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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### A GEO-ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY ON CULTIVATION, PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF BANANA IN GOALPARA DISTRICT OF ASSAM, INDIA

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#### Abstract

Goalpara district covering an area of 1,824sq.km.in the western part of south bank of the Brahmaputra in Assam extends between 25° 54'N to 26° 17'N latitude and 90°3'E to 91°6'E longitude. The district along with its surrounding areas basically the south central parts are very suitable for the cultivation of banana one of the important fruit crop of the district. The district is not only rich in the cultivation and production of banana but also it has some big collecting centers mainly at Daranggiri, Dhupdhara, Rongjuli, Dudhnoi, etc. The century-old Daranggiri banana market in Goalpara district has now reached the peak of selling with rank first as the largest banana market in Asia. Bananas from Daraggiri are being supplied to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and many other places of India and abroad. The present paper is a modest attempt to analyse the geo-environmental characteristics of Cultivation, Production and Marketing of Banana in Goalpara District of Assam.

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#### Introduction:-

India with an annual output of 14.2 million tones ranks first in the world production (86 million tons) of banana. The acreage under this crop in the country stands third as regard the total area given to all fruit crops. The banana in India covered 13 per cent of the country's total area and 33 percent of the total production as per the statistics of 2001-2002. In Assam the production of banana encompassed a tune of 605.9 matric tones over an area of 5.80 thousand hectare of land as per the statistics of 2001-2002, the yield per hectare of land being 104.47 metric tones. In Assam even as banana is scatteredly grown in all the districts, the best produced areas are located in the district of Goalpara, Nagaon and Sonitpur. The northern foothills of Meghalaya extended to Goalpara district and parts of Kamrup district (now South Kamrup district) are the rich banana producing areas. Of these areas Goalpara district is by far the most potential and productive area as regards in banana production in whole of the country.

#### The Study area

The present study area is the district of Goalpara covering an area of 1,824 km<sup>2</sup>.in Assam in the western part of the south bank of the river Brahmaputra, extends from 25° 54'N to 26° 17'N latitude and longitudinally from 90°3'E to 91°6'E. From the geo-environmental point of view the district comprises foothills of pre-cambrian rocks surface in the south flood free built-up areas. Three distinct geomorphic areas, viz. the chronically affected floodplains including levees in an east-west stretching belt very nearer to the Brahmaputra in the north, the comparatively flood-free built-up areas in the middle and the foothills of the Meghalaya plateau in the south. From tectonic point of view

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the whole of the Goalpara district has been a part of in the free-deep lying in the southern end of the mighty Himalayas.

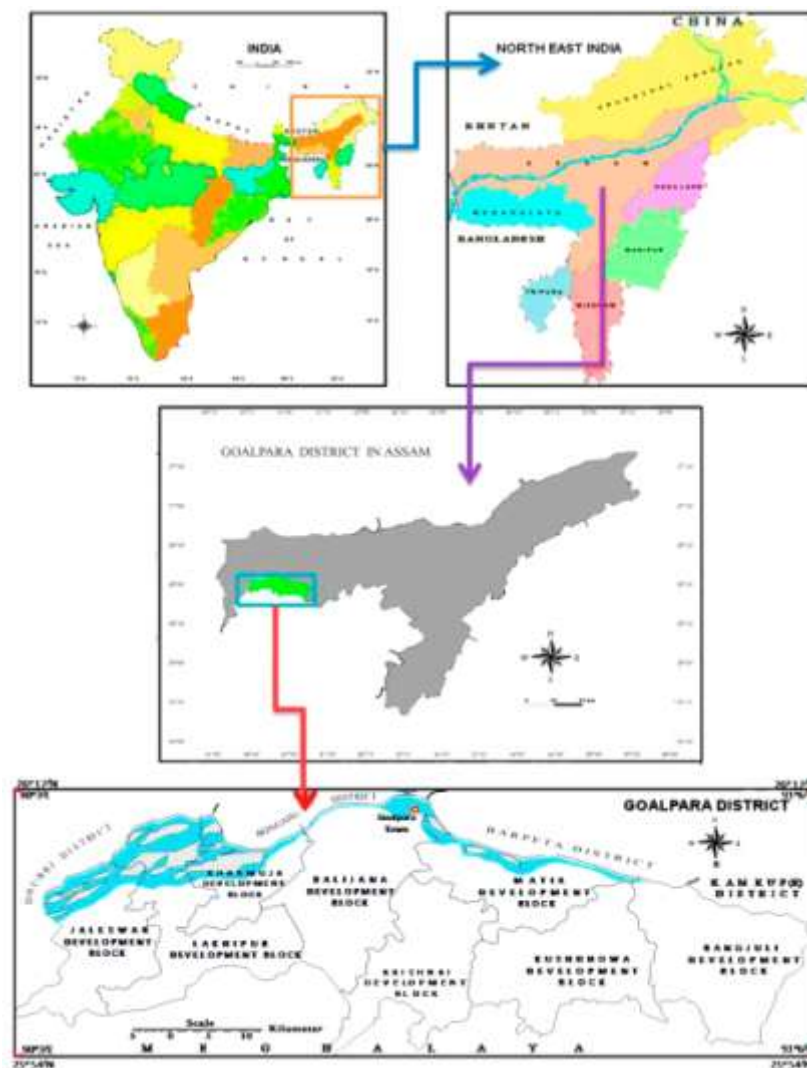


Fig. 1:- Location of the study area.

### Objectives:-

The following are the main objectives of the present study:

1. To identify the major banana cultivated areas and the amount of production ;
2. To examine and analyse the geo-environmental condition for marketing of banana.

### Methodology:-

To carry out the study, the data and information are collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data and information are collected by using the survey schedule and personal interview with the local people drawn from the study area. The secondary data related to the study has been collected from different secondary sources like census handbooks of Goalpara district, topographical sheets of scale 1:50,000, census reports (soft format) of Goalpara district, 1991 and 2001 and various published and unpublished sources. The collected information's are then processed and presented with the help of qualitative, quantitative and cartographic methods.

### Analysis

#### Cultivation and Production of Banana in Goalpara District:

Banana is one of the important fruit crops in the district of Goalpara. The district is by far the most potential and productive area as regards in banana production. Different villages in and around the district of Goalpara are well in

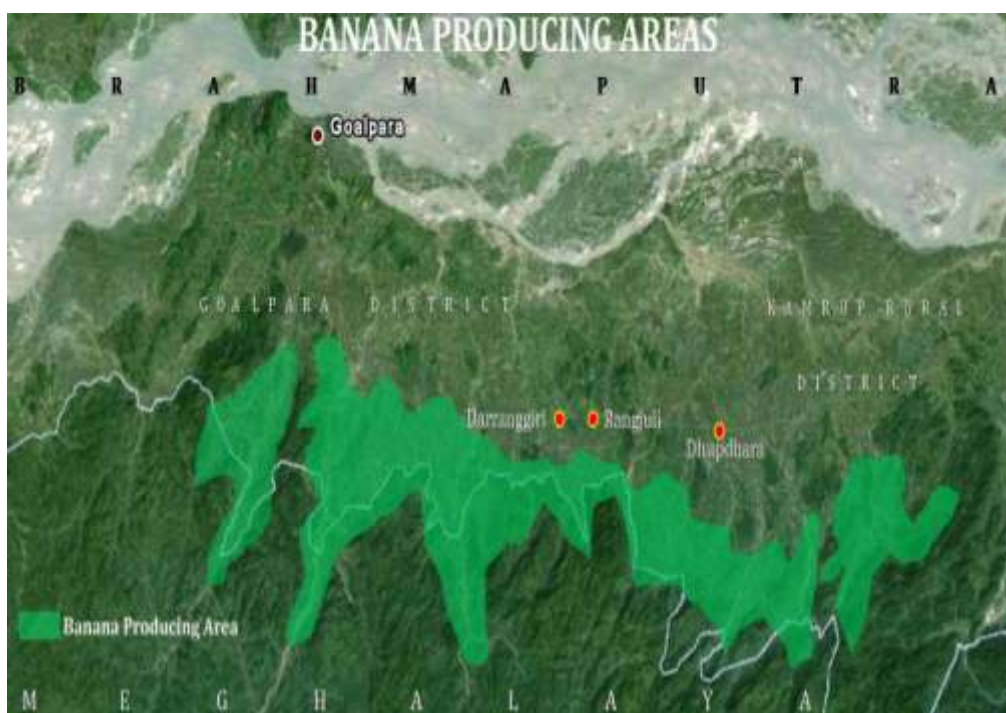
banana cultivation such as Rangshai area, baranapur and different villages near Ajagar hills. Khunagiri, Mongrai, kalaituli, Garomara, Baktapara, khardang, Mongree, Baishapara and many other villages near Krishnai and Dudhnoi river valley areas are cultivated banana at an scattered way (Fig.3). The Musa diversity of banana is very high in Assam along-with the district of Goalpara. Musa acuminate and Musa bulbisiana are the two most important species of banana cultivated by most of the cultivators. However, some wild banana species are also available in the area are Musa luca, Musa rosacea and Musa velutina.

**Table 1:-** Diversity of Banana in and around the district of Goalpara.

SLNo.	Genome	Cultiver
1	AB group	Cheni champa
2	BB group	Bhim kal
3	AAA group	Amrit sagar, Jahaji, Bar jahaji, Saapa kal etc.
4	AAB group	Malbhog, Champa, etc.
5	ABB Group	Kach kal, Jati kal, Monohar, Muthia etc.

**Source:** State of Environment Assam: 2004 Assam Science Technology and Environment Council

The diversity of banana in an around the study area are shown in the table-1. Based on the Genetic diversity, five different groups (i.e AB group, BB group, AAA group and AAB group and ABB group) can be categorized. Among the various banana species the cultivators produced different varieties of banana i.e., Malbhog, Champa, Cheni champa, Bhim kal, Jahaji etc. Mal-bhog is the best quality banana of Goalpara district and it has a great demand not only in the local market but also in abroad. People from different distance and remote areas carry banana to different weekly markets by using bicycle as a mode of transportation as shown in the plates below. They carry sometimes more than 40-50 kilometer up and down by bicycle with more than 300 nos. of banana.



**Fig. 2:-** Banana Producing Areas.

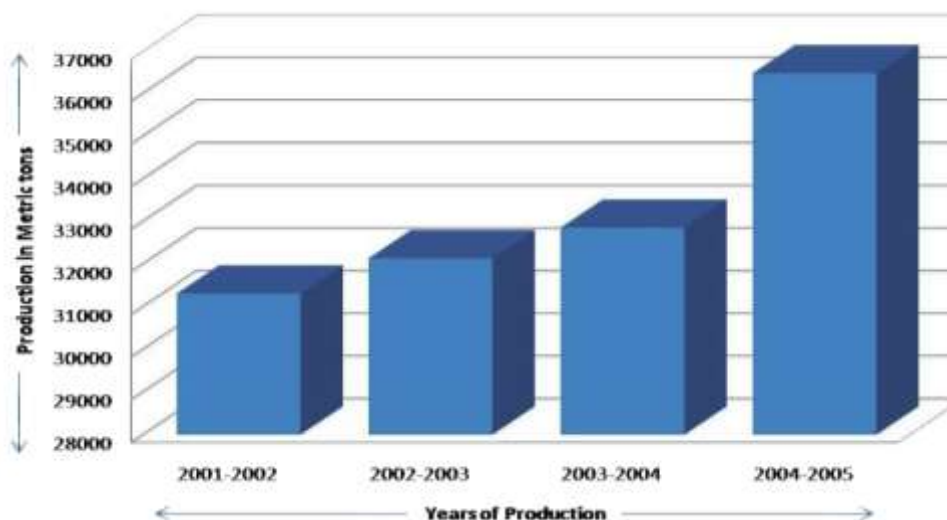
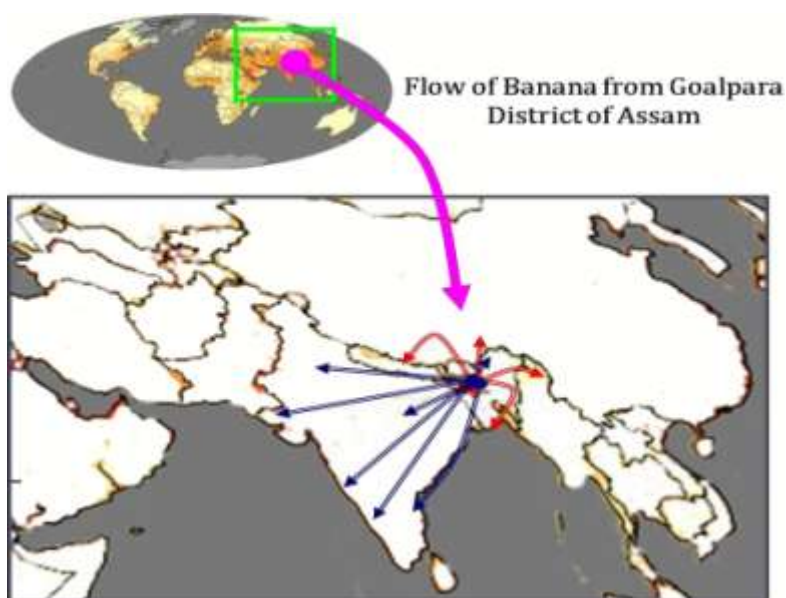
According to a survey using interview method with the carrier of banana on bicycle nearly 30 per cent carried by traveling more than the 40 kilometers up-down twice a week, similarly between 20-40 kilometer 30 per cent and remaining 40 per cent are up to 20 kilometers. The table-2 shows area coverage and production of banana during 2001-2002 to 2004-2005 in Goalpara district.

**Table-2:-** Area of Cultivation and Production of Banana in Goalpara District, 2001-2005.

Year	Area in hectares	Production in metric ton	Mt ton/ hectares
2001-2002	2020	31310	15500
2002-2003	2060	32136	15400
2003-2004	2063	32854	16120
2004-2005	2070	36472	16003

**Source:** Office of the Daranggiri Development Committee.

According to the official record a total area of 2020 hectares has been cultivated in the year 2001-2002 and produces 31310 metric ton of banana in the district of Goalpara. The production per hectares was 12200 metric ton. The cultivated area as well as the production has been annually increasing since 2001 to 2005. In 2004-2005 the production per hectares increased up to 16003 metric ton when the total cultivated area of 2070 hectares produced 36472 metric ton of banana.

**Fig. 3:-** Production of Banana in Goalpara District, 2001-2005.**Fig. 4:-** Flow of Banana from Goalpara District.



### Marketing of Banana in Goalpara District:

The district is not only rich in the production of banana but also it has some big collecting centers mainly at Daranggiri, Dhupdhara, Rangjuli, Dudhnoi, etc. As per the geo-environmental condition of the location of different market place is concerned the above mentioned centers are very suitable. The century-old Daranggiri banana market in Goalpara district has now reached the peak of selling. Bananas from Daraggiri are being supplied to Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh and many other places of India and abroad.

Daranggiri, the largest banana market of Asia has an annual turnover of over one crore. Every week around 5 thousand bicycles loaded with bananas reach the market from the neighboring areas. Officials of the Daranggiri Development Committee said that, 10 to 15 trucks each of which contains 1200 bunches are being supplied weekly. Malbhog and Cheni are the two types of banana for which buyers make a beeline at Daranggiri. Besides, Monua, Athia, etc. are the other important varieties of banana in the district.

The market also provides employment opportunities to around 10,000 people in packaging and other associated works. To fulfill the growing demand of the buyers and sellers, the state government has already established banana ripening facilities. Once functionalized, it is likely to be a boon for the local cultivators.

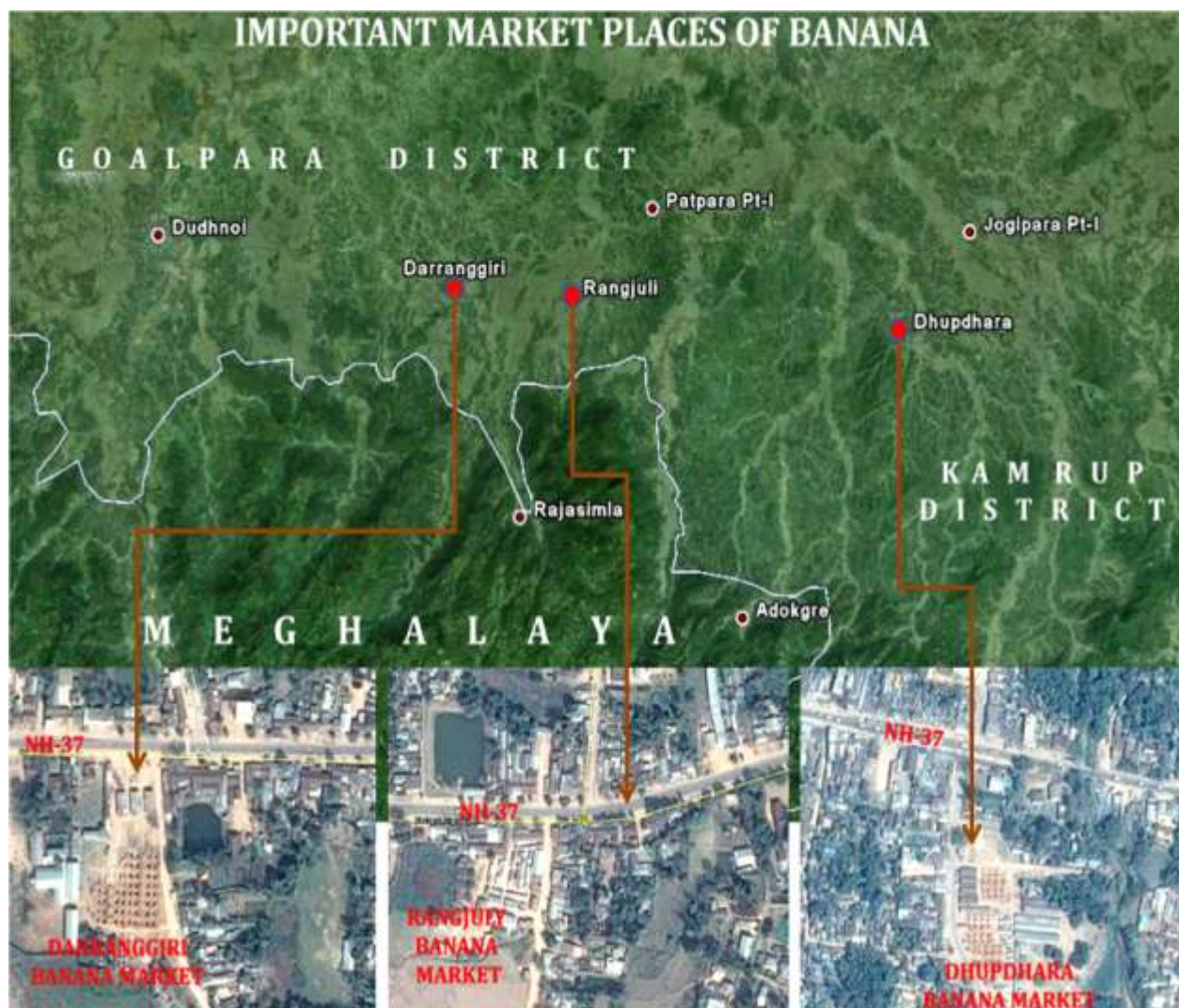


Fig 5:- Important Market Places of Banana In Goalpara District.



**Plates-** Banana carries to different weekly markets by using bicycle. and Unloading of Banana for Supplying it to Bihar on August, 2015.

### Conclusion:-

The district of Goalpara and its surrounding areas are highly induced by nature, providing such a good environmental condition for banana cultivation and good quality and quantity of production as well. At the same time good marketing is also near at hand. But still there is a need of improvement and innovation is required for smooth functioning of banana cultivation, production and marketing. The technological innovation in Banana cultivation is very negligible, on the other hand the marketing network yet not properly managed and the Government initiatives towards banana industry is presently insignificant. The technological innovation in cultivation and production of banana is the need of the hour. Government should take proper initiative to provide basic infrastructure and to develop a suitable market network for banana.

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