

Agricultural Marketing in Hailakandi District of Assam

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Abstract:

Agricultural marketing is one of the vital marketing system in Hailakandi District of Assam. Due to geographical location the district is very much fruitful for production of agricultural product but earlier the farmers were face to many problems but with the development of transportation system with compare to early period the farmers are now getting right price of their product. The district is one of the backwards district among other district of Assam from the survey report it is observed that the agricultural population account for 78 percent of the total population. Hence the agriculture remain economically important. The District is only 2 percent of total population is engaged industrial sector and expansion rate of Industries like small scale and large scale are very low in percentage. The existing practice of agricultural marketing in the Hailakandi District is a combination of informal and formal arrangements. As per the survey report the farmers of Hailakandi District of Assam are poor, illiterate and ignorant and due to these reasons, the trace of green revolution comes to this district a bit later. One more another important feature is that in Hailakandi District most of the farmers are belongs to marginal farmers so commercialization of agriculture s very struggle in the District.

Keywords:

Farmers, Agriculture Marketing, Marketable Surplus Producer, Hutments markets.

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Agriculture Marketing:

Agriculture Marketing in its simplest form is the buying and selling of agricultural products. In modern agricultural marketing, the agricultural products have to undergo a series of transfer or exchange from one hand to another before they finally reach the consumer. A well-organized agricultural marketing can play a vital role in agricultural development by moderating fluctuation in the price of farm products and reducing uncertainty associated with the same.

Physical Characterization of Hailakandi District:

Assam is one of the big states in India. Assam has 33 districts; Hailakandi is one of the Districts located in the southern part of the state.

Hailakandi was one of the oldest sub-division in the state of Assam. It was constituted as a civil sub division on 1st June 1859. Subsequently, it was upgraded to a district in 1989.

The district has total geographical area of 132700 (Ha) of which 55.8 percent is forest area, 33.6 percent is cultivable area. Area under rice accounts for 27.5 percent of the cultivable area 4.46 percent is used for cultivation of tea.

There are five blocks in the district namely Katlicherra, South Hailakandi, Algapur, Lala and Hailakandi.

The total population of the District is 5,42,978 as per the census report 2001. The percentage of literacy to the total population is 49.16 as per census report 2001.

Occupation:

The percentage of workers and non workers to the total population are 29.09% and 68.50% respectively.

Agricultural Sector:

The agricultural population in the district accounts for 78 percent of the total population. Hence to that extent agricultural remains economically important.

Industrial Sector:

Only 1 percent of the total population engaged in industrial sector. This speaks of the very low level of industrial performance. This also explains a very low per capita income and low tempo of development.

Tertiary sector:

5.14 percent to the total population is found engaged in various activities operating in the tertiary sector. Peculiarly defence service and teaching services are found encouraging.

Existing Practices of agricultural Marketing in Hailakandi :-

The existing marketing structure for agricultural commodities in Hailakandi District is a combination of informal and formal arrangements. The formal part, supervised by the Marketing wing of the department of agriculture and the Agriculture Marketing Board, Silchar, has a two-tier system. At the lowest level, there are about 23 primary markets in Hailakandi district. These Primary markets along with the village huts constitute the marketing network for farm products at the grass-root level. The two secondary markets of the region mainly deal in output coming from the markets at grass -root level. The secondary markets located in town areas are looked after by their respective Town Committee, Municipal Board, Makhuma Parishad and Gaon Panchayats, The markets within the jurisdiction of the forest department are managed or leased out by the department. The whole sale trade on agricultural product is mainly controlled by private traders and merchant associations. The government agencies such as Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Assam State Co-operative Marketing and consumers Federation Ltd. Handle only about a quarter of the total transactions. The District is, however handicapped by the absence of regulated markets.

The market intelligence inspectors of the Department of Agriculture are responsible for collection of retail and whole sale prices and they submit it to the marketing officer. The department also makes arrangement for regular broadcasting of weekly market bulletin through All India Radio, Silchar. Some of the activities of agricultural marketing wings in the region are arrangement for transportation of winter vegetable from rural

to urban markets.

The present study speaks of a picture different from the official records, Normally in Hailakandi paddy is collected from the farmer's house by the merchants and grinded in local rice mills to be sold in other places. Another obstacle of this system is bad road communication system, In some far flung villages even earthen roads are not available and the paddy harvested by these farmers could not get the right price.

Percentage of Marketable Surplus Producer Farmers:

From study of the land holding pattern of the Hailakandi district we find that above fifty percent of total farmers belongs to the group of marginal farmers.

Again the farmers are categorized into two categories. The first categories are the marketable surplus producer farmers and the second categories are the consumption requirement producer farmers. The percentage of the first category is very low as compared to the second category. Table No.1 gives the total picture of these two categories. From the table we see that the percentage of marketable surplus is highest in Rajyeswarpur village.

Table No.1

Village wise generation of marketable surplus.

Name of the Village	P.C. of households producing marketable surplus	P. C. of households producing for consumption requirement
		50%
Paloicherra Mohanpur Boalipur	50%	68%
Garodpunji (Forest Village)	32%	18%
Joynagarpunji (Forest Village)	52%	15%
Rajyeswarpur Purbokitterbond	9.24%	
Rongpur Sudarsanpur		50%
Bakrihawar	0%	
		20%
	53.25%	60.5%
	22.91%	42%
	53.1%	40%
	53%	30%
	22.23%	
Average	34.77%	39.35%

Source: Field Survey:

Here it is necessary to explain that Garodpunji and Joynagar villages produce less amount of paddy but by Jhum cultivation, they produce variety of fruits like pineapple, banana, papaya, orange etc. and spite like ginger, turmeric etc. which make up the deficit in production of rice. They manage to buy foodgrains with money earned by selling other crops. Besides this it is observed that the village Rajyeswarpur has highest percentage of marketable surplus. The village joynagarpunji has the lowest percentage of marketable surplus.

Location of markets in the District :-

The village marketing centers of the district located near N.H. 154 are as follows Janaki Bazar, Algapur,

Boalipar, Monacherra, Jamirah , Gharmurah etc. In district level there is Hailakandi market, Circle level is LalaMarket .

A part from these, there are some markets near the district major roads like Mohanpur market near the Algapur Mohanpur road, Ratanpur market near the Hailakandi Ratanpur road, Kalacherra in the way of the Somarikona Gaglacherra Lala Road, Bilaipur, in southern part of the district and right bank of river Katakhal near the Lala Nutan Bazar Road.

There are also many '*hutments markets*' in the remote areas of the district which are connected with earthen roads. But at present many roads are under construction under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) scheme of Union Government and if all these schemes are completed effectively, a better communication network can be expected. The markets which are located in the flood affected areas of river Katakhal and Barak are in a bad condition during the rainy season.

Thus, organisation of market needs to be improved considerably as indicated below:

1. In order to have better advantage in marketing of agriculture produce the farmer should enjoy certain basic facilities. He should have proper facilities for storing his goods.
2. He should have holding capacity, in the sense, that he should be able to wait for times when he could get better prices for his produce and not dispose of his stocks immediately after the harvest when the prices are very low.
3. He should have adequate and cheap transport facilities which would enable him to take his surplus produce to the mandi rather than dispose it of in the village itself to the village money-lender-cum - merchant at low price.
4. Farmers should have clear information regarding the market conditions as well as about the ruling prices; otherwise, he may be cheated. There should be organised and regulated markets where the farmers will not be cheated by the dalals and arhatiyas.
5. The number of intermediaries should be as small as possible so that the middleman profits are reduced. This will increase the returns to the farmers.

Conclusion :

Judged from these considerations, the position of agricultural marketing in Hailakandi district is deplorable. The farmers of Hailakandi are poor, illiterate and ignorant.

First of all, it does not have proper storage facilities which are available in the village at present are so poor that 5 to 10 percent of the produce is eaten by rat.

Secondly, the average farmer is so poor and indebted that he has no capacity to wait for better prices. He is forced to sell his output to the money lender or to the trader so as to clear his debts. Such distress sales weaken the already miserable position of the average farmers of the District.

Thirdly, the transport conditions in rural areas to be bad that even richer farmers, who have large amount of surplus, may not be interested in going to the mandis . Most of the roads are kacha (unmetalled) and in rainy season they are unusable.

Fourthly, the number of intermediaries and middlemen between the farmer and the final consumer of their product is too many and the margin going to them is too less.

Finally, the farmers do not ordinarily get information about 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.

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