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Assessing the status of rural weekly markets and socio-economic lifestyle of the tribal population: a case study of Alipurduar district

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Abstract:

The tribal weekly market is a complex phenomenon which is distinct from the agricultural market or the 'Bazar' in the urban and semi-urban areas catering the numerous needs of the people. It is more in the nature of social gathering where people in the given area come together and incidentally make purchases and sales. Markets have been the places where earliest human communities have formed based on essential social needs. This survey evaluated and explained the function of weekly street markets in improvement of qualitative indexes of life and conditions of livelihood in the rural families. It was an applied study in terms of objective, and a descriptive-analytical and survey study in terms of methodology. Each individual tribal also has a long standing relationship with one or more traders. To fulfill their basic needs, tribal people are adopting trading as their primary occupation in spite of agriculture and forest gathering. Tribal economy is largely identified as backward in comparison to the other areas. Weekly market is a main source of daily need to the local villagers. Market is not only a business place side by side it's has great cultural value. In tribal areas as well as rural areas, the weekly market is considered as one of the best places of enjoyment. However, weekly markets are an influencing factor for the individual as well as regional development through tribal participation as sellers in the market. But through urbanization tribal haat gradually modifies its richness from tribal's point of view. Therefore standard management practices by the government and non-government organizations will be the root of development.

Keywords: Weekly market, rural landscape, socio-economic lifestyle, micro-finance, tribe, Alipurduar district.

Introduction: Tribal economy is largely identified as backward in comparison to the other areas. The region is undifferentiated and its structure is simple. As the demand for modern commodities is still, occasions for exchange/transaction are within the community and are

governed more by traditional custom than by market condition. There is a spirit of mutual help and value of money is not very high (Sharma, 1976; Singh, 1979). Weekly markets are held periodically on some specific days or on a day of the week at some fixed sites and provide goods and services to the rural settlement (De and Mallick, 1987). Weekly markets are locally known as, Haat, Bazaar, etc. In recent years, rural weekly markets have acquired a significant role, as the overall growth of the economy has resulted in substantial increase in the purchasing power of the rural communities. In tribal areas, most of the transactions in different communities are mutual and are in the nature of barter. The self-sufficient economy of tribal communities does not have a substantial surplus to establish a regular market. Naturally two types of buyers are always available in the place. One the persons living in the local areas along with persons employed at various officers of subdivision and the other are small trades living at place where the bus services are well connected with the place. In fact a potential market place has been developed in particular areas (De and Mallick, 1987; Basu, 1982). Rural weekly markets have a dispersed population due to which it is tough to reach this segment. The rural people do not easily reach out to the urban areas for purchasing goods and services, so their needs should be addressed properly (Borthakur, 1989; Basu, 1992). But this involves high cost and effort. The alternative channels that sellers use include these weekly markets. Sellers sell in one market on a day and move on to another on the next day. Weekly markets not only sell to loose products but also a significant amount of packaged goods. The market activities of rural weekly markets are based upon a strategic balance of demand and supply which differs from place to place based upon various factors including geographical aspects along with composition & lifestyle of the local populace based upon socio-cultural and economic parameters (Mahto, 1977; Chauchuri, 1986; Mahanand, 2014; Sarwade, 2017). A market system is considered to be functional when it involves activities of buyers and sellers. The buyers act as per rules of demand and the sellers act according to the rules of supply. Their interactions determine the equilibrium price of commodities through the demand and supply forces. The above analysis applies to weekly markets as we know that, weekly markets are opened or closed within a weekly time frame. The weekly markets are the outcome of the natural rural development process, where certain villages functionally become commercial centres of the surrounding areas. They provide a collective force in the socio-economic life of the local people including the local tribals. These markets are located either at a centre point surrounded by rural communities or in an open space or along access roads adjoining the Gram Panchayat offices in the villages of any district. The rural weekly markets mainly involve retail sellers and buyers. A retail seller mainly buys goods from the wholesale market and sells it to buyers in the rural weekly markets of the district. The supply of goods can change as a result of a change in technology, resource prices, transport cost, managerial cost, pecuniary cost and weather conditions (for agricultural goods). The buyer is related to the demand side in the market (Venugopal, 2014; Danda, 1991). As per the availability and requirement of goods, buyers purchase goods from sellers in the rural weekly markets of the district. Rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of people. The present strategy of rural development mainly

focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes. Development of the weekly market leads to improved transportation, infrastructure, insurance, banking, communication, entertainment, electricity, primary health centre, education and other facilities (Chakraborty, 1980; Mondal, 1997; Durgade, 2013; Sarkar et al., 2014). They boost local economic growth which stimulates production, business behavior of sellers and buyers, employment (Shubha, 2003; Behera, 1998; Bomley et al., 1975). These markets act as the centres of exchange of goods and provide the maximum opportunities for mobilization of local resources and its demand and supply functions generate employment to the surrounding area (Bomley et al., 1975; Chakraborty, 1980). The rural markets play a pivotal role in the life of the tribals. On one hand these markets are directly linked to their socio-economic development as they are involved here both in the capacity of buyers and sellers while on the other, it also acts as a periodic meeting place where people get an opportunity to interact and share views with one another (Danda, 1991; Mahto, 1977; Basu, 1992; De and Mallick, 1987). A latent form of barter system prevails in the transactions as it is often found that tribals bring MFPs or hand-made artefacts as per their exclusive art & craft traditions or such other items which they sell in these markets to buy daily essentials and other items of household necessity, dress & ornaments for beautification, entertainment materials, etc. These in turn have a direct bearing on their socio-cultural as well as economic life in general affecting their tastes & bibliographies, triggering diverse elements of selective tribal acculturation and actively contributing to the process of tribal development in due course.

Objectives of the study: The main objectives are as follows

- i. To understand the nature of weekly market and the role of the tribals participating therein
- ii. To determine major change elements and their impact on the social, cultural & economic life of the tribal people participating in a weekly market and
- iii. To suggest effective measures to utilize this platform for promoting developmental benefits among the tribals.

Brief outline of the study area: Alipurduar (also known as ‘Dooars’) was a subdivision of Jalpaiguri district before its emergence as the new 20th district of West Bengal on 25 June 2014. Weekly markets are very important in the rural areas and are intricately connected to the patterns of socio-economic and cultural life of the tribals of both the locality and beyond.

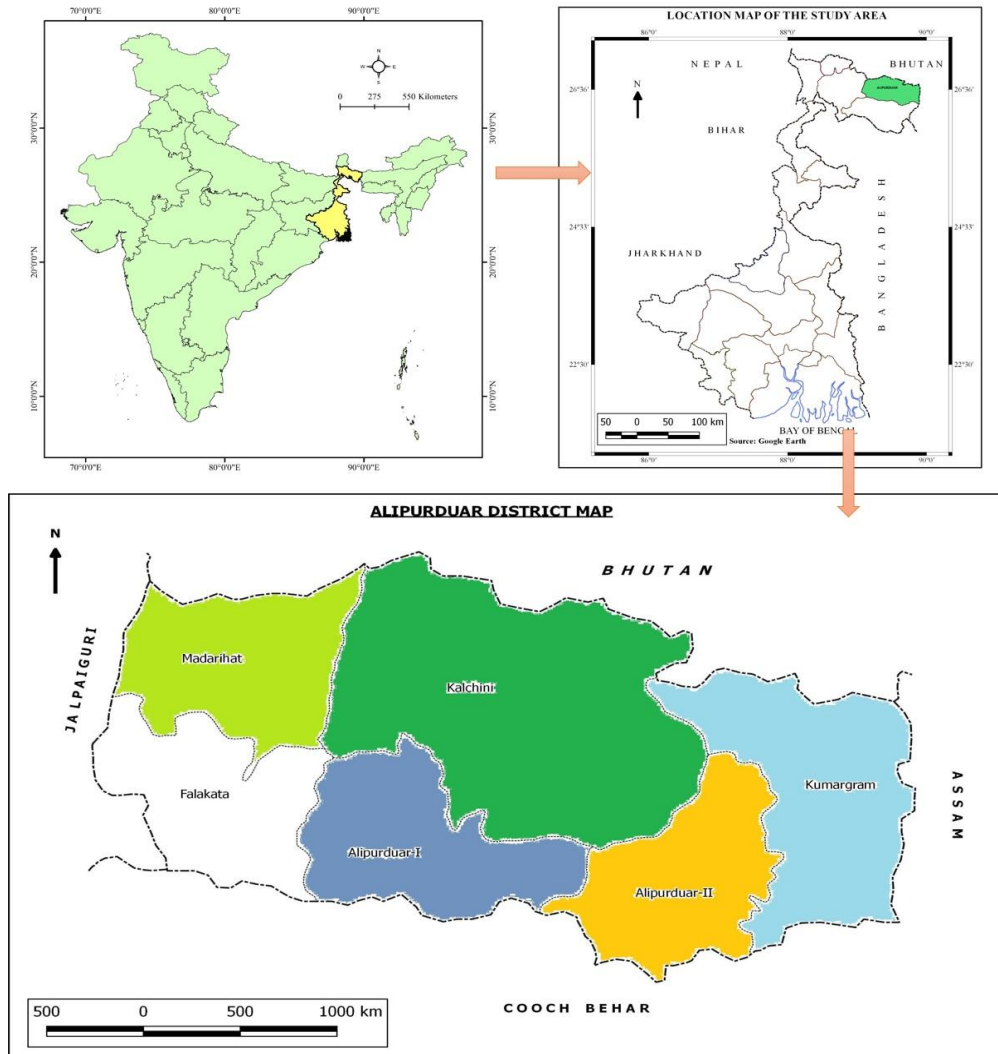


Figure 1 Locational identity of the study area

So, weekly rural markets in the Alipurduar district with a considerable tribal population which are situated for the present study. The district now contains nine Census towns, 66 gram panchayats under six community development blocks namely, Madarihat–Birpara, Alipurduar–I, Alipurduar–II, Falakata, Kalchini and Kumargram. The district had a population of 73,047 in 2001 and in 2011, the total population increased to 127,342.4 The district covers 3383 sq.km area and extents from 26° 24'N to 26° 51'N and from 89° 2'E to 89° 53'E. This strategic location of Alipurduar district is quite important so far as the defence, development and economy of the region are concerned. The long international border with the neighbouring country of Bhutan has a shared 105 km length in the north. Buxa in Kalchini block of the district acts as corridor for international trade between India and Bhutan. Since time immemorial, wool, ivory, wax, silk cloth, and piece-goods have been imported from Bhutan.

Table 1 List of Weekly markets

Sl. No.	Market Name	Block name	Dominated tribes
1	Dakshin Latabari	Kalchini	Asur, Bhumij, Bhutia, Chik
2	Santalabari	Kalchini	Baraik, Dukpa, Gond,
3	Atiabari	Kalchini	Hazong, Lepcha, Oraon,
4	Pipeline	Kalchini	Mahali, Mech, Munda,
5	Nimti	Kalchini	Rabha, Rava, Santal,
6	Subhashini	Kalchini	Tamang
7	Radharani	Kalchini	
8	Mechpara	Kalchini	
9	Garopara	Kalchini	
10	Bhatpara-B	Kalchini	
11	Achhapara/Bhatpara-A	Kalchini	
12	Chuapara	Kalchini	
13	Hamiltonganj	Kalchini	
14	Bishbagan	Kalchini	
15	Bharnobari	Kalchini	
16	Hasimara	Kalchini	
17	Mathura	Kalchini	
18	Raimatang	Kalchini	
19	Jamtala	Madarihat	Bhutia, Chik baraik, Gond,
20	Totopara	Madarihat	Kheria, Lohora, Mech, Mal
21	Lankapara	Madarihat	paharia, Munda, Oraon,
22	Sishubari	Madarihat	Rava, Santal, Toto,
23	Pagli Bhutan	Madarihat	Tamang
24	Tulsipara	Madarihat	
25	MLA	Madarihat	
26	Ramjhora	Madarihat	
27	Birpara	Madarihat	
28	Madarihat	Madarihat	
29	Ethelbari	Madarihat	
30	Damanpur	Alipurduar-II	Mech, Asur, Munda, Santal, Oraon, Chik
31	Panbari	Alipurduar-II	Baraik, Kharia, Munda and Bhutia
32	Kartika	Kumargram	Santal, Mech, Oraon,
33	Loknathpur	Kumargram	Munda, Kheria and Rabha
34	Raidak	Kumargram	

Source: Block Development office (B.D.O.) and Field visit, 2022

Database and methodology: The first step of the research methodology was to define the requirements of the data that the study was required. As per the preliminary plan, most of

the Tribal weekly market related data are available from the Cultural research institute, Census of India, Books, Journals, Block Development office, Sub-divisional office, and various other institutions. For the present study Purposive sampling method has been applied to select the tribal weekly market. For that, the weekly markets were selected on the basis of the number of tribal people who engaged themselves as buyers or sellers. The next step has been to meet people (who are associated with the market) to find out their views. These were Panchayet Pradhan, Market committee, Mahaldar etc. who provided a general view of the trends. Further, to strengthen the understanding, the next step has been followed to meet various types of sellers and buyers who were provided an insight into the topics of discussions and their views on weekly market, business, tribal involvement etc. and how it impacted their thoughts and actions. In this case the methodology has been followed by questionnaire-base surveys among the Buyers as well as sellers of the selected Weekly market. A lot of emphasis has been laid on how their aims, goals and dreams have been changing over the years due to the changing world. Who of them saw this as an opportunity and who of them saw this as a killer coming their way and how did these thoughts impact their lives?

Both quantitative as well as qualitative research will be undertaken in the study. Efforts will primarily be done to understand reasons that govern human behavior and not just the behavior. Questions shall be broad based to learn more about the topic of discussion and will further focus to greater details to narrow down on a theme. A systematic empirical investigation of numbers will be done at different places to gather data that will be used for statistical analysis. After getting the entire information, it should be analysed and tested for its significance by Chi-square and Pearson's product moment correlation. Sampling & Derivative Research will also play an important role in the process of establishing relationships between the variables.

Results and Discussion

1.1 Present status of the weekly markets

In tribal dominated rural areas of Alipurduar district, weekly markets are important economic functions throughout the week and this is the backbone of the rural economy. Total number of 34 weekly markets are developed in the district but few of them are studied to know the status of weekly markets and associated functions through which local peoples are benefited.

1.1.1 Subhashini Haat

District: Alipurduar
Kalchini

Block:

: General Information:

Address: Vill. Subhaini TG; Gram panchayat: Malangi

Market Area: 8 Bigha
wholesale

Market type: Retail &

Market pattern: linear & compact

Market day: Thursday **Market frequency:** Weekly **Market time:** 3 pm -8 pm

Nature of market: Perfect competition **Nature of market place:** Surrounded by village

Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe

Tribe: Santal, Mahali, Oraon, Munda, Rabha

Nature of Shop: temporary
Essential

Nature of product:

_____ : **Administration:** _____

Ownership: Block office
group

Market managed by: Self-help group

_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	Rajabhatkhawa
Bus stop:	Kalchini
Weekly market:	Pipe line, Nimti, Dipo
Metalled road:	Kalchini
Un-metalled road:	Village road
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode:	Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, pick up van
Dispatched mode:	Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, pick up van

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance: **Tribe-** 30 **Non tribe-** 30

Retailer: 60

Wholesaler: No

Shop details (in number): **Pucca-** 25 **Kacha-** 5 **Open:** 30

Crowd: 400 (approx)
20000/- **Average transaction (Rupees):**

_____ : **Facilities and Services:** _____

Drinking water:	No	Toilet:
No		
Sweeping cleaning:	Yes	Electricity:
Yes		
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:
No		
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:
No		
Water through:	No	

_____ : **Market charges:** _____

Category: Temporary Shop **Rate (Rs.)** 5/- **Paid by:** shopper

1.1.2 Sishubari Haat

District: Alipurduar **Block:** Madarihat

_____ : **General Information:** _____

Address: Vill. Sishubari; Gram panchayat: Rangali Bazar

Market Area: 8 Bigha

Retail

Market pattern: linear & Compact

Market day: Thursday, Monday (Small), Daily market

Weekly

Market time: 7 am -6 pm

Nature of market: Perfect competition

Nature of market place: Surrounded by

village

Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe **Tribe:** Oraon, Mech, Munda, kharia

Nature of Shop: temporary & Permanent

Nature of product: Essential &

Luxury

_____ : **Administration:** _____

Ownership: Jilla Parisad (Alipurduar)

Tender

Market managed by:

_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	Dalgaon (18km)
Bus stop:	Lankapara
Weekly market:	Pagli-Bhutan, Tulsipara, Ramjhora,
Jamtala	
Metalled road:	Madarihat-Lankapara
Un-metalled road:	Na
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode:	Bike, by walk, cycle,
Bus	
Dispatched mode:	Bike, by walk, cycle,
Bus	

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance: Tribe- 14 **Non tribe-**
90

Retailer: 104

Wholesaler: No

Shop details (in number): Pucca- 14
Crowd: 500-600 (approx)
 250000/-

Kacha- 20
Average transaction (Rupees):
Open: 80

: Facilities and Services:		
Drinking water:	Yea	Toilet:
	Unused	
Sweeping cleaning:	Yes	Electricity:
	No	
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:
		No
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:
		No
Water through:	Yes	Market Shade: Yes
(5)		

: Market charges:		
Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by:		
Vegetable Shop	10/-	
shopper		
Large Shop (based on type, transaction etc.)	20/-	
shopper		

1.1.3 Santalabari Haat

District: Alipurduar
 Kalchini **Block:**

: General Information:		
Address: Vill. Santalabari; Gram panchayat: Rajabhatkhawa		
Market Area: 5 Bigha	Market type: Retail	Market pattern:
Compact		
Market day: Tuesday	Market frequency: Weekly	Market time: 7 am -12 am
Nature of market: Perfect competition	Nature of market place: Surrounded by village	
Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe		
Tribe: Bhutia, Tamang, Lepcha, Munda, Oraon, Dukpa,		
Nature of Shop: temporary	Nature of product:	
Essential		

: Administration:	
Ownership: market committee	Market managed by: Market committee

: Communication and transportation:	
Nearest	Name

Railway station:	Rajabhatkhawa
Bus stop:	No
Weekly market:	No
Metalled road:	Rajabhatkhawa-
Bauxafort	
Un-metalled road:	No
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode:	Auto, bike, by walk,
Lorry	
Dispatched mode:	Auto, bike, by walk,
Lorry	

: Market functionaries: :

Seller attendance:	Tribe- 20	Non tribe-
120		
Retailer:	140	
Wholesaler:	2	
Shop details (in number):	Pucca- 28	Kacha- 52
Crowd:	800 (approx)	Open: 60
100000/-		Average transaction (Rupees):

: Facilities and Services: :

Drinking water:	No	Toilet:
Yes		
Sweeping cleaning:	Yes	Electricity:
No		
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:
No		
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:
		No
Water through:	No	

: Market charges: :

Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by:		
Temporary Shop	5/-	
shopper		

1.1.4 Nimti Haat

District: Alipurduar	Block:
Kalchini	

: General Information: :

Address: Vill. Nimti; Gram panchayat: Latabari	Market type: Retail	Market pattern:
Market Area: 6 Bigha		
Compact		

Market day: Wednesday **Market frequency:** Weekly **Market time:** 3 pm - 8 pm

Nature of market: Perfect competition **Nature of market place:** Surrounded by village

Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe

Tribe: Munda, Oraon, Kharia, Lohora, Rabha, Asur, Chik Baraik, Mech

Nature of Shop: temporary

Nature of product:

Essential

_____ : **Administration:** _____

Ownership: Kalchini Block office committee

Market managed by: Market committee

_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	No
Bus stop:	Nimti
Weekly market: Patkapara	Nimti Domohani,
Metalled road:	Kalchini-
Un-metalled road:	No
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode: bus	Auto, bike, by walk, Lorry, pickup van,
Dispatched mode: bus	Auto, bike, by walk, Lorry, pickup van,

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance: Tribe- 50 **Non tribe -**
202

Buyer attendance: Tribe- 90% **Non-tribe-**
10%

Retailer: 252

Wholesaler: 12

Shop details (in number): Pucca- 54 **Kacha-** 90 **Open:**
108

Crowd: 800-1000 (approx) **Average transaction (Rupees):** 200000/- to
300000/-

_____ : **Facilities and Services:** _____

Drinking water: Yes	No	Toilet:
Sweeping cleaning: rupees)	YES (5 rupees)	Electricity: Yes (10
Shed of animal: No	No	Godown:

Loading Platform: No**Parking:**
No**Water through:** No_____ : **Market charges:** _____

Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by: Temporary Shop shopper	5/-	

1.1.5 Pagli-Bhutan Haat**District:** Alipurduar
Madarihath**Block:**_____ : **General Information:** _____**Address:** Vill. Lankapara Khans basti; Gram panchayat: Lankapara**Market Area:** 1.5 Bigha **Market type:** Retail & wholesale **Market pattern:**
Compact**Market day:** Friday **Market frequency:** Weekly **Market time:** 8 am - 6
pm**Nature of market:** Perfect competition **Nature of market place:** Surrounded by
village**Surrounded by the communities:** Tribe & non tribe**Tribe:** Bhutia, Mech, Tamang**Nature of Shop:** temporary
Essential**Nature of product:**_____ : **Administration:** _____**Ownership:** Villagers
Committee**Market managed by:** Haat_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	Dalgaon (19km)
Bus stop:	Lankapara (3km)
Weekly market: (6km)	Lankapara (3km), Ramjhora
Metalled road:	Madarihath-Lankapara
Un-metalled road:	Village road
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode: van	Bike, by walk, Pickup
Dispatched mode: van	Bike, by walk, Pickup

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance: Tribe- 10 Non tribe- 40
Buyer attendance: Tribe- 100% Non-tribe- 50
Retailer: 50
Wholesaler: 1
Shop details (in number): Pucca- 50 Kacha- 50 Open:
Crowd: 200-300 (approx) Average transaction (Rupees):
 100000/-

Facilities and Services:

Drinking water:	Yes (Panchayat)	Toilet:
	No	
Sweeping cleaning:	No	Electricity:
	No	
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:
	No	
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:
	No	
Water through:	No	Market Shade:
	No	

Market charges:

Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by:		
Small shop	10/-	
shopper		
Vegetable Shop	20/-	
shopper		
Garments shop	20/-	
shopper		
Meat/Fish	50/-	
shopper		

1.1.6 Atiabari Haat

District: Alipurduar **Block:**
 Kalchini

General Information:

Address: Vill. Atiabari; Gram panchayat: Garopara
Market Area: 10 Bigha **Market type:** Retail **Market pattern:** Compact & linear
Market day: Tuesday **Market frequency:** Weekly **Market time:** 3 pm -7 pm

Nature of market: Perfect competition **Nature of market place:** Surrounded by village

Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe

Tribe: Oraon, Munda, Mech, kharia, Lohora, Mahali, Dukpa, Rabha, Bhumij, Nagesia, santal, Bhutia, Mech

Nature of Shop: temporary
Essential

Nature of product:

_____ : **Administration:** _____

Ownership: Block office
owner

Market managed by: Tea garden

_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest Railway station:		Name Rajabhatkhawa
Bus stop:		Atiabari
Weekly market:	Hamilton (10km), Nimti, Damanpur, Rajabhatkhawa, Chuapara	
Metalled road:		Kalchini-
Un-metalled road:		No
Ferry Ghat:		No
Arrival mode:		Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, pick up van
Dispatched mode:		Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, pick up van

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance: **Tribe-** 50 **Non tribe-**
200

Buyer attendance: **Tribe-** **Non tribe-**
Retailer: 60

Wholesaler: No

Shop details (in number): **Pucca-** **Kacha-** **Open:**
Crowd: 1200 (approx) **Average transaction (Rupees):** 4-5
lakhs

_____ : **Facilities and Services:** _____

Drinking water:	No	Toilet:	
Yes			
Sweeping cleaning:	Yes	Electricity:	
No			
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:	No
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:	No
Water through:	No		

_____ : **Market charges:** _____

Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by:		
Small Shop	10/-	
shopper		
Meat shop	20/-	
shopper		

1.1.7 Lankapara Haat**District:** Alipurduar**Block:**

Madarihat

: General Information:**Address:** Vill. Madarihat; Gram panchayat: Lankapara**Market Area:** 4 Bigha **Market type:** Retail **Market pattern:** linear & Compact**Market day:** Wednesday **Market frequency:** Weekly **Market time:** 8 am -6 pm**Nature of market:** Perfect competition **Nature of market place:** Surrounded by village**Surrounded by the communities:** Tribe & non tribe**Tribe:** Oraon, Mech, Munda, kharia**Nature of Shop:** temporary & Permanent**Nature of product:**

Essential

: Administration:**Ownership:** Block Office**Market managed by:**

Tender

: Communication and transportation:

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	Dalgaon (18km)
Bus stop:	Lankapara
Weekly market:	Pagli-Bhutan, Tulsipara, Ramjhora,
Jamtala	
Metalled road:	Madarihat-Lankapara
Un-metalled road:	Na
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode:	Bike, by walk, cycle,
Bus	
Dispatched mode:	Bike, by walk, cycle,
Bus	

: Market functionaries:

Seller attendance:	Tribe- 14	Non tribe-
90		
Buyer attendance:	Tribe- 95%	Non-tribe-
5%		

Retailer: 104**Wholesaler:****Shop details (in number):** Pucca-**Crowd:** 500-600 (approx)

250000/-

Kacha-**Average transaction (Rupees):****Open:****Facilities and Services:****Drinking water:** Yea

Unused

Sweeping cleaning: Yes

No

Shed of animal: No

No

Loading Platform: No

No

Water through: Yes

(5)

Toilet:**Electricity:****Godown:****Parking:****Market Shade:** Yes**Market charges:****Category:****Rate (Rs.)****Paid****by:**

Vegetable Shop 10/-

shopper

Large Shop (based on type, transaction etc.) 20/-

shopper

1.1.8 Pipeline Haat**District:** Alipurduar

Kalchini

Block:**General Information:****Address:** Vill. Uttar Latabari; Gram panchayat: Latabari**Market Area:** 20 Katha**Market type:** Retail**Market pattern:**

Compact

Market day: Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday

Weekly

Market frequency:**Market time:** 3 pm -6 pm**Nature of market:** Perfect competition**Nature of market place:** Surrounded by

village

Surrounded by the communities: Tribe & non tribe**Tribe:** Santal, Sherpa, Oraon, Mech, Munda, Bhutia**Nature of Shop:** temporary**Nature of product:**

Essential

Administration:

Ownership: Land owner
owner

Market managed by: land

_____ : **Communication and transportation:** _____

Nearest	Name
Railway station:	Rajabhatkhawa
Bus stop:	Kalchini
Weekly market:	Latabari, Nimti, Dipo
Metalled road:	Kalchini-
Rajabhatkhawa	
Un-metalled road:	Village road
Ferry Ghat:	No
Arrival mode:	Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, cycle
Dispatched mode:	Toto, Auto, bike, by walk, cycle

_____ : **Market functionaries:** _____

Seller attendance:	Tribe- 30	Non tribe-
30		
Buyer attendance:	Tribe- 40%	Non-tribe-
60%		
Retailer: 60		
Wholesaler: No		
Shop details (in number): Pucca- 4	Kacha- 9	Open: 47
Crowd: 300-400 (approx)	Average transaction (Rupees):	
20000/-		

_____ : **Facilities and Services:** _____

Drinking water:	No	Toilet:
No		
Sweeping cleaning:	No	Electricity:
No		
Shed of animal:	No	Godown:
No		
Loading Platform:	No	Parking:
No		
Water through:	No	

_____ : **Market charges:** _____

Category:	Rate (Rs.)	Paid
by:		
Temporary Shop		5/-
shopper		

1.1.9 Hasimara haat

Hasimara haat is a weekly market which is situated at the new Hasimara of Santali GP under Kalchini block in Alipurduar district. This haat is comparatively a large haat as well as well-known haat in this block. This place is 3 km away from the old Hasimara and 13 km away from the Kalchini block office. This haat is just beside the main road (New Hasimara to Alipurduar road). This is under the control of the block office and supervision power comes through the tendering process. It is not only a weekly market but also a very small daily market. But in this locality, old Hasimara is a good daily market rather maximum villagers have to preferred this weekly market.

In this market, there have so many types of shop i.e. vegetable, grocery, meat (chicken, mutton and pork), fish, dry fish, garments, foot wear, ready to eat, snacks, fruits, plants, tailor, broom, basket, pan stall, rope, fish trap, photo of God, tobacco and so on. In this market, there were approx 350 shops out of which maximum are vegetable shopper and garments shopper but tribal involvement is comparatively small in this haat. These (vegetable) are not totally own cultivated but they have to be brought from villagers also. In this case, both retail and wholesale mode of business have been seen in this market.

1.1.10 Sombarer Haat

Latabari is a village and gram panchayat also. This is a large GP of Kalchini block. Latabari haat has also been known as Sombarer haat. This is a comparatively small haat on the basis of aerial extension (10 katha approx.). This haat located at Latabari under Latabari GP of Kalchini block in Alipurduar district. At present SHG has been played a crucial role in this market as a controller. This haat is mainly held on every Monday after 3:00 pm and continues upto day light. Basically this is a tribal haat because maximum sellers and buyers are tribal people. They are mainly belongs to Oraon, Santal, Mech, Rabha, Munda, and Limbu community also. This haat surrounded by village (basically tribal village).

In this market various kinds of shops are present like- vegetables, grocery, snacks, Mahua, stationary and so on. Vegetable shoppers not only sold their own cultivated products side by side they also sold collected vegetables from other markets (Falakata wholesale market and Hamilton weekly market). Customers of this market are maximum local people. Local people are not only dependent on this haat, they have fulfilled basic needs from neighbouring haat such as Pipeline haat (Tuesday), Hamilton haat and Kalchini daily market also.

The main communication languages of this haat periphery have been Bengali, Nepali, Hindi and Sadri etc. Road transport is not too good in this area (unmetalled road). There were various transport modes such as bi-cycle, bike, toto, bus and walking also.

Sellers of this haat have been paid only 5 rupees on a weekly basis. And they are enjoying only sitting facilities and few of them are enjoying shading facility. Otherwise they are deprived from others facility like- drinking Water, and toilet etc.

This is a large haat in this block but the glorious status of this haat continuous downward due to the emergence of several weekly or bi-weekly and weak conditions of the village road.

Problems

- a) Road problem
- b) Weak business condition
- c) Lack of proper shade
- d) Lighting facility etc.

Recommendation

- i. In the rainy season the market condition of this haat goes downward. So shade for individual should be positive action
- ii. Water and toilet facility should be very healthful
- iii. Road construction is another issue regarding to development of haat

1.1.11 Bishbagan Haat

This is a weekly market and also a daily market. It has been seen that it is comparatively medium size haat. Linear pattern of this market has been seen. Among the tribe only Oraon and Mahali are found in this market. They don't have any controlling power. Therefore any kinds of government didn't available there. The shops arrangement of this haat is linear. There have various kinds of shops like- vegetable, grocery, stationary, foot wear, garments, ready to eat food, bag, rope, hand-made product, meat (chicken, mutton and pork), broom (modern and traditional) and so on. Rope, made by jute, is buying in this market used by tea garden labour or forest collectors. One interesting thing that tribal people is selling wood stick (hand-made products) which are made by forest wood. This is large at the 'Talab' day and other day (specific day in a week basically Friday) few sellers are present in this market. Basically the maximum transaction has been seen in a talab day because they are interested in buying various items. Reason behind that at this particular day they got a huge amount so they don't have any kind of problem with purchased basic needs.

Problems

- a) Road congested problem due to the roadside settlement
- b) There have no controlling committee
- c) Shade, water and toilet is another problematic issue in this haat

Recommendation

- i. Particular place is needed
- ii. Formation of monitoring committee of this haat. It is very urgent for the development of this haat
- iii. At rainy season, sellers have faced problem. Therefore shade is needed

1.2 Socio-economic background of households

To study the status of weekly markets and socio-economic lifestyle of the tribal population, a total 14 number of haats were studied across the Alipurduar district. In Alipurduar district all the blocks have been covered for the present study about weekly markets. Weekly market is well known and famine also occurs in this district. Total number of informants is 290. Kalchini block of Alipurduar district consists 41.31% (out of total informant) of tribal

those who are associated with the weekly market. It is seen that about 40.30% of tribal people have been associated with weekly market as a buyer and seller. Noteworthy, tribal women were more active in weekly markets (Table 2) which indicates women are the pillar of the tribal family. Several type of community were observed like Asur, Baraik, Bhumij, Bhutia, Boro, Chikbarai, Dukpa, Ekka, Hajong, Khariya, Lama, Lohora, Mahali, Mech, Munda, Oraon, Santal, Rava, Tamang, Thapa, and Toto (Table 3) but in Alipurduar district Oraon is the dominant tribal community. Generally Alipurduar is a tea garden area. Therefore lots of weekly markets are actually organized within the tea estate basically for the Tea garden workers. Almost every tea estate has their own weekly market and available other areas also. Till now most of the tribal people are directly involved in T.G area and hilly areas also. Apart from this 9.98% of tribal informants consist of Alipurduar-II block, Alipurduar-I, Kumargram and Falakata shows 3.05%, 3.97% and 1.38% of tribal people respectively. It is clear from the data that the weekly market is the main source of essential products of the family and important field of business.

In this district tribal people, those who are associated with the weekly market, have played four types of roles such as buyer, seller, seller cum buyer and tailor. Noteworthy, most of the tribal informants are buyer (50 %). Among them, two blocks (Kalchini and Madarihat) of Alipurduar district have maximum number of buyers i.e. 20% and 25%. It is noticeable to point out that one of the most important reasons behind this concentration is they are mainly tea garden workers and a weekly market actually organized on 'Talab' day's for them. Therefore they are not actually involved as a seller. Although, the weekly market is an important business field and side by side main source of daily essentials. Therefore 30% of tribal sellers are also a buyer in a particular weekly market. Because the weekly market is a more suitable place due to time consumption. It is also important to note that few tribal peoples are associated in the weekly market as a tailor. This type of occupation is seen in Alipurduar-I and Madarihat block.

Table 2 Gender wise work participation of tribals in the Weekly markets

Sl. No.	Haat name	Female	%	Male	%	Grand total
1	Atiabari	15	8.62	13	11.21	28
2	Birpara	6	3.45	1	0.86	7
3	Ethelbari haat	20	11.49	14	12.07	34
4	Hamiltonganj	39	22.41	19	16.38	58
5	Jamtala	22	12.64	10	8.62	32
6	Madarihat	5	2.87	5	4.31	10
7	Nimti	10	5.75	13	11.21	23
8	Pagli Bhutan	5	2.87	8	6.90	13
9	Pipeline	10	5.75	4	3.45	14
10	Ramjhora	4	2.30	1	0.86	5
11	Santalabari	1	0.57	4	3.45	5
12	Sishubari	20	11.49	12	10.34	32

13	Subhashini	10	5.75	7	6.03	17
14	Totopara	7	4.02	5	4.31	12
	Grand total	174	60.00	116	40.00	290

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 3 Distribution of the community specific seller in weekly markets

Sl. No.	Community	Number of informant	Percentage
1	Asur	1	0.34
2	Baraik	2	0.69
3	Bhumij	2	0.69
4	Bhutia	3	1.03
5	Boro	7	2.41
6	Chikbarai	1	0.34
7	Dukpa	1	0.34
8	Ekka	1	0.34
9	Hajong	2	0.69
10	Khariya	17	5.86
11	Lama	2	0.69
12	Lohora	4	1.38
13	Mahali	4	1.38
14	Mech	32	11.03
15	Munda	23	7.93
16	Oraon	166	57.24
17	Rava	1	0.34
18	Santal	8	2.76
19	Tamang	4	1.38
20	Thapa	2	0.69
21	Toto	7	2.41
	Total	290	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4 Distribution of income level from a weekly markets

Sl. No.	Income class (Rs.)	Informants	Percentage
1	< 200	52	17.93
2	200-300	1	0.34
3	200-400	86	29.66
4	400-600	50	17.24
5	600-800	29	10.00
6	800-1000	24	8.28
7	>1000	48	16.55

Total

290

100.00

Source: Field survey, 2022

Business is not stagnant. This is changing over time on the basis of the capacity of businessmen. There may be several types like – change in business pattern which is seen in Alipurduar-II, Kalchini and Madarihat block with minimum percentage. Vegetable sellers always change their business on the basis of production because crops or vegetables are a seasonal product. On the other hand, few sellers are rational sellers because they always run their business on the basis of market demands (depending on availability). It is noticeable that the business of handicraft items (own made) may increase or decrease which totally depends on the capacity of the producer. This type of business has been seen in the weekly market of Alipurduar-II block. In general sense, maximum sellers (45%) have been running their business in a profitable way therefore investment has been increased. In this case Kalchini block also played a positive role (20.57%). It is noteworthy that 24.64% of tribal sellers have not changed their business because they are small sellers, new sellers and this is a profitable business also.



Figure 2 Income level of Informants (Sellers)

In Alipurduar district, Sellers have been used to earn money for various purposes i.e. only business development, family purpose, cultivation and both family purpose and business development simultaneously. Most of the tribal sellers take this business as a main occupation therefore they use the earn money for family purpose side by side business purpose also (53.63%). Majority is seen in Kalchini block (26.65%) and Madarihat block (14.67%). Only family purposes are used by 44.35% of tribal sellers those who are associated with vegetable, country liquor, forest product, handicraft, tailor, and fish shops etc. But only few sellers of Alipurduar-II, Kalchini, Kumargram and Madarihat blocks have to used earn money only for business purpose. It is interesting to note that the tribal sellers

of Alipurduar-II block are being used to earn money for family purposes side by side cultivation because they are farmers.

Weekly market is a good business field therefore both local and outsider sellers have been come to the weekly market for business purpose. In the case of the weekly market most of the sellers are local. The above table depicts 71.67% of tribal sellers are local; they actually came from surrounding villages (covered less than 8km distance). It is seen that among the above mentioned blocks Kalchini block has maximum local sellers (29.68%). Local sellers also played an important role in Madarihat block (17.88%) and Alipurduar-II (10.20%) block also.

Weekly markets have been a played very important role in rural areas. From this weekly market generally particular villagers and surrounding villagers have been fulfilling their daily needs. This is the large field of source of necessary items. Therefore large numbers of people have to come to the weekly market on a regular basis. On the other hand only 3.59% of tribal shoppers have not been considered as a regular. They are mainly used in particular haat only for very necessary cases. It may be interesting to note that they mainly avail other nearby haat or daily markets. Particular haat in some cases may be famous for its own unique characteristic. So, the livestock market is not necessary on a daily basis to all customers. Among the regular buyers few of them are sellers also in this particular haat.

1.3 Economic empowerment of tribals through the micro-economic functions

Market is a backbone of the economy in the rural tribal areas of Alipurduar district. Tribal peoples are engaging themselves as buyers as well as sellers of local products like vegetable, grocery, ready to eat food, bag, rope, hand-made product, meat (pork), broom, and local drink Handia etc. Noteworthy, women participation rate is comparatively high in the tribal markets. Therefore, it can be said that women are an active agent for mobility of the tribal family. On the basis of conversations with buyers, satisfactory income level was the main cause of continuous involvement in this business. Generally tea garden workers are belong in the poor economic class but this kind of small scale business (low investment business) and held at out time of the main occupation (Tea Garden work) therefore simultaneously two types of work they have been performed. As a result they have followed a better lifestyle from a social, economic and cultural point of view. It can be said weekly markets are an influencing factor in their socio-economic life and such an economic field not only an income generating sector rather field of acculturation, entertainment and refreshment also. So, it has immense value in tribal development as well as regional development. From date back, women are the decision makers in the tribal family and presently their engagement in weekly markets is remarkable from a women empowering point of view. So, this is also a field of women empowerment through active participation in the business sector.

Conclusion: At the end of the healthy discussion it is clearly observed that weekly haats have closely been associated with the tribe as well as the rural economy. It is noteworthy that they are totally dependent on this type of market (district of north Bengal). But it is a

little bit different from the market of south Bengal. All products of this haat are very essential. Basically luxurious or premium luxurious products are not available in this market because they (Tribe) all belong to economically backward classes. It is interesting that their own products i.e., cultivated (vegetable) or manufactured (handicraft) items have been supplied to the local market by them. This periodic haat is valuable with respect to social aspect as well as economic and cultural aspect also. This field is a main source of daily need to the local villagers. Through this procedure cultural interaction and ultimately exchange of thought/ideas have been possible from one person to another, one community to another community and one place to another place also. No doubt, urbanization processes are continuously being spread into the remote areas and therefore the glamour of the haat is gradually decreasing over time. But it is well known, this is the heart of the rural economy therefore proper maintenance should be required to preserve old glamour with the light of new look.



Photo 1 Nimti Haat



Photo 2 Jamtala Haat



Photo 3 Pagli-Bhutan Haat



Photo 4 Sishubari Haat



Photo 5 Totopara Haat

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