationery sectors etc. Meat sector is quite some distance away from the main market. Main types of meat sold are beef and pork; from sanitary point of view as well as from the point of view of 'pollution'.

The structure of the stalls are of two types, permanent or semi permanent structures and stalls are in the open space. Generally, the permanent stalls are of a size of 3 metres by 3 metres, rectangular in space. Structure are supported by bamboo or wooden posts supporting the roofing which is made of either thatches or corrugated iron sheets. The stalls are arranged in continuous rows. The construction and the maintenance of the complex is done by annual contract bidder, who in turn collects rental/ toll the shopkeeper.

# SPATIAL ARRANGMENT OF STALLS IN PERIODIC MARKET

DEBERAPAR MARKET ( Sunday )

HEMLAI MARKET ( Tuesday )



## I N D E X

- |                               |                       |                  |                           |                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. CLOTH & READYMADE GARMENTS | 6. CATTLE MARKET - Ca | 12. RICE - Ri    | 18. FURNITURE - Fu        | 23. MOLASSES - Mo |
| 2. VEGETABLES & FRUITS - V    | 7. WELL - W           | 13. PAULTRY - Pu | 19. VESSELS - Vs          |                   |
| 3. SHOES - S                  | 8. STATIONARY - Si    | 14. BISCUIT - Bu | 20. BAMBOO - Ba           |                   |
| 4. BARBER - B                 | 9. GROCERY - Gr       | 15. Pig - Pi     | 21. EMPLOYEE QUARTER - Eq |                   |
| 5. EARTHENWARE - Ew           | 10. HOTEL - H         | 16. GOAT - Go    | 22. TEA - Te              |                   |
|                               | 11. FISH - Fi         | 17. DRUGS - Dr   |                           |                   |

Fig.58

In Assam all the periodic markets follow sector-wise arrangement of stalls, as noticed( Sketch 5.8). In Deberapar market, the grocery sectors are in the left hand, fish in the front space, vegetable sector are not arranged properly. Cloth sector are to the backside. In Deberapar market,( Nakachari Rly. Station Road) on the back side it is busier than Dhundar Ali road side.

In Hemlai market, the grocery and cloth sectors cover most of the space. Namsasu river flows on the periphery of the market.

CHAPTER VI

**A Comparative Study of the Economic  
Structure of Periodic Markets of Tribal  
and Peasant Areas of North East**

A Comparative Study of the Economic Structure of  
Periodic Markets of Tribal and Peasant Areas of North East

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In the previous chapter, the spatial structure of the periodic markets and their internal organization was dealt with in some detail. In this chapter attempt will be made to discuss the behavioural pattern of the participants of periodic markets of tribal and peasant areas of the North East India. The participants of the markets can be divided into two broad groups; the buyers and the sellers. Further buyers can be divided into two types: (a) the middlemen buyers and (b) the end use buyers. Sellers can be divided into three sub groups, (a) Sellers of farm produce (b) Middle-men sellers, and (c) sellers of non-farm produce. It provides the pattern of interaction within the various segment of participants.

As seen from the figure a large part of the end-use buyers are also sellers of farm produce. In other words, farmers from nearby villages come to sell their farm produce and then, become buyers of items which they need. Similarly, there is a small group of middlemen traders who buy from the farmers in bulk and then sell the same commodities in the market to other buyers at a higher price. Finally, there are the sellers of non-farm produce trade in goods and services which are not produced in the village economy but are important for the people. Such commodities could be manufactured product, hardwares, processed food or a variety of services like barbers, carpenters, blacksmiths and shoemakers etc.

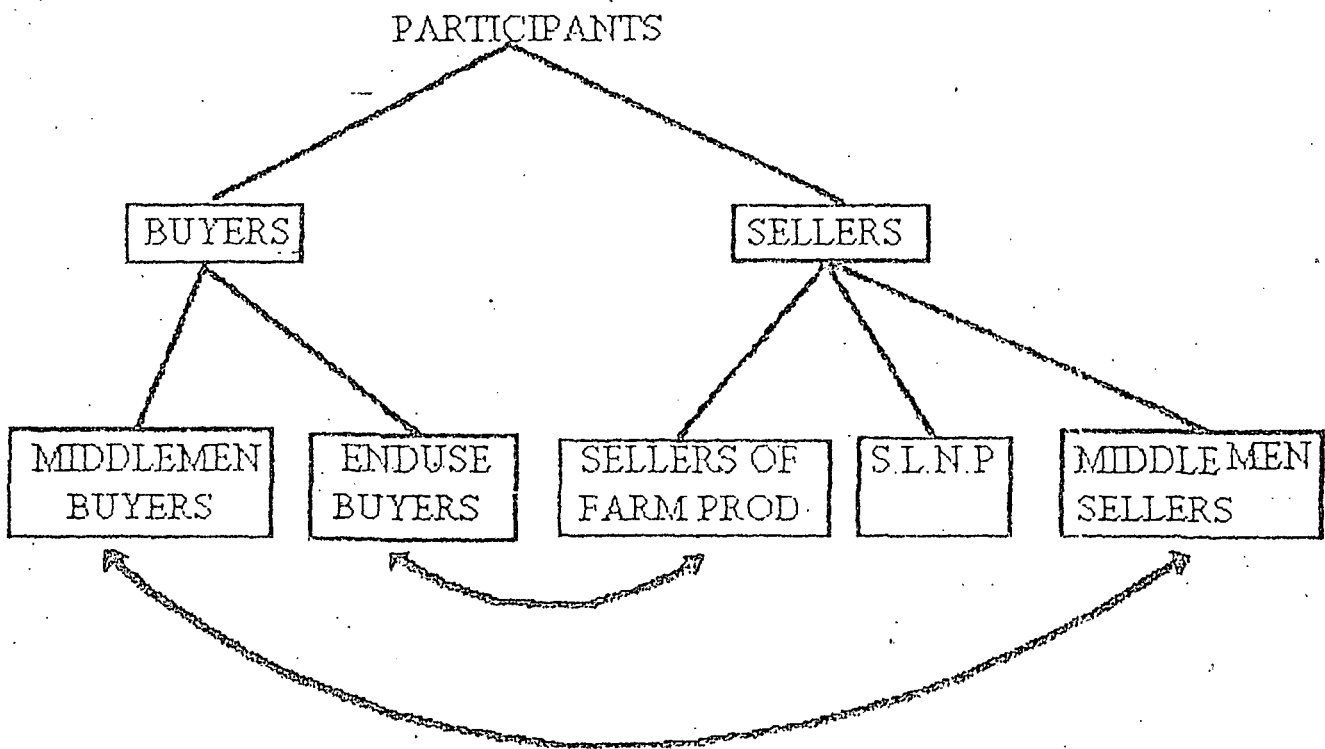


Fig.6.1

\* S.L.N.P.: Sellers of Non-Farm Produce

### 6.1. Traders and Goods Traded

Traders are the most complex group of people found in the periodic market. They come from various directions with their various types of goods, either produced by themselves or collected from others. There are generally three types of traders, found in the periodic market i.e. (a) those who sell their own produces (b) who act as middlemen between producers and sellers and (c) those who are agents of wholesalers or urban traders. Similarly, there are three types of buyers, found in the periodic market (a) those who purchase for their own consumption, (b) who purchase for re-sale in villages and (c) the wholesale purchasers who sell in the urban markets. In addition to these buyers and sellers, there are another small group of people found almost in all the markets under study, whose sole purpose of visit to the market is recreation.

Many geographers dealing with marketing geography have attempted to classify traders in the periodic market and goods they traded. Bromley<sup>1</sup> classified all the traders found in the periodic market into eight categories on the basis of the source of merchandises, time spent in the trading and mobility. These are:

- (1) Part-time fixed producer trader
- (2) Part-time fixed intermediaries.
- (3) Part-time mobile producer-trader
- (4) Part-time mobile intermediaries
- (5) Full-time fixed producer trader
- (6) Full-time fixed intermediaries.
- (7) Full-time mobile producer-trader
- (8) Full-time mobile intermediaries.

1. Bromley R.J. : "Trader Mobility in Systems of Periodic and Dairy Markets" in Horber, D.I. and Johnson R.J. (eds) Geography and Urban Environment, Progress in Research and Applications, John Willy, (New York, 1980), p. 133-174.

2

Wanmali, who worked in the field of marketing geography in India, indentified two major types of traders in Singhbhum area; part-time traders and full-time traders. Part-time traders are sub-divided into two categories, i.e. producer seller and collector seller and Full-time trader into three categories -i.e. selling traders, buying traders and those engage in services. Wanmali's views are related to Indian situation and it has some relevance with the present study. In the study area, traders are divided into the following groups on the basis of goods they traded and the length of time spent in the market.

- A. Part-time Sellers.
  - 1. Producer Sellers.
  - 2. Collector Sellers.
- B. Full-time Sellers
  - 1. Non-Producer Seller.
  - 2. Service men or Service traders.

The producers sellers are not professional traders, rather, they sell their surplus product for cash. The type and volume of the commodity varies from time to time and place to place. Collector sellers are professional traders, who collect various goods either from the vllages or from the forest areas for sale in different markets.

The non-producer sellers are professional trader. They mostly come from the nearby urban centres to sell manufactured goods, consisting of luxury and other fancy goods. While the service traders make available all the services required by the local people from fortune telling to lottery ticket selling etc.

The goods and services, that different traders offer for sale in the study area are given below:

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2. Wanmali, S : Op. cit., pp 45.

The Producer Seller: The producer seller sells his own produce. They generally sell earthen ware, bamboo ware, ropes and a variety of green grocery like beans, brinjals, peas, cabbages, cauliflowers, chillies, garlic, ginger, coriander leaves, onions, potatoes, radishes, carrots, sweet-potatoes, limes, lemons, papayas, bananas, tomatoes, jackfruits, pineapples, tamarind, sugarcane, rice, pulses, fowl, eggs, dry fish, fresh fish, meat etc.

Middlemen Sellers: Middlemen sellers mostly come from the urban centres and collect almost all the goods mentioned above from different villages or from producer sellers with an aim to re-sale them in the urban market or periodic markets.

Non-Farm Goods Sellers: They mainly deal with processed industrial goods like various kinds of aluminium, bell-metal ware, utensils, glass and plastic containers, cup plates, spoons etc. Luxury goods (bangles, brassware, hairpins, ribbons, threads, needles, cosmetics for women). Confectionary (biscuits, various kinds of sweets, mortons etc.), agricultural inputs (only seeds), various types of medium and low quality clothes (mill made), ready-made garments, footwear, grocery articles (which include spice, salt, sugar, pulses etc). These groups of sellers are mainly urban sellers and interact almost in all nearby markets.

Middlemen Buyers : They buy a variety of local produce like brooms, betel leaves, betel-nuts, charcoal, banana, ginger, pineapple, potatoes, papayas etc.

Buyers from rural areas : The peasant participants buy a variety of daily requirements like food stuffs mainly rice, flour, biscuits, clothes, agricultural inputs and other sundry items.

Those Engaged in Services : These groups of people mostly come from urban centres and render their services to the people like the barbers, carpenters, shoe makers, meal sellers and the fortune teller etc.

6.1.1. Commodity Composition : Periodic market acts as the central place, provides several central services to the rural folk, but its most important function is to supply various types of commodities and services not only to the rural people, but in some cases, to the urban people also. In Meghalaya there are mainly two types of commodities sold in these markets: first goods of local origin and second obtained from outside. The following table (6.1) indicates the commodity structure of the periodic market in Meghalaya and Assam:

Table 6 :1  
Commodity structure in the Periodic Market

Broad classes of goods and services	Commodities	Remark (origin of the goods and services)
A. Food	1. Grocery	Non-local
	2. Green Grocery	Local
	3. Spice and condiments	Non-local
	4. Meat	Local
	5. Fish/egg	Non-local
	6. Processed foods	Non-local
B. Clothing	1. Millmade clothes	Non-local
	2. Readymade garments	Non-local
C. Housing	1. Bamboo	Local
	2. Other Material	Non-local
D. Others	1. Utensils	Non-local
E. Service	1. Barber	Non-local
	2. Shoemaker	Non-local
	3. Fortune teller	Non-local

### 6.1.2. Mode of Exchange :

In pre-independence period, at those periodic markets, a brisk barter trade used to be carried on between the people from the plains and the hills. In early times, when the value of an article was measured in terms of commodities, all business transaction was carried on by a system of barter, as shown by early literature, like in cattle, animal skins, rice, arrows, spear head etc. which were bartered. People carried out their commercial transactions with the help of barter even long after the circulation of coins. On the Sylhet frontier, Cowri shed used to be the main currency and employed as a medium of exchange. But the Raja of Jaintia issued some debased money called Kattrataka<sup>3</sup> (sword rupees) which were, however very limited in circulation. The bulk of the trade was therefore, currency in the Ahom Kingdom consisted of cawries, rupees and gold coins were accepted in Assam.

Now there is no indication that barter trade in any way in use. All the transaction are done with the help of money. But presently some participants, mainly the sellers from rural areas sell their commodities without any weight and measures (mainly vegetables). They sell their vegetables on thack basis. Every thack costs rupees one to two. On this basis the transaction is mostly seen in Meghalaya.

#### Traders in the Periodic Market :

The rural people in the study areas seem to participate in production and distribution process in the economy through their trade activity.

3. Promatha Nath Dutta (1980) : Impact of the Khasi and Jaintias, pp. 13-15.

In order to form an over view of the spatial behaviour, a sample survey of selected markets was conducted (25% sample survey). In order to get information about their (a) community, (b) language, (c) religion, (d) age and sex, (e) education (f) occupational structure, (g) distance they travel, (h) mode of travel, (i) income, (j) level of transaction, (k) level of profit, (l) list of markets visited in a week, (m) nature of visit to the market, (n) number of monthly visit to the urban market, (o) what types of commodities they buy from the urban market etc. Various information was collected from the field survey and analysed in the following paragraphs :

## 6.2. Spatio - Temporal Behaviour of Traders

### 6.2.1. Producer Sellers :

It is observed that producer sellers interact only with the nearest markets, as far as practicable. It is generally that the traders select more than one market depending the distance from the market and their home base. From the field survey of both the peasant and tribal areas it is found that producer sellers always dominate the periodic markets (Table 6.2); their participation is always high (60-80%) in all periodic markets.

Table 6.2  
Number of Producer and Non-Producer Sellers  
(in Assam)

Name of the market	Nearest urban centre	Distance (km)	% producer sellers	% of producer sellers
Mariani (weekly)	Mariani	-	95.00	5.00
Debarpar	Nakachari	1	66.33	34.67
Hemlai *	Nakachari	3	35.00	65.00

Source : Field Survey, 1990

\* Tea-garden Market

Table 6.3  
Number of Producer and Non-producer Sellers  
(in Meghalaya)

Name of the market	Nearest urban centre	Distance (km)	% of producer sellers	% of Non-producer sellers
Nongpoh	Nongpoh	1.5	85.54	14.46
Umsning	Shillong	25	70.00	30.00

Source : Field Survey, 1990.

From the Table 6.2 and 6.3 shows that the percentage of non-producer sellers tend to increase along with the increase of distance between urban centre and the periodic market. If any permanent market is close to the weekly market, there the non-producer sellers are also very less in number e.g. Mariani in Assam and Nongpoh in Meghalaya. But in the case of tea-garden markets, non-producer sellers have a dominant role e.g. Hemlai 65 per cent non-producer seller but producer sellers are only 35 per cent.

Maximum spatial distance a producer seller can conveniently travel is given in the Table 6.4 and 6.5.

Table 6.4  
Variation of Traders according to distance (Assam)

Name of the market	Distance (km)				
	0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	Above >12
Mariani	75.33	22.67	-	-	2.00
Debarpar	90	10	-	-	-
Hemlai	92	7.21	-	-	79

Source : Field Survey 1990

Maximum distance that a producer-seller can conveniently travel seems to be within 3 km in both the study areas. From the Table 6.4 it can be seen that 75-90 per cent producer-sellers come from 0-3 km distance. This is because majority of sellers (70-80%) have to walk down the market with the load of goods.

Table 6.5  
Variation of Traders according to Distance  
(in Meghalaya)

Name of the market	Distance (km)				Above 12
	0-3	3-6	6-9	9-12	
Nongpoh	45.0	22.22	11.88	10	15
Umsning	55.11	27.89	9.14	5.86	10

Source : Field Survey 1990

In Meghalaya (Table 6.5), most of the producer-sellers come from within 3 km distance but some producer-sellers come from distances more than 12 km; mostly they come by bazar bus.

Table 6.6  
Mode of Transportation in Assam

Market	Mode of Travel	% of producer sellers
Mariani	Bus	1.11
	OV	10
	R/CL	19.89
	FT	69
Debarpar	Bus	2
	OV	4.21
	R/CL	20.79
	FT	77
Hemlai	Bus	-
	OV	-
	R/CL	11
	FT	89

Source : Field Survey 1990

The travel pattern of all the traders are not identical in either of the study areas. The small scale vegetable sellers select only the nearest assemblies from their homebase. The most important consideration in the travel pattern of vegetable sellers is the transport cost, types of buyers and size of the market. The use of bus or truck services for transportation of vegetables

Table 6.7  
Mode of Transportation in Meghalaya

Market	Mode of Travel	% of producer sellers
Nongpoh	Bus	18.75
	OV	-
	R/CL	18
	FT	65.3
Umsning	Bus	19
	OV	81
	R/CL	-
	FT	80

Source : Field Survey 1990

\*OV = Other vehicle, R/ CL = Rickshaw/Cycle, FT = Foot

seems to be uneconomic to the small vegetable sellers. Therefore, they carry their products in Bhars.

In Meghalaya, 62.86 per cent of the producer-sellers come by foot carried their vegetables in Hura and only 18 to 19 per cent come by bus and they generally carry larger volumes of vegetables.

It is necessary to point out that these producer sellers are well-aware about the fact that the space-time and hierarchial arrangement of the market as well as the nature and psychology of a consumers. They select markets for their trade in such a manner, that they can avoid uneconomic visits.

It has been observed that definite price fixation is not a common in the markets. This is due to the fact that the local producer-sellers are not organised. Moreover, a general principle of 'free market' operates; i.e. the prices of the village produce settles down once most of the sellers and buyers arrive and the

\* 'Bhar' - A load of goods carried in two big bamboo baskets, hang at the two ends of a pole which is balanced on shoulder of a person, generally in use at peasant areas.

\* 'Hura' - Generally in use at tribal area, basket made from bamboo or cane, carried in the back side.

arrival of the quantity of a specific commodity. Generally, the prices go down towards end of the market day, since the perishable sellers may decide to get rid of the unsold articles, even at a throw away price to avoid a painful head load back to homebase. Prices of commodities, especially local products are fixed in consultation among the traders themselves. Even then, the prices of local products vary at different hours of the market day. Generally two types of prices are found, viz whole sale price is much lower than the retail sale prices. The urban wholesale buyers are most 'welcomed buyers' of the producer sellers. In the presence of middle men buyers, the retail prices of local producers fluctuate. But after their departure from the market, the retail price tends to fall.

Though the cost - profit analysis is a difficult exercise because the producer neither possesses any idea about the cost of the product nor maintains any account of sale proceeds, but from the field survey, it is found that approximate profit of the producer's sale is less than 30 per cent. After selling the farm goods, they buy other commodities from the market (Table 6.8 and 6.9).

Table 6.8  
Cross-Purchase of the Producer-Sellers (Meghalaya)

Items	Nongpoh (%)	Umsning (%)
1. Food stuff	70	65.55
2. Clothes	17	15.45
3. Other Sundry items	11	14.00
4. Agricultural inputs	2	16.00

Source : Field Survey 1990

The distribution of traders by the hour of arrival is also fascinating. During the first hour of assembling, of the full time

Table 6.9

## Cross-Purchase of the Producer-Sellers (Assam)

Items	Mariani	Debarpur	Hemlai
1. Food stuff	70.66	66.63	60
2. Clothes	12.34	10.00	20
3. Other Sundry items	12.00	24.00	20
4. Agricultural inputs	5.00	37	

Source : Field Survey 1990

traders are very high. In the second hour, the proportion of part-time traders increases quite appreciably.

With a view to studying the arrival pattern of full-time and part-time traders and to understand concentration of activities in the periodic market on the market day, data was collected from the both study area. The following types of information was collected:

(a) Hourly variation of part-time producer traders and full-time non-producer traders in the market.

(b) Hourly variation of number of stalls in the market area on the market day.

Analysis : In a periodic market, three kinds of activities generally predominate on the market day - i.e. 'assembling', 'transaction', and 'dispersion'. The first few hours of the market day is dominated by activity of 'assembling' during which traders from various directions with their commodities assemble in the market area. Analysis shows that 90 per cent of the traders in Meghalaya and 79% of traders in Assam reach the market during the first two hours of the market day.

Part-time producer-sellers are found to arrive at the market much earlier than the non-producer full-time traders, because, (1) Most of the (95%) part-time producer trades are local people and can arrive the market easily before the arrival of full-time non-

producer sellers. (b) Part-time traders have an intention to meet the urban wholesale buyers as easily as possible because of high demand for their goods in early hours and also (c) to occupy better space for their stalls.

Table 6.10  
Hourly Variation of Part-time and Full-time Traders  
(in Assam)

Market		8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-1	1-2	hours
Market	(a)	70.0	67.33	75.00	53.33	-	-	-
	(b)	30.0	32.67	25.00	46.67	100	-	-
Debarpar	(a)	69.31	65.00	72.00	51.00	5	-	-
	(b)	30.69	35.00	28.00	49.00	95	-	-
Hemlai	(a)	73.0	67.00	70.00	50.00	1	-	-
	(b)	27.0	33.00	30.00	50.00	99	-	-

Source : Field Survey 1990

\* (a): Part-time traders, (b): Full-time traders

Table 6.11  
Hourly variation of Full-time and Part-time Traders  
(in Meghalaya)

Market		Hours				
		6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11
Nongpoh	(a)	75	65.33	52.00	30.00	-
	(b)	25	34.77	48.00	70.0	100
Umsning	(a)	-	77	60	45	-
	(b)	-	23	40	55	100

Source: Field work, 1990

It is observed that the producer-sellers generally complete their transactions within three to four hours from their time of arrival. After which 15 to 20 per cent of the producer-sellers become the consumers in the same market.

The pattern of visit of the producer-sellers are not identical. The fruit sellers visit only those markets, where the traders

(retailers) purchase fruits, operates thus avoiding an uneconomic visit to other markets.

Those selling earthenware and bambooware seem to take advantage of the space-time and hierarchial arrangements to sell their goods.

As for the costs are concerned, no single type of producer-seller is able to give the details of the costs of production. Even such overheads as transport cost, seems to be non-existent. This was because of the tendency among all the producer-sellers to walk to the market.

#### 6.2.2. Non-Farm Good Sellers (Full-Time Traders)

They mainly deal with processed industrial goods like various kinds of aluminium, brass metal, utensils, glass and plastic containers, cup-plates, spoon etc. (discussed before). These groups of sellers are mainly from urban/semi-urban areas and interact in almost all the nearby markets. Non-farm goods traders are full-time traders; their occupation is not directly based on the function of production but on the quantum and variety of demand for commodities in the market. Non-farm goods sellers, generally travel longer distances. The percentage of non-producer sellers tend to increase along with the increase in distance between the urban centre and periodic market.

Table 6.12  
Interactive Distance of Non-Farm goods Sellers  
within the market in Meghalaya (%)

Market	0-3 km	3-6 km	6-9 km	9-12 km	Above 12 km
Nongpoh	28.57	-	-	-	71.42
Umsning	-	-	14.28	14.28	71.92

Source : Field Survey 1990

Table 6.13  
Interactive Distance of Non-farm goods Sellers  
in Assam (%)

Market	0-3 km	3-6 km	6-9 km	9-12 km	Above 12 km
Mariani	100	-	-	-	-
Debarpor	20	30	10	-	40
Hemali	-	30	-	-	70

Source : Field Survey 1990

Non-farm producer-sellers are always less in comparison with the producer sellers in all the periodic markets with the exception of the tea-garden markets. The number of non-producer sellers tend to increase in remote and interior periodic markets, where people wait for the periodic market day for their various consumer and household goods. They usually add the transport cost while fixing the prices of their goods to be traded. Due to this, prices of their commodities varies from market to market depending upon the transport cost. In the both study areas, it is found that non-producer sellers are non-local.

All the non-producer sellers move in a radial manner to a number of markets during the market week. The non-producer trader travels a long distance and everyday he returns to the home base. It is observed that the spatial movement as well as behavioural pattern of the non-producing traders are influenced by their economic status. With the view to analysing their behavioural pattern, traders are divided into three groups depending on their capital investment, mode of transportation used and quantity of traded goods, i.e. (a) small traders (b) medium traders and (c) big traders.

(a) Most of the small non-producer traders (capital investm-

ent less than Rupees 1,800/-) are mobile in nature and do not have any place of permanent residence. They move to different markets with load of goods, packed on their bi-cycle (in Assam) and return to their homebase in the evening. They have a good perception regarding the behaviour of consumers in different markets. They select the nearest markets; however, they avoid markets having permanent shops (in Mariani, non-producer sellers are only 5%). They quote price to the consumers sometimes more than double in those markets where bargaining is a common practice. Generally, the non-producing small traders deal in luxury goods, jewellery, confectioneries and other stationery goods of low quality and cost.

(2) Medium Traders : (Capital investment Rs 1800-4000) :

They mostly reside in urban business centres. They are partly mobile and partly sedentary. They generally select four or five markets depending on distance, nature and quality of demand and size of market. They generally travel either by bus or by trucks. They usually prefer larger markets, because such markets provide better scope of bargain with a large number of buyers.

The common formula adopted for price fixation is:

quoted price = wholesale price + transport cost + profit

Bargaining is common in all periodic markets.

(3) The Large Traders (Capital Investment more than Rs 4000) :

These are the traders dealing in sophisticated and luxury goods. They generally select large market. Various categories of cloth marchants, steel goods sellers, utensils, grocery sellers are included in this group. They generally travel by bus, truck or jeep and cover long distances from their homebase. Their usual

customers are two types - (a) urban and rural consumers who seek costly goods, (b) rural retail-seller, who buy in large quantity in wholesale price for retailing.

Non-producer sellers get their supplies from urban or semi-urban centres. But, there is another group of rural based non-producer traders who select some small periodic markets where competition from urban-based medium or large traders is comparatively less.

Some of the medium and big traders are 'dual traders' in the sense that they possess permanent stores in the urban market and operate business in the periodic markets through their appointed agents, because (1) to earn extra profit, (2) to dispose off unsold poor quality goods in the rural areas.

#### 6.2.3. Behaviour of Middlemen Sellers :

The middlemen-sellers of the agricultural products maintain a regular channel of trade. They collect various goods from small producers for re-sale in different markets. They visit all the nearest markets from their homebase. The pattern of their radial movement is that, they move out to all the neighbouring periodic market catering from their home base. Collector sellers collect a variety of forest products throughout the year and bring these for sale in the periodic markets. Collector sellers have no alternative occupation. Like the producer-sellers, this class of traders are also consumer in the same market. However, since the buying - traders specialise in forest products are only the consumers of the collector sellers.

Collector sellers collect earthenware, bambooware, ropes, coal and a variety of green grocery like brinjals, peas, cabbage,

cauliflower, chillies, garlic, ginger, coriander leaves, onions, potatoes, radishes, carrots, sweet-potatoes, limes, lemons, papayas, bananas, tamarind, sugarcane, rice, pulses, chicken, eggs, dry fish etc. and various other forest products like firewood, lac, wild fruits, bee-wax, honey, and various kinds of wild birds captured in the forest areas.

#### 6.2.4. Behaviour of Service Traders :

Servicemen or service-traders usually avoid uneconomic movements. Their obvious choice is the nearest market. It is observed that the service-traders traverse from two separate directions, specially servicemen like sweets & eatable-sellers, meatsellers, come to the market from the nearby villages, while barbers, fortune tellers, canvassers of drugs and goods come from nearby urban centres. Their choice of market is guided by time and distance between market and their homebase, size of gathering and demand for their services which proportionately increases with size of the market. In each market big or small, presence of specific service traders are found to depend upon the local needs.

#### 6.3 Consumer Behaviour in the Periodic Market :

Consumers are the most important component of players in the periodic market. Consumers behaviour is the sum total of the activities that a consumer performs by visiting market places guided therein by his intellectual ability and economic status. Christaller had predicted four groups of factors influencing consumer movement. These are (a) the importance of the central place (b) the purchasing power of the consumer, (c) subjective economic distance, and (d) the value, quality and quantity of goods to be purchased. For goods of higher value and better quality, longer travels

to larger centres may be undertaken.

The movement of participants in the market place is influenced by the distance and direction of the market place from their point of origin and by the nature of transport network available (Cox: 1972). This shows that their movements are either distance biased or direction biased. The direction bias is revealed when a consumer, instead of being influenced by distance in his decision making process, is influenced by the presence of another market place which is more attractive. May be, it provides greater variety of goods at cheaper prices and has also entertainment facilities etc. He may not choose the nearest market. Direction bias of movements are of two types, (a) convergent and (b) divergent. The convergent movements take place due to the attractive forces of a market centre. Some markets may produce repulsive effects due to high prices of goods, higher cost of journey or inconvenient modes of available transport. These give rise to divergent movement.

The transport network is an important consideration. Consumers always prefer to the easiest access to a market. Similarly, the role of the information network is also important. If consumers are aware the existence of a market, of the prices and quality of goods, their availability etc., they orient their market visitation pattern accordingly.

The study of consumer behaviour with reference to the perception of the geographical space is a new field of research. The present study is limited to the urban consumers and rural consumers of the higher and medium order periodic markets. The behaviour of the consumers of the lower order village markets can not be

4. Cox Kevin (1972) : Man, Location and Behaviour, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New York (V).

generalised, because the taste, choice, needs and the nature of aptitude of village market consumers are motivated by the geographical situation, economic activities, income levels and other socio-cultural parameters.

Data Collection :

In all the sample markets, about 25 per cent of consumers were interviewed and information relating to their (a) residential location, (b) distance from the market, (c) mode of transportation, (d) reason for choice of market, (f) commodities purchased (g) No of markets visited in a week etc. were collected and analysed to study consumer's behaviour.

6.3.1. Consumer Behaviour

(a) Buyers from Rural Areas :

It is observed that each buyer normally goes round the market to acquaint himself about the types of goods displayed at different stalls for sale, and to locate the places where his or her required goods are available in order to assess the probable prices of his goods. Moreover, the periodic market is a place of recreation for the village folk, for which a pleasure visit round the market is a common habit of the buyers. However, some of the regular visitors to the periodic market are conversant with the probable location of the choicest stalls and prefer to purchase goods from the known sellers for two reasons; firstly, the goods are of reliable quality and secondly, the sellers, give concession to the old customers or even, a limited credit arrangement for petty purchases.

(b) Behaviour of Middlemen-Buyers :

The middlemen-buyers collect various goods for resale. They

are professional traders and visit a number of periodic markets; their trading pattern is different and unlike Wanamali's (1981) and Hay's (1971,1977) observations. The major items of the products preferred in the periodic market (Table 6.13).

Table 6.14  
Commodity Composition of Purchases by Middlemen  
(in Meghalaya)

Commodities	Nongpoh(%)	Umsning(%)	Total (%)
	A	B	A+B
1. Betel leaf, betel-nut	25	21.42	22.72
2. Banana, Pineapple	37.5	7.14	18.18
3. Broom	12.5	7.14	9.69
4. Papaya (Vegetables)	12.5	21.42	18.18
5. Ginger	-	42.85	27.27
6. Charcoal	12.5	-	-
7. Other goods	-	-	-
			100

Source : Field Survey, 1987

### 6.3.2. Consumer Travel Behaviour :

The coincidence of area of each of the market centre with the village boundaries, predominantly in which the market lies with an additional area of adjoining market centres, gives a wide discretionary choice of consumers travel behaviour at one's convenience. The resultant of this interacting process implies the hypothetical total overlap of the service area of a given market centre with service areas of adjacent markets (Fig 6.4), though the visiting consumers from individual adjacent villages may be out numbered by the local consumers.

The market place is separated by relatively long distance leads to the inverse relationship of spatial proximity to temporal

5. S. Wanmali (1981) : Periodic Market and Rural Development in India, Delhi, pp. 56-58.

6. A.M.Hay : "Some Alternatives in the Economic Analysis of Periodic Marketing", Geographical Analysis, Vol.3, pp. 393-401.

# PATTERN OF SERVICE AREAS

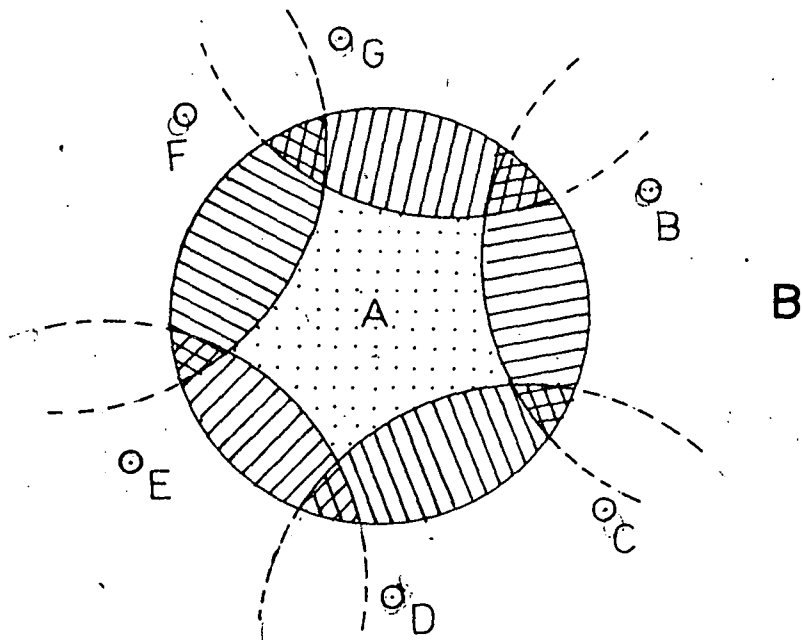
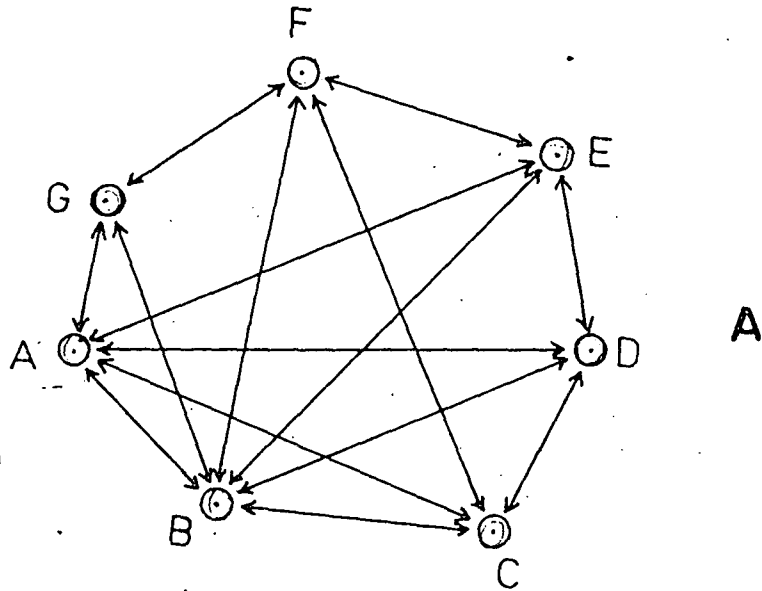


Fig. 6.4

proximity (Good:1970)<sup>7</sup>. The interacting process generated by this relationship results in sufficiently large exclusive area of a selected market centre and fringed on all sides by overlapping service area intersected by service area/areas of neighbouring market centres. (Fig.6.4.B)

Here an attempt has been made to analyse the mode of travel of consumers in the periodic markets (Table 6.15).

Table 6.15  
Mode of Travel According to Distance (Assam)

Name of market		Distance in km				
		0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	Above 20
Mariani	A	64.28	-	-	-	-
	B	35.72	64.0	20.36	3.2	-
	C	-	11.0	74.00	80.0	-
	D	-	24.0	5.64	17.9	-
Debarpar	A	70.0	-	-	-	-
	B	28.0	80.0	5	-	-
	C	-	5	85.0	-	-
	D	2	15.0	10.0	-	-
Hemlai	A	90	10	-	-	-
	B	10	70	-	-	-
	C	-	5	-	-	-
	D	-	15	-	-	-

Source: Fieldwork, 1991-92

From the Table (6.15 and 6.16) shows that most of the consumers' prefer to travel on foot to a distance of 5 km from their residence. In Meghalaya, buyers are coming from distant villages. They mostly come by bus. Bazar bus is the most popular mode of conveyance for rural people. Distant urban buyers are

7. C.M.Good 1970 : Rural Markets and Trade in East Africa, Department of Geography, University of Chicago, Chicago.

Table 6.16  
Mode of Travel According to Distance, Meghalaya

Market	Mode of travel	Distance in km				
		0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	Above 20
Nongpoh	A	90	40	35		
	B	-	23	50	90	93
	C	10	7	3	-	-
	D	-	10	12	10	7
Unsning	A	93.0	80	30	3	-
	B	-	14	60	83	90
	C	-	-	-	-	-
	D	7	6	10	14	10

Source : Field Survey 1990

A = Foot, B = Bus, C = Cycle/Richshow, D = Other vehicles

mostly middlemen buyers.

In the case of rural consumers, travel distance and time are not the guiding factors but the quantity, price, availability of specific or specialised items and the perception of the market etc. which plays a vital role in this respect. In general, it can be assumed that temporal as well as spatial distances a consumer can travel is directly related to the size of the market.

From the observation it confirms that the number of consumers visiting a market centre falls with increasing distance.

The choice of a market that a consumer or buyers prefers is that a consumer is free to buy at any place and from any person according to one's economic advantages. It is observed that if, there is more than one market meetings on a particular day of the week, the consumer tends to visit the nearest market.

While, analysing the temporal choice of rural and urban consumers, it is found that about 30 per cent of the rural consumers have choice of more than one market, but in the case urban consumers, about 70 per cent consumers choose larger number

of markets. Thus, urban consumers have more temporal choice of periodic market than rural consumers.

Above discussion clearly indicates that consumer is the most complex component of periodic market. Their behaviour is mainly dependent on economic characteristics as well as their own experience and perceptions towards the periodic market.

#### 6.4 Social Characteristics of the Participants :

Economic and social characteristics are interlinked. In the field survey, data on social conditions of the participants was collected. Data collected for social conditions were, on age and sex, language and religions. Market is a mixing bowl of different age and sex groups, language and religious groups of participants. The main social characteristics are discussed below:

##### (i) Age and Sex :

Age and sex are important social characteristics. In the tribal markets, every age-group and sex-group of population are found. Markets are mainly dominated by women. Female participation is higher in both the markets i.e. Nongpoh and Umsning. (Table 6.17)

From the table, it is seen that the buyers from rural areas and the farm goods sellers are mainly females. Non-farm goods sellers and middlemen-buyers are male dominated. They come from urban areas from a fair distance.

Age is one of the important considerations for the participants. Though people of all age groups are found in the market, middle age group participants are always higher. Persons above 60 years is almost absent in both the markets. (Table 6.18)

Participants in below 15 years age are negligible in both

the markets. Middlemen-buyers are mainly of the age group of 25-35 years.

Table 6.17  
Population Structure of Periodic Markets in Meghalaya

Market	Sex	% B (RA)	% B (MM)	% S(F)	%S(NFG)	%S(MM)	% AT
Nongpoh	M	43.75	100	37.5	71.42	80	60.60
	F	56.25	-	62.5	28.57	20	39.39
Umsning	M	46.15	100	28.57	57.14	66.66	55.10
	F	53.84	-	71.42	42.85	33.33	44.89

Source : Field Survey 1987

Table 6.18  
Age Structure of Participants in Periodic Markets  
in Meghalaya

Market	Age-group	%B(RA)	%B(MM)	%S(F)	%S(NFG)	%S(MM)	% AT
Nongpoh	< 15	6.25	-	-	-	-	2.04
	15-25	18.75	-	18.75	14.28	20	16.32
	25-35	56.25	20	62.5	57.14	20	51.02
	35-45	18.75	80	18.75	14.28	60	28.57
	45-60	-	-	-	-	-	2.04
	Above 60	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umsning	< 15	-	-	-	-	-	-
	15-25	23.07	-	7.14	28.57	33.33	16.32
	25-35	46.15	22.22	64.28	28.57	50.00	44.89
	35-45	30.76	44.44	28.57	28.57	16.66	30.61
	45-60	-	33.33	-	14.28	-	8.16
	Above 60	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source : Field Survey 1987  
 B (RA) = Buyers from Rural Area  
 B (MM) = Middlemen Buyers  
 S (F) = Farm goods sellers  
 S (NFG) = Seller Non-Farm goods  
 S (MM) = Middlemen Sellers

From the field survey of the peasant areas (of Assam) it is noticed that buyers from rural area and farm goods sellers found in every age group. But non-farm goods sellers and middlemen buyers mostly age group from above 15 to below 45 years of age.

Table 6.19  
Age-structure of Periodic Markets in Assam

Market	Age-group	% B(RA)	%B (MM)	%S (F)	% S(NFG)	% S (MM)
Mariani	< 15	7	-	10	-	-
	15-25	20	18	30	25	10
	25-35	30	32	27	35	30
	35-45	23	30	13	28	40
	45-60	17	20	10	12	20
	Above 60	3	-	10	-	-
Debarpar	< 15	10	-	15	-	-
	15-25	20	10	30	7	15
	25-35	30	40	10	40	30
	35-45	15	30	15	23	28
	45-60	15	20	15	30	27
	Above 60	10	-	15	-	-
Hemali	< 15	15	-	7	-	-
	15-25	30	12	23	30	22
	25-35	30	30	30	32	48
	35-45	15	28	20	38	15
	45-60	10	30	20	-	5
	Above 60					

Source : Field Survey 1990

In the peasant area sex data has not been collected because except Hemai market (tea-garden market) in the other two markets 95 per cent of the participants are males. But in the Hemai market, both male and female participation is the same like tribal markets.

(ii) Language :

Language is one of the important means of communication between different person. Markets is one of the place where any age, sex, religion and linguistics groups of people can participate and therefore the need of effective communication.

From the Table 6.20, it is found that the market is dominated by the Khasi linguistic group, but other groups of people were also found. Non-farm goods sellers and middlemen buyers

Table 6.20  
Linguistic Composition of the Market Meghalaya  
(In Percentage)

Market	Language	B(RA)	B(MM)	S(F)	S(NFG)	S(MM)	AT
Nongpoh	KH	56.25	20	68.75	28.57	80	60
	BEN	-	80	-	28.57	-	8
	AMS	6.25	-	-	14.28	-	4
	GA	-	-	1.25	-	20	6
	NEP	-	-	-	-	-	-
	OTH	37.50	-	18.75	28.57	-	22
Umsing	KH	92.30	22.22	92.85	85.71	100	87.75
	BEN	-	44.44	-	-	-	4.08
	AMS	-	-	-	-	-	-
	GA	-	11.11	-	-	-	2.04
	NEP	7.69	-	-	-	-	-
	OTH	-	11.11	7.14	14.28	-	6.12

Source : Field Survey 1987

KH = Khasi, BEN = Bengali, AMS = Assamese, GA = Garo, NEP = Nepali  
OH = Others

Table 6.21  
Linguistic Composition of the Markets of Assam  
(In Percentage)

Market	Language	B (RA)	B (MM)	S (F)	S (NFG)	S (MM)	AT
Mariani	Assamese	100	60	100	30	27	
	Hindi	-	10	-	10	12	
	Bengali	-	30	-	60	65	
Debarpar	Assamese	100	52	80	5	20	
	Hindi	-	8	-	15	17	
	Bengali	-	40	20	80	63	
Hemai	Assamese	70	40	72	12	25	
	Hindi	12	20	-	35	15	
	Bengali	18	40	28	53	60	

Source: Survey: 1992

are mainly non-Khasis. In both the markets, middlemen buyers are dominated by Bengali speaking groups. In Nongpoh they constitute 80 per cent and in Umsning, 44.44 percent, respectively.

In the Table 6.21, it is revealed that the Assamese is the most dominated group in study areas. Buyers from rural areas

and farm goods sellers are mostly Assamese. But middlemen buyers and non-farm goods sellers are mostly the Bengali speaking group.

(iii) Religion

Like other social characteristics, religion is taken as one of the important factors for the participants in the periodic market. Khasi Hills is dominated by Christians. Other religious groups are also found there.

Table 6.22  
Religious Composition in Periodic Markets of Meghalaya

	Religion	B (RA)	B (NM)	S (F)	S (NFG)	S (MM)	AT
Nongpoh	Christan	56.25	33.33	56.25	57.14	60	54
	Hindu	18.75	33.33	6.25	42.85	-	18
	Tribal	25	33.33	37.5	-	40	28
	Religion Any other	-	-	-	-	-	-
Umsning	Christan	61.53	50	88.71	42.8	83.33	100
	Hindu	7.69	37.5	-	14.28	-	66.66
	Tribal	30.76	12.5	14.28	42.85	16.67	10.41
	Religion Any other	-	-	-	-	-	22.91

Source : Field Survey 1987

From the Table 6.22, it is seen that Christians are the majority compared with other religions groups, i.e., Hindu, tribal religion are also there. Those who are coming from urban areas are mainly (from Guwahati) Hindus. That is the reason that it is found that the middlemen buyers and non-farm goods sellers are mainly Hindus. Buyers from rural areas and farm-goods sellers are mostly Christians. Tribal people preserve their original religious faiths, also. In Nongpoh there are 28 percent and Umsning 22.96 per cent of the participants who are of the tribal indigenous faith.

In peasant areas of Assam, Hindus dominate in every category

of participants, other religious groups are negligible in number.

Summary :

In summarising the chapter the following points can be mentioned in connection with the periodic markets in both the study areas:

(1) Producer-sellers generally come from shorter distances and they are part-time traders.

(2) Non-producer sellers generally come from longer distances and they are full-time traders.

(3) Where any permanent market is available nearby, the periodic market there fewer non-producer sellers.

(4) Participation is always high where periodic markets are widely spaced (for example, participation is higher in Meghalaya than in Assam) and if it is closely spaced, the participation is less in number.

(5) Definite price fixation is not common in periodic market.

(6) Service traders are non-local people in the both study areas. Middlemen- buyers and sellers are also mostly of non-local origin and they are the richest group.

(7) The number of consumers decreases with increasing distances.

(8) It does not appear that the periodic markets of tribal areas are any way different from such markets observed elsewhere in the plains, except for the fact that in the matter of periodicity and the general high female participation. This indicates the general peasantisation of the tribal areas under study and the characteristics of the society as manifest in the periodic market.

(9) Finally, the manifestation of the increasing integration of the rural economy into the overall economic system is observed through the growing role of the urban based middlemen.

## CHAPTER VII

### Periodic Markets and the Problem of Integration

Periodic Markets and the Problem of Integration  
with the Larger Economic System

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7.1. Introduction:

In a traditional society and an undifferentiated, simple economy, the periodic market provides the first contact of the village economy with the out-side world in general and the larger economic system, in specific. The problem of studying the role of periodic market vis-a-vis the village economy at one hand, and the larger economic system (whether regional and national or international), on the other, can viewed as an 'integrative' one, i.e. the market acting as a link between the simple, self-reliant village economy to the complex and interdependent larger economic system. This integration may be beneficial to the rural economy, but as inherent in relationships between the 'small fry' and 'the big fish', the latter wins and ends the simpler economic forms and structure at the village and then, the latter is subsumed into the larger system, in which the independence and personality of this system is lost for ever.

Richard Symanski, Ian R. Manners, and R. J. Bromley<sup>1</sup> developed a three stages of model which is based on changes in mobility of the market system. According to this in three stages the local system became integrated into regional system and then, to the national economic system.

Stage I, with small surplus, self-sufficient economy and low mobility of goods and people.

1. Richard Symanski, Ian R. Manners, and R.J. Bromley (1975): "The Mobile Sedentary continuum", Annal of the Association of American Geographers, Vol.65, No.3.

Stage II, has high mobility by means of production, population growth, technological changes, the increasing size of social and political organizations, and the intrusion of out-side traders and of new information and opportunities which result in regional integration, greater specialization in the local system;

Stage III has reduced mobility. Regional systems become integrated into national systems with increased specialization. The concept of mobility : The term embraces not only a variety of special movements but also social and intellectual mobility. Most traders in the periodic market maintain a permanent residence, and return home everyday or every few days or weeks. Traders operate by the transfer of merchandise from one market place to another.

#### 7.2. General Feature of the Mobile System :

Hypothesis I : Regular cyclical movements are highly developed among market traders.

Hypothesis II : The mobility of traders periodic markets is mainly a function of the density and a variety of consumer demand; the synchronization of markets, the speed, frequency and cost of transport; and the ecological complementarity of neighbouring production zones.

Hypothesis III : Mobility can be related to indices of development that include energy consumption, per capita production, information flow, access to health care and educational facilities and levels of regional, national and international integration.

2. Wayno Mckim (1972): "The periodic Market System in North-Eastern Ghana", Economic Geography, Vol. 48. p. 341.

3. Allan M. Hay (1971) "Notes on the Economic Basis for periodic Marketing in Developing countries", Geographical Analysis, Vol.3. pp. 393-401.

## The Model:

Stage I : Local systems :

Individual movements are relatively restricted in the initial stages because of low population density, limited demand for goods and services, low levels of technology and poor communication systems.

During the early development of mobile trading, local markets, if they existed at all, were probably in small, widely spaced, and poorly synchronized manner.<sup>4</sup> In many areas peddlers begin travelling from house to house and from village to village<sup>5</sup> before periodic markets were established. These peddlers were usually few in number, served a limited per-capita demand and developed irregular cyclical patterns. In some parts of the world, markets were initially established on traditional rest days or those set aside for religious or ceremonial activities.<sup>6</sup> The opportunities for mobile trading were severely restricted when markets occurred on the same day of the week. In eighteenth century, in the Central Highland Ecuador for example, all most all the periodic markets were held on Sundays. During the Nineteenth century, as population and per capita demand increased and as communications improved, new market centres were established and many existing markets grew considerably.

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4. Jan Vansina, "Trade and Markets among the Kuba" in Paul Buchannon and George Dalton, (eds) Markets in Africa, Evanston, Illinois: W. Penn Handworker, (1971). The Liberal Internal Market System (unpub.) doctoral dissertation, University Oregon, pp.50-96.  
 5. Sven Dahl, (1960) "Travelling Peddlars in Nineteenth Century Sweden" Scandinavian Economic History Review, Vol 7. pp 167-68  
 6. Mactin P. Nisson (1920): Primitive Time Reckoning, pp. 329-35 and Sidney M. Mints and Dauglas Hall, (1960) "The origin of the Jamaican Internal Marketing System", Publications in Anthropology, No. 57. p.19.

Competition increased between market centres. A more integrated pattern of market activity facilitated the activities of mobile traders and completed the transition to Stage II.<sup>7</sup>

Stage I has small and relatively self-sufficient systems with high intrnal coherence and low overall mobility. Linkages with other systems are poorly developed. Opportunities for developing linkages are usually limited by low population density, poor communications, and an unfavourable political climate, and inter-regional exchanges are in luxury commodities traded by the elite or in essential goods, which can not be locally produced.<sup>8</sup> Changes elsewhere, such as political unrest or natural catastrophe, may have little effect on local systems. Occupational specialization is limited by low level of technology and by the low per-capita demand, self-sufficiency may be the rule at the local, tribal villages and even at the individual household level. For example local traders frequently produce the goods they sell and many of the goods are consumed by their own families.<sup>9</sup> They have not developed, nor had the opportunity to learn, the skill of full time professional traders. Professional traders in the local market systems tend to be the out-siders passing through the area. Full time professional trading allows the performance of a single task

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7. Rosemary, D.F. Bronley and R.J. Bromley(1975): The Debate on Sunday Markets in Nineteenth Century Equador," Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol.7. pp:150-160.

8. Karl Polanyi, Corral M. Aransberg and Harry W. Pearson, (1957)" Trade and Markets in the Early Empires, and Charles M. Good(1972): "Salt Trade and and Disease, Aspects of Development in Africa's Northern Great Lakes Region," International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol. 5 pp. 543-586

9. G. William Skinner (1964-65): " Marketing and Social Structure in Rural China",Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.24 p.10. and G.N. Vzoigwe,(1972):"Precolonial Markets in Bunyaro - Kitara" Comparative Studies in Society and History, Vol.14 p. 440.

with maximum efficiency and expertise. For the local traders in stage I, however, such opportunities are generally unavailable or unappreciated, and most traders divide their time between the production and marketing of goods.

Stage II : Regional Systems :

In Stage II, participants develop greater mobility due to more regular and elaborate cyclical movements and greater individual and group specialization. Local systems become functionally integrated into larger regional systems. The articulation of these larger systems is based on the increased frequency, amplitude, and regularity of the movements of people and commodities. The critical variables includes (1) increases in population, and thereby, intensified competition for resources and growth in demand for goods and services;(2) increase in information about other systems;(3) the intrusion of outside products and values; (4) the adoption of new technologies, facilitating increase in production and mobility; (5) changes in physical environment, and (6) changes in social and political institutions.

The size and number of market centres increase and authorities attempt to synchronize markets. Synchronization reduces competition between markets and facilitates the movement of traders . Interactions among local economic systems increase as more traders become mobile and as mobile traders develop cyclical hierachies. The infusion of new information and capital into local system have some multiplier effect. Market traders, who

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10. R.J. Bromley, (1973): "The Spatial pattern and Temporal Synchronization of periodic Markets," Swansea Geographer, Vol.11. pp.15-25.

were previously also producers, begin to act as commercial intermediaries and many eventually specialize as collecting wholesale, distributing wholesaler or retailers. Specialization of traders is paralleled by specialization of market centres and sectioning of markets. Central markets develop, new markets are founded and some existing centres stagnate because of increased competition.<sup>11</sup> "Outsiders often enter as cultural and economic brokers or a con~~ing~~ing elite". These outsiders link the local areas into wider commercial systems.<sup>12</sup> Some of the profits from wider systems are returned to the local areas. Traders may use these profits to pay of social obligations and acquire social prestige, but eventually, they are invested in expanding marketing activities. Traders sell higher order goods or invest in urban residences, storage and processing facilities, or retail shops, thereby increasing the sophistication of their commercial operations.

Systems become more diverse, and there is considerable evidence of 'systems stability'; participants widen the range of production sites, diversify their outlets, and increase the range of products handled. Market traders learn of alternative product periods of reduced supply and demand.<sup>13</sup> Occupational specialization of one particular life-style and means of production are generally increased, but the occupations themselves become more diversified, flexiable and sophisticated.

11. Symanski and Bromley (1974): "Market Development and Ecological Complex", Professional Geographer, Vol.26. pp 382-388.

12. Abher Cohen (1971): Cultural Strategies in the organisation of Trading Diasporas, London pp. 266-81.

13. Symanski and Webber (1974): "Complex Periodic Market Cycles", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol.64. pp. 203-213.

Stage III: National Integration:

In the stage III, residential mobility and mobility of the means of production are reduced. Local and regional systems become integrated into wider national and international systems, and individual, social groups, localities and regions more specialized in their productive activities and increasingly dependent on outside suppliers and consumers. Self-sufficiency is abandoned in favour of higher production, greater occupational specialization and increased interaction and interdependence. Communication networks improve and facilitate the penetration of external technologies, capital and values. Distant and more developed systems can induce the sedentarization of traditional local mobile systems. A shift from more diverse subsistence agriculture to commercial cultivation of a few crops for sale in distant markets may reflect changes in local values, but such a shift is likely to be encouraged by and to coincide with the goals of a higher order control system (e.g. potatoes and ginger are commercial crop of Meghalaya; these crops mainly, ginger are sent to far off places like Bombay and even Pakistan also).

As the density of consumer demand increases, full-time specialized mobile traders find that mobility is no longer necessary. Urban periodic markets become daily markets as the urban centres grows in size and captures the hinterlands of smaller market centres.

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14. A. Roy. Rappaport, (1971): "The Flow of Energy in an Agricultural Society", Scientific American, Vol.224:3 pp. 117-132 and Rent. V. Flannery (1972): "The cultural Evolution of Civilization", Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics, Vol.3 pp. 399-426.

Though three stages of development has been seen in the marketing system, but these stages not deterministic. A transition from Stage I to Stage II, and from Stage II to Stage III, may be considered the norm, but exceptional groups can remain indefinitely at one stage or even regress.

#### 7.2.1 Analysis:

If we look periodic market system of North-East India is still in a backward stage .Periodic markets of Meghalay are still in the stage I: individual movement is restricted because of low population density and limited demand for goods and services, low levels of technology and poor levels of communication and the markets are widely spaced.

Barabazar of Shillong is now passing through the Stage II: regional system of Meghalaya. Local systems become functionally integrated into larger regional system through Barabazar. It is the biggest business centre of Meghalaya. Previously, it was only a periodic market. Besides, at the daily market site, it still maintains the periodicity. Tha bazar has two markets - one held on the last day of the eight day week (according to Khasi calendar) known as Iewduh and other held the sixth day known as Iewpamtiah.

#### Hierarchy of Business Structure in Meghalaya:

15

Berry (1967) applied the central place theory to study the of commercial structure in urban areas. In towns where population densities are high, locations of retail and service activities are close together; yet, there exists a hierarchial structure of shopping centres. The larger the centre, the more extensive is the

15. B.J.L.Berry,(1967): Geography of Market centres and Retail Distribution, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. (III,IV).

market area and greater is the specialization in service provision. A large centre thus, has more establishments and business types, offers more goods and services, does greater volume of business, and deals mainly in higher order goods which are bought less frequently, and for which shoppers travel longer distances compared to a smaller centres. Small centres, generally provide lower order goods such as food stuff which are purchased frequently with minimum consumer travel. Shopping centres comprise of a hierarchy made of discrete groups of centres. Shopping centres of each higher order provides all the goods and services provided by lower order centres togetherwith a discrete group of higher order functions. The market areas of lower order centres rest within the market areas of higher order centres (Scott 1970).<sup>16</sup>

In order to identify the hierarchy of commercial structure in Shillong, all the commercial areas were marked. Different types of shops and services were grouped into sixteen categories of shops, dealing in perishable goods, which account for more than one-fourth by using the formula (discussed in Chapter II).

With the help of the functional index (FI) specialisation indices of Bara Bazar is 15.85 and police bazar is 8.54 : as calculated. Barabazar gets the highest specialisation index.

The difference between the hierachial order in Shillong and that of Christaller's model seems to be due to the following reason:

- 1) Shillong is a hill town where population is very irregularly distributed.
- 2) The distribution of transport facilities are also uneven.

16. P. Scot (1970): Geogrphy and Retalling, Chicago.

3) Since the town is small and some of the large markets are easily approachable from most of the areas, many people do not patronise the nearest shopping centre.

4) the price of commodity varies greatly between and small shopping centres.

Table 7.10  
Hierarchy of Business Centre

Orders of Business Centre	Actual no. of Centres in Shillong	Theoretical progression of centres according to $K=3$
i. Central Business District	1	1
ii. Regional Shopping centres	2	2
iii. Community Centres	5	6
iv. Neighbourhood centres	8	18
v. Isolated Stores centre	8	54

7.2.2. Central Business District: The central business district (CBD) is the nucleus of central services of highest orders and is the largest and dominant retail centre. Like the central business district of many Indian towns, the C.B.D of Shillong does not have a central location, though it is close to the population centre.

The arrangement of stalls shows that Barabazar is a planned market. The eastern portion of the Bazar, in the north is dominated by shoe stalls and in the south by betelnuts and leaves. West of these is the cloth sector. Vegetables, eggs, chicken and fish occupy western segment of the market and fruit and meat stalls are in the southern. Thus, barring a few exceptions, the different types of shops have obtained segregated locations.

Wholesale business is also located in Barabazar. Utensils, betel-leaves and nuts, fruits, eggs, chicken, vegetables, handicrafts etc. are sold at Barabazar.

In Assam, most of the area is still in a backward stage. It

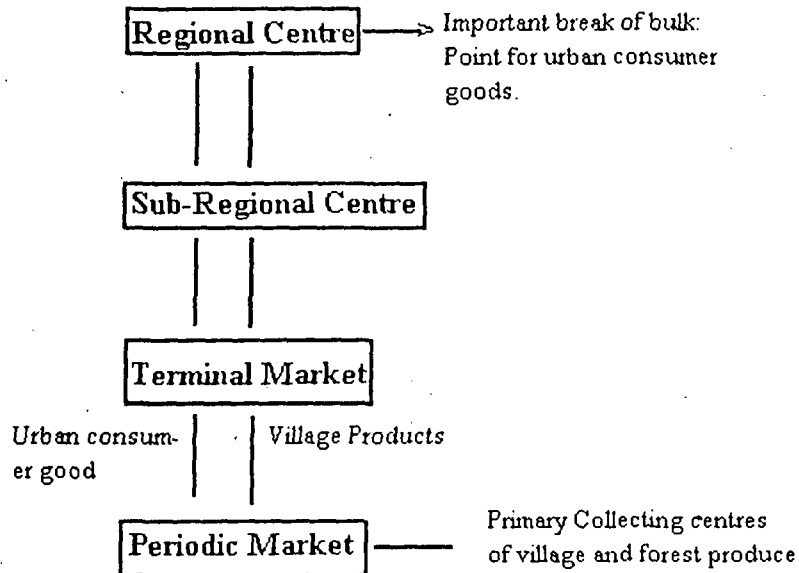
is also the fact that most of the periodic markets are in the First Stage of development. Most of the periodic markets in Jorhat district are tea-garden markets where participation is very less. Comparatively, participation is even less than East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. Jorhat town is a sub-regional centre for Jorhat district. From this sub-regional centre urban consumer goods flow upward to the regional centre (Guwahati) and downward to the village markets. Village products enter higher level market through this sub-regional centre.

Better roads induce villagers to market higher level to larger places, because of improved transport network and reduced the transportation cost and increase in the variety of goods available, increased trade permitted further differentiation and specialization and decreasing activity put the lower level centres in cummulatively less competitive situations.

There was thus, a reversal of traditional processes. Traditional change led to additions of centres, reduction of areas served, and growth at the lowest levels as functions moved down the hierarchy. Modern changes decreased the number of centres, increased market area size, and forced the function upwards in the hierarchy. Expanding zones around growing cities were often undergoing modern changes and reductions in number of lower-level centres, while at the advancing edge, modernization was taking place. Beyond the modern frontier, traditional processes worked to increase the number of centres and market schedules.

Though the periodic markets links rural population with the larger economic system, it dominates the 'grass root' economy of the rural areas. So the economy of the rural areas are closely

Dig.7.31 Hierarchy of Business Centres



related to the periodic market centre.

Growth of market centres depends upon expansion of its hinterland (market). The market indicates involvement of large section of the people in the transactions.

Christaller defined the centrality of a centre as the ratio between the services provided and the local needs of its inhabitants.

Travel pattern and distance are one of the most important considerations to choose the market. From the field study, it has been observed that buyers from rural areas and farm goods sellers are coming from short distances. They are poor, so they can not afford higher transportation cost, and thus, long distances. They, usually travel by foot.

But middlemen set of buyers and non-farm goods sellers come

from distant places. They add transport cost when selling or buying the goods. Middlemen buy goods from different periodic markets at lower prices. The marketing system, especially the pricing policy of agricultural produces (Table 7.2) of rural area is defective and peasants do not get their due. On the other hand, producer sellers have to pay 20 to 35 per cent more than the actual prices for the consumer goods (Table 7.3). Naturally, producer sellers are exploited in two ways; they do not get the actual price (some time price is lower than the cost of production) for their produce and they buy consumer goods at higher price.

Table 7.2  
Price of Selected Commodities in Periodic and Urban Market  
(in Rupees)

Commodities	Urban rate	Periodic Market rate
Rice	6.50	5.50
Betelnut	50/ (per pone)*	35/
Gur	10.50	9.00
Vegetables	5.50	4.00

Source : Field Survey 1991. Assam

Pone\* : consisting 80 numbers

Note : Prices are collected from Mariani dairy market and Debarpar Periodic Market.

Table 7.3  
Percentage of Increase in Prices  
(for some selected consumer goods in periodic markets)

Commodities	Percentage of increase
1. Cloth and ready made garments	30 to 38 percent.
2. Foot wear	20 to 30 "
3. Jewellery	40 "
4. Confectionaries	15 to 20 "
5. Alluminium Utensils	25 to 28 "

Source: Field survey, 1991, Assam.

Rural producer and buyers are usually exploited by the middlemen and urban wholesale buyers by manipulating weight and measures also.

Another important fact as revealed is that no standard pricing policy prevails in the periodic market. In the periodic market system another problem is that there is complete absence of quality control system.

### 7.3. Socio-cultural Role of the Periodic Market:

In both the tribal and peasant areas, periodic market plays an important role in the social-cultural life of the people. The periodic market serves a variety of social functions for which it can be thought of as an social institution for the rural folk. As the people in the surrounding villages have little opportunities for entertainment, it brings a fresh air in the daily, monotonous life of the people. People having no specific business of buying or selling also go the market and also look forward to the market day.

The periodic market serves as a meeting place for the people of both the close by and distant villages. It provides an ample opportunity for gossiping, enjoyment or many making discussion or any topic vital to their lives and society.

The periodic market is a place for interaction between people of different ethno-linguistic groups, living in different cultural ethos. Several markets like Byrnihat (Meghalaya), Debrapar (Assam) show close interaction between the hill and plains people. People hear different languages and in course of time speak and see different cultural forms. It exposes them to different ideas and thus, bringing some changes in their lives; for

example, in dress pattern, dietary habits etc. Most of the people wear modern dresses and the elite and the well-offs put on their best on the market day. The market also brings new commodities for consumption and therefore, has a 'demonstration effect' on the lives of the villagers. There is an intermixture of different languages spoken by the people coming to the market. The tribal people while dealing in the market, speak in broken Assamese, broken Hindi, broken Bengali, broken English. The market acts as a channel of innovation, adjustments and acculturation of the diverse elements. On the market day, women come dressed in their colourful (and traditional) garments from which their ethnic identities are discernible. The market too provides an opportunity for friends and relatives to exchange matters of their families and the weekly accounts.

Although the market, in a general sense is the web of inter-relationship between customers, sellers and producers who are involved in exchange, it also serves at the place of contact with non-locals. The market also provides an outlet for ill wills and prejudices between different communities and helps in the process of integration.

#### 7.4 Periodic Market as a Centre of Diffusion:

Periodic markets is of a great significance to the rural masses. In some rural areas, periodic market is the only means of communication. (It is mostly seen in Meghalaya). Thoughts and ideas from the institutions may be transferred to the people through lecturers, posters, demonstrations, dramas and movies. Market place creates a platform for acting as a medium of exchange of ideas between the people on one hand, and the socio-economic orga-

nizations and the government. In the market, communication or exchange takes place between<sup>a</sup> different groups of people irrespective of their caste, creed and language. Communication may be between consumers and sellers, buyers and buyers hailing from rural as well as urban areas. In a sense, all the participants act as important elements of the drama.

The medium of communication in the periodic market is mainly the "face to face" communication. Interpersonal communication is the most effective method of information diffusion.

The information diffusion brought out by the modern technology and science has also swept the periodic markets. Information diffusion through printed leaflets, posters, family planning and agricultural campaigns within mobile vans equipped with projectors and promotional films are often noticed. The typical affluent rural youth carrying transistor sets, political speeches during elections - are all for the participants of the periodic market as a centre of information diffusion.

In spite of all these good elements, there is a darker side of the periodic market. Periodic market is now a breeding ground for social evils. Gambling and selling of liquor is a common practice in the periodic market, particularly in the tea-garden markets. But in my field survey in Meghalaya, one never notices the practice of gambling and selling of liquor which is strictly prohibited by the local authority.

Though this is the darker side in the periodic market, it plays an important role in integrating the unorganised, scattered rural economy into a dynamic, interactive, functional region and

at a second level links this economy with the larger economic system.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **Summary and Conclusion**

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## Summary and Conclusion

### 8.1. Summary of Findings.

This study is intended for exhibiting spatio-temporal distribution of periodic markets in the tribal areas of North East India, in special reference to Meghalaya and Assam and to assess their impact on the economic transformation the rural hinterland. Periodic markets have some vital features besides trading which are of, rather tangible nature and elude the observation of a common man. An academic approach to the situation brings to light several intricate and interrelated phenomena while analysing the whole functional aspect of a markets and their hinterland. An attempt has been made to deal with this complex subject, exhaustively and to formulate a theoretical base for the understanding of the interaction between the rural masses and the periodic markets, and the general development of the area concerned.

The study is divided into eight chapters to deal with different aspects, including the socio-economic base of the periodic markets. In the introductory chapter, the problem of the objectives, hypotheses behind the study had been defined and also the general background to the study area of Assam and Meghalaya. In this chapter relevant literature on the subject has been summarised and the problems posed for the study. A brief resume of works done in 'Market Geography' in different parts of the world has also been taken into account. It may not be out of place to mention here, that very few works have been found on 'Marketing Geography' in India and studies of the periodic situation in the tribal areas are rare, indeed, especially in the North-Eastern region.

The present study therefore, might be considered a first attempt in 'Marketing Geography' tribal and peasant areas of North East. It also deals various views on the subject about the origin, structure and function of periodic markets.

The methodology, data base and data analysis - methods and techniques have been discussed in the Chapter II. Data has been collected three sources; i.e. historical documents, field investigation and governmental statistics. Major part of the data has been collected through field work from three periodic markets from tribal areas Khasi Hills (Meghalaya) and three periodic markets from the peasant areas of Jorhat district (Assam) on the basis of schedule based interviews and physical surveys etc.

Data from secondary sources, like information from the reports of decadal censuses, district statistical hand-books and other governmental publications were used for analysing the spatial aspects of the periodic markets of two contrasting regions.

Chapter III deals with the evolution of the periodic market system in the region, North East region in general and specifically valley areas of Assam and tribal areas of Meghalaya. It also discusses how trade fairs originated in the region. In all farming societies of the world, post-harvest jubilation and celebration is a common phenomenon. The origin of trade fairs dates back to the Ahom Rule in Assam. The hill people used to attend trade fairs held in the bordering areas. The fairs would also promote close contact among the people, both in the hills and the plains. The export items of the hill people at the fairs consisted mostly forest resources and their handloom garments and the valley people generally exported agricultural products. There are two

major hypotheses regarding the origin of periodic markets; (a) the evolutionary model and (b) the contactual origin model. The evolutionary model deals with the gradual emergence of surplus and crop specialisation in a peasant societies leading to emergence of 'economic exchange'. The 'contactual origin' model proposes the emergence of periodic markets as a product of periodic contact between two societies with different levels of economic development and societal evolution and the basic parameters governing their economies. These two hypotheses regarding the origin of periodic markets in study areas seems to be valid .

(a) Periodic markets emerged at the interface of the two contrasting cultures, the tribal (hunting, gathering and quasi-agricultural) society in the hills and the peasant societies in the north and south of the hills. This process continued for a few hundred years prior to the advent of colonisers (the British) in the scene.

(b) Two points are important from the point of view of colonial intervention in the earlier economic system :

(i) As a result of colonial intervention, the location of the markets somewhat changed and even some of the earlier markets died a slow death and on the other hand, a network of periodic markets emerged in the plateau proper. Thus, the entire plateau turned as an interface between the interactive pressures of the two large peasant cultures to the north and the south.

(ii) The advent of the Britisers changed the economic structure to some extent, by introducing new crops and products. Many of the other crafts and products (like iron) died. This led to the incorporation and integration of the simple, traditional

economy into the larger, world economy. Money economy became more common.

(c) During the third phase, i.e. after independence of the country and the resultant division and the emergence of the international border to the southern edge of the plateau, (i) the process of consolidation and integration of the traditional economy was hightened, and (ii) the trading relations and markets of the southern border of the plateau, suddenly ceased and thus, the economic orientation of the plateau became more inward and more towards the plain of Brahmaputra.

Chapter IV deals with the periodic market system, its structure and function in tribal and peasant economies. The three different structures of periodic markets have been suggested by different social scientists, i.e. (a) solar system, (b) dendritic system and (c) the intermeshed marketing system. The solar system, i.e. planets revolve round the 'sun', the trading activity revolves around hierarchically arranged system of markets. The 'dendritic system' shows that the spatial arrangement of market is such that, lower order markets are linked to a single higher order market through a few intermediary markets. The Intermeshed marketing system deals with a three-tier exchange system which is temporarily interlocking.

This chapter also throws light on the sequential development of periodic market system, the 'standard sequence' and the 'non-standard sequence'. The 'standard sequence' traces a market system developing from a simple peasant exchange to a complex regional, commercial-exchange system. The non-standard sequence argues that at first, the market does not emerge from local peas-

ant exchange but is rather a consequence of contrasting cultures brought together by long distance trade.

The study of peasant society (Assam) provides one of the best empirical examples of standard sequence of development of periodic market system. The periodic markets emerged as centres of administrative power of non-food producing demand i.e from quasi-urban centres. In Jorhat district, most of the periodic markets have emerged due to tea-cultivation.

Non-standard sequence of development of periodic marketing is applicable in the study area of Meghalaya.

The comparative study of the spatial structure of periodic markets in tribal and peasant areas has been discussed in the Chapter V. Broadly, the structure of periodic market system can be viewed as having three identifiable components, namely the spatial structure, the economic structure and the hierarchial structure. These components interact within each other as well as are supported by other components and concepts. The internal structure or morphology differs from place to place.

In the Meghalaya, eight day market-week are followed according to Khasi calendar and in Assam seven day market-week are followed according to the Gregorian calendar. In this chapter it is seen that distribution of periodic markets are influenced by (a) transport and communication (b) density of population (c) physiography. The periodic markets emerged out of the necessity of surplus areas to fulfill needs of the deficit areas at fixed places at a fixed time.

There are three types of distribution of periodic markets. They are: (a) regular (b) clustered and (c) random. In Assa-

m, the above three types of markets are observed, but in Meghalaya spatial distribution of periodic markets are mostly random.

Markets can be classified on the basis of location. In Assam periodic markets are classified into three different categories: (1) Tea-garden markets, (2) Tea-garden-cum-village markets and (3) Village market. But in Meghalaya periodic markets are only village markets. According to the day of market meeting, it is observed that village markets (28.03%) are held on Sundays. Fridays (35.51%) and Saturdays (15.88%) are the most preferred day for tea-garden market meetings.

Chapter VI discusses the behaviour of the traders and consumers and goods traded. The traders and consumers of the market can be divided into two broad groups; the buyers and sellers. Further, buyers can be divided into two types (a) the middlemen buyers (b) the enduse buyers. Sellers can be divided into three groups (a) sellers of farm produce, (b) sellers of non-farm goods, (c) middlemen sellers. Commodity composition is dealt with the help of a detailed schedule. Buyers from rural areas and producer-sellers come to the market from the nearby villages.

Through this chapter the social characteristics of the traders and consumers has also been highlighted. In both the study areas, it has been seen that middlemen buyers and non-farm goods sellers are mostly non-local and they are richest group in the periodic market.

The interaction of consumers and traders is not confined to one market but is spread over to more than one in the system.

depending on spatio-temporal characteristics. The producer sellers as well as the rural consumers interact only with the nearest market.

For the rural consumers, distance to the market from their home base is the most important consideration in selection of a particular market, while for the urban consumers important points is the consideration of the size of the market, availability of specialised goods, cheap prices and convenience of transport facilities.

It does not appear that the periodic markets of tribal areas of Meghalaya are any different from such markets observed elsewhere in the plains of Assam, except the matter of periodicity and the general high female participation.

Chapter VII deals with that how periodic market acts as a link between the simple, self-reliant village economy to the complex and inter-dependent larger economic system. According to this, in three stages the local system becomes integrated into regional system and then with the national system.

In Stage I, with small surplus, self-sufficient economy and low mobility of goods and people are operative.

Stage II, has high mobility by means of production, population growth, technological changes, the increasing size of social and political organizations, and the intrusion of outside traders and the new information and opportunities which result in regional integration, greater specialization in the local system.

In Stage III, the system has reduced mobility. Regional systems become integrated into national system with increased specialization.

If we examine the periodic market system of North East India, it is still in backward stage of economy. Periodic market system in Meghalaya is still in stage I : individual movement is restricted because of low population density and limited demand for goods and services, low levels of technology and poor levels of communication periodic markets which are widely spaced.

Barabazar of Shillong is now going through the stage II, regional system in Meghalaya. Local systems become functionally integrated into larger regional system through Barabazar.

In Assam, most of the area is still in backward stage. Most of the periodic markets in Jorhat district are tea-garden markets where participants are a few and periodic markets are in the 1st stage of development. Jorhat town is a sub-regional centre for Jorhat district.

A common characteristic, found in the periodic market is that no standard pricing policy prevails for rural products. The prices are fixed arbitrarily and fluctuate depending on presence and number of urban wholesale buyers.

In the periodic market system, another problem is that complete absence of quality control; so the urban sellers sell their unsold low quality goods in the periodic market.

Apart from the economic aspect the periodic markets play an important role in the social life of the village people. It is a melting-pot of various ethno-cultural and social groups living in different habitats. Several markets of study area are the main place of interaction for hill and plain people or tribal and non-tribals. Periodic markets are important media through which news, views and ideas are diffused to its zone of influence.

The periodic market centres can best be selected as important growth points and innovations can be diffused, effectively to the surrounding areas.

## 8.2. Conclusion :

The periodic market are the centres, through which majority of rural surplus product is distributed. This is the pivotal point of balance between the rural surplus and the urban or other deficit areas. From the point of view of economic exchange, the development of a market network, efficient marketing system is highly essential.

The following conclusions can be arrived after studying the evolution of periodic markets of Meghalaya and Assam.

(i) The periodic market system is as much a part of an exchange economy as a significant part of the culture of the peasant society, through out the world. Its emergence though, by and large evolved within the incipient peasant farming and network of exchanges, as could be seen in the history of its development in the North East India, the cardinally different economic basis of the societies in the cul-de-sac of hills and in the plains and valleys led to exchange system at spatial interface between these groups, i.e. areas bordering the hills. This is one reason that one rarely comes across any periodic markets in the tribal areas of the region with the sole exception of Meghalaya, where the system made gradual inroads into the plateau, being located at the water-devide of two large valley civilizations, to the north and the south.

(ii) It was also observed in the comparative study of the market system in Meghalaya and Assam that except a few surface features, there are no significant differences between the two. This indicates a process of detribalisation and peasantisation of the hill economy, which is by and large complete. This would ofcourse mean, other ills of a peasant economy in a growing market economy, i.e. emergence of interpersonal inequalities and rise in land alienation against a tradition of equity and sharing of resources. The processes in any case are irreversible.

(iii) The comparison of the periodic market systems in the two study areas also indicate that though the 'solar system' is relatively more valid for the Assam plains, the 'dendritic

system' has greater relevance in the hill state of Meghalaya, i.e. there is a greater unidirectional flow from a single central market like Barabazar in Shillong, through a network of smaller markets and to the periodic markets and retail distribution in the countryside.

- (iv) The hypothesis regarding the spacing of the markets to density (market size) function generally applies in the Assam valley but has limited applicability in the state of Meghalaya where the physiography and communication linkages determine the location and spacing of the periodic markets.
- (v) It was also observed in both the study areas that the urban based wholesale and retailers command supremacy over the market conditions, i.e. prices of commodities. This contributes to the idea of a monopsony of a group who could influence the terms of trade between the rural and the urban and therefore, the overall economic situation of the villages. By and large, the rural producers are unorganised, have a low staying power and have imperfect knowledge of supply conditions which further weakens their position in the market.
- (vi) While the periodic market serves as an important channel of communication into the rural areas and could be used for purposes of diffusion of innovation and modernisation of the rural economy, including monetisation and efficiency of production, it has the painful cost of the integration with the larger economic system. It can become the vehicle of unequal exchange. Opening of the interior areas with better communication infrastructure can lead to increased competition among the urban wholesalers and this would have a beneficial impact on the villager both in price and quality goods and services it receives.

### 8.3. Suggestions:

The study of periodic markets are both rewarding from the point of view of academic interest and that of opening the fascinating world of the countryside and the way it functions. For a country of peasants and rural dwellers, the culture lies in the countryside, the soul of a nation. Further studies, especially on the transaction system and the trade between the rural and the urban is one area which needs immediate attention. The process of unequal exchange and primitive accumulation from rural to urban is extremely detrimental to a country where 74 percent of people live

in rural areas and also in a region where it is nearly 90 percent. The periodic market system is one of the most important cogs of the exchange system in the wheel of the nation needing greater and rigorous analysis.

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## APPENDIX-I

## IDENTIFICATION SCHEDULE - I

1. Name of the Respondent :
2. M/F :
3. Age :
4. Language (MT) :
5. Religion - T/C/AO :
6. Place of Residence :
7. Distance from the Market :

Seller's Schedule-II (a)  
(farmer's own Produce)

1. How much of land you own ?
2. Do you lease in any land ?
3. What crops do you grow ? (list)
4. Is the produce enough for your yearly requirement ?
5. Do you sell some part of your crop and buy other food stuffs?
6. What do you sell in this market ? (list)
7. At what prices ? (list for units)
8. Do you sell to the middlemen ?
9. Do you come regularly to this market ?
10. If not, how frequently ?
11. Do you visit other markets also ?
12. What things do you buy from the market ?
  - a) Food items

- b) Clothes, other sundry items
- c) Fertilizers, seeds and pesticides

13. Do you sell forest produces - like roots, game, fruits and nuts etc.
14. What is your income from sales in the market in a year ?

**Sellers Schedule - II (b)**  
(Farm produce by middlemen)

1. What community are you from ?
2. What commodity/commodities you trade ?
3. Where do you contact the farmers ?
  - a) at the farm site
  - b) at the market itself
4. At what rates do you buy from the farmers ?  
(list for price)
5. How do you transport to the market ?
6. At what rates do you sell ?
7. How many other markets do you visit and how regularly ?
8. What could be your annual income from this business alone ?

**Sellers' Schedule-II (c)**  
(non-farm produce sellers)

1. What commodities do you sell ?
  - a) Grocery
  - b) Stationery and other sundry items
  - c) Fuel (wood, kerosene)
  - d) Building materials (cement, iron, wood etc)
  - e) Agricultural inputs
  - f) Clothes
  - g) Any others
2. Where do you buy your goods ?
3. How do you transport it ?
4. What margin do you get (list per unit)
5. Do you sell on credit ?
6. If so, at what rate of interest per month ?
7. What will be your approximate annual income from this trade?

Buyers' Schedule - III (a)  
(Buyers from rural areas)

1. Do you visit the market regularly ?
2. From how far do you come here ?
3. How do you come here ?
4. What goods do you buy here ?
  - a) Food stuff
  - b) Clothes
  - c) Other sundry stuff
  - d) Agricultural inputs
5. Do you visit the city (nearest) to purchase also ?
  - a) If so, what things do you buy there ?
  - b) How, frequently do you visit the city ?
6. How do you buy ?
  - a) by paying money
  - b) by exchanging some goods (barter)
  - c) by credit
7. Do you buy from the farmers ?

Or

From the middlemen ?
8. How much money you spend on the market every month ?
9. What is your annual income (money/kind) ?

Buyers Schedule-III (b)  
(Middlemen)

1. Do you visit this market regularly ?
2. Do you visit other markets (list) ?
3. What commodities do you buy ? (list)
4. How do you transport it ?
5. Where do you sell it ?
6. What margin do you get (list per units) ?
7. What is your annual income from this trade ?

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