

## Agro-tourism : The performance, problems and prospects for the farmers in Maharashtra

M.D. JAGTAP, M.B. NICHIT AND S.R. BENKE

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**Key words :** Problem, Agro-tourism, Agribusiness

Mother nature is an open door school without brick walls, observes carefully, explores the hidden treasures and learns something or the other, moreover India is agricultural country, hence it is expected of us to be well informed about it. Agri-tourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes. Tourism is the holidays concept of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agri-business operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation.

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. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centres and there is large scope and great potential to encourage farmers to establish small and viable business such as agro-tourism in rural India.

### **Objectives :**

- To examine the importance of agro-tourism development in Maharashtra.
- To define a suitable framework for the of agro-tourism centres in the view of marginal and small farmers.
- To identify the problems of the agro-tourism and make suggestions to establishment and operations of agro-tourism.

### **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 and 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 visit or stay in villages. 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 serve them and create additional income sources.

The present study was 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 based on primary data collected from ten agro-tourism centres located around Pune city. The data have been also furnished from the related articles, research papers, reports and 11<sup>th</sup> Plan document of the government of India. Some data have been furnished from the websites of the government of India and Maharashtra, as well as Ministry of Agriculture. Some ideas have been also taken from the Tourism Development Corporation of Maharashtra.

### **What agrotourism?:**

Agricultural tourism is the holidays concept of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agri-business operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. In general agri-tourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes.

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### **Correspondence to:**

M.D. JAGTAP, Agricultural Economics Section, Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil College of Agriculture and Business Management, Akurdi, PUNE (M.S.) INDIA

### **Authors' affiliations:**

M.B. NICHIT AND S.R. BENKE, Agricultural Economics Section, Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil College of Agriculture and Business Management, Akurdi, PUNE (M.S.) INDIA

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