

The role of agritourism in the development of regions

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Abstract. Agritourism is a form of sustainable tourism that emerged as a unique combination of agriculture and tourism. Agritourism is a sector that offers visitors an agricultural experience and transforms rural areas into tourist destinations. Natural beauty, traditional agricultural practices and local culture are key elements of agritourism. One of the main advantages of agritourism is that it has great employment potential. It helps increase employment in rural areas by providing employment opportunities in various fields such as farm workers, tour guides, chefs, artisans and historians. To increase employment in the agritourism sector, it is important that local people are supported in training and skills development. Training programs on topics such as agricultural techniques, hotel management, entrepreneurship, sales and tour guiding enable more effective involvement of local people in the sector. Agritourism creates new markets and business opportunities for local farmers, artisans and small businesses. This stimulates the local economy and helps increase employment. It is important to offer tourists local products, create regional experiences and support local businesses. This sector, with its rich employment potential, offers important opportunities to strengthen the local economy and improve the living standards of people in rural areas. With sector-specific training, local collaboration and sustainable employment models, agritourism can play an important role in the tourism sector of the future.

Keywords: Agrotourism; tourism; entrepreneurship; rural tourism, sustainable development

1 Introduction

If we look at the countries of the world, the decline in the population in the regions and the increase in urbanization is clearly visible. This in turn leads to agricultural resources remaining unused. As the influence of natural resources becomes increasingly important, countries are paying particular attention to the development of agrotourism in their development policies [1]. Agritourism is one of the adopted development strategies since rural development can be achieved through the development of rural tourism [3]. Agritourism

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can support the development of entrepreneurial activities such as agricultural entrepreneurship and arts. In addition, the services provided on a large scale can effectively contribute to the protection of national cultural heritage and promotion at the global level. Agritourism plays an important role in eliminating inequality between cities and regions and in the development of agriculture [5]. In general, medical, cultural, leisure, ecotourism, etc. Travel for travel purposes is the reason for the development and improvement of the concept of agritourism. Agritourism is growing in popularity in both developed and developing countries around the world as it offers different options or complements existing types of tourism [2]. People's support is one of the important factors in the development of agritourism, ensuring its socio-cultural and economic benefits. In this sense, relevant government institutions and private institutions should communicate with people, identify needs through collaboration, and offer products and services tailored to their needs. The products and services offered should be granted access to the local market and the global market and supported in this direction. Without cooperation with the local population, the planned activities are at high risk of failure [4].

2 Agritourism

The richness and diversity of cultural and natural resources of agritourism are important for the development of the tourism sector. Reasons such as the reduction of economic efficiency in agriculture, the restructuring of the agricultural sector and the migration from regions to cities are related to this. For this reason, in many Western countries the economic and social development of rural areas is an alternative to the development strategy [6].

In the studies conducted by Kandari and Chandra, agritourism is divided into two main directions:

- Measurable population density,
- Accommodation potential of rural tourism.

Economic recession, poor development in agriculture and lack of alternative employment opportunities, lack of facilities and market security, difficult communication with rural areas and lack of waste treatment facilities are some of the obstacles to the development of agritourism [9].

To ensure the development of agritourism in the country, urban and rural lifestyles should be analyzed and their needs identified:

- The livelihood of the majority of people living in villages is met mainly with agricultural products;
- Village life differs from city life in many ways. Village life is more physically demanding, quiet, leisure-oriented areas without entrepreneurial facilities;
- A rural community is smaller than an urban community, which is one of the reasons for the smaller population;
- People living in villages are in close contact with nature, one of the reasons for this is that most of their activities are carried out in the natural environment;
- Although the people belong to different social classes, most of the residents are engaged in agriculture and farming.

Countries carry out numerous activities to support the tourism sector and develop agritourism. These activities are based on analyzing, responding and improving existing infrastructure. Countries see agritourism as a new opportunity due to the prevention of internal migration (urbanization), the reduction of the development gap between regions and the inadequate level of tourism infrastructure [8].

Agritourism is a form of tourism that combines the natural environment, culture and agriculture and is easily integrated into other types of tourism. Therefore, agritourism, which can be enriched by various national and international initiatives, is able to attract people to

villages in many countries around the world [11]. In order to make the expression of agrotourism clearer, it is necessary to first explain the concept of “rural territory” in which agrotourism activities are carried out [7].

From the past to the present, rural areas with their natural and cultural structures have tried to meet the growing recreational needs of the urban population. We can present the important characteristics for regions that engage in agrotourism as follows [10].

Geographical location of the company;

- Compliance with international standards in transportation, accommodation and food services;

- Unique local traditions, clothing, crafts and crafts;

- Biodiversity, rich flora and fauna;

- Attractive landscapes (natural parks, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests, plateaus, islands);

- Cultural heritage (villages, settlements, historical buildings, etc.), sports facilities (hunting, horse riding, trekking, skiing, fishing, etc.);

- Supporting the country in the promotion of agritourism is considered necessary.

The positive effects of agritourism include revitalizing places at risk of population decline and preventing out-migration. As a result, the demand for agricultural products increases, self-employment develops (crafts, etc.), an additional source of income, accommodation, catering options, etc. is created. As the number increases, this is reflected in the increase in employment and income. The work carried out in this direction contributes to tourism, infrastructure, living and working conditions. In this way, agritourism simulates domestic tourism. Taking into account all the above points, we can indicate criteria for the development of agrotourism in the regions under the following headings [15].

- The first characteristic of agrotourism is that it is a type of tourism that can be carried out at any time of the year: Agrotourism supports other tourist activities carried out in different months of the year.

- Agritourism is a balancing factor between other types of tourism: it creates favorable conditions for the tourist use of rural areas, thereby preventing the accumulation of tourism in arbitrary geographical locations. It enables the use of unused areas for tourism purposes.

- Compatibility of agrotourism with other types of tourism: Agrotourism is a form of tourism aimed at satisfying foreign tourism demand and is implemented with the support of certain intermediaries. Tourism activities that started in the regions end here.

- Leisure activities in agritourism: The fact that agritourism can be carried out at any time of the year increases the variety of possible activities. From this point of view, if the year is divided into 4 seasons, it is possible to plan different events in each season. To this end, people in rural areas should be informed, voluntary groups formed and joint activities promoted. The tourism sector should support these events. Another feature of agritourism is that it contributes to the protection of the natural environment and cultural heritage and promotes sustainable tourism: the influence of tourism on national cultural customs and traditions is high. From an ecological perspective, the trend towards environmentally friendly tourism has increased in recent years. Agritourism aims to ensure the protection and proper use of the environment during travel, the protection and balanced use of natural resources, and the protection of all the values that encourage tourists to visit the region. Agritourism directly supports the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

One of the main features of agritourism, like other types of tourism, is that it plays an important role in the recognition of the country: the organization of agrotourism in Azerbaijan will lead to the recognition of the country's national and cultural heritage of the world and social and economic development.

2.1 Local characteristics of agritourism

If we mean the development of agritourism, it is primarily about the natural beauty of the region, local traditions, rivers, lakes, tourists' interest in local products, etc. The development of agrotourism according to local characteristics can be based on the following criteria:

- Organization of trips to the region
- Hospitality services and other services
- Creating an experience environment for agricultural activities and these activities can be carried out by tourists
- Natural beauties and their preservation
- Preservation of historical and cultural values
- Formation of appropriate environment for sports activities
- Delivery of local cuisine to tourists
- Showing hospitality to tourists [1].

2.2 Characteristics of farms operating in agritourism

One of the characteristics of agritourism is that it is a daily or very short trip. The stay in the village is usually no more than a week. Activities or services for residents or daily visitors play an important role in increasing tourist attraction. It includes farming, animal care, local crafts, nature and cultural tours, sports activities, festivals and more. Events can be organized [13].

The companies active in rural tourism are mostly small family businesses. Various authors have divided agritourism into different classes. These classes include the following [12]:

Health Farms: Health Farms are for city dwellers. The main attraction of these farms is the natural surroundings and farm location. Ecological measures such as the intensive use of environmentally friendly furniture are carried out in wellness farms, smoking and non-smoking areas, vegetarian catering options, outdoor recreation areas, health aspects, etc.

Excursion farms: Agricultural adventure and leisure activities are carried out in the tour farms.

Urban Farms: This type of farm is the farm of people who live in the city. It is used on weekends and holidays. Such businesses enable economic activities to be carried out.

Teaching farms: The production of agricultural products, economic life and the rural cultural experience are the main factors of teaching farms. In such companies, the safety of leisure activities is the priority. In rural tourism, there are more of these businesses in agricultural businesses such as organic farming, family farms, disabled farms and horse farms.

2.3. Accommodation features in agritourism

Hospitality services are important for the development of agritourism. Interest in agritourism varies depending on the population. Therefore, the balance between lifestyle and guest expectations plays an important role in shaping lifestyle choices and guest service.

In addition to respecting local traditions, accommodation establishments should also have modern facilities (internet, TV, hot water, etc.). Therefore, it is necessary to implement the necessary measures to improve service quality in rural areas and meet customer demand. To ensure service quality in the hospitality industry, the following factors should be taken into account:

- Offers guests a selection of local and homemade food and drinks.
- Room design that allows reading and relaxing.

- General information on natural and cultural values as well as environmental protection surrounding the accommodation.

We can indicate the types of accommodation in agritourism as follows [11].

Village and farmhouses: These houses are preferred by tourists who want to experience the natural environment and culture, especially those who value social interaction. These houses are restored according to the local architecture, necessary additions are made and are ready for occupancy [12].

Old Catalan houses in Spain, old castles in England, Italy and Germany have been restored and converted into farmhouses and given over to agritourism services.

Spending the night in tents and caravans: If you want to be outdoors in direct contact with nature, you have the choice. Tourists who make this choice are often low-income [11]. Campsites are facilities with at least ten residential units where the customer generally pays for accommodation, food and drink, relaxation, entertainment and sport at their own expense in naturally beautiful areas such as the sea, lakes and mountains.

Hotels and Motels: Hotels are mostly located in the region, while motels are located on the side of the road. It is the most preferred type of accommodation in agritourism as it offers accommodation, restaurants and special leisure services.

Houses or rooms for rent: In some rural houses, residents rented one or more rooms in their houses for a few days. They are also available for daily or weekly rental.

2.4 Agritourism services in countries around the world

Although agritourism is not a new tourism activity, it has emerged as a form of tourism that is increasing with the increase in transportation services. With the development of the railway network in Europe, there was an increase in this area. At the end of the 20th century, the use of automobiles and the growth of highways developed the tourism industry. For the first time in the world, the Alps, the mountainous regions of Canada and America were used as places for rural tourism. Therefore, the railway company started agritourism activities. Rich industrialized countries such as the United States have achieved an important position in agritourism through advertising and government policies.

For Italians, rural tourism means integration with nature, silence, observation and discovery of the beauty of natural landscapes, making connections through new warm friendships and returning to their traditions. It can be mentioned that rural tourism in Italy is “family and adult tourism”. on a farm in Lazio, Italy; Visitors are offered camping, horse riding and fishing opportunities at the farm, and the farm is also a great spot for Sunday hikers [14].

The first country houses opened in France in 1951 and agritourism has been supported by the state since 1955. Cottages were restored as second homes and since the 1970s green holiday villages, national or regional parks, waterworks and family accommodation have emerged. In the 1970s, “Discovery Farm” museums were established to show how farms were managed in rural areas, and later the “Farms Open to the Public” project was created to showcase local agricultural products in an agricultural setting appreciate. In 1982, the “Sharing Life in Rural Areas” project was launched and from 1991, nature trips were offered for tourists under the motto “An extraordinary walk” [15].

In 2003, the Franco-Greek partnership created the first GUESTINN housing chain, consisting of traditional low-capacity accommodation in rural areas. The network has 357 rooms and 42 members in 9 out of 13 regions of the country [13].

Spain has become one of the most important countries in terms of nature and ecotourism. Spain is one of the countries with the highest environmental awareness. Policies have been developed and tourism activities formulated to promote agritourism in Spain. Agritourism began to gain traction in Spain in the 1960s as a low-cost holiday option. During this period,

in addition to repair and restoration work in rural areas, measures were also carried out to improve the quality of services for tourists coming to the region. In Germany and throughout Europe, agritourism is used as a tool for the development of rural areas. The development of agritourism in Germany began in 1873 with the granting of paid leave to civil servants and further developed in 1914 with the participation of civil servants.

One of the European countries where agritourism is preferred is Austria. Here, families living in mountain villages increase their income by renting out a side of their house to tourists to earn additional income through tourism [7].

Agritourism activity in the UK began in 1992 with a joint effort between the Welsh Department of Tourism, rural agencies in and around villages and local people. Villages where agritourism activities are carried out; The presence of natural landscapes, preserved historical and cultural values, a natural lifestyle in the villages, workshops for the development of handicrafts and excursion destinations are more in line with the demand. Another example is the festival program in Wales set up by the Development Council for Wales in 1985 for economic growth. Numerous events and activities took place as part of the main elements of the festival. To these; Nature and wildlife tours, bird and mammal tours, nature lessons, environmental activities, agriculture and other farm tours, nature markets, forest exploration, village life education, history and culture, also bike tours, castle tours, history rediscovery tour.

The development of agritourism in Canada has occurred for two reasons. Firstly, people's interest in rural areas and historical values has increased, and secondly, the Canadian government has supported rural development and reduced development disparities between regions. Agritourism has become a means of creating new jobs and improving living standards in areas where industries such as fishing and agriculture are in decline. For this reason, agritourism in these areas has created conditions for the development of regional resources and cultural heritage.

2.5 The role of agritourism in self-employment

Changes in the economic, political, cultural, technological and environmental spheres have made it necessary for countries to revise their development policies. They should analyze the role of rural industry and agritourism in the development of agriculture and apply a multifaceted approach. If we analyze the last few years, we can see that new opportunities have emerged in the field of agritourism. Particular attention was paid to the preservation of nature and landscape, historical buildings and traditional rural communities.

In addition to economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts, tourism is also an activity that impacts the social structure. For this reason, the impacts of rural tourism should be examined not only from economic but also from non-economic aspects. The impacts of rural tourism can be divided into three categories: economic, socio-cultural and physical environmental impacts [16].

Impact on Income: Among the economic impacts of agritourism on regions, the most important is its income-generating impact. The development and spread of agritourism is one of the main reasons for the development of regions in many directions (economic, cultural, social).

Local and foreign tourists traveling to the regions use accommodation services such as rental housing provided by the local population to meet their accommodation needs. In addition, the sale of handicrafts, carpets, wooden products, souvenirs and other local products that represent the rich cultural heritage helps to reduce the imbalance in income distribution by bringing additional income to the local population [7].

Table 1. Positive and negative effects of agritourism

Economic	Socio-cultural	Environment
Positive		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It creates alternative or supportive income and employment opportunities. ● It reduces social power imbalances between genders. ● Prevents population migration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It encourages cooperation between the community ● It revives the local culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It supports the preservation and protection of the environment ● It provides restoration and reuse of historic buildings and other places
Negative		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It can cause inflation in the regions ● Complexes that have little benefit to the local economy should not be opened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disappearance of local culture ● Avoiding negative impacts on local culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Environmental damage ● Increasing residential buildings ● The presence of an increase in the use of harmful gases and other emission gases

Prevention of urbanization, job creation and impact on women's employment: Migration from regions to cities leads to lower production levels and population decline in the regions [19]. To prevent urbanization, it is possible to improve living standards, provide fair income, ensure employment all year round and channel it into the manufacturing market economy [18]. The rapid spread of information and the rapid development of technology have led to employment opportunities in cities, the creation of industrial enterprises, unemployment in regions, and the migration of people from regions to cities.

3 Results and Discussions

To investigate the awareness of agritourism in our society, a survey was conducted. The purpose of the survey is to learn the opinions and thoughts of society and individuals on agritourism and to explore people's expectations from agrotourism activities. 50 people took part in the survey.

38% of respondents are women and 62% are men Fig.1.

Survey participants are listed by age category in Fig. 2.

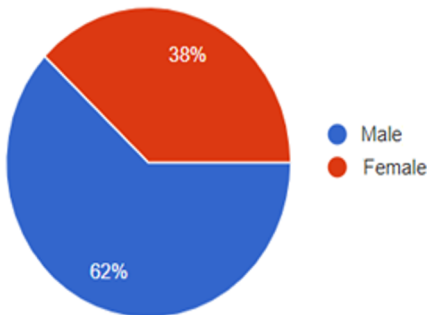


Fig. 1. Gender

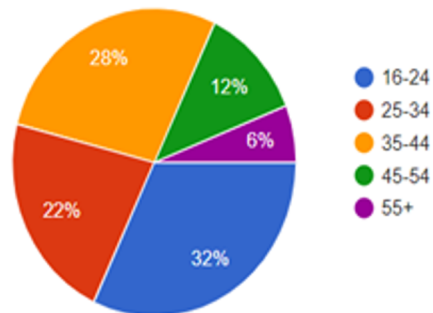


Fig. 2. Age.

It was found that 32% of survey participants had no information about agritourism and 68% had information about it Fig.3.

86% of respondents live in the city and 14% in the countryside Fig.4.

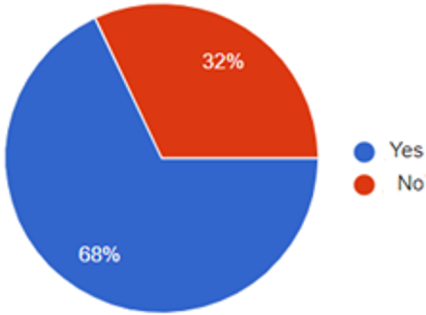


Fig. 3. Awareness of agritourism.

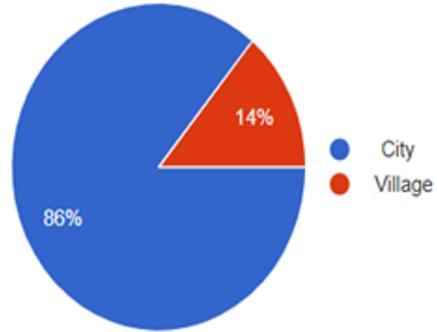


Fig. 4. Where you live.

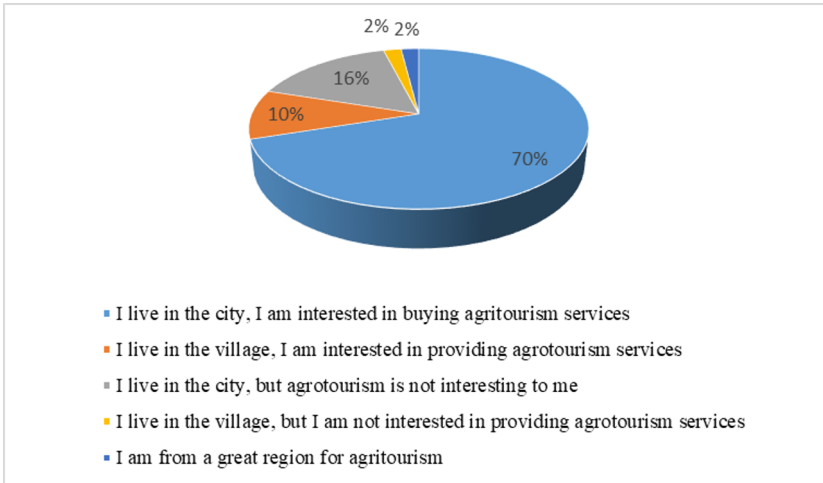


Fig. 5. Agritourism service.

70% of city residents who took part in the survey are interested in purchasing agritourism services. 10% of villagers are interested in providing agritourism services Fig.5.

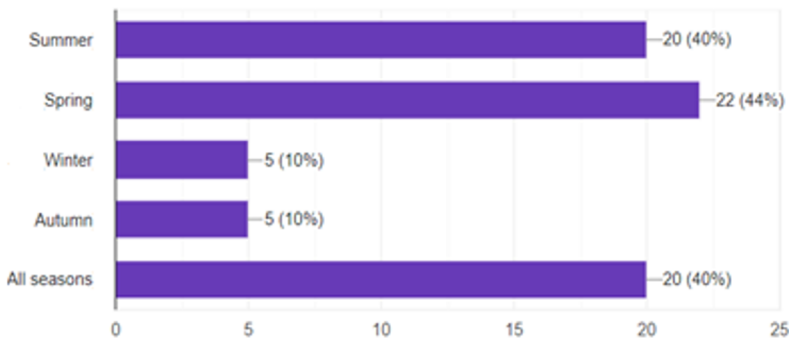


Fig. 6. Which season do you prefer for agritourism?

According to participants' responses, the spring and summer seasons are favorable for agritourism activities. According to another 20% of participants, all seasons are suitable for agritourism activities Fig.6.

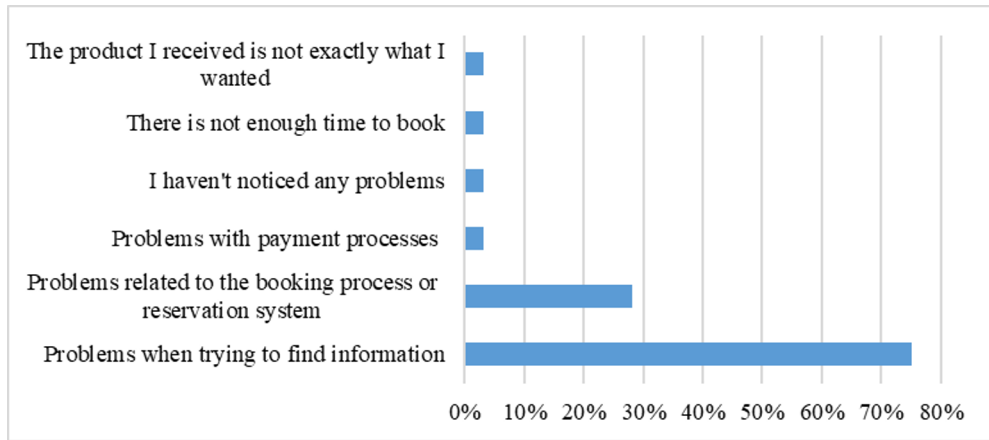


Fig. 7. Problems in agritourism.

48% of participants who wanted to purchase agritourism services reported that they encountered problems. 75% of participants reported difficulty finding information, 28.1% had problems making reservations, and 34.4% had problems making payments Fig.7.

4 Conclusions

Agritourism supports local entrepreneurship, thereby supporting the country's economy. The organization of tourist services, especially in mountainous areas, provides the local population with the opportunity to sell their services and products, which improves their well-being. This activity not only supports local entrepreneurship but also prevents migration to cities. Agritourism encourages population migration from cities to rural areas where living conditions are more dense. Tourist demand for local products and services is increasing, supporting the development of local entrepreneurship and businesses. Agritourism makes it possible to preserve the cultural heritage and traditions of the region and pass them on to future generations.

To support the development of agritourism, the following activities are proposed:

1. Educational and promotional programs should be organized to promote local entrepreneurship: Educational programs should be implemented to ensure the integration of local people in tourism. Training programs on communication, customer satisfaction, service and product presentation improve the skills of the local population and ensure that they benefit more from tourists.

2. The impact of agritourism on sustainable development should be promoted: in this sense, education on the impact of agritourism on the environment should be increased and the protection of natural resources should be promoted.

3. Marketing of local products should be supported.

4. Providing support for the establishment of cooperation.

5. The organization of tourist trips should be supported.

6. The preservation of cultural heritage and traditions should be promoted.

Today, women's participation in the labor market is important for both developed and developing countries. Many of the producers and sellers of agricultural products featured in agritourism are women.

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