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ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH AGRITOURISM: CASE STUDY FROM ODISHA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture remains the mainstay of Odisha's rural economy, yet the sector faces persistent challenges from climatic vulnerability and a declining share in the state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), underscoring the need for farm diversification strategies. Agritourism offers a promising avenue for supplementary income generation and rural economic resilience, leveraging Odisha's rich agricultural heritage, diverse agro-climatic zones, and cultural landscapes. This study employed a case-study approach to examine entrepreneurial success and economic transformation across ten agritourism destinations located in Puri, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Khordha, and Nayagarh districts, using data obtained from the Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL) and semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs. Success was assessed through both income comparisons (pre- and post-adoption) and a five-dimension scoring framework covering visitor volume, accommodation scale, enterprise diversification, value addition and revenue diversification. Results show substantial income transformation among the eight operational destinations, with an average growth multiplier of 8–9 times pre-adoption income; Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal recorded the highest gain, at nearly 28 times its original income. Success-attribute scoring revealed that established, diversified enterprises such as HealthVille and GSDR Nature Cave outperformed newer or pre-operational ventures, indicating that agritourism success is closely tied to enterprise diversification, value addition, and infrastructure development rather than a single uniform model. The findings affirm agritourism's potential as a sustainable strategy for enhancing farm profitability, income diversification, and inclusive rural development in Odisha.

Key words : Agritourism, Enterprise diversification, Farm income transformation, Income diversification, Rural entrepreneurship, Sustainable rural development.

Introduction

Agriculture remains the backbone of Odisha's economy and plays a crucial role in shaping its socio-economic development. According to Census 2011, nearly 84 percent of the state's households reside in rural areas, with agriculture and allied activities serving as their primary source of livelihood. Despite its significance, the sector faces persistent challenges due to the state's high vulnerability to climatic risks such as cyclones and intense rainfall. These recurring disruptions have contributed to a gradual decline in the share of agriculture in Odisha's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). In this context,

there is an urgent need to promote farm diversification strategies that can enhance farmers' resilience and income stability. Agritourism emerges as a promising yet underutilized opportunity in Odisha, offering substantial potential for sustainable growth, rural development, and supplementary income generation. Vinuta *et al.* (2019) highlighted that agritourism offers immersive, hands-on experiences, including activities such as milking cows, riding bullock carts, and tasting freshly harvested produce. Expanding on this perspective, Shah *et al.* (2019) characterized agritourism as a farm-based enterprise designed to generate additional income for farmers.

Odisha has a high potential for agritourism due to its rich agricultural legacy, diversified agro-climatic conditions, rural culture, traditional farming practices, and picturesque landscapes. The concept of agritourism in Odisha gained institutional support with the introduction of the Odisha Tourism Policy, 2022, which recognized rural and farm-based tourism as an important component of sustainable tourism development in the state (Government of Odisha, 2022).

Rationale of the study

This study was conducted to systematically investigate entrepreneurial performance and the economic transformation associated with agritourism adoption, given the ongoing fragility of Odisha's farm economy and the scant empirical documentation of agritourism outcomes in the state. The study's specific objectives are to: (i) compare farm revenue before and after agritourism adoption in selected destinations; and (ii) evaluate these destinations' success factors using a multi-dimensional, structured scoring framework.

Materials and Methods

The present research has employed a case study research design. In a case study design, the selected case serves as the foundation for a detailed, comprehensive, and holistic investigation of the specific aspects under study. It is an approach in which one particular case or a limited number of carefully chosen cases are examined intensively (Gilbert, 2008: 36). Burns (1997: 364) states that, for research to qualify as a case study, it must constitute a bounded system, meaning an entity that exists independently. A case study should therefore concentrate on a clearly defined subject or unit that may either be highly representative or distinctly unique.

For the identification and selection of agritourism units, secondary data were obtained from the Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL), Government of Odisha. The study area

included 10 agritourism destinations located across various districts of Odisha. Such as Puri, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Khurdha and Nayagarh. These destinations were selected randomly using information obtained from secondary sources and official documents associated with agritourism activities in the state.

The present study utilized data collected from these ten destinations, detailed in Table 1.

For the present research, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered using a semi structured interview schedule. Success was operationalized as the developmental experiences and achievements of the selected agritourism destinations that reflect their growth and sustainability over time. This was captured through the interview schedule by documenting the entrepreneurs' background, motivation for adopting agritourism, changes in farm and tourism infrastructure, diversification of activities and services offered, visitor profile and tourism performance, access to training and government support, and the economic benefits derived from agritourism.

Success attributes of agritourism destinations were assessed through cross-case thematic analysis. Five dimensions—visitor volume, accommodation scale, enterprise diversification, value addition, and revenue diversification—were used for evaluation. Each dimension was measured on a three-point continuum, assigning scores of 1 (low), 2 (moderate) and 3 (high). The scores obtained across dimensions were aggregated to derive an overall success score for each destination. Cross-case thematic analysis enabled the comparison of destinations and the identification of common attributes associated with successful agritourism ventures, such as diversified enterprises, higher visitor attraction, value-added activities, accommodation facilities, and multiple revenue streams. This approach provided a systematic framework for documenting and comparing agritourism success stories.

Results and Discussion

Among the eight operational destinations, the average income growth multiplier was approximately 8–9 times the pre-adoption income level. Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal recorded the highest transformation — from a net agricultural income of ` 1.25 lakh to an annual income of ` 30–40 lakh, representing a growth of nearly 28 times. Even destinations with comparatively modest growth, such as Satya Sagar Water Park (1.5×) and SK Agro Village & Forest (3.2×), demonstrated significant improvement in absolute income and livelihood diversification. Two destinations — the farm of Mrs. Bhabani Das (Khordha) and the venture of Mr. Baibhav

Table 1: Destination details.

Name of destination	District
Agr-Eco village	Puri
Kapilash agri eco resort	Dhenkanal
SKAgrovillage & forest	Dhenkanal
Mahima agro tourism hub	Dhenkanal
Satya sagar water park	Dhenkanal
GSDR natures cave	Nayagarh
JR wonderland eco resort	Jajpur
Green heaven agro retreat	Khurdha
Bhabani Das (Owner)	Khurdha
Baibhav Pattnaik (Owner)	Dhenkanal

Table 2 : Scoring framework for assessing the success attributes of agritourism destinations.

Dimension	Score 1 — Low	Score 2 — Moderate	Score 3 — High
Visitor Volume	Fewer than 300 cumulative visitors OR not yet operational for tourism	300–2,999 cumulative visitors OR ‘steadily increasing’ without a specific figure reported	3,000 or more cumulative visitors
Accommodation Scale	Minimal rooms, under construction, or no accommodation infrastructure in place	Some rooms/cottages built but fewer than 20 rooms in total	20 or more rooms currently operational
Enterprise Diversification	Single enterprise or very limited combination (1–2 activities)	Two to three enterprises combined (e.g. crops+fisheries OR horticulture + livestock)	Four or more enterprises integrated (e.g. crops + livestock + poultry + fisheries + tourism)
Value Addition	Raw produce only; no on-farm processing infrastructure present	Some on-farm processing or a farm-to-fork supply chain established	Dedicated processing infrastructure present (e.g. drying unit, cold storage, oil extraction, vermicomposting)
Revenue Diversification (Events/Wellness)	No events or wellness revenue stream; income from tourism/farm only	Some event hosting or a wellness component present but not a dedicated facility	Dedicated convention/events hall OR wellness/therapy centre constituting a distinct revenue stream

Pattnaik (Dhenkanal) — are currently under development and represent an emerging category of enterprise in the sector. The findings are consistent with those of Yadav *et al.* (2024), who reported that agritourism contributes to economic development, income generation and rural entrepreneurship through the integration of agriculture and tourism, and they also mirror the international evidence of Barbieri and Mshenga (2008) and Park and Stollery (2017), both of whom found that enterprise longevity and the extent of on-farm diversification are key drivers of higher agritourism income.

As presented in Table 4 and Figs. 1-2, considerable variation was observed in the economic performance of the selected agritourism enterprises. Among all the destinations, Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal recorded the highest income transformation. The enterprise increased its annual income from approximately ` 1.25 lakh under conventional farming to nearly ` 35 lakh after adopting agritourism, representing an income growth multiplier of approximately 28 times. This exceptional performance can be attributed to the successful integration of diversified farm enterprises, including fisheries and plantation crops, with accommodation facilities, recreational activities, and its strategic location near the internationally renowned pilgrimage destination of Puri, which ensured a consistent inflow of tourists throughout the year.

Among the remaining destinations, Mahima Agri-Eco Hub and GSDR Nature Cave also exhibited substantial

economic improvement, recording income growth multipliers of 6.0 and 4.9, respectively. Both enterprises adopted diversified farming systems integrated with tourism-oriented services, enabling them to generate multiple sources of income while enhancing the value of existing farm resources. Likewise, JR Wonderland Eco Resort achieved an income growth multiplier of approximately 3.8, demonstrating that the integration of dairy farming, recreational facilities and visitor-oriented infrastructure can substantially improve enterprise profitability. These findings reinforce the role of agritourism as an effective strategy for income diversification and sustainable rural entrepreneurship, which is consistent with the findings of Yadav *et al.* (2024).

Moderate income enhancement was observed in SK Agro Village and Forest and Satya Sagar Water Park, which recorded income growth multipliers of approximately 3.2 and 1.5, respectively. Although, these enterprises reported comparatively lower growth than the leading destinations, they nevertheless experienced notable improvements in annual earnings. The findings indicate that even moderate levels of agritourism integration can contribute meaningfully to farm income and livelihood diversification.

A different pattern was observed in the cases of HealthVille and Sambit Eco Garden. Unlike the other destinations, these enterprises were already operating as established commercial ventures before incorporating

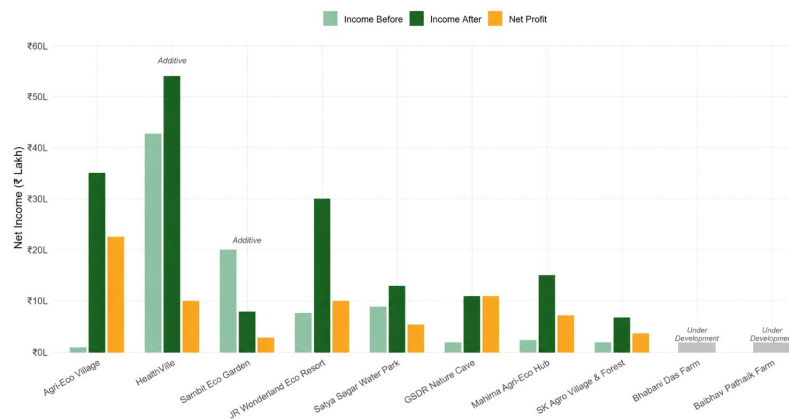


Fig. 1 : Income Transformation across 10 Agritourism Destinations.

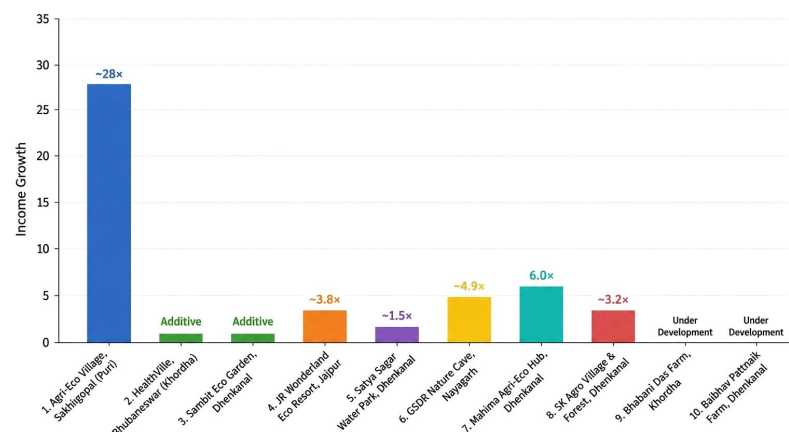


Fig. 2 : Comparative Income Growth Multipliers of selected Agritourism Destinations in Odisha.

agritourism activities. Consequently, the additional revenue generated through agritourism represented supplementary income rather than a transformation of their existing income base. Nevertheless, the incorporation of agritourism broadened their business portfolios, enhanced visitor engagement and created additional revenue streams, highlighting the complementary role of agritourism in diversified rural enterprises.

The analysis further revealed that Bhabani Das Farm and Baibhav Pattnaik Farm were still in the developmental phase and had not yet commenced commercial agritourism operations during the period of investigation. Although post-adoption income could not be assessed for these enterprises, their investment in agritourism infrastructure reflects the increasing interest of rural entrepreneurs in adopting agritourism as an alternative enterprise.

The evidence generated from the present study indicates that agritourism can serve as a sustainable rural enterprise model capable of improving farm profitability and promoting inclusive rural economic development in Odisha.

The assessment of success attributes among the

selected agritourism destinations revealed substantial variation in their overall performance. Among the ten destinations evaluated, HealthVile and GSDR Nature Cave emerged as the most successful enterprises, each obtaining a total score of 13 out of 15. HealthVile demonstrated outstanding performance in terms of visitor volume, accommodation facilities, and revenue diversification through its integrated wellness services, including Ayurveda, yoga, and therapeutic activities. In contrast, GSDR Nature Cave achieved high scores owing to its enterprise diversification, value-addition practices, and nature-based tourism experiences, which enhanced its overall attractiveness and economic sustainability.

Satya Sagar Water Park and Mahima Agri-Eco Hub occupied the second tier of performance, each recording a total score of 10. These enterprises successfully combined agricultural production with recreational facilities and value-added services, thereby creating diversified income opportunities. SK Agro Village & Forest, Sambit Eco Garden, and Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal recorded moderate success, with overall scores ranging from 6 to 8. Although, these destinations offered unique agricultural and tourism experiences, their performance was constrained by comparatively lower visitor inflow, limited accommodation facilities, or fewer revenue-generating activities.

The lowest scores (5 out of 15) were recorded for JR Wonderland Eco Resort, Bhabani Das Farm and Baibhav Pattnaik Farm (Dhenkanal Sadar Enterprise). While JR Wonderland Eco Resort had recently commenced agritourism operations, Bhabani Das Farm and Baibhav Pattnaik Farm were still in the developmental stage during the period of investigation. Consequently, these enterprises had limited tourism infrastructure, lower enterprise diversification, minimal visitor attraction, and fewer value-added services, which adversely affected their overall success scores.

The findings indicate that successful agritourism destinations are characterized by a balanced combination of high visitor attraction, adequate accommodation facilities, diversified farm enterprises, value-addition activities, and multiple revenue streams, which is consistent with the observations of Karjigi (2019) and with the typology of agritourism enterprises proposed by

Table 3 : Documenting success stories of agritourism destinations.

S. no.	Enterprise	Entrepreneur	Core Farming	Key Attractions	Unique Success Attribute
1	Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal (Puri)	Suresh Ch. Mahapatra	Organic farming, guava cultivation, fisheries, coconut and arecanut plantation	Farm stay, rural cuisine, fishing, cultural experience	Highest income transformation
2	HealthVille, Bhubaneswar (Khordha)	Indumati Ray	Wellness tourism integrated with horticulture and farming	Ayurveda, yoga, boating, cycling, wellness therapies	High visitor volume with diversified wellness services
3	Sambit Eco Garden, Dhenkanal	Sujit Ku. Nanda	Turmeric, mango, banana and pumpkin cultivation	Nature trails, eco-tourism, educational farm visits	Successful integration of eco-tourism with farming
4	JR Wonderland Eco Resort, Jajpur	Jyotsnarani Routray	Dairy farming integrated with horticulture	Eco-resort, dairy farm visits, recreational activities	Successful integration of dairy farming with tourism
5	Satya Sagar Water Park, Dhenkanal	Dushasan Dalei	Apple ber, lemon cultivation and fisheries	Water park, convention hall, farm recreation	Diversified revenue through recreation and event tourism
6	GSDR Nature Cave, Nayagarh	Ramesh Ch. Sahoo	Guava, litchi, mango, dragon fruit and fisheries	Orchard tours, eco-tourism, nature-based recreation	High enterprise diversification with value-added agriculture
7	Mahima Agri-Eco Hub, Dhenkanal	Amarendra Malla	Integrated farming, horticulture and value addition	Farm stay, processing units, educational tours	Strong enterprise diversification with multiple income sources
8	SK Agro Village & Forest, Dhenkanal	Saumendra Pattnaik	Poultry, mango, potato, pulses and fisheries	Forest trails, farm stay, livestock demonstrations	Sustainable integrated farming and rural tourism model
9	Baibhav Pattnaik Farm, Dhenkanal Sadar	Baibhav Pattnaik	Cashew plantation and emerging agritourism	Farm-to-Plate concept, agricultural learning	Innovative Farm-to-Plate model with strong future potential
10	Bhabani Das Farm, Khordha	Bhabani Das	Fruit orchard (mango, lemon and guava)	Orchard visits, fruit harvesting, farm education	Orchard-based agritourism with experiential learning

Philip *et al.* (2010), in which greater authenticity of farm-based experience and scale of tourism activity are associated with stronger enterprise performance. The superior performance of HealthVille and GSDR Nature Cave demonstrates that diversification beyond conventional farming—through wellness-based tourism, integrated farming systems, and experiential tourism—substantially enhances the competitiveness and sustainability of agritourism enterprises.

Conversely, destinations with limited enterprise diversification, inadequate tourism infrastructure, and fewer visitor-oriented services achieved relatively lower

success scores, emphasizing the importance of developing complementary attractions and value-added components to improve enterprise performance. The results further suggest that agritourism enterprises progress through distinct developmental stages, with established destinations exhibiting greater capacity to attract visitors, diversify income sources, and generate sustainable economic returns than emerging or pre-operational ventures. Overall, the study highlights enterprise diversification, value addition, accommodation facilities, and revenue diversification as the principal determinants of agritourism success, indicating that a

Table 4 : Comparative Income Profile of selected Agritourism Destinations, Odisha.

S. no.	Destination	Status	Income before Adoption (` Lakh)	Income after Adoption (` Lakh)	Net Profit (` Lakh)	Income Growth
1	Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal (Puri)	Active	1.25	30–40	20–25	~28×
2	Health Ville, Bhubaneswar (Khordha)	Active	42.84	52.80	10.00	Additive
3	Sambit Eco Garden, Dhenkanal	Active	20.00	6–10	2–4	Additive
4	JR Wonderland Eco Resort, Jajpur	Active	7.80	30.00	10.00	~3.8×
5	Satya Sagar Water Park, Dhenkanal	Active	9.00	13–14	5–6	~1.5×
6	GSDR Nature Cave, Nayagarh	Active	2.24	10–12	10–12	~4.9×
7	Mahima Agri-Eco Hub, Dhenkanal	Active	2.50	15.00	7–8	6.0×
8	SK Agro Village & Forest, Dhenkanal	Active	2.18	6.94	3.94	~3.2×
9	Bhabani Das Farm, Khordha	Under Development	Farming income	—	—	—
10	Baibhav Pattnaik Farm, Dhenkanal	Under Development	Cashew + Salary	—	—	—

Table 5 : Assessment of success attributes of selected destinations.

Destination	Status	Visitor volume	Accommodation value	Enterprise Diversification	Value addition	Revenue diversification	Total/15
Health Ville	Established	3	3	2	2	3	13
GSDR Nature Cave	Established	3	3	3	3	1	13
Satya Sagar Water Park	Established	2	2	2	1	3	10
Mahima Agri-Eco Tourism Hub	Established	2	2	2	3	1	10
SK Agro Village & Forest	Established	1	2	3	1	1	8
Sambit Eco Garden	Emerging	1	2	2	1	1	7
Agri-Eco Village (Sakhigopal)	Emerging	1	2	1	1	1	6
Bhabani Das Farm	Pre-operational	1	1	1	1	1	5
JRWonderland Eco Resort	Newly operational	1	1	1	1	1	5
Dhenkanal Sadar Enterprise	Pre-operational	1	1	1	1	1	5

holistic integration of agricultural production with tourism-oriented services is essential for achieving long-term sustainability and rural economic development.

As illustrated in Fig. 3, the selected agritourism destinations exhibited distinct performance profiles across the five success dimensions, namely visitor volume, accommodation scale, enterprise diversification, value

addition, and revenue diversification. Among the destinations, GSDR Nature Cave demonstrated consistently high performance in visitor attraction, accommodation facilities, enterprise diversification, and value-addition activities. However, it recorded a comparatively lower score in revenue diversification, as it lacked dedicated event- or wellness-based income

Agritourism Destination Scoring — Multi-Dimensional Comparison

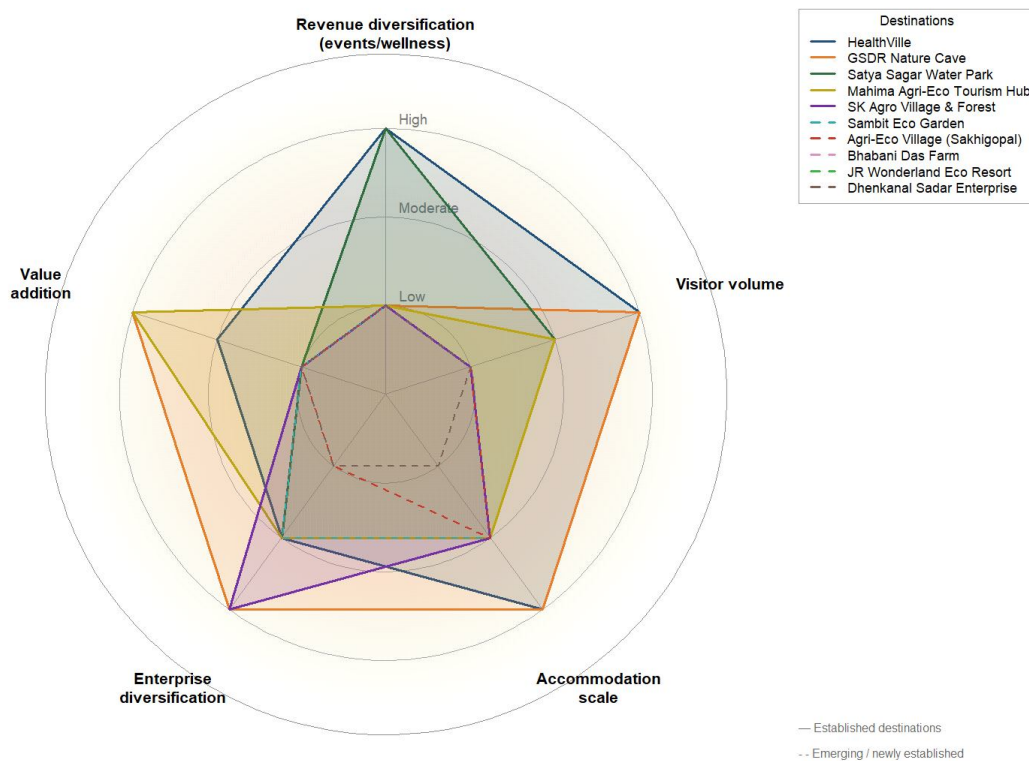


Fig. 3 : Comparative success profile of ten agritourism destinations (Qualitative Assessment Derived from Case Narratives).

streams.

In contrast, Satya Sagar Water Park and HealthVille achieved higher scores in revenue diversification through distinct business models. Satya Sagar Water Park generated additional income from its convention and event facilities, whereas HealthVille successfully integrated wellness-based services, including yoga, Ayurveda and therapeutic treatments, thereby creating a diversified and sustainable revenue base beyond conventional farm tourism.

Mahima Agri-Eco Hub emerged as a notable example of value-added agribusiness, with facilities such as oil extraction and vermicomposting enhancing both farm profitability and visitor engagement. Although its accommodation infrastructure was comparatively moderate, the enterprise demonstrated strong performance through value addition and diversified agricultural activities. Similarly, SK Agro Village & Forest displayed a high level of enterprise diversification by integrating crop cultivation, livestock, poultry and fisheries. Nevertheless, its relatively lower visitor volume and limited accommodation capacity indicate that it currently functions as a smaller-scale integrated farming model rather than a mass tourism destination.

The remaining destinations—Agri-Eco Village (Sakhigopal), Sambit Eco Garden, Bhabani Das Farm, JR Wonderland Eco Resort, and Baibhav Pattnaik Farm (Dhenkanal Sadar)—recorded low to moderate scores across most evaluation dimensions. This comparatively lower performance primarily reflects their early stage of enterprise development rather than inherent limitations in their agritourism potential. As newly established or developing ventures, these destinations are still expanding their tourism infrastructure, visitor base and value-added services.

These findings suggest that ‘success’ among Odisha’s agritourism destinations should be documented and communicated not as a single visitor-count league table, but as a set of distinct, replicable models — each offering a different template that prospective agritourism entrepreneurs, extension agencies and policymakers can draw upon depending on their existing resource.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that agritourism can help Odisha’s rural communities diversify their sources of income and undergo economic change. Analysis of ten case-study locations revealed a wide range of results: individual performance varied from a 28-fold increase at

Agri-Eco Village, Sakhigopal, to more modest gains of 1.5–3.2 times at locations like Satya Sagar Water Park and SK Agro Village & Forest, while the average income growth multiplier across eight operational enterprises was 8–9 times pre-adoption levels. The five-dimension success-attribute scoring, which showed that established, multi-service businesses like HealthVille and GSDR Nature Cave scored highest (13/15) and newer, developing ventures scored lowest (5/15), confirmed the strong correlation between this variation and the degree of enterprise diversification, value addition, accommodation capacity, and revenue-stream diversity. These enterprise-level patterns are consistent with international evidence that firm characteristics such as operating experience and diversification breadth are key determinants of agritourism performance (Barbieri and Mshenga, 2008; Park and Stollery, 2017), and they situate Odisha's experience within the broader global movement toward agritourism as a multifunctional strategy for sustainable rural development (Sharma *et al.*, 2025; Sarath, 2025).

The findings suggest that the success of agritourism is not dependent on a single model but rather advances along a developmental continuum, with businesses earning higher returns as they diversify revenue streams and construct infrastructure focused on tourism. This has a practical implication for Odisha: instead of encouraging a consistent template, policy and institutional assistance, especially through organisations like APICOL, should concentrate on assisting new agritourism companies in accelerating this diversification process. By doing this, a larger number of farm households would be able to duplicate the income increases seen by the state's top agritourism businesses, boosting both farm profitability and rural economic resilience.

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