

FARMER'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRACTICES IN DALGAON SIALMARI BLOCK OF DARRANG DISTRICT IN ASSAM

Biraj Saha¹, Maharsi Das²

¹Asst. Professor, Department of Accountancy, Mangaldai Commerce College

²B. Com Mangaldai Commerce College

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ABSTRACT

The study assesses the perceptions of farmers toward sustainable agriculture practices in Dalgaon-Sialmari Block are determined by their economic and social characteristics. The study data were gathered through interviews, employing a questionnaire method, from a conveniently selected sample of 87 farmers spanning across 10 villages. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part included the independent variables, while the second part featured a scale to measure the farmers' attitudes towards sustainable agriculture practices. The results showed that most of the participants 54.02% are 30-50 years of age, 62.06% are illiterate, 56.32% has 4-7 family members, 67.8% has <2 acres of land and 47.1% has 16-26 years of farming experience. While crop rotation (429), soil and water conservation (427), application of cow dung and compost (422), sustainable agriculture for productivity of farming system (415) and farmers should be informed about sustainable agriculture practices (401) are given high attitude and over use of chemical fertilizers (399), modern agriculture (370) and planting more trees (320)

are given medium attitude by the farmers. While sustainable agriculture is not economical (267) is given neutral and implementing sustainable agriculture practices is challenging (220) is given low attitude by the farmers.

Keywords: Sustainable Agriculture; Production Practices; Attitudes of Farmers.

INTRODUCTION

The present global situation needs sustainability in development of every sector. The United Nations issue 17 Sustainable Development Goals for this concern, where Goal 12 deals with the sustainable consumption and production patterns. There is a growing global recognition for the sustainable agricultural practices due to the detrimental environmental impact of conventional farming methods like soil degradation, water pollution, and the emission of greenhouse gases. These problems can be eliminated by adapting the sustainable practices because of this, farmers are essential to the development of a sustainable agricultural system, which is shaped by their desires and level of expertise.

Between latitudes 26°27'N and 26°42'N and longitudes 92°5'E and 92°20'E is the Dalgaon-Sialmari Block. According to the 2011 Census, this block, which occupied 33,061 hectares, had a total population of 177,467, consisting of 90,439 men and 87,028 women. With about 90% of the population working as farmers, the area makes a substantial contribution to the growing and shipping of a variety of agricultural products.

This paper's objectives are to gauge farmers' attitudes toward sustainable agricultural methods in the Dalgaon-Sialmari Block, look into their opinions on sustainable agriculture practices, and look into their personal, social, and economic aspects. For this study a sample of 87 farmers are collected from 10 villages and analysed them with the help of percentage analysis method and Likert Scale.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bharti : A micro-level analysis was carried out at the village level to ascertain the regional patterns of sustainability in farming, looking at the relationships between sustainable farming, economic performance, and community. Recommendations for sustainable agriculture have been proposed at both the macro and micro levels. the findings of the report, one of the main causes of environmental and financial issues is monoculture or rice-wheat cultivation, resulting in a lack of variety in crops^[1] .

TANWEER AHMED, M (2022): To assess consumer preference for organic products, the researcher collected data from organic outlets in Bengaluru urban district. The findings of the study revealed that 47.50 per cent of organic farmers belong to highly sustainable category followed by less sustainable (29.17%) and sustainable (23.33%). With respect to adoption of organic farming practices is concerned, 58.33 per cent of organic farmers belonged to high category of adoption followed by low (24.17%) and medium (17.50%)^[2]

Bhujel, Roshan Raj (2024): The study uncovers how sustainable factors with the ETPB model influence farming. When it comes to determining their intents, farmers' attitudes have an enormous impact. The study demonstrates that beneficial social influences, also known as subjective norms, have a significant impact in influencing favourable attitudes and the intents of farmers to adopt Sustainability Enabling Agricultural Practices^[2] .

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To assess social and distinctive traits of the farmers and
- To find out how farmers perceive about sustainable agriculture practices.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design is used in this study. To achieve the study's objectives, data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected from 87 respondents from different villages of the Dalgaon-Sialmari Block. In this research study, the sample has been selected on the basis of Convenience Sampling Technique for selection of samples of farmers because population is unknown. There are 110 villages in the Dalgaon-Sialmari Block out of that 10 villages have been selected conveniently. A total of 87 farmers are selected by convenient sampling. For primary data collection the tools and techniques are schedule cum telephone interview method. The data has been analysed with the help of using few mathematical tools, mainly the percentage analysis method and Likert's Scale. This is done using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicates highly agree, 4 indicates agree, 3 indicates neutral, 2 indicates disagree, and 1 indicates severely disagree. The respondents were divided into four groups based on their calculated scores: high attitude (score > 400), medium attitude (score 300–400), neutral attitude (score 250–300), and low attitude (score < 250).

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

Categories	No of Respondents (Out of 87)	Percentage
Age		

Categories	No of Respondents (Out of 87)	Percentage
17-29 Years	34	39.08
30-50 Years	47	54.02
51-65 Years	6	6.9
Educational Qualification		
Illiterate	54	62.06
School Level	28	32.2
Secondary Level	5	5.74
College	0	0
Family Size		
≤ 3	12	13.8
4-7	49	56.32
8-10	17	19.54
>10	9	10.34
Acres Of Land Holding		
< 2 Acres	59	67.8
2-5 Acres	28	32.2
> 5 Acres	0	0
Farming Experience		
<5 Years	13	14.9
5-15 Years	27	31
16-26 Years	41	47.1
27-37 Years	6	7

Table 1 : Categories of Distinctive and Social Traits of the Farmers

The percentage of respondents whose age 17-29 years is 39.08%, 30-50 years is 54.02% and 51-65 years is 6.9%. So, it can be interpreted that majority of the farmers are between 30-50 years of age. The majority of the farmers are illiterate with 62.06% while 32.2% have school level knowledge and only 5.74% have secondary level knowledge. Family size as a percentage of responders ≤ 3 is 13.8%, 4-7 is 56.32% and 8-10 is 19.54%. Although the proportion of participants with family size >10 is 10.34%. Acres of land holding of the farmers ranged from 2-5 acres is 32.2%. The highest proportion 67.8% of the farmer have <2 acres. There is no farmer with >5 acres of land. 14.9% of respondents have worked for <5 years, while 31% have worked in agriculture for 5-15 years and 16-26 years is 47.1%. while 27-37 years of experience farmers are 7% only. This means that almost half of the respondents are working in agriculture for 16-26 years.

Particular	HA	A	N	DA	SDA	Score	Rank
Crop rotation improves soil texture	81	6	0	0	0	429	1
Soil and water conservation	79	8	0	0	0	427	2
Application of cow dung and compost increase soil fertility	74	13	0	0	0	422	3
Sustainable agriculture for productivity of farming system	67	20	0	0	0	415	4
Farmers should be informed about sustainable agricultural practices	61	18	8	0	0	401	5
Over use of chemical fertilizers	71	11	5	0	0	399	6
Ecological issues are mostly caused by modern agriculture.	54	25	8	0	0	370	7
Increasing the number of trees planted is a sign of sustainable agriculture.	4	57	20	6	0	320	8
Sustainable agriculture is not economical.	0	21	51	15	0	267	9
Implementing sustainable agriculture practices is challenging	0	16	27	31	13	220	10

Table 2 : Farmers' Attitudes Towards Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Index: HA= Highly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, DA=Disagree, SDA=Severally Disagree

As shown in Table 2, crop rotation (429), soil and water conservation (427), application of cow dung and compost (422), sustainable agriculture for productivity of farming system (415) and farmers should be informed about sustainable agriculture practices (401) are given high attitude and over use of chemical fertilizers (399), modern agriculture (370) and planting more trees (320) are given medium attitude by the farmers. While sustainable agriculture is not economical (267) is given neutral and implementing sustainable agriculture practices is challenging (220) is given low attitude by the farmers.

CONCLUSION

The present study indicates that the majority of farmers are young, have large families, small landholdings, lack formal education, and possess medium to high levels of farming experience. So, in the overall ranking, crop rotation, conservation of soil and water, application of natural compost are given top priority by the farmers regarding sustainable agricultural practices and regarding sustainable agriculture's economically not viable and hard to apply, farmers show medium and low priority respectively.

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