



Satisfaction Levels of Farmers in Dhemaji Hut-The Atmanirbhar Dhemaji

Ashim. Kr. Saikia ^{a++*}, Neelakshi Bhuyan ^{b#},
Gunjan Gogoi ^{b†}, Binita Konwar ^{b‡}, Prajwalita Pathak ^{b^},
Abhilasa K Borthakur ^{b##}, Susmita Gogoi ^{b##},
Bhupen Kr. Daflari ^{b§}, Rekhamoni Gogoi ^c,
Manoranjan Neog ^{d^^} and Uma Ram Tamuli ^{e‡#}

^a Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science, Joying, Assam Agricultural University, North Lakhimpur, India.

^b Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhemaji, AAU, Simen Chapori, India.

^c JRF, KVK, Dhemaji, AAU, Simen Chapori, India.

^d Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Jorhat, India.

^e Lakhimpur College of Veterinary Science (LCVSc.), Joying, AAU, North Lakhimpur, India.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors AKS, NB and GG conceptualized the study, data collected and drafted the original manuscript. Authors BK, PP, AKB, SG, BKD, RG and AKS helped to interview the respondents, analyzed, reviewed and edited the manuscript. Authors MN and URT supervised the entire study. All authors discussed the findings and contributed to the final manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9734/jsrr/2024/v30i72130>

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/118575>

⁺⁺ Associate professor;

[#] Subject Matter Specialist (Soil Sc.);

[†] Sr. Scientist & Head;

[‡] SMS (Horticulture);

[^] SMS (Animal Sc.);

^{##} SMS (Plant Pathology);

^{#^} SMS (Agronomy);

[§] PA (Fishery Sc.);

^{^^} Director of Extension Education;

^{‡#} Associate Dean;

^{*} Corresponding author: E-mail: ashim.saikia@aau.ac.in;

Cite as: Saikia, Ashim. Kr., Neelakshi Bhuyan, Gunjan Gogoi, Binita Konwar, Prajwalita Pathak, Abhilasa K Borthakur, Susmita Gogoi, Bhupen Kr. Daflari, Rekhmoni Gogoi, Manoranjan Neog, and Uma Ram Tamuli. 2024. "Satisfaction Levels of Farmers in Dhemaji Hut-The Atmanirbhar Dhemaji". Journal of Scientific Research and Reports 30 (7):131-41. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jsrr/2024/v30i72130>.

ABSTRACT

Kisan Mela (Farmers' Fair) is an organized educational activity for involving and educating farmers by bringing together the farmers, scientists, extension workers, input agencies, developmental departments and non-governmental agencies on agriculture and allied aspects at a Research Station or an agriculturally important educational centre or a public field of convenience. These are being organized from time to time by different agricultural institutes throughout the year to create awareness among the farmers and farm women about new technologies in agricultural and allied subjects developed by researchers from central and state agricultural and allied research centres, state agricultural universities and some private sector institutions. The present study was conducted in the *Dhemaji Hut- The Atmanirbhar Dhemaji*, a *Kisan mela* cum exhibition programme, organized by the Dhemaji district administration, Assam in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhemaji, Assam Agricultural University, Simen Chapori, Assam on 11th to 13th January 2024. Two hundred forty respondents were selected randomly and interviewed personally with the help of pre-tested, semi-structured interview schedule. They were interviewed to know about their personal details, their satisfaction level with the *Kisan mela*, their views on different components of the event, any constraints they faced during the *mela*. The data recorded were analyzed using frequency and percentage. The findings revealed that majority of farmers and farm women were satisfied about the location of the venue (1st), the behavior of different *mela* organizing persons (2nd) and the timing of the event (3rd). Among the constraints perceived by the respondents, 38.33% found no constraint in any form while 37.50% reported 'lack of sanitary facility' as the major constraint in the *mela*. With sufficient numbers of toilets and proper arrangement for regular cleaning of the same during *mela* period in future may be the solution to such problem. Some other constraints recorded from farmers' perspectives were non-availability of quality seeds, high price of products/ seeds, disturbance in routine work in agriculture fields, cost of transportation and provision for meals etc. It can be concluded that although the *Kisan melas* play a very effective role in the dissemination of information on agriculture and allied subjects, they must be updated each year based on the feedback received to catch more attention from the farmers and make it more effective.

Keywords: *Kisan mela; Dhemaji hut; exhibition; farmers; farm-women; agricultural scientists.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture holds a significant place in the Indian economy, as over 70% of rural households rely on it for their livelihoods. As a critical sector of Indian economy, agriculture contributes around 17% of the GDP and employs approximately 58% of the population. It is also a vital sector in Assam's economy covering about 54% of the total geographical area [1] and the livelihoods of more than 70% of the state's population depend on agriculture [2]. Similarly, agriculture and allied activities are the indispensable sustenance for the livelihood of more than 85 per cent of the people residing in the Dhemaji district [3]. Dhemaji district is the eastern-most corner of Assam, on the north bank of the river Brahmaputra [4-6]. The district has 1.24 lakh farm families with more than 6.86 lakh population out of which 47.44 and 6.44 % are ST and SC

populations, respectively [7]. Paddy is the major crop of the district covering more than 60 per cent of the gross cropped area followed by rapeseed and mustard, black gram, potato and maize. Piggery, poultry, goatery, fishery and sericulture are also major livelihood activities in the district. The agriculture activities in the district are primarily rain-fed with annual rainfall ranges from 2600 to 3200 mm with relative humidity varying from 73 to 90%. The area under irrigation is only 6.6% of the total cultivable area [8]. Farmers mainly practice the traditional methods for crop cultivation with little mechanization and scientific practices adopted by some farmers in the recent past. Lots of young and educated persons have been engaged in agricultural activities, especially in horticultural cash-crops, livestock farming and fishery-based integrated farming systems. They are properly encouraged by the district administration through various line

departments with adequate infrastructure and funds under various government schemes with required technical support from the Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhemaji under the Directorate of Extension Education of AAU, Jorhat. As a part of this process, the district administration and KVK have been organizing the *Dhemaji Hut- The Atmanirbhar Dhemaji*, a *Kisan mela* cum exhibition, every year since 2020-21 during the month of January to give proper platform and exposure to the farming community of the district. During the *mela*, the organizers have tried to showcase different advanced technologies related to agriculture and allied subjects, displays the machineries required for mechanized-agriculture, provide a platform to progressive farmers for selling their products and create market linkages, facilitate interaction of the farmers with the scientists of different agriculture-centric state and central institutes, inviting and presenting the successful agripreneurs with their success stories and arranging a huge *Magh-bihu* market in the heart of the district for both the producers and consumers. The fast growth of the agriculture and allied sectors can only be achieved by transferring the new information to the farmers, the real users. *Kisan mela* is one of the most effective methods to disseminate information to large numbers of farmers in a short period of time. *Kisan melas* and *kisan goshtis* have been the key activities of agriculture research institutes to spread awareness about the new technologies among farmers and to address their problems [9]. There is a tremendous gap between knowledge production and knowledge utilization by the farmers [10], which can be bridged effectively through the *Kisan melas*. Despite various ICT tools for information dissemination, the *Kisan melas* continued to be a significant mode of transfer of technology owning many advantages [11,12].

The fourth edition of the *Dhemaji Hut* was organized for 3 days from 11 to 13th January, 2024 at the Dhemaji Court Field with new ideas and planning to benefit more farmers and expose them to more and more advanced agricultural technologies. On this occasion, an agro-industrial exhibition was organized with the exhibition-stalls erected by the government, semi-government and private organizations dealing in agriculture and allied fields to display their products, technologies etc. to make the visiting farmers aware of the utility of these products. Different competitions on various horticultural-crops and traditional household food-items, viz. cucurbits,

roots and tubers, leaf-vegetables, chilli, tomato, brinjal, capsicum, flower-tubs; traditional food-items (*ladu, pitha, jalpaan*); mushroom beds/cylinders etc. were also organized among the farmers to encourage and attract them with the provision of prize moneys to first three position holders. Success and effectiveness of such *melas* depend on the participation of farmers and their satisfaction levels in the *mela*. Lots of efforts were put up by the organizers, scientists, professionals and other stake-holders to give maximum benefits to the farming community with highest level of satisfaction. Authorities, scientists, other staff and development professionals need to spend several weeks to organize such events [13]. But the participants of such *mela* always perceive some or other types of dissatisfaction and constraints during their visit. As the whole event was organized for farmers, farm women and others related to various kinds of agricultural activities, so their satisfaction was of prime concern for success of the event and obtaining desired goal of creating awareness among the farmers. It is high time that the current status of Dhemaji hut is being analyzed and takes necessary measures to upgrade it in future. The constraints perceived by *Kisan mela* participants are very important gear to understand the problems faced by them during the visit. Keeping in view of the above facts and the importance of agricultural technology for the farming community of the district and the region, a study was carried out to record the profiles of the participants, their level of satisfaction in the *Dhemaji Hut* and to identify the constraints perceived by the farmers so as to formulate future course of action to improve the quality of such *mela* in next year.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The district administration of Dhemaji, Assam in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Dhemaji, Assam Agricultural University, Simen Chapori, Assam has been organizing the *Dhemaji Hut – The Atmanirbhar Dhemaji*, a Farmers' Fair cum exhibition, every year in the month of January just before the *Magh bihu* or *Bhogali bihu*, one of the most important Assamese society and agriculture-based festival of Assam. It has been an inevitable occasion for thousands of farmers and farm women of Dhemaji and nearby districts for last 4 years. The present study was carried out in the *Dhemaji Hut* held at the Court Field, Dhemaji during 11 to 13th January, 2024. A simple random sampling method was used to select the respondents, who were from various

farming sectors including businessmen and service-holders, who visited the *Kisan mela*. The respondents were personally interviewed to know about their personal details, their satisfaction level in the *mela*, their response about different components of the event and any constraint they face during the *mela* with the help of a pre-tested, semi-structured interview schedule. The participants were interviewed by a group of RAWE (Rural Agricultural Work Experience) Programme students of the College of Agriculture, AAU, Jorhat, who were engaged with the farmers of Dhemaji district in a teaching-learning process under the guidance of KVK, Dhemaji. A total of 240 respondents were interviewed in successive days during the period of *mela*, 80 respondents being interviewed in each day. For assessing satisfaction level, the farmers' data were collected in three point scale i.e., most satisfied (MS), satisfied (S) and not satisfied (NS) and the scoring system followed 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The total weighted mean scores (TWMS) were calculated for each aspect by adding up the frequencies multiplied with respective scores and divided by total numbers of respondents and then ranking was done on the basis of the scores.

Total weighted mean scores were calculated with the help of following formula-

$$TWMS = (\text{freq of MS} \times 3 + \text{freq of S} \times 2 + \text{freq of NS} \times 1) / N$$

Where,

Freq=Frequency, MS= Most satisfied, S= Satisfied, NS= Not satisfied, N=Numbers of respondents

To analyze the constraints perceived by the respondents, they were asked to mention their perception on different aspect of the constraints indicated in the list. Then the collected data were statistically analyzed with the help of frequency and percentage.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 revealed that 30.83% of respondents were young people below the age of 35 years and largest percentage (52.08) of them fell in the middle aged category (36-50 years) while 14.58 and 2.51% of the respondents were from advanced (51-65 years) and old (>65 years) aged categories, respectively. It is observed that

the most of the farmers and farm-women, who visited the *mela*, were of middle aged followed by the young aged, which is a very good sign for the progress of agriculture and allied sectors as around 83% of the participants, below the age of 50 years, are presumably the persons related to agriculture, veterinary, sericulture, fishery and horticulture activities. Similar type of finding was also reported by some other researchers [14]. The categories of the visitors were also recorded and found that 54.17% were from Schedule Tribe (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC), while 30.83 and 15% were belonged to Other Backward Caste (OBC) and General Caste, respectively. Since, more than 50% of the population of Dhemaji district is shared by tribal people (ST- 47% and SC-6%), it was natural that the representations from ST and SC people would be more in any such gatherings about agriculture and allied activities. Gender-wise 55.83% of the respondents were male and 44.17% were female. The total population of the district is comprised of 51% male and 49% female. It reflects almost equal participation of female, which also supports the fact that tribal females are engaged in agriculture and related activities at par with their male counterparts. Tribal farm women play an important role and make significant contribution to small and medium sized farm [15]. The data on education status of respondents revealed that 44.58% were Graduate and above, followed by Matriculation (29.17%), Intermediate (13.33%) and Primary (12.92%) levels. It showed that large numbers of well-educated persons, comprising 87% having the minimum education of matriculation, are involved in agriculture and allied sectors and interested in participating in such *Kisan mela*, which reflects that the formal education already spread in agriculture based rural society and the technology-driven agriculture has created a niche in rural agriculture eco-system.

The participants' profile further illustrated that 18.33, 7.92 and 1.68% of respondents were purely engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries, respectively, as main occupation for livelihood. On the other hand, 7.08% of respondents were engaged both in agriculture & AH, while 5.83% were involved in Agriculture, AH & Fisheries altogether as sources of livelihood earnings. Interestingly, maximum numbers of respondents, comprising of 27.50%, were engaged in some sort of business as the primary source of earnings in addition to agricultural activities and 17.08% of the respondents were service-holders, either private or government

level. It reflects that businessmen as well as servicemen are equally interested in agriculture and allied activities. Most of such people try to maintain a small-sized kitchen garden or nutritional garden or rooftop garden organically for their family consumption. A sizable number of respondents (14.57%) mentioned 'others' as their means of livelihood, which may include daily-waged labors and un-employed persons who depend on their family members and some kinds of part time economic activities for their living. The study indicated that the farmers and farm women of the modern rural society were involved in diversified works related to agriculture and allied sectors, which demands intense as well as diversified extension and advisory services from the public sector service providers. It was also revealed that the numbers of *Kisan mela* visited by the respondents varied from 1 to 8 or more times and the majority (32.08%) of them visited it for the first time. Percentage of respondents visited the *mela* for 2nd and 3rd time were 19.17 and 15.42, respectively and 6.25% of them visited various *Kishan melas* including the *Dhemaji Hut* for eight or more times. So, it's a good percentage to signify the importance of such farmers' gathering through *Kisan mela* for the people of the district as it seems every time they visit the *mela* with the expectation to get some new information and knowledge in the field of their interest.

People who visited the *Dhemaji hut* had their own purposes. Out of total 240 respondents, 4.17% mentioned that they came to the *mela* for purchasing good quality seeds, may be the local rice, vegetable seeds or seeds of HYV, who were presumably the serious cultivators and they always try to explore something new from such *melas*. Some of the visitors came to collect information about good breeds of animal and birds (2.8%) or to procure them and to see or purchase machineries related to cultivation (5%). Largest proportions of respondents (30%) visited the *Dhemaji hut* to see new technologies on agriculture and related subjects. Entertainment was one of the purposes of attending the *hut* for a sizable numbers of respondents (21.25%) as cultural programmes were organized in the *mela* in each day in the evening hours covering various local performers of the district as well as some state level famous artists. Lots of respondents (13.33%) came to the *mela* to exhibit their own products and to participate in the competitions, which included the vegetables, flowers, traditional dresses, handlooms, poultry, fruits, eggs etc and some were there to

showcase their indigenous technologies which could be meant for cultivation of various crops. Large numbers of respondents (24.17%) had the miscellaneous purposes of visiting the same like 'information on organic or natural farming, information on loan, purchasing of traditional dresses and flower plants from nurseries, to enjoy local traditional dishes and beverages etc.', were kept in 'other' category. Regarding the type of information obtained by the respondents, 51.25% revealed that they got some sorts of latest information on agriculture & allied technologies and 10% of them gathered advices about controlling various diseases in crops, vegetables as well as livestock and poultry. About 20 and 12% of the respondents got the information on improved seed varieties and improved livestock and poultry breeds, respectively during their visit in the *mela*. A considerable proportions (6.75%) of the participants, whose views were recorded under 'other purposes' carried no particular information or undecided about the message they got in the *hut* or they might be visiting it to satisfy their curiosity by observing the peoples' gathering in the Court Field which is located in the heart of Dhemaji town. A lot of people came to the town for *Bihu* marketing as it was *Magh bihu* time, so such people might also enter the *mela* site and have some experience of the hut.

3.2 Level of Satisfaction

Evaluation of farmers' satisfaction is very important as the farmers are the ultimate beneficiaries of the *Kisan melas* and so they are the right persons to judge its success and failure and their views are very critical inputs for future improvement of the same. Table 2 revealed that majority of respondents (77.50%) were most satisfied with the site of the *Dhemaji hut* i.e. the Dhemaji Court Field, which is located on the side of Dhemaji DC's office, whereas 22.50% were satisfied and not a single respondent was unsatisfied with location. On the basis of total weighed mean score (TWMS-2.775), location of *hut* got 1st rank in overall satisfaction criteria. The visitors of the *mela* came from different parts of the district as well as neighboring districts of the state, so its location bears significant importance on the numbers of attendance in the same. Behaviors of different *mela* organizing persons toward the visitors also play an important role in overall success of a *mela* as well as satisfaction level of the visitors. Here, the respondents were very satisfied with the behaviors of *mela* organizers showing 2nd rank on TWMS (2.558)

Table 1. Profile of respondents (N= 240)

A Age			
Sl. No.	Level	Frequency	Percentage
1	Young (up to 35 years)	74	30.83
2	Middle (36-50 years)	125	52.08
3	Advanced (51-65 years)	35	14.58
4	Old (>65 years)	6	2.51
B Categories			
1	SC/ST	130	54.17
2	OBC	74	30.83
3	Gen	36	15
C Genders			
1	Male	134	55.83
2	Female	106	44.17
D Education level			
1	Primary	31	12.92
2	Matriculation	70	29.17
3	Intermediate	32	13.33
4	Graduate and above	107	44.58
E Occupations			
1	Agriculture	44	18.33
2	Animal Husbandry (AH)	19	7.92
3	Fisheries	4	1.68
4	Service	41	17.08
5	Business	66	27.50
6	Agriculture & AH	17	7.08
7	Agriculture, AH & Fisheries	14	5.83
8	Other	35	14.58
F Number of Kisan mela			
1	1	77	32.08
2	2	46	19.17
3	3	37	15.42
4	4	33	13.75
5	5	20	8.33
6	6	10	4.17
7	7	2	0.83
8	8+	15	6.25
G Purpose of attending Kisan mela			
1	Purchase of seed	10	4.17
2	Purchase of animal breed	5	2.08
3	Purchase of machinery	12	5
4	See new technology	51	21.25
5	Entertainment	72	30
6	Participation in exhibition	32	13.33
7	Other-Information on organic/natural farming	58	24.17
H Type of information obtained			
1	Improved seed variety	24	10
2	Agriculture & allied technology	123	51.25
3	Disease control	12	5
4	Other	81	33.75

with the percentage of most satisfied, satisfied and not satisfied respondents being 56.67, 42.50 and 0.83, respectively. With respect to the timing of the event, 55.42% respondents were MS, 44.58% were S and no one was there in NS

category and ranked 3rd as per TWMS (2.554) in overall satisfaction level. The *Dhemaji hut* has been organized in the same time every year i.e. just before the *Magh Bihu*, after completion of the harvesting of the state's main crop i.e. *Sali* paddy

by the farmers. So, the *hut* becomes a kind of buyer-sellers' meet with regard to agriculture produces needed for enjoying mandatory feast for celebrating the occasion and a nice platform for producers of agricultural inputs and their consumers. Timing of the year when such *Kisan melas* are being organized plays a major role in turn-out of the visitors and without sufficient numbers of the target people the very purpose of organizing such event remains unfruitful. The organizers knew this fact very well and accordingly arranged the programme when the harvesting of paddy is over. It was also observed that 49.17% of respondents were most satisfied, 50.41% were satisfied and only 0.42% was not satisfied with regard to the orientation of different stall in *mela* ground. The organizers always tried to utilize the available space in best possible manner which presents a beautiful look as well as exposure to the *mela* and also facilitate the ease of visiting different stalls within minimum efforts, time and energy. Most of the visitors were satisfied barring a few regarding the orientation of the stalls in the *mela*, which was ranked 5th on TWMS (2.488).

Regarding availability of product varieties in the *mela*, 42.08, 56.67 and 1.25% of the respondents were most satisfied, satisfied and unsatisfied, respectively with the TWMS of 2.408 and got 10th rank on satisfaction level. With respect to availability of quality seeds, 47.08, 51.67 and 1.25% of the respondents were most satisfied, satisfied and unsatisfied, respectively with overall satisfaction rank of 7th (2.458). *Kisan mela* is a good platform for buying and selling varieties of local as well as HYV seeds of different field crops, flowers, vegetables etc. [16] reported that more than half of the farmers visited the farmers' fair for 'purchase of HYV seeds'. Here, the availability of such seeds might not be up to the level of satisfaction of all the participants, which might be due the prevailing diversified agriculture pattern followed in the district and nearby region and diversified needs of the farmers about varieties and qualities of seeds. The expectation of such respondents might be fulfilled by inviting more numbers of enterprises and agencies involved in production of quality seeds of different crops and vegetable in future.

The percentage of respondents with most satisfied, satisfied and not satisfied categories were 45.42, 53.33 and 1.25, respectively about the arrangement of animals for exhibition in the *mela* with overall satisfaction rank of 8th on TWMS (2.442). The availability of information on

green fodder for animals and new strains of crops or animal ranked 9th and 11th in overall satisfaction with TWMS 2.408 and 2.413, respectively. Different species and breeds of animals and birds with high prolificacy and attractive look always inspire visiting farmers in such *mela*. Now a days, most of farmers know about the importance of cultivating quality fodder for their herbivores and they take the opportunity of *Kisan mela* to observe and collect the seeds or saplings of various fodder crops and here the respondents might not find all the required details of fodder crops they sought. This is important feedback from the farmers' side to be taken care of by the concerned departments during future arrangements of *Dhemaji hut*. Similar kinds of views on fodder crops from the *Kisan mela* visitors were also observed by Shandilya [17]. Lots of participants always try to interact with expert and progressive farmers in agriculture and allied sectors in such occasions and here also 47.50, 52.08 and 0.42% of respondents were most satisfied, satisfied and unsatisfied, respectively by getting a platform for interaction with agricultural scientists and progressive farmers, with a satisfaction ranking of 6th position overall (2.471). Contrary to this, it was reported that 'lack of interaction with scientists or experts' was a serious constraint faced by the respondents and was ranked 1st [18]. Regarding the information on new technology development in agriculture and allied subjects, 33.33, 66.25 and 0.42% were most satisfied, satisfied and unsatisfied, respectively with overall satisfaction of 12th rank (2.329). Imparting trainings to the farmers on agriculture and allied subjects are obligatory activities in a *Kisan mela* and here the farmers were least satisfied (13th rank) in this aspect with the TWMS of 2.282. This feedback would be one of the significant findings for the *mela* organizers with respect to improving the quality of *Dhemaji hut* in future. The respondents were also asked to give their views about 'overall effects of *Kisan mela* by considering all the satisfaction criteria together. Nearly all the respondents (99.58%) were satisfied with the overall effect of *Kisan mela*, where 52.50, 47.08 and 0.42% were most satisfied, satisfied and unsatisfied, respectively. The overall effects of *Dhemaji hut* ranked 4th based on the total weighted mean score (2.521). It showed that *Kesan mela* was well organized and fulfilled almost all the requirements of respondents barring a very few. There is always a next time and so, it is expected to be more organized, improved and informative *Dhemji hut* in the years to come.

Table 2. Level of satisfaction of respondents in Kisan mela(N= 240)

Sl. No.	Area of satisfaction	Satisfaction levels						TS	TWMS	Rank
		Most Satisfied		Satisfied		Not Satisfied				
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage			
1	Location of venue	186	77.5	54	22.5	0	0	666	2.775	I
2	Timing of events	133	55.42	107	44.58	0	0	613	2.554	III
3	Orientation of different stalls	118	49.17	121	50.41	1	0.42	597	2.488	V
4	Availability of products variety	101	42.08	136	56.67	3	1.25	578	2.408	X
5	Availability of quality seeds	113	47.08	124	51.67	3	1.25	590	2.458	VII
6	Arrangement of animals for exhibition	109	45.42	128	53.33	3	1.25	586	2.442	VIII
7	Information regarding new strains of crops/animal	100	41.67	138	57.5	2	0.83	578	2.408	XI
8	Information on green fodder for animal	104	43.34	131	54.58	5	2.08	579	2.413	IX
9	Platform for interaction with experts and progressive farmers Information provided in <i>Kisan mela</i>	114	47.5	125	52.08	1	0.42	593	2.471	VI
10	Information regarding new technology development in agriculture and allied	80	33.33	159	66.25	1	0.42	559	2.329	XII
11	Training on agriculture and allied subjects	72	30	164	68.33	4	1.67	548	2.283	XIII
12	Behaviour of different <i>mela</i> organizing persons	136	56.67	102	42.5	2	0.83	614	2.558	II
13	Overall effects of <i>Kisan mela</i>	126	52.5	113	47.08	1	0.42	605	2.521	IV

*TS=Total Score, **TWMS=Total Weighted Mean Score

3.3 Constraints Perceived

The data summarized in Table 3 regarding the constraints faced by the respondents in attending and during the *Dhemaji hut* revealed that the largest proportion of the respondents (38.33%) perceived no constraints. It showed that the *Kisan mela* was well organized and fulfilled almost all the requisites of the participants. Still, shortfalls are part and parcel of such events, which cannot be avoided at any cost and a record of which from the respondents becomes good input for improvement of the same in future. One of such problems faced by the farmers here was the 'lack of sanitary facility' as mentioned by 37.50% of the respondents. Some of the respondents (6.25%) recorded that their routine work in the agriculture field is disturbed for attending the *mela*. 'Lack of sanitation facility' and 'disturbance in routine works in agriculture fields' were also found to be the constraints faced by the visitors of the university-organized *Kisan mela* [19]. Majority of the respondents, mainly the farmers and farm women, came to attend *Dhemaji hut* from far remote areas of the district, where more intensive agriculture work is done and who mainly depend on agriculture as their means of livelihood. A substantial numbers (5.83%) of respondents recorded their problems in attending the *mela* in the 'other category of constraints' such as 'distance of *mela* site from their villages', 'cost of transportation', 'family obligations', 'cost of meals and tea' etc. So, it would have been a better proposition to bear the cost of meals and transportation, at least for the farmers who travelled a long distance from remote villages, by the organizers for the sack of better attendance and to reduce some economic burden on farmers' part as they had to lose their agriculture-field works and daily mandatory works related to their livestock on that day. This fact was supported by other workers [20] who also put forward their opinion that the

transportation facility should be provided by the organizers to the farmers from the bus stand and railway station to the place of the farmers' fair. In present-day societies, family obligation is always a hindrance to spare time for the head of the family due to the changing societal structure from a joint family to a nuclear family system. The findings of the present study agreed with the reports of Pattnaik [21], who revealed that even though most of the participants wanted to visit the *Krishi mela*, the lack of transportation facilities was one of the major constraints which hindered their visit. Lack of time (3.75%) for the visitors is also related to their diversified agricultural activities throughout the day and family obligations. 'High price of products or seeds' and 'non-availability of desired quality seeds' came out as few more concerns as indicated by 5.42 and 1.67% of the respondents, respectively. The *mela* visitors always want to have some good quality seeds or saplings of different vegetables and fruits at reasonable prices on such occasions and when that would not have happened they naturally get disappointed. Other researchers also observed that non-availability of quality seeds as well as the high price of available seeds was some important constraints for the visitors to *Kisan mela* [19]. Such problems can be addressed by making necessary arrangements for good quality seeds at reasonable prices in the up-coming *Dhemaji hut* by inviting more numbers of input dealers and giving some sort of incentives to them to keep the prices at a minimum level. Few respondents (1.25%) mentioned lack of drinking water as a constraint in the *mela* though the arrangement for drinking water was sufficient. The visitors might be confused about the place of the water arrangement which needs to be improved in next year's *Dhemaji hut*. Some other workers [18, 22] also concluded that lack of drinking water was the major physical constraint faced by the farmers visiting the farmers' fair.

Table 3. Constraints perceived by respondents in Kisan mela (N= 240)

Sl. No.	Constraints perceived with regard to	Frequency	Percentage
1	Non availability of desired quality seeds	4	1.67
2	High price of products/ seeds etc.	13	5.42
3	Lack of drinking water facility	3	1.25
4	Lack of sanitation facility	90	37.50
5	Disturbance in Routine Agriculture work	15	6.25
6	Lack of time	9	3.75
7	Others- distance from village, cost of transportation, family obligations and meals, tea etc.	14	5.83
8	No constraints	92	38.33

4. CONCLUSION

Participation of young and middle-aged persons with enough educational backgrounds in the *Dhemaji hut* is a very positive sign for the development of agriculture and allied sectors in this region of the state. The results of the study revealed that though most of the respondents were very satisfied with the arrangement of the *Dhemaji hut*, one of the important setbacks they faced was the lack of sanitary facilities at the *mela* site. However, this problem can be addressed with sufficient numbers of toilets and proper arrangement for regular cleaning of the same during *mela* period in future. Other such constraints to take note of were 'non-availability of quality seeds', 'high price of products/ seeds', 'disturbance in routine work in agriculture fields', 'cost of transportation', 'provision for meals in the *mela*' etc. The availability of quality seeds of different crops and vegetables at affordable prices needs to be arranged to fulfil the farmers' satisfaction in the *hut* next time. Further, the farmers can be provided with transportation facilities from their villages to the *mela* site and the arrangement of meals/ packet lunches during *mela* days by the organizers. Additionally, to address the farmers' queries and problems, there is a need of a Farmer Care Centre which can cater for them the required information. Moreover, it is observed that there may be a provision of stalls from various funding agencies of the district to provide awareness and knowledge on available loan facilities for the farmers during the hut.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to acknowledge the Director of Extension Education, AAU, Jorhat and all the farmers who participated in the study and made the study successful. Authors are also thankful to all the RAWEP students of 2020-A batch working under KVK, Dhemaji, who interviewed the visitors and guide them to fill-up the interview schedules. Other necessary supports provided by the staffs of Dhemaji district administration and KVK, Dhemaji, AAU, Simen Chapori are also duly acknowledged.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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