



**A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF AGRO-TOURISM IN JUNNAR
TAHSIL WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PARASHAR
AGRO-TOURISM CENTRE**

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism plays very crucial role in the regional development, thorough creating employment opportunities for local people. In the study area there is scope for general tourism as well as agro-tourism. In the tahsil there are four agro-tourism centers, but the Parashar agro-tourism center is recognized, therefore this center has been taken for the study point of view. There are so many facilities are available for tourists at Parashar agro-tourism center. The economic development of the surrounding area of Parashar agro-tourism center has been improving because of tourism activities. The Parashar agro-tourism center has been trying to provide maximum facilities to the tourists, even though there are some problems which tourists have to face. The tourists are visited to Parashar agro-tourism center from different parts of the Maharashtra state as well as country and abroad. The facilities provided by Parashar agro-tourism center creates employment opportunities for the local farmers and Women self help group, which is helpful to the economic development of the region.

INTRODUCTION:

Now a day's tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Tourism represents the largest segment of international trade and earning. The development of tourism started from the last 50 years. The Social, Cultural, Educational, Historical, Geographical factors are affecting the tourism all over the world. India is the paradise of tourism. Tourism has demonstrated its potential for creating jobs and encouraging income-generating activities to benefit local communities in the particular areas. Tourism plays very crucial role in the regional development, thorough creating employment opportunities for local people. Tourism can increasingly be regarded as a main instrument for regional development, as it comprises a complex set of interlinked activities, such as travel, accommodation, catering, shopping and so on; it supports the local economic activities and stimulates

new ones. Tourism generates local employment, both directly in the tourism sector and in the various support and resource management sectors, with the creation of full-time and part-time jobs. It stimulates profitable domestic industries such as hotels, restaurants, transport systems, souvenirs and handicrafts.

AGRO-TOURISM:

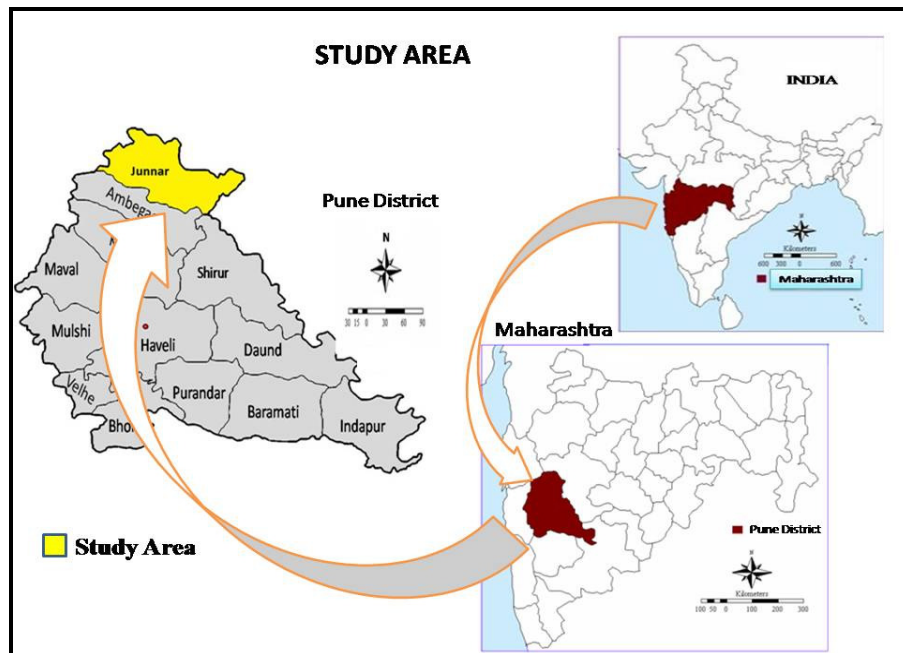
Agricultural Tourism is the Holidays concept of Visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education, or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation. In general, Agro-tourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes. However, Agro-tourism is small-scale, low-impact, and, in most cases, education-focused. Because landowners operate the majority of farms in Maharashtra, opportunities for uniqueness and customization are limitless. Many agro-tourism activities require only a small farm crew in order to be successful. For instance, farm tours, bed and breakfasts, Tractor / bullock cart rides, grapes, mangoes, and other horticulture farms, by product farms, birds / animal zoos, and many other activities may be operated with little additional investment in labour. Agro Tourism is now well recognized as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their Agro Tourism potential. Agro-tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled population. Hence, the World Travel and Tourism Council have rated India as one of the five fastest growing tourism economies in the world. Agro-tourism is an innovative agricultural activity related to tourism and agriculture both. It has a great capacity to create additional source of income and employment opportunities to the farmers. Maharashtra is one of the major tourist centers in the India and there is large scope and great potentiality to develop agro-tourism. This paper is the combine study of agricultural activity and its association with tourism in Junnar tahsil of Pune district of Maharashtra.

STUDY AREA:

Junnar tahsil is located in the northern zone of the Pune district. It occurs in the zone of steep isohyetal gradient having rainfall between 50 to 250 cm. The atmosphere of the tahsil is very pleasant and it is favorable for tourism. The latitudinal extent of the Tahsil is 19° 00' to 19° 24' north and longitudinal extent is 73° 40' to 74° 18' east. The area of the Tahsil is 1579.84 Sq.km. Junnar is mainly rural in character as 183 villages are there,

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according to 2001 census. Junnar Tahsil has the human population as about 3, 44,897, the rural population of the Tahsil is 98%, While the urban population is 2% according to 2001 census.



There are so many tourist centers in the study area. There are two Lord Ganpati temples of “Ashtavinayak” in Junnar Tahsil. Girijatmak which is situated at Lenyadri and Vighnahr is situated at Ozar. The Shivaneri, birth place of Lord Shivaji is also located in the study area. The geographical condition is favorable for the general tourism as well as agro-tourism.

OBJECTIVES:

The main purpose of this paper is to study the scope and opportunities of agro-tourism in the tahsil. The paper is based on the following objectives:

1. To examine the importance of agro-tourism development in Junnar tahsil.
2. To identify the Agro-tourist centres in the study area.
3. To study the success story of Parashar Agro-tourist center.
4. To identify the problems and suggestions of the Agro-tourism.

METHODOLOGY:

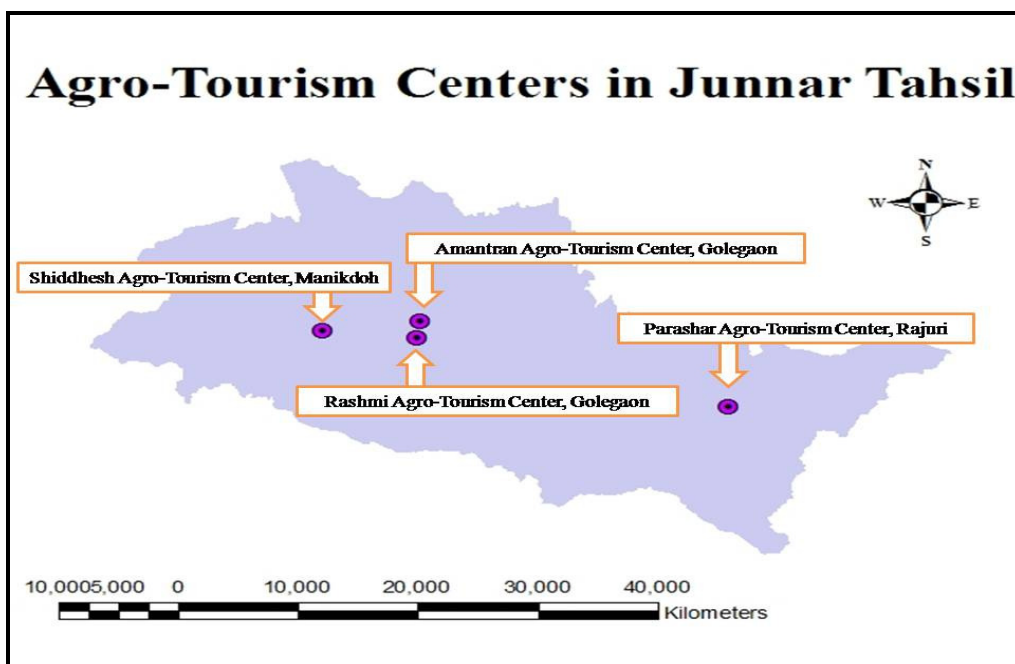
The primary and secondary data have been used for the research paper. The data has been collected by the direct interview method. The interview of the manager of Parashar agro-tourism center, Rajuri, Taluka Junnar has been taken and collected the necessary data. The statistical method has been used for calculation. The cartography and GIS techniques are used to represent the data.

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Primary Data: The data has been collected by the direct interview method.

Secondary Data: Secondary data which is necessary collected from Parashar agro-tourist centre; Magazines, other related books and Journals are also referred to get secondary information. Junnar tahsil is most important for tourism as well as agro tourism. In tahsil following agro-tourism centers are available. They are as follows:

1. Parashar Agro-tourism Center- Rajuri
2. Amantran Agro-tourism Center- Golegaon
3. Rashmi Agro-tourism Center- Golegaon
4. Shiddhesh Agro-tourism Center- Manikdoh



Out of this four Agro-tourism Centers Parashar Agro-tourism Center is one of important and well developed Agro-tourism center in the Tahsil, so this center has been taken for study point of view.

PARASHAR AGRO-TOURISM CENTER:

Parashar Agro tourism center is working under the guidance of Hachiko Tourism Organization. Hachiko Tourism is a newly established company working in the field of India tourism, working on new innovative tourism concepts. Under Hachiko Tourism “Parashar Agro Tourism” introduced the innocent joy of virgin culture of Junnar Tahasil to foreign and domestic tourists. The Parashar Agro-Tourism established on 4th September 2011 by Manoj Hadawale. This agro-tourism center is only one center which registered under MTDC.

The project is planned at the “Sanitarium of India” at Junnar, Dist-Pune, Maharashtra state. Since British period this place is known for its fresh & healthy air which can cure all breathing diseases. Due to green belt this fresh air will remain forever as it is. Exact spot of this project is at Rajuri on Nagar-Kalyan highway near Alephata 4 km away on Nagar road. The spot is at just 65 km from Ahmednagar 125km from Kalyan, 90km from Nashik & 95 km from Pune. This project is very near from “Shivneri Fort” a birthplace of Legendary Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj & Ozar, Lenyadri.

This agro-tourism center provides following facilities to the tourist:-

1. Dining hall/Multiple hall
2. Eight rooms and one dormitory
3. Beautiful sunrise & sunset from machan
4. Well developed agricultural farm
5. Different fruit crops, vegetables, flowers, grains, pulses & fodder crops.
6. Different irrigation system farm pond
7. Cow buffalo, sheep, Goat rearing
8. Beautiful nature
9. Bird observation
10. Village structure administration, credit structure, co-operative structure, NDDB award winner Milk Dairy
11. Weekly Markets
12. Forest visit & lunch
13. Jatra Festival
14. Visit to historic places
15. Junnar darshan (Shivneri fort, Ozar -Lenyadri Ashtavinayak darshan, ancient temples)

Also for amateur guests they provide facility for paintings, one day trekking, atmosphere to write books/poems, space for photography as well as they provide entertainment facilities like overnight stay a quality event of

Maharashtrian folk such as Jagaran, Gondhal, Powada, Bharud, Bhajan, at morning & evening soft music, celebration of festivals on farm and books for reading etc.

Table No.1: Number of Tourist Visited

Sr.No.	Year	Number of Tourist Visited	Income
1	2011-12	360	5,40,000
2	2012-13	710	10,65,000
3	2013-14	930	13,95,000
Total		2000	30,00,000

The table No.1 depicts that the tourist visited to this center as well as the income is increasing gradually. The tourist is visited to this agro-tourism center are from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, America, Germany, and France. This shows the scope for agro-tourism centers in the study area. The foreigners are visited to this tourist center; this shows the identification and recognition of agro-tourist center is important to get foreign currency for our country.

This center is employment oriented. In this agro-tourism center actually six worker are working, but very important thing is that the surrounding farmers as well as Women self help group is also engaged to provide tourist facilities.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PARASHAR AGRO-TOURISM CENTER:

1. Enlisted in top 10 village tourism centers in India (Junnar get identity for very first time on such platform)
2. It registered with MTDC under Mahabharama scheme for conservation of culture.
3. Shooting of Junnar tourism with Parashar by Marathi star Siddharth Jadhav for 9X Zakas Channel.
4. It Awarded 'JagতিকKrishiParyatanGaurav Purskar' in 2013 by MART.
5. Also more than 2000 guest visited from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, America, Germany and France.
6. It accessed Area Junnar, Ambegaon, Parner, Malshej Ghat, Lenyadri, Ozar, Shivneri Fort, Ane Ghat, GMRT, Ale (Reda Samadhi Mandir), Habashi, Ghumbaj, Weekly Market (Belhe), Nighoj Pothols, Ralegan Siddhi, Gowardhan Plant, and Many More.
7. Promotion of Junnar tourism internationally.

8. Promotion of Junnar food culture like Missal, Masvadi, Shengdana chatni and many more.

PROBLEMS OF THE AGRO-TOURISM IN JUNNAR TAHSIL:

Though the Junnar Tahsil has a greater potential of the development of the agro tourism centers as per above discussions, some problems are observed in the process of agro-tourism development in the study area. They can be discussed as follows:

1. Lack of perfect knowledge about the agro-tourism.
2. Weak communication skill and lack of commercial approach of the small farmers.
3. Lack of capital to develop basic infrastructure for the agro-tourism.
4. Ignorance of the farmers regarding to such type of activities.
5. Presence of unorganized sector in the Agro Tourism industry, ensuring hygiene and basic requirements considering by urban visitors.
6. Farmers have small size holding, low quality land and little or no access to credit of irrigation.

SUGGESTION AND DISCUSSION:

Agro-Tourism is a one of the business activity. So, farmers have must of commercial mind and some marketing techniques for the success. For the better success Agro-tourism can following techniques like publicity of tourism centre by news papers, television etc, and use all possible advertisement means, develop contacts with the schools, colleges, NGOs, clubs, unions, organizations etc. To train the staff or family members for reception and hospitality, to understand about the customers need and their expectations and then serve, charge optimum rent and charges for the facilities on the commercial base. The artificially use local resources for the entertain to tourist, develop the website and update time to time for attract foreign tourist. Take their feedback and comments about the service and suggestions to more development and modification. Develop a good relationship with the tourist for future business and chain publicity, develop different agro-tour packages of for different type of tourist and their expectations. Preserve an address book and comments of the visited tourists for future tourism business, behave sincerely with the tourists and participate with them, small farmers can develop their agro-tourism centers on the basis of co-operative society. For any agro-tourism venture to be successful some important pre-conditions need to be fulfilled. Like as: A complete tourism package can be provided through initiation by the local government bodies of activities such as beautification campaigns, sponsorship of special events that

tie in with local tourist attractions and participation of all businesses in the area.

CONCLUSIONS:

Junnar tahsil has a great potential to the development of agro-tourism, because of natural conditions and different types of agro products as well as variety of rural traditions, festivals. More than 6.37 percent of population of Junnar tahsil is live in the urban area and they want enjoy rural life and to know about the rural life. It is a good opportunity to develop an agro-tourism business in Junnar. But there is a problem of low awareness about this business in the farmer and problem of the finance and proper view in the farmers of Junnar. If above discussed strategies and some local government support will received in proper way, the study area will definitely in general popular as well as a good agro-tourism spot in Maharashtra.

Hence, the agriculture departments and Agriculture Universities should try to give orientation about it and provide some innovative ideas regarding to the Agro-tourism. The government should try to provide optimum financial aids to the agro-tourism activities in the Maharashtra by the grants and institutional finance. The various banks should provide optimum financial help for the agro-tourism activities in the tahsil.

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