

A STUDY ON FARMER'S WILLINGNESS TO OPT FOR AGRITOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TELANGANA

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ABSTRACT

Background: The Agritourism is a Special Interest Tourism (SIT) and created buzz among the agripreneurs in India. In the last few decades, the concept of agritourism is gaining popularity which is an alternative income in the agriculture. Agriculture is the major occupation for people in India than other developing countries, which is considered backbone of the country's employment. **Objectives:** Sensing the importance, this study aims to identify farmers willingness to opt Agritourism, the awareness of farmers regards with agritourism, and to explore the various tourism attractions in and around. **Methodology:** Data were collected from 48 farmers of Mulugu district, at selected mandalas, Telangana. Using Purposive sampling by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods from which information was collected i.e., one to one, focused group interviews and questionnaire. **Results:** The study revealed major respondents are highly dependent on farming. Around 50% of the farmers having their own land. As per data 100% of the family were involved in the farming activities. Irrespective of the season 38% of the farmers do agriculture both rabi and kharif. Clearly 63% of the farmers are unaware of agritourism concept, still majority i.e., 80% of the farmers are looking for alternative income, breakthrough 46% of the farmers have given willingness to opt agritourism. On positive note 55% of the farmers would like to promote their village's art and craft. 44% of the farmers clearly mentioned that they are not happy with selling rate of harvested crop. Finally entire Mulugu district is blessed with all tourism attraction like historical, natural, religious, and cultural. **Conclusion:** It can be concluded by the research that there is need for awareness on agritourism and lack of knowledge on alternate income and alternate tourism.

Key Words: Agritourism, Alternative Income, Farmers Willingness, Alternative Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

"The discovery of agriculture was the first big step toward a civilized life." - Arthur Keith

Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for about 58% of India's population. Indian rural population, 65.53% of the total geographical area of India, lives in

rural areas. Telangana's nominal gross state domestic product for the year 2020- 2021 stands at ₹11.05 lakh crore. Agriculture is the backbone of Telangana's economy. Initiation of agritourism in developing countries is steadily increasingly (Akpinar et al., 2005; Malkanthi & Routry, 2011; Kunasekaran et al., 2012). Whereas in developing

countries Agritourism development predominantly based on the challenges faced by the farmers which need to be understood and clearly defined, which need to be promoted at grass root levels (Vishwanath et al., 2022). Farmer's push and pull factors for farm diversification is like agritourism studies have been studied in the Columbia (Vaugeois et al., 2017). In addition to all these farmers motivational elements on well-established agritourism centers in the Romania (Ciolac, et al., 2019) have been studied by different scholars. In developed countries sustainable development is witnessed by implementing agritourism notably in rural settlements (Ciolac, et al., 2019). Most of the farm lands are utilized for agritourism and considering farming as secondary, where farmers owned small amounts of land as farming encouraged the tourist PYO (Pick-Your-Own) farm produce (McGehee & Kim, 2004). Comparing to various farm activities agritourism is the most successful venture in terms of earning profits, local employability, conversing natural and cultural heritage (Barbieri, 2013). However, these studies did not consider willingness of farmer to start Agritourism. Similar studies like, willingness to establish community- based agritourism and farmer's willingness and strategies for agritourism tourism is used as an important tool to not only in community or rural development but also for poverty elevation. Ample number studies conducted on Agritourism in well developed countries, highlighted on developed agritourism destinations (Brian et al., 2006; Barbieri, 2008). Adding to these the attitude of agriprenures in developing countries who are not practicing in agritourism presently should be investigated and their willingness in agritourism in the future. Agritourism implementation is primarily based on farmers willingness since their attributes are the key factors which determine agritourism success.

development in Nepal (Bhatta & Ohe, 2019). Latest study on challenges and suggestions of farmers to promote Agrotourism in Karnataka, India (Manjuprakash, & Vishwanath, 2022) have mentioned agritourism, failed to

consider factors related willingness of farmers to adapt agritourism. By extensive review of previous studies there are no studies pertaining to willingness of farmer to adapt agritourism in India. Considering this, study aims to investigate farmer's willingness to opt Agritourism for sustainable development in Telangana.

Definitions of Agritourism accepted by various researcher across the globe in different geographical regions considering their individual characteristics. There are various terms used to define; Different labels such as Agritourism, Agrotourism, Farmtourism, and Farm-based tourism. Agritourism: Any such practice developed on a working farmland with the intention of engaging visitors (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). A peculiar type of rural tourism in which the organizing homestead is integrated into an agricultural estate is occupied by the owner, allowing tourists to participate in agricultural activities on the property premises (Marques, 2006). Rural entrepreneur which combines both a working farm environment and a commercial tourism component (McGehee, 2009) and (McGehee et al., 2007). Tourism components which are directly involves along with the agrarian environment, agrarian stays (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997).

Agrotourism: The tourism activities which are handled in country side by single owner whose prime income is in the direct and indirect sector of the economy (Lakovidou, 1997). The tourist involvement of small-scale, family in origin, being raised in rural areas by people employed in farming (Kizos & Losifides, 2007). The farm owners are providing opportunities for tourist on working farmland (Wall, 2000).

Farm Tourism: Providing rural tourism on working farmlands where the different working conditions part of the tourism product from the consumer view (Clarke, 1999). Here the tourist activities are closely associated with farm activities and sometimes with the viability of the housework (Gladstone & Morris, 2000). The revenue generated enterprises on working farmlands.

Provide bed and breakfast as a part of a package, along with various entertainment and nature-based tourism-NBT (Ollenburg & Buckley, 2007). As a part of rural tourism, depending on geographical location, the accommodation is given to the visitor by the farm owner on full-time or part-time basis (Oppermann, 1996).

Farm-based tourism: Creating an experience attracting people onto a farmland (Evans & Ilbery, 1989).

“An alternative farm enterprise” (Bowler et al., 1996) One form of rural tourism in which farm visitors involve in agricultural activities such as sowing, planting and harvesting, while farm land owner provide accommodation, food and develop activities on the farm land (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). Agritourism is a diverse tool which benefits farmer by generating income directly to the farmer as well as local community (Petroman & Petroman, 2010).

Willingness of Farmers opting Agritourism: Developing agritourism, in different conditions should be considered; like willingness is a key factor, which need to understand before implementation of any kind of agritourism. Farmers were inclined to adopt farm diversification based on three types of reasons: social, economic, and external (Nickerson, et al., 2001). In India Maharashtra is the pioneer in agritourism, local farmers given share 70% of total revenue. This factor motivated local farmers to continue agritourism as their alternative income which more sustainable business venture than any other business projects (Chadda & Bhakare, 2012). Similarly, this alternative income on farm land motivated the farmersto continue their tourism activities in developed countries (Nickerson, et al., 2001; McGehee & Kim, 2004). Even though income a motivating factor universally, the push and pull factors will keep varying from place to place. Various studies determined agritourism linked farmers perceptions. If farmers are not satisfied with returns on their farm land there is little chances of establishing agritourism on their farm lands (Kunasekaran et al., 2012). However, the interest and

perceptions of farmer regarding adapting agritourism based individual countries economic situation. Sensing agritourism as sustainable approach for the rural development which yielded high potential for economic, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits (Obeidat & Hamadneh, 2022).

Agritourism not only plays a role in rural areas in remote regions (Chen et al., 2018) but also has an impact on rural areas with various social–ecological functions, such as production, social life, culture, ecology, and so on, especially for farmers. Agritourism can cause changes to and lead to the building of farmers' lifestyles, transform many traditional subsistence farmers into modern subsistence farmers.

In today's scenario, India's rural revitalization strategy has five basic requirements: prosperous industry, livable ecology, civilized countryside lifestyle, effective governance and a prosperous life. Agritourism, as one of the important driving forces for the realization of the basic requirements of the rural revitalization, has attracted increased attention from global tourism and academic circles (JiuXia et al., 2020).

Based on the available literature review, of various researchers and academicians on farmer's willingness to opt agritourism is been neglected area. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap.

The objectives of the study were:

- To know the farmers willingness for opting agritourism as their alternative income.
- To understand the awareness of farmers regarding agritourism.
- To know the various tourism attractions nearby (historical, natural, religious, and cultural).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study adopted qualitative and quantitative research methodology, used (semi-structured and structured questionnaire and focused group interviews) for getting uniformed data collection where eclose ended

questions were constructed. The study was conducted at Mulugu District, Telangana.

Locale: Mulugu District, Telangana

Sampling Design: A random study was conducted in Mulugu district, Telangana, where selected mandals has been chosen. Sample size was 48 farmers in and around Mulugu district. Purposive sampling technique was applied. Since population is larger in size, the purposive sampling swift's the work by narrowing sample and we got the feedback form right respondents.

Tools and Technique: In this research, the primary data was collected by the semi-structured questionnaire. A close rapport was developed by the researcher along with a self-introduction. The researcher was quite informal in a conversational style with farmer. The questionnaire was given and read out to the agriprenuer/farmer and the data is recorded. Data was collected, on socio-demographics, willingness, and various tourism attractions at the locale. The questionnaire was in English, due to the language barrier, translated verbally into local language.

Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis: Collected data is classified and presented in percentage form through graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data has been collected from the respondents are from diversified age group ranging 28 years to 58 years old. Based on Simple Random Sampling, out of 48 respondents there were 60.4% as males and 39.4% as females. Sampling has taken place in the Mulugu District of Telangana State particularly in Eturnagaram, Govindaraopet, Tadvai, Venkatpur and Wazeedu Mandals.

The data signifies that the whole family or the majority members in the family did farming as their livelihood. Major number of respondents were doing farming as their primary source of income for more than 8 years. The younger generation with 1 to 5 years of experience is 22.9 percent wherein 8 to 10 years of experience is 29.2 percent. 62.5% of

the respondents own their piece of land wherein 37.5% were farming in a land that is taken for lease.

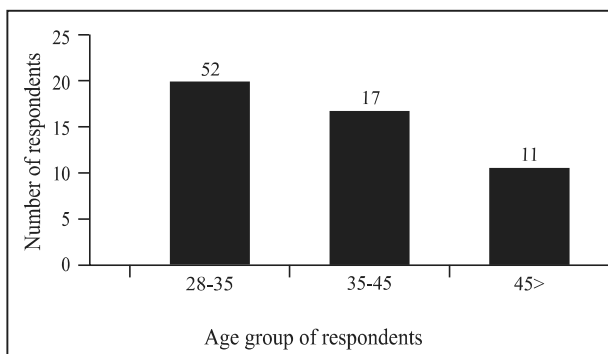


Figure 1: Age group of respondents

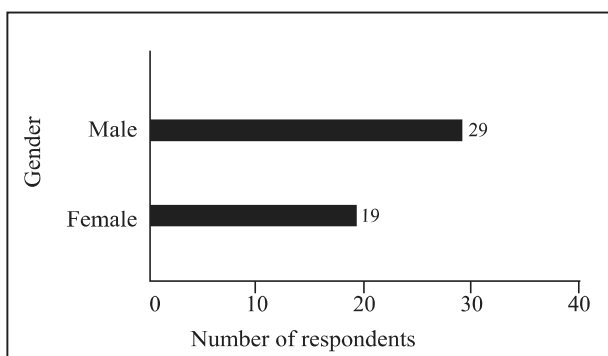


Figure 2: Gender of respondents

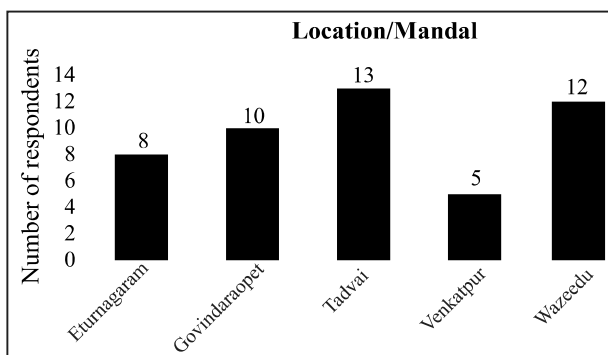


Figure 3: Location of the Mandals

To be precise, Rabi crops are sown in winter from October to December and harvested in summer from April to June. Kharif crops are grown with the onset of monsoon and these are harvested in between September and October. 37.5 % of the population grow their crop in both the seasons whereas 31.3 % in Rabi and 31.3 % in Kharif.



Figure 4: Duration of farming

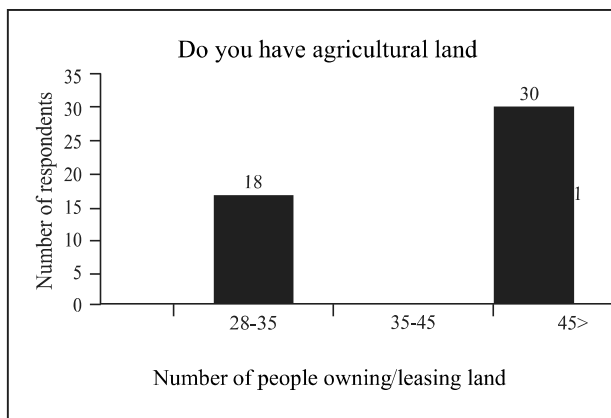


Figure 5: Respondents owning and leasing land

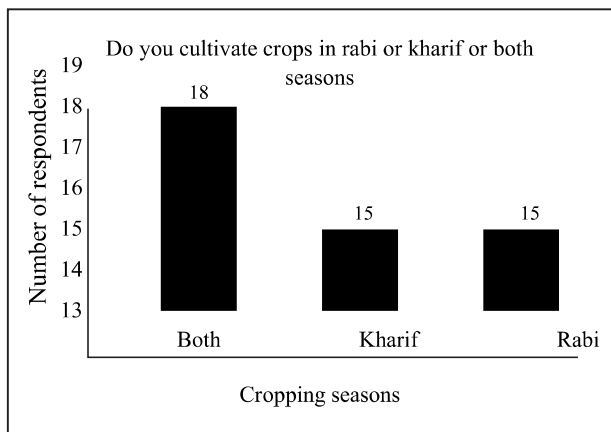


Figure 6: Cultivation of Rabi and Kharif crops

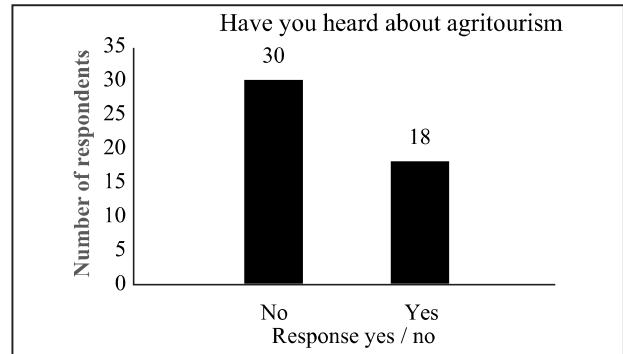


Figure 7: Response for agritourism

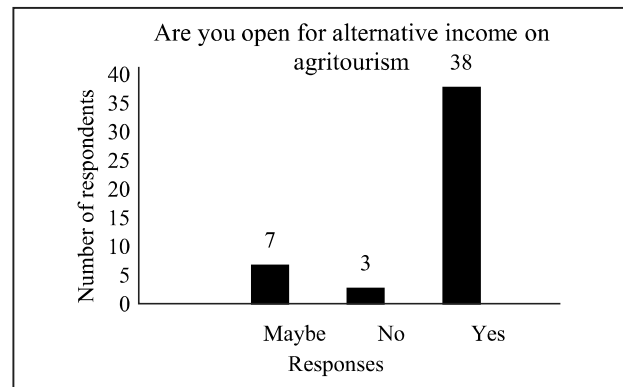


Figure 8: Openness for alternative income on agritourism

The data clearly indicates that 62.5 % of the respondents are not aware and never heard of agritourism. The younger generation who opted for agriculture recently were aware of Agritourism. The data indicates that 80% Number of respondents of the population are open for the alternative source of income which directly or indirectly related to Agritourism. 14.8% of the population are in state of acceptance.

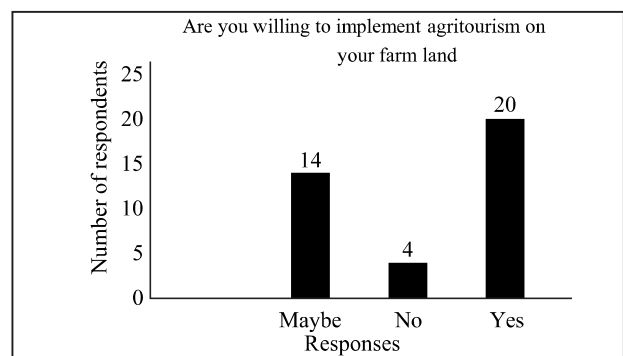


Figure 9: Willingness to implement agritourism on farmland

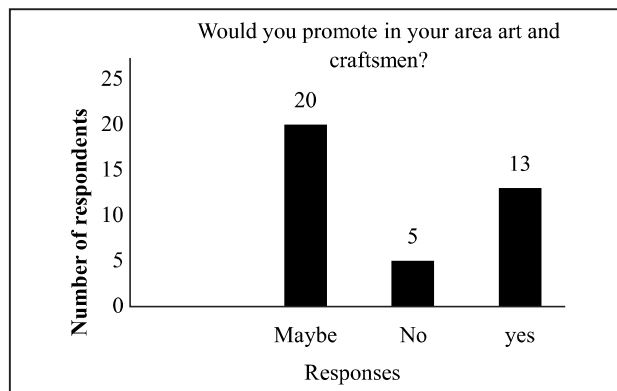


Figure 10: Response for promotion of art and craftsmen

The chart clearly says, 45.8 % of population is in stage of yet to decide as in many out of them respondents have taken the farm land for lease. 4.17% of respondents have accepted to implement agritourism in their farm but 12.5% have felt that agritourism might somehow affect that and may create damage to their land.

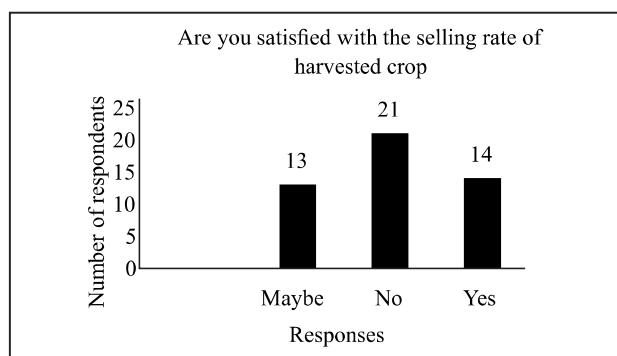


Figure 11: Satisfaction with the selling rate of harvested crop

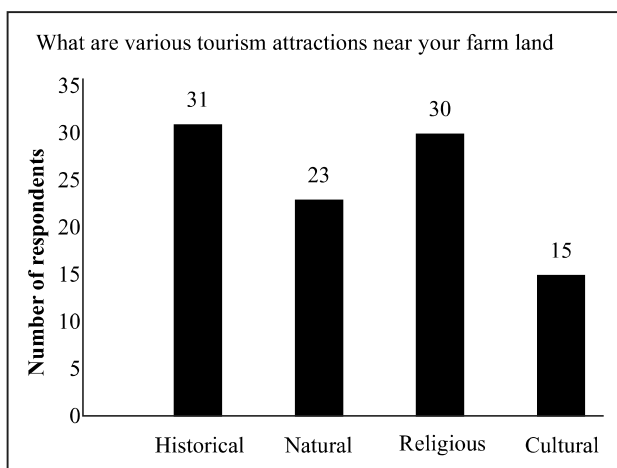


Figure 12: Attractions near farm land

Major number of respondents were not aware of the advantages of promoting the local art and craftsmanship. As the response shows 54.2 % of the population is yet to decide and 10 % are not ready to promote. The data signifies that 43.8% of the population is not all satisfied with the selling rate. Keeping in mind the cost involved in production, transportation, market demand and supply; the selling rate has been low and unable to meet the needs and investments for the next cropping. As Mulugu district is surrounded by natural attractions like Etunagaram forest, Bodega falls, Laknavaram Lake; Historical sites like Ramappa Temple, Thousand Pillar Temple which can also be considered as religious destinations and cultural attractions specially on Gadwal Sarees; This place can be best for choosing agritourism along with promotion of other tourism forms. As per (Chen et al., 2018), agrotourism in rural areas can be focused keeping in mind the socio economic factors. Thus, the aim of alternative tourism can be achieved. Keeping in mind the willingness of farmers for agrotourism (Akpınar et al., 2005), the farmers may transform from traditional subsistence to the modern subsistence. Government support should be given in order to develop a traditional segment of tourism i.e., Agrotourism and encourage the younger generations for sustainable livelihood activities. Infrastructural development helps the remote areas in order to get the essentials more conveniently. With development in agrotourism, there is scope of rural development which directly and indirectly affects the country's gross domestic product. (Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). By introducing farm-based tourism, one can get closer to the nature and get the actual experience of farming.

CONCLUSION

As per the study, the willingness of the farmers have been observed for development of economic independence through alternate source of Income. It was found that there is a lack of awareness on the segment of Agritourism. Moreover, the Government has to take the initiative by promoting tourism

initiative by promoting tourism on the countryside by involving tourists into farming activities. A PPP [Public Private Partnership] initiative can be taken to develop the infrastructural facilities which helps the farmers to commute with more ease. Scope can be seen in the areas of Alternate tourism through agritourism; Socio-Economic Development of Farmers; Awareness and Willingness Creation by providing in-depth knowledge on the advantages of having alternate income.

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