

AGRO TOURISM AN ECONOMIC OPTION

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Abstract— Tourism is an economic activity to develop knowledge, experience, and fulfillment of hobby, medical treatment, business development, research and a means to add wealth to mankind. Many English authors devoted their writings on this subject as Lord Francis Bacon said “Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder a part of experience.” To invest in experience is far better trait than investing in money as money can vanish but not the experience. My subject of agro tourism is a new branch of this discipline where we explore the operational strategies of poor farmers who produce food for mankind. They face countless challenges of climate change, drought, excessive rains, and farm credit but in India they are worst off to lead a decent life. Agro tourism can just supplement their meager income in the Indian context but for city dwellers it is an extra ordinary experience to know the NATURE, the farm land, trees, mountains the system of agro production, harvesting, marketing, warehousing and the source of living.

Keywords— Tourism Is Hobby Business Avenue Farm Produce And Challenges Climatic Problems Lack Infrastructure To Distribute City Dwellers It Is Outstanding Priceless Experience.

I. INTRODUCTION

William Hazlitt said in his essays “ I should like to spend the whole life travelling, if I could borrow another life to spend at home” Travel across the world is most popular vocation where public travel for medical tourism, business tourism, hobby agro tourism, religious tours in India, historic tourism etc.

Today agriculture sector in India is facing acute problems like of infrastructure, warehousing, climate change, excessive rains, drought, no irrigation facilities availability of seeds, fertilizers, like finance and effective marketing.

Urban citizens have great anxiety to visit rural hinterland and examine how our food is produced and transported into the cities. The Rural Nature mountains trees, rivers, the rural cottages, open fresh air is an outstanding experience.

Even the famous poet William Wordsworth wrote poems only on NATURE very lively and he is regarded as icon of English Literature. Ulysses the famous Greek traveler moved across the world tirelessly and discovered the seven seas.

Lord Tennyson has wrote poem on Travel. All English essayists have at least one subject on travel and tourism. This is most important economic activity specially the hilly regions, like Switzerland, Kashmir, North Europe, North Russia etc. Their income depends only upon tourism. Unemployment is the important curse to mankind and the Indian farmers try to find alternate means of livelihood by way of AGRO TOURISM an important avenue to meet both ends. Agriculture in India is most uncertain depending on monsoon with less avenues from irrigation. Hence it is needed to supplement the

income of rural folk. India with six lakh villages and vast land to cultivate but except Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat other states face very urgent problems to address. I propose to find the crux and insight of agro tourism

Since 2004 agro tourism was started by Pandurang Taware award winner of President for this sector. Agri Tourism India is pioneer in the development and marketing agri tourism in India.

People have become more interested to know how their food is produced. They want to meet farmers and processors and discover the modus operandi of this sector reeling under stress. Maharashtra attracts many tourists from different states and foreigners to witness the NATURE in its naked form. The concept of agro tourism is new discovery in this sector and growing fast as better economic avenue which combines travel, agriculture, rural settings, and operational strategies very complex to understand. In spite of 70% people engaged in agriculture it contributes just 15% to GDP even after 12 five year plans and 70 years of independence. In fact the agriculture in USA is most lucrative just 2% people work and produce enough to export. This sector needs drastic change and revolution to reform this sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. SOME RENOWNED PROFESSORS EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ON AGRO TOURISM AND I QUOTE THEM

Dr Tanuja Mahapatra Reader Ravenshaw University Cuttack Odisha

Global economic restructuring has created a climate in which local economies have to adjust in order to maintain their socio economic viability. Many westerners finding on global level form of rural landscape and how to use it for economic gain for rural poor as side income.

India is now forerunner to restructure its rural wealth in the form Natural Gift to explore the possibilities to gain in economic term some benefit to rural poor where he is in an economic paradox as the agro sector is more erratic for gainful avenue unlike other countries of west. Farmers are finding beyond traditional farming to generate additional income with present resources of nature from the well to do people with deep pockets from urban India.

Apart from normal agriculture which includes farm produce, cattle grooming, sericulture, flori culture poultry breeding, vegetable and fruit growing they have now innovated to explore another means to earn an extra rupee from agro tourism (summarized text).

B. AGRO TOURISM POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR FARMERS IN MALAYSIA

BY Neda Tiraeyari and Azami Hamzah Institute of Social Studies University Putra Malaysia

The article reflects in short on potential benefits of agro tourism for farmers and local rural communities in general across the country.

The authors find in their presentation that agro tourism has become an economic instrument with great potential to contribute the rural economy in their country. Agro tourism in their country has formed the basis of relaxation, enjoyment and education of urbanelites.

SHP MALKANTHI , J K Routry Sri Lanka

Agro tourism is increasingly recognized as an important strategy that can contribute to agricultural development through diversification of farming activities and providing opportunities to rest, relax, enjoy and study about farming for the visitors. Many countries are promoting agro tourism to help farmers to get extra income to support them.

Sri Lanka has experimented in five districts recently and found that the agro tourism proved very successful but some infrastructural problems continue they are regarding training farmers, living facilities proper cleanliness waste management so that some extra income to farmers will help.

Tourism is the one of the industries with the strongest effect on the economy. This is a developing sector. Tourism Industry is the tool for the development of backward areas. For the development of tourism some attractions are necessary which can attract to the tourists. Concept of traditional tourism has been changed. Some new areas of tourism have been emerged like AGRO TOURISM. It is defined as Travel that combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations—all within a tourism experience. Our district Kolhapur has a great potential to the development of agro tourism because natural conditions and different types of agri products.

OBJECTIVES

- To look at the importance of Agri-tourism development in Maharashtra.
- To find the potential for Development of agro-tourism in Maharashtra and elsewhere including EAST INDIA NORTH INDIA
- To identify the problems and make suggestions to improve agro tourism

NEED OF STUDY

To examine the potential in this sector and try to help farmers to make extra income and supplement their way of living. Farmers in India are not well versed in the technology practiced in foreign countries. To improve the logistics and lodging facilities as they do not have so that more urban dwellers will join and enhance the income of rural poor. Study will find the monetary benefits and problems.

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation and Ministry of Agriculture will explore the possibilities to attract urban people and increase the income of poor

As a matter of fact India is vast country with more than 60% people live in villages and more Natural beauty exists across the country and India enjoys very good climate for tourism and even in East and North has excellent Natural beauty. Many countries having good Natural beauty but the climate is not conducive to travel like North Europe Canada North Russia where logistics and climate is a problem. On the holistic consideration our brain requires stimulation of hormones millions for health functioning. The mind and brain gets relaxation by witnessing NATURE in its original form and the best nutritious element enters brain in the presence of NATURE. Therefore I submit that AGRO TOURISM is the best method to enhance our health and get happiness for good.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. DATA COLLECTION

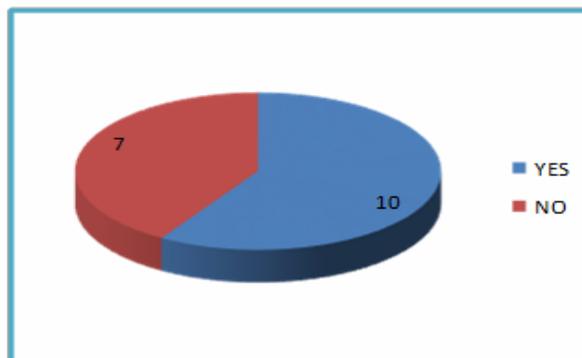
Primary Data Drafting a questionnaire, observing and interviewing the owners of agro tourism guests and experts in this sector.

B. SECONDARY Data

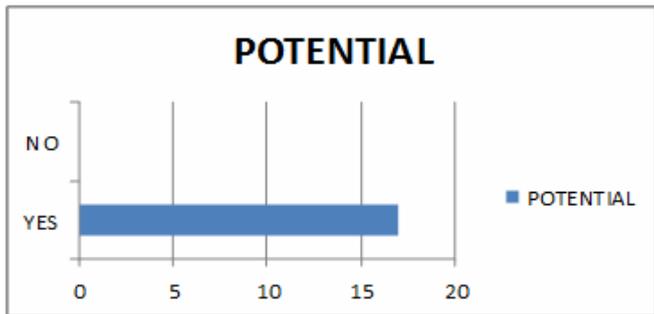
Referring books, magazines, newspapers, journals, web- sites and past published work.

C. DATA ANALYSIS

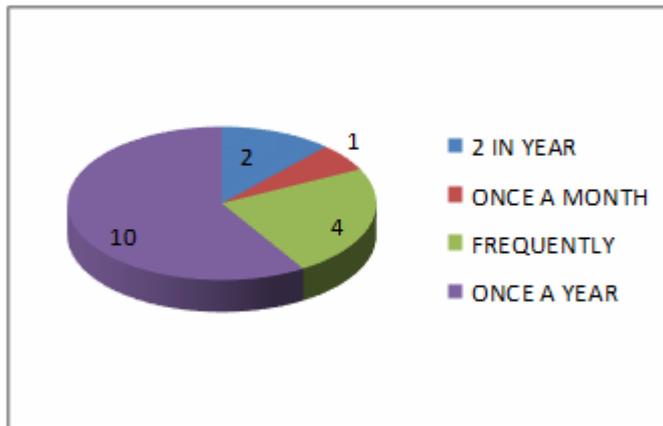
After collection of data we consolidate the raw data into a proper statistical format like histograms pie charts diagrams graphs percentages etc. to dissect the collected material Out of 20 targeted respondents 17 feedbacks were received, in all 10 of the people said that they have good road to reach Agri Tourism center, and 7 said that there is no good road to reach place, they said that there is need to develop the Maharashtra tourism.



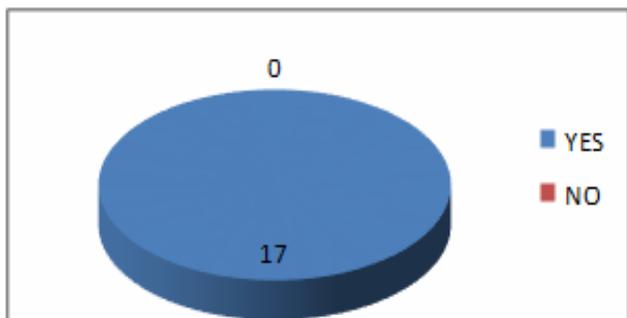
According to survey, 17 respondent's received every one said there is Potential for Development of Agri-Tourism in Maharashtra.



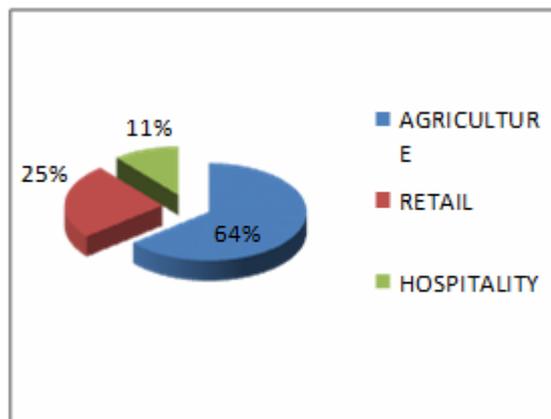
According to survey, 17 respondent's received every one said it would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the farmers and rural people. Some of those as follows: - 1) Employment opportunities to the farmers. 2) Additional income source for the farmers. 3) Farmers can improve their standard of living due to the contacts with urban peoples 4) Urban peoples can understand about the rural life.



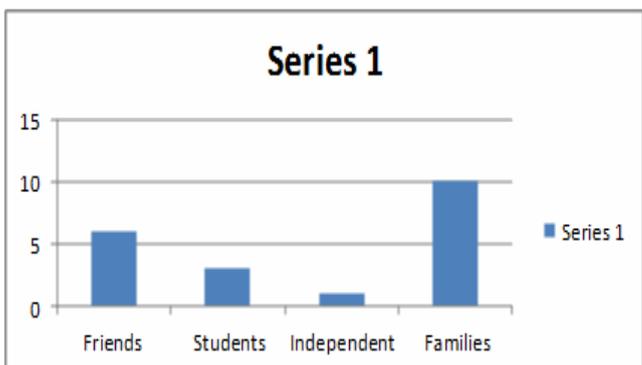
The feedback received from the owners of Agri tourism, 25% of them belong to Retail business, 11% belong to Hospitality industry and 65% belong to Agriculture.



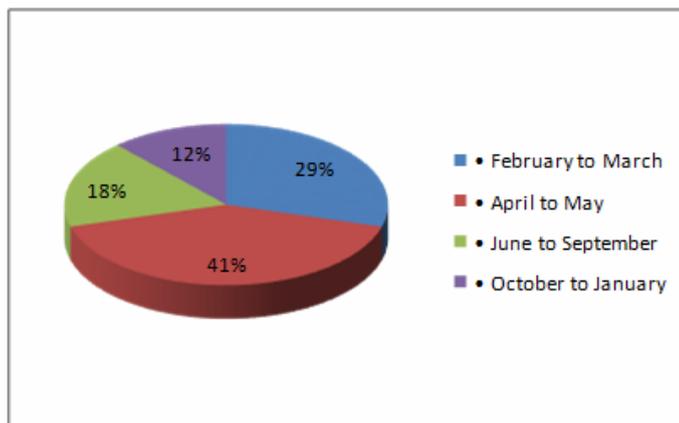
The questionnaire was submitted, in which 17 was received, as per below columns chart families are more attracted towards Agri-Tourism in Maharashtra, comparatively friends also more visited. Mostly foreigners come independently.



Out of 20 targeted respondents 17 feedbacks were received 41% of them said Guest visit maximum in April to May, 18% said Maximum guest come in June to September, 12% of them said October to January, In February to March maximum guest were said by 29% people.



In the feedback received for how frequent Guest come to Agri-Tourism? Then some said twice in a year, 1 of them come once a month, 4 are come frequently, 10 are attending events once a year. Jatra, Yatra, Dasara, Nag Panchami, Gokul Ashtmi, Pola, Makar Sankranti, and Holi and many other local events attract the guest, More of them attend events once in year.



D. Data Interpretation

The pictorial presentations mentioned above have to be assessed with systematic thinking to conclude the results and

reach a productive solution and suggest the best options available

IV. AGRO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (ATDC)

ATDC is main promoter to encourage tourism in rural Maharashtra. ITS aims are

- Prepare agro projects and help farmers to execute them
- To help farmers financial support from nationalized banks
- To conduct training for this tourism
- To conduct seminars and conferences on agro tourism and educate organizers
- To provide sales support and marketing support
- To arrange national and international tourist to come to India for agro tourism
- To link urban and rural folks to meet and mix their culture.

A. INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED

- To provide lodging facility to tourists
- To provide water fresh farm produce to customers
- To give cooking facilities to the tourists
- To provide first aid box in case of emergency
- To provide bullock carts horse ride to visitors
- To give information about sericulture
- To give jungle animals to entertain visitors.
- To provide authentic food items of rural taste for breakfast lunch and dinner
- To provide about the culture festivals of that area
- To offer rural special items as a commercial venture
- To provide safety to tourist in case of animal attack or terror threat
- To sale the handicrafts prepared by villagers.
- To offer pollution free environment to them
- To make tourist busy and enjoy village arts
- To provide logistic facility to visitors if they are in remote places

B. BENEFITS

- Employment facilities to be given to villagers as additional income
- Farmers can improve their standard of living
- To boost economic development and improve skill of rural people
- To give special attention to the lodges new look to comfort homely feel

C. FINDINGS

- Lack of perfect knowledge about the agro tourism
- Weak communications skill and lack of commercial approach of the small farmers
- Lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for agro tourism
- Ignorance of farmers regarding to the such type of activities
- Presence of unorganized sector in the agro tourism industry
- Ensuring hygiene and basic needs considering urban visitors
- 80% farmers have small holdings and their job is hand to mouth cannot give more to visitors as per their expectations
- Many of our farms face drought almost every year and sometimes excessive rains causing even more hardship and cannot think to earn extra money by agro tourism is the real fact.

SUGGESTIONS & CONCLUSION

- Small farmers with small holdings can form cooperative society to establish agro tourism center
- Give a wide publicity in media print and electronic so as to get more tourist.
- Develop contacts with schools colleges NGOs clubs union etc.
- Train your staff or family members for receptions and hospitality
- Assess the needs of customers what they want and expect from visitors
- Charge rent or facilities reasonably and affordable
- Train educated farmers on development of IT and innovations and websites
- Develop good relations between customers and hosts farmers
- Develop agro tourism package for different types of people
- Preserve address book notes comments tourists etc. for record
- Behave well with customers as farmers are not so educated.

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