

POTENTIAL OF AGRI-TOURISM TO ELIMINATE POVERTY IN MADHYA PRADESH

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Abstract: Agritourism is a tour to a working farm providing a fresh and live experience of various farm activities and agricultural background. It includes food, fun and farming apart from bullock cart rides and exposure to the rural set up. Agri-tourism could become a good support for additional and regular revenue to the local farmers and could also contribute to the social development through rural employment. In fact it is more a need for Madhya Pradesh. If the venture of agri-tourism works along with main fold of tourism it could lead to economic stability to the rural population and reduce the social unrest to a greater extent. It is obvious that tourists visiting tourist destinations their stay in the state can be increased leading to increase the tourist spending .the increase in domestic tourists to the state is a positive indicator for the growth of rural tourism in state. This research paper studies the potential of Agri Tourism in eliminating poverty in state .

Keywords: Agri-Tourism, , Farm Activities, Agriculture, Home Stay, Poverty.

Introduction Agritourism: Agri-tourism is the form of tourism which capitalizes on rural culture as a tourist attraction. It has gained a new dimension as a potential income and job generating activity. The symbiosis between tourism and agriculture that can be found in agro-tourism is a key element of an environmentally and socially responsible tourism. Travel and tourism are human-resource intensive, employing directly and indirectly 8 per cent of the global workforce. It is estimated that one job in the core tourism industry creates about one and a half additional or indirect jobs in the tourism-related economy.

Definition of Agritourism —It is the holidays concept of visiting farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

Agritourism center is the location where tourists from the urban areas can come and spend their weekends or holidays in a village with agricultural atmosphere at a very economical cost; it is the home away from home giving a personal feel of harmony with rural culture. Agritourism integrates agriculture with pleasure and gives the benefit of agriculture and tourism activities to the tourists that deliver economic benefit to concerned farmer and villagers.

Agriculture in Madhya Pradesh Economy: Madhya Pradesh is Landlocked in the central part of the country; it is bounded by the states of Rajasthan to the northwest, Uttar Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east and Maharashtra to the south, and Gujarat to the west.

Madhya Pradesh is the second largest state and ranks seventh in population. The State is primarily an agriculture State. About 73% population of the state is rural, which is directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. Thus Agriculture Sector is the main Steak of the State economy. The Agriculture and allied services contributes about 44% share in state economy and 78% of its working force is directly engaged in Agriculture. Thus Agriculture sector forms the backbone of MP economy.

Madhya Pradesh is having a geographical area of 30.75 million hectares, which is divided into 51 districts of the state and 10 revenue divisions. The state has 313 development blocks which are the units for development activities. The forests occupies in the States 8.49 million hectares which is 27.2 % of the Geographical area of the state where as the cultivated area is about 49 %. The major perennial rivers of the State namely Mahi, Narmada, Tapti, Chambal, Betwa, Sone, Wainganga, Ken., and Pench Originate in Madhya Pradesh and flow to the seven bordering states Madhya Pradesh has a topography that is crossed from north to south by plains separated by upland areas. The state has three main seasons: winter (November through February), summer (March through May), and the monsoon season (June through September). During the winter average temperatures range from 10° to 27° C (50° to 81° F). Summers are hot, with an average temperature of 29° C (85° F) and a high temperature that at times reaches 48° C (118° F). During the monsoon season temperatures

average 19° to 30° C (66° to 86°). Madhya Pradesh receives an average annual rainfall of about 1200 mm (nearly 50 in), of which 90 percent falls during the monsoon season. The capital of the state is Bhopal.

Society and Culture: Madhya Pradesh has at least four agro-climatic zones, and thus, has the most interesting mix of people and ways of life. It is home to about 40 percent of India's tribal population. There are three distinct tribal groups in the state. The largest chunk is formed by the Gonds, who once ruled a major part of the state and after whom Gondwana, the central portion of the state is known. Western Madhya Pradesh is inhabited by the Bhils, a colourful group of warriors and huntsmen. Eastern Madhya Pradesh is dominated by the Oraons, most of whom have now turned Christians.

Hindi is the most widely spoken language though Marathi is also widespread. Urdu, Oriya, Gujarati and Punjabi are each spoken by sizeable numbers. The Bhils speak Bhili and the Gonds Gondi, the independent in origin of the Indo-European and Dravidian language groups.

The Gonds, Bhils and Banjaras have several vibrant tribal dances like Phag (a sword dance), Lota (dance by women full of water on their heads), and other stilt dances. Textiles are important but Madhya Pradesh also has a strong traditional village handicraft industry. Handloom Chanderi and Maheshwar silks are especially sought after. The tribal population produces attractive handicrafts.

Among the temples known throughout the world for their erotic art are those at Khajuraho in the Chhatarpur district in the north of the state; dating from AD 1000, they were built by the Chandella kings. The temples at Gwalior and in its vicinity should also be mentioned. The palaces and mosque at Mandu (near Dhar), the majestic Bandhogarh fort built in the 14th century, and the Gwalior fort--perhaps the most impressive of the residences of the former princes of Madhya Pradesh--represent other notable architectural achievements.

The state has several well-known annual cultural events, such as Kalidas Samaroh (for performing and fine arts) in Ujjain, Tansen Samaroh (music) in Gwalior, and a dance festival in Khajuraho, where artists from all over India participate. In Bhopal there is a unique multifaceted cultural complex, the Bharat Bhavan, which functions as a meeting ground for artists from various fields. Located along the Bhopal Lake, this sprawling complex houses a museum, a library, an open-air theatre, and a number of conference halls. The state has important yearly religious meals (gatherings) in Mandasor and Ujjain, as well as the religious Dashhara festival in the Bastar region.

Rationale of Study: In agri-tourism sector increasing the involvement of local communities, especially the poor, in the tourism value chain can contribute to the development of local economy and poverty reduction. This can include the local supply of products, labour, and tourism services. There is increasing evidence that more sustainable tourism in rural areas can lead to more positive poverty-reducing effects. Nowadays more and more travelers are found to favor environmentally-friendly tourism and be willing to pay for related experiences. Traditional mass tourism has reached a stage of steady growth. In contrast, agro-eco-tourism, nature, heritage, cultural, and "soft adventure" tourism are taking the lead and are predicted to grow rapidly over the next two decades.

Objectives of Study:

1. Find out growth possibilities for Agri-tourism in Madhya Pradesh
2. Find out existing scenario and scope in Agri-tourism project from secondary research
3. To find out locations nearby tourist destinations where tourist can spend more additional days.

Research Methodology: Though the main research for this paper is secondary research, some primary inputs are also added. For this Primary (Survey) research is carried out with sample size of 40 for each of the ten divisions of Madhya Pradesh these 40 respondents rural family. A small test questionnaire was used to collect answers about acceptance of Agri Tourism.

Secondary research was done by reviewing journals, research papers, newspaper articles, official websites of MPSTDC, MOT

Methods used for statistical calculations of primary data were central tendency such as arithmetic mean and mode. Data is represented.

Literature Review and Findings: "This concept has not yet developed in India. We (MTDC) want to promote this activity, as it is in the interest of farmers. We will help them if they register on our website. We will give them a platform to increase their visibility. It will also help tourists understand the kinds of crops that are grown in Maharashtra. This will also help bridge the gap between urban and rural India and help tourists connect with rural life," Kinalekar, manager, MTDC, said. (Sharleen DSouza, 2011) Madhya Pradesh can adopt others state models in terms of agri tourism.

"This will help farmers to transcend to the next level of development and give them an insight into the requirements on how to start a business as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the latest practices," Anjali Parasnis, fellow & coordinator of TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) said. (Sharleen DSouza, 2011)

"Agro-eco-tourism offers an opportunity to experience the real enchanting and authentic contact with the rural life, taste the local genuine food and get familiar with the various farming tasks. It also provides the welcome escape from the daily hectic life in the peaceful rural environment and to relax and revitalize in the pure natural environment, surrounded by magnificent landscape. Agro-eco-tourism can contribute towards a green economy transition through investments leading to energy and water efficiency, waste reduction, biodiversity and cultural heritage conservation, and the strengthening of linkages with local communities." DR. Ashok Sikka, DGM(NRM) of Indian Council of Agricultural research mentions in his editorial forward. (Barbuddhe and N.P. Singh, 2014)

"We hope to bring the farmers together and help them understand agri tourism better. This will increase their income levels and the entrepreneur-based activities," D Ranjit, assistant general manager of Nabard, said. (Sharleen DSouza, 2011)

Pandurang Taware (2008) said about Agritourism scope, "The urban population which is having roots in villages always has the curiosity to learn about rural life regarding sources of food, plants, animals, handicrafts, languages, culture, tradition, dresses and rural lifestyle. Agritourism has the capacity to satisfy the curiosity of this segment of population."

Data Analysis: When a survey of 40 respondent rural families from 10 divisions of Madhya Pradesh Sample distribution was: based on agricultural income of Families

- A 200000/-
- B 400000/-
- C 600000/-
- D 800000/-
- E 100000/-

Result			
Income Group	Acceptance	Share food & Culture	Row Total
500000	35 (32.65) [0.17]	32 (34.36) [0.16]	67
100000	22 (24.36) [0.23]	28 (25.65) [0.22]	50
Column Total	57	60	117 (Grand Total)

For mean income group five lacs rupees and ten lacs rupees a popularity survey was conducted to find whether the rural families are ready to accept the phenomena of agro tourism

Applying Chi-square test to find acceptance of agro tourism independence of categories in making choice.

The chi-square statistic is 0.7779. The p-value is .377779. The result is not significant at $p < .05$. Thus the independent categories do not make any significant impact on choice at this sample size.

Interpretation: It is found that irrespective of type of group, preference is more to the acceptance of agro tourism activities. This is mainly because, groups consider this is an additional income beside their agriculture income.

Whether these families are ready to accept the tourist to share food and culture and to let the extra accommodation

Respondents	500000	1000000
Yes	39	27
No	01	13
Mean	20	20

Interpretation: though the families are ready to accept the tourist but they have hesitations to share food and culture.

Conclusion:

- From the secondary research and with the study of various reports the agri tourism can be the economic booster to the rural families of Madhya Pradesh.
- While surveying these families it is found that they are ready to accept the tourist but hesitant to share food and culture.
- By having alternatives or popularizing the phenomena of agri tourism the acceptance can be increased this will increase the average stay of tourist in Madhya Pradesh.
- The tourists will be familiar to agricultural activities and the happenings at agricultural fields will be a showcase to the tourists.
- The schemes like home stay may be helpful to increase the income of rural families hence the author is in opinion that agri tourism is having huge potential to eliminate poverty in Madhya Pradesh
- The villages nearby to the prominent tourist destination can be clustered and may be utilized for popularizing rural agritourism.

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