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AGRITOURISM ADVANTAGE RAJASTHAN

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CONTACTS	**YES BANK Ltd.** **Registered and Head Office** 9th Floor, Nehru Centre, Dr. Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai - 400 018 Tel : +91 22 6669 9000 Fax : +91 22 2497 4088 **Nikhil Sahni** Group President **Government Banking,** **Strategic Government Advisory &** **National Head - Branch Banking** *Northern Regional Office* 48, Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi – 110 021 **Tel** : +91-11-66560562 **Email** : nikhil.sahni@yesbank.in **Website** : www.yesbank.in **FICCI** **Headquarters** Rahul Chakravarty FICCI Federation House Tansen Marg, New Delhi 110001 Tel: 91-11-23738760-70 Fax: 91-11-23320714, 23721504 Email: rahul@ficci.com Website: www.ficci.in **Rajasthan State Office** FICCI-Rajasthan State Council 202 Rajputana Tower A-27-B, Shanti Path, Tilak Nagar Jaipur - 302 004 Tel: 0141-2621488, 5103768, 4061345 Fax: 0141-5116464



Foreword

Tourism sector makes a significant impact on the economy of our country. World Travel and Tourism Council Report 2016 reveals that the travel and tourism sector contributed INR 8309.4 billion to the country's GDP which supported around 37 million jobs in 2015. Tourism is thus a priority area for the Government due to its important contribution to job creation and bring much needed economic stimulus.

Although India has a myriad of successful tourism products, there is scope to innovate new emerging segments. Agritourism is one of them. It has emerged as an innovative theme that supports growth in agriculture and the rural economy. This synergy between tourism and agriculture capitalizes on the combined benefits of development in agriculture as primary sector and tourism as service sector which further boosts rural employment generation.

I am pleased to present the FICCI - YES BANK Knowledge Report 'Agritourism – Advantage Rajasthan'. This report aims to highlight Agri tourism as a viable value proposition in Rajasthan. It provides an analysis of the potential of Agritourism in Rajasthan and further enunciates the need for concerted efforts from all stakeholders in the government, industry, policy makers. The report also attempts to highlight the holistic nature of the Agritourism and the role of multiple stakeholders in the proposition.

I wish Government of Rajasthan the very best for a grand success of Global Rajasthan Agrithech Meet-GRAM 2016.

Dr Jyotsna Suri

Immediate Past President, FICCI

Chairperson, FICCI Tourism Committee and

Chairperson and Managing Director, The LaLit Suri Hospitality Group



Foreword

Tourism offers enormous growth opportunity in India by accelerating business, trade and capital investment, resulting in, job creation and entrepreneurship alongside promoting our rich heritage and cultural values. With investments expected to rise by 4.8% in 2016 and by 6.3% p.a. thereafter till 2026, the tourism industry will create a multiplier effect on other sectors of the economy.

India's stand as a preferred destination for tourism, catering to a diversified segment of travelers is undisputed. The onus to tap the potential of tourism sector in order to convert it into a socio-economic enabler needs serious planning, focus and change in mindset beyond the policy framework. Developing new niches within the tourism sector, apart from the already well known segments of religious, heritage and MICE tourism, will be key growth drivers to make the sector sustainable in near future.

Further, with 32 world heritage sites, long coastline, intensive agrarian culture, unchallenged geographical advantage and a diverse portfolio of niche tourism products, India remains the hotspot for global tourists. However, to realize the true untapped potential of the sector in the nation, it is pivotal to build on products such as Agritourism, which though at a nascent stage, can induce sustainable development at grassroots level and become the backbone of India's economy.

I am pleased to present the FICCI - YES BANK Knowledge Report 'Agritourism – Advantage Rajasthan' which highlights potential of Agritourism in Rajasthan along with key recommendations for establishing the State as most preferred agri based tourism destination.

I am confident that the contents of this report will be useful reference for all stakeholders and will provide further impetus towards development of the Agritourism sector in Rajasthan and further in India.

Sincerely,

Rana Kapoor
Managing Director & CEO YES BANK
Chairman YES INSTITUTE

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2. Executive Summary



1 Executive Summary

Agritourism: Opportunities in Rajasthan

Tourism is one of the most promising industries globally and holds immense potential to propel nation's economic growth story. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Report, 2015, the total contribution of travel and tourism sector to the world GDP was approximately USD 7,170.3 Billion. It contributed around 9.8% to global GDP, higher than other significant sectors like Agriculture (8.5%), Education (8.4%), Automotive Manufacturing (7.0%) and Banking (5.9%).

Further, as per World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Report, 2015, the sector in India contributed 6.3% to national GDP amounting to INR 8,304 Billion. The sector also played a highly pivotal role in employment generation through supporting 38.4 million jobs in 2016 which is forecasted to rise further to 46.4 million jobs by 2026.

In order to keep the momentum rolling for tourism in India, there is an imminent need to focus on 'niche tourism' segments and adopt newer models of development driven by innovation. The demand in the present scenario is for an inclusive and sustainable development and is therefore strongly linked to the growth in agriculture and the rural economy. Agritourism has emerged as an innovative theme that has the potential to support dependant agrarian population. It capitalizes on the combined benefits of development in both agriculture and tourism. The distinguished outcomes towards the same require the Government to act as facilitator and attract private investments.

Agritourism

The fundamental concept lies in attracting tourists through developing farms into vacation ventures and hosting farming based activities. This convergence of tourism and agriculture will not only support the farms with additional revenue and better sustainability, but also create multiplier effect on employment generation, thereby supporting the ancillary line of business. The opportunity holds immense potential due to its cost effective nature, demand for family oriented recreation environment, growing curiosity

about farming industry, and increased focus on promoting environmental consciousness & educational value of Agritourism. However, to realize full potential of this niche segment, it is important to accept, acknowledge and recognize the Agritourism market amongst the entire agricultural community and value chain.

Case Studies of Agritourism

1. Initiatives by Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) in Maharashtra which develops, actively promotes and encourages agritourism in the state. The aim of this business model is to create employment opportunities and increase community income through small business development and local entrepreneurship by broadening the market base for local businesses. Following a phase of research and an initial pilot programme in the Malegaon village in Baramati, Pune in 2005, ATDC now has 500 trained farmers and 152 Agri Tourism Centers operational across the state of Maharashtra, which are run by local farmers. . The ATDC programme offers participatory activities for tourists which provides an opportunity to experience local agricultural practices (horticulture, harvesting, beekeeping, and dairying), rural ways of living and local culture (music, food, dances, and handicrafts).

2. Nirvana Organic Farm in Rajasthan - Has developed what was once a piece of barren land into a small patch of forest landscape using organic farming methods devoid of any usage of chemicals. Managed by a local farmer, the farm offers experiential travelers a chance to witness Rajasthan's folk and farm culture in simple but cosy thatched roof huts. Activities offered at Nirvana farms includes tiling the land, harvesting the crops, looking after the cattle, stretching out on a khatiya (cot) to watch birds, taking a cooking lesson on an open-air chulha (clay stove), and getting involved in rural recreational games available at farm.

3. Tarpa, an Agri-Tourism activity at Save Farm, Maharashtra- horticultural orchard on unfertile barren land. Save family offers an added tourism perspective to visitors by providing educational value through unique collection of plant species for students of botany and pharmacy along with an ideal location for camping.

4. Valle Del Marta's Farm in Tarquinia, Italy- The farm grows many products as well as everything used for production of wines, liqueurs, jams and jellies, honey, olive oil etc. Additionally, the farm also offers organic products for purchase along with accommodation facilities with restaurants serving local food and cuisines.

The above case-studies showcase ample evidence for adopting similar techniques in Rajasthan to create the experience of agritourism amongst the travelers coming to the State.

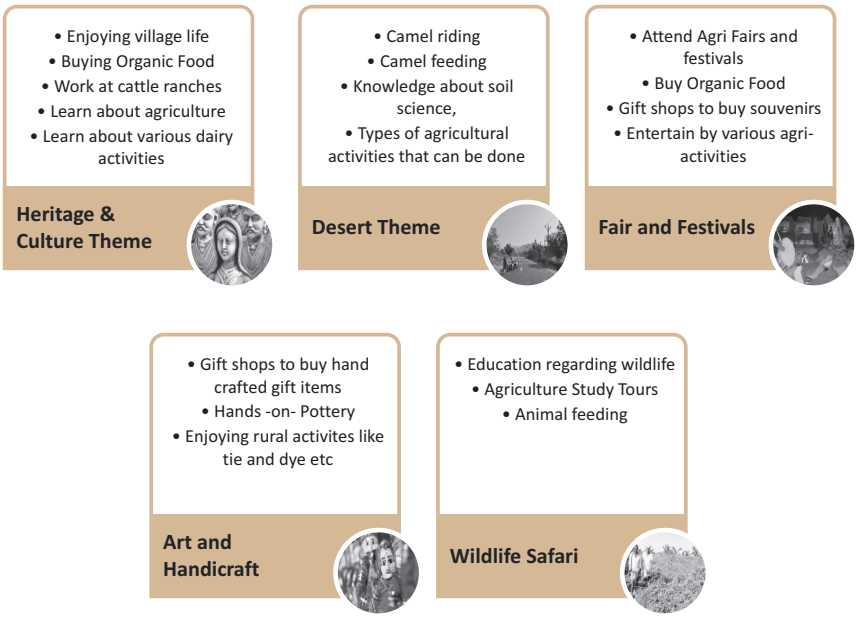
Agritourism in Rajasthan: Opportunities

Rajasthan is endowed with massive forts, palaces, varied culture amidst a rugged landscape and offers immense investment potential for promoting Agritourism in the State.

The agricultural and allied sectors contributed 32.65% to the GSDP of Rajasthan in 2014-15 at current prices and witnessed a CAGR of 13.5% over 2004-05 to 2014-15 indicating the growing importance of the sector in economic growth. Rajasthan has 10 Agro climatic zones with 53% of the State's total land as net sown area. Out of the total population in Rajasthan, approximately 27% of the people ply their trade as agricultural laborers or cultivators. Further, Rajasthan with 15% of India's cultivable land is a leading producer of food grains, pulses, oilseeds and cotton. Rajasthan is also a producer for crops like Dates & Olives which also have an enormous potential.

The economy of Rajasthan will reap benefits with the growth of agriculture sector. Currently, the Government has laid impetus for the growth of this sector. Given the scenario where socio-economic benefits are added to the agriculture dependent rural areas, Agritourism has emerged as a high-potential concept.

To begin with, Agritourism has the potential to be developed around the identified tourist circuits to capture the on-going tourist footfall and further build on momentum into the identified circuits



Few of the regions of high potential to be developed for Agritourism are as follows:

- ✓ Desert Circuit (Jodhpur-Jaisalmer-Bikaner)
- ✓ Mewar Circuit (Udaipur-Chittaurgarh-Nathdwara)
- ✓ Vagad Circuit (Dungarpur-Banswara)
- ✓ Dhundhar Circuit (Jaipur-Dausa-Tonk)

Key Areas of Intervention

- ✓ **Capacity Building:** Training facilities at village level is essential for farmers as their skills, ability and attitude would entirely depend on the training and education received. Farmers need to be trained before they establish their ventures.
- ✓ **Marketing and Promotion:** In order to increase their competitiveness; farmers need to be in a position to generate sufficient awareness about their existing products in present and future target markets.
- ✓ **Interaction with the Tourists:** While farmers will have the opportunity for cultural exchange and exposure to diverse backgrounds, they need to have a good understanding of the visiting communities if they are to offer a unique experience and maximize the comfort level.

- ✓ **Access to Information:** Currently farmers have minimum access to information related to current trends and best practices in agritourism market. Publication of user-friendly information handbooks and training manuals is an effective way of information dissemination. The farmers would then be in a position to keep up to date with trends in the industry, and best capitalize on business potential.
- ✓ **State Regulation & Support:** Since Agritourism is a relatively new concept, there is absence of dedicated policy framework dealing with agritourism as emerging tourist product. Government should endeavor to support this sector. The State Government may set up a dedicated cell/ panel/committee consisting of experts to formulate regulations such as agritourism policy which enables a supportive ecosystem in the State.

Way Ahead

- ✓ **Technical Assistance and support during Transition/Transfer/ Development:** Agritourism depends upon the adoption of best practices for supplementing farmer's revenue. This includes profitable farming practices and technology, production practices, business & financial management and availing grants & tax incentive programs etc.
- ✓ **Education of key players and Training for the Agritourism Sector:** To ensure success in a new venture, farmers need to be adaptive to develop new skill sets, progressive mindset, and selective adoption of best practices of retail and hospitality.
- ✓ **Marketing and Promotion of Agritourism Sites:** Adequate branding to highlight the presence of agritourism sites while State government providing marketing boost to both tourism and agriculture in the state.
- ✓ **Development of local agricultural products:** Local agricultural products need to be promoted as part of this theme. In addition, agritourism entrepreneurs may simultaneously experiment with new product offerings each year, and seek ways to improve their products and services.
- ✓ **Building a Common Platform for Farmers and Tourism operators:** This will help farmers to get benefits from already established tourism networks and capitalize on existing large tourist base that visits the State.
- ✓ **Infrastructure Development including Agriculture and Tourism:** Development of agritourism should go hand-in-hand with the development of infrastructure in rural areas. Development of both physical and social infrastructure is an important key enabler for agritourism. This development should be an integral component of the State's infrastructure planning.
- ✓ **Policy Interventions and Government Support:** Agritourism is at a very nascent stage in India and the policy interventions will be crucial in defining its growth and future direction. This includes Policy formulation for Agritourism, programming, and funding support. A variety of measures focusing specifically at farm operations, regional and local development and conservation processes, marketing campaigns and training and development initiatives will help agritourism's growth. Some of the key governmental interventions have been elaborated in the report for the benefit of stakeholders.

We trust this report presents a comprehensive overview of Agritourism and demonstrates its tremendous potential to create employment opportunities in the State. We hope that the knowledge report **Agritourism: Advantage Rajasthan** will facilitate a better understanding of the opportunities presented for the government as well as private sector and will be instrumental in planning new interventions in Agritourism domain.





I. BACKGROUND



I. Background

1.1. Overview - Tourism Market in India

Tourism is one of the most promising sectors globally and offers much economic growth potential without creating regional or economic disparity. Projections suggest that by the end of the first quarter of this century tourism will grow at a faster rate than the world's collective wealth. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Report, 2015, the total contribution of travel and tourism sector to the world GDP was approximately USD 7,170.3 Billion. It contributed around 9.8% to global GDP, higher than other significant sectors like Agriculture (8.5%), Education (8.4%), Automotive Manufacturing (7.0%) and Banking (5.9%).

The most important economic feature of tourism and its related activities arise from the contribution in generation of income, employment & foreign exchange earnings. Hence, tourism has a very strong linkage to the socio-economic progress of India. It has a very high revenue-capital ratio and one of the highest employments – investment ratios.

Progressive Growth:

The Travel and Tourism sector in India provides significant socio economic benefits. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Report, 2015, the sector's contribution to GDP is estimated at INR 8,304 Billion which is around 6.3% of National GDP. These have further been forecasted to rise at a growth rate of 7.3 % in 2016. The sector supported 37.3 Million jobs in 2015. These have been further forecasted to increase to 38.4 Million jobs by 2016 and reach approximately 46 Million jobs by 2026.

Table 1: Tourism Snapshot

Tourism Stats	Value
GDP at current prices (INR lakh Cr, 2014-15)	125.4
Tourism contribution to GDP (2015)	6.3%
India's rank in World Tourist Arrivals (2015)	40
Share in International Tourist Arrival (2015)	0.68%
India's rank in APAC* Tourist Arrivals (2015)	11
Share in APAC Tourist Arrival (2015)	2.88%
Foreign Exchange Earnings (USD Bn, 2015)	21.07
Domestic Tourist Visits (DTVs) (Mn, 2015)	1432
Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) (Mn, 2015)	23.3

3rd largest foreign exchange earner after gems, jewellery and readymade garments in India

Ranked 15th in the world in terms of International Tourism Receipts with a share of 1.62% of the world's total tourism receipts

#52 in the World Economic Forum's 2015 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

Big Employment generator: 78 jobs with every USD 1 Million invested

FEEs grown by 4.1% over 2014

DTVs grown by 11.63% over 2014

FTAs increased by 4.5% as compared to 2014

**APAC- Asian Pacific Region*
Source: WTTC

Table 3: Advantage India

Robust demand	Foreign tourist arrivals (FTA) expected to increase at a CAGR of 7% over 2005–25.
Attractive opportunities	India has a diverse portfolio of niche tourism products – cruises, adventure, medical, wellness, sports, MICE, ecotourism, film, rural, heritage and religious tourism.
Diverse attractions	India offers geographical diversity with undulating hills and terrains and varied flora and fauna.
Policy support	National Tourism Policy to be launched. The Visa on Arrival scheme was extended to 150 countries in 2015.
Connectivity	Regional Connectivity Scheme introduced for enhancing regional connectivity.
Developmental Initiatives	• Launched infrastructure development schemes like HRIDAY, PRASAD, Swadesh Darshan; • 24X 7 Tourist Helpline

State Government Initiatives

- ✓ **Policy Initiatives:** The state has recently launched Rajasthan Tourism Unit Policy 2015 which offers attractive incentives and institutional support to promote investment in tourism in the state. Additionally, the state is in process of drafting new tourism policy focused upon product based incentives, integrated marketing, infrastructure development and effective implementation mechanism.

- ✓ **Product Development:** The state is focused to develop themes based tourism products i.e. Heritage, Spiritual, Cultural, Wildlife, Desert, MICE, Adventure, Heritage, Night Tourism to promoted Rajasthan as all season tourist destination.
- ✓ **Marketing:** The state has recently launched a 360 degree marketing campaign "Jane kya Dikh Jaye' to promote Rajasthan among domestic and international tourists and re-invent brand Rajasthan. The state is also working on providing support to B2B stakeholders involve in driving tourist to Rajasthan.
- ✓ **Land Allotment/Conversion:** Government owned properties/land has been earmarked in various parts of the state for development of Tourism Projects. Concessions are provided on stamp duty, registration fee, conversion and development fee on land transaction related to tourism projects.
- ✓ **Development of Tourism Circuits:** Rajasthan is part of established tourist circuit formed by New Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, Golden Triangle one of the most travelled circuit. The state has further identified nine tourist circuits based on their geography, attractions and coverage by independent / group tourists which are been developed with assistance from Central Government.
- ✓ **Ease of Doing Business:** Rajasthan ranks #6 in India on World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking 2015.. A single point online application and interaction platform is been operational in the state under Bureau of Industries Promotion easing the process of investment by making it transparent and responsive.

1.2 Emerging Tourism Segments

Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism - Trends Globally

As the idea of sustainability incepted its roots around 1980s, along with the key economic reforms focused on developing economies, the requirement of creation of an eco system which fosters self sustained and cross linked business model emerged to preserve the integrity of rural and agrarian systems.

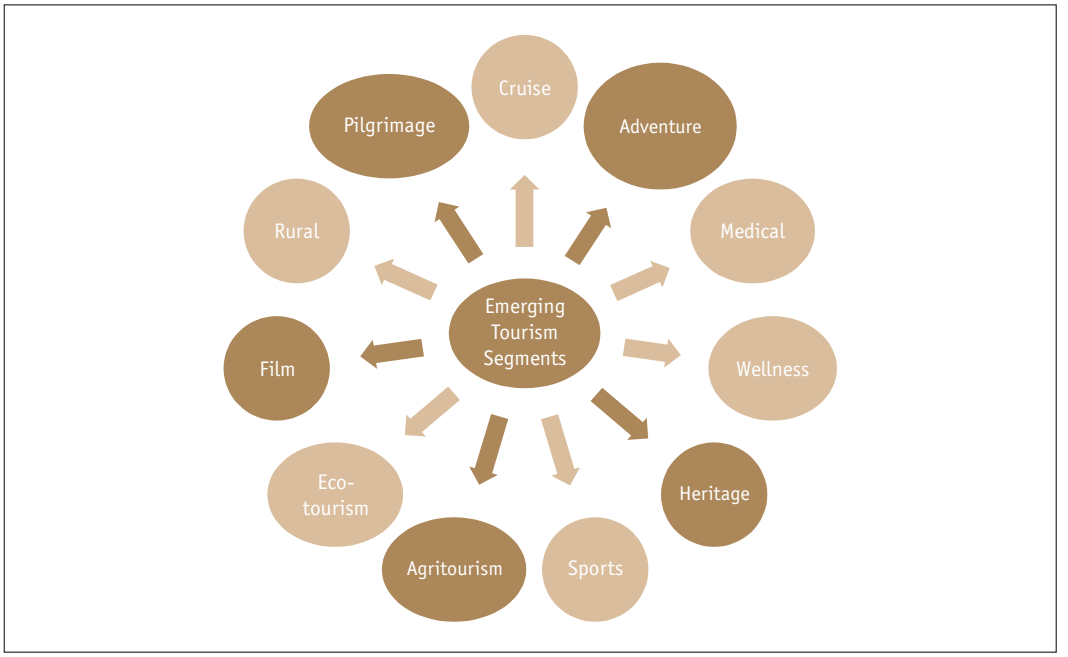
The concept of community based tourism grew as an alternate income source to farmer for lean agricultural periods. It originated out of small tribes looking for additional source of income while conserving cultural identity and controlling urban migration. The initial models emerged in countries like Australia and New Zealand, Canada which emerged as one of the first countries to develop the niche tourism. By the 90s, the utility of such a model as a tool for ensuring inclusive growth was well established and it was replicated across Africa and South East Asia.

Today, the tourism stakeholders have realized the need to identify and develop emerging tourism segments. In order to realize the greater potential of tourism sector, industry is focusing upon leveraging the 'experience' aspect which has led to rise of niche tourism such as agritourism, with product features being more 'activity' oriented, and 'interaction' between the tourist and the host underlying the core aspects.

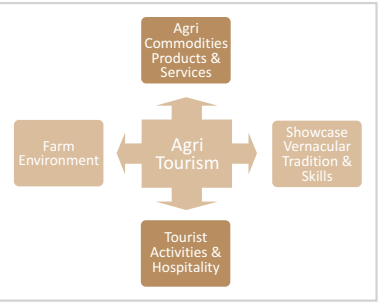
Niche tourism is a form of specialty tourism and is emerging as an antagonist to detrimental developments of mass tourism referring to environmental degradation and socio-cultural disturbance. From an ethical and moral perspective, niche tourism is connoted with development compatible with environmentally sustainability and social care. (World Tourism Organization and World Travel and Tourism Council in Novelli, 2005)

The representative list of Emerging Tourism activities are:

Figure 1: Emerging Tourism Segments



This report will discuss the concept of agritourism and its probable adoption modalities for the state of Rajasthan.



1.3. Agritourism: An Introduction

"Agritourism is the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agri-business operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation." - Agritourism Legislation HB 654[1,2].

The novel concept of developing farms into vacation ventures with hospitality facilities helping the farms to generate additional revenue is known as Agritourism. It is one of the fastest growing concepts in emerging tourism segment and may include a variety of ancillary activities including the opportunity for visiting tourist to assist with farming tasks. The product can be "experience itself". It includes variety of agricultural related activities like buying organic food, farm stays, learning about agricultural activities that attracts tourist globally.

Agritourism involves activities that bridge the gap between visitors and farmers.

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[1]HB 654 was a bill introduced in the 2002 Legislative Session to establish an agri-tourism interagency position within the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and Tourism Development Cabinet to work directly with Farmers involved in Agritourism. This legislation passed during the 2002 Session.

[2]http://www.trailsrus.com/agritourism/definition.html)

For the purpose of this report, Agritourism for farmers is considered as "A range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income for their businesses"

Enablers for Agritourism:

- ✓ Potential of agri entrepreneurs to generate additional income through diversification into related businesses with minimal investment.
- ✓ Synergy of agriculture and tourism by capitalizing on their best practices.
- ✓ Income generation through services and products including a mix of education and entertainment related activities on the farm for tourists.

1.4 . Agritourism & its implications to Rural Economy

Rural residents, especially from the farming community in most locations have not yet reaped the benefits of 'Emerging India'.

BENEFITS

- ✓ It brings major primary sector Agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. This convergence is expected to create win-win situation for both the sectors
- ✓ Support to farms - additional revenue and better sustainability
- ✓ Attract attention to rural infrastructure development
- ✓ Create employment opportunities and empowerment of local people
- ✓ Stimulate investment & create opportunities in ancillary & support line of business
- ✓ Showcase the environmental, cultural and heritage aspects of the region
- ✓ Showcase local cuisine & culinary practices; handicrafts & vernacular skills
- ✓ Create Goodwill & positive sentiments between visiting communities and hosts

The emergence of an agritourism market is characterized by three major developments:

- ✓ Growing acceptance among the rural community of the need for supplementing revenue in a sustainable manner
- ✓ Increasing popularity among global tourists.
- ✓ Recognition of community benefit.

Some of the reasons for the development of agritourism are:

1) Cost Advantage:-	**(2) Growing curiosity about the farming industry and life style:-**
✓ Lower costs in rural areas making ✓ Agritourism a relatively less expensive option, Feasibility of a better pricing structure ✓ Target niche segments - Widen the tourist base.	✓ Potential for capitalizing on curiosity as a business opportunity. ✓ Rich diversity of rural lifestyle & unsuccessful efforts of resorts in urban areas to replicate such an environment. ✓ Support towards keeping farming communities closer to their roots.

(3) Demand for family oriented recreation, peace and tranquility:– ✓ Variety of recreational opportunities for all age groups & family entertainment, ✓ Attraction of urban population towards an environment of peace and tranquility.	**(4) Environment consciousness of urban population:–** ✓ Noticeable environmental degradation and changes in weather patterns in urban areas, ✓ Increased demand and marketability of eco-friendly ventures.
(5) Educational value of Agritourism: - ✓ Potential in creating awareness of traditional agri-technology & practices ✓ Knowledge about agricultural science. ✓ Sharing of expertise among farming entrepreneurs. ✓ Educational and practical training tools for students and professional.	

Importance to the rural economy & environment

Agritourism activities are commonly developed around an existing farming facility and most often located in a rural location with a natural setting. For these rural communities and regions, Agritourism can be a vehicle for diversifying and stabilizing rural economies. Some of the key contributions include:

1. Creating jobs and increasing community income: ✓ Additional direct revenue from farming business ✓ Making business sustainable and encouraging farmers ✓ Surviving the growing competitiveness in the rapidly developing market	**2. Providing a broader market base for local businesses:** ✓ Wider base for farm produce and increased volume of direct sales ✓ Attracting potential investors and business partners into the region ✓ Attracting existing base of tourists from urban locations with high spending capacity
3. Promoting local crafts, culture and tradition: ✓ Showcase local innovation, products and services, ✓ Conservation of heritage and boost to vernacular traditions, art, craft and skills	**4. Attracting other businesses and small industries:** ✓ Investment and development of infrastructure in the region ✓ Facelift to the regional appearance and support facilities ✓ Increased motivation for collaboration and commercial cooperation

1.5. Case Studies of Agritourism Operations: Domestic & International

DOMESTIC: Initiatives by Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Maharashtra[3]

The Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC) founded by entrepreneur Pandurang Taware in 2005 is an initiative which develops, actively promotes and encourages agritourism in the state of Maharashtra. The organization aims to create sustainable livelihoods in rural areas by providing training, creating employment opportunities and linking tourism with agricultural production and related activities such as the manufacturing of handicrafts. The aim of this business model is to create employment opportunities and increase community income through small business development and local entrepreneurship by broadening the market base for local businesses.

Following a phase of research and an initial pilot programme in the Malegaon village of Taluka Baramati, Pune in 2005, ATDC now has 500 trained farmers and 152 Agritourism Centers operational across the state of Maharashtra, which are run by local farmers. These Agritourism Centers serve predominantly domestic tourists from urban areas, which are provided with the opportunity to interact with rural villagers and farmers in order to experience authentic Indian agricultural traditions in unexploited natural environments. The ATDC programme offers participatory activities for a tourist who provides an opportunity to experience local agricultural practices (horticulture, harvesting, beekeeping, and dairying), rural ways of living and local culture (music, food, dances, and handicrafts). Between 2007 and 2011, the offerings of Agritourism Centers across Maharashtra attracted over 200,000 visitors.

Various socio-economic benefits:

- ✓ It generates additional income for the farmers, who have experienced a 25% income increase across the state.
- ✓ Improvements in the physical infrastructure (tourism accommodation facilities, road networks, electrical generating and distribution systems) in support of the Agritourism Centers.
- ✓ On-site employment opportunities have been created for members of farming families, eliminating the necessity to migrate to urban areas

Saguna Baug — the agri - tourism hub in Karjat taluk in Maharashtra - transformed 50 acres of land into a productive agriculture landscape that brings urban and rural culture together.

- ✓ Benefitting farmers with additional income, knowledge and self confidence
- ✓ Benefitting tourists by experiencing agriculture, practicing it and buying organic products
- ✓ With the launch of new concept 'Find Farmer Friend' (3F), they have launched a new beginning of learning between city and farm dwellers.

- ✓ Awareness of local agricultural products has increased in urban communities, leading to direct sales from farmers to urban households

[3] *http://www.besteducationnetwork.org/Case_Studies/5436, http://www.agritourism.in/*
[4] *http://prakritifarms.com/*
[5] *http://nirvanaorganicresort.com/*

DOMESTIC: Prakriti Farm, Punjab

Kaushal fondly remembers his childhood summers in the forests and farms of his ancestral village, Rail Majra, near Ropar. Freshwater springs ran through these lush forests, and farms of sarson painted the land yellow in winter. The land which is located 7 km from Ropar wetlands which is one of the 21 sites identified by the Ramsar convention as a unique bio diverse wetland and host to numerous migratory birds was once a forest area where kaushal and other youths from village has spend their childhood. After studying in the cities and corporate stints abroad, Kaushal returned to his ancestral farms but this time he felt heartbroken to see that the forests had completed dried up and villagers were abandoning their withering farms to get jobs in factories. The development around seems to have changed the cultural landscape of our village. The forest resources have dried up, the land is barren and devoid of all vegetation, the natural spring in the forest had dried up, signaling drastic changes in the forest. It was this neglect and disrespect of nature by the local community and government.

Challenging himself Kaushal quits his corporate life to slowly recreate an ecological environment in the private forest land that he inherited from our ancestors. He took to organic farming on the land his family owned – using traditional farming practices he revived the soil to grow popular trees, kinnow orchards, and seasonal crops and herbs. In the gentle backdrop of the Shivalik hills, Prakriti Farm now offers weekend breaks in a charming mud cottage and farm tents, promising a slice of the Punjabi countryside (complete with makki di roti, sarson da saag and daal handi) an hour away from Chandigarh.

Activities and Facilities offered at Prakriti Frams:

- ✓ Accommodation available in Thatch and Mud Deluxe cottages; Swiss tents with camps; Kinnow orchard cottages;
- ✓ Farm tours targeted towards creating Environmental and Conservation awareness amongst school children.
- ✓ Bird watching;
- ✓ Camping;
- ✓ Organic farming practices;
- ✓ Rural recreational games.

DOMESTIC: Nirvana Organic Farm, Rajasthan

Nirvana organic farm, situated an hour drive from Jaipur. Once a piece of barren land is now nurtured into a small patch of forest landscape using organic farming methods devoid of any usage of chemicals. The nutrient of the soil has revived such that the trees and seasonal crops would survive even in the harsh Rajasthan summers. Managed by a local farmer named Arvind along with his wife, the farm offers world-weary travelers a chance to experience Rajasthan's folk and farm culture in simple but cosy thatched roof huts. Activities offered at Nirvana farms included tiling the land, harvesting the crops, looking after the cattle, stretching out on a khatiya (cot) to watch birds, taking a cooking lesson on an open-air chulha (clay stove), and indulging in delicious farm-grown food. Also there are various options for tourists to get involved in rural recreational games available at farm like playing Guli Danda, Sitolia, Marbles or Fly Kites, ride a Bicycle or take Bullock Cart ride in the country side.

Other facilities available at farms are:

- ✓ Reading Room
- ✓ Forest Walk
- ✓ Educational Tour
- ✓ Organic Products and Rajasthani Handcrafts Stall

[6] *http://savefarm.in/*

DOMESTIC: "Tarpa Agro-Eco tourism", at Save Farm , Maharashtra, India[6]

Save farm is located at about 130 kms from Mumbai, in north Konkan region of Maharashtra state. It was established in 1970, on a barren piece of land by the Save family. The family opted for this land only because of its financial limitations and faced with the challenge of developing a horticultural orchard on this unfertile, eroded land. With consistent scientific efforts and innovative implementation of latest technology, they were able to convert this once neglected land in to a lush green productive farm and over a period of about 35 years have reaped good harvest.

'Tarpa Agro-Eco Tourism' is a novel venture of Save Farm. The word 'Tarpa' comes from a vocal musical instrument used by local tribal community called 'Warli'. The objective of this project is to promote Agricultural Activities, introduce Tribal Culture and give a glimpse of Rural Life to our Urban Guest; and to offer a peaceful and quite holiday experience found only in the Indian countryside. Tarpa is not a conventional hotel , it's a vacation with a experience! It's a place where, what would be considered quirks of a conventional hotel, are actually our strengths.

Farm Facilities available at Save farms are:

- ✓ Coconut cottages, mud huts for accommodation,
- ✓ Fruit-plant nursery with green houses and shade houses (for indoor plants),
- ✓ Botanical Garden with medicinal herbs & plants, well-documented 300+ plants,
- ✓ An artificial lake for rainwater harvesting, bee-keeping, pet birds & animals and a novel concept of aqua-phonics.

Recreational Activities available are:

- ✓ Comprehensive farm tours,
- ✓ Program for acquiring rural life-skills of art and craft such as Fishing, Mat Weaving (from coconut), Coconut Peeling, Basket Weaving from Bamboo, Warli Painting, etc.
- ✓ Soft adventure activities like Zip line, Rope course etc.
- ✓ Educational Tour,
- ✓ Organic Products and Souvenir Stall.

Some of the outcomes of this venture include:

- ✓ Since adding a tourism perspective to their farming operations the Save family have benefited from greater sustainability of their commercial operations,
- ✓ The tourists have an opportunity to experience nature and rural life,
- ✓ Awareness and environmental consciousness through comprehensive farm tours,
- ✓ Local community has benefited from tourists visiting near-by areas; understanding their culture, economy and art, and buying souvenirs from community.

[7] *http://www.morarkango.in/organic_food_festival.aspx*
http://www.facenfacts.com/NewsDetails/8612/farm-tourism-in-rajasthan-booming.htm

DOMESTIC: Initiatives by Morarka Foundation, Rajasthan[7]

The Morarka foundation is a not for profit voluntary organization set up by Mr. Kamal M. Morarka in 1993 to create wealth for the nation through innovations in resource management and capacity building. Unlike other voluntary organizations Morarka Foundation is into more than just the conventional areas of voluntary actions. The Foundation restricts its role to that of a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator, encouraging necessary participation of the rural community and entrepreneurs.

Through their initiatives in promoting farm tourism Morarka Foundation was instrumental in trying out farm tourism concept in 2 villages in Shekhawati region – Kattrathal and Singhasan where they motivated 2 farmers Mr. Digvijay Singh of Kattrathal and Mr. Girwar Singh of Singhasan village to build facility in their farm for tourists to come and have a comfortable stay. Shekhawati region in Rajasthan was given partial treatment by Mother Nature which is reflected in its semi-arid conditions. The Shekhawati culture responded to this challenge and compensated very beautifully in its rich tradition of folk arts, handicrafts and life styles.

Tourism promotion in Shekhawati began with the organizing of first Shekhawati Festival, way back in 1995. In initial days it took ample time to explain theses farmers about farm tourism concept and the advantages of setting up the facility for the same in their farm. The Morarka Foundation, in its efforts to introduce new economic opportunities, identified tourism promotion. With the result in 15 years in Shekhawati alone from 50 odd rooms in 2-3 hotels, today there are about 1000 rooms available to the tourists. Since many years a new and unique event "Organic Food Bazar" has also been added. About 40 farm families practicing organic management were invited to cook and serve their traditional food to the visiting tourists. This event attracted very-very large number of local residents as well.

As a part of stay, Morarka Foundation teaches them yoga, Ayurved medicine, conduct lessons in Hindi, local games like kabbaddi, langdi, camel and horse rides and ride on the tractor fascinates them.

Various socio-economic benefits:

- ✓ It generates additional income for the farmers,
- ✓ Improvements in the physical infrastructure of the region,
- ✓ Employment opportunities – community bonding,
- ✓ Conservation and awareness of rural heritage and culture,

INTERNATIONAL: VALLE DEL MARTA's FARM: Tarquinia, Italy[8]

Tarquinia is a remote location, just outside Rome near the port of Civitavecchia. Valle del Marta Farm, is an incredible family owned and operated farm in this location. The farm grows many products as well as everything they use for the production of wines, liqueurs, jams and jellies, honey, olive oil and the list goes on.

The organically grown products are available to visitors and have a reputation for their superior taste. The farm has positioned itself as a pioneer in 'facilitating visitor's rediscovery of old tastes'. The product variety ranges from vegetables to spirits, fruit to meat, spices to pure virgin olive oil, from honey and by-products to medicinal oils.

[8] *http://www.valledelmarta.it/en/*

Activities:

- ✓ Accommodation facilities built using local skill practices in construction to blend with the surrounding environment.
- ✓ The restaurant offers dishes of old country food, and the hospitality and décor reflect a similar theme.
- ✓ In addition to the standard agritourism activities, the farm offers thematic parties, river fishing journeys, farm tours and cultivations, wines and liqueurs tasting, tours to discover civilizations of the middle age.
- ✓ The greatest part of the venture is the vineyards, where visitors can observe the careful and accurate work required on the specially scented grape. The farm also has a kitchen garden, olive yard and rearing of animals.

Some of the benefits of this farm to the region include:

- ✓ It has put Tarquina on the world tourism map
- ✓ This has attracted the attention of many entrepreneurs to invest in supporting businesses,
- ✓ It has projected the local cultural and heritage in a positive manner,
- ✓ Local cuisine & culinary practices; handicrafts & vernacular skills have been conserved.

INTERNATIONAL: Agritourism in England[9]

England offers a strong example of a place where agritourism has become a driving economic force. Many of the farms in England received grants and/or low interest loans to make necessary conversions of buildings and other improvements for overnight accommodations. The British Government has taken the approach that recognizes that an attractive countryside is critical to the nation's overall tourism success. Additionally, government also formed the Farm Holiday Bureau (FHB) which is made up of 95 different Holiday Groups totaling over 1,000 farms in England, Scotland and Wales which came to be known as 'Farm Stay UK'. Leadership and support was provided by ADAS (an environmental consultancy), the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE), the National Tourist Boards and the Farmer's Weekly.

The company is a leader in its field, recognized for its innovation and success within the tourism industry in England and abroad. Their three primary functions are to:

- ✓ Promote the concept of farm tourism in the UK
- ✓ Support members expand their businesses through pro-active marketing/sales support
- ✓ Assist farmers in broadening their income base through diversification.

On a more local level, the County of Devon, England offers a prime example of a regional agritourism initiative. Devon is the second largest county in England and has a population of 1,141,600.

Common throughout Devon is, the tradition of high quality local produce - providing visitors and residents alike with a wonderful array of Devon-grown foods. Devon Farms were set up by a group of like-minded farmers who knew that they had something special to offer to the visitors of South West. They wanted to

[9] *http://www.swotc.ca/wp-content/uploads/Agri-tourism-Strategy.pdf*

promote not only their own holiday accommodation but also their way of life, environment and Devon as a whole to a wider audience. With farming going through a difficult time many farm owners were diversifying and looking at other ways to earn a living or increase their income. Some launched successful tourist attractions, while others opened up their homes for a special place to stay for visitors. The group formed a cooperative called "Devon Farms" with the criteria that all members must be a working on a farm and their accommodation must be formally inspected.

As a co-operative, Devon Farms is run, promoted and managed entirely by the farm owners to ensure its integrity. Each operator has their own unique product; however what they all have in common is their passion towards creating a unique and authentic experience. This region has also produced 'The Devon Food Book" which links the landscape to the food that is prepared in the region, winning the Gourmand World Cookbook award in 2005 and 2006 for the Best Local Cookbook. This is a prime example of building awareness and capacity about agritourism and encouraging participation from community.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Financial support and incentives can encourage agritourism activities
- ✓ Collaboration between farmers to create a cooperative can result in greater agritourism activities.
- ✓ The production of the Devon Food Book, an award winning local cookbook enhanced the brand identity of the region as an agritourism centre, highlighted the importance of agritourism and re-localize the food system by demonstrating how local food can be cooked through a variety of recipes.

1.6. Initiatives by State Governments

Maharashtra Tourism Policy 2016

Under Rural Tourism, an action plan is proposed for local players / tour operators practicing Agritourism wherein standardization/ certification of activities will be envisaged with additional incentives for Agritourism units.

Haryana Tourism Policy 2008

Haryana Tourism has pioneered to introduce the concept of Farm/ Agritourism. Guidelines formulated were to assist Farm houses creating infrastructure leading to Farm/ Agritourism site. It has attracted a lot of response from people and the clientele is increasing day by day.

Punjab Farm Tourism Scheme 2013

The farm house owners act as both hosts and guides to the visiting tourist. Apart from the farm experience the visitor should get exposure to local community life, which may mean attending a gram panchayat meeting or a social event in the village, along with an opportunity to experience local music, dances, cuisine, art, craft and culture. It will promote farm accommodation and activities in partnership with the private sector. The quality of services offered by farm houses is to be verified by PHTPB. It then enrolls them into the scheme and provides mandatory training, as well as development and operational advice, and undertakes promotional activity for farm tourism via the internet, publications and media relations.





II. RAJASTHAN AND AGRITOURISM



II. RAJASTHAN AND AGRITOURISM

2.1 Potential Regions for Development of Agritourism Sites

Rajasthan is renowned for its forts, palaces and varied cultures, set amidst an inviting landscape.

- ✓ Largest State by area in India
- ✓ Geographical area 3,42,239 sq. km. (10.4 per cent of the India)
- ✓ 33 districts, 268 tehsil
- ✓ 44,823 villages
- ✓ One of the most populous State in India
- ✓ Population density of 200 person per sq. km. as against 382 for India
- ✓ Represent 5.6 per cent of the country's population
- ✓ Prominent role in Indian political, cultural and socio economic scenario



Source: IBEF, 2015

There are a vast number of potential sectors and investment opportunities in the State. However, with respect to agriculture sector the key measures for economic growth in Rajasthan are:

- ✓ Support to sustainable growth of the agriculture sector,
- ✓ Creation of adequate forward and backward linkages,
- ✓ Empowerment of local communities,
- ✓ Propel economic growth through sustainable development in the rural areas,

- ✓ Development and up-gradation of infrastructure facilities,
- ✓ Harness the untapped potential in sunrise sectors through innovative interventions.

Agritourism is an effective way for the State to benefit from its strength in agricultural resources, promote local products and support growth of the agriculture sector.

Agritourism opportunities in Rajasthan

The agricultural and allied sectors contributed 32.65% to the GSDP of Rajasthan in 2014-15 at current prices. The sector also witnessed CAGR of 13.5%, indicating the growing importance of the sector in economic growth. Rajasthan has 10 agro climatic zones with 53% of the State's total land area as net sown area. Out of the total population in Rajasthan, approximately 27% of the people ply their trade as agricultural laborers or cultivators. Rajasthan has 15% of India's cultivable land, which accounts for 27.2 mn hectares. Meanwhile tourism is termed as an instrument for employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Rajasthan accounted for 2.52% of the tourist's arrival in India in 2014. Foreign tourist arrivals in Rajasthan were recorded at 14.75 lakhs in 2015 with a CAGR of 3% (2012-15), while domestic tourist visits stood at 352 lakhs recording a CAGR of 8% (2012-15). Renowned domestic and international hotel chains are successfully operating in the State and offers accommodation primarily in the luxury category.

Rajasthan holds a prominent position on the agricultural map of the country. Integrating Tourism sector with Agriculture would further strengthen the competitiveness of Rajasthan Tourism in the global market.

Map 1: Crop Distribution in Rajasthan



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

The high proportion of land under cultivation, high population density which is largely dependent on agriculture requires vital attention towards ensuring sustainability.

Potential Regions for Development of Agritourism in Rajasthan

Some of the potential regions that can be developed for Agritourism include:

- ✓ **Desert Circuit (Jodhpur-Jaisalmer-Bikaner)**
  - o The Desert circuit is most popular circuit especially for camel riding,
  - o The Bishnoi village near Jodhpur popularly known as Shepherds' Village is famous for organizing dessert and jungle safaris for domestic and international tourists,
  - o The village is also popular among the tourists for other activities like camel caravans, pottery and puppetry.
  - o Main attractions are Camels – the state animal of Rajasthan along with Chinkara which are abundantly found in Desert National Park, Jaisalmer.
- ✓ **Mewar Circuit (Udaipur-Chittaurgarh-Nathdwara)**
  - o The Mewar circuit is one of the famous destinations amongst tourists. It offers a great combination of religion, tradition and history,
  - o The tribal area of Chittorgarh has the potential for Agritourism due to the presence of some unique products developed by the tribal people of that area such as tribal saris made from sandalwood threading and quilts made from medicinal plants.
- ✓ **Vagad Circuit (Dungarpur-Banswara)**
  - o The circuit represents a unique combination of tribal culture, tradition and history of rajasthan,
  - o Jaisamand lake in the vicinity of Vagad Circuit is one of the famous man-made lake and also offers a huge potential for agritourism activities such as fishing and farming in nearby villages.
- ✓ **Dhundhar Circuit (Jaipur-Dausa-Tonk)**
  - o The circuit is well known for its rich culture, history, architecture and religion.
  - o Proximity to Delhi/NCR region makes it a very popular destination for the urban population where they can visit and experience the local culture of Rajasthan. Famous religious destinations in the circuit are an added advantage.
  - o Agri areas near Jaipur can be utilized for agritourism as they offer a blend of agri and cultural experiences on the Dhundhar Circuit.

In addition to the State Government initiatives, to promote Olives and Dates farming in the identified regions, there lies an immense opportunity to develop agritourism around the cultivation and its processing facilities. The following areas have been identified to integrate with agritourism activities:

- o World Class Nursery: Durgapur & Bassi near Jaipur
- o Agriculture Training Centre: Sri ganganagar, Nagpur, Bikaner, Jalore, Jhunjhun, Alwar and Jaipur
- o Olive Extraction Plant: Lunkaransar, Bikaner (to be set up)
- o Oil Plant: Bikaner, Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Jhunjhun

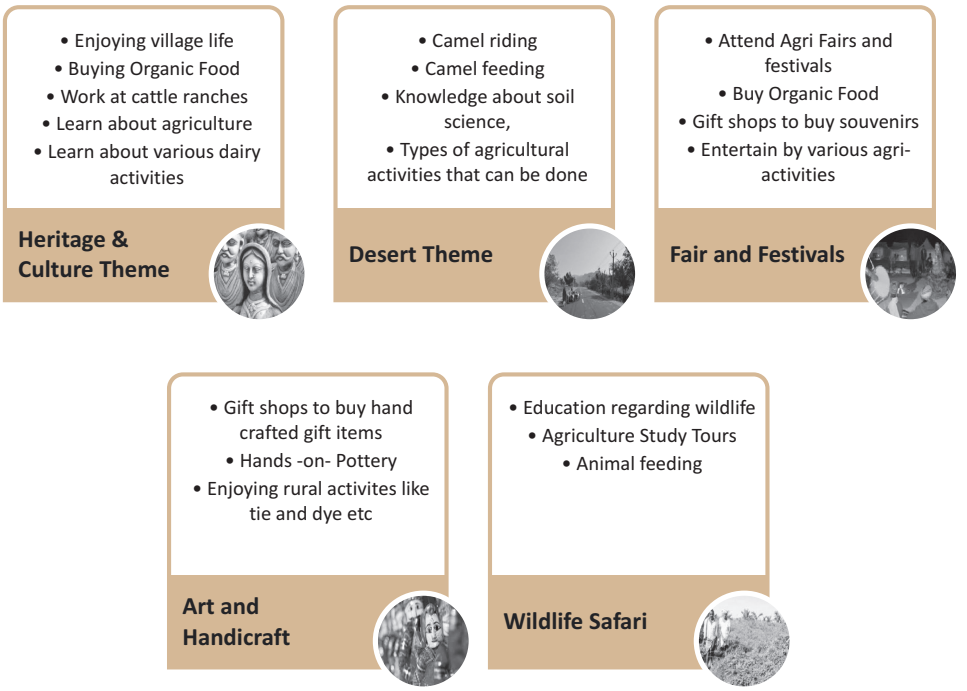
- o Promote different varieties of dates and concentrate around Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Hanumangarh distrcts.

There are various types of agritourism opportunities that can explored at identified regions such as:

- ✓ Farm tours for Families and School Children,
- ✓ Day trips and Camps,
- ✓ Educational, Activity trips and hands-on chores,
- ✓ Self-Harvesting of Produce,
- ✓ Overnight stays in a Bed and Breakfast

The simplest form of an Agritourism venture is identifying an existing farm that is well connected with a picturesque natural setting with calm and serene surroundings coupled with hospitality on the farm. As the awareness of such opportunities increases, there will be greater interest in developing agritourism ventures in Rajasthan and the sector will grow rapidly with the increase in the number of farms offering overnight accommodation.

Agritourism activities that a tourist can enjoy in Rajasthan can be categorized under the following themes and opportunities:



SWOT Analysis: Rajasthan Agritourism:

As we can see that Rajasthan is naturally endowed to promote agritourism, a SWOT analysis of the sector is encapsulated in the below matrix:



2.2 Key areas for intervention

While considerable potential exists to develop Agritourism market in many regions of Rajasthan, several measures are needed to ensure farmers can best capitalize on opportunities.

2.2.1 Marketing and Promotion

Knowledge towards market linkage and promotion remains prerequisite the small farmers contemplating Agritourism. There is need to increase their competitiveness to generate sufficient awareness towards key aspects of marketing and promotion.

2.2.2 Training and Education:

The key objective is to create alternate livelihood channels to complement the existing agriculture incomes in the rural areas. The farming community needs to build their capacities on critical aspects as below to create sustainable ventures.

Capacity Building Enhancement towards various avenues will be of utmost importance while planning Agritourism ventures. Key indicative areas are listed below:

- ✓ Tourism and business training programs for operators and employers
- ✓ Education and training related to other value-added products and services
- ✓ Establishment and implementation of training programs dealing with customer service, business plan development and marketing
- ✓ Guidance to develop good systems and processes for functioning; preparation of self-help training manuals and awareness of available quality certifications
- ✓ Training programs and experiential exposures
- ✓ Training in financial planning and management
- ✓ Help to document and showcase past accomplishments through proper record keeping

2.2.3 Interaction with the Tourist:

The target visitors to an Agritourism venture are likely to be those with a minimum exposure to such an environment. This requires the farming community to be sufficiently equipped to deal with significant cultural differences. While farmers would have the opportunity for cultural exchange and exposure to diverse backgrounds, they would need to have a good understanding of the visiting communities if they are to offer a unique experience and maximize the comfort level.

2.2.4 Access to Information:

It is prudent to make farmers aware of about agritourism and the opportunities it offers for additional revenue generation. In the process of setting up agritourism the farmers are always seeking guidance on how to progress on various fronts toward success of their venture. In such situations the key concern of the farmers is the quality and reliability of the information sources. It is important to ensure the access to such expertise. Publication of user-friendly information handbooks and training manuals is an effective way of information dissemination. The farmers would then be in a position to keep up to date with trends in the industry, and best capitalize on business potential.

2.2.5 Policy support

Since Agritourism is a relatively new concept, the State Government should endeavor to support this sector. In addition to a number of initiatives of the State Government, their support in streamlining growth is critical. This could include sector specific regulations, adequate connectivity and rural infrastructure development. Simultaneously, publications and developing maps for the region can be initiated towards developing a network of trails that connects farms in the region.

2.3 Implications for Rajasthan

2.3.1 Development of Rural Economy:

The economy of Rajasthan is heavily dependent on the growth of the agriculture sector. Agritourism has emerged as a very high-potential concept in this scenario. It is synergetic with that of rural tourism. It is a form of secondary enterprise which offers much promise in adding value to farm operations. Tourist in urban areas visiting these farms impact trade in the region. The farms also benefit from greater attention and new markets for their output. Agritourism can act as a catalyst to partnerships that can in turn help the growth of industry in the region. There is also a greater developmental focus on the area and realization of the investment potential is more likely.

The secondary economic effects include boost to other businesses and development of infrastructure in the region. This will ensure greater connectivity and access to the region which will not only support this sector but also develop the region as a whole.

2.3.2 Advantage to rural communities:

Agritourism helps in generating alternate livelihoods for farming community. The value of Agricultural land increases and creates greater assets for entrepreneurial farmers. New Agritourism ventures attract domestic and international tourists resulting in greater tourist spends in the region This revenue will be distributed amongst the various facilities such as accommodation, food and local art & craft forms.. The net result is the creation of additional direct and indirect job opportunities in the region.

2.3.3 Contribution to the State's GDP growth;

Agritourism will necessitate up gradation of infrastructure in the region. With better access and exposure the farming community will reach out to larger markets resulting in enhanced income levels. It is in this direction that agritourism will support an increase in the contribution of both agriculture and tourism to the GDP. In addition to strengthening rural GDP it will popularize local culture.

The potential impact of agritourism on Rajasthan includes:

- ✓ Increasing the rural GDP
- ✓ Improving the socio economic conditions of rural areas
- ✓ Creation of employment opportunities
- ✓ Productive use of local resources
- ✓ Improving the productivity and quality of life
- ✓ Developing agri entrepreneurship
- ✓ Rural industrialization and development
- ✓ Reducing migration to urban areas



III. RECOMMENDATIONS



III. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to develop and promote agritourism sector in Rajasthan, it is imperative to put into place, the mechanisms that support farm entrepreneurs. Some of the essentials for agritourism include:

- ✓ Infrastructure Development - Agriculture and Tourism
- ✓ Marketing and Promotion
- ✓ Policy Interventions and Government Support
- ✓ Skill Development& Community Assistance

It is also crucial to define clearly, what can be categorised as an agritourism venture. A detailed framework needs to be established & implemented. This will strengthen efforts to evolve an environmentally responsible solution. A rating or grading scale can also be implemented that will assist visitors in their choice.

3.1 Infrastructure Development - Agriculture and Tourism

Development of agritourism should go hand in hand with the development of infrastructure in rural areas. The Government has already been directing significant efforts in this direction and seeks to involve the private sector to strengthen these efforts. The government should initiate regional cooperation in infrastructure development. Some of the areas that need immediate attention include:

3.1.1 Physical Infrastructure:

Physical infrastructure is the key enabler for the development of tourism. In rural Rajasthan, there are several aspects that would need due attention:

- ✓ Land
- ✓ Connectivity
- ✓ Water , Electricity, Fuel / Gas
- ✓ Solid Waste Management

Last mile connectivity to the remotest areas is extremely important and crucial. Better connectivity attracts tourism to remotest places. Rapid expansion and integration of the network/facilities across urban and rural areas should be pursued. As Road connectivity attracts tourists, better communication infrastructure helps to extend tourist stay at one location. Availability of water and electricity should also be focused upon. Sanitation facilities should conform to best practices to ensure that there is minimal environmental impact .Integrating agritourism with various sources of renewable energy will further facilitate to expand the tourism activities in a region.

3.1.2 Social Infrastructure:

Development of agritourism will require robust social infrastructure perspective. This includes:

- ✓ Health Facilities
- ✓ Education and Training
- ✓ Social Facilities and Institutions
- ✓ Festivals and Cultural Events

It is necessary to sensitize both host communities and visitors to ensure that a synergy is developed, particularly in the initiation phase. Local festivals and cultural events help in creating awareness about community lifestyle and tourist interest in the region.

3.2 Marketing and Promotion

The key facets of marketing and promotion would include:

- ✓ Developing agritourism as a niche tourism segment akin to heritage tourism
- ✓ Generating adequate awareness among target customer segments
- ✓ Use of new age technology tools and media for wider reach
- ✓ Projecting a unique combination of experiences for visitors

Rajasthan is well known for its agrarian economy. Branding is of key importance for Rajasthan to help it develop a unique image of its strengths and offerings. This will also help differentiate Rajasthan from similar destinations in other parts of India. Developing agritourism as a niche tourism segment will give boost to both tourism and agriculture, simultaneously attracting other economic advantages.

3.2.1 Developing a Marketing Framework

The first step in creating an agritourism marketing framework is to identify the target segments. The facilities would need to be developed keeping the preferences of target customer in the center. Unlike traditional agriculture products, agritourism products may include a service or experience as well as merchandise.

Some of the key initiatives needed for marketing and promotion include:

- ✓ Building a marketing strategy around unique features and areas of competitive advantage. This can include capitalizing on existing tourist inflow of key tourist attractions like Jaisalmer, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur amongst others.
- ✓ State Government to facilitate marketing promotion through Tourism Website & its offices.
- ✓ Development of Marketing associations and collaborative partnerships with the resources and talents necessary to disseminate Agritourism product information efficiently to target markets.

- ✓ Expanding beyond the limited and neighborhood markets and access to newer markets, both national and international through trade fairs & tie ups with established agencies in India and abroad.
- ✓ Strategic alliance between Agritourism operators and other tourism suppliers.
- ✓ Generating a wider awareness of regional rural tourism experiences.
- ✓ Advocating linkages between food producers and tourism operators to create innovative products.
- ✓ Marketing Development Assistance
- ✓ Effective and systematic risk management and insurance programs.

3.2.2. Cross Promotion with other local businesses

The Government and Business associations will have a key role to play in packaging and portraying the location as a high potential destination for business. Several aspects of the location would need to be developed and highlighted in this direction including the physical infrastructure, connectivity, communication, availability of manpower.

A common approach for development of Agritourism is to link them to existing tourism destinations that are very popular – making them an extension of travel itinerary. This enables for a more comprehensive offering to tourists and helps these destinations capitalize on each other's strengths and benefits. Creating such an approach will help in increasing the length of stay of visiting tourists.

3.2.3 Development of local Agricultural Products:

Developing local produce helps in strengthening the brand and identity of agritourism in Rajasthan. This enriches the experience that is offered in making it a more authentic experience of the region.

Selection of the produce also requires a scientific assessment as in major cases the products will be outcomes of food processing. Normally the local produce would be the ones that are best suited to the environmental conditions in those areas and over generations farming communities would have expertise in such cultivation.

3.2.4 Building a Common Platform with Tourism Operators

The agritourism industry must develop stronger alliances between agricultural association, farm owners, farming communities, tourist operators, other key players in the agriculture and tourism industries, aswell as with government organizations. Several industry organizations provide the foundation on which alliances and collaboration can be built. This will help the farmers get the benefit of established networks and capitalize on the benefits of an already large tourist footfall in the state. The tourists gain from the wider range options available to them. Suitable technology to enable such a linkage should be facilitated.

3.3 Policy Interventions and Government Support:

Agritourism is at a very nascent stage in India and the policy interventions will be crucial in defining its growth and future direction. This includes formulating a Public Policy for agritourism, programming, and funding. Around the globe, policies and programs encourage expansion of the supply of agritourism and value-added processing activities. A variety of measures aimed specifically at farm operations, regional and local development and conservation processes, marketing campaigns, and training and development initiatives have helped agritourism's growth in these regions. Some of the measures to be undertaken at

the policy level include:

- ✓ Establishing a supporting framework and organizational system
- ✓ Coordinating and linking of local/regional support structures
- ✓ Defining and Promoting standards and quality of product/services
- ✓ Inclusive approach to diversity that evolves from small operators
- ✓ Promoting Social equity and community involvement
- ✓ Agricultural and tourism industry collaboration
- ✓ Development/marketing support

Statewide education, coordination and training will generate awareness among tourism professionals, civic leaders, farmers and all present and potential stakeholders. Local leaders need to be educated about the economic potential of successful agritourism. They also need to be educated in terms of changes to signage requirements, and taxation that would help sustain these ventures.

Some of the key governmental interventions include:

- ✓ Workshops on agritourism
- ✓ Agritourism Development Centers/ Committee
- ✓ Encourage private agencies to work together more closely.
- ✓ Financial and Practical assistance to any existing agritourism operators
- ✓ Agritourism marketing and advertising
- ✓ Directory of registered agritourism ventures
- ✓ Agritourism Rajasthan website including an interactive map of all registered businesses.
- ✓ Linkage with existing popular itineraries

3.4 Skill Development& Community Assistance

3.4.1 Technical Assistance and Support during Transition/Transfer/ Development:

In the development of agritourism ventures farmers need to be trained for strengthening of institutional mechanisms including collaborative models. The same will address challenges being faced by the farming community in adopting agritourism activities in addition to the customary farming practices.

Small farmers and farming communities would seek technical assistance and expertise in this phase which would need to be facilitated. This includes:

- ✓ Profitable Farming practices and technology
- ✓ Business and financial management
- ✓ Availing of Central and State Government Schemes
- ✓ People & Family Considerations including community synergy
- ✓ Developing a 'customer experience'

3.4.2 Education of Key Players and Training for the Agritourism Sector:

To ensure success in a new venture, farmers need to get ready to develop new skill sets, change their thought process, selectively adopt the best practices of retailing and hospitality in addition to production of agricultural commodities. Agritourism ventures have a very strong community orientation, and developing these requires considerable synergies towards skill development. The communities need to be educated on diverse cultures of the prospective tourists largely representing an urban population.

Such training can be categorized into commercial and technical skills. Business skills though relatively intangible would be crucial in directing such ventures to profitability. Simultaneously a good understating of hospitality and customer service standards is necessary. It will also ensure customer-friendly atmosphere and dedication to serving the visitors. Access to self help information will also be of significant benefit. A collaborative approach to imparting this training is needed. This can be in the form of seminars and classroom style training sessions. Interactive methodologies would need to be adopted. At the same time a vast majority of learning would need to be through 'hands – on' activities and demonstrations. Peer-to peer training and knowledge sharing within communities needs to be encouraged. The Government with the support of experts in this field should assist setting up a dedicated body that identifies such learning needs, facilitates dedicated training institutes, training seminars and knowledge sharing.

Palm Tourism

Date Palm based Agritourism in Rajasthan



Varieties

- Date Palm Varieties- Barhee, Khuneji, Khalas, Medjool, Khadravi, Jamli and Sagai.
- Single sapling of date palm costs INR 2,000- 2,500

Date Palms production in Rajasthan to reach **800 tonnes** from the fist harvest in 2015-16 and is expected to rise significantly. After successful trial of tissue based palm cultivation, date palm farming has been adopted by farmers in Jaisalmer, **Barmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Hanumangarh, Sri Ganganagar, Nagaur, Pali, Jalore, Jhunjhunu, Sirohi and Churu**. With **813 acres land under palm cultivation** in the above districts an immense to potential to develop Agri-Tourism product exist.

Initially it is proposed Palm based agritoruism is developed on Jaisalmer-Barmer-Jodhpur-Bikaner (Dessert Circuit) with high existing tourist footfall, introduction of Agritourism product would further enhance the attractiveness of the circuit.

Sample Itinerary

Day One

Brief- about types of Palm and Process run through

- Interaction with Local Community- Visit to few households
- Tour Date Palm Farmlands
- Attend Cultural Program with local cuisine

Overnight at Tent/ Home Stay

Day Two

- Early Morning visit to Date Palm Farmland under harvest
- Sample the different varieties of Palms
- Visit local market and buy local products
- Tour to Production and Hardening Facility

Government Enablers to Promote Date Palm Farming

- 75 per cent subsidy provided to farmers to use drip irrigation.
- Culture raised sapling to farmers at a subsidised rate under the centrally-sponsored scheme Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
- Alliance with private company Atul Ltd for cultivating fine quality tissue cultured date palm saplings for distribution to farmers at a subsided rate.

NOTES

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