

## **AGRITOURISM: LINKING AGRICULTURE WITH TOURISM**



*Social Equity-based Public Private Partnership strategy for development of Agriculture and Rural Tourism has the potential to enhance rural (and farmers') economic growth. This should be implemented using Cooperatives and other farmer groups, including FPOs and FPCs, opines Tushar Pandey.*

### **CONTEXT**

In India, most farmers find it difficult to cultivate land in the conventional manner, as it does not offer good economic returns. So they turn to either cultivating cash crops or selling their land. To make their efforts economically viable, an alternate revenue generation model of Agritourism can be framed that can be operated by them. Diversifying into this agribusiness model calls for much less investment and it can help farmers in gaining an additional source of income.

The combination of Agriculture and Tourism has the potential to not only develop the local economy of the farming community but also for retaining youth by creating ample opportunities for earning while safeguarding the environment and the ecology of the place as a whole. Developments on AgTech and FinTech makes synergy possible on many operational aspects of Agritourism, such as marketing, financing, insurance and other institutional mechanisms. Further prospects on enabling entrepreneurship seems plausible owing to the impetus offered by Farmer Groups, including Farmer Producer Organizations and Companies (FPO/FPC), and other forms of cooperatives. Formation of the new Ministry of Cooperatives by the Government of India is a complementary step in the development of Agritourism and must be taken up by the new ministry on a priority basis.



**Rural Homestay Camping Site in Bagheshwar District, Uttarakhand**

## AGRITOURISM

Agritourism, which falls under the category of Alternate Tourism, refers to the act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural or agribusiness operation for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. It synergizes both agriculture and tourism by capitalizing on their best practices. Though not a new idea per se (as it is already in practice in developed countries), we need to give this an Indian touch. Today, there are closer links between agritourism and nature-based or eco-tourism. There are many places in India that offer outstanding scenery and have national parks, wildlife and heritage buildings. Sustainable habitat management is of increasing interest to a highly urbanized population and that's why agritourism becomes important for both – the urbanized population and farmers.



**Trainees of MANAGE on a visit to Agritourism unit near Pune**

The recent National Sample Survey on Agriculture (NSSO) indicates the sad reality of India's younger generation being uninterested in taking up agriculture. But agritourism could provide them an opportunity to return to their roots. And what could be better than this where you do your farming and also entertain your guests. Tourists visiting such places can relish a combination of special interest, need and leisure, all that makes it different from conventional tourism.

## PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN AGRITOURISM

For the development of Agritourism agripreneurs, farmer organizations, co-operatives, funding institutions, NGOs and agribusiness companies need to come together to take up these ventures together with the help of farmers, government agencies and tour operators. Transporters and the hospitality industry are also involved and would benefit in the process. The PPP model provides an appropriate structure for the development of such projects.

The involvement of the state government becomes very important not only in developing such initiatives but to extensively consider the benefits that will ultimately reach the local farmer community. Sustainability monitoring also needs to be taken care of by the government. The major



issue is to develop the project considering the long term sustainability of the entire area, population, carrying capacities and farmer benefit. A structured Public Private Partnership approach on Agritourism needs to be evolved after considering the following prime objectives:



**Rural Homestay in Baghsvar District, Uttarakhand**

- All Agritourism activities have to be sustainable;
- Focus on environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability criteria;
- Local communities should benefit economically and culturally from tourism;
- Ecologically sustainable development;
- Minimize impact by visitors;
- Better environment and better health;
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect;
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts;
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation;
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people;
- Raise sensitivity to host countries' political, environmental, and social climate;
- Support international human rights and labour agreements.

A farm-based agritourism site needs to be developed on the lines of Public Private Partnership which will take into account the best possible practices and also set an example for all the stakeholders to start such initiatives. Primarily this model farm will showcase the ability of states as a brand for their agricultural produce, promote educational tours, agricultural festivals and fairs, appeals to special



March 2016

## FACE TO FACE



*"I believe that agri-tourism can be an important driver in poverty alleviation through the creation of sustainable livelihood and diversification of rural economies. Extension and advisory services could play a major role in strengthening agri-tourism. But to do this, their capacities need considerable enhancement."*

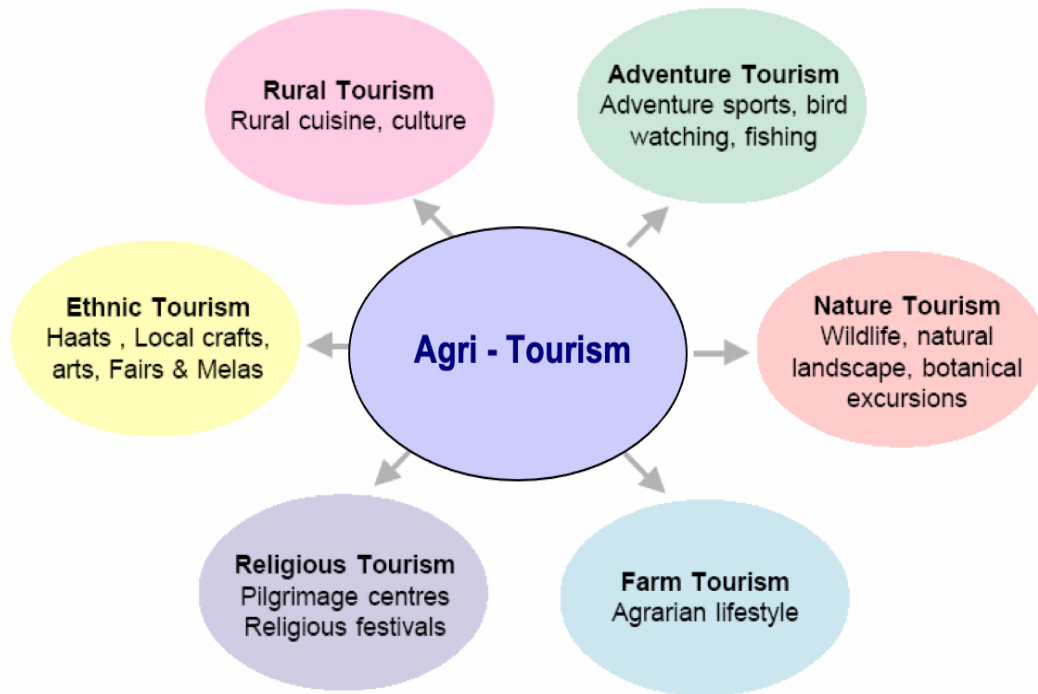
**Shri Pandurang Taware**  
**Founder & Managing Director**  
**Agri-tourism Development Corporation Pvt Ltd, Maharashtra**

*Shri. Pandurang Taware has received several national and international awards for his work on agri-tourism. Mr Gopal Naidu recently interviewed Shri. Taware to understand the potential of agri-tourism and some of the challenges it faces in India.*

**AESA Face to Face Interview with Shri Pandurang Taware,**  
**Agri-tourism Development Corporation Pvt Ltd, Maharashtra**  
<https://www.aesanetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/FF4.pdf>

interest groups as an experience of the village life style, thereby creating a tremendous market for both domestic and foreign tourists.

Some areas in India have been successful in developing Agritourism. These include: Maharashtra (Pune and Baramati region); Coorg and other regions in Karnataka; Sikkim, Himachal and Uttarakhand (especially on rural homestay models). There are other isolated projects in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, MP and Orissa developed with Agritourism as a theme.

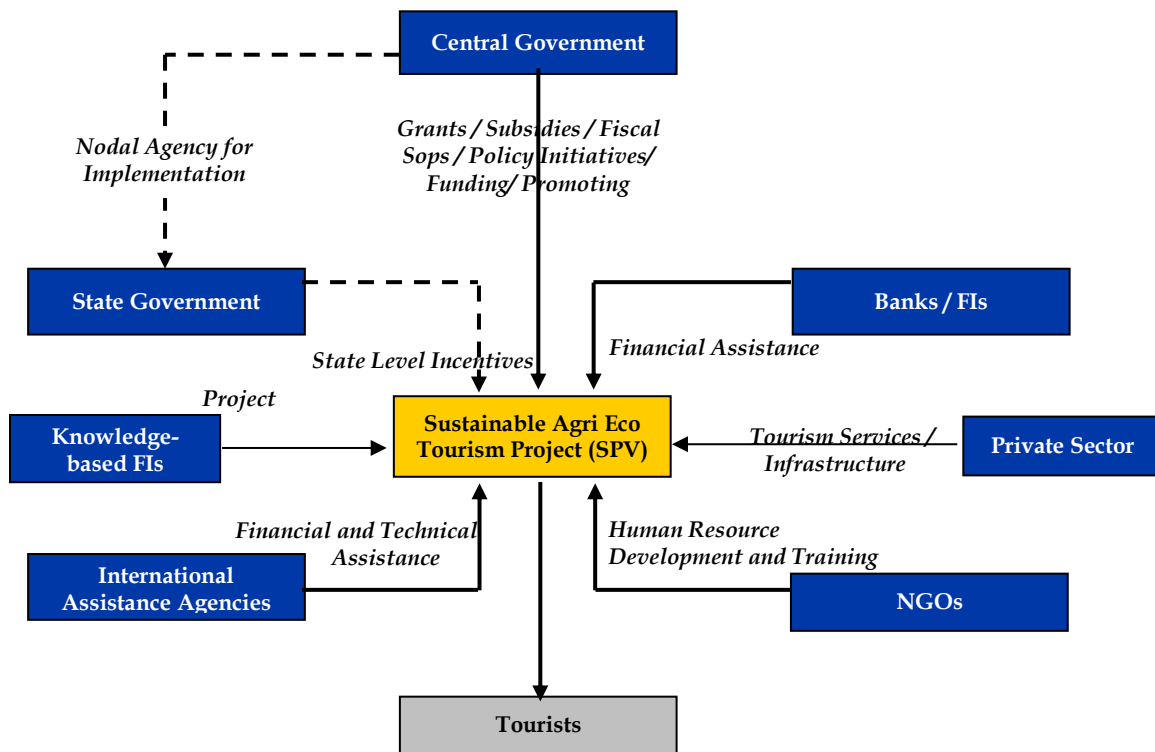


Activity based linkages of Agritourism



An agritourism unit near Pune

The SPV chart below shows the roles of all the stakeholders in the Agritourism business.



## ENDNOTE

The benefits of tourism are well known as it boosts regional development by developing infrastructure, increasing government earnings and revenues through foreign exchange, providing employment to local population, besides enabling lasting peace in conflict ridden areas. Therefore, governments should take up agritourism as a new thrust area and all the stakeholders should take responsibility to promote agritourism. The following steps are critical.

- Agripreneurs should join hands with tourism industry for services;
- Efforts should be made to train local manpower to enter this industry in large numbers;
- Better sharing and dissemination of information on Agritourism through internet and satellite channels;
- Offers made available through major tour operators. They sell it along with other holiday packages;
- The Department of Tourism promoting India as an Agritourism destination in the international market.

The capacities of Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) in this area need to be considerably enhanced in order to identify, encourage, and support farmers and agripreneurs who could potentially initiate agrotourism enterprises. We need specific training modules and programmes for training of trainers in this area so that EAS providers can organize training and capacity building of farmer groups. When this happens we can look forward to an exciting journey where farmers become agripreneurs offering agritourism that can enhance the tourism potential of India to its fullest in a sustainable manner. This is a win-win for both the economy and society as a whole.

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