

Weekly Market in Tribal Areas and the New Economic Frontier

*Hari Charan Behera*¹

How to cite this article:

Behera, Hari Charan. 2024. 'Weekly Market in Tribal Areas and the New Economic Frontier'. *Sampratyaya*, 1(2): 1-15. DOI: 10.21276/smprt.202412.12.a1

Abstract

Weekly market, a traditional economic organisation is an integral part of rural economy. This is especially an important social and economic organisation for peoples living in forest, hills and uplands who do not have regular market access unlike peoples in plain areas. In view of this, the present paper based on the study of two weekly markets with one each from Jharkhand and Odisha states attempts to situate them in contemporary situation. The paper focuses three major dimensions such as economy, culture, and ecology associated with the study of the weekly market. Also, the important discussion in the paper is about weekly market's presence in the new economic frontier that is associated with new technology or electronic devices including smartphones.

Keywords: Weekly Market, Minor Forest Produce, Tribal, Economic Frontier, Culture

1.0 Introduction

Economy is an important facet of human society. Different forms of economy still exist today ranging from mere subsistence to pre-capitalist to neoliberal forms of organisation. Each form has its own characteristics and defines the identity of a particular society. Subsistence form of economy is noticed among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and forest dwellers. Pre-capitalist form, reflecting relative autonomy or self-dependence, dominance of forest and agriculture, is a distinct characteristic of the Indian tribes which shows close connection with nature. Economy in the large part of rural India is also a pre-capitalist mode of production. In addition to material manifestation, tribal economy is associated with culture and ecology. Among tribal foragers, shifting cultivators, small agriculturists, and artisans, forest plays a major role in manifesting culture, identity and assuring livelihood sustenance. To pursuit this economic practice, economic organisation plays an important role. Anthropologists are interested in the structure and organisation of economic activity for two reasons. By structure, or organisation, economic activity implies the internal order that evolves from the interrelations between those people who are participating in the economic pursuits, either as producers or as consumers, or as

¹ Associate Professor, Sociological Research Unit, Indian Statistical Institute, Giridih, Jharkhand. **ORCID:** 0000-0002-0078-9780. Email: haricharan@isical.ac.in

distributors, or in the same kind of a combination of these roles (Majumdar & Madan 1970). The link between production, consumption, and distribution is established through market in an organised way. Polanyi has given the typologies of exchanges, reciprocity, and redistribution (Polanyi 2001). Among the typologies of exchanges, market exchange is important in view of current discussion on weekly market. Dalton (1961) says, the market exchange refers not only to the existence of market places, but more importantly, to the organisation process of purchase and sale at money price which is the mechanism of transacting material products, labour and natural resources. Besides, in pre-industrialised societies people derive their livelihood through material means and market plays a significant role to this material manifestation. All material means are derived from selling something through the market mechanism. It facilitates a particular kind of social interaction, namely exchange of goods and services. Polanyi's 1944 pioneering work, *The Great Transformation*, as Frerichs (2019) argues, discovered about social relations that are embedded in an economic system than economy embedded in social relations in modern market, which is a transformation from the tradition Weekly market organisation, however, is not a reflection of such dominant economic system, but a space of more balanced social and economic relations than in the modern market system.

Markets are usually held at a convenient place with an advantage of communication and connectivity to the neighbouring villages. The varieties of goods available in the local weekly markets are based on the conditioning of local social and cultural interests in a particular geographical and environmental condition. The utility of natural resources with local skills and tradition for making goods available in weekly market is common in most of the tribal inhabited regions. This issue has been already discussed by various authors. In many tribal areas it is noticed that row of aboriginal men and women sellers who bring nature's varied gifts-tubers, roots, wild fruits, honey, wax, lac, bamboo work, ropes, dried or fresh fish, etc. (Nag 1958). Traditionally, the weekly markets have some features of homogeneity and more or less common cultural and social bindings by dominant participation of ethnic community members.

Traditional societies are not static. They change, among other things, with policy intervention and schemes for rural development. New economic opportunities are available at the village level with launch of welfare schemes and flagship programmes. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGA) of the Central Government flagship programme has created employment opportunities in many rural and tribal villages of India. Moreover, there are other livelihood based programmes and food security schemes launched in the tribal pockets of the country. There is a gradual transformation of economy from merely subsistence to surplus to suit market economy. Both agricultural and livelihood diversification are creating new economic opportunities. The weekly market is certainly in transition. Therefore, it is important for economic anthropologists to look into substantive and formal approaches afresh. While the substantivists are able to convince that the primitive economy is based on subsistence with relative autonomy and self-dependence and culturally motivated practice, the formalists engage in more market-organised economy with a special nature of interdependence. In the market organised economy, the livelihood is derived from selling something, goods or services through the market mechanism (Dalton 1961). The weekly market is thus an organised economic system, which creates opportunity for the local people to trade with limited goods. In the course of evolution society is becoming complex from the simpler existence. There is a persistent pressure on the individuals from within and outside society due to social and cultural changes, policy intervention, and economic transformation.

Further, the changing economic behaviour leads to a complex market arrangement. Weekly market is thus not an exception. It is currently forced to exist in the new economic frontier. Infrastructure opportunities, economic diversification, migration, print media, electronic media and smart phones access, and social mobility have influenced traditional economy and economic organisations. In the meanwhile, new challenges for the weekly market are inevitable due to challenges from new technology, economic policies, and modern and virtual market. Under this backdrop this paper is developed with three main objectives:

- i. To focus on nature and function of weekly market with focus on its continuity and change.
- ii. To examine both formalistic and substantivist approach to study weekly market.
- iii. To examine both issues and prospects of weekly market in the new economic frontier.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This paper is based on the study of two weekly markets, with one each from Jharkhand and Odisha states of eastern India respectively. Both the states are similar in many counts. These two states have a large stretch of forest and abundant natural resource. There is a large presence of tribal communities in both the states. Unfortunately, both the states have a sizeable proportion of rural people who are poor and living below poverty line. Both mining and industrialisation have affected forest based as well as agricultural economy. It has been noticed that the new economic policies have affected but not replaced the core values of weekly market. Rather, it has been revived and renewed with new structural and functional arrangements. The author discusses various socio-cultural and economic values of weekly market and also the interface between traditional and modern economy. The paper focuses three major dimensions such as economy, culture and ecology associated with the study of for interpretation and analysis.

A cross cultural comparison of two weekly markets in Odisha and Jharkhand gives further clarity on the nature and characteristics of weekly market. One weekly market in Dhawatanr located in Dumri block of Giridih district in north Chotanagpur division of Jharkhand and the other one in Phiringia block in Kandhamal district in south central region of Odisha are selected for the study.

3.0 Review of Literature

As has been mentioned above, market is a process of distribution of goods and services between buyers and sellers. It allows people to hone their skills and utilise resources to engage in higher productive activities, if there are institutions to support these activities. Unlike modern marketing, tribal marketing is associated with existence of periodical market, crude system of measures and exchanges, and cultural sharing. Marketing has a significant role in developing socio-economic process and improving the standards of living. But due to lack of proper developed marketing system, whatever may be the production capacity of the small and marginal tribal farmers, the major chunk of profit from production goes to the middlemen and nontribal traders (Singh 1996).

Weekly market is a traditional form of economic organisation that provides avenues for sale, purchase, and exchanges of goods, services, ideas, knowledge and

thoughts. In tribal societies the population being sparsely distributed in small villages and hamlets of forest or hill areas, weekly market is considered furthermore important to meet basic functional requirements of the communities. According to Mehdi, weekly market may rightly be described as the nerve centre of the exchange system of the tribal region (Mehdi 1987). Indeed, the economy in tribal life is associated with culture and ideologies (Corbridge 1988, Polanyi et al. 1957 and Vidyarthi & Rai 1976) and small scale production. Due to difficult geographical terrains and limited resource opportunities such as limited production and demand, the weekly market is preferred to the regular market. Moreover, the weekly market is culturally and socially acceptable economical practice and is time-tested. The market centres in tribal economy are not only important for business but also centres of social gathering as they provide occasions for get together to discuss varied topics of mutual social and economic interests ranging from enquiries about crops, market trends, political issues, and socio-economic demands based on mutual interest (Rao 1988). Therefore, weekly market is a type of social construct to meet specific demands of ethnic communities and the sections of 'primitive societies' for trade with limited goods, services and social interest.

The weekly market, in a nutshell, is mainly a periodic market that is associated with spatio-temporal, social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects. The value of traditional weekly market is very well associated with human ecology. The flow of natural goods and culturally driven economic practices are common in most of the weekly market in tribal areas (Upadhyay 2001). It is held weekly at a specific location on a fixed day and normally in a fixed time period with dominant participation from certain sections of communities and social groups. The weekly market exhibits the characteristics of an organisation with temporary or permanent leadership, and committee members are either selected or elected by community members with a common set of interest and agenda.

A few classic works by (Gell 1982, Patel, 1984, Sinha 1963 & 1968 and Smith 1974) have narrated the importance of weekly market in the tribal areas. Ostor (1984) discussed about Bazaar in Bengal: A cultural and structural study that provides a framework to analyse the weekly market practice in other tribal and nontribal regions. Most of these studies are associated with the nature and functioning of weekly market, social, cultural and environmental association, business practices and social composition among others. Weekly market is organised in both rural and urban areas. But its uniqueness in tribal areas is well discussed in the literature (Nag 1958, Patel 1984 and Sinha 1963 & 1968). Datta (2002) noted that location of these weekly markets is obviously guided by the density of settlement and the factors of accessibility and thus, defines it as a periodic assemblage in an open space both in tribal and rural areas.

Table No.1. Weekly market under study

Weekly market location	Block, district	Day of weekly market held	Peak hours of business/trading
Dhawatanr	Dumri, Giridih	Tuesday	Afternoon
Phiringia	Phiringia, Kandhamal	Tuesday	Noon

Source: Filed data

Figure No.1. Dhawatanr weekly market in Giridih district of Jharkhand (Photos taken during September-October month)



Figure No.2. Phiringia weekly market in Kandhamal district of Odisha (Photos taken during December and January months)



4.0 Results and Discussion

Weekly market in Jharkhand is locally called *hat* or *hatia*. In Odisha it is called *haata* or *haat*. The *haats* in both Dhawatanr in Giridih district of Jharkhand and Phiringia in Kandhamal district of Odisha are held in open spaces mostly with a close proximity to main road connecting two major towns. Each weekly market in two different states under the study caters to the demand of above 30 per cent tribal population in the region. In Dhawatanr the weekly market covers the requirement of 100 villages belonging to five panchayats. The market spreads across two acres here. The Phiringia weekly market is relatively bigger in size that covers more than 200 villages and spread above five acres. Dumri block in which Dhawatanr is situated is dominated by the Santhal tribe while the Phiringia block is dominated by the Kondh tribe in terms of their numerical presence. Both the Santhals and the Kondhs are dominant participants in the weekly markets. Traditionally, both these tribal communities are agricultural communities with a large proportion of the farmers belonging to the peasant groups or small and marginal growers. These two markets are characterised by the participation of more number of women as sellers as well as buyers than men. Women in general come in group with head-load of vegetables placed in bamboo baskets. Sometimes, they are supported by male counterparts for carrying goods in cycle or bikes. In Phiringia market, most of the people are from Kondh community though other people from Gandapadar, Minia, Karnada, Bisipara, Kanganida, and Gumaguda villages come in large numbers either to buy or sell products at this weekly market at Phiringia. Baniyapur, Barmasia and Atki are some of the villages from where a good quantity of vegetables is brought into the Dhawatanr weekly market. Pendrabad and Belatanr are villages from where the minor forest produce is collected and brought into the market. Ropes, wooden crafts and bamboo baskets, potteries, etc., are brought here from Pirtanr block. The close association of people with forest and agriculture based economy in tribal areas and trading of such commodities in weekly market has principally developed an integrated rural economy with culture, ecology, and community. The weekly markets in both the places are agrarian in nature with greater participation from forest dwellers, farming communities, and small traders for sale of products that suit demands of the rural and agrarian class. The demand of artisan products in the urban market is decreasing over the years due to increasing dependence on farm mechanisation and increasing supply of efficient farm machineries in the market. A weekly market is perhaps the last resort to provide ample opportunities for the local ironsmiths, potters, carpenters and other traditional artisan class to showcase their talents and obtain place to sell their items for the local rural and agrarian communities. It is witnessed that more than two-third of the population in periodic markets are involved in sale and purchase of agricultural items or the minor forest produce that is locally grown and match food habits and interest of the communities. The active women participation in weekly market not only signifies the woman contribution to household economy but also to their position in the society. The hardworking women grow vegetables in the upland, hill and plain areas under extreme difficult geographical conditions. Women are also involved in sale and purchase of minor forest products and to some extent grocery items. They are also found in purchasing the pulses or the *dal* varieties during harvesting season in the late winter. The pulses are grown locally on the plain or hill lands.

In the late rainy season weekly market has less cereals and pulses for sale by local people. But, they are able to collect minor forest products particularly the bamboo products, mushrooms, and some edible leaves and flowers among a few other items.

Varieties of mushrooms are available in the weekly and regular markets during rainy season. Gourd, ridge gourd, *okra* (lady's finger), pumpkin, cucumber, elephant foot yam, radish, etc. are common rainy season vegetables available in Dhawatanr weekly market. The weekly market in Phiringia collects a large amount of pumpkin, local variety of beans, ridge gourd, radish, okra, etc. But elephant foot yam is not so popular in the Phiringia weekly market. In the winter season the tribal weekly markets provide space for sale and purchase of varieties of pulses along with the large varieties of vegetables. Important spice products such as turmeric and ginger are available in good quantity in Phiringia market. These spice products attract a large number of private traders to bargain and negotiate with the local growers and sellers during weekly market days. In the summer season there is bamboo, tamarind, mangoes, jackfruit and other forest items and vegetables available in the market. Normally, vegetables are available throughout the year. A good monsoon season allows the growth of good quantity of vegetables. Winter is a suitable agro-climatic condition which usually witnesses the bumper production of vegetables. In Phiringia as well as Dhawatanr weekly markets there is bumper sale of cauliflower, cabbage, potatoes, and tomatoes. Besides, local potato variety, flat beans, French beans and potatoes are available in the weekly markets. In Dhawatanr, however, the liquor making products along with other intoxicants are made available by the vendors. The salt that helps in preparing local country liquor such as *handia* and *mahua* is commonly available in the weekly markets of Giridih block. However, *mahua* is only a seasonal flower collected by women and children during summer season. It is available in plenty in the plains and valleys of Giridih and Kandhamal districts. A group of small and petty traders sell tobacco related items in the weekly markets. Open selling of intoxicant items shows the intensity of alcohol addiction by the local tribal communities and other people in the region.

Apart from small sellers, the weekly market is also characterised by the presence of wholesalers, *sahukars* or *mahajans*, and large-scale buyers in Dhawatanr as well as in Phiringia. The presence of intermediaries is common in all the weekly markets. Upadhyay (2001) reported that a number of dealers are found in different types of business either to dispose the surplus commodities or supply the necessary amenities to the tribals. These dealers purchase seasonal harvest in a throwaway price. The dealers have direct connection with the wholesalers. The wholesalers mainly belong to the non-tribal community. The presence of wholesalers in the weekly markets is for purchase of commodities brought by people in the respective local regions. These wholesalers also collect local produce in bulk almost at a throwaway price especially the perishable goods such as vegetables and gain better return from selling these goods in the urban markets in the same season or during the offseason. These local *mahajans* and shopkeepers speculate good return in advance and store the produce for sale during offseason. In Phiringia weekly market chiefly three types of traders settle in and around Phiringia towns. These traders mainly belong to non-tribal castes such as the Shundi (liquor distiller), Pana (SC), Teli (oil maker) and Brahmins who are also in service sector. The presence of Muslim people in Kandhamal district is very few. Whereas, its population in Giridih district is the second largest and it is only next to the Hindu population. Therefore, the people from this section of religious category participate in large number in the weekly markets held in Giridih district. The Muslim, the Verma (the Koiri caste), and the Santhals are well known vegetable growers in Giridih district. The Koiris usually grow vegetables in large scale. Therefore, participation of vegetable vendors from heterogeneous caste groups is also observed in the weekly markets of Giridih district of Jharkhand and Kandhamal district of Odisha.

A few fancy items, clothes, foot wears, cosmetic items, utensils, mobile handsets and smart phone covers, earphones, mobile chargers, adapters, etc., have been added to the traditional products available in the weekly market. These are some of the items which have attracted youth to the venue who spend a better portion of their money for buying such fancy and electronic items. Some liquor making ingredients are available in weekly market of Dhawatanr. This item is also common in other weekly markets of Jharkhand state. The local quacks and medicine men find weekly markets a convenient place to advertise their clinic for treatment of sexual diseases to attract rural youths. The weekly market is also very much attached to the established regular market through middlemen traders.

One of the important functions of the weekly market is to arrange basic food items, clothes or fancy items that is cheap and affordable to attract women, youth, and children. Weekly markets in the whole district exhibit more or less similar characteristics. The surplus food items are purchased by middlemen or non-tribal traders and supplied to other local weekly markets based on demand by the local people. Similarly, the scarcity of food items and other goods and services in some weekly markets are overcome by the supply of produce from other markets of tribal and non-tribal regions. Therefore, the weekly market performs the basic economic functions by balancing supply and demand, when there is scarce or abundant resource supply. The weekly market has exhibited a new economic feature which is not fully traditional and culturally driven as it was earlier. But, the component of material culture is fully ingrained in the periodic market system. The weekly market is fully exploited as an opportunity to use small growers' production for optimal economic benefit by reducing transaction cost. The use of cash is still prominent in the market transaction. Small growers prefer cash for sale or purchase of limited produce to accomplish other household demands. The small traders were affected by recent demonetisation act they virtually had little connection with the banking system and poor institutional financial support. Also, as the practice of barter exchange has reduced significantly, it had a little supporting role to help them at the time of demonetisation. The proportion of non-local buyers for bio organic products in the periodic market is higher compared to the buyers of synthetic and non-bio-products and synthetic items in the market. The engagement of family members for production and sale is higher compared to the hired labourers among the ethnic communities and local traders whereas the engagement of hired labour and outsourcing is relatively higher among the non-tribal traders. In between production and transportation of goods, there is a role of kinship organisation but that is associated with extra pressure on the women. They deal with household chores and at the same time use their limited homestead land to get at the least minimum support from the weekly market. The ingenuity of poor tribal households to pool all available and affordable resources for maximising livelihood support through periodic market opportunity is well known. The weekly market is thus an avenue for exchanges of goods and services more with cash based transaction and less with barter exchange. Weekly market is also a support for the small and medium traders of non-local communities. The economising calculation to a special set of calculation and rationalisation with standardised norms and procedures is still limited in the tribal periodic market. In the meanwhile, there is a reduced exchange practice and reciprocity as per the substantivist norms. Weekly markets in the region are no more ethnic in pure form and there is abundant flow of products from the corporate world. There are finished items, clothes and other fancy goods available to attract youth. More than basic needs the youths are attracted to such fancy items. Moreover, the means of communication in the weekly

market is not merely by personal meeting but over mobile phones. This indicates the prevalence of transitional economic practice in weekly market.

4.1 Labour engagement in the weekly market

One of the important economic characteristics is the mode of production and distribution. Traditional economy is labour intensive. Weekly market is an opportunity for the local people to earn through contribution of labour in the nearby shops and storehouses. The vendors at weekly market mainly use their family members for labour assistance. This is particularly observed in the sweet stall, confectioneries, cloth selling outlets, etc. However, in some cases these vendors engage other kin members and hired labourers certainly at low wages compared to the normal wage practices in the region. During weekly market days the regular shops, storehouses, cooperative bodies and agencies become furthermore active as more number of people directly approach the market. Many youngsters approach the local shopkeepers and sahuikars in Phiringia market during weekly market days. The hired members are engaged in many labour intensive activities such as fetching water for the sweet makers and local confectioners, supply or selling goods at the local shops, store keeping, housekeeping, packaging and transporting among others. During such market days, there is an extra set of norms applied for payment of daily wages mostly with personal negotiation and bargaining. Young and healthy youngsters are preferred for engagement in labour intensive jobs than skilful and handsome youngsters by the local traders and shopkeepers. Apart from negotiation and bargaining, the principle of social bondage and networking is applied for labour engagement. Normally, there is a group of identified men or women who are preferred by the local sahuikars for engagement periodically particularly during the weekly market days. The nature of trading is thus more of negotiation, bargaining and based on established social network.

4.2 Money lending activities in the weekly market

It is observed that poor institutional framework of marketing and credit allows non institutional traders and moneylenders make a dominant presence in tribal areas. Weekly market plays an important function with regard to trading of goods and services such as labour, cooperative practice, credit and money-lending. In tribal market, Public Distribution Service (PDS) outlets are opened to supply kerosene, sugar, rice, etc. Cooperative service is delivered by LAMPS or PACs in the weekly market areas. The Kondhs and the Santhals apart from selling and purchasing goods in the weekly market also approach moneylenders in the region. When the cooperative banks fail to provide loans, the poor people depend on the private moneylenders in the weekly market. In Phiringia, it was observed that people receive loans through different means. Besides, people get loan through mortgaging land, jewellery, and other valuable good, which is called *bandhaki*. Mostly, land is used as collateral for bank loan or for private lending. This lending is usually practiced for long term lending. The interest rate is as high as five percent per month in Kandhamal region. Loan or lending on grain is also common among the Kondhs and the Santhals in weekly market. The interest rate in terms of cash or kind is charged heavily by the moneylenders. The other form of borrowing or lending is *hathudhari*. In *hathudhari*, the lending is short term or long term mainly among the kin members and it has to be reciprocated equally or unequally with same quantity of produce for exchange. The types of reciprocation, the balanced or negative takes place depending on the nature of social bondage. In Phiringia town, it was observed that the exchange of

goods for goods or barter exchange is occasional. Paddy is a common good exchanged by the tribal folk for purchase of other essential items. People usually borrow money for purchasing seeds for cash crop, for medical expenses, or for social needs such as marriage and other ritual expenses. In Phiringia town it was found that the merchants or the settled traders acted as private moneylenders. Among the traders, the liquor traders and the *mahajans* at the weekly market region extend money-lending as a business opportunity. This form of private lending is highly exploitative and is dealt with unequal treatment and exchange practices. The practice of money lending is not new. Bailey during his study in Bisipara village observed the linkage between the tribe and the non tribe for money lending and market. He observed that a teacher was involved in money lending during 1950s. By giving money in advance he used to collect paddy and other agricultural produce like mustard, rapeseed, and horse-gram from the Kondh. When it was difficult to repay at the part of the tribal moneylender a portion of land was given by the borrower to the moneylender (Bailey 1957). Eventually, both tribal and nontribal have started lending loan to the poor tribal in the region. However, the role of the *mahajan* (moneylenders) in money lending is still a common practice in the weekly market region.

4.3 The noneconomic functions of weekly market

Weekly market has delivered both economic and noneconomic functions. As already mentioned, several studies discussed the noneconomic social and cultural functions of weekly market. Upadhyay (2001) has discussed the social function of the weekly market among the Sabar in Jharkhand. People from different villages assemble in the weekly market, social interaction continues and the issues pertaining to society are discussed. Matters regarding marriage, divorce, conflict, child birth, health issues, etc., are also discussed with both kin and non kin member. Among the studies the fresh ideas about non-economic functions was discussed by Datta who described weekly market as a powerful channel of communication. It also acts as a place of ethnic interaction. Gell (1982) observed that, this interaction corresponds to the major channel of inter-village communication and is extremely sociable. Since tribal settlements are located geographically in the disadvantaged positions mainly in the forest or the forest fringes and away from mainstream channel of communication weekly market provides this opportunity for the tribal communities, especially women to communicate with their fellow counterparts, relatives from same village or other villages and with the non-tribal communities apart from their involvement in economic activities. Forest dependent communities, agriculturists, small traders, and small artisans participate in the market for sale as well as purchase. Sinha interpreted this institution as an agent of cultural change. People from different communities, tribes and non-tribes assemble in the weekly market. Both Dhawatanr and Phiringia weekly markets are situated almost in similar geographical and socioeconomic conditions. Population density is not high compared to other town and places of the region. Many villages situated in the forest and hill tracks have access to this weekly market for their everyday requirements.

Like urban market the weekly market is also linked with management by a specific committee. In Dhawatanr there is a group of members from the Durga Puja Committee who manage the periodic market, collect certain amount of fees from traders who want to sell items in the weekly market. The committee organises Durga Puja and other festivals from the collections made out of the sellers approach to weekly market. Vegetable vendors are left out as far as collection of fee is concerned.

The composition of committee member at Dhawatanr shows the caste-tribe interaction and coordination in the region to organise festival and weekly market. The committee members have role in social, cultural and religious functions. These committee members are influential and have good social network with other members and communities in the region. Having a good social network in the region, these committee members often get close interaction with the political representatives. This type of organising committee is more or less common in other regions in Jharkhand and Odisha. In Phiringia weekly market is being managed by the Gram Panchayat, the village level democratic institution, but it is auctioned annually to an individual or Self Help Group (SHG). The SHG members collect the fees from the local traders, the fee is nominal. The money (nominal fee) collected from weekly market is utilised for development of weekly market areas, cleaning and sanitation, required construction work, and other developmental works. There is almost a common characteristic in the weekly market where rituals and festivals are organised by the same committee members. The organising committee members are also the members of important social, political and religious functions.

4.4 Issues and opportunities observed in the weekly market

There is no proper shed for sellers in most of the weekly markets particularly in tribal areas. The arrangement is mostly in open space. There is no drinking water, separate toilets and health facilities. There is no policy or mechanism to provide minimum support price to the sellers particularly for the vegetable and forest produce sellers. It is observed that there is poor hygienic situation in the weekly market. Adulterous items are also brought into the market since there is no mechanism to check quality. Also, there is no inspection of the items brought by the sellers from outside. In addition to these issues, there are also opportunities available to create awareness, information and knowledge about schemes, programmes, product, and market among others. Weekly market is a powerful channel of communication, information and new technology dissemination. It is the door step to disseminate information for the villages which are mostly inaccessible and difficult to approach. The tribal people, especially women get opportunity to exhibit their economic skill. Varieties of handmade items are brought to market by women. Weekly market is important for being culturally adaptable and acceptable, a support system to subsistence growers and as a venue for sale and purchase of products which are culturally acceptable and environmentally sustainable.

4.5 Weekly market and the new economic frontier

Weekly market, a traditional economic organisation is still an integral part of the rural economy. However, this traditional economic organisation has also undergone changes and transformation over the years. Some goods from the tribal and rural areas such as vegetable items, forest goods, labour, etc., are brought in weekly market and often exchanged with urban goods and service facilities. Electronic goods, clothes, cosmetic goods, mobile handsets and accessories and other fancy items are brought to weekly market by vendors from nearby town and cities. These goods are only exchanged with money. In all the weekly markets, money is medium of exchange now. There is very little scope for the barter exchange as money is the medium of exchange even in the rural frontier. Weekly markets are now present in the new economic frontier. On one side, there is a modern market and on the other side there are villages with traditional and peasant economies. Youth from both the economies are connected through their access to Smartphone. Youth from both rural and urban settlements now have access to information

on global market. This seems imaginary but real in the region where access to material and means of entertainment are curtailed by lack of employment and income opportunities for the youths who are not interested in agriculture due to its labour intensive and less remunerative nature. The youth prefer to work in non-agricultural sector. Since the opportunities are very limited they prefer to migrate to other cities. Also, the youth from many villages are now having exposure to cities and global market due to migration and having access to social networking sites operated through Smartphone. In between traditional and modern market arrangements there is a virtual presence of global market that is now influencing the behaviour of buyers and the sellers. The youth keep a track of the information about the product launched in the market, update themselves with price of goods and services, read about demand and supply opportunities and related constraints. Nevertheless, there are certain sections of the traders particularly the small and marginal producers who belonged to tribal community and women groups who are not able to gain adequately from the invisible global market presence. The weekly market is thus not completely autonomous and physically present, but also associated with more virtual, abstract and imaginary economic condition developed due to mobile service network access through Smartphone technology.

The information about modern market through Smartphone and exposure to modern market due to migration has affected weekly market but it cannot anyway diminish the importance of weekly market. Most of the families have a mobile handset. Also, the youth have access to other electronic gadgets. Besides having basic knowledge about new brands and products their capacity to purchase such items has not changed significantly. Rather, the youth's behaviour has created a pressure on the parents, particularly on the women counterpart to be more occupied and involved in an intensive work for production, sale and purchase. However, the return from sale is used for household requirements and youth demand for new products. Now in family, there is a shifting priority between the youth and the elderly people on marketing, occupation and consumption. The youth prefer employment in the service sector than agriculture and forest based occupation. The presence of virtual market has further affected culture, livelihood and society. There is an increasing cultural assimilation but less economic integration in the tribal society. But, the youths have an increasing desire with information available and frequent social interaction possible through electronic media or exposure out of migration.

Weekly market has received stiff challenges from the expansion of modern market. The modern market is much capable to produce the processed food items, fancy and colourful items, electronic goods and services to attract youth which is contrary to the organic and raw goods available in plenty through weekly markets. The new economic policies have allowed free flow of goods with relaxation on import and export of goods and service. Both globalisation and liberalisation have been made popular under new market reforms. But, this liberalised market and globalisation have affected the organic nature of weekly market. Even the branded and nonbranded items are brought to weekly market for sale by the small traders. Many of such items are low quality imported goods. The low quality goods available in cheaper price has challenged the originality of goods available by local artisans and other producers. For instance, the ropemaking skill of the Birhor communities, pottery making by the potters, iron tools by the iron smith are now replaced by synthetic plastic goods or other such metal items. Tribal and peasant economies are now affected by the expansion of modern market, new economic policies and opportunities through infrastructure growth, mining and industrial development. The electronic goods and services are rapidly penetrating to the rural hinterlands. Weekly

markets have witnessed further changes due to extension of mobile services, computer facilities, television and other electronic services in the village level. The youth in tribal areas are not very different in terms of their behaviour to economic practice and market response. New economic corridors are established by state to encourage modern economy. Road, electricity, mobile network and internet facilities are now easily available in the rural areas compared to yesteryears. This has resulted increasing entry of nontribal to tribal pockets. There is an increasing scope for market integration. Economy in every society is now in transition also under the influence of IT revolution. The market is just a tip away for youths having knowledge to operate such electronic devices. The modern economy is more invisible and abstract than traditional economy with a component of more material expression. The youth are being attracted to buy new gadgets and wearable items, spend more time in entertainment, and other form of material expression. The modern economy is more imagining, widespread and conceivable. It has been permeated across culture and society. The means of its widespread permeation is through communication technology, particularly in the backdrop of Smartphone technology revolution. With 3G or 4 G network service available at an affordable rate in the recent time, the youth search internet sites and use YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook and other such social networking sites on their mobile.

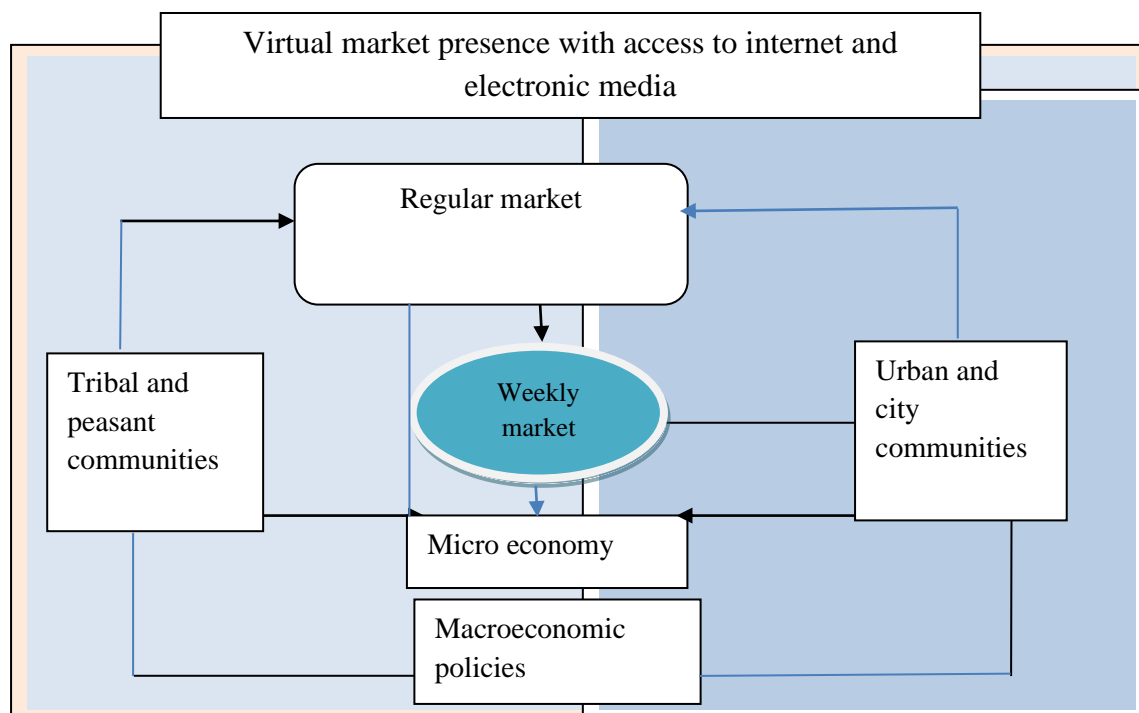
Now, in every state and district there is a focus on non-agricultural growth and infrastructure development. New roads and infrastructure projects are built up to push new economic growth in small towns like Giridih and Phulbani where the study weekly markets are located. Private investment in mining and industries is increasingly taking place. Giridih has half a dozen of steel factories and rolling mills. Old mica industries have also occupied good space and invited outsiders to the Giridih district. Though Phulbani is still not in such race for big or medium industries, tourism opportunities and small manufacturing units are being set up in the region. New markets are being built up in small towns and villages. New commodities are adding up for sale in every market in rural and urban areas. Increasing mining and industrialisation, infrastructure growth, urbanisation has certainly affected the microeconomic growth which is also associated with local resources such as forest and agriculture. New rural development schemes such as the NREGP, food security scheme, health and education related schemes have influenced rural livelihood. But, new economic policies have affected agriculture and forest based economy to a greater extent. In such a scenario the weekly market is in transition and posing challenge to its true identity.

Despite challenges, the aesthetics of weekly market is alive for the people who are not only interested about economic practice but also about social and cultural values of economic organisations imbued with richness of tradition. Weekly market is an avenue for social change in the present economic context.

In the above framework it is depicted that weekly market has evolved as a connecting point between traditional economy and modern economy and between rural society and urban society. There is presence of a virtual market but its influence is still limited and to some extent restricted with poor internet service network. Therefore, the rural market is still not dominant in comparison to the urban area. Thus, it is a grey area as far as access to internet service network is concerned. There is a presence of a virtual market but its influence is still limited and to some extent restricted with poor service network. There has been a continuous demand for access to information on one hand and access to material resources on the other hand. Weekly market is a place for social, cultural

and economic interaction associated with the value of nature and tradition. The place provides opportunity for marketing of forest produce, agricultural produce and other organic products. It also enables interaction between men and women from the tribal and non-tribal communities. In this way, the weekly market is acted through contours of culture, economy and human ecology.

Figure No.3. Weekly market in the new economic frontier: A framework



Source: Author

5.0 Conclusion

Weekly market is a mirror of social, cultural and economic expression for subsistence growers and buyers in tribal society. The link of forest resource, agriculture, small commodities, aboriginal communities or native buyers and sellers together develop a nature, man and economic complex. The root of weekly market is organic and a dominant character of human ecology. This place provides avenues for exchange of essential goods and services on weekly basis where there is a difficulty in access to regular market. The nature and functioning of weekly market is changing with a push for new economic growth by the state. Both globalisation and liberalisation have influenced every social and economic life. Therefore, weekly market is no exceptional. Most importantly, there is virtual presence of global market for the youth who have access to smart phones with 3G or 4G connectivity. The youth are no doubt aware of the search engines to check and update with latest market information and the launch of new product and brands. A new culture of consumerism has grown eventually in almost all the regions. Therefore, weekly market is also getting tuned with new ideas and products launched. Instead, in the weekly market the duplicate version is available to make it affordable for the youths in rural areas. There is a wide range of products launched in the weekly market but the very organic nature of weekly market is often affected by adulterous items and low quality imported goods. There is a dominant invisible and supermarket which is found available through

electronic access. In between modern *e commerce* (market) and traditional regular market, the presence of weekly market is still important for bridging the communication gap. Weekly market is a door step to change for traditional societies.

Traditionally societies facing challenges from modern society and traditional economy is being affected by modern economy. Similarly, the weekly market is also having a stiff challenge and resistance from modern market, new economic push and changing youths' behaviour. Today, weekly market is situated in the new economic corridors. On one side, there is traditional and pre modern societies and on the other side there is urban societies. Also, there is presence of global market. However, the weekly market is so adaptive and locally acceptable that its importance cannot be undervalued and diminished.

References

- Bailey, F. G. 1957. *Caste and Economic Frontier: A Village in Highland Orissa*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press.
- Corbridge, S. 1988. 'The Ideology of Tribal Economy and Society: Politics in the Jharkhand, 1950-1980'. *Modern Asian Studies* 22 (1): 1-42.
- Dalton, G. 1961. 'Theory and Primitive Society'. *American Anthropologist* 63(1): 1-25.
- Datta, A. 2002. 'Impact of weekly market on tribal life'. *The Oriental Anthropologist* 2(2):162-167.
- Frerichs, S. 2019. 'Karl Polanyi and the Law of Market Society'. *Osterreichische Zeitschrift fur Soziologie* 44(2): 197-208
- Gell, A. 1982. 'The Market Wheel: Symbolic Aspects of an Indian Tribal Market'. *Man* 17(3): 470-491.
- Majumdar, D. N. and T.N. Madan. 1970. *An Introduction to Social Anthropology*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Mehdi, R. 1987. 'Structure and function of rural market in tribal Bihar'. In M. Prasad (ed.) *Tribes, Their Environment and Culture*. 256-265. Delhi: Amar Prakashan.
- Nag, D. S. 1958. *Tribal Economy*. Delhi: Bharatiya Adimjati.
- Ostor, A. 1984. *Culture and Power: Legend, Ritual, Bazaar and Rebellion in Bengal Society*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Patel, M. L. 1984. 'Observations on the existing and perspective market centres of the study regio'n. In M.L.Patel (ed.) *Planning Strategy for Tribal Development*, 62-96. New Delhi: Inter Indian Publications.
- Polanyi, K, C. M. Arensberg and H. W. Pearson. 1957. *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Polanyi, Karl. 2001. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*. Beacon Press. First published in 1944.
- Rao, I. M. K. 1988. *Marketing in Tribal Economy*. New Delhi: Inter India Publications.
- Singh, K. S. 1996. *Identity, Ecology, Social Organisation, Economy and Linkages and Development Process*. New Delhi: Oxford Publication.
- Sinha, D. P. 1963. 'The Role of the Pahariya in Tribal Acculturation in a Central Indian Market'. *Ethnology* 2(2): 170-179.
- 1968. *Culture Change in an Intertribal Market*. New Delhi: Asia Publishing House.
- Smith, C. A. 1974. 'Economics of Marketing Systems: Models from Economic Geography'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 3: 167-201. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.03.100174.001123>
- Upadhyay, V. S. 2001. *Hill Kharia*. Ranchi: JTWRI, Government of Jharkhand.
- Vidarthi, L. P. and B. K. Rai. 1976. *The Tribal Culture of India*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.