Chapter - V

ECO-AGRI-RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES
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5.1 FARM TOURISM IN KERALA

Farm Tourism in Kerala is being developed as a relatively new tourism product. Kerala, being an agricultural nominated state, has tremendous potential for developing Farm Tourism in a big way without much additional investment. Reports state that Kerala has 30.22 lakhs hectares of gross cropped area which is 56.78% of the State’s total geographical area. More than 1/3 of the cropped area contains plantations of Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Pepper, Cardamom and Ginger, and another 1/3 of this area is covered by Coconut plantations. The state has about 350,000 lakhs hectares of land under paddy cultivation.

There is a possibility of converting potential cropped areas of the state as tourist attractions with minimum intervention to transfer the benefits of tourism directly to the farmers. The various schemes underway are intended to prepare the farms / plantations of Kerala to receive tourists by presenting a positive image of the farm and of agriculture as a whole, in view of revitalizing the agriculture sector of Kerala through tourism.
The government decision to allow 5% of the farm area for tourism purpose has been an encouraging factor for the tourism industry. Numerous projects are being planned by the state to prepare the farms / plantations of Kerala to receive tourists by presenting a positive image of the farm and of agriculture as a whole, in view of revitalizing the agriculture sector through tourism and increasing tourist traffic to the state.

5.2 GREEN FARMS KERALA

Background

In recent times Tourism has emerged as one of the few economic alternatives to develop the State economy. It has been recognized as an important sector for the development on account of its potential for generating income and employment. In the context of poor prospects of the manufacturing sector and the severe threats facing agricultural and traditional sectors and the uncertainties facing expatriate employment, tourism is considered as one of the sectors, which can drive Kerala economy to take the State to the pinnacle of socio-economic development. Kerala stands unique in the matter of its rich tourism experience keeping the customs and traditions of the State intact, at the same time receptive to new ideas and alien culture. Sandwiched between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, Kerala is blessed with unmatched natural diversity that provides immense scope for tourism.
Kerala could sustain a very high growth rate in inbound tourist arrival during the last few years and contribute a share of more than 10% of the international tourist arrivals to the country. The growth rate of inbound tourist arrival to the State was an all time high 26.63% in 2003 over the year 2002. In 2004 we could sustain the high growth with 17% over 2003. When Kerala received 3.44 lakhs international tourists in 2004, the number of domestic tourists visited the state during the period was over 60.00 lakhs. According to the study of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) on tourism sector in the State, Travel and Tourism generates as much as 7.7% of GSP and 6.2% of total employment. Visitor exports (tourism receipts) is worked out as 14.3% of the total export of the State. It is estimated that the State of Kerala attracts more than Rs. 1000 crores investment per year in the tourism sector and provides employment opportunity to about 8.00 Lakh persons. The income to the state from tourism is in the order of Rs. 6000 crores with a foreign exchange earning of Rs. 1300 crores.

One of the reasons for the sustaining success of Kerala Tourism is its’ continuous efforts on improving the existing tourism products and innovating new tourism products. Houseboats, Ayurveda, eco-tourism, Medical Tourism etc. are examples of tourism products which are inter-sectoral nature and shown tremendous success. Kerala, being an agricultural dominated state, has tremendous potential for developing Farm Tourism in a big way without much additional investment. Kerala has 30.22 lakhs hectares of gross
cropped area which is 56.78% of the State’s total geographical area. More than 1/3rd of the area under cropped area is plantations of Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Pepper, Cardamom and Ginger, and another 1/3rd of area is under Coconut plantations. The State has about 350,000 lakhs hectares of land under paddy cultivation. There is a possibility of converting potential cropped areas of the state as tourist attractions with minimum intervention to transfer the benefits of tourism directly to the farmers. The scheme ‘Green Farms Kerala’ is intended to prepare the Farms/Plantations of Kerala to receive tourists by presenting a positive image of the farm and of agriculture as a whole, in view of revitalizing the agriculture sector of Kerala through tourism.

The scheme is also very appropriate in the background of Government decision on allowing 5% of the farm area for tourism purpose.

Objective

The primary objective of the project is to prepare the Farms/Plantations of Kerala to receive tourists by presenting a positive image of the farm and of agriculture as a whole, in view of revitalizing the agriculture sector through tourism and increasing tourist traffic to the state.
Benefits

- Increase in tourist arrival and the accrual of related benefits in socio-economic development
- Revitalizing the plantation sector through the additional income generation
- Image boost of the agriculture sector and creation of a layer of employment opportunities for the educated unemployed in the agriculture sector who otherwise opt for non-agriculture activities
- Multiplier effect in employment generation

Project Components

The State of Kerala has large numbers of Farms/Plantations which can be converted into tourism product with very minimum intervention. What is needed is to develop minimal facilities to receive tourists and to have some facade improvements to beautify the entrance area. It is also necessary to have stalls to showcase the products of the farm. The walkways inside the farm should be clean. There should be trained persons to guide the tourists inside the farm. Signage’s and name boards of various species and its importance, specialties, uses etc is important. Accommodation facilities in the form of traditional farm houses or estate bungalows are optional. The minimum infrastructure facilities required for tourists include parking area, toilets etc.
Thus the project components additionally required to make the Farms attractive to tourists are considered to be supported by Department of Tourism with incentives.

The following are the essential project components included in the scheme;

- Parking area
- Beautification of entry area
- Ticket counter, Guard room, Gate, Name Boards, Compound wall at the entry area etc
- Stalls or shopping area outside or inside the farm
- Restaurant/coffee shop/snack bar
- Walkways, signage etc within the farm
- Toilet facilities inside and outside the farm
- Brochures

The following facilities are optional;

- Renovations required for the accommodation facilities, if available
- Interpretation centre
- Souvenir shops
- Tourist Information centre, Communication Centre
- Product conversion units
- Industrial units on the by-products
- Development of new accommodation facilities exclusively for the tourists
Trekking to natural attractions, tented accommodations, adventure activities

The above list is not exhaustive and the Farm owners can think of innovative additions to make the products more attractive.

Location

The farms at or near a tourist centre, or along an established tourist circuits or major transport corridor will be considered for including in the scheme.

No. of units

It is envisaged that about 50 numbers of Green Farm units will be set up throughout the state in 2 years.

Eligibility for participating in the Scheme

Minimum 10 Acres of farm or 50 Acres of plantation.

Procedure for Selection

Selection of the Farms/Plantations will be done by a committee appointed by Government for the purpose, based on the following criteria:

- Location of the Farm/Plantations and accessibility
- Type of Farm and its’ extent
- Present condition of maintenance and attraction
- Possibility of developing tourist facility etc.
- Concept designs
Those who are already in the field of tourism will be given preference.

**Incentives Offered by Government**

The Green Farm units will be provided with 25% for the additional specified facilities targeting exclusively for the tourists subject to a maximum of Rs. 5.00 lakhs. Subsidy will be given to the units only after completion of the project and approval by a committee. The essential and desirable facilities which are eligible for subsidy are given in the section above. The committee may also consider other innovative items if it is found that these are developed exclusively targeting the tourists.

**Facilitation by Government**

Government will facilitate the investor in the following area; Availing of Loans: Department of Tourism will talk to various commercial banks and will facilitate the farm owners in getting the loans at the lowest cost.

Promotional support: Department of Tourism will utilize print and electronic media to market the approved Green farms Unit. They will also be marketed through the Kerala Tourism Websites, Tourism Trade Fairs and Road shows organized by Department of Tourism from time to time.

Capacity Building: Trainings for the qualitative improvements to the persons supposed to interact with the tourists will be given by
Department of Tourism through the institutions like KITTS, Food Craft Institute, IHMCT etc.

**Pattern of Investment**

The quantum of investment entirely depends on the farm owner. But it is assumed that an average investment of Rs. 20 lakhs will be necessary to put up the minimum facilities and make it attractive to the tourists. If the number of units targeted is kept as 50, the average total investment by the private sector due to the declaration of the scheme will be Rs. 10 crores. The investment required in the units which offer accommodation facilities will be much higher.

Incentive requirement for 50 units will be of maximum 2.50 crores.

**Employment Generation**

One of the important benefits of the scheme is that it helps in image boost of the agriculture sector and creation of a layer of employment opportunities for the educated unemployed in the agriculture sector who otherwise opt for non-agriculture activities. Therefore educated unemployed youths can be attracted towards agriculture sector which will be an important change as far as Kerala State is concerned.

Assuming that at an average of 10 personnel will have to be engaged in each unit, the direct employment generation will be for
500 persons in 50 units in the state. Based on the study conducted by TATA Consultancy Services in 2000, the ratio of direct and indirect employment in tourism sector in Kerala is 4.62. Accordingly, the potential for total employment will be for about 2,000 persons.

5.3 PROSPECTS OF VILLAGE TOURISM IN KERALA

Located at the southern extremity of the Indian sub-continent hugging the Arabian sea, the State of Kerala is resplendent for her scenic splendour and cultural opulence. The total area of the state comprises 38,863 square kilometers and a coastline length of 550 kilometers. This tiny gift of nature with amazing physical features such as misty mountains, hills, high ranges, evergreen forests, meadows, rivers, waterfalls, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, backwaters, lagoons, palm-fringed coastline etc. is yet to be visited by many from far and wide. Apart from geographical features, the picturesque settings of ancient temples, shrines, churches, mosques with their magnificent architecture are other attractions. Besides, the cultural heritage of Kerala is very famous as it is evident from different art forms, cultural fete, music, folk dance, handicrafts, boat race etc.- all these make up this land into a romantic dream of tropical paradise.
Kerala’s Village Panorama

A village panorama in Kerala is a natural wonder showing scintillating views such as paddy fields, spice gardens, captivating scenery of hill ranges, variety of home and migratory birds, magnificent religious festivals, grand galore of elephants pageants in temple festivals, age-old heritage monuments, glamorous folk arts, centuries old classical arts, enthralling architecture associated with churches, temples and mosques, placid backwaters, ever cool hill stations and the list goes unending. Agriculture itself has undergone drastic changes in Kerala. Due to cost escalation farmers have shifted from commercial farming to subsistence farming and now mixed farming. Village or Rural tourism in Kerala is focused here, because the state has unlimited scope for developing rural tourism potential. Although Kerala is visited by large number of tourists, their visit and length of stay are confined to selected tourist destinations and urban centers. The existing south domination of Kerala tourism still continues; while Malabar Tourism is yet to make a major breakthrough in the tourism growth of Kerala. In Kerala, every village can boast of at least one or two tourism projects. It is high time tourism is redefined in Kerala. Tourist inflow into conventional tourist destinations can create social, environmental and carrying capacity problems, especially during tourist season. Kerala’s age-old culture is evident in her rural life. This will be shared, strengthened and continued. Rural tourism is more friendly rather than alien and much misconception about tourism -can be wiped out with a friendly approach. Besides, it will lead-to a
balanced-regional development of the state. The tourism will get a chance to imbibe our culture. Rural tourism is an effective medium for rural development, alleviating rural poverty and fighting rural unemployment. Unemployment rate in Kerala is 11.6% in rural and 12.2% in urban areas. Poverty rate in Kerala is 9.38% in rural areas and 20.27% in urban areas. In Kerala the agricultural sector which is associated with the rural environment, contributes only 13% to the state domestic product (SDP) and the whole primary sector contribution is up to 17%. A tourist is a guest, a friend and our benefactor. Our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had once opined “welcome a tourist and send back a friend.” Pope Late John Paul II while addressing a private audience of 7000 travel professionals in 1985 said “world is becoming a global village in which people of different continents are made to feel like neighbors. Modern transportation has removed the obstacles of distance enabling people to appreciate each other, engage in the exchange of ideas and commerce. Tourism can help overcome real prejudices and foster bonds. Tourism can be a real force of world peace.”

**Coastal Kerala - Bewitching Greenery**

Kerala has a long coastline on the western side hugging the Arabian Sea. Forty one rivers of Kerala merge into the Arabian sea facilitating inland navigation through rivers and lakes and backwaters. Coastal villages have bewitching greenery of coconut palms and biodiversity. Fishing by motor boats and country boats, cruise by houseboats, flocks of migratory birds, exotic mangrove with its flora and fauna, long golden sandy beaches, pristine backwaters, rows of
Chinese fish nets, ethnic village culture, coir making by villagers and many more to enthuse the visitors. Of late, many beach based and backwater-based tourist resorts have come up in various parts of Kerala offering diverse hospitality services. There are 27 estuaries and 34 lagoons in Kerala and the total navigational length of backwaters and rivers is around 1960 kms.

Midland Attractions

Kerala midland villages are generally plain land areas with copious greenery. Most rivers that originate from eastern mountains flow through the mid-land plain making the land fertile and water sufficient. This has created picturesque attractions to entice any wander lust traveller. Standing crops, exotic lakes and rivers, lush greenery, ethnic agricultural operations, glamorous rural festivals, village industries, handicraft making work of rural artisans, local customs and traditions, curative powers of Ayurveda, our age old joint family system and communal harmony, religious rituals, arts and crafts, marriage customs, trade and commerce in towns and cities and thus goes an unending list of attractions. Mid-land is the heartland of Kerala’s age-old classical art forms like Koodiyattom, Kathakali, Krishnanattom, Theyyam, Margomkali, Chavittunatakam etc.

Highland Specialities

The eastern part of Kerala is protected by a long and expansive mountainous region namely Western Ghats with an average height of 2000 metre above sea level. Anamudy, the highest peak of Kerala has a height of 2817 metres. There are nearly fifty mountains and peaks in Kerala. The hill ranges are rich in greenery and biodiversity. These
regions have created 13 wildlife sanctuaries and two national parks. Associated with these hilly areas there lies a number of villages from Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram giving numerous natural spectacles such as spice-fragrant high ranges, evergreen wilderness, congenial climate, ever flowing waterfalls, flowing rivers, watershed areas such as Dams and Hydroelectric projects, chirping birds, tribal settlements, spectacular canopy of thick foliage, evergreen natural carpet of tea plantations, mist-clad mountains and it goes like that.

**Rural- Tourism - A non-seasonal approach**

Village tourism is a non-seasonal tourism product and it must be promoted as such. We have tourist attraction to suit any season. Even in acute rainy season during June-July- August we can attract tourists to enjoy Rain Tourism, Backwater Tourism, Ayurvedic Tourism, Medical Tourism, Cultural Tourism (classical arts, yoga, retreat, martial arts like Kalarippayattu, film tourism etc.). Eco-tourism in Kerala can also be linked with rural tourism because the objective of the former is to throw open natural areas for tourist visit by conforming with strict rules and regulations for preserving the local, ecological conditions of the area.

**What we can do in the name of Rural tourism**

Make a survey of the countryside of Kerala spread over highland, midland and coastal plain regions and identify villages which have unique features for attracting tourists. This is to select only few villages in each district that can provide unique and qualitative rural tourism. Provide basic amenities such as better roads, electrification, drinking water supply, health and sanitation facilities,
hygienic comfort stations, better accommodation facilities etc. Tourism Master Plan for each such chosen village must be drafted in consultation with the local panchayat, and community organizations and development agencies. Give earnest care to preserve the biodiversity and local cultural traditions while implementing plans and programmes. The local community must be taken into confidence by suitable participation programme and they must feel that the project is part of a development activity which is meant to eradicate rural poverty and unemployment. A rural-tourism development agency must be formed either as an autonomous body or as a separate department under the State Department of Tourism. Every year, separate budget allocation for rural tourism development programme must be given. Funding by the government must be supported by adequate private participation too as regards finance, manpower and services. On strict transparent guidelines, facilities or the required amenities can be provided on BOM (build, operate and manage) basis or on lease basis or on income sharing basis or under suitable contracts with local agencies. Convenient tourism packages must be designed with respect to each rural tourism project and attracted domestic and foreign tourists by national, international publicity. The progress of rural tourism projects must be evaluated time-to-time and effective measures must be undertaken to make them highly receptive to tourists.

**Significance of Rural tourism**

The international trend amongst the current tourists is to visit natural regions where peace and holistic environment persist. Urban
tourism is always viewed as something ‘elite’ and often misconceived. Problems of overcrowding and environmental threats can be solved better by the dispersion of tourists far and wide in rural tourism. Rural tourism programme is an effective measure for rural development and raising the standard of living of the rural folk. Tourism in villages needs a social harmony of host culture and visitor culture. Rural tourism too must be limited to carrying capacity levels. Kerala has the pride of starting a rural tourism project at Kumbalangi near Kochi with assistance from the Department of Tourism, Government of India. Similar unique village attractions exist in other districts too, especially north Kerala regions where tourism is still in its infancy.

5.4 FARM TOURISM IN GREEN PUNJAB

Punjab, which has around 95 lakhs acres of agriculture land, proposes to make a tourist venture out of the sprawling agriculture fields.

And what better time to do it, but now when mustard fields are in full bloom and wheat crops are painting the fields green?

Punjab has the potential to develop farm tourism as a profitable venture and in a bid to attract tourist attention and provide them a glimpse of rural life, the government has launched a farm tourism scheme.
5.5 PUNJAB GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES FARM TOURISM SCHEME

With a view to bring more tourists to the villages, the government of Punjab has introduced a farm tourism scheme.

The Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board (PHTPB) will soon launch 'Punjab Farm Tourism Scheme,' engaging private sector farmers or farm house owners to provide Rural Tourism experience to tourists. Under this scheme, the farm houses that are fully developed and worth visiting from tourism point of view will be enrolled or registered for two years, which can be extended depending on the services provided.

PHTPB is working for the implementation of this scheme. Only those farm houses that are fully developed will be given the enrolment forms. The farm house owners will act as both hosts and guides for tourists. The farm houses will have to provide a clean, hygienic environment with modern facilities for the comfort of visitors, which meets the standard defined by Punjab Tourism or the PHTPB."

To facilitate the farmers for creating required infrastructure in the farm houses, they have tied up with nationalized banks. The Insurance companies will also be involved for 'Public Liability Insurance.' The registered farm house owners or farmers will have to go through Short Term Training Programme for two to three days under Capacity Building Programme, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), which will be organized by Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Chandigarh and IHM, Gurdaspur."
As per guidelines for approval and enrolment of farm houses, the preference will be given to those farm houses, which have an attached agricultural land. The farm house owner should provide home cooked food, comfortable accommodation and show the visitor the local agriculture practices such as floriculture, harvesting, bee keeping, etc. They also have to introduce tourists to the rural way of living.

**Registration criteria and guidelines:**

1. Only those farm houses that are well developed will be chosen for enrolment.
2. It is mandatory to have a minimum of two rooms with an attached toilet.
3. The enrolment will be valid for two years starting from the date of registration, which can be further extended depending upon the recommendation of the inspecting or reviewing committee of Punjab.
4. It is mandatory to maintain a visitor's book and remarks obtained from the guests to be available for inspection by Punjab Tourism. Details of any foreigner staying in a farm house must be registered within 24 hours to the Foreigner's Registration Officer on the form prescribed.
5. The owner of the farm house is responsible for any casualty, which may occur during the stay of the visitors and is liable to provide immediate medical and transportation assistance.
6. An inspection committee of Punjab Tourism will inspect the farm house and recommend its registration.
7. Punjab Tourism reserves the right to modify these guidelines or terms and conditions from time to time.

Priority selection would be given to farms providing a wide range of activities and excursion possibilities. The tourism department would act only as promoter and would have no say in fixing the prices to be taken from tourists. The state government would have no share in the revenue generation from it, "Farm tourism would provide the owners with a source of additional income. It would make a significant contribution to uplift the rural economy and improve the quality of life of the farmers and the communities involved,

5.6 PUNJAB: ATTRACTING RURAL GATEWAYS

Hoshiarpur (Punjab), The sight of hundreds of orange-colored kinnows hanging on small trees is tempting enough for anyone to get up - close and personal.

Their Citrus County is a sprawling farm stay getaway in the middle of 75 acres of kinnow and poplar plantations that can give a refreshing break from city life, just 130 km from Chandigarh.

These not only offer farm stay but also hands-on experience of village life coupled with some adventure. These are simple things in life that people in villages across Punjab do every day but for residents of cities, this is something new.
People are living in the middle of a sprawling kinnow farm. They can even go and pluck fresh kinnows from the trees. Arrangements for a group of Australian guests coming here for the New Year’s holiday.

The kinnow fruit - developed in 1935 in the University of California at Riverside by cross-pollinating kings and willow-leaf varieties of oranges - has its peak season between December and March.

Punjab primarily gets religious tourists with the holiest of Sikh shrines, Harmandar Sahib - popularly known as the Golden Temple - in Amritsar accounting for most of them. Another attraction is the Attari-Wagah border between India and Pakistan where a ‘Retreat’ ceremony takes place every day at sunset to close the border gates.

The novel concept of farm stays might therefore become a big hit among tourists in the near future.

A senior state tourism official said: “We are expecting more tourists to come and enjoy farm stays. Through this, they can take a little bit of real Punjab with them.”

Citrus County not only offers spacious regular rooms in the farmhouse but also six luxury tents. The farmhouse and the tented accommodation is itself spread in two acres. Guests often come in groups of 20-25.
Traditional Punjabi food with a barbeque, evening bonfires, a golf putting area, a gazebo cafe and a swimming pool for summer months are being offered along with the experience of rural surroundings.

Also on offer is a short trip to the village ‘chaupal’ or common area, seeing daily village activities, ride on a tractor, walk through the kinnow farm and an adventurous jeep safari through farm and forest land in which some wildlife can be spotted. The safari also includes a drive through the dry-bed of a ‘choe’ or seasonal rivulets that Hoshiarpur district is famous for.

People get a lot of peace of mind after coming here. Staying in the luxury tents is an added advantage. This is the closest you can get to nature and have adventure and fun. Guests come from India and abroad and everyone has liked the concept.

5.7 PUNJAB VILLAGE TOUR


The land of five rivers and integrated cultural history, is a treasure trove for an avid tourist. For this land of the great gurus not only boasts of ancient monuments but throbs with historical embodiments. It is no secret that whoever comes to this land of yellow fields with blue mountains providing the romantic and picturesque backdrop has never gone back without imbibing the essence of Punjab.
For a traveler, Punjab is a wonderful tourist destination and especially if you visit a countryside place or Pind (village) is what you wish to explore on your luxury Punjab travel, spend some in a traditional Punjab village.

**What to See and feel in Punjab Village :**

Stay in the Punjab Village home. Early morning visit the houses to see and feel how the day in the village starts. Men give bath to their Cows and milk them. The ladies of the House will light their hearths with cow dung and leaves to cook food. The Punjab villager farmers plough their fields with bullocks.

Potters collect clay from nearby pond (Chhappar) and make clay pottery, Surahi and Ghara (vessels for storing water), dishes, jars, etc.

Sit and see the creative ability of the women in Phulkari embroidery of different design and blending of harmonious colours.

Watch village metal-workers or Lohars casting, soldering and making metal things like Hammer, Sickle, garden tools, pots and common utensils used in the village kitchen.

Visit Carpenters or Tarkhans to see them carving traditional and regional style Doors, Windows, Beds, chairs, tables, etc out of different Woods you can walk along the swaying mustard fields, take a ride on a tractor, take the cattle for grazing, feed the cattle or
simply sit, relax and gulp down the fresh buttermilk in the green fields.

**What to eat:**

- Stuffed Alloo (Potatoes), Gobhi (Cauliflower) or Muli (Reddish) Paranthas with fresh Butter and a glass of butter milk.

- Sarson Ka Saag (Mustard Leaves) and Makki Ki Roti (Corn Flour) with Onion chutney.

- Mah Ki Dal (Black Lentil), Baingan Bhartha (mashed Eggplant), Bhunna Gosht (Mutton), Butter Chicken, Tandoori Roti (Baked Bread) and Dahi Raita (Curd).

**What to Visit:**

- Golden Temple Amritsar, Jallianwala Bagh, Durgiana Temple and local Gurudwaras.

- Wagah Border to watch Indo-Pak Border closing ceremony.

- Punjab Bazar.

- Punjab Village Home

  Punjab has received hospitality as a God's gift and in Punjab villages it remains supreme. It resides in the soul of rural folks. Reach a home in the middle of the night, the ladies will happily get
up and cook fresh food for you. You can't pass by certain villages without enjoying hospitality. You'll be looked after so long as you stay. You will be warmly sent off, not empty handed, but with a gift of whatever is available in the house. Like all other human traits of the people of Punjab their hospitality is also guileless, rare and intense. It is an ubiquitous theme of Punjabi folk lore. When the crow, sitting atop the roof, crows, or dough when it is being kneaded bubbles, folk songs tell us that these are auspicious omens which convey that a guest is on his way. There are several other sayings which speak of the pleasures that are derived by looking after visitors.

Good habitat, laughter, playfulness and love form the environment in which hospitality grows in Punjab.

Tour GT-55

Two Nights / Three Days Punjab Village Tour
Both sides Travel by Air conditioned Chair Car Swarna Shatabadi Train

Day 1. Departure from Delhi for Amritsar early morning by Train, Pickup from Amritsar Railway station, Darshan of Golden Temple, visit Wagah Border, drive to Punjab Village Home, Dinner & night at village home.
Day 2. Breakfast, Full day tour of a Punjab Village experiencing the real & actual life of a traditional Punjab village and Punjabi life. Lunch, Dinner & night at village home.


Cost Per Person:

For 2 persons : Rs 5500 Per Person on Double/Twin sharing Room.
For 4 persons : Rs 4900 Per Person on Double/Twin sharing Room.
For 6 persons : Rs 4500 Per Person on Double/Twin sharing Room.
For 8 persons : Rs 4400 Per Person on Double/Twin sharing Room.
For 10 persons : Rs 4250 Per Person on Double/Twin sharing Room.

Tour GT-55 Cost Includes:

- Air Conditioned Chair Car Swarna Shatabadi Train Tickets To and Fro.
- Air Conditioned Village House Accommodation for 2 nights.
- Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner included.
- All transfers, sightseeing by Air Conditioned Vehicle as per the itinerary.
- All taxes, driver allowances, toll tax, parking etc.
Price does not Include:

- Entrance fee to monuments.
- Any meals except specified in the itinerary.
- Tips, Beverages, Laundry, Telephone Calls, etc.
- Medical and Insurance.

Last and Farewell day (Not included in Package/Extra Charge):

Punjabi Theme night dinner: Village setup with Punjabi folk dance & music.

5.8 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FARM ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES WITH INDIA

Agri Rural Tourism in Australia

Agri rural Tourism in Australia is now one of Australia’s most important foreign exchange earners. It is the 4\(^{th}\) single industry earner contributing over 8 billion US$ to the economy.

Agri tourism business break down in Australia is as follows:

a) Agri Attraction - 40%
b) Farm Stays - 30%
c) Agri Day / Extended Tours - 20%
d) Agri Conference / Seminars - 10%

In Australia, the largest farm property can accommodate 600 guests while smallest just 2.
Following features constitute agri attractions in Australia

a) Tropical Fruit Farms
b) Fish / Yabby Farms
c) Australian Wool Sheds
d) Whole Range of big attractions like Big Banana etc.

Apart from this, there are also increasing links between agri tourism and nature based or eco tourism. Farms / regional centers offer outstanding scenery, national parks, nature reviews, wildlife, nature flower as well as heritage building, landscapes.

It has proved in Australia that domestic agri tourism market is more opportune one than the perceived glamerous inbound tourists. In general, annual growth of agro tourism is 20% in Australia.

Following new ideas which are also followed in agri tourism in Australia are as follows;

a) Tracking through wild flowers
b) Small weekly bazaars
c) Agri conferencing

There are dedicated tours operators who operate only in this sector.

Many Australian rural communities had rural co-operatives and the farm based tourism activity also requires a hub, most often in the form of tourist center.

Local authorities in Australia also have policies to distribute a proportion of tourism related taxes or other revenue back into the community for the maintenance of the aesthetic nature of the district.
It has been observed that the perceived growth of farm tourism in Australia had more to do with the number of farms entering the tourism market than any real demand by tourists.

A) Transportation: Transportation facilities in Australia regarding agri, farm tourism are modern and well developed. The farms are quite accessible and are located near the highways. The roads are well developed.

Majority of tourists prefer to travel by motor cars or even by trains or buses which ply to the countryside. Both modes of transportation i.e. by road and by rail are available.

B) Accommodation: In a break down of agri tourism in Australia, farm stays constitute 30% of agri tourism business. In Australia, the large farm property can accommodate 600 tourists while smallest just two.

In 1992 the Bureau of tourism Research (BTR) profiled Australian domestic travelers and found that around 1% of travelers surveyed stayed on farms and there was no discernable differences bases on age, sex, or socio economic grouping.

Similarly in 1994, 2.4% tourists stayed on farms. In Sydney, 14% of farms were involved in agri tourism with up to 28% having been involved in the past.

Most urban tourists in Australia prefer to stay in natural surroundings of farm accommodation.

C) Employment Opportunities: The Australian Tourism National Action Plan seeks to enhance the capacity of agri tourism to create jobs in regional Australia.
Agri tourism has been a major contributor towards employment generation in Australia. 23% farmers have employed skilled staff in order to manage their tourism businesses.

The employment theme is extended to include specific opportunities for young people within rural communities in the hope that agri rural tourism provides an incentive to them not to migrate.

Career options are enhanced with the opportunities for training and direct involvement in running agri tourism businesses.

**Different Eco – Agri – Rural Tourism Activities in Australia.**

a) **Certified Farmers Market (CFM)**: Here certified farmers sell certified agricultural products grown by them.

b) **Agricultural Products**: Included are fresh fruits and vegetables, tree, shrubs and bedding plants, fresh or smoked fish, processed food products like wine, honey, maple, syrup, apple cides, cheese, preserves, fruit juices.

c) **Community Supported Agriculture**: Partnership between consumers and farmers in which consumers pay for farm products in the region.

d) **Direct Marketing**: Includes roadside stands, kiosks, leaflets, brochures, folders, subscription farming, farmers markets community supported agriculture.

e) **Farm Visits**: The activity of visiting a farm for short periods of time for the purpose of participating in or enjoying farm activities and or other attraction offered.
f) **Pick – Your – Own – Operations**: There are fruits and farms or orchards where the tourists themselves harvest the fruits or products.

g) **Rent a Tree Operations**: These are activities where tourists rent or lease trees from farmers. Tourists pay initially and farmers do the harvesting.

h) **Value Added**: Value added include bagging, packaging, bundling, pre-cutting etc.

i) **Roadside Stands**: There have been used by farmers for years. Roadside stands, sales allows farmers to sell fresh produce canned dried, pickled or otherwise processed food and floral products from a direct to consumers stand, or kiosks located near his farm.

j) **Agricultural Festivals**: Festivals that are related to a particular agricultural products are known as agricultural festivals. These festival are very popular among tourist.

Agriculture festivals include following:

**Entertainment**: Country music, dance, folk songs, cowboy dance, wallabies, tribal dances, orchestra are performed with local cuisines and delicacies. All these entertainment activities are enjoyed by tourists with great enthusiasm.

1) The Tulip Festival
2) The National Cherry Festival
3) The Asparagus Festival
4) Cheese Festival
5) Tomato Festival
6) Wine Festival
7) Pumpkin Festival
Income Generation through Agri – Rural Tourism in Australia

In 1991 the agri tourism industry was worth 350 million Australian dollars in 2001 it became 1.5 billion Australian dollar industry. Agri tourism in Australia is growing at the ratio of 20% per annum.

78% of Victorian farmers started tourism ventures for extra income. 14% of farming businesses in the New South Wales region of Sydney were involved in tourism.

Around 50% farm tourism businesses grossed less than $ 5000 and 16% grossed over $ 40,000. Similarly income generated through farm accommodation, transportation, agri tours, agri tourism activities, agri tourism festivals also contribute significantly to Australian economy.

Agricultural tourism provides enjoyment and education for the public promotes products from the farm, and increases income for the farm.

5.9 AGRI RURAL TOURISM IN ISRAEL

Introduction :-

A) Farm Activities in Israel

Agriculture is a major industry in Israel with the country being net exporter of food as well as a world leader in agricultural technologies. Today agriculture represents 2.5% of total GDP and 3.6% of exports. Agriculture workers make up about 3.7% of these employed and Israel produces 95% of its food requirements, supplementing this by importing grain, oil seeds, meat, coffee, cocoa
and sugar. Israel is home to two unique agricultural communities the Kibbutz and Moshav.

Most of Israeli agriculture is based around co-operative principles which evolved during the start of the twentieth century. Two unique forms of agricultural settlements Kibbutz, a collective community in which the means of production are commonly owned and each member work benefits all and the Moshav a farming village where each family maintains its own household and works its own land, while purchasing and marketing are conducted co-operatively. Both communities provided a means not only to realize the dream of the pioneers to have rural communities based on social equality, co-operation and mutual aid but also to gain agricultural output in a productive means. To-day between Kibbutzim and Moshavism 76% of the countries fresh produce is output as well as many processed food products with agricultural exports of 1.4 US billion dollars and an additional 1.5 billion in overseas sales of agricultural inputs like irrigation equipments and fertilizers. Israel has much to offer the world in farming know how Agricultural tourism is an effective way to tap into that know how.

B) **Farm Accommodation**

Many farmers in Israel are supplementing their farms income by offering overnight accommodation, farm visits, nature walks, and other camping activities to the tourists.

Urban tourists also enjoy to stay at the farms in natural surroundings away from pollution, stress and hustle and bustle of hectic urban life, which also offers them rejuvenation.
C) Modern Computerized Irrigation System

Israel which is a world leader in applying high tech technology in irrigation system. Tourists are visiting to see the demonstration of modern computerized irrigation systems like;

2) Drip Irrigation System
3) Sprinkler Irrigation System
4) Trickled Irrigation System
5) Irrigation Equipments

All these high techniques of irrigation system showing the world improved farmers, how to use, minimize irrigation to get the higher yield of the crop.

By showing demonstration and export of there modern irrigation equipments, large income and revenue is generated to Israely farmers. Even fertilizers and pesticides are also applied through these high tech irrigation system.

D) Computerized Glass Houses, Poly Houses and Green Houses

In Israel, off seasons crops, fruits and vegetables are cultivated. Due to the diversity of the land and climate across the country, Israel is able to grow a wide range of crops like wheat, sorghum and corn. Fruits and vegetable grown include citrus avocados, kiwis, guavas and mangoes. Tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and zucchini are grown commonly through out the country. Bananas, dates, apples, pears and cherries are also grown even in an unfavorable climate.

Scientists, farmers, tourists from all over the world visit Israel to see how the off season crops are cultivated.
E) **Dairy Farming**

Dairy farming is one of the most important farm activities in agri tourism in Israel. Pure breeds of cattles ex. Holsteins, frisan, jarcy produce high yield. The tourists take interest in how the milking is done. The computerized milk parlors are used for milking. The tourists also take keen interest in milk and milk bi-products ex. flavored milk, cheese, yogurt etc.

F) **Floriculture**

Israel is the largest flower growing country. The tourist are visiting the poly houses, green houses, to see cultivated wax flowers, roses, different types of ornamental and showy plants.

G) **Horticulture**

In horticulture activities different types of fruit crops like citrus, oranges, grapes which exude a delightful fragrance in the springs. These fruits require less water more resistant to diseases ripen earlier and offer longer shelf life and of course best taste. These types of horticulture farm tours are very popular among tourists in Israel.

H) **Artificial Lake Fishery Farm**

Artificial lakes are created in the farm for the various activities such as water sports, different types of fish species are rared in the ponds. Tourism take keen interest in fishing by line gear.

I) **Poultry and Ostrich Farming**

Israel is a market leader in poultry, turkey meat and also it has become the worlds largest producer of ostrich meat. Tourist enjoy eggs and chicken bio-products on the farm.
J) **Use of Sea Saline Water for Cultivating Farming**

Tourists are shown how Israel has transformed the desert. Israel excelled in developing tomatoes, cucumbers and melons grown in the winter in the countries southern regions. In the case of tomatoes and melons, it was discovered that using highly saline geothermal waters creates sweeter varieties, while innovative strains of tomatoes, cherry tomatoes and tomatoes on a vine (Eaten like grapes) have proved popular among tourists.

K) **Agricultural Farm Festival**

There are many agricultural farm festivals in Israel, including the Olive festival in October. The summer visitors can join in grape picking in the late spring, cherries are ripe for picking. Tourists also participate in festivals like grape festival, wine festival.

5.10 **AGRI RURAL TOURISM IN SINGAPORE**

Singapore is a small, heavily urbanized, island city state in southeast Asia, located at the southern tip of the Malayan Peninsula between Malaysia and Indonesia. It is made up of several islands. Its climate is characterized by uniform temperature and pressure, high humidity and heavy rainfall.

The agricultural sector of Singapore is engaged mainly in the production of eggs, fish and vegetables for local consumptions and orchids and ornamental fish for exports. About one percent of Singapore’s land area is used for agricultural purposes.
A) Farm Accommodation

Various types of farm accommodation are available in the farms of Singapore. Because of ample water resources unique type of accommodation facilities are available which are as follows;

a) Floating Accommodation
b) House Boat Accommodation
c) Fruit Garden Accommodation

B) Water Transportation

The farms are located near the water resources, therefore they are accessible through different types of water ways like i) Boating, ii) Ferric, iii) Cruise and iv) Ship.

C) Horticulture Garden Tours

Horticulture garden tours are arranged for the discerning tourists. How different types of crops are cultivated like bananas, rubber, spices, crop are shown to young children and tourists.

D) Adventure Water Sports

Because of abundant water resources in rural areas of Singapore, lots of adventure water sports activities like river rafting, swimming, water scooter driving, boating, water skiing are available for the tourists. Water based activities are very popular form of outdoor recreation.

E) Floating Vegetable Gardens

This type of vegetable gardening is generally seen in rural areas of Singapore. A floating base is made from the roots of various grasses, weeds growing wild in the lake. The leaf compost is spread over them and then the seedlings are trans planted. All agricultural
operations are done on boats. Most of the vegetables supplied farm accommodation, hotels. The tourist observe and purchase all these vegetables which are produced on floating vegetable gardens.

F) Fishing by Nets, Boats and Trawl

Tourist participate in fishing activities on the farms using manual nets, small boats as well as modern trawl (big advanced mechanical boats).

G) Processing demonstration

Processing demonstrations in fishery like cord liver oil, fish glue, fish flour, fish leather, fish soup processing of black pepper, cardimom, cinnamon, coffee, rubber is also demonstrated to the tourists.

H) Roof Top Production of Fresh Vegetables

In rural areas, the vegetables are cultivated in roof tops. Leafy and fruit vegetables are cultivated by applying organic manners are used to cultivate these vegetables. Tourism enjoy buying the fresh vegetables produced on rooftop.

I) Farm Educational Tours

Singapore is a world leader in aquaculture, as well as world best hydroponics education. There is a scope for special urban agriculture education in certificate, diploma, graduate and post – graduate studies that focus on the higher technologies of urban hydroponics and aquaculture for the tropics and subtropics.
J) **Fish Ranching**

The farm owners cultivating different types of special fish in rivers, or lakes. Tourist take keen interest in watching and participating these type of activities.

K) **Unique dining Experience**

In Singapore rural areas food is served to the public on farms and ranches. There farms have special location, setting with a view. They also provide tourists plays, other entertainment, catering service, fun dining experience on the farm with great country cooking.

### 5.11 FARM ACTIVITIES OF PUNJAB

A) **Transportation**

In Punjab, especially in the rural areas and on the farms unique type of rural transportation like ride on a tractor, tractor safari, walk through the farm, bullock cart rides, horse cart rides and adventure jeep safari.

B) **Farm Accommodation**

With the initiatives like Punjab Farm Tourism Scheme, the farmers provide farm stays clean, hygienic accommodation to the tourists. Tent accommodation is provided which is the closest a tourist can get to nature and have adventure and fun.

Despite offering a luxurious stay at the farm, many of the things have deliberately been kept in their ethnic rural format. Even the attendants at the farm too are simple village girls and boys. Zopadi, kothi accommodation is also provided.
C) **Kinnow Plantation**

This is another unique rural experience for tourists in sprawling kinnow farm. The sight of hundreds of orange colored kinnows hanging on small trees is tempting enough for anyone to get up close and personal. Tourists can even go and pluck fresh kinnows from the trees.

D) **Food Tourism**

Punjabis have the reputation of being connoisseurs of good food. The famous ‘Dhaba’ concept was originated in Punjab. Traditional delicacies food like stuffed aaloo (potato), gobhi (cauli flower), muli (reddish), paratha’s with fresh butter and a glass of butter milk, sarson ka saag (mustard leaves), makke ki roti (corn flour) with onion chutney, mah kid al (black lentil) baingan ka bhartha (mashed eggplant) bhuna gosh (mutton), butter chicken, tandoori roti (baked bread) and dahi raita (curds) are offered to the tourists.

E) **Rural Art and Craft**

Tourists are shown how potters collect clay from nearby pond (chhappar) and make clay pottery, surahi and ghara (vessels for storing water), dishes, jars etc.

Visitors are also shown the creative ability of the women in Phulkari embroidery, jewellery design and blending of harmonious colours. Tourists are also shown village metal workers, carpenters carving traditional and regional style doors, windows, beds, chairs, tables etc. out of different woods.
F) **Souvenir Shopping**

Shopping is one of the most important tourist activities. Various souvenir are kept in huts and bazar’s, villages and souvenir market. Thus tourist get to experience and appreciate the rich culture and heritage of Punjab.

G) **Leisure and Pleasure**

The tourists can simply walk along the swaying mustard field, take a ride on a tractor, take the cattle for grazing, feed the cattle or simply sit, relax and gulp down the fresh butter milk in the green fields.

H) **Fairs and Festivals**

Lots of tourists are attracted to traditional life style culture and customs of Punjab. Fairs and festivals like Basant Panchami, Baisakhi, Jalandhar Mela, Lahori festival, classical music and dance festival are celebrated and shown to the tourists with great fervour and enthusiasm.

I) **Entertainment**

Traditional Punjabi music, dance, folk songs, bhangra dance, folk musicals concerts and performing arts are performed for the tourists. Religious songs, Vahe Guru da kirtan are also performed for the tourists.

J) **Farm Forestry and Social Forestry in Rural Area**

To maintain the ecological balance to control the pollutions, number of plant species are planted along the roadside, community places, gram panchayat areas, along the canal sides, etc.
The farmers cultivate different type of plant species on the boundary line of farm, waste land and the barren lands and tourists are shown this type of plantation for ecological awareness among them the selves and the society.

K) Sports and Adventure

In rural villages, the food, fruits processing units like milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables bi-products small cottage, oil industries, leather industries, food industries, bakery and confectionary products, depend upon farm products. Farmers exhibit all these to the tourists.

5.12 FARM ACTIVITIES IN KERALA

Kerala being an agricultural dominated state, have tremendous potential for developing farm tourism.

A) Farm Accommodation

Tourists are offered unique farm stay experience such as;

01) Coconut Garden Accommodation
02) Areca nut Garden Accommodation
03) Spices Garden Accommodation
04) House Boat Accommodation
05) Tree top Accommodation
06) Bamboo / Cane Accommodation
07) Tented Camps
08) Ethnic Villages Accommodation

B) Transportation

Water transportation is available for tourists in Kerala. Tourists are taken from one farm to another by house boats. Similarly tractor
rides, bullock cart rides, boat rides, cycle auto rides are also offered to the tourists.

C) Local Farm Site Tours

Farm tours are arranged on poultry farm, local sight seeing. Guides show farm units like spices garden, nursery plants, horticulture gardens, sericulture units, temples, different flora and fauna, eco tourism sites, beaches, medicinal tours spa tours etc.

D) Agricultural Products

Tourists are shown all processing units at farms like different bi-products of coconuts, coconut oil, culinary products, leaves which are used for huts, processing units of Areca nut, coffee, spices such as black pepper, cultivated paddy and pulse crops are sold to tourists cloves, cardamon, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, nutmeg, medicinal plants, herbs, shrubs.

E) Rejuvenation Ayurvedic Medical Therapies

Medical tourism is quite popular in Kerala. Similarly ancient Indian medical therapies like Ayurvedic massages, treatments, rejuvenational treatments, medicated baths, spa treatments are offered to the tourists.

F) Festival of Special Interest

Onam festival is the harvest festival and is the most important celebration of Kerala. Floral decorations, cultural shows and snake boat races and processions are part of the programmes.

Ulsavom is ten days festival when processions of elephants are taken out and music performances and folk dances held. Arat festival is again a 10 days festival where a procession with caparisoned
elephants is taken down to the beach. There are also firework displays.

G) Shopping
Kerala is a hub of shopping for tourists. Inlaid woodwork, sandal wood, ivory and wooden carvings, coir works, brass and bell metal lamps, and vessels and coir products, silk clothes, embroidery work, intricate carving, small cotton industries.

H) Sporting Events
Snake boat races are major event in Kerala, elephant safari, wild life safari, boating, adventure water safari and other sports activities are very popular among tourists. Aquatic sports are also held for the tourists.

I) Music Entertainment
Traditional classical dance performance like Kathakali dance, folk dances and music, songs are performed for the tourists. Various performing arts, music, festivals are performed for the tourists.

J) Local Cuisine
Local delicacies like sea food is served on banana leaves, along with fish, prawns, crabs, organic vegetables and different types like vegetarian and non vegetarian rices with sambar, coconut sweets, desserts are also served to the tourists.

K) Eco – Friendly atmosphere in the Farm and Villages
International tourists who come for different purposes are shown majestic Kerala for eco tourism, to enjoy the natural beauty, flora and fauna, backwater cruises, rcolourful chirping birds, animals.
These type of activities release the tension and stress of the tourists and they feel more energized and rejuvenated.

Eco Agri Rural Tourism in Australia, Singapore, Israel compared to Kerala and Punjab is well developed. The farmers in these countries have also more awareness about agri rural tourism business and its consequent benefits. However in India (Kerala and Punjab) it is still developing and is in nascent stages. There is also a need to create awareness about eco agri rural tourism among Indian farmers and rural community.

Now, eco – agri – rural tourism has penetrated in to the heart of Indian villages in Maharashtra.
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