

# Rethinking on Agritourism Business Practices in Maharashtra

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## Mini Review

**Received:** 08/10/2021

**Accepted:** 22/10/2021

**Published:** 29/10/2021

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**Keywords:** Agritourism; Pollution;  
Artificial decoration; Negligence

## ABSTRACT

Agritourism is increasing in popular among the urban peoples in worldwide and many farmers are establishing agritourism centre in their farm to create additional income source. However, it is evident that adoption of agritourism is very poor in the India due to the various problems. The present research was focused on new issues and problems of agritourism. The author observed that the core concept of agritourism is polluted by the farmers, agritourism operators and tourists. The agritourism operators are decorating the agritourism centers and its activities according to the demand of the tourists but neglected the essence of agritourism.

## MINI REVIEW

Agritourism is an innovative idea which connected to tourism, agriculture and rural area. The world scenario indicates that there is increasing trend of the using agritourism as a passion and business also. Now a day, it becomes income generating and support to the agriculture. It also leads to the employment generation and backward as well as forward linkages in the economic development process [1]. However, the Indian agritourism sector is suffering from new issues since last 5 years. There is urgent need of proper regulation and improvements before become polluted? Hence, the author has tries to address the issues and problems through the investigation in Maharashtra state of the India.

### Original concept of agritourism

The history of agritourism dates back to the late 1800's when people began leaving the city to come to farms to visit relatives for short stays to escape the city life. sAgritourism is variously referred to as "agricultural tourism," "agri-tainment," "farm recreation," "entertainment agriculture" and other rubrics. It includes agriculture and then tourism, not tourism and then agriculture.

According to World Tourism Organization (1998) Agritourism involves accommodation being offered in the farmhouse, providing meals and organizing guests' activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations [2]. As per the WTO definition it is expected to provide stay for tourists at farmhouse and also provide opportunity to learn about agriculture, observe agricultural activities and participate in the agricultural activities which going in farm as it is. I agritourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes.

Required data was collected through primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data was collected through various online and offline source i.e. published and unpublished reports, account books, journals and magazines etc. Primary data was collected through the interviews and discussions with the agritourism operators in Maharashtra. Collected information was analyzed using logical method and empirical evidences observed by the authors [3]. The results of the study were confirmed with the discussions with the experts and other researchers doing research in agritourism.

### **Agritourism-expectations and reality**

Agritourism falls under the umbrella of “diversified agriculture” as it generally encourages the development of more dynamic agricultural crops and activities. This allows farmers to diversify their income streams by increasing the place-based value of their land. This place-based diversification is used to avoid the negative impacts of both local and global economic competition.

### **Simple and hygienic food**

The agritourism centers have to provide simple and typical rural food which consumed by the farmer community, it can must be hygienic and have a rural flavor [4]. The fundamental aim behind the providing simple and hygienic food is to realize the concept of the rural livelihood and lifestyles, not to provide so called quality food as served in the three star or five star hotels. The Agro-tourism service provider is supposed to provide home cooked food, stay facilities and show the visitors the agricultural practices such as floriculture, harvesting, bee keeping, dairying etc. The people visiting to the agritourism centers who come from urban area they already consume that so called quality food, if you provides same at your agritourism center it can't create thrill or interest to the tourist. Even, though climate is very important in tourism sector, it leads to more or less visits of the tourists. mentioned that climate change is a very important issue in the field, having lasting effects, changing visitor use patterns, and leading to physical impacts to tourism sites such as flooding, wildfires, and severe storms.

### **Agriculturally related activities**

It is expected that the agritourism is that the tenets allow or encourage farmers to pursue agriculturally related activities on their lands to generate additional income. It not expected to create additional non-agricultural activities and link with the agriculture. If we observe the different agritourism centers in Maharashtra we can find that there are many artificial and non-agricultural activities are arranged to entertain the tourists, some farmers or agritourism operators says that these are value added activities. But, unfortunately, it creates pollution in the idea of agritourism.

### **Agritourism is subordinate to agriculture**

Basically, the agritourism is the allied and subordinate activity to the agriculture; it means the agricultural activities are main activities which can't be disturbed by the agritourism. If we take the example of the Lancaster County, municipalities have created agricultural tourism overlays to restrict activities to specific areas with additional rules and regulations to protect agriculture as a main occupation while doing agritourism CRPA. But, in Maharashtra we observed that day by day agriculture is becoming allied activity in the agritourism centers [5]. Especially, the agritourism centers located at national highways and historical tourist places are converted themselves as hotel, general tourist spot or Dhaba.

### **Orientation of non-farm families**

It is also observed that the main intension of the agritourism is lapsed in the agritourism centers; the operators diverted their concentration from orientation to entertainment. Because of the generation gap between farm and non-farm families, the demand for a slower paced farm experience has now become the catalyst for farm-based recreation to become an important business. If we focus on the bridge the gap between the urban families through the orientation about the agriculture and rural systems by the agritourism, purpose will be served, otherwise it will become a business like hotel and general tourism.

### Post- productivits agriculture system

Post- productivits agriculture system is a broad concept and the five main tasks of it are qualitative priorities in food production, alternative income sources for farmers and sustainability of agricultural lands, conservation of environment and new employment opportunities. It is expected to operate the agritourism as agricultural allied activity to produce quality food and serve it to the society, maintain sustainability of the agriculture sector, the operator and tourist should be taken precautions for conservation of environment and these activities should provide employment to the local people not only the outsiders and high class services providers. The local skills, talent and expertise should be utilized for providing services to the tourists coming at agritourism centers.

### Sustainability in agritourism operations

World Tourism Organization defines sustainable development as “convene the requirement of present tourists and host regions as caring and improving opportunity for prospect. It is necessary for ecological processes, biological diversity and existence support system. While the providing agritourism services the operators should be take care of agricultural resources and ecology. However, it is observed that the operators are not taking care of their resources and ecology, even though they are exploiting the natural resources without considering the future needs.

### Connecting to rural culture

Agritourism is nothing but extension of rural tourism along with experience of agriculture. In broader term it includes a series of activities linked with rural culture and traditions, accommodations offered by farmers at his farmhouse not in well-furnished bungalow, peasants and inhabitants rural environment. It is found that some of the agritourism centers providing expected experience and arranging such a activities for the tourists but not all. Most of the agritourism centers are not focused on organization of cultural events and shows at their agritourism centers, however, they organize modern activities which are basically not connected to the rural society and culture.

### It is not enterprise!

Agritourism centers are addition in the agricultural activities it is not an enterprise like manufacturing units or service industry. Many operators assume that the Agritourism is a subset of a larger industry called rural tourism that includes resorts, off-site farmers' markets, agricultural tours, and other leisure and hospitality businesses that attract visitors to the countryside. Unfortunately, this assumption was taken place in the Indian agritourism, it leads to the conversance of agritourism in to agrotourism sector. Due to this changing scenario in the agritourism in Maharashtra we observed that the main essence of the agritourism has been gone and it becomes tourist spot and holiday home outside the urban area only. The agritourism is the idea of originality of agriculture and tourism; however, it has been spilled due to the changing expectations of the farmers and tourist. The farmers are targeting the short term profit or income through the demand side consideration of the tourists and providing services as they demanding.

However, they are not thinking about the sustainability of the idea, sustainability of the agriculture, objectives of the agritourism and future consequences. It is suggested that the formers have to execute the original ides of the agritourism for its long term existence and survival of the farmers along with sustainability. The government and consultants in agritourism should look in to the matter and warn about the risk and future consequences.

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