

Agri-Tourism Entrepreneurship: A Tool to Rural Development

Dr. Ratna Shanker Mishra¹

¹*Assistant Professor, Office Management & Company Secretaryship,
Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi-221005.*

Abstract

Government of India increased Rs. 525 to 2900 Crores in Xth five year plan for the promotion of this industry, Rs. 60 Crore sanctioned for promoting the brand. The major decision has taken is that an allocation of Rs. 50 lakhs per village for village tourism has been proposed, the states are also interested to float public-private partnership in this industry for fast development (ATDC). “During 11th Five-year plan (2007-12) Ministry of Tourism propose to continue supporting creation of world class infrastructure in the country so that existing tourism products can be further improved and expanded to meet new market requirements and enhance the competitiveness of India as a tourist destination” (MOT, India). Ministry of tourism of India is promoting Eco-tourism in the country and developing proper network for the development of Agri-tourism.

Agriculture is the backbone of Indian Economy, around 85 percent of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on Agriculture and almost one fourth of the GDP comes from the Agriculture sector only. 90 million farmers are dwelling in 6.25 lakh villages producing more than 200 MT of food grains feeding the country (Taware, CII). Agri-tourism is seen as virtually identical to its European equivalent “Farm-Tourism” (Busby and Rendle 2000; Getz and Carlsen 2000). Busby and Rendle (2000, p. 636) report an evolution of more than 13 definitions of farm tourism or agri-tourism currently in the literature. A great deal of interest has been focused on the area of agri-tourism in recent years (Bowen, Cox, and Fox 1991; Cawley et al. 1995; Davis and Gilbert 1992; Mjalager 1996; Nickerson, Black, and McCool 2001; Vogeler 1997). Many studies have focused on the rationale for Agripreneurship Development. The obvious, and most prevalent, reasons for agri-tourism development are economically based on (Busby and Randle 2000; Weaver and Fennell 1997; Miller 1993; Nickerson, Black, and McCool 2001).

Research objectives

The Objective of this paper is as follows:

- To find out suitable path for development of Rural Entrepreneurship among Indian farmers through Agri-Tourism as Medical-Tourism and Cultural-Tourism.
- To-explore the possibilities of Agri-Tourism business in agriculture dominated areas of nation and chances of up-gradation of farms and fields according to the business.
- To evaluate the Indian agri-tourism industry in context to rural employment generation and rural development.

Importance of the study

Agri-tourism may be the factor, through which Indian tourism industry can attract foreign as well as local tourist. In survey we found that many of tourists wanted to visit a place like medicinal farms, so there is a possibility to develop categorical medicinal-farms for the cure of different diseases. Hence, agri-tourism is a tool to development of the rural farmers as well as villages. Farmers can expose their field and farms and avail the benefits of tourism industry.

Indian Government is much conscious about infrastructural development for tourism industry and concentrating on eco-tourism. Agri-Tourism attracts foreigners as well as domestic tourists towards Indian tourism destinations. Out of 13 states, Kerala has maximum sanctioned amount (Rs. 706.47 lakhs) for development of eco-tourism infrastructure and basic amenities for the Industry. Second highest assistance is given to the Orissa i.e. Rs. 680.34 lakhs. The actual domestic tourist visits in India since 1991-2007. From 1991 to 1994 there was more than 20 percent increase in the number of tourist visits but after that it had down fall in the numbers. In 2007 the total number of domestic tourists was 52,65,64,364, it shows a around 14 percent per year average growth in last ten years.

Entrepreneurship development in Agri-tourism business

In the study we found that in majority the farmers are not educated, and are not ready to expose them in this business. They are not able to take any type of risk in the agriculture and its produce. This may be quite good business if they take it as enterprise. Agri-tourism has wide dimension of earning. After meeting the farmers and survey we can suggest few motivational aspects of Agri-tourism:

- a) Additional Income generation from Agriculture Practice.
- b) No need of additional capital investment for business
- c) Full family involvement/employment (Family Business)
- d) Full utilization of Agri-Resources

Medical tourism destination: Through this concept a farm holders can develop his farm according to the needs of different disease. He can develop a farm for Sugar Patients, Blood Pressure Patients, Liver Patient, and all other diseases which can be cured through fresh fruits, vegetables, and leafs. He can produce these things in his farm and advertise his farm as Medical-Tourism destination.

Cultural tourism destination

Rural Craft and art also can be one tool to attract tourist at the destination, urban people want to enjoy the rural craft and art. Entrepreneur can have one small outlet of rural craft and art at the farm or a group of Agri-tourism entrepreneurs can run an exhibition of rural made art and craft, surely it will help in the business. For cultural entertainment of tourists farmers can organize Nautanky, Raas, RamLeela, Natak, Naach, Swang, and so on, according to the taste of tourists.

Nature based Farm tourism destination (Village Tourism)

Village life is amazingly slow and people of villages are living simple life since thousands past of years. Nature based far tourism is one of the village tourism segment. In nature based farms entrepreneurs can maintain Tree Houses for accommodation. Tree house itself has great attraction for the farm and tourist want these types of luxuries in there visits.

Conclusion

The current study has implications for Agri-tourism development in all the states of India. Study shows that Agri-tourism development has moved towards clustering strategies with the development of theme tourism. Family business in Agri-tourism indicates a dependence on structural resources to develop the business. Although, Agri-tourism is an innovative idea for fostering the farmers' efficiency and economic status but, financing is still a major problem for entrepreneurs. Government should take the initiative for helping them and offer proper trainings to the entrepreneurs.

Suggestions

Agri-tourism has wide range of customers and stakeholders. For more success of this business farmers have to do it very sincerely and think for new dimensions of Agri-tourism. An effective management of business can achieve the success in less cost and enjoy the benefit of the industry. Few suggestions on the base of study are given below:

- Develop relationship with tourist for further businesses always inform them for special occasions.
- Fix family package, corporate house package, foreigners' package.
- Develop good standard cultural accommodations for tourists according to their needs.

- Make arrangements for electricity and have 24 hours supply through your own tools or govt. supply.
- Contact big-business houses, colleges, NGOs, clubs for season tours and trips of their employees, members or executives.
- Develop communication/media system for stakeholders and develop your website for information regarding package and other details.
- Agri-tourism farms should be near to main roads or highways.
- Agri-tourism Entrepreneurs should have contact with tourism agencies of cities or metros.

References

1. Bowen, R. L., L. J. Cox, & M. Fox (1991). "The Interface between Tourism and Agriculture." *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 2 (2): 43-54.
2. Busby, G., and S. Rendle (2000). "The Transition from Tourism on Farms to Farm Tourism." *Tourism Management*, 21: 635-42.
3. Cawley, M., D. A. Gillmor, A. Leavy, and P. McDonagh (1995). *Farm Diversification: Studies Relating to the West of Ireland*. Dublin: Teagasc.
4. Clarke, C. (1999). "Marketing Structures for Farm Tourism: Beyond the Individual Provider of Rural Tourism." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 7 (1): 26-47.
5. Clarke, J. (1996). "Farm Accommodation and the Communication Matrix." *Tourism Management*, 17 (8): 611-6.
6. Davies, E. T., and D. C. Gilbert (1992). "A Case Study of the Development of Farm Tourism in Wales." *Tourism Management*, 13 (1): 56-63.
7. Doyle, A. B., and N. G. McGehee (2002). "Case Statement for the Development of Agri-Tourism in the Commonwealth of Virginia." Unpublished document. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Tech.