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Ritu Tiwari
Assistant Professor,
Department of Tourism and
Travel Studies, Berhampur
University, Odisha, India

Abhay Pratap Singh
Research Scholar, Department
of Tourism and Hospitality
Management, Mizoram
University, Aizawl, Mizoram,
India

Agri tourism: A new paradigm for the socio-economic development of rural areas of Odisha: A case study of Daringbadi

Ritu Tiwari and Abhay Pratap Singh

Abstract

Agriculture in Odisha is the mainstay of the majority of the populace and, thus, holds the key to the State's socio-economic development. Census 2011 shows that 84% of Odisha's households stay in village areas, with agriculture and allied activities as their primary livelihood source. However, as we know that Odisha is vulnerable to various climatic hazards like cyclones, heavy rainfall etc., due to which the share of the Agriculture Sector in the State's GSDP has been declining over the years, so it becomes imperative to think about methods of farm diversification which can support the farmers of Odisha during these times of crisis. Agri tourism is one such opportunity that still needs to be explored by the people of Odisha, despite having tremendous scope for its growth and development. Agriculture (and allied activities, including animal husbandry) is the primary sector of the State economy. This primary sector offers the most potential for generating green-skills-based employment. However, Odisha has been seeing a shift from the rural sector with a noticeable fall in the number of farmers. Workers are leaving the primary sector due to inadequate irrigation, lack of proper skills, the impact of climate extremes, low market price for produce, and inadequate financial support. Not surprisingly, migration from rural Odisha to other states has risen three-fold in 10 years. Hence it is evident that to achieve sustainable development rural population must learn skills related to agri entrepreneurship and techniques of farm diversification. As the villages of Odisha have their unique and traditional way of living and farming, it gives immense scope for agri-tourism activities to flourish in Odisha with proper training and skill development workshops. Therefore, this study is an effort to highlight the role and significance of agri entrepreneurship and agri tourism in transforming the socio-economic condition of people residing in villages of Odisha. It was found that lack of government support and knowledge amongst the locals have restricted the growth of agri tourism in Daringbadi, which can be a great socio-economic driver for the area.

Keywords: Agri tourism, agri entrepreneurship, farm diversification, Daringbadi

Introduction

Agriculture in Odisha is the mainstay of the majority of the populace and, thus, holds the key to the State's socio-economic development. Census 2011 shows that 84% of Odisha's households live in village areas, with agriculture and allied activities as their primary livelihood source. However, as we know that Odisha is vulnerable to various climatic hazards like cyclones, heavy rainfall Etc., due to which the share of the Agriculture Sector in the State's GSDP has been declining over the years, so it becomes imperative to think about methods of farm diversification which can support the farmers of Odisha during these times of crisis. Agri tourism is one such opportunity which still needs to be explored by the people of Odisha despite having tremendous scope for its growth and development. Agri-tourism is a rural business that combines a working farm with a commercial tourism component. This concept was born in Europe and North America, and it quickly expanded throughout the world. Agri Tourism Development Corporation of Maharashtra started it in Malegaon village, near Baramati, Maharashtra 2005. (ATDC). The ATDC promotes agri-tourism centres and is pioneering the growth of the agri-tourism idea in India. It also meets the needs of farmers by equipping them with the necessary skills and technical expertise to start and manage this business on their farms. The State's economy is mostly based on agriculture (and related industries like animal husbandry). Following this core sector in potential for creating jobs based on green skills are the forestry, fisheries, energy, services, and construction industries. But Odisha has been witnessing a change in the agricultural sector, with a discernible decline in the number of farmers. Agriculture's

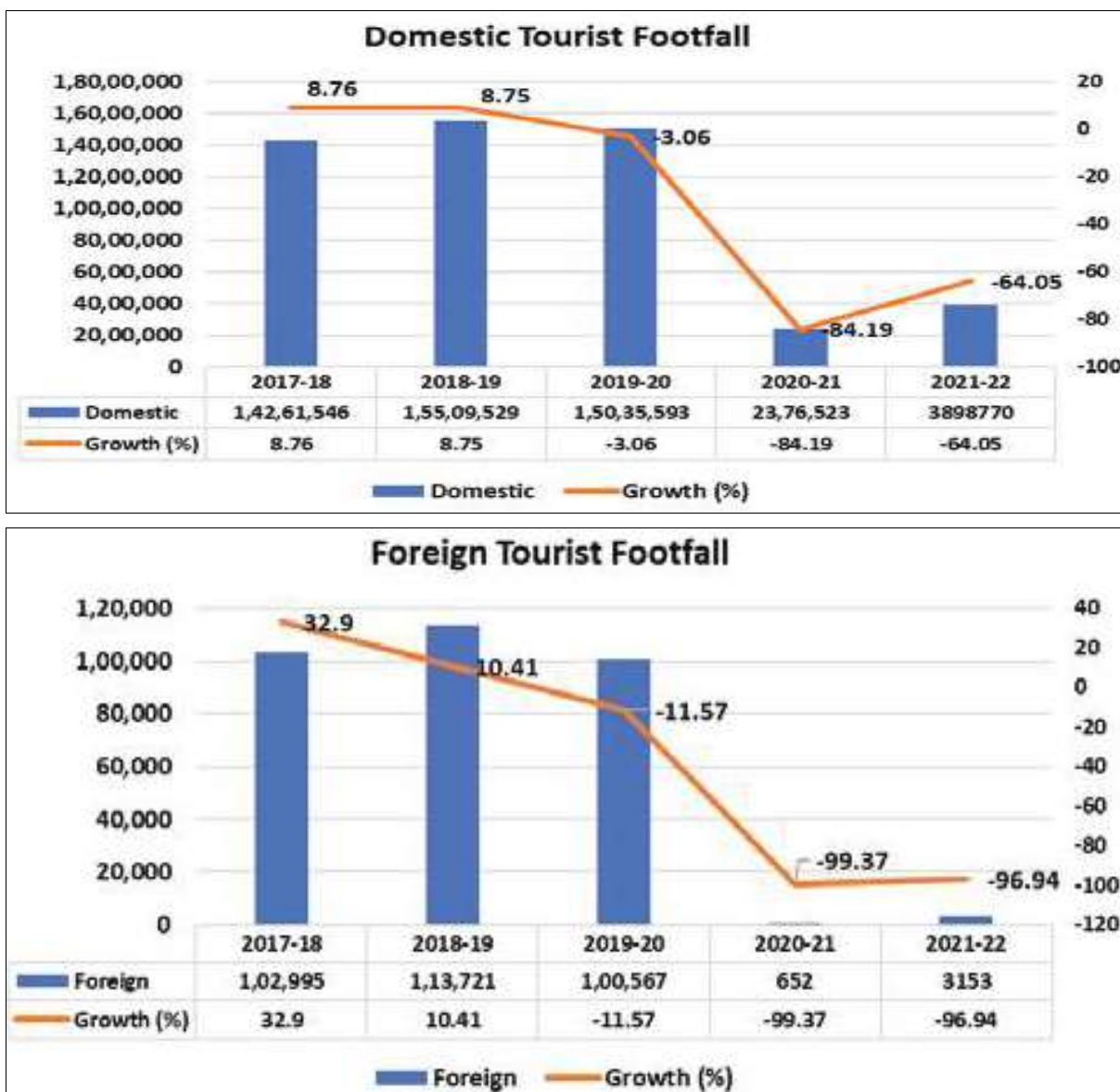
Corresponding Author:
Ritu Tiwari
Assistant Professor,
Department of Tourism and
Travel Studies, Berhampur
University, Odisha, India

contribution to the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has decreased from 62% in 1950 to 20% in 2017. Due to poor irrigation, a lack of appropriate skills, the effects of climate extremes, low market prices for produce, and insufficient financial support, workers are quitting the primary industry. It is not unexpected that rural Odisha has seen a three-fold increase in migration to neighbouring states in the past ten years, from 55,000 in 2007 to 1.5 lakh in 2015. Looking at this situation, it is evident that migration is driven not by choice but distress. Hence it is evident that to achieve sustainable development rural population must learn skills related to agri entrepreneurship and techniques of farm diversification. As the villages of Odisha have their unique and traditional way of living and farming, it gives immense scope for agri-tourism activities to flourish in Odisha with proper training and skill development workshops. Therefore, this study aims to highlight the role and significance of agri entrepreneurship and agri tourism in transforming the socio-economic condition of people residing in villages of Odisha with minimum training, awareness and skill development.

Agritourism can provide a ray of hope by providing a platform for farmers to boost their source of income, thereby benefiting India's agriculture and tourism industries and contributing to the country's long-term progress. Some of the benefits of Agritourism in the country may include:

1. Diversification of the economy of rural areas of the country.
2. Creation of jobs to increase the income of rural communities of the country.
3. Preservation and Promotion of traditional knowledge and wisdom of India.
4. Increasing harmony amongst the rural and urban communities.
5. Revitalization of the body and the mind of tourists.

Odisha, too, can benefit similarly by developing and promoting agri-tourism by adopting and following the best practices from states successfully running agri-tourism projects.



Source: Odisha Annual Report 2021-22

Fig 1: Present status of tourism in Odisha-domestic & foreign tourists visit to Odisha

Review of Literature

This essay emphasizes the link between rising tourism and improved sector employability. The local populations are crucial to the future expansion of Indian tourism. India's rural areas require comprehensive development in order to combat the country's pervasive poverty, increase agriculture's competitiveness internationally, and support increased rural economic activity. They also need to be developed in order to foster strong economic growth for the nation by enhancing Indian agriculture with tourism development. (Khatoun & Mehdi, 2013) ^[26], Agritourism may open the door for rural communities to flourish sustainably. Using India as an example, it presents a thorough explanation of the idea of agri-tourism, covering its advantages, drawbacks, and key success criteria. 85% of the people in this nation depend on agriculture for their living. In Maharashtra, agri-tourism is extensively promoted and encouraged by the Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) project. The study addresses the benefits of agri-tourism for both directly affected farmers and for nearby villagers. These benefits may include financial advantages, education, and understanding of the need to protect natural resources, as well as the empowerment of underrepresented community groups. Through local entrepreneurship and small business growth, this agricultural business model seeks to boost employment possibilities and community income by expanding the customer base for nearby businesses. It will lead to economic development. (Hausler & Kasuske, 2005) ^[21]. The study highlights the potentiality of agri tourism in the socio-economic development of rural areas. It identifies the impact of agri tourism in India with major challenges such as lack of education, age gap, govt. policy etc. To assess these factors, secondary data has been gathered from a variety of sources including government websites, books, journals, magazines, and the Internet. The study's conclusion that agri-tourism is a sustainable kind of tourism that offers a chance for additional income for households solely reliant on agriculture is based on an exploratory research approach. It can enhance the quality of life for residents. In this regard, Agritourism Development Corporation (ATDC) has trained hundreds of farmers in and around Maharashtra to enhance their agricultural income. The study argues that if the Government develops a full-fledged policy support system for agri tourism, it can strengthen India's socio-economic development with its diversified approach. (Singh & Mishra, 2016) ^[42]. The authors highlight the positive impact of self-employment by analyzing, analyzing, and synthesizing the data on self-employment and, with the help of reviews, show that self-employment leads to an increase in per capita income and, therefore, the growth and development of the local economy. Results of the study also suggest a focus on policy and education on self-employment to improve further productivity and opportunities. (Stephan, Fleming, & Rupasingha, 2012) ^[44]. The author argues that proper policy formulation and implementation can help reap Agri tourism's full potential and economic benefits. This case study focuses on the efforts of budding entrepreneurs of Maharashtra in promoting Agritourism with the support of Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) and the Union Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India. (Kharade, 2011) ^[25]. The paper stresses policy suggestions to strengthen agri tourism as a major driver of Local Economic Development (LED) in South Africa. The paper suggests that there is a lack of business skills,

entrepreneurial capabilities, enterprise networking, innovation, learning Etc. in entrepreneurs or farmers turned into entrepreneurs; therefore, enhancing these skills should be the main policy concern of the Government. (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2014) ^[36]. The study highlights the synergistic relationship between farming and tourism in the national park of Denmark, leading to the area's sustainable development. Based on the survey in two major national parks of Denmark, it was analyzed that a small number of farmers are interested in small-scale food entrepreneurship in the national park with no coordinated marketing and economic strategies. However, with proper governance and the active role of national park authorities, it will become a progressive and sustainable step for farmers and tourists coming to the national park. Agritourism involves training and preparing locals to produce an alternative source of income and maintain their cultural traditions. Wherever tourists and agricultural operations coexist, this type of tourism emerges. It includes a variety of agricultural activities, animal rides, accommodations in rural settings, and meals made with organic ingredients. It might serve as a catalyst for rural development in emerging nations like India. (Srivastava & Surabhi, 2016) ^[43]. The study highlights that the strategy of farm diversification in agriculture may result in improvement in Italy farms, which is a good result for the economy and individuals. With traditional agro-tourism activities, there was no improvement in Italy farms. By using organic farming and direct sale to tourists, there was a much more increase in tourists towards Italy's agriculture. There are an equal number of diverse farms in Italy's north (39%) and south (39%), with increases of 20% and 10%, respectively, from 2005 to 2007. The Multivariate Probit Model is employed to examine specific actions connected to a number of variables related to farm geography, farm business characteristics, and farmer characteristics. According to the study, diversity was essential for enhancing the socioeconomic circumstances of farmers. Therefore, when designing rural development measures, it is important to take into account the potential trade-offs and synergies in various types of diversification. Khanal and Shrestha argue the importance of Agritourism in developing agrarian countries like Nepal, with huge potential in the forms of agricultural activities like forestry, fishery, hunting, farming, livestock farming, myriads of florals found in the hills of Nepal; Agritourism can be developed as an emerging tourism product and become a major contributor in foreign exchange earnings and economic development of Nepal.

Problem Statement

Due to a number of issues, including poor irrigation, a lack of appropriate skills, the effects of climate extremes, low market prices for produce, and insufficient financial support, Odisha is seeing a significant emigration of farmers. Numerous steps have been launched by the Odisha government. However, it is clear from a review of the Odisha Tourism Policy 2016 and the Samruddhi Agricultural Policy 2020 that agritourism has not yet received the attention it deserves in the socioeconomic advancement of the state's farmers.

Research Objective

1. To highlight the socio-economic benefits of adopting Agri- tourism activities for farmers.
2. To find out how agritourism contributes to sustainable development in Odisha's rural communities.

3. To analyze the methods of farm diversification to support the farmers in the time of economic crisis
4. To suggest Agri -entrepreneurial opportunities to boost Agri -tourism in Odisha

Research Methodology

The study is exploratory. Though many studies have been conducted on rural tourism in Odisha, minimal studies focus on agri tourism in Odisha. Both qualitative and quantitative tools are used in the study, i.e. The mixed method is applied. Data is collected through structured questionnaires, focus group interviews and personal interview methods. Secondary data sources are research articles, journals, books, periodicals, district gazettes Etc. The study's scope is limited to Odisha's potential agri-tourism destinations only.

Case analysis of Daringbadi, Khandhamal

Daringbadi is a large area around 3000 feet above sea level, and it is a renowned summer resort known as the "Kashmir of Odisha." Natural wonders such as pine forests, coffee gardens, and gorgeous valleys abound in the area. It is the only site in Odisha where snow falls in the month of winter. The place is situated around 130 km away from the nearest city of Berhampur. The total population of Daringbadi block is 63,524 in 162 villages, as per the 2011 Census. The economy of Daringbadi is mainly attached to nature tourism, and the residents always hope to have more footfalls of tourists when the temperature falls. Daringbadi is a seasonal destination which means seasonal income. To learn about the socio-economic conditions of the host community of Daringbadi, we visited the area. We observed that most of the families in the area were involved in turmeric plantations, and there is one Government owned coffee and pepper plantation garden. To learn more about the potential and scope of Agri tourism, we interviewed the garden manager; during the interview, he told us that no govt. Support is provided to them for starting any new activity in the garden, as they proposed to open a coffee shop on the garden premises for the tourists to give the authentic taste and experience of the coffee beans directly from the garden. We also met a few residents of that area who all had small farmlands and were involved in turmeric farming. After further conversation with farmers, we realized that turmeric farming takes around ten months to complete. Then the end product (turmeric powder) is sold to the local retailers at a low price of Rs. 20/kg, whereas the retailers are selling the same to end customers—tourists for approx. Rs. 80/kg. When we asked the reason for selling at such low rates, they replied that to meet the annual expenses, they borrow money from these retailers, and to settle the same, they sell the turmeric at low rates. When we enquired them about their idea on Agri tourism and related economic benefits, they were ignorant about it. However, after sharing the idea of agri tourism and its potential in Daringbadi, they seemed interested to know more. They expressed interest in getting some training and knowledge on the same.

Discussion

The above case study clearly shows that the need for more government support, policy framework, and lack of knowledge amongst the locals have restricted the growth of agri tourism in Daringbadi, which can be a great socio-economic driver for the area. There is only one income source for most villagers other than turmeric farming. Daringbadi tourism has a limitation of seasonality, whereas

Agri tourism has the potential to make it a year-round destination.

Conclusion

Like Daringbadi, Odisha has many such destinations like Desia Garden (Green Koraput Campaign), Koraput, and Jeypore in Koraput, known for a variety of rice, and many tribal villages having a unique style of farming, medicinal plantation Etc., showing massive potential for agri tourism which will diversify the farm income of the local population of that area leading to reduced migration of the farmers and better socio-economic development of rural areas of Odisha.

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