

‘ GEOGRAPHIC MOSAIC OF PERIODIC MARKET
PLACE EXCHANGE SYSTEMS AND NETWORK ’

by

B. G. Tamaskar

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The book, tenuously titled, (Periodic market systems could have carried the same meaning) is largely a collection of papers published by Prof. Tamaskar in various Indian Journals during a thirty year period, starting from the ‘ Weekly Market Place at Patharia Kalan ’, published in ‘ Vikassheel Bhugol Patrika ’ in 1984. Of the nine chapters that form the book, only two appear to have remained unpublished. Most probably these were written for the book to impart some semblance of a theoretical approach to conform with the title.

The book is truly a geographic mosaic, both areally and thematically. Seven chapters out of nine represent case studies centred on Sagar-Damoh plateau and Chattisgarh plain, both from Madhya Pradesh of India. Grafted on these case studies is a trilogy of themes, viz. weekly markets, livestock marketing and fair centres. The entire work is neither pieced together well, nor sequentially unified, for, the chapters hang as case studies. For a major theme like the one discussed here, the approach and organisation demand a historical perspective, well focused investigations of the past as well as the contemporary situation, followed by a generalised presentation of the author’s views and findings. Professor Tamaskar has tried to cushion his isolated case studies against the regional approach to Chattisgarh market network and a review of market systems in chapter five.

The merit of the book lies as claimed by the author, in the preface, in its being ‘ one of the pioneering academic ventures ’. Those interested in the study of market centres and fairs, will find the book useful. The book is a valuable addition to the existing literature on India and can be considered as a representative of much that is written on periodic markets and fairs of central India. One eagerly awaits the arrival of the companion volume ‘ the generalised features of weekly market places ’. Prof. Tamaskar deserves not only appreciation, but even applause for dedicating the volume to his teacher Prof. B. M. Thirunaranan, whom the reviewer has the privilege of knowing as a man of rare sensibilities, having human qualities and a geographer of incisive perception and rational understanding of the world.

The book is well bought out; quality paper, neat publishing and flawless binding, topped with a well designed glossy jacket. With the author, the publishers also deserve our appreciation.

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