Bridging the Gap; Agro Tourism

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Abstract

Atithi devo bhava- the guest is equivalent to God – is a tradition of Indian culture value system. Mr. Pandurang Taware, promoter of Agro tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), thought of expanding this value system to business arena through agro tourism. The case provides a detailed narration of the concept of agro tourism, including the benefits, constraints and success factors involved, with specific reference to India where about 65% of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihood. ATDC, a venture initiated in 2005 in village Palshi in Maharashtra, develops, actively promotes and encourages agro tourism throughout the state of Maharashtra. The objectives of the organization is to create sustainable livelihoods in rural areas by providing training, creating employment opportunities and linking tourism with agricultural production and related activities such as the manufacture of handicrafts. ATDC have provided training to about 2500 farmers till date and with about 200 agro tourism units in operation in Maharashtra. It has also initiated operation in state like Kerala, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh. These Agro Tourism Centers serve predominantly domestic tourists from urban areas, who are provided with the opportunity to interact with rural villagers and farmers in order to experience authentic Indian agricultural traditions in unexploited natural environments. Being an unchartered area, there are many challenges that the participating farmers are likely to face. The issues like sustainability, economic feasibility, guest host relationship, connectivity infrastructure, communication are important for development of agro tourism. The full growth potential for agro tourism can be realized through proper strategies addressing the challenges to be developed and implemented jointly by the stack holders. The stack holders are farmers, tourism organization and the government agencies responsible for formulating policies.

Learning objectives: Introduction to agro tourism- a niche tourism; Relevance of agro tourism, new enterprise in agriculture industry; Strategy formulation, external and internal factor analysis; Implementing strategy – internal factors; Roles of stake holders.

Key Words: Agro tourism, entrepreneurship, strategy, stack holders