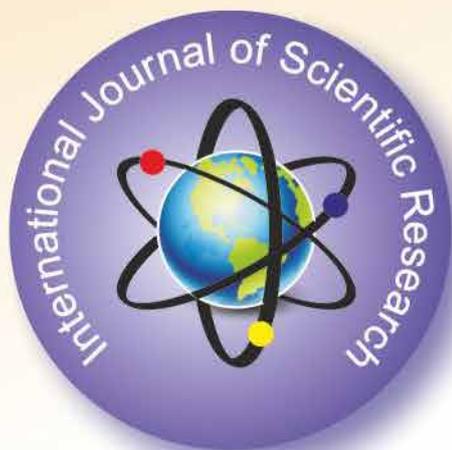


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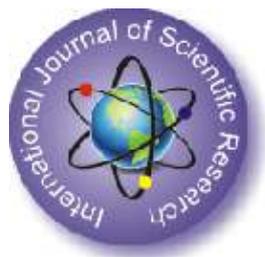
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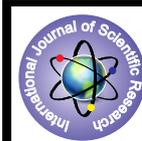
## INDEX

Sr. No.	Title	Author	Subject	Page No.
1	Ionic composition of a freshwater lake and its implications on aquaculture	Dr. Shankar P. Hosmani	Biotechnology	1-2
2	Growth and Performance of Mutual Fund Industry in India	Dr. M. K. Maru	Commerce	3-4
3	Waste Management: A New Paradigm of Contemporary Business	Dr. Vipul Chalotra	Commerce	5-6
4	Rural Financial Services in J&K (A study in the field of financial services sector development)	Tarsem lal	Commerce	7-8
5	Banyan, the National Tree of India	Dr. J.K. Sehgal	Commerce	9-10
6	Impact of Online Marketing on Customers with Special Reference to Coimbatore City	Dr. R. Ganapathi	Commerce	11-15
7	Customers' Attitude towards Housing Loan With Reference to Commercial and Rural Banks	Dr. R. Ganapathi, Mrs. B. VIDYA	Commerce	16-23
8	Consumer Behaviour towards Broiler Chicken Retail Stores With Reference to Madurai City	P. Easwaran, J. Gnanadevan, Dr. R. Ganapathi	Commerce	24-30
9	Data Security and Protection in Cloud Computing	Shameena Begum, V. Ratna Vasuki, K.V.V.Srinivas	Computer Science	31-34
10	Foreign Direct Investment in India – An Explanatory Study	Dr. K.Madhu Babu	Economics	35-38
11	Growth - Saving Causality in India: A Cointegration Analysis	Dr. Shradha H. Budhedeo	Economics	39-42
12	Constitutional perspectives on Labour Wages in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	43-45
13	A Critical Study of Special Economic Zones in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	46-48
14	Industrial Relations - Settlement of Disputes in India	Dr. Shankar Ambhore, Dr. Dilip Arjune, Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Economics	49-50
15	AMLA - ITS MEDICINAL USES	Manisha Gaur	Economics	51-52
16	The Role Of Total Quality Management In Higher Education	Ramesh B. Sakhiya	Education	53-55
17	Perceived Competencies Of Graduate Teacher Trainees In The Intensive Teaching Practice [I T P] Session	Dr M. Parimala Fathima, N.Sasikumar, M. Panimalar Roja	Education	56-58
18	Uchch Siksha Ki Rah Men Dushvariyan	Dr. Anup Chaturvedi	Education	59-60
19	Fault Diagnoses of Rotating Machinery with Advance Signal Processing Methods	Prof. Divyang H. Pandya, Prof. Ankit A. Darji	Engineering	61-63
20	A Hybrid Neural Network Approach for Wind Speed Prediction	S.N Deepa, K.gnana Sheela	Engineering	64-67
21	A Study on Phishing: Preventions and Anti-Phishing Solutions	V.Karamchand Gandhi, Prof R.Senthil Kumar	Engineering	68-69
22	The Killari 1993 Intracratonic Earthquake- a Comparative Study	S.S. Patil, K.L. Karkare, I.B. Ghorade	Environment	70-72
23	Cosmic Plants as Alternative Medicine	Dr. Sneh Harshendra Sharma	Environment	73-77

24	Green Initiatives for Reducing Carbon Footprint	Dr Mahalaxmi Krishnan	Environment Science	78-79
25	Prediction of Urban Sprawl in Hyderabad City using Spatial Model, Remote Sensing and GIS Techniques	S. Indhira Gandhi, Dr. V. Madha Suresh	Geography	80-81
26	Tectono-Provenance and Reservoir Rock Characteristics of the Tipam Sandstones in Parts of Upper Assam Basin	Dr. Pradip Borgohain	Geology	82-84
27	(Jansanchar Aur Bharatiya Samaj)	Dr Subodh Kumar	Journalism	85-86
28	An Overview of Industrial Disputes Settlement Authorities in India	Manish Parshuram Pawar, Dr. Ashok Shankarrao Pawar	Law	87-88
29	Innovative Method of Role Play for Developing English Language Teaching and Learning	K Rajkumar	Literature	89-91
30	Impact of Workers Participation in Management on Industrial Relations	Anuradha Averineni	Management	92-93
31	Consumers Preferences , Behaviour and Satisfaction with respect to banking services quality in Ghaziabad(NCR Region)	Prof(Dr.)H. P. Pandey, Mr. Ashish kumar Singh	Management	94-96
32	Factors Influencing Employee Branding in Higher Educational Institutions: A Special Reference to Management Institutions in Virudhunagar District in Tamilnadu	Jegadeeswari. Mani, Dr. S. Franklin John S.	Management	97-98
33	Evaluation of Service Quality in Internet Banking: An Empirical Study in Coimbatore	Ms. R. Gokilavani, Dr. R. Ganapathi	Management	99-101
34	To Study the Relationship Between Gender & Banking Preferences of Management Graduates at Ibmr, Ahmednagar	Rajendrasingh Pardeshi, Gadekar Vithal Laxman	Management	102-103
35	FCB model of Advertising Strategy	Prof. Arvind Rathod	Management	104-107
36	Assessing Beneficiary Satisfaction with Service Delivery of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	Dr Papori Baruah, Bhaskar Jyoti Barthakur	Management	108-111
37	Current Trends in Human Resource Management	Dr. Kalyani Kenneth, Mrs.R.Aruna jayamani	Management	112-113
38	“Indian Banking – A Future Ahead”	Haresh B. Barot	Management	114-116
39	Financial Inclusion-Banking Services to the Common Man	Dr. M. Venkata Subba Reddy, Mr. M.s.udaya Banu	Management	117-118
40	A study of Service Marketing Mix w.r.to b-schools in Mumbai	Dr. Balaji S. Mudholkar	Management	119-120
41	A Study on the Customers Opinion on the Benefits of the Credit Cards Around Combatore District	Mrs. G. Murali Manokari	Management	121-123
42	A Study on the Job Satisfaction of the Employees at Sri Kannan Departmental Stores, Coimbatore	Mrs. G. Murali Manokari, Mrs.r.kanaka Rathinam, Mr. G. Lenin Kumar	Management	124-126
43	Foreign Direct Investment In Indian Retail Sector: A Critical Evaluation	Dr. Raghavendra Dwivedi, Ram Kumar	Management	127-128
44	Emerging Challenges to Cyber Security-Internet Monitoring with Specific reference to National Security	Triveni Singh	Management	129-131
45	An Empirical Study of Consumer Impulse Buying Behavior in domestic Markets (special reference to Ahmednagar, (M.S) India.)	Gadekar Vithal Laxman	Marketing	132-135
46	Insomnia and the performance of general population: Results from the Insomnia Survey	Miss Ketaki Sathe, Dr G S Shekhawat	Medical Science	136-137
47	Transition in Human Resource for Health: Challenges Ahead	Dr. Pawan Kumar, Dr. Abdul Majeed Khan	Medical Science	138-139

48	Kartageners Syndrome- A Case Report	Dr. Ramakrishna Ghubde, Dr. Archana Shekokar	Medical Science	140-141
49	Perceptual challenges in auditory neural processing in neurodegenerative conditions like Fredereich Ataxia	Mr. Ayas Muhammed, Ms. Archana, Dr. Rajashekhar	Medical Science	142-143
50	Transient Auditory Dysynchrony Due to Non-Maturational Causes Evidenced by ABR – A Case Report	HariPrakash. P, Sangeetha. G, Bhargavi P.G	Medical Science	144-146
51	Study on Sphenoid Sinsuses Variants in Magnetic Resonance Imaging of South Indian Population	Suresh Sukumar, Sushil Yadav	Medical Science	147-148
52	A Study to Find out the Prevalence and Effectiveness of Occupational Therapy Intervention for Pain and Activity Performance in Mobile Users with Risk of Repetitive Strain Injury	KR.Banumathe, V.Guruprasad, Leena Ann Lukose	Medical Science	149-151
53	Modified Falls Behavioral Scale for Indian Community Dwelling Older Adults	V.Guruprasad, Sebestina A D'Souza, KR.Banumathe	Medical Science	152-154
54	The Essence of Employees Training and its Impact on the Work Force in an Industry	Dr. Mohan Singhe	Organization Behavior	155-156
55	Scientific Behaviourism of Watson and Hull : A Philosophical Perspective	Dr. Jatinder Kumar Sharma	Philosophy	157-158
56	The growth of manganese oxide thin films by spray pyrolysis technique	M.Sudha, P.Duraisamy	Physics	159-161
57	Terrorism and Competitive Terrorism in India	S. Sreejith, P. Sakthivel	Political Science	162-164
58	Kuposhan Se Karahta Bachpan	Dr. Anup Chaturvedi	Social Science	165

## Tectono-Provenance and Reservoir Rock Characteristics of the Tipam Sandstones in Parts of Upper Assam Basin



### Geology

**KEYWORDS :** Tectonic setting, Reservoir characteristics, Tipam Sandstone, Upper Assam

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### ABSTRACT

*The Tipam Sandstone Formation belongs to Late Miocene to Early Pliocene age and it is one of the main oil producing horizon of Upper Assam Basin. It varies widely in thickness from area to area owing to a major unconformity at the top. The sandstones are composed mainly of quartz, rock-fragments, and mica. The contribution of quartz varies from 43.5% – 57.5%. Both the monocrystalline and polycrystalline quartz are reported. Feldspars varies from 2.2% - 2.5%, rock-fragments varies from 7.0% - 7.5%. The sandstones have undergone all the stages of diagenesis. Dissolution features, quartz overgrowth, transformation of secondary minerals are frequently reported. These diagenetic changes have a direct control on the reservoir quality of the sandstones. The sandstones are mainly subarkosic and wacke type. The sandstones are derived from varied sources however middle rank of metamorphic origin is dominating. Volumetric analysis of major oxides suggests that the sandstones are derived from active continental margins and subordinately from the continental island arc provenance.*

### Introduction:

The Upper Assam basin has sustained interest in oil exploration and exploitation for more than a century. It is one of the oldest petroleum producing basins of the world. The basin is bounded by in the north by the eastern Himalayas, in the east by the Mishimi Massif, in the south by Naga-Patkai Hills and in the west by the Mikir Hills and Shillong Plateau. A thick pile of sediments ranging in age from Cretaceous to Pleistocene has been deposited in the basin. Commercial hydrocarbon production from Upper Palaeocene to Mio-pliocene has been established in this basin. In the subsurface, a ridge of Precambrian rocks known as Brahmaputra arch roughly bisects the Assam Basin and it is an important feature from the hydrocarbon entrapment point of view. The Tipam Sandstone Formation of Miocene age constitutes one of the main oil bearing horizon in the Upper Assam Basin and it contains a significant percentage of known hydrocarbon reserves of Assam Geological Province.

### Objective of the study:

The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the reservoir characteristics of the Tipam sandstones with the help of petrography and scanning electron microscope study and to determine the tectonic setting of the source area.

### Materials and Methods:

In the present study, conventional core samples have been collected with due permission from the management of Oil India Limited, Duliajan, Assam. Detail thin section petrography, scanning electron microscope study and geochemical analysis for major oxides were carried out to achieve the goal of the objectives of present study.

### Results and Discussion:

Petrographic study reveals that quartz is the most dominant constituent of the Tipam sandstones. and they normally show floating texture (fig.1a ). Grains are sub-angular to sub-rounded and varies from 43.5 - 60.5%. The irregular boundary indicates the pressure solution effect. Polycrystalline quartz grains are recorded as composite, schistose and pressure metaquartz (fig.1b). Certain monocrystalline quartz grains show inclusions of zircon, mica, hornblende, tourmaline etc. indicating its igneous origin. The plagioclase feldspar is dominating over the orthoclase and microcline. The average percentage of feldspar in the sandstone of the present study is about 2.2-5%. The grains are subangular, subrounded and prismatic and some of them are found to be fractured. In spite of fracturing, some feldspar grains show banding and displacement in thin lamellae which is due to the thrusting effect of Belt of Schuppen. Flakes of muscovite and biotite are found between quartz grains (fig.1a ). They constitute 3-12% of the total constituents. Rock. Metamorphic rock fragments are generally dominating over the igneous and sedimentary origin (fig.1c). The average percentage of rock fragments in the sandstone is 7.5%. In the present investigation chert grains are very frequently observed and their percentage is about 8.2%. The matrix is argillaceous as well as siliceous in nature constituting about 12% in the studied samples. The ar-

gillaceous matrix is characterized by the presence of clay and recrystallised micas along with liberation of iron (fig.1d). All types of cements are recorded constituting 25%-35%. Grain boundaries are seen to be corroded by the precipitation of the ferruginous cement. Petrographic evidences shows that the argillaceous cement is the first generation cement followed by the calcareous and then the ferruginous cement. In certain cases calcite crystals showing good cleavage are found to generate from the cementing material (fig.1f) within the framework grains.

The sandstones are moderately to poorly sorted. The sandstones are mainly subarkosic and quartz wacke type (Fig.2). Following Dickinson et. al.(1983), it is seen that the sediments were derived from uplifted terrains of folded and faulted strata from which recycled detritus of sedimentary and metasedimentary origins are being contributed (Fig.3). From Diamond diagram plot (after Basu et. at. 1975), it is found that the samples are derived from middle and upper rank metamorphic to low rank metamorphic sources (Fig.4). An attempt is made to find out the tectonic setting of the provenance with the help of sandstone chemistry. In bivariate plots (fig.5) of (Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> + MgO ) vs. TiO<sub>2</sub>, ( Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> + MgO ) vs. Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>/ SiO<sub>2</sub>, ( Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> + MgO ) vs. K<sub>2</sub>O / Na<sub>2</sub>O and ( Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> + MgO ) vs. Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> / (CaO + Na<sub>2</sub>O ), it has been observed that the sandstones of present study are derived from active continental margin and subordinately from the continental island arc provenance. The active continental margin type of sandstones are characterized by low Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> + MgO, TiO<sub>2</sub> and . K<sub>2</sub>O / Na<sub>2</sub>O is nearly 1, which is well observed in the sandstones of present study. Higher percentage of SiO<sub>2</sub> also indicates its derivation from the passive margin

Under SEM certain quartz grains show intragranular fracturing as well as overgrowths. Various types of open pores are present within the rocks of the sandstones. However, these pores are usually partly or completely filled with authigenic clay minerals such as stacks of kaolinite (Fig.6a). The commonly recorded clay minerals are kaolinite and illite. Chlorite occurs in clusters in some areas only. Smectite is occasionally observed, but tends to occur mainly as mixed-layer clays such as smectite-illite (fig.6b). Formation of framboidal pyrite (fig.6c) crystals in the inter spaces of the framework grains occupy partly or wholly the pore spaces and thereby reduces the porosity and permeability. So, some of the diagenetic changes within the reservoir make certain horizons to be highly productive while others make to be less productive in spite having good reserves.

### CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the Tipam Sandstones are derived from recycled orogenic provenance and are mainly the products of lower to middle rank metamorphic sources followed by sedimentary and igneous sources. Major element composition indicates their derivation mainly from active continental margin and subordinately from the continental island arc as well as passive margin. The diagenetic alterations control the reservoir quality of the sandstones of present study. The precipitations

of cementing materials, authigenesis of secondary minerals like chert, mica, and quartz overgrowth are some of the important diagenetic changes responsible for porosity reduction. Mineral dissolution has resulted in an increase in porosities within the sandstones. Some of the diagenetic changes make certain horizons to be highly productive while others make it to be less productive in spite having good reserves. Such as, presence of kaolinites and fibrous nature of illite in the pore throats also play an important role in porosity reduction. Conversely development of intragranular fractures, corrosion, dissolution and partial replacement of the framework grains by cementing materials contribute towards the development and enhancement of secondary porosity and permeability.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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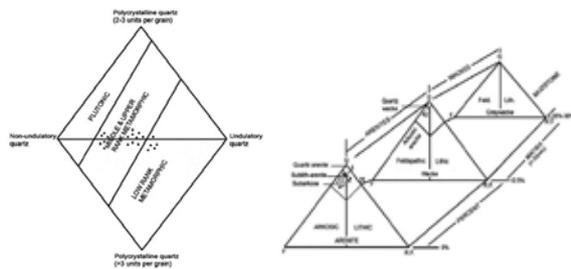


Figure 2 : Classification of Tipam Sandstones Figure 4: Diamond diagram (modified after Dott, 1964). ( after Basu et.al. 1975)

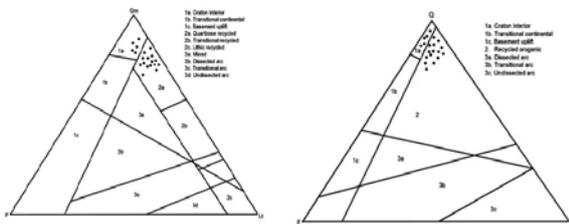
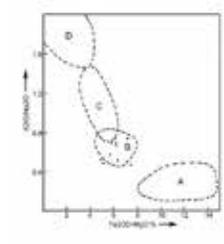
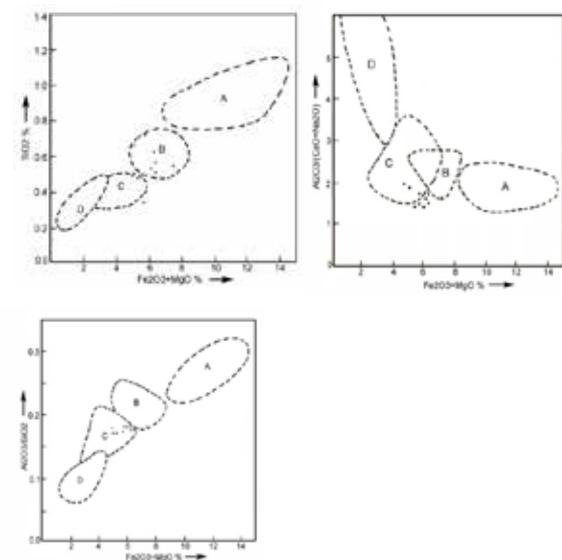


Figure 3: QFL & QmFlt plots for provenance discrimination of Tipam Sandstone of Upper Assam Shelf (after Dickinson & Suczeck,1983)



A-Oceanic, B-Continental Island Arc, C- Active continental margin, D- Passive margin

Figure5: Source area tectonic setting discrimination. (after Bhattachia, 1983)

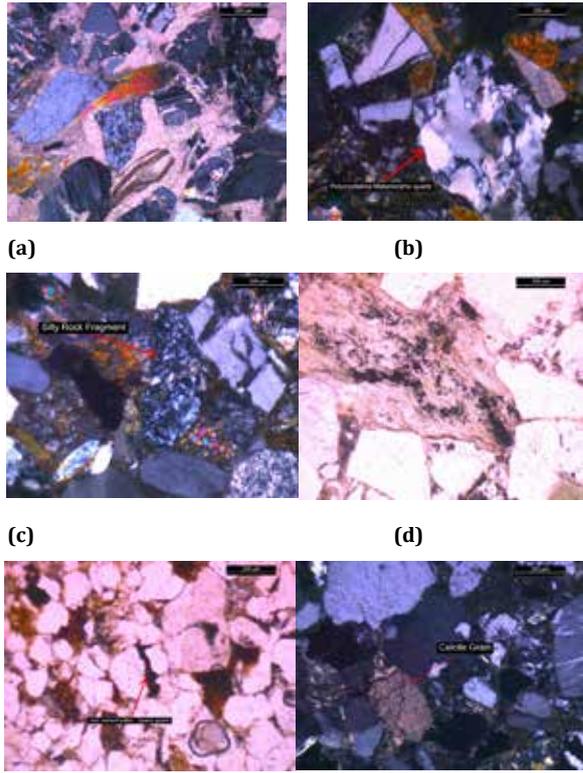
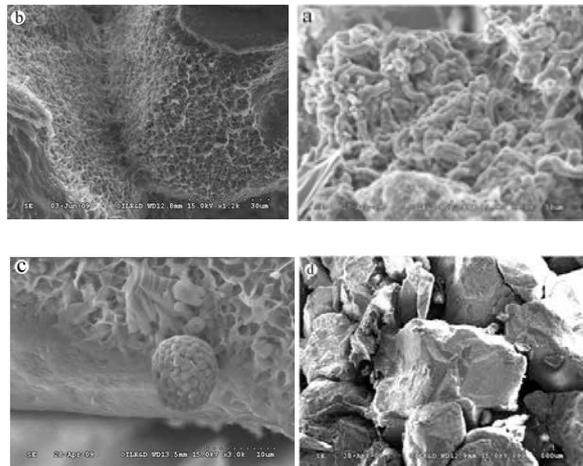


Figure 1: Photomicrographs showing (a) framework grains floating in calcite cement (b) polycrystalline quartz of metamorphic origin (c) silty rock fragment (d) recrystallisation of argillaceous cement into micaceous material liberating iron (e) ferruginous cement precipitating in intergranular spaces (f) Calcite grain. (Magnification 100x)



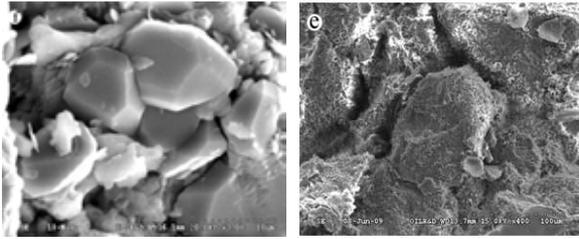
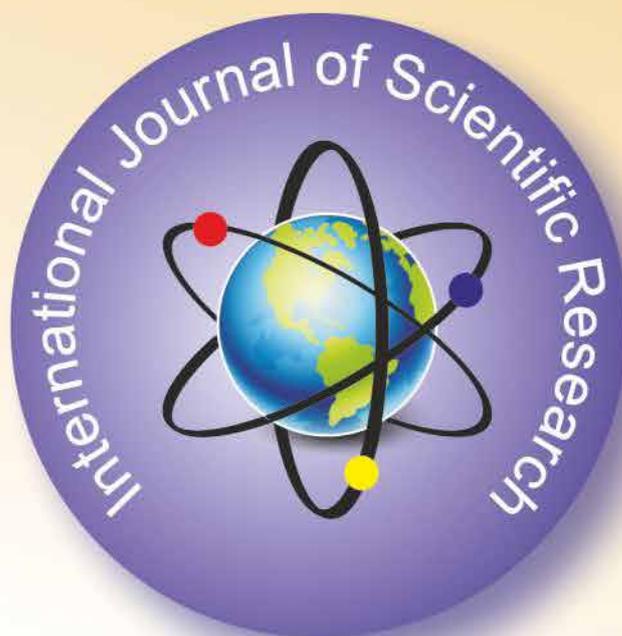


Figure 6: SEM Photomicrographs showing, (a) kaolinite verms, (b) illite-smectite layer, (c) framboidal pyrite, (d) inter particle pore spaces, (e) smectite coating over grain, (f) quartz overgrowth. (Magnification shown in the photomicrographs)

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