

## AGRI-TOURISM –ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

*“Still round the corner, there may wait, a new road or a secret gate.” – J. R. R. Tolkien*

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### Abstract

Agri-tourism is the concept of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. The major aim of agri-tourism is to provide support in terms of financial and as well as elevation of the local skills and talents of the local community specifically admiring the landscape, the natural fauna and flora, their cultural manifestations that take place in their areas, but today farmers are facing with adverse climatic conditions and the reducing yields. Factories source the farm at a very low cost. This conceptual paper discusses about the issues and challenges associated with agri-tourism and also discusses about the strategies that can be adopted in order to minimize the challenges and elevate agri-tourism as an inclusive growth.

***Keywords: agri-tourism, involvement, farm, support, landscape, yield, challenges, issues, inclusive growth***

### Introduction

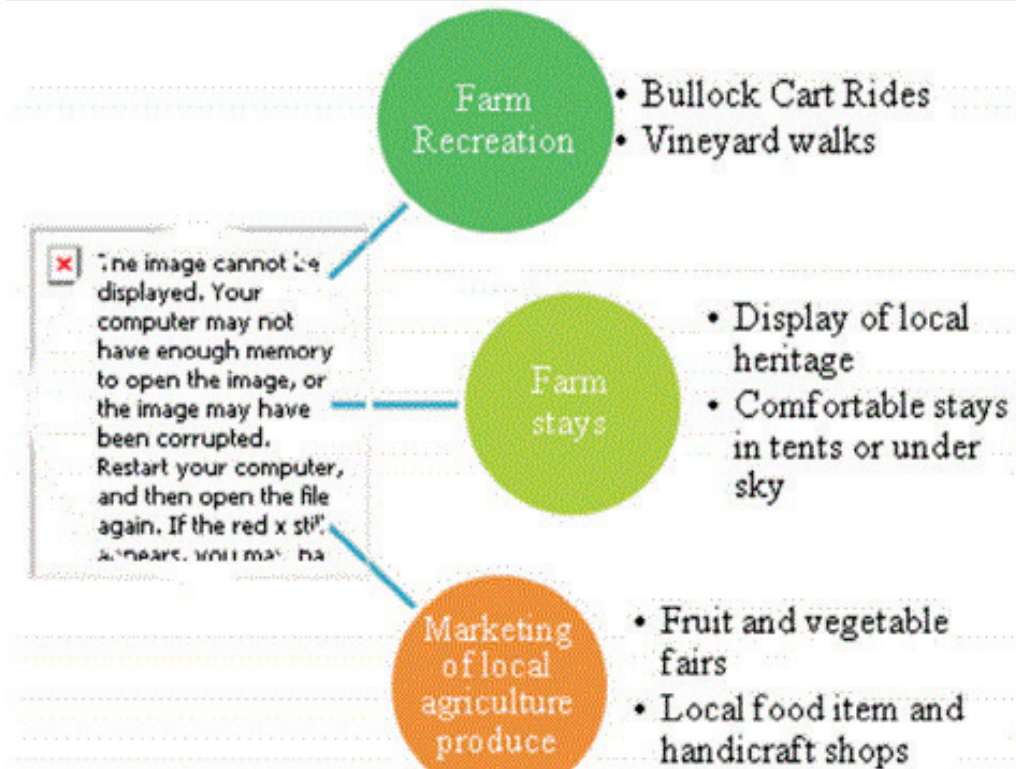


### **Agri-tourism practices**

Agriculture plays a vital role in the Indian economy. Over 70 per cent of the rural households depend on agriculture. Agriculture is an important sector of Indian economy as it contributes about 17% to the total GDP and provides employment to around 58% of the population. Indian agriculture has registered impressive growth over last few decades

- The share of agriculture in GDP increased to 19.9 per cent in 2020-21
- **India ranks 2nd in the world in agriculture production**
- Indian agricultural production has increased from 87 USD bn to 459 USD bn in the past 15 years (12% annual growth).
- Globally India ranks 9th for the agricultural exports.
  
- In Europe ‘rural tourism’ is usually used to describe agri-tourism (tourism on farms) but expands to encompass basically all tourism activities in the countryside when needed. Along with agritourists, four other rural tourism niche market groups were selected from the TAMS dataset rural heritage tourists, nature tourists, rural sports tourists, and rural adventure tourists.
  
- Agri-tourism refers to the phenomena as “hosting” and “holiday’s” but the key meaning relates to the use of tourism as a “supplement to” farm business.
- Agri-tourism has different definitions in different regions of the world and sometimes refers to farm stays and sometimes to a wide variety of activities, including buying a produce which can also be described as agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch. It can also be denoted as ecotourism is the act of taking a journey to natural areas that are relatively undisturbed or contaminated.

**Figure:Agri-tourism**



Source: go

## Review of literature

### Rural Tourism based reviews

1. **Brookfield, 2008; Essex et al., 2005; Gartner, (2004)** stated that visiting rural areas is not a new phenomenon, the socioeconomic shift occurring in rural areas from one centred on predominately primary-sector industries (i.e., farming, fishing, mining, and forestry) to one embracing new opportunities in service- and experience-based economies has had an impact on the character of most rural areas in Western countries
2. **Lane (1994)** argued that in its purist form, rural tourism must comprise these features: located in rural areas; functionally rural: built upon the rural world's special features of small scale enterprises, open spaces, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, and traditional societies and practices; rural in scale: both in terms of buildings and settlements and, therefore, usually small in scale; and traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families; it will often be largely controlled locally and developed for the long-term good of the area and will be of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy, history, and location. (p. 14)
3. **Roberts and Hall (2001) and Frochot (2005)** raised key questions concerning —what is rural as suggested in Lane's (1994) often-quoted foundational paper, which has

informed much of the rural tourism research. The meaning of rural has become increasingly contested, given the recent transformations occurring in many rural communities

4. **Frochot, 2005; Oh & Schuett, 2010; Roberts & Hall, 2001, 2004; Sharpley, 2004; Sharpley & Roberts, (2004)** from their perspective suggest rural areas are places of consumption and are becoming extremely diverse as destinations for a wide range of different niche tourism products
5. **Frochot, 2005; Oh & Schuett, 2010; Page & Getz, 1997; Park & Yoon, (2009)** examined the smaller, more specialized tourism niche markets found in rural areas that could serve to identify any differences and marketing advantages among them.
6. **Haugen & Vik, 2008; Ollenburg, 2006; Wilson, (2007)** observed that more so than the desire to increase economic returns, farm families may be diversifying into agritourism because of the effects of globalization on agriculture, the growth of tourism, and social motivations, such as choosing to maintain a rural lifestyle

#### **Agri-tourism based reviews**

7. **According to Klaze (1994)** stated that a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business
8. **Wilson et al., (2006)** formally defined Agri-tourism as anything that connects consumers with the heritage, natural resource or culinary experiences unique to the agricultural industry, or a particular region of the country's rural areas.
9. **Rich et al., (2012)** defined agri-tourism to comprise of activities offered on working farms and other agricultural settings for entertainment or educational purposes.

#### **Problem statement**

AgriTourism contributes to the economy as inclusive growth.

In order to develop the rural folk, local community, their native skills and talents,, knowledge of its essence is required and is it an inclusive growth

#### **Research questions**

- How agri tourists do?
- What are the challenges and issues of agri-tourism?
- How agri tourism becomes an inclusive growth?

#### **Objectives of the study:**

1. To study the role of rural tourism

2. To discuss the role of agri-tourism
3. To identify the issues and challenges associated with agri-tourism
4. To determine how agri-tourism as inclusive growth

### **Methodology**

- Type of study: Descriptive
- Secondary data: through surf engines, bulletins, company websites and journals
- Limitations of the study:
  1. Time is one of the limitations
  2. Secondary sources of data collected may have been utilized for some other purpose

### **Challenges of agriculture**

- **Instability:** Agriculture in India is largely depends on monsoon. As a result, production of food-grains fluctuates year after year. A year of abundant output of cereals is often followed by a year of acute shortage.
- **Cropping Pattern:** The crops that are grown in India are divided into two broad categories: food crops and non-food crops. While the former comprise food-grains, sugarcane and other beverages, the latter includes different kinds of fibres and oilseeds.
- **Land Ownership:** Although the ownership of agricultural land in India is fairly widely distributed, there is some degree of concentration of land holding. Inequality in land distribution is also due to the fact that there are frequent changes in land ownership in India. It is believed that large parcels of land in India are owned by a- relatively small section of the rich farmers, landlords and money-lenders, while the vast majority of farmers own very little amount of land, or no land at all.
- **Sub-Division and Fragmentation of Holding:** Due to the growth of population and breakdown of the joint family system, there has occurred continuous sub-division of agricultural land into smaller and smaller plots. At times small farmers are forced to sell a portion of their land to repay their debt. This creates further sub-division of land.
- **Land Tenure:** The land tenure system of India is also far from perfect. In the pre-independence period, most tenants suffered from insecurity of tenancy. They could be evicted any time. However, various steps have been taken after Independence to provide security of tenancy.
- **Conditions of Agricultural Labourers:** The conditions of most agricultural labourers in India are far from satisfactory. There is also the problem of surplus labour or disguised unemployment. This pushes the wage rates below the subsistence levels.
- **Manures, Fertilizers and Biocides:** Indian soils have been used for growing crops over thousands of years without caring much for replenishing. This has led to depletion and exhaustion of soils resulting in their low productivity. The

average yields of almost all the crops are among the lowest in the world. This is a serious problem which can be solved by using more manures and fertilizers.

- **Irrigation:** Although India is the second largest irrigated country of the world after China, only one-third of the cropped area is under irrigation. Irrigation is the most important agricultural input in a tropical monsoon country like India where rainfall is uncertain, unreliable and erratic India cannot achieve sustained progress in agriculture unless and until more than half of the cropped area is brought under assured irrigation.
- **Lack of mechanisation:** In spite of the large-scale mechanisation of agriculture in some parts of the country, most of the agricultural operations in larger parts are carried on by human hand using simple and conventional tools and implements like wooden plough, sickle, etc. Little or no use of machines is made in ploughing, sowing, irrigating, thinning and pruning, weeding, harvesting threshing and transporting the crops.
- **Agricultural Marketing:** Agricultural marketing still continues to be in a bad shape in rural India. In the absence of sound marketing facilities, the farmers have to depend upon local traders and middlemen for the disposal of their farm produce which is sold at throw-away price.
- **Inadequate transport:** One of the main handicaps with Indian agriculture is the lack of cheap and efficient means of transportation. Even at present there are lakhs of villages which are not well connected with main roads or with market centres.

**Major Agro-tourism Destinations in India:** Some of the famous and major agro-tourism destinations in India are as under:

- Dewalokam Farmstay Retreat, Karimannoor, Kerala.
- Vanila County, Kottayam District, Kerala.
- Maachli and Dwarka Farmstay, Sindhudurga Region, Maharashtra.
- Dudhsagar Plantation and Farmstay, Goa.
- Destiny Farmstay, Ooty, Tamil Nadu.
- Acres Wild Cheesemaking Farmstay, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.
- Banyan Tree Farmstay, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
- Green Dreams, Coorg, Karnataka.
- Citrus County, Hoshiarpur, Punjab.
- Prakriti Farms, Rupnagar, Punjab.
- Thathagata Farm, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- The goat Village, Garhwal District, Uttarakhand.
- The Country Retreat Farmstay, Pali, Rajasthan.

### Challenges of agro-tourism

Most of the studies have proved the due importance and need of agro tourism on the following basis: Agro-tourism is a sustainable form of tourism business.

- It provides an additional source of income for the farmers.

- It gives prestige to rural life and creates new jobs at local levels.
- It gives an opportunity to urban tourists to escape from hectic life of the city.
- It enhances the quality of life for local residence.
- It gives the tourists glimpse of village ambience, local cuisine, culture and art.
- It expects the active involvement from the tourist, rather than a passive spectator, so a bond between guest-host is strengthened. It is eco friendly which is very essential in the present environmental scenario.
- It makes tourists familiar with the rural life and roots of early civilization.
- It has a vast scope in the present scenario of tourism business in India.
- It is less expensive gateway of tourism and the cost of accommodation, food, travel and recreation is very less in Agro-Tourism when compared to any other type of tourism.
- It widens the tourist base by widening the scope of tourism due to its cost effectiveness.
- It has a strong demand in the contemporary world scenario.
- It provides all opportunities to all age groups i.e. children, young, middle and old age, female, male, in total to the entire family at a cheaper cost. It makes tourists familiar with rural games, traditional dresses, festivals and food.
- It brings tourists close to the nature and provides variety of entertainment to them.
- It is a source of knowledge to get information about plants, animals, raw materials like handicrafts, woods, rural lifestyle and their languages, culture, tradition. Agro-Tourism which generally revolves around farmers, villages and agriculture has the potential to satisfy the curiosity of this segment of population. It is a way for tourists to look towards agro-tourism as a means for searching peace and tranquility.
- It brings tourists very close to nature and crops, birds, animals, mountains, water bodies, villages provide totally different atmosphere to urban population in which they can forget their busy and hectic urban life. It provides tourists an opportunity to visit villages and spend time with family.
- It creates awareness about rural life and knowledge about agriculture science among urban children and it can effectively be used as educational and training tool to train urban tourists. It provides variety of recreation to urbanites through festivals and handicrafts.

### **Conclusions:**

Agro-tourism is a boon for the development of our rural India as an inclusive growth

1. The only way to curb the challenge is to generate more demand through different promotional media, which is the only way to garner higher unit prices, while producing crop at full potential.
2. There is a need to find solutions for the rural households, by increasing their incomes through the best use of their economic potential, developing accommodation services and modalities to sell their own and local products.
3. Poor infrastructural facilities in rural areas is one of the tourist area and this need to be developed for attracting more tourists

4. Lack of quality of the services given to the tourists: In most of the farm tourist places there are lack of related services that must be provided to tourists, it is the responsibility of the local sarpanch or policy decision makers to train the farmers to provide enhanced services to the tourists
5. In most of the rural areas at the agri-tourist places, the farmers/farm owners are not literates and this is one of the biggest disadvantage, hence there is need to appoint the personnel for promoting their activities
6. In most of the agri-tourist places, the tourists do not get the information about the farms and farm lives. There is a need for good marketing strategy for creating local medium of advertising to promote their new farming lives/farms., establish local agri-tourism centers at bus-stops, railway stations, mass media and obscures on the way to reach the tourists sites without any problems
7. Lack of government support and identification of problems faced by the tourists. Government support is very much required to attract the agri-tourists with the help of melas, and more so they must address tourists problems when they visit these farms such as local language, their cultures and maintain hygienic conditions where tourists feel safe and secured without affecting their health and property
8. Preparedness for risk management programs for any unforeseen conditions that can be meted out by tourists.
9. All the above strategies and activities to be made functional in order to have sustainable agri-tourism and benefit the farmer and the local community through agri-tourism as inclusive growth.

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