

MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning (E4L)" Webinar Series

Topic: "Agri-Tourism as a Tool for Rural Entrepreneurship and Livelihood Enhancement: The Baramati Agri Tourism Experience"

Schedule:
26-11-2022, 19:00-20:30 PM

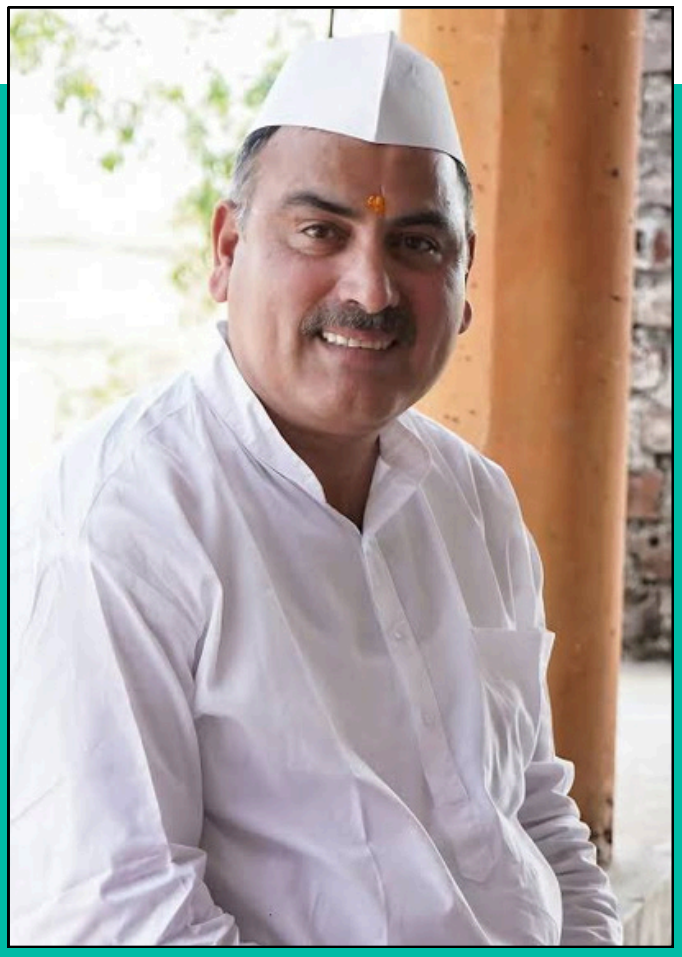
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About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension "Evening4Learning" Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The twelve-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.





Speaker

Mr. Pandurang Taware
Founder
Agri Tourism Development Corporation

Pandurang Taware

About the Speaker

Mr. Pandurang Taware is the Founder of the Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Maharashtra, and a pioneer of agri-tourism in India. Hailing from a farming family in Sanghavi village, Baramati, he combines agricultural knowledge with experience in hospitality and tourism. He promotes agri-tourism to diversify farmers' income, generate rural employment and connect visitors with farming practices and rural culture.

Through ATDC, he supports agri-tourism development and farmer capacity building, guided by the "See, Do and Buy" principle, which encourages visitors to experience farming activities and purchase local produce. His contributions have been recognised through the National Tourism Award for Most Innovative Tourism Product (2010), the National Tourism Award for Best Responsible Tourism Project (2012), and the ICAR National Innovative Farmer Award (2018).

Introduction

Agriculture and tourism offer significant opportunities for rural development, livelihood diversification and employment generation. Agriculture remains the primary source of livelihood for a large proportion of rural households; however, farmers increasingly face challenges such as rising input costs, fluctuating market prices, climate variability, limited market access and uncertainty in agricultural production. Dependence on agriculture alone can make farm households vulnerable to economic and environmental risks, particularly when crop failures or unfavourable market conditions affect farm income. Therefore, diversifying rural livelihood opportunities and creating additional sources of income have become important for improving farmers' economic stability and resilience.

In this context, agri-tourism has emerged as a complementary enterprise that integrates agricultural activities with tourism experiences. It provides opportunities for farmers to showcase their farms, farming practices, local food, traditional knowledge, cultural heritage and rural lifestyles to visitors, particularly those from urban areas. Activities such as farm visits, participation in agricultural operations, demonstrations of traditional practices, local cuisine, rural games and the sale of farm produce can create engaging experiences for visitors while generating supplementary income for farming households.

Agri-tourism can also contribute to rural employment by creating opportunities for women, youth, local artisans, food service providers and other rural entrepreneurs. By encouraging the direct sale of agricultural produce and locally made products, it can strengthen farmer–consumer connections and improve the value derived from agricultural activities. Furthermore, it can promote awareness of agriculture, biodiversity, traditional farming systems and rural culture among visitors. Thus, agri-tourism offers a potential pathway for linking agriculture with the service sector, strengthening rural entrepreneurship, preserving local heritage and promoting sustainable rural development while enabling farmers to retain agriculture as their primary activity.

What is Agri-Tourism?

Agri-tourism refers to tourism that combines agriculture, rural settings and agricultural operations to provide visitors with an experiential learning and recreational opportunity. The central product of agri-tourism is the experience offered to visitors, enabling them to understand farming and rural life through direct participation.

Visitors may experience the lifestyle of farmers by participating in agricultural operations, observing crops and livestock, enjoying traditional food, exploring villages and learning about local history, geography, climate and culture. Activities such as sowing, harvesting, irrigation, feeding animals and visiting local markets help urban visitors understand the realities of agricultural production.

Agri-tourism also creates opportunities for farmers to interact directly with consumers, sell agricultural produce and processed products, and showcase local handicrafts and cultural traditions. Thus, it integrates agriculture, tourism, education, recreation and rural entrepreneurship.

Rationale for Agri-Tourism

The rationale for promoting agri-tourism arises from the need to diversify farm income and respond to the growing interest in experiential tourism.

- **Diversification of farm income:** Farmers face fluctuating agricultural prices, rising production costs and climate-related uncertainties. Agri-tourism can provide an additional source of income alongside crop and livestock production.
- **Employment generation:** Tourism activities create employment for farm family members, rural youth, women, local artisans and other village residents.
- **Growing interest in rural experiences:** Urban visitors increasingly seek opportunities to experience village life, traditional food, farming practices and rural culture.
- **Agriculture awareness:** Agri-tourism helps visitors understand where food comes from, how it is produced and the challenges faced by farmers.
- **Direct farmer–consumer relationships:** Farmers can sell fresh produce, processed products and handicrafts directly to visitors, creating opportunities for better market access.
- **Utilisation of existing farm resources:** Existing agricultural enterprises, such as dairy, horticulture, poultry, vegetable cultivation and agroforestry, can serve as the foundation for tourism activities.
- **Preservation of rural culture:** Local traditions, cuisine, folk performances, crafts and agricultural heritage can be promoted through visitor experiences.
- **Sustainable rural development:** When planned responsibly, agri-tourism can strengthen local economic activity while supporting environmental conservation and community participation.

Developing a supplementary income source at the farm and village levels helps to improve livelihood security and support the long-term sustainability of farming.

Types of Agri-Tourism

The formats through which farmers can develop agri-tourism enterprises:

- **Retail sales:** Direct sale of fresh agricultural produce, processed products, local foods, handicrafts and souvenirs.
- **Accommodation and meals:** Providing visitors with rural accommodation and traditional farm-based meals.
- **Educational farm tours:** Organising visits for schoolchildren, college students, agricultural institutions and other educational groups.
- **Agricultural events and festivals:** Conducting activities associated with harvests, flowering seasons, fruits, local traditions and agricultural festivals.
- **Participatory farm activities:** Enabling tourists to participate in sowing, harvesting, irrigation, livestock care and other farm operations.
- **Farm-based recreation:** Offering activities such as bullock-cart rides, village walks, birdwatching and demonstrations of traditional agricultural practices.

Basic principles of agri-tourism

The basic principle of an agri-tourism enterprise is **"See, Do and Buy".**

See: Visitors should have something interesting to observe, such as crops, livestock, irrigation systems, gardens, agroforestry plots and traditional agricultural practices.

Do: Visitors should be able to participate in activities such as harvesting, watering crops, feeding animals, preparing traditional food or experiencing local customs.

Buy: Visitors should have opportunities to purchase farm-fresh produce, processed agricultural products, local food items, handicrafts and souvenirs.

A successful agri-tourism farm should offer meaningful experiences that combine learning, engagement, enjoyment and opportunities to purchase locally produced goods.

Types of Customers in Agri-Tourism

The different customer groups that farmers can target while planning agri-tourism activities includes:

Families: Families seeking recreational activities and opportunities for children to experience farming and village life.
Educational groups: Schools, colleges, universities and agricultural institutions interested in practical learning and exposure visits.
Corporate groups: Organisations seeking group activities, experiential learning and team-building opportunities.
Organised groups: Community organisations, professional associations and other groups interested in rural experiences.
Events and festivals: Visitors attending seasonal celebrations, harvest festivals, cultural programmes and farm events.
Special-interest groups: People interested in agriculture, rural culture, biodiversity, traditional food, livestock, horticulture and sustainable farming.

Understanding customer preferences helps farmers design suitable activities, determine the services to offer and develop appropriate tourism packages.

Advantages of Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism provides several economic, social, educational and cultural benefits.

Economic benefits

- Diversifies farm income by combining agricultural production with tourism services.
- Enables direct sales of agricultural produce and processed products to visitors.
- Generates revenue from accommodation, meals, farm tours and recreational activities.
- Creates markets for village handicrafts, traditional foods and locally produced goods.
- Provides supplementary income that can be reinvested in agricultural development.

Employment generation

Agri-tourism creates opportunities for family members and local residents to work as farm guides, tour coordinators, hospitality staff, cooks, sales representatives and farm managers. Women and rural youth can participate in activities such as food preparation, cultural performances, handicraft production and visitor management.

Educational benefits

Agri-tourism bridges the gap between urban consumers and agricultural producers. Visitors gain practical knowledge about crop production, livestock management, irrigation, harvesting, food systems and the importance of agriculture in everyday life.

Social and cultural benefits

The enterprise provides a platform for promoting local cuisine, traditional attire, folk performances, handicrafts and village customs. It can also encourage community participation and strengthen the identity and visibility of rural communities.

Environmental benefits

Agri-tourism can encourage the conservation of trees, biodiversity, traditional agricultural practices and local natural resources when environmental sustainability is incorporated into farm management.

Overall, agri-tourism can support farm diversification while helping farmers retain agriculture as their principal livelihood activity.

Disadvantages of Agri-Tourism

Although agri-tourism offers considerable opportunities, it also involves operational challenges that farmers must consider.

- **Time and management requirements:** Farmers must balance agricultural operations with tourism-related responsibilities, including visitor reception, scheduling, farm tours and hospitality.
- **Infrastructure investment:** Accommodation, sanitation, parking, dining facilities, kitchens, storage and visitor amenities may require additional expenditure.
- **Service quality expectations:** Visitors expect cleanliness, safety, courteous communication and well-organised experiences.
- **Farm presentation and maintenance:** Agricultural activities and farm facilities may need to be organised to make them accessible and understandable to visitors without disrupting production.
- **Additional skills:** Farmers may need training in hospitality, communication, customer service, tourism management and marketing.
- **Seasonal demand:** Visitor numbers may fluctuate according to holidays, weekends, weather conditions and agricultural seasons.
- **Coordination challenges:** Managing staff, family responsibilities, farm work and visitor expectations requires planning and teamwork.

The farmers entering the tourism business should recognise these responsibilities and develop the necessary management skills before starting operations.

Current Market Scenario and Demand for Agri-Tourism in India

There is an increasing potential for agri-tourism in India, particularly because of the growing interest in specialised tourism experiences and rural lifestyles. Many urban residents have limited opportunities to experience village life directly, creating scope for farms to provide educational, recreational and cultural experiences.

According, a survey conducted by the organisation in 2004 found that 43% of urban respondents did not have relatives in villages, while 56% had never visited and stayed in a village. These findings illustrate the potential demand for rural experiences. There is also a significant contribution of agri-tourism to farm income and local employment.

The agri-tourism activities can be scheduled around weekends, public holidays, festivals and suitable agricultural seasons, allowing farmers to earn supplementary income while continuing their regular farming operations.

Requirements to Start Agri-Tourism

Starting an agri-tourism enterprise requires careful assessment of resources, objectives, infrastructure and customer needs. The presenter introduced a "**W Formula**" to help farmers plan their enterprises.

The W Formula includes:

What to do: Identify the agricultural enterprise or tourism activity to be developed, such as dairy farming, horticulture, poultry, vegetable cultivation, agroforestry or educational farm visits.

When to do it: Identify suitable seasons, flowering and fruiting periods, harvesting periods, festivals, weekends and holidays.
Where to do it: Assess the farm's location and nearby natural, historical, geographical, religious or cultural attractions that may complement the tourism experience.
How to do it: Develop an appropriate farm layout, visitor route, activities, accommodation and food services. Present agricultural operations in a manner that visitors can understand and safely experience.
Why to do it: Define the objectives of the enterprise, such as selling agricultural produce, generating additional income, providing educational experiences, promoting local culture or creating employment.

There is a need to discuss the enterprise's objectives with family members and involve them in planning and decision-making.

Essential requirements in Agri Tourism

- **Resource assessment:** Evaluate physical resources, human resources, financial capacity and existing agricultural activities.
- **Infrastructure:** Plan for essential facilities such as toilets, parking, reception or administrative space, housekeeping and kitchen storage, dining areas and accommodation where required.
- **Visitor activities:** Develop suitable opportunities for observation, participation, learning, recreation and purchasing farm products.

- **Training**: Acquire basic knowledge of tourism operations, hospitality, visitor management and customer service.
- **Community participation:** Involve local women, youth, artisans and farmers in the enterprise wherever appropriate.
- **Marketing and Promotion:** Establish suitable channels for communicating the farm's offerings and attracting visitors.
- **Environmental responsibility:** Use local resources where feasible and conserve biodiversity, water and other natural assets.

The **"E Formula",** emphasising the need to engage visitors through **exploration, education, experience, enjoyment, entertainment, enrichment and enlightenment**. The aim is to create a memorable experience that connects visitors with farming and rural life.

Opportunities for Extension Professionals

Agri-tourism creates opportunities for agricultural extension professionals to expand their role beyond technology dissemination and support farmers in developing viable rural enterprises.

- **Capacity building:** Organising training programmes on agri-tourism planning, hospitality, communication, customer service and enterprise management.
- **Enterprise development:** Helping farmers identify suitable agricultural activities and develop tourism services around existing farm resources.
- **Resource mapping:** Supporting the assessment of physical infrastructure, human resources, financial requirements and local tourism attractions.
- **Market linkage:** Facilitating direct connections between farmers and consumers, educational institutions, tour operators and other potential customers.
- **Women and Youth empowerment:** Encouraging rural women and young people to participate in tourism management, local food enterprises, handicrafts, farm guiding and marketing.
- **Business planning:** Assisting farmers in developing tourism packages, identifying target customers, assessing investment requirements and planning revenue-generating activities.
- **Skill development and employment:** Facilitating training and placement opportunities for agricultural graduates in farm management, tour coordination, sales and tourism operations.
- **Institutional convergence:** Connecting farmers with agricultural universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), tourism departments and other relevant institutions for training and technical support.
- **Promotion of local products:** Helping farmers market fresh produce, processed foods, traditional products and handicrafts directly to visitors

Extension officers and agricultural graduates could undertake on-site training at agri-tourism farms to understand the practical requirements of the enterprise.

Agri-tourism therefore offers extension professionals an opportunity to act as facilitators of rural entrepreneurship, livelihood diversification and farmer–consumer engagement.

India’s Position at the International Level in Agri-Tourism

India had a reported share of approximately 1% of international tourist arrivals and 2% of international tourism receipts, with rankings of 26th and 13th, respectively, cited for the corresponding indicators.

India's huge potential can be utilized to strengthen its position through its agricultural diversity, traditional knowledge, regional cuisines, rural landscapes, livestock enterprises, handicrafts and cultural heritage. Agri-tourism can provide international visitors with opportunities to experience local agricultural systems and rural lifestyles.\

Successful Models of Agri-Tourism

The following examples illustrating how existing agricultural enterprises can be diversified through tourism activities.

Anand Agri-Tourism Centre, Sakara, Maharashtra

Anand Agri-Tourism Centre is an example of how agri-tourism can transform the income and employment potential of a small farm. The farm had approximately five acres of land. With an annual income of ₹2–3 lakh before introducing agri-tourism. But after practicing the agri tourism in their farm, its income was reported to have reached approximately ₹65 lakh with direct employment for 18 people and indirect employment for approximately 40–43 people.

Other examples

Other agri-tourism enterprises includes Abhishek Mala-Solapur, Morachi Chincholi, Meher retreat-Pune, Sunder baug Nagar and Ek Mokala Swas- Chandrapur. These examples illustrate the diversity of farm-based tourism initiatives and their potential to generate additional income.

Key lessons from successful models

The examples demonstrated that farmers do not necessarily need to abandon their existing agricultural enterprises to enter tourism. Instead, they can integrate visitor experiences with ongoing farming activities.

- Retain agriculture as the primary enterprise and use tourism as a supplementary activity.
- Design activities around the farm's existing crops, livestock and natural resources.
- Provide authentic rural experiences through local cuisine, agricultural demonstrations and cultural activities.
- Involve local women, youth and artisans in service delivery and enterprise management.
- Create opportunities for visitors to purchase agricultural products and local goods.
- Maintain appropriate standards of cleanliness, hospitality, safety and visitor management.

Agri-Tourism in Other Countries

The international examples to demonstrate the different ways in which agricultural enterprises can integrate tourism.

United States of America

In the USA, approximately 160,000 agri-tourism farms were established since 2002. Farm tours and recreational activities, including fishing and other outdoor experiences, were associated with agricultural enterprises.

Italy

Italy was described as an important centre for the development of agri-tourism with more than 28,000 farms. Examples included farms combining grape cultivation, vineyards, dairy production, cheese-making, wine tasting and direct sales to visitors.

Singapore

In the Kranji Farm SEZ, small farms combined agricultural production with visitor services where farmers can spend time in the vegetable garden and eat the restaurant that used produce grown on the farm.

Philippines

Example includes Shira Gardens, known for flower-based attractions, and other farms combining agricultural activities with leisure, recreation and cultural or pilgrimage-related experiences.

Thailand and Switzerland

In Thailand, Mini Murrah farms and a Swiss farm offers farm-based accommodation alongside potato cultivation and livestock rearing.

These examples illustrates that agri-tourism can be developed around different agricultural enterprises, including horticulture, floriculture, dairy farming, vegetable production and other specialised farming activities. The key is to develop visitor experiences that are compatible with the farm's principal agricultural activity.

Baramati Agri-Tourism Model

The Baramati agri-tourism initiative in Maharashtra is an example of integrating agricultural development, environmental conservation, community participation and tourism.

The farm was developed in a relatively dry, rain-shadow area where rainfall was reported to be approximately 238 mm annually. Rather than relying on an established tourist attraction, the initiative focused on developing the farm's own agricultural and environmental assets.

Development of the farm

The initiative began with rainwater harvesting and the creation of a farm pond. The harvested water supported tree planting and the development of an agroforestry area, containing more than 100 varieties of trees and saplings.

The project also involved local residents in construction and development activities. Materials were sourced locally wherever feasible, with most materials, apart from cement and steel, were obtained from within approximately five kilometres of the farm.

This approach aimed to strengthen local ownership, create economic opportunities and ensure that the enterprise benefited the surrounding community.

Community participation

The initiative incorporated local people into different aspects of tourism operations.

- Local youth worked as guides and assisted with farm tours and visitor management.
- Women participated in welcoming visitors, preparing traditional meals and presenting local cultural experiences.
- Local artisans and craftspeople had opportunities to sell their products to tourists.
- Farmers could sell vegetables, leafy greens and other agricultural produce directly to visitors.
- Traditional activities, such as bullock-cart rides and farm work, were incorporated into the visitor experience.

The model illustrates the importance of preserving local culture and ensuring that community members benefit economically from the enterprise.









Visitor experience

The farm followed the “See, Do and Buy” approach by enabling visitors to observe agricultural activities, participate in farm work and purchase locally produced goods.

Activities included observing crops and livestock, learning about irrigation and cultivation, participating in harvesting and watering, experiencing traditional attire, enjoying authentic rural meals and exploring the surrounding village.

The model demonstrated how a farm in a relatively less-visited area can create a tourism destination by combining agricultural activities, environmental assets and local cultural experiences.

Achievements of Baramati Agri-Tourism Model

Several achievements and contributions associated with the Baramati agri-tourism initiative.

Economic and livelihood benefits

The initiative demonstrated how tourism can create additional income opportunities for farming households while maintaining agricultural production. Direct sales of farm produce, traditional food, handicrafts and tourism services provided opportunities to generate revenue from multiple activities.

Employment generation and community development

The involvement of local youth, women, farmers and artisans created opportunities for employment and enterprise development. The project also encouraged the use of local skills, labour and materials, contributing to economic activity within the surrounding villages.

Environmental conservation

Rainwater harvesting, farm-pond development, tree planting and agroforestry were highlighted as important components of the initiative. The conservation of grassland and the presence of trees and associated biodiversity also contributed to the farm's visitor appeal.

Promotion of local culture

The farm provided opportunities to showcase traditional food, attire, handicrafts, agricultural practices and rural customs. These experiences helped visitors engage with local culture while creating markets for community-produced goods.

Training and capacity building

The presenter described the farm as a training centre for farmers, agricultural graduates and extension professionals. The programme included theoretical sessions and practical exposure to farm operations, visitor reception, tourism management and community participation. The model is involved in development of agri-tourism management education and the placement of graduates with agri-tourism farms and related organisations.

Key Highlights

- **Agri-tourism as a supplementary income source:** Integrating tourism with existing agricultural activities helps farmers diversify income and reduce dependence on crop production alone.
- **"See, Do and Buy" approach:** Successful agri-tourism enables visitors to observe farming practices, participate in farm activities and purchase agricultural produce, processed foods and handicrafts.
- **Rural employment and entrepreneurship:** Agri-tourism creates opportunities for rural women, youth and local artisans in hospitality, food preparation, guiding, handicrafts and tourism management.
- **Village-level agri-tourism development:** Resource mapping, community participation and coordination through village committees can help develop entire villages as agri-tourism destinations.
- **Role of agricultural extension professionals:** Extension agencies can facilitate farmer training, business planning, resource assessment, market linkages and institutional convergence to promote agri-tourism enterprises.
- **Sustainable rural development:** Successful models, such as Baramati Agri-Tourism in Maharashtra, demonstrate how agriculture, environmental conservation and local cultural heritage can be integrated to generate livelihoods while retaining farming as the primary activity.

Interactive Session

1. How does Agri Tourism Development Corporation collaborate with government departments and extension agencies to train farmers and extension officers in agri-tourism?

Agri Tourism Development Corporation is collaborating with various government departments and extension institutions to promote agri-tourism through capacity-building programmes. The Department of Agriculture, Government of Maharashtra, is training farmers and field-level extension officers through SAMETI. The governments of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have also taken initiatives to promote agri-tourism through their respective tourism and agriculture departments. In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with ICAR–National Institute of Abiotic Stress Management, Baramati, to conduct at least one training programme every month. These collaborations provide opportunities to strengthen the capacities of farmers and extension professionals to develop and promote agri-tourism enterprises.

2. How can an entire village be developed as an agri-tourism destination?

An entire village can be developed as an agri-tourism destination through resource mapping, collective planning and community participation. The village should identify available tourist accommodation, agricultural activities, animal husbandry units, local attractions and traditional practices. A village-level agri-tourism committee can coordinate these activities and document what tourists can see, do and buy.

Agri-tourism enables farmers to sell agricultural produce, handicrafts and homemade products directly to visitors, generating additional income and employment, particularly for rural women. Farmers can receive government funds for village tourism development, institutional credit for individual farmers and state-level policy support, subject to applicable schemes and eligibility conditions.

YouTube Link:
https://youtu.be/Q3yDbjIviHE?t=2

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