

MARKETING OF VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE BY TRADERS IN MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT, NAGALAND, INDIA

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Abstract: Nagaland is predominantly an agricultural economy with healthy signs of transformation in agriculture and allied activities. Agriculture in Nagaland has continued to be the source of livelihood to majority of the population. Agriculture in Nagaland can be balanced and made efficient through proper and better management practices. Moreover, the opportunities provided by agricultural marketing should be tapped effectively by the marketers. The present study highlights on the scenario of agricultural marketing prevailing in Mokokchung town with special importance given to indigenous agricultural products selling in daily and weekly markets, its challenges and scope. The scope of agricultural marketing in Nagaland is still at the infant stages of growth and development since most of the agricultural commodities and essentials are imported from the neighboring states and the area of export of local indigenous products to the other States is yet to be materialized. With no heavy tax levied, the marketing system should be blooming but it is in disarray and remains dysfunctional.

Keywords: Agriculture marketing, Indigenous products, Daily and Weekly bazaar, Local Traders, Sellers and Farmers

Classification Code: E24; E31; M31; P22; P25; Q21.

1. INTRODUCTION

Agricultural marketing includes all those activities which are mostly related to procurement, grading, storing, transporting and selling of agriculture produce. Krishnamacharyulu and Ramakrishnan, (2011) defined agricultural marketing as a “process that starts with a decision to produce saleable farm products that also includes pre and post-harvest operations, assembling, grading, storage, transportation and distribution”. Agricultural

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marketing system transmits the crucial price signal and in order to sustain the growth of the non-agricultural sector, resources have to be extracted from the agricultural sector-physical resources to guarantee supplies of food and raw materials for the agro-industry and financial resources for investment in nonfarm economy as well as for re-investment in agriculture. Agricultural marketing is an efficient way by which the farmers can dispose their surplus produce at a fair and reasonable price. Improvement in the conditions of the farmers and their agriculture depends to a large extent on the elaborate arrangements of agricultural marketing (P.K. Dhar 1993) ¹.

Agricultural marketing is a very important means for the farmers as well as traders to meet their ends and also increasing their productivity. A proper agricultural marketing system means availability of correct marketing information, storage, grading, price, planning and a proper marketing infrastructure and, also better transportation facilities without the support of middlemen. In the rural areas of Nagaland there is hardly any proper agriculture marketing facilities, let alone a better marketing infrastructure to build confidence among the farmers and sellers to sell their produce. In order to develop the agriculture sector there has to be a proper marketing structure that includes better infrastructure like roads and better markets to improve the feasibility of selling the local agricultural products. Therefore, the government needs to focus and utilize their available resources to upgrade the marketing structure by setting up proper regulated markets and also by providing subsidies for better seeds, irrigation, market information and trainings to the farmers as well as traders for both to coexist in a better environment of economic surplus.

An efficient agriculture marketing system, thus, becomes imperative. It will enable easy accessibility to all the widely scattered farmers; help overcome the difficulties the farmers face in selling their produce because of the fixed location of farms. Another reason is the loss of bargaining power of the farmers due to relatively greater perishability of agricultural produce, added to this is the small size of the farms-which is a common malady of the agriculture sector in most of the under-developing countries. The cost of marketing per unit of a crop goes up and a good marketing system can help such farmers, in some ways, to sell their crops at lower costs (Soni and Sangeeta 2017). The problems of agricultural marketing can be solved by the establishment of regulated markets with marketing efficiency (Royal Commission on Agriculture 1928).

Rural periodic market/ haats is the first contact point for producer-sellers for en-cashing his agricultural produce and income. There are about 27,294 rural periodic markets in the country. The minimum necessary infrastructural facilities do not exist in these rural periodic markets

(Government of India 2009). Growers are deprived of a good price for his produce during the peak marketing season while the consumer needlessly pay a higher price during lean season (Ramkishan 2004)².

The need for an efficient marketing system in Nagaland is necessary in order to help sustain the economy and the layman involved in it. The agricultural marketing system in the State is traditional and highly archaic. APMC (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee) Act also called the Nagaland Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development & Regulation) Act 2005, provide for establishment, improvement, development and regulations of markets and marketing systems for agricultural produce in the State including processing and export. The agricultural markets present in Nagaland are the daily and weekly bazaars which are highly unregulated. These bazaars can be also called as "mandies" and it is the only place for the farmers to sell their surplus produce at a tangible rate. The income from selling their agricultural produce is marginal and not enough to sustain their livelihood. Government agencies like ATMA (Agriculture Technology Management Agency) involved in agricultural activities for sustainable development in the districts has rendered its services to help the farmers by organizing farming oriented activities like trainings, demonstrations, exposure tours, farm schools, exhibitions, farmer awards etc., in the field of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, veterinary, sericulture, animal husbandry, soil and land resources. In most of the villages the VDBs (Village Development Board) with the help of the State Government looks after the weekly bazaars held in the villages and most of the transportation facilities like buses and trucks are owned by them to help the farmers carry their produce to the bazaars and villagers in plying from one village to another.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Johnston and Mellor (1961) stated that, commercial demand for agricultural produce increases due to income and population growth, urbanization, and trade liberalization. Kahlon, *et al.* (1995) agricultural regulated markets have been playing a major role in the smooth distribution of food grains, oilseeds, fiber crops and fruits and vegetables to meet the supply and demand needs of the farmers, traders, processors and consumers of the State. Jairath, M. S. (2004) cited in his paper that, farmers on an average gets 8 to 10 per cent higher price and higher share in the consumer's rupee by selling their produce in the regulated markets compared to rural, village and unregulated wholesale markets. On the other hand, Jaffer *et al.* (2005) show that, lower the number of intermediaries higher is the market efficiency and vice versa. Sudha *et al.* (2005) also found that 'the producers share in consumer's rupee is higher where no middleman existed then where

middleman existed'. So marketing efficiency is more where there is no middle man existed.

Khatkar *et al.* (2005) advocated the need for government intervention to safeguard the farmers interest by introducing cooperative marketing and processing of agricultural products. Vadivelu & Kiran (2013) highlighted that, for an efficient marketing system, market information plays a vital role as it enables market decision and regulates and simplifies market mechanism. Dattet Sundharam (2016) explained that, the conditions in the mandis are such that, the farmer may have to wait for some time before he may be able to dispose off his produce. In the mandis the farmer make use of the service of dalal (broker) to sell his output to the arhatiya. The dalal is often in collusion with arhatiya and, therefore, the price which is settled is generally to the advantage of the arhatiya and not to the farmer. Lekhi & Joginder (2016) opined that, transportation plays an imperative role in making the market system efficient and useful, as it leads to cheap and easy means of transportation, encouraging the farmers to carry their produce to markets and create confidence among them and improve their bargaining power.

3. OBJECTIVES

To study the problems and prospects of local traders involved in marketing of agricultural produce in the weekly and daily bazaars in Mokokchung Town.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted from a primary data pertaining to the year 2019-20. Separate questionnaires were tabulated for the collection of data from the local traders and farmers in the daily markets and weekly markets. All together 40 respondents were interviewed. The data has been analyzed using appropriate statistical tools and technique, such as ratios, percentages and proportions.

5. COST ON PURCHASE OF VARIOUS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE FROM THE FARMERS AND RETAIL PRICE OF THE TRADERS IN THE MARKET

Cost refers to the total expenses incurred in purchasing the marketable commodities from farmers by the traders including its transportation cost and sometimes even the commission that is given to various agent that are involved in bringing the produce till the market. The local agricultural produce is still yet to be exposed to the markets outside the State, due to

inadequate facilities like storage, grading, packaging, transportation, weighing, pricing, marketing information, standardization, credit, and marketing regulation. The presence of regulated market in Nagaland is still a far cry. The prices of the agricultural commodities are fixed by the farmers at a deflated rate, but as always the middlemen and the other traders benefit the most by fixing the prices of the produce at will. The validity of the produce such as vegetables and fruits are short and easily spoilt. The involvement of the Government to regulate the prices remains anonymous. Marketing information is a very important element of marketing but the available information is not feasible or negligible for the farmers.

Table 1: Leafy Vegetables sold in the market in bunch (In ₹)

<i>Leafy Vegetables</i>	<i>Real Price</i>	<i>Moderated Price</i>	<i>Profit</i>
Yam	12	20	8
Mongmong Leaves	12	20	8
Naga Chives	12	20	8
Spinach	12	20	8
Burma Cilantro	12	20	8
Mustard Leaves	12	20	8
Other Local Leaves	12	20	8

Source: Field Survey 2019-20

Table 1 highlights the different types of leafy vegetables sold in the daily and weekly bazaars of Mokokchung by the local sellers. The vegetables are sold in per bunch since there are no proper weighing measures taken for these products. Most of the farmers (marginal & small) cannot come to the market to sell their produce directly so they sell their produce to the local traders who either come to the farm directly to purchase at a deflated price of ₹ 10 per bunch. The additional ₹ 2/- is the transportation cost incurred by the retailer in purchasing and selling the agricultural produce in the bazaar or the farmer will sell it by himself or through Dara Sale (wholesale). The moderated price is the price fixed by the local retailer with a 10% increase in the real price as their profit. The second and third column highlights the real price and moderated price and, the fourth column profit refers to the difference between real price and moderated price of the local sellers where.

All the leafy vegetables mentioned above has the same value for real price, consequently the value of the moderated price is same and the profit incurred by the local seller is ₹ 8/- for every leafy vegetable sold per bunch in the bazaar. Seasonal variation was neglected since the survey was done only during the end of the years thereby, neglecting other seasonal changes

which also determines the price of the produce. The production of the leafy vegetables mentioned above is more suitable for cold climatic conditions.

Table 2 illustrates the prices (both real & moderated price) per kg of various vegetables and other agricultural produce and the profit gain from the sale of the produce. Vegetables like colocassia, bitter gourd, Naga bitter brinjal, chili, brinjal, beans, gourd and pumpkin and indigenous produce such as Naga garlic, Naga ginger, Naga cucumber and Rajma beans all make the same profit of ₹ 17/-. Dry fish is the costliest commodity and also with the highest profit margin of ₹ 95/- as shown in the table, which is mostly imported from the neighboring district of Wokha and also from the State of Assam. Squash (aka chow chow) is the most common vegetable available in the all hilly places of Nagaland and since Mokokchung being a hilly place, squash is available in abundance. As a result, the demand for squash is low and, almost everyone cultivates it in their own home gardens.

Table 2: Vegetables sold in the Market per kg (In ₹)

<i>Vegetables</i>	<i>Real Price</i>	<i>Moderated Price</i>	<i>Profit</i>
Squash (Chow Chow)	32	40	8
Colocassia	42	60	18
Bitter Gourd	42	60	18
Naga Bitter Brinjal	42	60	18
Chili	42	60	18
Beans	42	60	18
Brinjal	42	60	18
Gourd	32	50	18
Pumpkin	32	50	18
Local Rice	52	70	18
Naga Garlic	83	100	17
Naga Ginger	83	100	17
Naga Cucumber	83	100	17
Rajma Beans	83	100	17
Sticky Rice	62	90	28
Dry Fish	405	500	95

Source: Field Survey 2019-20

* Real price = Price of the produce directly purchase from the farmers

* Moderated price = Price of the produce moderated by the seller after purchasing from the farmer

* Profit = (Real price – Moderated price)

The local indigenous products as shown in Table 3 are variety of ethnic delicacy and the prices vary from place to place depending upon the season but since seasonal factors were neglected the price shown above are the maximum prices of the products sold in the bazaars of Mokokchung town.

The above indigenous products are sold without the use of any metric scale or weights either, the local sellers sell in terms of plates for products like mushroom, silk worm, king chili. Indigenous Products like, mongmong seeds (local schezwan), dry bamboo shoot, anishe (fermented yam), axone (fermented soya beans), jaggery are sold in packets. Local orange, tapioca, yongchak (parkia species), are sold in terms of bunch. Bamboo vinegar, honey, local rice drink are sold in per bottle (750ml). The above analysis shows that, traders are making profit by trading on various indigenous agricultural produce but their profit depends on the type of produce they sell and also demand of particulars products by the consumers. In spite of all the hardships, like transport problems, lack of proper marketing system and exploitation the middlemen, the traders still make profit but they make maximum profit from bottled and packet products than vegetable and other items sold in the form of bunch, with an average profit ranging from $^1.8$ for bunch vegetables to even ₹ 155 in case of honey.

Table 3: Indigenous Products sold per Packet/Bottle (In ₹)

<i>Indigenous Products</i>	<i>Real Price</i>	<i>Moderated Price</i>	<i>Profit</i>
Mushroom	84	100	16
Silk Worm	84	100	16
King Chili	84	100	16
Mongmong Seeds	22	30	8
Dry Bamboo Shoots	153	200	47
Anishe	403	500	97
Axone	12	20	8
Jaggery	84	100	16
Local Orange	355	500	145
Tapioca	22	40	18
Yongchak	52	80	28
Honey	355	500	155
Bamboo Vinegar	32	50	18
Wet Bamboo Shoot	102	150	48
Local Rice Drink	12	20	8

Source: Field Survey 2019-20

* The agricultural produce that were sold in the weekly bazaars in Mokokchung, Chuchuyimpang and Ungma Village bazaars in Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, the local sellers had to pay a tax of ₹ 10/- to the Watsu Mungdang for those selling in Mokokchung bazaar and ₹ 10/- to the Yimden for those selling in the respective villages of Ungma & Chuchuyimpang.

* There were some Permanent local retailers who had their own shops in Kichu complex and Old Town Hall paid ₹ 3000/-per month as rent and ₹ 5000/- annually as tax to MMC (Mokokchung Municipal Council).

6. CONSTRAINTS FACED BY THE LOCAL RETAILERS

The constraints faced by farmers when it comes to marketing their produce are:

1. **Insufficient profit:** The profit from the sale of agricultural produce is insufficient to sustain their livelihood. As shown in the table, 83.33% of the respondents incurred insufficient profit.
2. **Price instability:** Due to the presence of unregulated market in the State, the prices of the agricultural produce keeps on fluctuating.
3. **Lack of adequate market information:** Farmers have no cognizance about the latest information about the market prices of various crops, changes in the demand for these crops, government policy etc., which affects the operational efficiency of the agricultural market.
4. **Lack of weighing facilities:** The methods of weighing that exist in the bazaars are still traditional and archaic. Local agricultural produce like vegetables and other produce, were found to have no adequate weighing apparatus so instead they sold in an impromptu manner by the use of cups, plates, packets etc.
5. **Lack of storage facilities:** Lack of access to proper storage facilities and the produce being stored in open, pots, pits, mud stores and most of the time fully exposed to dust, heat and rain further contaminate the produce. This problem further reduces the operational efficiency of the agricultural markets
6. **Lack of grading facilities:** Another important problem was the absence or lacking of grading and standardization facilities. Hence the price of the produce does not have direct relation with the quality of the produce and it ultimately deprives the farmers and the sellers of higher profit for their superior quality of the produce.
7. **Poor quality of the product:** Since the sellers or farmers had no notion about grading, the quality of the produce was judged upon their appearances, experience and taste of the produce, thereby resulting in poor quality of the product.
8. **Lack of management experience:** The respondents had formal education below the level of matriculation, so their managing experience was through sheer experience. They hardly maintain any written accounts or records of their income, sale, expenditure and other miscellaneous cost.
9. **Poor transportation facilities:** Poor transportation facilities, especially the ones linking the villages with markets. Thus the poor

transportation facilities impede the operational efficiency of the bazaars.

10. **Spoilage:** The respondents commented on the produce being spoiled easily and expressed their inability to do anything to prevent the delay deterioration process which thereby affects the price efficiency of the produce.
11. **Insufficient credit:** Institutional credits are hardly available and even if available they are reluctant to provide sufficient loans or credit to the farmers. As shown in the table, 70% of the respondents do not have to access to better credit facilities.
12. **Pest problem:** Pests, such as rats, maggots and other insects, destroys and contaminates the agricultural produce and further reducing the quality of the produce.
13. **Irregular demand:** Since agricultural produce are seasonal in nature, the problem for irregular demand of the agricultural products becomes a strain for the sellers.

Table 4: Constraints faced by local retailers

Sl. No.	Problems	Respondents in %
1.	Insufficient profit	83.33
2.	Price instability	80
3.	Lack of adequate market information	76.67
4.	Lack of weighing facilities	80
5.	Lack of storage facilities	86.67
6.	Lack of grading facilities	100
7.	Poor quality of the product	33.33
8.	Lack of management experience	73.33
9.	Poor transportation facilities	100
10.	Spoilage	86.67
11.	Maintenance problem	66.67
12.	Insufficient credit	70
13.	Pest problem	96.67
14.	Irregular demand	90

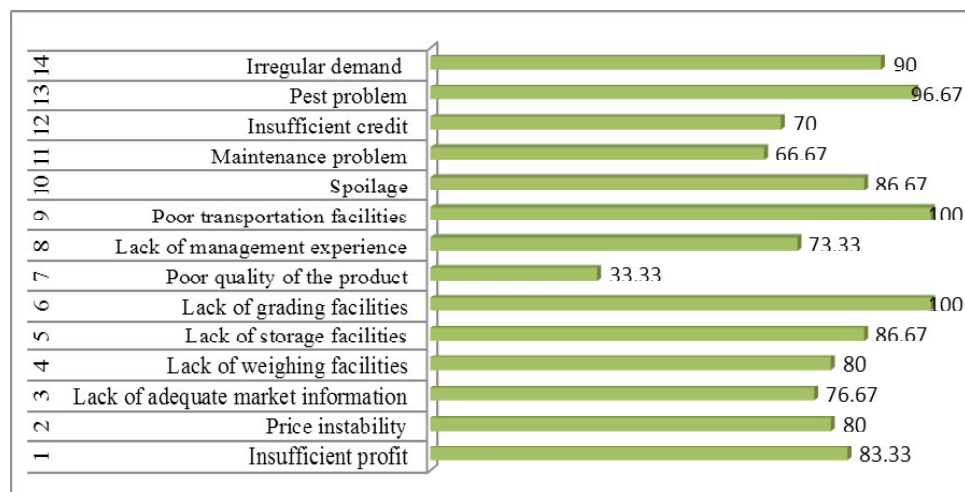
Source: field survey 2019-20

7. SUGGESTION TO IMPROVE MARKETING

To improve the present agriculture marketing system we need to improve certain areas:

1. **Good marketing infrastructure:** Need for a better marketing infrastructure since it is an important element of social overhead

Figure 1: Constraints faced by local retailers (In Percentage)



capital and a strong marketing infrastructure will be efficient in facilitating sales and widening the scope of the market.

2. **Aid from the Govt. and other agencies:** Agricultural marketing in Nagaland is a grey area since marketing activities especially in the agricultural sector is depressed. Government and concerned agencies needs to take initiative in providing extensive service to aid the poor farmers in all the corners of the State. Reliable policies and measures have to be implemented to make the farmers reach their full potential in production.
4. **More availability of Market credit:** In order to save the cash trapped farmers, adequate credit facilities should be made available at low rates in the rural areas. Moreover, integrated schemes of rural credit must to implement to aid the rural farming activities.
5. **Need for intensive training on marketing:** Majority of the sellers and the farmers has limited notion on functioning agricultural marketing and the little knowledge they have is through experience and instinctive observation. There is a need to let the farmers and sellers undergo various trainings on marketing strategy and planning.
6. **Effective market regulation:** The purpose of state regulation of agriculture markets is to protect farmers from exploitation by middlemen and also to ensure better prices of their produce, use of standard weights, market information, unauthorized dealings and malpractices etc. but the presence of regulated markets throughout

Nagaland is abysmal and invisible. The need for regulated markets especially in the rural markets/bazaars is very important for the rural farmers to sell their produce at a profitable rate.

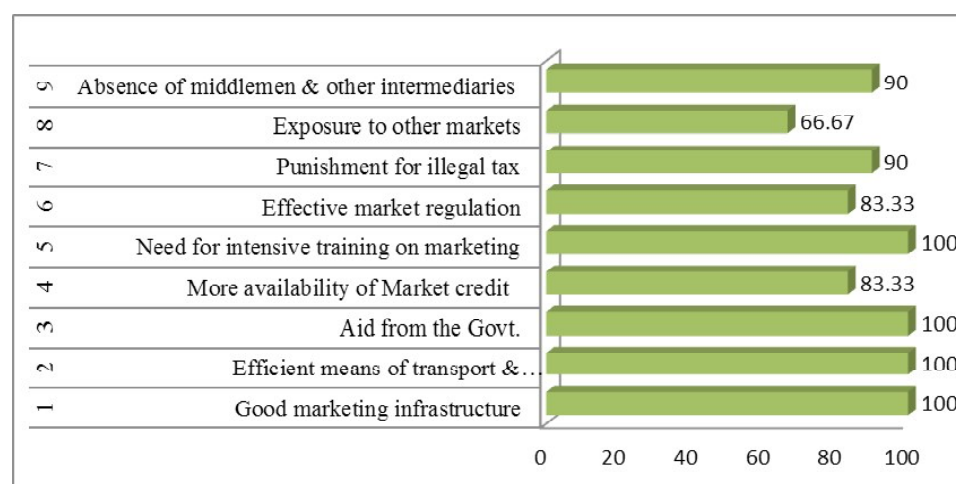
7. **Punishment for illegal tax:** Even though there is no GST (Goods & Services tax) for agricultural goods or other tax in the State, almost all the farmers and sellers operating in the bazaars pay taxes that are illegal to the law. Therefore, such practices needs to be checked.
8. **Exposure to other markets:** The economy of the State grows if its markets are exposed to other markets both inside and outside the State. The local indigenous agricultural produce found in the States are rare and purely organic by default, so the demand for the indigenous products will rise if exposed to other markets.

Table 5: Local retailer's suggestion

Sl. No.	Suggestions	Respondents in %
1.	Good marketing infrastructure	100
2.	Efficient means of transport & communication facilities	100
3.	Aid from the Govt.	100
4.	More availability of Market credit	83.33
5.	Need for intensive training on marketing	100
6.	Effective market regulation	83.33
7.	Punishment for illegal tax	90
8.	Exposure to other markets	66.67
9.	Absence of middlemen& other intermediaries	90

Source: field survey 2019-20

Figure 2: Suggestions for improvement (In Percentage)



8. PROSPECTS

Agriculture marketing in Nagaland is also evolving but at a very low pace. Mokokchung district is a commercial hub for marketing of agricultural produce since it is surrounded by the neighboring districts such as Longleng, Tuensang, Zunheboto and Wokha. The prospects of agricultural marketing in the district are bright and offer greater scope for agriculture.

1. The weekly bazaars in Mokokchung is a boon to the marginal and small farmers, since the market itself is on a weekly basis, it becomes easier for small and marginal farmers to travel to the bazaar and sell their produce directly without the involvement of middlemen and other intermediaries.
2. Majority of the villages has weekly bazaars and which are easily accessible. The farmers and sellers from other villages and nearby districts can come to the bazaars for trading activities, and can influence the diversity of agricultural produce in the markets.
3. Majority of the villagers have their own house gardens and farms, so there is surplus of vegetables to be sold by those villages who organizes weekly bazaars in their own respective villages.
4. The weekly and the daily bazaars in Mokokchung are the only markets where local indigenous products like king chili, Naga garlic & ginger, kholar, local leafy vegetables, axone, anishe, fermented bamboo shoot, and other local vegetables etc., are sold since production of indigenous products are very low and hard to avail due to seasonal and geographical features.
5. With the scope of agriculture widely expanding in the State, farmers are opting for the cultivation of vegetables and other allied agricultural farming. So, the growth of agriculture depends directly on an efficient agricultural marketing system.
6. If the State government provides maximum financial assistance to the marginal and small farmers, provide trainings on production, marketing, storage, processing, warehousing etc., and also provide better storage and transport facilities, then surely the scope of agricultural marketing in the State will expand exponentially.

9. FINDINGS

1. The weekly bazaars in Mokokchung town are a symbol of women empowerment since majority of the sellers were women folks ranging from 25-70 years. It mostly sells indigenous products like king chili, Naga garlic & ginger, kholar, local leafy vegetables, axone, anishe, dry

vegetables, fermented bamboo shoot, and other local products etc.

2. During peak and festive seasons local seller earns between ₹ 2000/- to ₹ 5000/- per day. The local sellers operating in the weekly bazaars pay a tax of ₹ 10/- and the permanent sellers in the daily bazaars of Mokokchung town pay a tax of ₹ 5000/- annually to MMC (Mokokchung Municipal Council).
3. The marketing infrastructure in Mokokchung is obsolete and non-operational. The need for regulated markets especially in the rural markets/bazaars is very important for the rural farmers to sell their produce at a profitable rate. 83.33% of the respondents did not know about regulated markets and its regulation on prices of the produce.
4. The sellers in the weekly bazaars were mostly small and marginal farmers. The function of the weekly bazaars is similar to that of an open market.
5. Majority of the villages in Mokokchung district does not have efficient means of transport facilities and the most common problem that exist in all the villages are the poor conditions of the roads. The local traders bring the agricultural produce from the farmers in terms of bags with a transportation cost ranging between 30-50 rupees for each bag.
6. The sellers and the farmers has limited notion on the functionalities of agricultural marketing and the little knowledge they had about marketing was through experience and instinctive observation. Majority of the sellers did not maintain any written accounts or records of their sale. 100% of the respondents had no formal trainings on marketing.

CONCLUSION

The indigenous products of Nagaland have high commercial value since the agricultural produce is organic by default. Majority of the farmers are small and marginal farmers and they have a high cognizance on agricultural activities, since, agriculture was the only source of livelihood from time immemorial. The growth and development of the economic affairs of the Nagas still has a long way to achieve the peak status and various reasons, like policy implications and political tensions has marred the growth of her economic progress even though the resources available is enough to sustain her people. Marketing sector is still in its infant stages, majority of its supplies are through import activities and the export activities remains nominal at best. Marketing area needs enormous measures and steps from the policy makers to spurt the economic activities of self-dependency; it is still a grey area with enormous potential. The role of Agricultural marketing in Mokokchung district is subjective, unless the agricultural sector in

Mokokchung is developed to a certain point there won't be any development in agricultural marketing since agriculture is directly proportional to agricultural marketing. Both have to co-exist in the same plane of economic growth and development. From the study, there is dire need for development in the social-overhead capital and the create awareness among the farmers and also the public that imperative measures has to be initiated by the Government to developed the agricultural sector in the State.

Notes

- * The weekly bazaar in Mokokchung town was first introduced in 2010 by the Watsu Mundang, the Apex Ao Women Organization, with a vision to uplift and to provide means of opportunities to the women community in the economic affairs and in order to sustain their livelihood with an alternate source of income. The products range from vegetables to other indigenous products which has now grown from a handful of sellers to more than 300 sellers for instances as far as Tuensang, Zunheboto and Wokha sellers from these districts swarm in the activities of the weekly bazaars and the affects can be observed in almost all the villages.
1. Marketed supply simultaneously rises due to productivity improvements in production, postharvest processing, and distribution systems.
 2. Growers are deprived of a good price due to the lack of food processing and storage for his produce even during the peak marketing season.

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