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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE AGRITOURISM IN THE STATE OF PUNJAB

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Abstract: Majority of India's population is dependent on the agriculture. Most of the economies of the world are developing the concept of agritourism. Due to the emergence of this new concept, the researcher is endeavored to carry out the present study. The study is limited to the state of Punjab. Firstly the researcher has tried to clear the meaning of agritourism. As there are many disagreements in the past research studies. The aim of the study is to study the demographic features of the farmers and also to identify the underlying factors important for the future growth of agritourism in Punjab. The study concludes that there are four underlying dimensions associated with agritourism development in Punjab viz. (1) Additional Source of Income (2) Market-driven forces (3) Family support and (4) Personal Goals. It is recommended in the present study that the farmers should focus on the promotion of agritourism for the personal growth as well as the development of the society.

Keywords: Agritourism, farmers and Punjab

I INTRODUCTION

Secondary and tertiary sectors are dependent upon the primary sector of Indian Economy. Majority of population i.e. around 65 percent of the Indian population is engaged in the agricultural sector. Agriculture sector accounts for 16 percent in the GDP (www.statista.com). The term agritourism is gaining the importance day by day in the state of Punjab. By merging rural tourism, adventure tourism and health tourism, agritourism can be promoted in the state of Punjab. Agritourism is the latest concept in the Indian tourism industry. It is mainly related with farms. With the help of natural resources and rich heritage of Punjab, the tourists can enrich themselves with good experiences. Therefore, firstly it is important to know about the meaning of agri-tourism. Schilling, Sullivan, and Komar (2012) pointed out that there is no well accepted definition of agritourism and even the scope of agritourism is not defined. There are four major disagreements regarding the meaning of agritourism. Firstly regarding the meaning agricultural farms. Arroyo, Barbieri, and Rich (2013) carried out a study on farmers, Cooperative Extension faculty, and residents of Missouri and North Carolina about their perceptions of agritourism. In the US, fields generating the revenue of \$1000 or more from the production or sale of agricultural goods comes under the definition of farms. It also includes ranches, nurseries and related activities (USDA, 2009). The E.U. advocates that a farm is economic unit engaged in agricultural production

activities under a single management and includes non-agricultural activities also (OECD, 2001). Canadians defines farms includes any activities related to the production of crops, livestock, poultry, animal products, or any other agricultural products (Statistics Canada, 2001). Therefore, it is observed in these researches that agritourism must take place on a working farm. Secondly regarding the inclusion of non-working farms in the scope of agritourism. It is seen in some researches agritourism includes nonworking farms as well as farmers markets and agricultural fairs . It includes non-farm activities like wedding ceremonies and recreational activities (Carpio et al., 2008).

Thirdly, it is related with the activities included in the scope of agritourism. According to various studies conducted by Barbieri concluded that hospitality services include lodging, food services, event programming are an integral part of the agritourism. Sonnino (2004) advocated that agritourism includes hospitality. Agritourism includes the following activities (Oredegebe & Fadeyibi (2009), Wilson et.al (2006).

(1) outdoor activities (watching of birds, picking of fruits, hunting, photography of wild life animals, fishing, hunting, playing grounds),

(2)educational experiences (on farm experience, agricultural tours related to agriculture and culture, heritage, to know facts

related to wild and domestic animals, demonstrations of farms, horse farm tours, educational tours,

(3) entertainment and hospitality services includes festival celebrations related to harvesting, organization of events involves music and dance, stay at farms and ranches, guided tours

(4) direct sales from the farms includes roadside stands and

(5) direct sales in the market includes sale in local markets, farmers fairs .

Ollenburg & Buckley (2007) excluded hospitality from agritourism in their study. Fourthly, disagreement is related with the inclusion of travel. The World Tourism Organization defines a traveler will be considered as a tourists if his or her stay must last less than one consecutive year. Therefore, it is argued to include or not to include travel in it. None of the study included travel within the purview of agritourism.

It is further found in the research studies that there is a clear distinction between agritourism from rural tourism . (Colton & Bissix, 2005; Kizos & Iosifides, 2007; McGehee & Kim, 2004). Agri-tourism refers to all recreational and tourism related activities carried out on a working farm while rural tourism is a recreational activities carried out in rural areas and excludes agritourism (Przezborska, 2005).

II RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ludhiana and Mohali district of Punjab. For the present study, 60 farmers were identified using convenience sampling method. Secondary data was taken from the sources like economic survey, reviewed articles, books and websites. The study is exploratory in nature. A structured interview schedule was prepared and personal interviews with farmers were conducted in order to collect data. The information gathered from selected respondents was tabulated. Simple percentage distribution and factor analysis was performed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version: 20) to analyse the data. The personal interviews were conducted with the farmers

Research Objectives

- 1) To know the about the demographic profiles of the respondents.
- 2) To study the factors important for the future growth of agritourism in Punjab.

Analysis and Results

Table 1 shows general information about the socio economic condition of the farmers that possess land assets, livestock, type of house and monthly income.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the respondents

Indicators	N=80	Percentage
Land asset		
Landless	5	6.25
Upto 2.5 Acre	42	52.50
2.5- 5 Acre	25	31.25
Above 5 Acre	8	10
Live stock		
0-10	53	66.25
11-20	16	20
21-30	11	13.75
Type of House		
Kachcha House	8	10
Partial Kachcha – Pucca House	18	22.50
Pucca House	54	67.50
Monthly income of the family		
Below Rs 40,000	12	15
40,000-60,000	45	56.25
Above Rs 60,000	23	28.75

Source: Primary Data

Data shows that 52.50 % of the farmers possess the land up to 2.5 acre , 66.25 % of the farmers possess the livestock ,67.5% of the respondents lives in pucca houses and 56.25% of the respondents possess the income between Rs 40,000 to Rs 60,000. This indicates overall there is higher economic status of the respondents.

Table 3: Rotated Factor Matrix

Variables	Components			
	1	2	3	4
Additional Source of Income				
Reduces fluctuations in revenue	.683			
Increases the financial ability	.813			
Better utilize farm resources	.514			
Off-season revenue generation	.712			
Market Driven Forces				
Create new customers base		.754		
Mass awareness about agriculture		.634		
Highly customized services		.829		
Promotion of direct selling		.685		
Family Support				
Enhance family quality of life			.656	
Involvement of family members			.542	
Provide employment for family members			.752	
Personal Pursuits				
Keep you active				.674
Additional revenues to keep farming				.758
Fulfilling personal hobbies and interests				.569

Source: Primary Data

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation

Data obtained for the present study was analyzed separately using Principal Axis Factoring in order to identify the underlying factors for the fifteen statements. The initial

solutions were rotated using varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalisation and factors with eigen values greater than one were retained. In table 2, 14 statements were reduced to five orthogonal factor dimensions which explained 57.637% of the overall variance.

Table 3: Total Variance Explained for the Respondents

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of squared loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Factor	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.797	27.125	27.125	3.415	24.394	24.394	2.713	15.520	15.520
2	2.190	15.641	42.766	1.803	37.273	37.273	1.944	13.889	29.409
3	1.696	12.115	54.881	1.294	46.512	46.512	1.562	11.157	40.566
4	1.451	10.361	65.242	.950	53.300	53.300	1.550	11.070	51.636
5	1.060	.7573	72.815						
6	.814	5.812	78.627						
7	.611	4.367	82.994						
8	.536	3.827	86.820						
9	.416	2.969	89.790						
10	.395	2.822	92.611						
11	.356	2.546	95.157						
12	.288	2.055	97.212						
13	.212	1.512	98.725						
14	.179	1.275	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Table 3 shows the total variance explained for the selected. There are four underlying dimensions associated with agritourism development (1) Additional Source of Income (2) Market-driven forces (3) Family support and (4) Personal Goals.

The results show that there are four major factors which affects the growth of agritourism in Punjab. It provides an additional source of income to the farmers. It leads to decrease in fluctuation of revenue, increases the financial ability to pay off debts, better utilize farm resources, off-season revenue generation. Market driven forces includes expansion of customers base, mass awareness related to agriculture, better serve current customers, promotion of direct selling. Family support includes improves the quality life of family, family support in organisatio of farm activities, gives employment opportunities to family members. Personal goals includes keep you active, additional revenues to keep farming and fulfilling personal hobbies and interest.

It can be concluded in table 2 that agritourim helps the farmers to decrease their revenue fluctuations related with their farm business, it further enhances the ability of farmers to meet financial obligations like debts, farm resources can be better utilized for providing the services for agritourism and it is source of alternation revenue generation during the off-season.

Overall, it generates profits for the farmers. The growth of agritourism is market driven. It is helpful to generate new customer base by providing awareness regarding agriculture. Hospitality provided by farmers and selling of value added products helps the farmers to serve their clients better. Involvement of the family of farmers in the activities of agritourism helps to increase the quality life of the family . The personal goals of the farmers can be achieved by actively involve themselves and they can make money by fulfilling their hobbies and interest.

Reliability Test

To assess the reliability of each underlying dimensions, a measure of Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated. The value of α coefficients to be reliable should be 0.7 or more. Thus, the items measuring the dimensions appear to be sufficiently reliable.

Factor	Cronbach’s Alpha
1	.7789
2	.7493
3	.7614
4	.7832

III CONCLUSION

Major population of Punjab state is dependent upon the agriculture. Therefore, there is a vast potential for agritourism in this state. The present study concludes that there are major four factors namely additional source of income, market-driven forces, family support and fulfillment of personal goals. It is an additional source of income for the farmers which increases their quality of life and along with that their family members can involve in the business. It also helps to achieve their personal hobbies and interest. It is recommended in the study that the farmers should also focus on agritourism as reduces income fluctuations and helps to meet them financial burdens. It is recommended in the present study that farmers should focus on the activities of agritourims for the growth of self, his family members and the society.

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