

## Agro Tourism : A Way of Livelihood Security for Farmers of Ramanagara District of Karnataka

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### ABSTRACT

Agriculture in India today is facing acute problems from production to marketing aspects. Hence, it is needed to supplement the income of rural folk and the Indian farmers should find an alternate means of livelihood. Since, agriculture is the main occupation of the people in India there is a need to think of allied income generation strategies with agriculture, agro tourism is one such approach. This approach has got lot of potential by utilizing the local resources to its fullest potential. It also has the capacity to generate a marginal or supplementary source of income and also creates employment opportunities to the farmers. Hence it acts as an alternative means and ways of livelihood security to the farmers. The study was conducted in Ramanagara district of Karnataka with an objective of analyzing the impact of agro tourism on livelihood security of farmers. This study aims to provide much needed empirical data about livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism centres. Results from a survey of 32 farmers of the selected study area indicated that majority (59.38 %) of the farmers belonged to the medium category of overall livelihood security followed by 28.12 per cent of the farmers belonging to the low and 12.50 per cent of the farmers belonging to the high category of livelihood security. The mean livelihood score under different factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism is also presented in this paper. The findings highlights the agro tourism can be effectively implemented, if the idea is promoted and widely adopted, it not only enhances livelihood security of the farmers but it also serves as a value addition and can accelerate further economic growth of the country.

*Keywords* : Agriculture, Livelihood security, Agro tourism, Farmers, Impact

AGRO tourism is the concept of visiting an agricultural, horticultural, animal husbandry or agri-enterprise operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm operation. In general, agro tourism is the practice of attracting visitors to an area used primarily for agricultural purposes. It could be described as Rural / Agricultural Environments + Farm Commodities + Tourism Services = Agro tourism. Agro tourism is basically a subset of rural tourism where tourism concept is invoked in the agriculture activities. (Kartik and Gajanand, 2019). Agro tourism is defined as ‘A range of activities, services and

amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business’ (Gannon, 1994). In general, agro tourism is defined as any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations thereby benefitting the local community economically and socially and enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience (Krishna, 2019).

The concept of agro tourism developed due to urbanization, as many people are not aware of rural background and the constraints in production of grain,

fruits, and vegetables. Agro tourism not only provides opportunity to the visitors to involve in the activities such as visit to farmer's markets to purchase farm fresh products, taking part in orchard and floral garden tours, bullock cart rides, tractor rides, agricultural operations, Pottery making, using farm bed and breakfast, accommodation, wineries, aquaculture, petting farms and participating in other such agricultural activities. It is also a source of income to the farmers in the Agro Tourism Centres (ATCs).

Today agriculture sector in India is facing acute problems like infrastructure, warehousing, climate change, excessive rains, drought, no irrigation facilities, availability of inputs, finance and effective marketing etc. Agriculture in India is most uncertain depending on monsoon with less avenues from irrigation. Hence, it is needed to supplement the income of rural folk and the Indian farmers should find an alternate means of livelihood. Since agriculture is the main occupation of the people in India there is a need to think of allied income generation strategies with agriculture, one of which is agro tourism (Chada and Bhakare, 2012).

Karnataka is one of the prominent agricultural producing state and it is one of the top ten domestic tourism destinations in India, ranking IV among the states (Hamsa *et al.*, 2015) and there is a large scope and great potential to develop agro-tourism. Many ATCs have been already established in different parts of Karnataka. These Agro tourism approach has got lot of potential to transform and develop a rural economy into a modern economy by utilizing the local resources to its fullest potential. It also has the capacity to generate a marginal income or supplementary source of income and also employment opportunities to the farmers. Hence it is a means and ways of livelihood security to the farmers in ATCs.

As there are no much studies conducted on ATCs, keeping in view the importance of ATCs as a means of livelihood security to farmers a study on ATCs is of paramount importance. Hence the present study was planned with the objective of analyzing the impact of agro tourism on livelihood security of farmers.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to measure the impact of agro tourism on livelihood security of farmers of Ramangara district of Karnataka state. The district was selected purposively based on the number of agro tourism centres for pretest and the convenience of the researcher. From 8 different agro tourism centres of Ramanagara, 4 farmers from each centre comprising of total 32 farmers were randomly selected. The data was collected from the farmers by interview method using structured schedule, which consisted of livelihood security statements. Ex-post-facto research design was adopted for the study. The responses were scored, classified, analyzed and calculated the mean livelihood security score for each statements under different dimensions of livelihood security. The overall livelihood security was classified into low medium and high category and was calculated based on the mean and standard deviation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It is evident from the Fig.1 that majority (59.38 %) of the farmers belonged to the medium category of overall livelihood security followed by 28.12 per cent of the farmers belonged to the low and 12.50 per cent of the farmers belonged to the high category of livelihood security. This may be due to the fact that the participation of visitors in the agricultural activities is less, also the visitors are not available throughout the year in all the seasons. The income level of farmers is not up to the expectations. There is no much interactions between the tourists and the farmers in agro tourism centres, farmers are not taking full

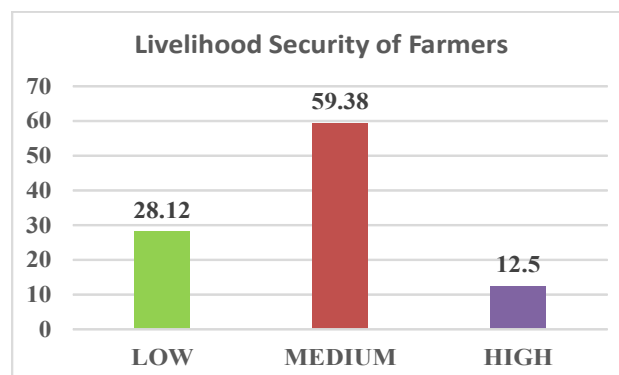


Fig. 1 : Overall impact of agro tourism on livelihood security of farmers

TABLE 1  
Overall impact of agro tourism on livelihood security of farmers n=32

Category	Criteria
Low (Mean-1/2 SD)	< 96.102
Medium (Mean)	96.10 to 132.46
High(Mean+1/2 SD)	>132.46

advantage of having direct link with customers in agro tourism centres. Hence more than fifty per cent of the farmers belonged to the medium category. These results of livelihood security are in confirmation with the findings of Narayani *et al.* (2011).

The results from the Table 2 indicates the social security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in ATCs. It was evident that the highest mean livelihood security score of 4.00 was observed for the statement 'Agro-tourism benefits the local community

TABLE 2  
Social security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism

Livelihood Security statements	Mean Livelihood security score
<i>Social security statements</i>	
Agro-tourism benefits the local community socially by enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more educational tourism experience	4.00
Agro-tourism aids in promotion of the preservation of local customs and traditions.	3.78
Agro-tourism helps in cultural exchange and social modernization	3.15
Enhance recognition and respect of farmers	3.62
Enhance standard of living of farmers	3.50
The Agro-tourism prevents migration of rural youth to city	2.71
Contribute for social infrastructure	2.84
Agro-tourism promotes inter-regional and intercultural communication	3.53
Helps in promoting rural leadership	2.93

socially by enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more educational tourism experience'. Farmers felt that social security of local community enhanced through increased interaction between the tourists, through which local customs and traditions preserved and encouraged. With more interaction more intercultural communication takes place. On the other side, it is observed that the mean livelihood security on statement, 'The Agro-tourism prevents migration of rural youth to city' had the least mean score of 2.71. ATCs cannot prevent the rural youth migration to the cities, as they are more attracted towards city life. Even though ATCs creates employment opportunities to the youths, the income or the salary what they get is comparatively high in the cities.

It is observed from the Table 3 that among the statements of economic security, 'Agro-tourism help the farmers to gain more income by undertaking diversified activities and services' is having the highest mean score of 4.12 and 'Irrespective of climate or season, the income from the farm is ensured' having lowest mean score of 3.03. Having diversified

TABLE 3  
Economic security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism

Livelihood Security statements	Mean Livelihood security score
<i>Economic security statements</i>	
Agro-tourism help the farmers to gain more income by undertaking diversified activities and services	4.12
Agro-tourism helps in creating employment opportunity to jobless youths and generate income	3.75
Agro-tourism result in increased land value for the farmers	3.65
Irrespective of climate or season, the income from the farm is ensured	3.03
Adoption of Agro-tourism is a profitable business venture	3.34
Agro-tourism has the potential to improve the financial situation of farming sectors	3.31

activities such as selling of farm products, availability of desi foods, rural sports, pottery making, bullock cart riding etc., people were more attracted and participation was high, as a result it ensured good income to the farmers. On the contrary, number of visitors will vary depending on the climate or seasons and it affects the income level during the off season.

It is clearly depicted from Table 4 that the livelihood of farmers expressed under educational security factors, the highest mean livelihood security score of 3.71 is obtained for the statement 'Agro-tourism supports increased awareness on agriculture'. It shows that farmers knowledge is increased with the involvement in the various agro tourism activities, on how to carryout agricultural activities in an innovative way by referring to the various literature which aids for betterment of farm and attracting the visitors, thus ensuring the educational security. We can observe from the table that the least mean livelihood security score of 2.91 is observed on the statement 'Agro-tourism act as a tool to teach the interactive effects of

environment and agriculture to the population, this may be due to the reason that farmers are less likely to have knowledge on the interactive effects of environment with agriculture.

It was witnessed from the Table 5 that among the statements from health security, the statement 'Promotes better health conditions'. is having the highest mean score 3.78. Agro tourism represents more than just a stay at peasant guest house. The activities at the farm, good environment keeps the body healthy and mind calm. Health components cannot be disassociated from economic, social and cultural life of the people. Agro tourism provides all these to farmers by means of financial stability, interaction with visitors and satisfaction in their personal life too.

The results in the Table 6 shows the Ecological and Environmental security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in ATCs. It was witnessed from the results that the statement 'Improving aesthetic value of the nature by means of human intervention' has got the highest mean score 3.87. Aesthetic values is of prime importance for visitors, tourists fall in love with the place when the aesthetic experience is good. Farmers expressed that human intervention with innovative ideas can create more aesthetic value and if educational messages on environmental protection are given at the ATCs, the

TABLE 4

Educational security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism

Livelihood Security statements	Mean Livelihood security score
<i>Educational security statements</i>	
Agro-tourism supports increased awareness on agriculture	3.71
Agro-tourism allows visitors to understand and engage in agricultural activities which leads to greater joy	3.21
Learning about agriculture & environment in a scientific way is a new thing	3.15
Creation of awareness on environment will help in transforming the people into a responsible person to conserve environment	3.41
Agro-tourism helps to understand important role of farmers and the path that food production takes place	3.31
Agro-tourism act as a tool to teach the interactive effects of environment and agriculture to the population	2.91

TABLE 5

Health security factors influencing the livelihood security of farmers in agro tourism

Livelihood Security statements	Mean Livelihood security score
<i>Health security statements</i>	
The fresh air and the good ambience have helped to maintain good physical health	3.34
Human well-being can be enhanced through sustainable human interaction with ecosystems	3.56
Promotes better health conditions	3.78
Being with nature has resulted in greater satisfaction	3.69
Promotes rural health being in the midst of environment	2.87



TABLE 6  
Ecological and Environmental security factors  
influencing the livelihood security of  
farmers in agro tourism

Livelihood Security statements	Mean Livelihood security score
<i>Ecological and Environmental security statements</i>	
Agro-tourism helps in maintaining cultural integrity and protect biological diversity	3.72
Agro-tourism cause air pollution and increase environmental temperature	2.37
Diversified components in Agro-tourism have resulted in adoption of reuse, recycle and reducing pollution eco-friendly principles	3.31
Agro-tourism encourages sustainable & ecologically sound agriculture system	3.59
Agro-tourism focuses on maintenance and enhancement of the natural resource base	3.25
Agro-tourism leads to irreversible alteration of landscape, due to the proliferation of infrastructures and constructions	3.31
The disturbance due to Agro-tourism causes disappearance of plant species and forced escape of fauna	2.56
Improving aesthetic value of the nature by means of human intervention	3.87

tourists are more likely to accept them. Contrary to this, the results also indicate the lowest mean score of 2.37 for the statement 'Agro-tourism cause air pollution and increase environmental temperature'. It may be due to the fact that agro tourism is the way for ecological stability and environmental conservation. Due to the presence of diversified components in the ATCs, utilization of natural resources and reuse mechanisms, the pollution is reduced and the greenery at the ATCs helps in balancing the environment.

India basically being a farming nation, agriculture is the essential thing in the Indian economy. Agro tourism which is an emerging concept in the tourism

industry and contributes to the GDP of the country. It is a crucial tool for employment generation and sustainable human development. The present study is instrumental in understanding the importance of agro tourism on overall livelihood security of the farmers. The study revealed that the social, economic, educational, health and environmental security aspects contribute well to the overall livelihood security of farmers. Agro Tourism provides an alternative source of livelihood and large scale employment opportunities for farmers. In India, Agro tourism is still in nascent stage and if the idea is promoted and widely adopted, it not only enhances livelihood security of the farmers but it also serves as a value addition and can accelerate further economic growth of the country. Therefore, the concept of agro tourism should be effectively implemented in the developmental programs. Government and all stakeholders including the local communities and the relevant institutions in a country need to work together so that the utilization, development and management of tourist areas could be given a serious attention.

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