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## 24. A Study of Scope for Agro -Tourism in India

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### 1.0 Introduction

Agriculture is backbone of Indian Economy. Agriculture generally means the growing and raising crops and livestock. Majority of people of our country lives in the rural areas. Activities such as agriculture, forestry, and fishery are the means of livelihood in these rural areas. Near about 85 per cent of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture. Near about 26 per cent of GDP comes from agriculture. More than profession, business, agriculture is culture. So adding additional income generating activities to existing agriculture would certainly increase contribution of agriculture to national GDP. According to Dr. M.S. Swaminathan agrarian activities will be the only sector for our country which will provide major job opportunities for youth. Today the returns from agriculture sector are slow and low. Because of agriculture commodities price is not determined by the farmer but somebody else. Tourism industry is the potential industry for generating foreign exchange and employment for the developing country like India. Tourism sector has the potential to stimulate other economic sectors through its backward and forward linkages. Travel and tourism are human-resource intensive, employing directly and indirectly. In agro-tourism there is the economic diversification and technological improvement and its extension with preservation of art, culture, natural resources in an integrated manner. Agro- tourism centres provide scope for opening the rural life which is rich in diversity

### 2.0 Overview of the India's Tourism Sector:

India is endowed with both natural and man-made attractions such as coast lines, snow-capped mountains, wild life, heritage sights, monuments and hearth-taking picturesque etc. India has tremendous potential to promote inbound and outbound tourism. Tourism industry is the potential industry for generating foreign exchange and employment for the developing country like India. Tourism sector has the potential to stimulate other economic sectors through its backward and forward linkages. Travel and tourism are human-resource intensive, employing directly and indirectly. It is estimated that one job in the core tourism industry creates about one



and a half additional or indirect jobs in the tourism related economy. Tourism has emerged as one of the largest global economic activities. As per the estimate of World Travel and Tourism Council (W.T.T.C.), tourism generated more than worth \$ 5 trillion of output equivalent to about 8 per cent of total world GNP.

In Table 1 below, we see that in 2005 near about 4 per cent of world tourist arrivals were visited to India for tourist purpose. It rises to 14.57 per cent in 2016. India's percentage share in world increased from 0.49 to 1.18 during 2005 to 2016. India's rank in world regarding foreign tourist arrivals is increased from 44<sup>th</sup> in 2006 to 24<sup>th</sup> in 2015.

**Table: 1 Foreign Tourist Arrival and Share of India in World Arrivals**

Year	International Tourist Arrivals in World (In Million)	FTAs in India# ( In Million)	Percentage Share and Rank of India in World	
			% Share	Rank
2005	803	3.92	0.49	43 <sup>rd</sup>
2006	846	4.45	0.53	44 <sup>th</sup>
2007	894	5.08	0.57	41 <sup>st</sup>
2008	917	5.28	0.58	41 <sup>st</sup>
2009	883	5.17	0.59	41 <sup>st</sup>
2010	948	5.78	0.61	42 <sup>nd</sup>
2011	994	6.31	0.63	38 <sup>th</sup>
2012	1039	6.58	0.63	41 <sup>st</sup>
2013	1087	6.97	0.64	41 <sup>st</sup>
2014	1134	13.11	1.15	24 <sup>th</sup>
2015	1184	13.28	1.12	24 <sup>th</sup>
2016	1235	14.57	1.18	25 <sup>th</sup>

Note: #: Excludes Nationals of the country residing abroad.

figures of ITAs in India, and accordingly the percentage share and rank, has increased for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 due to inclusion of NRIs arrival data

Source: www.indiastat.com

In below Table 2 and chart we can show that Foreign Exchange Earnings from tourism in India was US \$ 7493 million in 2005. It increased to US \$ 23146 million in 2016. This shows net US \$ 15653 increase in Foreign Exchange Earnings during 2005 to 2016. But when we see the percentage change during 2005 to 2016 it decreased from 21.4 to 9.8 per cent. This shows that there is need to attract foreign tourist to visit our country and our tourist places. We should be

focus to develop our tourist places and to diversify tourism to agro-tourism. It will be beneficial to our economy and to sustain our agriculture and allied sector.

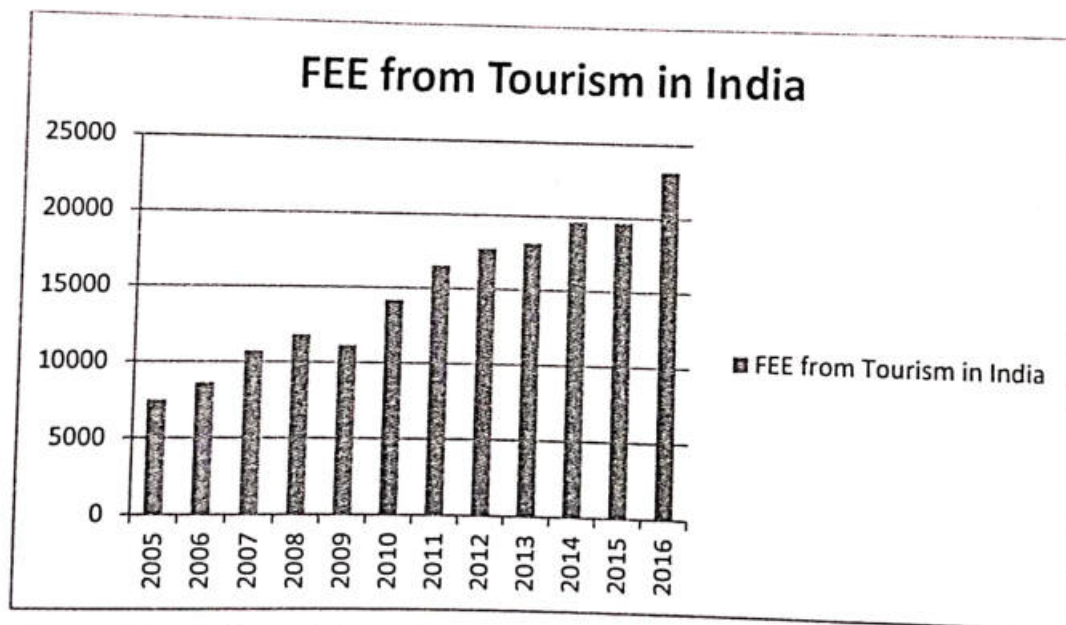
Table: 2 Foreign Exchange Earnings from Tourism in India

Year	In US \$ Million	% age Change
2005	7493	21.4
2006	8634	15.2
2007	10729	24.3
2008	11832	10.3
2009	11136	-5.9
2010#	14193	27.5
2011#	16564	16.7
2012#	17737	7.1
2013#	18133	2.2
2014	19657	6.6
2015	19676	2.8
2016	23.146*	9.8

Note: #: Advance Estimates

\*: In Billion

Source: www.indiastat.com



### 3.0 Meaning and Definition of Agro-Tourism:

Agro-tourism is the latest concept in the Indian tourism industry. It brings major primary sector- agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. The agro-tourism is symbiosis between tourism and agriculture. It is a key element of an environmentally and socially responsible



tourism. It is an economic activity that occurs when people link travel with agricultural products, services or experiences.

Agro-Tourism is defined as "Travel that combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations- all within a tourism experience." According to Mr. Pandurang Tavare (ATDC, Pune), "Agro-Tourism is that agri-business activity, when a native farmers or person of the area offers tours to their agriculture farm to allow a person to view them growing, harvesting and processing locally grown foods, such as coconuts, pineapple, sugarcane, corn or any agriculture produce the person would not encounter in their city or home country."

In agro-tourism there is the economic diversification and technological improvement and its extension with preservation of art, culture, natural resources in an integrated manner.

Agro- tourism centres provide scope for opening the rural life which is rich in diversity. All age groups of family i.e. children, youngsters, middle and old age people, male or female can get recreational opportunities in villages.

We know very well that agriculture alone can no longer be dependent upon to provide the economic stability for rural villages and communities. Because of constant instability of net farm incomes and the loss of jobs in rural areas have led to human and financial capital drain from many rural areas, leaving many farming families and business under economic stress. So the integration of tourism and agricultural activities will open up new opportunities and can play the key role to provide various jobs and to improve the economic status of rural people.

#### **4.0 Benefits of Agro- Tourism Centres**

- Agro-tourism has potential to improve the situation of traditional agriculture and local farmers.
- It would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the farmers and rural people.
- It provides employment opportunities to the farmers, family members of farmer and local youth. They won't need to migrate from their own village to other place in search of job.
- Urban peoples can understand the rural life through agro-tourism and know about the agricultural activities.
- It can help to expand the tourist areas in the country and reduce burden on the other traditional tourist centres.

- Food, accommodation, recreation and travel is available in minimum cost as compare to urban tourist places.
- It provides market to food, agri- products, handicrafts, traditional goods.
- It provides information about rural languages, culture, tradition, dresses and lifestyle.
- Agro-tourism could create awareness about rural life and knowledge about agriculture.
- Urban people who always face stress in day to day life can get peace and relaxation.
- It helps to strengthen the local economy and contribute to reduce poverty.

#### **5.0 Problems of Agro- Tourism Industry:**

- Majority of rural peoples are low educated; uneducated and untrained and have low capital so they can't develop agro-tourism centre.
- In rural areas staying facilities are not in well condition.
- In many villages there is lack of entertainment services, rental services and other recreational facilities.
- Majority of farmers have limited land holding, low per capita income, lack of water resources. So they cannot create/ develop new products for agro-tourism.
- The process of establish agro-tourism is critical process.
- There is need of government assistance to agro tourism enterprises regarding technical, financial, marketing support.
- Small farmers have lack of perfect knowledge about agro-tourism. They have weak communication skill, lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure. They have less courage to undertake entrepreneurial task.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

India is endowed with both natural and man-made attractions such as coast lines, snow-capped mountains, wild life, heritage sights, monuments and hearth-taking picturesque etc. India has tremendous potential to promote inbound and outbound tourism. Domestic and foreign tourist visits are increasing. There is scope for agro-tourism industry. It brings major primary sector- agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. The agro-tourism is symbiosis between tourism and agriculture. It is a key element of an environmentally and socially responsible tourism. Now a day agro-tourism industries are increasing in India. But still there are various obstacles in establishing agro-tourism industry. There are various problems facing agro-tourism industry in India



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