

# The Community- Managed Agritourism Trek in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, Philippines: Cbpar Approach

Jossie Baranda-Romero<sup>1</sup>, Nancy Peñero Penacilla<sup>1</sup>, Margarita Mirador Lanciso<sup>2</sup>,  
Isaias Climaco Penacilla<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Hospitality Department, Partido State University, Camarines Sur, Philippines

<sup>2</sup>School of Graduate Studies and Research, Partido State University, Camarines Sur, Philippines

## Email address:

jossie.romero@parsu.edu.ph (J. Baranda-Romero), nancypenacilla@yahoo.com (N. P. Penacilla),  
margaritalanciso31879@yahoo.com (M. M. Lanciso), isaias.penacilla@yahoo.com (I. C. Penacilla)

\*Corresponding author

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**Abstract:** The study aims to develop a community-managed agritourism trek in Tigaon, Camarines Sur, Philippines through Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) that may serve as a vehicle in uplifting the socio-economic condition, preserve the biodiversity of the locality and in support to the governments' plans and programs in promoting agriculture and tourism which will benefit the farmers, creates job opportunities, preserve nature and in response to RA 10816 of 2016 otherwise known as Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016. The study adopts the exploratory method through focus group discussions in classifying potential agritourism activities and determining possible obstacles. Interviews and ocular site visits were also conducted for validation. The participation of Agtang Tabanganon and the community shed insights in developing community-managed agritourism trek in the locality. Based from the results, the socio-demographic profile reveals that most of them were elementary graduates and their job were laborers and housekeepers while in classifying agritourism potential activities reveals agri-entertainment has the most number of activities followed by agri adventure and agri products where tourists will experience the traditional way of picking up products without any machinery used. The identified possible obstacles and the necessary trainings are opportunities towards a competitive operation of community-managed agritourism trek activities that will help the indigenous people, women, family farmers, habalhabal operators generate additional income while improving the value of the tourism experiences.

**Keywords:** Community-Managed Agritourism Trek, CBPAR, RA 10816, Agriculture and Tourism

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## 1. Introduction

The focus of the study is to develop a community-managed agritourism trek in Tigaon, Camarines Sur that may serve as a vehicle in uplifting the socio-economic condition and preserve the biodiversity of the locality. Exploring the nature, its habitat and experiences in nurturing agricultural products and services, the culture of the locality that includes norms and conduct of the people, the values on how the people accepts changes, and the uniqueness of the vicinity is a perfect combination of transforming a place where the main source of living is agriculture. The potential agritourism sites and side attractions with the existence of flora and fauna, the

various fruit bearing trees and trees in decades and some man-made attractions cultivates in the process of putting up this project.

Agritourism is a fast growing industry in developing countries in the Southeast Asia region. The potential benefits of agritourism trek directly or indirectly connects in nurturing and preserving the biodiversity of the locality and in response to the administration socio-economic agenda promoting the rural development by strengthening the innovative ways in agriculture from the traditional way of preparing the farm land for plantation with the used of organic preserves and increases

the fertility of the land while adopting the use of machinery or equipment in cultivating the farm land. Agritourism trek is a combination of activities that tourists or guests will experience. The products produced from farm to table and the services of the native tribes will also be asserted.

The Philippines is abundant in natural resources surrounded with mountainous hills and slopes, and bodies of water. As a strategy to nurture the natural resources and strengthen the combination of agriculture and tourism, Republic Act No. 10816 otherwise known as Farm Tourism Development Act of 2016. It is embedded in the Act to provide for the development and promotion of farm tourism in the country. The Bicol Region comprises of six provinces, namely: Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate and Sorsogon wherein Camarines Sur has 34 municipalities and two cities. Tigaon, Camarines Sur is a 3<sup>rd</sup> class municipality geographically located in a mountainous area where Agtang Tabangnon tribe lives in Barangays Libod and Tinawagan. The main source of living are rice, sugar cane, corn, pineapple plantation, herbs and spices, and other vegetable plantations. The local government unit upkeep to strategize the farmers increase their income by strengthening agritourism in the municipality, thus developing a community-managed agritourism trek cropped up.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Respondents

The respondents consists of stakeholders, tribe representatives, local government officials, habalhabal group, and community participated in this study.

### 2.2. Research Design

The study used the exploratory method of research. The Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) approach was used to collaborate and participate in the data gathering, encountered problems and suggested solutions that generated factual and valuable information. The CBPAR model was adopted and the Tourism Rapid Assessment (TRA) tool was also used to consolidate information along socio-demographic profile and assessing the classification of agritourism activities. During the pre-initial period, the researchers conducted a focus group discussions to gather inputs and layout plans for the activities. The gathering of data was conducted through focus group discussions followed by an ocular site visit and interview for validation. There were 3 worksheets used as an aid in gathering the data, namely: Worksheet 1: determining the socio demographic profile of potential agritourism sites that includes the biodiversity of the locality, Worksheet 2: Assessing the classification of agritourism activities and Worksheet 3: Problems encountered and the social viability in developing community managed agritourism trek. In analyzing the result, the descriptive statistics was employed.

After the participatory workshops were done to generate

factual and evidence based information. Actions through trainings on livelihood and tour guiding were given to community and habalhabal groups respectively.

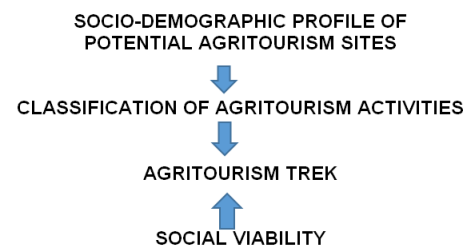


Figure 1. Flow of the study (by the author).

### 2.3. Reviewed Literature

Agritourism as defined in the Webster Dictionary is the way of visiting and participating in any farm activities. The study of Maruti [1] presented information in developing agro-tourism in Maharashtra, India that provides additional source of income and an opportunity to farmers. Similar to the studies of Barbieri, C. and Mshenga, P. M. [2]; Sotomayor, et al., [3]; Marques, H. [4]; Pijpers, R., & Maas, M. [5]; Cruz, C. & Nordqvist, M. [6] expresses that agritourism encourages guests to experience the agritourism activities and strengthen the entrepreneurial skills of the farm/family owners while the studies of Che, D., et al., [7]; Barbeire, C. and Mahoney, E. [8]; McGehee, et al., [9]; Maetzold, J. [10] explains that agritourism served as the potential vehicle for preserving and sustaining family farm. Likewise, the studies of Ciolac, R. et al., [11]; Khairabadi, O., et al., [12]; Schaneman, [13] manifests the complex of activity for both health and environment that delivers learning opportunities and healthy tourism activities.

In United States, the American Urban promotes agritourism on-farm experience and other resources as a diversification strategy to leverage farm incomes such as pumpkins farm, strawberry farms, ranches and other family farms while in Ukraine, agritourism is clustered based on agricultural enterprises such as farms and households, Malska, et al., [14]. This includes job opportunities, Calza, et al., [15] for young and women in which hospitality practices such as guiding tourists as well as preparing food and snacks. In Bali Indonesia, the agro-tourism, Budiasa, et al., [16] serves as innovators offering various kind of services and tourism products. It is an avenue to many standard agro-tourism activities though it passes tough and rough helps improve the life of farmers and enriches the native culture of the locality, Choo, H. and Petrick, J. F., [17].

Indeed, this study cropped up in response to the RA. No. 10816 to determine the possibility of developing a community-manage agritourism trek through a community-based participatory action research in Barangays Libod and Tinawagan, Tigaon, Camarines Sur.

### 2.4. The Site Profile

The locale of study was conducted at Barangays Libod and

Tinawagan, Tigaon, Camarines Sur. Libod is situated at approximately 13.6246, 123.4463, with an elevation of more or less 238.4 meters or 782.1 feet above sea level while Tinawagan is situated at approximately 13.6310, 123.4625, with more or less 157.8 meters or 517.7 feet above sea level (PhilAtlas.com). In terms of population, Libod consists 1584 individuals while Tinawagan consist of 3,657 individuals as of 2015 per record shown of Philippine Statistics Authority. The barangays of Salvacion, Panagan, Consocep, Gao, and Mabalodbalod, all in Tigaon, Camarines Sur and Brgy. San Pedro (Aroro), Goa, Camarines Sur, respectively serves as boundaries.

### 3. Results and Discussions

#### 1. Socio-demographic Profile

It is interesting and challenging in developing a community managed-agritourism trek to take into

consideration the socio-demographic profile of the locality. Table 1 presents the respondents contribution along educational attainment having the highest percentage of 31.67% were elementary graduates while the least percentage of 10% were college graduates. In term of job classification, housekeeper has the highest percentage of 30% and the least percentage of 13.33% others. The usual source of income of the people is buy and sell with the highest percentage of 28.33% and the least percentage of 9% for professionals and farmers while the laborers comprises the 25% of the respondents. In diversifying the source of income among the opportunities is the livelihood trainings in particular tour guiding having the highest percentage of 30% while the least is on packaging and labelling. These contributions as perceived by the respondents intensify the possible strategies needed for developing this project.

**Table 1.** The respondents contribution on socio-economic profile =N 60.

Indicators	f	%	Rank
1. Educational Attainment			
a. College Graduate	6	10.00	5
b. College level	7	11.67	4
c. Secondary Graduate	18	30.00	2
d. Elementary Graduate	19	31.67	1
e. Elementary level	10	16.67	3
2. Job classification			
a. labourer	13	21.67	2
b. skilled worker	12	20.00	3
c. farmers	9	15.00	4
d. housekeeper	18	30.00	1
e. others	8	13.33	5
3. Source of income			
a. profession	9	15.00	5
b. labourer	15	25.00	2
c. farming	9	15.00	5
d. self-employed	10	16.67	3
e. buy and sell	17	28.33	1
4. opportunities to diversify income			
a. skills and livelihood training	18	30.00	1
a.1. tour guiding	15	25.00	2
a.2. vegetable processing	11	18.33	3
a.3. handicraft making	10	16.67	4
a.4. bread and pastry	4	6.67	7
a.5. cosmetology	2	3.33	8
a.6. RAC servicing	4	6.67	7
b. packaging and labelling	5	8.33	5
c. financial literacy			

Like other studies on agritourism identifies the role of biodiversity in sustaining the environment. Table 2 presents the environment and biodiversity of the proposed project as perceived by the respondents. It was noted that the geological formations is a natural attractions identified in this area which will caught the interest of the tourist particularly to trekkers including the passage way where

various form of rocks serves as a gateway to Canibag falls. It is also exciting to identify the different types of ferns that you can only have within the locality as shown in the table 2 with the scientific names that serves as a guide to people for their consumption and medicine. The existence of flora and fauna were given good care of the farm owners.

**Table 2.** Environment and Biodiversity.

Indicators	Specific Names	Remarks
1. Nature and Values		
a.1 geological formations	Canibag Falls, hillslope mountainous landscapes, man-made cave, man-made pool, tree house	The geological formations are a natural attraction interesting to tourists.
a.2 water bodies/forms	Rocky valley	The passage way going to canibag falls is a rocky valley
a.3 ecosystem	Various ferns: Types of ferns 1. Alpine wood fern 2. Ostrich fern 3. Royal fern 4. Japanese tassel fern 5. Maidenhair fern 6. Licorice fern 7. Eagle fern 8. Silver fern 9. Tasmanian Cup fern 10. Boston fern 11. Staghorn fern 12. Feather fern	Scientific names Dryopteris walli chiana Matteuccia struthiopteris Osmunda regalis Polystichum polyblepharum Adiantum Polypodium glycyrrhiza Pteridium aquilinum Cyathea dealbata Cyathea arborea Nephrolepis exaltata Platyserium Pneumatopteris pennigera
a.4 presence of flora	coconut trees, corns, da-o trees, pineapple, banana, vegetables, assorted fruit bearing trees	The various species of ferns connotes that the locality needs to protect the ecosystem considering ferns serves as the habitat of microbial and small animals that enriches the environment. It is also utilized as food and medicine for human.
a.5 presence of fauna	Wild hog, geese, birds, carabaos, cows	These were protected by farm owners These were given good care of the farm owners
2. Cultural Values	The existence of Tabangnon tribes	Tabangnon tribes were given housing in the area

While in terms of cultural values, Tabangnon tribes manifest a strong cultural values and attitude in the locality. The tribe is being headed by the Chieftain. The chieftain with her members participated in the workshops and trainings conducted. Potential agritourism sites were identified Romero [18], the Helen's haven eco-park and resort, sanoy farm, VK farm, Maripas Farm, Hearty Harvest Family Farm, and Canibag falls. The named agritourism sites were developed with various activities being offered to guests, such as hiking, swimming, hunting, picking, birds watching, feeding and experience the traditional way of making the fiber out from abaca.

The stakeholders and the community had shown interests and encouraged the members of the tribe to participate in various trainings and workshop, as shown in figure 11. The habalhabal group attended the training workshop on tour guiding enable them to be aware on how to handle tourist safely. The livelihood trainings were also conducted to showcase the different delicacies in the locality such as Halaea making, Tableau making, Banana chips, cassava roll making, sweet and spicy dilis, turmeric tea making using the local raw materials that may serve as "pasalobong" while handicraft making using the abaca for souvenirs, placemat and door mat making, and flower arrangement.

**Table 3.** The Accessibility and Potential Obstacles.

Indicators	Location	Potential Obstacles
A. Air	Nearest Airport: Naga Airport (Domestic) Pili, Camarines Sur	Domestic lines
B. Water	Nearest Port: Nato Port, Sagnay, Camarines Sur	Maybe open for public utility vessels
C. Road Access from the National Road	Barangay Road	Congestions due to traffic
D. Road condition from the National Road	Pave	Congestions due to traffic
E. Distance from the Municipal Hall	Approximately less than 5 kilometers	Congestions due to traffic
F. Type of transportation	a) Bike/pedicab b) Habalhabal c) Tricycle d) Private car/rental car (only habal-habal used to transport farm products)	Noise and pollution
G. Distance from potential agritourism trek-Canibag Falls	Approximately 45 mins walking away from the barangay road	Alternative route must be considered for safety

## 2. Accessibility and Potential Obstacles

The accessibility and mean of transportations plays a vital role in the development of community-managed agritourism trek. Several authors Sznajder, et al., [19] and Potocnik-Slavic, I and Schmitz, S.[20] expresses that the accessibility of markets, the state of farming, the social attitudes and the farm structure including the landscapes contributes in developing

agritourism. Table 3 reveals that access road from the national road is a barangay road, thus, needs to be widen to enable vehicles passed by without traffic or causes of congestions which may result to possible obstacle to tourists. At present, there is only one way going to Barangays Tinawagan and Libod that showcases some challenges in bringing out the produced farm products especially during lean or rainy season

causing flashfloods along the spillway. The accessibility contributes greatly in bringing the tourist from one place to another. The shorter the distance covering one farm site and another increases revenue as attested in the study of Dominguez, [21] the benefits both for tourist and farm market owners. It was also noted that habal-habal is the only mean of transportation Romero, [18] being utilized by the constituents in the locality. The clamor of the populace is to have the possibility of developing an alternative route going to Canibag falls at the height of water if the weather change from sunny to rainy season will add to the attraction and activities of the tourist. In terms of air facilities, Barangays Libod and Tinawagan is at a distance from Naga Airport less than an hour to travel via domestic flights from Manila to Naga Airport, then from Naga Airport to the perspective agritourism trek is (Barangays Libod and Tinawagan) less than an hour to travel via private vehicles. It was asserted Stepniak, et al., [22] an empirical result that the median travel time of 120 minutes trips for business and tourism is considered as short-distance travel. The accessibility is a factor that helps increases the revenue of the farm owners and the marketers of the produce products.

### 3. Classification of Agritourism Activities

Classifying the different agritourism activities in developing a community manage- agritourism trek is an innovative way to promote agritourism in the locality. Table 4 presents the agritourism activities as perceived by the respondents, namely: agri-accommodation, agri-products, agri-recreation, agri-adventure, agri-entertainment adopted Sznajder [19]. Agri-accommodation refers to any

accommodation facilities situated within the farm or agri-resort, while agri-products are both processed pick and buy products. Agri-recreation denotes the season of visits either weekenders or holidays. Agri-adventures present the different potential agritourism trek while agri-entertainment nurture the activities and experiences of the tourist.

The results reveals that agri-entertainment has the highest number with seven (7) identified activities followed by agri-adventure and agri-products with six (6) activities while the least are agri-recreation and agri-accommodation had only two activities. Agri-adventure the most exciting event nourishes with beautiful nature-based falls. Said falls is named as “Canibag” because of its bag like form in a local dialect. The freshness of the surroundings, the hill slopes and hill sides, the rocky gateway of the falls and the amazing route to reach Canibag falls expresses a different experience to trekkers.

The concepts of enhancing and protecting the environment and preserves nature-based plantation such as varieties of trees, fruit bearing trees, rootcrops, and herbs and spices will nourish the tourists. This is being attested by similar studies that determines the small scale farms Tiraieyari, N., and Hamzah, A. [23] the farm stays, pick your own products, (McGehee, NG, et al., [9] generating innovative activity for enterprising farmers, (Manhas, P. S.[24] evaluating the potential agritourism sites along attractions, Romero, J [18] agritourism business activities, Sznajder, et al.[19] and the development of agro-tourism (Budiasa, et al., [16] in Bali Indonesia as innovators offering various kind of services and tourism products.

**Table 4.** Agritourism activities.

Indicators	Activities	Location
Agri-accommodation	1. Homestay 2. Agri-resort	Helen's Haven Farm and Resort
Agri-products	1. Processed Products such as heart cocoa tableau 2. handicraft bags, baskets and slippers made of abaca 3. pick and buy farm products	Hearty Harvest family farm Sanoy Farm, VK Farm, Senorita plantation
Agri-recreation	Weekend holiday 1. Hiking and walking 2. Birds watching	Helen's Haven, Canibag Falls, VK Farm, and Maripas Farm
Agri-adventure	3. Slope area and hillsides 4. Rocky landscaping 5. Water falls 6. Man-made cave	Canibag Falls, Pineapple plantation, Hearty Harvest Family farm, and Maripas Farm Helen's Havens Farm and Resort
Agri-entertainment	1. agri-tour/agri-visit 2. Corn plantation 3. Pineapple plantation 4. Cassava plantation 5. plantation of herbs and spices 6. Varieties of trees 7. Fruit bearing trees 8. Pigpen of wild hogs	Sanoy Farm, Maripas Farm, VK farm, Helen's Havens farm and resort, Ecopark

Source: Adopted from Sznajder, et al., (2009).

Based from the results, classification of agritourism activities derives several benefits as perceived during the focus group discussion: 1. Agritourism farm related activities will be secured considering some irregularities brought by monsoon or change in weather, 2. Serves as another source of income, 3.

Preserves the agri-farms environment, 4. Agritourism is an opportunity to give insights and awareness about the process of how the product is produced and or how does organic farming works, 5. It provides another experience to tourists by participating in agricultural activities, and 6. It will also serves

as a vehicle to connect with organizations and other agencies to encourage tourist to visit and investors to invest.

**Table 5.** The identified problems in developing community-managed agritourism trek.

Problems Identified	Interventions	Actions taken
1. Lack of training for agritourism activities	Conducts Needs Assessment	Results of needs assessment was deliberated and conducts the initial training needed in the project such as: 1. training for tour guides 2. livelihood training (food delicacies and handicrafts)
2. Low awareness among farmers on agritourism activities	Recommends training for farmers on adaptation of organic farming as an innovation way to nurture the agricultural land	
3. Lack of coordination between the concerned offices (local agriculture office and tourism office)	Recommends to coordinate and top government offices for the project	
4. Lack of awareness on entrepreneurial skills	Recommends seminar workshop on enhancing entrepreneurial skills in handling agritourism activities	
5. Low on communication skills	Recommends series of activities that will elevate their confidence how to communicate or how to deal with people	
6. Lack of entrepreneurial fund for establishing community managed agritourism trek	Connect with government agencies in particular the local government of Tigaon and non-government organizations for funding purposes	
7. High risk for hikers, there is no alternative route for Canibag Falls	Recommends for creation of alternative route subject for its approval of the local government unit and other concerned offices	
8. Road widening for tourist vehicles	Recommends for road widening	
9. Lack of Accommodation facilities	Encourage investors	
10. Lack of sewage	For possible increase of tourist arrivals additional sewage is necessary	

Table 5 presents the identified problems that might be encountered in the operation of community-managed agritourism trek as perceived by the respondents that the local government unit needs to take in consideration to come up with a vivid solution to enable farmers and the community to participate in the operation of community-managed agritourism trek activities, thus, the following are recommended:

1. Training workshops to farmers, farm owners, and farm enthusiasts, re: innovative ways of farming for sustainability.
2. Livelihood training workshops to tribes and community.
3. Encourages local government unit to recognize the potential agritourism sites.
4. Encourages farmers and farm owners to conceptualize and venture into small and viable agritourism activities.
5. Encourage the community to participate in any agritourism activities to nourish and nurture in-depth knowledge and creativity.

Aside from the infrastructures that will enhance the area, such as widening of roads, creation of alternative route going to Canibag falls in times of change in weather conditions and other infra projects. This will also respond to Sustainable Development Goals-journey 2030 promoting local and green purchase food/agricultural local supplies and fair trades, host community involvement [25] and maximizing the benefits that derive from agriculture and tourism [26].



**Figure 2.** VK Farm and Sanoy Farm.



**Figure 3.** Tree House. The tree with almost 1.1 meters width at Helen's Haven Eco Park and Resort, Barangay Libod, Tigaon, Camarines Sur.



**Figure 4.** Hillsides and hillslope going to Canibag Falls.





**Figure 5.** The Canibag falls is a like bag shape can be found in the mountaineous area adjacent to Mt. Isarog Protected Area at Libod, Tigaon, Camarines Sur.



**Figure 6.** A man-made cave. This is located inside the Helen's Haven Eco-Park and Resort. It is unique in nature where tourist will enjoy the difference from the natural-based cave.



**Figure 7.** Sample ferns in the vicinity.



**Figure 8.** Sample vegetable plantation.



**Figure 9.** The Da-o tree and other species.



**Figure 10.** The wild pig and geese.



**Figure 11.** During the focus group discussion.

## 4. Conclusion and Implementation

Agritourism is considered as the driver for tourism's growth that the local government units promote and inject plans and programs for tourism development. This study provides relevant information that could be used by policy makers in recognizing and preparing policies and guidelines for the implementation and operation of the community-managed agritourism trek. The participation of Agtang Tabanganon and the community shed insights in developing agritourism in the locality. The socio-demographic profile, the classification of agritourism potential activities and the identified possible obstacles and the necessary trainings are opportunities towards a competitive operation of community-managed agritourism trek activities that will help the indigenous people, women, family farmers, habalhabal operators generate additional income while improving the value of the tourism experiences.

Therefore, this study will be presented to the local government unit in aid of legislations and will serve as a guide for policy makers in recognizing the operation of community-managed agritourism trek in barangays Libod and Tinawagan, Tigaon, Camarines Sur.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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