

NATURE OF DATA ON PRICES AND ARRIVALS IN REGULATED MARKETS *

A. P. KULKARNI

THE establishment of regulated markets in India has served the basic need of a source of prices and other data at the level of primary or assembling markets. Basically, these markets are formed to provide better marketing facilities to farmers and control the malpractices of the traders. Their working is governed both by the State Marketing Acts and by their by-laws. These legal provisions require the Market Committees to collect and maintain various kinds of information for the smooth working of the markets. This information is useful to both academicians as well as the policy-makers; and many official and non-official agencies depend on the Market Committees for the supply of such information. In view of the large variety of uses to which these data are being put and are likely to be put, it is necessary to pay some attention to the nature of these data and the circumstances under which they are collected by the Market Committees. The present note attempts to examine the nature and utility of the information with the Regulated Markets. Since the data most widely used pertain to 'arrivals' and 'prices', of individual farm products the note is restricted to the examination of those data only. It is based on a survey of some regulated markets in western Maharashtra (i.e. the present Maharashtra State excluding Vidarbha and Marathwada regions) where data relating to the prices and arrivals of groundnut, *Jowar*, and paddy were collected. It is not claimed that the observations made in the article would be valid for all the regulated markets in the country or the State of Maharashtra. Indeed, even among the markets surveyed, the records of the Market Committees differ, in respect of certain details. While therefore, no universality can be claimed for the findings, what, it is hoped, will emerge out of this enquiry is a broad picture showing the major characteristics and limitations of the data on 'prices and arrivals' provided by the Market Committees, which should be borne in mind while making any use of them.

The working of a regulated market in Maharashtra is governed by the Bombay Agricultural Produce Markets Act and the by-laws of the individual markets. These lay down the procedure by which the

* The author is grateful to Dr. N. Rath for a very helpful discussion of the first draft of this note and to Shri A. R. Kulkarni for his comments.