

**MARKETING**  
**IN**  
**INDIA**



**K. L. GOVIE**

# Marketing In India

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface .. .. .	v
Introduction .. .. .	i
Marketing Functions .. .. .	9
Marketing Organization .. .. .	41
Advertising .. .. .	80

### AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN INDIA

Introduction .. .. .	111
Chief Characteristics of Indian Agriculture .. .. .	122
Co-operative Marketing .. .. .	193

### STAPLE COMMODITIES

Wheat .. .. .	229
Cotton .. .. .	279
Jute .. .. .	306
Rice .. .. .	340
Market Terminology .. .. .	368

### STOCK EXCHANGE

Stock Exchange .. .. .	395
<i>Bibliography</i> .. .. .	429
<i>Index</i> .. .. .	431

## STATEMENTS AND TABLES OF

PAGES

1.	Charges and deductions from Agricultural Produce .. .. .	146-47.
2.	Adulteration in wheat .. .. .	153
3.	Railway Mileage in India and other countries ..	177
4.	Motor Cars and other mechanical vehicles ..	183
5.	Non-credit Agricultural Societies .. ..	196
6.	Activities of Punjab Co-operative Shops .. ..	210
7.	Cane Societies .. .. .	216
8.	Average Annual Jute Prices .. .. .	222
9.	Wheat Production .. .. .	230
10.	Yeilds of wheat .. .. .	231
11.	Wheat exports and imports .. .. .	237
12.	Wheat Production, net imports and exports and balance available for consumption .. ..	239
13.	Produce sold through co-operative societies in Punjab .. .. .	248
14.	Market charges of wheat .. .. .	258
15.	Refractions found in wheat .. .. .	264
16.	Process of grading of wheat in Bombay .. ..	265
17.	Charges paid by speculators in wheat at Hapur ..	273
18.	Cotton acreage, yield and consumption in India ..	281
19.	Cotton production and consumption in America ..	283
20.	Cotton sales in villages and <i>mandis</i> .. ..	287
21.	Cotton forward business, transacted through East India Cotton Association .. ..	304
22.	Middlemen's share in the marketing of jute ..	317
23.	Share of various conveyances in the transport of, Jute .. .. .	322
24.	Jute production by individual growers .. ..	329
25.	Rice acreage and yield .. .. .	340
26.	Yield of rice per acre .. .. .	341
27.	Periods in rice crop. .. .. .	342
28.	Rice imports and exports .. .. .	343
29.	Share of various agencies in the marketing of rice .. .. .	348-49
30.	Government of India loans .. .. .	410-II
31.	Provincial Government loans .. .. .	412
32.	Indian States loans .. .. .	413-14

## PREFACE

Marketing organization depends upon the economic organization of society. From simple barter to organized sales through central marketing boards or cartels and pools is a marvellous development. But it has been achieved gradually through evolution of market organization and practices, brought about by rapid means of transport and communications, banking facilities, grading and standardisation of products, improvements in the technique of selling and advertising.

In an expanding market of the first half of the 19th century marketing problems did not receive as much attention, as they did in the latter half, when competition grew keener and keener among the industrialised countries. The situation grew worse in this century, particularly during the inter-war period. Since 1929 when the economic depression enveloped the world, the marketing problems have come in for a good deal of criticism and consideration all over the world, including this country. The post-war boom of 1919-21 was followed by a sharp recession of prices and output which continued, more or less, up to 1924. Thereafter attempts were made by different

countries, independently and through the League of Nations, to resuscitate the international trade to its pre-war order. But it could not be achieved owing to the aggressive economic nationalism of different countries. While Asia and Africa were growing more and more conscious of their industrial backwardness and asserting to improve their lot, Europe and the United States of America were striving hard to retain their hold over these markets by effecting changes in their productive and marketing organizations and practices. For example, in the United Kingdom, a number of Committees, e.g., the Liberal Industrial Enquiry Committee, the Balfour Committee and the Macmillan Committee, were appointed to investigate into the problems of industry and trade; and marketing organization always received the most careful attention of these bodies. The Wembley Exhibition of 1924 was organized to judge the Imperial self-sufficiency and the Ottawa Conference of 1932, to retain control over the Empire markets.

Other countries were shaping their own policies and insulating themselves from the outside world by high tariffs. It seemed as if we were going back to the mercantilist period and the principles of *laissez faire* and *free competition* were bidden good-bye. National economic planning became the common cry and Russian, German, Italian, American and Japanese plans were objects of envy and emulation for other nations.

In India, too, various Commissions and Com-

mittees were appointed, in the post-War period, to make investigations into agricultural, industrial, labour and banking problems. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, and the Central and Provincial Banking Enquiry Committees fully stressed the need of improving our marketing organisation and practices. To give effect to the recommendation of the Agricultural Commission, the Central Government created a Department of Marketing, and appointed a Marketing Adviser to the Government of India on January 1, 1935. Provincial Governments and leading Indian States also cooperated in this mission. The Department is primarily concerned with agricultural marketing, because in the post-war depression the prices of raw materials and foodstuffs fell more than those of manufactured goods. This hit the Indian cultivator very severely who was, more and more, dispossessed of his only source of livelihood, i.e., land. Debt legislations were also passed by most of the Provincial Governments, particularly after the assumption of power by popular governments in 1937.

The War gave a fillip to some of the Indian industries—machine and cottage—and agriculture. But the quantum of trade has suffered severely and the price level has gone up considerably. Our imports have fallen more than our exports, resulting in the creation of heavy sterling balances to India's credit in the United Kingdom. The chief features of the War period trade are Government controls,



Government restrictions and Government purchases. In every trade whether it is cloth or grain, sugar or cement, bricks or iron and steel, the hand of the State is visible. In some cases the grip is tight, while in others it is yet loose. Forward business in grains, oil-seeds, bullion, cotton and securities has been forbidden by law. Even the 'hedging contracts' in cotton which are so essential to trade and industry and which have received the blessings of the Indian Central Cotton Committee, have been forbidden. Rationing has been introduced in foodgrains and cloth in selected places. The ordinary laws of supply and demand are not operating, partly because of the insufficiency of transport facilities, and partly because of restrictions of some of the provincial governments and Indian States. There is lack of unified central control in the country at present.

Another important change to note in our marketing system is the appearance of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation which is participating in India's foreign trade to the detriment of normal trading interests. Its existence is being justified by Government on strategic grounds. At best, it may be tolerated during the period of the War, although there is no justification for it even at present. But people have grave doubts whether it will be wound up with the cessation of hostilities. This, only the future can tell.

The future tendency of marketing organization

seems to be towards increasing concentration and pooling of output on national and even international scale. There were a number of international combines and trusts before the war. The British industry has been thoroughly re-organized in the last 25 years, and to meet foreign competition marketing has been centralised. The State has encouraged common selling through marketing boards, like German cartels. Combinations which were dreaded in the 19th century have become the order of the day, and it is commonly believed that without some form of combination for fixing of prices, regulation of output and restriction of productive capacity, industry cannot be rationalized. The United States of America contemplates organizing an International Commodity Stabilisation Corporation to rid the world of trade cycles and combat the evils of colonial controls of raw materials. The Sugar Syndicate and the Cement Merger in this country are only pointers of the direction in which the wind is blowing. The cotton mill interests of Bombay have been making attempts to combine to face competition from within and without.

The present *volume* is an attempt to place, in the hands of advanced students of Economics and Commerce, and those of the general readers and State Officials who are interested in the marketing problems, a book dealing with the present-day marketing problems of this country. It deals with the principles as well as the practice of marketing, particularly in India.

There is dearth of books on this subject, especially of those illustrating Indian conditions. The first few chapters are devoted to the principles of marketing which apply equally to the manufactured goods as well as the agricultural products. A separate chapter is allotted to Advertising and Salesmanship. Agricultural marketing occupies the place of honour, partly because it gives occupation to about three-fourths of the population, and partly because marketing of agricultural products on sound lines needs greater stress and attention. Staple commodities like wheat, cotton, jute and rice have been separately dealt with. Quite a large number of senior students of Economics and Commerce are not familiar with market phraseology and they are not able to understand, much less to interpret, market reports. A chapter is, therefore, added on market terminology. The last chapter is on the Stock Exchange. Besides the technique of marketing, followed on the stock exchanges, the reader will find helpful suggestions to decide where to invest.

The author is grateful to the numerous writers from whose works he has drawn inspiration and material. He has gratefully acknowledged them in the footnotes of the book. Inadvertent omissions may be forgiven. Most of the material on agricultural marketing in India is based on Government Reports and publications. They are the best available sources at present.

October, 1943.

K. L. GOVIL.

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Review of Trade for British India (*Annual Publication*)

Agricultural Marketing in India (*Annual Publication*)

# INDEX

## A

- Account Day, 416
- Acworth Committee, 176, 188, 189, 191
- Advertising, 17, 82 to 108
- Agents:
  - Auctioneer, 75
  - Broker, 73, 75
  - Commission, 75
  - Clearing, 77
  - Del credere, 75
  - Exporting, 77, 78
  - Factor, 73, 74
  - Forwarding, 77
  - General, 72, 73
  - Particular, 73
  - Selling, 76
  - Warehouse Companies, 76
- Adulteration, 151 to 154
- Agmark, 31, 115, 220, 354
- Agra, 146, 147
- Agricultural Commission, 3, 48, 50, 124, 126, 141, 152, 167, 170, 176, 179, 180, 187, 189, 197, 198, 206, 225, 286, 306
- Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act of 1937, 31, 150, 265, 345, 354
- Agricultural Research Laboratory of I. C. J. C., 338
- Agriculture:
  - debt relief legislation, 127-28
  - department of, 150
  - disabilities in India, 122

- holdings, 123-24
- middlemen in marketing, 135
- marketing defects, 137
- necessity of planning, 120
- organisation of markets, 129
- production statistics, 121
- yield, 122
- Arbitrage dealings, 38

## B

- Backwardation, 425
- Bases of purchase, 14
- Bearer Bonds, 408
- Berar Cotton and Grain Markets Act, 169
- Bears, 273, 375, 423
  - kinds of, 376
  - protected, 381
  - squeeze, 377
- Bengal:
  - Agriculturists, Debt Relief Act, 318.
  - Board of Economic Enquiry, 311.
  - Chamber of Commerce, 328.
  - Jute Enquiry Committee, 223.
  - Wholesale Co-operative Society, 222.
- Beoparis, 35, 133-34.
- Block Rates, 188
- Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab, 242
- Bombay:

- Cotton Contracts Act of 1932, 301.
  - Cotton Contracts Act of 1919, 299
  - Cotton Market, 298.
  - Cotton Markets Act, 170
  - Principal cotton trading bodies, 298
  - Provincial Banking Enq. Committee, 134, 163, 200, 289
  - Rice Merchants' Association, 364
  - Stock Exchange, 398, 425
  - Weights and Measures Act, 142
  - Wheat Market, 252
  - Bought and Sold notes, 420
  - Brokers, 43, 73, 75, 357
  - Buckingham Canal, 191-192
  - Budla, 428
  - Bulls, 273, 374, 423
  - kinds of, 374, 375
  - protected, 381
  - Buying-in day, 417
- C**
- Calcutta:
    - Grain, Rice and Oilseeds Association, 253, 365
    - Jute Market, 315
    - Rice Merchants Association, 365
    - Stock Exchange, 397-98, 425
    - Wheat Market, 252
  - Carry-over, 423
  - Caveat emptor*, 14
  - Central Banking Enq. Com. 125, 127, 135, 164, 204, 286
  - C. P. Banking Enq. Com., 135, 171
  - Chain Stores, 4, 52, 58 to 61
  - Chandausi, 251, 266
  - Chandpur, 315
  - Clousten, D., 151
  - Contango, 415, 423, 424
  - Contract Note, 420
  - Cottage industries, 125
  - Cotton:
    - acreage and yield, 281
    - adulteration, 292-93
    - chief growing areas, 281
    - Contracts Committee of 1918, 299
    - Contracts Board, 299
    - Contract Act of 1942, 305
    - control of forward contracts, 302-3
    - damping, 294
    - forward business, 303 to 305
    - Ginning and Pressing Act, 284, 294
    - grading, 296-7
    - Indian Cotton Contract, 280, 298
    - Indian Cotton Cess Act, 285
    - middlemen in marketing, 286 to 289
    - malpractices and defects, 291-2
    - regulated markets, 284
    - ready and forward business, 297
    - standards (U. S. A.), 297
    - speculation, 304
    - technological laboratory, 285
    - Transport Act, 284, 292, 326
    - Wiles Committee of 1930, 300-1
  - Co-operative Marketing, 64, 193 to 225

- advantages, 66, 67, 200
- cane societies in U. P., 211, 217
- causes of failure, 68
- consumers, 68, 69
- difficulties; 224
- disadvantages, 67
- origin, 65, 194, 198
- organisation, 65, 66
- Rochdale Societies, 69
- sales unions, 208, 211
- Co-operative Societies:
  - Acts, 194
  - Bombay, 207
  - Ghee societies, 220
  - Jute societies, 222
  - kinds of, 201
  - liability, 197-98
  - Lyallpur, 209
  - multipurpose vs. single, 197-98
  - organization in India, 202
  - stores, 202
    - Surat, 208
- Cover System, 427
- C. P. Cotton Market Act of 1932, 171
- Council of Agricultural Research, 12
- Credit and Financing, 34
- Cum. div., 421

## D

- Dantwala, 287, 297
- Darshani Hundi, 364
- Debentures, 404
- Debt Relief Legislation, 127-28
- Deferred shares, 402
- Departmental Stores, 14, 17, 52, 55 to 57
- Derby, Lord, 24, 175

- Distribution of wealth in India, 119
- Dutton, H. P., 31
- Dalhousie, Lord, 173

## E

- East India Company, 111, 174
- East India Cotton Association, 8, 32, 299, 300, 302
- Elevators, 28
- Estimates of area and yield of principal crops in India, 280
- Exchange Committee, 426
- Ex. div., 421

## F

- Fairs, 130
- False weighment, 140
- Famine Commission, 126, 193
- Federal Trade Commission on Grain Trade (U. S. A.), 298
- Financing of Agri. Marketing, 33, 34
  - by banks, 160
  - classification, 155
  - deposit system, 159
  - hundis, 159
  - in Punjab, 161
  - intermediaries, 158
  - itinerant beopari, 158
  - lagana, 157
  - loan offices in Bengal, 161
  - sarafs, 158-59
  - sawai system, 157
  - village sowkar, 157
- Food Control Department, Kashmir, 353
- Forward business, 370
- Franco, 20
- Freight rates, 188
- Functional middleman, 42



Funded Debts, 409  
Futures, 370, 371, 372

## G

Gale Option, 381  
Gearing of Capital, 402  
Ghaziabad, 146, 147, 251, 256,  
266  
Ghee Societies, 220  
Gadag Sale Societies, 207  
Gordon, S., 199  
Government Loans, 409  
—Securities, 405  
Grading, 12, 28, 29, 149  
'Grow more food' campaign,  
232, 247

## H

Haldwani, 347  
Hapur, 146-47, 234, 251, 255-  
56, 266, 270-71  
Hathras, 146-47  
Hedging transactions, 38, 383  
Hubli societies, 207

## I

Imperial Council of Agricultural  
Research, 149-50, 166  
Incidental charges, 144-45  
Indian:  
—Central Cotton Committee,  
3, 104, 123, 150, 152, 172,  
206, 280, 284, 286, 293,  
301, 305  
—Central Jute Committee,  
3, 163, 221, 307, 310, 311,  
326, 328, 329, 333, 336-  
37  
—Cotton Exchange, 300  
—Industrial Commission, 191

—Jute Mills Association, 323,  
326  
—Produce Association, 253  
—Sugar Committee, 123  
—Taxation Enquiry Com-  
mittee, 148  
—Textile Journal, 304  
—Trade Journal, 262  
Interest cover, 406  
Itinerant dealer, 245

## J

Jobbers, 397, 398  
Jute:  
—Co-operative movement, 318  
—credit facilities, 318  
—deductions, 317  
—grading, 324  
—jaohandars, 319  
—insurance, 332-33  
—kucha balers, 314, 319, 324  
—malpractices, 325  
—marketing, 309  
—marketing conditions, 221  
—marketing surveys, 307  
—middleman, 313  
—prices, 334  
—restriction of acreage, 335  
—sales in villages, 316  
—standards, 336  
—storage, 312, 314, 316, 329-  
30  
—terminal markets, 315-16,  
322  
—transport, 319 to 323  
—kinds of, 323, 325  
—weighing, 336-37

## K

Karda, 154-55  
Kashipur, 347

Kashmir, 355  
 Khattis, 10, 11, 27, 28  
 Kirkness, L. H., 186  
 Kucha arhatiya, 35, 48, 132,  
 135, 137 246, 290  
 Kucha balers, 315-16, 319, 324

## L

Larkhana, 365  
 Lindley, 404  
 Lombard Street, 398  
 London Stock Exchange, 395  
 Lyallpur, 251

## M

Maclagan Committee, 126, 194  
 Madras Committee on Co-  
 operation, 224-25  
 Madras scheme of godowns,  
 164  
 Mail orders, 15, 17, 30, 52, 62-  
 64  
 Mandis, 7, 131  
 Making-up price, 424  
 Margin system, 427  
 Marketing:  
 —adviser, 115  
 —department, 3, 31  
 —development, 112-13  
 —finance, 115  
 —functions, 9, 10  
 —organization, 41  
 —process, 9, 11  
 —unions, 219  
 Markets:  
 —agricultural, 129  
 —commodity, 368  
 —definition, 1, 2, 5, 6  
 —forward, 5  
 —information, 39, 261  
 —perfect, 6

—phatka, 1  
 —primary, 249  
 —problems, 2  
 —regulated, 6  
 —reports, 389  
 —secondary, 250  
 —spot, 5  
 —terminal, 251-52  
 —terminology, 368  
 —terms, 385  
 —tone and undertone, 388  
 Marking-board, 419  
 Middleman, 4, 26, 34  
 Mitchell, K. G., 186  
 Motor transport, 181  
 Muddati hundi, 352  
 Multiple shops, 4, 14, 52  
 Multi-purpose co-operative so-  
 cieties, 197

## N

Najrana option, 274, 379  
 Name or ticket day, 415  
 Narayanganj, 315  
 National income, 117

## O

Octroi duty, 148  
 Okara Co-operative Society,  
 248  
 Options:  
 —general, 378  
 —call option, 378  
 —double options, 379  
 —put option, 378  
 Outright purchase system, 219

## P

Packaging, 33  
 Pakka arhatiya, 35, 47, 132, 246

Parbatipur paddy sale societies,  
363  
Pay day, 416  
Per capita income, 118  
Pooling, 203  
Prices, 19, 386, 387, 388, 427  
Principal commodity markets,  
368  
Principal Mandis, 131  
Printers' Ink, 81  
Promissory Note, 408  
Provincial Banking Enq. Com-  
mittees, 125-26, 225  
Public Debt, 408  
Public Works Department, 179  
Punjab Provincial Banking  
Enq. Committee, 141, 164,  
204, 209  
Purshottamdas Thakurdas  
(Sir), 304  
Pyle, J. F., 11, 29, 42, 55, 61

## R

Rabi Crops, 25  
Rail and River-borne Trade of  
India, 262  
Rail-road Controversy, 187  
Railway Policy, 175  
Railway Rates, 188  
Railway Rates Advisory Com-  
mittee, 189  
Ralli Brothers, 132  
Rates Tribunal, 189  
Ready and Forward Sections,  
370  
Refraction, 154-55  
Refrigeration, 28  
Regulated Markets, 169 to 172  
Research Institute Coimbatore,  
149  
Reserve Bank of India, 127  
to 129

Retailer, 26, 37, 43, 51, 52  
Review of Trade for Br.  
India, 40, 182-83, 280  
Rice:  
—assembling agencies, 346  
—conservation, 354  
—consumers' co-operative  
stores, 366  
—co-operative societies, 363  
—cost of storage, 356  
—deductions and charges, 350-  
51  
—dehuskers, 348, 357  
—direct sales, 346  
—factors influencing price, 344  
—financing, 351-52  
—future dealings, 357  
—grading, 353  
—handling and transportation,  
358  
—loss in storage, 356  
—markets, 349  
—marketing process, 345  
—middlemen, 347  
—per capita consumption, 343-  
44  
—periodical distribution of  
crop, 342  
—premium on old rice, 357  
—retail trade, 365  
—standardization, 353  
—statistics, 358  
—storage by merchants, 355  
—trade, 343  
—trade associations, 364  
—weights and measures, 369  
—wholesale distribution, 362  
—yield per acre, 340-41  
Risk bearing, 35  
Road Development Com-  
mittee, 184-85  
Rural Development Deptt.,  
180

Rural Indebtedness, 126

## S

Saharanpur, 347

Sale, 14, 15

Saraiya, R. G., 294

Sea-borne Trade of India, 262

Shah, K.T., 117

Shirras, F., 118

Shri Mahajan Association, 299

Shroffs, 352, 364

Speculation :

—general, 8, 372

—kinds of speculators, 373 to 375

—gale option, 381

—hedging, 383

—najrana option, 379

—options, 378

—satta, 382-83

—settlement, 385

—speculative bout, 377

—switching over, 384

—straddling, 382

—teji-mandi transactions, 379

Standardization, 28

—of weights, 141, 143

Standing Committee of Roads, 185

Stock Exchange:

—backwardation, 425

—Bombay, 398

—Bought and Sold notes, 420

—budla, 425

—buying-in, 417

—Calcutta, 396, 398

—clearing house, 426

—contract notes, 420

—contango, 415, 423, 424

—cover system, 427

—cum. div., 421

—debentures, 404

—ex. div., 421

—Govt. Securities, 405

—Lombard Street, 398

—London, 395, 397, 398

—name or ticket day, 415

—pay day, 416

—sell out, 416

—settling day, 415

—shares, 400, 401

—share warrants, 403

—stock, 403

Storage, 25, 162 to 168

Suez Canal, 24, 175

Sugar Cane Act of 1934, 213

Sugar Factories Control Act of 1938, 213, 214

## T

Tape prices, 427

Tata Deferred Shares, 402

Technique of Advertising, 95

Technological Research Laboratory of I. C. J. C., 326, 333

Teji-mandi ka sauda, 379

Tenders, 377

Terminal Markets, 251-52

Trade Association, 364

Trade Journal, 40

Trade Marks, 18, 107, 108

Trading in actuals, 370

Trans-Atlantic cable, 296

Transportation:

—co-ordination, 192

—effects of railways, 175-76

—feeder roads, 187

—rail-road controversy, 187

—railway rates, 188

—Railway Rates Advisory Committee, 189

—Rates Tribunal, 189

—road management, 178-79

- various means, 178
- water transport, 190
- Wedgewood Committee, 189

## U

Units of quotations:

- Foreign, 390-91
- Inland, 391-92
- Unfunded Debts, 409
- Unit Stores, 53
- U. P. Agricultural Marketing Bill, 205
- U. P. Banking Enquiry Committee, 48, 133, 134, 145

## V

Voelcker, J. A., 193

## W

- Water Transport, 190
- Weaknesses in agricultural marketing, 138
- Wedgewood Committee, 189
- Wheat:
  - acreage, 234
  - allowable deductions, 275-77
  - arhatiyas, 246
  - collection, 240-41

- consumption, 238
- co-operative commission shops, 247
- co-operative marketing, 248
- dara sales, 256
- delivery months, 278
- direct marketing, 242-43
- exports contracts, 269
- exports to U. K., 237
- foreign trade, 234
- forward sales or budni, 270
- grading, 264-65
- Hapur mandi, 270-74
- imports from Australia, 237
- impurities, 264
- itinerant dealer, 245
- markets, 249-52
- marketing practices, 253
- marketing processes, 239
- methods of sale, 254
- mill contracts, 268
- non-protective duties, 235
- prices, 258-59
- production, 230
- qualities, 234, 263
- ready sales, 266
- storage, 267
- supply, 233
- units of weight, 277
- village baniya, 244