



STUDY OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGRO TOURISM

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Introduction:

Agri tourism as “involves accommodation being offered in the farm house or in a separate guesthouse, providing meals and organizing guests’ activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations.” Tourism was identified as a revenue generating sector in western countries. In India the scenario was totally different. Since her independence in 1947, Indian policy makers had traditionally neglected tourism industry as it was considered to be a luxury segment benefiting only few. As then, the Indian economy depended a lot on agriculture, the government policies had always aimed to develop agriculture and other allied areas. Tourism was always viewed as an industry serving the elite instead of being accepted as a means to provide employment with good “multiplier effect”. Tourism was considered as an easy way to correct foreign exchange shortage. Consequently hotel rooms, food and beverage, handicrafts and many other services in most of the tourist destinations in India had traditionally been overpriced. Although in 2000, Global tourism industry represented one of the largest industries in the world with revenue of \$595 billion and the number of tourist arrivals globally as high as 698 million; India’s share in global tourism remained low.

The Union Budget granted the tourism industry much needed “Infrastructure – Status.”

As a result of boosting rural development from tourism point of view and encouragement of tourism infrastructure development in rural areas by state governments, Agri- Tourism Development Corporation was established on 16th May 2004 in Maharashtra. Agro tourism as “anything that connects tourists with the heritage, natural resource or culinary experiences unique to the agricultural industry or a specific region of the country’s rural areas.”

Keywords: Agri tourism, farmers, farms, urban, Opportunities

Objectives of the study:

1. To study of the Principles and Opportunities Agro Tourism in India.
2. To study of the Distinction between Rural Tourism and Agro Tourism.

Research Methodology:

The primary source of data collection in this research paper is the secondary data. The available information on **Agri tourism** has been extensively used to complete the research paper. All the available Journals, Related books, Web, Articles, Publish and unpublished information and Papers provided necessary information to the finalize the research paper.

Definitions of Agri tourism:

Agri tourism for farmers is considered as “A range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income for their businesses”.

Principles of Agri – Tourism

Agri - Tourism should ensure the following three basic principles.

- 1. Have something for visitors to see** - Animals, birds, farms and nature are few things which Agri-Tourism could offer to the tourist. Apart from these, culture, dress, festivals and rural games could create enough interest among visitors in Agri-Tourism.
- 2. Have something for visitors to do** - Participating in agricultural operations, swimming, bullock cart riding, camel riding, buffalo riding, cooking and participating in the rural games are few activities to quote in which tourists can take part and enjoy.
- 3. Have something for visitors to buy** - Rural crafts, dress materials, farm gate fresh agriculture products, processed foods are the few items which tourist can buy as memento for remembrance.

Advantages of Agri :

1. It brings major primary sector agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. This convergence is expected to create win-win situation for both the sectors.
2. Tourism sector has potential to enlarge.

3. Agriculture sector has the capacity to absorb expansion in tourism Sect

Distinction between Rural Tourism and Agro Tourism:

Even though Rural Tourism and Agro Tourism are commonly confusing terms, a distinction can be drawn between them. While Rural Tourism is a more generic term, Agro Tourism refers to specific sets of leisure activities organized by farmers to cater to visitors. These tourist services are regarded as a complement to main source of income. Agro-Tourism involves the whole family of the farmer whose customs and traditions are preserved. It includes shared or independent accommodation at owners' home. It allows customers to have a peaceful stay, away from crowds, with friendly people and in direct touch with nature.

Agro Tourism is more than just another tourist product. It goes well beyond a mere offer of services in rural setting. Rather, it implies a novel way of understanding travel, a new awareness, a positive attitude towards environment, local people and their culture. Agro-Tourism as a leisure activity has been extremely successful abroad. The possibility of enjoying the rural environment and culture at an attractive price appeals to a large market, including family, couples, students and senior citizens. The customers of this type of tourism, who usually travel with their family, are of predominantly urban origin and tend to be educated. They respect the local culture and often gather information in advance about the place they plan to visit. Users of agro tourism services want to avoid mass tourism. Instead they are interested in maximum contact with nature and in warm relationship with other people. They are environmentally aware and demand natural products, including healthier food. Moreover they seek genuine local culture as well as novel activities based on agriculture. Agro-tourism can be promoted for an individual farm in a region where as to develop rural tourism the entire village community has to be taken into consideration. In Rural Tourism local tradition, design, and architecture, local art and culture play a major role.

Conclusion:

Agriculture is the main sector of Indian Economy. Around 65 percent of the population is directly or indirectly dependent of agriculture. Out of total GDP around 13 percent GDP comes from agriculture sector. Providing additional income generating activities to existing agriculture would certainly increase contribution of agriculture to national GDP. Agri Tourism will serve this purpose. Agri Tourism is the latest concept in the Indian Tourism industry. It gives an opportunity to experience the real enchanting and authentic contact with real life. Promotion of Agri tourism needs conceptual convergence with rural tourism, health tourism and adventure tourism.

Which has recently emerged in Maharashtra. It is a field with potential to develop. Certainly as a newly developing field it has its own share of challenges and management issues to face. The issues like guest host relationship, sustainability, economic feasibility are important for any new tourism development at a destination. It is more so in the case of agro tourism as it has a direct impact on the host culture and rural community as a whole.

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