

AGRO-TOURISM: SCOPE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FARMERS IN MAHARASHTRA

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Tourism is now well recognised as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled. Today the concept of traditional tourism has been changed. Some new areas of the tourism have been emerged like Agro-Tourism. Promotion of tourism would bring many direct and indirect benefits to the people.

Agro-tourism is a way of sustainable tourist development and multi-activity in rural areas through which the visitor has the opportunity to get aware with agricultural areas, agricultural occupations, local products, traditional food and the daily life of the rural people, as well as the cultural elements and traditions. Moreover, this activity brings visitors closer to nature and rural activities in which they can participate, be entertained and feel the pleasure of touring.

Agro-Tourism has helpful to the both farmers and urban peoples. It has provided an additional income source to the farmers and employment opportunity to the family members and rural youth. But, there are some problems in the process of the development of such centers. Hence, the government and other related authorities should try to support these activities in the Maharashtra for the rural development and increase income level of the farmers. The farmers should also try to establish their co-operative society for the development of agro-tourism centers. The agro-tourism may become a cash crop for the farmers in the Maharashtra and also an instrument of the rural employment generation.

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