

Assessing the agritourism potential for rural tourism essay



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Development is critical and essential to the sustenance and growth of any nation. The main goal of each and every country is to reach development of the country. The term development encompasses the need and the means by which to provide better lives for people in a country. It includes not only economic growth, although that is crucial, but also human development providing health, nutrition, education, and a environment. However, in executing development is a complex issue and the basic perspective of it is equates development with economic. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2009) development is ' to facilitate a valuable long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to get opportunities to use the resources needed for a good level of living and to be able to take part in the community life.

Gboyega (2003) captures development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the conditions of human existence in all ramifications. implies improvement in material well being of all citizens, not the most powerful and rich alone, in a sustainable way such that today's consumption

does not imperil the future, it also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced. It seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihoods and expansion of life chances. Thus, development aims at improving important aspects of people's lives such as livelihood, security, environmental, physical and mental well being. Enhance in knowledge, experience and resources is helped people to build a better life.

The goal of development is to expand the capabilities of people to live the lives they choose to lead (Amartya Sen 1999). It is most defined with their active participation. Development is different from growth. It has broader and deeper meanings. Economic growth is necessary but not sufficient condition for development and hence it can be viewed as a multi-dimensional phenomenon. The major dimensions of it include the level of economic growth, standards of education, quality of housing, level of health, distribution of goods and services, and access to communication (World Bank

Ingredients for development and economic growth are capital formation, human resources, natural resources, and technology/entrepreneurship. Capital formation is essential to invest in sectors with high economic output, saving capital, investing in infrastructure creates jobs directly indirectly by attracting investors. Human resources are a key to development in any country. There is need to develop a mechanism to address lack of health facilities, lack of education, poverty, malnutrition, and disease. Human resource development is important if people are to make use of ICT for <https://assignbuster.com/assessing-the-agritourism-potential-for-rural-tourism-essay/>

development. Natural resources are crucial in development. Development activities need to be harnessed more of their natural resources. It is imperative that they should improve farming techniques and develop better land ownership methods. Technology and entrepreneurship are important developing countries to improve the know-how and know-what. Openness to ideas is important if any economy is to develop. The formation of regional and international blocks encourages technology and entrepreneurship

Development should be a sustainable long-term condition for humanity's multidimensional well-being. It has been clearly explained in the Rio Declaration, of United Nations Conference in 1992, held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil as; " Humanat the center for sustainable development. They are entitled to productive life in harmony with nature called " equitable and balanced," meaning that, in order for development t, it should balance the interests of people, same generation and among generations, in three major interrelated areas social, and environmental and economic. Sustainable development equity, opportunities for well-being about objectives.

Not all the countries in the world have same level of development. While developed countries have reached higher level of development or standard living due to better standards in their societies, developing countries have faced several issues and challenges along their way towards development. Developed countries are countries whose lives are patterned industry and have some specific characteristics like higher level of average per capita income, level of education, life expectancy of the population and al so low level of population growth rate and death rate. Life style is based on the market economy and economic activities are mostly related with industry

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sector as well as export oriented. Furthermore, majority of the population lives in cities and there is relatively higher level of health of the population. Countries that have Human Development Index (HDI) of or over are in the category of developed countries. According to the IMF index of HDI released in 2011, there are 47 countries in the and classified as possessing a " Very high human development

On the other hand several common negative characteristics can be seen among developing countries as well. These are preventing the development of those countries. Low living are manifested qualitatively in form of low incomes , inadequate housing, poor education, low life and work expectancy, many cases, a general malaise and hopelessness are some of them. Moreover, low levels of productivity in many areas like labour productivity, agriculture or farm productivity. In addition, low level industrial development, high unemployment, small domestic market, small amount of disposable income and uneven regional development, problems in institutional changes , credit and banking, honest s and the restructuring of educational. Most of the developing countries population growth by high birth rate but declining rate

Rural development in developing countries

Rural development is an integral part of the national development of a country. Rural development actions mostly to the social and economic development of areas (Chigbu, 2012). Especially in developing countries, very high emphasis has rural development, aiming to gain equitable and balance development throughout the country. Rural Development concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard <https://assignbuster.com/assessing-the-agritourism-potential-for-rural-tourism-essay/>

of the rural people by providing adequate and quality minimum essential. The present rural development poverty alleviation, livelihood opportunities, provision of infrastructure facilities programs of wage and self-employment

Rural development process of improving life and economic wellbeing in relatively populated areas (Malcolm, 2003). Although rural development has on the exploitation natural resources such as agriculture and forestry, due to changes in production networks urbanization have changed the areas.

Increasingly, and recreation resource extraction and agriculture drivers (Neil and David, 2009). The need for approach a wider perspective has created on a range of development goals creating incentive for agricultural or businesses. Education, physical infrastructure, infrastructure all play role developing regions (Conn, 1996). Rural development emphasis on locally produced economic development strategies (Malcolm

Furthermore, rural development is the ways to improve the participation of the rural people as to meet the required need of the rural area. As people themselves in their rural development. When development is concerned, in one point of view it can be explained as the development consists of a wide variety of new activities such as production of high quality and region specific products, nature conservation and landscape management , agritourism and the development of supply chains (Knickel & Renting, 2000). These new activities in rural areas mean new income sources to local people. Therefore it

doing diversification and utilizing multi-functionality of agriculture and formation of agritourism can be used as a strategy to enhance rural

development Rural Development and national development in developing countries

In developing countries, the rural development is one of the most important factors for the growth of the national economy. Desai (2009) recorded “Rural Development is an important segment of national development”. Developing countries are primarily agriculture-based countries and majority of the population are in rural areas. Agriculture contributes for a significant share of the gross domestic product (GDP) of those countries Agriculture, mining, forestry, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, dairy and rural tourism are the primary contributors to the rural business economy of developing countries

However, in many developing countries sufficient amount of investment in rural sector doesn't take place (United nation, 2011). The rural sector not able to contribute its full potential for the national development. For example, in the Asia-Pacific region governments implement strategies, including fiscal policies, which are the rural sector in general. Policies affecting the livelihoods development of producers and producers areas (United nation, 2011). As a consequence of the biased policies allocations government most concerned unable promote agriculture and rural development provision of timely and production services areas making lesser contribution for the national development (FAO, 2003).

Not only in Asia-Pacific has this problem existed in other regions of the world as well. The countries of the Caribbean need to invest in rural communities economic contribution development is officially believed, according World

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Bank report recently. The report evaluates the rural sector on poverty reduction, environmental degradation both in the rest of the economy, as the public policies that its contribution to development (Viveros and Morrison 2005). A study of Onyemelukwe (1981) on the assessment of the performances of the rural the typical African country Nigeria in national development contexts has found out the critical role of the sector and the system effects of inadequate equipment of the sector for such role. The Nigerian situation is used to illustrate the prospects and the problems of the rural sector in most African countries

Rural sector in Sri Lanka is mainly consisted of farming community. The agriculture sector is the cornerstone in Sri Lanka's economy with more than of the population living in rural areas depending on agriculture for their livelihoods. Currently this sector contributes to about 18% of the Domestic Product (GDP) and 30% of the employment (Central bank of Sri Lanka, 2011). Therefore, without taking into consideration agricultural development, we can't even imagine rural development in this country

What is Agritourism

In general, agritourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes. In particular, it refers to farm enterprises and community events that showcase the activities and produce of rural families and the agricultural heritage of farming regions to travelers. Agritourism provides "rural experiences" to travelers with the goal of generating revenues for farmers and surrounding communities. These experiences typically include a wide range of attractions and activities that take place in agricultural areas

Important ingredients of agritourism's "rural experiences" include open spaces, low levels of urban or industrial

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development, and opportunities for visitors to directly experience agricultural, pastoral, and natural environments.

Moreover, agritourism is a type of rural tourism. It is a combination of two complex industries; agriculture and tourism, to open up alternative income sources for the farmers as well as surrounding community (Wicks and Merrett, 2003). Brscic (2006) has explained agritourism as a form of tourism which takes place within the family farm that symbolizes a specific form of business, giving a number of benefits to the families involved, with multiple impacts on the socio-economic relations and the space in rural areas. It is a form of farm diversification aiming some benefits from existing farm resources. Agritourism can be also explained that gives as an activity, enterprise, which help or business that combines most important characteristics of agriculture, industry investment and tourism that helps and provides an experience that stimulates economic activity and community income.

Relationship between agritourism and rural development

Several research findings in many developed countries have shown that agritourism as a possible rural development strategy. For example, Haghiri Okech (2011) discovered role of the agritourism in developing the economy of rural areas in the province of Newfoundland. According to Topcu (2009), agritourism is a new element for rural development in Turkey. Agritourism as an effective vehicle for development in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan (Dernoi, 2002; Weaver and Fennell, 1998). Study of Hightower (2011) is being used as a catalyst for additional income and triggering economic growth in rural areas." Disez, (1999) revealed represents and <https://assignbuster.com/assessing-the-agritourism-potential-for-rural-tourism-essay/>

innovative activity taking place within the framework of rural development in Massif Central region in France, agritourism is the best way for the preservation of traditions and customs in the rural areas, supplying a sustainable rural development. In some countries like Italy, Spain, Greece, Austria, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ireland and Norway it is a growing sector with the policies of the governments aiming to benefit from it as a regional development instrument (Demirtaş Topcu, 2007; Frater, 1983). Rural tourism benefits to local areas by bringing visitors to the region, increasing awareness for agricultural products and showcasing produce to the local

regional community. It can also provide incentives for local heritage and conservation groups to preserve unique heritage landscapes and built heritage. Most studies have highlighted the multiple benefits that agritourism brings to the farm, local communities, agriculture heritage and natural resources (Fleischer and Pizam, 1997; Busby and Rendle, 2000; Ventura and Milone, 2000; Sharpley, 2002; Wicks Przezborska, 2005; Fleischer and Tchetchik, 2005; Mitchell and De Agritourism Research conducted in developing countries

A small number of researches have been conducted in some developing countries in Asia. Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and India are examples of such countries. When South Asian countries are concerned, the number of research is very few. India is the country leading in agritourism in this region

According to Tiraieyari and Hamzah (2011) in Malaysia, there are potential benefits of agritourism for farmers and local communities in general. Further indicated that agritourism as an economic development instrument has great potential to contribute to rural development as Malaysia is one of the tourist countries with great potential to develop agritourism. As per the national Council of Agriculture and fisheries (COA) of Taiwan, after registering a huge and wide decline of GDP in 2001, 173 Farms had been soon established for tourism sector and this created the development of rural Taiwan such as chi-ching Shwei-Li in (Murangwa, 2 010) A recent research study on agritourism in Thailand discovered that “ agritourism has been utilize the agricultural holdings produce for such as scenery from paddy fields and farm lands , food and fibre from products (vegetable, fruit, e from local products, accommodations from farm stay or vacated property to gain local development in area ” As reported by the South East Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA), in Manila Philippines, could be a nich? tourism product that would help improve farm incomes provided a well-planned program is put in place. It will consolidate initiatives in agriculture and tourism sectors nationwide that contribute d to poverty reduction, natural resources management, and rural development in Aguiba.

A research in Chitwan District in Nepal found out the importance of agritourism for the rural development in Nepal. Agritourism is the concept of diverting the tourists to those rural areas, where there is range of agricultural activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people attract both internal as well as international tourists in order to

generate extra income for their business. The living standard of the farmers and rural poor can be raised by identifying high value-low volume crops, which have comparative advantages and by optimally utilizing the available resources for sustainable development (Maharjan, 2008). However, the available literature evidence that our neighboring country India engaged in agritourism successfully. According to the research on “Agritourism - the potential for sustainable development and growth” explore the scope for developing agritourism in India has been conducted by Raghunandan et al., (2010). This research has concluded that potential for Agritourism in India to grow into an important source of income for the rural population if the development is focused on integration and participation. Furthermore, Agritourism has been identified as a source of generation of alternative income for farmers and local employment opportunities, reduction of gender bias and accelerate growth rate by Chadda and Bhakare (2010) based on their research on Socio-Economic Implications of Agritourism in India

Agritourism in Sri Lanka

Evidence on only one study related to agritourism and rural development of Sri Lanka was found as a result of the vigorous literature search during the study. One study is the research conducted by Senanayaka and Wimalaratna (2010) about agritourism and rural development in Sri Lanka. Special reference to Nuwara Eliya District. They have found that the economic problems as well as development potentials remain in areas side by side in the country. Only a small fraction of the vast rural agritourism resource base is being utilized by the industry now with little or no benefits to rural people. Dedicated research work on agritourism will promote the

sector with the participation of policy makers, communities and private investors on a sustainable manner while trickling down a reasonable fraction of the benefits to the rural people. This would diversify their agricultural livelihoods and improve their income and living standards

As per the literature review, agritourism in most of the countries has a short history and it is at the developing stage (Maumbe, 2012; Bernardo et al., 2007). Several countries have the research findings mainly based on preliminary research and pilot studies. Therefore, there definitely a need for future research to verify the preliminary findings of these researches especially in developing countries. Moreover, several researchers have shown that agritourism has lots of strengths and opportunities for the improvement of rural areas and rural development. However those researches have been conducted in specific condition which is unique to that particular country itself. Therefore, generalization of the findings to other countries is not so valid specially, for developing countries having lots of variations in geographical, political, economical and environmental conditions. Not only the differences among the developing countries, there are several regional level differences within a country. Furthermore, in a country, rural areas are different from each other. Thus, testing the level of contribution of the rural development at provincial level is the best way to identify the real potential of it. Since a very few number of research have been conducted at provincial level in developing countries, there is a need for lots of research of this kind. Even though in Sri Lanka there may be potential in this regard, no sufficient research have been conducted in this field. Therefore, this kind of research is highly important.

Problem statement

Sri Lanka is a developing country and there is a need to enhance the living condition of the people by developing the total economy of the country. There is a gradual, but comparatively slow increase in GDP in the country for several years (Figure

Figure 1. 1: Improvement of the GDP from 2002 to 2012

Source: Central Bank of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka tourism has contributed to the growth of total economy for several years. However, due to existing civil war during 2008-2009, tourism being faced a declining trend. Along with ending the war in 2009, tourism industry restated to flourish and contribute for the significantly. As a result, by now it is one of the main contributors of the national income of the country and expects to have further growth in future. The total annual direct contribution of Travel and Tourism GDP in 2011 was LKR219. 7 (3. 4% GDP). This is future based forecast to rise by 5. 6% to. This figure has primarily reflects the economic activity really generated through the industries such as hotels, restaurants, parks, travel agents, airlines and other local and foreign tourist transportation services (excluding commuter services). The average gross direct contribution of travel and tourism is expected to grow by 5. 7% per annum to of GDP) by 2022

Figure 1. 2: Contribution of travel and tourism to GDP from

Source: World Travel and Tourism council

Moreover, travel & tourism generated 236, 500 jobs directly in 2011 (3. 0% of total employment) and this is forecast to of total employment). This includes employment by hotels, tour operators travel agents, airlines, sea line and other passenger transportation and helping services (excluding supportive services). It includes, for example, the prent activities of the restaurant, hotels, villas, and leisure industries directly and highly supported by tourists. By tourism will account for 293, 000 jobs directly, an increase of 2. 2% per annum over the next ten years.

Figure1. 3: Travel and tourism's contribution to employment opportunities from 2011

Source: World Travel and Tourism council

Rural sector performs a significant contribution for the national development in the country. About 70 percent of Sri Lanka's population lives its rural areas. In rural areas, main sectors that are helping for rural development are agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, art and craft and rural tourism.

Among these sectors, the most important one is agriculture. A large number of people in the rural sector engaged mainly agriculture and allied activities.

Agriculture sector can generate regionally equitable economic growth, rural livelihood improvement, and food security through efficient production of commodities for consumption for agro-based industries. Since agriculture sector has multi-functionality, it can link with other sectors like tourism and form new opportunities for local and regional development. Considering the experience of other developing countries in Asia, it can be assumed that

there will be a potential for agritourism for the rural development in Sri
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Lanka. Therefore, this study will answer the question “ does agritourism represent a significant and viable rural development tool in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of this research is to explore the potential of agritourism for rural development in Sri Lanka with special reference to demand, supply and impacts of agritourism issues.

Specific objectives of this research are

To find out the current supply of agritourism in the

To study the government policy interventions in tourism and agritourism sector of the country

To identify and assess the visitors’ needs and satisfaction of and demand for agritourism of the country

To find out the local residents’ attitude towards impacts of agritourism economic and contribution of agritourism for rural development and also

To study the national and provincial level support to the development of agritourism as a sector of rural development

To recommend ways and strategies to development of agritourism in Sri Lanka as a sector of rural development

Conceptual Framework

The aim of this research is to study the agritourism and its contribution for the rural development in the country. The main agritourism are agritourism

providers, visitors, local residents and the government. Figure 1.4 shows the relationship of the stakeholder in agritourism and how agritourism links with rural development

Agritourism providers supply the agritourism. They can be farmers, private sector companies or organizations. Agritourism supply can be conducted by adding tourism activities to the existing farm and arranging facilities for the visitors to come to the farm, see those activities and get knowledge about them, spend leisure time at the farm. In supply agritourism three things are important. Things to see (farm animals, fruits, vegetables, Herbal plants) activities to do (feeding animals, milking cows, harvesting crops, climbing trees, picking fruits, threshing paddy)

farm products to buy (yogurts, curds, fruits, vegetable, jam jelly)

Visitors can be local or foreign people those who are ready to buy the agritourism services. They make demand for agritourism. They come to visit the farm to see things, get a rest, enjoy farm activities and sometimes study on farming, Farm stay for few days, visit surrounding villages, buy local art and craft items, see cultural shows perform by local people and pay for the farm goods and services they consumed. In this way agritourism provider can earn extra income and other returns from agritourism which is the main aim of providing agritourism. Improvement of the level of income and living standard of the agritourism providers (especially farmers) is the main aspects of agritourism business. Other important point regarding agritourism is the presence of other tourism attractions in the area. Other tourism attractions can act as a motivational factor for visiting agritourism operation.

Moreover, proper government interference through correct rules and regulations are essential to operate the agritourism industry smoothly

Also, on the way, visitors can buy local products of nearby local residents, can visit other interesting places in the village like religious places cultural sites, national parks, forests, waterfalls, traditional festivals, folk games. In this way, visitors can interact with local residents of the area. These interactions create economic, social-cultural and environmental that impacts for the rural development of the area. Furthermore local residents can sell their products and labour to agritourism operation and earn some money. Enhancement of the level of income and living

standard of local residents are the other aim of agritourism along the way to rural development.

The other important factor is the government attitude towards agritourism and intervention to rural areas where agritourism operations are available. Especially provincial and local level governments have responsibility to enhance the condition of the area up to a good stand making it suitable for conducting tourism activities. So that, provision of infrastructure facilities such as road system, transport facilities, water, electricity telecommunication to the area have to be taken place. Not only that, banking facilities, safety and security, medical facilities for the area also needed to be provided. In this way, provisions of infrastructure facilities directly help for the rural develop of the area

Figure 1. 4 Conceptual Framework of the

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Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study has covered important aspects such as the supply of agritourism (number of destinations, scale of operation, available facilities, number of visitors, length of stay etc). Demand for agritourism (demographic information of visitors, nature of their demand, visitors' satisfaction towards agritourism, demand function) information of local residents (impacts of agritourism on them, their attitudes towards agritourism development) and policies related to agritourism development in the country. Agritourism is a business process. However, aspects like establishment, management development, improvement, marketing and promotion of the operations are beyond the scope of this study

There were few limitations in this research. This is a small-scale research conducted at local level with four types of stakeholder; operators, visitor, local residents and government officials within only few districts without the whole country. In terms of operators, analysis like benefit cost ratio, IRR of agritourism etc., could not be done as they did not want to disclose financial information due to tax problems. With regard to agritourism visitors, comparatively a low number of visitors were included in the study. The sample size resident is also comparatively low. The study was totally based on a cross sectional data, not the longitudinal data

Dissertation

This dissertation consists of seven chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, conceptual scope and limitations of the study. Chapter two explains about tourism and <https://assignbuster.com/assessing-the-agritourism-potential-for-rural-tourism-essay/>

agritourism. Introduction to tourism, definitions, industry, initiation of and development of agritourism have been discussed. Chapter three is focused on rural development Introduction to rural development, definitions of rural development, relationship between rural development and agritourism, agritourism, activities involved in agritourism, history of agritourism have been explained in detail. Chapter four explains the methodology. Different research philosophies, approached, designs have been explained at the beginning. After that justification of research approaches and designs related to this study have been presented. Then, introduction to research study area and the research designs have been explained in detail.

Chapter five discusses about Sri Lanka: tourism and development. Detail introduction to Sri Lanka in general and tourism in the country in particular have been presented. Furthermore, information about tourism policy and needs for agritourism policy in the country have been discussed at the end of the chapter. Chapter six devoted to present the research outcomes. Present situation of supply of agritourism in the country, different suppliers available facilities, agritourism activities, strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of agritourism have been discussed as the first section of this chapter. Then, profile of visitors and their satisfaction level towards available products and services are presented as the second section of this chapter. Thereafter, demand for agritourism, visitors' awareness, desire on agritourism and factors affecting the demand have discussed as the third section. Furthermore, evaluation of the perception of local residents towards different impacts of agritourism in country has been done as the forth section and finally, government officials' attitude towards impact of

agritourism for the rural development in the country and national and provincial level support to the development of agritourism as a sector of rural development have been explained in detail. Chapter seven is the last chapter. At the beginning of the chapter conclusions of the study have been presented and it is followed by the recommendations of the study.