



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF AGROTOURISM IN WESTERN MAHARASHTRA

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Abstract:

The researcher will understand how agro tourism is considered as a way of sustainable development. A continual Social and Economic deterioration has impacted rural communities. This paradigm of growth has become unsustainable from a social, cultural and economic point of view. Modern rural development trends underline that rational and organized utilization of agricultural resources, along with the enhancement of rural, cultural and naturalistic heritage.

In this paper views the researcher investigates the studies on the status of Agro-tourism, studies on cash flow in agro-tourism and studies on problems and prospects of agro-tourism, the possibility of agro tourism as a driver of sustainable rural development. Researcher examined the prospect for sustainable development of Agro tourism in western Maharashtra.

Keywords- *Status of Agro tourism, Cash flow in Agro tourism, Problems and prospects of Agro tourism.*

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Introduction:

India rapidly growing 121.08 cores population increasing enormous pressure on fertile land while on the other side, crop yield would be decline due to climate change in India as projected by the IPCC (IPCC, 2007b). Climate change has emerged as another challenge to agriculture. The negative impact of climate change on agriculture has been witnessing worldwide, but vulnerability is very high in an agriculture country like India where, more than 58 percent of the population depend on agriculture and allied sectors for their livelihood. Climatic variation, especially in the southwest monsoon adversely impacts the quality and quantity of crops which leads to fluctuation in prices of agro-products.

India is a country of villages, about 68.84 percent of the total population are living in the 6,45,856 villages

(Census, 2011), where agriculture is not only the backbone of the economy but also the livelihood of people. More than 75 percent of the total workforce depends on agriculture directly and indirectly whereas, employing more than 54 percent of the workforce. But recently, Indian agriculture has been witnessing new challenges, one of the foremost is the rapidly growing population. The population of the country was 102.67 cores in 2001, jumped to 121.08 cores in 2011 means an increase of about 18.15 cores.

Study Area:

Western Maharashtra has been selected for the present research work covering Nashik, Ahmednagar, Pune, Satara, Solapur, Sangali, and Kolhapur districts. The present study has been focused mainly on the Sustainable development of agro-tourism centres in districts of Western Maharashtra.



Location of the study area:

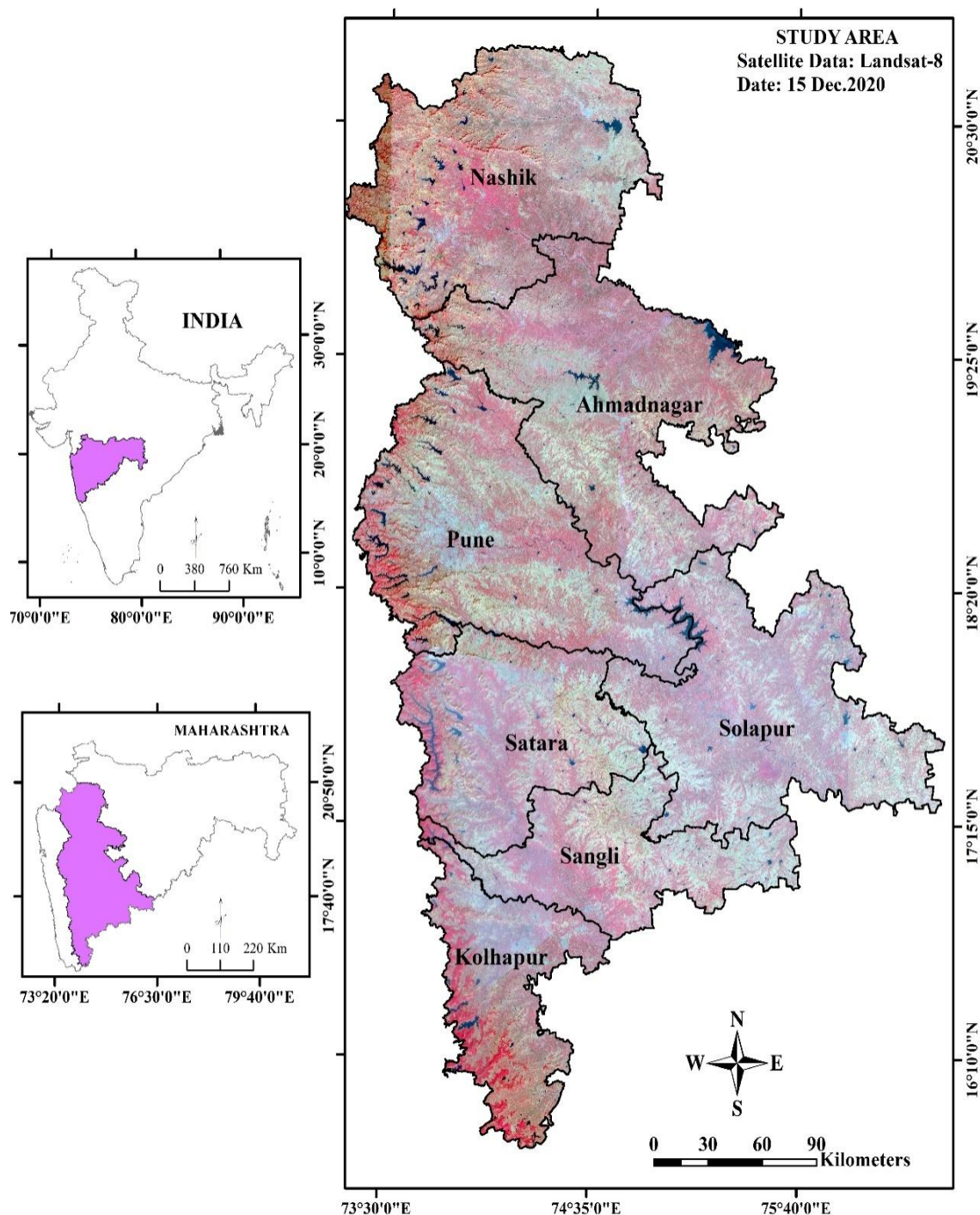
Western Maharashtra extends from 15° 40' N to 20° 53' N, and 73° 16' E to 76° 45' E. The study area is about 500 km. from north to south and 100 km. from east to west. Western Maharashtra covers seven districts with a total geographical area of 89,911 sq. km. Territorially, it has Gujarat to the north, Dhule and Jalgaon district to the northeast, Jalana, and Beed to

the east, and Karnataka, and Goa to its south, whereas Konkan to the west. The Western Ghats lies in the study area is well known as 'Sahyadri', which runs from the mouth of Tapi southwards along the western edge of the Deccan plateau to the southern boundary of Maharashtra. The average elevation of 1200 m, found more than 1600 m in the northern part while declining towards the south.

Table: Districts of Study Area

Sr. No.	District	Tehsils
1	Nashik	1. Nashik 2. Igatpuri 3. Trimbakeshwar 4. Dindori 5. Peint 6. Kalwan 7. Sargana 8. Chandwad 9. Deola 10. Satana 11. Malegaon 12. Yeola 13. Nandgaon 14. Niphad 15. Sinnar
2	Ahmednagar	1. Kopergaon 2. Rahata 3. Akole 4. Sangamner 5. Newasa 6. Shrirampur 7. Shevgaon 8. Pathardi 9. Rahuri 10. Nagar 11. Parner 12. Shrigonda 13. Karjat 14. Jamkhed
3	Pune	1. Haveli 2. Pune City 3. Maval 4. Mulshi 5. Shirur 6. Baramati 7. Daund 8. Indapur 9. Bhore 10. Velha 11. Purandar 12. Khed 13. Junnar 14. Ambegaon
4	Satara	1. Satara 2. Wai 3. Khandala 4. Koregaon 5. Phaltan 6. Man 7. Waduj 8. Karad 9. Patan 10. Medha 11. Mahabaleshwar
5	Solapur	1. North Solapur 2. South Solapur 3. Barshi 4. Akkalkot 5. Pandharpur 6. Mangalwedha 7. Sangola 8. Mohol 9. Madha 10. Karmala 11. Malshiras
6	Sangali	1. Miraj 2. Tasgaon 3. Kavthe Mahankal 4. Jat 5. Vita 6. Atpadi 7. Kadegaon 8. Palus 9. Walwa 10. Shirala
7	Kolhapur	1. Karvir 2. Hatkanangle 3. Shirol 4. Kagal 5. Panhala 6. Gadhinglaj 7. Radhanagari 8. Chandgad 9. Shahuwadi 10. Bhudargad 11. Ajra 12. Bavda

(Source: District Handbook, 2011)



Location of the study area



Methodology:

After a review of the literature, the following methods have been adopted to investigate the status of the agro-tourism business and rural development in terms of geographical point of view. An understanding of tourist options on infrastructure and facilities is needed. Hence, field data about ATCs and tourists were collected and various techniques have been applied. The methodology applied in the study is briefly sustainable development of Agro tourism in Western Maharashtra.

Studies on the status of Agro-tourism:

Maetzold (2002) carried out a study in Italy regarding agro-tourism. He found that the physiography of the region is important for the development of agro-tourism business. The study reported that 51.4 percent of agro-tourism centres were located in hilly areas, more than 34.4 percent of canterers were situated in mountainous areas and remain in plain areas of Italy. Organic agro-tourism is the most famous type of agro-tourism, characterized by the saving of water, selling of organic agro-products, traditional culture, following norms of environmental protection.

Barbieri (2013) examined 873 agritourist canterers as an enterprise and their role in socio-economic, cultural development in the USA, the empirical findings of the research showed the continuous uptrend of agritourist. Agritourist has great success in generating additional income, employment, and protecting nature as well as cultural heritage.

Mane and Patil (2017) conducted a field survey for the 18 agro-tourism centres, the study mentioned the status of agro-tourism canterers. As per the tourist's point of view, infrastructural facilities are not well developed in most of the canterers, hence the focus should be given to the improvement of infrastructural facilities to attract the urban tourists towards the agro-tourism canterers.

Ngo, and Nguyen (2020) examined the impact of agro tourism on the community of Islet of Can Tho, Vietnam, the result showed that agro tourism emerged as a gold mine in the development of South Vietnam. The study also discussed some positive and negative impacts of community-based agro tourism which is the most popular form of tourism in Vietnam, positive impact such as ensuring sustainable additional income, improvement in the standard of living, preserving their local culture, evenly distribution of benefits in the community, community unity, good leadership, etc. while negative.

Sowmya and Sudha (2014) discussed that India has physical and cultural diversity which provides ample scope to develop the agro-tourism sector. There is a rapid increase in tourists preferring to visit the agro-tourism centres in the village.

Singh and Mishra (2016) studied the potential of agro-tourism in India, the result shows that many Indian farmers especially Maharashtra, are involved in agro-tourism as a mode for earning additional income. Agro-tourism give the golden opportunity to the urban people to experience the farm operations, rural lifestyle, tasty foods, local festivals, etc. during the visit.

Studies on cash flow in agro-tourism:

Thorat and Suryawanshi (2017) assessed the agro-tourism canter potential in Junnar tehsil, Maharashtra using the weighted scores method. As per the findings of research agriculture and agro-based industry is a dominant factor in the economy of the tehsil. Agro-tourism is one of the key economic activities in the Kukadi basin.

Kanse and Kanse, (2017) have suggested that agro-tourism is an opportunity to earn extra income by using available resources from agricultural land. If the government gives priority to the agro-tourism sector in Maharashtra through appropriate policies, then



agro-tourism can play a vital role in rural development.

Gokovali and Bahar (2006) carried out a study regarding tourism for the Mediterranean countries from 1987 to 2002. The result indicates that tourism is favourable to economic growth based on the regression analysis. The study concluded that tourism plays a vital role in the economic growth of Mediterranean countries.

Bhandari and Bhattarai (2018) conducted a study in Nepal, the findings point out that the tourism industry contributed about 7.5 percent of the country's GDP in 2017 with generating almost 6.7 percent of all workforce. The study suggested that motivation for the establishment of agro-tourism centres is needed not only for individual farmers but also for agricultural cooperatives institutes, private organizations, and other government as well as non-government agencies for generating additional income for sustainable development.

Mitchell and Ashley (2010) have carried out a study that reveals agro-tourism directly improves the earning of farmers as well as farm labourers and indirectly agro-tourism development has contributed to the entire economy of the country.

Doke, A. (2014) considered that the agro-tourism business is the fastest-growing in the tourism sector with a 5 percent of annual growth rate worldwide. As far as India is concerned, 6.97 million foreign tourists arrived in 2013 which was more than 6 percent than the previous year. The cash flow from foreign tourists was US dollars 18.44 billion with a growth of 4 percent as compared to 2012.

Kiran *et.al* (2014) studied the investment opportunities in agri-tourism in India, findings of the study point out that the tourism industry is the fastest growing industry with a 10 percent annual rate.

Marcouiller, Kim, and Deller (2004) adopted the empirical county-level model and measured the

income of the agro-tourism sector by the Gini coefficient method for the USA, these empirical findings show that natural amenities are connected to the distribution of agro-tourism income.

Studies on problems and prospects of agro-tourism:

Lack, K. (1997) conducted the study on agro tourism in British Columbia, he has been found the obstacles of the agro tourism sector such as lack of training to the farmer, lack of quality control of infrastructure and facilities provides, lack of marketing and booking, lack of capital, distance from market centres, conflicts with other primary activities, and farm diseases.

Le Gall and Leboucq (2004) estimated that foot-mouth diseases negatively impact the agriculture and agro-tourism business in African countries. Because these countries are highly dependent on external tourists and external markets. Hence, all stakeholders of the agro-tourism sector must put in building the strategy that helps to tackle the economic uncertainties facing the agro-tourism business

Ramkumar and Shinde (2008) assessed the main challenges of agro-tourism in Maharashtra, according to findings the shortage of trained manpower is one of the major barriers to the success of agro-tourism because most of the well-trained people are not interested to work in rural areas. There are problems of communication with foreign and urban tourists, and also maintenance of rooms or suites.

Kumhar, V. (2009) attempts to focus on problems of agro-tourism business in Maharashtra. Though Maharashtra has great potential for the development of the agro-tourism sector due to good natural and agro-climatic variation, there are some key obstacles in the progress of agro-tourism such as weak communication skills, lack of commercial approach of small and marginal farmers, lack of capital to establish and maintain the ATC, etc.



Jagtap et al. (2010) examined the problem and prospects of agro-tourism facing farmers in Maharashtra. The study reveals that the major problems are lack of proper knowledge about agro-tourism business, shortage of capital for setup of agro-tourism centers as well as maintain, weak communication skill of farmers, lack of digital resources, lack of basic facilities for urban tourists.

Malkanthi and Routry (2011) conducted a field survey across the five districts of central Sri Lanka. The result indicated that there several barriers in the establishment and development of agro-tourism, the main barriers are infrastructure development, proper training, and education to the farmers, easy access of credit as capital from various agencies, suitable environmental policies, lack of water management for enhancing the income of agro-tourism canterers.

Taware, P. (2013) study the agro-tourism sector in India. The study shows that the agriculture has potential to absorb the expansion of the tourism industry in India, and it is a powerful tool for generating additional income and employment, poverty diminishment in rural areas of the country.

Conclusion:

The research design has been made to investigate the real situation of agro-tourism centres, the development of agro-tourism business, and the role of agro-tourism in rural development to generating additional income for farmers. For the investigation of agro-tourism development and agro-tourism potential, an in-depth study of the physical and demographic profile of the study area is necessary.

In conclusion, the title "Sustainable Development of Agro Tourism in Western Maharashtra: A Focus on Rural and Agro Tourism Initiatives" highlights the importance of balancing economic growth with environmental and socio-cultural integrity in the tourism sector. By focusing on rural and eco-tourism, Maharashtra can leverage tourism as a tool for

sustainable development, preserving its natural and cultural heritage while promoting economic growth and social welfare. The success of these initiatives depends on effective policy implementation, community engagement, and sustainable infrastructure development.

The resources and innovative programs combined with expertise in Maharashtra make the state an exemplary case for rural development that can boost Indian agriculture toward lasting prosperity for its rural domain.

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