Chapter - I

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Urbanization was a phenomena that happened much earlier and faster in foreign countries than in India. Industrialization and the effects of industrial growth were felt strongly in these countries, hence the need for a change from the industrial pressures were felt in these countries and this gave birth to various ideas of holidaying that brought a change of environment in the hazardous daily routine of labourers. Countries like Australia, Singapore and Israel were some of the pioneers in starting rural and agri tourism nearly 20 to 30 years back and offered complete relaxation and recreation in the bosom of nature.

India took a long time in emulating foreign countries as basically 70% Indians are living in villages and are farmers and agriculturists. So development of the concepts of agri or rural tourism did not find a place with a country that literally lived in villages. However since last two to three decades there is a gradual growth of urbanization and cities and life in city is increasingly becoming difficult with concepts like globalization, privatization and liberalization competition that existed with each country now expanded at global level. Universities, colleges, industries, traders every segment of market geared up to face increasing competition. The present generation youth is more exposed to intensive
competition. Competition has increased at all levels of business, education and with this there is increase in tensions and pressures of the present working classes. Work pressures, boss pressures, time pressure is creating health problems.

And to get away from all these stress and strain people are trying to find destinations where they are away from the demanding office work and natural environment especially village life where people are more carefree, closer to unadulterated surroundings, trees, mountains, flowers and fruits, water bodies are simply a way out of the daily rut.

In India the demand for such get aways started growing and North Indian states started catering to this segment of society by developing their farms, villages into tourism havens. Rural tourism, agri tourism grew in these states and innovative ideas were implemented. As agriculture is rich in states like Kerala and Punjab these states found rich dividends in implementing rural and agri tourism in their states.

Now the Government of India in its intensive efforts to improve the condition of rural India is coming up with several projects, one of which introduced by UNESCO and Government of India, Department of Tourism came under the umbrella of Rural Tourism Development and Endogenous Programmes covered 31 rural areas with historical monuments in close proximing in several states of India that proved successful and also offered work to several people from these villages in hospitality, as guides, craftsman and farmers.
The Union Government is again coming up with new schemes for rural improvement and upgradation through tourism innovative ideas. Now the state of Maharashtra is also coming up in a big way in developing farm tourism and one of the sites that has been a pioneer in developing and marketing rural tourism is Baramati followed by Nerul.

In fact the state since last couple of years is reeling under farmers suicide problems as due to drought and famine or floods cultivating lands and farming has simply become impossible. Farmers had to survive and for that were compelled to borrow from village Zamindars and found it impossible to repay huge interest rates and has no escape except commit suicide.

The state government seriously started alternatives to these problems and while farm loan waiver was one of them another farmer savior they came up with was rural and agri tourism. Farmers from different regions like Marathwada, Konkan were invited by Agriculture Tourism Development Corporation led by Shri Pandurang Taware the Director of this project. Today ATDC has 127 farmers in Maharashtra in agri tourism and has motivated them to start the tourism projects in their farms. ATDC is also promoting tourist locations around the farmlands for the tourists to get the advantage of not only rural tourism but also visiting historical monuments, eco sites, natural sites in close vicinity of the rural sites.

Promoting rural tourism is the need of the time and Maharashtra State too is committed to the cause of uplifting the
farmers condition. A pro poor stand has been taken by the Union Government and State Government.

Another major reason for promoting and marketing rural tourism in a big way is the resulting advantages of developing as with farm land even the infrastructure develops like roads, bridges, communication, accommodation, hospital and health services, sanitary and garbage disposal, quickly followed by schools, colleges, trade and business activities.

The chapters have been divided as per the following scheme.

**CHAPTER – II: SCOPE OF THE STUDY, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The scope of the study was Aurangabad and nearby sites like Sillod, Khuldabad, Paithan, Kannad, Soygaon. Aurangabad is well connected by rail, road and air. Other sites are connected by roads. These sites have various types of agri tourism like rustic farm tours, farm vacations and seasonal harvest festivals. Accommodation of the rustic type is provided and typical rural and local cuisine are offered. As well as adventure sports, entertainment are also offered. As well the sites of local importance to be developed for eco agri rural tourism have been studied.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The sample population was simple random sampling of tourists that visited Aurangabad sites. A sample population of 100 tourists was done. A questionnaire was prepared for the purpose.
Another methodology used was stratified random sampling as samples were taken from directly concerned 40 entrepreneurs were directly and personally interviewed. The structured interviews were conducted.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Following books related to rural agri rural tourism were referred. Rural Tourism : Challenges and Paradox by R. K. Pruthi, Romila Chawla’s Tourism and Development series Agricultural Tourism, Jagmohan Negi’s Tourism and Travel Concept and Principles, Yogesh Kumar Sharma’s Rural Tourism Development, M. Opperman’s Business of Rural Tourism: International Perspectives.

The research journals were specially helpful as there were few articles which gave extremely new and novel ideas in rural tourism. Research journals like annals of tourism research, journals of international travel research, rural tourism policies were referred.

State agriculture department’s magazines Shetkari, Shetibhati were also referred. News paper articles such as Dainik Sakal’s Agrovan were also referred.

**CHAPTER – III : ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM CONCEPT, DEFINITION, MEANING TYPES AND DESCRIPTION**

Eco tourism is basically in ecological surroundings like mountains, rivers, valleys, beaches, hills and natural landscapes mostly unspoiled. Agro pertains to agricultural tourism were horticulture, dairy products, sericulture, apiculture, fresh fruits etc. are available and grown while rural is generally rustic surrounding where
development is limited. Vast development like roads, bridges, hotels, restaurants, buildings are not available.

It is a pro-poor approach and aims at developing tourism not only for tourist but also for the advantage of the local farmers through revenue generation.

**CHAPTER – IV: ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

The concept of eco agro rural tourism according to findings was first developed in foreign countries especially countries like Australia, Israel, Singapore. In a country like Singapore where there is little agricultural land even in these countries agri tourism has been developed. Here fish farming, water falls, fruit farms, have been developed. In Australia the farms are accommodating as may as 600 tourists at a time. Agri rural tourism industry is the 4th single industry earner contributing over 8 billion US dollars to Australian economy. Israel is the world leader in Agriculture technologies. Most of Israel’s agriculture is based around co-operative principles.

**CHAPTER – V: ECO AGRI RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA – A COMPARATIVE STUDY WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

Compared to foreign countries like Israel, Australia and Singapore Indian eco agri rural tourism is still in its nascent stages. In states like Punjab and Kerala the development is quite good and they offer medicinal plants, dairy products, horticulture agro forestry, fishery and preservative fruits. In comparison Maharashtra still has to learn lessons. However eco agri rural tourism in certain parts of
Maharashtra like Konkan and West Maharashtra are in developing stages. The state Government of Maharashtra has recently sanctioned 30 crores for agro forest tourism that could develop fauna and flora of Vidarbha. The Agro Tourism Development Corporation, Pune (ATDC) has granted the financial aid, to many farmers of Maharashtra.

CHAPTER – VI: ECO – AGRI RURAL TOURISM IN AURANGABAD DISTRICT

Aurangabad district offers a variety of tourist attractions varying from pilgrimage centers, forts, dam sites, World Heritage sites, eco tourism areas. Aurangabad has eco agri rural tourism destinations such as Paithan, Khuldabad, Kannad, Sillod and Soygaon. Aurangabad is well connected with all major cities of Maharashtra and other states by rail and air network. Paithan, Khuldabad, Kannad, Sillod and Soygaon are well connected by road.

Besides agriculture, horticulture and sericulture farming, apiculture be hive demo farms too are being offered. Medicinal plantation tours are being organized. Sale of crafts, food grains and local toys too are being offered as well as tours to nearby sites. Package tours too are being offered.

CHAPTER – VII:
A) ANALYTICAL FINDINGS OF PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TOURISTS FOR ECO AGRI RURAL TOURISM IN AURANGABAD DISTRICT
B) ANALYTICAL FINDINGS OF PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF ECO AGRI RURAL TOURISM FOR FARM ENTREPRENEURS
A) Analytical findings of problems and prospects of tourists for eco agri rural tourism in Aurangabad district.

B) Analytical findings of problems and prospects of eco agri rural tourism farm tourism entrepreneurs.

Five sites from Aurangabad i.e. Sillod, Paithan, Kannad, Soygaon, Khuldabad were identified. Analytical findings of problems and prospects of tourists as well farm entrepreneurs were shown. The sample population of 100 tourists was done. A questionnaire was prepared for the purpose. 40 entrepreneurs were directly and personally interviewed. The structured interviews were conducted for the purpose.

**CHAPTER – VIII : INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ECO – AGRI RURAL TOURISM : COMPARISON OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES WITH INDIA**

In most of rural areas there is a lack of basic infrastructure like drinking water, clean toilets, connecting good roads, schools and colleges as well as accommodation and transportation facilities. It is extremely important that villages be connected with major cities for development. A major problem in many rural areas is electricity. The Aurangabad sites are developing and are connected by road while the nearest airport is Aurangabad. Accommodation too has been well developed due to tourism in Aurangabad.
CHAPTER – IX: ECONOMIC UP GRADATION OF FARMERS AND PROMOTION OF LOCAL CRAFTSMAN

The study in its findings found that the farmers and entrepreneurs in Aurangabad are economically upgraded. The studies conducted around Paithan, Khuldabad, Sillod, Soygaon and Kannad found a number of farmers have started eco-agri rural tourism. 12 farmers in and around Paithan, 6 in Khuldabad five in Sillod and 15 in and around Kannad and 2 in Soygaon have started farm tourism. Most of these farmers own farm land between 25 to 50 acres. The ATDC is also encouraging farmers in the state to start farm tourism. The areas like Paithan, Khuldabad, Sillod, Soygaon and Kannad are historically and naturally rich. Mountains, hills, rivers, water falls, forest areas are abundant and attract large number of tourists.

CHAPTER - X: EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN VARIOUS SECTORS THROUGH PROMOTION OF ECO–AGRI-RURAL TOURISM

There would be huge employment for people living in rural areas due to farm tourism, various activities like large scale farming, adventure sports, crafts, promotion of local sites, accommodation, entertainment, cuisine, requires manpower skilled and unskilled. Hence it is extremely important that many farmers start eco–agri rural tourism.
CHAPTER XI: ECOLOGICAL BALANCE OF DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE ECO – AGRI - RURAL TOURISM

After starting eco agri rural tourism the findings were that at Aurangabad sites there is a lot of awareness of ecological conservation. Environmentalists and specialists experts in ecological conservation are frequently invited by the entrepreneurs to protect the natural environment and bookings are generally limited and this tourism is mostly class tourism and not mass tours.

CHAPTER - XII : CONTRIBUTION OF ECO – AGRI RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

The contribution of eco agri rural tourism towards national progress is definitely huge as villages and rural areas that have suffered backwardness since years will witness development of roads, rails, and connectivity will be better. More development and connectivity will attract more schools, colleges, hospitals and other necessary infrastructure. Rural areas will march towards progress and with more schools and colleges the percentage of educated Indians will increase. Due to eco agri rural tourism, rural farmers will be of economically and socially uplifted in Aurangabad district.

CHAPTER – XIII: RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. It was found that most of the farmers in Paithan, Sillod, Khuldabad, Soygaon and Kannad require financial assistance.

2. Expert financial assistance should be given to these farmers to develop their farms for tourist by NABARD Nationalized banks, well renowned agriculturist should assist farmers.
3 The farmers should be taken on tours to Baramati, Nerul, Sindhudurg to understand the various facilities required for development of farm tourism.

4 Expert assistance should be offered to the farmers.

5 The developed sites of eco agri rural tourism should be included in domestic brochures and folders of domestic travel agents and tour operators, for publicity and promotion.

6 Urban people should be encouraged to visit and stay in these developed farm sites, for pleasure, leisure and eco tourism activities and their native roots.

7 Like other areas sericulture, fishing, apiculture, preservation of fruits and food, drink making, agro forestry, aquaculture should be taught to these farmers for marketing.

8 Strong community – private sector partnership should be sought.

9 Indian Agri Tourism Council (IAC) should be established for coordinating product development, marketing and training for all agri tourism initiatives.

10 Some farmers in Aurangabad sites should have collaboration or tie-up with Agriculture Tourism Development Corporation, (ATDC) Pune to get more business and earn profit.

11 Safety and security should be provided to the tourists and better communication facilities also should be provided to the tourists.