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- Schemenner, R.W., Huber, J.C. and Cook, R.L. (1987), "Geographic Differences and the Location of New Manufacturing Facilities," Journal of Urban Economics, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 83-104.

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**AGRI TOURISM IN KARNATAKA – ISSUES CONSTRAINTS AND POSSIBILITIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*To enhance its socio economic viability, any economy in the present global economic restructuring phase has created a climate in which local economies have to adjust. As is been observed, economic and social forces operating at the global level are determining both the nature and form of the rural landscape and how we value and use it. Coupled with new ideas and approaches, these changes to leisure and recreation time are encouraging tourism development in rural areas at an ever increasing pace. Rural tourism development in areas not traditionally considered tourism destinations per se occurs incrementally, either as a result of entrepreneurs developing businesses that attract visitors or as a result of visitors discovering the area and thereby generating a demand for tourism related activities to which local entrepreneurs respond. The development of tourism in rural area is not simply a matter of matching tourist demands with local product supply but a matter of evaluating local suitability and acceptability. With the growing importance of Agri-tourism and the thrust given by the government to promote tourism this paper aims at examining the key issues involved in the development of Agri-tourism in Karnataka, challenges faced by Agri- tourism industry and suggest recommendations for the success of Agri-tourism in Karnataka.*

**KEYWORDS**

Agriculture, Agri-Tourism, Karnataka, Tourism.

**INTRODUCTION****INDIAN AGRICULTURE**

India has more arable land than any country except the U.S and more water area than any country except Russia, Canada and the U.S Indian life revolves mostly around agriculture and allied activities in small villages, where the over whelming majority of Indians live. As per census 2001, 72.2% of India's population lives in about 6,30,000 villages. By 2011 India had established itself as the world's second fastest growing major economy. India's large service industry accounts for 57.2% of the country's GDP, while the industrial sector contributes 28.6% and agricultural sector contributes and 14.6%. Agriculture still, is the predominant occupation in rural India accounting for about 52% of its employment. However a survey suggested that the share of agriculture in employment has dropped to 45.5% which is a major concern for policy makers as some two thirds of India's people depend on rural employment for living. Current agricultural practices are neither economically nor environmentally sustainable and India's yield for many agricultural commodities are also low as the irrigation systems are poorly maintained and lack of good extension services are among the factors responsible.

**INDIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY SCENARIO**

- ✓ Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during the Month of December 2011 was 7.15 lakh as compared to FTAs of 6.80 lakh during the month of December 2010 and 6.16 lakh in December 2009.
- ✓ There has been a growth of 5.2% in December 2011 over December 2010 as compared to a growth of 10.4% registered in December 2010 over December 2009.
- ✓ The growth rate of 5.2% in December 2011 is higher than 4.7% growth rate observed in November, 2011.
- ✓ FTAs in India during 2011 were 6.29 million with a growth of 8.9%, as compared to the FTAs of 5.78 million with a growth of 11.8% during the year 2010 over 2009.
- ✓ The growth rate of 8.9% in 2011 for India is better than UNWTO's projected growth rate of 4% to 5% for the world in 2011 and 7% to 9% for Asia and the Pacific.
- ✓ Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) during the month of December 2011 were Rs. 8870 crore as compared to Rs. 7039 crore in December 2010 and Rs. 7042 crore in December 2009.
- ✓ The growth rate in FEE in Rs. Terms in December 2011 over December 2010 was 26.0% as compared to no growth in December 2010 over December 2009.
- ✓ FEE from tourism in Rs. Terms during 2011 were Rs. 77591 crore with a growth of 19.6%, as compared to the FEE of Rs. 64889 crore with a growth of 18.1% during the year 2010 over 2009.
- ✓ FEE in US\$ terms during the month of December 2011 were US\$ 1688 million as compared to FEE of US\$ 1558 million during the month of December 2010 and US\$ 1510 million in December 2009.
- ✓ The growth rate in FEE in US\$ terms in December 2011 over December 2010 was 8.3%, as compared to the growth of 3.2% in December 2010 over December 2009. FEE from tourism in terms of US\$ during 2011 were US\$ 16564 million with a growth of 16.7%, as compared to US\$ 14193 million with a growth of 24.6% during the year 2010 over 2009.

The above figures of tourism scenario in India gives a clear indication that there is no dearth in tourists arrivals nor Foreign exchange earnings in India, and India is such a Tourists destinations were a visitor always expects for more, that, which, can be cashed further by adding Agri-Tourism.

**CONCEPT OF RURAL TOURISM AND AGRI-TOURISM****RURAL TOURISM**

The definition of rural tourism has been the subject of many debates in the literature without arriving at any firm consensus (Pearce 1989; Bramwell 1994; Seaton et al. 1994). First of all, rural areas where rural tourism occurs are difficult to define since criteria used by different nations vary enormously; secondly, not all tourism which takes place in rural areas is strictly "rural" – it can be urban in form, and merely be located in a rural area; thirdly, different forms of rural tourism have developed in different regions and hence it is hard to find characteristics that are common to all of the countries; fourthly rural areas are in a complex process of change due to the impact of global markets, communications and telecommunications that have changed market conditions and orientations for traditional products. Besides, though some rural areas have experienced depopulation there are many of them that are experiencing an inflow of people to retire or to develop new non-traditional businesses. The ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in India have partnered the promotion of 36 such rural locations, under the Endogenous Tourism Project/Rural Tourism Scheme.

- Rural tourism and agri-tourism (each of these categories is a derivative of the subsequent one, like concentric circles).
- Tourism is termed rural when the rural culture is a key component of the product on offer.

Depending on the primary activity component of this product, the terms used are agri-tourism, green tourism, gastronomic, equestrian, nautical, hunting, adventure, historical/cultural tourism and so on. Tourism activities revolving around large holiday home developments, big hotels, golf courses are difficult to integrate into the concept of rural tourism. The distinguishing feature of tourism products in rural tourism is the wish to give visitors personalized contact, a

taste of the physical and human environment of the villages and, as far as possible, allows them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people. There is also a strong cultural and educational element in this form of leisure tourism. Hence a rural tourist destination could be defined as a wider area dominated by the natural and/or farmed/forested environments where specific natural, economic and socio-cultural features, such as tradition, local cooperation, trust and reciprocity are harmoniously embedded and as such create a unique tourist product that is predominantly small scaled, nature friendly, "ethno-cultured", in other words 'sustainable'.

Since tourism is predominantly a consumer activity, most of the studies are demand driven, concentrated on the visitors and their needs and motivation. Hence the motives attracting people to the villages are seen as reflection of a growing interest in the outdoors, and a number of other general trends of tourist motivation. The attractiveness of rural areas for tourism and recreation can first be associated with the image of rurality of area. Here rurality is closely related to the traditional and romantic idea of the "good old days" pure and simple lifestyle, intact nature and perfect integration of man in his natural environment. Thus nostalgia of the origins, the need for recuperation of the lost link with nature and the basics of life in an increasingly complex, highly organized, anonymous, congested, stressful urban and inhumane surrounding constitutes the principal attraction of rural area (Kastenholz, Davis, Paul 1999). Agro Tourism is when a **native person or local of the area** offers tours to their Agriculture Farm to allow a person to view them growing, harvesting, and processing locally grown foods, such as coconuts, pineapple, sugar cane, corn, or any produce the person would not encounter in their home country. Often the farmers would provide a home-stay opportunity and education. An Agri-tourism farm is any land based farm or business that is open to the public. These specialized agri-tourism destinations generally offer things to see, things to do, and produce or gifts to buy, and are open to the public at least some parts of the year. Some agri-tourism farms are open 365 days, some only open for a few weekends in the fall. All offer a unique and entertaining farm experience and are generally appealing to all members in a family. Wine tasting, farm tours, country bed and breakfast, corn mazes, hay rides, U-Pick farms and even farm stands are all examples of Agri tourism. These diversified farming operations are bringing an interested customer right to the agri tourism farm, providing education and experience, and offer special farm products or related gifts for sale, things to do, and opportunities for easy and inexpensive education and entertainment experiences for young and old alike.

The importance of rural tourism as a part of the overall tourism market depends on each country's recreation/ tourism resources, infrastructure image, market access and the presence of other types of tourism products. Even if rural tourism may be minor in relation to the overall tourism market of many countries its importance to the development of specific rural areas may be critical. Thus, the multiplier effect is often more impacting in rural areas where the entire rural lifestyle is looked for a main attraction.

#### RURAL TOURISM INCLUDES

1. Agri – Tourism: Tourism on the farms enables farmers to diversify their activities while enhancing the value of their products and property. Farm tourism also helps to reconcile farming interests and environmental protection through integrated land management in which farmers continue to play a key role. Tourists who choose farm accommodation rather than other kinds of accommodation facilities look for genuine rural atmosphere where they can share intimacy of the household they live in learn traditional crafts and skills with their hosts, make friends which is a quality, modern times have almost forgotten and above all enjoy homemade food and drinks. Some specific food labels can help consumers establish a local produce and can be used as a selling point to tourist who want to taste home grown quality food and drink. (khatrotti)
2. Heritage and cultural Tourism in rural areas comes in a wide range of forms most of which are unique to an individual local and a valuable component of the rural tourism product. Heritage and cultural tourism includes temples, rural buildings but may be extended to local features of interest including war remnants, monuments to famous literary, artistic or scientific people, historic remains, archeological sites, traditional parkland etc.
3. Eco Tourism: Many tourists visit rural areas for the purpose of bird and animal watching and learning about local flora and fauna. Rural tourist destination as a product is definitely very fragile in ecological, social and cultural sense. Its development requires very specific approach that could help it remain sustainable in the long term.

Apart from Agriculture, Agri-Tourism concept should also include Agricultural Product like Horticulture, Sericulture, Animal Husbandry, Dairy husbandry, Floriculture, Fisheries and Apiculture, includes minor forest produce & live stock based products. The advantage of including all agricultural products will be that it will enlarge the Agri-tourism product features/offers.

#### RURAL TOURIST DESTINATION – A TOURISM PRODUCT

The following are some of the critical factors responsible in the evaluation and development of rural tourism as a product, which are as follows:

- Changes in the preferences and needs of visitors.
- Destination of the natural and manmade environment.
- Change or disappearance of those attractions, which brought tourists to the area.
- Identification of potential consumer.
- Understanding the rural tourists buying behaviour.

To be competitive rural tourism destination must possess basic tourist requirements, such as hygienic accommodation and catering. It should be connected with the farm accommodation.

#### DEFINING AGRI-TOURISM

Agri Tourism is defined as travel, which combines agricultural or rural settings with products of Agricultural operations all within a tourism experience. The product can be "experience itself". Agri-tourism can be defined 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". (Gannon, 1988 in Klaze, 1994).

#### BASIC PRINCIPLES OF AGRI – TOURISM

Agri - Tourism should ensure the following three basic principles.

1. Have something for visitors to see - Animals, birds, farms and nature are few things which Agri-Tourism could offer to the tourist. Apart from these, culture, dress, festivals and rural games could create enough interest among visitors in Agri-Tourism.
2. Have something for visitors to do - Participating in agricultural operations, swimming, bullock cart riding, camel riding, buffalo riding, cooking and participating in the rural games are few activities to quote in which tourists can take part and enjoy.
3. Have something for visitors to buy - Rural crafts, dress materials, farm gate fresh agriculture products, processed foods are the few items which tourist can buy as memento for remembrance.

#### ELEMENTS OF AGRI-TOURISM

1. Farmer – In majority of the cases, farmers are less educated, less exposed and innocent. For a farmer, any outsider is a guest and is treated wholeheartedly without any commercial motive. Treating guests is pleasure for the villagers than pain. The farmer entertains the guest while entertaining himself in the process. He is not like an exploitative natured businessman which itself facilitate a clean tourism atmosphere.
2. Village – Villages, located far from the city lack urban facilities, but are blessed with natural resources. Investments are made by nature in the form of water bodies, fields, forest, mountains, deserts and islands. The community structure is more homogenous and treating guests is part of the culture rather than a professional activity leading to natural environment required for such form of tourism.
3. Agriculture – Rich resources in agriculture namely land, water and plants are unique from place to place bringing diversity and creating curiosity. Each field is unique which adds to the attraction of tourists. The way of cultivation and the products are great attraction to the urban population. Indigenous knowledge of rural people is a wealth, which adds to the novelty and the curiosity of urban population. Combination of farmer, village and agriculture creates a wonderful situation which provides unlimited satisfaction to the tourist especially from urban areas.

#### AGRI-TOURISM - INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The following table shows the importance attached to Rural Tourism (Agri Tourism) as Farm Tourism by various countries, which is very much a reflection of Acceptance and Success of the Tourism product i.e., Agri Tourism

Country	Kind of incentive/ help given by different sources aimed at rural/ farm tourism development.
Belgium	Regional governments subsidize accommodation facilities to up to 30% of the total cost of the project.
Denmark	Government subsidies National association for agri-tourism development with a fixed amount of money per year.
France	Regional governments give incentives to the new entrepreneurs in rural areas; they also give professional help in marketing activities and making up feasibility studies; departments, regions and national government subsidize different rural tourism associations with the fixed annual amounts.
Greece	Rural tourism projects in the region Petra Kesvos have been subsidized by the government, local authorities and the EU.
Ireland	Agency for development of tourism in the rural areas "BallyhouraFailte Society" is financed by the government, local authorities and the EU.
Italy	Agri-tourist Association has been financed by the national government on an annual basis.
Netherlands	Some associations (such as "VerenigingRecreatie by de Boer") have been financed by their regional governments.
Germany	Incentives aimed at rural tourism development are distributed from different levels; Bayern has been financed by the national government. Niedersachsen by the regional government, Hessen –regional government, Baden Wurtemberg – by the regional government, RheinlandPfalz-regionand other sources, Schleswig- Holstein-regional government and other sources.
Portugal	General tourist office has developed a system of subsidizing initial tourist investments in ruralareas
Spain	Galice – investment subsidizing (to upto 30% of the total cost of investment), Asturias – 30% of the total cost of the investment, Catalogue and Canaries – subventions for the preservation of cultural and ethno heritage in the localities that have less than 2,000 inhabitants,Agrotourism Basque Association has been financed by EU (the level of subsidy has reached 25-50% of the total amount subsidized by region).
Great Britain	There is a strong involvement of national and regional governments into development of rural areas; under Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) so called "Rural whitepaper" has been introduced with different development schemes that also include rural tourism development
Slovenia	Government has subsidized first phase – implementation of the tourist facilities on farms (to upto50% of the total amount of project, while in the second phase, when a farm started to deal with tourism activities, two thirds of the necessary amount were given by the government and local communities while the rest has to be secured by an entrepreneur.

From the above table it is needless to say that the concept of Agri – Tourism is not a new concept it's been practiced for quite a long time say for a decade from now at international, national and state level what is missed out is the fact that, it has failed to create a niche for itself as an independent tourism product.

#### AGRI-TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIA

Indian tourism industry is growing at the 10.1%. The World Tourism organization has estimated that the tourism industry is growing at the rate of 4% a year and that by the year 2010 there were more than one billion tourists visiting various parts of the world. The demand for travel and tourism in India is expected to grow by 8.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019 and will place India at the third position in the world. But the Indian tourism industry is growing at the rate of 10.1% which is 2½ times more than the growth rate at global level. By introducing Agri-Tourism concept, not only present growth rate is sustained but also this value addition contributes to further growth. India has entered amongst the top 10 tourist destinations list (Conde Nast Traveller – A leading European Travel Magazine) - India is already established as one of the top tourist destination in the world. Value addition by introducing novel products like Agri-tourism would only strengthen the competitiveness of Indian tourism industry in global market. India has diverse culture and geography which provides ample and unlimited scope for the growth of this business. India has diverse Agro-climatic conditions, diverse crops, people, culture, deserts, mountains, coastal systems and islands which provides scope for promotion of all season, multi-location tourism products. Increasing number of tourists are preferring non-urban tourist spots (financial express). Hence, there is scope for promotion of non-urban tourist spots in interior villages by establishing Agri-tourism centers. Priority was given to rural tourism since 10<sup>th</sup> five year plan Government initiatives and policies in XI five year plan allocation has been increased from 2900 crore to 9290crores. Increased financial allocation reaffirms the government commitment and can be used for capacity building of service providers, creation of infrastructure and publicity. India's travel and tourism sector is expected to be the second largest employer in the world, employing 40,037,000 by 2019

#### IMPORTANCE OF AGRI-TOURISM

It not only improves quality of life for visitors and residents and farmers alike but also preserves farm land and open spaces in rural India. Tourists will not only enjoy and relish the fresh grown and prepared traditional cuisine but it will also help create and preserve sources of fresh locally grown food. It will definitely help in creating a place for families to experience agriculture and develop respect for the profession. Promotion of Agri-Tourism enables preservation of family farms in particular and agriculture on a whole as they are the backbone of India(Even today). Turn back the pages of our history; this country was a land of farmers, settling from coast to coast while providing food for their families. Through the years the number of farmers has decreased, and the number of families fed per farmer has increased. Fewer people from the urban India are around who remember what it was like to grow up on a farm. Some have experienced farm life by visiting grandparents or relatives in rural India. Families and specifically children should have the opportunity to learn that food is produced on a farm and is not just a product of the local grocery store. The services offered in agri-tourism generally include accommodation in the farm cottages or farm bungalow where tourist can eat ethnic food and observe rustic life at close quarters. Agri Tourism is not just all about staying in a village and relishing authentic rural food but this is an opportunity to take a closer look at the life of farmers and the village life

#### SUCCESS STORIES

Agri- tourism in India has been launched and run successfully in two of its villages in Maharashtra. They are Malegaon and Baramati, which came into picture due to the efforts of Agri Tourism Development Corporation, Pune. A pilot project has been kicked off in Baramati in Maharashtra. The unit offers tourists edutainment farm tours in Baramati district, Malegaon area where they are told about the cultivation of grapes, sugarcane, pomegranate, guava, and watermelon or get an insight into how silk is produced and raw jaggery is made. It includes Marathi programmes such as Bharud, Jagran Gondhal, Shekoti folk songs (all these are combinations of songs, drama, acting with music and dance). About 25 more such locations have been identified in Maharashtra as rural tourist destinations. In the coming three months, Agri Tourism would be developing Dapoli, Mulshi and Reha (in the foothills of Hinjewadi) as new locations. The aim is to have five such locations as autopilots, which would be ready within a year. They offer various packages as tour to this agri farm including an overnight stay. The farm tour also includes visits to goat and emu farms. This is first such effort in India on an organized level.

#### AGRI TOURISM IN KARNATAKA

##### SCOPE

Although Karnataka has made rapid progress in the field of Information Technology, Agriculture has remained the backbone of the state. In fact, traditionally, Karnataka has been one of the prominent agriculturally-important States of the country with its conducive environmental conditions, innovations in farming, crop patterns and researchers. Agriculture is the means of livelihood for nearly 65 per cent of the state's population. Statistics show that 64.6 per cent of the State's geographical area is under cultivation, though 83 per cent of the area is suitable for agriculture. The fact that the State has 10 different agro climatic zones coupled with fertile soil has resulted in cultivation of a variety of crops. While the State has 10 different agro climatic zones coupled with fertile soil has resulted in cultivation of a variety of crops. While the State leads the country in the production of sunflower and minor millets, it also ranks among the major producers of maize, sugarcane and pulses. Karnataka contributes 7 per cent of the country's agricultural production. What is significant is that the share of agriculture in the State GDP is about 16 per cent, which is higher than the national average of 12-13 per cent. Several policy measures by the Government have supported agricultural growth in the State. Karnataka was the first in the country to bring out an agricultural policy for the holistic development of the farm sector and to provide the status of industry to agriculture. The State has been making efforts to turn agriculture into a business venture in a bid to increase the income of farmers and to provide a boost to the rural economy. There are 29,340 villages in Karnataka compared to only 347 towns(2011 provisional census),

which shows Karnataka's major population still lives in rural parts, which is further evident by the number of population which lives in rural Karnataka 43,51,788 compared to population of urban Karnataka 25,04,013

In fact, **agriculture** is so important in Karnataka that we find three agricultural seasons, viz.:

- Kharif - Jowar, Maize, Pulses, etc. (April to September)
- Rabi - Rice, (October to December) and
- Summer (January to March).

Moreover, Karnataka is the largest producer of Coffee, coarse cereals and raw silk among the other states of India. Agriculture is an important part of economy of Karnataka. Karnataka has got a topography that is highly suitable for agricultural activities. That is to say, Karnataka's relief, soil, climatic conditions taken together contribute immensely towards growing crops. Agriculture is one of the main occupations of the people of Karnataka. About 12.31 million hectares of land, including 64.6% of the total area, is used for agriculture in Karnataka. According to the 2001 census, about 71% of work forces in Karnataka are farmers and agricultural labourers. Agriculture of Karnataka is mainly dependent on monsoon, as only 26.55% of land is supported by irrigation. In Karnataka, irrigation is done in about 26.5% of the total sown area. In Karnataka some horticulture farms like tea plantation, wine yard, coffee plantation, rubber plantation and agriculture farms have potential for Agri-tourism

#### KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT SCHEMES TO PROMOTE AGRIBUSINESS AND ALLIED FOOD PROCESSING

Dodges in Karnataka's Agriculture

- Karnataka is only second to Rajasthan in terms of drought-prone land
- Lack of quality seeds
- Lack of water supply
- Lack of electricity
- Lack of marketing facilities
- Inability of maintain stable prices
- Farmers suicides
- Snatching land from farmers in the name of agricultural investment

Karnataka is no free from agricultural problems like the few mentioned above, the government of Karnataka is trying its best to overcome these gaps and provide amicable solutions to these problems like the State Government has submitted a memorandum to release aid of Rs. 723.24 crore in addition to deputing a team for study of the drought in the State apart from dry land development project and watershed project which will be helpful for preservation of water and soil erosion etc.. The government is also planning several projects for stabilisation of rates, quality seeds, water supply and marketing facilities etc... And to prevent farmers Suicide cases the government is implementing projects like distribution of sowing seeds at concessional rate, distribution of agricultural machine and tools and minor irrigation units, agricultural loans at interest rate of 1% in cooperative banks and 3% in commercial banks, implementation of projects such as Bhoo-Chethana and SuvarnaBhoomi etc..

The sericulture industry in Karnataka, which accounts for more than 60% of the total raw silk produced in the country, today an estimated eight lakh people, including a large number of small farmers and women are directly or indirectly dependent of sericulture. While over 1.4 lakh agriculturists are cultivating mulberry, there are over 8,000 silk reeler in the State. The main silk regions in the State are four taluks of Chennapatna, Ramanagaram, Kanakapura and Magadi and some parts of the districts of Mandya and Tumkur. Karnataka has 62,697 hectares of land under mulberry plantation and a total of 66 government-run cocoon markets and 10 silk exchanges function across the State.

Horticulture in Karnataka has a turnover of Rs. 2000 crore including revenue and exports. Parks nurseries are envisaged to be set up at Chickaballapur, Sirsi, Tumkur and Kannamangala and Mysore at a cost of Rs. 10 crore. A Rs. 25 crore coconut productive improvement programme would be started with 50 per cent collaboration from farmers. Karnataka was leading other States as far as the implementation of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) is concerned. Of the total Rs. 125 crore the State received under the NHM during 2011-12, Rs. 66.58 crore had been disbursed among farmers. The area under fruits, flowers, spices, medicinal cosmetics and other horticultural crops has been extended to 16,424 hectares. Organic farming in 6,623 hectares had been given subsidy. Financial help has been provided to 162 post-harvest maintenance units and 148 agricultural ponds. About 40% of the total income of the state is generated from horticulture. Karnataka occupies the second position in terms of the horticultural productions in India.

Floriculture is growing and there is international demand for flowers grown over an area of 3,500 hectares across the State. With a view to encouraging floriculture, the government had reduced power tariff for cold storages to Rs. 2 a unit and the sector has been exempted from VAT.

With all these initiatives, projects, schemes, Agri-tourism can be taken to new heights by allowing the visitors experience all of it.

#### ELEMENTS AND PRINCIPLES OF AGRI- TOURISM IN KARNATAKA

Have something for visitors to see (festivals/jatras etc.), Have something for visitors to do (rural games), Have something for visitors to buy

1. The **Suggi** or harvest festival for farmers of Kaveri basin of Karnataka: On this auspicious day, young females (kids & teenagers) wear new clothes to visit near and dear ones with a Sankranti offering in a plate, and exchange the same with other families. This ritual is called "ElluBirodhu." Here the plate would normally contain "Ellu" (white sesame seeds) mixed with fried groundnuts, neatly cut dry coconut & fine cut bella (Jaggery). The mixture is called "Ellu-Bella". The plate will also contain sugar candy molds of various shapes (SakkareAcchu) with a piece of sugarcane. There is a saying in Kannada "ellubellathinduollemaathadi" which translates to 'eat the mixture of sesame seeds and jaggery and speak only good.' This festival signifies the harvest of the season, since sugarcane is predominant in these parts. In some parts of Karnataka, a newly married woman is required to give away bananas for a period of five years to married women (*muthaidhe*) from the first year of her marriage, but increase the number of bananas in multiples of five. There is also a tradition of some households giving away red berries "Yalchi Kai" along with the above. In North Karnataka, kite flying with community members is also a tradition. Drawing rangoli in groups is another popular event among women during Sankranti. An important ritual is display of cows and cattle in colourful costumes in an open field. Cows are decorated for the occasion and taken on a procession. They are also made to cross a pyre and is called "KichchuHaisodhu."
2. The **Banashankari Fair**: at the village temple in Banashankari (near Badami) is much more than a religious event for the people of that locality. A large variety of articles and utensils are purchased in the fair. Rathosava is an important item sold in the fair. Palm implements and other domestic interior articles are exhibited and purchased in the **Banashankari Fair of Karnataka**.
3. **Fairs of Karnataka – Adding to the Exultation**: Like the festivals, the fairs of Karnataka are also religious and folk in nature and belief. To honour Vithappa, the deity of the village Vithappa, a grand fair is held in the village. It is a three day festival where around 7 to 8 thousand people gather. Another popular fair is the Godachi Fair, held in the honour of ShriVeerabhadra and it is organized by the government of Karnataka (ShriYellammafair is held 5 times between the months of October to February at Saundatti).
4. **Anegundi**: The annual fair during the month of April and the AnegundiUtsav in November are a must see for visitors. An added attraction in the same period is HampiUtsav. Fairs and festival and festivals are celebrated throughout the year. There is no communal difference during these celebrations. Both communities, Hindu and Muslim participate actively during Mohram, Deepavali, the annual fair & the Utsav.
5. The rural sport of Kambala is a traditional buffalo race held predominantly in the southern coastal Karnataka region. A mélange of slush, speed and power, Kambala features buffaloes racing down a muddy track while being urged frantically by a farmer riding a wooden plank. A massive congregation cheers the competing beasts and fastest pair of buffaloes garners the top prize. In its original avatar, Karaga celebration was marked by the humble elements of rural life. Today, riding on a popularity wave, Kambala has assumed massive proportions. Modern Kambalas are professionally organized day and night events with electric illumination. One could see more than 20,000 spectators in a well-organized "Kambala" and up to 130 pairs of buffaloes may participate.

The above mentioned are only droplets of the rural/agri tourism potential in Karnataka.

Thus, it can be concluded that agriculture is an important part of the economy of Karnataka

**KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE AGRI TOURISM**

All the interdependent sectors are now joining hands to introduce and promote the concept of Agriculture Tourism. The integrated Agribusiness Development Policy 2011, Government of Karnataka, Department of Agriculture, Bangalore, has dedicated towards it **Special Agro Tourism Investment Zones**, Specialized tourism zones aim to promote agriculture tourism to provide, employment and economic stability in rural communities in the state. Agricultural tourism is the holiday concept of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agri business operations for the purpose of infotainment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. Agricultural products like farm gate, fresh market, processed foods; organic food could lure the urban tourists. Villages provide recreational opportunities to all age groups i.e. children young, middle and old age, male, female, in short to the whole family at affordable cost. Rural games, festivals, food, dress and the nature provides variety of entertainment to the entire family. These identified zones shall provide a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract urban tourists, thus providing opportunity for urban people to get back to the roots. These zones shall offer full scope to develop agro tourism products like farm vacation – farm stays, feeding animals, picking fruits / vegetables, camping sites, rural sports, themed special events and festivals, village fairs, farmers markets, road side farm produce stands, agro shopping, culinary tourism, bed and breakfast, pick and pay, bullock cart riding, boating, fishing, herbal trail, games and health (ayurvedic and naturopathy/traditional Indian medicine) tourism. The themes in agro tourism are vast and a farm operator may offer his or her own creativity to tourists. The state has been making efforts to turn agriculture into a business venture in a bid to increase the income of farmers to provide a boost to the rural economy. In this connection, Karnataka has taken the lead in developing a sustainable agribusiness model by coming out with an "Integrated Agribusiness Development Policy" covering agriculture and allied sectors both in the infrastructure and the industrial segment. In this regard the state government can give prominence to Agriculture tourism. The State Government's move to develop Agro Business Investment Regions (ABIR) is based on the logic of developing "clusters" and "corridors" of agro processing activity in contiguous geographical areas.

**AGRI TOURISM CIRCUITS IN KARNATAKA START UP**

To initiate in Karnataka the concept Agri- tourism in its full swing, Karnataka Tourism Department can start with already popular rural destinations like Banavasi and Anegundi and by setting Agri Tourism Development Corporations at each Village Level so that it can focus and dedicate to the enhancement and development and promotion of these destinations as not only Rural Tourism but also Agri tourism Destinations

**BANAVASI**

At attempt has to be made by Vishwodaya Grameen Pravassodyama Samsthe, Banavasi, Uttara Kannada, Karnataka and Village Tourism Development Committee, to create a niche for Agri Tourism in Banavasi. The benefits can be, that, it is already a well-known Rural Destination and has the basic infrastructure in hand to explore the Agri Tourism Concept where people will not just come and visit a rural place but also be part of it most important source of earning i.e., Agriculture Mr Rehman Sheikh and his family are happy to host you on their plantation where pineapples, bananas, arecanut, pepper, paddy, etc. are grown. Mr Sheikh is known as the "Pineapple King". A visit to his plantation will help you understand why. Returning from the plantation, stop by at Mr S M Hegde's house. He has a room full of Ganesha idols in all shapes, colours, sizes and made of varying materials. Finally, stop off at the Gudnapur Lake to watch a beautiful sunset. Gudnapur also has the Rani Mahal, a fifth century structure still being explored by the ASI. A beautiful statue of Mahavira inside gives you a glimpse of the religious tolerance in those days.

With Kadambotsava, an annual event organised by the state government, Banavasi regains its former glory as a cultural capital. Renowned classical musicians, yakshagana artistes, drama troupes, folk dancers and eminent literary personalities assemble for Kadambotsava and make it a huge cultural fete. This is organised usually in the month of December.

At Banavasi, tourists can stay at the newly built Village Tourism Complex. There are eleven double rooms available with attached bathrooms set around a square courtyard at the edge of Banavasi with the River Varada on one side and the Pampa Vana on the other.

Come to Banavasi for its varied cuisine. "Khanavalis" or small eateries in Banavasi serve up hot, delicious food with a warm smile. There are several breads made of rice, jowar and corn as well as rice served with a variety of sweet, sour, pungent and spicy curries and sauces. Accompanying the meal is a wide range of fresh powders and chutneys made of lentils, chillies, tamarind, oil cake.

A book of recipes using pineapple is available and you could even be there for the monthly pineapple mela which is held on the first weekend of every month. This is when a women's group in Banavasi come together to cook up a feast using pineapple as the main ingredient. It not only enhances the importance of rural destinations but also will be able to contribute directly to the well-being of the Farmers

**ANEGUNDI**

An interesting feature of the village is its white washed houses and the labyrinth that takes you on a lovely intimate journey through it, giving an insight on the way of life in the village. These humble yet regal houses have beautifully carved wooden pillars, and line the main streets proudly. As they walk around, visitors can get a peek at any artisans of banana fibre, women grinding 'chutney' by rolling huge stones, others using lime hand prints for decorating doorways and doing coloured Rangoli in front of their houses. The coracles or bamboo basket boats are yet another attraction giving the visitor an incredible experience of the river full of boulders. The landscape made up of huge granite boulders, rice paddies and banana plantations have 'mantapas' scattered around them reminding one of a miniature painting. The irrigation systems from 14th Century irrigate and maintain lush agricultural landscape. The rides in the basket boat, coracles are a must that takes one on an enchanted journey. Walks on the village routes will take you on mythical journeys of the Kishkinda the ancient monkey kingdom which are full of stories and references and outdoor/ecotourism including low-impact cycling tours. A unique and astonishingly beautiful area of natural wilderness, the region has been called the 'playground of the gods' and is home to crocodile, leopard, great owl, sloth bear, langur, several species of turtles and nearly 300 varieties of birds.

**Art & Craft** The non-traditional artisans of Anegundi are pioneers in new and innovative low-waste methods of banana fibre production. Products created by the banana fibre are widely accepted all over the world. The existing crafts in the region are **Quilting** Lambadi embroidery Stone and Wood Carving Black Pottery Traditional masonry Bamboo crafts a new jewelry is being developed with beautiful tear drop like white and dyed seeds. **Folk traditions:** The region has a rich folk performing traditions which include Kolata, Hagalu Veshha – Burra Kathe, Rana Modi & Raja Modi, Bayalata, Kinnari Jogi, Devadasi, Deity Dance, Dasara Songs, Lambadi, Veshagare. Oral Traditions include Folk songs such as Suggi Padagalu, Sobane Padagalu, Gondali Aata, Malerayana Haad etc. **Cuisine:** A range of sweet and savory rice preparations, sambars, sweets with coconut, sesame, millet rotti made on an open fire, a variety of non vegetarian spicy meats, various sweet and spicy chutneys, both dry and wet, Banana fritters, a range of health foods made of Ragi, a variety of locally baked breads, Jilebi, Baloosha etc. **Popular breakfast:** Mirchi and Oggarani, Holigi. Seasonal fruits like Targola, Papaya, Mango and dates are popular too.

A geographical indication (GI) is a form of protection highlighted in the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO). It protects intangible economic assets such as the quality and reputation of a product through market differentiation. It is considered a promising tool at the international level to maintain multi functionality in rural landscapes and involve local populations in biodiversity management and conservation. Using the example of an existing GI for Coorg orange, a crop frequently associated with coffee agro-forestry systems in the mountain region of Kodagu (Western Ghats, India), which can be successfully used by local producers to promote Agri-tourism.

**AGRI-TOURISM IN POTENTIAL REGIONS OF KARNATAKA**

Karnataka is blessed by the presence of Western Ghats which have rich mountain landscapes and majority of land being used for Coffee, Tea and Tobacco cultivation. This includes Shimoga, Chikmanaglore and Kodagu. This is one of the best tourist destinations for adventure and nature seekers. Some of the famous spots include

- Agumbe is a village located in the Shimoga district in the state of Karnataka, India. Lying in the Thirthahalli taluk and the Malnad region, Agumbe is among the places in India that receive very heavy rainfall earning it the sobriquet, "Cherrapunji of the South". It is also the home of the *Agumbe Rainforest Research Station*, the only permanent rainforest research station in India. The renowned herpetologist, Romulus Whitaker called Agumbe the *capital of King Cobra*. An area near Agumbe has been converted into a protected area for Medicinal Plants to help in their conservation

- Balehonnur is a small city in the Chikkamagaluru district of the Indian state of Karnataka. It is located on the bank of the Bhadra River and is a green, picturesque place, with an average rainfall of 80 inches a year and is dominated by coffee estates, arecanut, paddy fields, pepper, vanilla and other spices. It is the location of the main Hindu Matha belonging to veerashivpantha called *Sri Rambhagpur Matha*, one of the oldest temples in Karnataka. The main crop in this and surrounding areas is coffee. It is a major junction for routes to Chikkamagaluru, Kudremukha, Sringeri-Koppa and Shivamogga.
- Madikeri is a hill station in North Karnataka famous for its he aroma of fresh cardamom, Black pepper and Coorg honey, Cauvery River.

#### ANALYSIS OF AGRI-TOURISM IN KARNATAKA

A careful analysis and observation of the Case Study of Karnataka's Agri-tourism as a full fledge niche product brings to light certain issues and challenges which need to be addressed immediately. These are:

#### CHALLENGES

1. Danger of over exploitation of natural resources.
2. Uncertainty of demand for Agri Tourism especially in the light of the fact that other types Tourism are becoming popular.
3. Providing and maintaining hygienic conditions in the Agri-tourism destination.
4. Danger to Plant life in the form of infectious diseases.
5. Lack of sufficient government support.
6. Training the farmers.
7. Large scale power-cuts.
8. Security aspects.
9. Accessibility and approachability of the area with respect to basic facilities like (medical facilities, transport facilities, availability of water etc.)
10. Differentiating Tourism and Agri- tourism.
11. Marketing Agri-Tourism as a product effectively and consistently.

#### ISSUES

- Connectivity
- Attractions
- Accommodation
- Outdoor recreational activities
- Entertainment programs
- Meals for tourists
- Safety and security aspects
- Medical facilities
- Risk and liability in case of accidents

#### ADVANTAGES OF AGRI – TOURISM

1. 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.
2. Tourism sector has potential to enlarge.
3. Agriculture sector has the capacity to absorb expansion in tourism Sector.

#### KEY TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESS IN AGRO-TOURISM

Agro-Tourism is a one of the business activity. So, farmers must have commercial mind and some marketing techniques for the success. For the better success in the agro-tourism you should follow the following things;

- ✓ Give a wide publicity of your tourism centre by new papers, television etc Use all possible advertisement means.
- ✓ Develop contacts with the schools, colleges, NGOs, clubs, unions, organisations etc.
- ✓ Train your staff or family members for reception and hospitality
- ✓ understand about the customers' wants and their expectations and serve
- ✓ Charge optimum rent and charges for the facilities/services on the commercial base
- ✓ Do the artificially use local resources for the entertain / serve to tourist
- ✓ Develop your website and update time to time for attract foreign tourist
- ✓ Take their feedback and comments about the service and suggestions to more development and modification
- ✓ Develop a good relationship with the tourist for future business and chain publicity
- ✓ Develop different agro-tour packages of for different type of tourist and their expectations.
- ✓ Preserve a address book and comments of the visited tourists for future tourism business
- ✓ Behave sincerely with the tourists and participate with them / him
- ✓ Small farmers can develop their agro-tourism centres on the basis of cooperative society.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Karnataka has a great potential to the development of agro-tourism, because of natural conditions and different types of agri products as well as variety of rural traditions, festivals. It is a good opportunity to develop an agro-tourism business in Karnataka. But there is a problem of low awareness about this business in the farmer and problem of the finance and proper view in the farmers of the Karnataka. Though the hurdles seem many the potential for economic growth along with environmental protection is highly acceptable. Karnataka is the Information technology Hub of India hence it can also be Agri tourism hub of India. It can utilise and implement technological tools to improve effectiveness and efficiency of agri-tourism (Online booking, services etc). There is a need for required support from local community and government for a sustainable growth in this sector as opportunities need to be exploited in strategically planned manner. To Conclude 60 to 70 % of Indian Population lives in rural villages which make it further more responsible tourism form. On realizing their difficulties and needs we feel there is still many things than can be done for these people. The trust is to concentrate its efforts all along for the overall up liftment of the farmers in rural villages. 90% of the rural community earns its livelihood from agriculture directly or indirectly and improve the standard of living of the rural people there is need to improve and increased the per capita production from farmers land which can be contributed by the very concept and also by using new technology in their farms. The rural youth particularly the school drop outs and educational backward neglected rural women constitute more than 50% of our rural population. Unless we undertake welfare activity for this section of the community social upliftment and economic restructuring for development remains uncompleted.

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