

## Agro-Tourism: Scope And Opportunities For The Farmers n Maharashtra, A Geographical Analysis.

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### Introduction:

Agricultural tourism is a worldwide trend, which offers city dwellers a chance to escape urban concrete and re-discover their rural roots. Agricultural tourism is a relatively new market for tourists. The chance of interacting with individuals that one may not interact with on any level at any time involves the mystery that accompanies the occupation of this individual. The interaction of individuals with farm life also carries an educational aspect. People tend to enjoy learning about items and processes that they will not participate in directly. Agro-tourism or Agricultural tourism is becoming an important tourism development opportunities and more of the population have moved to the city and have lost their connection to where agriculture is produced "Agricultural Tourism" includes a set of economic and social activities that occur and link travel with the products, services, and experiences of agriculture.

Agricultural tourism is a type of tourism that has seen a boost in popularity within recent years. It allows people to stay at fully functioning farms in order to observe the work routines and activities that are undergone in the agriculture business on a day-to-day basis.

This is an excellent opportunity for many people to experience and learn about a lifestyle that is quite different than their own, often times in beautiful, peaceful, rustic settings.

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 tourism potential. 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. Some new areas of the tourism have been emerged like Agro-Tourism. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people.

Agro-tourism is an innovative agricultural activity related to tourism and agriculture both. It has a great capacity to create additional source of income and employment opportunities to the farmers. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centers in the India and there is large scope and great potential to Develop agro-tourism.



### Objectives :

The objectives of this paper are follows:

1. To examine the importance of agro-tourism development in Maharashtra.
2. To define a suitable framework for the of agro-tourism centers in the view of marginal and small farmers.
3. To identify the problems of the agro-tourism

### Hypotheses :

The hypothesis of the study is: - the agro-tourism is an additional co-activity 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. There is need of such types of activities in the Maharashtra.

### Importance Of The Study:

Agriculture is a most important occupation in the India including in the Maharashtra. But, today it has becomes unprofitable due the irregular monsoon, prices fluctuations of Agro-products and some internal weakness of the agriculture sector. Hence, there is need to do some innovative activities in the agriculture, which will help to farmers, rural peoples.

Urban population is increasing day by day in the Maharashtra, today the urban people's world is restricted in the closed door flats, offices, clubs, television, video games, spicy fast food, computer, internet, and so on. They can see nature only on television or screen of the computers. More over some people living in the cities do not have relatives in villages and they never visited or stayed in village. These peoples want enjoy rural life but there is problem of such type of facilities. Hence, it is opportunity to the farmers for development of the agro-tourism centres and serves him and create additional income source.

### Scope And Methodology Of The Study :

The scope of the study is limited to examine the benefits and applicability of agro-tourism business in Maharashtra. The study includes their benefits and problems. As well as it includes appropriate framework regarding to establish the agro-tourism centres in the Maharashtra.

The present study was conducted on the agro-tourism is based 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. Some ideas have been taken from the Tourism Development Corporation of Maharashtra.

### What is Agro-Tourism?

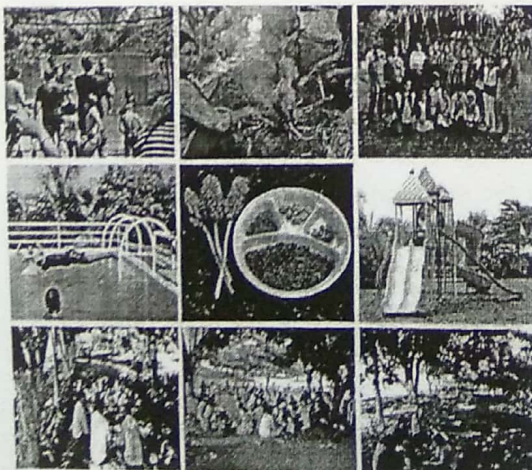
Farm recreation refers to activities conducted on private agricultural lands, which might include overnight stays, educational activities, etc. This category of tourism is a subset of a larger industry known as agro-tourism. Agro-tourism is "a commercial enterprise at a working farm, or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner."

### Who Can Start Agrio-Tourism Centres :

The individual farmer can start agro-tourism who have minimum two hector land, farm house, water resource and is interested to entertain the tourists. Apart from the individual farmer, agricultural co-operatives institute, Non-Government organizations, Agricultural Universities, and agricultural colleges may start their centre's. Even Grampanchayats can start such centers in their operational areas with the help of villagers and farmers.

### A : Infrastructure:-

- Accommodation facilities at same place or alliance with nearest hotels.
- Farmhouse, which has the rural look and feel comfortable along with all minimum required facilities.
- Rich resources in agriculture namely water and plants at the place.



- Cooking equipments for cooking food, if tourist have interested.
- Emergency medical cares with first aid box.
- The well or lake or swimming tank for fishing, swimming
- Bullock cart, cattle shade, telephone facilities etc.

### B : Facilities Should Provide :-

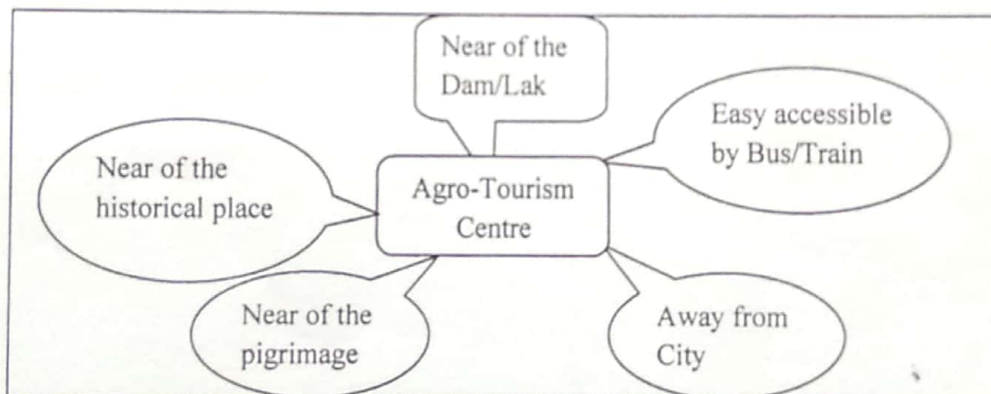
- Offer authentic rural Indian / Maharashtra food for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Farmers should offer to see and participate in the agricultural activities.
- Offer an opportunity to participate in the rural games to the tourist

- Provide information them about the culture, dress, arts, crafts, festivals, rural traditions and also give possible demonstration of some arts.
- Offer bullock car for riding and horse riding, buffalo ride in the water, fishing facility in your pounds or nearest lake.
- Offer fruits, corns, groundnuts, sugarcane and other agro-products as per availability.
- Show local birds, animals and waterfalls etc and give authentic information about them.
- Must provide safety to tourists' with the support of alliance hospitals.
- Arrange folk dance programme, Shekoti folk songs bhajan, kirtana, lezim dance, dhangari gaja, etc.
- Available some agro-product to purchase to the tourist

**C : Other Miscellaneous:-**

- Offer pollution free environment to the tourists
- Try to create interest about the village culture for the future tourism business.
- Introduce the tourists with imminent persons of your village.
- Employ well-trained staff or funny (comedy) persons with good communication skill to entertain the tourist.
- To have authentic information regarding to the railway and bus time table for the help of tourists. Farmer can also provide other additional facilities to their requirements for the better satisfaction of tourists.

**Location For The Agro-Tourism Centre :** Location is most important factor for success in the agro-tourism. The location of the centre must easy to arrive and have a good natural background. Urban tourists are interested into enjoying the nature and rural life. So, farmers should develop their centre in the rural areas only which have a beautiful natural background to attract urban tourist in your farm.



The place of agro-tourism centre must need easy accessible by roads and railways. Tourists want to enjoy some historical and natural tourist places along with the agro-tourism. Hence, the centre should be developed near of these tourist places. It is more beneficial to both tourist and farmers. The places which are already tourist centres like Mahabaleswara, Panchgani, Nashik, Jotiba, Narshinghadi, Pandharpur, Akkalkot, Konkan etc. These are the better places for the development of agro-tourism. Other than these places farmer can develop their centres in any affordable places.

**Benefits Of Agro-Tourism Centres :**

Agro-Tourism has the potential to change the economic face of traditional agriculture. The benefits of agro-tourism development are manifold. It would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the farmers and rural people. Some of the benefits are following:-

1. Employment opportunities to the farmers including farm family members and youth
2. Additional income source for the farmers to protest against income fluctuation.
3. Cultural transformation between urban and rural peoples including social moral values
4. Farmers can improve their standard of living due to the contacts with urban peoples.

5. Benefits to the urban peoples, they can understand about the rural life and know about the agricultural activities.
6. It support for rural and agricultural development process.
7. Help to the reduce burden on the other traditional tourist centers.

#### Suggestion:

1. A complete tourism package can be provided through initiation by the local government bodies of activities such as beautification campaigns, sponsorship of special events that tie in with local tourist attractions and participation of all businesses in the area.
2. 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.
3. 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.

#### Conclusion:

1. Maharashtra 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.
2. Maharashtra tourism industry is growing rapidly. By introducing Agro tourism concept the value addition contributes to future growers.
3. Through Agro- tourism development farmer can develop themselves into entrepreneur.
4. Agro- tourism contributes to rural development by creating employment opportunity and empowerment of rural people.

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