



Shivtirth Agro-tourism Project – A Case Study

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Abstract:

Agriculture provides a source of living to almost 54% population in India. But its share in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been declining steadily. In present scenario, Indian agriculture is facing many problems such as low income, in able to create new jobs, climate change, etc. Agro-tourism is a new emerging concept in the sector of tourism and it is a way to sustainable agriculture also. Agro-tourism is becoming an important for rural area as well as urban area. It provides several advantages like income, employment, and use of accommodation, activities, natural resources conservation, recreation and education.

Increase in unemployment, lower socio economic status and living challenges demands opportunities for community development in rural area without disturbing the ecology of the region; the agro-tourism is the best way. The main five forms of tourism are Natural tourism, Cultural tourism, Ecotourism, Village tourism and Agro-tourism. This case study is based on Shivtirth Agro tourism project. Information collected in the form of primary data, based on visiting the sites and communicating with owner and working employees. This study is an attempt to reveal the way of performing, handling agro-tourism and its benefit for the society.

Key words: *Argo-tourism, Local community, Community development.*

Introduction:

India is agriculturist country and near about more than 80% peoples of India depends on agriculture and its outputs directly and indirectly, therefore agriculture is the backbone of Indian economy. Majority of the Indian population living in rural belts and facing several challenges arising from socioeconomic, demographic

and institutional sectors that effects their basic needs of survival. For economic growth of any nation tourism is an important sector for strengthening the GDP of the nation and also for employment generation and rural development. As per census 2011 data, the population of India is 1.21 billion and continuously enhancing year after years, at the same time existence of agriculture is threatening due to globalization and industrialization. Many people from villages come forward for earning the sources of income through jobs or business so as to sustain their household income. Agro-tourism is a part of tourism which is second largest sector in getting the jobs for non-skilled worker (Srivastava, 2016).

The concept of agro-tourism start in developed countries like Europe and North America, then after spread in most of the nations of the world. In India, it was initiated in 2005 at Malegaon village near Baramati of Maharashtra by Agro-tourism Development Company (ATDC). The main intention of ATDC to provide training and technique to the farmers and youth of rural areas to cater needs of farmers. Agro-tourism can rejuvenate the traditional views of tourism and brings new ideas in the sustainable development. Now a day, rural tourism development has become a top priority of the economic agenda of all the countries (Fariborz A, and Gill, 2009). The urban population which having roots in villages always has curiosity to learn about rural life regarding sources of food, vegetables, plants, animals, languages, culture, tradition, dresses and rural lifestyle. Agro-tourism has the power to satisfy the curiosity of people. Hence the majority of the people have been showing their interest toward the rural areas (Leon, 2005).

Objectives:

- To understand the functioning of Shivtirth agro-tourism project
- To know the various activities running at the site
- To find out the importance of agro-tourism

Shivtirth agro-tourism project:

Shivtirth agro-tourism project located near Umari dam of Saoner tahsils; it is just 47 Km away from Nagpur. The geographic location of Shivtirth agro-tourism project is 21⁰25 N, 78⁰48E and 392 M height from MSL. Umari dam located in Satpuda mountain ranges and valleys surrounded deciduous mix forest along with agricultural tract. The owner had procured land for the development of

agro-tourism project. Now, Shivtirth agro-tourism project represent largest plantation centre of edible fruit plants along with wild tree and exotic plants in Vidharbha. The place is established for the various agro, aqua, adventure activities for complete learn and fun. Beside this, they also organized school/college camps and social function like birthday, anniversary party, marriage ceremony, many rural games, etc.

Vision and mission:

According to their vision and mission, Mother Nature is open-door school without brick walls. India is agriculturists country, it is expected that we should know the information related to agriculture i.e. nature. Today urban children's world has become limited in the closet door school, classes, cartoon programs, television, video games, computer, internet, luxurious fun and food. Now a day it become very necessary that children must know agriculture farming to come very close to land and nature and learn many new things about farming, crops, plant, gardens, insecticides, animals, birds, water etc.

By keeping in mind the overall development of student Shivtirth has developed a centre for learning the above things. Shivtirth is dedicated to quality year round outdoor, natural education to make students more courageous, confident and creative to strengthen their capabilities from physical stamina to intellectual skills from environmental awareness to concentration ability with varieties of recreational games of agro, aqua and adventure activities for complete learn and fun.

Activities carried out at Shivtirth:

- Shivtirth Agro-tourism project had established in 2016 as a tourist place initially and visitors' gets attracted towards a site with god gifted nature with well furnished accommodation facilities with the help of the services of local employees. As the place is located on ranges of Satpuda Mountain ranges near Umari dam surrounded by forest along with agricultural tracts, various activities had been carried out like Agro special, Traditional food dishes, Adventure, Water Park, Trekking, Special camp, Boating, etc.

- Shivtirth management had started some agriculture related activities like plantation and growing of various horticultural plants, floral plants, seasonal crop and vegetable. Other farming practices done at the spot like plowing, soil preparation, installation of irrigation system, traditional farmer's equipment, honey bee hive, vermi-compost, bullock cart riding and tractor riding.
- They also provide information about agro-practices and cultivation of plants.
- At initial stage, the massive plantation done at the site from the year 2009. Now the place is full of various plantations like Custard apple, Guava, Papaya, Ber, Awla, Orange, Pomegranate, Mangoes, Chiku, Jamun, Drumstick and many more wild plants. Botanical garden along with nursery and ornamental and medicinal plants is well developed and saplings are ready to sell for the customers.
- Traditional delicious food prepared by local lady cooks is also served which exhibits the village culture; it gives utmost satisfaction for the tourist and does the mouth publicity which makes the tourist place popular.
- As the site located near Umari dam, the tourist has taken ride on self-paddling boat, motor boat, banana boat which is escorted by boatman. Tourist also enjoy boat house to celebrate their memorable party/event with hearties person or life partner.
- Peoples of nearby village have booked the spot for social function like wedding, ring ceremony, birthday celebration, etc.
- Different activities included in adventure are net climbing, rope courses, shooting range, archeries and traditional games which gives fun to visitors.
- They also arrange some fun entertainment programs like dance, singing, mimicry, magic show in which visitors can also participate and perform their talent.
- They also have traditional games which can be played by the visitors of all ages.
- Aqua related activities which are mostly liking and attracting to tourist are swimming tank, rainbow dance, splash buckets, mushroom dance, etc.
- In Shivtirth agro-tourism project near about 125 employees are working for smoothly carried out various ongoing activities and also for taking care of tourist at the spot. Most of employees working in the project are local coming from Umari and nearby villages.

Facilities given by Shivtirth:

- The entire package of Rs, 600/ per person per day with full package includes breakfast, lunch, site seeing and enjoying the other facilities mentioned above.
- The resort rooms are well furnished and equipped with all amenities including T V sets.
- In open place with decoration, peoples can celebrate birthdays, social functions and other events in the vicinity of nature.
- All types of boating escorted by boatman.
- Swimming and rain dance with music.
- Bullock cart and tractor riding to observe the natural view of Shivtirth.
- At the departure time, tourist can purchase locally available fruits, vegetables, flowers and also ornamental and medicinal plant saplings.
- Shivtirth provides personal assistance and guidance as per visitors need.

Use of natural resources:

- At the Shivtirth, workers are taking care of waste material comes from kitchen, vegetable sorting, foliage and litter. All the organic waste material dumps under the ground for composting which is useful for nursery plants and various vegetable and horticultural plants.
- Branches of wild dead fire plants are used for cooking purpose. In winter days, it also used by tourists for the campfire in night.
- Mostly on Sunday or other holiday, there is booking of more visitors then the manager ask to local employee on daily wedges to give service for the tourist.
- Umari dam is very adjacent to Shivtirth that is why visitors can enjoy boating and Water Park. Two motor pumps installed for getting continuous supply of water for irrigation to farm, nursery, garden, restaurant, washrooms, etc.

Findings and Conclusions:

- Most of the tourist booked for one day and reaches to the spot upto 10.30 a.m. and take their entry pass. For each visitor, it is impossible to enjoy and avail all activities running at the place in single day time. Hence, there is great demand by tourist for boating, swimming, bullock cart riding and tractor riding.
- The rush of tourist occurs in diwali vacation, summer vacation, Sunday of week and other holiday. In the month of December and January, there is booking of schools and colleges tour. In rainy season, the flow of tourist is less. Thus, there is more fluctuation in flow of tourists.

- Most of the employee working in the Shivtirth gets salary after the month end on the basis of number of duties. Even in slag season, they get salary of the duty days. Thus the Shivtirth management doing much expense on the salary of employees.
- Shivtirth management does the publicity through website, social media and visited tourist by mouth publicity.
- Shivtirth agro-tourism project is much helpful for neighboring community to enhance socio-economic status.
- Due to Umari dam tourist can enjoy different boating types and mentioned aqua related activities. Tourist can also enjoy the natural view near to dam.
- Shivtirth providing and preserving traditional games of villages, traditional culture like cooking pots, costumes, farm equipments, etc.
- For urban people, it is a stress buster amusement and students can enrich with the village culture, traditional games and activities.

In future Shivtirth agro-tourism management wants to construct a conference hall which will accommodate at least 500 participants which necessary for educational and social function. And have planning to install solar water heater and street solar lights to save in electricity bills and for becoming eco friendly attitude.

Shivtirth management is utilizing the proper use of natural resources, providing employment to local peoples, motivating for development of the people, helping for physical as well as mental relaxation especially for urban people, preserving traditional culture, protecting environment which helps to sustain biodiversity of the area. It is the best platform for the socio-economic development of the rural area. Thus the government has to provided a full fledge policy support system for the rooting and strengthening of the agro-tourism in Maharashtra.

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