



## **Innovative Agrotourism Trends- Maharashtra State as a Model for Cross-Cultural Tourism in India**

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### **Abstract**

Both urban residents and farmers benefit from agro tourism. Farmers now have a second source of income, and family members now have a job opportunity. However, there are some issues with how such centers are being developed. Therefore, in order to advance and raise the income level of the farmers in Maharashtra, the government and other relevant authorities should try to support these activities. The study's goal was to investigate the difficulties that Konkan region agro-tourism centers faced.<sup>5</sup> It was noted that the Konkan division, the second-largest division in Maharashtra, has 33 agro tourism centers that have been successfully established (58.6 percent) Agro tourism businesses were established between 2008 and 2010, 22.2% of respondents were registered with the Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation LTD (MART), but there was a lack of training for the industry (62.2%), poor communication skills (80%), a lack of coordination between the departments of agriculture and tourism (100.00%), and low levels of entrepreneurship (90.00%). (78 percent).<sup>4</sup> utilizing a descriptive research methodology, primary and secondary data were collected using the questionnaire and observation as the main data collection tools. Journal articles, articles, websites, and other secondary data collection tools were used. 45 active agro tourism facilities in Maharashtra's Konkan region participated in the survey.



### **Article History**

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Agrotourism;  
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Cross-culture;  
Farmers;  
Maharashtra state etc.

### **Current Development of Indian Agro –tourism industry**


From a local to a worldwide level, the tourism sector is significant both economically and non-

economically ways. The potential for agrotourism is limitless. India has a lot of possibility to explore its tourist potential and generate profitable returns from it. According to a private survey, Indian tourism

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is expanding at a rate of 10.1%, at the same time as global tourism is only expanding at a rate of 4%.<sup>2</sup> This indicates that Indian tourism is expanding at a rate that is 2.5 times faster than the global average. By adopting the concept of agrotourism, not only is the current growth rate sustained, but also this value-added contribution to future growth, particularly focusing on domestic tourism in addition to the package tourism, is made. Additionally, this would increase India's tourism industry's competitiveness on the world market.

### **Agro-Tourism: A New Tool for Socio-Economic Activities**

Any rural individual farmer can launch an agrotourism business using his current resources as part of an innovative idea. Agrotourism facilities may be established by agricultural co-operative societies, non-governmental organizations, agricultural universities, and agricultural colleges in addition to individual farmers. Even community involvement is necessary for the success of agrotourism. Even Grampanchayats (Local Bodies), with the assistance of villagers and farmers, can launch such centres in their operational regions.<sup>1</sup> Agrotourism has a lot of potential in the current context because,

- Agrotourism is a low-cost entryway.
- An additional source of work and money for farmers who protest unpredictable revenue.
- Urban residents who are concerned about their health and seek refuge in environmentally beneficial activities.
- It satisfies interest in the farming sector and way of life.
- There is a large need for healthy, family-friendly recreational activities.
- Fosters an appreciation for and interest in nature.
- It is a useful resource for fostering cultural change among urban and rural populations.
- A novel approach to lessen disappointment with overcrowded cities and resorts.
- Reminiscence of their farm-based origins.
- The educational benefits of agrotourism.
- Assists in lightening the load on other established tourist destinations.
- The best resource for cross-cultural transmission, last but not least.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To analyze the trends in agro-tourism industry in the state of Maharashtra as a model for cross-cultural tourism in India
- To recognize agrotourism as a cross-cultural trending instrument and to offer recommendations for presenting Maharashtra State as a "Model of Indian Agro-tourism."

### **Hypothesis of the Study**

- The level of awareness and both tourists and farmers have a positive relationship.
- The level of entrepreneurial culture and both tourists and farmers have a positive relationship.
- There is a positive relationship between bank loan interest and both tourists and farmers.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Sources of Data**

The Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation Limited (MART), Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (MTDC), and Agro-Tourism Development Corporation's records provided the study's primary data and basic information (ATDC). The investigator then conducted one-on-one interviews with the owners of agro tourism centers after creating an interview schedule with goals in mind.

The following sources provided the secondary data and other pertinent information for the study.

- Published studies, papers, and other data from various agriculture organizations.
- Reference materials related to the topic published by various authors and organizations, including reports, bulletins, journals, and periodicals.
- Taking part in training sessions, seminars, and workshops on the subject.

#### **Locale of the Study**

The Konkan region of Maharashtra state served as the site of the current study.

#### **Research Design**

The study's research design was exploratory.

### Selection of the Respondents

Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg districts are located in the Konkan region. The study covered each of Konkan's five districts. Agro tourism facilities are located in the area and are registered with the Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation Limited (MART), the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (MTDC), and the Agro-Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC). Agro tourism facilities are also operating in the area without being registered with any organization.

In order to identify the actual operational agro tourism centers, a pilot survey was conducted in five districts of the Konkan region: Palghar, Ratnagiri, Raigad, Sindhudurg, and Thane.

50 operational agro-tourism centers were chosen for the study from a list of well-functioning working agro-tourism centers that was created with the aid of the pilot survey. 45 respondents from five different districts were chosen at random to make up the sample.

### Construction of Schedule

The scheduled structured interviews are used as a tool for data collection. An interview schedule was created with the study's goals in mind.

Data collection was done using the personal interview technique.

### Statistical Analysis

Using parameters like frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation, the data were processed and tabulated.

### Result and Analysis

Current agro tourism conditions in Maharashtra's Konkan region

Maharashtra's division-specific agro tourism destinations

Maharashtra's division-specific agro tourism destinations (November, 2020) under the auspices of Maharashtra State Agricultural Tourism Cooperative Federation Limited (MART)<sup>3</sup>

Table 1 and Fig. 1 were reviewed to determine the distribution of agro-tourism centers by division in the state of Maharashtra. Of the centers registered

with MART, slightly more than two-thirds (58.6%) were located in the Pune division, and 21.1% were located in the Konkan division. Nasik came in second with 3.8 percent of the agro-tourism centers, followed by Nagpur with 11.5 percent, Amravati with 2.4 percent, and Aurangabad division with 2.21 percent. The highest number of active agro tourism facilities is 124, located in Pune division. With 33 successfully established agro tourism centers, the Konkan division of Maharashtra is the second-largest division.

### Year of Establishment

The data pertaining to the year of establishment of agro-tourism enterprises are given in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2 and Fig. 2, the majority of agro tourism businesses (44.4%) were founded between 2006 and 2007, 22% between 2008 and 2010, 13.3% between 2005 and 2006, and 8.8% between 2001 and 2005 and 1970 to 1990, respectively.

This business gained traction after the Agro-Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) was founded in 2005 and the Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation Limited (MART) in 2008. The agro-tourism concept began to gain popularity as a result of the federation's efforts in both areas, particularly in promoting the concept in urban areas and providing training to farmers regarding agro-tourism.

### Agro-Tourism Center Registered Under Organization

The first state in India to introduce agro tourism was Maharashtra. Numerous societies, organizations, and NGOs working on agriculture tourism in the Maharashtra state have received official recognition from the Maharashtra government. Table 3 displays the distribution of respondents by the organization that their agro-tourism centre is registered with.

The Agro Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) and the Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation LTD respectively registered 38.0% and 33.3% of the respondents, respectively, according to Table 3 and Fig. 3, respectively (MART). Only 40% of respondents were registered with the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation, however (MTDC)

Agro tourism centers have been established by farmers in the Konkan region and throughout the state as a result of the MTDC and ATDC initiatives to launch the Mahahraman scheme and Agro Tourism Vistar Yojana, respectively. With the primary goal of coordinating the activity of planning, financing, marketing, and liaison with various state and central governmental agencies, MART is similarly working on the agricultural tourism line.

**Challenges Faced by the Agro-Tourism Center Owner for Running Agro-Tourism Center**

The following are some of the main obstacles or roadblocks to the proper development of agro tourism enterprises.

According to Table 4, the owner of an agro-tourism centre faced challenges such as a lack of training in agro-tourism (62.2%), poor communication skills

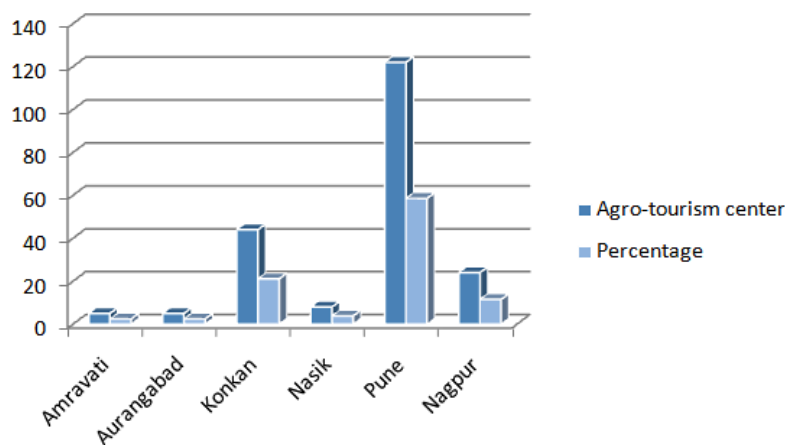
(80%), a lack of coordination between the agriculture and tourism departments (100.00%), low awareness of agro-tourism among farmers and tourists (48.8%), a low level of entrepreneurial culture (78%).

Maharashtra's Konkan region is experiencing rapid growth in agro tourism.<sup>6</sup> Despite this, there are obstacles preventing Maharashtra's agro-tourism industry from developing further. Here are a few of them

- weather conditions
- Orientation issues in customer communications and marketing fragmented and less productive land
- Lack of understanding of government agricultural policies and programmes
- Fewer visitors are drawn to the agro tourism centre.

**Table 1: Maharashtra's division-by-division distribution of agro tourism destinations (December, 2019) Licensed by the Maharashtra State Agricultural Tourism Cooperative Federation Limited (MART)**

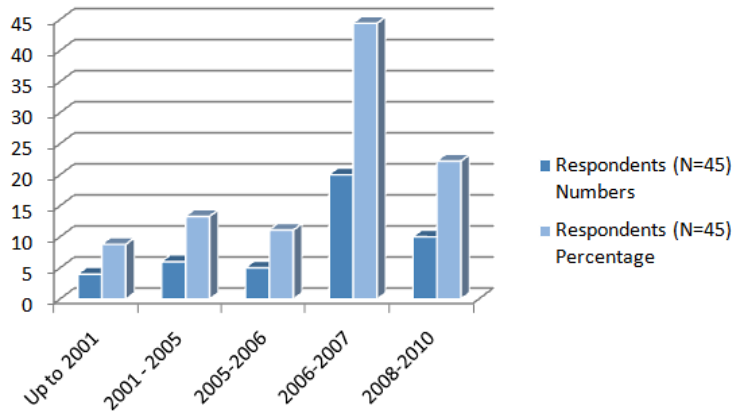
Division	Agro-tourism center	Percentage
Amravati	05	2.4
Aurangabad	05	2.4
Konkan	44	21.1
Nasik	08	3.8
Pune	122	58.6
Nagpur	24	11.5



**Fig.1: Maharashtra's division-by-division distribution of agro tourism destinations**

**Table 2: Distribution of the agro tourism destinations based on the founding year**

Year of establishment	Respondents (N=45)	
	Numbers	Percentage
Up to 2001	4	8.8
2001 - 2005	6	13.3
2005-2006	5	11.1
2006-2007	20	44.4
2008-2010	10	22.2



**Fig 2: Distribution of the agro tourism destinations**

**Table 3: Distribution of the agro tourism centers according to the organization that each one is registered with**

Organization	Respondents (N=45)	
	Number	Percentage
Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation	15	33.3
Agro Tourism Development Corporation	13	29
Maharashtra State Agro Tourism Co-operative Federation LTD	17	38

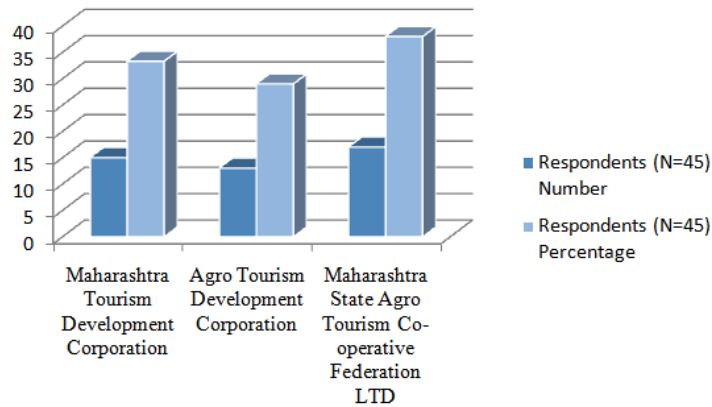


Fig. 3: Distribution of the agro tourism centers

Table 4: Distribution of the respondents in accordance with the difficulties the owner of the agro tourism centre has in operating the centre

S.No.	Problems	Respondents (N=45)	
		Numbers	Percentage
1.	Lack of training for agro-tourism	28	62.2
2.	Weak communication skills	36	80
3.	Lack of co-ordination between agriculture and tourism department	45	100
4.	Low awareness among farmers as well as in tourists regarding agro-tourism	22	48.8
5.	Low level of entrepreneurial culture	35	78
6.	High rate of interest on bank loan	44	98
7.	As an agriculture enterprise high rate of electricity unit bill	38	84

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

	Value of $\beta$	Sign. Value	Accept/ Reject
The level of awareness and both tourists and farmers have a positive relationship.	4.5631	0.03	Accept
The level of entrepreneurial culture and both tourists and farmers have a positive relationship.	4.2133	0.02	Accept
There is a positive relationship between bank loan interest and both tourists and farmers.	3.2631	0.01	Accept

The findings regarding the difficulties faced by the proprietor of an agro tourism facility are shown in Table 4.

The significant values 0.03, 0.02 and 0.01 respectively which is less than standard significant value of 0.05. Hence, it is proved that there were positive

and significant relationships found. According to table 5, the current study's hypotheses are accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Conclusion

In summary, agro tourism is beneficial to both traditional and contemporary agricultural activities. Farmers now have the chance to use the available resources in a diversified and creative manner. Both farmers and tourists benefit from it, which is a win-win situation. By creatively utilizing the resources at their disposal, farmers can increase their income, and tourists can affordably enjoy rural life and nature. Additionally, the growth of agro-tourism is advantageous for the villages. A few instances of agro tourism in the Maharashtra district's Konkan region. Agro tourism has been demonstrated in Raigad, Ratnagiri, and Sindhudurg to benefit a village's overall social and economic development in addition to the development of its farmers. Despite the fact that agro tourism is expanding, government support through appropriate and favorable policies for its development is still lacking. As a result, the government should give Maharashtra's agro tourism industry priority through appropriate policy measures.

To promote and spread the idea of agro-tourism as an easily adaptable and implementable business for farmers in India, a proper business model is required. All of the aforementioned issues can be resolved, and agro tourism can be introduced gradually and piecemeal. It all depends on the farmers' determination and the effective marketing techniques used to sell the idea to weekend visitors.

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### Conflict of Interest

There is no any conflict of interest including any financial, personal or other relationships with other people or organizations that can influence their work.

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