



Farms as Tourism Destinations: Emerging Trends and Prospects of Agritourism in Odisha

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Agritourism is increasingly viewed as a viable strategy for diversifying farm-based activities, enhancing farm income, generating rural employment, and promoting sustainable rural development in Odisha. The state's diverse agricultural systems, traditional farming practices, scenic landscapes, and rich cultural heritage offer substantial scope for the emergence and expansion of agritourism enterprises. However, despite this potential, agritourism as an alternative livelihood option is still at a nascent and uneven stage of emergence across different regions of the state. This paper synthesizes insights from existing research studies, policy documents, and institutional reports to examine the current status and emerging trends of agritourism in Odisha. It assesses farmers' awareness levels, patterns of enterprise uptake, and the key constraints influencing the growth of agritourism, while also analysing the role of extension services and digital platforms in strengthening this sector. Strengthening institutional support systems, enhancing capacity-building initiatives, and integrating digital marketing and advisory mechanisms are crucial for accelerating the emergence of agritourism as a sustainable rural enterprise and for fostering inclusive livelihood opportunities in Odisha.

Keywords: Agritourism, digital promotion, emerging trends, enterprise uptake, extension services, Odisha, rural tourism

Introduction

Agriculture continues to be the backbone of Odisha's rural economy, supporting a large proportion of small and marginal farming households. However, escalating input costs, increasing climatic variability, and growing uncertainties in agricultural markets have adversely affected farm profitability. In this context, agritourism has emerged as a complementary livelihood pathway, integrating agricultural production with tourism by offering recreational, educational, and cultural experiences within farm settings. Odisha's diverse agro-climatic zones, indigenous farming systems, vibrant tribal culture, and scenic rural landscapes provide favourable conditions for the emergence of agritourism as a rural enterprise. Empirical studies highlight that agritourism contributes to income diversification, employment generation, preservation of local traditions, and strengthening rural-urban linkages (Tiwari & Singh, 2019; Behera et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the pace of agritourism emergence in Odisha remains slow, constrained by limited awareness, inadequate entrepreneurial skills, insufficient infrastructure, and weak extension support systems. Therefore, an examination of farmers' enterprise uptake behaviour and the role of extension mechanisms is essential to understand and promote agritourism development in the state.

Importance of Agritourism in Odisha

Agritourism comprises a broad spectrum of activities, including farm stays, guided farm visits, participatory agricultural operations, direct marketing of farm produce, cultural performances, and nature-based recreational experiences. In the context of Odisha, agritourism assumes particular importance due to the dominance of small and marginal farmers and the limited availability of alternative non-farm livelihood opportunities in rural areas. Research evidence suggests that the emergence of agritourism enterprises supports income diversification, mitigates seasonal and distress migration, and contributes to inclusive rural development (Mahapatra & Singh, 2025). Additionally, agritourism facilitates meaningful interactions between urban consumers and rural communities, while creating new marketing channels for agricultural produce, traditional foods, and handicrafts. Thus, agritourism serves as a crucial linkage between agriculture, tourism, and rural entrepreneurship.

Farmers' Awareness of Agritourism

Existing literature indicates that farmers' awareness of agritourism in Odisha ranges from low to moderate. While farmers are generally familiar with conventional tourism activities in nearby destinations, their understanding of agritourism as an emerging farm-based entrepreneurial opportunity remains limited. Higher awareness levels are observed in areas with established tourism exposure, such as Daringbadi, Chilika, and select pockets of coastal and western Odisha, where farmers have greater interaction with tourists and tourism-related institutions (Tiwari & Singh, 2019).

Factors Influencing Awareness

Studies reveal that awareness of the emerging concept of agritourism is influenced by farmers' educational status, exposure to mass media, frequency of interaction with extension personnel, participation in training and capacity-building programmes, and direct engagement with visitors (Rout et al., 2020). Farmers associated with self-help groups, farmer producer organizations, and rural youth development initiatives tend to exhibit higher awareness levels due to better access to information, training, and institutional networks.

Emerging Trends in Agritourism Practices

The emergence of agritourism in Odisha is currently at an early developmental stage. A limited number of progressive farmers and rural entrepreneurs have initiated basic agritourism activities, such as organized farm visits, promotion of local cuisine, and demonstration of traditional agricultural and cultural practices. However, the spread of more capital-intensive and skill-demanding components remains limited.

Status of Emerging Agritourism Components

Agritourism Component	Status of Emergence
Farm visits and demonstrations	Moderate
Sale of local farm products	Moderate
Farm stay facilities	Low
Cultural and tribal experiences	Low to Moderate
Digital promotion and online booking	Low

(Based on published studies and institutional reviews)

Factors Constraining the Emerging Trend

Several challenges hinder the wider emergence of agritourism enterprises in Odisha. These include inadequate technical knowledge, poor rural infrastructure, limited access to institutional credit, lack of clear policy guidelines, and weak integration with tourism markets (Londhe & Ishwar, 2025). Furthermore, farmers often perceive agritourism as a high-risk venture due to uncertain tourist demand and insufficient institutional and advisory support.

Role of Extension Services in Strengthening Emerging Agritourism Trends

Extension institutions, including Krishi Vigyan Kendras, line departments, and rural development agencies, play a pivotal role in familiarizing farmers with the emerging opportunities associated with agritourism through trainings, exposure visits, and entrepreneurship development programmes. However, agritourism-specific extension initiatives remain sporadic, with limited geographical coverage and insufficient emphasis on sustained capacity building.

Emerging Role of Digital and Virtual Extension

Digital and virtual extension tools—such as social media platforms, mobile applications, websites, and online booking portals—are increasingly shaping the growth trajectory of agritourism enterprises. Studies indicate that digital extension enhances enterprise visibility, improves market access, and strengthens farmer–tourist interactions (Behera et al., 2023; Pujar & Mishra, 2024). When effectively integrated with conventional extension approaches, digital tools can significantly accelerate the emergence and consolidation of agritourism initiatives.

Constraints in Agritourism Development

Despite its considerable potential, the emerging agritourism sector in Odisha faces multiple structural and institutional constraints. These include inadequate rural infrastructure, limited hospitality and enterprise management skills among farmers, restricted access to financial support, weak coordination between agricultural and tourism departments, and low awareness of regulatory and safety standards. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts among stakeholders and the formulation of supportive policy frameworks.

Strengthening Emerging Agritourism Trends

To strengthen the emerging trend of agritourism in Odisha, several strategic interventions are required. These include enhancing farmers' capacities through targeted training and skill development programmes, promoting affordable and location-specific infrastructure, integrating agritourism modules into extension education curricula, and leveraging digital platforms for marketing and outreach. Encouraging community-based and collective agritourism models, along with financial incentives and clear policy support, can further facilitate enterprise emergence. Aligning agritourism initiatives with existing rural development and tourism schemes will enhance long-term sustainability and scalability.

Conclusion

Agritourism holds substantial promise as an emerging livelihood diversification strategy in Odisha. Despite the state's rich agricultural, cultural, and natural resource base, the growth of agritourism remains limited due to constraints related to awareness, skills, infrastructure, and institutional support. Evidence from existing studies underscores the critical role of extension services—particularly digital and virtual approaches—in bridging the gap between awareness and enterprise emergence. Strengthening extension systems, supported by enabling policy frameworks, can empower farmers to transform agricultural landscapes into experiential tourism destinations and contribute to sustainable and inclusive rural development in Odisha.

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