

## A Review

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# Large cardamom production scenario in mountainaeous region of West Bengal: Constraints, issues and strategies

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## Introduction

Large cardamom (*Amomum subulatum*), belongs to Zingiberaceae family under the order Scitaminae is one of the main cash crops cultivated in the sub-Himalayan Kalimpong and Darjeeling district of West Bengal. Large cardamom has been major cash crop and foreign currency earning horticultural commodity in north eastern Himalayan region, including Darjeeling district. As per the estimation of Spice Board, approximately 9893 families are engaged in this activity. Most of the family in the hill blocks of Darjeeling and Kalimpong doing the cultivation of large cardamom due to its economic returns and it's suitability to agro climatic condition of the region. India is the largest producer of large cardamom with 54 per cent share in world production (Sharma *et al.*, 2016). Kalimpong and Darjeeling is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading producer of large cardamom in India after Sikkim and during 2015-16 the area of large cardamom was 3305 ha, yield area 2829 ha, production was 848.84 metric tonnes and the

average productivity was 300.5 kg ha<sup>-1</sup>. Kalimpong contributes 80 per cent of the total area under large cardamom, however, Darjeeling contributes 20 per cent of the total area under large cardamom cultivation. According to survey by a group of scientists of Regional Research Station, UBKV, Kalimpong, 90 per cent area grown by Varlangey cultivar in Darjeeling and Kalimpong district. It is also cultivated in some parts of Uttarakhand and in some other North-Eastern States. Nepal and Bhutan are the other countries where large cardamom is cultivated. It is used as a spice and in several ayurvedic preparations. It contains 2 to 3 per cent of essential oil and possesses medicinal properties like carminative, stomachic, diuretic, cardiac stimulant, antiemetic, etc (Sharma *et al.*, 2009). The decoction of seeds is used as a gargle in infection of teeth and gums. Large cardamom seeds are considered as an antidote to either snake venom or scorpion venom. It is also reported that large cardamom seeds are used as preventive as well as curative measure for throat troubles, congestion of lungs, inflammation of