

SCOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES OF AGRO-TOURISM IN TRIMBAKESHWAR TEHSIL OF NASHIK DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Agro Tourism is promoted by most of the countries in the world aiming at sustainable rural development. Since India is an agricultural country, it is the time to analyze the potential of this strategy at local levels. Thus the main aim of this research is to study the possibility of application of Agro Tourism in Maharashtra context. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centers in the India and there is large scope and has great potential to develop agro-tourism. The study was conducted in more than fifty villages of the eastern part of the Maharashtra using a field survey and some group discussions with farmers and respective tehsil offices of these villages. Results revealed that there are several possibilities for the establishment of Agro Tourism in Trimbakeshwar Tehsil.

Trimbakeshwar abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient temples, ancient forts and monuments, forest and wild life unique hill stations, pilgrimage centers, a rich tradition of festivals, art and culture. However, there are few problems militate against the success of the Agro Tourism development. Provision of solutions for these main problems related to; infrastructure development, relevant training and education for the farmers, access to farm credit, and proper measures to waste management as well as suitable environment protection methods in those areas will enhance the benefits of Agro Tourism as a sustainable rural development strategy.

Key words: Tourism, Agro Tourism, Sustainable Development.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Agro Tourism is now well recognized as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their Agro Tourism potential. Agro Tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled population. Promotion of Agro Tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people. 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.

The tourism Growth in India is continuously growing due to find out various diversities in physical and cultural environment. India is known as 'Land of villages', where more than 150 cores farmers live in 664,369 of village (2021) and agriculture contributed about 18.5% of the national income (2006-07). 82% of population of India still depends on agriculture hence agriculture is not simple business, but is still the 'True Culture of India'. On the other hand India has achieved great prosperity in tourism as a product. India being the home to many leading religions of the world has many important pilgrim sites of different religions scattered throughout the country with growing trend in Agro-tourism. Hence, the World Travel and Tourism Council have rated India as one of the five fastest growing tourism economies in the world. This paper is the combine study of agricultural activity and its association with tourism in Trimbakeshwar tahsil of Nashik district of Maharashtra.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

In India as well as in study region the agriculture is facing some problems like irregular monsoon, prices fluctuations of agro-products, availability of good market etc and becomes unprofitable. For this reason, the agro-tourism acts as additional co-activity and plays a significant and innovative role in agriculture for the farmers. It provides additional income source and employment opportunity to the farmers and rural peoples. It gives new look for the agri-business. Growing urbanization also supports to such activities.

3. LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA:

The study area is situated in western part of Nashik district in Maharashtra state. The Trimbakeshwar tahsil is famous for the Trimbakeshwar temple one of the jyotirlinga, Brahmigiri hills and source region of Godavari river for trekking, Nivruttinath temple, etc having the historical as well as pilgrim centers, Kokankada for adventure tourism and natural beauty etc. in Trimbakeshwar tahsil various tribes are also found hence, having the cultural and social significance.

In short the study area has the potential for develop as well as known as tourist spot. The situations are favorable for the employments generations for rural population in agriculture field. It will support and survive to the agro tourism activity (Fig.1).

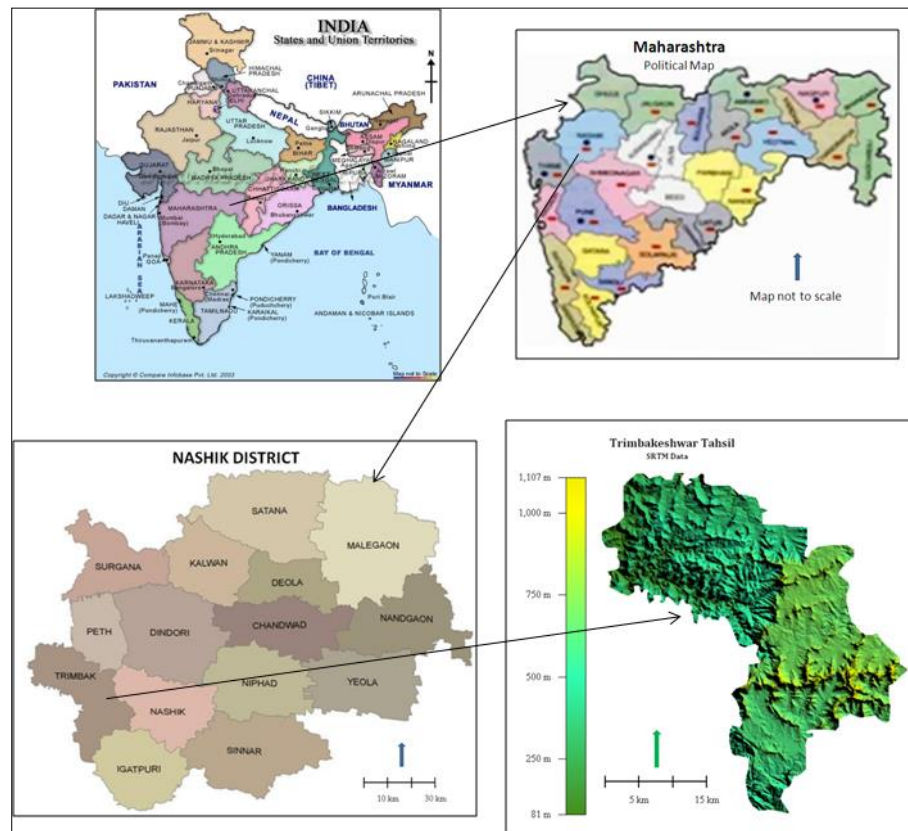


Fig.1: Location of Study Area with Context to India and Maharashtra State

4. OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the importance and potential of agro-tourism in Trimbakeshwar tahasil.
2. To study the scope of employment generation through the eco tourism.
3. To define a suitable framework for the agro- tourism centers developments.
4. To identify the problems of the agro-tourism and make suggestions to establishment and operations of agro-tourism.
5. Finally, to advise the guidelines and suggestions for the rural developments trough the Agro tourism development with sustainable developments way

6. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The present study is concerned with the agro-tourism development which is based on physical, climatic and cultural variations in study area as well as on secondary data. The data has been furnished from the related articles, research papers, reports and 11th plan document of the government of India. Some data has furnished from the websites of the government of India and Maharashtra, as well as ministry of agriculture. Here, the study of population or tourist flow from the urban areas like Mumbai, Nashik and Pune which are the most demanding cities for agro tourism facilities. Finally, few ideas are given for the development of the agro tourism sector in the above said area.

7. AGRO-TOURISM AND TRIMBAKESHWAR TAHSIL:

According to the above said information the Trimbakeshwar tahsil has a central location with reference to Mumbai, Nashik and Pune cities which are most demanding cities for agro-tourism. In these urban areas people are high profiled and they are very busy in their jobs only. In urban areas there is a lack of freshness of environment, cultured life, natural beauty, adventure, simple and relaxed life etc. Therefore they need relaxation and leisure time for mental refreshment. Due to all these reasons the people from urban areas are always attracted by the nearest natural tourist spot. These spots should be reachable for only weekend's holidays because of less time availability. In all these senses the Trimbakeshwar is reachable for the tourist coming from Mumbai, Nashik, Southern part of Gujarat and rarely from Ahmednagar and Aurangabad city.

8. PROBLEMS OF THE AGRO-TOURISM IN TRIMBAKESHWAR TAHSIL:

Though the Trimbakeshwar Tahsil has a greater potential for the development of agro-tourism centers as per the above discussions, some problems are observed in the process of agro-tourism development in the study area. They can be discussed as follows: Lack of perfect knowledge about agro-tourism, weak communication skills and lack of commercial approach of small farmers, lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for agro-tourism, ignorance of farmers regarding such types of activities, presence of an unorganized sector in the Agro-Tourism industry, ensuring hygiene and basic requirements considering urban visitors, farmers have small size holdings, low quality land and little or no access to credit or irrigation.

9. SUGGESTION AND DISCUSSION:

To beat the above problems some suggestions are given here. Agro-Tourism is one of the business activities. So, farmers must have a commercial mind and some marketing techniques for success. For better success in agro-tourism farmers should follow the following things:- Give wide publicity of the tourism center by news papers, television etc, and use all possible advertisement means, develop contacts with schools, colleges, NGOs, clubs, unions, organizations etc., train the staff or family members for reception and hospitality, understand about the customers' wants and their expectations and then serve, charge optimum rent and charges for the facilities / services on a commercial basis, do not artificially use local resources for entertainment / service to tourists, develop the website and update it time to time to attract foreign tourists, take their feedback and comments about the service and suggestions for more development and modification, develop a good relationship with the tourist for future business and chain publicity, develop different agro-tour packages for different types of tourists and their expectations, preserve an address book and comments of the visited tourists for future tourism business, behave sincerely with the tourists and participate with them, small farmers can develop their agro-tourism centers on the basis of cooperative societies.

9.1. Good community leadership:

Successful tourism promotion and development requires good leadership by open minded and enthusiastic persons from local government, community groups, the business community and non-profit organizations such as chamber of commerce and convention and visitor bureaus.

9.2.Support and participation of local government:

The role of local government is especially important in the following areas; funding for tourism development and promotion, creating and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for tourism, zoning and maintenance of the community so that it looks clean and appealing to tourists and educational support for farmers.

9.3.Sufficient funds for tourism development:

Most of the rural communities depend on public funds that are very often insufficient to cover all the needs of the rural community; private funds are something that most often can't be reached since local people do not have sufficient incomes by themselves to invest; therefore it is very important to explore for other sources of funding and assistance.

9.4.Strategic planning:

Planning is fundamental for the efficient and effective use of resources and funds, especially in rural areas that have few funds and resources. Good planning for tourism development and promotion can help develop and support local businesses connected to tourism. Planning for tourism development should be integrated into a community's overall economic strategy because of the interdependence of the community and key aspects of tourism development and promotion. Hence, planning for tourism requires the involvement of various stakeholders in the community.

9.5.Coordination and cooperation between businesspersons and local leadership:

For tourism development and planning to work, coordination and cooperation between local government and entrepreneurs is crucial. While strength of rural communities is their strong personnel networks, coordination and cooperation between local government and the business community do not always occur easily, if at all.

9.6.Coordination and cooperation between rural tourism entrepreneurs:

Tourism requires different types of businesses to work together because, by its nature; tourism has intertwined relations between different types of business such as shops, accommodation facilities, restaurants and tourist attractions. They may create different types of networks, both formal and informal. Tourism network allows for a standardized, yet high quality, business management, which small enterprises lack. Strategic planning and tactical decisions such as pricing, product differentiation and yield management can be handled much better by a qualified management.

9.7.Information and technical assistance for tourism development and promotion:

Different types of information for tourism development and promotion are especially important to agro-tourism development because small communities usually cannot afford to hire experts to this end the role of the above explained networks is also of the utmost importance.

9.8.Widespread community support for tourism:

Community support for tourism development and the attitudes and hospitality of local tourism workers are important for successful tourism.

10. CONCLUSIONS:

Trimbakeshwar tahsil has a great potential to the development of agro-tourism, because of natural conditions and different types of agro products as well as variety of rural traditions, festivals. More than 35 percent of population is live in the urban areas and they want enjoy rural life and to know about the rural life. It is a good opportunity to develop an agro-tourism business in Trimbakeshwar. But there is a problem of low awareness about this business in the farmer and problem of the finance and proper view in the farmers of Trimbakeshwar. If above discussed strategies and some local government support will received in proper way, the study area will definitely popular as a good agro-tourism spot in Maharashtra.

Hence, the agriculture departments of the districts', Agriculture Universities should try to give orientation about it and provide some innovative ideas regarding to the Agro-Tourism. The government should try to provide optimum financial aids to the agro-tourism activities in the Maharashtra by the grants and institutional finance. Bank should provide optimum financial help for the agro-tourism activities in the Maharashtra. Union of the agro-tourism service providers is also another need of these farmers which helps to the agricultural tourism network in the Maharashtra including Trimbakeshwar.

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