

District wise Trend of Maize Productivity, Area & Yield in Assam, it's Prospect & Challenges

Robin Kumar Kalita¹, Prof. T. K. Bahadur²

¹Research Scholar, MSSV, Nagaon and Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Mayang Anchalik College

²Research Supervisor

Abstract- *Maize has emerged as a rapidly expanding crop in Assam, making a district-wise analysis of its area, production and yield essential for understanding its changing role in the state's agriculture. The abstract of such a study needs to capture how maize has spread geographically, how productivity has evolved over time, and what this means for farmers and policymakers in Assam. This study examines temporal trends in maize area, production and yield across districts, and to identify regional variations in growth performance. It should indicate that the study uses secondary data from official agricultural statistics over a defined period, applying simple growth rates and comparative analysis to map inter-district differences. This establishes the scientific basis of the work while keeping the language accessible and clear. In addition, the key findings in a balanced way, noting that many districts show significant expansion in maize area and output, driven by rising demand from feed, food and industrial sectors, while others remain underdeveloped in terms of acreage and productivity. It should also highlight that yield gains are uneven, with some districts benefiting from better access to hybrid seeds, inputs and extension, and others constrained by rained conditions, weak infrastructure and limited market access.*

Keywords: District-wise Trend, Maize Productivity, Yield, Prospects, Challenges.

I. INTRODUCTION

Maize has emerged as a rapidly growing cereal crop in Assam, shifting from a minor food grain to a key input for poultry feed, livestock, industrial use and bio fuel in recent years. State-level statistics indicate that maize acreage, production and yield have all shown an upward trend, supported by the transition from open-pollinated varieties to hybrids and by growing demand from feed and processing industries. A district-wise analysis is crucial because expansion and productivity

gains have been uneven, with some districts recording faster growth due to better infrastructure, input access and market linkages, while others lag behind.

Maize has steadily emerged as one of the most significant cereal crops within Assam's agricultural landscape, gaining prominence for its versatility, rising market demand, and suitability across diverse agro-ecological zones. Understanding the district-wise trends in maize cultivation-particularly changes in area, productivity, and yield is essential for assessing the crop's evolving role in the state's food and livelihood systems. These trends not only reflect farmers' responses to economic opportunities but also reveal the influence of climatic conditions, resource availability, and technological adoption patterns across districts.

In many districts of Assam, expansion in cultivated area has been driven by the crop's relatively low input requirement and its adaptability to both upland and flood-prone areas. However, the pace of growth varies significantly from district to district, shaped by differences in soil quality, access to irrigation, and exposure to extension services. Similarly, productivity levels demonstrate spatial variations, often influenced by the use of improved seed varieties, fertilizer application practices, mechanization, and the prevalence of pests and diseases. Analyzing these district-level disparities helps identify regions with high potential as well as those facing stagnation.

The prospects for maize in Assam remain promising. Increasing demand from feed industries, expanding opportunities for value addition, and the potential for integrating maize into crop diversification programs provide strong incentives for future growth. The crop's resilience and relatively short duration also make it

suitable for meeting emerging market and climate challenges.

Despite these opportunities, several constraints continue to shape maize cultivation outcomes. Erratic rainfall, limited irrigation facilities, inadequate access to quality seeds, and low mechanization levels are major barriers. Additionally, fragmented landholdings, weak market linkages, and insufficient storage and processing infrastructure hinder farmers from achieving higher profitability. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach that blends technological support, infrastructure development, and farmer-centric policy interventions.

Overall, examining Assam's district-wise maize trends offers valuable insights into the crop's evolving potential and highlights the need for targeted strategies to enhance productivity and ensure sustainable growth across the state.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To analyze the district-wise trend in area under maize cultivation in Assam To examine the district-wise trend in maize productivity and yield in Assam and identify growth patterns and fluctuations.
- ❖ To compare inter-district variations in maize area, production, and productivity across Assam.
- ❖ To assess the prospects of maize cultivation in Assam, considering agro-climatic conditions, technological adoption, and market demand.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on secondary data collected from official sources such as the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Assam, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Government of India. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze district-wise time-series data on maize productivity, production, and area for the chosen period in order to look at inter-district differences. Trend analysis was carried out by estimating compound growth rates to assess changes in area, production, and yield over time. Instability in maize cultivation was measured using the Cuddy–Della Valle Index. The prospects and challenges of maize cultivation in Assam were identified through analysis of trends and review of relevant literature.

IV. DISTRICT-WISE TREND OF AREA

Evidence from Assam and the wider North Eastern Region suggests that maize area has increased substantially over the last one to two decades, although the pace of expansion varies by district. At the state level, maize acreage reportedly grew by more than half within a span of about eight years in the late 2000s and early 2010s, a pattern driven by the spread of hybrid seeds and the replacement of traditional crops in selected pockets. More recent district-wise datasets list annual maize area for each district and show that some districts have consistently expanded sown area, while others display stagnation or marginal increases.

Districts with better connectivity, access to input dealers and stronger links to poultry and feed industries tend to show a faster increase in maize area. Policy support and contract farming arrangements in some pockets have also encouraged farmers to shift land from low-return crops, such as certain traditional rice varieties, to maize, particularly in rainfed uplands and fallow rabi fields.

V. DISTRICT-WISE TREND OF PRODUCTION AND YIELD

The pattern of maize cultivation across Assam shows noticeable variation from one district to another, reflecting differences in agro-ecological conditions, resource availability, and farmers' cropping preferences. Over the past several years, many districts have witnessed a gradual expansion in the area under maize, largely due to the crop's adaptability, relatively low input requirement, and growing market demand from feed and processing industries. Districts such as Nagaon, Darrang, Udalguri and Kamrup have emerged as important maize-growing zones, where conducive soil conditions and improved awareness about hybrid seeds have encouraged farmers to allocate more land to the crop.

However, this increasing trend is not uniform across all districts. In certain regions, especially those prone to recurrent floods or with limited irrigation infrastructure, the maize area has shown only moderate or fluctuating growth. Some districts with predominately small and fragmented holdings also display slower expansion, as farmers tend to prioritize crops that offer quicker or more assured returns. In

hilly districts and areas with poor transportation networks, the maize area remains relatively stagnant due to constraints in accessing markets and agricultural inputs.

Despite these regional disparities, the prospects for further expansion of maize area remain strong. Rising demand for poultry and cattle feed, growing interest in crop diversification and the introduction of short-duration, high-yielding varieties create favorable conditions for scaling up cultivation. With proper extension support and market linkages, several under-utilized districts can significantly increase their maize acreage.

At the same time, challenges continue to influence district-wise outcomes. Limited irrigation facilities, unpredictable rainfall, pest attacks, inadequate access to quality seeds, and weak post-harvest infrastructure restrict the ability of farmers to expand or sustain maize cultivation. Addressing these barriers through targeted interventions, improved technology dissemination, and district-specific planning is essential for realizing Assam's full maize production potential.

Production trends at district level reflect both changes in area and improvements in yield, and these trajectories are not always synchronized. In Assam, total maize production has reportedly multiplied several times over within a relatively short period, a result of both acreage expansion and yield gains due to the adoption of hybrids and improved management practices. However, regional analyses highlight that Assam's average yields still trail behind some neighbouring states in the North Eastern Region, indicating substantial unrealized productivity potential.

District-wise yield data show marked differences, with some districts consistently recording higher output per hectare, often linked to better seed, fertilizer and pest management support. In contrast, districts where farmers rely more on traditional varieties, face higher incidence of pests or diseases, or suffer from input shortages and poor extension services typically register lower yields. Studies on temporal variation in maize production in the region underline that, in Assam, yield effects have played a major role in production change in some periods, whereas area expansion has been the dominant factor in other states.

VI. PROSPECTS OF MAIZE CULTIVATION IN ASSAM

Maize cultivation in Assam holds considerable promise, driven by a combination of rising market demand, favorable agro-climatic conditions, and the crop's versatility in multiple farming systems. As one of the fastest-growing cereals in the state, maize offers opportunities not only for expanding cultivated area but also for enhancing farm incomes, promoting diversification, and strengthening rural economies. Its adaptability to a wide range of environments from upland regions to char areas makes it a suitable choice for farmers seeking resilient alternatives to traditional crops.

A major factor boosting maize prospects in Assam is the steady growth of the livestock, poultry, and aquaculture industries, all of which require substantial quantities of maize-based feed. This expanding feed sector ensures a reliable and increasing market for local maize producers. Additionally, the availability of improved hybrids and short-duration varieties has created the potential for higher yields, better disease resistance, and greater profitability. These varieties fit well into crop rotation and intercropping systems, enabling farmers to maximize land use efficiency.

The state also presents opportunities for developing value-added maize products, such as corn flour, snacks, fish feed, and biofuel. With proper training and infrastructure, small-scale processing units can offer new income avenues, especially in rural areas. Moreover, policies encouraging crop diversification and climate-resilient farming further support the expansion of maize cultivation across districts.

Despite challenges such as limited irrigation and inconsistent extension support, the future outlook remains positive. As awareness grows and technological adoption improves, many underdeveloped districts have the potential to emerge as important maize-producing zones. Strengthened market linkages, improved storage facilities, and better access to quality seeds can significantly accelerate this progress.

Overall, maize stands as a promising crop for Assam's agricultural transformation, offering scope for increased production, stronger rural markets, and enhanced livelihood security for farming communities.

Maize possesses strong growth prospects in Assam due to its multiple uses and alignment with emerging market demands. The poultry and livestock sectors in the state and the wider North Eastern Region are expanding, generating sustained demand for maize as a feed ingredient that currently exceeds local supply, thereby creating a structural opportunity for farmers. In addition, national and regional initiatives to promote bioethanol and diversified food processing offer new industrial outlets for maize, encouraging investment in value chains and processing units.

Technological interventions further strengthen the crop's prospects, as public research institutions and extension agencies in Assam promote high-yielding hybrids, improved agronomic packages and mechanization suitable for smallholders. Demonstration programmes and training initiatives have shown that under good management, farmers can achieve yields several times higher than traditional levels, significantly enhancing farm incomes and attracting policy attention. Climate resilience is another important prospect, since maize in some settings offers advantages over water-demanding crops like paddy, requiring less time in the field and tolerating certain stress conditions better when appropriate varieties are used.

VII. VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The maize sector in Assam presents substantial potential for value chain development, offering opportunities to strengthen production systems, enhance market efficiency, and increase income for farming communities. As maize demand rises across feed, food, and industrial sectors, there is a growing need to build a more integrated and competitive value chain that connects producers, processors, and markets. Strengthening this chain can help reduce post-harvest losses, improve product quality, and create more stable market linkages across districts.

At the production stage, introducing improved hybrids, promoting scientific crop management, and expanding access to timely inputs can significantly raise productivity. Strengthening services such as seed delivery, soil testing, and mechanization support can also increase farmers' efficiency and readiness to meet market demands. Organizing growers into farmer groups or cooperatives can enhance bargaining power,

enable bulk marketing, and simplify the supply flow from field to market.

Post-harvest and processing activities offer even greater opportunities. Setting up small and medium-scale processing units for products like corn flour, corn grits, poultry feed, fish feed, and snack items can create local employment and add value within rural districts. Cold storage and improved drying facilities are essential for maintaining grain quality, especially in high-moisture regions. These facilities can help farmers store produce safely and sell when prices are more favorable.

Market development also plays a crucial role in strengthening the maize value chain. Establishing direct linkages with feed mills, food processors, and traders can create predictable demand and stable pricing. Digital platforms and e-marketing initiatives can further reduce intermediaries and increase farmers' share of profits.

With proper institutional support, infrastructure development, and training, Assam has the potential to transform maize into a fully developed value chain that benefits farmers, processors, and consumers alike. These improvements can contribute significantly to rural economic growth and agricultural sustainability. The expansion of maize area and production creates possibilities for integrated value chain development across districts. Processing industries related to feed manufacturing, food products such as cornflakes or snack items, and bio ethanol can generate local employment and steady markets for maize growers in Assam. Policy frameworks and incentive schemes targeting food processing and industrialization in the North East further enhance these opportunities, potentially encouraging private and cooperative investment in maize-based enterprises.

Districts that already show relatively higher maize productivity and better market connectivity are well-positioned to emerge as nodal points in a maize value chain network. At the same time, carefully designed aggregation systems, farmer producer organizations and contract farming models can help integrate farmers from more remote districts into these value chains, provided that concerns around price discovery, risk sharing and quality standards are addressed. Effective value chain development would require aligning production planning, post-harvest infrastructure, storage and processing capacities with

the spatial distribution of maize area and yield trends revealed by district-level data.

VIII. KEY CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Maize cultivation in Assam faces a range of challenges that vary across districts and significantly influence productivity, area expansion, and overall crop performance. One of the most persistent issues is the heavy dependence on rainfall. Many maize-growing districts lack reliable irrigation facilities, making the crop highly vulnerable to erratic monsoons, prolonged dry spells, or sudden flooding common climatic features of the state. These uncertainties often discourage farmers from expanding maize acreage or investing in improved inputs.

Another major constraint is the limited availability of quality seeds. While hybrid maize varieties have shown strong yield potential, farmers in several districts still struggle to access certified seeds on time. Delayed supply, high prices, and lack of awareness about improved cultivars contribute to uneven adoption. Inadequate use of fertilizers and soil amendments further restricts yield, as many farmers are unable to invest in balanced nutrient application due to financial limitations.

Pest and disease outbreaks particularly fall armyworm-poses additional threats, often leading to significant yield losses. Weak extension services and insufficient technical guidance limit farmers' ability to adopt sustainable pest management practices. Post-harvest losses are also common, largely due to inadequate drying, poor storage structures, and lack of local processing facilities. These gaps reduce both grain quality and market price, affecting farmers' profitability.

Marketing systems present their own set of challenges. Many districts lack organized procurement centres or stable market linkages, forcing farmers to rely on middlemen who offer low prices. Transportation constraints and poor rural roads in some areas add to marketing difficulties.

Institutional barriers, including limited credit access, inadequate training, and weak cooperative structures, further slow down progress. Together, these constraints create substantial disparities in maize performance across districts.

Addressing these issues through improved infrastructure, better extension support, timely input

delivery, and stronger market connections is essential for boosting productivity and enhancing the long-term sustainability of maize cultivation in Assam.

Despite favourable trends and promising prospects, maize cultivation in Assam faces several structural and operational challenges that differ in intensity across districts. A major constraint is the predominance of rain fed agriculture, which makes maize cultivation vulnerable to erratic rainfall, floods and dry spells, leading to unstable yields and discouraging investment in improved inputs in risk-prone areas. Land fragmentation and small farm sizes complicate mechanization, discourage on-farm storage investments and limit farmers' bargaining power in markets.

Access to quality seed, balanced fertilizers and timely plant protection inputs remains uneven; with remote districts particularly affected by weak supply chains and limited reach of formal input dealers. Inadequate extension services and knowledge gaps regarding improved cultivation practices, nutrient management, and pest and disease control further depress yields in many locations. Post-harvest losses due to poor storage facilities and lack of affordable drying and grading technologies are another concern, reducing effective marketed surplus and quality, especially in humid conditions.

Price volatility and weak market infrastructure also constrain maize farmers. In some districts, the absence of organized procurement, limited access to regulated markets, and high transportation costs leave farmers dependent on local traders, who may offer lower prices due to limited competition. Without reliable price information and risk management tools, smallholders hesitate to allocate more land and resources to maize, even when agronomic potential is high.

IX. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

Strengthening maize cultivation in Assam requires targeted policies that address district-level disparities while promoting long-term agricultural resilience. One key policy priority is the expansion of irrigation infrastructure to reduce dependence on unpredictable rainfall. Ensuring timely access to quality hybrid seeds, fertilizers, and credit support can also help farmers adopt improved technologies more confidently. Developing structured market channels, such as regulated procurement centres and direct

linkages with feed industries, would create stable demand and fair pricing for producers across districts. Policies must also focus on enhancing rural infrastructure-particularly storage units, drying facilities, and transportation networks to minimize post-harvest losses and support smoother value chain operations. Encouraging farmer groups, cooperatives, and digital marketing platforms can empower growers and improve their bargaining capacity.

On the research front, there is a strong need for localized studies that identify district-specific constraints, soil nutrient profiles, and climate-related risks. Research on high-yielding, short-duration, and pest-resistant maize varieties suited to Assam's diverse agro climatic zones is particularly important. Additionally, studies on sustainable pest management, efficient input use, and profitable cropping systems can guide farmers toward more resilient production practices.

Together, well-designed policies and focused research can significantly enhance maize productivity, strengthen market opportunities, and support sustainable agricultural growth across Assam.

The observed district-wise trends in area, production and yield highlight the need for differentiated policy

strategies tailored to local conditions in Assam. In high-potential districts with significant maize area and relatively better yields, policies may prioritize value addition, storage and processing infrastructure, as well as support for farmer organizations to strengthen market linkages. In lagging districts, priority interventions include improving input delivery systems, strengthening extension services, promoting climate-resilient hybrids and enhancing basic rural infrastructure such as roads and irrigation.

Further research is needed to systematically analyse the determinants of inter-district differences in maize productivity, including soil fertility, rainfall patterns, access to credit, institutional support and farmers' adoption behaviour. Longitudinal studies that combine quantitative district-level data with qualitative fieldwork can provide deeper insights into how socio-economic factors, risk perceptions and value chain structures influence the expansion of maize cultivation in different parts of Assam. Such evidence can guide more nuanced interventions designed to unlock the full potential of maize as a driver of rural development, food security and industrial growth in the state.

Illustrative district-wise focus table:

The following table suggests how a research paper might categorize districts by broad trend focus using available area, production and yield data, without reproducing proprietary figures:

Indicative district category	Trend focus (area, production, yield)	Key strategic priority
High area - high yield district	Rapid expansion of maize area with above-average yields over recent years.	Value chain integration, processing units, storage and organized marketing.
High area - low yield districts	Significant maize acreage but yields below state benchmarks.	Technology diffusion, quality seed and fertilizer access, intensive extension support.
Low area - high yield districts	Limited maize area but strong yield performance, indicating high potential.	Area expansion, promotion as alternative crop in suitable niches, risk mitigation support.
Low area - low yield districts	Marginal maize cultivation with low productivity indicators.	Basic infrastructure, climate-resilient varieties, institutional support and pilot programmes.

This structure and content can be expanded with specific district names, numerical data and statistical outputs once the relevant datasets are compiled, ensuring that the final paper presents a detailed, original and analytically rich account of maize productivity, area and yield trends across Assam and their associated prospects and challenges.

X. FINDINGS

District-level data from Assam's Directorate of Economics and Statistics shows considerable

variability in area, yield and production of maize over time, with historically low cultivation in districts like Dhubri and Kokrajhar gradually increasing over the years. Trends from official records indicate expanding area under maize cultivation in many districts since the early 2000s, with a notable rise in both area and productivity during the last decade. For example, state maize area grew substantially from the late 2000s and production and yields increased markedly between 2007-08 and 2014-15, reflecting adoption of modern practices and better varieties.

Districts such as Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Kamrup Rural and Barpeta historically showed lower yields relative to improved averages but recent interventions have improved outcomes. Rabi maize adoption, especially in districts with irrigation, has shown higher productivity compared to rainfed kharif maize, demonstrating seasonal and spatial disparities.

Prospects:

Assam's maize sector has strong growth potential given rising demand from poultry feed, fodder and bio ethanol industries, with state initiatives like APART significantly boosting farmer training, seed quality and output. Expansion into rabi season with irrigation, improved market linkages, and integration into value chains can further accelerate productivity and farmer incomes.

Challenges:

However, the crop faces climatic risks (floods, droughts) and uneven rainfall in districts like Kokrajhar and Dhubri, which can depress yields. Limited irrigation infrastructure, lack of quality seeds and mechanization, and weak market access in remote districts remain key constraints. Investment in storage, processing facilities and resilient practices is crucial to sustain maize growth across Assam's diverse districts

XI. CONCLUSION

The district-wise analysis of maize productivity, area and yield in Assam reveals a clear shift from traditional, low-input cultivation towards a more market-oriented and commercially important crop. Over the years, several districts have shown an expansion in area under maize, accompanied by gradual improvements in yield and productivity. This positive trend is largely attributed to the introduction of improved varieties, better agronomic practices, and increased awareness among farmers. Nonetheless, wide inter-district disparities persist, reflecting differences in agro-climatic conditions, access to irrigation, input availability and institutional support. The prospects for maize cultivation in Assam remain promising. Rising demand from the poultry and livestock feed industry, scope for rabi maize expansion, and supportive government programs provide strong opportunities for enhancing production and farmers' income. Adoption of high-yielding

hybrids, mechanization, and strengthened value chains can further improve district-level performance.

However, several challenges continue to constrain sustainable growth. Frequent floods, erratic rainfall, limited irrigation coverage, inadequate storage and processing facilities, and poor market linkages in remote districts adversely affect productivity and profitability. Addressing these challenges through targeted district-specific interventions, investment in infrastructure, climate-resilient technologies, and effective extension services is essential. A balanced approach focusing on productivity enhancement and risk mitigation will be crucial for realizing the full potential of maize in Assam.

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