

A STUDY OF POST-PANDEMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF AGRO-TOURISM INDUSTRY IN VIDARBHA REGION

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Abstract

Agro-tourism is basically a agricultural activity which attracts customers or visitors to farm or ranch and has different definitions across the world. Agro-tourism came into operation first by Pandurang Taware named as Baramati Agro tourism centre in Pune district. He also received National tourism award for his achievement. After that it spread by Agro-tourism Development Corporation has started Agro-tourism centers in Maharashtra with affiliated with more than 200 farmers. After that agro tourism business spread in other states of India like Punjab, MP, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka, West Bengal, kerala, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, etc. Agro tourism is a new concept which relates to farming activities also provide best opportunity to know rural life farming and knowledge of local traditions. 95 million farmers are living in 7 lakhs villages which contributing Indian agriculture contributes 30% GDP. Agro-tourism has spread widely in metro cities like Pune, Mumbai, Sangali, Satara, Kolhapur, etc. Firstly Agro-tourism is started in Pune's Baramati district by National tourism award winner from the president of India Mr. Pandurang Taware who receives the award for most Innovative tourism product. But what about the other regions of Maharashtra other than Metro cities? In Vidarbha region Agro- tourism is not known to many people as Vidarbha consists of 85% of Farmers and their main source of income is farming only. Very few Agro-tourism centers are there in Vidarbha and many of them are already closed due to lack of tourists. Research paper mainly focus on sustainability of Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region. Entrepreneurs who think of starting Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region will get great help from the paper.

Keywords: Agro-tourism, Sustainability, Farming, Pandemic, Agriculture, Tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Agro-tourism is the latest tourism trend in metro cities like Pune, Mumbai, Bangalore, etc. Agro tourism provides an experience to take a break from urban life and enjoy the rural roots. Agro tourism refers to tourist visit the private agricultural land, which includes overnight stays, rural activities, buying products from the Agro-tourism centres i.e., directly from farm, playing and feeding animals, bull cart ride, picking fruits. During the year 2019 30 lakhs foreigners' tourism visited Agro-tourism centres in India and also, they show interest in Agro-tourism activities. But stats shows that Agro-tourism business is sustainable only in metro cities. Therefore, it is urgent need to identify the reasons for the same. Agro-tourism provides agriculture experience of rural life which we not get in metro cities i.e., riding bull cart, mud play, experience farming etc. But Agro-tourism get the tourist in metro cities only. Other than Metro cities in Maharashtra many Cities consists of small villages and villagers has at least small amount of farm. Research paper mainly focuses on sustainability of Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region. Entrepreneurs who think of starting Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region will get great help from the paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kama and Kieti (2007) and Ezeuduji and Wolfgang (2011) stated ways tourism can help to contribute in sustainable rural development and developing nation, creating employment for locals, supporting local communities' participation, NGOs and local communities.

Fazio et.al (2008) who put the Agro-tourism under the sustainable agriculture defines the concept as "a method in which resources are kept in balance whether it is through conservation, recycling and preservation that prevent environmental damage to the farm while profits remain at acceptable levels".

Vijay M. Kumbhar et. al (2011) in his findings of Maharashtra stated that Agro-tourism has a wide scope in metro cities in all over Maharashtra but it will take more time for the other regions as well to develop Agro- tourism.

N. G. McGehee, et. al. (2012) in their research has explained Agro-tourism has power of employment generation in rural area, it will be economical benefits also but only for metro cities.

3. OBJECTIVES

- 1) To study the sustainability of Agro-tourism industry in Vidarbha region.
- 2) To study the current market status of Agro-tourism centers in Vidarbha region.
- 3) To study the feasibility of starting Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research work is exploratory in nature and based on primary data which is collected through circulating well-structured questionnaire. The secondary data has been

collected from papers, journals, and trusted websites. Some observational facts have been used by researcher.

- Geographical Scope: All districts and Talukas under Vidarbha, Maharashtra. Sample size: 300
 - Sample unit: People in Vidarbha region and Agro-tourism owners.
 - Sampling method: The random sampling method was used to collect the samples.
- Sources of data: The data was collected through well-structured questionnaire.

Hypothesis I

Agro-tourism industry in not sustainable in Vidarbha region

Answer: Yes. Proved

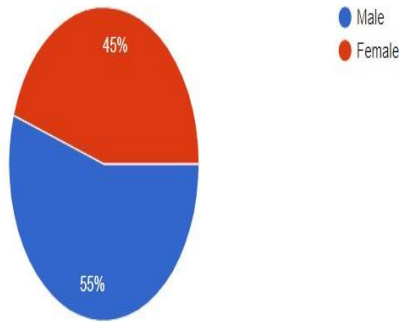
Hypothesis II

Feasibility of starting Agro-tourism in Vidarbha region is very less

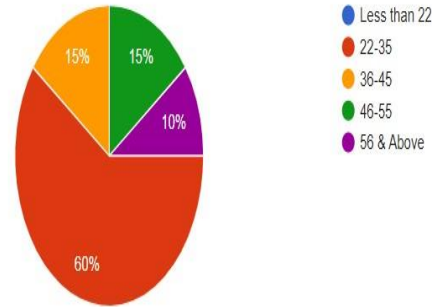
Answer: Yes. Proved

• DATA COLLECTION

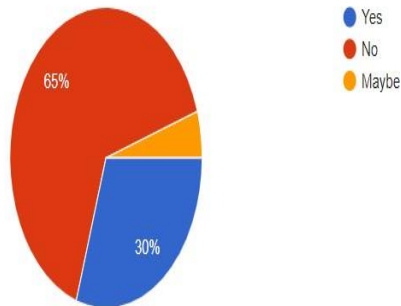
Gender



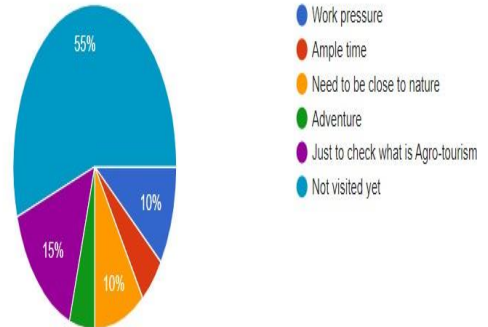
Age



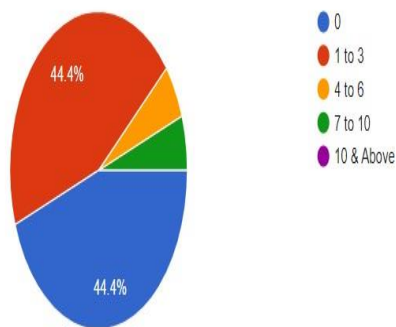
Have you attend any Agro-tourism before for tourism reason?



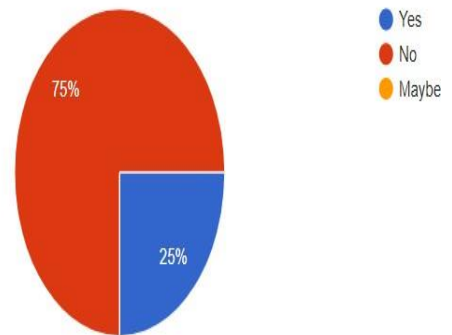
What made you specially decide to attend an Agro-tourism activities?



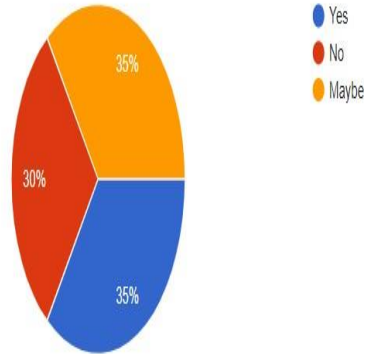
No. of Agro-tourism centers in your region



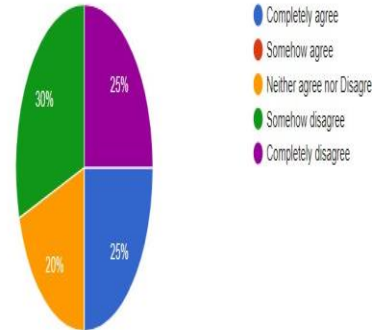
Do you know any famous Agro-tourism center near you?



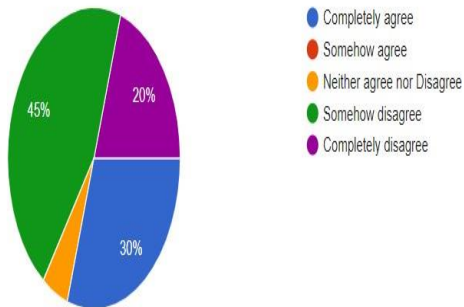
Would you like to visit / again in future?



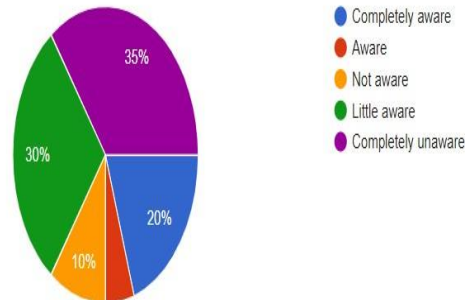
Do you think attending Agro-tourism is beneficial for you as well as people?



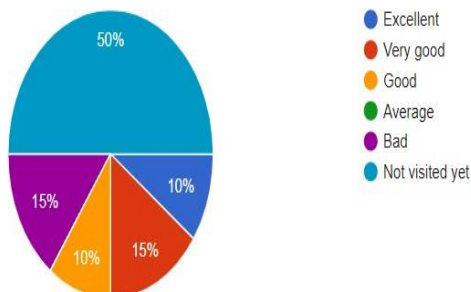
What do you think about developing Agro-tourism industry in Vidarbh?



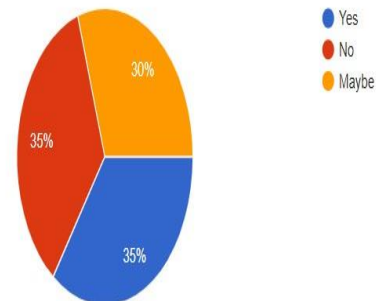
Do you think people around you are aware about Agro-tourism?



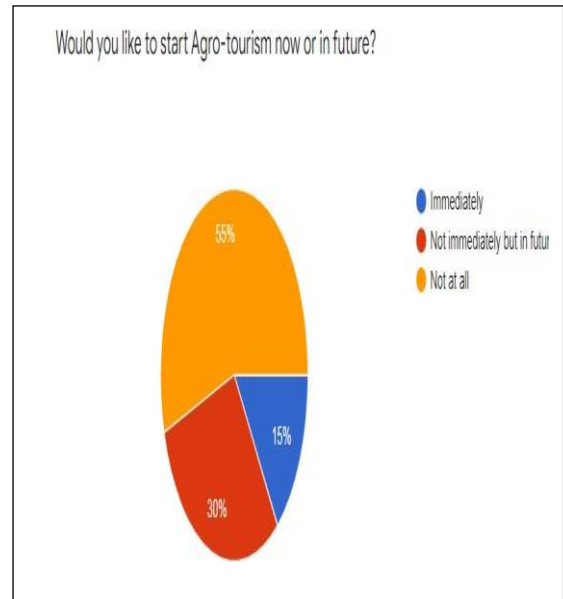
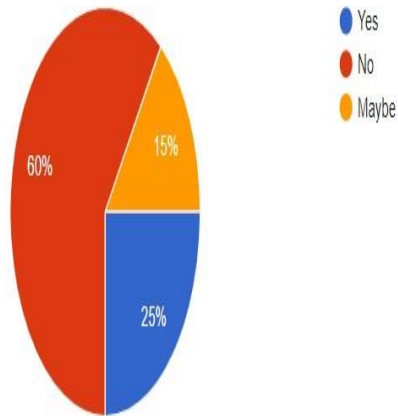
What about the services in Agro-tourism activities?



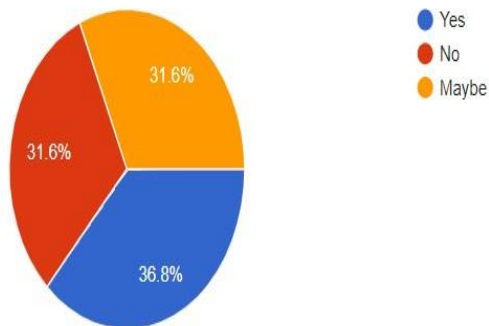
Do you think more people should attend Agro-tourism activities from Urban area?



Do you think Agro-tourism can help developing local economy or society?



Do you think Agro-tourism industry will develop further in future in Vidarbha?



5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

We have circulated the well-structured questionnaire among the people as well as we have telephonic conversation with the some Agro-tourism owners in Vidarbha region. From that most of the respondents are of the age group 22-35. Many of the respondents are employed and students as well as farmers also. Most of the respondents are from urban are which is the

core customer group for Agro-tourism. We collected the responses from all over Vidarbha and most of the respondents are from Nagpur and Amravati region. Many respondents even did not know 'what is Agro-tourism'. They also didn't know Agro-tourism centers in their region. Most of the respondents didn't attend the Agro-tourism before eventually they did not know any famous Agro-tourism centre in their region. And the respondents who visited Agro-tourism is only for to check what is Agro-tourism and they are not willing to visit again because of lack of services and bad experience. Majority of the group thinks that attending Agro-tourism is not beneficial for them as well as others. Most of the respondents are not in the favor of developing Agro-tourism industry in Vidarbha. People who visited Agro-tourism had experience bad services and they are unsatisfied hence they suggested that no one should attend Agro-tourism. Most important thing I that many respondents said that people around them are also not aware about Agro-tourism. Hence, they think Agro-tourism cannot help developing local economy or society in Vidarbha. Eventually many farmers in Vidarbha region are not willing to start Agro-tourism and also, they said that Agro-tourism will not develop further in vidarbha.

6. DISCUSSION

Agro tourism industry in Vidarbha facing many problems and farmers need to adopt modern way of doing Agro-tourism and cater the tourist. And the Agro-tourism centres which are doing well are only in metro cities. Today Agro-tourism needs proper planning and strategy but it's not an easy task. Therefore, it needs to be implemented as soon as possible well-planned business model for the betterment of Agro-tourism at state level. In these regards farmers need product and service quality improvement, government supported policy structure of Agro-tourism, proper financing solution.

7. CONCLUSION

Thus, it is concluded that sustainability of Agro - tourism industry in Vidarbha region is very low. There are many reasons for that but the main reason is, in Vidarbha 80% of population is depend on farming and some farmers held very small amount of land. That's why they are not capable of paying for Agro-tourism. And if they have their own land doing all the things which is done in Agro-tourism then why they visit Agro-tourism? Farmers already living rural life and went to farm every day and do farm work. Even some farmers said that farming is very difficult nowadays because of rising inflation. Then in such conditions how someone can think of paying extra money for the same which they already doing every day. We also contacted some Agro-tourism owners like Vednandini Agro-tourism Akola, Raigad Agro-tourism Nagpur, Rukhmini Agro-tourism Nagpur, Nal-Damayanti Agro-tourism Washim, Palasbag Agro-tourism Bhandara all the owners said that very few tourists visited there to their Agro-tourism and that's why because they couldn't afford it, some converted their Agro-tourism into Marriage Hall of Birthday Hall, some did farming, some converted it into hotels, and some closed it down. Very few Agro-tourism currently running in Vidarbha and them,

too, are on the verge of closing. And when conducted the survey we found that people are not aware about Agro-tourism and not willing to visit also. That's why feasibility of starting Agro-tourism in Vidarbha is very low infact about 0 to 10%.

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