

GREEN GROWTH THROUGH AGRI TOURISM

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The word “green growth” is definitely a sunrise sector likewise is Agri-tourism where green growth, zero carbon emission, natural farming, sustainable farming, eco-tourism has become major strategic issues for many rural areas.

World Tourism Organization (1998) defines agri-tourism as “involves accommodation being offered in the farmhouse or in a separate guesthouse, providing meals and organizing guests’ activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations.”

Agritourism offers farmers the possibility of diversifying and generating additional income through on-farm touristic activities in order to help **supplementing** their low agricultural income. This helps to maintain the viability of active farms and rural communities. The more general understanding of agritourism states that agritourism activities support and promote agricultural resources, traditions and culture. Following this line of thought, agritourism results to be a successful example of sustainable tourism that has gained importance over the years.

A growing number of farmers are turning entrepreneurs and earning big bucks from something they offered free to friends and relatives – a healthy and relaxing weekend to unwind in lush green farms, drive a tractor, ride a bullock cart, milk a cow and pluck fresh fruit from orchards. Farm tourism, once a small niche, is expanding rapidly and getting a big push from the tourism ministry. Tour operators, including some who were farmers to begin with, are aggressively pushing farm tourism in India and abroad. We have heard of coastal tourism, heritage, adventure and even heli-tourism. Now, the upcoming tourism policy will also include agritourism, which is gradually becoming a hit among children, urban families and even the corporate world.

In the last two years, many agricultural farms have come up in and around the city. Many schools have been organising trips to such places where children are made to understand rural life by spending time with farm animals like cattle, horses, birds and even reptiles. Some also do dairy farming and agriculture. Similarly, many urban families are taking their children to day-long tours to such agro-tourism farms where families get to spend quality time together.

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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, 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.

Scope of Agri Tourism in India:

Agri Tourism is to experience the real rural life, taste the local genuine food and get familiar with the various farming tasks. Agriculture is the backbone of Indian Economy. Around 75% of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on Agriculture and almost 26 percent of India's GDP comes from Agriculture. 90 million farmers are dwelling in 6.25 lack villages producing food grains for feeding the country

Agri Tourism Benefits:

The potential benefits of agri tourism development extend to farmers, rural communities, and tourism operators.

Benefits for Farmers: For farmers agri tourism is a potential way of:

1. Expanding farm operations;
2. Using farm based products in new and innovative ways;
3. Improving farm revenue streams;
4. Developing new consumer market niches;
5. Increasing awareness of local agricultural products;
6. Increasing appreciation of the importance of maintaining agricultural land;
7. Channeling additional on-farm revenues directly to family members;
8. Improving farm living conditions, working areas & farm recreation opportunities;
9. Developing managerial skill and entrepreneurial spirit; and
10. Increasing the long term sustainability for farm businesses.

Benefits for Communities: From a community perspective, agri tourism can be a vehicle for:

1. Generating Additional Revenue For Local Businesses And Services From Tourists;
2. Upgrading / Revitalizing Community Facilities For Residents And Visitors;
3. Increasing Protection Of Rural Landscapes And Natural Environments For Tourists And Residents;
4. Helping Preserve And Revitalize Local Traditions, Art And Craft;
5. Promoting Inter-Regional, Inter-Cultural Communication And Understanding;
6. Increasing Awareness Of Agricultural Issues And Values Among The Public;
7. Promoting The On-Going Use Of Local Agricultural Products And Services;
8. Helping To Diversify & Strengthen Rural Economy Via Job & Income Creation; And
9. Providing A More Energetic Business Environment For Attracting Other Businesses And Small Industries.

HERE ARE SOME OF THE AGRI-TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN INDIA

1. **Dewalokam Farmstay Retreat, Karimannoor, Kerala-** Dewalokam is the organic ancestral farm of a welcoming Syrian Christian family. The name means “paradise” and the property certainly is that! This faultless farmstay is conveniently located only 90 minutes drive from Kochi airport, in the spice belt of Kerala, bounded by a placid river and nature reserve. Fruit, vegetables, spices, milk, and honey are all produced there. An extensive range of activities is available for guests, including spice walks, village walks, bamboo rafting, temple visits, cow milking, and swimming.
2. **Vanilla County, Kottayam, Kerala-** It’s located two and a half hours drive from Kochi airport, near Vagamon in the lush Western Ghat mountain range. Guests can swim in natural rock pools, go on plantation walks, go trekking, birding, visit villages and a local meditation ashram, and cruise the Kerala backwaters.
3. **Konyak Tea Retreat, Mon District, Nagaland-** The host is the great-granddaughter of a tattooed headhunter, and she’s actively involved in researching and documenting the various tattoo patterns of her tribe. The boutique farmhouse is located in the middle of a remote, privately-owned 250-hectare tea estate. However, tea isn’t all that’s grown there. The farm also has an orange tree orchard and organic vegetable garden. Guests can pick and eat during harvesting season (mid-November to December).

4. **Maachli, Sindhudurg, Nagaland-** The name “Maachli” means “elevated huts” in the local Malvani language. There are four architecturally designed hut-style accommodations on the property, built deep within nature among the Samant family’s coconut, betel nut, banana and spice plantation. Everything revolves around nature, and there is a sweet water stream flowing through the property. Responsible tourism is also a strong focus. Activities include village walks, cooking lessons, farming experiences, trekking.
5. **Enchanted Forest Farm, Gangtok, Sikkim-** The tranquil setting, deep inside the forest with a waterfall, and delightful hosts are totally worth it though! The farm is completely organic and the property is pretty much self-sufficient. There’s a fish pond, cows and goats. If you’re a music lover, you’re also in luck. The host plays the guitar and loves a good jam session. Guest accommodations consist of three rustic yet elegant standalone cottages.

Some barriers in Agro-tourism

1. **Language Problem:** Language problem in the locality have been found to be one of the barriers in the enhancement of the tourism potential. People are found to be lacking proper fluency in Hindi, English or even local dialect, for interaction with the tourists.
2. **Insufficient Financial Support:** Proper financial support can enhance the tourism potential of the region, which would help the folks to preserve the local culture, traditions, heritage, art forms etc. that showcases the uniqueness of the place in the proper manner.
3. **Communication Problem:** There should be proper transport and communication facility i.e. better road connectivity, mobile and telephone network for better commutation and convenience of the tourists.
4. **Lack of Trained tourist guide:** The whole tourism concept is very indigenous in the rural areas. Though initiative attempt have been taken by the local youths, yet the professionalism is lacking. They are lacking proper training to project in the manner from tourism perspective.
5. **Lack of business planning skill:** Some regions have great potential as an upcoming agro tourist spot. But, in order to bring it to a greater platform, sound business planning has to be made. The region needs proper enhancement of its beauty and resources skilfully to bring itself to light.

Socio-economic impacts of Agro-tourism

1. Employment to youth: Rural tourism contributes positively to the increase in employment and income levels of the youths.
2. Boost to the Handloom and Cottage industry: Traditional attires, especially of women are found to a delightful attraction for incoming tourist both domestic and outsiders. People, often found to be interested in purchasing the garments, which is helping in gearing up the production of local handloom products.
3. Preservation of natural resources: Tourism in local areas helps in preserving the rural eco system, since it forms the base to the tourism sector, also a part of the development funds are use in creating social forests and preserving existing forest.
4. Exchange of revenue: Employment avenues created by tourism demands help in earning domestic income.
5. Exposure to their religion: Tourism avenues have a given a due introduction to this almost hidden but old culture. Tourist interaction has provided the proper exposure to the world outside.

Key Strategy for Success of Agro-Tourism

Agro-Tourism is a one of the business activities. So, farmers must have commercial mind-set and some marketing techniques for the success. For the better success in the agro-tourism farmers should follow the following things;

- Give a wide publicity of your tourism centre by newspapers, television etc. Use all possible advertisement means.
- Develop contacts with the schools, colleges, NGOs, clubs, unions, organizations etc.
- Train your staff or family members for reception and hospitality of the agro tourists.
- Understand about the customer's wants and their expectations and serve them accordingly.
- Charge optimum rent and charges for the facilities/services on the commercial base.
- Do the artificially use local resources for the entertainment / service to tourists.
- Develop your website and update time to time for attract foreign tourist.
- Take their feedback and comments about the service and suggestions to more development and modification.
- Develop a good rapport with the tourist for future business and chain publicity
- Develop different agro-tour packages of for different type of tourist and their expectations.
- Maintain an address book and comments of the visited tourists for future tourism business and reference.
- Small farmers can develop their agro-tourism centres on the basis of cooperative society.

Agri Tourism in India and world Statistics

India Agritourism Market: Industry Trends, Share, Size, Growth, Opportunity and Forecast 2023-2028

The India agritourism market is expected to exhibit a growth rate (CAGR) of 19.9% during 2023-2028.

Agritourism refers to a commercial practice that combines agricultural activities with tourism for the entertainment and recreation of tourists. It provides the farmers with an opportunity to generate additional income and a channel for direct marketing to consumers. Agritourism also offers communities the potential to increase their local tax bases. Besides this, it helps to preserve agricultural lands and allows states to develop business enterprises. Currently, agritourism is gaining immense traction across India on account of its ability to revitalize rural economies, provide employment opportunities to local residents, and educate the masses about agricultural practices.



Healthy, sustainable and inclusive food systems are critical to achieve the world's development goals. Agricultural development is one of the most powerful tools to end extreme poverty, boost shared prosperity, and feed a projected 9.7 billion people by 2050. Growth in the agriculture sector is two to four times more effective in raising incomes among the poorest compared to other sectors.

Agriculture is also crucial to economic growth: accounting for 4% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and in some least developing countries, it can account for more than 25% of GDP.