

SOIL DISTRIBUTION & AGRICULTURAL PATTERN IN BANKA DISTRICT, BIHAR

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Introduction

Banka district is primarily an agricultural region where more than 80 percent population is rural. Agriculture forms the mainstay of the economy in the region. The proportion of agricultural land to the total land is very high except in Katoria and Chanan anchals where the land is hilly and have extensive forest zone. Rice, Wheat, maize, gram and Khesari are popularly grown here. River Chandan, Badua and Chir provide water for irrigation and other purposes. Barahat, Rajoun and Amarpur blocks are famous for cultivation of good quality of rice viz. Katarni, Malbhogh, Kesour and Sonam rice. More than 80 percent of the working force is engaged in agricultural sector.

Agriculture is predominant occupation in the region, but industrialisation and modernisation is the call of the day. Many agro and cottage industries have developed and are taking place. The whole area is on the path of transformation. Rurban centres are growing fast. Means of irrigation, pattern of agriculture, modes of transportation, and industrial development are developing at speedy rate. Due to fast development in every field of life, environment is also changing.

Study Area

The proposed study relates to a small geographical unit a newly carved district out of old Bhagalpur. The district is situated on the south eastern portion of South Bihar Plain. Due to mixed topographic terrain – both plateau and plain, it has a distinct personality of its own. It is very close to Jharkhand, bounded in the south and east by Deoghar, Dumka and Godda district, whereas, its northern boundary touches Bhagalpur district and western portion is adjacent to Jamui and Munger districts.

Geographically, the Banka district is located between 24°30'00" to 25°09'00" North latitudes and 84°30'00" to 87°12'00" East longitudes. The geographical area of the district is 3020 Km². The district has been further sub-divided into 11 Block-cum-Anchals, 185 Panchayats and 2011 inhabited villages as per 2011 census. It's population is 2,099,339 persons (male 1,064,307 and female 965,032) living in 380,013 (Rural– 366,656 and urban, 13,367) households as per 2011 census. The Table no. 1.1 & Fig. 1.1 shows anchal-wise Male - Female population of Banka district.

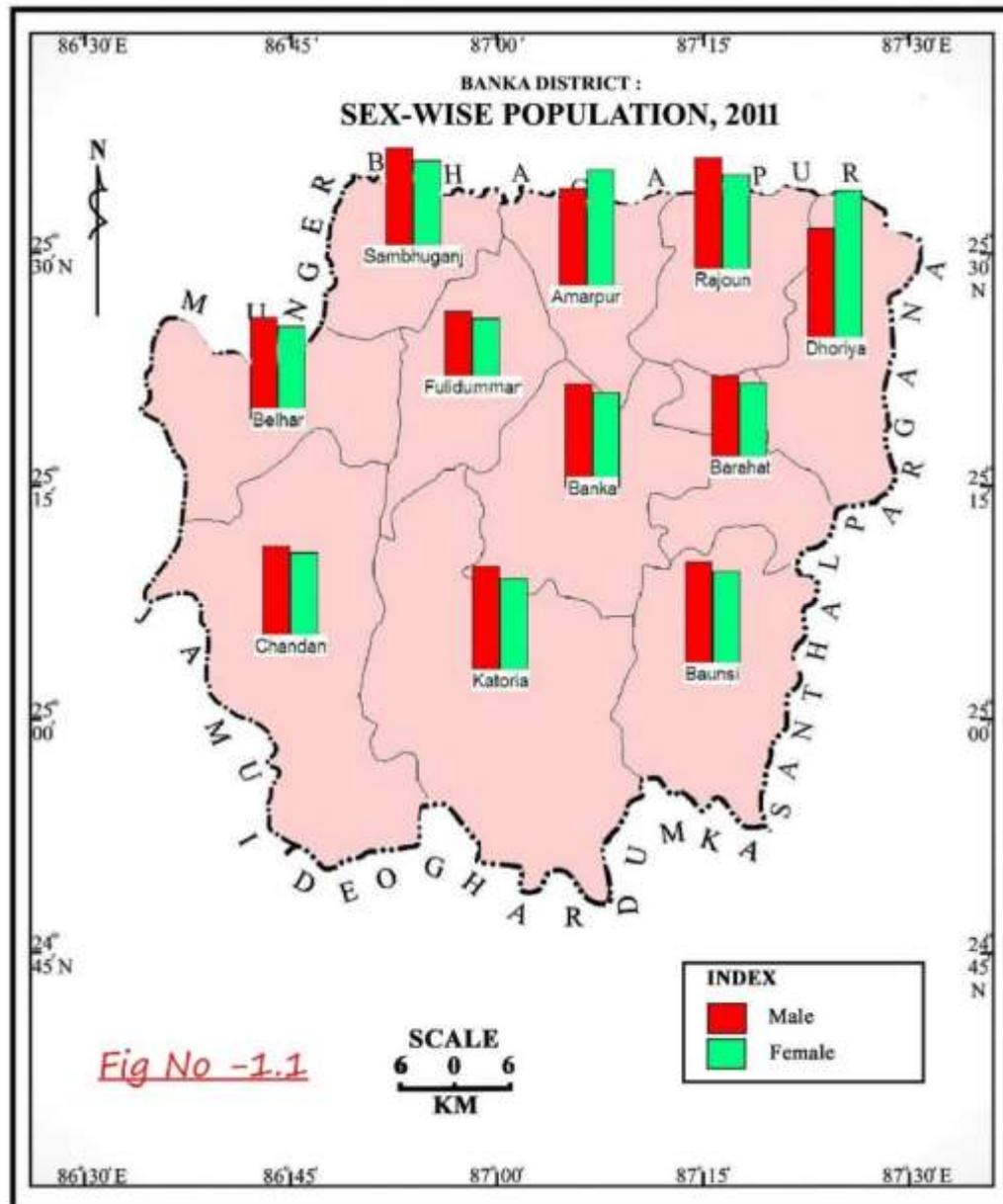
Table – 1.1

(Banka District : Anchal-wise Population, 2011)

State/District Anchals	Total Population		
	Persons	Male	Female
BIHAR	10,38,04,637	5,41,85,147	4,96,19,290
BANKA	20,34,763	10,67,140	9,34,353
1. Shambhuganj	1,73,974	92,351	81,623
2. Amarpur	2,01,351	1,05,705	95,646
3. Rajoun	1,97,601	1,03,596	94,055
4. Dhoraiya	2,39,762	1,25,586	1,14,176
5. Barahat	1,49,188	77,845	71,343
6. Banka	1,71,324	89,334	81,990

7. Phuli Dumar	1,25,251	66,115	59,136
8. Belhar	1,67,719	87,838	79,881
9. Chanan	1,65,634	86,251	79,383
10. Katoria	1,86,646	98,119	88,527
11. Baunsi	1,85,000	96,357	88,643
URBAN POPULATION			
1. Banka	45,977	24,591	21,386
2. Amarpur	25,336	13,452	11,884

Source: Census of India, Bihar, 2011



Methodology

In the present study, a systematic approach has been applied and a balanced geographical account of all effective factors of agriculture like population, land, soil, forest and water of Banka district has been made using relevant data, statistical analysis, maps and diagrams. The data for the study are obtained mainly from Bihar Statistical Handbook, Census Handbook and other secondary sources.

Soil survey laboratory, Sabour has provided the facilities for analysing the chemical and physical properties of soil which have been presented in the form of maps.

For conservation and better management of land, recommendations of soil scientists, agronomists, ecologists, agriculture engineers, horticulturist and scientist of other disciplines have been obtained and utilized.

Review of Literature

Bihar is the third populous state in India. Major proportions of its population are directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of the people. It contributes a major share in the economy of the state as well as of Banka district. Improvement in agriculture may increase the efficiency of crop cultivation and production. This can uplift the socio-economic conditions of the farmers. The assessment of agricultural efficiency reveals that Banka district has medium efficiency. The northern Banka (Rajoun, Dhoraiya, Amarpur, Shambhuganj, Phullidumar and Banka have high efficiency because these anchals have fertile soil and more irrigation facilities. Chandan and Badua dam supplies more water for irrigation. Lakshmipur Dam of Baunsi anchal supplies least water in Baunsi anchal and much to Barahat anchal. Southern Banka have more wasteland. It covers much hilly and forest area, hence agricultural efficiency is very low in Chanan, Katoria and Baunsi anchals.

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy, but owing to sedentary methods of cultivation and high pressure of population, agriculture is not a business proposition for farmers but living a way of life. In the study area, agriculture is the primary occupation and basic resource where arable land covers about 64 percent of the total area. Nearly 91.06 percent of the total population of Banka district is rural which gets sustenance mainly from agriculture. The fertile old alluvial soil occupies nearly half of its northern part. As this soil is underlain by rocks of primitive formation, ground water is nearer the surface which facilitates supply of adequate water for agriculture throughout the year (Choudhary, 1962).⁵ The southern hilly tracts have either sedentary soil or shallow alluvium (Jha, 1960).⁶ The average annual rainfall is nearly 1200 mm and fairly uniform throughout the district.

Soil distribution in Banka district

Thus the agriculture is directly influenced by soil. According to soil texture, chemical composition and productive capability of soil we can divide it into three major categories in Banka district (Fig. 1.2):

1. **Older Alluvium**
2. **Soil Balther Soil &**
3. **Red Soil**

1. **Older Alluvium Soil:** This type of soils is found in Amarpur, Shambhuganj, Phullidumar, Rajoun, Dhoraiya, Barahat and Southern Banka anchals of the district. It is also found in some parts of Belhar and Baunsi anchals. It is one of the most fertile soils of the district. It is neither acidic nor basic. It can hold water for longer period. Hence, it is best suited for paddy cultivation. Wheat, Gram, Masoor, Khesari, Arhar, etc.

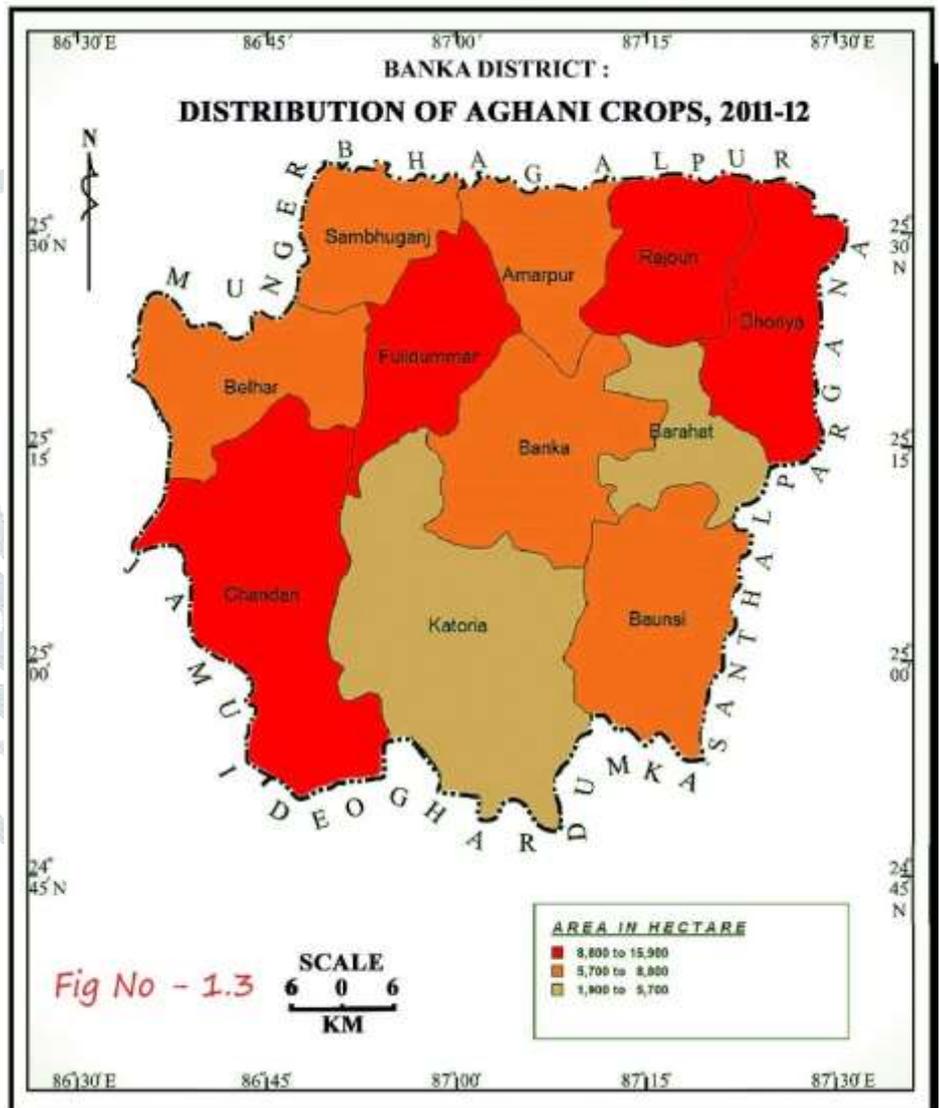
7	chanan	8808.95	1157.7	729.95	1140.79	11837.42
8	Belhar	8298.14	--	3510.37	888.07	12696.58
9	Dhoraiya	14073	--	2219.12	1236.96	17529.03
10	Shambhuganj	7185.13	--	1646.26	642.22	9473.61
11	Phullidumar	15857.6	--	1653.96	396.89	17908.41
BANKA DISTRICT		92496.7	7987	34982	11898.3	147363

Source : Agricultural deptt., Banka District (2011 – 12).

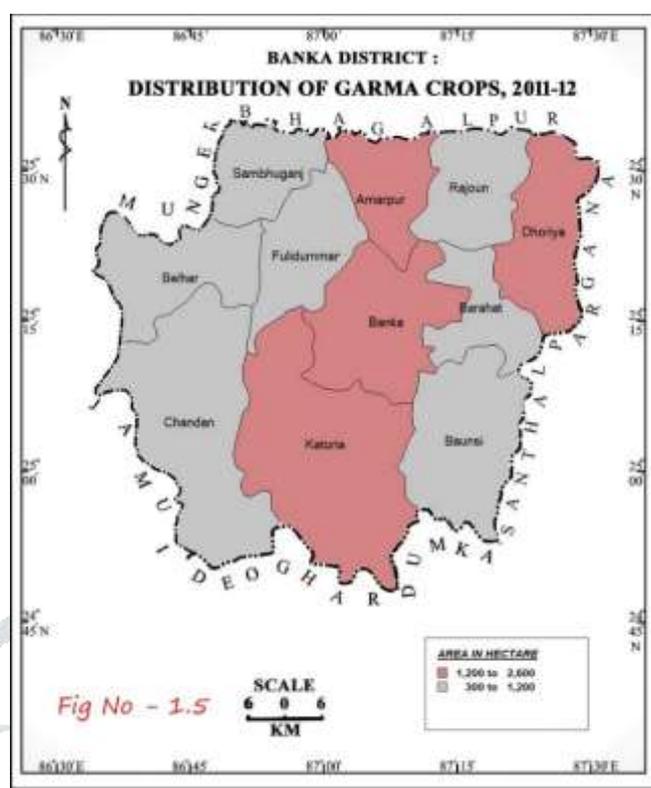
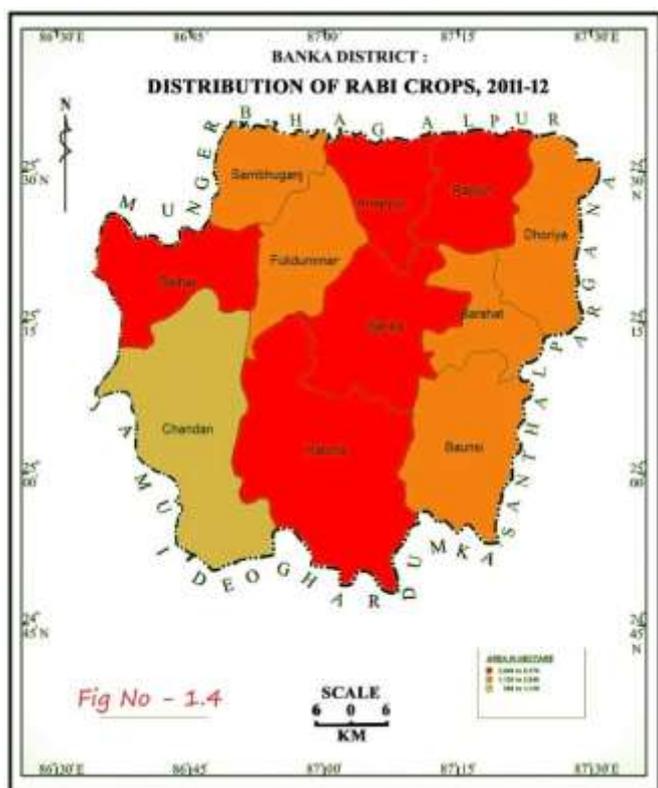
i) **Bhadai**, is known as autuman crops. It is harvested in September– October. The Bhadai crops generally consists of early ripening varieties of rice, different varieties of millets, maize, pulses and vegetables, etc. These crops are mainly grown on ‘Dih’ or ‘Bari’ lands near settlement. The main growing anchals are Rajoun, Dhoraiya, Amarpur, Fulli Dumar and Shambhuganj, all are situated in the northern part of Banka district.

ii) **Aghani**, crops are harvested generally in November – December. Maximum areas of agricultural land are occupied by crops harvested in this season. Rice, Sugarcane, Oilseeds and Pulses are the main crops of this season. In the low plains of the district, Aghani crops are grown.

iii) **Rabi**, crops are generally harvested in March and April. It occupies higher percentage of land than Bhadai and Garma and comes next to Aghani or Kharif crops. The main crops of this season include wheat, barley, rapeseed, mustard, linseed, tobacco, peas, gram, arhar, etc.



iv) **Garma**, is also termed as summer harvest. Only a little area of cultivated land is under this cropping season in the district. These crops consist mostly of vegetables, maize, marua, millets, etc. which is grown in moist riparian tracts and on irrigated lands near homestead.



Summary & Conclusions

Agriculture is the chief source of livelihood for millions of people in India in general and Banka district in particular. Agricultural research, technology, development and dissemination under the umbrella of Green Revolution are the major factors in increasing both agricultural production and productivity.³ Agriculture, being the predominated sector of economy is the pace of economic development of the district. Agricultural development is unquestionably a multi-dimensional concept of which crop productivity is one of the vital aspects. Agricultural development, in true sense, denotes the quality of agricultural system of a region in terms of productivity, diversification and commercialization. Agricultural development is a multi-dimensional process. It is a key element of rural development. There is a legitimate aspiration of people in rural areas to improve their standard of living and to share the fruits of development. The primary objective of agricultural development is usually increased growth of agricultural output. It is a requisite of economic growth. Agriculture is the mainstay of almost all the eleven blocks of Banka district.

There is obvious need for a meticulous agricultural planning and its implementation in appropriate measure in the region. A better land-use duly supported by efficient agricultural productivity can sustain the increasing human number in the Banka district.

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