

# AGRITOURISM - A CASE STUDY OF SUPPLEMENTARY INCOME FOR FARMERS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Agritourism is an alternative tourism form that provides first-hand experience of agricultural practices in the farm fields, authentic cuisines tastes, live rural celebrations and arts forms. It is not a new practice, in India it is an age old practice that farmers with their relatives spend time on their own forms yearly once or twice in the name of festivals. It is gaining importance in India because of its' role in creation of alternative income to farmers, employment to rural youth, sustainable development and economic growth of the country. Maharashtra State in India is a pioneer in Agritourism and it has given importance in Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2016 by incorporating Agritourism as one of the major potential areas to help small farmers. Now Government of Maharashtra has come up with clear guidelines to boost Agritourism in the state with Maharashtra Agri Tourism Policy 2020. This study discusses the complete details of growth of Agritourism in India and how extent it supplements the income of farmers and possibility of replicating the Agritourism concept across India to minimise the financial risk of farmers who are mostly depending on rainy season. In India, Agritourism can ensure alternative, continuous, season independent and sustainable income to small farmers with little investment on farm accommodation and exhibition of existing resources to Agritourist.*

**Keywords:** Agritourism, Supplementary Income, Agritourism Policy.

## INTRODUCTION

Agritourism is an alternative tourism form that provides first-hand experience of agricultural practices in the farm fields, authentic cuisines tastes, live rural celebrations and arts forms. It is not a new practices, in India it is an age old practice that farmers with their relatives spend time on their own forms yearly once or twice in the name of festivals. It is gaining importance in India because of its' role in creation of alternative income to farmers, employment to rural youth, sustainable development and economic growth of the country (Table 1).

S.No.	Year	Number of Agritourists
1	2017	0.47 million
2	2018	0.58 million
3	2019	0.79 million

Maharashtra State in India is a pioneer in Agritourism and it has given importance in Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2016 by incorporating Agritourism as one of the major potential areas to help small farmers. It is mandated that Educational tour of 5th standard to 10th standard school students to Agritourism Centres. The policy implementation in the Maharashtra State in school curriculum has increased the Agritourists foot fall and income of Agritourism

entrepreneurs and farmers. In order to strengthen more, Government of Maharashtra has come up with clear guidelines to boost Agritourism in the state with Maharashtra Agri Tourism Policy 2021 (Borlikar, 2017; Paris et al., 2005).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Agritourism

The basic definition of Agritourism is the combination of Agriculture and Tourism. Especially “*Agritourism means familiarising oneself with agricultural production or recreation in the agricultural environment or it may include an opportunity to help with farming tasks during the visit*” (Sznajder et al., 2009). Agritourism gives an opportunity to explore the farming activities during their visit to farms. Few researchers defined “*Agritourism consists of farming-related activities carried out on a working farm or other agricultural settings for entertainment or education purposes*” (Arroyo et al., 2013). These researchers argue that the place agriculture setting is created for the purpose of entertainment or education comes under the Agritourism. Few defined “*Agritourism activities that might occur on a farm include but are not limited to: pick your own systems, recreational activities, hosted events such as weddings or festivals, guided tours, and dining or accommodation opportunities on the farm*”. In their view any celebration like marriage of festival at farms including guided tours and farm accommodation comes under the Agritourism. Missouri Department of Agriculture (2009) defined Agritourism as “*Visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operation for the purpose of appreciation, enjoyment, education, or recreational involvement with agricultural, natural or heritage resources*”. In general staging the experience or providing recreation and leisure activities at farm fields to Agritourists is called Agritourism and it brings an economic advantage to farmers, agritourists and local communities (Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007; Tew & Barbieri, 2012; Toorop et al., 2020).

### Role of Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC)

Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC) was incorporated in the year 2005 with a pilot project of 38 acres Agritourism Centre near Pune city in India. It gives training to the farmers to take up the Agritourism as an alternative income generator for small scale farmers. It is collaborated with Maharashtra State Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism to promote the farmers number to take up Agritourism as supplementary income generator without depending up on the rainfall (Singh, 2018).

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Gap

The availability of literature on Agritourism and documentation of number of foot falls to Agritourism sites and revenue generated through Agritourism is limited, especially in Indian context there are few research papers available on Agritourism. India doesn't have any ministry or department to document, manage and monitor the Agritourism activities.

### Main Objective

The objective of the study is to discuss the financial benefits of farmers in Maharashtra with

Agritourism concept and how much percent it adds to main income of farmers.

### **Method**

Personal interviews and content analysis was done on few selective papers published on Indian Agritourism and workshop material prepared after several survey by Shri. Panduranga Taware. In order to get the information related to Agritourism in Maharashtra researcher went to field and interacted with the Agritourist entrepreneurs especially Shri. Panduranga Taware mentor for more than 500 Agritourism centres and holds workshop to promote Agritourism.

### **Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to Maharashtra State and 623 Agritourism Centres mentored by Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Baramathi, Pune.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Since there is no availability of the documentation of demographics and survey on Agritourism centres, Agritourist so the study is carried out with the available surveys and study material developed by Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC).

## **RESULTS**

The study results show that there is scope for replication of Agritourism centres in every village in future not only in Maharashtra State but pan India. For example Agritourism Development Corporation (ADTC) was incorporated in the year 2005 and with the efforts of Panduranga Taware and Maharashtra Ministry of Tourism and Maharashtra Ministry of Agriculture, now these centres were expanded to 623 across 30 Districts (Taware & ATDC, 2019). There are many reasons for scope of expanding Agritourism in India. Firstly Agriculture has become an expensive affair due to rise in the prices of fertilisers and pesticides along with the high usage. Secondly the product cost has become high due to increase of daily labour wages and thirdly unemployment has been increasing due to various reasons forcing rural youth to find their livelihood in their villages. These are all factors are responsible for the farmers to include Agritourism as an alternative income source on one hand. On the other hand there are benefits for farmers too. First one is that investment to establish an Agritourism centre is very less expensive affair. Second there is no need to create any new venue for visitors, farmers can turn into tourism products with the existing resources. Thirdly rural youth especially their family members get the employment with the Agritourism. Fourth one is that Agritourism is one of the sustainable form of tourism has low impact on environment when compared with the other forms of tourism. Fifth one is that farmers get an opportunity to sell their produce at their farms itself for best price. Keeping all these benefits Agritourism centre increasing year by year, there is no official documentation of Agritourism centres in India but Agritourism Development Corporation(ATDC) conducts survey and publishes the tourists foot falls to Agritourism centres and income generated through Agritourism concept. According to the survey of Agritourism Development Corporation(ATDC) the Agritourism Centres in Maharashtra State have received 0.47 million, 0.58 million, and 0.79 million Agritourists per annum for the three consecutive years 2017,2018 and 2019 respectively(Taware & ATDC, 2019).

## **DISCUSSION**

In India Maharashtra is the only one state is having exclusive public policy on Agritourism.

Government of Maharashtra identified Agritourism as one of the supplementary income generator for farmers in the year 2016 and included the term “Agritourism” in the Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2016. It mandated the visit of school students of 5th standard to 10th standard to undergo for an education tour to Agritourism centres yearly once. Agritourism has become a part in the school curriculum and generated total 82.80 million INR for the last 4 years in 628 Agritourism centres across 30 districts according to the survey conducted by Agritourism Development Corporation. A case study was published on Agritourism states that farmers got extra income of 25% apart from their regular income generated from crops produce and cattle because of Agritourism (Taware & ATDC, 2019). After witnessing the positive change in the farmers additional income the Government of Maharashtra has come up with clear guidelines to boost Agritourism in the state with Maharashtra Agri Tourism Policy 2021.

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

In India, Agritourism can ensure alternative, continuous, season independent and sustainable income to small farmers with little investment on farm accommodation and exhibition of existing resources to Agritourist. Future studies could be carried in the other states of India along with the State of Maharashtra to create the basic demographic picture of Agritourists and their motivations and experiences. Foreign tourists who are visiting Agritourism centres is an unexplored research area.

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