

# The Scenario of Agro - Tourism in India: An Overview

Vikas Dangi

Master in Tourism Management (MTM)

V. & PO. Madina, District: Rohtak (HR)

**Abstract:** Agro-tourism is a new concept in the tourism sector of Indian economy and it is related to the farming activities which provides better opportunities to experience rural farming life and taste of local genuine food. Today all the tourists want to escape from the daily hectic life of cities and desire to stay in peaceful environment of rural areas enriched with farming activities. Since 2004, Agro-tourism came into operation first in Baramati Agri Tourism Center under the guidance of Padurang Taware who received the National Tourism award due to this achievement. After that Agri-tourism Development Corporation affiliated and motivated more than 200 farmers to operate Agro-tourism centers in different villages of Maharashtra. Furthermore, Agro-tourism business spread out in the different parts of India such as Kerala, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, etc. Today it is estimated that 90 million farmers are living in 6.25 lakh villages producing food grains and almost 26 percent of GDP of Indian economy comes from agriculture sector. Therefore, here it is urgent need to make some serious efforts to boost the Agro-tourism sector which may be very helpful to generate employment, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. It is true that during the year 2000, 26.4 lakh foreigner tourists visited India and they showed an interest in Agro-tourism activities.

**Keywords:** Agro-Tourism, Tourism Sector, Employment Generation, GDP Growth, Indian Economy, Farming, Rural Life, Agricultural Farms, Public Awareness.

**Introduction:** The fact is that Agro-tourism is the latest and very popular key concept in the Indian tourism industry, which normally occurs on farms. Nowadays, agriculture sector is becoming more and more popular for the Agro-tourism business. Moreover, it is a form of agricultural multi-functionality which provides an opportunity to experience the real alluring and authentic contact with the rural life, taste of the local food and get familiar with the many farming activities for the foreigner tourists. It also provides an opportunity to get rid of hectic life of cities and an opportunity to live in the peaceful village environment with the rural people and farmers in the pure natural environment, surrounded by splendid setting in rural areas on farming sites. Today many Indian farmers especially from Pune and Maharashtra currently are considering the use of agro-

tourism as a mode of diversifying their farm operations. Now it has become an assumed fact that the overall potential for agro-tourism can only be achieved if strategies to address and overcome their challenges.

**Research Objectives:** The present research paper includes the following objectives:

- To explore the concept of Agro-tourism.
- To highlight the current scenario of Agro-tourism in India.
- To point out and identify key factors for the development of Agro-tourism.
- To know about the various Agro-tourism destinations in India.
- To find out the major challenges of agro-tourism sector.

**Research Methodology:** The present research work is exploratory in nature and based on the secondary source of data collection. The researcher has collected the secondary data from the reputed books, journals and official websites of the tourism department and department and tourism boards of different states as well as of tourism ministry of India. To pace the study, the researcher has also used some observational facts.

**A Review of Literature:** There is a plethora of literature on rural tourism in India as well as in abroad. A lot of research work has been done in this field and most of the suggestions made by the researchers indicate a great potentiality of the development of Agro-Tourism in India. Actually, Ago-tourism is not a new field of research and many researches has well stated the term 'Agro-tourism' as any practice developed on a working farm with the purpose of attracting visitors.

P. Singh and Manoj Kumar (2016) in their study have stated that Agro-tourism is a supportive system to the agricultural activities in India. Moreover, it is an Innovative practice which can be utilized by the famer and farm owners to harvest this opportunity, through a diversified approach in the core areas of agriculture sector in India. Azimi Hamzah et. al. (2012) in their study have discussed about the potential socio-economic benefits that can be offered by the agro-tourism activities to progressive fishing. Vijay M. Kumbhar (2010) in his study of Maharashtra has pointed out that tourism is now well recognized as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Therefore, tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled. Today the concept of traditional tourism has been changed and some new areas of the tourism have been emerged like Agro-Tourism. Consequently, the promotion of Agro-tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the local people by generating new job opportunities in rural areas in the farming sector.

N. G. McGehee, et. al. (2007) in their study has explained Agro tourism as rural enterprises which incorporate both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component. Marques (2006) in his study has

pointed out agro-tourism as a specific type of rural tourism in which the hosting house must be integrated into an agricultural estate, inhabited by the proprietor, allowing visitors to take part in agricultural or complementary activities on the property. Sonnino (2004) in his study has stated that all activities of hospitality performed by agricultural entrepreneurs and their family members that must remain connected and complementary to farming activities. Likewise, Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) in their research have revealed the fact that tourism products which are directly connected with the agrarian environment, agrarian products or agrarian stays.

**The Concept of Agro-tourism:** The term 'Agro-tourism' is defined most broadly, involves any agriculturally based operation or activity that brings visitors to a farm or ranch and it has different definitions in different parts of the world, and sometimes refers specifically to farm stays, as in Italy. Elsewhere, agro-tourism includes a wide variety of activities, including buying produce direct from a farm stand, navigating a corn maze, slopping hogs, picking fruit, feeding animals, or staying at a bed and breakfast on a farm. Moreover, agro-tourism is a form of niche tourism that is considered a growth industry in many parts of the world.

Here it is noteworthy that agro-tourism is possible where agriculture and tourism meet to provide us with an amazing educational experience whether it may be a tour of a farm, a festival or a fair in rural areas. In such type of tourism activity, farmers turn their farmland into a tourist destination which attracts a large number of commercial activities. Today agro-tourism is becoming very popular business activity at the global level and even in almost every state of India. It is a leisurely activity that helps a tourist to understand the rural life of a particular area.

**Agro-tourism in India:** The idea of agro-tourism makes tourists live life like a villager, right from milking the cow, ploughing the field, bathing in a well, to climb a tree and plucking fruits from trees. Therefore, it is a new concept in Indian tourism sector which normally occurs on farms which gives an opportunity to experience the real enchanting rural life with the taste of local food including the familiar with the various farming tasks during the visit on a farm. India is a agriculturalist country and since 2004 Agro-tourism is operational, which started in Baramati Agri Tourism Center under the guidance of Pandurang Taware who received the National Tourism Award from the President Of India, for the most innovative Tourism Product. Agri-Tourism Development Corporation in India is pioneer in the development and marketing of agro-tourism concept in India which has 218 affiliated farmers and operates agro-tourism centers in their respective villages in the state of Maharashtra in 2014.

**Need and Importance of Agro-tourism in India:** It is said that agro-tourism is a better way to know about the traditional agricultural farming activities which brings us very close to mother-nature and it is also very essential thing for a sustainable living on this planet. Today, Indian cities are facing the problem of overcrowd and environment pollution. Now, it has become an assumed fact that agro-tourism can give us a relief from the hectic life of urban areas. That is why; agro-tourism, eco-tourism and rural tourism are emerging as key sectors of tourism business in India. Most of the studies have proved the due importance and need of agro tourism on the following basis:

- Agro-tourism is a sustainable form of tourism business.
- It provides an additional source of income for the farmers.
- It gives prestige to rural life and creates new jobs at local levels.
- It gives an opportunity to urban tourists to escape from hectic life of the city.
- It enhances the quality of life for local residence.
- It gives the tourists glimpse of village ambience, local cuisine, culture and art.
- It expects the active involvement from the tourist, rather than a passive spectator, so a bond between guest-host is strengthened.
- It is eco friendly which is very essential in the present environmental scenario.
- It makes tourists familiar with the rural life and roots of early civilization.
- It has a vast scope in the present scenario of tourism business in India.
- It is less expensive gateway of tourism and the cost of accommodation, food, travel and recreation is very less in Agro-Tourism when compared to any other type of tourism.
- It widens the tourist base by widening the scope of tourism due to its cost effectiveness.
- It has a strong demand in the contemporary world scenario.
- It provides all opportunities to all age groups i.e. children, young, middle and old age, female, male, in total to the entire family at a cheaper cost.
- It makes tourists familiar with rural games, traditional dresses, festivals and food.
- It brings tourists close to the nature and provides variety of entertainment to them.
- It is a source of knowledge to get information about plants, animals, raw materials like handicrafts, woods, rural lifestyle and their languages, culture, tradition.
- Agro-Tourism which generally revolves around farmers, villages and agriculture has the potential to satisfy the curiosity of this segment of population.
- It is a way for tourists to look towards agro-tourism as a means for searching peace and tranquility.

- It brings tourists very close to nature and crops, birds, animals, mountains, water bodies, villages provide totally different atmosphere to urban population in which they can forget their busy and hectic urban life.
- It provides tourists an opportunity to visit villages and spend time with family.
- It creates awareness about rural life and knowledge about agriculture science among urban children and it can effectively be used as educational and training tool to train urban tourists.
- It provides variety of recreation to urbanites through festivals and handicrafts.

**Major Agro-tourism Destinations in India:** Some of the famous and major agro-tourism destinations in India are as under:

- Dewalokam Farmstay Retreat, Karimannoor, Kerala.
- Vanila County, Kottayam District, Kerala.
- Maachli and Dwarka Farmstay, Sindhudurga Region, Maharashtra.
- Dudhsagar Plantation and Farmstay, Goa.
- Destiny Farmstay, Ooty, Tamil Nadu.
- Acres Wild Cheesemaking Farmstay, Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.
- Banyan Tree Farmstay, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
- Green Dreams, Coorg, Karnataka.
- Citrus County, Hoshiarpur, Punjab.
- Prakriti Farms, Rupnagar, Punjab.
- Thathagata Farm, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- The goat Village, Garhwal District, Uttarakhand.
- The Country Retreat Farmstay, Pali, Rajasthan.

**Challenges to the Agro-Tourism in India:** However, Agro-tourism is a boon for the development of our rural society but there are some challenges as:

- Lack of quality of the services given to the tourists.
- Poor infrastructural facilities in rural areas.
- Low literacy rate of the farmers and farm owners.

- Inadequate information about the farms and farming life.
- Lack of government support and identification of problems faced by the tourists.
- Lack of effective agro-tourism resource centers.
- Lack of proper marketing strategy for agro-tourism.
- Inadequate risk management programs and techniques.

**Conclusion:** Thus it can be concluded that agro-tourism in India is facing many problems and Indian farmers need to cater the concept of agro-tourism as diversifying their operation. Today Agro-tourism needs a creative strategy for the betterment but it is not an easy task. Therefore, here it is an urgent need to implement a well defined strategy for the development of agro-tourism at national and state level. In this regard we need proper recognition of agro-tourism industry, government supported policy structure of agro-tourism, education of the farmer and farm owner, proper financing solution for its enhancement, liability and risk management programs, product and service quality improvement. Moreover, a Public Private Strategic Partnership Development Model may be created to boost the agro-tourism sector in India.

### References:

- A. K. Bhatia, **Tourism in India- History and Development**, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1978.
- D. K. Diane, **Agritourism in New York: Management and Operations**, Mackin Hall, Oswego, 1998.
- N. G. McGehee, & K. Kim, "Motivation for Agri-tourism Entrepreneurship", **Journal of Travel Research**, Vol. 43, 2004, PP. 161–170.
- B. P. Tyagi, **Agricultural Economics and Rural Development**, J. P. Nath and Company, New Delhi, 2005.
- B. B. Adams, **The New Agritourism Hosting Community and Tourists on your Farm**, N W Publishing, California, 2008.
- P. Singh & Manoj Kumar, "Identifying the Potential of Agri-Tourism in India: Overriding Challenges & Recommend Strategies", **International Journal of Core Engineering & Management**, Vol. 3 (3), June 2016.
- <https://www.linkedin.com/.../agri-tourism-sustainable-business-opportunity-indian>
- [www.agritourism.in/about-agri-tourism/](http://www.agritourism.in/about-agri-tourism/)
- [www.ecoindia.com](http://www.ecoindia.com) › Sustainable Tourism