

Socio-economic status and Drawback of Banana Growers: A review on Asia's Largest Banana Market Daranggiri, Goalpara, Assam, India

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(Received 10 May, 2021; Accepted 19 June, 2021)

ABSTRACTS

The development of horticulture has high potentiality in India. Among the horticulture banana is one of most profitable and suitable environmental plants in India especially in Assam and Meghalaya. With 14 million tonne annual production India sustains 1st rank position in Banana cultivation in the world. The high nutrient value, employment opportunities enrich the banana cultivation in India. The rural background society, extra profit and high market demand are also pulling the unemployed youth to initiate banana cultivation in large scale. However the socio-economic status of the cultivator is still unknown. There are also various drawback of the banana grower as banana is perishable ability in term of production and market as well as fluctuating with market behavior. In the study area the existence of Asia's largest banana market highly influence banana cultivation in the surrounding region. As a protection of soil erosion and easy source of income banana is cultivated in most of area in most of the area and it also replaced the age old jhumming cultivation in the hills area of Garo hills of Meghalaya. Thus the present study attempts to evaluate the socio-economic condition of banana grower and their various drawbacks in banana farming. The practical background of knowledge and skill in banana farming is also studied.

Key word: Banana grower, marketing, Nutrient value, Socio-economy, and Unemployment.

Introduction

Banana is one of the largest herbaceous flowering plants of the tropical area of the world. Generally it is accepted that all the edible bananas are indigenous to the warm, moist region of tropical Asia, particularly in the Assam, Myanmar, Thailand (Singh, 1990). Now-a-days banana is planted in every tropical country of the globe.

Banana is the most important fruits after mango and also largest producer sharing 29.19% of world banana production at 35.88 MT/ha productivity (FAO, 2010). The different agro climate and physiological condition of the India is favoring

for the growth of Banana. According to National Horticulture board of India (2017), the country's total banana production is 30.5 million tonnes. Among the states, Tamil Nadu has the largest share of area under banana cultivation.

Assam produces 805.2 thousand tones of banana having an area of 53.4 thousand ha (National Horticulture Board, 2012-13). The state rich soil and abundant rainfall is the positive factor for its development.

The age old traditional use of banana caudexes and fruits among the Hindu religious mythology enrich its value and usability. In various festive and religious traits of Assam banana plants have a spe-

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cial place. Banana as a vegetable also has an integral part of various typical Assamese dishes. 'Khaar' (ash) a bio-antacid is also made from the pseudo stem and corm parts of banana. The nutritional value of banana fruits is also gain priority among the people as a poor's man apple.

Banana cultivation requires both agro-climatic prospects and a well market facility. In the study area these natural requirement are available from the past and as a result banana are cultivated from the centuries. In the surrounding areas of Daranggiri² banana market the soil are rich in loam preferable for banana cultivation. Along with the temperature range is from 15° C to 35° C, the area also have tropical humid climate. Banana is grown in both in plain as well as foothill region of the surrounding areas of the market. Presently it also replaced the age old culture of jhumming cultivation which is most popular among the hill people of Meghalaya.

In case of marketing Daranggiri the Asia' largest banana market is just away from NH³⁷ of Goalpara district and also well connected to banana growers. According to NEDFI⁴ the market is largest in term of highest transaction of Banana fruits.

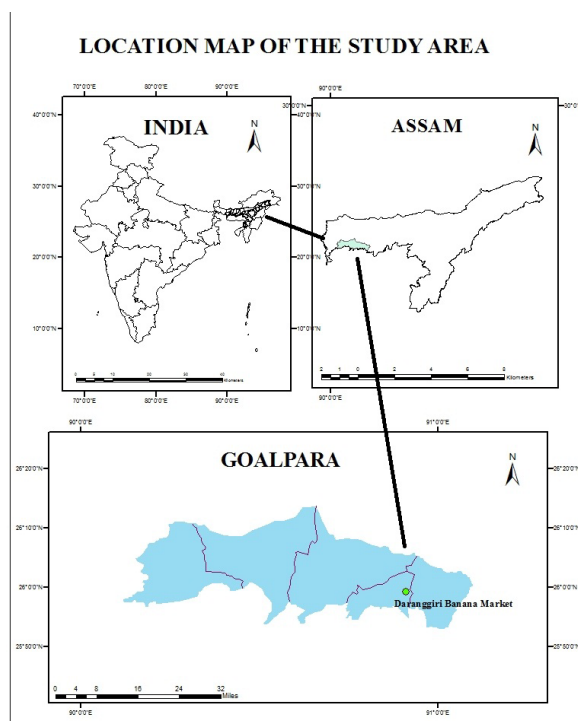


Fig. 1. Map of the study area

Objectives

The agricultural productivity of any crops is very much influenced by socio-economic condition of the farmers. Therefore the research paper attempts to know the socio-economic status of the banana growers. This papers also makes an attempt to interpret the economic importance of banana plantation and their drawbacks in banana farming in perspective of banana market of the study area. The study will also evaluate infrastructure facilities related to banana market.

Materials and Method

The study is mainly based on primary data and which are collected through direct personal investigation with the help of questionnaire prepared for the problem. As total of 50 banana growers are selected randomly from both Goalpara and Meghalaya based on amount of banana production. Another schedule is also prepared for the main Daranggiri banana market development committee for collection of import and export data. And the necessary secondary data and references are collected from different books, journals, National Horticultural office, NEDFI markets, district horticulture office and blocks etc. The data are processed statistically and diagrams are provided wherever assumed necessary.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics of banana growers. The study briefly discusses the socio-economic characteristics of the banana cultivators. It reveals their decision making behavior. It also largely determines the nature and extent of participation in development of a nation. The socio-economic factors of banana cultivator in the study area are given below.

Education level of banana growers

The educational levels of banana cultivator were classified into illiterate, primary, high school, higher secondary and graduate. Most of the people especially the farmers are poor and low level of education. The Table 1 showed that illiteracy is found high (39.13%) in the small categories of farmer. Illiteracy rate in the large categories of farmer is low i.e. 5.88%. Among the small farmers the primary education is high (30.4%). The percentage of graduate is

high in large categories of farmers (29.14%), while it is 08.6% among the small categories of farmers. It basically reveals that overall percentages of education status of banana growers are high between illiterate and primary level of education.

Occupation of the banana cultivators

In the present study, the occupation from which a lion share of the income is generated irrespective of time and labour devoted to it has been termed as the main occupation of the respondent. Agriculture is found to be the inherent and single major occupation among the farmers in the study area. Only a small proportion of the farm families were found to have dealt with service, business and other occupation excluding agriculture during the study period.

Table 2 shows that about 60% of all banana cultivators dealt with agriculture singly as main occupation. 12.5 % of cultivator deal with agriculture cum service, 20% agriculture with business and only 7.5% dealt with agriculture cum other occupation.

Average land holding size of the respondent banana cultivators

The land ownership was classified into different categories i. e., cultivated own land, land rented in, land rented out, homestead area and pond in the study area. The average farm sizes of the small and large farmers were 75.77 and 132.1 decimals respectively with overall average being 103.93 decimal in the study area.

The average farm size was calculated as: average

farm size= cultivated own land +land rented in – land rented out.

Economic importance of banana market

The Daranggiri banana market is the economic boon of the surrounding region of Assam and Meghalaya. The poor economic scenario of the tribes push them directly to banana plantation as it grow every season of the year with minimum efforts. In Goalpara district the Rabha, Bodo tribes and some indigenous Muslim family mainly engaged in Banana cultivation. Whereas in Meghalaya the Garo hill tribes cultivate banana in the foot hill region and shares about 70% of banana to the Daranggiri banana market. Individual cultivation is mostly preferred than community farming by the tribes. Nearly 15000 people are engaged in both productions as well as marketing. The most interesting fact is that they practiced traditional farming and only 16.4% farmer use organic pasture or manure with total absent of chemical fertilizer (Singh, 2006). The scientific farming is still absent in those banana cultivated area.

Export of banana

The Darranggiri banana market boasts of different varieties of banana like Cheni Champa, Malbhog, Kashkal etc. among them Cheni Champa variety is excellent product then other varieties. The annual turnover is around Rs 4 crore in Daranggiri banana market. The August to November month is peak season in the banana harvesting in this region. Approximately 1500-1800 full loaded trucks of banana

Table 1. Education levels of the Banana Cultivators.

Categories of farmer	Illiterate school (I-VI)	Primary	High school	Higher secondary school	Graduate	Total
Small farmers	9 (39.13%)	7(30.4%)	3 (13.02%)	2 (8.6%)	2(8.6%)	23 (100%)
Large farmers	1 (5.88%)	4(23.52%)	3 (17.64%)	4 (23.52%)	5 (29.14%)	17(100%)
Total	10 (25%)	11(27.5%)	6 (15%)	6(15%)	7 (17.5%)	40 (100%)

Source: primary survey, 2020

Table 2. Occupation status of the Banana Cultivators.

Categories of farmer	Agriculture	Agriculture cum service	Agriculture cum business	Agriculture cum others	Total
Small farmers	13 (56.52%)	3 (13.04%)	5 (21.73%)	2 (8.69%)	23 (57.5%)
Large farmers	11 (64.70%)	2 (11.76%)	3 (17.64%)	1 (5.88%)	17 (42.5%)
Total	24 (60%)	5 (12.5%)	8 (20%)	3 (7.5%)	40 (100%)

Source: primary survey 2020

are sold every week from this banana market. These bananas are exported to Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and other states of India like west Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand etc. Table 2 shows the total export of banana from Daranggiri banana market from the year of 2015 to 2018.

Government scheme and infrastructure

In Assam the Horticulture marketing development has initiated various schemes under the "Assam agriculture production market Act, 1972". In case of Daranggiri Banana market the state government initiated 'Banana Market Development Programme' under the Assam State Marketing Board. It includes road infrastructure, storage facility, processing units, go-downs etc. In Goalpara a private cold storage center was developed but still it is under process. The road connectivity is now under construction under PMGSY⁶ of Central government. Recently the Chief Minister of Assam has assured to

establishment of **Assam Agriculture University** in Goalpara to accelerate the growth of banana market.

Banana and environment

Banana plant acts as a protector of environment. The roots of banana protect the soil from erosion. In case of hilly areas like Garo hills of Meghalaya and flood prone village of Goalpara districts banana may be cultivated for checking soil erosion. The most noticeable fact is that in North Garo hills region of Meghalaya banana cultivation replaces the age old shifting cultivation of the tribes with a concept of sustainable farming. Now they are depend on banana farming for their livelihood.

Drawback of the banana cultivators

Banana is a year round field crop. Based on the opinion of the respondent the most common and serious problem of growing banana faced by the cultivator in the study area are summarized and dis-

Table 3. Average land holding of the banana cultivators in decimal

Land type	Small farmers	Large farmers	All farmers
Homestead area	6.2	8.33	14.53
Pond	1.63	2.41	4.04
Cultivated own land	52.65	112	164.65
Land rented in	23.12	20.10	43.22
Land rented out	00	00	00
Total land	83.60	142.84	226.44
Average farm size	75.77	132.1	103.93

Source: primary survey, 2020.

Table 4. Export of banana from Daranggiri banana market in 2015-2018

Banana variety (2015-16)	Weekly sale (trucks)	Monthly sale (trucks)	Yearly sale (trucks)
Chenichampa	30	120	1440 (53.57%)
Malbhog	23	92	1104 (41.07%)
Kaskol	3	12	144 (5.35%)
Total	56	224	2688 (100%)
Banana variety (2016-17)	Weekly sale (trucks)	Monthly sale (trucks)	Yearly sale (trucks)
Chenichampa	32	128	1536 (54.23%)
Malbhog	24	96	1152 (40.67%)
Kaskol	3	12	144 (5.08%)
Total	59	236	2832 (100%)
Banana variety (2017-18)	Weekly sale (trucks)	Monthly sale (trucks)	Yearly sale (trucks)
Chenichampa	36	144	1728 (53.73%)
Malbhog	26	104	1248 (38.80%)
Kaskol	5	20	240 (7.46%)
Total	56	224	3216 (100%)

Source: Daranggiri banana market committee, Daranggiri, Goalpara, Assam.

cussed below. These are:

Problem of credit

Credit poses as a most important constraint in banana production. The various problems related to credit by the farmers are:

Non-availability of credit

Non-availability of credit always hampers the banana grower. About 28% of the banana grower reported that they had problems in obtaining bank loans. Some of them also reported the failure of loan sanction after applied to the bank.

Insufficiency of loan amount

Some of the farmer complained that loan amount from bank was not sufficient to cover the expenses of production. About 20% of the respondent farmers reported inadequacy of loan amount to obtain better yield and timely completion of banana production.

Low prices of output

The farmers of Daranggiri banana market are not well organized and educated. All the output is moved to market either through middle man or village assembling centre to main market. They usually do not get competitive price for their product. About 50% of banana growers sold their product at low prices.

Lack of storage facility

Storage problem for banana cultivation was another important problem in the study area. Because of banana being a perishable fruit crop, most of the output is sold after harvest at lower prices due to lacks of cold storage facilities or go-downs. Therefore the value addition of the products is not achieved and also the banana easily deteriorates. The price behavior also changes with time. These facts are easily taken up by the agents or middle man. About 70 % of banana growers reported that they had no proper storage facilities.

Lack of research center

High productivity of banana always demand research center or laboratory to test the soil fertility, growth and production of banana, need of fertilizer, various disease of banana etc. As an Asian largest banana market the study area has to be a well equipped testing laboratory or research center for better results.

Conclusion

The productivity of any horticulture always relies on socio-economic characteristics of farmer and related facilities of the market. The study reveals that most of the banana cultivators have poor socio-economic status with agriculture as a basic source of occupation. The individual families are practicing banana farming from centuries in a traditional method. After the location of market it bucks up the banana growers for banana production and also helps to accelerate the economy. It also encouraged sustainable farming by replacing age old jhumming cultivation in Garo hills of Meghalaya. Recently the state government of Assam also takes some important initiative towards banana cultivation and market infrastructure of Daranggiri under Horticulture Department of Assam.

As a perishable fruit banana has lots of constraints both in production and marketing. Lack of cold storage, poor road connectivity, low level of education, lack of banking knowledge always hamper to get proper value of their product. Above all absent of scientific farming and low importance in community farming deprive from development and extension of banana cultivation.

Suggestions

In a developing country like India, we cannot fulfill the entire drawback at a time but we can work together for better results. Lots of factors such as agro-climate, agriculture society, market, replacement of shifting cultivation etc helps in banana cultivation. But there have been some constraints and other factors. These may include following suggestion:-

1. Proper policies and financial support for encouraging the youth generation towards banana farming.
2. Availability of storage facility, establishment of food processing industries and well connected road must be developed to ensure reasonable market price of banana.
3. Supply of credit through institutional credit facilities to the farmers must be done.
4. Proper training and management of banana farmer are essential for enhancing production.
5. Aware of community farming as well as scientific technology should be done for better result through camps and meeting by Horticulture department.
6. Establishment of research laboratory for en-

hancing the banana production.

Acknowledgement

This paper owes its gratitude to the people of Darangiri banana market who has been very cooperative during the events of field survey. The collection of first hand information and the various interviews of Banana growers were conveniently conducted during the survey period. We would like to acknowledge the Darangiri banana market committee and various other authorities for granting us permits wherever required. Through this paper we would like to express our gratitude to the families especially the youth whose daily wage and livelihood depend on the Banana cultivation of the region.

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