Research Report

EXPLORING AGRITOURISM AS A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN SRI LANKA

G.V. Norica Aiome
Sagarika Hitihamu
Uthpala Jayasinghe
Sangeeth Prasad Fernando

Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute

HARTI

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G.V. Norica Aiome

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Research Report No: 271 November 2025

Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute
114, Wijerama Mawatha
Colombo 07
Sri Lanka

First Published: 2025
ISBN: 978-624-5973-62-0

Exploring agritourism as a pathway to sustainable livelihood development strategy in Sri Lanka / G. V. Norica Aiome...[et al.]. - Colombo : Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, 2025.
xiv, 145 p. : figures ; 29 cm. - (Research report ; No. 271)

ISBN 978-624-5973-62-0

i. 338.927095493 DDC 23
ii. Aiome, G. V. Norica (Co.author)
iii. Title
iv. Series

1. Sustainable development-Sri Lanka
2. Sustainable agriculture-Sri Lanka
3. Agritourism-Sri Lanka
4. Agriculture-Economic aspects-Sri Lanka

Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute
114, Wijerama Mawatha,
Colombo 07
Sri Lanka

Telephone : +94 11 2696981
+94 11 2696437

Fax : +94 11 2692423

Email : director@harti.gov.lk

Web page : www.harti.gov.lk

Final typesetting and lay-out by : Niluka Priyadarshani De Silva

Cover page designed by : Udeni Karunaratne

FOREWORD

Agritourism has emerged as a promising approach to strengthen the link between agriculture and tourism, creating new opportunities for sustainable and inclusive rural development. In Sri Lanka, where farming forms the backbone of rural livelihoods and cultural identity, integrating tourism into agricultural systems offers great potential to diversify incomes and enhance community resilience.

This study, *"Agritourism as a Sustainable Livelihood Development Practice in Sri Lanka,"* provides timely insights into how tourism-based agricultural activities can contribute to rural prosperity. By examining spice, cinnamon, paddy, and vegetable-based tourism models, the study identifies both opportunities and constraints within the sector.

The research highlights the need for improved infrastructure, financial support, and community-based tourism approaches to ensure sustainable growth. The proposed *Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM)* offers a valuable framework for stakeholder collaboration and policy development.

This publication aligns with HARTI's mission to promote evidence-based policymaking for rural development. I commend the research team for their dedication and professionalism in conducting this important study and trust that its findings will serve as a useful guide for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners committed to advancing agritourism in Sri Lanka.

Prof. A.L. Sandika
Director/Chief Executive Officer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was made possible through the valuable contributions and support of numerous individuals and institutions.

At the outset, the research team extends heartfelt gratitude to Prof. A.L. Sandika, Director and Chief Executive Officer of HARTI, for his invaluable guidance and encouragement throughout the publication process of this research report. Our sincere thanks go to Dr. N.P.G. Samantha, Additional Director of HARTI, for his support in the successful completion of this research.

We are deeply grateful to Prof. S.H.P. Malkanthi, Senior Professor in Crop Science and Senior Lecturer, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, and Dr. K N. Nadeeshani Silva, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka, for their insightful comments and continuous encouragement. Their constructive feedback greatly enhanced the quality and depth of this report.

We also wish to thank the staff of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority and the Department of Agrarian Development for their generous support. Our sincere appreciation is extended to all the Officers, Agriculture Instructors, and Agriculture Research and Production Assistants attached to the Agrarian Services Centers in the Badulla, Kandy, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Galle Districts for their excellent assistance during the field survey.

We gratefully acknowledge the spice farmers, spice garden owners, and farmers engaged in agritourism, as well as the relevant officials from the study districts, whose willingness to share their time, experiences, and insights was instrumental to the success of this study.

Special gratitude is extended to Mr. W.P. Kumarasiri, Statistical Assistant, HARTI, for his dedicated service in data collection and analysis, and to Ms. H.G.D.P. Sanjana, Management Assistant, for her valuable coordination and support during the field surveys. We also appreciate the efficient logistical and administrative assistance provided by Ms. L.A.K.C. Dahanayaka, Assistant Registrar (Programme), and her staff, as well as the Accounts Unit of HARTI. We extend our thanks to Mr. S. Rameshwaran for his editorial assistance, Mrs. Niluka Priyadarshani de Silva, Management Assistant, for her contribution to final page setting and layout design, and Mr. S.A.C.U. Senanayake for proofreading the report. Our appreciation is also extended to the staff of the Information and Communication Division of HARTI for facilitating the publication of this report. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of the investigators of this study, Ms. A.D. Jayali Kithmini and Ms. Achini Samarakoon, for their dedication during data collection, tabulation, and analysis. Last but not least, we express our sincere thanks to the entire staff of HARTI for their unwavering support and cooperation from the initial stages of the study to the final publication.

Research Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sri Lanka's tourism sector is a vital contributor to the national economy, offering a diverse range of attractions, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa, and Kandy. Adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and agritourism are rapidly growing trends, attracting travelers in search of authentic and sustainable experiences. Despite recent challenges such as economic crises and the COVID-19 pandemic the sector is rebounding, supported by strong government initiatives and private sector investment. Notably, Sri Lanka was ranked ninth among the top 25 destinations to visit in 2025 by the BBC, making it the only South Asian country in the top 10.

Agritourism is increasingly recognized as a strategic avenue for rural development, offering farmers opportunities to diversify their income through tourism-based farming experiences. This study examined the potential of agritourism as a livelihood development strategy in Sri Lanka, focusing on five sub sectors spice-based tourism, cinnamon-based tourism, paddy tourism, combined paddy and vegetables tourism, and vegetable-based tourism. The findings revealed that these activities are predominantly family operated, with limited adoption of community-based tourism (CBT) models, highlighting the need for more organized and collaborative approaches to ensure sustainable growth. The findings reveal significant income variation across agritourism sectors. Spice and cinnamon tourism consistently generate higher incomes, driven by strong market appeal, value added production practices, and superior tourist accessibility. In contrast, paddy-based sectors perform comparatively poorly, highlighting gaps in infrastructure, service quality, and overall tourism preparedness. Drawing on successful agritourism models from across Asia, the study underscores the importance of integrating cultural heritage, agricultural practices, and community participation to build resilient and sustainable tourism ecosystems.

To support this transformation, the study developed a Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM), grounded in systems thinking and network theory. The model maps key stakeholders, infrastructure, sectoral linkages, and benefit flows, offering a scalable and policy-relevant framework for rural tourism development in Sri Lanka.

However, agritourism communities face several challenges. These include inadequate infrastructure (27%), financial constraints (32%), wildlife threats, skill gaps, and a significant lack of awareness (90%) of available government or private support programmes. Tourist engagement also varies significantly across sites, depending on the appeal of experiences offered and the effectiveness of marketing efforts. Capacity building in tourism management and language proficiency is urgently needed to enhance sector competitiveness.

To fully realize the potential of agritourism, targeted policy interventions are essential. These should prioritize infrastructure development, financial assistance, training, marketing support, and the strengthening of CBT structures, alongside the introduction of innovative tourist activities. With coordinated efforts, Sri Lanka can transform agritourism into a dynamic driver of inclusive and sustainable rural development, while preserving its cultural and agricultural heritage for future generations.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AgMRC	-	Agricultural Marketing Resource Center
AI	-	Agriculture Instructor
ARPA	-	Agriculture Research and Production Assistant
ASC	-	Agrarian Services Center
ASEAN	-	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBT	-	Community-based Tourism
DAD	-	Department of Agrarian Development
DCS	-	Department of Census and Statistics
DOA	-	Department of Agriculture
DS	-	Divisional Secretariat
FGD	-	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	-	Gross Domestic Production
HARTI	-	Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute
KIIs	-	Key Informant Interviews
MART	-	Market for Agricultural and Rural Trade
OTOP	-	One Tambon One Product (Thailand's local entrepreneurship program)
SLTDA	-	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
UCANR	-	University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	-	United Nations World Tourism Organization
US$	-	United States Doller
USDA	-	United States Department of Agriculture

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Tourism and Agriculture Sectors in Sri Lanka

1.1.1 Agriculture Sector in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, as an island, is naturally blessed with ideal environmental conditions for agriculture, which is practiced with a focus on sustainability. The agriculture sector is a major economic strength of the national economy, ensuring food security, employment, and poverty alleviation in rural communities. This sector is driven by distinct sub-sectors such as paddy, tea, rubber, coconut, vegetables, fruits, export crops, and sugar, while livestock and fisheries sectors also make substantial contributions. Fluctuations—both negative and positive—within each sub-sector directly influence the country's overall development and the well-being of society (Ranathunga et al., 2018).

The agriculture sector remains the mainstay of Sri Lanka's economy, contributing 8.3% to the GDP (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2023). A quarter of the labour force is employed in this sector, with most land used for food production owned by smallholder farmers who possess less than two hectares on average (Yakandawala, 2023). The horticulture sector, which includes fruit, vegetable, floriculture, and landscape industries, has great potential to expand due to the variety of produce that can be grown throughout the year in diverse agro-climatic zones.

Recently, the demand for fruits and vegetables has risen. In 2022, the country produced 1,588,256 metric tons of vegetables and earned 28.5 million US$ by exporting 21,540 metric tons. Simultaneously, 697,144 metric tons of vegetables worth US$384.3 million were imported. Fruit cultivation is primarily limited to home gardens, with a few varieties grown commercially (Yakandawala, 2023).

The agriculture sector in Sri Lanka encompasses food crops (rice, maize, other cereals, fruit and vegetable crops), plantation crops (tea, rubber, coconut, sugarcane, and palmyra), export agricultural crops (spices such as clove, cinnamon, black pepper, and beverage crops such as coffee and cocoa), as well as forestry, fisheries, livestock, and poultry subsectors. Given its importance to food security and the livelihoods of a large portion of the population, the sector receives considerable direct and indirect support from the government.

As of 2023, approximately 27.3% of Sri Lanka's workforce is employed in agriculture sector, though the number has gradually declined from 2.24 million in 2015 to around 2.16 million in 2020 (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022). The latest data shows a continued slight reduction due to labour migration and economic changes (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2024). Despite this, the share of agricultural workers among the low-income class is rising, reflecting the growing severity of economic problems faced by agricultural households. The sector is becoming increasingly unpopular as a source of employment, particularly among young people, a global trend. (National Science and Technology Commission, 2020).

Rice is the most important staple food crop in Sri Lanka, occupying the majority of cultivable agricultural land and serving as the foundation for many people's livelihoods (Chithranayana & Punyawardena, 2014).

In addition to rice and other food crops, export crops also play a substantial role in Sri Lanka’s economy and provide livelihoods to many people. Key export crops include areca nut, betel, cardamom, cinnamon, citronella, clove, cocoa, coffee, ginger, goraka (*Garcinia cambogia*), lemongrass, nutmeg, pepper, turmeric, and vanilla. These crops are grown in various locations under diverse climatic conditions, with many freely available and easily cultivated in villages, thus playing an essential role in the rural economy (Nawarathna, 2008).

1.1.2 Tourism Sector in Sri Lanka

Tourism is defined as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes” by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

Tourism remains an important source of net foreign currency earnings for a country, as foreign currency outflows because of inputs are minimal. In addition to earning foreign currency, the tourism industry contributes to economic growth, employment, and reduction in regional income disparity. Sri Lanka’s strategic location, attractive natural endowments, cultural diversity, and rich history, together with the peaceful, clean, safe, and foreigner-friendly environment, provide the basis for this industry to flourish.

Sri Lanka has increasingly become a popular destination for international tourists and expatriates returning home to visit relatives and friends. An analysis of tourist arrivals by region shows that Europe remains the leading source of tourists to Sri Lanka, accounting for 52.7% of total arrivals (India Outbound, 2024). This highlights Europe's strong affinity for Sri Lanka as a preferred travel destination, likely driven by cultural ties, effective marketing strategies, and well-established travel routes (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) Annual report 2024).

Forbes magazine reported that tourist arrivals in the first half of 2024 were up 60% compared to the same period in 2023, a promising sign for this resilient nation. According to Forbes magazine's 2024 ranking, Sri Lanka was ranked as the fourth most popular solo travel destination.

Tourism has become one of the fastest-growing industries in post-war Sri Lanka, playing a vital role in the country’s economy (Suresh & Senthilnathan, 2014). It is a major foreign exchange earner, particularly for small islands like Sri Lanka, which are rich in natural and cultural resources.

The Central Bank of Sri Lanka reported that earnings from tourism soared to over $1.5 billion in the first half of 2024, marking a 78% increase year-on-year. Tourist arrivals reached 1.01 million, up 62% from the same period in 2023. By June 2024, tourism earnings had climbed to $151.1 million, a 23% increase year-on-year, despite a slight month-on-month decline. The $1.5 billion revenue surge in the first six months is important, especially considering it took Sri Lanka 10 months last year to reach $1.59 billion in tourism earnings from 1.1 million arrivals. The tourism sector's earnings exceeded $2 billion in 2023. Tourism arrivals peaked in 2018 in Sri Lanka, when 2.5 million tourists spent $4.4 billion in the country. (SLTDA Annual report 2024).

The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) is the government authority tasked with planning, development, regulation, and policy implementation of tourism and related industries. Before SLTDA was established in 2007, these functions were handled by the Ceylon Tourist Board, later known as the Sri Lanka Tourist Board and Sri Lanka Tourism Board.

According to the statistics report of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development authority, tourist arrivals reached 1,487,303, generating total revenue of US$2,067.96 million in 2023. Throughout the year, there was a significant increase in tourist arrivals by 106.6% compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, indicating a positive trajectory for Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

Visitor and revenue data from sites managed by the Central Cultural Fund indicate that 477,628 foreign visitors, comprising 32.1% of Sri Lanka's total tourist arrivals, visited several locations such as Sigiriya Rock Fortress and Museum, Dambulla Museum, Ritigala Forest Monastery, Ibbankatuwa Ancient Burial Ground etc. Among foreign tourists, popular historical sites include Sigiriya Museum and Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Polonnaruwa Gal Viharaya, Museum and Kingdom, and Jethawanaya (SLTDA, 2023).

Among foreign tourists, popular historical sites include Sigiriya Museum and Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Polonnaruwa Gal Viharaya, Museum and the Kingdom, and Jethawanaya (SLTDA Year Review Report, 2023).

1.1.3 Introduction to Agritourism

Agritourism is a component of the tourism industry. There are many synonyms and definitions for agritourism depending on the context. The general meaning of agritourism is the practice of attracting travellers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes. Agritourism, farm tourism, or agricultural tourism refers to attracting visitors and travelers to agricultural areas, generally for educational and recreational purposes (Lamb, 2008; Veeck et al., 2006). It also generates additional income for the farm by marketing farm products, activities, and services.

Agritourism is increasingly recognized as a key strategy that contributes to agricultural development by diversifying farming activities and offering visitors opportunities to rest, relax, enjoy, and learn about farming. Many countries worldwide are now promoting agritourism as a means to achieve sustainable rural development (Malkanthi & Routry, 2011). Agritourism, also known as farm tourism or agricultural tourism, involves attracting visitors to agricultural areas, primarily for educational and recreational purposes (Lamb, 2008; Veeck et al., 2006). University of California researchers define agricultural tourism (agritourism) as any income-generating activity conducted on a working farm or ranch for the enjoyment and education of visitors. This includes the natural, cultural, historic, and environmental assets of the land and the people working on it.

1.1.3.1 Agritourism in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, known as the 'Pearl of the Indian Ocean,' is also famous for its tourism and hospitality industry. After years of conflict, which ended in 2009, the tourism sector has seen significant investment and recovery. This revival presents a substantial opportunity for the development of agritourism by linking the agricultural and tourism sectors (Malkanthi & Routray, 2011).

Sri Lanka, often regarded as a tourist paradise and one of South Asia's top travel destinations, offers a wide range of tourism resources, including its beautiful beaches, rich biodiversity, wildlife, indigenous culture, Buddhist heritage, and remnants of Arab, Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences. The country has enjoyed a steady growth in its tourism industry, yet the agritourism sector remains in its early stages. Only a few agritourism destinations are currently operational, offering basic facilities and services. Nonetheless, the growing global interest in agritourism is influencing its development in Sri Lanka, which is well-suited for such activities due to its diverse agro-climatic conditions that support the cultivation of various crops, fruits, vegetables, and trees (Malkanthi & Routry, 2011).

Agritourism is a specific type of rural tourism where tourists visit agricultural sites, participate in agricultural activities, or engage in farm-to-table experiences (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). In Sri Lanka, the potential for agritourism is significant due to the economy's traditional dependence on agriculture, with over 70% of the population residing in rural areas and participating in farming activities (Kumari, 2016). The country is renowned for its organic products, including herbs and spices (Malkanthi & Routray, 2012). However, the agricultural sector faces challenges such as low productivity, high production costs, and international competition. Increasing urban migration in search of alternative income sources has added to these pressures (UK Essays, 2013). Agritourism can offer farmers an alternative revenue stream and help mitigate market fluctuations (Karin, 2017).

Given its vast rural areas, rich cultural heritage, and thriving agricultural industry, Sri Lanka holds immense potential for integrating rural communities into tourism through the development of agritourism products. Agriculture continues to dominate the Sri

Lankan economy, with most of the population relying on farming (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2022). The country's favourable climatic conditions support the cultivation of tea, spices, fruits, and rubber (Department of Agriculture, 2023). Many small-scale farms already possess the basic resources, knowledge, and equipment to meet visitor needs, lowering barriers to entry into agritourism (Kumari, 2016). Combined with Sri Lanka's hospitality and rich cultural traditions, this makes the country an ideal destination for agritourism (Malkanthi & Routry, 2011).

1.1.3.2 Agritourism Activities

The Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (AgMRC) of where provides a list of business activities that it categorizes as agritourism. Examples of agritourism activities include but are not limited to U-Pick farms, on-farm markets, pumpkin patches and corn mazes, outdoor recreation, farm stays, demonstration farms and more. Agritourism activities can provide the supplemental income necessary to allow for the preservation of small and mid-scale farms, ranches, and rural communities. It can be promoted as an outlet for residents and tourists to experience direct contact and interaction with agriculture and natural resources. Increasing public interaction with local farms and ranches can promote greater understanding and appreciation for the working landscapes that help maintain or enhance natural resources.

Agritourism has been suggested to foster rural development by promoting youth retention, revitalization of local economies, and preservation of agricultural and natural heritage (Fleischer & Pizam, 1997; Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005; Sharpley, 2002; Wicks & Merrett, 2003). A review of the literature on the some agritourism activities (Table 1.1)

Table 1.1: Major Agritourism Activities

Aspect	Major Activities
Farm-based	Participation in farming activities, farm tours/farm demonstrations, fishing, cattle rides
Food and accommodation	Unique dining experiences, bread and breakfast, agro-catering business, organic foodstuff facilities to consume farm products in the farm/picnic areas, cookery classes, and cookery demonstrations
Entertainment and educational activities	Nature trails, watching wildlife, hiking, kayaking, boating, farm, museums/heritage, fairs, festivals and special events
Selling farm products	On-farm direct sales, including U-pick operations or roadside stands. Off-the-farm direct sales, farmers' markets, county, and state fairs, and sales in special events. Both direct and indirect sales of value-added products.
Supplementary products and activities	Sale of village-based handicrafts. Participation in activities related to local Enterprises. Wildlife photography.

Source: Kizos and Isoifides, 2007; Malkanthi and Routry, 2011.

1.2 Justification

Sri Lanka is rich in rural tourism resources that hold great appeal to visitors. These resources include diverse fauna and flora, scenic landscapes, streams and waterfalls, irrigation tanks and canal systems, beautiful beaches, mouth-watering tropical fruits and vegetables, historical monuments, music, dance, festivities, authentic foods, beverages, traditional agriculture, local costume, indigenous medicine and healing methods, as well as traditional arts and sports.

Tourism in Sri Lanka accounts for almost 12 percent of the country's GDP and is the third largest source of foreign exchange reserves—behind worker remittances and the apparel industry (The Diplomat, 2022). Sri Lanka is rich in agricultural biodiversity, and there is, strong demand to connect agricultural activities with tourism in the country.

The agritourist industry is one of the leading and fastest-growing economic activities around the world, which brings numerous benefits to the host country, stimulating various income-generating opportunities. Many countries promote tourism as a part of their economic development strategies to earn foreign exchange without exports, accelerate regional development, and increasing income-generating activities. However, to realize the true benefits of tourism, in real terms, these benefits should remain with the local community. In most developing countries, rural communities receive fewer benefits from tourism due to limited investment and promotion focused on them. In this context, many development practitioners have paid attention to agritourism and its potential to improve the living standards of rural farming communities while meeting the growing demand in the tourism industry.

Rambodagedara and Silva (2015) stated that it is a well-established practice in many developed countries as an alternative income source for the rural farming communities. They also noted that agrotourism is practiced in many regional countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Indonesia, providing numerous benefits to the rural community.

In South Asia, India is the leading country in agritourism. A study by Taware (2010) on the agritourism industry in India identified several major challenges, including industry recognition, supportive policies and regulations, financing, effective training programmes, product and service quality control, partnership development, marketing and conflict management. The study also proposed strategies to overcome these challenges. Although most Asian countries have agricultural economies and developed tourism industries, it is hard to find evidence from other Asian countries for such kinds of studies.

Although a certain amount of research has been carried out on various aspects of agritourism in many countries, there are limited studies focusing on the issues and challenges of agritourism development. For example, Colton and Bissix in 2005 studied issues and challenges in developing agritourism in Nova Scotia and revealed that issues related to marketing, product development, government support, education and training, as well as partnership and communication, as the prominent issues.

Based on the above literature, agritourism is an important alternative source of income for rural farmers including small-scale farmers in many countries of the world. Achieving higher growth in agricultural productivity is a necessary part of economic transformation; it is the only way for the agricultural sector to release labour to other, higher-value-added sectors while maintaining modest growth in rural and agricultural household incomes. In this background, it is necessary to find innovative avenues to enhance income generation in the agricultural sector. Agritourism is an evolving sector in Sri Lanka, still in its infancy.

Therefore, investigating the potential and possibilities of enhancing rural livelihood through agritourism is both essential and timely. Due to economic difficulties and changes in the farming and livestock industries worldwide, many farmers - especially those with small-scale, family-owned farms, have recognized the need to supplement their agricultural business model and find new ways to generate income.

1.3 Research Problem

In rural Sri Lanka, a significant portion of the population relies predominantly on agriculture as their primary source of income. Despite this, numerous individuals within agrarian communities face significant socio-economic challenges, including inadequate income, underemployment, indebtedness, substandard living conditions, and a lack of economic and social security. Consequently, there is a pressing need to explore alternative avenues for income generation among farmers that align with new opportunities and contribute to their overall social and economic welfare.

As agriculture is the main livelihood of rural people, the agricultural sector should adequately focus on the potential of building stronger linkages with other segments of the economy. Although there are various kinds of activities and resources linked with the agricultural sector to be utilized for agritourism, it has not been fully realized in Sri Lanka, particularly compared to other regional countries. Since the tourism sector is emerging as a leading economic contributor to the country's economy, linking tourism and agriculture would benefit both agriculture and tourism sectors. In the existing literature, it is evident that a significant proportion of agritourism activities are currently orchestrated by large-scale corporations.

However, the participation of rural farmers in this industry has predominantly been on a small scale. The involvement of non-farmers in agritourism is common, highlighting the need for greater integration of real farmers into this sector. Recognizing the potential benefits, encouraging the active engagement of real farmers in agritourism is a timely and effective solution for augmenting the income of rural farmers.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What challenges and opportunities exist for promoting agritourism sub-sectors among the farming community?
ii. What is the current situation of agritourism sub-sectors among the farming community, and what potential agritourism activities can improve their livelihoods?
iii. How can stakeholder participation in agritourism be understood to enhance local livelihoods?
iv. What best practices and lessons learned from successful agritourism initiatives — both locally and globally —can inform effective implementation and the development of an agritourism rural network model

1.5 Main Objective

The overall objective of this study is to examine the potential of agritourism sub-sector development as a means of enhance livelihood opportunities within the farming community in three selected provinces in Sri Lanka.

Specific Objectives

i. To identify the key factors influencing the development of various agritourism sub-sectors (such as paddy tourism, vegetable tourism, spice tourism, and cinnamon tourism), including associated challenges and opportunities.
ii. To assess the current status of agritourism sub-sectors within farming communities and explore viable agritourism activities to enhance their livelihoods.
iii. To analyze the impacts of these factors on stakeholders involved in local livelihood development.
iv. To investigate best practices in agritourism at local and global levels, and explore the potential for developing an effective agritourism rural network model tailored to Sri Lanka.

CHARTER TWO

Review of Literature

2.1 Agritourism Development Efforts in Sri Lanka

Agro Technology Parks, initiated by the Department of Agriculture in Sri Lanka, serve the purposes of agricultural extension, education, and agritourism. The first Agro-Technology Park was established in Gannoruwa, Kandy District, followed by a second park in the Hambantota District near the Bataatha government farm (Department of Agriculture, 2014).

The national spice garden concept was established to preserve the taste, aroma, and quality of local spices, while also providing a comprehensive knowledge of spices and products for local and foreign tourists. This initiative is based at the Matale Central Research Center of the Department of Export Agriculture (Department of Export Agriculture 2024). These agricultural hubs highlight a spectrum of agricultural activities, spanning from cutting-edge techniques to traditional methods, catering to the diverse interests of visitors. The parks play a pivotal role in disseminating valuable information to farmers, school children, and the public. Moreover, they serve as educational platforms by offering training programmes and hands-on learning experiences

Various agricultural varieties and technologies, along with edible landscaping featuring tropical crops, are integral components of agritourism initiatives in Sri Lanka (Department of Agriculture, 2014). In addition, private sector entities and individuals within the agriculture, travel, and tourism sectors have ventured into agritourism. Windsor Park, managed by the CIC group and located on a vast 1,300-acre agriculture farm, stands out as one of the country's prominent agritourism parks (CICAgri, 2014). Moreover, some tourist hotels and individuals have actively engaged in agritourism activities within their medium or small-scale farms.

2.2 Agritourism Studies in Sri Lanka

Agritourism in Sri Lanka has developed gradually over the past decade, with several studies and case reports documenting its potential, practices, and challenges. The earliest study by Malkanthi and Routry (2011) explored the *Potential for Agritourism Development* in the country. This research highlighted Sri Lanka's diverse agricultural landscapes and cultural traditions as key assets that could be packaged into agritourism offerings. The authors identified several categories of agritourism experiences ranging from farm stays to food production tours, while also acknowledging limitations such as weak infrastructure and insufficient market linkages. Their work laid the foundation for more detailed case-specific research that followed.

Further conceptual advancement was made in *Agritourism Development: The Case of Sri Lanka* (Imbeaw & Hairunnisa, 2011). This study emphasised the need to integrate agricultural and tourism planning, arguing that agritourism could contribute to both rural development and national tourism differentiation. It drew attention to community participation, equitable benefit-sharing, and the necessity of embedding agritourism within regional tourism strategies. Unlike the exploratory nature of earlier work, this study provided a policy-oriented framework for scaling agritourism initiatives.

Later, research shifted towards practical case studies in specific sectors. Madhuwanthi et al. (2021) investigated *Smallholder Rubber Farming-based Agritourism in Moneragala*, showing how rubber landscapes could be transformed into experiential tourism sites where visitors could engage in tapping latex and processing rubber sheets. The study acknowledged challenges such as farmer awareness, market access, and infrastructure, but pointed out opportunities to integrate rubber tourism into eco-trails and rural circuits. Similarly, the community-driven example of *Heeloya Village* presented by Eranda and Niroshana (2019) and later updated by Dassanayake (2023) highlighted the role of agritourism in strengthening household incomes and preserving cultural traditions. Heeloya's success as a tourism village reflected the power of integrating farming, homestays, and cultural heritage into visitor experiences, though later assessments also stressed the need for governance to ensure equitable benefit-sharing and cultural preservation.

In the tea sector, Sewwandi (2024) examined *Tea Tourism Landscape Development at Pedro Tea Estate, Nuwara Eliya*. The study showcased how Sri Lanka's global reputation for tea could be leveraged through immersive plantation tours, heritage branding, and sustainable landscape planning. Importantly, it argued that tea tourism could simultaneously empower communities and conserve environment when approached with sustainability at its core. This finding reinforced the notion that certain agricultural sectors, like tea, hold comparative advantages in agritourism.

Understanding the visitor perspective was the focus of Gunasekara and Silva (2022) in their study on *Agro-Tourist Satisfaction in Sri Lanka*. Their research, based on a survey of agro-tourists, identified activities and attractions as the most significant factors influencing satisfaction. They recommended improving interpretation, accommodation, and amenities to enhance visitor experiences and encourage repeat visitation. Complementing this, Gnanathilaka (2024) investigated the *Impact of Agro Tourism on the Travel Experiences of Domestic Tourists*. This symposium paper found that Sri Lankan domestic tourists valued authenticity, hands-on experiences, and cultural connection, confirming that agritourism is not limited to international markets but also holds potential as a domestic travel product.

At a divisional level, the study *Farm to Tourists: Challenges and Development Strategies in Kurupetta Division* (South Asian Journal of Social Science & Economics, 2024) revealed the constraints smallholders face when engaging in agritourism. The study pointed to inadequate infrastructure, low farmer awareness, and weak institutional support as critical barriers, while also recommending training, cluster branding, and partnerships as practical development strategies. By focusing on a specific locality, this study contributed context-specific insights into how agritourism could be practically supported at the grassroots level.

Taken together, these eight studies demonstrate the evolution of agritourism scholarship in Sri Lanka. From early conceptual explorations to sectoral and community-based case studies, the literature consistently highlights agritourism's potential for income diversification, cultural preservation, and sustainable rural development. At the same time, challenges such as infrastructure deficits, skill gaps, and lack of coordinated policy remain persistent. The studies also show that both domestic and international tourists value authentic, participatory experiences, reinforcing the importance of product quality, interpretation, and sustainable planning. Collectively, these works provide a strong evidence base for developing agritourism as an integrated national strategy for rural development and tourism diversification.

2.3 Sustainable Tourism and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Livelihood Development

The aim of promoting tourism is to increase the net benefits to rural communities, and enhance their participation in tourism. Sustainable tourism is a continuously evolving concept that meets the needs of both local communities and tourists, while providing broad opportunities for future development (Sumanapala, et al., 2023a). Sustainable tourism refers to the development of tourism in a manner that avoids ecological degradation, cultural disruption, and other adverse impacts while enhancing the well-being of host communities and meeting the expectations of tourists (Selcuk et al., 2021).

Furthermore, tourism, being a rapidly growing sector, is significantly affected by skill shortages (UNWTO, 2019). As rural tourism is highly competitive, it is essential to identify and leverage opportunities for gaining a competitive advantage.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is an approach to tourism in which local communities play a central role in the planning, management, and ownership of tourism activities, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are equitably shared among community members. The role of CBT in promoting sustainable rural development is increasingly recognized, as it provides an alternative to sustainable tourism that is more inclusive and environmentally friendly (Samarathunga et al., 2015).

While the concept of CBT is relatively new to Sri Lanka, it has gained significant popularity among global tourists. Currently, CBT stands as a well-established practice in numerous developed nations, serving as an alternative income source for rural farming communities. This trend is not limited to developed countries, as many regional neighbours, including Thailand, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Indonesia, have also embraced agritourism, contributing manifold benefits to their rural communities. In these, agritourism has evolved into an integral part of agriculture and rural development, with a policy-level focus on enhancing the livelihoods of rural farming communities.

Malaysian Homestay Experience Programme was launched in 1995 to encourage the rural communities to venture into the tourism sector by offering community-based tourism (CBT)products or services to both local and international tourists (Norhafizah Johar lecture 2024). According to Muhammad Aiman bin Ahmad Kamal Lecture 2024, there is significant potential for agritourism through agro-based industry in Malaysia, and CBT is currently being practiced successfully has emerged as a powerful tool for achieving sustainable rural development. It provides economic opportunities for local communities and helps protect the environment and preserve cultural heritage (Iddawala et al., 2024). The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA, 2017) has promoted CBT as part of its broader strategy for promoting sustainable tourism development in Sri Lanka (Samarathunga, et al., 2015).

2.4 Policy Related to Rural Tourism Development Programmes

Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA) is the government authority tasked with planning, development, regulation, and policy implementation in the tourism and related industries.

Policy Development in Sri Lankan Tourism

- Government initiatives for tourism development in Sri Lanka began in 1937 with the establishment of the Ceylon Tourist Bureau.
- However, it was closed in September 1939 due to World War II.
- After Sri Lanka's independence, tourism promotion resumed with the re-establishment of the Ceylon Tourist Board, which took over the function of the Tourist Bureau.
- The tourism sector was formally regulated with the enactment of Act No.10 of 1966.
- This legislation provided the establishment of the Ceylon Tourist Board and the development of the first Tourism Plan.
- Under the UNDP country programme with the WTO, Sri Lanka introduced the Tourism Master Plan 19 in 2001.
- In October 2007, under section 2 of the Tourism Act No.38 of 2005, the Sri Lanka Tourist Board (established under Act No. 10 of 1996) was replaced by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA).
- In 2001, Sri Lanka introduced the tourism tagline 'Paradise in Sri Lanka'.
- This was later updated to a new tagline, 'The Wonder of Asia'.
- In 2017, the Sri Lankan Government introduced a five-year strategic plan for tourism development covering the period 2017–2022.

Current Policies Implemented

National Tourism Policy: Encourages sustainable tourism practices and the development of rural tourism to alleviate poverty.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Highlights how rural tourism aligns with national and international development objectives.

Vision 2025: A strategic framework that aims to enhance rural livelihoods through tourism and empower local communities.

Sri Lanka Tourism Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

Ministry of Rural Development Initiatives: Supports local tourism projects focused on community participation and environmental sustainability.

Community-Based Tourism Development Programme

2.5 International Exposures

Due to economic difficulties and changes in the farming and livestock industries worldwide, many farmers especially those who have small-scale, family-owned farms have recognized the need to supplement their agricultural business model and find new sources of income. Agritourism can contribute to the overall income, cash flow, and profitability of a farm by providing alternative income via farm products and farming activities (Colton and Bissix, 2005; Huybers, 2007).

While the concept of agritourism is relatively new to the country, it has gained significant popularity among global tourists. In many developed countries, agritourism is a well-established practice, serving as an alternative income source for rural farming communities. This trend extends beyond developed countries, with regional neighbours such as Thailand, Malaysia, India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Indonesia also embracing agritourism, and generating numerous benefits to their rural communities. In these countries, agritourism has become a vital part of agriculture and rural development, with policies focused primarily on improving the livelihoods of rural farming communities.

Developed countries have undertaken various research initiatives and programmes to promote sustainable agritourism. For example, researchers from the University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension and the UC Small Farm Programme conducted an extensive survey of farmers involved in different agritourism practices across California. This study aimed to investigate the political, social, and economic characteristics of agritourism in the region. the findings helped researchers better understand the needs of the California agritourism sector and design outreach programmes to support its growth. The survey team focused on the types of activities farmers engaged in, marketing strategies, management and staffing practices, profitability, and the profile of typical visitors. Detailed survey information was published in UC ANR's quarterly journal, *California Agriculture*, highlighting the growing economic potential of agritourism operations in California. The survey found that more than 2.4 million visitors participate in agritourism activities annually in California. While the state's wine industry is a significant contributor to its agricultural economy of the state, the survey focused only on small wineries producing fewer than 10,000 cases annually that also offered non-wine-related agritourism activities. It is estimated that the wine industry attracts an additional 21 million tourists who spend approximately $2.1 billion annually within the state (UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2023).

The survey also found that 68% of farms offering agritourism activities were classified as 'small farm' by the **United States Department of Agriculture (**USDA). These farms operate with gross annual sales of less than US$250,000. Income diversification is a crucial aspect for small-scale farms to maintain economic viability. By supplementing traditional production with agritourism practices, these farms can buffer seasonal fluctuations in income and market volatility. Approximately 75% of the survey respondents reported that their primary motivation for adopting agritourism was to increase profitability. The report also highlighted that, particularly in areas at the urban-rural interface, agritourism provides economic incentives for growers, opportunities for product diversification, and helps to educate the public about the importance of supporting local agriculture.

According to the literature review, Agritourism development in Sri Lanka is constrained by inadequate infrastructure, limited farmer awareness and skills, weak market access, insufficient policy and institutional support, and challenges in ensuring equitable benefit-sharing and sustainability.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.1 Study Area of the Research Sample Selection

The study area focuses specifically on the North Central, Central and Southern provinces of Sri Lanka Table 1.2. These provinces were selected for their importance as leading tourist destinations, particularly for eco and cultural tourism, and as major agricultural hubs characterized by diverse farming practices.

Selection of the sample

A combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to select sample units within these provinces. The research includes Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), case studies, focus group discussions (FGDs), and surveys targeting both farmers, farmers who engage in agritourism activities and tourists/visitors, all designed to achieve the study's objectives.

Divisional Secretariats (DSs) were selected based on their potential for agritourism, following initial discussions with relevant officials DSs were chosen from each district, prioritizing areas that attract more than 50% of tourists/visitors and include key travel destinations, to ensure representative coverage for the study. In selected DSs Different agritourism were conducting.

From each DS, one agritourism activity site was selected as community-based tourism site considered as the village community engaged in tourism activities as a community. The selection was made in consultation with relevant DS officials. Key indicators used in the selection process included the presence of horticultural and plantation crops specific to the study area, proximity to popular tourist attractions, availability of natural and cultural resources, overall attractiveness of the location, and the presence of notable agricultural resources and farming practices. Five sub-categories of agritourism activities are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetable, and tourism with vegetables.

The selected agritourist sub-categories areas community-based tourism areas (CBTs) served as the primary study sites for data collection. Three separate questionnaire surveys were conducted in selected agritourism CBTs: two questionnaires for farmers one for the general farmers, one specifically for farmers involved in agritourism and one for tourists.

Farmer-level information was gathered within the respective Grama Niladhari Division GNDs where the agritourist activities were located. Finally, a total of 209 farmers were selected for the questionnaire for farmers who were engaged in agritourism activities The same community-based tourism sites were used to conduct questionnaire surveys with farmers in the relevant areas. A total of 170 farmers were selected from the study area for this purpose. For both questionnaires, the sample size was determined using Slovin's Formula, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level, based on the known population of farmers engaged in agritourism within the respective GN divisions. Data collection was carried out between May to November of 2024.

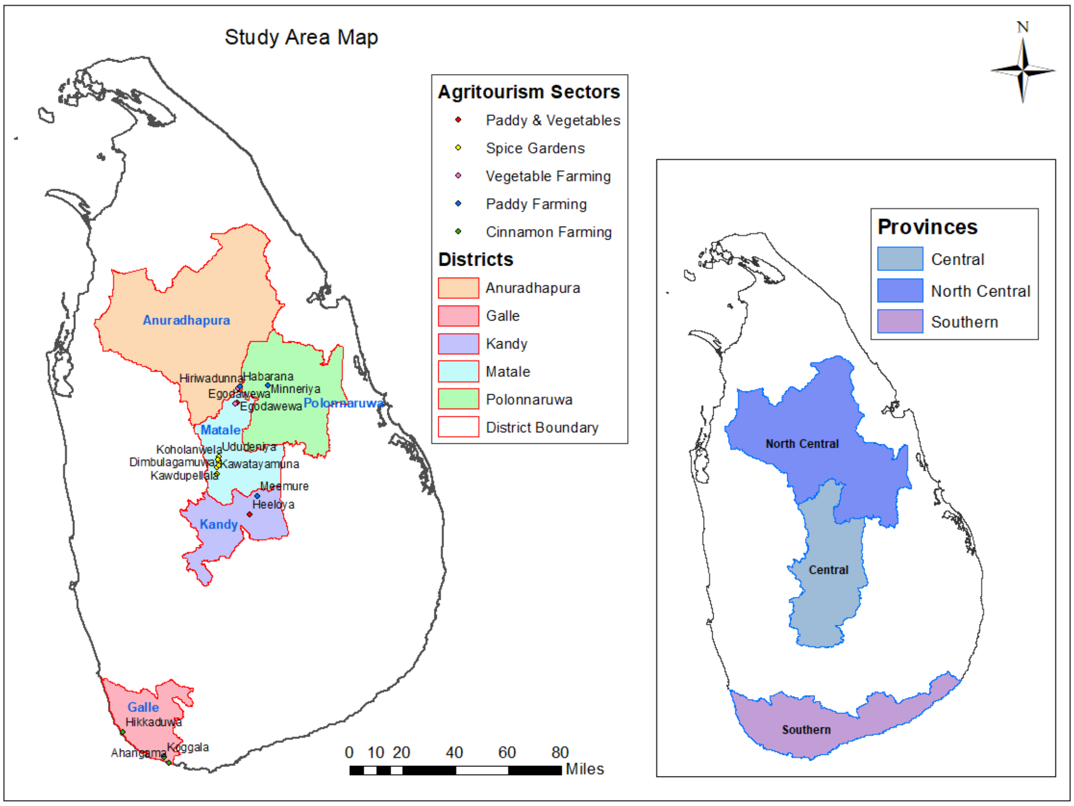
For the third questionnaire survey targeting tourists/visitors, a total of 30 participants were selected from the Central Province, 20 from Southern Province, and 20 from North Central Province. These numbers were based on the tourist population data provided by the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (2023) during the months of April, May, June, and July of 2023. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select tourists/visitors within the study areas.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Case Studies were conducted to collect primary data.

Table 3.1: Study Area and the Sample Number of Farmers who were Engaged in Agritourism Activities (study focused on five prominent agrotourism practices)

Agritourism Sectors	Province	District	Study location & Sample Size (No. of Respondents): farmers who were engaged in agritourism activities	Study location & farmers in the relevant area who were not engaged in agritourism activities
Tourism with both Paddy and Vegetables	Central	Matale	Egodawewa-20	12
		Kandy	Heeloya-14	9
	North Central	Polonnaruwa	Minneriya-6	5
Tourism with Spice Gardens	Central	Matale	Kawdupellala-10	14
			Ududeniya-10	14
			Madawala - Ulpotha-10	14
			Dimbulagamuwa-5	9
			Koholanwela-5	10
			Kawatayamuna-2	6
Tourism with Vegetable Farming	North central	Anuradhapura	Hiriwadunna-23	10
	Central	Matale	Egodawewa-23	10
Tourism with Paddy Farming	Central	Kandy	Meemure-33	20
		Matale		
	North Central	Polonnaruwa	Minneriya-5	11
			Habarana-5	10
Tourism with Cinnamon Farming	Southern	Galle	Hikkaduwa-10	6
			Ahangama-10 Koggala-15	10

Study Area and the Sample Distribution



Source: Author's Survey Data 2024

Figure 3.1: Study Area and the Sample Distribution

3.2 Primary Data Collection

Direct field observation methods were employed as the primary tools for data collection in the study area. In addition, Structured Questionnaire Surveys, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Case Studies were conducted to gather primary data.

Structured Questionnaire Survey

As mentioned above, three surveys were carried out using questionnaires and for this purpose, the computer-based application ‘Kobo Toolbox’ was used for collection and organizing the data in effective manner.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

KIIs were conducted with the responsible officers, subject matter experts, and individuals who have previously researched this sector. The purpose of the KIIs was to gather their views, suggestions, and in-depth information on the opportunities and challenges in developing agritourism within the farming community, as well as to validate other field data collected.

The study gathered views from various stakeholders such as national and district-level administrative officers in the agriculture and tourism sectors, tour operators, agriculture instructors, community leaders, agricultural research, and production assistants, Grama Niladharies, as well as members and office bearers of community-based organizations, including farmer organizations.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Farmer-level information was collected through focus group discussions to assess their capacity and resources for developing agritourism, as well as to identify opportunities, challenges, and issues faced at the farmer level. These discussions also explored current agritourism and related activities, farmers' perceptions of agritourism, potential agritourism activities and products, and the benefits that agritourism could bring from the farmers' perspectives.

Case Studies

Six case studies were used to gather and analyze data on the current situation of agritourism activities in the study area, focusing mainly on horticultural and plantation crops. These case studies examined specific agritourism initiatives within rural Sri Lankan communities to provide detailed insights into both successful or struggling ventures. They analyzed factors contributing to success or failure and extracted lessons to inform policy and practice. One case study was selected from each GND's division.

For the local case studies, the snowball sampling method was employed to select participants. Additionally, four global case studies were chosen for the third objective using the snowball sampling method and secondary data.

GIS Mapping

Used Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to identify potential agritourism sites based on factors such as accessibility, natural attractions, and existing infrastructure. Collected spatial data on potential agritourism sites and used GIS mapping tools to visually represent and analyze their geographic distribution. This approach helped identify clusters or patterns to inform targeted recommendations. In this study, agritourism is defined as any activity, enterprise, or business that combines key elements of tourism and agriculture to increase income for farms and rural communities.

3.3 Secondary Data Collection

Secondary information was gathered from published and unpublished reports and online sources, including reports and publications of government ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Industrial Development, and the Ministry of Tourism, and international organizations like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

3.4 Data Analysis and Analytical Techniques

Collected data will be analyzed using SPSS software to perform both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Objective 1: To identify the key factors influencing the development of various agritourism sub sectors such as paddy tourism, vegetable tourism, spice tourism, and cinnamon tourism including the challenges and opportunities associated with each sub-sector.

Data Source - Primary Data

Primary Data Collection

Data Collection Methods

a) Focus group discussions - Farmer organizations and village-level organizations in the study area. Relevant information is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.2: Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition and Unit
Demographic Variables	Age distribution of farmers – [Categorical variable based on age ranges (in years)]. Gender distribution among farmers (Percentage by gender). Education level of farmers (Categorical variables). Household income of farmers – (Rupees).
Geographic Variables	Location of farms (urban, suburban, or rural). Proximity to tourist attractions or population centers - (measured in distance units such as kilometers or miles, or travel time). Climate and seasonality – (*yala* and *maha*)
Farm Characteristics	Type of crops grown or livestock raised. Farm size – (acreage). Existing agricultural activities (primary or major operations). Farming practices (organic, conventional, mixed methods, etc.). Infrastructure available on the farm (eg., water supply, electricity, lodging, dining facilities, recreational areas). Crops cultivated in the area (types of crops commonly grown). Other occupations, (dairy farming, poultry farming, beekeeping, fishing)
Village-based statistics	The total population and number of households, infrastructure facilities in the area.
Awareness of agritourism	Farmer's awareness of agritourism (Assessed through individual discussions/interviews).
Current agritourism status of the area	Tourist destinations in the area. Established tourism activities and overall tourism exposure. Existing agritourism practices conducted in the study area. Identification of farmers directly or indirectly involved in the agritourism sector.

The possible agritourism activities	Identify potential agritourism activities that can be performed by the farming community in the study areas. Identify resources that can be linked to agritourism both directly and indirectly (e.g., carpenters, etc.), vehicles (tractors, three-wheelers, and motor bicycles) that can support agritourism logistics, and human skills (e.g., language proficiency, guiding ability) that enhance visitor experiences.
Major Livelihood Benefits	Potential benefits of agritourism for the farming community, including major livelihood improvements. Agritourism opportunities, based on existing resources in each study area, as identified by farmers and farmer organizations. Facilities available for farmers to renovate and enhance agritourism destinations to make them more attractive. Required business management skills, including entrepreneurship, general management, interpersonal, and communication skills.

b) KIIs – Village Level Officers/District Level Officers/Experts

Analytical Methods of Objective 1

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Tools, Descriptive and Inferential Analysis
Pairwise comparison charts prioritized factors affecting agritourism including challenges and opportunities. Resource mapping, timeline, and trend analysis identified resources and track changes over time. Farmers' view that agritourism is beneficial was identified using a Likert Scale, reflecting respondents' perceptions. Calculate descriptive statistics for variables related to agritourism participation, including the number of farms involved, revenue generated from agritourism activities, and types of agritourism activities offered. Calculate the direct and indirect economic benefits of agritourism, including additional income generated from tourism activities, sales of agricultural products

Analytical Methods of Objective 2

To assess the current status of agritourism sub-sectors within farming communities and explore viable agritourism activities that can enhance their livelihoods.

Data Source
Questionnaire Survey
Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Tools, Descriptive and Inferential Analysis
Farmers' view on the current situation of agritourism in the study area and possible activities based on the crop.

Analytical Method
Descriptive Inferential Statistics

Objective 3
To analyze the impacts of these factors on stakeholders involved in local livelihood development.

Data Source

Questionnaire Survey

The questionnaire survey comprised three parts: The first for farmers (based on crop) involved in agritourism, the second for farmers in the case study area, and the third for tourists/visitors.

1. Questionnaire Survey (farmers involved in agritourism)

Dimension	Variable Description
Dependent variable	Levels of livelihood status (income from the agritourism business)
Independent variables Demographic characteristics	Age and gender distribution of farmers, and their education level.
Agritourism Participation	Number of farms engaged in agritourism activities. Types of agritourism activities offered by farms (e.g., farm tours, farm stays, farm-to-table dining). Frequency of agritourism events or activities hosted by farms. Types of agritourism experiences offered.
Resources	Access to resources (land, capital, equipment)
Community Engagement and Support	Collaboration and partnerships between farmers and local tourism agencies or organizations. Participation in community events and initiatives related to agritourism. Supportive policies and regulations at local and regional levels.
Market Demand and Trends	Market demand for agritourism experiences in the region. Trends in consumer preferences for local and sustainable agricultural products. Competitor analysis of agritourism destinations in the area. Local and regional tourism trends.
Infrastructure and Resources	Availability of infrastructure to support agritourism (e.g., lodging, transportation). Access to marketing and promotional resources for agritourism activities. Investment in agritourism infrastructure by the local government or the private sector
Challenges and Barriers	Barriers to participation in agritourism (e.g., regulatory hurdles, lack of awareness or resources). Seasonal constraints or challenges related to agricultural production. Perceived risks associated with agritourism activities.
Tourism-related Variables	Existing agritourism activities on farms. Visitor count and revenue generated from current agritourism activities. Types of agritourism activities offered (e.g., farm tours, pick-your-own, farm stays). Customer satisfaction and feedback. Collaboration with hoteliers and tourists /visitors. Collaboration with the government stakeholders.
Customer Satisfaction and Feedback	Visitor satisfaction with agritourism experiences. Visitor feedback on potential improvements or new activities

2. Questionnaire Survey Tourists/Visitors

Dimension	Variable Description
Dependent variable	Levels of livelihood status
Independent variables	Tourist Demographics Travel Motivations: Reasons for travel, such as seeking relaxation, cultural experiences, adventure, or culinary exploration can influence tourists' interest in agritourism activities. Awareness and Information: Tourists' awareness and information about agritourism offerings — through marketing, online resources, and word-of-mouth — can affect their likelihood of engaging in agritourism experiences. Previous Agritourism Experience: Perceived Risks and Barriers: Concerns about safety, accessibility, language differences, or unfamiliarity with agritourism experiences can discourage tourists from participating in agritourism activities. Travel Constraints: Factors such as time, budget restrictions, and distance to agritourism destinations can affect tourists' decisions to participate in agritourism activities. Seasonality and Weather Conditions: Seasonal demand fluctuations and weather patterns can influence tourists' preferences and the timing of their visits to agritourism destinations. Quality of Agritourism Offerings: The quality and diversity of agritourism experiences — such as farm tours, culinary activities, accommodations, and recreation — affect tourists' satisfaction and their likelihood of returning. Peer Influence and Social Networks: Recommendations from friends, family, online communities, as well as social norms or cultural expectations, can shape tourists' decisions to participate in agritourism activities.

Analytical Method
Descriptive Analysis:

Objective 4
To investigate best practices in agritourism at local and global levels, and to explore the potential for developing an effective agritourism rural network model tailored to Sri Lanka.

Data Source
Six case studies were conducted within the study area (two in each study area) and four additional case studies were reviewed using secondary data from global contexts including countries with similar agricultural landscapes or strong agritourism sectors. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, secondary records, observations, focus group interviews, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Data Analysis

Case Study Analysis	Analyze each case study in detail, focusing on agritourism activities offered, target markets, marketing strategies, partnerships with local communities, government support, sustainability practices, and financial viability.
Thematic Analysis	Identify recurring themes and patterns in strategies, challenges, and best practices from interviews, documents, observations, and focus group discussions.
Comparative Analysis	Compare and contrast findings from local and global case studies to identify similarities, differences, and transferable lessons.
SWOT Analysis	Conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis to assess internal and external factors influencing agritourism initiatives.
Network Analysis	Analyze existing networks and relationships among agritourism stakeholders to understand collaboration dynamics and identify potential gaps or opportunities for improvement.
Model Development	Synthesize findings from data analysis to formulate recommendations for developing an effective Agritourism Rural Network Model.
Validation	Validate the developed model through expert reviews, pilot testing, and stakeholder feedback.
Dissemination	Share the validated model and research findings through publications, presentations, workshops, and online platforms to promote knowledge exchange and uptake among stakeholders and decision-makers.
Adaptation to Sri Lankan Context	Assess how best practices and lessons learned can be adapted to Sri Lanka's socio-cultural, economic, and environmental context, considering agricultural diversity, tourism infrastructure, regulatory environment, and local community needs. **Development of Rural Network Model:** Based on the insights gained, develop a Rural Network Model for agritourism in Sri Lanka. This model should outline the key components, involved stakeholders, governance structure, and strategies to promote collaboration and sustainability in the agritourism sector. **Pilot Implementation and Evaluation:** Implement a pilot project based on the developed Rural Network Model in a selected region of Sri Lanka. Monitor and evaluate the project's progress by gathering feedback from stakeholders, and adjust the model as needed to ensure its effectiveness and scalability. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building: Share the findings, best practices, and lessons learned with relevant stakeholders in Sri Lanka through workshops, seminars, and training programmes. Build capacity among local communities, farmers, tour operators, and government agencies to support the sustainable development of agritourism initiatives. Rural Network Model tailored to the specific context of Sri Lanka. By following this methodological framework, you can gain valuable insights from successful agritourism initiatives globally and develop a robust Rural Network Model tailored to Sri Lanka's specific context.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Agritourism Sub-sectors in the Farming Community: Challenges and Opportunities (Tourism with Spices)

Introduction

Five sub-categories of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetable, and tourism with vegetables. Each sub-category is analyzed based on demographic, economic characteristics, farm attributes, infrastructure facilities, geographical features, awareness levels, challenges, and potential of farmers. This chapter focuses on tourism with spices.

4.1 Tourism in Spice Gardens

The Matale district, located in central Sri Lanka, is renowned for its rich agricultural heritage, particularly its spice gardens, which play a vital role in the region's agritourism sector. Areas of Kawdupelalla, Ududeniya, Madawalaulpatha, Dibulagamuwa, Koholanwala, and Kawatayamuna are especially popular for their spice cultivation.

All 42 spice gardens were selected for the study, and 67 farmers who were cultivating spices. These gardens offer visitors a unique opportunity to experience the process of spice cultivation firsthand and learn about traditional farming practices. Many of the farmers maintain their gardens on inherited lands, with each garden typically spanning over one acre.

The spice gardens offer a variety of activities for visitors, including guided tours in multiple languages that explain spice cultivation and the uses of numerous spices and herbs. Visitors can also enjoy Ayurveda treatments and massages using locally sourced plants and spices. The on-site restaurant serves a traditional ‘Kamatha Lunch,’ providing an authentic culinary experience. Visitors have the opportunity to purchase spices, Ayurveda products, and locally crafted items such as the ‘Kothalahibutu Jug’ from nearby stalls. Additionally, demonstrations highlight the traditional methods used in producing Ayurveda and spice-based products, allowing visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the process.

In addition to its spice gardens, the Matale District is home to several notable tourist attractions, including the Matale Alu Viharaya, Nalanda Gedige, Riverston, Dambulu Viharaya, and Sigiriya Rock Fortress. Together with the unique experience offered by the spice gardens, these sites contribute to Matale’s status as a key agritourism hub in Sri Lanka.

4.1.1 Main Demographic Characteristics of the Spice Garden Owners

The main demographic characteristics of spice garden owners were studied. Findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Main Demographic Characteristics of the Spice Garden Owners

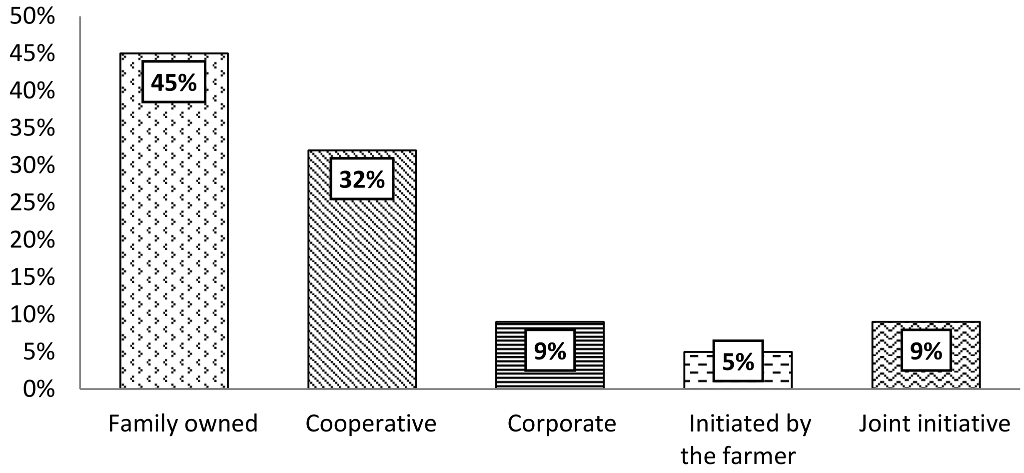
Characteristics		N=42 %
Age distribution	Under 25	0
	25-34	0
	35-44	18
	45-54	46
	55-64	32
	65 and above	5
Gender	Female	14
	Male	86
Education Level	No schooling	0
	Up to G.C.E. (O/L)	9
	Passed G.C.E. (O/L)	18
	Up to G.C.E. (A/L)	27
	Passed G.C.E. (A/L)	27
	Diploma	9
	Degree	9
	Post Graduate	0
Agritourism as the primary occupation	Yes	73
	No	27

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Table 4.1 presents main demographic characteristics of the spice garden owners. The survey of 42 spice garden owners shows that the majority are middle aged to older individuals, with 46% aged 45–54 and 32% aged 55–64, while no participants were under 35. The sector is male-dominated (86% male, 14% female). Educational levels are moderate, with most having completed up to G.C.E. (A/L), while 9% hold diplomas and 9% degrees. Agritourism is the primary occupation for 73% of owners, making it the main source of livelihood in the area.

4.1.2 Types of Agritourism Businesses in This Area

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the types of agritourism businesses in the study area vary, as Family-owned businesses comprise the largest segment, at 45%, followed by cooperatives at 32%. Corporate ventures account for 9%, while both joint initiatives and those independently initiated by spice garden owners each represent 5%.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 4.1: Types of Agritourism Businesses

4.1.3 Monthly Income Distribution among Individuals Engaged in Agritourism in the Study Area

Table 4.2: Monthly Income Distribution among Individuals Engaged in Agritourism in the Study Area

Characteristics		N=42 %
Monthly income from the spice gardens as an agritourism activity	Less than Rs. 25,000	0
	Rs. 25,000- Rs. 50,000	9
	Rs. 50,001- Rs. 100,000	18
	Rs. 100,001- Rs. 200,000	27
	More than Rs. 200,000	45

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.2 highlights the monthly income distribution among individuals engaged in agritourism within the study area. Notably, none of the participants earns less than Rs. 25,000 per month from agritourism activities. A significant number of owners (27%) earn between Rs. 100,001 and Rs. 200,000 per month. Most notably, 45% of the owners earn over Rs. 200,000 monthly, indicating that this sector serves as a substantial source of income for nearly half of the participants.

4.1.4 Farm Characteristics of the Spice Gardens

Table 4.3 presents the farm characteristics of the 42 spice gardens surveyed in the study. Most spice gardens are privately owned, either purchased (46%) or inherited (32%). Farm sizes vary, with many owners holding between 1–2 acres or larger plots exceeding 5 acres. Farming is largely sustainable, split between organic and integrated practices. Spice crops form the core cultivation, with some diversification into plantation, medicinal, fruit, and perennial crops.

Table 4.3: Farm Characteristics of the Spice Gardens

Characteristic	Key Findings N=42	%
Ownership	Own land	77%
	Non-owned (rented/share cropped)	23%
Land acquisition	Purchased	46%
	Inherited	32%
Farm size	Small to medium holdings (1-2 acres)	27%
	5-10 acres	23%
	>10 acres	23%
Farming practices	Integrated	52%
	Organic	48%
Main crops	Spice crops	50%
	Plantation	14%
	Medicinal	14%
	Fruits	9%
	Others	11%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

4.1.5 Infrastructure Facilities in the Spice Gardens

Table 4.4: Infrastructure Facilities in Spice Gardens

Facility Type	Key Findings N=42	%
Basic facilities	Water supply	100%
	Electricity	95%
	Buildings	68%
	Parking	63%
	Sanitation	50%
Tourism-related	Restaurants	28%
	Stalls	32%
	Spas	8%
	Cottages /guest houses	2%
Other facilities	Accommodation	9%
	Waste management	9%
	Transport	5%
	Farm equipment	5%
Water sources	Municipal supply	55%
	Shallow wells	24%
	Agro wells	12%
	Deep wells	6%
	Spring water	3%
Electricity	All from national grid (100%), no alternative sources.	
Nearby attractions	Alu Viharaya	15
	Nalanda Gedige	15
	Riverstone	9
	Dambulla Viharaya	5
	Sigiriya	6

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.4 presents the infrastructure facilities available in the 42 spice gardens surveyed. All spice gardens have water supply and nearly all have electricity, with moderate levels of buildings (68%), parking (63%), and sanitation (50%). Accommodation and waste management facilities are rare (9%), while no farms operate greenhouses. Municipal water is the main source (55%), and electricity comes solely from the national grid. Tourism infrastructure is modest, with restaurants (28%) and stalls (32%) being the most common.

4.1.6 Geographic Variables - Distance and Travel Time from the Spice Garden to Major Cities

Table 4.5: Distance and Travel Time from Spice Gardens to Major Cities

Characteristic	Key Findings N=42	%
Distance to nearest city	5–10 km	50%
	10–20 km	36%
	<5 km	14%
	>20km	None
Travel time to the city	15–30 min	64%
	<15min	23%
	30-60 min	14%
	>60min	None

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.5 presents the distance and travel time from the surveyed spice gardens (N=42) to major cities. Most spice gardens are conveniently located near major cities, with half situated 5–10 km away and nearly two-thirds accessible within 15–30 minutes. None are beyond 20 km or more than an hour's travel, making them easily reachable for tourists. Nearby attractions such as Alu Viharaya, Nalanda Gedige, Riverston, Dambulu Viharaya, and Sigiriya further enhance their tourism appeal.

4.1.7 Awareness of Agritourism among Spice Garden Owners

Table 4.6: Presents the Distance and Travel Time from the Surveyed Spice Gardens (N=42) to Major Cities

Characteristics	N=42	%
Mode of starting agritourism business	Training programmes	4
	Family business	58
	Media (TV/radio/newspaper)	17
	Popular in village	21
	Tourism business	0
Awareness of programme support for agritourism among owners	Yes	0
	No	100
Spice garden owners' awareness of government and agricultural organizations support for agritourism development	Yes	0
	No	59
	Not sure	41

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.6 illustrates the variation in distance and travel time from spice gardens (N=42) to major cities. 58% of agritourism businesses are initiated as family ventures, while 21% start due to local popularity. Media sources such as TV, radio, or newspapers account for 17%, and only 4% are launched through training programmes. Notably, none of the businesses originates from existing tourism ventures. Survey results also highlight a complete lack of awareness regarding agritourism support programmes, with 100% of respondents unaware of any initiatives.

4.1.8 Number of Visitors and Countries

Table 4.7: Number of Visitors and Countries.

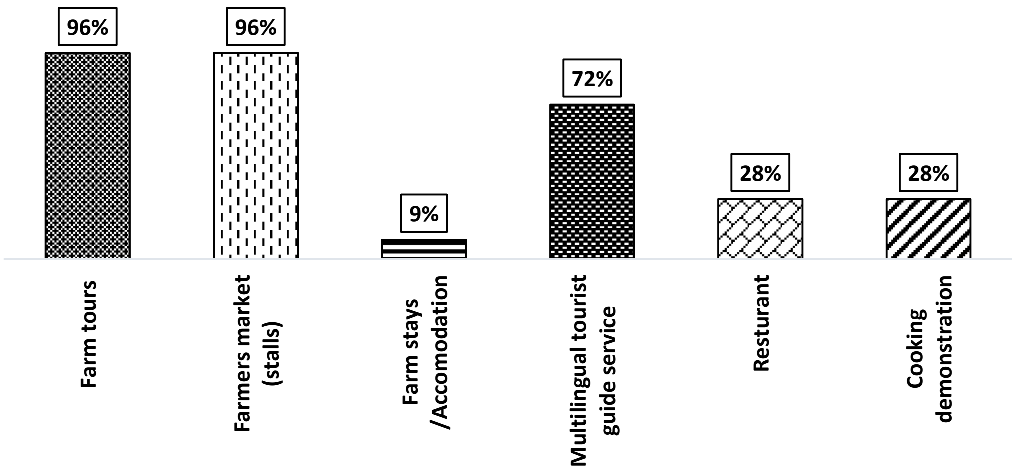
Characteristics	N=42	%
Sri Lanka Tourist Board Registration of Agritourism Businesses	Yes	91
	No	9
Number of tourists visiting the spice garden per month	Less than 20	5
	20-40 tourists	14
	40-80 tourists	14
	80-100 tourists	9
	More than 100 tourists	59
Major countries from which tourists arrive	Canada	12
	China	25
	France	18
	Germany	20
	Russia	6
	India	8
	Italy	5
	UK	5
	Local	4

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

As shown in Table 4.7, the spice gardens attracted visitors from several countries, with varying numbers reported. The most agritourism businesses (91%) are registered with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. A majority of spice gardens (59%) receive more than 100 tourists per month, while smaller shares report fewer visitors. Tourists mainly come from China (25%), Germany (20%), France (18%), and Canada (12%), with smaller proportions from Russia, India, Italy, the UK, and local visitors.

4.1.9 Types of Agritourism activities

Figure 4.2 illustrates the various types of agritourism activities. Farm tours and farmers markets (stalls) are the most popular activities, each engaging 96% of participants. Multilingual tour guide services are also significant, offered by 72% of businesses. Cooking demonstrations attract 28% of interest, while farm stays/accommodation and restaurants are less common, present in 9% and 28% of operations respectively.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 4.2: Types of Agritourism Activities

4.1.10 Potentials and Challenges in Agritourism as a Community-based Industry for Spice Garden Owners in Sri Lanka

Table 4.8: Duration of Involvement and Workforce Participation in Agritourism

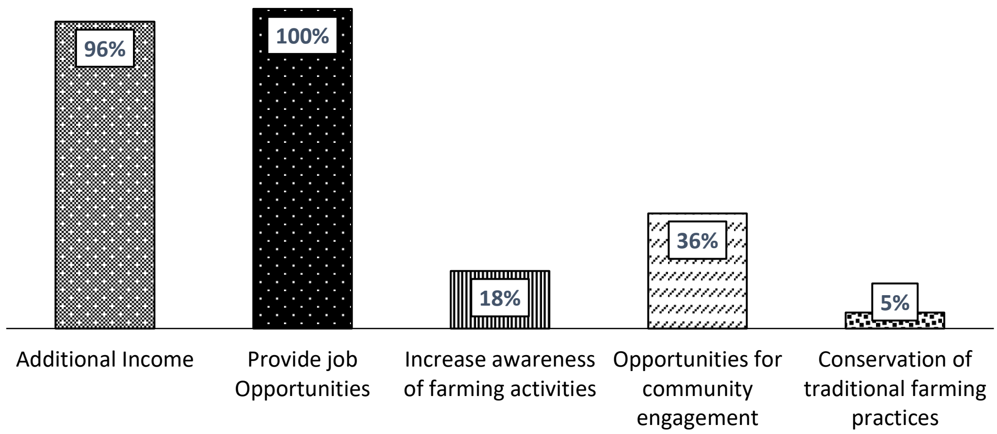
Duration of Involvement and Workforce Participation in Agritourism		N=42 %
Duration of involvement in agritourism activities	Less than 1 year	9
	1-3 years	9
	3-5 years	9
	More than 5 years	73
Availability of skilled employees or family members for agritourism	Yes	50
	No	50

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.8 provides details on the duration of involvement of spice gardens in agritourism and the extent of workforce participation. The majority of participants (73%) have been engaged in agritourism activities for over five years, indicating long-term involvement in the sector. In contrast, only 9% of participants reported shorter durations of engagement, with less than 1 year, 1-3 years, and 3-5 years each accounting for minimal representation. The data reveal an even split in the availability of skilled support for agritourism. Exactly 50% of farms have employees or family members equipped with the necessary skills to assist in agritourism activities, while the remaining 50% lack such support.

4.1.11 Potential Benefits from Agritourism to Farms and Society

Figure 4.3 illustrates the potential benefits that agritourism provides to both farms and the wider society. A significant 96% of respondents identified agritourism as a source of additional income for farmers, while 100% of them emphasized its role in creating employment opportunities. Additionally, 18% of participants noted that agritourism enhances public awareness of farming activities, and 36% acknowledged its contribution to fostering community engagement. A smaller proportion (5%) highlighted its importance in conserving traditional farming practices. These findings underscore agritourism's potential as a multifaceted tool for rural development and agricultural sustainability.

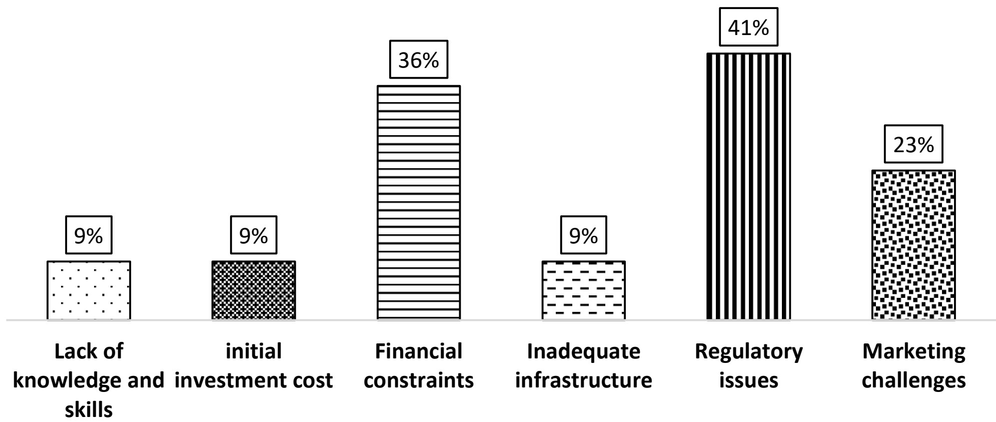


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 4.3: Potential Benefits from Agritourism to Farms and Society

4.1.12 Main Challenges Faced in Operating Spice Gardens

Figure 4.4 shows the main challenges faced in conducting agritourism include regulatory issues, identified by 32% of respondents as a major barrier. Financial constraints are also significant, cited by 29%. Marketing difficulties were noted by 18%, while 7% of respondents mentioned a lack of knowledge and skills, inadequate infrastructure, and initial investment requirements as additional obstacles.



Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 4.4: Main Challenges Faced in Operating Spice Gardens

4.1.13 Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

As illustrated in the Figure 4.5, the main factors contributing to tourist dissatisfaction with agritourism services include expensive product prices, (65%) of respondents, making it the most significant concern. Cleanliness and hygiene issues account for 4%, while restrictions on product transportation represent 22%. Lastly, 9% of respondents highlighted customer service as a source of dissatisfaction.

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 4.5: Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

4.1.14 Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

Table 4.9: Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

	Expected Support	N=42 %
Expected support to develop agritourism business	Financial support	29
	Training and Education	3
	Marketing and promotion	16
	Infrastructure development	10
	Policy support	29
	Networking opportunities	13

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.9 summarizes the types of support expected by respondents to develop their agritourism businesses. Financial and policy assistance are the top priorities, each cited by 29% of respondents. Marketing and promotion are important for 16%, while 13% emphasize the need for networking opportunities. Infrastructure development is expected by 10%, and only 3% highlight the need for training and education.

4.1.15 Spice Gardens and Their Interaction with the Village Community

Table 4.10: Spice Gardens and Their Interaction with the Village Community

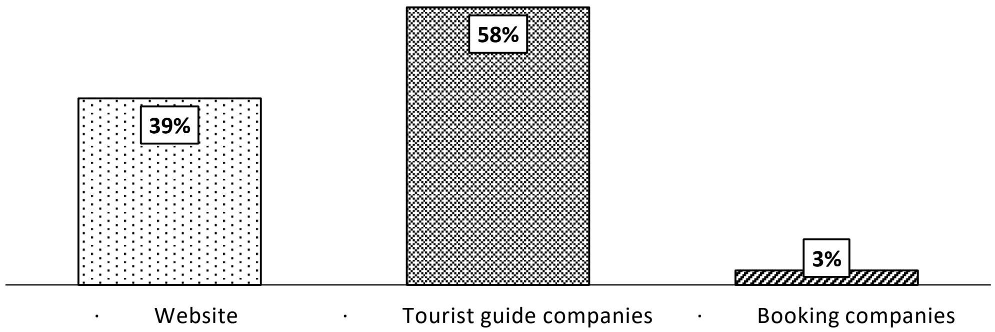
Number of village workers	Less than 10 workers	27%
	10-20 workers	32%
	20-40 workers	32%
	40-80 workers	5%
	More than 100 workers	5%
Methods of purchasing spices/value-added products to the sales outlet of the spice garden	From own farm	31%
	From outside farmers	60%
	From outside suppliers	9%
Methods of contacting village spice farmers when buying spices	Regular suppliers	57%
	Farmers bring their products to the institute	29%
	From farm organization	0%
	Individual farmers with contact	14%
Number of village spice farmers supply spices to the spice garden	Less than 5	36%
	5-10 suppliers	50%
	More than 10	14%
Expected support from stakeholders to enhance the business	Financial support	13%
	Training and Education	27%
	Marketing and promotion	40%
	Infrastructure development	10%
	Policy support	10%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Table 4.10 presents the extent and nature of interactions between spice gardens and the surrounding village communities. Spice gardens employ a significant number of village workers, mostly between 10–40 workers (64%), showing their role in local employment. For sourcing products, the majority purchase from outside farmers (60%), while 31% use their own farm produce. Owners typically maintain contact with villagers through regular suppliers (57%) and by allowing farmers to bring products directly to the institute (29%), with some engaging individual farmers (14%). About half of the gardens rely on 5–10 regular village spice suppliers (50%), reinforcing steady farmer–business links. To strengthen these relationships, owners expect greater marketing and promotion support (40%), alongside training, financial assistance, and infrastructure development. Spice garden owners engage villagers mainly as workers and suppliers, using regular supplier networks and direct contact, which aligns with a community-based tourism approach by creating employment, supporting smallholder farmers, and integrating local production into tourism activities.

4.1.16 Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business

As shown in Figure 4.6, tourist awareness of agritourism businesses primarily comes from tourist guide companies, cited by 58% of respondents. Websites are another important source, mentioned by 39%, while booking companies contribute the least, with only 3%. This indicates that guiding companies play a key role in promoting agritourism.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 4.6: Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business

4.1.17 Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

Table 4.11: Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

Characteristics	Categories	% of Farmers
Reasons for not engaging in agritourism	Lack of knowledge/awareness	8
	No access to tourists	45
	Lack of capital/investment	35
	No interest in tourism activities	2
	Other	10
Perceptions about agritourism	Good opportunity to increase income	61
	Beneficial for community development	22
	Risky / uncertain business	14
	Not suitable for their farming system	3
Preferences for future participation	Willing to engage if training/support is provided	64
	Prefer to collaborate with existing agritourism businesses	21
	Interested only in supplying farm products	15
	Not interested at all	0

Table 4.11 summarizes the perceptions and preferences of farmers who are not currently engaged in tourism activities. Multiple responses given by the farmers, most farmers not engaged in agritourism reported lack of access to tourists (45%) and limited capital (35%) as the main barriers, while fewer cited lack of knowledge (8%) or other reasons (10%). A majority viewed agritourism positively, seeing it as a good opportunity to increase income (61%) and for community development (22%)**,** though some considered it risky (14%) or unsuitable (3%). Looking ahead, most farmers showed willingness to participate, with 64% open to engagement if training/support

is provided, 21% preferring collaboration with existing businesses, and 15% interested in only supplying products, while none expressed total disinterest.

Spice gardens already provide a foundation for community-based tourism through employment and supply linkages. Farmers not yet engaged are largely willing but face access and financial barriers. By strategically connecting these two groups, agritourism can evolve into a sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven model, ensuring benefits flow across the rural economy.

CHAPTER FIVE

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Agritourist Sub-sectors in the Farming Community: Challenges and Opportunities (Tourism with Vegetables)

Introduction

Five sub-sectors of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. Each sub-category is analyzed in terms of demographic, and economic characteristics, farm features, infrastructure facilities, geographical features, awareness levels, challenges, and potential. In this chapter discusses tourism with vegetable farming. Pairwise comparison charts are used to prioritize the challenges and opportunities for promoting agritourism among the farming community.

5.1 Tourism with Vegetable Farming

All 46 farmers engaged in tourism and 20 farmers not engaged in agritourism were selected for the study. Hiriwadunna and Egodawewa are prominent agritourism villages located near Sigiriya in Sri Lanka, where farming is integrated with tourism to support local livelihoods. Hiriwadunna, situated in the Anuradhapura District under the Palugaswewa Divisional Secretariat, primarily depends on agriculture, with vegetables as the main crop, along with fruits, paddy, and coconut. Similarly, Egodawewa, located in the Matale District, primarily focuses on vegetable cultivation, along with fruits, spices, and paddy, while actively engaging in agri-tourism. Both villages attract tourists due to their proximity to popular tourist attractions such as Sigiriya, Rock Fortress, Minneriya Wewa, and Dambulu Viharaya.

The agritourism experiences offered in both villages are rich and diverse. In Hiriwadunna, visitors can enjoy activities such as bullock cart rides, catamaran boat rides on Hiriwadunna Lake, village tours through paddy fields, and traditional meals prepared with freshly harvested vegetables. They can also participate in cultural demonstrations, including roof-making with coconut leaves and the use of traditional tools like ‘kulla’ and ‘mirisgala’ to separate rice grains. In Egodawewa, tourists engage in farm tours, U-pick operations, cooking demonstrations, traditional agricultural practices, and cultural performances, such as the ‘raban gaseema’.

Despite the success of agritourism, both villages face several challenges that hinder further growth. Wildlife threats, particularly from elephants and monkeys, pose significant risks to crops and property. Irrigation support remains a critical concern, as farmers in both villages require additional resources to ensure a reliable water supply for cultivation. There is also a pressing need for training and awareness programmes to improve agritourism offerings and attract a wider range of visitors. Additionally, the maintenance of traditional village houses, known as ‘wadiya’ or ‘gami gedara,’ presents financial difficulties, with many villagers lacking the funds needed to purchase materials for essential roof repairs. To further develop their agritourism sectors, the villagers have identified specific areas where support is needed. Both communities seek assistance with improving irrigation facilities to ensure a reliable water supply for farming activities. They have also expressed interest in acquiring beekeeping boxes, aiming to diversify income sources and enhance the agritourism experience. Additionally, addressing land scarcity is a key priority, as both villages are exploring solutions to allow for the expansion of farming operations and agritourism services.

5.1.1 Main Demographic Characteristics of the Vegetable Farmers Engaged in Agritourism

The main demographic characteristics of vegetable farmers were studied. Findings are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Main Demographic Characteristics of the Vegetable Farmers Engaged in Agritourism

Characteristics	N= 46	%
Age distribution	Under 25	5
	25-34	10
	35-44	10
	45-54	35
	55-64	40
	65 and above	0
Gender	Female	35
	Male	65
Education Level	Primary (grade 1-5)	5
	Secondary (grade 6-10)	35
	Up to G.C.E. (O/L)	35
	Passed G.C.E.(O/L)	5
	Up to G.C.E. (A/L)	10
	Passed G.C.E (A/L)	10
	Degree	0
	Diploma	0
	Post Graduate	0
	No schooling	0
Agritourism as a primary occupation	Yes	45
	No	55
Types of agritourism businesses	family-owned	95
	cooperative businesses	5

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

The table 5.1 presents the main demographic characteristics of vegetable farmers engaged in agritourism in the study area. The data indicates that the majority of farmers are between 55 and 64 years old, comprising 75% of the farming population (35% are 45-54, and 40% aged 55-64). Younger farmers are less represented, with only

5% under the age of 25, and 10% each in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups. Notably, there are no farmers aged 65 or older. This distribution highlights that vegetable farming and agritourism in the area are primarily undertaken by middle-aged and older people.

This chart illustrates the gender distribution of farmers in the study area. The majority are male, comprising 65% of the farming population, while females make up the remaining 35%.

The table indicates that the majority of farmers have completed some level of secondary education. Specifically, 35% have studied up to the secondary level and another 35% have reached the G.C.E. (O/L). However, only 5% have passed the G.C.E. (O/L), while 10% have studied up to G.C.E. (A/L) and another 10% have passed it. A small proportion (5%) has completed only primary education. Notably, none of the farmers hold a degree, diploma, or postgraduate qualification.

The data show that 55% of farmers do not consider agritourism as their primary occupation, while 45% are engaged in it as their main source of income. Regarding the types of agritourism businesses in the study area, the majority 95% are family-owned, with only 5% operating as cooperatives. This indicates that agritourism in the region is predominantly managed by individual families.

5.1.2 Economic Characteristics of the Vegetable Farmers Engaged in Agritourism

Table 5.2: Economic Characteristics of the Vegetable Farmers Engaged in Agritourism

Characteristics N=46		%
Monthly income from agritourism	Less than Rs.25,000	25
	Rs.25,000- Rs.50,000	65
	Rs.50,001- Rs.100,000	5
	Rs.100,001- Rs.200,000	0
	More than Rs.200,000	5

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

The table 5.2 highlights economic characteristics of the vegetable farmers engaged in agritourism. The data indicates that 65% of farmers earn between Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000 per month from agritourism, while 25% earn less than Rs. 25,000. Only 5% report earnings between Rs. 50,001 and Rs. 100,000, and another 5% earn more than Rs. 200,000. No farmers earn between Rs. 100,001 and Rs. 200,000. Overall, most farmers generate moderate income from agritourism, with only a few earning higher amounts.

5.1.3 Farm Characteristics of the Vegetable Farms

Table 5.3: Key Farm Characteristics of the Vegetable Farms N=46

Characteristic	Key Findings N=46	(%)
Ownership	Own land	77%
	Non-owned (rented/share cropped)	23%
Land acquisition	Purchased	46%
	Inherited	32%
Farm size	Small to medium holdings (1–2 acres)	27%
	(5–10 acres)	23%
	(>10 acres)	23%
Farming practices	Integrated	52%
	Organic	48%
Main crops	Spice crops	50%
	Plantation	14%
	Medicinal	14%
	Fruits	9%
	Others	11%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 5.3 presents farm characteristics of the vegetable farms. The data reveals that most farms (77%) are owned, with land mainly purchased (46%) or inherited (32%). Farm sizes are generally small to medium, with notable shares in 1–2 acres (27%), 5–10 acres (23%), and over 10 acres (23%). Farming practices are almost evenly split between integrated (52%) and organic (48%). Spice crops dominate production (50%), followed by plantation and medicinal crops (14% each), fruits (9%), and others (11%).

5.1.4 Infrastructure Facilities of the Vegetable Farms

The table 5.4 shows the infrastructure facilities of the vegetable farms. The survey revealed that all vegetable farms had access to water, while 85% were connected to electricity, mainly through the national grid. Basic infrastructure such as sanitation (10%), parking (5%), and transport facilities (20%) was limited, and no farms reported accommodation, greenhouses, farm equipment, or waste management systems. Water sources were primarily rivers/streams (39%) and deep wells (22%), with some relying on municipal supply (17%), shallow wells (13%), and agro wells (9%). Residential houses (49%) and Mati Gedara/Wadiya structures (46%) were the main buildings on farms, while guest houses and stalls were rare (3% each). Proximity to major tourist attractions, especially Sigiriya Rock Fortress (visited by 20 farms), highlights the strong agritourism potential of these sites.

Table 5.4: Infrastructure Facilities of the Vegetable Farms

Characteristic	Key Findings N=46	(%)
Basic facilities	Water supply	100%
	Electricity	85%
	Buildings	40%
	Transport options	20%
	Sanitation	10%
	Parking	5%
	Accommodation,	None
	Greenhouses,	
	Farm equipment, or	
	Waste management	
Water sources	River/stream	39%
	Deep well	22%
	Municipal supply	17%
	Shallow well	13%
	Agro well	9%
Electricity sources	National grid	83%
	Solar power	17%
	Wind power	None
	Generators	
Buildings on land	Residential	49%
	Mati Gedara/Wadiya	46%
	Guest houses	3%
	Stalls	3%
	Restaurants,	None
	Warehouses	
	Workshops	
Nearby tourist sites	Sigiriya Rock Fortress	20 farms
	Pidurangala	9 farms
	Dambulu Viharaya	3 farms
	Habarana Safari	3 farms
	Others (Minneriya, Hurulu Eco Park, Hiriwadunna, Kaudulu)	≤2 farms

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

5.1.5 Geographic Variables: Distance and Travel Time from the Vegetable Garden to Major Cities

The table 5.5 highlights geographic accessibility of vegetable farms. The majority of vegetable farms in the survey are situated very close to major cities, with 70% located within 5 km of an urban center. Only a small proportion of farms (5%) are situated more than 20 km away. This proximity allows farmers quick and easy access to urban markets, facilitating the sale of fresh produce and reducing transportation costs. Correspondingly, travel time reflects this accessibility, with 65% of farms reachable in less than 15 minutes and 95% accessible within 30 minutes. Very few farms (5%) require 30–60 minutes to reach a major city, and none are more than an hour away.

This high accessibility is advantageous not only for commercial vegetable production but also for promoting agritourism, as tourists can easily reach these farms for visits, farm stays, and other agro-based activities. It highlights the potential for integrating urban demand with rural production, improving both livelihood opportunities for farmers and the supply of fresh, local produce.

Table 5.5: Geographic Accessibility of Vegetable Farms N=46

Characteristic	Key Findings (%)	
Distance to nearest major city	5 km	70%
	5–10 km	5%
	10–20 km	20%
	>20 km	5%
Travel time to major city	15 min	65%
	15–30 min	30%
	30–60 min	5%
	>60 min	None

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

5.1.6 Awareness of Agritourism among Spice Garden Owners

Table 5.6: Awareness of Agritourism Among Vegetable Garden Owners

Characteristics N=46		%
Modes of starting agritourism business	Training programmes	0
	Family business	41
	Media (TV/radio/newspaper)	5
	Popular in village	45
	Via tourism business	9
Awareness of any programme support for agritourism	Yes	20
	No	80
Owners' awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development	Yes	5
	No	35
	Not sure	60

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

The table 5.6 presents awareness of agritourism among vegetable garden owners. The data shows that 45% of farmers became aware of agritourism through its popularity within their village, making it the most common source of introduction. Another 41% gained awareness through family involvement in agritourism. Meanwhile, 9% learned about agritourism via existing tourism businesses, and only 5% through media outlets such as TV, radio, or newspapers. Notably, no farmers reported receiving awareness or knowledge from training programmes as a starting point for their agritourism business.

The data show that 80% of farmers are unaware of any support programmes for agritourism, while only 20% have awareness of such initiatives.

The table presents data on awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development. Only 5% of respondents are aware of such support, while 35% are unaware, and 60% remain uncertain. This indicates a widespread lack of awareness regarding available support for agritourism development among the farming community.

5.1.7 Number of Visitors and Countries

Table 5.7: Number of Visitors and Countries

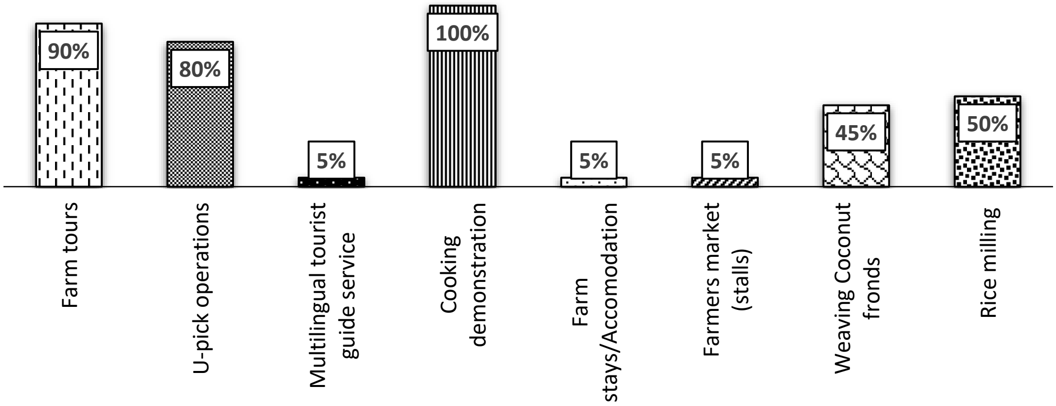
Characteristics	N = 46	%
Sri Lanka Tourist Board registration of agritourism businesses	Yes	5
	No	95
Number of tourists visiting the agritourism sites per month	Less than 20 tourists	5
	20-40 tourists	25
	40-80 tourists	15
	80-100 tourists	20
	More than 100 tourists	35
Arrival of tourists from major countries	Japan	6
	Poland	2
	China	9
	France	20
	German	15
	India	12
	Australia	6
	Russia	3
	Italy	14
	Spain	3
	Arabic Countries	3
	UK	3
	USA	6
	Lebanan	2

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 5.7 reveals the number of visitors and countries. The data shows that only 5% of agritourism businesses are registered with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board, while the vast majority (95%) are not.

The table indicates that the number of tourists visiting agritourism sites each month varies among farmers. Only 5% reported receiving fewer than 20 tourists per month. Meanwhile, 25% host between 20 to 40 tourists, 15% receive 40 to 80 tourist visitors, and 20% attract 80 to 100 tourists monthly, and the largest group, accounting for 35%, welcomes more than 100 tourists per month. The table shows the major countries tourists visiting the agritourism sites. Most visitors are from France, Germany, and Italy. China and India also contribute a significant number of tourists. Additionally, visitors arrive from Japan, Australia, the USA, the UK, Spain, and some Middle Eastern countries. This demonstrates that the agritourism sites attract people from across the globe.

5.1.8 Types of Agritourism Activities

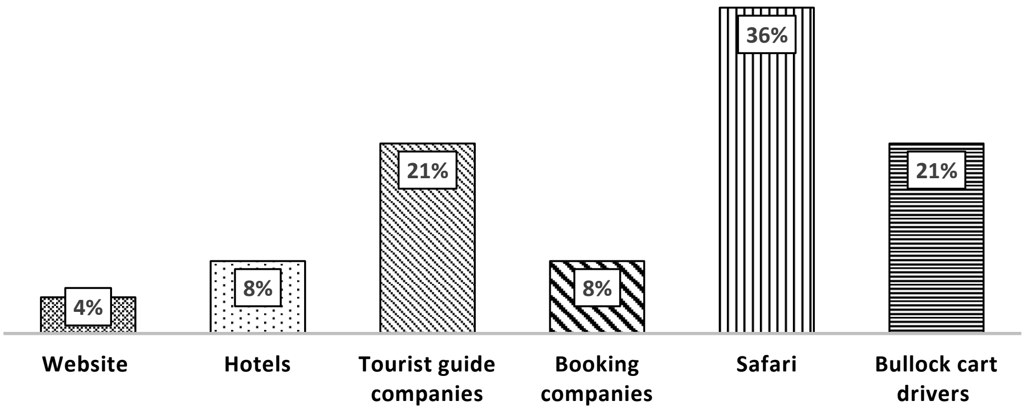


Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 5.1: Types of Agritourism Activities

The figure 5.1 illustrates the various types of agritourism activities offered by farmers. Cooking demonstrations are the most common, featured by 100% of farms, followed by farm tours at 90% and U-pick operations at 80%. Rice milling activities account for 50%, while weaving coconut fronds represents 45%. Less common activities include farm stays, farmers markets, and multilingual tour guides, each offered by 5% of farms.

5.1.9 Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 5.2: Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business

The figure shows the various ways tourists become aware of agritourism businesses. Safari tours are the most significant source, accounting for 36% of tourist awareness. Tourist guide companies and bullock cart drivers each contribute 21%. Booking companies and hotels play smaller roles, each accounting for 8%, while websites contribute only 4% contribute awareness.

5.1.10 Potentials and Challenges of Agritourism as a Community-based Industry in Sri Lanka

Table 5.8: Experience and Skilled Labour

	N=46	%
Duration of involvement in agritourism activities	Less than 1 year	5 %
	1-3 years	35%
	3-5 years	0%
	More than 5 years	60%
Availability of employees or family members with skills to support agritourism	Yes	65%
	No	35%

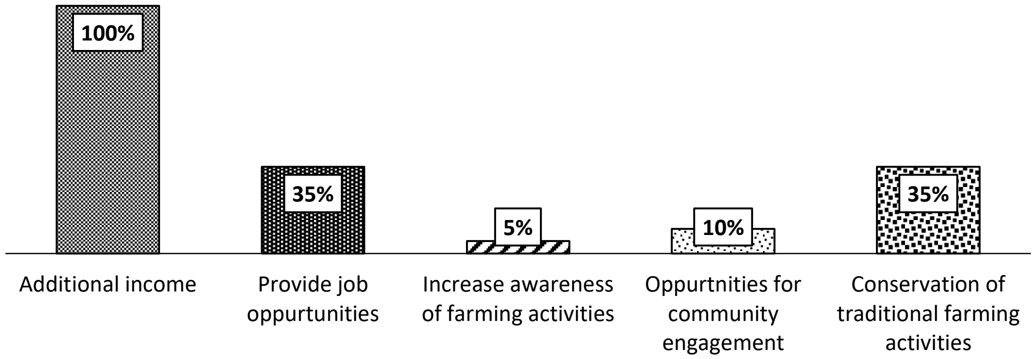
Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 5.8 presents data on the duration of farmers' involvement in agritourism activities, based on a survey of 20 farmers. It reveals that 5% have been involved in agritourism activities for less than one year, while 35% have engaged for one to three years. A significant majority (60%) have participated for more than five years. This indicates that most farmers have substantial experience in this field, with many engaged for over five years.

The table presents information on the availability of skilled employees or family members to support agritourism. It shows that 65% of respondents have such skilled individuals available, while 35% do not. This indicates a significant level of skilled support within the agritourism community.

5.1.11 Potential Benefits to Agritourism Owners

The figure illustrates the perceived benefits of agritourism for both farms and society. Almost all the respondents (100%) identify additional income as the primary benefit of engaging in agritourism. Job opportunities and the conservation of traditional farming practices are each recognized by 35% of respondents. A smaller proportion (10%) view agritourism as fostering community engagement, while only 5% believe it increases awareness of farming activities. Overall, the pie chart highlights those financial gains and the preservation of traditional practices are the most valued outcomes of agritourism.

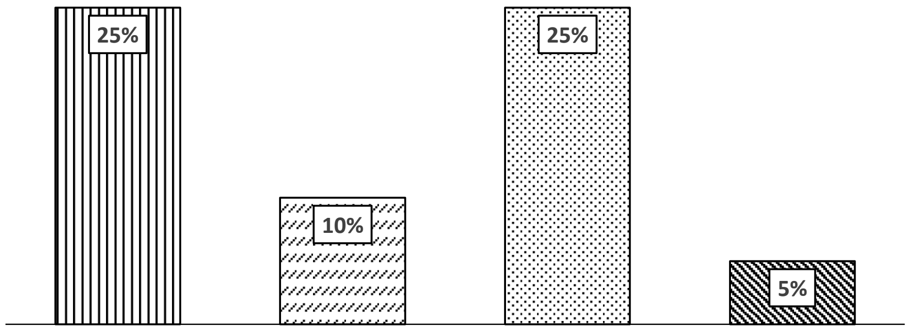


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 5.3: Potential Benefits to Agritourism Owners

5.1.12 Skills of Family Members that Contribute to Development of Agritourism

The bar chart shows the skills of family members that support agritourism. Language proficiency and cooking demonstrations each account for 25%, while management skills represent 10%, and financial support accounts for 5%. The pie chart highlights the variety of skills available within families that contribute to agritourism activities.

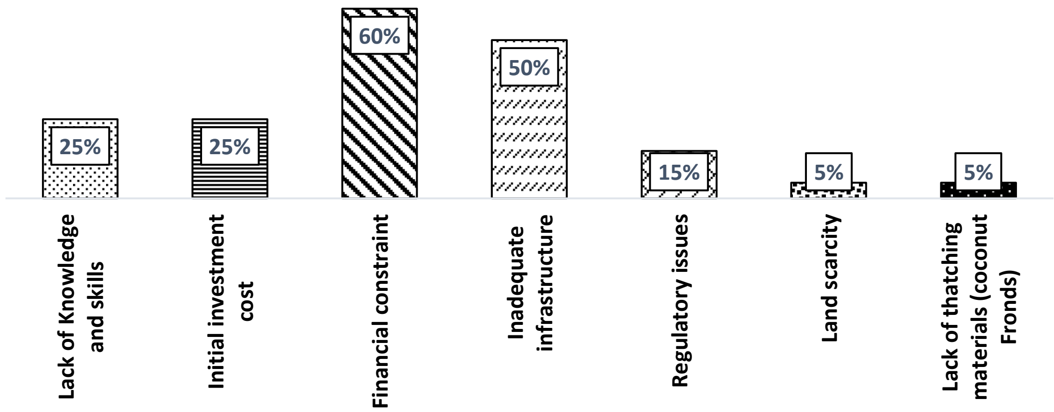


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 5.4: Skills of Family Members that Contribute to Development of Agritourism

5.1.13 Main Challenges in Promoting Agritourism

The bar chart outlines the main challenges faced by farmers in promoting agritourism. Financial constraints are the most significant, cited by 60% of farmers. Inadequate infrastructure is also a major concern, affecting 50%. Both lack of knowledge and skills and initial investment costs are identified by 25% of farmers. Regulatory issues are noted by 15%, while scarcity of thatching materials (coconut fronds) and land shortages challenges for 5% each. Overall, financial and infrastructural barriers emerge as the most prominent obstacles to agritourism development

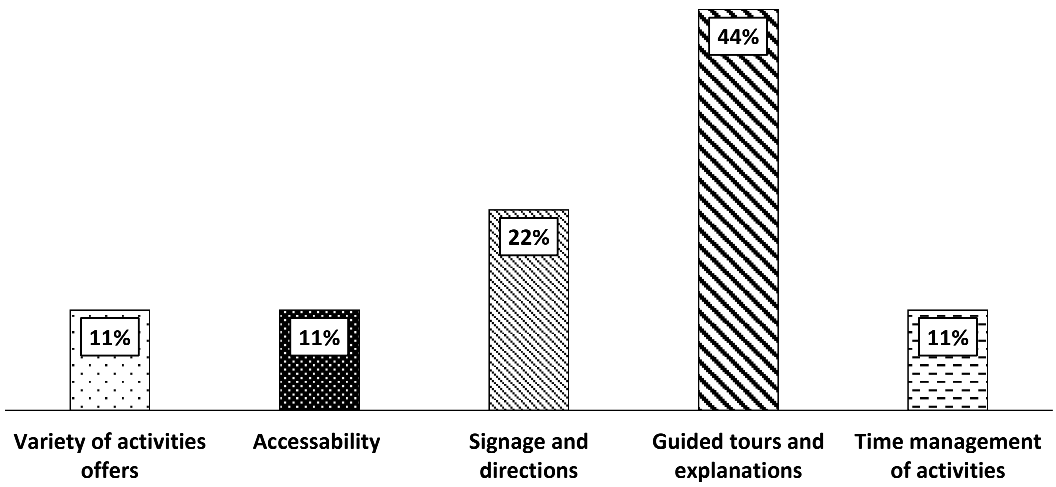


Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 5.5: Main Challenges in Agritourism

5.1.14 Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

The bar chart outlines the main sources of tourist dissatisfaction with agritourism services. The primary concern is guided tours and explanations, accounting for 44% of the dissatisfaction. Signage and directions contribute 22%, while both the variety of activities offered and accessibility each represent 11%. Time management of activities also accounts for 11%. This highlights that improving guided tours and explanations is the key area for enhancing tourist satisfaction.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 5.6: Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

5.1.15 Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

Table 5.9: Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

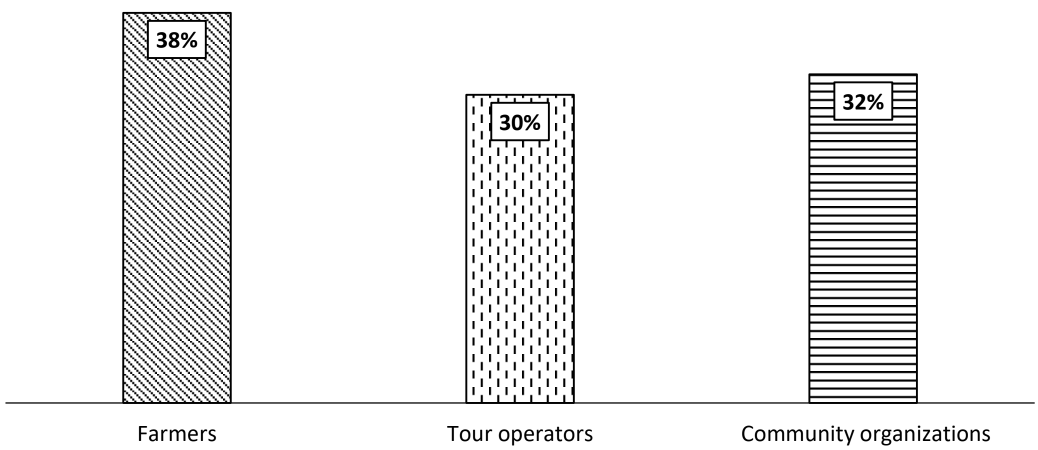
Expected support	N=46	%
Expected support from stake holders to enhance the business	Financial support	30
	Training and education	16
	Marketing and promotion	19
	Infrastructure development	24
	Policy support	11

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 5.9 shows the expected support to develop agritourism business. To enhance agritourism, several types of support are needed. The greatest need is financial support, cited by 30% of respondents. Other important areas include infrastructure development (24%), marketing and promotion (19%), and training and education (16%). Policy support is the least requested, at 11%. This indicates that immediate needs such as funding and infrastructure take priority over regulatory changes.

5.1.16 Vegetable Farmers Engaged in Agritourism and heir Interaction with the Village Community

The bar chart shows the key stakeholders involved in the agritourism business. Farmers constitute 38% of the stakeholders, while tour operators account for 30%. Community organizations, including groups like Catamaran Boat Riders and Bullock Cart Riders, represent 32%. This highlights the diverse range of groups in actively supporting and contributing to agritourism.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 5.7: Key Stakeholders Involved in Agritourism Business

5.1.17 Vegetable Farm Gardens and Their Interaction with the Village Community

Table 5.10: Vegetable Farm Gardens and Their Interaction with the Village Community

Number of village workers	Less than 10 workers	95%
	10-20 workers	0%
	20-40 workers	0%
	40-80 workers	5%
	More than 100 workers	0%
Methods of Purchasing vegetables/Value-Added Products	From own farm	44%
	From outside farmers	51%
	From outside suppliers	0%
Methods of Contacting village farmers when buying vegetables from outside	Regular suppliers	5%
	Farmers bring their products to institute	0%
	From farm organization	0%
	Individual farmers with contact	90%
Number of suppliers when buying vegetables from outside farmers	Less than 5	95%
	5-10 suppliers	0%
	More than 10	0%
Expected support to develop agritourism business	Financial support	38%
	Training and education	8%
	Marketing and promotion	3%
	Infrastructure development	38%
	Policy support	5%
	Networking opportunities	8%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 5.10 indicates the number of workers employed in agritourism businesses, based on a survey of 20 farmers. It shows that 95% of farmer's employ fewer than 10 workers, indicating that most operate on a small scale. Only 5% of the farmers have between 40 to 80 workers.

The table presents information on the methods used to purchase vegetables or value-added products, based on a survey. It shows that 56% of purchases are made from outside farmers, while 44% are sourced from the farmers' own farms. Notably, there are no purchases made from outside suppliers.

The table reveals information on how respondents contact farmers when purchasing vegetables from outside based on a survey of 20 respondents. It shows that 90% of contacts are made directly with individual farmers with whom buyers have established communication. Only 5% use regular suppliers, while no contacts are made through farmers bringing their products to the institute or through farm organizations.

The table provides information on the number of suppliers used by respondents when purchasing vegetables from outside farmers, based on a survey of 20 respondents. It shows that 95% of respondents rely on l fewer than 5 suppliers. The farmers highlighted several areas of expected support to develop their agritourism businesses. Financial support and infrastructure development were the most commonly mentioned, each mentioned by 38% of farmers. Training and education and networking opportunities were mentioned by 8%. Marketing and promotion accounted for 3%, while policy support was noted by 5%.

5.1.18 Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

Table 5.11: Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences N=20

Characteristics	Categories	% Of Farmers
Reasons for not engaging in agritourism	Lack of knowledge/awareness	11
	No access to tourists	30
	Lack of capital/investment	45
	No interest in tourism activities	3
	Other (specify)	11
Perceptions about agritourism	Good opportunity to increase income	68
	Beneficial for community development	12
	Risky / uncertain business	17
	Not suitable for their farming system	3
Preferences for future participation	Willing to engage if training/support is provided	54
	Prefer to collaborate with existing agritourism businesses	31
	Interested only in supplying farm products	15
	Not interested at all	0

The Table 5.11 reveals the farmers not engaged in tourism: perceptions and preferences. Multiple responses given by the farmers. Most farmers not currently engaged in agritourism cited lack of capital/investment (45%) and no access to tourists (30%) as the main barriers, with smaller shares reporting lack of knowledge (11%), other reasons (11%), or no interest (3%). Despite these challenges, 68% perceived agritourism as a good opportunity to increase income, 12% viewed it as beneficial for community development, and 17% considered it risky or uncertain. Looking ahead, over half of the farmers (54%) expressed willingness to engage if training or support is provided, 31% preferred collaborating with existing agritourism businesses, and 15% were interested only in supplying farm products, while none were entirely disinterested.

CHAPTER SIX

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Agritourism Sub-sectors in the Farming Community: Challenges and Opportunities (Tourism with Paddy)

Introduction

Five sub-sectors of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. Each sub-category is analyzed based on demographic, and economic characteristics, farm features, infrastructure facilities, geographical features, awareness levels, challenges, and potential. For the farmers in the area. This chapter discusses about the tourism associated with paddy farming.

6.1 Tourism with Paddy Farming

There are 3 districts selected for this sector: Kandy, Matale, and Polonnaruwa districts. Sample size is 43 farmers engaged in paddy with tourism activities and 41 farmers not engaged in tourism activities. These rural villages, farming, particularly paddy cultivation, is the main livelihood of the villagers. In Meemure, the village is relatively isolated, with a poor road relatively, and located about two hours away from major towns such as Ududumbara and Hunnasgiriya. Infrastructure remains basic, with spring water, electricity supplied by the national grid, and accommodation facilities. However, approximately 35% of farmers still lack access to electricity. Meemure is home to popular tourist attractions such as Lake Gala and Rawana Guhawa, attracting both local and international visitors. In these areas tourists can experience authentic rural life through activities like early morning walks, visits to village homes, and learning about local traditions. Despite its potential for agritourism development, farmers face challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, poor transportation, limited marketing and promotional support, financial constraints, and crop damage caused by wild animals such as monkeys, oxen and wild pigs.

To address these challenges, farmers have expressed the need for government support in the following areas:

- Development of tourist attraction activities:
  - Aerial rope adventures
  - Target shooting with air rifles
  - Jungle trekking
- Promotion of agricultural practices such as cultivation of herbal and fruit plants.
- Encouragement of traditional paddy and vegetable farming as interactive tourist experiences.

- Implementation of solutions for wild animal hazards, particularly crop damage caused by monkeys.
  Improvements of basic infrastructure, with a focus on electricity and transportation facilities.

6.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Paddy Farmers Engaged in Tourism

Table 6.1: Key Demographic Characteristics of Paddy Farmers Engaged in Tourism

Characteristics		(N= Total)	%
Age distribution of the farmers in the study area	Under 25	1	4
	25-34	6	23
	35-44	9	35
	45-54	6	23
	55-64	3	12
	65 and above	1	4
Gender	Female	1	4
	Male	25	96
Education level of the farmers in the sample area	Primary (up to grade 1-5)	0	0
	Secondary (up to grade 6-10)	2	8
	Up to G.C.E (O/L)	11	42
	Passed G.C.E.(O/L)	4	15
	Up to G.C.E. (A/L)	3	12
	Passed G.C.E. (A/L)	3	12
	Diploma	0	0
	Degree	2	8
	Post Graduate	1	4
	No schooling	0	0
Agritourism as the primary occupation	Yes	11	42
	No	15	58

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 6.1 presents the age distribution of farmers in the study area. The largest proportion, 35%, falls within the 35 to 44 age group, followed by 23% each in the 25 to 34 and 45 to 54 age groups. Smaller segments include 12% of farmers aged 55 to 64, and only 4% aged 65 and above. Interestingly, just 4% of farmers are under 25, indicating limited involvement of younger individuals in farming in this area.

The gender distribution in the study area shows that 96**%** of participants are male, while only 4% are female. The education levels among farmers shows a varied distribution. A significant portion (42%) has studied up to the G.C.E. O/L level, while 15% have passed the G.C.E. O/L exams. studied 12% have studied up to the G.C.E. A/L, with another 12% having passed the G.C.E. A/L exams. A smaller number have completed a degree (8%) or postgraduate education (4%), while there are no farmers with only primary education, diplomas, or no formal education. Overall, the data suggests a moderate level of education among farmers, with most having completed secondary-level schooling.

In the study area, 42% of farmers consider agritourism as their primary occupation, while 58% do not. This indicates that although a notable portion of farmers are involved in agritourism, the majority do not rely on it as their main source of income.

6.1.2 Economic Characteristics of Famers Engaged in Tourism with Paddy Farming

Table 6.2: Economic Characteristics of Famers Engaged in Tourism with Paddy Farming

Characteristics		(N= Total)	%
Monthly income from agritourism	Less than Rs. 25,000	10	39
	Rs. 25,000- Rs. 50,000	6	23
	Rs. 50,001- Rs. 100,000	8	31
	Rs. 100,001- Rs. 200,000	2	8
	More than Rs. 200,000	0	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 6.2 illustrates the economic characteristics of farmers engaged in tourism with paddy farming. Monthly income from agritourism in the study area varies among farmers. Thirty nine percent of farmers earn less than Rs. 25,000 per month, 23% earn between Rs. 25,000 and Rs.50,000, and 31% earn between Rs. 50,001 and Rs. 100,000. A smaller group, 8%, earn between Rs. 100,001 and Rs. 200,000, while no farmers reported earning more than Rs. 200,000.

6.1.3 Farm Characteristics

Table 6.3: Farm Characteristics

Characteristics	Key Findings N=43	%
Land Ownership	Owned land (mostly inherited – 92%)	96%
	Rented	4%
Land Size	1–2 acres	58%
	Most common <1 acre	27%
	2–10 acres	16%
Farming Practices	Crop farming (dominant)	67%
	Organic farming	33%
Main Crops Grown	Paddy	40%
	Spice crops	30%
	Vegetables	19%
	Fruits	7%
	Plantation crops	4%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 6.3 shows the farm characteristics. According to the survey data, a significant majority of farmers (96%) own the land they, cultivate while 4% do not. Among the landowners, 92% inherited their land, 4% purchased it, and none leased their land.

The table shows the nature of non-owned land usage among farmers in the study area. It reveals that 4% of farmers rent land, while none engage in share cropping or use community-owned land, with both categories reporting 0%.

The extent of land ownership among farmers in the study area varies. Most farmers (58%) own between 1-2 acres, while 27% own less than 1 acre. Smaller proportions own between 2 - 5 acres (8%) and between 5 -10 acres (8%), with no farmers owning more than 10 acres. This suggests that the majority of farmers hold relatively small land plots.

In the study area, 33% of farmers practice organic farming, while 67% are involved in crop farming. No farmers reported using conventional or integrated farming methods. This indicates that while most farmers focus on crop farming, a smaller group has adopted organic practices.

The primary crops grown by farmers in the study area include grains (paddy), cultivated by 40%, and followed by spice crops at 30%. Vegetables are grown by 19% of farmers, while fruits account for 7%. Plantation crops are cultivated by 4% of farmers, and medicinal plants are not cultivated, as indicated by the 0% in this category.

6.1.4 Farm Infrastructure and Facilities

As shown in table 6.4, the infrastructure facilities available on farms in the study area include water supply (100%), accommodation (88%), and sanitation facilities (69%). Electricity is available on 65% of farms, while existing buildings are present on 54%. Parking space is available on 31% of farms, and transport services are offered on 23%. Notably, no farms with greenhouses, nurseries, farm equipment, or waste management systems

The table explains the sources of water available to farms in the study area. The majority of farms (92%) rely on spring water as their primary source. A small percentage, (8%) use river or stream water. Notably, no farms use deep wells, shallow wells, rain fed water tanks, municipal water supply, or agro wells.

The table shows the availability of electricity among farmers in the study area. It reveals that 62% of farmers have access to electricity from the national grid. A small percentage, 4%, rely on generators for power, while 35% have no access to electricity. Notably, solar or wind power are not used.

Table 6.4: Farm Infrastructure and Facilities

Characteristics	Key Findings N=43	%
Infrastructure Facilities	Water supply	100%
	Accommodation	88%
	Sanitation	69%
	Electricity	65%
	Existing buildings	54%
	Parking	31%
	Transport options	23%
	Greenhouses	None
	Nurseries	
	Farm equipment	
	Waste management absent	
Water Sources	Spring water dominant	92%
	Rivers/Streams	8%
	Other sources (deep/shallow wells, rain-fed tanks, municipal water, agro well)	None
Electricity Availability	National grid	62%
	Generator	4%
	No electricity	35%
	Solar and wind power	None
Existing Buildings	Residential buildings	47%
	Guest houses/cottages	47%
	Warehouse/storage	2%
	Camping tents	4%
	Workshops	None
	Restaurants	
	Stalls	
	Spa	
	Traditional buildings	

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

6.1.5 Geographic Variables - Distance and Travel Time from the Agritourism Location to Major Cities

Table 6.5: Geographic Variables – Distance and Travel Time to Major Cities

Characteristics	Key Findings N=43	%
Distance from farm to nearest city	More than 20 km	100%
Travel time to major city	More than 60 minutes	100%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

6.1.6 Awareness of Agritourism among Paddy Farmers who Own the Business

The table 6.6 presents the awareness of agritourism among paddy farmers own the business**.** The data indicates that the most common way to start an agritourism business in the area is through popularity, chosen by 65% of respondents. A smaller percentage (23%) began their agritourism venture as a family business, while 8% were influenced by media such as TV, radio, or newspapers. Only 4% participated in training programmes, and none of the respondents started their agritourism business through an established tourism enterprise.

Table 6.6: Awareness of Agritourism among Paddy Farmers Own the Business

Characteristics		%
Modes of starting an agritourism business	Training programmes	4
	Family business	23
	Media (TV/radio/newspaper)	8
	Popular in village	65
	Via tourism business	0
Awareness of programme support for agritourism	Yes	11
	No	89
Awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development	Yes	8
	No	85
	Not sure	8

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

According to the survey data, only 11% of respondents are aware of any programme support for agritourism, while the vast majorities (89%) are unaware of such programmes. In the study area, 85% of farmers are unaware of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development. Only 8% are aware of such support, while another 8% are unsure about government assistance for agritourism. This indicates that the majority of farmers have limited knowledge about available support for agritourism.

6.1.7 Number of Visitors and Countries

Table 6.7: Number of Visitors and Countries

Characteristics	N=43	%
Sri Lanka Tourist Board registration of agritourism businesses	Yes	0
	No	100
Monthly number of tourists visiting the agritourism site	Less than 20 tourists	58
	20-40 tourists	19
	40-80 tourists	19
	80-100 tourists	0
	More than 100 tourists	4
Major countries of origin of visiting tourists	China	5
	France	12
	Germany	11
	Italy	4
	Local (Sri Lanka)	46
	USA	6
	New Zealand	5
	India	3
	Australia	5
	Poland	3

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

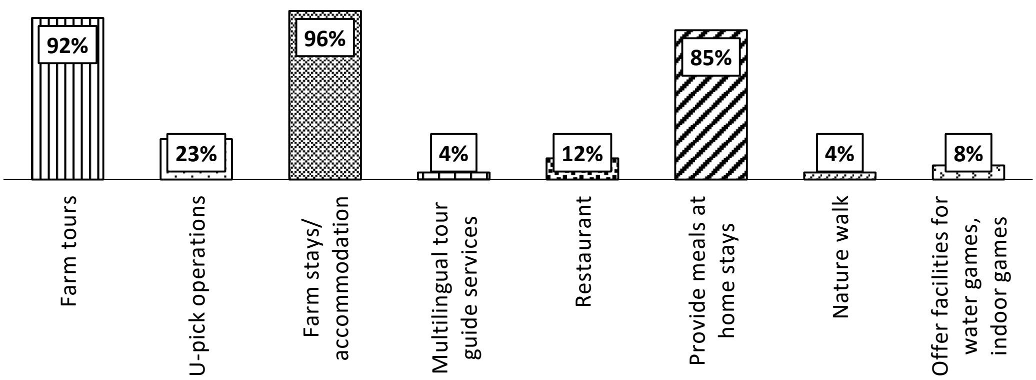
The table 6.7 reveals number of visitors and countries. The data shows that none of the agritourism businesses in the area are registered with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board, with 100% of respondents reported no such registration.

The study revealed the monthly number of tourists visiting the agritourism sites. About 58% of respondents reported fewer than 20 tourists per month. Nineteen percent of sites attract between 20 and 40 tourists, and another 19% receive between 40 and 80 visitors. Only 4% of sites host more than 100 tourists per month, while none reported having between 80 and 100 tourists.

The data shows the countries from which major tourists arrive at the agritourism sites. The highest number of tourists come from Sri Lanka, with 46% local visitors. Other notable countries include France and Germany.

6.1.8 Types of Agritourism Activities

The figure 6.1 illustrates the various types of agritourism activities offered by farms in the study area. Farm stays/accommodation are the most common, reported by 96% of respondents. Farm tours are also popular, with 92% of respondents indicating this activity. Providing meals at home stays is offered by 85%, while 23% have u-pick operations. Smaller percentages offer a restaurant (12%), facilities for water or indoor games (8%), and multilingual tour guide services (4%). Nature walks are the least common activity, reported by 4% of respondents.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 6.1: Types of Agritourism Activities

6.1.9 Potentials and Challenges in Agritourism as a Community-based Industry for Paddy Farm Owners in Sri Lanka

The table 6.8 shows the duration of involvement in agritourism activities. The majority of respondents (69%) have been involved for more than five years. Smaller percentages include 15% with 1-3 years of involvement, 12% with 3-5 years and only 4% engaged for less than one year.

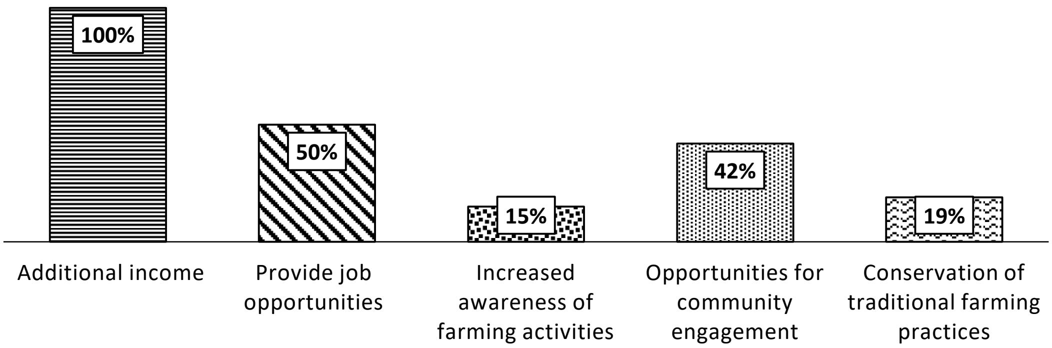
Table 6.8: Duration of Involvement and Workforce Participation in Agritourism

Involvement in Agritourism	N=43	5
Duration of involvement in agritourism activities	Less than 1 year	4
	1-3 years	15
	3-5 years	12
	More than 5 years	69

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

6.1.10 Perceived Potential Benefits of Agritourism for Farms and Society

The figure 6.2 illustrates perceived potential benefits of agritourism for farms and society. The data on perceived benefits of agritourism to farms and society shows that additional income is the most recognized advantage, cited by 100% of respondents. This is followed by job creation, mentioned by 50% of respondents. Other perceived benefits include increased awareness of farming activities (15%), opportunities for community engagement (42%), and the conservation of traditional farming practices (19%).

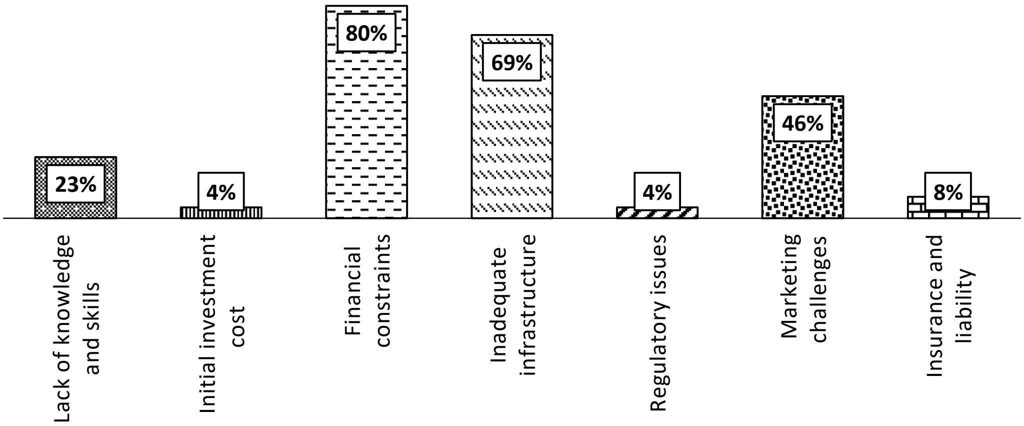


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 6.2: Perceived Potential Benefits of Agritourism for Farms and Society

6.1.11 Main Challenges Faced in Conducting Agritourism

Figure 6.3 reveals main challenges faced in conducting agritourism. The main challenges facing agritourism promotion in the study area include financial constraints, identified by 80% of respondents, followed by inadequate infrastructure, cited by 69%. Marketing difficulties were also significant, mentioned by 46% of respondents. Other challenges include lack of knowledge and skills (23%), insurance and liability concerns (8%), initial investment costs (4%), and regulatory issues (4%).

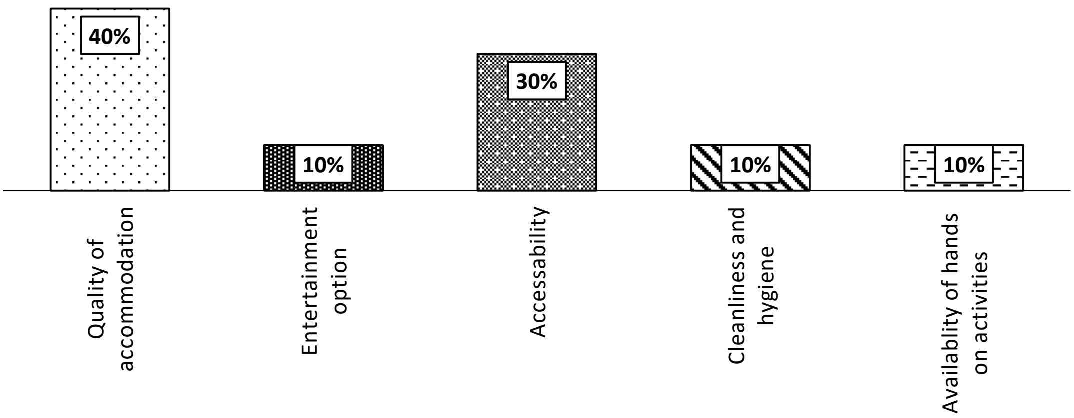


Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 6.3: Main Challenges Faced in Conducting Agritourism

6.1.12 Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

The Figure 6.4 shows tourist dissatisfaction with agritourism services. Visitor dissatisfactions with agritourism services in the study area is primarily related to the following factors. Forty percent of visitors are dissatisfied with the quality of accommodation, 30% with accessibility, and 10% with entertainment options, cleanliness and hygiene, and the availability of hands-on activities. This indicates that the areas of concern are accommodation quality and accessibility, while issues such as entertainment, cleanliness, and activities also contribute to dissatisfaction but to a lesser extent. Expected support to develop agritourism business.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 6.4: Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

6.1.13 Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

Table 6.9: Expected Support to Develop Agritourism Business

Expected Support	N=43	%
Expected support from stakeholders to enhance the business	Financial	38
	Training and education	10
	Marketing and promotion	27
	Infrastructure development	21
	Policy	4

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 6.9 summarizes the expected support to develop agritourism business**.** Farmers in the study area expect various forms of support from stakeholders to enhance their agritourism businesses. Thirty-eight percent seek financial assistance, 27% want help with marketing and promotion, and 21% prioritize infrastructure development. Smaller portions expect training and education (10%) and policy support (4%). This indicates that most farmers focus on financial and marketing support to grow their agritourism businesses.

6.1.14 Interaction between Agritourism Owners and the Village Community

Table 6.10: Interaction between Agritourism Owners and the Village Community

Aspect	Key Findings N=43	%
Number of workers	fewer than 10	100%
Sources of value-added products	from own farms	49%
	from outside suppliers	51%
Methods of contacting farmers	direct contact	96%
Number of paddy suppliers	fewer than 5 suppliers	96%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

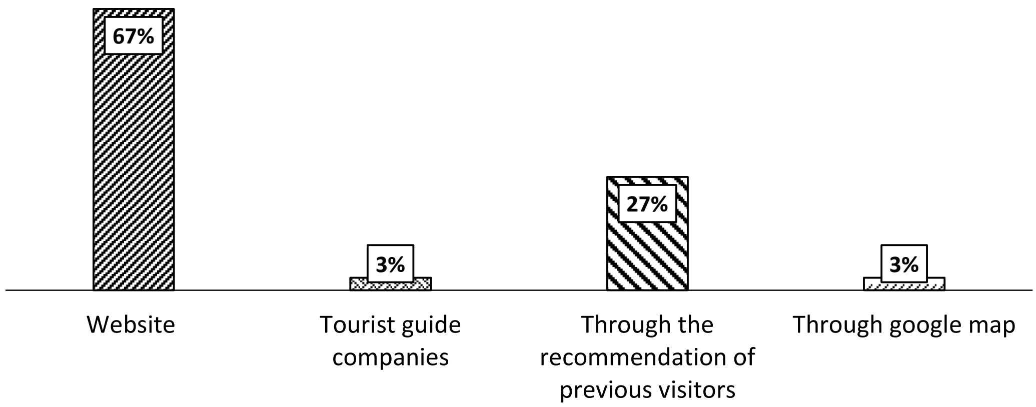
The table 6.10 highlights interaction between agritourism owners and the village community. The data shows that all respondents (100%) have fewer than 10 workers. The methods of purchasing vegetables/paddy in the study area are divided between two main sources. Forty nine percent of farmers source these from their own farms, while 51% purchase them from outside suppliers. This indicates that while a significant portion of farmers rely on their own produce, the majority depend on external suppliers for their vegetable and paddy needs.

In the study area, 96% of vegetable and paddy purchases from outside sources are made directly from individual farmers with whom buyers have contact. No respondents reported using regular suppliers, having farmers deliver products to the institute, or contacting a farm organization.

When purchasing vegetables or paddy from outside suppliers, 96% of farmers rely on fewer than 5 suppliers. No farmers reported using 5-10 suppliers or more than 10 suppliers. This indicates that the majority of farmers source their vegetables and paddy from a small number of suppliers.

6.1.15 Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business

As shown the Figure 6.5, the majority of tourists (67%) become aware of agritourism businesses through websites. Additionally, 27% learn about these businesses through recommendations from previous visitors. Smaller percentages discover agritourism in the area through tourist guide companies and Google Maps, each accounting for 3%.

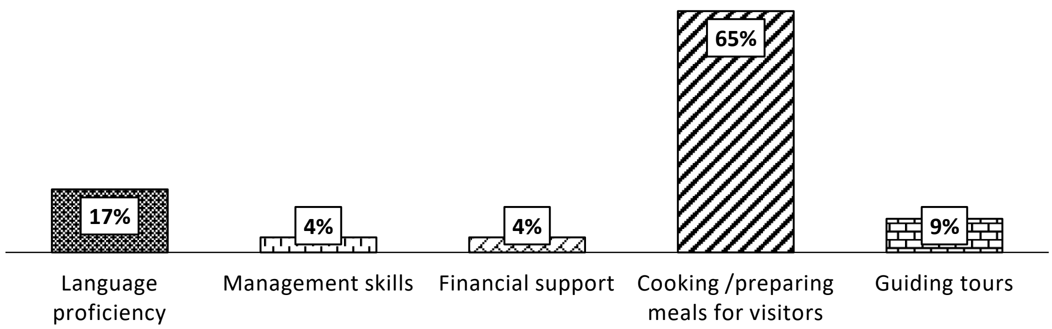


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 6.5: Tourist Awareness of Agritourism Business

6.1.16 Skills of Family Members Supporting the Development of Agritourism

The bar chart shows the types of agritourism activities**.** The skills of family members supporting the development of agritourism in the study area are diverse. The most common skill is cooking with 65% of the family members contributing in meal preparation for guests. Language proficiency is held by 17%, while 9% have guiding tour skills. Management skills and financial support each account for 4%.

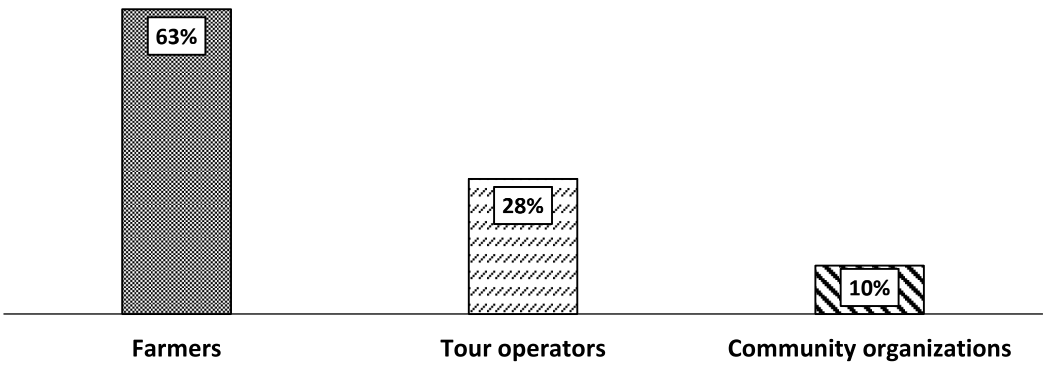


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 6.6: Types of Agritourism Activities

6.1.17 Key Stakeholders Involved in Agritourism Business

Figure 6.7 illustrate the key stakeholders involved in agritourism business. The key stakeholders involved in the agritourism business in the study area are primarily farmers, who represent 63% of the involvement. Tour operators represent 28%, while community organizations comprise 10%. This highlights the dominant role farmers play in agritourism businesses.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 6.7: Key Stakeholders Involved in Agritourism Business

6.1.18 Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

Table 6.11: Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences N=41

Characteristics	Categories	% Of Farmers
Reasons for not engaging in agritourism	Lack of knowledge/awareness	8
	No access to tourists	45
	Lack of capital/investment	35
	No interest in tourism activities	2
	Other	10
Perceptions about agritourism	Good opportunity to increase income	61
	Beneficial for community development	22
	Risky / uncertain business	14
	Not suitable for their farming system	3
Preferences for future participation	Willing to engage if training/support is provided	64
	Prefer to collaborate with existing agritourism businesses	21
	Interested only in supplying farm products	15
	Not interested at all	0

The Table 6.12 presents the farmers not engaged in tourism: perceptions and preferences among farmers not engaged in agritourism, multiple responses given by the farmers. the main barriers were lack of access to tourists (45%), lack of capital (35%), and limited knowledge or awareness (8%). Despite these challenges, most farmers perceived agritourism positively, with 61% identifying it as an opportunity to increase income and 22% recognizing its benefits for community development, though 14% considered it risky. Looking ahead, a majority (64%) expressed willingness to participate if training and support are provided, 21% preferred collaboration with existing agritourism businesses, and 15% were interested in supplying farm products only. Notably, none reported complete disinterest.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Agritourism Sub-sectors in the Farming Community: Challenges and Opportunities (Tourism with Cinnamon)

Introduction
Five sub-sectors of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. Each sub-category is analyzed based on demographic, and economic characteristics, farm features, infrastructure facilities, geographical features, awareness levels, challenges, and potential for farmers. This chapter focuses on cinnamon tourism.

7.1 Tourism with Cinnamon

The Galle District in Sri Lanka is famous for its cinnamon cultivation. There are 35 farmers were selected for the study, who were engaged in tourism, and 16 farmers in the same area who were not engaged in tourisum. According to the survey data, farmers earn overs Rs. 50,000 per month. Most of the land is inherited, and the majority of farmers own more than 10 acres. The area benefits from key infrastructure such as water supply, electricity, and existing buildings, with water primarily sourced from deep wells and electricity from the national grid. Galle is also home to popular tourist destinations, including Hikkaduwa Coral Reef, Boossa Beach, Unawatuna Beach, and the Sinharaja Rainforest.

Within the sample area, although cinnamon farming remains the primary occupation, there is significant potential to expand agritourism in the region. Many farmers still rely on hand tools for production, though some have invested in processing machines. The farms are located less than 10 km from major population centers, with a travel time of less than 30 minutes, making them accessible to tourists. However, most farmers are not yet engaged in agritourism, although many are willing to explore this opportunity.

Key challenges for promoting agritourism include a lack of knowledge, insufficient infrastructure, and marketing barriers. Farmers seek support in the form of financial assistance, training, and infrastructure development. Currently, only a few farmers are engaged in agritourism but earn over Rs. 200,000 monthly. These agritourism ventures attract tourists from countries such as Japan, Italy, Germany, and France, and offer value-added cinnamon products such as drinks, oils, and incense sticks. With the right support, cinnamon agritourism in Galle could enhance both farmers' income and the region's tourism sector.

7.1.1 Main Demographic Characteristics of Owners of Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites

Table 7.1: Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Cinnamon-based Agritourism Owners

Characteristic	Key Findings N =35	%
Age	25–34 years	50%
	65+ years	50%
Gender	Male,	100%
	Female	0%
Education	Up to O/L	70%.
	Up to A/L,	10%
	Degree holders,	10%
	Secondary	10%
	Postgraduate or Diploma holders.	None
Primary Occupation	Agritourism	None

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 7.1 summarizes main demographic characteristics of owners of cinnamon-based agritourism sites. The table shows the age distribution of people engaged in agritourism in the study area. Half of the participants (50%) are in the 25 to 34 age range, while the other 50% are aged 65 and above. The gender distribution shows that all participants (100%) are male, with no female participants. Regarding education level, 50% have passed the G.C.E. (O/L), while the remaining 50% have completed post-graduate education. In the study area, 100% of farmers do not engage in Agritourism as their primary occupation.

7.1.2 Monthly Income Distribution among Individuals Engaged in Agritourism in the Study Area

Table 7.2: Monthly Income from Agritourism

Characteristics N=35		%
Monthly income from agritourism	Less than Rs. 25,000	
	Rs. 25,000- Rs. 50,000	
	Rs. 50,001- Rs. 100,000	
	Rs. 100,001- Rs. 200,000	
	More than Rs. 200,000	1

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 7.2 highlights the monthly income distribution among individuals engaged in agritourism in the study area. The monthly income from agritourism in the study area shows that all participants (100%) earn more than Rs. 200,000 per month.

7.1.3 Farm Characteristics of Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites

Table 7.3: Summary of Farm Characteristics of Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites

Characteristic	Key Findings N=35	%
Land Ownership	Own land	100%
	Purchased, Leased, Rented, or Community-owned land	None
Extent of Land	2–5 acres	50%
	More than 10 acres	50%
Farming Practices	Organic farming	50%
	Crop farming	50%
	Conventional or Integrated farming reported	None
Primary Crops	Cultivate spice crops (cinnamon)	100%
	Other crops	None

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 7.3 reveals farm characteristics of cinnamon-based agritourism sites. The data indicates Cinnamon-based agritourism sites are entirely farmer-owned, with all land inherited. Farms are either medium-sized (2–5 acres) or large (over 10 acres). Farmers mainly practice organic and crop-based farming, with no conventional or integrated methods. Spice crops, particularly cinnamon, are the sole cultivation focus, with no diversification into other crops.

7.1.4 Infrastructure Facilities at the Agritourism Site

The Table 7.4 shows infrastructure facilities at cinnamon-based agritourism sites. All farms have water supply, electricity, and existing buildings, with half providing transport options and farm equipment. Water is sourced entirely from deep wells, and electricity comes from the national grid. Buildings include warehouses/storage (100%) and residential or workshop/training facilities (50%), but there are no guest houses, restaurants, sanitation, parking, or accommodation facilities. All sites are located near famous tourist destinations.

Table 7.4: Summary of Infrastructure Facilities at Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites

Characteristic	Key Findings N=35	%
Basic Infrastructure	Water supply	100%
	Electricity	100%
	Existing buildings	100%
	Transport options	50%
	Farm equipment	50%
	Parking	None
	Sanitation	
	Accommodation facilities	
	Greenhouses	
	Nurseries	
	Waste management systems	
Water Source	Deep wells	100%
	Shallow wells, rain-fed tanks, rivers/streams, municipal supply, or agro wells	None
Electricity Source	National grid	100%
	Solar, wind, or generator	None
Existing Buildings	Residential buildings	50%
	Warehouses/storage	100%
	Workshops/training centers	50%
	Guest houses, restaurants, stalls, spas, or wadiya	None
Nearby Tourist Destination	Near famous tourist destinations	100%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

7.1.5 Geographic Variables -d istance and Travel Time from Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites to Major Cities

Table 7.5: Distance and Travel Time from Cinnamon-based Agritourism Sites to Major Cities

Characteristics	N=35	%
Distance from farm to nearest major city	Less than 5 km	100
	5-10 km	0
	10-20 km	0
	More than 20 km	0
Time travel from farm to major city	Less than 15 min	100
	15-30 min	0
	30-60 min	0
	More than 60 min	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 7.5 summarizes distance and travel time from cinnamon-based agritourism sites**.** All farms (100%) are located less than 5 kilometers from the nearest city and can be reached within 15 minutes.

7.1.6 Awareness of Agritourism among Cinnamon Agritourism Owners

Table 7.6: Awareness of Agritourism among Cinnamon Agritourism Owners

Characteristics N=35		**%**
Modes of starting an agritourism business	**Training programmes**	**0**
	Family business	50
	Media (TV/radio/newspaper)	50
	Popular in the village	0
	Via the tourism business	0
Awareness of programme support for agritourism	Yes	0
	No	100
Awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development	Yes	0
	No	50
	Not sure	50

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 7.6 indicates the awareness of agritourism among cinnamon agritourism owners**.** The data indicates that the most common way to start an agritourism business is through a family business, accounting for 50% of farms. Additionally, 50% of farms started their agritourism businesses through media channels such as TV, radio, or newspapers. According to the survey data, 100% of respondents are unaware of any programmes supporting agritourism.

The table shows awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development. According to the data, 50% of farms are not aware of such support, while the other 50% are unsure. No farms reported being aware of government or agricultural organization support.

7.1.7 Number of Visitors and Their Countries

Table 7.7: Number of Visitors and Countries

Characteristics N=35		**%**
Sri Lanka Tourist Board Registration of agritourism businesses	Yes	30
	No	70
Number of tourists visiting the agritourism sites per month	Less than 20 tourists	50
	20-40 tourists	0
	40-80 tourists	50
	80-100 tourists	0
	More than 100 tourists	0
Major tourist source countries	France	13
	Germany	14
	Italy	21
	Japan	20
	Australia	16
	Philippines	16

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table 7.7 outlines the Sri Lanka Tourist Board registration status of agritourism businesses in the sample area. It shows that all farms (100%) are not registered with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. The study also revealed the number of tourists visiting the cinnamon farm per month. According to the data, 50% of the cinnamon farms receive fewer than 20 tourists, while another 50% attract between 40 and 80 tourists. According to the survey data, the major countries of tourists arriving include Italy, Japan France. Germany, Australia and the Philippines.

7.1.8 Potentials and Challenges in Agritourism as a Community-based Industry in Sri Lanka for Cinnamon Garden Owners

Table 7.8: Types of Agritourism Activities & Experience and Skilled Labour

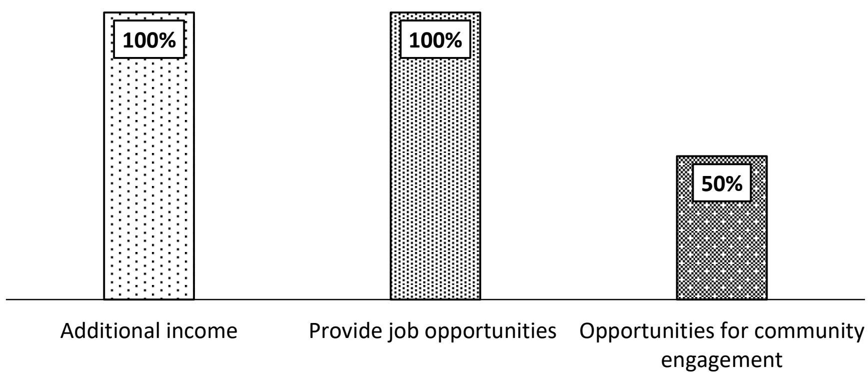
Experience and Skilled Labour	N=35	%
Duration of involvement in agritourism activities	Less than 1 year	0%
	1-3 years	0%
	3-5 years	0%
	More than 5 years	100%
Availability of employees or family members with skills to support agritourism	Yes	100%
	No	0%

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Table 7.8 shows the duration of involvement in agritourism activities. All farms (100%) have been involved in agritourism for more than 5 years. The data also reveals the availability of skilled support for agritourism. Exactly 100% of farms have employees or family members equipped with the skills necessary to assist in agritourism activities.

7.1.9 Perceived Potential Benefits of Agritourism for Farms and Society

Figure 7.1 illustrates the potential benefits of agritourism to farms and society. All farms (100%) believe agritourism provides additional income and job opportunities. Additionally, 50% of farms view agritourism as an opportunity for community engagement.

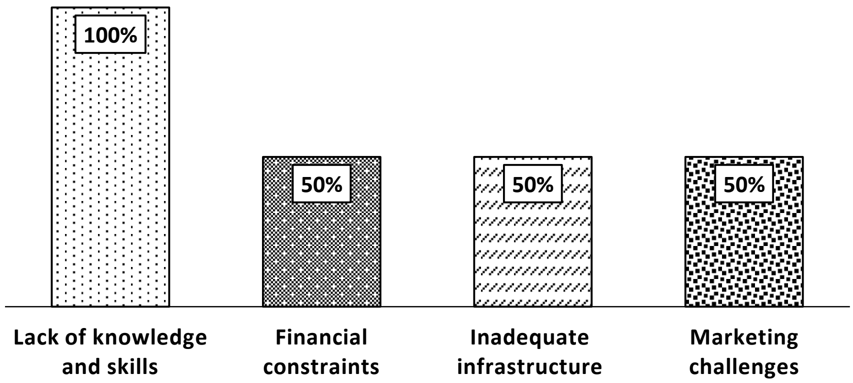


Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 7.1: Perceived Potential Benefits of Agritourism for Farms and Society

7.1.10 Main Challenges Faced in Conducting Cinnamon-based Agritourism

Figure 7.2 shows the main challenges faced in promoting agritourism. All farms (100%) identify a lack of knowledge and skills as a key challenge. Financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and marketing challenges are each reported by 50% of farms.



Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

Figure 7.2: Main Challenges Faced in Conducting Cinnamon-based Agritourism

7.1.11 Expected Support to Develop an Agritourism Business

The table 7.9 indicates the expected support to develop an agritourism business from the sample population. The data shows that expected support to develop agritourism businesses includes financial support, training and education, marketing and promotion, and infrastructure development, with 50% of farms anticipating each of these forms of assistance.

Table 7.9: Expected Support to Develop an Agritourism Business from the Sample Population

Expected support to develop an agritourism business	Financial support	51%
	Training and education	45%
	Marketing and promotion	57%
	Infrastructure development	59%
	Policy support	30%
	Networking opportunities	105

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

7.1.12 Cinnamon Agritourism and its Interaction with the Village Community

The table 7.10 reveals the duration of involvement in agritourism activities. All farms (100%) have been involved in agritourism for more than 5 years. It also indicates the number of workers employed in agritourism activities, with all farms (100%) having between 10 and 20 workers.

Table 7.10: Summary of Cinnamon Agritourism Interaction with the Village Community

Characteristic	Key Findings	
Number of Village Workers	10–20 workers	100%
Source of Cinnamon/Products	Own farm	100%
	External farmers	100%
Methods of Contacting Farmers	Regular suppliers	50%
	Direct contact with individual farmers	50%
	Farm organizations	None
	Farmer drop-offs	
Number of Village Farmers Supplying Cinnamon	5–10 suppliers	50%
	More than 10 suppliers	50%
	Fewer than 5	None
	Training/education	50%
	Marketing/promotion support	50%
	Financial aid	None
	Infrastructure	
	Policy support	

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The table outlines the methods of purchasing cinnamon. All farms (100%) purchase spices from their own farms, while the same proportion (100%) also purchase them from outside farmers. Regarding contacting farmers for outside purchases, 50% of farms contact regular suppliers, while the other 50% contact individual farmers with whom they have established contact.

When buying spices from outside farmers, 50% of farms purchase from 5-10 suppliers, while the other 50% buy from more than 10 suppliers.

The expected support from stakeholders to enhance the agritourism business includes training and education, as well as marketing and promotion, each anticipated by 50% of farms.

7.1.13 Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

The Table 7.11 presents the farmers not engaged in tourism: perceptions and preferences. According to the analysis of multiple responses given by the farmers, most farmers identified lack of capital (45%) and limited tourist access (40%) as the main barriers to engaging in agritourism, while perceptions were largely positive, with 61% seeing it as an opportunity to increase income and 32% recognizing its community benefits; for future participation, 64% were willing to engage if training or support was provided, 61% preferred collaboration with existing businesses, and 15% were interested only in supplying products, with none being completely uninterested.

Table 7.11: Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences N=16

Characteristics	Categories	% Of Farmers
Reasons for not engaging in agritourism	Lack of knowledge/awareness	3
	No access to tourists	40
	Lack of capital/investment	45
	No interest in tourism activities	2
	Other (specify)	10
Perceptions about agritourism	Good opportunity to increase income	61
	Beneficial for community development	32
	Risky / uncertain business	14
	Not suitable for their farming system	3
Preferences for future participation	Willing to engage if training/support is provided	64
	Prefer to collaborate with existing agritourism businesses	61
	Interested only in supplying farm products	15
	Not interested at all	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

CHAPTER EIGHT

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Agritourism Sub-sectors in the Farming Communities: Challenges and Opportunities (Tourism with both Paddy and Vegetables)

Introduction

Five subcategories of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. Each subcategory is analyzed based on demographic and economic characteristics, farm features, infrastructure facilities, geographical features, awareness levels, challenges, and potential for farmers. This chapter focuses on farmers engaged in combined paddy and vegetable-based tourism, as well as those farmers not participating in agritourism within the study area.

8.1 Tourism in Paddy and Vegetable Farming

The study sample was drawn from Matale, Kandy and Polonnaruwa districts. A total of 40 farmers engaged in agritourism and 26 farmers who were not engaged in agritourism from the same site were selected. From the sample, Heeloya is a renowned agritourism destination located in the Kandy District. In the study areas, where farming is the primary occupation of the villagers. The community predominantly cultivates paddy, along with vegetables such as okra, cassava, and spices like pepper. The farmers are engaged in community-based tourism. This scenic village offers a unique rural experience for tourists, with various agritourism activities, including farm tours, home-stay meals, accommodation, cooking demonstrations, and U-pick operations. Multilingual tour guides enhance the experience for international visitors, many of whom come from the Philippines, France, Italy, and Japan.

8.1.1 Main Demographic Characteristics of Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

The Table 8.1 presents main demographic characteristics of paddy and vegetable farm owners. The age distribution of farmers in the study area reveals that the majority fall within the middle-aged group. The largest segment, 45%, falls within 45 to 54 age range, followed by 20% in the 35 to 44 age range. A smaller proportion, 15%, is between 55 and 64 years old, while 10% are under 25, and 5% are aged 65 and above. Only 5% of farmers fall within the 25 to 34 age range.

The gender distribution among farmers in the study area shows equal representation, with male and female farmers each comprising 50% of the population. Regarding educational attainment, 10% of the farmers have completed only primary education (up to grade 1-5), while 15% have completed secondary education (up to grade 6-10). A significant 30% have studied up to the G.C.E. (O/L) level, and 10% have passed the G.C.E. (O/L). Additionally, 10% have completed the G.C.E. (A/L), and 15% have passed the G.C.E. (A/L). A smaller proportion (5%) hold a degree, and another 5% have a diploma. According to the survey data, 35% of the farmers engage in agritourism as their primary occupation, while the remaining 65% do not.

Table 8.1: Summary of Main Demographic Characteristics of Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

Characteristics	Key Findings N=40	%
Age	45–54 years	45%
	Under 25	10%
	Above 65	5%
Gender	Male	50%
	Female	50%
Education	Primary	10%
	Secondary or O/L level	55%
	A/L level	20%
	Diploma or degree;	10%
	Postgraduate	None
	No schooling	
Agritourism as primary occupation	Engaged primarily	35%
	Not primarily engaged	65%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

8.1.2 Type of Agritourism Business

As illustrated in figure 8.1, the types of agritourism businesses are as follows: corporate ventures represent the largest segment at 75%, followed by family-owned businesses at 25%.

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 8.1: Type of Agritourism Business

8.1.3 Monthly Income from the Paddy and Vegetable Farms as an Agritourism Activity

The Table 8.2 highlights the monthly income distribution from the paddy and vegetable farms as an agritourism activity in the study area. A significant 45% of participants earn between Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 50,000 Rupees per month, while 30% earn less than Rs. 25,000. Additionally, 25% earn between Rs. 50,001 and Rs. 100,000.

Table 8.2: Monthly Income from the Paddy and Vegetable Farms as an Agritourism Activity

Characteristics N=40		%
Monthly income from the paddy and vegetable farms as an agritourism activity	Less than Rs. 25,000	30
	Rs. 25,000- Rs. 50,000	45
	Rs. 50,001- Rs. 100,000	25
	Rs. 100,001- Rs. 200,000	0
	More than Rs. 200,000	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

8.1.4 Farm Characteristics of Paddy and Vegetable Farms

Table 8.3: Summary of Farm Characteristics of Paddy and Vegetable Farms

Characteristics	Key Findings N=40	%
Land ownership	Owned land (all inherited);	55%
	Rented land	45%
Extent of land	Less than 1 acre	70%
	1–2 acres	25%
	2–5 acres	5%
Farming practices	Organic farming	70%
	Crop farming	60%
	Conventional	None
	Integrated farming	
Primary crops	Paddy/grains	80%
	Spices	70%
	Vegetables	35%
	Plantation crops	30%
	Medicinal plants	5%
	Fruits	15%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 8.3 summarizes the farm characteristics of paddy and vegetable farms. Survey data indicate that 55% of farmers in the study area own the land used for their agritourism activities, while 45% do not. All landowners (55%) have inherited their land. Among those without land ownership, 45% rent the land they use. Regarding land extent, 70% of farmers own less than 1 acre, 25% own between 1 and 2 acres, and 5% own between 2 and 5 acres.

Farming practices in the study area reveal a strong preference for sustainable and diverse methods. A significant 70% of farmers engage in organic farming, highlighting a commitment to environmentally friendly agricultural practices. Additionally, 60% focus on crop farming.

In terms of crop distribution, grains (including paddy and other cereals) dominate at 80%, followed by spice crops at 70%. Vegetables account for 35%, and plantation crops make up 30%. Fruits contribute 15%, while medicinal plants represent 5%. This distribution highlights the area's strong focus on grain and spice cultivation, with a notable presence of vegetable and plantation crops.

8.1.5 Infrastructure Facilities: Paddy and Vegetable Farms

Table 8.4: Summary of Infrastructure Facilities, Paddy and Vegetable Farms

Characteristics	Key Findings N=40	%
Farm infrastructure	Water supply	100%
	Electricity	70%
	Existing buildings	55%
	Accommodation	40–45%
	Sanitation	40–45%
	Parking space	15%
	Transport	None
	Greenhouses	
	Equipment	
	Waste management systems	
Water sources	Rivers/streams	60%
	Springs	45%
	Other sources (wells, tanks, municipal water, or agro wells)	None
Electricity availability	National grid	70%
	No electricity	30%
	Solar, Wind, or Generators	None
Existing buildings	Residential buildings	45%
	Guest houses/cottages	35%
	Mati gedara/wadiya	15%
	Summer huts	5%
	Warehouses, Workshops, Restaurants, Stalls, or Spas	None

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

The table 8.4 illustrates the availability of infrastructure on farms in the study area. Water supply is the most accessible facility, available on 100% of farms, followed by electricity at 70% of farms. Existing buildings are available on 55% of farms, and sanitation facilities are found on 45%. Accommodation facilities are found on 40% of farms, while parking space is present on 15%. River/stream water is the primary source, available to 60% of farms, followed by spring water at 45%. Regarding electricity, 70% of farms are connected to the national grid, while 30% have no access. Among the existing buildings, 45% of farms have residential buildings, and 35% have guest houses/cottages. A smaller proportion includes a ‘Mati Gedara’ (15%) and a summer hut (5%). Popular tourist destinations include Wariga Sabhawa (13), Perumal Watuna alla (11), Parana Vee Atuwa (9), Gal Kamatha (8).

8.1.6 Geographic Variables: Distance and Travel Time from the Farm to Major Cities

The table 8.5 highlights distance and travel time from the farm to major cities**.** The table shows that 55% of farms are located 5–10 kilometers from the nearest major city, while 45% are within 5 kilometers. In terms of travel time, 70% of farms are accessible within 15–30 minutes from the major city, while 30% are within 15 minutes. No paddy and vegetable farms are more than 60 minutes away from major population centers.

Table 8.5: Distance and Travel Time from the Farm to Major Cities

Characteristics N=40		%
Distance from the farm to the nearest major cities	Less than 5 km	45
	5-10 km	55
	10-20 km	0
	More than 20 km	0
Time taken to travel from farm to major cities	Less than 15 min	30
	15-30 min	70
	30-60 min	0
	More than 60 min	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

8.1.7 Modes of Starting and Awareness of Agritourism among Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

Table 8.6: Modes of Starting and Awareness of Agritourism among Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

Characteristic	N=40	%
Modes of Starting an Agritourism Business	Training programmes	80%
	Family business	5%
	Media (TV/radio/newspaper)	5%
	Popular in the village	10%
	Via the tourism business	0%
Awareness of any programme support for agritourism	Yes	80%
	No	20%
Awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development	Yes	5%
	No	40%
	Not sure	55%

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 8.6 shows modes of starting and awareness of agritourism among paddy and vegetable farm owners. The data shows that 80% of agritourism businesses were started through training programmes, while 10% began because they are popular in the village. Media sources such as TV, radio, or newspapers account for 5%, and only 5% started as family businesses. Regarding awareness of support programmes, 80% of respondents are aware of some form of support for agritourism, while 20% are not. When it comes to awareness of government and agricultural organization support for agritourism development, 5% are aware, 40% are not, and 55% are unsure.

8.1.8 Number of Visitors and Countries

Table 8.7: Number of Visitors and Countries

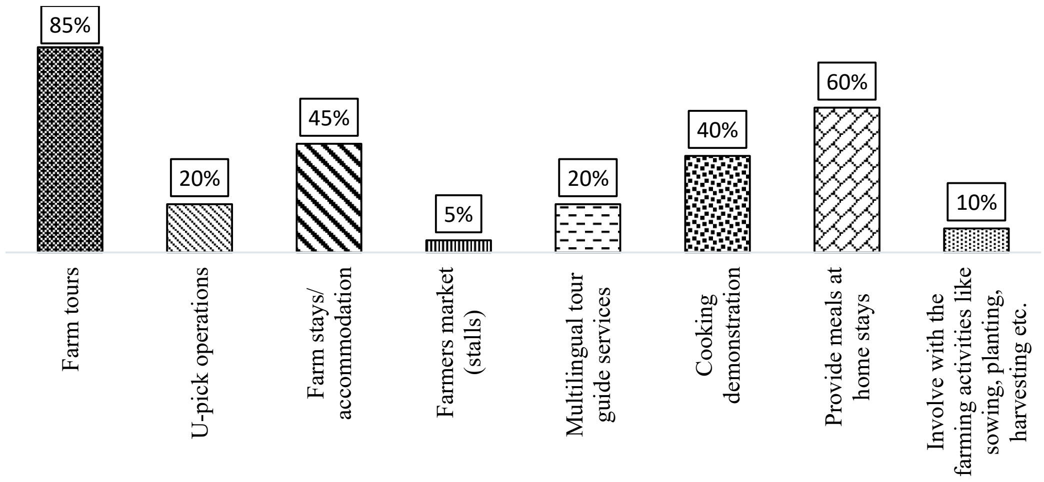
Characteristics	N=40	%
Registration of agritourism businesses with Sri Lanka Tourist Board	Yes	85
	No	15
Monthly number of tourists visiting the agritourism sites	Less than 20 tourists	20
	20-40 tourists	35
	40-80 tourists	25
	80-100 tourists	10
	More than 100 tourists	10
Major tourist source countries	Canada	2
	Japan	9
	Australia	7
	USA	9
	Philippines	17
	China	7
	France	13
	Germany	7
	India	6
	Italy	9
	Netherland	7
	Russia	2
	UK	2
	Local	2

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 8.7 outlines the registration status of agritourism businesses with the Sri Lanka Tourist Board. A significant 91% of respondents are registered, while 9% are not. Regarding the number of tourists visiting the spice garden per month, 59% of respondents reported receiving more than 100 tourists, indicating strong interest in the attraction. In contrast, only 5% reported fewer than 20 tourists. The ranges of 20-40 tourists and 40-80 tourists each account for 14%, while 9% reported 80-100 tourists. According to the survey data, the major countries from which tourists arrive include China, with the highest frequency of 12 visitors, followed by Germany with 10 and France with 9.

8.1.9 Types of Agritourism Activities

The Figure 8.2 illustrates the various types of agritourism activities. Farm tours are the most popular, accounting for 85% of activities. Farm stays/accommodation are also widely offered, provided by 45% of farms. U-pick operations attract 20%, and multilingual tour guide services are available at another 20%. Cooking demonstrations account for 40%, while providing meals at home stays is available at 60% of farms. Additionally, 5% of farms have farmers markets (stalls), and 10% involve visitors in farming activities such as sowing, planting, and harvesting.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 8.2: Types of Agritourism Activities

8.1.10 Potentials and Challenges in Agritourism as a Community-based Industry in Sri Lanka's Paddy and Vegetable Sectors

Table 8.8: Experience and Skilled Labour

Experience and Skilled Labour	N=40	%
Duration of involvement in agritourism activities	Less than 1 year	5
	1-3 years	20
	3-5 years	10
	More than 5 years	65
Availability of skilled employees or family members for agritourism	Yes	80
	No	20

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

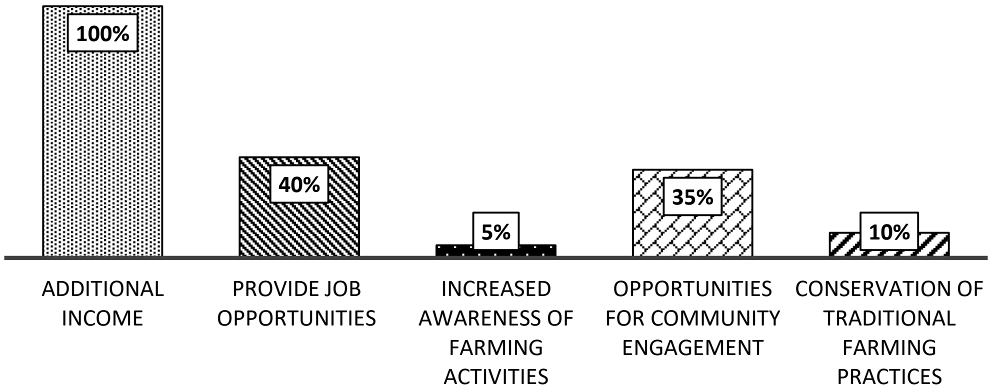
The table 8.8 reveals the experience and skilled labor**.** The data shows that the majority of participants (65%) have been engaged in agritourism activities for over five years, reflecting long-term involvement in the sector. A smaller proportion, 20%, have been involved for 1-3 years, while 10% have been involved for 3-5 years, and only 5% have been engaged for less than a year.

In terms of skilled support, 80% of farms have employees or family members who possess the necessary skills to assist in agritourism activities, while 20% lack such support. This indicates that most farms are well-equipped with skilled personnel to manage their agritourism operations.

8.1.11 Potential Benefits to Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

The Figure 8.3 shows potential benefits to paddy and vegetable farm owners**.** The study highlights the various benefits of agritourism for both farms and society. All respondents (100%) identified agritourism as a significant source of additional income for farmers. Additionally, 40% emphasized its role in providing job opportunities. Only

5% of participants pointed out that agritourism increases awareness of farming activities, while 35% acknowledged its potential to foster community engagement. Furthermore, 10% highlighted its importance in conserving traditional farming practices.

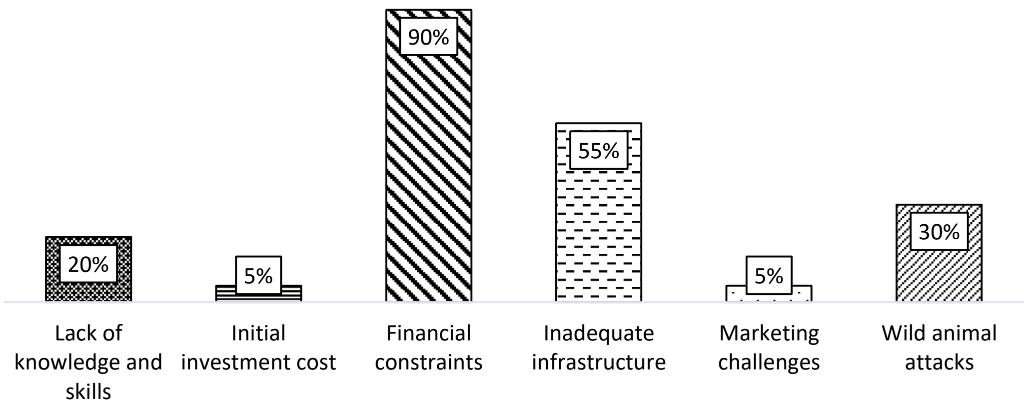


Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 8.3: Potential Benefits to Paddy and Vegetable Farm Owners

8.1.12 Main Challenges Faced in Promoting Agritourism

The Figure 8.4 illustrates main challenges faced in promoting agritourism. The study identifies several challenges faced by agritourism operators. Financial constraints are the most significant obstacle, cited by 90% of respondents. Inadequate infrastructure is another major barrier, reported by 55%. Wild animal attacks pose a challenge for 30% of participants. Additionally, 20% highlighted a lack of knowledge and skills as a key difficulty, while 5% mentioned initial investment costs and marketing challenges as barriers to growth in the sector.

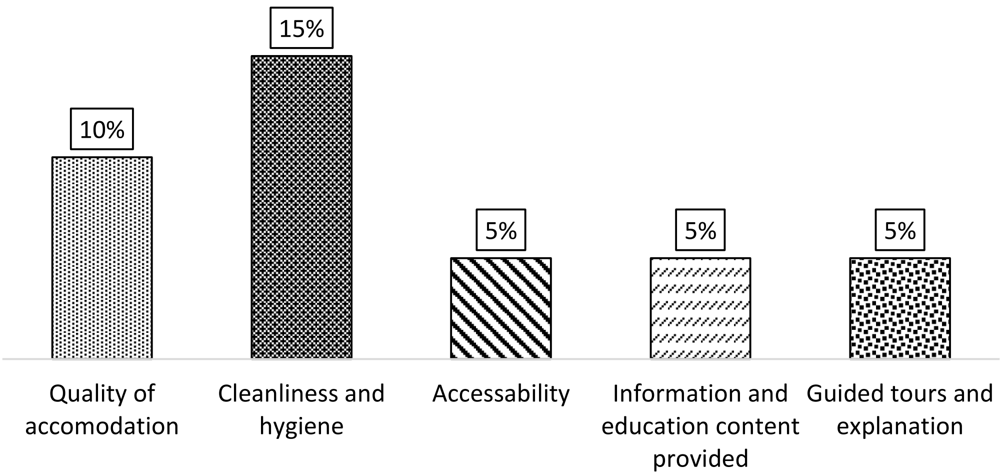


Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 8.4: Main Challenges Faced in Promoting Agritourism

8.1.13 Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

As illustrated in the figure 8.5, the main factors contributing to tourist dissatisfaction with agritourism services include cleanliness and hygiene, accounting for 15%, making it the largest concern. Quality of accommodation is also a significant, noted by 10% of respondents. Accessibility, information and educational content guided tours and explanations each contribute to dissatisfaction, with 5% of tourists highlighting each factor.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 8.5: Tourist Dissatisfaction with Agritourism Services

8.1.14 Expected Support to Develop an Agritourism Business

Table 8.9: Expected Support to Develop an Agritourism Business

Expected support	N=40	%
Expected support to develop an agritourism business	Financial support	95
	Training and education	45
	Marketing and promotion	15
	Infrastructure development	30
	Policy support	0
	Networking opportunities	5

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 8.9 indicates expected support to develop agritourism businesses. In the data table financial support is the highest priority, cited by 95% of respondents. Training and education are also important, mentioned by 45% of participants. Infrastructure development is expected by 30%, while 15% emphasize the importance of marketing and promotion. Networking opportunities are highlighted by 5%, and no respondents indicated a need for policy support.

8.1.15 Farms and Their Interaction with the Village Community

Table 8.10: Farms and Their Interaction with the Village Community

Number of village workers	Less than 10 workers	95
	10-20 workers	5
	20-40 workers	0
	40-80 workers	0
	More than 100 workers	0
Methods of purchasing paddy and vegetables for the meal preparation	Own farm	80
	Outside farmers	20
	Outside suppliers	0
Methods of contacting village paddy/vegetable farmers when buying spices	Regular suppliers	5
	Farmers bring their products to the institute	40
	farm organization	10
	Individual farmers with contact	45
Number of village paddy/ vegetable farmers supplying paddy/vegetable to the agritourism place	Less than 5 suppliers	50
	5-10 suppliers	3
	More than 10 suppliers	0
Expected support from stakeholders to enhance the business	Financial support	85
	Training and education	65
	Marketing and promotion	35
	Infrastructure development	20
	Policy support	0

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Table 8.10 presents farms and their interaction with the village community According to the survey data, multiple answers were received for each section. Most farms employed fewer than 10 village workers (95%), with only 5% employing 10–20 workers. Paddy and vegetables for meal preparation were mainly sourced from their own farms (80%) or outside farmers (20%), while spices were obtained through individual farmers (45%), farmers bringing products to the institute (40%), farm organizations (10%), or regular suppliers (5%). Half of the farms relied on fewer than five village farmers for supplies, and very few had 5–10 suppliers (3%). To enhance their agritourism businesses, farmers expected financial support (85%), training and education (65%), marketing and promotion (35%), and infrastructure development (20%), with no demand for policy support.

8.1.16 Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences

The Table 8.11 shows the farmers not engaged in tourism: perceptions and preferences. According to the analysis of multiple responses given by the farmers, most farmers identified the absence of capital (63%) and limited access to tourists (52%) as the main reasons for not engaging in agritourism, while a few mentioned lack of knowledge (10%), other reasons (8%), or no interest (2%). Perceptions were largely positive, with 68% seeing agritourism as a good opportunity to increase income, 28% recognising community benefits, 24% considering it risky, and 3% finding it unsuitable for their farming system. For future participation, 68% preferred collaboration with existing agritourism businesses, 54% were willing to involve if training or support was provided, 12% were interested only in supplying farm products, and none were completely uninterested.

Table 8.11: Farmers Not Engaged in Tourism: Perceptions and Preferences N=26

Characteristics	Categories	% Of Farmers
Reasons for not engaging in agritourism	Lack of knowledge/awareness	10
	No access to tourists	52
	Lack of capital/investment	63
	No interest in tourism activities	2
	Other (specify)	8
Perceptions about agritourism	Good opportunity to increase income	68
	Beneficial for community development	28
	Risky / uncertain business	24
	Not suitable for their farming system	3
Preferences for future participation	Willing to engage if training/support is provided	54
	Prefer to collaborate with existing agritourism businesses	68
	Interested only in supplying farm products	12
	Not interested at all	0

CHAPTER NINE

Results and Discussion

Sectoral Comparison of Agritourism Sub-Sectors: Income, Operations, and Community Engagement

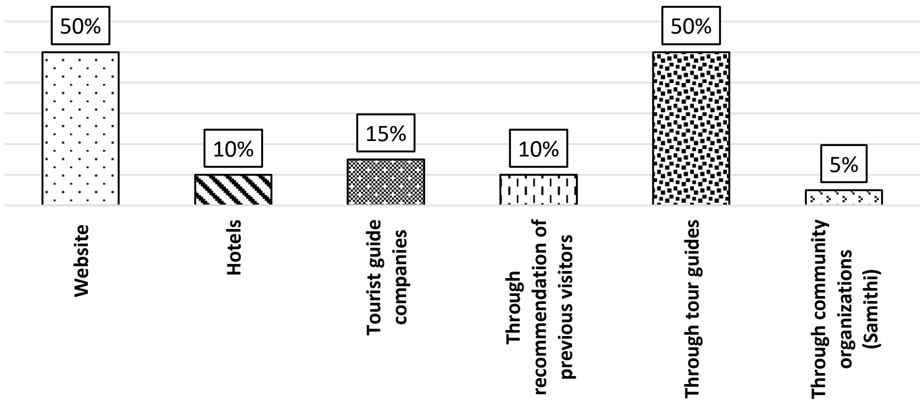
Introduction

Five subcategories of agritourism are identified in the study area: tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. This chapter describes the comparison of all 5 sub-sectors. The analysis integrates statistical results, descriptive insights, and field observations to highlight sectoral differences in income levels, demographic characteristics, farm size, infrastructure, accessibility, and community engagement.

9.1 Tourist Preferences for Agritourism Business

9.1.1 The Way Tourists Get Aware of the Agritourism Business

The Figure shows various ways tourists become aware of the agritourism business. Websites and tour guides are the most dominant sources of information, with each accounting for 50% of awareness, highlighting the importance of both online visibility and direct personal guidance in promoting agritourism activities. Tourist guide companies also play a notable role (15%), acting as intermediaries who connect tourists with farm-based experiences. In contrast, hotels (10%) and recommendations from previous visitors (10%) represent relatively smaller but still meaningful sources of awareness. These channels suggest that agritourism is yet to become fully integrated into the hospitality sector, and word-of-mouth marketing, although present, is not as strong as expected for a community-driven activity. The lowest contribution comes from community organizations such as Samithi (5%), reflecting a missed opportunity where grassroots institutions could promote agritourism more actively at the village level.



Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

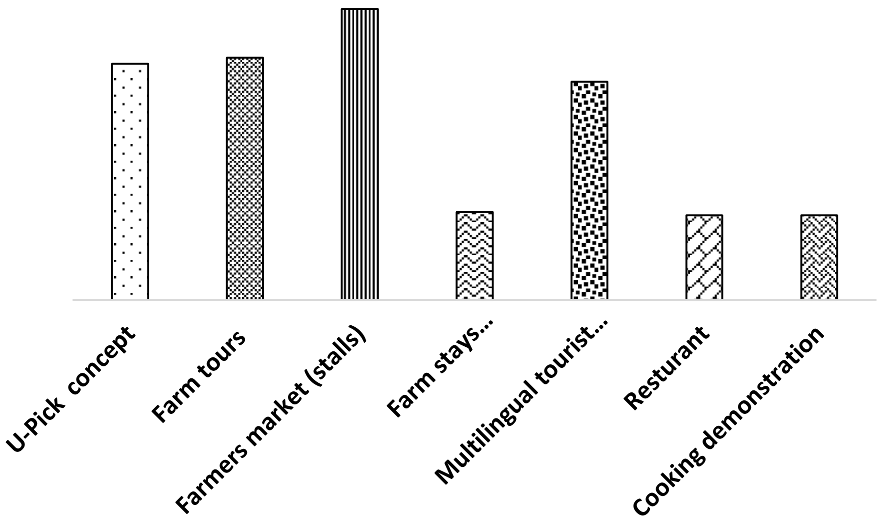
Figure 9.1: Tourist Awareness of the Agritourism Business

9.1.2 Tourist Preferences for Agritourism Activities

The survey findings indicate varying levels of tourist preference for different agritourism activities. Farmers' markets emerged as the most popular option, with 96% of respondents expressing interest in purchasing farm-fresh produce directly from farmers. This was followed by farm tours (80%) and the U-Pick concept (78%), both of which highlight tourists' strong preference for interactive and participatory farm-based experiences.

Supportive services were also valued, with 72% of respondents indicating interest in multilingual tourist guide services, which underscores the importance of effective communication in enhancing visitor experiences. By contrast, activities such as farm stays/accommodation (29%), restaurants (28%), and cooking demonstrations (28%) recorded relatively low levels of preference. This suggests that tourists are less inclined toward extended stays or dining within farm settings, instead prioritizing short-term, hands-on, and market-based experiences.

Overall, the results highlight that interactive and experiential activities are more appealing to tourists than long-term or service-oriented offerings, providing useful insights for developing and promoting agritourism initiatives.



Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Figure 9.2: Agritourism Activity Preferences

9.2 Relationship between the Agritourism Sector and Income Level

The Chi-Square Test of Independence Analyzing the Relationship Between Agritourism Sectors and Income Levels

The null hypothesis is rejected since the p-value is far below the standard significance level of 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant association between the agritourism sector and income level.

Interpretation of Chi-Square Test

The results suggest that income levels vary significantly across agritourism sectors. For example, a large proportion of participants in the spice garden and cinnamon sectors fall into higher income brackets (over Rs. 100,000), while those in the Paddy and Vegetable sectors are more concentrated in the lower income brackets (below Rs. 50,000). This disparity may reflect differences in market appeal, value-added practices, tourist accessibility, or scale of operations among the sectors.

Table 9.1: Descriptive Insights from Crosstab

Sector	< 25,000	25,000–50,000	50,001–100,000	100,001–200,000	> 200,000	Total
Spice Garden	0 (0.0%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	10 (45.5%)	22 (100%)
Vegetable Farming	5 (25.0%)	13 (65.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.0%)	20 (100%)
Paddy Farming	10 (38.5%)	6 (23.1%)	8 (30.8%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (100%)
Paddy + Vegetable	6 (30.0%)	9 (45.0%)	5 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (100%)
Cinnamon	0 (0.0%)	3 (30.0%)	4 (40.0%)	1 (10.0%)	2 (20.0%)	10 (100%)
Total	21 (21.4%)	33 (33.7%)	22 (22.4%)	9 (9.2%)	13 (13.3%)	98 (100%)

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Spice gardens and cinnamon farming demonstrate strong tourism-driven income, with a significant proportion of farmers earning over LKR 100,000 (45.5% of spice garden farmers earn above 200,000, and 20% of cinnamon farmers exceed this level), while vegetable farming remains relatively low-income with most earning 25,000–50,000, and paddy and paddy–vegetable farming show moderate and more varied earnings, reflecting medium-level income potential.

Table 9.2: Chi-Square Test Interpretation

Test	Value	df	p-value
Pearson Chi-Square	42.437	2	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.128	2	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Assoc.	41.044	1	0.000

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The Chi-Square test shows a significant link between sector and income, with spice gardens and cinnamon earning the highest returns, vegetable farming mostly low-income, and paddy and paddy–vegetable farming generating moderate but varied incomes, highlighting the stronger profitability of spice and cinnamon-based agritourism.

Table 9.3: Relationship between Agritourism Sectors and Infrastructure

Sector	Water Supply	Electri-city	Existing Building	Parking	Sanitation	Accom-modation	Transpor-tation	Farm Equipment	Manage-ment
Spice Garden	21 (21.6%)	22 (22.4%)	21 (26.6%)	15 (25.9%)	14 (53.8%)	11 (27.5%)	2 (6.1%)	1 (8.3%)	2 (66.7%)
Vegetable Farming	20 (20.6%)	20 (20.4%)	17 (21.5%)	8 (13.8%)	1 (3.8%)	2 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Paddy Farming	26 (26.8%)	26 (26.5%)	17 (21.5%)	14 (24.1%)	8 (30.8%)	18 (45.0%)	23 (69.7%)	6 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Paddy + Vegetable	20 (20.6%)	20 20.4%)	14 (17.7%)	11 (19.0%)	3 (11.5%)	9 22.5%)	8 (24.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Cinnamon	10 (10.3%)	10 (10.2%)	10 (12.7%)	10 (17.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (33.3%)

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

Paddy farms and Spice Gardens are generally best equipped for agritourism. Water supply and electricity coverage is highest in Paddy farms (26–26.8%), with Spice Garden, Vegetable, and Paddy + Vegetable farms around 20–22%, and Cinnamon farms lowest (10%). Existing buildings are most common in Spice Gardens (26.6%) and least in Paddy + Vegetable farms (17.7%). Parking and sanitation facilities are limited, with Spice Gardens at 25.9% and 53.8%, Paddy farms 24.1% and 30.8%, while Vegetable farms have only 13.8% parking and 3.8% sanitation. Accommodation facilities are highest in Paddy farms (45%) and Spice Gardens (27.5%). Transportation is strongest in Paddy farms (69.7%), and farm equipment in Cinnamon (85.7%) and Paddy farms (50%). Management systems are highest in Spice Gardens (66.7%)

Table 9.4: Relationship between the Agritourism Sectors and Demographic Factors

Sector	Primary	Secon-dary	Up to G.C.E. O/L	Passed G.C.E. O/L	Up to G.C.E. A/L	Passed G.C.E. A/L	Degree	Diploma	Post Grad uate	Total
Spice Garden	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)	0 (0%)	22
Vegetable Farming	1 (5%)	7 (35%)	7 (35%)	1 (5%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20
Paddy Farming	0 (0%)	2 (7.7%)	11 (42.3%)	4 (15.4%)	3 (11.5%)	3 (11.5%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.8%)	26
Paddy + Vegetable	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	6 (30%)	2 (10%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	1 (5%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	20
Cinnamon	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	10

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The majority of farmers across sectors have up to G.C.E. O/L or A/L education, with 27–42% in Paddy, Paddy + Vegetable, and Spice Garden sectors reaching these levels. For example, Paddy Farming has 11 farmers (42.3%) with up to G.C.E. O/L, while Spice Garden has 6 farmers (27.3%) with up to G.C.E. A/L. Higher education is more concentrated in Cinnamon and Spice Garden farms, with Cinnamon having 4 farmers (40%) with Passed G.C.E. A/L, and 1–2 farmers holding Degrees or Diplomas in these sectors. In contrast, Vegetable Farming has lower higher-education representation, with only 2 farmers (10%) reaching up to G.C.E. A/L and none with degrees. Primary and secondary education alone is rare, except for Paddy + Vegetable Farming, where 2 farmers (10%) have only primary education. This distribution suggests that Cinnamon and Spice Garden sectors have higher potential for adopting advanced agritourism practices due to the presence of better-educated farmers, while Paddy and Vegetable sectors may require additional training or support for tourism management

Table 9.5: Relationship between the Agritourism Sectors and Farm Characteristics

Sector	<1 acre	1–2 acres	2–5 acres	5–10 acres	>10 acres	Total
Spice Garden	4 (18.2%)	6 (27.3%)	2 (9.1%)	5 (22.7%)	5 (22.7%)	22
Vegetable Farming	13 (65%)	3 (15%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20
Paddy Farming	7 (26.9%)	15 (57.7%)	2 (7.7%)	2 (7.7%)	0 (0%)	26
Paddy + Vegetable	14 (70%)	5 (25%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20
Cinnamon	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	5 (50%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	10
Total	39 (39.8%)	31 (31.6%)	14 (14.3%)	7 (7.1%)	7 (7.1%)	98

Source: Author’s survey data, 2024

The majority of farms in the study are small-scale, with 39.8% under 1 acre and 31.6% between 1–2 acres. Vegetable Farming and Paddy + Vegetable sectors are dominated by very small farms, with 65% and 70% under 1 acre, respectively, suggesting limited capacity for large-scale agritourism activities. Paddy Farming shows a larger proportion of medium-sized farms, with 57.7% in the 1–2 acre range, indicating more space for potential agritourism development. Spice Garden Farms are more evenly distributed, with a mix of small (<1 acre, 18.2%) and larger plots (>5 acres, 45.4% combined in 5–10 and >10 acres), making them relatively flexible for hosting agritourism infrastructure. Cinnamon farms are mostly medium-sized, with 50% in the 2–5 acre range and 20% exceeding 10 acres, which could facilitate specialized agritourism activities like farm tours or on-site processing demonstrations. Overall, small farm sizes in several sectors may limit visitor capacity, while medium and large farms, particularly in Paddy and Cinnamon sectors, offer greater potential for infrastructure development and diversified agritourism offerings

Table 9.6: Relationship between the Agritourism Sectors and Distance to the Cities

Sector	<5 km	5–10 km	10–20 km	>20 km	Total
Spice Garden	3 (13.6%)	11 (50%)	8 (36.4%)	0 (0%)	22
Vegetable Farming	14 (70%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	20
Paddy Farming	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	26 (100%)	26
Paddy + Vegetable	9 (45%)	11 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20
Cinnamon	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10
Total	36 (36.7%)	23 (23.5%)	12 (12.2%)	27 (27.6%)	98

Source: Author's survey data, 2024

The proximity of farms to cities varies widely across sectors, which can significantly influence their potential for agritourism. Cinnamon farms are all within 5 km of a city (100%), and Vegetable Farming farms are mostly nearby, with 70% under 5 km, suggesting excellent accessibility for tourists. Spice Gardens are moderately close, with 50% within 5–10 km and 36.4% within 10–20 km, offering reasonable accessibility. Paddy + Vegetable farms are somewhat close, with 45% under 5 km and 55% within 5–10 km, providing moderate convenience for visitors. In contrast, Paddy Farming is located more than 20 km from a city (100%), which could limit tourist visits due to travel distance, despite the potential for large-scale agritourism infrastructure. Overall, 36.7% of all farms are less than 5 km from a city, 23.5% are 5–10 km, 12.2% are 10–20 km, and 27.6% are over 20 km, highlighting that accessibility will vary significantly depending on the sector and may affect visitor flow and agritourism planning.

Table 9.7: Parameter Estimates

Predictor	Estimate	Sig.	Interpretation
infra_index	0.165	.001*	significant → infrastructure availability has a clear effect.
sector (Spice-based vs Crop-based)	2.499	.000*	Highly significant → Spice-based farmers are much more likely to fall into higher income categories than crop-based farmers.
Education (No formal/Primary)	-18.680	.000*	Perfect separation issue (very few cases in this group), coefficient not interpretable.
Education (Secondary)	-0.997	.435	Not significant.
Education (O/L level)	0.177	.815	Not significant.
Education (A/L level)	1.370	.071	Marginal effect → A/L farmers tend to be in higher income, borderline significant.
Farm size (<2 acres)	-0.915	.243	Not significant.
Farm size (2–5 acres)	-1.172	.201	Not significant.
Reference categories	Crop-based, Higher Education, >5 acres.	–	Used as baselines.

The model fits well, showing that the agritourism sector, especially spice-based farming, is the strongest predictor of higher income, while education shows a marginal positive effect, and the infrastructure index is a significant predictor. The analysis indicates that the agritourism sector is the strongest predictor of farmer income, with spice-based farmers significantly more likely to achieve higher income compared to crop-based farmers. Education shows a marginal positive effect, particularly at the A/L level, while farm size and infrastructure availability do not have a significant impact. These findings align with existing literature, which highlights the income advantages of high-value crops and suggests that infrastructure alone does not guarantee higher earnings in agritourism.

CHAPTER TEN

Results and Discussion

Current Situation of Optimal Agritourism Practices Locally in the Study Area

10.1 Current Situation of Agritourism Communities in the Study Area

During the key informant discussions, the research team identified five major sub-sectors of community-based agritourism activities in the study area. They are tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables. The following case study examples illustrate how businesses are performing within each of these sub-sectors. These case studies were conducted in the study area using various data collection methods, including structured questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, direct observations, and focus group interviews. A total of 6 case studies were used to gather and analyze data on the current state of agritourism activities in the study area, primarily focusing on horticultural and plantation crops. These case studies explored specific agritourism initiatives within rural Sri Lankan communities, offering detailed insights into successful or struggling ventures.

10.1.1 Case Study: Agritourism in Hiriwadunna Village (Tourism with Vegetables)

Hiriwadunna a well-known agritourism village near Sigiriya, located in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka, under the Palugaswewa Divisional Secretariat. The nearest agrarian service center is located in Palugaswewa. The majority of the villagers belong to the Sinhala Buddhist community, most of whom have completed up to the GCE O/L level. Farming is their primary occupation, and agritourism has emerged as an important means of livelihood development, providing an additional monthly income of approximately Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000 for most families. The farmers of Hiriwadunna cultivate a diverse range of crops including vegetables, fruits, spice crops, grains, and some plantation crops, on inherited lands. Commonly grown crops include:

- Vegetables: Chilli, tomato, brinjal, okra, winged bean, bean.
- Fruits: Banana, papaya, passion fruit, watermelon.
- Other Crops: Paddy, coconut.

The village has access to essential infrastructure, including electricity from the national grid, with some farmers on inherited lands solar power. Water for farming is primarily sourced from a village tank, while a few families rely on deep or shallow wells.

Hiriwadunna's proximity to popular tourist destinations such as Sigiriya Rock Fortress, Minneriya Wewa, Hurulu Eco Park, Habarana, and Pidurangala, has made it an attractive location for agritourism. Visitors from countries including Japan, Australia, India, Italy, France, the USA, the UK, and various Arabic countries learn about Hiriwadunna through bullock cart drivers, safari companies, and tourist guides. The village is home to approximately 250 families, with nearly 188 —about three-quarters of the population — actively engaged in agritourism.

Agritourism in the village offers visitors a unique and immersive experience of rural life. A typical tour itinerary includes:

- **Bullock Cart Ride:** The tour begins with a traditional bullock cart ride near the village pond. Visitors enjoy a 15–30-minute ride through the countryside.
- **Catamaran Boat Ride:** Upon reaching Hiriwadunna Lake, tourists board a catamaran for a scenic boat ride. The lake offers beautiful views of Sigiriya and Pidurangala rocks. Visitors may participate in rowing, while the boatman crafts hats and necklaces as souvenirs.
- **Village Tour:** After docking on the other side of the lake, visitors walk through paddy fields and vegetable cultivations, experiencing rural life firsthand. They visit a traditional village house known as 'wadiya/gami gedara' and climb the tree house, used by farmers to guard their crops from wild animals.
- **Traditional Meal:** Tourists are treated to a simple, authentic Sri Lankan meal prepared using freshly harvested vegetables. They are encouraged to pick vegetables and assist in cooking.
- **Cultural Demonstrations:** After lunch, villagers showcase traditional skills such as weaving coconut leaves to make roofs and using tools like the 'kulla' and 'mirisgala' to separate rice grains from the husk.

Despite the success of agritourism, the village faces several challenges that hinder its further development:

- **Wildlife Hazards:** Wild animals such as monkeys and elephants pose significant threats to crops and property.
- **Irrigation Support:** Farmers have requested additional support to improve irrigation infrastructure and ensure a reliable water supply.
- **Training and Awareness:** Villagers have expressed the need for awareness and training programmes focused on agritourism to enhance their services and attract more tourists.
- **Maintenance Costs for Village Houses:** To maintain their traditional 'wadiya' or 'gami gedara,' villagers need financial support, to purchase thatching materials for roofs.

Hiriwadunna has the potential to become a leading agritourism destination, provided that appropriate interventions are made to address the existing challenges.

Judgment: Hiriwadunna village exemplifies the success of agritourism as a sustainable livelihood strategy, benefiting nearly three-quarters of its families with additional income. Its diverse agriculture and strategic location near popular tourist sites make it a unique destination. However, challenges such as wildlife threats, irrigation demands, and financial constraints for maintaining infrastructure must be addressed through targeted interventions. With enhanced training, support, and effective resource management, Hiriwadunna can fully realize its agritourism potential and serve as a model for rural economic development through agritourism.

10.1.2 Case Study – 2: Egodawewa Agritourism Village (Tourism with Vegetables)

Egodawewa is a well-known agritourism village near Sigiriya, located in the Matale District of Sri Lanka. It falls under the Dambulla Divisional Secretariat, with the nearest agrarian service center is in Kibissa. The majority of the villagers belong to the Sinhala Buddhist community, and many combine farming with agritourism to support their livelihoods. Through agritourism, villagers earn an additional monthly income ranging from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000.

Farmers in Egodawewa cultivate a variety of crops on their lands, including:

- Vegetables: brinjal, okra, winged bean, pumpkin, jackfruit, sweet potato, moringa and bean.
- Fruits: Banana, papaya, pineapple, and watermelon.
- Other Crops: Paddy, coconut, and various spices like pepper, turmeric, ginger.

The village is well-equipped with basic infrastructure such as electricity supplied by the national grid. Water sources consist of village tanks, deep or shallow wells, agro-wells, and municipal water supplies. The fertile lands and favourable conditions enable farmers to diversify their crops, supporting both their food security and agritourism activities.

Egodawewa's close proximity to major tourist attractions such as Sigiriya Rock Fortress and Dambulu Viharaya attracts visitors from countries, such as Japan, Australia, India, Italy, France, the USA, the UK, and Germany. Many tourists learn about Egodawewa agritourism offerings through safari companies, catamaran boat operators, and tourist guides. The village has around 35 families, with nearly 30 actively engaged in agritourism.

The agritourism experience in Egodawewa typically begins when safari companies or boat operators notify villagers of upcoming tourist visits. The participating villagers then prepare traditional Sri Lankan lunches for visitors at a ‘gami gedara’ or ‘wadiya,’ — a typical village house. Upon arrival, tourists are offered a variety of authentic agritourism activities:

- **Farm Tours and U-Pick Operations:** Visitors are taken on a tour of village farms, where they stroll through vegetable fields, spice gardens, and fruit plantations. They also get to participate in U-pick activities, harvesting fresh produce directly from the fields.

- **Cooking Demonstrations:** One of the most engaging experiences in Egodawewa is the cooking demonstration. Visitors dress in traditional Sri Lankan attire, such as the 'sarong' and 'cheeththa,' and learn to prepare local delicacies like 'kavum,' 'pol sambol', and 'pol roti.'
- **Traditional Practices:** Visitors observe traditional techniques such as making roofs from coconut leaves and watch how villagers use tools like the 'kulla' and 'mirisgala' to separate rice grains from the husk and straw.
- **Cultural Performance:** A lively display of 'raban gaseema' (tambourine beating) adds a vibrant cultural touch, giving tourists a genuine experience of Sri Lankan rural life.

Despite its success, Egodawewa faces several challenges that limit the growth of its agritourism sector:

- **Land Scarcity:** Farmers face limitations due to the limited availability of arable land available for both agriculture and agritourism activities.
- **Irrigation Issues:** Persistent water scarcity affects crop production and hampers the ability to provide a consistent agritourism experience.
- **Lack of Infrastructure:** While basic infrastructure is available, further development is needed to better accommodate the growing number of tourists.
- **Wildlife Hazards:** Encroachment of wild animals, particularly elephants, poses a significant threat to both crops and village infrastructure.

To further develop their agritourism ventures, the villagers have requested the following forms of support:

- **Beekeeping Boxes:** Villagers are seeking support to acquire beekeeping boxes, aiming to diversify their income sources and enrich the agritourism experience with honey-related activities.
- **Land Solutions:** The community is exploring ways to overcome land scarcity, which would allow for the expansion of both agricultural production and agritourism services.

With the right support and targeted interventions, Egodawewa has the potential to evolve into a thriving agritourism destination — enhancing the visitor experience while significantly improving the livelihoods of its farming community.

Judgment: Egodawewa village highlights the success of agritourism as a supplementary livelihood, with most families benefiting from increased income through diverse agricultural and cultural activities. Its strategic location near major tourist attractions combined with engaging experiences such as farm tours and traditional cooking demonstrations, make it an attractive destination. However, growth is hindered by challenges such as land scarcity, irrigation issues, wildlife threats, and infrastructure limitations hinder its growth. Addressing these constraints through targeted interventions —such as improved irrigation, beekeeping initiatives, and land management solutions — can help unlock the village's full potential. Egodawewa holds significant promise as a model agritourism village for sustainable rural development.

10.1.3 Case Study 3: Meemure Agritourism Village (Agritourism with Paddy)

Meemure, a popular village located near the border of the Kandy and Matale districts, falls under the Udadumbara Divisional Secretariat in the Kandy District of Sri Lanka. The nearest agrarian service center is situated in Dambagahapitiya. The majority of the villagers are Sinhala Buddhists, most of whom have completed their education up to the GCE O/L level. Farming is the primary occupation, with many cultivating paddy, spice crops, and vegetables on inherited lands —primarily focusing on paddy and pepper. In recent years, agritourism has emerged as a significant supplementary livelihood. Although most families engaged in agritourism currently earn less than Rs. 25,000 per month, this reflects the growing potential of this sector in the village.

The nearest major population centers to Meemure are Ududumbara and Hunnasgiriya, both located approximately 36 kilometers from the village. both to the poor road conditions and limited transportation options, it takes at least two hours to reach these towns. Meemure's infrastructure includes a water supply sourced from springs, electricity provided by the national grid, and accommodation facilities for visitors. However, around 35% of the farmers still lack access to electricity.

The village is home to several popular tourist destinations, including 'Sooriya Arana' film location, Lake Gala, Diya Karalla, Ali Hatha, Wedilunu Guhawa, Alugal Lena, and Rawana Guhawa. Most visitors to the area are locals, with a smaller number come from countries such as Australia, Germany, China, and France. Tourists typically discover Meemure through Facebook pages and word-of-mouth recommendations from previous visitors.

Visitors to the village can experience rural life through early morning walks that reveal the daily routines of villagers. These walks lead through paddy fields, along riverbanks, and through jungle paths, with opportunities to climb modest mountains, swim in natural waterways. Guests are invited into village homes for a cup of Ceylon tea, can observe farmers at work in the fields, and learn about the community's culture, lifestyle, and traditions, offering a unique and immersive experience.

Farmers in Meemure face several significant challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, like limited access to electricity and transport facilities. Marketing and promotion are also challenging, as many struggle to attract a wider audience to the village and its agritourism activities. Financial constraints further limit their ability to invest in enhancing farming practices and enhancing tourism-related activities. Additionally, wild animal threats— particularly from oxen and wild pigs — pose serious risks to crops and livelihoods.

To address these challenges, farmers have expressed the need for government support in the following areas:

- Development of tourist attraction activities:
  - Aerial rope adventures
  - Target shooting with air rifles
  - Jungle trekking
- Promotion of agricultural practices such as cultivation of herbal and fruit plants
- Encouragement of traditional paddy and vegetable farming as interactive tourist experiences.
- Implementation of solutions for wild animal hazards, particularly crop damage caused monkeys. -
- Improvements of basic infrastructure, with a focus on electricity and transportation facilities

Judgement: Meemure village showcases the potential of agritourism, centered around paddy farming and immersive rural experiences, despite most families currently earning only modest supplementary income. Its natural beauty and rich cultural heritage attract both local and international visitors. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited marketing efforts, and wildlife hazards impede its growth. Addressing these issues through targeted government support for tourism development, infrastructure improvement, and wildlife management can significantly enhance Meemure's agritourism appeal. With proper interventions, Meemure improvement thrive as a unique agritourism destination in Sri Lanka.

10.1.4 Case Study 4 - Ranweli Spice Garden (Agritourism with Spices)

Mr. C.W.M. Perera, a Sinhala Buddhist, inherited less than an acre of fertile land in the Kaudupallala area of Matale district. Recognizing the region's popularity for spice gardening among tourists, he transformed this small piece of land into the successful Ranweli Spice Garden agritourism venture. With over five years of experience, Mr. Perera's journey has been characterized by innovation, dedication, and strong community collaboration.

Ranweli Spice Garden is more than just a farm — it is a holistic agritourism destination. Mr. Perera cultivates a diverse range of crops, including spices, medicinal plants, and paddy, using a combination of chemical and organic fertilizers. The lush garden offers a rich sensory experience, highlighting the rich agricultural heritage of the region.

The village of Kaudupallala is home to numerous spice gardens, forming a vibrant network of opportunities within the tourism sector. Ranweli Spice Garden has played a key role in this ecosystem by building strong partnerships with local tourism agencies, hotels, and tour operators. These partnerships have been instrumental in promoting the garden as a desired destination for travelers seeking authentic agricultural experiences.

Ranweli Spice Garden offers a variety of agritourism activities designed to engage and educate visitors. Guided tours are available in multiple languages, providing insights into spice cultivation and traditional farming practices. Visitors also can enjoy Ayurveda treatments and massages using locally sourced medicinal plants and spices. The garden's restaurant serves a unique ‘kamatha lunch,’ offering a traditional and immersive dining experience. Additionally, a range of spices and Ayurveda products are available for purchase, allowing visitors to take a piece of their experience home.

Mr. Perera's family plays a crucial role in the management and operation of Ranweli Spice Garden. Their collective effort guarantees the smooth running of the business and the delivery of high-quality service. Collaboration extends beyond the family to include partnerships with an Ayurveda hospital and local doctors, further enhancing the garden’s value and offerings.

Strategic promotion by tour agents, websites, and hotels has significantly boosted Ranweli Spice Garden's visibility. The garden's reputation for trustworthy service and authentic experiences made it a preferred destination for tourists. By blending traditional farming with modern tourism, Mr. Perera has created a sustainable enterprise that benefits his family, the local community, and visitors from around the world.

Judgement: Ranweli Spice Garden exemplifies the successful integration of traditional spice cultivation and agritourism, offering immersive activities like guided tours, Ayurveda treatments, and traditional dining experiences. Through strategic partnerships and strong community involvement, Mr. Perera has created a sustainable enterprise that benefits local residents while attracting visitors from around the world. The garden highlights the potential of small-scale agritourism to preserve cultural heritage and support rural livelihoods.

10.1.5 Case Study 5: Oak Ray Isiwara Ayurveda Spice Village (Agritourism with Spices)

Oak Ray Isiwara Ayurveda Spice Village, located in Yatawaththa, Matale, Sri Lanka, began as a coconut and rubber plantation and has since transformed into a successful agritourism venture. The owner, Mr. Shyam Indrajith, a Sinhala Buddhist educated up to the G.C.E. Advanced Level, has been managing this enterprise for more than five years.

Spanning 5.5 acres, the spice garden is rich with spice crops and medicinal plants. It offers visitors an immersive experience through guided educational tours that explore the world of spices and herbs.

The spice garden provides a variety of activities designed to enhance the visitor experience. These include educational tours conducted by multilingual guides, highlighting the cultivation and uses of numerous spices and herbs. Ayurveda spa treatments, which utilize the medicinal plants, promote holistic well-being. A restaurant on-site serves traditional meals prepared with locally sourced ingredients. Visitors can also explore stalls selling a variety of spices. Ayurveda products, and locally manufactured items such as the 'kothalahibutu jug,' a product particularly popular among overseas travelers. Additionally, demonstrations of the manual production processes for Ayurveda and spice products provide unique insights into traditional manufacturing practices.

The establishment of Oak Ray Isiwara Ayurveda Spice Village has considerably benefited the local community by creating job opportunities for villagers. Its collaboration with local farmers, Ayurveda hospitals, and medical doctors further integrates the garden into the community, fostering a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship.

Although the spice garden maintains its own website, much of its promotion is driven by tour agents who actively market the location to tourists.

Mr. Shyam Indrajith's dedication to promoting local products and sustainable shines throughout Oak Ray Isiwara Ayurveda Spice Village. By blending traditional agriculture with modern tourism, he has created a unique and successful venture that not only promotes local products and traditions but also significantly contributes to the well-being of the local community.

Judgment: Oak Ray Isiwara Ayurveda Spice Village exemplifies the seamless integration of traditional spice cultivation with modern agritourism, offering diverse activities such as educational tours, Ayurveda treatments, and showcases of local products. Mr. Shyam Indrajith's strong commitment to sustainability and community development has created a thriving venture that supports local livelihoods and preserves cultural heritage. This model highlights the significant potential of agritourism to generate both economic and social benefits in rural areas.

10.2 SWOT Analysis for the Community-based Activities in Sub-sectors of the Agritourism Industry

Analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is essential for any industry to understand its capabilities and growth potential.

Strengths

Rich Agricultural Heritage

Sri Lanka has a long-standing tradition of distinctive farming practices, offering an authentic and enriching experience for agritourists. This cultural richness offers tourists the opportunity to actively engage in time-honoured agricultural activities, deepening their appreciation and understanding of local traditions.

Diverse Agro-Climatic Zones

Sri Lanka's diverse climate zones, ranging from lush tea plantations in the highlands to expansive rice paddies in the lowlands, offer a diverse range of agritourism experiences, attracting tourists with different interests in nature, farming, and agricultural products.

Authentic Cultural Experiences

Agritourism in Sri Lanka offers tourists the chance to experience authentic cultural practices—such as traditional lifestyles, crafts, and cuisine — fostering a deeper connection with local communities.

Biodiversity and Scenic Beauty

Sri Lanka's rich biodiversity and scenic landscapes serve as major attractions, providing the perfect backdrop for agritourism. These natural features not only enhance the overall experience but also strongly appeal to eco-tourists and nature enthusiasts.

Government Support for Rural Development

The Sri Lankan government's policies promoting rural development and tourism provide strong institutional backing for agritourism. This support enhances the viability and potential of agritourism projects through initiatives such as infrastructure development and local enterprises.

Weaknesses

Limited Infrastructure in Rural Areas

Poor infrastructure in rural areas —such as inadequate roads, limited public transport, and a lack of essential amenities —can hinder access to agritourism sites. This limitations may negatively affect the overall tourist experience and restrict the growth and reach of agritourism initiatives.

Low Awareness and Promotion

Despite its potential, agritourism in Sri Lanka suffers from low visibility, both locally and internationally. The absence of comprehensive marketing and promotional strategies means that many potential tourists remain unaware of the unique experiences the sector has to offer.

Inadequate Training and Skills among Farmers

Many farmers lack training in essential areas such as hospitality management, marketing, and foreign languages —skills that are crucial for operating successful agritourism ventures. This knowledge gap can negatively affect the quality of visitor experiences and reduce overall operational efficiency.

Seasonal Tourism Demand

The agritourism sector is highly dependent on tourist seasons, resulting in fluctuating visitor numbers. This seasonal nature can lead to inconsistent income, making agritourism financially inconsistent and unsustainable for smaller operators — especially in rural areas with limited tourist amenities.

Financial Barriers

Developing agritourism infrastructure requires significant initial investment, which can be a significant financial burden for many small-scale farmers. The high upfront costs, coupled with financial risk, may discourage many from entering or expanding within the agritourism market.

Opportunities

Growing Interest in Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Tourism

The global trend toward sustainable tourism aligns well with agritourism, which emphasizes eco-friendly practices, organic farming, and low-impact travel. This trend offers Sri Lanka a valuable opportunity to a valuable market of environmentally conscious travelers.

Income Diversification for Farmers

Agritourism offers farmers the opportunity to diversify their income sources, reducing their dependence on traditional agriculture and enhancing financial stability. This diversification can play a key role in alleviating poverty and improving livelihoods in rural communities.

Government and NGO Support

Growing recognition of agritourism's potential for rural development has prompted increased support from both the government agencies and NGOs. This assistance often includes funding, training programmes, and infrastructure development, all of which contribute to the sector’s growth and sustainability.

Health and Wellness Tourism

Integrating health and wellness practices, such as Ayurveda, with agritourism can attract tourists seeking holistic travel experiences. This market segment is expanding globally, and Sri Lanka's rich tradition of wellness offerings positions it well to capitalize on this growing trend.

Increasing Demand for Local and Authentic Experiences

Tourists are increasingly seeking authentic, immersive travel experiences that foster a deep connection with local culture and traditions. Agritourism in Sri Lanka is well positioned to meet this demand by offering unique opportunities focused on rural life, traditional farming practices, and local cuisine.

Digital Marketing Potential

The rise of social media and digital platforms provides a valuable opportunity to reach a wider global audience. Cost-effective online marketing strategies can effectively promote Sri Lanka's agritourism sector to eco-conscious travelers, millennials, and Gen Z —groups that are highly engaged with sustainable travel trends.

Untapped Rural Land Resources

Unused or underutilized land in rural areas offers opportunities for agritourism development without displacing primary agricultural activities. This can facilitate the expansion of agritourism offerings while improving overall land use efficiency.

Threats

Climate Change and Environmental Risks

Climate change poses significant risks to agricultural productivity, increasing the frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts and floods. These environmental challenges can disrupt agricultural activities and, consequently, agritourism operations.

Dependency on Tourist Seasons and External Markets

Agritourism's dependence on seasonal tourist flows and international markets makes the sector vulnerable to economic fluctuations. Economic downturns, geopolitical tensions, or disruptions tensions pandemics can disproportionately impact on agritourism businesses.

Social Theories and Their Application in Agritourism Policy Formulation in Sri Lanka

According to the previous studies, several social theories offer valuable insights for designing policy interventions to promote agritourism as a sustainable livelihood development practice in Sri Lanka. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) highlights the importance of strengthening human, social, natural, physical, and financial assets to improve rural livelihoods while reducing vulnerability (Chambers & Conway, 1992). Policies informed by the SLF can prioritize investments in infrastructure, training, and market access for rural agritourism enterprises. The Social Capital Theory emphasizes the role of trust, networks, and norms in enabling collective action and community resilience (Putnam, 2000). In agritourism, this can translate into policies that foster community-based tourism associations and public–private partnerships. The Community-based Development Theory argues for participatory approaches in planning and implementing development initiatives, ensuring local ownership and cultural relevance (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Similarly, Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new practices spread within communities, guided by factors such as perceived benefits, compatibility, and ease of adoption (Rogers, 2003).

Policymakers can use this framework to design targeted awareness programmes, demonstration farms, and pilot agritourism projects. Finally, Stakeholder **Theory** stresses the importance of addressing the interests of all actors involved—farmers, tourists, local governments, and private investors—for equitable and sustainable outcomes (Freeman, 2010). Integrating these theories enables a holistic policy approach that builds local capacities, encourages innovation, strengthens social cohesion, and ensures long-term sustainability of agritourism initiatives in Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Results and Discussion

Optimal Agritourism Practices Worldwide

11.1 Current State of Optimal Agritourism Practices Worldwide

Four global case studies were selected for the fourth objective using the snowball sampling method and secondary data. These case studies illustrate how businesses have performed in various community-based tourism subsectors. Each study examines the business overview, objectives implementation, infrastructure, marketing approaches, financial impact, community engagement, challenges and lessons learned.

11.1.1 Case Study 1: Tea Culture and Community-based Tourism in Huey Nam Guen Village-Japan

Introduction

Huey Nam Guen is a highland village situated at an altitude of 1,200 meters, renowned for its century-old tradition of producing fermented tea known as ‘miang’. This community is located in Vieng Pa Pao District, which is in the Southern most part of Chiang Rai Province. The village is part of the agricultural extension zone associated with the Huey Pong Royal Project.

Business Overview

Farm Profile

Tea has become the village’s primary tourist product, adding a unique identity to its brand and positioning the community as Thailand's hub for organic Assam tea cultivation.

Agritourism Activities

The village incorporates its signature organic five-coloured tea into a comprehensive community-based tourism package. This package comprises homestay accommodation, traditional meals, tasting sessions of organic five-coloured tea, and tea-related souvenirs. Additionally, visitors can also engage in a variety of health and tea-related activities, such as traditional massages, cooking with organic tea ingredients, harvesting wild tea leaves, handcrafting and processing tea, exploring organic tea gardens, and trekking through wild tea forests.

Objectives

- To develop concepts for integrating tea culture into sustainable tourism, aiming to revitalize small-scale tea enterprises in Thailand.
- To encourage villagers to operate agritourism businesses based on the core principles of community-based tourism (CBT).
- To support farmers in managing the negative impacts of agricultural development, such as the harmful use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, including chemical residue in their products

Implementation

An organic tea group from Huey Nam Guen village is working to transform wild tea (*Camellia sinensis* var. *Assamica*) traditionally used to make 'miang' —a pickled chewing snack—into a drinkable, health-oriented tea.

Additionally, the creation of 'five coloured tea' (locally known as 'cha ha si') serves as a method to engage tourists, differentiate the miang product for tourists, increase the value of wild tea, and foster relationships between tea farmers and tourists. This tea blend includes white, green, yellow, black, and red teas, each crafted from specific parts of the tea plant using local knowledge and techniques. White tea uses only the tip of the wild tea bud, green tea incorporates a second leaf and its tip, yellow tea combines three leaves (one tip and two second leaves), and black tea requires a group of tea leaves comprising at least four leaves. Additionally, a type of red tea is produced using *Luead Mang Korn* (dragon blood), a new herb introduced by the Royal Project.

Infrastructure

- Investments in developing infrastructure such as tea farms, mushroom farms (e.g., the Shitake mushroom farm 'Genboku Shitake-en Miyanaka'), and organic apple orchards (e.g., Kubota farm) to offer agricultural tourism experiences like tea picking and apple picking.
- Development of farmer-owned restaurants (e.g., 'Takenichinoen Yucha-an') that serve tea-based fusion cuisine using local ingredients, providing tourists with unique dining experiences.
- Investments in community market places (e.g., 'Tawara Yamasato Ichiba') aimed at selling tea products and other agricultural commodities, creating opportunities for local farmers to showcase and sell their products to visitors.
- Provision of rental bicycles and bike lanes to support tourist transportation and enhance sightseeing experiences within tea-growing communities.
- Efforts to preserve cultural heritage, such as archaeological sites (e.g., 'Onoyasuma Ronohaka'), though challenges remain in providing accurate accurate and multilingual tourism information and interpretation.

Marketing Approaches

- Collaborations with local farmers, restaurants, and community market places to create attractive tourism packages and experiences. For example, partnering with farmer-owned restaurants to offer unique tea-based dining experiences for visitors.

- Organizing special events and programmes targeted at tourists, such as tea farmer exchange programmes, tea brewing demonstrations, tea tasting sessions, and farm tours. These interactive and educational activities enhance the appeal of tea tourism.
- Highlighting cultural aspects and culinary traditions related to tea production through hands-on experiences such as tea picking, tea brewing workshops, and cooking demonstrations using local tea ingredients. These activities engage tourists and offer authentic cultural immersion.

Financial Impact

Hosting tea farmer exchange programmes and agritourism activities — such as tea tasting, farm tours, and culinary experiences — generate revenue from participating tourists. Tour packages that include tea tasting, meals, and farm visits contribute to income for local farmers and businesses.

Farmer-owned establishments like restaurants also benefit financially by hosting tourists for tea-related dining experiences. The growth of agritourism and tea-related activities creates employment opportunities within the community, supporting livelihoods and local fostering economic development.

Tea farmers and local businesses diversify their income by engaging in agritourism activities, offering workshops, demonstrations, and guided tours to tourists interested in tea culture and agriculture. This diversification reduces dependence on traditional farming income and enhances overall profitability.

Community Engagement

Agritourism initiatives, including tea farmer exchange programmes, and related activities, actively involve local farmers and community members in tourism. This engagement fosters community pride and ownership in highlighting local agricultural practices and traditions. Agritourism contributes to income diversification by providing additional revenue streams for farmers and local businesses. Hosting tourists for tea-related experiences, culinary workshops, and farm tours supports entrepreneurship and promotes sustainable livelihoods.

Environmental and Social Impact

Agritourism initiatives often prioritize organic farming methods and sustainable agriculture practices, such as the production of organic tea and vegetables. This promotes environmental stewardship by reducing chemical inputs and preserving soil and water quality. Additionally, local farmers and businesses benefit from increased income and employment opportunities generated through tourism activities.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Strengths

- Exhibit unique and traditional tea-growing practices, offering authentic experiences for tourists interested in agritourism
- Introduce diverse activities such as tea tasting, farm visits, and cultural experiences, enhancing the overall appeal of tourism packages.
- Involvement of academic institutions like Mae Fah Luang University strengthens the programme's credibility and supports research and development in sustainable agriculture and tourism.

Weaknesses

- The lack of multilingual tourism information and interpretation boards limits the accessibility and understanding of tourists from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Limited accommodation options, such as farm-stay or homestay reduce opportunities for immersive, extended visitor experiences.
- The growth of tourist activities, including bicycle rentals and guided tours, may put pressure on local resources like transportation infrastructure and waste management.

Opportunities

- Positioning Huey Nam Guen and Tawara as unique agritourism destinations can attract environmentally conscious and culturally curious tourists.
- The exchange programme strengthens the appeal of these destinations by promoting cultural and experiential learning.
- Ongoing collaboration and innovation in agritourism can lead to the creation of new tourism products and experiences that cater to diverse visitor interests.

Threats

- Intensive tourism activities may negatively affect natural resources, biodiversity, and landscapes, requiring effective management to prevent environmental degradation.
- The growing popularity of agritourism could lead to overcrowding during peak seasons, diminishing the quality of visitor experiences and overburdening local infrastructure and services.

Conclusion

Throughout the implementation and development of the exchange programme between Tawara and Huey Nam Guen, various forms of sustainable tourism and related approaches were identified and emphasized.

1. Green Tourism in Tawara: Focused on urban-rural interaction by connecting urban by connecting rural communities. This included using organic tea and vegetables in value-added activities that encouraged meaningful engagement between hosts

and guests, while promoting health and well-being through safe and sustainable food products.

2. Community-based Tourism (CBT) in Huey Nam Guen: Focused on branding and imaging tea products, particularly the 'Five Coloured Tea,' to strengthen place identity and reshape the image of the tea community. Organic wild tea products, such as miang, were integral to reshaping the tea community's image under CBT.
3. Health Tourism: Emphasized the link between tourism and health and well-being concerns, especially through the promotion of organic and safe food products such as tea and vegetables from Tawara and Huey Nam Guen.
4. Heritage Tourism: Focused on preserving traditional tea cultures and practices in both Tawara and Huey Nam Guen. This included safeguarding Japanese tea heritage in Tawara and maintaining miang tea traditions in Huey Nam Guen. Heritage tourism also encompassed the revitalization of tea-related properties and culinary practices—such as repurposing tea estates for tourism and incorporating tea leaves into modern cuisine — contributing to sustainable tourism development.

These forms of sustainable tourism and their associated approaches contribute to a development model centered on the cultural commodification of tea. They demonstrate how tea communities can leverage their heritage, culture, and agricultural products to enrich tourism experiences while fostering sustainable development and preserving local traditions.

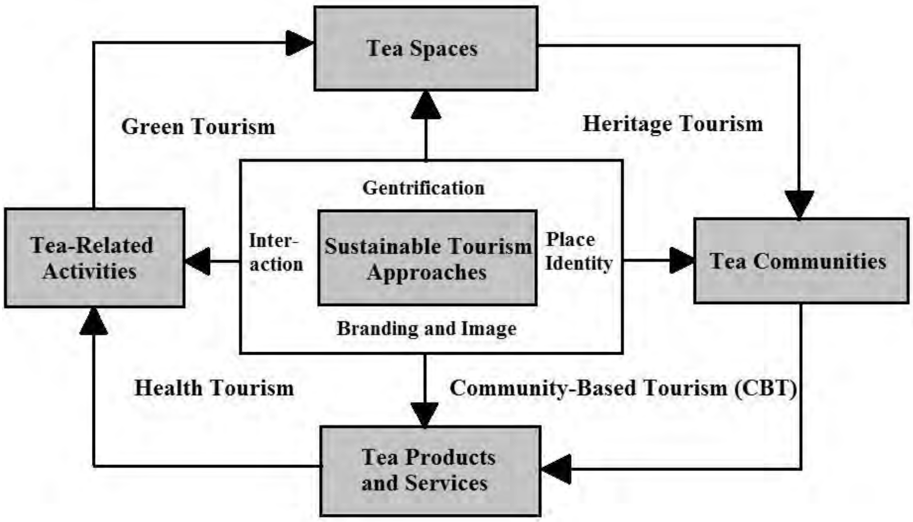


Figure 11.1: A Development Model of Tea Cultural Commodification in Sustainable Tourism

11.1.2 Case Study 2: Promoting *the* Local Economy through a Creative Tourism Travel Route: A Practical Application in Chiangrai Province, Thailand

Introduction

Thailand's tourism industry has significantly contributed to economic growth due to its rich natural and cultural resources, including human artefacts and traditional lifestyles. The cultural tourism attraction in Thailand is characterized by its rich arts, traditions, folklore, architecture, ancient sites, and antique artefacts. The country has preserved local and domestic wisdoms, which have helped the Thai people survive. The current tourism industry has shifted from mass tourism to niche markets and cultural attractions.

Chiangrai Province, located in the North of Thailand, is a prime destination for both Thai and foreign travelers. The province has seen a 28% increase in tourists and travelers since 2011, making it an attractive destination for both Thai and foreign travelers. Creative tourism, a modern tourism industry, aims to preserve Thai culture and way of life, attracting tourists and retaining their visit. Chiangrai Province, Thailand, has a rich history of creative tourism with over 750 years of ethnic origins. With vast land and natural resources, it has potential for a sustainable tourism industry. This research aims to promote cultural traveling routes, increase local and international tourism income, and promote ASEAN tourism.

Business Overview

Farm Profile

Chiang Rai province is situated in the Northern most part of Thailand, characterized by a rugged mountainous landscape. The area is notable for its proximity to the Mekong River, particularly at the Golden Triangle located in the Chiang Saen district of Chiang Rai province. The Golden Triangle is a significant tourist destination where Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar converge at the point where the Mekong River meets. This region holds historical, cultural, and geographical importance, drawing visitors interested in exploring the unique intersection of these three countries along the Mekong River.

Agritourism Activities

Visitors can learn about traditional farming techniques specific to each ethnic group, such as rice cultivation, corn and maize farming, tea cultivation, and the harvesting of herbal plants. This hands-on experience allows tourists to understand the local agricultural practices. Tourists can participate in cooking classes to learn about the diverse culinary traditions of different ethnic communities. This may involve cooking local dishes using ingredients sourced from the region, providing insight into traditional cooking methods and flavours. Guided tours into community forests and jungle areas offer visitors the opportunity to learn about the collection of forest products for livelihoods. This could include activities like identifying medicinal plants or gathering materials for local crafts.

Local artisans may conduct workshops on bamboo crafts, teaching tourists how to make items like brooms, mats, and other handicrafts using traditional techniques. Tourists can participate in or observe traditional festivals and ceremonies specific to each ethnic group, gaining an understanding of the cultural significance and customs associated with these events. Visitors can engage in workshops on various traditional crafts like pottery making, knife forging, and bamboo weaving, learning directly from skilled local craftsmen and women. Activities related to coffee and tea production can be part of the agritourism experience, where tourists can learn about the cultivation, processing, and tasting of locally produced coffee and tea.

Objectives

- To assess the potential of the cultural tourism in Chiangrai Province, Thailand
- To explore creative tourism travel routes that can enhance the economic value for Chiangrai Province, Thailand

Implementation

Strategy

Agritourism was integrated by allowing tourists to visit hill tribe villages such as Bann Lor Cha, Bann Karen Ruammit, Bann Ja Bu Sri, and Bann Santikeree. These visits provided opportunities for tourists to learn about the villagers' ways of life, cultural practices, and engage in activities with the local community. Tourists were likely encouraged to participate in cultural festivals like the Flower Festival, Cherry Blossom Festival on Doi Mae Salong, Blooming Dok Siew at Phu Chi Fah, and Mae Khong Fish Preservation. These festivals highlight local traditions, arts, and culinary delights, offering tourists rich and immersive experiences.

Agritourism was likely promoted through tea and fresh coffee-tasting sessions, where tourists could sample locally grown and processed teas and coffees. These experiences highlights the agricultural aspect of the region and provides insights into traditional production methods. Agritourism was integrated with the promotion of villages producing OVOP (One village One Product) items such as Bann Doi Chaang, Bann Long Plai Na, Bann Mae Salong, and Bann Vieng Ka Long. These villages likely offered guided tours that highlighted the production processes of local products, such as coffee, tea, handicrafts, or other specialty items unique to each village.

Agritourism activities may have included workshops on farming techniques, such as organic farming practices, herbal plant cultivation, or bamboo product crafting. These hands-on experiences allowed tourists to actively participate in agricultural and traditional craft activities,. Agritourism integrated into farm operations likely involved close collaboration with local communities, allowing tourists to interact directly with farmers and artisans, gaining insights into their livelihoods while supporting sustainable rural development.

Infrastructure Development

There has likely been development and improvement of tourism facilities and services, including accommodations such as homestays (as noted in private reports), hotels, and guesthouses to accommodate tourists during their visits. Home stays, in particular, offer tourists an authentic chance to experience local lifestyles and traditions first hand. Investments have also been made toward the preservation and restoration of tourism attractions, ensuring that cultural sites and heritage are well-maintained and accessible. This effort includes maintaining historical background and cultural identity of local communities.






There is a strong emphasis on tourism management and safety measures, including ongoing monitoring and assessment of tourism impacts to ensure the security and well-being of visitors. This may include implementing guidelines and regulations to protect tourists and local resources. Investments are directed towards community participation in tourism management, aiming to empower local communities and generate income from tourism activities. Such involvement supports sustainable development of tourism by ensuring that local communities share in its advantages.

Challenges and Lessons

Strengths

- Chiang Rai Province boasts a rich cultural heritage with diverse ethnic communities, each offering unique traditions, festivals, and lifestyles that attract tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences.
- The Province's mountainous terrain, Mekong River, waterfalls, and lush forests provide natural attractions that appeal to outdoor enthusiasts and eco-tourists.
- Strong community involvement and initiatives in community-based tourism offer immersive experiences, such as homestays and participation in local activities.
- The promotion of local products like coffee, tea, and handicrafts (OTOP) adds value to the tourism experience and supports sustainable livelihoods.
- Investments in tourism infrastructure — including transportation routes, accommodations (homestays, hotels), and cultural preservation—enhance the overall visitor experience.

Weaknesses

- Despite improvements, infrastructure in remote areas remains inadequate, affecting accessibility and visitor comfort.
- Reliance on seasonal festivals and activities leads to fluctuations in tourist arrivals, challenging year-round sustainability.
- Limited skills and training for among local communities hinder effective sustainable tourism management and service delivery.

Opportunities

- Expanding tourism offerings beyond cultural attractions to include adventure tourism, eco-tourism, and culinary experiences can attract a wider range of visitors.
- Continued investment in infrastructure development —such as transportation and visitor facilities, can enhance accessibility and overall visitor satisfaction.
- Emphasizing sustainability and responsible tourism practices can attract environmentally conscious travelers and the strengthen province's reputation.

Conclusion

This research underscores the importance of cultural tourism in Chiang Rai Province and highlights its potential for sustainable growth by capitalizing on cultural diversity, natural assets, and strong community engagement. By addressing existing challenges and seizing emerging opportunities, Chiang Rai can continue to thrive as a desirable destination —one that celebrates its heritage while embracing responsible and sustainable tourism practices.

10.1.3 Case Study 3: Agritourism: A Sustainable Tourism Development in Maharashtra - A Case Study of Village in Wardha

Introduction

India, one of the world's oldest civilizations and the largest democracy, boasts a rich tapestry of history and culture, blending ancient traditions with modern advancements. The tourism industry in India, a mix of private and public sector service providers, holds significant potential for enhancing cultural heritage and economic growth, particularly in rural areas. While domestic tourism has grown steadily, there is a notable shift from mass tourism to niche tourism, which includes adventure, eco-tourism, and spiritual tourism. Agritourism is also gaining traction, particularly in progressive states like Maharashtra, offering sustainable and immersive experiences in scenic rural settings. However, careful planning is essential to avoid the negative impacts of unregulated tourism, as evidenced in destinations like Goa and Lakshadweep.

Background

Agritourism in India, particularly in Maharashtra, is an emerging sector with significant potential for sustainable development. It offers a valuable additional income source for farmers, thereby enhancing rural livelihoods where agricultural earnings are often limited. This form of tourism elevates the prestige of rural life, creates local jobs, and provides urban tourists with a much-needed escape from their hectic routines, reconnecting them with their roots. Visitors enjoy authentic experiences of village ambiance, local cuisine, culture, and art, fostering active participation and strengthening guest-host bonds. While agritourism is well-established in countries like such as UK, Spain, and Australia, its development in India remains relatively recent and is still in its nascent stages. Systematic records and information on its growth are limited, highlighting the need for structured development and documentation to maximize its potential benefits.

Business Overview

Farm Profile

Located on Zadgaon Road at Umri (Meghe), Wardha, the farm is approximately 5 kilometers from Wardha Railway Station and just 2 kilometers from Mumbai Highway. The farm is owned and managed by Mr. Sunil Mankikar, who spent 25 years working with the Income Tax Department. Though not originally a farmer by profession, Mr. Mankikar transitioned to agriculture after retirement by purchasing a 30-acre farm near Wardha and moved to the village.

In 2008, he launched a project that integrates dairy tourism, medico tourism, and agritourism. As an innovative farmer, he is open to experimenting and actively supports others in developing new ideas. Notably, he has cultivated a black variety of guava. His inspiration to venture into agritourism was sparked by a CD he once watched on the subject.

Objectives

- To study the development and management of agritourism at Village Inn Agritourism in Wardha.
- To assess the impact of tourism development on socio-cultural and environmental aspects of the region.
- To evaluate the long-term sustainability of the destination.
- To analyze the economic feasibility of the project.

Implementation

Strategy

As agriculture serves as the foundation for all activities on the farm, Mr. Mankikar has extensively experimented in this field. His innovative agricultural practices are a significant draw for tourists. The farm features a *gulkand* processing unit and a dairy unit with 40 cows, producing various milk products such as *mawa* and curds. The cultivation of medicinal plants is another notable feature. The primary source of income is generated from agricultural endeavours. Additionally, all personnel employed on the farm, including those working in the processing plant and agritourism services, are locals who receive on-the-job training as part of their employment.

Infrastructure Development

An Ozone zone has been created by planting Tulsi plants over half an acre of the farm. Visitors can enjoy organic fruits and vegetables grown on the farm. Traditional rural games such as *lagori, vittidandu*, and *bhovra* are offered, along with a 2-acre playground for football. Additional activities include boating on the river and night time camp fires. Guests are served simple, home-cooked meals and provided with clean, comfortable accommodations.

A special package for a family of four is available for Rs. 5,000, which includes an overnight stay, meals, and transportation from Wardha Railway Station to the farm. The location is well-connected by road and rail, with reliable access to water and electricity.

Marketing Approach

The owner aims to attract Ayurveda college students to study the medicinal plants cultivated on the farm, catering to both day visitors and overnight guests. The primary target groups include families, senior citizens, and school groups. He is affiliated with MART and is listed on their website, although he prefers a more subtle approach to marketing and does not pursue aggressive promotion.

Financial Impact

In Village Inn Agro Tourism, a family renting a shank at Rs. 500, purchasing meals at Rs. 150 per head, and participates in entertainment and allied activities at Rs. 50 per head, the total revenue generated for a family of four ranges from Rs. 1,300 to Rs. 1,500. During peak season, at least 3-4 families visit per day, resulting in a daily revenue of Rs. 5,000. Additionally, guests often purchase fresh farm products, further contributing to revenue. In the fiscal year 2009-2010, the farm earned a total revenue of Rs. 1,860,000. After deducting expenses —including salaries, maintenance, food costs, and other expenditures — totaling to Rs. 900,000, the net profit for the year was Rs. 960,000. For the year 2010-2011, the target revenue is set at Rs. 2,500,000.

Community Engagement

While agriculture remains the primary source of income, the owner's inventive ventures such as *gulkand* processing and dairy operations contribute both to revenue and the farm’s appeal to tourists. Local residents are employed for all farm tasks and receive training to manage dairy and other processing facilities on-site.

Environmental and Social Impact

The farm accommodates a maximum of 30 guests at a time, focusing on respectful and non-disruptive visitor groups such as families, students, and senior citizens. Male guests are strictly prohibited to prevent potential disturbances, particularly related to alcohol consumption. The owner emphasizes harmony within the local community by banning non-vegetarian food and alcohol and encourages guest participation in farm activities, promoting responsible tourism.

Organic farming methods are employed to maintain crop quality, and guests are encouraged to purchase fresh produce directly from the farm. This form of tourism not only supplements farmers' income during agricultural challenges but also fosters respect for their profession among urban tourists, offering guests a chance to reconnect with nature and experience a sense of nostalgia.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Strengths

- Village Inn Agro Tourism aligns with the traditional lifestyle and culture of the region, attracting visitors seeking an authentic rural experiences.

- The farm's commitment to responsible tourism and organic farming practices helps preserve local culture and biodiversity while minimizing environmental impact.
- Agritourism creates job opportunities for local residents and enhances their skills through training in farm activities and processing units.

Weaknesses

- The farm's maximum capacity of 30 guests at a time may restrict potential revenue and limit the number of visitors.
- Seasonal fluctuations can affect revenue generation, influencing the project's financial stability.
- The strict prohibition of male guests may limit potential clientele and revenue opportunities, which could be perceived exclusionary practices.

Opportunities

- There is potential to expand and diversify agritourism offerings by introducing new activities or accommodations, attracting a wider range of visitors.
- Collaboration with local businesses or organizations can enhance the project's visibility, drawing more visitors and increasing revenue.
- Implementing effective marketing strategies can raise awareness of the project attracting more tourists and amplifying its economic impact.

Threats

- The emergence of competing agritourism projects or alternative tourist destinations may pose a threat to Village Inn Agro Tourism's market share and revenue potential.
- Stricter regulations or evolving societal norms —particularly those related to restrictions on non-vegetarian food or alcohol — may deter certain visitor segments, limiting broader appeal and revenue opportunities.

Conclusion

Agritourism provides urban dwellers a valuable opportunity to retreat from city life and reconnect with nature and traditional village life. Village Inn Agro Tourism in Vidharbha region exemplifies this, founded by an owner with no prior farming background, yet inspiring others to embrace agritourism. By employing local residents, preserving local cultural practices, and emphasizing responsible tourism, the project minimizes environmental impact while generating revenue. With strict regulations against non-vegetarian food and alcohol and a focus on guest participation in farm activities, the project fosters a safe and inclusive environment.

Economic feasibility is evident from the revenue generated, bolstered by innovative ventures such as *gulk* and processing and dairy operations, supporting farmers and empowering communities. Ultimately, agritourism offers a sustainable means of destination development, bridging the gap between urban and rural lifestyles while promoting cultural heritage and environmental conservation.

11.1.4 Case Study 4: A Study on Tourism Planning of Edible Fungus Park from the Perspective of Agricultural Tourism Integration: A Case of Muer Town, Zhashui County, China

Introduction

China, known for its rich wild fungus resources and history of cultivating edible fungi, is home to nearly half of the world's known wild edible fungi. In recent years, national policies such as targeted poverty alleviation, many regions, especially economically disadvantaged regions, have developed characteristic towns centered on edible fungus cultivation, such as Guizhou Qinglong Mushroom Town and Shaanxi Zhashui Fungus Town.

However, these towns typically focus on single-industry production and processing, resulting in short industrial chains and limited social benefits. To enhance their economic sustainability and social resilience, it is crucial for these towns to adopt a multi-development strategy that integrates edible fungus cultivation with tourism. By developing edible fungus theme tourism, these towns can diversify their industrial functions, strengthen their anti-risk capabilities, and boost economic, social, and cultural benefits, ensuring sustainable development.

Background

Agritourism, situated at the intersection of agriculture and tourism, involves engaging visitors in farm-related activities and experiences. This concept allows tourists to participate in activities such as cultivation, harvesting, and processing of agricultural products.

In the context of edible fungus parks, agritourism presents an opportunity to transform these areas into vibrant tourist destinations where visitors can gain hands-on experience with mushroom cultivation, experience the farming process first hand, and enjoy the local culture. This approach not only diversifies the park's industrial functions but also enhances its economic, social, and cultural benefits, contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation in rural areas.

Business Overview

Farm Profile

Edible fungus parks involved in agritourism are typically located in rural or economically disadvantaged regions, such as Zhashui County's Muer Town in China. These parks have formed a significant industrial scale focusing on the production and processing of various edible fungi, including oyster mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, and enoki mushrooms. The size of these parks may vary, but they are generally large enough to accommodate multiple functional areas.

The spatial structure of the park is divided into key zones based on the edible fungus production process and tourism demand. These typically include:

- Edible Fungus Production Area
- Edible Fungus-Themed Tourist Area

Agritourism Activities

Tours showcasing the growing and processing methods of various fungi, viewing areas with landscapes themed around edible fungi, hands-on experience in picking wild mushrooms, educational activities teaching visitors how to identify different mushroom species, including poisonous ones, interactive sessions where visitors can learn and participate in both traditional and modern mushroom cultivation techniques, demonstrations and participatory activities in mushroom processing using both manual and mechanical methods, culinary experiences where visitors can learn to cook with edible fungi and taste various mushroom-based dishes, services and information centers for tourists, areas dedicated to educational and sightseeing opportunities related to edible fungi, sections where tourists can taste and buy edible fungus-based foods, relaxation and recreational activities in designated park areas, enjoyment of the park's themed amenities, such as mushroom cabins, themed restaurants, and culturally inspired trails and seating areas. These activities aim to provide a comprehensive and engaging experience for tourists, integrating education, recreation, and cultural immersion related to edible fungi.

Objectives

- To develop the Edible Fungus Park into a rural complex that integrates production, processing, sightseeing, and experiential activities, ensuring the mutual prosperity of agriculture and tourism.
- To optimize the spatial structure and functional layout of the park to better meet tourism development needs, including the division of areas into production zones and themed tourist attractions.
- To develop experience-based tourism products.

Implementation

Strategy

Integrating agritourism into existing edible fungus farm operations enhances their industrial structure and resilience by diversifying income sources and expanding market reach. This approach involves transforming parts of the park into eco-tourism zones, offering interactive agritourism activities such as mushroom picking and cooking workshops, and hosting educational programmes and festivals to attract visitors. Establishing visitor centers, eco-lodges, and mushroom-themed restaurants further enriches the tourist experience. By collaborating with travel agencies and implementing strategic marketing, parks can increase revenue, create employment opportunities, and promote local culture. This integration not only boosts economic stability but also fosters community engagement and cultural pride, ensuring sustainable development for the parks.

Infrastructure Development

Investments in visitor accommodation at edible fungus parks have focused on developing theme-oriented tourism infrastructure to enhance the overall tourist experience. These investments include building tourist hotels, improving transportation, and adding shopping and entertainment facilities that are intricately themed around edible fungi and local folk culture. Specific examples include the construction of mushroom cabins for lodging, edible fungus-themed restaurants for dining, and creatively designed amenities such as red mushroom trails, enoki mushroom guard rails, and cordyceps street lamps. These enhancements ensure that the park not only meets the basic needs of tourists but also provides a unique and immersive environment, thereby increasing visitor satisfaction and encouraging repeat visits.

Marketing Approach

To attract visitors, the edible fungus park in Zhashui Muertown employs a comprehensive approach that capitalizes on the diverse offerings within its 1,850-acre area, strategically divided into five major zones. These zones cater to different aspects of the visitor experience, including tourism reception services, fungus technology research and development, themed tourism attractions, and production and processing facilities. Visitors can engage in activities such as cultivation, picking, and processing of edible fungi, as well as enjoy attractions like fungus museums and amusement parks, creating a multifaceted experience for visitors. Additionally, the park's focus on community development, with plans to involve 850 poor households in the fungus industry, thereby driving economic growth and providing employment opportunities. The park's success is measured not only in terms of economic output but also in its ability to improve the livelihoods of local residents, demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainable development and community well-being.

Community Engagement

Dividing the park into edible fungus production areas and themed tourist areas not only facilitates tourism development but also provides opportunities for community participation. In the edible fungus production areas, residents are likely to be directly involved in cultivation, processing, and research activities, contributing to the park's agricultural functions. Additionally, the creation of tourist-centric areas, such as edible fungus-themed tourist zones and wild picking and leisure areas, encourage local participation in tourism-related services and experiences.

Environmental and Social Impact

The emphasis on themed tourist areas and wild picking and leisure zones fosters environmental awareness and appreciation for nature among visitors, encouraging conservation efforts. Socially, the integration of community engagement in park activities enhances local livelihoods by providing employment opportunities and stimulating economic growth, particularly in poverty-stricken areas. Moreover, by promoting cultural heritage and involving residents in tourism services, the park strengthens social cohesion and fosters a sense of pride and ownership among the local community, contributing to overall well-being and sustainable development.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Strengths

- Significant potential to increase annual output value and economic benefits.
- Creates employment opportunities and contributes to poverty alleviation.
- Requires low investment while delivering quick results, high income, and substantial impacts from tourism development.
- Effectively integrates local culture and heritage into tourism, enhancing visitor experiences and fostering regional pride.
- Offers a diverse range of tourist activities, including sightseeing, experiential learning, and themed events.

Weaknesses

- Dependence on a limited variety of edible fungi, which weakens market competitiveness and limits output value.
- Existing tourism products lack appeal, reducing the likelihood of repeat visits.

Opportunities

- Developing edible fungus-themed tourism can satisfy urban residents' curiosity and demand for new experiences.
- Tourism offers strong support for the sustainable development of the park and its surrounding areas.
- There is potential to educate visitors about edible fungi cultivation, harvesting, processing, and local cultural practices.
- Integrating farming and tourism can boost local economies and create new revenue streams.

Threats

- Variability in consumer habits, consumption levels, and economic income may affect the success of deep-processing edible fungus products.
- Potential negative environmental impacts from increased tourism and agricultural activities, if not managed properly, could lead to negative environmental impacts.
- Growing competition from other regions or parks offering similar attractions.

Conclusion

The edible fungus industrial park plays a crucial role in the revitalization and development of rural areas by enhancing local economic, social, and cultural benefits.

While edible fungi are both familiar and novel to the public, there is significant demand for them in the tourism market. Developing tourism in the edible fungus park through the integration of agriculture and tourism can fulfil the needs of both the park's growth and the mass tourism sector, ultimately achieving shared prosperity between park's agricultural and tourism activities.

Edible fungus-themed tourism, which combines recreation and health care, is likely to attract more tourists, presenting a significant development opportunity for the edible fungus-themed tourism park.

11.1.5 Case Study 5: Does Agritourism Benefit Mountain Farmers? A Case Study in Phu Ruea District, Northeast Thailand

Introduction

The Phu Ruea agritourism system in Loei Province, Thailand, exemplifies a comprehensive integration of agriculture and tourism, fostering economic synergy among a wide range of stakeholders. The district's agritourism model involves multiple components, including tourists, government agencies, specialty-crop farms, souvenir producers, roadside stalls, tourism service enterprises, and hired workers. Each plays a pivotal role in the local economy.

Phu Ruea attracts nearly 200,000 tourists annually, drawn by its specialty crops such as exotic flowers, shiitake mushrooms, and strawberries, as well as its vibrant winter flower festival. Local government agencies actively promote agritourism, providing financial and logistical support to enhance farm attractions and facilitate tourist visits. Specialty-crop farms serve as the main agritourism destinations, though farmers face challenges in catering to tourists. Souvenir production and local markets further capitalize on tourism, while local resorts, hotels, and restaurants integrate agricultural products into their services, creating employment opportunities for locals and migrants. This interdependent system illustrates the potential benefits and complexities of agritourism in rural development.

Business Overview

Farm Profile

Phu Ruea district, located in Loei province within the Northern Petchabun mountain range of Northeast Thailand, spans approximately 88,800 hectares, with 70% of the land above 700 meters above sea level. The tropical Savannah climate features an average annual rainfall of about 1,300 mm, a rainy season from May to September, and a prolonged dry season. The district is known for its cold winters, with temperatures dropping as low as 20.3°C, attracting tourists from warmer regions.

In 2014, Phu Ruea had 18,916 residents primarily engaged in agriculture. The main crops include maize, cassava, rice, rubber, ginger, lychee, longan, sweet tamarind, strawberries, shiitake mushrooms, and ornamental plants and exotic flowers, reflecting the district's agricultural diversity and its adaptation to both tropical and temperate crop production.

Agritourism Activities

Agritourism in Phu Ruea district has developed significantly since the establishment of Phu Ruea National Park in 1979 and the emergence of the first tourism enterprises in 1992. The district is renowned for growing ornamental plants, exotic flowers, and shiitake mushrooms, and it is also home to Thailand's first large-scale vineyard and winery.

The Loei Provincial Agricultural Extension Office began officially promoting agritourism in 2001, in collaboration with the Tourism Authority of Thailand. This initiative aimed to combine agricultural products with tourism to boost the local economy. Agritourism activities include visiting specialty-crop farms that cultivate exotic flowers, ornamental plants, shiitake mushrooms, strawberries, and grapes.

Tourists can learn about and purchase these products directly from the farms. The annual Phu Ruea Winter Flower Festival, featuring flower displays, parades, and competitions, is a major event that provides a market for local farmers to sell their products. Additionally, tourists can explore local markets, roadside stalls, and souvenir shops offering agricultural products and handicrafts. Local hotels, resorts, and restaurants cater to tourists by incorporating locally grown produce, especially shiitake mushrooms, into their offerings.

Objectives

- To analyze the current agritourism system in Phu Ruea
- To evaluate the economic impact of agritourism on the local economy
- To assess the role of agritourism events and festivals in promoting local agricultural products

Implementation

Agritourism in Phu Ruea district was seamlessly integrated into existing farm operations through the promotion of specialty crops that appealed to tourists while preserving traditional agricultural practices. Farms cultivating exotic flowers, ornamental plants, shiitake mushrooms, and strawberries began to offer educational and interactive experiences for visitors, allowing them to learn about the cultivation processes and purchase products directly from the farms. This integration was facilitated by local government initiatives that supported agritourism through events like the Winter Flower Festival, which not only highlighted the district's agricultural diversity but also provided a market for farmers to sell their produce.

The agritourism system leveraged the natural beauty and unique climate of Phu Ruea, attracting tourists with its cold weather and scenic landscapes, further enhanced by visually appealing specialty crops. This approach created a symbiotic relationship where tourism promoted agricultural products, increased farm income, and diversified the local economy, while also maintaining and enhancing the agricultural heritage of the district.

Infrastructure

- **Establishment of Tourism Enterprises:** The first tourism enterprises including hotels, resorts, restaurants, and various farms such as shiitake mushroom farms and vineyards, were established in 1992 by entrepreneurs who purchased land from local villagers.
- **Phu Ruea Highland Agricultural Experiment Station:** Established as a tourist attraction to conduct research on upland crops, this facility was part of the effort to promote and support agritourism.
- **Phu Ruea Winter Flower Festival:** Local government agencies established a large flower park to host the annual festival, which features flower displays, parades, and competitions, providing a market for farmers to sell their products. The budget for buying flowers for the festival in 2014 was approximately US$ 57,000.
- **Roadside Stalls and Souvenir Shops:** Both permanent and temporary stalls were set up along the main roads to sell agricultural products and souvenirs to tourists throughout the year.
- **Development of Resorts, Hotels, and Restaurants:** Significant investments were made by local business people and government officials to establish numerous hospitality enterprises to cater to the increasing number of tourists.

Marketing Approaches

The methods of attracting visitors to Phu Ruea district involved multiple approaches. The district leveraged its unique cold weather and natural beauty, particularly the Phu Ruea National Park, which has been a popular destination since its establishment in 1979. To enhance its appeal, the Loei Provincial Agricultural Extension Office started promoting agritourism in 2001, in cooperation with the Tourism Authority of Thailand and the Department of Agricultural Extension. This included organizing events like the Phu Ruea Winter Flower Festival, which features flower displays, parades, and competitions, and is supported by a budget for buying local flowers.

The district also established the Phu Ruea Highland Agricultural Experiment Station to research upland crops and serve as a tourist attraction. Further, local government agencies and projects provide financial support to farmer groups, coordinate farm visits, and operate markets selling local handicrafts and agricultural products. These efforts are complemented by the tourism enterprises such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, and specialty-crop farms, which collectively attract a significant number of tourists each year.

Financial Impact

The Phu Ruea agritourism system significantly boosts the local economy, generating nearly US$ 16 million in annual gross income as of 2014. This income is predominantly derived from specialty-crop farms, which contribute about US$ 12 million, equating to 74% of the total. These farms, including flower, mushroom, and strawberry farms, yield high net incomes per hectare—much greater than conventional crops. The flower farms, despite their small size, generate considerable income through both direct sales and participation in local events, while the mushroom farms benefit from increased local demand due to tourism. Additionally, locally owned roadside stalls, souvenir producers, and car rental services collectively generate about US$ 1.4 million annually. Tourism-related businesses such as resorts and restaurants add another US$ 2.8 million, with a significant portion owned by district residents. Overall, agritourism creates substantial employment, engaging about 1,500 individuals, primarily local residents, and supports around 10% of the district's working-age population. This system not only enhances incomes for farmers and farm households but also integrates various community members into the economic benefits of tourism.

Community Engagement

Agritourism plays a pivotal role in community development and fostering local partnerships in Phu Ruea district. By integrating tourism with agricultural practices, agritourism has significantly boosted local incomes and provided numerous employment opportunities for the district's residents, especially farmers and farm households. This system has enabled farmers to diversify their income sources, enhance their agricultural practices, and directly engage with tourists. The involvement of local government agencies and various stakeholders, including farmer groups and tourism enterprises, has promoted cooperative efforts to develop and sustain agritourism.

Events such as the Phu Ruea Winter Flower Festival and initiatives by local agricultural extension offices have created platforms for farmers to showcase and sell their products, thus strengthening the local economy. These collaborations have not only improved the financial well-being of the community but have also fostered a sense of collective effort towards sustainable development and economic resilience. Overall, agritourism has become a vital mechanism for enhancing community cohesion and empowering local partnerships in Phu Ruea district.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Strengths

- The agritourism system generates significant income, approximately US$ 16 million annually, benefiting specialty-crop farmers, tourism enterprises, agricultural workers, and landowners.
- Agritourism creates numerous jobs for local residents, with around 1,500 people directly earning income from this system.
- Specialty crops such as flowers, shiitake mushrooms, and strawberries yield high net income per hectare, far exceeding that of conventional field crops.
- Local government agencies actively promote agritourism, organizing events like the Phu Ruea Winter Flower Festival, which boosts local sales and attracts tourists.
- Phu Ruea is an established tourist destination, featuring attractions such as Phu Ruea National Park and the local vineyard and winery.

Weaknesses

- The system heavily relies on tourist visits, which are seasonal and vulnerable to external factors such as economic downturns or pandemics.
- Although specialty crops attract tourists, most sales are to middlemen rather than directly to tourists, limiting potential income.
- There is a shortage of local labour, and farmers often struggle to hire enough workers, sometimes relying on migrant labourers from Laos.
- Starting specialty crop farms requires significant investment and specialized knowledge, which not all farmers possess

Opportunities

- Enhancing tourist experiences and promoting direct sales from farms can increase income and boost the local economy.
- Encouraging the cultivation of more high-value crops and providing training can help more farmers benefit from agritourism.
- Continued and expanded government support for infrastructure and marketing can attract more tourists and enhance the district's appeal.
- Agritourism provides opportunities for cultural exchange and education, enriching both tourists and local residents

Threats

- Increased tourism and agricultural activities may strain local resources, leading to land degradation and water scarcity.
- The influx of entrepreneurs and external businesses could outcompete local farmers and small business owners, threatening their livelihoods.
- The district's economic stability is vulnerable to fluctuations in tourism, which can be affected by external factors such as economic crises or natural disasters.
- The presence of tourists and migrant workers may lead to cultural changes and social tensions within the local community.

Conclusion

Phu Ruea district in Loei province, Thailand, has successfully integrated agritourism into its economy, generating nearly US$ 16 million in 2014 and providing employment for about 1,500 people. This system, which combines speciality-crop farms, tourism enterprises, and government support, has significantly boosted local incomes, particularly through high-value crops like flowers and shiitake mushrooms. Local government initiatives and events, such as the Phu Ruea winter flower festival, have played a crucial role in promoting agritourism, benefiting both local farmers and tourism businesses. Overall, agritourism has fostered economic development and employment opportunities in Phu Ruea, illustrating the potential for rural transformation through strategic integration of tourism and agriculture.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Results and Discussion

This chapter addresses objective four of the research, to examine optimal agritourism practices at both local and global levels and to explore the potential for developing an effective agritourism rural network model. The proposed Integrated Agritourism Network Model is based on best agritourism practices identified through a comparative analysis of local and international case studies.

12.1 Agritourism Network Model Derived from Global and Local Case Studies

Objective four aims to investigate optimal agritourism practices both locally and globally and to assess the potential to develop an effective agritourism rural network model. The resulting Integrated Agritourism Network Model is derived from best practices identified through four international case studies, each contributing distinct network layers. The model outlines core stakeholders, the flow of resources, and the interaction between various sectors and tourism offerings, illustrating how a holistic and sustainable agritourism framework can function in practice.

The model was developed through a multi-phased, qualitative approach that integrates both global and local perspectives to ensure contextual relevance, sustainability, and scalability in the Sri Lankan context. The research was guided by systems thinking and network theory, with a focus on identifying inter-sectoral linkages, stakeholder roles, and benefit flows in existing agritourism ecosystems. The study followed a case-study-driven model development approach, combining both deductive (theory-informed) and inductive (empirical insight-based) reasoning.

Data Analysis Techniques

A thematic analysis was applied to extract key patterns, stakeholder roles, activities, infrastructure components, and benefit flows from the case studies. These identified themes were structured under the following analytical categories: Stakeholder Networks; Agritourism Activity; Infrastructure and Service Layers; Marketing and Communication Channels; Economic, Social, and Environmental Impact Flows; and Adaptation Mechanisms.

A comparative synthesis was conducted to identify commonalities and contextual variations across the case studies. This process enabled the integration of best practices into a unified network model, designed to be adaptable to the rural Sri Lankan context.

Model Development Process

Building on the findings from the thematic analysis, the Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM) was developed through the following steps:

- **Mapping Network Layers**: Identification of stakeholders, activity zones, and institutional roles.
- **Flowchart Development**: Visualization of resource flows, stakeholder interactions, and tourism product value chains.
- **Integration of Sector-specific Modules**: Incorporation of paddy, spice, tea, and vegetable tourism modules as interconnected but customizable.

Model Validation

The preliminary model was reviewed by a panel of experts, including:

- Agritourism practitioners
- Rural development officers
- Tourism board representatives
- Academic researchers

Validation involved a series of expert interviews in selected rural areas. Feedback was used to refine the model for practical feasibility, scalability, and policy relevance

Network Layers in Case Studies:

List of Key Stakeholders (Network Actors)

Stakeholders	Role in Network
Farmers and Farmer Organizations	Primary hosts, resource providers
Tourists	Experience seekers, market drivers
Local Communities	Cultural and tradition contributors
Government Sector (Tourism and Agriculture Ministries)	Policy, funding, training
NGOs and Development Agencies	Capacity building, innovation, and sustainability
Private Sector (Hotels, Tour Operators)	Packaging, marketing, logistics
Academia and Research Institutions	Impact assessment, model development
Digital Platforms and Media	Promotion, booking, story telling

Agritourism Activities in Case Studies:

Sector	Activities
Tea Tourism (Huey Nam Guen Village)	Tea leaf picking, five-coloured tea tasting, tea cuisine, heritage garden tours, wellness (massage) experiences
Vegetable Tourism (Thailand)	Organic farming demos, cooking with farm produce, home gardening workshops
Spice Tourism (Indonesia/India models)	Spice trail walks, spice blending workshops, plantation stays, Ayurveda/herbal experiences
Rice Tourism (Japan/Sri Lanka)	Rice paddy planting/harvesting, mud festivals, local rice-based cuisine, village life immersion

Key Infrastructure Components in Case Studies:

- Infrastructure (access roads to the village)
- Services (electricity/communication, and water supply)
- Farm Stay and Homestay Accommodations
- Agritourism Activity Zones (tea gardens, paddy fields, spice farms)
- Visitor Centers and Community Marketplaces
- Eco-friendly Transport Systems (e.g., bike paths, tuk-tuks)
- On-farm Restaurants/Cafes
- Local Craft/Souvenir Shops

Supporting Services and Institutions in Case Studies:

- Training and Capacity Building (led by universities, NGOs)
- Branding and Marketing Agencies
- Tourism Boards / Chambers of Commerce
- Community of the village
- Agri-Cooperatives and Farmer Groups
- Technology Platforms (Online booking, Digital story telling, Farm maps)

Flow of Benefits in Case Studies:

Farmers ⇄ Tourists ⇄ Local Community
⇅ ⇅
Academic Partners ⇄ Government Support ⇄ Investors

- Economic: Income diversification for farmers, and increased rural employment
- Social: Community engagement, cultural preservation, and pride
- Environmental: Organic practices, and biodiversity preservation

Marketing Channels in Case Studies:

- Social Media Platforms
- National and Regional Tourism Portals
- Travel Agencies and Booking Sites
- Cross-border Tourism Exchange Programmes
- Cultural Events and Agri-Festivals

Tourism Experience Types Integrated in case studies:

Type	**Description**
Community-based Tourism (CBT)	Locals lead the tourism process, hosting and guiding
Health and wellness tourism	Focus on organic tea, vegetables, and healing traditions
Heritage tourism	Tea traditions, spice legacy, and paddy rituals
Green tourism	Urban-rural linkages via eco-friendly practices
Culinary tourism	Farm-to-table food, workshops, and tastings

Lessons from Global Practices

- Cooperate with the village community
- Combine product uniqueness (e.g., Five-Coloured Tea) with immersive activities
- Focus on branding rooted in tradition and sustainability
- Train locals in tourism and business
- Establish clear interpretation tools (multi-lingual support)
- Balance tourism scale to avoid resource stress

Agritourism Rural Network Model Developed from the Local and International Case Studies

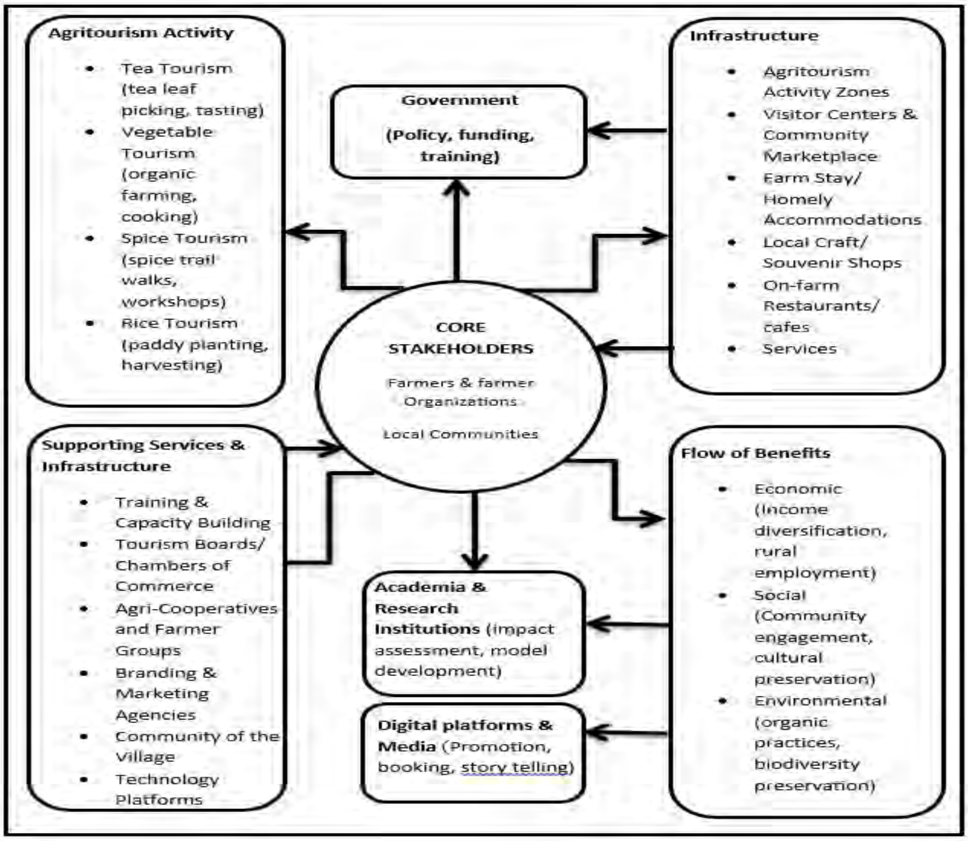


Figure 12.1: Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM)

Agritourism Network Model (SANM) was developed using a case study-driven model development approach, guided by network theory (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011) and systems thinking (Meadows, 2008)) This Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM) was developed using a case study-driven model development approach, guided by network theory (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011) and systems thinking (Meadows, 2008). The model integrates qualitative data from both local and global agritourism practices, analyzed through thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and comparative synthesis, to identify core stakeholders, sectoral linkages, infrastructure layers, and benefit flows in agritourism ecosystems. The model draws its empirical foundation from international case studies in Laos, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Japan, and Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Conclusion, Research Findings and Recommendations

13.1 Conclusion

Five sub-categories of agritourism sectors were identified in the study area using the Community-Based Tourism Approach (CBT): tourism with spices, tourism with cinnamon, tourism with paddy, tourism with both paddy and vegetables, and tourism with vegetables.

The analysis of agritourism in the study area reveals that these sub-sectors are primarily family-driven, with businesses largely owned and operated by individual families. There is currently no strong and efficient community-based tourism approach in study areas. This reflects a strong tradition of individual family involvement in agritourism operations, highlighting a potential avenue for local economic development. A wide variety of agritourism activities are offered, underscoring the need for a more effective and coordinated CBT framework in the study area.

However, despite their potential, these communities face several challenges, including infrastructure inadequacies, financial constraints, and marketing barriers, which limit their ability to fully capitalize on agritourism opportunities. Financial constraints affect 32% of farmers, while infrastructure inadequacies impact 27%, alongside threats from wildlife. Additionally, a significant 96% lack of of government or private support programmes, making it difficult to overcome initial start-up costs and operational demands.

This low engagement with existing support programmes highlights a knowledge gap that limits farmers' ability to effectively utilize available external resources. Tourist engagement levels vary across sites, with some farms attracting fewer than 20 visitors monthly, while others exceed 100. This variation may indicate differences in the attractiveness of certain agritourism offerings or the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Skill gaps, particularly in tourism management and language proficiency, have been identified as key areas where training and education have been identified as key farmers could support growth in the sector.

Moreover, the results suggest that income levels vary significantly by sector. For example, a large proportion of participants in the Spice Garden and Cinnamon sectors fall into the higher income bracket, while participants from both Paddy and Vegetables and Paddy sectors tend to be in lower income brackets. This reflects potential differences in market appeal, value-added practices, tourist access, or scale of operations among sectors.

Global case studies from Asian countries show that integrating culture, agriculture, and community engagement creates successful and sustainable agritourism models. These initiatives promote income diversification, heritage preservation, and environmentally friendly practices. The lessons learned offer valuable guidance for adapting similar models in Sri Lanka's rural tourism development.

In this study, a Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM) was developed by synthesizing insights from local and international case studies using systems thinking and network theory. The model identifies key stakeholders, sectoral linkages, infrastructure components, and benefit flows that support sustainable agritourism development.

13.2 Research Findings

Agritourism Potential

Five subcategories of agritourism sectors are identified in the CBT approach for rural development in the study area: paddy cultivation and tourism, vegetable cultivation and tourism, paddy and vegetable cultivation and tourism, spice gardens and tourism, and cinnamon cultivation, processing and tourism. These sectors exhibit strong potential for clustering. Notably, Sri Lanka's spice and cinnamon sectors hold significant global appeal. Seventy percent of surveyed farmers expressed interest in diversifying into agritourism activities.

Agritourism sectors such as paddy, vegetable, spice, and cinnamon tourism exhibit strong potential for clustering, which can be leveraged to establish agritourism clusters combining multiple sectors. This approach offers diversified visitor experiences and maximize resource use. Implementing community-based agritourism models is recommended to ensure equitable benefits for all stakeholders.

Potential Benefits of Agritourism to Farms and Society

In all five sub-categories of agritourism, the majority of respondents (100%) identify additional income as the primary benefit of engaging in agritourism. Job opportunities are considered a key advantage by 65% of participants. Meanwhile, 35% believe agritourism offers opportunities for community engagement, and 17% highlight its role in conserving traditional farming practices. Only a small proportion (11%) view agritourism as a means to increase awareness of farming activities.

Economic Impact

Monthly income from agritourism varies significantly across the five sub-categories: Paddy and Vegetable, Spice Garden, Vegetable, Paddy, and Cinnamon. The Cinnamon and Spice Garden sectors exhibit the highest income potential, with all participants in the Cinnamon sector earning above Rs. 100,000, and 50% earning more than Rs. 200,000. Similarly, 72% of participants in the Spice Garden sector earn above Rs. 100,000, with 45% earning more than Rs. 200,000. Other sectors display a wider income range, with 39% earning less than Rs. 25,000 and 31% earning between Rs. 50,001–100,000 per month, indicating potential for growth.

These differences highlight the economic advantage of high-value sectors like Cinnamon and Spice Garden, while paddy and vegetable-based tourism sectors show moderate income potential and may require strategic development to improve profitability. Overall, income levels vary significantly by sector, with many in the Spice Garden and Cinnamon sectors in higher income brackets (over LKR 100,000), and those in Paddy and Vegetable and Paddy sectors concentrated in lower income brackets (below LKR 50,000), reflecting differences in market appeal, value-added practices, tourist access, or scale of operation.

Community Participation and Empowerment

The analysis of agritourism in the study area reveals that this sector is primarily family-driven, with most businesses being family-owned. There is currently no strong or efficient community-Based tourism (CBT) approach in place. This reflects a tradition of individual family involvement in agritourism, highlighting potential opportunities for local economic development. The findings also underscore the need to establish more effective CBT initiatives in the region.

Community-Based tourism is feasible and can significantly boost local employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth, through roles in hospitality, guiding, and handicraft production. Furthermore, community-Based agritourism initiatives help strengthen social cohesion and promote the preservation of rural heritage.

Women represent only 20% of participants in agritourism projects, highlighting a significant gender disparity.

Tourist Preferences

According to survey data, farm tours are the most popular agritourism activity, with 93% of respondents indicating their involvement. U-pick operations are offered by 41% of participants, while farm stays or accommodation are provided by 39%. Cooking demonstrations are featured by 56% of agritourism operators, and 73% offer meals at home stays. Additionally, 25% provide multilingual tour guide services to cater to a diverse range of visitors.

Visitors primarily seek authentic rural experiences, local cuisine, and educational activities such as farming demonstrations. Many tourists prefer hands-on agricultural experiences, such as harvesting or cooking traditional meals. Among international tourists, 50% indicated interest in spice and cinnamon tours, while 60% cited Sri Lanka's spice and cinnamon sectors as key attractions. Additionally, 50% of surveyed tourists expressed interest in agritourism activities related to traditional paddy and vegetable farming.

Infrastructure and Accessibility

Sixty percent of potential agritourism sites lack proper road access and visitor facilities, while only 30% of rural destinations meet the basic requirements for tourist comfort and safety.

Market Challenges

Forty percent of farmers involved in agritourism struggle to market their products directly to tourists, while only 25% of agritourism enterprises engage in value-added product sales, such as packaged spices.

Environmental Practices

Forty-five percent of agritourism operators reported issues related to waste management and resource overuse, while only 20% have adopted eco-friendly practices such as organic farming or the use of renewable energy.

Policy and Regulation

Ninety percent of agritourism operators identified the lack of a regulatory framework as a significant challenge, while less than 10% of government support programmes specifically address agritourism development.

Digital Marketing Gaps

Seventy-five percent of agritourism operators do not use digital platforms for promotion, and only 15% of tourists discovered agritourism sites through online channels.

Training and Capacity Building

Only 15% of farmers in rural areas are actively engaged in agritourism initiatives. A lack of awareness and training was cited by 80% of respondents as barriers to participation. Local farmers and rural communities remain inadequately involved in agritourism initiatives, with 85% of farmers reporting a need for training in tourism management and hospitality.

Tourists' Awareness in the Agritourism Sector of Sri Lanka

The sample data reveals the various sources through which tourists learn about agritourism businesses. The majority of tourists (42%) know about these businesses through websites. Websites are the most common source, cited by 42% of tourists, followed by recommendations from tour guide companies (24%) and previous visitors (29%). A smaller percentage of tourists find out through hotels (9%) and booking companies (6%).

Challenges

Across the five sub-categories, financial constraints are the most significant issue, reported by 63% of respondents. Inadequate infrastructure is another major challenge, identified by 47% of participants. Lack of knowledge and skills is a concern for 35%, while marketing challenges affect 31% of those involved in agritourism. Regulatory issues are seen as a problem by 20%, and initial investment costs are considered a challenge by 11%. Additionally, all five agritourism sectors address land scarcity as another priority, with villages exploring solutions to expand farming operations and agritourism services.

Expected Support from Stakeholders to Enhance the Business

Stakeholders are expected to support agritourism in Sri Lanka primarily through financial support (30%), representing the highest need. Other important contributions include infrastructure development (24%), marketing and promotion (19%), and training and education (16%). Policy support is the least demanded, at 11%. This suggests that immediate needs like funding and infrastructure are prioritized over regulatory changes.

Sectoral Contributions

Distinct agritourism sectors, such as paddy and tourism, spice and tourism, and vegetable and tourism, demonstrate varying levels of economic and cultural appeal to tourists. Among these, spice and cinnamon-related tourism shows the highest potential for export-oriented product development and value addition.

Agritourism Network Model

The study developed a Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM) based on global and local case studies, integrating core stakeholders, infrastructure, and benefit flows across four agritourism sectors: tea, rice, spice, and vegetable tourism. The findings highlight that a well-connected rural agritourism ecosystem depends on strong multi-stakeholder collaboration among farmers, communities, government bodies, private sector, academia, and digital platforms.

The model illustrates sector-specific activity zones supported by infrastructure such as homestays, eco-transport, visitor centers, and farm-based experiences. It highlights crucial economic, social, and environmental benefit flows, and emphasizes the importance of inclusive training, branding, and digital marketing. This holistic model provides a practical framework for policy formulation focused on rural development, sustainable tourism, and community empowerment.

13.3 Recommendations

Potentials

Agritourism sub-sectors such as paddy, vegetable, spice, and cinnamon tourism exhibit strong potential for clustering. It is recommended to establish agritourism clusters that combine multiple sectors to offer diversified experiences and maximize resource use. Successful community-based agritourism models should be implemented to actively involve farmers within their communities. Additionally, creating dedicated agritourism marketplaces will help connect tourists with local producers, ensuring equitable benefits across agricultural areas.

Develop Agritourism Policies and Guidelines

Establish clear policies to regulate and promote agritourism as a sustainable sector. Provide incentives such as tax benefits and subsidies to support agritourism enterprises. Develop agritourism-specific regulations and ensure coordinated efforts among tourism, agriculture, and rural development authorities.

Strengthen Infrastructure and Facilities

Improve efficient rural transportation, connectivity, accommodation and sanitary facilities. Invest in developing visitor centers and signage in agritourism areas.

Capacity Building and Training

This highlights a potential avenue for local economic development and the need for efficient CBTs in the study area. However, local farmers and rural communities currently lack adequate involvement in agritourism initiatives. To address this, provide training programmes for farmers on CBT activities, hospitality management and tourism skills. Enhance local community awareness of the economic and cultural benefits of agritourism, and encourage knowledge-sharing among farmers to replicate successful agritourism models.

Promote Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

Encourage collaboration between government bodies, private investors, and local communities. Support cooperative models that enable farmers share resources and profits.

Control Digital Marketing and Technology

Develop online platforms and mobile apps to market agritourism destinations and experiences. Use technology for booking, reviews, and feedback to enhance visitor experiences.

Diversify Agritourism Activities

Promote diverse activities such as paddy cultivation experiences, vegetable harvesting, spice and cinnamon tours, and cooking classes using local produce. Integrate cultural and traditional practices into agritourism packages.

Focus on Sustainability and Environmental Conservation

Encourage eco-friendly practices such as organic farming and effective waste management. Ensure agritourism development aligns with environmental conservation goals.

Enhance Financial Support and Microcredit Facilities

Facilitate access to low-interest loans and grants for small-scale agritourism entrepreneurs. Support insurance schemes to help farmers mitigate risks when entering the tourism sector.

Build Stronger Networks and Partnerships

Establish local and international agritourism networks to share knowledge and best practices. Collaborate with universities and research institutes to develop innovative agritourism models.

Prioritize Strengthening Community-based Tourism Structures

Insights from both local and international case studies highlight the importance of integrating agriculture, culture, and community engagement in developing successful agritourism models. Policy support should prioritize strengthening community-based tourism structures, improving rural infrastructure, and enabling market access through digital and regional platforms.

Capacity-building programmes in tourism management, branding, and language skills are essential to enhance local participation and service quality. Tailored financial incentives and startup support can empower farming communities to adopt sustainable agritourism practices and scale their operations effectively.

Agritourism Rural Network Model

Policymakers are encouraged to adopt the Sustainable Agritourism Network Model (SANM) as a strategic framework to guide rural tourism development in Sri Lanka. The model supports the integration of key stakeholders, infrastructure, and sector-specific tourism activities activities to achieve more coordinated and equitable outcomes.

Monitor and Evaluate Agritourism Initiatives

Implement a monitoring framework to assess the socio-economic and environmental impacts of agritourism. Use findings to refine strategies and ensure long-term sustainability.

Promote Sri Lankan Agritourism Globally Brand Sri Lanka as a unique agritourism destination by promoting these sectors through international campaigns. Conduct targeted marketing campaigns to attract international tourists, highlight unique offerings such as Sri Lanka's spice gardens and traditional paddy fields in promotional materials.

Community-based tourism is practicable for these areas. Agritourism raises local employment opportunities, particularly for women and youth, in hospitality, guiding, and handicraft production. Community-based agritourism initiatives strengthen social cohesion and promote rural heritage.

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Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute,
PO Box 1522,
Colombo,
Sri Lanka.
Tel. +94 11 2 6969 81
+94 11 2 6964 37
Fax. +94 11 2 6924 23
e-mail director@harti.gov.lk
Web www.harti.gov.lk

ISBN: 978-624-5973-62-0

9 7 8 6 2 4 5 9 7 3 6 2 0

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