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Opinion regarding Agri-tourism: Relationship between socio-personal characteristics and opinion

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Abstract

The present paper study the opinion of the respondents regarding agri-tourism and the relationship between their socio-personal characteristics and opinion. The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab state and 210 were selected for the study. The respondents selected were mainly teachers/principals, students and urban consumers. The findings revealed that majority of all the categories of respondents had high opinion of agri-tourism such as farm stays are the perfect ways to get closer to nature, agri-tourism is less costly than other tourism and agri-tourism creates curiosity to learn about food, plants, animals and rural lifestyle. Educational level of the teachers has positive and significant correlation with opinion of agri-tourism, while non-significant correlation observed between educational level and opinion of the urban consumers. Most of the teachers were having post graduate qualification, whereas the urban consumers were having only secondary education. Positive correlation between service experience of the teachers and opinion was notice and it was due to the fact that opinion may increase as service experience increase.

Keywords: Agri-tourism; Opinion; Socio-personal characteristics; Urban consumers; Students; Teachers/principals

1. Introduction

Agri-tourism is designed to involve visitors in agricultural activity to recreate in an agricultural environment and offers tourist an opportunity to live a rural life (Ragunandan 2010). It involves the practice of attracting visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes. However, agri-tourism is small-scale, low-impact, and, in most cases, education focused. Many agri-tourism activities require only a small farm crew in order to be successful. For instance, farm tours, bed and breakfasts, tractor bullock cart rides, grapes, mangoes, and other horticultural farms, by-product farms, birds, animal zoos, and many other activities may be operated with little additional investment in labor (Anonymous 2004). The importance of agri-tourism as part of the overall tourism market depends on recreation tourism resources, infrastructure image, market access and the presence of other type of tourism products. Even if agri-tourism maybe minor in relation to the overall tourism market, it is important for the development of specific rural areas. In the rural context, Tucker (2003) reported that tourists frequently look for a special relationship with their hosts as a means of getting to know their way of life, simultaneously enjoying genuine hospitality and getting to know the authentic cultural context of the host community. One should therefore understand the hosts and the local population, in general, as a significant element in the construction of a complete rural tourism experience product. On the similar line Rilla (1997) in her study stated that agri-tourism should have a strong connection to the local community to develop a critical customer base that not only makes purchases, but also markets the enterprise by word of mouth;

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to develop a supportive constituency available for market research; and to enlist the support of local officials and agencies that can develop supportive policy and provide technical assistance where necessary.

A strong relationship with the local community is critically important to a number of enterprises because local customers are good sounding boards for new ideas and are readily available for testing new products and services. Although agriculture is known to be the most important occupation in the rural area of Punjab, over the years it is becoming less sustainable due to number of factors and at the same time urban people can't experience the rural life as they don't have any of their relatives staying back in rural areas, thus deprive them from experiencing the natural rural setting. Hence, there is a need to promote innovative activities in the agriculture sector as well as conserving the natural heritage which will help the rural people live a sustainable life. The finding of the study will throw light on the opinion and relationship of socio-personal characteristics of the respondents regarding the potential of agri-tourism in the state.

2. Methodology

The present study was planned on the basis of suitable research methods and appropriate tools to measure the outcome. It was conducted in the district of Ludhiana, Punjab and is comprised of three kinds of respondents' viz. teachers and principals, final year students of under graduate programme and urban consumers. From the procured list of senior secondary schools of Ludhiana district, five Government and five private schools were selected, ten teachers were selected randomly from each school and the principals of all selected schools were also included, thus having a total of one hundred and ten respondents from the selected schools. Two Government Colleges i.e. one for boys and one for girls were also selected for this study. Out of these, sixty final year students of under graduate programmes were selected on the basis of probability proportional to the total number of final year students in under graduate programmes in each college. From the locality of Sarbha Nagar Ludhiana district, forty urban consumers were selected using the incidental sampling technique. Thus, the total sample comprised of 210 respondents for the present study.

Table 1 Opinion of the respondents regarding Agri-tourism

Category	Secondary school		Government College		Locality	Total
Study area	Public	Private	Boys	Girls	Urban consumers	
Sample size	55	55	30	30	40	210

3. Results and discussion

The data in Table 2 indicated that little more than half of the total respondents agreed that agri-tourism provide a clean and pollution free environment. 71.0 per cent of the teachers agreed with the statement that agri-tourism enables one to meet new people, while 63.3 per cent of the students and 60.0 per cent of the urban consumers also agreed on the same. The data further revealed that 65.0 per cent to 69.1 per cent of the three categories of respondents agreed that agri-tourism offers an opportunity to exchange experiences. Although 69.1 per cent of the teachers agreed that agri-tourism provide an opportunity to be creative by participating directly in farm work, 55.0 per cent of both students and urban consumers were somewhat agreed. 69.1 per cent, of the teachers, 65.0 per cent students and 55.5 per cent urban consumers agreed that agri-tourism protects the environment naturally. Most of the respondents i.e. 71.0 per cent teachers, 68.3 per cent students and 65.0 per cent urban consumers agreed that farm stay is the perfect way to get closer to nature. Although 66.4 per cent of teachers agreed that agri-tourism enhance the aesthetic value of villages and public spaces, little more than half of the students and urban consumers were somewhat agreed with the same statement. The data continued to show that majority of the urban consumers 77.5 per cent, students 73.3 per cent and teachers 71.8 per cent agreed that agri-tourism is less costly than other tourism and little more than half of the teachers agreed that it contributes to rural income. Large majority of urban consumers 80.0 per cent, students 78.3 per cent and teachers 76.4 per cent agreed that agri-tourism creates curiosity to learn about food, plants, animals and rural lifestyle. Although large majority of teachers i.e. 77.3 per cent agreed that indigenous knowledge can be gained through agri-tourism, only 65.5 per cent of both students and urban consumers agreed with the statement. Similar trend was followed in the case of knowledge to grow food organically whereby 78.2 per cent of the teachers, 71.7 per cent students and 67.5 per cent urban consumers agreed with the same. The data in the table also depict that majority of the teachers 72.7 per cent agreed that agri-tourism creates awareness about rural life and their farming system. It also depicts that 73.6 per cent of the teachers agreed that agri-tourism provides agricultural products. While 68.3 per cent of the students also agreed with this statement, whereas 52.5 per cent of the urban consumers agreed to somewhat extent.

Table 2 Opinion of the respondents regarding agri-tourism

Sr. No	Opinion	Teachers n ₁ =110			Students n ₂ =60			Urban Consumers (n ₃ =40)		
		A	SWA	DA	A	SWA	DA	A	SWA	DA
		f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
1	Provides a clean and pollution free environment to the tourists	60 (54.5)	50 (45.5)	0 (0)	33 (55.0)	27 (45.0)	0 (0)	23 (57.5)	17 (42.5)	0 (0)
2	Enables one to meet new people	78 (71.0)	32 (29.0)	0 (0)	38 (63.3)	22 (36.7)	0 (0)	24 (60.0)	16 (40.0)	0 (0)
3	Offers an opportunity to exchange experiences	76 (69.1)	32 (29.1)	2 (1.8)	40 (66.7)	20 (33.3)	0 (0)	26 (65.0)	14 (35.0)	0 (0)
4	Rural traditions can be revived by agri-tourism	54 (49.1)	56 (50.9)	0 (0)	27 (45.0)	30 (50.0)	3 (5.0)	17 (42.5)	23 (57.5)	0 (0)
5	Preserves the culture and heritage of the rural people	61 (55.5)	45 (41.0)	4 (3.5)	34 (56.7)	22 (36.7)	4 (6.6)	24 (60.0)	16 (40.0)	0 (0)
6	Provide opportunity to be creative by participating directly in farm work.	54 (69.1)	56 (50.9)	0 (0)	27 (45.0)	33 (55.0)	0 (0)	18 (45.0)	22 (55.0)	0 (0)
7	Promotes additional markets for food stuffs.	50 (45.5)	58 (52.7)	2 (1.2)	26 (43.3)	34 (56.7)	0 (0)	19 (47.5)	21 (52.5)	0 (0)
8	Promotes diversified activities in rural areas.	61 (55.5)	44 (40.0)	5 (4.5)	31 (51.7)	25 (41.7)	4 (6.6)	22 (55.0)	16 (40.0)	2 (5.0)
9	Protects the environment naturally	76 (69.1)	34 (30.9)	0 (0)	39 (65.0)	21 (35.0)	0 (0)	22 (55.0)	18 (45.0)	0 (0)
10	Farm stays are the perfect ways to get closer to nature.	78 (71.0)	32 (29.0)	0 (0)	41 (68.3)	19 (31.7)	0 (0)	26 (65.0)	14 (35.0)	0 (0)
11	Provides a friendlier ambience for the guests.	70 (63.6)	37 (33.7)	3 (2.7)	28 (46.7)	32 (53.3)	0 (0)	19 (47.9)	21 (52.5)	0 (0)
12	Enhance the aesthetic value of the villages and public spaces.	73 (66.4)	37 (33.6)	0 (0)	29 (48.3)	31 (51.6)	0 (0)	18 (45.0)	22 (55.0)	0 (0)
13	Services are available on the farm.	55 (50.0)	45 (41.0)	10 (9.0)	25 (41.7)	30 (50.0)	5 (8.3)	18 (45.0)	22 (55.0)	0 (0)
14	Satisfies urban tourist.	60 (54.5)	43 (39.1)	7 (6.4)	27 (45.0)	30 (50.0)	3 (5.0)	15 (37.5)	21 (52.5)	4 (10.0)
15	Less costly than other tourism.	79 (71.8)	31 (28.2)	0 (0)	44 (73.3)	16 (26.7)	0 (0)	31 (77.5)	9 (22.5)	0 (0)
16	Contributes to the rural income	56 (51.0)	46 (41.8)	8 (7.2)	24 (40.0)	33 (55.0)	3 (5.0)	16 (40.0)	20 (50.0)	4 (10.0)
17	Creates curiosity to learn about food, plants, animals and rural lifestyle.	84 (76.4)	26 (23.6)	0 (0)	47 (78.3)	13 (21.7)	0 (0)	32 (80.0)	8 (20.0)	0 (0)
18	Provide a healthier environment.	74	32	4	28	32	0	23	17	0

Sr. No	Opinion	Teachers n ₁ =110			Students n ₂ =60			Urban Consumers (n ₃ =40)		
		A	SWA	DA	A	SWA	DA	A	SWA	DA
		f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %	f %
		(67.3)	(29.1)	(3.6)	(46.7)	(53.3)	(0)	(57.5)	(42.5)	(0)
19	Gain indigenous knowledge	85 (77.3)	25 (22.7)	0 (0)	40 (66.7)	20 (33.3)	0 (0)	26 (65.0)	14 (35.0)	0 (0)
20	Develop knowledge to grow food organically.	86 (78.2)	24 (28.2)	0 (0)	43 (71.7)	17 (28.3)	0 (0)	27 (67.5)	13 (32.5)	0 (0)
21	Close proximity to nature, peace and tranquility exist.	72 (65.5)	32 (29.1)	6 (5.4)	27 (45.0)	31 (51.6)	2 (3.4)	17 (42.5)	23 (57.5)	0 (0)
22	Creates awareness about rural life and their farming system.	80 (72.7)	30 (27.3)	0 (0)	37 (61.7)	23 (38.3)	0 (0)	25 (62.5)	15 (37.5)	0 (0)
23	Provide agricultural products	81 (73.6)	29 (23.4)	0 (0)	41 (68.3)	19 (31.7)	0 (0)	19 (47.5)	21 (52.5)	0 (0)

3.1. Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

3.1.1. Overall opinion regarding Agri-tourism

It can be observed that 69.1 per cent, of the teachers, 68.3 per cent students and 67.5 per cent urban consumers had high opinion about agri-tourism, whereas 25.5 per cent of teachers, 23.3 per cent students and 22.5 per cent urban consumers fall in the medium opinion 39 – 55. Only a small percentage of respondents (teachers 5.4%, students 8.3% and urban consumers 10%) had low overall opinion of agri-tourism.

Table 3 Overall opinion of the respondents regarding agri-tourism

Sr. No	Category/Range	Teachers (n ₁ =110)		Students (n ₂ =60)		Urban Consumers (n ₃ =40)	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	Low (23 – 39)	6	5.4	5	8.3	4	10
	Medium (39 – 55)	28	25.5	14	23.3	9	22.5
	High (55 – 71)	76	69.1	41	68.3	27	67.5

3.2. Relationship between socio personal characteristics and opinion regarding Agri-tourism

Table 4 Relationship of socio-personal characteristics and opinion of the respondents regarding Agri-tourism

Sr. No	Socio - personal characteristics	Teachers (n ₁ =110)	Students (n ₂ =60)	Urban Consumers (n ₃ =40)
		r	r	R
1	Age	0.1268	0.0138	0.0116
2	Family background	0.4261**	0.3527**	0.3481**
3	Educational qualification	0.5362**	-	0.2137
4	Service experience	0.2348**	-	-
5	Social participation	0.3641**	0.3254**	0.0146
6	Occupation	-	-	0.0214

** Significant at 5 percent level

Socio-personal characteristics is the analysis of the condition of the respondents, as contained by socio-personal characteristics variables like age, marital status, education, annual income, type of family, size of family, family background etc. It is known fact that the independent variables or predictor variables presumes change in the dependent variables as such the relationship between these two variables for all categories of respondents was calculated and placed in Table 4.

3.2.1. Age and opinion of Agri-tourism

There was no significant correlation between age and opinion of agri-tourism among teachers, students and urban consumers because this study is attributed to the relative novelty of the subject.

3.2.2. Family background and opinion of Agri-tourism

Family background of the teachers, students and urban consumers was found to have positive and significant correlation with opinion of agri-tourism at 5 per cent level of significance. This might be due to the reason that the respondents belonged to urban background and have access to quality education and modern facilities thus they see the importance of agri-tourism.

3.2.3. Educational level and opinion of Agri-tourism

Educational level of the teachers was found to have positive and significant correlation with opinion of agri-tourism at 5 per cent level of significance. However, non-significant correlation was observed between educational level and opinion of the urban consumers. The reason can be that most of the teachers were having post graduate qualification, whereas most of the urban consumers were having secondary education.

3.2.4. Service experience and opinion of Agri-tourism

It was observed that there was positive correlation between service experience of the teachers and opinion, but it was not significant. It can be concluded that opinion may increase as service experience increase.

3.2.5. Social participation and opinion of Agri-tourism

Social participation of teachers and students was found to have significant and positive correlation with opinion of agri-tourism at 5 per cent level of significance, while non-significant correlation was observed between social participation and opinion for the urban consumers. The reason for this is that most of the teachers and students are actively participating in social organizations thus having more knowledge on various activities

4. Conclusion

The study can be concluded that tourism in the form of housing and catering for visitors is not a new activity on farms, as historically people from the cities have turned to the countryside for recreation and holidays, the diversification of farming into tourism is a fundamental change since it demands new skills and competencies of the farmers and may lead to influence the attitude, mentality and identity. Farmers involved in developing value-added products including jellies, jams, or sauces as diversification farming in which visitors may learn about food preservation and maximization. These firsthand experiences encourage visitors to make purchases or use local products for future food preparation. It can be further concluded that 69.1 per cent of the teachers, 68.3 per cent students and 67.5 per cent urban consumers were agreed on the opinion of agri-tourism i.e. they fall in high category of 55 – 71 scores. Family background of the teachers, students and urban consumers had significant and positive correlation with opinion of agri-tourism at 5 per cent of level of significance, similar case of relation was found between educational level of teachers and opinion of agri-tourism. There was also positive correlation between service experience of the teachers and opinion. However, the social participation of teachers and students was found to have significant and positive correlation with opinion of agri-tourism at 5 per cent level of significance, whereas non significance correlation was observed between social participation and overall opinion of the urban consumers.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest

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