

THE GROUNDSWELL IN AGRI-TOURISM: THE ROAD AHEAD

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Abstract

The need of India's current economic state demands for the adoption of the popular slogan reflecting the craze for agritourism: *Come eat a fruit, smell a flower, run through the fields, converse with the plants, and get lost in rural India.* The diversity of rural customs and festivals in India makes it an ideal destination for agricultural tourism. A unique geography as well as an array of agricultural products contribute to the country's popularity. Rural life appeals to a significant portion of the nation's population who live in urban areas, wondering what country life is like. There seem to be no major barriers to the establishment of an agritourism industry in the country. The present research study focuses on exploring the various aspects of establishing agritourism which includes suggestions to bring out strategies for its promotion and implementation of the same.

Keywords: Agri-tourism, tourism, agriculture, promotion

1. Introduction

The majority of emerging economies, especially India, are based on agriculture. In the last few years, agricultural development has advanced quickly thanks to the green revolution and lower plot ownership, as seen in Asian nations. Despite this, India still has to contend with a number of issues that influence its fundamental existence and are caused by socioeconomic, demographic, and institutional factors. With a few notable exceptions, the majority of Asian economies in Asia have seen a steady change from an agrarian to modern capitalist culture. In India, 85% of people live in rural areas and are either directly or indirectly employed in the agricultural sector. Any country's GDP is greatly impacted by tourism, which also significantly contributes to job creation, poverty reduction, and long-term human development. Rural tourism and agritourism play a significant role in promoting development because India's economy is primarily rural.

Although agritourism is the latest concept of the industry it starts from the farmers' fields and it allows the tourists to taste the local rural and domestic food to get the authentic experience of rural life and get acquainted with different types of agricultural activities during the journey. provides an opportunity to be Tourists who rest in a purely rural and natural environment. As urban life is getting more hectic and complex day by day. Non-government organizations have helped in generating good employment opportunities, but at the same time have increased the level of stress and the complexity of working relentlessly.

In the arrangement of agricultural tourism, a person can not only reduce his stress by going to distant hilly areas or other metropolises with his family and visiting villages near his city but knowledge related to agriculture for himself and his children. Can apply too! It has often been seen that due to continuous living in cities, children, as well as adults, do not have complete information about rural life and agriculture. Even many people are not even aware of the technology of production of items used in the form of food grains, fruits and vegetables every day. During a survey, it has been found that many children have never even seen a cow and buffalo giving milk.

Agricultural tourism involves opening up urban areas and farms to foreign tourists and experiencing rural life. Telling them about different crops, how crops are sown and harvested,

the experience of harvesting crops themselves, the experience of women cleaning wheat or other crops, children playing with and touching sheep, goats, and chickens, Riding on a bullock cart, feeding young goats, running after ducks, catching chickens running away is more thrilling than roaming in malls in cities, playing cartoons and video games on mobile and they remember these experiences for life. Along with this, along with the traditional food of the villages and the art of preparing it in traditional utensils, there is an opportunity to interact with handicrafts, culture, music and language. Australia is leading country in Agri/ Farm tourism, Natural tourist destinations are seen comparatively safer during the epidemic and provide room for physically remote or "closed" tourist destinations. For domestic travelers, agritourism farms are the best places to go in Australia, California, California, and Poland. According to a survey, the majority of visitors believe that agritourism farms are the safer vacation spots and the same was endorsed by Wei Lee Chin & Siti FatimahwatiPehin Dato Musa in their research, they stated:*to spend holidays in peace and quiet, to consume healthy food served at the farms, competitive prices, safer travel destination for families with small children (Wojcieszak-Zbierska et al., 2020).*

Agritourism is considered a potential "industry recovery engine" in Western Australia, it led to an increase in sales of local agricultural products domestically. *Agritourism farms are safe destinations because of the low infection possibilities(Martinus&Boruff, 2020)* and post Covid-19, the majority of the people are looking for less crowded boutique destinations and Agri tourism activities for their Vacations.

2. Why agriculture tourism

- Agriculture tourism is one of the emerging sectors in the world as well as in our country. Concepts like agri-tourism provide quality products and information.
- India ranks 11th out of 184 countries in the total contribution of travel and tourism.
- The travel and tourism sector is capable of contributing 9 per cent of the total employment.

Today's farming has not been traditional, but new techniques have to be used to take proper benefits from farming, due to which farming is becoming expensive day by day. Due to the increasing pressure on agriculture under the pressure of population, the fertility of the land is decreasing day by day. In such a continuation, if the people and children of the city themselves will experience the labour and cost involved in farming through agri-tourism, then a sense of respect will arise in their mind for the farmers and they will understand the importance of food grains and waste it and they will avoid doing it!

Agro-tourism is developing very loudly all over the world. Agricultural tourism is being seen in different forms. Agricultural tourism allows people to breathe fresh air, get to know the rural environment, horse ride, bullock cart ride, consume fresh fruits, play with animals, experience milking, the experience of harvesting in the fields, cutting and buying fresh fruits, and vegetables in the fields. Experience, the experience of eating the fruits by plucking them from the trees, gives a completely different experience to agricultural tourism as compared to other tourism! It is a fun as well as an educational and learning process.

India is an agricultural country although the urban population is increasing day by day. Today, the world of urban children is confined to closed-door schools, classrooms, cartoon programs on television, video games, internet and they have only seen Mother Nature on TV screens or National Geographic channels! It has also been seen that 25 per cent of the people living in the

cities have no contact with the villages and neither their relatives are from the villages. About 34 per cent of the people have never been to the village.

3. Objectives of Agri-tourism

- To analyse current agritourism strategies and programmes in order to advance agritourism in the nation.
- To document the current agritourism business model and add recommendations in a workable model.
- To investigate the strategic function of its extension and maintenance.

4. Agricultural Tourism - A Possibility

A low-cost entry point: Agriculture the least expensive form of transportation, lodging, and entertainment is tourism. It expands the number of visitors! The urban, wealthy class, which makes up a relatively tiny portion of the population, is the only group eligible for the current concept of travel and tourism. Due to its affordability, the concept of agriculture brings travel and tourism to a large population and expands the reach of tourism.

Curiosity about agriculture, industry, and way of life - The urban population, which is based in the countryside, has a constant desire to learn about the food, plants, animals, raw materials like wood, handicrafts, language, and culture, tradition, clothes, and village. This group of people's curiosity might be sated by agricultural tourism, which centres on farmers, villages, and agriculture.

Strong Demand for Recreation-Oriented Recreational Activities - Villages offer affordable entertainment choices for families of all ages, including youngsters, the young, the medium-aged, and the elderly. Village festivals, sports, food, costumes, and nature offer a wide range of family-friendly activities.

Health, urban population awareness, and the search for natural resources - Life has become more stressful as a result of the modern lifestyle, and lifespans have decreased. People are constantly looking for nature to make their lives more tranquil. The pro-nature medicinal system Ayurveda has its origins in rural areas. The people's traditional medicinal knowledge is valued. Organic foods are in high demand both domestically and overseas. Overall, the urban population that is concerned about health is looking to the villages for answers.

The desire for Peace and Peace: Diverse ways of thinking and actions make up modern life. To benefit from modern conveniences and increase their income, everyone attempts to work in different areas. Peace always eludes you because of this. Finding a tranquil setting is possible through tourism. Agricultural tourism is peaceful and calm because it is located distant from cities and near to nature.

Interest in the natural environment- The bustling metropolitan populace is gravitating toward nature since it is constantly removed from the busy lifestyle. The inhabitants of cities can temporarily find peace of mind and contentment in a completely different environment thanks to birds, animals, crops, mountains, water bodies, and villages.

Disillusioned with crowded resorts and hotels - Overcrowded hotels and resorts are becoming a problem for the people who want peace! Therefore, through farmhouses, we try to create a village-like environment in the sub-urban areas. Nowadays, weddings and parties in farmhouses are a vivid example of this.

Rural Entertainment -Through festivals and handicrafts, villages provide the metropolitan population with a variety of amusement. The peasants' way of life, diet, languages, culture, and traditions appeal to them. Urban education can spark interest in the agricultural environment surrounding the farmers and the overall production process. You may be tempted by agriculturally significant locations like farms with the highest crop or animal yields, processing facilities, farms where tourism-attracting innovations have been made, and agricultural products like farm gates, fresh markets, processed foods, organic foods, and urban tourists. By clubbing adventure with Agri- Tourism will add benefit with the hand on practice while doing adventure activities in the Rural areas

Agritourism in the rural regions can be boosted by investing more efforts in the following directions in order to attract more tourists:

- Cattle fairs are a big success even as tourist attractions in the fair at Pushkar, a place located in Rajasthan, India, a simple approach to experience Rajasthani rural life is through that. It is a wonderful method to capture the simple Rajasthani way of life, which makes for an excellent vacation encounter. This fair, where people assemble to buy and sell various types of cattle, provides an opportunity to see the long-standing relationship and interdependence between humans and domesticated animals. The second option is to travel to the communities in the hinterland, which is not exactly simple.
- Agri-cuisines such as cow milking, cooking on mud chulhas, learning basic rural handicrafts, etc., may be more encouraged and introduced in a more structured way to the tourists who show keen interest to visit village areas and want to experience the specifics of village life for attracting bigger numbers.
- Most of the heritage hotels are located in rural areas, farmers can be motivated to join hands with heritage hoteliers to launch Agro-Cultural tourism as joint venture so that domestic and international tourists can get the benefits of agritourism.

The educational value of agricultural tourism - Urban schoolchildren can develop an interest in agriculture and rural living through agricultural tourism. The ideal location for a picnic is this school. Urban college students studying agriculture have the chance to learn by doing thanks to it. Future farmers can effectively use it as a teaching aid. It offers exceptional chances for studying while having fun, where learning is simple and enjoyable. Seeing is believing, and doing is learning. Agrotourism is the term for this experience-based idea. Agriculture tourism takes the shape of camel rides, bullock cart rides, boating, fishing, rural sports, and health (Ayurvedic) tourism.

5. Suggestions

Following rules should be followed when engaging in agricultural tourism:

- **There is something for the visitors to see** - Animals, birds, farms, and other natural features might draw travellers to the agricultural tourism industry. In addition to this, the culture, traditions, celebrations, and rural sports could greatly increase visitors' interest in agricultural tourism.
- **There is something for the visitors to do** – Tourists can engage in and enjoy a variety of activities, including farming, swimming, carting, camel riding, disguise riding, self-cooking, and playing rural sports.

benefits of agri-tourism

- It brings the important primary sector of agriculture and tourism together. Both regions are anticipated to benefit from this convergence. The tourism industry has room to grow. The agriculture sector can absorb the growth in the tourism sector.
- Many developed states have found success with agrotourism as a source of income, and they will take the initiative to promote it when conditions change. Some of the tourism business models that have been successful include:
 - arts and crafts display
 - Farm Store: Agricultural Equipment Exhibition
 - Roadside stands selling fresh agricultural products and craft items
 - demonstration of agricultural activities
 - sheep shearing
 - wool processing
 - fishing
 - farm holiday
 - bed and Breakfast
 - Farm Tour
 - horse riding
 - Like deserts and snow fields, rain also attracts agri tourists.
 - picnic ground
 - A shady place for visitors to rest - like a big banyan tree
 - Educational tour for school children, officers and progressive farmers
 - Farm school to learn a particular skill
 - outdoor school
 - herb garden

6. Role of Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) in the promotion of Agri-tourism

The promotion of agritourism has numerous difficulties, mostly as a result of farmers' ignorance, a lack of chances for agritourism training and project implementation, and a lack of legislation and infrastructure. EAS can therefore significantly contribute to removing these obstacles to learning and training. E. A. S. can help the officers set up rules and regulations for the appropriate operating of the Agri Tourism Center as well as the promotion and marketing of agri-tourism products in addition to giving farmers and entrepreneurs the training they need to acquire the knowledge and skills. Today's EAS must be skilled in the production process as well as supplementary marketing, promotion, and farming community development strategies like agritourism.

E.A.S. The staff should be knowledgeable about finding possible farms and business owners who can carry out the agro-tourism project. Numerous 'experts' in agricultural tourism lack complete or even basic expertise in both the agriculture and tourism fields. Development needs to be done sequentially to address this issue. First and foremost, the senior and medium-level extension employees should have solid agritourism training. The crew should be carefully chosen based on their sincere interest in "Agri Tourism" and trained locally and abroad to get extensive knowledge in the field.

The majority of urban-born, educated travelers who typically travel with their family respect the local way of life and frequently do their research beforehand.

Plan a trip: People that are interested in agritourism services want to have positive interactions with the environment and other people. They demand natural items because they are environmentally sensitive. Including wholesome food, they also look for authentic local culture and other agriculturally related activities. In such regions, where the growth of rural tourism benefits the entire village community, agricultural tourism can be fostered. Rural tourism is heavily influenced by local custom, design, architecture, and art and culture.

7. Strategy for Promotion of Agri-tourism

Products: The Eternal Product in Agricultural Tourism: Seeing, Believing, and Experiencing. This is an exceptional and unequalled experience. No million-dollar tourist attraction can provide the unique sensations that tree climbing, bullock cart trips, and drinking sugarcane juice in the field can.

Price: Agri-tourism businesses may charge extra during the peak season, which is from November to January, and during the off-season or at significant events, even if it is during off-season.

Location: The location where visitors stay has an impact on prices as well. While the cost of lodging in the fields is high due to the infrastructure being developed on the farm specifically for tourism purposes, the fee may be lower if the tourists are accommodated in the hamlet with the farmers. The use of facilities already in place.

Promotion: There are three levels at which the Strategy Alliance may promote agritourism.

Partnerships with airlines, tour companies, and foreign embassies –Through this collaboration, agritourism is made accessible to upper-middle-class metropolitan travellers and overseas tourists. Farmers might not be able to do this task alone. The central and state tourism departments can promote and coordinate operations on behalf of agritourism businesses.

Tie-up with Hotel Industry: By partnering with the hotel sector, it is possible to draw in a big number of domestic tourists. The hotel sector can help advertise the idea of agrotourism.

Promotion done by Agri Tourism Units The primary methods of promotion is word-of-mouth and local publicity from "Agri Tourism." The agrotourism unit can survive with just a little bit of strong direct marketing. They can engage in cooperative marketing based on cast sharing and promote the potential for agritourism in other regions of the nation. However, early government involvement is required to further this group's agenda.

Positioning - At some point, the phrase "Come feed a fruit, smell a flower, run in the fields, walk on the grass, and get lost in rural India" must become part of the tourist's mental image of agritourism.

8. Suggestions for promoting agri-tourism

Communication: It is challenging to publicise a rural agritourism unit. Therefore, organisations like ITDC, State Tourism Development Corporation, NGOs, Press, and Tour Operators can take on this role, or Agri Tourism Operators themselves can undertake PR. The promotion of agrotourism can benefit greatly from the use of information technology. An interactive website with all the information on agritourism destinations and a toll-free, round-the-clock hotline can offer crucial information to agri tourists.

Transport: Due to poor transportation infrastructure in rural areas and a lack of access roads, reaching isolated agrotourism units has proven to be the toughest problem. Agritourism must

have access to amenities like internet connectivity and transportation via road, air, and train. Roads, transportation, and telecommunication in rural areas, particularly where agrotourism units are established on a priority basis, can be successful with private participation in partnership mode.

Accommodation: Accommodations for agricultural tourism should be secure and sanitary. Tourists from cities and other countries seek out these basic amenities. On the one side, it's important to inform the agro tour operators, and on the other, it's important to support these initiatives. It's crucial to have access to clean water and restrooms regularly. At the same time, it's also important to restrict the use of contemporary amenities that agricultural tourists find irrelevant.

Networking: To support agritourism companies in distant areas, public and private partners must network at the national and state levels. This network can provide infrastructure, policy support, and publicity for agritourism businesses. There are over 100 research labs and institutes of ICAR all over India with excellent lodging/ boarding facilities, they can be requested to help and support Agri-tourism activities to ensure enhanced income for their target group of farmers/ villagers.

Developing farmer's capacity: Farmers should focus on maintaining amenities, providing hospitality, and fostering goodwill. **Polyhouse/ Green House:** A polyhouse, often known as a greenhouse, is a building or an enclosure composed of translucent material, such as glass or polyethylene, in which plants thrive and flourish under carefully regulated climatic conditions. Depending on the situation, structures can range in size from tiny shacks to enormous buildings. A greenhouse is primarily a glass structure whose interiors warm up when exposed to sunlight because the structure prevents greenhouse gas from escaping. As a result, even in cold weather, the interior is warm enough for the plants to survive. India is becoming more and more popular for polyhouse farming, Using polyhouse farming, a farmer can earn a huge amount.

The following crops can be grown in the Polyhouse:

- ✓ Fruits like papaya and strawberries among others can be produced.
- ✓ Cabbage, bitter melon, capsicum, radish, cauliflower, chilli, coriander, onion, spinach, tomato, and other vegetables can be cultivated.
- ✓ It is also simple to cultivate flowers like carnations, gerberas, marigolds, orchids, and roses.
- ✓ Particularly for those who favour organic farming, Polyhouses are very advantageous to farmers.

Several advantages of a Polyhouses are listed below:

Because the plants are grown in controlled temperatures, crop loss or damage is less likely.

- ✓ As we don't need to wait for a specific season to grow crops; you can do so all year long.
- ✓ In a Polyhouse, there are less insects and vermin. Crop growth will not be impacted by the external climate.
- ✓ In a Polyhouse, the quality of the produce is obviously superior.
- ✓ Good aeration and drainage

Security of tourists: Agrotourism businesses are often threatened by theft and wild animals since they are situated in isolated locations without access to roads, hospitals, or

telecommunications. Because of this, there should be community support in addition to emergency medical facilities.

Public-Private Partnership: These endeavours can be undertaken by agribusinesses, farmer organisations, cooperatives, NGOs, and agri-business corporations with the assistance of farmers and tour guides employed by government entities. Additionally benefited by this approach are transporters and the hospitality sector.

9. Conclusion

With its variety of rural customs, festivals, natural surroundings, and agricultural products, India has tremendous potential for the development of agritourism. Rural life appeals to many people in the country, particularly those residing in urban areas. Consequently, the nation has an excellent opportunity to develop and grow the unique agritourism industry.

Undoubtedly, India stands with a significant chance of developing and expanding the Agrotourism industry. However, this industry's demands possibly have yet not reached to the farmers—the key person, and are limited due to funding issues and lack of a sound strategy. In order to create awareness and promotion of agriculture tourism, district and University Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Agricultural Universities should collaborate.

The possibility of revolutionary expansion of the Agrotourism industry depends on the financial support from the government through grants and institutional financing. In addition, government bodies have been more involved in the implementation of initiatives and strategies for promoting agritourism in India. The farmers across the country should also be included in the mission by linking with the various service providers who may assist them in expanding and promoting the agritourism network.

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