

## Modern Concept of Agroforestry Tourism

Prem Shanker Gochar\*<sup>1</sup> and Rekha Gurjar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.Sc. Scholar, Department of Agronomy, Post Graduate Institute, MPKV, Rahuri. Maharashtra-413722, India.

<sup>2</sup>M.Sc. Scholar, Department of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, S.K.N. College of Agriculture, SKNAU, Jobner, Jaipur, Rajasthan-303329, India.

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The word 'Tour' is derived from Latin word 'tornus' means a tool for making circle. The term ecotourism was coined in 1983 by "Hector Ceballos Lascrain" a Mexican environmentalist, and initially used to describe nature-based travel to relatively undisturbed areas with an emphasis on education (Dimitros,2010). In 1960s, researchers were concerned on economic issues related to tourism. Historically, during the same period (1960's) agritourism concept emerged in Europe and is a successful entrepreneurial venture capable of delivering wide array of ecosystem benefits both from economic and environment perspective of view (Cialoc, 2019). Earlier majestic forests and landscapes, rich biodiversity and natural heritage sites were major tourist destinations. Even though these have been included in sustainable tourism, the concept is changing in the present scenario. The demand for health tourism, spa tourism, medical tourism is growing faster than other types of tourism. There is also growing interest in agritourism which is gaining attraction in rural areas. Recently, in line with sustainable development emphasis on agroforestry tourism development is also on the road map. There are numerous benefits to be developed from agroforestry tourism such as creating job opportunities, preserving tradition of local culture, improving income of local farmers/people, enjoying the recreation and aesthetic view, scientific education, promoting training program to introduce agroforestry concepts. In India, the agritourism concept was first introduced in 'Maharashtra' and it is the first state to develop and execute 'Agritoursim Development Corporation, India'. Plantation crops involving tea (*Camellia sinensis*), coffee (*Coffea sp.*), rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*), Coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) based farming landscapes and the homestead systems in Western Ghats region attracts aesthetic and scenic view (Kumar *et al.* 2009). Many agroforestry systems like traditional *Prosopis cineraria* in arid zone, *Grevillea robusta* of Assam and Nilgiirs, *Alnus nephalensis* of North east India, *Grewia optiva* of Himalayas possess recreational and cultural value. Moreover, separate destiny-based farm stays are available in Goa, Uttarakhand (Goat village), Nagaland & West Bengal (Tea retreat), Cheese making farm stay (Ooty), Oyster opera (Kerala),

citrus country (Punjab) etc., But all the system developed holds separate destiny and product-based importance with scenic attraction. Nevertheless, people-nature interactions are core components of agroforestry systems. Therefore, multifunctional agroforestry comprising of vegetation diversity and livestock components possessing



multifarious role both as services and disservices towards achieving sustainability which is aesthetically appealing with distinct elements of uniqueness and wilderness has become much essential for agroforestry tourism. ( Parthiban *et al.* 2021). Globally, 43% of agricultural land has 10% tree cover and this has been increased by 2% over last ten years . The estimated agroforestry area accounts for 1020 m.ha globally . In India, the total agroforestry area is 28.03m.ha and the projected area is estimated to be 53.32 m.ha in 2050 (Parthiban *et al.* 2023).

Agroforestry entering its fifth decade has been understood for its potential multifarious ecosystem services viz., Provisioning services (Food, fruits, medicinal plants, timber, flowers etc.), regulating services (climatic regulation, air quality regulation, pollination, litter decomposition, water purification, erosion and flood control), supporting services (biomass production and carbon sequestration, soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, provision of habitat) and cultural services (recreation and aesthetic value, spiritual, walking, photography, mindfulness etc.). Hence agroforestry is not only seen as production and income-oriented activity, but also focuses on local traditional culture and associated activities.

### **Agroforestry Tourism – Components and Characteristics**

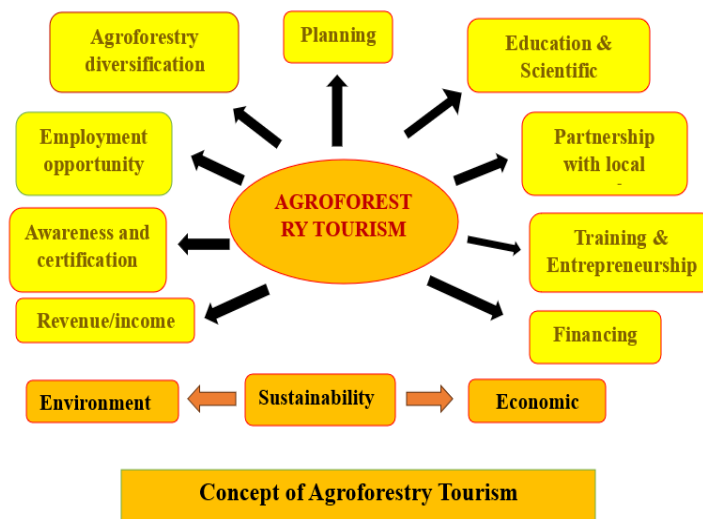
#### **Defining Agroforestry Tourism**

Agroforestry Tourism is a combination of agriculture, forestry, ecosystem, tourism and entrepreneurship development. Agroforestry Tourism is defined as an activity involving visiting to an agroforestry landscape setting for recreation, relaxation, education, entrepreneurship/business development coupled with practical learning in all the State-of-the-art agroforestry operational activities (Gao *et. al* 2014),It can be also mentioned as Travel to agroforestry farms which allows enjoying all tangible and intangible benefits. In other words, the farm owner offers to tour the agroforestry farm especially practically experiencing farm operations from land preparation, planting of trees and crops up to harvesting and incorporates all activities from production to consumption system. Farmers also provide home-stay opportunity (for a day to week)to see, learn, do and enjoy agroforestry farming on payment basis. This may include one person to group of persons.



Agroforestry farmers allow tourist to experience farming activities, cherish traditional food and also provide entertainment as well as cultural elements. **Concept of Agroforestry Tourism:**

Agroforestry tourism is a concept that combines agriculture, forestry, ecosystem and tourism. The concept of agroforestry includes visiting an agroforestry area of traditional and multifunctional values for the purpose of recreation and aesthetic values, learning of education and scientific information coupled with active involvement in farm operation. It can be viewed in four dimensions.



- First dimension includes earlier aspects related to production encompassing trees, crops, fodders and livestock.
- Second dimension will focus on services related to biodiversity viz., provision of habitat to diverse insects, birds etc., diversification of crops, recreation and aesthetic values and improvement of ecological systems.
- Third dimension is agroforestry tourism that allows tourists to visit different farms and adopt models of agroforestry in their farmlands.
- Fourth dimension includes entrepreneurship development by practicing, acquiring skills and expertise on all facets of agroforestry from production to consumption system.

The increasing tree cover on trees outside forest in India is also an example of expanding cultivation of trees, horticultural crops, medicinal plants etc., This has provided huge scope to evolve into concepts of agroforestry tourism in terms of understanding ecology and education and the associated components like horticultural trees and crops, pastures, tree borne oil seeds, multipurpose trees and shrubs, arboretum, biodiversity parks etc. This concept will provide an opportunity for the tourists to get exposed to a variety of new experiences augmented with new learning's in an engaging environment.

### Objectives of Agroforestry Tourism

Agroforestry Tourism encompasses living and enjoying with nature. It has huge potential to promote alliance among agroforestry and environment. The objectives of agroforestry tourism include:



- Integration of diversified farming activities to achieve sustainable venture.
- Delivering recreational, aesthetic and other supporting services in agroforestry farms.
- Provision of spiritual richness like mindfulness and peacefulness to ecotourists through cultural services.
- Development of agroforestry community development farms.
- Enriching old traditional agroforestry systems into technology leveraged agroforestry tourism, Providing sustained employment opportunities to local people through technological leveraged business development.
- Infrastructure development in and around agroforestry farms for the benefit of ecotourists and farmers thereby help to augment rural economy.
- Learning of scientific and educational information of agroforestry related activities.
- Learning opportunities for skill and entrepreneurship development.
- Development and promotion of multifunctional agroforestry models that suits different agroclimatic regions of the country.
- Environmental preservation and protection.
- Develop policy frameworks and regimes to consider multiple values and multifunctionality of agroforestry systems (Diaz *et al.*, 2018; kay *et al.*, 2019)

### Components of Agroforestry Tourism

The components involved in agroforestry tourism should be attractive, aesthetically appealing and a sound reflection of natural resource management activities. It can be developed as a farm-oriented tourism centers or a sightseeing agroforestry venue. The different agroforestry systems viz., Agri-silviculture, Silvipastoral, Agrosilvopastoral and other miscellaneous systems are all included as a component. Nevertheless, these systems are viewed only from production oriented and has not been explored for agroforestry tourism opportunities

### Practical approach towards Agroforestry Tourism

Agroforestry systems have been molded for centuries and these systems have delivered wide range of ecosystems services ( Lomba *et al.*, 2020). Hence, a transparent way is necessary to capture knowledge and disseminate to various stake holders which can be addressed through following mechanisms.

- Identifying the purpose of agroforestry tourism
- Explaining the scope and potential of agroforestry tourism
- Understanding of Indigenous and local knowledge systems
- Questionnaire approach to study the basic opinion of ecotourists



- Integrating and bridging values especially in decision making
- Using modelling approach to assess dynamics of agroforestry tourism
- Sorting out communication gaps
- Location of agritourism centre

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