

Original Research Article

SWOT Analysis of Agri-tourism Centers in Konkan Region of Maharashtra State

S. N. Wanole^{1*}, J. R. Kadam¹ and S. G. Bhave²

¹Department of Extension Education, Dr. B.S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli- 415712, Ratnagiri (M.S.), India

²Directorate of Extension Education, Dr. B. S. Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli- 415712. Dist. Ratnagiri (M.S.), India

**Corresponding author*

ABSTRACT

Agri-tourism could be an excellent alternative agri-business for farmers providing a fresh and live experience of different farm activities in agricultural practices, horticultural practices and rural experience. Konkan has the largest mango, cashew nut, and coconut and rice production in Maharashtra and can be a great contributor in generating revenue for the country. The purpose of the study was to examine the SWOT analysis of agri-tourism centers in the Konkan region. It was observed that strength of agri-tourism is a rich in flora and fauna or natural resources (i.e. hill station, beaches and waterfall) and strong historical background (i.e. forts, caves and temples) is 100 per cent, followed by 95.00 per cent of the respondents were having agreement on lack of financial support from the government or poor road infrastructure in rural area and 85.00 per cent of the respondents were having agreement on lack of skilled human resources as weakness of agri-tourism, cent per cent of the respondents were having agreement on employment opportunities to the farmers including farm family members and youths, majority (95.00 per cent) of the respondents were having agreement on potential to increase agri-tourism centers in Konkan region of Maharashtra, it also found that, cent per cent of the agri-tourism center owners were having agreement on migration agriculture sector to other and 95.00 per cent of climate variability, these are the threats of agri-tourism. A descriptive research methodology was utilized, it included two types of data collection methods - primary and secondary data; primary tools of data collection were the questionnaire and observation. Secondary tools of data collection were journal papers, articles, websites, etc. The survey was conducted among 40 operational agri-tourism centers in the Konkan region of Maharashtra state.

Keywords

Agri-tourism,
Operational,
Center, Konkan
and SWOT

Introduction

Agro-tourism two terms has the same meaning and both consist of two parts Agri or agro and tourism. The prefix agri derives from the *Latin* term ager which means field while agro comes from the *Greek* term agros, which means soil, while tourism is a form of

active recreation away from one's place of residence and inspired by cognitive, recreational and sport's needs. The combination of agri and tourism resulted in the formation of a new word that means human tourism which aims to become familiar with farming activities and recreation

in an agricultural environment. Agro-tourism can be 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 (Joshiet *et al.*, 2001). According to Pandurang Taware father of agri tourism concept in India, says “Agro tourism is that agri-business activity, when a native farmers or persons of the area offer tours of their agriculture farms to allow a person to view them growing, harvesting and processing locally grown foods, such as coconuts, pineapple, sugar cane, corn or any agriculture produce the person would not encounter in their city or home country. Often the farmers would provide a home stay opportunity and education (Kumbhar, 2009).

Agriculture is the mainstay of the state of Maharashtra. Maharashtra’s economy is predominantly agrarian. It is the main occupation of the people. Both food crops and cash crops are grown in the state. Major crops include rice, jowar, bajra, wheat, pulses, turmeric, onions, cotton, sugarcane and several oil seeds including groundnut, sunflower and soybean. The state has huge areas, under fruit cultivation of which mango, banana, grape, and orange are the main ones (Anonymous, 2012). Maharashtra is the third largest state of India, both in area and population. It is located on the west coast of India with a 720 km long coastline along the green Konkan region. Sindhudurg district is specially declared as a Tourist District by the government of Maharashtra (Landage, 2015). Historically Konkan has been the land with dense forest cover and a landscape fringed with beautiful beaches, picturesque hamlets, paddy fields, coconut grooves and mango orchards. Konkan is well known for its natural beauty and that’s the reason the region is referred as naturally gifted. Konkan’s greenery, coconut trees, beautiful virgin beaches, waterfalls, mountains and

lush green valleys will definitely provide a rich and pleasant experience for the traveler. There are many tourist centers in Maharashtra which are the supporting natural environment for the Agri Tourism centers in Maharashtra. The Konkan region is the most beautiful and God gifted land between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea at western coastline of India and known as little slice of paradise of Maharashtra. Region of Konkan or the Konkan Coast includes Thane district of Maharashtra to Mangalore port city of Karnataka and known for many tourist attractions and locations to explore (Murai, *et al.*, 2016)

SWOT is basically a business tool to identify strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of the business. It generally uses the basic data of the business to know the strength and weakness of the business and post the opportunities and threats which may come across or to be faced. It uses the strength is an area of expertise, skill and advantages available which could be financial back up, best marketing team, skilled work force, prominent places and huge resources. Weakness may include lack of technology, shortage of capital, unskilled labour, poor location which is in one’s control which can be improved (Billimoria, 2015).

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted Konkan region of Maharashtra. Konkan region includes Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. All five districts of Konkan were covered under the study. There are agri-tourism centers registered under Maharashtra State Agri and Rural Tourism Co-operative Federation Limited (MART), Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (MTDC) and Agri-Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) in the region. In addition, there are also agri-tourism centers

operating in the region, without–registration under any agency.

Therefore, a pilot survey was carried out in five districts namely Palghar, Ratnagiri, Raigad, Sindhudurg and Thane of the Konkan region, to know the actual operational agri-tourism centers. With the help of the pilot survey, a list of well operational working agri-tourism centers was prepared and from the list 40 operational agri-tourism centers were selected for the study. The sample was comprised of randomly selected 40 respondents from five districts, which was personally interviewed with the help of a specially designed interview schedule. ‘Exploratory’ research design was used for the study. Statistical tool like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation was used to analyze the data.

Results and Discussions

SWOT analysis was carried out for knowing strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of the agri-tourism centers in Konkan region. The purpose of SWOT analysis is to help policy makers and management body to take strategic decisions within given situation.

The statement wise responses would give clear idea about the SWOT analysis of the agri-tourism centers about various items in four component of agri-tourism SWOT. There were, in all 21 items. The responses of the respondents to each one of them are depicted in Table 1 with frequency and percentage.

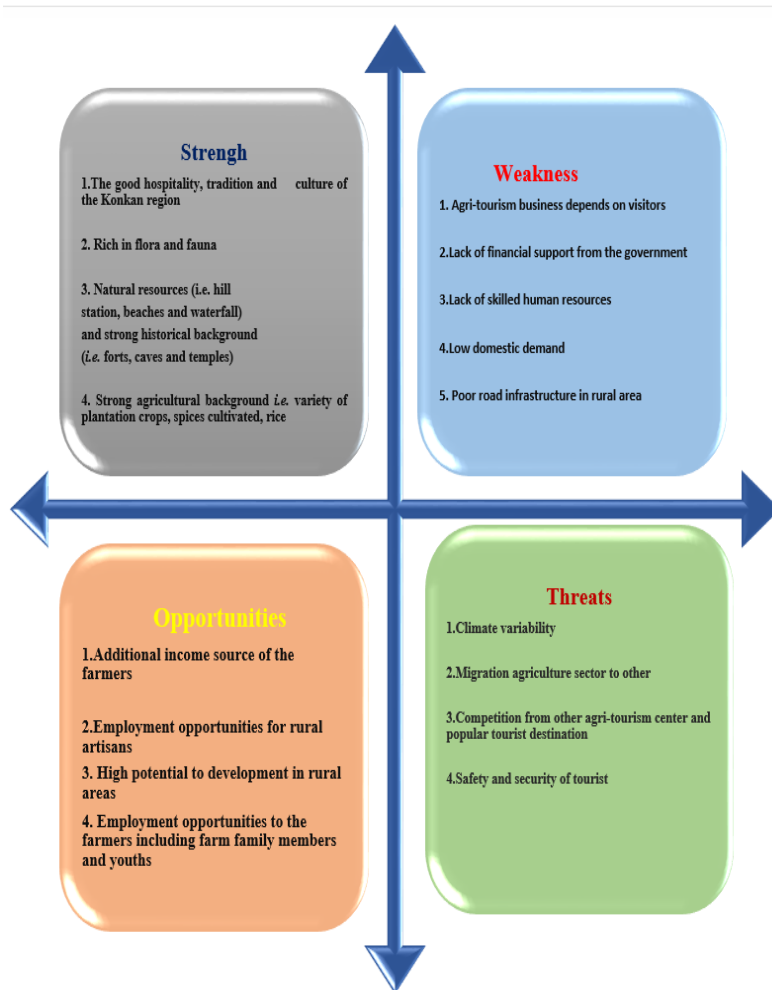
Tourism industry is one of the leading key sectors of economy in the world. Development of agri-tourism in some extent took place in the Konkan but it is not developed in genuine sense. However, there is an urgent need to view tourism and agriculture tourism of the Konkan in holistic sense beyond its national and global boundaries bringing together the stakeholders and retains tourism assets for future. Agri-tourism is an important industry for many areas in the Konkan, it is also one that can developed based on local resources and has aided the development many areas. This development can be seen as beneficial in term of sustainable economic development but the reliance on agri-tourism for sustainable economic development has strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Table.1 Statement–wise distribution of the agri-tourism center owners according to their SWOT analysis of agri-tourism centers in Konkan region

Sl. No.	Statements	Respondents (N=40)		
		Agree	Disagree	Undecided
A	Strength of agri-tourism			
1.	High productivity in the production of agriculture product	38 (95.00)	00 (00)	02 (05.00)
2.	The good hospitality, tradition and culture of the Konkan region	33 (82..50)	03 (7.50)	04 (10.00)
3.	Rich in flora and fauna	40 (100)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
4.	Natural resources (i.e. hill station, beaches and waterfall) and	40 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)

	strong historical background (<i>i.e.</i> forts, caves and temples)			
5.	Strong agricultural background <i>i.e.</i> variety of plantation crops, spices cultivated, rice	34 (85.00)	02 (05.00)	04 (10.00)
B	Weakness of agri-tourism			
1.	Agri-tourism business depends on visitors	40 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
2.	Lack of financial support from the government	38 (95.00)	00 (00.00)	02 (05.00)
3.	Lack of skilled human resources	34 (85.00)	04 (10.00)	02 (05.00)
4.	Low domestic demand	10 (25.00)	13 (32.50)	17 (42.50)
5.	Poor road infrastructure in rural area	38 (95.00)	01 (2.50)	01 (2.50)
6.	Less awareness of entrepreneurship ability, management ability, risk taking ability and decision making ability	20 (50.00)	04 (10.00)	16 (40.00)
C	Opportunities of agri-tourism			
1.	Potential to increase agri-tourism centers in Konkan region of Maharashtra	38 (95.00)	01 (2.50)	01 (2.50)
2.	Employment opportunities to the farmers including farm family members and youths	40 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
3.	Additional income source of the farmers	34 (85.00)	04 (10.00)	02 (05.00)
4.	Employment opportunities for rural artisans	29 (72.50)	05 (12.50)	06 (15.00)
5.	High potential to development in rural areas	18 (45.00)	12 (30.00)	09 (22.50)
6.	Opportunity for tourist's authentic and realistic experience in a natural and rural area, adventure tourism, sports tourism and health tourism	36 (90.00)	03 (7.50)	01 (2.50)
D	Threats of agri-tourism			
1.	Climate variability	38 (95.00)	01 (2.50)	01 (2.50)
2.	Migration agriculture sector to other	40 (100.00)	00 (00.00)	00 (00.00)
3.	Competition from other agri-tourism center and popular tourist destination	20 (50.00)	04 (10.00)	16 (40.00)
4.	Safety and security of tourist	24 (60.00)	16 (40.00)	00 (00.00)

Fig.1 SWOT analysis of agri-tourism centers in Konkan region



Strength of agri-tourism

A critical glance table 1 and fig. 1 postulated that, were four components and under each component some statements were developed from the first component is strength of agri-tourism, the statement like rich in flora and fauna or natural resources (i.e. hill station, beaches and waterfall) and strong historical background (i.e. forts, caves and temples) is 100 per cent and high productivity in the production of agriculture product (95.00 per cent) were having high agreed while, 7.50 per cent were having disagreement on the good hospitality, tradition and culture of the

Konkan region' and 10.00 per cent were having undecided on strong agricultural background i.e. variety of plantation crops, spices and orchards.

Weakness of agri-tourism

From the above table 1 and fig. 1 it was found that, weakness of agri-tourism, cent per cent of the respondents were having agreement on agri-tourism business depends on visitors, 95.00 per cent of the respondents were having agreement on lack of financial support from the government or poor road infrastructure in rural area and 85.00 per

cent of the respondents were having agreement on lack of skilled human resources, 40.00 per cent of the respondents were having undecided and 32.50 per cent of the respondents had disagreement on low domestic demand.

Opportunities of agri-tourism

It can be observed from the table 1 and fig. 1 opportunities of agri-tourism, cent per cent of the respondents were having agreement on employment opportunities to the farmers including farm family members and youths, majority (95.00 per cent) of the respondents were having agreement on potential to increase agri-tourism centers in Konkan region of Maharashtra, 90.00 per cent of opportunity for tourists authentic and realistic experience in a natural and rural area, adventure tourism, sports tourism and health tourism and 85.00 per cent of additional income source of the farmers, 30.00 per cent of the respondents were having disagreement with the statement high potential to development in rural areas.

Threats of agri-tourism

It also found that table 1 and fig. 1 threats of agri-tourism, cent per cent of the agri-tourism center owners were having agreement on migration agriculture sector to other and 95.00 per cent of climate variability while, less than fifty (40.00 per cent) of the agri-tourism center owners were having disagreement with the statements safety and security of tourist.

It is clear from above discussion that the Konkan region has the strength and opportunities for the sustainable tourism development and no doubt, it will overcome on the weaknesses and threats of the region. the Konkan region has the great potentiality and opportunities for the

development of tourism as a base of economic development. The Konkan region can take advantage of its strengths for its opportunities or the sustainable development of tourism by using sustainable tourism development approach.

The finding is in conformity with findings of Patil (2012), Zoto *et al.* (2013), Doke (2016), Misal (2017) and Shinde (2019).

In conclusion, SWOT analysis was done on the agri-tourism in Konkan region revealed some of the strengths and opportunities that could be used for developing the sector. The Konkan region rich in natural resources and diverse biodiversity coupled with a strategic position for accessing the expanding the large area could be used for generating employment, income, foreign exchanges and achieving the food security of the nation. Hence, the tourism and agricultural sector could significantly boost national economic growth if utilized in a proper manner. The same table also shows the weaknesses and threats that are encountered by the agri-tourism sector of the Konkan region. Correcting the weakness and avoiding or minimizing the threats would also lead to the development of the agri-tourism sector. Therefore, with the help of the SWOT and performance analysis, it will be possible to suggest some policies and strategies that could be pursued to bring the appropriate sustainable development of the agri-tourism in the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

References

Anonymous (2012). Agricultural mission mode project under national e - governance plan. Agricultural informatics division, National Informatics Centre, Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology Government of India.

- Billimoria, Rukshana (2015). Marketing strategies for the tourism development in Maharashtra. *Ph.D. (General Management) Thesis*, Jankidevi Bajaj Institute of Management Studies, SNDT Women's University Sir. Vitaldas Vidhyavihar, Juhu Tara road, Santacruz (W), Mumbai.
- Doke, A. (2016). Agro-tourism is an immersing field of sustainable development for rural Area: a case study of Bhor Tahsil of Maharashtra. *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2 (1):1-11.
- Joshi, P. V., Bhujbal, M. and S. Pable (2011). Socio-economic development of rural area of Konkan region of Maharashtra state through agri-tourism. *International Research Journal of Agricultural Economics and Statistics*, 2 (1):103-107.
- Kumbhar , V. (2009). Agro-tourism: a cash crop for farmers in Maharashtra (India). *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, Retrieved from: <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/25187/> MPRA Paper No. 25187, posted 21 Sep 2010 20:11 UTC.
- Landage, P. B. (2015). Scope of agri-tourism in generating supplementary income in Konkan region. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 5(5):1-8.
- Misal, R. B. (2017). Socio-economic appraisal of agro-tourism in Maharashtra. *M.Sc., (Agri.) Thesis*, Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri.
- Murai, A. A., Shirke, G. and Sarap, N. S. (2016). Agri-tourism in Konkan: an innovative enterprise for farmers to extra income. *Advances in Life Sciences*, 5(23):10875-10880.
- Patil, Sardar (2012). Sustainable tourism development in Konkan: a need of time. *Electronic International Interdisciplinary Research Journal (EIIRJ)*, 1(3):111-125.
- Shinde, H. R. (2019). Performance of agro-tourism centers in Ratnagiri district (M.S.): an economic analysis. *M.Sc., (Agri.) Thesis*, Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth, Dapoli, Maharashtra.
- Zoto, S., Qirici, E., and Polena, E. (2013) Agro-tourism - a sustainable development for rural area of Korca. *European Academic Research*, 1 (2):209-223.