

# **A STUDY ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETING OF BARPETA DISTRICT OF ASSAM SINCE 2005**

**Dr. WINSTON DUNN.**

*Research Scholar,*

***Department of Economics,***

***T.M.Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar.***

## **1. Statement of the Problem :**

*Marketing of his produce is the most important activity of a farmer. This is particularly true in the case of small farmers who have small surpluses for marketing. Agricultural marketing system is an efficient way by which the farmers can dispose their surplus produce at a fair and reasonable price. Improvement in the condition of farmers and their agriculture depends to a large extent on the elaborate arrangements of agricultural marketing. The term agricultural marketing include all those activities which are mostly related to the procurement, grading, storing, transporting and selling of the agricultural produce.*

*An efficient agricultural marketing provides incentives to the farmers to produce more by giving them fair prices for their produces and ensures availability of goods to consumers at fair prices. It will raise their standard of living, on one hand and the prosperity of the nation, on the other. Thus, an efficient and organized system of agricultural marketing reflects the socio-economic conditions of the country.*

*For a long period of time Indian agriculture was mainly in the nature of "subsistence farming". The farmers sold only a small part of his produce to pay off rents, debts and meet his other requirement.*

*Such sale was usually done immediately after harvesting of crops since there were no storing facilities. A considerable part of the total produce was sold by the farmers to the village traders and money lenders often at prices considerably lower than the market prices. The farmers who took their produce to the mandies also faced a number of problems as they were confronted with powerful and organised traders. In mandies, business was carried out by the arhatiyas with the help of brokers who were the agents of arhatiyas. In fact, there was a large chain of middlemen in the agricultural marketing system like village traders, Kutcha arhatiyas, Pucca arhatiyas, brokers, whole salers, retailers etc. As a result the share of farmers in the price of agricultural produce was reduced substantially. A study made by D.S. Sidhu revealed that the share of middlemen in case of rice was 31 percent, in case of vegetable was 29.5 percent and in case of fruits was 46.5% arhatiyas and brokers taking advantage of the ignorance and illiteracy of the farmers, used unfair means to cheat them.*

*Agricultural Marketing in Assam, as a part of India has been suffering from manifold problem. Such as price Spread, Distress Sale, Lack of Marketing intelligence, Lack of Grading, Lack of Proper Storage Facility, Lack of Proper Transport Facility and Lack of Regulated Market, etc.*

*In Assam jute is one of the most important cash crops. Marketing channel for jute composed of the middlemen like commission agents, as a result of which farmers are always deprived of getting the remunerative price of jute in the Barpeta district of Assam.*

*Barpeta district is situated in the lower part of the state Assam. Agriculture plays an important role in the economy of the district Barpeta and about 70% of the rural population directly depends on*

*agriculture for their livelihood. Paddy is the principal crop in the district. Apart from paddy, other major crops grown are like jute, oilseed, wheat and vegetables. There is considerable scope of crop intensification by way of increased cropping intensity and crop productivity.*

*Agricultural marketing is one of manifold problems which have direct bearing upon the prosperity of the cultivators. Although the system of agricultural marketing has been improved to some extent by the Government during the last decade in some part of the state Assam. Barpeta district as a whole is lagging far behind in this respect. So far no systematic work has been done on the problem. The role of agricultural marketing in Barpeta district of Assam is a micro level study. Such a micro level study on agricultural marketing in Barpeta district of Assam is considered to be highly significant to the solution of many agrarian problems in the district as well as in the state at large. The study will be useful to Government, planners and future researchers in the field of agricultural economics and agricultural problem.*

## **2 .Review of Literature:**

*To examine the relevance of the present study a review of existing literature is considered indispensable. The main objective behind such a review is to know the area of different studies made so far to perceive the gap and lacuna in this field of research. Some available literatures on agricultural marketing are as follows -*

*Lekhi, R.K. and Sing Joginder (1996) in their book, Agricultural Economics, opined that fluctuations in agricultural prices are one of the problems of agricultural marketing. Marketing conditions as they exist in the country is greatly responsible for the variations of agricultural products prices. Lekhi & sing also mentioned that failure*

*of farmers to adjust their supply to demand brings about fluctuations in the prices of agricultural produces.*

*Fluctuation in the prices of agricultural commodities affects the incomes of all types of farmers - big, medium or small to a greater extent. But the worst sufferers are the small farmers. They also suffer when prices rise. They also suffer when prices fall.*

*The fluctuations in prices breed inefficiency in agriculture and it mars the enthusiasm of farmers to undertake - intensive cropping and proper planning.*

*Sidhus (Economic Survey, 1996-97) while making an investigation into the structure of agricultural marketing mentioned that there is a large chain of middlemen in the agricultural marketing system like village traders, Kutcha arhatiyas, Pacca arhatiyas, brokers, whole sellers, retailers, money lenders etc. As a result the share of farmers in the price of agricultural produce has been reduced substantially. D.S. Sidhu also expressed that the share of middlemen in case of rice was 31 percent in case of vegetable it was 29.5 percent and in case of fruits was 46.5 percent.*

*Ahmed (2005) has mentioned that there is a wide gap between the price received by the producers and the price paid by the consumers. The price spread for agricultural produce varied depending upon the volume of production, road communication network and marketing facilities. He also mentioned that the larger the number of marketing channel that operates in the market the higher is the possibility of price spread. Again more is the price spread, the producers get lesser amount of consumer's price. Rice grower's share of consumer's rupee was found to be 61 percent, the share of jute producer was 50 percent and the share of wheat was*

*found to be 50 percent. Of course share of growers depend upon the channel through which agricultural products find their way to the final consumers.*

*Datt and Sundharam (2007) have mentioned about the defects of agricultural marketing in India and narrated that the position of agricultural marketing in India is still deplorable. The Indian farmer does not have facilities for storing his products. The storage facilities are so poor that 10 to 20 percent of the produced is eaten away by rats.*

*They have also mentioned that the average farmers are so poor and indebted that they have no capacity to wait for better prices. They are forced to sell their output to the money-lender or to the trader so as to clear their debts. Such distress sales weaken the already miserable position of the average Indian farmers. Datta and Sundharam further mentioned that farmers do not ordinarily get information about the ruling prices in the big markets. As a result the farmers have to accept whatever price is quoted to them and have to believe whatever the traders tell them.*

### **3. Significance of the Study:**

*The economy of Assam is basically agrarian. Majority of the population still depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. But the price of agricultural produces has been found to be very un-remunerative and fluctuating. Farmers with such price system cannot go and think for development of agriculture. It is also worth mentioning that farmers constitute large, medium, small and marginal farmers. From literature it appears that about 60% farmers are in the categories of small and marginal farmers. But the economic condition of small and marginal farmers is very weak. They are not in a position to adopt modern agricultural technology at their*

*own. And basically it is the small and marginal farmers that resort to distress sale and have to be contempt with whatever price is offered at the market. For the development of agriculture as well as farming community a better and improved agricultural price system is very much essential. This calls for appropriate policy measures which call proper investigation. In Barpeta district of Assam very few attempts have been made on the problem agricultural marketing. Therefore, an attempt at this point of time will be very much essential for formulation of appropriate policy measures to redress the problem of agricultural marketing.*

#### **4. Objectives of the Study:**

*The proposed study has the following important objectives:*

- (i) To examine the role of prices of agricultural produce in the state economy.*
- (ii) To examine the nature of agricultural prices.*
- (iii) To examine the impact of infrastructural facilities on agricultural prices.*
- (iv) To examine the nature of agricultural marketing.*
- (v) To study the pattern and channel of marketing of important agricultural commodities like paddy, rice, wheat, potato, jute, vegetables etc. and their impact on the socio-economic life of the peasants.*
- (vi) To examine the efficiency of the present market information system.*
- (vii) To examine the impact of over production or under production on agricultural prices.*
- (viii) To suggest policy measures.*

#### **5. Research Hypotheses:**

- (i) That actual farmers do not get the remunerative prices.*
- (ii) That the problems of agricultural marketing stand on the way of agricultural development.*

- (iii) That the low price of agricultural produces discourage farmers from adopting modern agricultural technology.*
- (iv) That the middlemen appropriate larger share of agricultural prices than the farmers.*
- (v) That the weak bargaining power of farmers cause to agricultural prices be at low level.*

## **6. Methodology:**

*For the proposed study both primary and secondary data will be used. Primary data will be collected from field survey through a set of questionnaire. To obtain primary data the sample farmers as well as market functionaries would be asked about market information. Total sample size will be about 300.*

*To supplement the primary data secondary data will be useful which shall be collected from Secondary data. Secondary data will be collected from district agriculture office, district marketing officer, Govt. reports, books and journals. This study will be basically on sample survey and simple statistical tools will be used to analyze the collected data through investigation. The collected data shall be analyzed with suitable statistical techniques.*

## **7. Limitations of the Study:**

*Every investigation and study has certain limitation. Similarly the present study about "A Study on Agricultural Marketing of Barpeta District of Assam Since 2005" may have certain limitation of time, study area, sample size and other investigation facilities. But to make the study as objective as possible considerable thought and care would be exercised. The proposed study would be undertaken in a limited geographical area of Barpeta district. Therefore, the findings emanating from the study may not be applicable everywhere of the country. Of course the finding of the proposed study would be*

*applicable in areas having same socio-economic features in Assam and elsewhere.*

### **REFERENCES**

1. Ahmed A.U. (2007), *An Enquiry into the determinants of adoption of new technology in agriculture by tribal and non-tribal farmers - A case study of Barpeta district of Assam.*
2. R.K. Lekhi, Joginder Sing, *Agricultural Economics.*
3. Brunk, M.E. and Dallah, L.B, 1985, *Marketing of Agricultural Products.*
4. Barbara Morris, 1984, *State and Market.*
5. Clark, F.E, 1986, *Principles of Marketing.*
6. Collins, N.R., and Holton, R.H., 1963, *Programming Changes in Marketing in Planned Economic Development.*
7. Datt and Sundharam, 62nd Revised Edition, *Indian Economy.*
8. Dr. P.K. Dhar, 26th April, 2009, *Indian Economy - its Growing Dimensions.*
9. Dr. P.K. Dhar, 2007, *The Economy of Assam including Economy of North East India.*
10. Goswami, P.C., 1988, *The economic development of Assam.*



11. *Kahlon, A.S.Q. George, M.V., 1985, Agriculture and Price Politics.*
12. *Kohls, R.L. and Uhl, J.N., 1980, Marketing of Agricultural Products.*
13. *Pawaskar, Madhoo, 1986. Indian Agricultural Development since Independence.*
14. *Yadav, J.S., 1996, Modern Trends in Agricultural Marketing.*