

AGRO TOURISM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT WITH A MARKETING ORIENTED APPROACH: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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Abstract

Tourism has increasingly diversified to be more competitive. Agro tourism is also such a diversified initiative aiming at achievement of sustainable development goals by focusing on rural areas of a country. Recently, agro tourism has drawn attention in the international literature and this has not been researched extensively in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to identify the stance of agro tourism and to discuss its role in rural development. Further, this paper comes up with a business model to enhance agro tourism by incorporating main stakeholders of the industry. This study was conducted using single case study method based on interpretivism philosophy. Accordingly, Heeloya Tourism Village in the Central Province was selected as the case study and the primary data were collected using participant observations and in-depth semi structured interviews. The key informants of this study were administrators, farmers, community and tourists in the village. Further, a pilot study was conducted with officials at the Agricultural Department to get initial insights. Data analysis was initiated using transcription and summary development which led the researchers to adopt the thematic analysis and cross-tab analysis. According to the findings, agro tourism village has a diversified set of initiatives to attract tourists based on its unique rural environment. However, agro tourism concept is still at infancy stage facing several challenges including negative attitudes of the community, lack of infrastructure facilities and entrepreneurial skills. Rural development is also evidenced through the means of enhancing the income of rural farmers and supported community, jobs creation and enhancing the competencies of the community. However, researchers need to emphasize that it is important to identify the problems in the village and those should be properly addressed by collaborating with relevant stakeholders. This idea is incorporated in the business model presented at the end to effectively achieve rural development through agro tourism.

Keywords: Agro tourism, rural development, case study method, stakeholders, business model

Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world which create numerous opportunities for host countries. Therefore, many countries are taking initiatives to develop this industry by capitalizing on the opportunities in the globe. However, in order to really benefit from the Tourism Industry, it should be linked with the local community. Particularly, the local community can be seen as an underprivileged stakeholder group in tourism development initiatives mainly in developing countries. In the meantime, scholars, development assisted

organizations and development practitioners have paid attention to agro tourism as a mechanism to link the local community with the growing Tourism Industry. Therefore, agro tourism is becoming an effective concept with the global reach. It primarily promotes tourists to spend an entertaining time in an agricultural firm. Agro tourism concept is a combination of the tourism and agricultural sectors. However, agro tourism is a new concept for Sri Lanka even it has become a well-established practice in some other developed countries. Moreover, it is increasingly adopted by some of the regional countries in Asia including Thailand, India and Indonesia.

Researchers strongly believe that Sri Lanka also has greater potential to develop this agro tourism concept since the country is endowed with natural and physical infrastructure for agriculture and tourism. In the meantime, the country is experiencing a sharp reduction of tourist arrivals after the Easter Sunday attacks which require a strong recovery strategy. Further, the main livelihood in most of the Sri Lankan rural areas is still agriculture where 77 percent of the population is living. Particularly, 26.1% of Sri Lankans were employed in the agricultural sector in 2017 (CBSL, 2018). However, in the meantime, most of the farmers were unable to sustain their income by only engaging in agriculture and as a result, they are focusing for additional income sources. Despite the importance of agriculture to economic development, small-scale farmers have remained poor and are not well linked to the markets (Aina, 2007). Therefore, the researchers strongly believe that the rural farming community should be absorbed into a high growth momentum by capitalizing a market-oriented approach. Hence, the integration of local community with modern economic prospects will be beneficial from a sustainability ground for which agro tourism may provide a stronger inclusive growth strategy.

Research objectives

This paper presents a conceptual framework as a business model to enhance agro tourism by incorporating a marketing-oriented approach to connect the rural community with the dynamics in the Tourism Industry. Accordingly, the paper aims at achieving the following objectives

- To uncover the stance in agro tourism through studying the selected case study
- To describe the means of achieving rural development using agro tourism
- To develop a business model using a marketing-oriented approach in agro tourism for rural development.

Literature review

Agro tourism is increasingly recognized as an important strategy that can contribute to agricultural development through diversification of farming activities and providing opportunities to rest, relax, enjoy and study about farming for the visitors (Malkanathi and Routry, 2011). At present, this concept can be identified as a modern tourism trend particularly as a sub concept of eco-tourism. George *et al.* (2008) defines agro tourism as any income-generating activity taking place at the farm in order to create enjoyment or educate the visitors, taking into consideration a variety of natural, historical, cultural and environmental assets of the land, as well as the people who cultivate it. Further, this agro tourism can be carried out in rural areas either in groups or individually. Moreover, agro tourism consists of tourists staying

in rural accommodation for several days for a fee or day trippers immersing in recreational activities and traditional farming life (Fahmi *et al.*, 2013). Particularly, the integration of farming with tourism enhance the distribution of farming products and provide travelers a unique rural experience (Wicks and Merrett, 2003). With respect to the literature, Table 1 presents the agro tourism activities commonly identified in practice.

Table 1: Agro tourism activities

Type of the activity	Major activities
Farm based activities	Participation in farming operations, farm tours, farm demonstrations, fishing, cattle rides
Food and beverage activities	Eat at village houses and in the farm, organic food activities, cooking with local community
Entertainment activities	Wildlife and bird watching, hiking, bathing in waterfalls, boating, take part in local festivals
Direct selling activities	Selling farm products in the farm and in roadsides, selling locally made products, farmers' markets in a local place
Accommodations	Lodging in rural village houses, home stay programs
Extra activities	Village photography, take part in local industries (e.g. weaving)

Source: Compiled by authors from Kizos and Isoifides, 2007; Stanovčić *et al.*, 2018; Malkanthi and Routry, 2011.

At present, the agro tourism sector in Sri Lanka is in the primary stage with initial facilities (Prashansa kumari, 2016). Therefore, it is not a sub segment with higher growth at the moment but it has a greater potential since Sri Lanka is blessed with all the natural and physical infrastructure to drive agro tourism. Stewart (2012) contends that agro tourism is an enterprise at a working farm or woodland, ranch or agricultural plant conducted for the enjoyment and benefit of visitors that generates supplemental income for the owner. Agro-tourism helps farmers to remain with farming activities constantly and at the same time enhance the quality of life of their families by earning an extra income (Ochterski and Roth, 2016). Therefore, it has contributed to the farmers to increase their income as an additional income source. According to Wicks and Merrett (2003), agro tourism provides reciprocal benefits both to the griculture community and its visitors. It has merged elements of agriculture and tourism through the concept of agro-tourism by providing new profitable markets, services and travel experience to large regional markets. Furthermore, it contributes to agricultural diversification and facilitates boosting the socio-economic condition of rural areas, create income generating activities and provide market facilities to sell the rural products as an innovative activity. According to this explanation, agro tourism concept has the potential to generate jobs, increase the income and utilize the rural resources. More importantly the marginalized rural farming community should be inserted to the market mechanism with an inclusive growth strategy. Jeczmyk *et al.* (2015) explains that agro tourism promises substantial benefits for the rural areas by reducing unemployment, rural migration and poverty. Moreover, agro tourism brings consistent education to the local community engaging in agriculture, promoting local products, creating added value through direct marketing and stimulating economic activities in the local places (Zoto *et al.*, 2013).

Farrington and Mitchell (2006) contend that it is important to make the rural communities more entrepreneurial in order to link them with economic activities and otherwise

consumption is the only way that they link with the globalized economy. Particularly, fostering entrepreneurship of agro-tourism sector is not only create value for the local community but also it preserves the rural heritage (Stanovčić *et al.*, 2018). Keller (2010) too points out that entrepreneurship is a key determinant of tourism growth. This has been reiterated by Sonnino's definition which defines agro tourism as "activities of hospitality performed by agricultural entrepreneurs and their family members that must remain connected and complementary to farming activities" (Sonnino, 2004). Therefore, it is important to uplift the entrepreneurial skills and competencies in order to be competitive. In this situation, the local community should be more marketing-oriented to catch up with the opportunities in agro tourism. According to Jaworski and Kohli (1993), market orientation means the actions within the firm that lead to the generation and dissemination of market intelligence related to customers' needs. These customer needs represent both present and future needs and also all the departments organization should be responsive to these market intelligences. In addition to that, Slater and Narver (1995) view marketing orientation as an organizational culture. Accordingly, they contend that market-oriented firms foster an environment within the firm that leads to suitable actions in order to create superior value for the customers and as a result it leads to better performance of the firm. The common theme in market orientation of these explanations is the focus on customer needs and also the needs that could be met through the company's products and services. More importantly, Kotler and Keller (2016) highlight that modern marketing should create superior customer value and need to build up customer relationships. In this case, the management of all the customer touch points is critical. They insist that customer touch point as any occasion that a customer encounters a product or service. Accordingly, agro tourism cannot be exempted from this and it should create superior customer value in order to be sustainable as a tourism destination.

In the meantime, creation of an enabling environment is the key to link rural communities with the globalized economic activities (Farrington and Mitchell, 2006). This is comprised with institutions and policies which facilitate and promote economic growth favoring the rural poor. The main components to be incorporated to create such an enabling environment includes the development in proper administration, infrastructure and investment climate.

Methodology

In order to explore the agro tourism and its contribution to rural development, a case study approach has been adopted based on interpretivism (Dewasiri *et al.*, 2018). Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) point out that case study is a theory building approach which is deeply embedded in rich empirical explanations of particular situations with respect to a phenomenon based on multiple data sources. The specific case in this study is Heeloya Tourism Village in the Central Province which has been selected due to the following salient criteria:

- It has incorporated rural farmers and other villagers in the tourism activities of the village
- It includes a center for coordinating tourists and the rural community
- It demonstrates a market-oriented approach by understanding the needs of tourists
- It is enriched with a natural environment by being a border village of the Knuckles Mountain Range which to attracts tourists

Therefore, based on these characteristics, Heeloya Tourism Village can be identified as a "unique" or "extreme" case (Yin, 2003) which can be used to explain the nature of agro tourism and its contribution to rural development. The findings of Heeloya case cannot be

directly applied to other agro tourism destinations. However, this can be presented as an example of “best practice” in pursuing agro tourism with a rural development intention.

In this research, both secondary and primary data were used. Secondary data was collected using relevant websites and official government publications. Primary data was collected through in-depth semi structured interviews and participant observations. The key informants of this study were administrators, farmers, local community and the tourists who have visited the village. The key informants were selected based on judgmental and snow ball sampling methods. A semi-structured interview guide was used in conducting interviews with the respondents. Each question in the interview guide was formulated as broadly as possible to allow the interviewee to extract their ideas and feelings in relation to the research topic. A pilot study was also conducted with officials at the Agricultural Department in Peradeniya to get some initial insights. Data analysis was initiated using transcription and summary development which led the researchers to adopt the thematic analysis. A cross-tab analysis was also undertaken in the final phase by comparing the respondents against key themes and vice versa to uncover the patterns of similarities and differences in data as pointed out by Longbottom and Lawson (2017).

Findings and Discussion: Agro tourism stance at Heeloya tourism village

The scope of activities that could be experienced and involved in by the tourists in Heeloya Village was identified by the researchers and these are presented in figure 1. By looking at the scope of tourist activities, it is evidenced that this village has a diversified set of initiatives to attract tourists. Particularly, the unique rural environment endowed at this village can be identified as a way of differentiating itself to attract more visitors. In other words, the idea of rurality is a significant fact used by the Heeloya Village to market its tourism initiatives. Researchers observed that the tourists are served by king cocunut with *kithul* treacle when they enter the village. This is a kind of initial customer touch point in the village by which the local community treats the tourists with rurality. In looking at almost all the touch points in the village, the notion of rurality was evidenced by the researchers.

Figure 1: Scope of tourism at Heeloya Village

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing the village environment through home stay programmes • Tasting traditional village food • Participating in agricultural activities like harvesting and involving in preparing food with the villagers • Involving in traditional agricultural methods like ploughing by cows • Cattle farming experience • Experiencing a waterfall (<i>Perumaal ella</i>) and a natural swimming pool • Hiking and wild camping |
|---|

Source: Compiled from interview data and participant observations

As per the findings from the Heeloya Tourism Village, agro tourism is still in the primary stage. However, it is clear that all the required resources are available to take this to greater heights. One of the main impediments to the success of this initiative is the lack of

support from the rural community and this is evidenced in excerpt 1 (key sections italicized) of the interview conducted with the secretary of Tourism Sumithuro Association (TSA) in the village.

Excerpt 1: Lack of support from the rural community

Secretary – TSA: This village was started by the officials who came from the Central Province Tourism Authority. They started the Heeloya Tourism Sumithuro Association with only 24 families. However, majority of the villagers opposed to joining this initiative. Particularly, they were of the idea that this will destroy the natural beauty and the culture of the village.

In this excerpt, it is clear that “villagers opposed to join” with the tourism activities which is one of the main obstacles for the success of this initiative. Moreover, they are of the view that this initiative “destroys the natural beauty and culture of the village”. These ideas and the thinking of the villagers reflect that they are not in favour of changing their traditional life style even though it is not promising enough to satisfy their needs. This reflects another side of the story and that is the information asymmetry between the government officials and the villagers. In other words, the dissemination of market intelligence has not taken place properly which is a major prerequisite for achieving market orientation as pointed out by Jaworski and Kohli (1993). Therefore, it is important to overcome this barrier by transmitting truthful information regarding the significance of joining with agro tourism as an additional income earning source by empowering them more. Furthermore, three of the major challenges encountered at Heeloya Tourism Village are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Challenges in the Heeloya Tourism Village

Secretary TSA	Respondent		Key outcome by theme
	Farmer 1	Farmer 2	
Opposition from community for tourists	Suspicion of being like <i>Meemure</i> Village	Our children will be badly affected	Negative attitudes of community
No location for coordination	We do not have facilities at our homes	We cannot ask tourists to stay in our village	Lack of infrastructural facilities
We do not have much opportunities to grow	I am scared to build a new house for home stay	I cannot think about anything new for tourists	Lack of entrepreneurial skills

Source: Compiled from interview data

In looking at these challenges, it is clear that this village community is not properly informed about what they are doing. Particularly, their negative attitudes are inherent from the conventional village lifestyle where they are less exposed to modern living standards due to the lack of market intelligence. Further, these findings also reflect that the attention from the

relevant authorities for developing the hard infrastructure is also at a lower level which requires urgent attention. Moreover, their traditional agricultural lifestyle has confined their thinking to a 'village farmer' without having entrepreneurial spirit. So that these farmers are in favour of mere selling of their harvest in the absence of any value addition. As pointed out by Sonnino (2004), entrepreneurial skills should be complemented with farming in order to be successful in agro tourism.

Heeloya agro tourism village was started four years back and it was supported by the Central Province Trade and Tourism Department through various means. Furthermore, private sector tourism companies have also paid their attention to this place mainly due to the advertising and promotional campaigns undertaken by the Central Province Tourism Authority. As a result of that, a reasonable number of tourists have arrived at this place to experience agro tourism. Therefore, the progress in the last four years has been questioned by an officer of the TSA and his ideas are presented in excerpt 2 (Key sections italicized).

Excerpt 2: Infancy stage of the village

Officer – TSA: I think still we are in the *infancy stage* of this tourism village even after spending four years. However, we gained *some achievements*. We tried to introduce *home stay programmes* and it seems successful. Visitors are also satisfied and villagers earned some additional income. However, all of our villagers do not have the *facilities* to operate home stay programmes. This is mainly because size of our *houses* are not adequate enough to provide facilities for visitors.

According to excerpt 2, it is clear that a positive development has occurred due to “some achievements” like “home stay programs”. However, they feel that they are still in the “infancy stage” and that is mainly due to the lack of “facilities” like “small houses”. This is in line with the explanation provided by Kumari (2016). Further, this has shown that all the villagers are not adequately benefitted from this tourism initiative particularly when they do not have the capability to serve the tourists. As a result of that, some of the villagers are disappointed with this arrangement even they are very much interested in this home stay programs. Accordingly, these villagers are in the view that they should be financially supported to build and renovate their houses to attract tourists.

The satisfaction level of tourists has also been questioned by the researchers to uncover their insights openly and this is presented in excerpt 3.

Excerpt 3: Satisfaction level of tourists

Tourist: We enjoyed a lot in this village by spending our time here. People are really hospitable and that is amazing. Anyway, *sanitary facilities* should be improved to make us more comfortable.

As per excerpt 3, it is reiterated that it is necessary to improve the infrastructure like “sanitary facilities” in order to satisfy the tourists. Therefore, researchers need to highlight that tourists are not attracted only to the experiences of the unique agro tourism in the village but also to the facilities offered to them which is also critical. The “hospitable” nature of the people

needs to be complemented with the hard infrastructure for creating enhanced customer value by satisfying them through all the touch points as suggested by Kotler and Keller (2016). Researchers believe that this will promote customers' engagement with Heeloya Village to make it a unique experience for their life. In other words, this initiative should not be a mere tourism effort and converting it to a second home at the minds of tourists is significant.

Findings and Discussion: Rural development through agro tourism at Heeloya Tourism Village

The main income source for the local community in this village is agriculture and in addition to that, most of the males engage in daily wage temporary jobs as well. Particularly, researchers experienced that their income from these two sources is not adequate to maintain a reasonable living standard of the family members. Therefore, the village community is attached to tourism activities to earn an additional income and this is reflected in excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4: Agro tourism is an additional income source

Farmer: Tourism is not my *main income source*. My main income is from *agriculture*. Sometimes, I do some daily work as well. If we have enough tourist arrivals, we will be really benefitted. But at the moment, the number of tourists visiting our village is *not adequate* to provide us a *good income*.

As per excerpt 4, it is clear that tourism is not their "main income source". This village community is highly dependent on "agriculture". Therefore, this is compatible with Ochterski and Roth (2016) where they state that agro tourism is an extra income that can improve the quality of life. However, for the Heeloya community, agro tourism has not contributed to earn a "good income" and this is mainly because of the "non adequate" tourist arrivals. In the meantime, as per the farmer's idea, they prefer these tourism activities which can be "beneficial" for them. Researchers observed that the lack of proper mechanism and coordination has reduced the number of tourists visiting the village.

Excerpt 5 of the findings from a home owner also reiterates the income enhancement with less expenses under the agro tourism initiative at Heeloya Village.

Excerpt 5: Agro tourism is enhancing income with less expenses

Home owner: I also do agriculture. But I have a big house which I inherited from my parents. So, tourists come and stay at my place and I am very happy about it because I can earn a good income. Sometimes, I receive some money directly from the tourists in addition to what I get from TSA. Our expenses are very much less when they stay here because they need to eat what we are eating. They even help our farming activities.

As per excerpt 5, villagers are earning a "good income" from home stay programmes. Particularly, they have two income sources including "money directly from the tourists" and money received from "TSA" membership. The most important thing is that this arrangement is less expensive in nature which is really important for the village community since they cannot afford higher expenses. This is mainly because the tourists need to adopt the village life style

when they are staying in the village while gaining a unique experience. Therefore, as explained by Farrington and Mitchell (2006), Keller (2010) and Sonnino (2004), agro tourism can make rural farmers more entrepreneurial in nature which is the key determinant of the local community's growth to be more competitive. Table 3 shows the analysis of rural development achievements by the Heeloya Tourism Village through agro tourism concept using the cross-tabular method. Horizontal analysis in table 3 enables patterns to be identified for each theme. Accordingly, under the 'income' theme, there is an emerging consensus that agro tourism contributes to 'income enhancement' as a rural development achievement. Further, researchers can contend that agro tourism has led to 'jobs engagement' of rural community under the 'jobs' theme. However, within the theme 'rural resources', farmers have different ideas and therefore, a consensus theme cannot be reached. Further, under the theme 'competencies', there is an emerging consensus that agro tourism has facilitated called 'improved competencies'. In addition to that, vertical analysis is important in identifying individual perspectives by respondents to categorize them with respect to rural development achievements through agro tourism. Consequently, farmer 1 is much more pessimistic about agro tourism while benefitting from it and hence he is labeled as 'sceptic beneficiary'. In contrast, farmer 2 displays responses that are generally 'positive and supportive' about agro tourism and its achievements. Moreover, farmer 3 is highly 'engaged and supportive' for agro tourism initiatives and its contribution for rural development.

Table 3. Summary analysis of rural development achievements by the Heeloya Tourism Village using cross-tabular method including thematic and case analysis

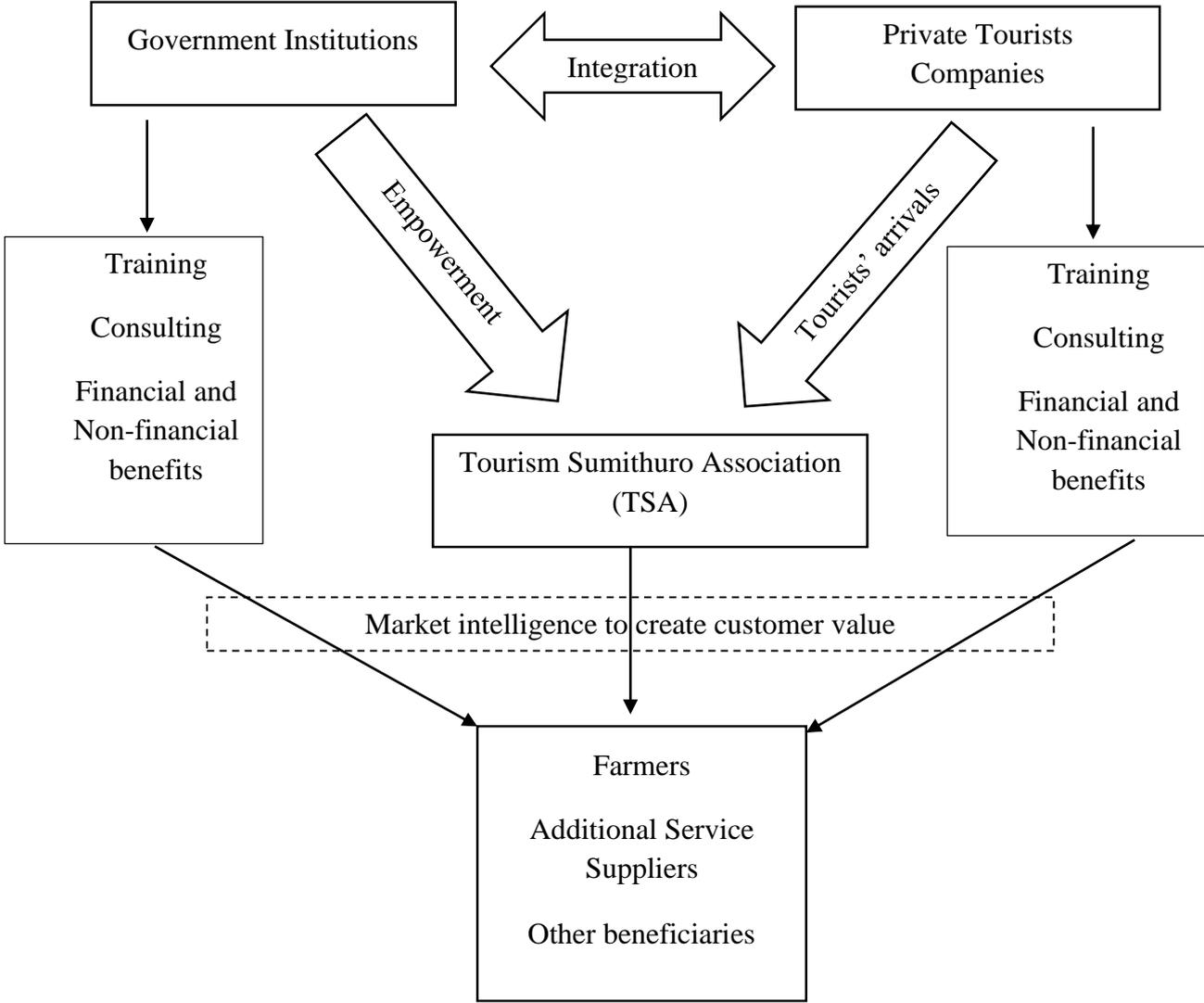
Theme	Respondents			Key outcome by theme
	Farmer 1	Farmer 2	Farmer 3	
Income	Additional income	Increased income	Increased income from home stay	Income enhancement
Jobs	Just involved	Act as a tourist guide in the village	More engaged	Jobs engagement
Rural resources	Under utilized	Waterfall, temple, and mountains visited by tourist	Moderate use	
Competencies	Don't see improvement	Learnt little English	English and hospitality	Improved competencies
Key outcome by respondent	'Sceptic beneficiary'	'Positive supporter'	'Engaged supporter'	

Source: Compiled from interview data

This study has contended that agro tourism in Heeloya Village is still in the infant stage with some positive signs. Accordingly, it could not reach greater heights in achieving rural development and one of the main reasons for this situation is the lack of proper coordination among the relevant stakeholders. Therefore, this analysis is concluded by presenting a business

model with the aim of enhancing rural development through agro tourism in figure 2. This model connects government institutions, private tourist companies, TSA officers and all the beneficiaries in the village including farmers, other service suppliers and the community at large. More importantly, the integration of relevant stakeholders needs to bring market intelligence for the rural community in order to create superior customer value for the tourists.

Figure 2. Proposed business model for agro tourism



Source: Compiled by researchers

Conclusions and policy implications

Considering the significance of rural community’s role that played in a globalized world, the increasing trend towards experiencing rural life by the modern society, and the quest for achieving sustainable development, the agro tourism is paramount for rural development through empowering local communities. Accordingly, case study findings and analysis have

shown that Heeloya Village has a greater potential to promote agro tourism and it has already widened its scope of activities to attract more tourists into the village. More importantly, the notion of rurality is properly addressed by the village community in creating value for the tourists by offering a unique experience. However, tourists' satisfaction in all the touch points is a challenge for Heeloya Village and that is mainly due to its lack of proper infrastructure. As a consequence, the overall positive customer value that can be gained by the tourists is strained and this requires attention from the relevant local government institutions. Researchers need to stress the immediacy of this attention since the tourists may comment on their actual experience in social media which may inhibit prospects to the village. In this context, Heeloya should not be a mere tourism destination and instead it needs to be a location for travelers to visualize the essence of rural life even by reconnecting their mindset with the past rural ancestors. So that, the digital experience that they gained through surfing the internet prior to visiting Heeloya should be exactly complemented with their actual experience in order to make their visit a unique experience for life. This can be realized by crafting an effective service blue print for Heeloya to instill the tourists' service as an integrated whole for embedding a marketing-oriented focus within the rural community. In doing this, the unsuccessful points and the weak links of the village's service value chain need to be immediately uncovered and should be uplifted with continuous quality enhancement.

Furthermore, in order to benefit from economic and social oriented advantages, agro tourism requires strong entrepreneurial marketing developments. In this case, it is important to make the rural community to be more resilient in order to capture the tourists' insights through entrepreneurship development initiatives with a customer-oriented mindset. As a consequence, they can understand the tourists' dynamics to create higher customer value. In this case, rural community should be convinced about multiple dimensions of customer value creation rather than merely focusing on treating tourists as guests. In this case it is necessary to overcome the lack of support from the rural community by promoting enhanced engagement by providing updated marketing intelligence. This requires the embeddedness of service-oriented culture for the rural community with a talent management focus in mind highlighting their competence, commitment and contribution for the Heeloya Village. More specifically, researchers suggest that the 'value of ordinary rural living' needs to be highlighted as the value proposition in positioning this village in the minds of tourists. In essence, the uniqueness of Heeloya should be effectively matched with what is really needed for the prospective tourists, and uncovering this overlapping space requires more in-depth research on customer insights. Accordingly, the destination marketing strategy need to highlight the unique and inimitable characteristics of Heeloya Village.

As per the findings, it has not been able to achieve the expected results even after a four-year time period. Particularly, this is mainly due to the challenges that are uncovered in the study. Therefore, researchers need to highlight that these challenges should be overcome in order to set a higher growth for agro tourism. Accordingly, as pointed out in the suggested business model, it is very much important for integrating the relevant stakeholders and their mutual understanding. Therefore, until it reaches a particular performance level, one of the major responsible parties, preferably a government authority, should provide the leadership.

However, that leadership needs to be more transformative in nature which can capitalize on major unsolicited opportunities in global tourism for the benefit of the rural community. More importantly, this leadership should reconnect the rural community with the market mechanism in global tourism through market intelligence to make it marketing oriented. Therefore, once again, this requires a proper integration of relevant stakeholders to prove the authenticity of this initiative.

Nonetheless, the quantitative research may include even more factors and variables than what we address as qualitative researchers in this manuscript. Therefore, the model developed in this study can be broadened and tested using a quantitative approach to uncover the said model's validity for other agro tourism contexts.

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