

THE ROLE OF AGROTOURISM IN ENHANCING RURAL EMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE LORI REGION

Հոդվածը ստացվել է՝ 10.03.25, ուղարկվել է գրախոսման՝ 30.04.25, երաշխավորվել է տպագրության՝ 11.07.25

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Introduction. In the Republic of Armenia, rural tourism (including agritourism and ecotourism) is experiencing continuous development. Agritourism refers to recreational activities in rural areas, typically organized by travel agencies, which provide city dwellers and their families an ideal opportunity to spend their summer vacations in nature. This form of tourism not only caters to the leisure needs of the urban population but also contributes significantly to rural employment, the utilization of local tourism resources, and the socio-economic stabilization of rural communities.

Within the broader context of global and national efforts aimed at promoting sustainable rural development, agritourism is increasingly recognized as a practical tool for economic diversification and job creation in rural areas. Armenia's Lori region, known for its scenic natural landscapes, cultural heritage, and strong agricultural traditions, holds considerable potential for the expansion of agritourism.

Nevertheless, despite this potential, many rural communities in Lori continue to grapple with high unemployment, seasonal labor volatility, and limited income-generating opportunities. This study is particularly relevant as it seeks to explore sustainable economic alternatives that can help revitalize rural economies, alleviate poverty, and mitigate outmigration.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how the development of agrotourism can contribute to rural economic diversification, reduce unemployment, and promote sustainable livelihoods in the Lori region. The primary objective of the study is to employ a SWOT analysis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of rural tourism in the target area, while also identifying external opportunities and threats that may influence its development. This approach aims to clarify both the advantages and limitations of agrotourism as a tool for rural development. It is important to note that the integrated rural development model encourages the growth of complementary economic activities. In this context, the production and sale of agricultural products through rural tourism initiatives is seen as a vital means of enhancing local economies.

The study answers the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the historical, cultural, and natural assets of the Lori region serve as prerequisites for the development of agrotourism?
2. What are the available resource endowments in the region, and how do they support the potential for agrotourism development?
3. How can the restructuring of the hospitality sector serve as a strategic mechanism for job creation and economic revitalization?
4. What are the key strengths and weaknesses of rural households currently engaged in agrotourism activities?

Literature review. It is evident that most agricultural activities are carried out by individual entrepreneurs, while hired and paid workers are primarily employed in the

processing industry¹. Agritourism, defined as the integration of tourism and agriculture, has emerged as a key driver in the revitalization of rural communities and economies. This integration supports sustainable economic development, boosts farm incomes, and fosters cultural exchange².

Agrotourism creates an opportunity to spend a healthy and full vacation in various entities, providing a quiet and peaceful living environment, the possibility of eating eco food, engaging in agricultural activities, directly communicating with nature, etc. In addition, rural tourism provides an opportunity to get acquainted with the customs and traditions of the given settlement. In Armenia, particularly in the Lori region, the abundance of historical monuments, monasteries, and many traditional customs, the abundance of farms in the rural region, and the diversity of flora and fauna allow the development of various forms of tourism in the region, including agrotourism³.

In the context of the development of agro-tourism in RA, gastro-tourism also has serious development goals. Each region of the country has its traditional foods. Reviving old and forgotten, lesser-known dishes and including them in menus is very important both in terms of preserving the traditions of national cuisine and offering tourists a wide range of interesting and delicious dishes. In addition, this can be used to create a unique gastronomy brand for each region⁴.

Summer house formations have serious possibilities for the development of rural recreation centers. It is not too late to rebuild and adapt the existing and unfinished summer houses according to the new purposes of tourism and recreation, to create appropriate infrastructures for the necessary maintenance and services. It is the creation of a public center for each independent entity with its food reception area (canteen, cafe), household service point (laundry, dry cleaning, rental, etc.), and shopping point (souvenirs, food, maps of the area, necessities), entertainment facilities, gym, etc. For lovers of winter sports, it is expedient to form and develop structures corresponding to winter recreation.⁵ From the perspective of farm guests, agritourism offers an authentic and unique travel experience that aligns with the growing interest and conscious mindset of responsible travelers, thereby contributing to broader sustainable rural development⁶.

¹ Nolte K., Ostermeier M., 2017, Labour Market Effects of Large-Scale Agricultural Investment: Conceptual Considerations and Estimated Employment Effects, *World Development*, Pages 430-446, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.05.012>

² Ling C., Mohd Yusoff Z., Aizam Adnan N., The Role of Agrotourism in Revitalizing Rural Economies: A Review of Global Trends and Local Applications, *International journal of academic research in progressive education and development*, DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i4/24477

³ Ndhlovu E., Dube K., "Agritourism and sustainability: 2024, A global bibliometric analysis of the state of research and dominant issues", *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2024.100746>

⁴ Tovmasyan GR., November 2018 Gastro-tourism as a direction of RA tourist potential, "Amberd" research center of ASUE, Yerevan, <https://asue.am/am/amberd/publications/analytics/gastro-tourism-potential-armenia>

⁵ Canovi M., Lyon A., 2019, Family-Centred Motivations for Agritourism Diversification: The Case of the Langhe Region, Italy, *Tourism Planning and Development*, DOI:10.1080/21568316.2019.1650104

⁶ Grillini G., Streifeneder T., Stotten R., Schermer M., Fischer C., 2025, How tourists change farms: The impact of agritourism on organic farming adoption and local community interaction in the Tyrol-Trentino mountain region, *Journal of Rural Studies*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2024.103531>

Methodology. This paper employs a range of economic research methods, including descriptive, statistical, comparative, and analytical techniques. The core analytical framework was based on the SWOT methodology, which enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to the organization of agrotourism by rural farms. SWOT analysis has been widely recognized as an effective tool for assessment and strategic decision-making across diverse systems, regardless of their type or complexity.

In the context of this study, SWOT analysis was applied to identify the internal strengths and weaknesses of rural tourism, particularly in its function as a marketing channel for agricultural products, as well as to assess the external opportunities and potential risks posed by the environment. This analysis is considered a crucial step in evaluating the feasibility and sustainability of the proposed agrotourism development concept.

SWOT, which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, is a strategic planning tool that helps organizations evaluate both internal capacities and external conditions. It can inform the development of effective strategies by identifying competitive advantages, areas for improvement, and environmental factors that could either support or hinder progress. By highlighting vulnerabilities and emerging prospects, SWOT analysis can also aid in preventing exploitation by competitors and guide efforts to improve performance.

Analysis. Tourists should either use the shelters or live in the conditions of a village house. Rural tourism creates a need to build comfortable cabins, and hotel structures in the lap of nature for the citizens of the region, vacationers from other places, and foreign tourists, which implies the creation of a significant number of jobs.

Considering the favorable climatic conditions of the Lori region, the clean air, the presence of forests, and the wonderful nature, particularly in the regions of Stepanavan, Alaverdu, Tumanyan, and Vanadzor, there are great prospects for organizing an organized holiday at a country house, why not prophylactic treatment as well.

In Stepanavan and Vanadzor, once there were sanatoriums and tourist bases in the area near the forest, where tourists from other regions and neighboring countries spent their healthy rest and treatment. Stepanavan, which is considered the best resort, has lost its opportunities to serve as a resort due to the loss of tourists and resort buildings due to the disaster. Stepanavan has its strengths in the development of tourism and the implementation of complex health resort programs. First, the community has a favorable geographical position, a mild and moderate climate, and cool air, the city is separated by the Dzoraget Gorge, which has the best conditions as a recreation area. The right bank slopes of the community are forested on the southwest side, the forest is dominated by local and Crimean pine tree species, and the phytoncides produced by them are of health importance, which is also an advantage. In the south-eastern parts of the city near the forest, it is advisable and necessary to build a resort and recreation base, to launch a new tourist complex on the base of the former tourist resort. The "Leonovich Garden" and the adjacent health resort in the village of Gulagarak in the Stepanavan region are also famous and once enjoyed a great reputation⁷. Indeed, the sanatorium is partially functioning now, but its reconstruction and provision of conditions following European standards will enable the reception of additional vacationers, thus increasing the employment of the village and adjacent settlements.

⁷ July2021.Official website" family remote online summer camp", , Yerevan <https://tsaghikgaspyan.wordpress.com/>

There are more than a thousand historical and cultural monuments and monuments in the region, some work has been done to preserve and improve them in recent years. In general, the number of visits to museums in the province is increasing significantly. 8 museums are operating in the Lori region. However, it should be noted that the lack of information about museums is very great⁸.

The monastic complexes of Haghpat, Sanahin, Kobair, Odzun, the relics of the Ashot Yerkat fortress (Stepanavan), as well as Dsegh, the birthplace of the great Lorets, are of great interest for tourism. Especially in Dsegh, in recent years, the influx of rural tourism lovers is evident. Of course, the "Kaghni" hotel operating in the village, the "WOW Glamping" tent hotel complex for eco-tourism lovers, and the unique "Shakaryan Rancho" LLC opened in 2023, which has a rich package of services, hotel, eco-farming with diverse plant species and domestic as well as exotic fauna. "Shakaryan Rancho" is especially attractive in the sense that tourists can spend their vacations in the peaceful nature of Lori, having direct participation in agricultural work and interacting with the animal world. Both the kitchens of "Shakaryan Rancho" and the rest of the hotels offer traditional Lori dishes as well as dishes typical of the cuisines of different nations. The monastic complexes of Haghpat, Sanahin, Kobair, Odzun, the relics of the Ashot Yerkat fortress (Stepanavan), as well as Dsegh, the birthplace of the Hovhannes Tumanyan, are of great interest for tourism. Especially in Dsegh, in recent years, the influx of rural tourism lovers is evident. Of course, the "Kaghni" hotel operating in the village⁹, the "WOW Glamping" tent hotel complex for eco-tourism lovers,¹⁰ and the unique "Shakaryan Rancho" LLC opened in 2023, which has a rich package of services, hotels, eco-farming with diverse plant species, and domestic as well as exotic fauna. "Shakaryan Rancho" is especially attractive in the sense that tourists can spend their vacations in the peaceful nature of Lori, having direct participation in agricultural work and interacting with the animals. Both the kitchens of "Shakaryan Rancho" and the rest of the hotels offer traditional Lori dishes as well as dishes typical of the cuisines of different nations.

The Tumanyan region has well-developed horticulture and viticulture sectors. The production of ecologically clean, high-quality fruits, along with dried fruit preparation and canning, presents significant potential for agritourism development. Fruit storage and processing cooperatives could be integrated into tourist itineraries, transforming them into attractive and educational tourism destinations. Additionally, the establishment of opportunities for visitors to tour apiaries and observe beekeeping practices firsthand could serve as a valuable asset in diversifying the agritourism offering.

Carpet weaving also holds substantial development potential in the region. Given Tumanyan's strong tradition of livestock farming, particularly sheep breeding, there is an opportunity to revitalize wool processing as a foundation for local carpet production. This, in turn, could stimulate employment and further enhance the scope and sustainability of agritourism in the Lori region.

Hunting tourism is also promising, for which sufficient legislative and organizational prerequisites have already been created in the RA. The National Assembly adopted the Law "On Hunting and Hunting Farms". In the territory of the Lori region, hunting is allowed only in the fields, and it is prohibited in the forests. Certain animals are

⁸2019-2020, RESEARCH OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN LORI REGION, page24-25 <http://lori.mtad.am/files/docs/48550.pdf>

⁹Official website "Kaghni" Hotel , <https://kaghnihotel.am/about/>

¹⁰Official website [https:// wowglamping.am/](https://wowglamping.am/)

not allowed to be hunted (bear, deer, wild boar). Only fox, hare, quail, and wild pigeon hunting is allowed, and only during the season from August to the end of February¹¹.

Fishing activities are feasible across nearly all rivers flowing through the Lori region, as well as in the seasonal ponds located in the Tashir area. The development of fish farms in the region presents a highly promising avenue for advancing agrotourism, offering both economic and recreational benefits. In recent years, Armenia has witnessed not only the growth in the number of fish farms but also a geographical expansion of their locations from the traditional Ararat plain into the foothill and mountainous areas, including Lori.

Currently, most pond-based aquaculture in Armenia involves warm-water, herbivorous fish species, which typically yield up to 300 kg of fish per hectare. In contrast, the cultivation of high-value species such as salmon and sturgeon in cold-water basins with specialized infrastructure can produce up to 100 tons of market-ready fish per hectare (equivalent to 10 kg per square meter). Encouragingly, this more intensive and productive model of aquaculture has recently been introduced in the Lori region, further strengthening its potential as a center for both fish production and agrotourism.

The expansion of fish farming is proposed as a strategic initiative to diversify economic activities and enhance employment opportunities in the Lori region. Among the various sectors of food production, fisheries offer one of the highest values of gross output per unit area. Importantly, fish farming can be conducted on land that is infertile or otherwise unsuitable for conventional agriculture, thereby transforming underutilized areas into productive assets. As such, the sector holds significant potential not only for profitability but also for improving the socio-economic well-being of the rural population, particularly in the context of agrotourism development and employment generation.

The establishment of one fish farm in each of the Gugark, Tumanyan, Spitak, and Tashir areas of Lori region, each occupying approximately 4-6 hectares, could generate around 40 direct jobs (assuming 10 employees per farm), not including the additional employment opportunities created through related agrotourism activities and services.

According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the global consumption of fish and fish products has significantly increased in recent years. This trend is also evident in Armenia, further reinforcing the rationale for expanding fish farming operations. The growing domestic and international demand, especially for frozen and processed fish products, including caviar, indicates a favorable market environment. Currently, Armenia exports such products primarily to the United States, the Russian Federation, and Georgia, highlighting both existing market access and the potential for future growth.

The development of agrotourism in the Lori region also necessitates the establishment and modernization of relevant infrastructure. This includes the improvement of interstate highways, access roads to key tourist destinations, and the creation of well-defined tourist routes. In particular, the Stepanavan-Tashir segment of the region's interstate highway network, as well as roads leading to culturally significant sites such as the Haghpat and Sanahin monastic complexes and the Odzun church, are in urgent need of repair and rehabilitation. One of Lori's key competitive advantages lies in its connectivity to Georgia via two major interstate highways: the M6 Vanadzor–Alaverdi–Georgia border and the M3 Vanadzor–Stepanavan–Tashir–Georgia border. In addition, the railway line connecting

¹¹Yerevan 2007 THE LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, ,
<https://www.arlis.am/documentview.aspx?docID=56736>

Armenia to Georgia traverses the Lori region, further enhancing its strategic significance for cross-border tourism and trade.

While transportation services between Vanadzor and the surrounding towns and villages operate relatively efficiently, the aging and deteriorated condition of the public transport fleet poses challenges to comfort, safety, and reliability. Upgrading the regional transportation system is essential for supporting increased tourist mobility and ensuring a positive visitor experience.

In the past 5 years, some work has been done in the establishment of the tourism infrastructure system. As of today, 35 hotels are operating in the region with different quality of service. Moreover, 15 of them were built and commissioned in the last 3 years. 2 of the hotels ("Avan Dzoraget" and "Argishti") meet international standards¹². According to the data of the National Statistical Service, the picture of tourism is presented in Table 1).

Table 1

The number of hotels in Lori region, the average number of employees, the number of incoming tourists¹³

Year	The number of hotels	the average number of employees (monthly)	The number of incoming tourists	Revenue, mln. AMD
2018	19	61	394	323,7
2019	30	140	1702	354,6
2020	30	141	10	204,9
2021	33	165	157	591,9
2022	35	173	340	657,7

The data indicate that in 2020, due to the combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Forty-Four Day War in Artsakh, both the number of incoming tourists and the revenue generated by hotel establishments declined sharply. Despite the presence of several hotels and public catering facilities that meet international standards in the region, key components of tourism infrastructure remain underdeveloped. Notably, the region lacks entertainment options and recreational amenities such as attractions, sports complexes, playgrounds, gymnasiums in parks, and car rental services, all of which are essential for a comprehensive tourism experience.

The Lori region has 8 cities, 11 communities, and 120 villages. In 2023, the population of the region was 211.5 thousand, of which 124.0 thousand live in urban communities, and 87.5 thousand in rural settlements¹⁴. As of 2023, the rural population of the region was 87.5 thousand. If we the that rural families consist of 4 members on average, then it can be considered that approximately 21,875 families (87,500/4) live in rural

¹²Official website of TUFENKYAN TRADITIONAL HOTEL AND RESTAURANT CHAIN, <https://tufenkianheritage.com/am/>

¹³Official website of Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia, SOCIO - ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MARZES AND YEREVAN CITY OF THE RA https://armstat.am/file/Map/MARZ_06.pdf, page 295

¹⁴ Official website of Statistical Committee Republic of Armenia, SOCIO - ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MARZES AND YEREVAN CITY OF THE RA https://armstat.am/file/Map/MARZ_06.pdf https://armstat.am/file/Map/MARZ_06.pdf, page 342

communities of Lori region. Even if 5% of these families have the desire, opportunity, and appropriate conditions to receive tourists in their village house, therefore, about 1093 families, 1093 residents (if we assume that only one of each family will be engaged in hospitality work) will already be provided with work.

Additionally, the establishment of roadside service points could create approximately 50-70 new jobs. The construction of five new guesthouses is expected to generate employment opportunities in both the construction sector (estimated at around 100 jobs) and in hospitality, with approximately 50 new positions for hotel staff. Overall, agritourism development is projected to increase regional employment by around 2,000 jobs. When estimating potential employment growth linked to rural tourism, several key factors must be considered. These include the number of households capable of hosting tourists, the availability of relevant tourism resources, and the infrastructure needed to support increased visitor activity, such as additional food outlets, fuel stations, and retail facilities along key transit routes.

The broader issue of tourism development in Armenia warrants comprehensive and dedicated scientific investigation. However, in this context, it is addressed specifically in relation to its impact on rural employment. The successful expansion of rural tourism depends on the establishment of joint ventures, the availability of low-interest investment capital, and targeted financial support for local entrepreneurs.

A SWOT analysis of the state of tourism, including agrotourism, in the Lori region was performed. The results are the following:

Strengths (according to the "2017-2025 development strategy of Lori region", which will serve as a guideline for us):

- Presence of large cities as service delivery, education, and health centers
- Tumanyan region as a pole of mining growth
- Tashir region serving a growth pole for animal husbandry and milk processing
- Favorable climatic conditions for recreation, a large proportion of forests
- Sufficient supplies of fresh and mineral water
- Presence of numerous monuments, some of them included in the UNESCO

World Heritage list.

- Favorable climatic conditions for agriculture (especially animal husbandry).
- Availability of unused production areas in the city of Vanadzor
- Availability of unused recreation zones in the region
- the airports of Stepanavan and Odzun communities as a key to the development of tourism in the region.
- Availability of a railway for almost the entire territory of the region
- Programs aimed at the development of eco, agro, and ethnic tourism
- Reconstruction of the Vanadzor cable car and stadium

Opportunities:

- existence of the state body coordinating the activities in the sector and establishment of its representation in the region;
- establishment of tourism infrastructures;
- providing information for the development of the sector (booklets, guides, booklets, etc.);
- existence of a breeding farm - breeding of the Caucasian gray breed (Tashir region, Blagodarnoye);

- perspectives of the creation and development of milk, fruit, and honey consumer cooperatives;

- restoration of existing, non-functioning tourist facilities in the region;
- improvement of the road network.

Weaknesses:

- absence of a cohesive and complex tourism development strategy in the region;
- poor state of inter-community highways.
- almost complete absence of sanitation system in villages;
- lack of serving points near historical and cultural monuments, as well as on the roads;
- the neglected and deplorable condition of historical and cultural monuments, and their adjacent areas;
- lack of specialized personnel.

Threats:

- insufficient funding,
- the underperformance of programs, etc.

To develop tourism in the region, it is proposed:

- creation of a working group and clarification of responsibilities between state, local administrative bodies, and private structures to be included in that group;
- active organization of preparation and qualification of professional personnel of the tourism sector (guides, various employees of the hotel economy, etc.);
- creation and development of structures dealing with tourism issues.
- presentation of tourism development opportunities in the region at "Diaspora-Armenia" business conferences, as well as other similar seminars and conferences, to secure investments for the re-operation of non-functioning tourist facilities in the region.

Conclusion.By examining the role of agrotourism in enhancing rural employment, this study contributes to the development of evidence-based strategies and policies aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of rural populations. Moreover, the study aligns with broader national development objectives, including rural sustainability, regional equity, and the advancement of the tourism sector.

To support the growth of tourism, particularly agrotourism, in Armenia, state and regional administrative bodies must undertake targeted and strategic actions. As an initial step, it is essential to identify and catalogue tourism assets of special significance. This includes conducting a comprehensive inventory of sites favorable for various forms of tourism, classified by type and region. Such a registry would enable the assessment of tourism object distribution across regions, potential tourist visitation rates, required investment volumes per site, regional employment needs, training and retraining demands, as well as estimating the number of local residents engaged in agrotourism and expected tourist flows, even on an approximate basis. In the Lori region, priority should be given to the development and modernization of tourism-supporting infrastructure. This includes the improvement of interstate highways, access roads to tourist sites, designated tourist routes, and bridges, all maintained to appropriate sanitary standards. Additionally, there is a need to develop accessible hotel complexes, expand networks of tourist lodges, hunting and fishing cabins, and forest guesthouses, and integrate them into national and international tourism cooperation frameworks.

The experiences of countries such as Switzerland, Greece, and Spain demonstrate that tourism can become one of the most profitable sectors of the economy. If approached strategically, it holds the potential to become a leading contributor to Armenia's GDP.

Such developments would result in the creation of a significant number of new jobs, increased employment rates, improved living standards for rural populations, and enhanced competitiveness across all regions of Armenia.

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ԱԳՐՈՏՈՒՐԻԶՄԻ ԴԵՐԸ ԳՅՈՒՂԱԿԱՆ ԶԲԱՂՎԱԾՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԲԱՐՁՐԱՑՄԱՆ ԳՈՐԾՈՒՄ. ԼՈՌՈՒ ՄԱՐԶԻ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

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Համառոտագիր

Ագրոտորիզմը ոլորտ է, որը մեծ ժողովրդականություն ունի, քանի որ հնարավորություն է տալիս դիվերսիֆիկացնել և մեծացնել շահույթը: Գյուղատնտեսության և զբոսաշրջության ինտեգրումը, որը կոչվում է «ագրոտորիզմ», զարգանում է որպես նոր տնտեսական շարժիչ ուժ: Այնուամենայնիվ, այս ինտեգրումը ագրոտորիզմ կազմակերպողների համար առաջ է բերում մարտահրավերներ և իրավական բարդություններ: Հետազոտության նպատակն է պարզել, թե ինչպես կարող է ագրոտորիզմի զարգացումը նպաստել գյուղական տնտեսության դիվերսիֆիկացմանը, գործազրկության կրճատմանը և տարածաշրջանում կայուն կենսամիջոցների խթանմանը: Ավելին, ուսումնասիրությունը կվերլուծի շրջակա միջավայրի հնարավորություններն ու ռիսկերը և կընդգծի այս հայեցակարգի առավելություններն ու թերությունները: Կարևոր է նշել, որ գյուղերի ամբողջական զարգացման մոդելը, բացի ժամանակակից գյուղատնտեսությունից, խրախուսում է փոխլրացնող գործունեության զարգացումը:

Հետազոտության ընթացքում ուսումնասիրվել են Լոռու մարզի պատմամշակութային և բնական պայմանները՝ որպես ագրոտորիզմի զարգացման հիմք: Բացի այդ, վերլուծվել են տարածաշրջանի ռեսուրսաապահովվածությունը և ագրոտորիզմի զարգացման ներուժը: Հյուրանոցային ոլորտի կազմակերպումը հետազոտվել է որպես ռազմավարական նախաձեռնություն, որն ուղղված է աշխատողների զբաղվածության ստեղծմանը, ինչպես նաև իրականացվել է ագրոտորիզմով զբաղվող տնային տնտեսությունների ուժեղ և թույլ կողմերի վերլուծություն:

Ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվել է մի շարք տնտեսագիտական **մեթոդների** կիրառմամբ, այդ թվում՝ տնտեսագիտական-նկարագրական, վիճակագրական, համեմատական և վերլուծական մեթոդներով: Վերլուծական աշխատանքն իրականացվել է SWOT մեթոդի կիրառմամբ՝ դրանով իսկ նպաստելով գյուղացիական տնտեսությունների կողմից ագրոտորիզմի կազմակերպմանն առնչվող ուժեղ, թույլ կողմերի, հնարավորությունների և խոչընդոտների համապարփակ վերլուծմանը:

Ուսումնասիրելով ագրոտորիզմի դերը զբաղվածության ավելացման գործում՝ ուսումնասիրության **արդյունքները** կնպաստեն փաստերի վրա հիմնված ռազմավարությունների և քաղաքականության մշակմանը, որոնք կուղղվեն գյուղական բնակչության սոցիալ-տնտեսական պայմանների բարելավմանը: Այն նաև համահունչ է ազգային զարգացման ավելի լայն

առաջնահերթություններին, ներառյալ գյուղական կայունությունը, տարածաշրջանային հավասարությունը և զբոսաշրջության զարգացումը:

Բանալի բառեր. ագրոտուրիզմ, հյուրանոցային բիզնես, աշխատատեղեր, գյուղատնտեսության զբաղվածություն, տնային տնտեսություններ, SWOT վերլուծություն, համայնքի զարգացում, գյուղական կայունություն:

РОЛЬ АГРОТУРИЗМА В ПОВЫШЕНИИ ЗАНЯТОСТИ СЕЛЬСКОГО НАСЕЛЕНИЯ: ПРИМЕР ЛОРИЙСКОГО РЕГИОНА

**ЦОВИНАР КОЧАРЯН
ГРАЧЬЯ ГРИГОРЯН**

Аннотация

Агротуризм представляет собой отрасль, находящуюся на этапе активного роста, поскольку сельхозпроизводители стремятся к диверсификации деятельности и увеличению доходов. Интеграция сельского хозяйства и туризма, получившая название «агротуризм», выступает в качестве нового экономического драйвера. Вместе с тем такое объединение порождает определённые вызовы и правовые сложности для субъектов агротуристической деятельности.

Целью настоящего исследования является определение того, каким образом развитие агротуризма может способствовать диверсификации сельской экономики, снижению уровня безработицы и продвижению устойчивых источников средств к существованию в регионе. Кроме того, в исследовании анализируются возможности и риски внешней среды, а также выделяются преимущества и недостатки рассматриваемой концепции.

Следует отметить, что модель интегрального сельского развития наряду с модернизацией сельского хозяйства предполагает развитие сопутствующих видов деятельности.

В рамках исследования были изучены исторические, культурные и природные условия Лорийского региона как основа для развития агротуризма. Кроме того, проанализированы ресурсный потенциал региона и перспективы становления агротуристической деятельности. Реструктуризация гостиничного сектора рассматривается как стратегическая инициатива, направленная на создание рабочих мест. Также проведён анализ сильных и слабых сторон домохозяйств, вовлечённых в агротуризм.

Методология исследования включает использование ряда экономических методов: описательного, статистического, сравнительного и аналитического. Основным инструментом анализа — метод SWOT, позволивший сформировать комплексное представление о сильных и слабых сторонах, возможностях и угрозах, связанных с организацией агротуризма на базе фермерских хозяйств.

Путём анализа роли агротуризма в повышении занятости исследование **вносит вклад** в разработку стратегий и политик, основанных на доказательной базе,

направленных на улучшение социально-экономического положения сельского населения. Работа также соотносится с общенациональными приоритетами развития, включая устойчивое сельское развитие, выравнивание региональных различий и развитие туризма.

Ключевые слова. агротуризм, гостиничный бизнес, занятость, сельскохозяйственная занятость, домохозяйства, SWOT-анализ, развитие общин, устойчивое сельское развитие.

THE ROLE OF AGROTOURISM IN ENHANCING RURAL EMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE LORI REGION

TSOVINAR KOCHARYAN
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Abstract

The integration of agriculture and tourism, commonly referred to as agrotourism, has emerged as a novel economic stimulus in rural areas. Agrotourism is a rapidly growing sector, driven by the need for producers to diversify their income sources and enhance profitability. While that integration presents significant opportunities, it also introduces a range of challenges, including legal and regulatory complexities for operators.

This study aims to explore how the development of agrotourism can contribute to rural economic diversification, reduce unemployment, and promote sustainable livelihoods in the Lori region of Armenia. It also seeks to identify the opportunities and risks associated with the development of agrotourism, as well as to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the concept within the broader context of rural development. The model of integrated rural development, which emphasizes modern agriculture alongside complementary activities such as agrotourism, serves as a conceptual foundation for the research.

The study examines the historical, cultural, and natural assets of the Lori region as enabling conditions for the development of agrotourism. It also evaluates the region's resource endowment and assesses its potential for expanding agrotourism. The restructuring of the hospitality sector is identified as a strategic initiative to foster job creation. Methodologically, the research employs a combination of economic-descriptive, statistical, comparative, and analytical approaches. The core analytical framework is based on the SWOT method, which enables a comprehensive assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats relevant to agrotourism enterprises.

By investigating the role of agrotourism in generating rural employment, the study contributes to the formulation of evidence-based strategies and policies aimed at improving the socio-economic well-being of rural communities. It also supports broader national development objectives, including rural sustainability, regional development, and tourism sector growth.

Keywords: agritourism, hotel business, jobs, agricultural employment, households, SWOT analysis, community development, rural sustainability.