
**Potential for Development of Agro-Tourism in Kolhapur
District of Maharashtra**

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ABSTRACT:-

Tourism is the one of the industries with the strongest effect on the economy because it helps in developing other sector. Tourism industry is the tool for the development of backward areas. For the development of tourism some attractions are necessary which can attract to the tourists. Concept of traditional tourism has been changed. Some new areas of the tourism have been emerged like Agro-Tourism. Agro - tourism is defined as "Travel that combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations – all within a tourism experience". Kolhapur district has a great potential to the development of agro-tourism, because of natural conditions and different types of agro products.

INDRODUCTION:-

Tourism is now well recognized as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled. Today the concept of traditional

tourism has been changed. Some new areas of the tourism have been emerged like Agro-Tourism. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people.

Agro-tourism is an innovative agricultural activity related to

CONCEPT OF AGRO-TOURISM:-

A term 'Agro-Tourism' is a new face of tourism. An agro-tourism is farm based industry that is open to the community. Agro - tourism is defined as "Travel that combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations – all within a tourism experience".

"Agro-Tourism is that Agri-Business activity, when a native farmers or person of the area offers tours to their agriculture farm to allow a person to view them

tourism and agriculture both. It has a great capacity to create additional source of income and employment opportunities to the farmers. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centers in the India and there is large scope and great potential to develop agro-tourism.

growing, harvesting, and processing locally grown foods, such as coconuts, pineapple, sugar cane, corn, or any agriculture produce the person would not encounter in their city or home country. Often the farmers would provide a home-stay opportunity and education".

Agro-Tourism and Eco-Tourism are closely related to each other.

Eco-Tourism provides by the tour companies but, in the agro-

tourism farmers offer tours to their agriculture farm and providing entertainment, education and fun-filled experiences for the urban peoples.

Agro-tourism is a way of sustainable tourist development and multi-activity in rural areas through which the visitor has the opportunity to get aware with agricultural areas,

agricultural occupations, local products, traditional food and the daily life of the rural people, as well as the cultural elements and traditions. Moreover, this activity brings visitors closer to nature and rural activities in which they can participate, be entertained and feel the pleasure of touring.

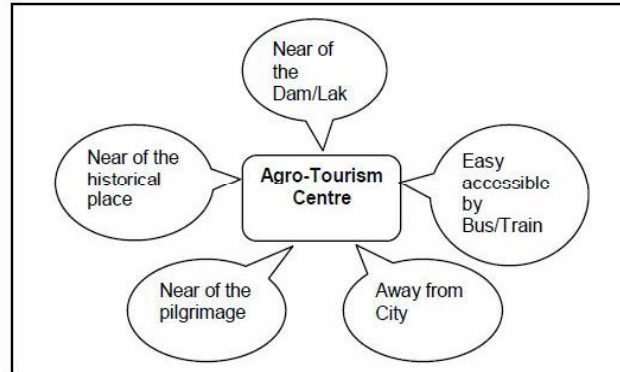
OBJECTIVES:-

- 1) To look at the importance of agro-tourism development in Kolhapur District.
- 2) To illustrate a proper framework for the agro- tourism centers.
- 3) To identify the problems and make suggestions to establishment agro-tourism.

LOCATION FOR THE AGRO-TOURISM CENTRE:-

Location is playing an important role for success in the agro-tourism. The location have a good natural background and easy to arrive. Tourists are interested into

enjoying the nature and rural life. So, farmers should develop their centre in the rural areas only which have a beautiful natural background to attract urban tourist in your farm.



The place of agro-tourism centre must need easy accessible by roads with having some historical and natural tourist places along with the agro-tourism. Hence, the centre

should be developed near of these tourist places. The places which are already developed as a tourist centers those are the better for the development of agro-tourism.

BENEFITS OF AGRO-TOURISM CENTRES:-

Agro-Tourism has the potential to change the economic face of traditional agriculture. It would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the farmers and rural people. Some of those as follows:-

1) Employment opportunities to the farmers.

2) Additional income source for the farmers.

3) Farmers can improve their standard of living due to the contacts with urban peoples

4) Urban peoples can understand about the rural life and know

about the agricultural activities.

5) Agro-Tourism support for rural and agricultural development process.

POTENTIAL OF AGRO-TOURISM IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT:-

Kolhapur district is one of the western districts of Maharashtra state. The total area of Kolhapur district is 8,059 Sqkm, which covers 2.62% area of Maharashtra state. It is known as 'Dakshin Kashi'. Kolhapur is a seat of Goddess Mahalaxmi and is one of the Shaktipeeths mentioned in Indian mythology. Kolhapur district is most agriculturally advanced districts of not only Maharashtra but also in India.

Kolhapur district is situated in the Western Ghats where establish several water reservoirs. Kolhapur district having semi-evergreen and deciduous forest. There are many

tourist centres in Kolhapur which are the supporting natural environment for the agro-tourism centres in Kolhapur.

Principal crops are rice, Jowar, pulses, turmeric, sugarcane and several oil seeds including groundnut and soyabean. Kolhapur is sanctified with a rich cultural heritage. The district having numerous festivities such as Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Gudhi Padwa, Dasara, Nag Panchami, Gokul Ashtmi, Pola, Makar Sankranti, and Holi etc.

Kolhapur district encompass abounds in numerous tourist attractions ranging from ancient

temples, ancient forts and monuments, forests and wildlife, hill

stations, pilgrimage centers. Thus the districts have a tourism potential.

INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITY AT AGRO-TOURISM CENTRES:-

To develop an agro – tourism must have basic infrastructure and facilities in their farm as follows:

- Accommodation facilities such as Farmhouse, which have the rural look along with all minimum required facilities.
- Wealthy resources in agriculture specifically water and plants at the place.
- Cooking equipments for cooking food, if tourist have interested.
- The well or lake or swimming tank for fishing, swimming
- Bullock cart, cattle shade, telephone facilities etc.
- Indian or Maharashtrian food for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

- Farmers should offer to see and participate in the agricultural activities.
- Offer an opportunity to participate in the rural games to the tourist.
- Present bullock cart for riding and horse riding, buffalo ride in the water, fishing facility in your pounds or nearest lake.
- Offer fruits, corns, groundnuts, sugarcane and other agro-products as per availability.
- Show local birds, animals and waterfalls etc and give authentic information about them.

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- Arrange folk dance programme, *Shekoti* folk songs *bhajan, kirtana, lezim* dance, *dhangari gaja*, etc.

PROBLEMS OF THE AGRO-TOURISM:-

The Kolhapur district has a greater potential of the development of the agro-tourism centers due to the good natural and climatic conditions. But there are some problems in the process of agro-tourism development. Major problems are follows,

1) Lack of perfect knowledge about the agro-tourism.

2) Weak communication skill and lack of commercial approach of the farmers.

3) Lack of funds to develop basic infrastructure for the agro-tourism.

4) Presence of unorganized sector in the Agri-Tourism industry.

CONCLUSIONS:-

Kolhapur district 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. Urban population want

enjoy rural life and to know about the rural life. It is a good opportunity to develop an agro-tourism business in the district. But there is a problem of low awareness about this industry in

the farmer and problem with the finance.

Hence, the agriculture departments of the district should try to give orientation about it and provide some innovative ideas regarding to the Agro-Tourism. The

government and Banks should try to provide optimum financial aids to the agro-tourism activities. Union of the agro-tourism service providers is also another need of these farmers which helps to the agricultural tourism network.

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