Research Methodology and Conceptual Model

Research Methodology is a way to find out the result of a given problem on a specific matter or problem that is also referred as research problem. In Methodology, researcher uses different criteria for solving/searching the given research problem. Different sources use different type of methods for solving the problem. If we think about the word “Methodology”, it is the way of searching or solving the research problem.

This chapter contains conceptual model, research hypotheses, research methodology, methodology used in the research. Conceptual model will also be used to undertake for analysis of study. In last research methodology will be offered so that set objectives can be attained successfully.

Agritourism is increasingly recognized as an important strategy that can contribute to agricultural development through diversification of farming activities and providing opportunities to rest, relax, enjoy and study about farming for the visitors. At present, agritourism is promoted by most of the countries in the world aiming at sustainable rural development. Since Maharashtra is an agricultural state in India, it is the time to analyze the potential of this strategy under local conditions. The study was conducted in Baramati District, of Maharashtra using a field survey and some group discussions with farmers and respective state officials of these districts. Results revealed that there are several possibilities for the establishment of agritourism in the country.

Agritourism has received increasing attention in academic literature as it has been widely promoted both in developed and developing countries like India. Based upon an empirical study in a rural village in Baramati District, Maharashtra State, this study examines the management of agritourism on an ethnic community and discusses the challenges faced by residents who are attempting to improve their livelihoods through tourism.

A qualitative study of selected households indicates positive experiences both economically and socio-culturally. Agritourism has not only provided a
supplementary income and new employment opportunities to the rural community, but has also increased the conservation of the environment and appreciation of minority cultures and rural lifestyle. However, the development of agritourism is facing a number of challenges, and government aid is needed to support farming families establishing and operating tourism enterprises.

3.1 Significance and Scope of the Study

Promotion of Agritourism enables preservation of family farms and they are the backbone of rural India. Early in our history, this country was a land of farmers, settling from coast to coast while providing food for their families. Through the years the number of farmers has decreased, and the number of families fed per farmer has increased. Fewer people from the urban India are around who remember what it was like to grow up on a farm. Some have experienced farm life by visiting grandparents or relatives in rural India. Families and specifically children should have the opportunity to learn that food is produced on a farm and is not just a product of the local grocery store.

Today urban children’s world is restricted in the closed door school, classes, cartoon programs on the television, video games, chocolates, soft drinks, spicy fast food, computer, internet, and so on, they see mother nature only on television screen,

Now it has become very necessary for the children to know the traditional agricultural farming activities, and other businesses dependant on agriculture.

Here children come very close to Mother Nature and learn many new things in life... Children get firsthand experience of the agricultural activity on the farm, they can freely roam in the 110 acres of agricultural farm, see and touch various types of fruits and domestic animals like cows, sheep, goats, emu birds, learn the milking process of the cows and goats, get an insight into how silk is produced, raw jaggery and sugar is made. Agri Tourism is a wonderful way to make students / children aware of the village life. Agri Tourism Offers rustic farm tours, farm vacations, seasonal harvest festivals, village fairs. Hence there are lots of local, regional, national and even international visitors attracted towards it.

Onsite Accommodation facilities and amenities available at Baramati
Chapter 3
Research Methodology and Conceptual Model

- 13 twin sharing accommodation with modest bedrooms, self-contained washrooms, toilets & bathrooms,
- Good quality bedding mattresses, bed linen.
- Dining facilities with genuine Maharashtrian home cooked food
- Window screens and coverings.
- Clothes storage and door locks.
- Electricity Generator Back Up facility (limited hours).
- On site Medical Help and Doctors on call, 24 hrs security personnel.
- Dormitory accommodation for bigger groups

3.2 Agritourism Development and Management Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEPS</th>
<th>PROCESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Identifying the objectives and Hypothesis | • Identifying the objectives  
  • Comparing the objectives  
  • Create the Hypothesis  
  • Integration of the objectives with the more |
| • Researches survey and Methods | • Quantitative data  
  • Qualitative data  
  • Social, economic, political and environmental factors |
| • Analyses and Interpretation | • Evaluating the data  
  • Reflection to future of the necessities and capacities |
| • Suggestions and Conclusion | • Preparation of alternative plans  
  • Deciding upon the most appropriate policies |
| • Implication & Management | • Implication  
  • Monitoring  
  • Evaluating process |

Source: Table that is adopted from Shapley and Sharpley, (1997) is taken from Gündüz, (2004)
Considering a board meeting of a corporate house under a mango tree with only a blackboard for writing down the information. This is what the Agritourism Development Corporation, Pune, is aiming at. A pilot project has been kicked off in Baramati in Maharashtra. The unit offers tourists edutainment farm tours in Baramati district, Malegaon area where they are told about the cultivation of grapes, sugarcane, pomegranate, guava, and watermelon or get an insight into how silk is produced and raw jaggery is made. It includes Marathi programmes such as Bharud, Jagran Gondhal, Shekoti folk songs (all these are combinations of songs, drama, acting with music and dance).

About 25 more such locations have been identified in Maharashtra as rural tourist destinations. In the coming three months, Agri Tourism would be developing Dapoli, Mulshi and Reha (in the foothills of Hinjewadi) as new locations. The aim is to have five such locations as autopilots, which would be ready within a year and then this company from Pune would be looking at locations in Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. The services offered include accommodation in the farm cottages or farm bungalow where tourist can eat ethnic food and observe rustic life at close quarters. Agri Tourism is not just all about staying in a village and relishing authentic rural food but this is an opportunity to take a closer look at the life of farmers and the village life. The company offers various packages as tour to this agri farm including an overnight stay. The farm tour also includes visits to goat and emu farms. This is first such effort in India on an organized level.

(Source: Pandurang Taware Director Sales & Marketing Agri Tourism Development Corporation, Pune)

3.3 Problem Statement

Problems of Agritourism in Maharashtra

The government agencies such as Agri Tourism Development Corporation, Pune and Maharashtra State Agri & Rural Tourism Co-Operative Federation Ltd - Mart Pune, has created enough awareness about the importance of agri tourism in the minds of both the farmers on the one hand and the tourists community on the other. It is also helping the farmers in all the possible ways to
enrich their knowledge and capacity to attract more and more customers- local and international as well.

However, a number of farmers involved in the agree tourism business are facing problems which are as follows:

### 3.4 Rationale of the study

Agri Tourism is one of the upcoming emerging sector in world as well as in the country. Concepts like Agri-tourism are providers of niche offerings as products which are expected create more demand. India ranked 11th among 184 countries in terms of travel and tourism’s total contribution to GDP in 2015 and the travel and tourism sector in India estimated to contribute 9 per cent of total employment, generating 37.4 million jobs in 2015. Agritourism in state Maharashtra has witnessed to the growth in the past years and helped additional income to the farmers.

#### Tourists Arrival at Agro Tourism Centers in Maharashtra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of tourists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>31200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>38900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>46700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>49850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>51254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>55282</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Increasing trend in tourists visited Maharashtra from 2007 to 2015
Problems related with globalization:

1. Tremendous competition because of globalization.

Problems Related with conditions of Farmers

2. Ignorance of farmers;
3. Fear of misinterpretation of the Agri Tourism concept;
4. Preservation of Family farms;
5. Presence of unorganized sector in the Agri Tourism industry;
6. Problem of hygiene and basic requirements considering foreign visitors;
7. Decrease in number of farmers and increase in number of families fed per farmer;
8. Agriculture crop growth is also weakened due to the uncertain climatic conditions;

Problems related with indifference of Government

- There is no minimum support price guarantee also;
- Insufficient subsidies as compared to their foreign counterparts and
- Absence of any regulatory authority to save farmer's interests.

3.5 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study was to determine the possibility of agritourism development in Baramati District.

The specific objectives were assessment of the important information on farming population and farm lands, identify the profile of farming community and identify the attractive features of the area for tourists. Conducting a SWOT analysis for agritourism sector of the country to study the important factors for the agritourism development was also another specific objective of this study.

1. To examine the effectiveness or otherwise of existing management practices in agritourism business for its all-round development;
2. To study the problems related to conditions of farmers and find out effective solutions;
3. To study the strategies to fight the competition due to globalization successfully;

4. To study the role of government and government agencies in uplifting the farmers and

5. To formulate the best strategies to innovate and build up agritourism

This study explores the perceived importance of agritourism in the accomplishment of different economic and intrinsic entrepreneurial goals. Economic goals relate to financial and market drivers, such as reducing debts, while intrinsic goals include personal and family pursuits.

Following are the other associating objective of the study

1. To study the steps to be taken to improve quality of life for visitors;

2. To study the steps to be taken to preserve farm land and open spaces in rural India;

3. To study the steps to be taken to create and preserve sources of fresh locally grown food;

4. To study the steps to be taken to create a place for urban families to experience agriculture and develop respect for the profession.

5. To study the steps to be taken for the overall upliftment of the farmers in rural areas;

6. To study the steps to be taken to improve the standard of living of the rural people there is a need to improve and increase the per capita income from farmers land as 90% of the rural community earns its livelihood from agriculture directly or indirectly and

7. To study the steps to be taken to undertake welfare activities for the rural youth particularly the school dropouts, illiterate backward and neglected rural women who constitute more than 50% of our rural population.

3.6 Hypotheses

H1Adequate development of Agritourism depends on effective management of the tourism business.
H2 Adequate development of Agritourism may not depend on effective management of the tourism business.

H3 Overall Development of Agritourism business in India is satisfactory.

H4 Overall Development of Agritourism business in India is satisfactory.

H5 Agritourism business may affect due to the effectiveness or otherwise of existing management practices.

H6 Agritourism business may not affect due to the effectiveness or otherwise of existing management practices.

3.7 Research Design

The research design for the present study was basically descriptive and exploratory in nature. The study started with exploratory research design in order to have a deeper insight of the Agritourism Business. This helps to formulate the research hypothesis for the present study.

Owing to the fact that Agritourism management is a relatively speaking a nascent field compared to other disciplines it is quite natural that most of the research studies will be of the type – exploratory.

According to Mouton (1996:175) research design “provides directions from the fundamental philosophical assumptions to research design as well as on data collection”. Research design involves a set of guidelines that can be followed in addressing a research problem (Creswell, 2014). Research design can also be used as a plan that describes or explains how research is to be carried out or can serve as a guideline with procedures on how research would be carried out. Research design also articulates what data is required, what methods will be used to collect data and how all of this will answer the research questions and also reflects the purpose the research is intended to achieve depending on the aim. Before embarking on the research process, the ontological foundation of the research problem should be clarified. According to Mouton (1996), this serves as a basis upon which methodological assumptions could be based upon.

This study therefore, will be an exploratory research based in a large measure on the collection of primary data and also the secondary sources.

(A) Nature of the study

It is exploratory type of research.

(B) Sample Design

(i) **Sampling units / Population**: Baramati District, Maharashtra State

(ii) **Sampling type**: Stratified Random Sampling.

(iii) **Sample size**: The total sample size were divided into three parts:

Participation in the study was limited to individuals 18 years of age or older owning and/or operating farms with diversified enterprises in Baramati District, Maharashtra State India.

The study sample was drawn from three sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agri Tourism Centers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and Executives working in Agri Tourism</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) **Data collection**

The data to be collected from Primary sources as well as Secondary sources:

**Primary sources:**

For Primary source a questionnaire will be prepared and this questionnaire will be filled by and scheduled interviews / personal observations.

And also three sources of evidence that Yin (2003) discusses were used in this study i.e. Interview, Documentation and Archival Records.

**Secondary sources:**

Data collected from internet, journals, magazines, text books etc. A sample of typical secondary source can be seen as per selected bibliography & references.
Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to "the development of the research background, research knowledge as well as its nature" (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007:107). It can also be defined with the help of a research paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), research paradigm is a framework comprising of perceptions, beliefs and understanding of theories and practices used to conduct research. A paradigm is not strictly a methodology, but a philosophy that guides the researcher on how research is supposed to be conducted. Williams (2011) adds that the combination of research philosophies and paradigms assists the researcher in developing an understanding and knowledge of the research topic. The author concludes that factors such as time and budget constraints may affect the research in terms of implementing a method in an effective way. However, through the use of an appropriate research philosophy and paradigm these factors can be eliminated.

Ontology

Research is based on underlying principles or beliefs about what constitute a valid research and which research methods are appropriate. According to Myers (1997), it is important to know the principles or beliefs before conducting or evaluating a research. The most pertinent philosophical beliefs are those relating to the underlying epistemology which guides the research. According Saunders et al. (2009), ontology refers to the reality that the researcher investigates and this reality can be subjective (subjectivism) or objective (objectivism). In this research, the reality is subjective.

Epistemology

The relationship between reality and the researcher is referred to as epistemology while methodology is the procedure used to investigate that reality (Healy & Perry, 2000). Epistemology refers to the assumptions or beliefs about knowledge and how it can be obtained. These assumptions underpin the research strategy and methods chosen as part of the strategy (Myers, 1997). According to Scotland (2012:9), “research paradigms are based upon their own epistemology and ontological assumptions and the philosophical underpinning of each paradigm can never be empirically proven or disproven".
Epistemological stances that can be followed are that of interpretive or positivism (Saunders et al. 2009). This study investigates the potential of ICT to enhance agritourism, a behavioral science phenomenon that cannot be understood through the empiricist approach. Consequently, the epistemology for this research is interpretive.

**Data Analysis**

Data collected was mainly qualitative in nature data were collected from the Agri tourism business centers.

Data was collected using printed and electronic questionnaires. This survey research is descriptive-relational in nature, and therefore non-experimental.

Data was tabulated, Charts, and graphs were used for comparative analysis. In addition to this, statistical tool like averages, ranking and chi square test were used.

A questionnaire addressing the study objectives was developed via adaptation of instruments from previous studies in the areas of agritourism and farm enterprise diversification (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2009; Barbieri et al., 2008; Barbieri & Mshenga, 2008). Researchers estimated that the questionnaire would require approximately 15 minutes for respondents to complete all questions. The questionnaire was distributed among different agritourisms in Baramati District.

This section also inquired about the importance of agritourism for accomplishing sixteen entrepreneurial goals using a five-point Likert type scale anchored in (1) Not Important and (5) Extremely Important.

**Study sample size and response rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Frame</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out of business reply</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valid subjects | 300 (84.50%)
---|---
**Number of Responses**
Total respondents (Tourist) | 300
Agri Tourism Centers | 5
Managers and Executives working in Agri Tourism | 50
Tourist | 300

**Thesis structure**
This study is divided into six chapters briefly outlined as follows:

**Chapter 1:** Introduction: Presents the introduction, background to research problem, Present status of Agritourism in Barahmati

**Chapter 2:** Review of Literatures: Presents the literature review on agritourism, The chapter also discusses the most common theories in Agritourism research and adopts the most appropriate theory for the study.

**Chapter 3:** Research Design and Methodology: Discuses the research design, methodologies and approaches used. Data collection methods, sampling techniques, analysis methods and ethical consideration of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

**Chapter 4:** Result Analysis and Interpretation: Examines and presents the results from the interviews with the respondents.

Limitation: Presents discussion of the Limitations of the Research study on agritourism.

Conclusion and Recommendation: Presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings.