

# Proceedings

## 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session

of  
Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA)

on

*Agri-eco-tourism in India:*

Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward

at

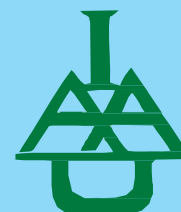
College of Forestry, Ranichauri

27<sup>th</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> October, 2025



Organized by  
Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University  
of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF)  
Bharsar-246123, Uttarakhand, India  
&

Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA)  
NASC Complex, Pusa Campus, New Delhi, India





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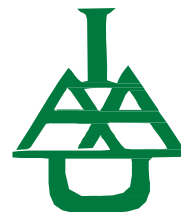
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*Organized by*

**Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry  
Bharsar, Uttarakhand**

**at College of Forestry, Ranichauri**

*on*

***Agri-Eco-Tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward  
(27<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> October, 2025)***

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&

Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar

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Brainstorming Session of IAUA

## The Organisers

### Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF) Bharsar

Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF), Bharsar, was established in 2011 by the Government of Uttarakhand with the objective of promoting education, research, and extension in the fields of horticulture, forestry and hill agriculture. The university was created by carving out the hill campuses of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (GBPUAT), Pantnagar comprising the College of Horticulture at Bharsar and the College of Forestry at Ranichauri, along with a newly established College of Hill Agriculture at Chirbatiya, Rudraprayag. The headquarter of the university is located at Bharsar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand with the main campus spread over 175 hectares.

In addition to its three academic colleges, VCSG UUHF has developed a robust network of research, extension, and training facilities across the state. The university comprises two institutions, five Research and Extension Centres, two KVKs, and six AICRP projects. University offers undergraduate degrees in Horticulture, Forestry, and Agriculture; master's programs in 16 disciplines; and doctoral studies in 11 disciplines. The vision of the university is to deliver quality education, foster need-based research, and enhance extension services for sustainable development in agriculture, horticulture, and forestry.

#### About College of Forestry, Ranichauri

The College of Forestry (COF), Ranichauri in district Tehri Garhwal of Uttarakhand was initially setup a hill campus of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar, and started as a research centre in 1976. It became fully operational in 1983 after the recruitment of scientific and academic staff with its spread across 203 hectares. Following Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 1985–86 to include forestry in the curriculum of State Agricultural Universities, Pantnagar University launched a B.Sc. Forestry program in 1986 at Ranichauri campus. In 2011, the College of Forestry of Ranichauri Campus became part of the newly established Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture and Forestry (VCSG UUHF), Bharsar, which further enhanced its focus on education, research and extension.

#### About IAUA

Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA) was established on 10th November, 1967. There were nine founder-member Agricultural Universities. The founder president was Dr. P. N. Thapar, Vice Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University, Chandigarh (now Ludhiana). The main objective of the Association is to promote agricultural research, education and extension in the universities and the states, and thereby rural development in the country. It also acts as a bureau of information to facilitate communication, co-ordination and mutual consultation among agricultural universities.

Presently, IAUA has 74 member universities, which include 66 State Agricultural Universities; 4 Deemed to be Universities (IARI, New Delhi; IVRI, Izatnagar; NDRI, Karnal and CIFE, Mumbai), 3 Central Agricultural Universities (CAU, Imphal; Dr. RPCAU, Pusa and RLBCAU, Jhansi) and one Central University with Agriculture Faculty (BHU, Varanasi). On specialization there are 46 Agricultural, 7 Horticultural, 17 Veterinary and Animal Sciences and 4 Fisheries Science Universities. All the SAUs and institutions (deemed-to-be universities) and (Central Agricultural Universities) in India, which provide an integrated programme of teaching, research and extension education in agricultural sciences, including veterinary, animal and fisheries sciences, are qualified to become regular members of the Association. The IAUA has organized 88 events since its establishment which includes 48 Annual Vice Chancellors' Convention, 17 National Symposium, 13 Brainstorming Sessions, 9 Regional Meetings and one International Conference.

## 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session on Agri-eco-tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward

The 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session on “Agri-Eco-Tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward”, was jointly organized by the Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA) and Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture and Forestry (VCSG UUHF), Bharsar during 27<sup>th</sup>–28<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at the College of Forestry, Ranichauri Campus of VCSG UUHF. The 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming session comprises Inaugural session and the three technical sessions followed by general session of IAUA, plenary session and the valedictory session.

### Inaugural Session (27<sup>th</sup> October, 2025)

The inaugural session on “Agri-eco-tourism in India: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward” sparks in the presence of Hon'ble Governor, Lt Gen. (Retd.) Gurmit Singh Ji. The dias was enshrined by Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor VCSG UUHF, Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor ANDUAT, Ayodhya, Shri Kishor Upadhyaya, MLA Tehri, Shri Vikram Singh Negi, MLA Pratap Nagar, Shri Ravinath Raman, Secretary to Hon'ble Governor and Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA. Besides, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellors from different agricultural universities embellished



the auditorium. With the arrival of His Excellency, the National Anthem was recited with standing ovation. Felicitation of the dignitaries on the dais was performed by offering shawls and bouquets, after the auspicious ceremony of lighting lamps (*Deep prajwala*).

**Dr. Parvinder Kaushal**, Vice chancellor, VCSG UUFH, Bharsar welcomed the chief guest, His Excellency Hon'ble Governor and the Chancellor, Lt Gen. Gurmit Singh and other guests, who have come from distant places of the country. He expressed the aim of organizing this brainstorming session and exploring the opportunities for developing roadmaps in SAUs/CAUs for Agri-eco-tourism. In his opening remarks, he defined the theme of this session "Agri-eco-tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward" linking as "*Aao chale Gaun ki aur*" (Let's move towards our villages). He presented about VCSG UUFH extended over 3-colleges, 2-institutes, 2-KVKs and 5-RECs, which are serving natural hot spots to the tourists. Need is to streamline the existing beauty into entrepreneurial hubs. He expressed his gratitude to the IAUA for taking the initiatives in this direction. He also expressed his gratitude to the Hon'ble Governor for strengthening the university infrastructure.

**Dr. Bijendra Singh**, Vice Chancellor ANDUAT, Ayodhya described the mission and mandates of IAUA and highlighted the theme of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming session for Agri-eco-tourism. The urbanites ought to be attracted towards the Nature's Lap. For this, roadmaps are to be devised, which remains the sole responsibility of the agricultural universities. Diversified agriculture, intercultural practices, harvesting operations, post-harvest processing, animal husbandry, piggery, and goatary, will have to be the hotspots of attraction for establishing home-stay.

**Shri Kishor Upadhyaya**, MLA Tehri, opened his remarks with the Sanskrit phrase "*Annah Vasta Prana*" meaning "*Life survives in food*". There was a time when very limited availability of grain to eat in hills particularly in Uttarakhand, but, the time changed, earning rose, now the people have self-sufficiency in food. He also highlighted the importance of water. All the sacred rivers are originating from Uttarakhand, fulfilling life, yet the water not being fully utilized.

**Shri Vikram Singh Negi**, MLA, Pratap Nagar, welcomed all the dignitaries and guests. Uttarakhand is the state of sacred rivers, mixed forests and diversified terrains, but need is to properly utilized these resources for the welfare of human beings. So the title of the 14<sup>th</sup> brainstorming session is most appropriate in the present time. He emphasized that the brainstorming session will certainly address the issue of out-migration, as horticulture can work as backbone for self-sustenance. The locations of Pratap Nagar and Jakhinda of Uttarakhand are being developed with concerted efforts of the VCSG UUFH and support of Government of Uttarakhand to the university.

**Shri Pushkar Singh Dhama**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand In his online message emphasized that agriculture contributes about 9.68% to the GDP of Uttarakhand and this share can be enhanced through the integration of agriculture, culture and tourism. He expressed his confidence that Agri-Eco-Tourism would play a transformative role in boosting the economy of the state. Natural beauty, fields in hilly terrain will certainly pave the way for agri-eco-tourism. He extended his best wishes and blessings for the successful deliberations of the 14<sup>th</sup> brainstorming session.

Innovative farmers of Uttarakhand, who have taken up agri-tourism as livelihood ventures, were felicitated by the Hon'ble Governor with memento and certificate for Himalayan Hemp Home stay. The following farmers were felicitated, Mr. Madhvendes Singh; founder of Harshil Retreat, attracts tourists for apple and Pahari huts, his earnings is about 10-12 lakhs per annum. Shri Chandrashekhar Pandey, known for *Pahari* natural products and *Bharamari* Homestay, involved the local youth in his ventures. Mr. Ramkrishan Dabral, founder of Hills Agro products and Green Home stay, started his venture integrated farming and local cultures. At present 20-25 farmers have been associated in his venture.

**Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh**, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Red.) Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand and Chancellor of VCSG UUFH, Bharsar, Uttarakhand energized the audience with '*Jai Hind*' slogan. In his inspirational address, Hon'ble Governor Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh described the theme of the session as a "Trishul", representing Krishi (agriculture), Sanskriti (culture) and Prakriti (nature). He urged universities and policymakers to blend these three elements to transform "ghost villages into host villages." The Governor identified migration, drudgery and unemployment as the three main challenges of Uttarakhand, stating that Agri-eco-tourism could provide holistic solutions by empowering rural women, preserving traditions, and promoting local entrepreneurship. He concluded his speech with call for collective action to make Agri-eco-tourism a catalyst for socio-economic transformation. He emphasized on Badri gai ghee, local pulses, keedajadi, honey, millets and other produce of the Uttarakhand.

The session witnessed the release of the souvenir, university brochure and IAUA brochure, showcasing the academic, research and outreach achievements of participating universities.

**Dr. Dinesh Kumar**, Executive Secretary, IAUA, New Delhi emphasized the importance of different events carried out by IAUA across the year in different parts of country with the help of Agricultural universities and Institutions as per the need and time and presented the vote of thanks to one and all.

The rapporteurs of Inaugural session: Dr. A. K. Joshi, Dean, COH and Dr. M. S. Yadava, Dean, COHA

The inaugural session concluded with the following key recommendations:

- Recognize tourism with agriculture, culture and nature as the major hub for the ari-ecotourism.
- Popularising the local produce for agri-ecotourism like Badri gai ghee, local pulses, keedajadi, honey and millets.
- Agri-ecotourism be linked with water conservation in the Himalayan states.





Glimpses of Inaugural Session

## Technical Session-I (27<sup>th</sup> October, 2025):

**Sub-Theme:** Exploring the Potential of Agri-Eco-Tourism for Rural Development and Livelihoods of Farmers

### Co-Chairs:

- Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, Acharya Narendra Dev University of Agriculture & Technology, Ayodhya, Uttarpradesh
- Dr. K. B. Kathiria, Vice Chancellor, Aanand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat

### Panellists:

- Dr. V.P. Chovatia, Vice Chancellor, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat
- Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka
- Dr. A.K. Panda, Vice Chancellor, Ch. Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Palampur

### Moderator:

- Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice Chancellor, VNMKV, Parbhani

### Rapporteurs:

- Dr. Amol Vasishth, ADR and Dr. J.C. Kuniyal, Head, FRM, CoF

### Keynote Speakers:

- Shri Pandurang Taware, Agri-tourism Development Corporation, Pune, Maharashtra
- Prof. S. P. Singh, Former Vice Chancellor, HNB Garhwal University, Uttarakhand

The Technical Session-I was chaired by Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, UP and Dr. K. B. Kathiria, Vice Chancellor, Aanand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat.

**Dr. Bijendra Singh** in his opening remarks appreciated the selection of the sub-theme of the session “Exploring the Potential of Agri-Eco-Tourism for Rural Development and Livelihoods of Farmers” and emphasized its relevance for the development of agriculture with agri-ecotourism. He noted that integrating agriculture with tourism activities could significantly enhance the livelihood opportunities of mountain communities. He also highlighted that the concept of agri-ecotourism holds great potential for sustainable rural development in hill regions. He further suggested that a dedicated course on agri-ecotourism should be introduced in the academic curriculum during any semester to promote awareness and capacity building among students.

**Shri Pandurang Taware**, the first key speaker of the session widely known as the *Father of Agri-Tourism in India* and Founder of the Agri Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC), Maharashtra, shared his pioneering experience of establishing over 1,700 Agri-Tourism centres across India since 2003. He highlighted how these ventures have empowered thousands of farmers, generated green jobs, and bridged the rural-urban divide. He emphasized that agriculture in India is not merely an occupation but the culture, heritage, and soul of the nation. In the context of declining farm profitability and rural migration, Agri-Eco-Tourism has emerged as a transformative concept that reconnects urban citizens with rural life, provides additional income to farmers, generates green jobs for youth and women, and promotes environmental conservation. He said that Maharashtra has benefited thousands of farmers, and the model has now spread to 23 states across India, receiving international recognition through the Global Agritourism Network. Shri Taware emphasized the need for a National Policy and Mission on Agri-Eco-Tourism, capacity building of youth and women, and incorporation of a 3-credit practical course on Agri-Eco-Tourism in agricultural universities.



**Prof. S. P. Singh**, Former Vice Chancellor, HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar, Garhwal the second key speaker on the theme highlighted on “*Agritourism and Agri-Ecosystem Services to Address the Economic Trivialisation of Farming.*” He asserted that agriculture must be recognized not only for its productive role but also for its ecological and cultural services such as carbon sequestration, carbon justice, biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation. Dr. Singh underlined that Agri-Eco-Tourism can mitigate rural-to-urban migration by offering local livelihood opportunities rooted in ecology and culture. He emphasized that agriculture is the foundation of human civilization and ecosystem balance, yet it is increasingly facing economic trivialisation wherein the social and ecological value of farming is overlooked. He advocated the Carbon Justice Initiative, promoting fair recognition and incentives for farmers maintaining ecological sustainability and enhancing agri-ecotourism. He highlighted that one of the pressing challenges facing Indian agriculture, particularly in mountainous states like Uttarakhand, is rural-to-urban migration. The outmigration of youth due to declining farm incomes and limited livelihood options has resulted in land abandonment, loss of traditional knowledge, and socio-cultural disintegration. To counter this, agri-ecotourism-based ventures can offer viable local livelihoods, encouraging youth to stay connected with farming and their native villages. Such ventures combine agriculture, culture, and tourism by allowing visitors to experience village life, local cuisines, organic farming, food processing, and traditional crafts.



These initiatives not only create local employment but also strengthen urban–rural linkages and revitalize community participation.

Drawing examples from across India, he illustrated how various regions such as Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Assam, and Sikkim have developed context-specific agritourism models. Globally, the farm tourism market is growing rapidly, and India, with its vast agro-ecological diversity, holds great potential to become a leader in this domain. He stressed that agritourism should be organically oriented, knowledge-based, and community-driven, focusing on longer stays, clean environments, personal engagement, and eco-friendly practices. Furthermore, he emphasized the need for research and policy interventions to strengthen farm-based economies, revive traditional practices, and ensure the intergenerational transfer of agricultural land. Finally, he reiterated that agri-ecotourism is not merely a leisure activity but a sustainable venture capable of addressing migration, strengthening rural resilience, and enhancing ecosystem services. It offers a transformative pathway to restore the economic, cultural, and environmental significance of farming in Uttarakhand and across India.

**Dr. K. B. Kathiria**, Vice Chancellor, Anand Agriculture University (AAU), suggested for adopting cluster based approach to promote successful agri-ecotourism initiatives. According to him, clustering of villages or farms

would enhance resource sharing, improve infrastructure, and create a more comprehensive tourism experience. He also emphasized the importance of ensuring participation and equal opportunities for women, particularly in remote and rural areas, as their involvement can significantly strengthen the socio-economic impact of agri-ecotourism. Besides, he recommended that agricultural universities should document and disseminate success stories of agri-ecotourism from adjoining regions to encourage replication of successful models.

**Shri Prem Chand Sharma**, Padma Shri awardee and a progressive farmer from Uttarakhand highlighted the significance of agri-ecotourism in promoting organic and natural farming practices. He emphasized that such sustainable farming systems can attract visitors and strengthen rural livelihoods. He also underlined the critical importance of soil health and its rejuvenation as the foundation for successful agri-ecotourism. As narrated by his poems, healthy and fertile soil ensures sustainable farm productivity and enhances the farm experience for visitors. He particularly stressed the need to promote agri-ecotourism in Uttarakhand. He noted that this approach can play an important role in improving the welfare and income of farmers in the state. He also shared his views on the potential of promoting nutritionally rich crops and highlighted the importance of the drumstick (Moringa) plant, which he described as having significantly higher nutritional value, including protein content, compared to several conventional food sources such as milk and ghee. He stressed that regular discussions and awareness programmes on agriculture are necessary to motivate the younger generation to remain connected with farming activities such that the agri-ecotourism can be promoted.

The technical session first was moderated by Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice Chancellor, Vasant Rao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth (VNMKV), Parbhani, the panellists shared their perspectives and insights on various aspects related to the theme of the session.

**Dr. Indra Mani Mishra**, emphasized the importance of promoting agri-ecotourism as an emerging approach for rural and agricultural development. He raised an important question regarding whether agri-ecotourism should be promoted as an independent sector or integrated with mainstream tourism. He also stressed the need for the formulation of suitable policies to strengthen and institutionalize agri-ecotourism initiatives in the country.

**Dr. V.P. Chovatia**, Vice Chancellor, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat, highlighted that before focusing on agri-ecotourism, it is essential to address the fundamental challenges faced by the agricultural sector. He pointed out that even in agriculturally progressive states such as Gujarat, farming conditions are becoming increasingly challenging, and if this trend continues, the country may face the risk of becoming food-deficient in the future. He stated the importance of encouraging youth participation in agriculture, particularly through agri-ecotourism initiatives. He highlighted that the dependency of the population on farming has declined from about 70 percent to nearly 48 percent, indicating a gradual shift away from agriculture. Therefore, linking agri-ecotourism with agricultural activities could not only revitalize farming but also contribute to enhancing the agricultural share in GDP.

**Dr. P. L. Patil**, Vice Chancellor, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka, supported the views expressed by the previous speakers and emphasized the need to promote integrated farming systems at the farm level. According to him, once farmers adopt integrated farming practices, the development of ecotourism activities would follow naturally. He also mentioned that many universities already maintain three to four ecological demonstration models, which could serve as practical platforms for promoting agri-ecotourism. He further suggested introducing the subject of ecotourism into academic curricula to encourage entrepreneurship among students. In addition, he proposed the initiation of diploma and postgraduate diploma programmes in tourism and agro-ecotourism to build skilled human resources in this field.

**Shri Kishor Upadhyay**, MLA, Tehri, Uttarakhand, expressed his appreciation for the valuable insights shared by the scientists and experts during the session. He noted that the ideas and recommendations presented by the distinguished panelists would be highly beneficial for the future development of the state,

particularly in strengthening agriculture and tourism linkages.

**Dr. A.K. Panda**, Vice Chancellor, Ch. Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavidhyaya (CSKHPKV), Palampur, Himachal Pradesh emphasized that promoting agri-ecotourism combined with natural farming and traditional cultural activities could provide alternative livelihood opportunities while also supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

**Key Recommendations of the first technical session:**

- A National level Policy and Mission on Agri-Eco-Tourism needs to be developed for unified development keeping state as unit.
- A 3-credit practical course on Agri-Eco-Tourism to be introduced in all agricultural universities.
- Model Agri-Eco-Tourism Centres at universities for demonstration and training may be established.
- Agri-Eco-Tourism based Agri-Business Ventures need to be strengthened for sustainable livelihoods and youth entrepreneurship.
- Integrate Agri-Eco-Tourism ventures into national livelihood schemes.
- Promote research, innovation, and partnerships to upscale best practices in agri-ecotourism.
- Agriculture as an Ecosystem Service: Recognize farming as a foundation service that supports biodiversity, carbon capture, water regulation, and cultural continuity in relation to agro-ecotourism.
- Climate-Responsive Strategies: Design agri-eco-tourism activities that enhance ecosystem resilience, particularly in hill regions.
- Migration Management: Promote ventures that create on-farm employment and retain rural youth.
- Capacity Building and Research: Universities should document pilot case studies, develop policy briefs, and create entrepreneurial training modules.





Glimpses of Technical Session -I

## Technical Session II (27<sup>th</sup> October, 2025):

**Sub-Theme: Addressing Policy, Infrastructure and Capacity Gaps in Agri-Eco-Tourism**

### Co-Chairs:

- Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice Chancellor, VNMKV, Parbhani
- Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad

### Panellists:

- Dr. K.B. Kathiria, VC, AAU, Anand
- Dr. Sanjay G. Bhavé, VC, Dr. BSKKV, Dapoli
- Dr. Anil Kumar (Director Education), RLBCAU, Jhansi

### Moderator:

- Dr. V.P. Chovatia, VC, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat

### Rapporteurs:

- Dr. J.C. Kuniyal, Head, FRM, CoF and Dr. S.P. Sati, Registrar

### Keynote Speaker:

- Dr. Tej Pratap, former Vice Chancellor G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar

The technical session-II was chaired by Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice Chancellor, VNMKV, Parbhani and Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad. The panellists were Dr. K.B. Kathiria, VC, AAU, Anand, Dr. Sanjay G. Bhavé, VC, Dr. BSKKV, Dapoli and Dr. Anil Kumar (Director Education), RLBCAU, Jhansi. The session was moderated by Dr. V.P. Chovatia, Vice Chancellor, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat.

**Dr. Tej Pratap**, former Vice Chancellor of G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Uttarakhand in his online presentation discussed the holistic nature of Agri-Eco-Tourism, explaining that while agritourism involves exposure to rural farm life, Agri-Eco-Tourism also integrates ecological sustainability and economic resilience. He interpreted the term “ECO” as signifying both “ecology” and “economy,” underscoring the dual objectives of environmental conservation and income generation.

He identified five categories of Agri-Eco-Tourism ventures as direct farm sales, agricultural education, hospitality, recreation, and entertainment where each capable of strengthening rural economies. Drawing from global examples (China, Australia, the Philippines, and Switzerland), he emphasized the importance of supportive policies, traditional resource management, and institutional partnerships.

The chair and panellists appreciated the presentation delivered by key speaker Dr. Tej Pratap. They highlighted that the presentation provided greater clarity on the theme of agri-ecotourism and its practical implications. Similarly, Dr. P. Kaushal, VC, VCSG UUFH, Bharsar appreciated the presentation and observed that it helped the participants clearly understand the distinction between conventional tourism and agri-ecotourism, thereby highlighting its unique role in rural development. During the panel discussion of this session, eminent experts shared their views and recommendations on strengthening agri-ecotourism as a sustainable development approach. Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary of the Indian Agricultural Universities Association (IAUA), emphasized that agriculture must remain the core component of agri-ecotourism initiatives. He highlighted that agri-eco tourism should not deviate from its agricultural foundation and stressed the need for a strong integration and fusion of agriculture with tourism activities so that visitors can experience authentic farm based practices and rural lifestyles.

**Dr. K. B. Kathiria**, VC, AAU, Anand the first panellist of the session acknowledged the extensive experience of Dr. Tej Pratap in the field and noted that the participants had much to learn from his insights. He further emphasized that farms involved in agri-eco tourism should maintain a natural and organic environment, as this authenticity forms a crucial component of the tourist experience. Dr. Kathiria also suggested exploring ways to engage Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in promoting agri-tourism through extension activities and farmer support programmes.

**Dr. S. G. Bhawe**, VC, Dr. BSKKV, Dapoli, another panellist highlighted the importance of capacity building and training of farmers for the effective implementation of agri-ecotourism initiatives. He stated that farmers must be trained to present their farms, traditional practices, and rural lifestyles in a way that is informative and engaging for tourists. He also emphasized that government support is essential, particularly for developing the necessary infrastructure required for agri-ecotourism activities.

**Dr. Anil Kumar**, Director Education, RLBCAU, Jhansi third panellist of the session noted that agri-ecotourism can be effectively integrated within the university system, particularly through the promotion of integrated farming system models. He highlighted developing the undulated land at RLBCAU and the agroforestry models which are also supportive for developing agri-ecotourism. He also emphasized on Aayurveda tourism an important aspect to link with agri-ecotourism. He suggested that agri-ecotourism destinations should be developed by incorporating indigenous and low cost infrastructure, along with the integration of local art, culture, traditions, and regional heritage. He further emphasized that ensuring quality services, accessibility, and proper connectivity would be key factors for the successful development of agri-ecotourism destinations.

**Dr. P. L. Patil**, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad, remarked that tourism is a vast and dynamic sector with great potential for agriculture-based initiatives. He suggested that students should be actively involved in agri-tourism activities to gain practical exposure. According to him, a specific season on the farm could be designated for agri-tourism activities, during which students can participate in various agricultural operations. He also emphasized the inclusion of value added farm products as part of the agri-ecotourism experience to enhance visitor engagement. He further highlighted the significant role that the network of more than 700 KVKs across the country can play in promoting agri-ecotourism. He suggested that each KVK can take the lead in demonstrating agri-ecotourism models on farms and guiding farmers in adopting such initiatives. Through this approach, the concept of agri-ecotourism can gradually be expanded across the country. He also opined/emphasized that these suggestions and recommendations should be

communicated to ICAR for wider implementation and support.

#### Key recommendation of the second technical session:

- Integrate Agri-Eco-Tourism into academic programs and research mandates.
- Develop pilot projects and incubation centres within universities.
- Strengthen farm-based infrastructure as roads, sanitation, and connectivity.
- Build capacity in eco-hospitality, communication, and entrepreneurship.
- Foster policy convergence among agriculture, tourism, and rural development ministries.
- Establish funding mechanisms for eco-friendly farm stays and ventures.
- Encourage monitoring, evaluation, and documentation of successful models for scaling up.

### Technical Session III (28<sup>th</sup> October, 2025):

**Sub-Theme:** Strategies and Innovations for Sustainable Growth of Agri-Eco-Tourism in India

#### Co-Chairs:

- Dr. R. S. Chandel, Vice Chancellor, Dr. YSPUHF, Solan, HP
- Dr. V. P. Chovatia, Vice Chancellor, JAU, Junagadh

#### Panellists:

- Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad
- Dr. A.K. Panda, VC, Ch. SK HPAU Palampur, HP

#### Moderator:

- Dr. K.B. Kathiria, VC, AAU, Anand

#### Rapporteurs:

- Dr. S.P. Sati, Registrar and Dr. Amol Vasishth, ADR

#### Keynote Speaker:

- Dr. S. C. Bagri, Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Training and Research, Dehradun and former head tourism department, HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar Garhwal.

The Technical Session-III was chaired Dr. R. S. Chandel, VC, Dr. YSPUHF, Solan, HP and Dr. V. P. Chovatia, VC, JAU, Junagadh and moderated by Dr. K.B. Kathiria, VC, AAU, Anand, the panellists in the session were Dr. P. L. Patil, VC, UAS, Dharwad and Dr. A.K. Panda, VC, Ch. SK HPAU Palampur, HP, the theme of this session was “Strategies and Innovations for Sustainable Growth of Agri-Eco-Tourism in India”

**Dr. S.C. Bagri**, the former head tourism department HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar Garhwal as a key speaker of the session provided an in-depth overview of the evolution, opportunities and innovations in Agri-Eco-Tourism. He outlined how the model combines agriculture, ecology and tourism to strengthen local economies while promoting environmental stewardship. He presented regional opportunities from dryland festivals in Western India to organic wellness tourism in the South, orchard tourism in the North and biodiversity-based tourism in the Northeast. Citing data from Maharashtra, where over 1.79 million tourists

generated nearly Rs.56 crore in 2018–19, he underscored the sector's significant economic potential.

Prof. Bagri stressed the need for education, innovation, and entrepreneurship to make Agri-Eco-Tourism a sustainable venture. He proposed introducing Post-Graduate Diplomas and Certificate Courses in Agri-Eco-Tourism, establishing university demonstration farms, and integrating entrepreneurship modules into agricultural curricula.

**Dr. R. S. Chandel**, VC, Dr. YSPUHF, Solan, HP, in his opening remarks, appreciated the comprehensive presentation delivered by the keynote speaker, Prof. S.C. Bagri, on the diverse dimensions of tourism. He noted that the presentation effectively covered the broad spectrum of tourism and highlighted important gaps and existing challenges in the sector. He also acknowledged how various tourism destinations and opportunities were identified and explained through practical case studies. He particularly emphasized the potential of roadside tourism and tourism along highways. He stressed that the institutionalization of ecotourism is crucial for its sustainable development. He further noted that the cluster model approach presented in the session can help in better utilization of village resources. He highlighted the importance of affordability for farmers and traceability of farm products. According to him, these aspects can play a key role in attracting the younger generation towards agri-ecotourism and rural enterprises.

**Dr. P. L. Patil**, Vice Chancellor, UAS Dharwad, appreciated the insightful presentation delivered by Dr. S.C. Bagri and noted that it helped participants understand the historical evolution of tourism as well. He emphasized that sustainability is the key theme in agri-ecotourism and that such sustainability naturally develops when agriculture and tourism are integrated effectively. He mentioned that Maharashtra has been a pioneer in this field, and the experiences shared by Dr. Taware could serve as useful guidelines for other states. He highlighted that academic institutions should actively participate in promoting agri-ecotourism, and through Krishi Vigyan Kendras in each district, focused models can be established to strengthen rural livelihoods and sustainability.

He also cited the example of wine tourism in Bengaluru, where tourism is promoted not only around wine consumption but also through diverse grape-based farm practices and experiences. He noted that, as mentioned by Dr. Bagri, there is still a long way to go in developing agri-ecotourism in India. He suggested exploring opportunities such as millet-based value-added products in regions where millets are widely grown, and medicinal and aromatic plant-based tourism in forest-adjacent areas. He further emphasized that academic institutions should develop sustainable diploma programmes in agri-ecotourism without depending entirely on government funding. Training skilled human resources through such programmes would ensure both livelihood opportunities and sectoral growth. He stressed that institutionalizing agri-ecotourism is essential. Finally, he noted that while India has achieved food security, the focus is now moving towards nutritional security, and agri-ecotourism can promote local crops, landraces, and organically grown produce rich in minerals and nutrients to attract visitors and enhance awareness by way of growing mineral rich crops in farm under agri-ecotourism.

**Dr. A.K. Panda**, Vice Chancellor, Ch. SK HPAU, Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, stated that after two days of deliberations, several important ideas emerged. He emphasized the need to train rural youth, including agriculture graduates, to promote agri-ecotourism. He noted that many states already run entrepreneurship programmes supported by both state and central governments. At his university, they are encouraging 10–15 entrepreneurs with financial support of government ranging from Rs.5 to 25 lakh to establish enterprises such as fisheries, floriculture, dairy, and local food ventures. He suggested that universities should now integrate these enterprises with agri-ecotourism by promoting local landraces, traditional costumes, and indigenous products. He further stated that universities can play a key role in

training and mentoring youth for such initiatives. He highlighted that Krishi Vigyan Kendras and university guest houses located across districts can be utilized as important infrastructure for training and exposure visits. Individuals who understand local culture and community needs can effectively plan and manage agri-ecotourism ventures. He also suggested developing models through public–private partnerships with strong handholding support from universities. According to him, states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Jammu & Kashmir have immense potential for agri-ecotourism as they are largely nature-driven regions.

**Dr. V. P. Chovatia**, Vice Chancellor, JAU, Junagadh, appreciated the presentation delivered by Prof. S.C. Bagri for clearly explaining the concepts of tourism, agri-tourism, and agri-ecotourism. He noted that the presentation helped in understanding the distinctions and linkages among these forms of tourism. He also highlighted the example of the Kachchh region of Gujarat, where a popular festival attracts a large number of visitors and promotes tourism. He emphasized that such initiatives demonstrate the importance of effective branding and visibility. According to him, similar efforts in branding and promotion are also essential for the successful development of agri-ecotourism.

**Dr. K. B. Kathiria**, Vice Chancellor, AAU, Anand, appreciated the lecture delivered by Dr. Bagri, noting that it comprehensively covered the tourism scenario both in India and internationally. He emphasized that since farmers already possess land resources, agri-ecotourism can provide them with opportunities to earn additional income. He suggested that agri-ecotourism models can be developed under three investment categories—low cost, medium cost and high cost so that farmers with different financial capacities can participate. He also pointed out that creativity and innovation in agri-ecotourism require financial support and proper planning. He highlighted that tourism often depends on seasons and festivals, but nearby rural destinations can attract visitors during weekends as well. Urban families may prefer short visits, day trips, or overnight stays at farms, which can be promoted through agri-ecotourism. He suggested adopting a village based or cluster based approach, where Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), cooperatives, and local culture can collectively support tourism activities. He also emphasized the need for basic facilities and minimum standards such as online presence, QR code based payment systems, and easy accessibility. Proper registration mechanisms and coordination with tour operators are also important for promoting agri-ecotourism. Finally, he stressed that activities should be designed to attract both children and parents, making agri-ecotourism an engaging family experience.

#### **Following recommendation emerged during technical Session-III:**

- Promote Agri-Eco-Tourism-based agribusiness enterprises integrating local culture, crafts, and hospitality.
- Launch PG Diploma and Certificate Programs in Agri-Eco-Tourism Management.
- Develop start-up incubation and mentorship support within universities.
- Conduct training and certification programs for farmers and rural youth.
- Ensure policy convergence among key institutions such as NABARD, NRLM, and Start-Up India.
- Promote low-carbon, community-based tourism models that retain 70–80% of revenue within rural economies.
- Develop branding, certification, and digital marketing frameworks for Agri-Eco-Tourism ventures.
- Document case studies, success stories, and integrate Agri-Eco-Tourism destinations under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme and National Tourism Policy.







## IAUA General Session

General session of the IAUA chaired by Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor, VCSG UUFH, Bharsar and Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, UP and participated by all Vice Chancellors present in the event, the session was convened by Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA; following were discussed in the meeting:

- **NAAS Publications:** High-quality NAAS publications are available with IAUA free of cost. All Vice Chancellors are requested to select one or more publications for their universities, and IAUA will arrange dispatch to the respective agricultural universities.
- **Revision of IAUA Memorandum and Bye-laws:** The IAUA Memorandum and Bye-laws were last revised in 2013, and certain operational issues have since emerged that require clarification. The matter will first be placed before the Executive Committee and then in the General Body for revision in line with existing practices and seniority norms.
- **Regional Committee Meetings of IAUA:** Earlier, it was intended that IAUA would organize regional meetings involving only universities from specific regions. However, these meetings have not yet been conducted in that intended format. In future, such meetings may also be organized zone-wise, following models adopted by organizations like the Association of Indian Universities, ensuring adequate participation of universities in that zone/region.
- **Scheduling of IAUA Events:** A proper annual calendar for IAUA events should be prepared, as currently many events are concentrated between October and December, leading to reduced participation. Adequate time gaps between events should be ensured, and events may be planned quarterly while considering regional seasonal conditions. It was suggested that the calendar should be planned at least one year in advance and finalized in the upcoming Annual General Meeting.
- **Annual Membership Subscription:** The current membership subscription for agricultural universities to join IAUA is Rs. 1.5 lakh. This funding supports the organization of IAUA activities throughout the year. Universities are requested to ensure timely payment of the membership fee, preferably within the first three months of the financial year, the proposal will be placed in the Annual Meeting for approval.
- **IAUA Foundation Day:** It was proposed that IAUA Foundation Day be organized on 10 November each year, including a formal function, award ceremony, and an invited lecture.
- **Constitution of Executive Committee:** It was suggested that the number of members in the Executive Committee be increased from three to five, while overall maintaining an odd number of members to facilitate voting and decision-making.

The above points were discussed in detail and it was resolved that matters/issues highlighted in these points to be placed in General Body meeting for final decision.

## Plenary Session

The Plenary Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brain Storming Session of the Vice Chancellors comprising different Agricultural Universities on “Agri-Eco-Tourism: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward” was organized after successful conductance of three technical sessions. The session was Chaired by Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, VC, VCSG UUFH, Bharsar and Dr. Bijendra Singh, VC, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, Sri Kishor Upadhyay, MLA, Tehri Garhwal with Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA and Dr. Arvind Bijalwan, Director Academics and Organizing Secretary of the event at VCSG UUFH was the Convener of the session.

**Dr. Parvinder Kaushal**, Vice Chancellor of VCSG UUFH, Bharsar, highlighted the need for a separate and well-defined policy for agri-ecotourism rather than including it under the general tourism policy. He emphasized that agri-ecotourism has distinct objectives and therefore requires dedicated guidelines and support mechanisms. He stressed the importance of clearly identifying and recognizing agri-ecotourism destinations with the support and acknowledgment of the government. He also pointed out that proper documentation of successful initiatives is essential to preserve the history of achievements and to guide

future developments. He suggested that all actionable and practical recommendations emerging from the discussions should be clearly recorded and implemented. He further emphasized the need to translate these suggestions into workable strategies for promoting agri-ecotourism. He highlighted that the Research and Extension Centre, Kanatal, Tehri Garhwal of VCSG UUFH, Bharsar is located in a prominent eco-tourism area. He proposed that this centre be developed as a horticulture-based agri-ecotourism site. Such initiatives, he noted, would help demonstrate successful models for farmers and stakeholders. He also expressed his gratitude to IAUA for organizing the event and providing a platform for meaningful discussions. Finally, he emphasized that agri-ecotourism should be taken forward through this forum with collective efforts and continued collaboration.

**Dr. Bijendra Singh**, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, emphasized that agro-ecotourism should be incorporated into the course curricula of universities in line with the National Education Policy (NEP). He suggested that universities should also develop eco-tourism models within their campuses, according to different agro-climatic zones. He narrated that; every agricultural university should establish a dedicated agri-ecotourism setup to promote this concept. He stressed that the policy document must clearly distinguish agri-ecotourism from general tourism, as both have different objectives and focus areas. While conventional tourism is largely associated with forests and wildlife under the forest department, agri-ecotourism focuses on agricultural farms as the main attraction. Therefore, he emphasized the need for separate policies and guidelines specifically for agri-ecotourism. He also remarked that organizing such events in the Himalayan region helps people better understand the true essence of ecotourism. Dr. Singh expressed his gratitude to the Governor of Uttarakhand, the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, and the local representatives MLAs associated with IAUA for their support. He stated that revitalizing agriculture requires introducing tourism activities on farms without disturbing farming operations, thereby creating additional income opportunities for farmers. He also highlighted the concept of developing “model villages,” as seen in Punjab, which can be achieved through agro-ecotourism initiatives. In hill states like Uttarakhand, where many villages are becoming “ghost villages,” he suggested transforming them into “host villages” through agro-ecotourism, an idea flagged by the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand.

**Dr. K. B. Kathiria**, Vice Chancellor of Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat, emphasized the need to clearly define actionable points for promoting agri-ecotourism. He stated that practical guidelines should explain what farmers or entrepreneurs need to do to establish agri-ecotourism ventures. He suggested that communication should be made with NABARD to include rural development initiatives specifically under agri-ecotourism segments. He highlighted the importance of developing primary infrastructure on farms to support agri-ecotourism activities. He stressed that adequate financial support and funding provisions should be made available for farmers adopting this model. He further noted that the primary benefits and subsidy components for farmers should be clearly defined in policy frameworks. Such incentives would encourage more farmers to participate in agri-ecotourism initiatives. He also suggested that IAUA should formally write to concerned government agencies and departments with recommendations emerging from the discussions. According to him, such official communication would make the proposals more effective and actionable.

**Dr. R. S. Chandel**, Vice Chancellor of Dr. YSPUHF, Solan, suggested that the National Mission on Natural Farming can strongly support the promotion of agri-ecotourism. He emphasized that natural farming practices are well aligned with the principles of agri-ecotourism. Instead of creating entirely new institutional setups, universities should collaborate with existing national initiatives and government programmes. He highlighted that farming systems should be nature-friendly as well as productive. Such systems would not only conserve the environment but also attract tourists interested in sustainable agriculture. He further noted that promoting nature-based farming and agri-ecotourism can help retain farmers and youth in hill regions by generating better livelihood opportunities.

**Shri Kishore Upadhyay**, MLA from Tehri, Uttarakhand, during the plenary session emphasized that the recommendations emerging from the discussions should be communicated to larger forums so they can reach wider stakeholders and he will help in that. He highlighted the important role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) as an effective extension support system for promoting agri-ecotourism among farmers. He appreciated the initiative taken in organizing this pioneering exercise on agri-ecotourism. He noted that such efforts can help strengthen rural livelihoods and create new opportunities for farmers. He also emphasized the significance of water resources in Uttarakhand. In particular, he highlighted the importance of the major rivers originating from the state and their role in sustaining agriculture and agri-ecotourism.

**Dr. Anil Kumar**, Director of Education, RLBCAU, Jhansi, emphasized that agri-ecotourism programmes should actively involve students, local communities and farmers. He highlighted that such participation would enhance learning, awareness and practical exposure to rural livelihoods. He suggested that successful models and documented success stories developed by universities should receive recognition from the tourism department. This recognition would help promote and replicate effective agri-ecotourism initiatives. He also stressed the importance of creating a separate policy framework specifically for agri-ecotourism. In this regard, he noted that the Uttar Pradesh government is already planning to develop such a policy to support the sector.

Thereafter rapporteurs presented summaries of respective session as presented in the following paragraphs:

**Dr. A.K. Joshi**, Dean, College of Horticulture, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar, summarized the key observations made during the inaugural session. He highlighted the growing importance of agri-ecotourism in strengthening the connection between urban and rural communities. He emphasized that people from urban areas should visit rural regions and agricultural farms to better understand farming practices. Such interactions can provide additional economic benefits to farmers through tourism-related activities. He also stressed the need for visitors to experience the real value of agriculture by understanding traditional products, such as discovering where *gur* comes from in sugarcane.

**Dr. J.C. Kuniyal**, Head, Forest Resource Management, College of Forestry, Ranichauri, summarized the key outcomes of the first technical session on *Exploring the Potential of Agri-Eco-Tourism for Rural Development and Livelihoods of Farmers*. He highlighted that agriculture should be recognized as an important ecosystem service that supports biodiversity, carbon capture, water regulation, and cultural heritage. He emphasized the need to integrate agri-eco-tourism into government policies as a sustainable rural enterprise. Farmers should be encouraged to develop farms as experiential hubs such as learning farms, eco-cottages, and farm-stay programs to generate additional income. He stressed that region-specific models based on horticulture, organic farming, fisheries, crafts, and cultural tourism should be promoted. Climate-responsive agri-eco-tourism strategies are essential, particularly for fragile hill ecosystems. He also noted that such ventures can help manage rural migration by creating employment opportunities for local youth. He emphasized the role of universities in capacity building, research, and introducing practical courses on agri-eco-tourism, and highlighted KVKs as strong infrastructure for expanding agri-eco-tourism across the country.

**Dr. S.P. Sati**, Head of Basic and Social Sciences and Registrar, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar, summarized the key outcomes of the technical session second presented by Dr. Tej Pratap. He highlighted agri-ecotourism as a viable venture model for promoting farm produce and diversifying income of farmers. He emphasized the need to formally recognize agri-ecotourism as an important component of sustainable rural development. He suggested the formulation of a comprehensive policy integrating agriculture and tourism to promote farm-based tourism initiatives. He stressed the importance of capacity building through structured training programs for farmers in agri-ecotourism management. He pointed out the need for strengthening infrastructure to support tourism activities in rural areas. Such initiatives would help create additional employment opportunities in villages. He concluded that promoting agri-ecotourism can significantly reduce

rural-to-urban migration and strengthen rural livelihoods. Institutional collaboration should be encouraged to create strong synergy among agriculture, tourism, and rural development agencies. Proper documentation and development of case studies on successful agri-ecotourism models should be promoted to guide future initiatives. There is a need to develop comprehensive national and state-level policies specifically focused on agri-ecotourism. A dedicated financial mechanism should also be established to support farmers and entrepreneurs involved in this sector. Incentives should be provided to promote eco-friendly farm development and sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, research should be strengthened to examine how agri-ecotourism contributes to the conservation of natural biodiversity and ecological balance.

**Dr. Amol Vasishth**, Additional Director of Research, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar, summarized the key outcomes of the third technical session on *Strategies and Innovations for Sustainable Growth of Agri-Eco-Tourism in India*, in which Dr. S.C. Bagri was the lead keynote speaker. He emphasized that agri-ecotourism destinations should be included under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Government of India. He also suggested that agri-ecotourism circuits may be incorporated into the National Tourism Action Plan. While concessions are available under homestay schemes, he highlighted the need for similar incentives for agri-ecotourism farm-based enterprises. He encouraged the promotion of innovative agri-eco-tourism agribusiness ventures that combine farm activities, local products, eco-lodging, and cultural experiences to diversify income of farmers. He further recommended introducing academic programmes such as one-year Post-Graduate Diplomas and six-month certificate courses in Agri-Eco-Tourism Management in agricultural universities. The session also stressed entrepreneurship development through incubation centres, mentorship, and start-up funding for agri-ecotourism enterprises. Capacity building through training programmes for farmers, women's groups, and rural youth in hospitality, branding, and digital marketing was also emphasized. Collaboration among institutions such as the Ministry of Tourism, NABARD, state agriculture departments, and national schemes was suggested to create a unified policy and funding support system. He also highlighted the need for research, demonstration models, branding, certification, and sustainable community-based tourism so that a major share of tourism income remains within rural communities.

### Vote of Thanks

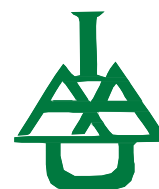
The formal vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Arvind Bijalwan, Organizing Secretary on behalf of organizing committee of VCSG UUHF, Bharsar to IAUA, Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Local representatives, Vice Chancellors of different agriculture universities, Deans, Directors, Officials, committee members and all who directly or indirectly participated and supported the event.

### Overall Recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session on Agri-Eco-Tourism (IAUA, 2025)

- A National Mission and Policy Framework for Agri-Eco-Tourism need to be formulated integrating agriculture, tourism, and rural development.
- Academic programs and training modules need to be introduced across agricultural universities.
- Model demonstration farms and university-based incubation centres need to be established.
- Promote women- and youth-led community ventures to counter migration.
- Strengthen infrastructure, connectivity, and eco-friendly facilities in rural areas.
- Foster collaboration among universities, ministries, and private partners for sustainable ecosystem development.
- Implement branding, certification, and e-marketing strategies for visibility and credibility.
- Encourage research, documentation, and case study development to guide policy and practice.
- Integrate Agri-Eco-Tourism circuits into the National Tourism Policy and Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- Adopt Agri-Eco-Tourism as a transformative approach to restore the economy, ecology, and culture of rural India.



## INAUGURAL PROGRAMME SCHEDULE



### 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session of IAUA

On

*Agri-eco-tourism in India: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward*

At

*College of Forestry, Ranichauri, Tehri Garhwal*

*Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF)*

*Bharsar-246123, Uttarakhand*

*(October 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025)*

### *Inaugural session*

Day-1: 27 <sup>th</sup> October, 2025	
<b>Time:</b> 10:45-12:36 Hrs.	
<b>Venue:</b> Auditorium, College of Forestry, Ranichauri	
<b>Inaugural Session</b>	
10:00 Hrs	Arrival of Dignitaries, Hon'ble Vice Chancellors, guests and Participants
11:00 Hrs	Arrival of Chief Guest, Hon'ble Governor Lt. Gen. Gurmit Singh, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd.) and Chancellor of the University
11:01 Hrs	National Anthem
11:02 Hrs	Ceremonial Lighting of the Lamp
11:05 Hrs	Floral Welcome of Chief Guest and other dignitaries
11:05 –11:15 Hrs	Welcome remarks by Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor, VCSG UUHF
11:15 –11:25 Hrs	Address by Dr. Bijendra Singh, VC, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, Introduction to IAUA
11:25 –11:30 Hrs	Remark by Hon'ble MLA, Tehri Garhwal, Shri Kishor Upadhyay
11:30 –11:35 Hrs	Remark by Hon'ble MLA, Pratap Nagar, Shri Vikram Singh Negi
11:35 –11:40 Hrs	Release of Publications
11:40 –11:45 Hrs	Address by Shri Pushkar Singh Dhami, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Uttarakhand (virtual)
11:45 –11:55 Hrs	Felicitation of Agri-Ecotourism Farmers by the Chief Guest
11:55 –12:25 Hrs	Presidential Address by Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand
12:25 –12:35 Hrs	Presentation of Mementoes to the Chief Guest and Dignitaries
12:35 –12:40 Hrs	Vote of Thanks by Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA
12:40 Hrs	National Anthem
<b>Rapporteurs</b>	Dr. A.K. Joshi, Dean, CoH and Dr. M.S. Yadav, Dean, CoHA
<b>12:40-14:00 Hrs</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>



TECHNICAL PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session of IAUA

On

Agri-eco-tourism in India: Opportunities, Challenges and the Way Forward

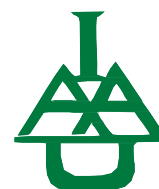
At

College of Forestry, Ranichauri, Tehri Garhwal

Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF)

Bharsar-246123, Uttarakhand

(October 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025)







Technical Sessions



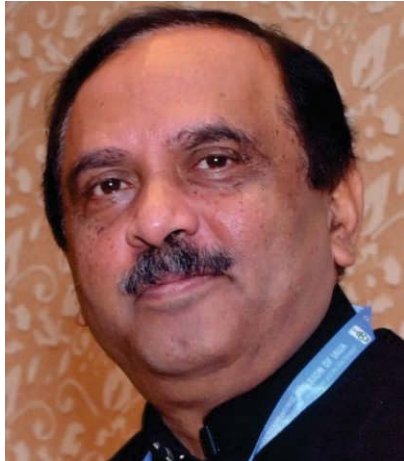

Session- I		
<b>Time-</b> 14:00-16.00 Hrs		
<b>Venue:</b> Dean's Committee room, College of Forestry, Ranichauri		
<b>Sub-Theme: Exploring the Potential of Agri-eco-tourism for Rural Development and Livelihoods of Farmers</b>		
	<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya, UP Dr. K. B. Kathiria, Vice Chancellor, Aanand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujrat
14:00-14:45 Hrs	<b>Keynote Address-I</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Shri Pandurang Taware, Father of Agri-ecotourism, India, ATDC, Pune, Maharashtra <b>Topic:</b> Agri-Eco-Tourism in India: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Way Forward
14:45-15:15 Hrs	<b>Keynote Address -II</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Dr. S.P. Singh, Former Vice Chancellor, HNB Garhwal University, Uttarakhand <b>Topic:</b> Agritourism and other ecosystem services to address the economic trivialisation of Farming
15:15-16:00 Hrs	<b>Panel Discussion</b>	<b>Panelists</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. V.P. Chovatia, VC Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat</li> <li>• Dr. P. L. Patil, VC, University of Agricultural Sciences, Dharwad, Karnataka</li> <li>• Dr. A.K. Panda, VC, Ch. Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Palampur</li> </ul> <b>Moderator:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice, Chancellor VNMKV, Parbhani</li> </ul>
<b>Rapporteurs:</b> Dr. Amol Vasishth, ADR and Dr. J.C. Kuniyal, Head, FRM, CoF		
Session- II		
<b>Time:</b> 16:00-18:00 Hrs		
<b>Venue:</b> Dean's Committee room, College of Forestry, Ranichauri		
<b>Sub-Theme: Addressing Policy, Infrastructure, and Capacity Gaps in Agri-eco-tourism</b>		
	<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Dr. Indra Mani Mishra, Vice Chancellor, VNMKV, Parbhani Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad
16:00-17:00 Hrs	<b>Keynote Address-I</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Dr Tej Pratap, Former Vice Chancellor of GBPUAT, Pantnagar <b>Topic:</b> Agritourism and Agri-ecotourism: Knowledge and Experiences led Policy, Research, Extension Advisory

17:00-18:00Hrs	<b>Panel Discussion</b>	<p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. K.B. Kathiria, Vice Chancellor, AAU, Anand</li> <li>• Dr. Sanjay G. Bhawe, Vice Chancellor, Dr. BSKKV, Dapoli</li> <li>• Dr. Anil Kumar (Director Education), RLBCAU, Jhansi</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. V.P. Chovatia, Vice Chancellor, Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat</li> </ul>
<b>Rapporteurs:</b> Dr. J.C. Kuniyal, Head, FRM, COF and Dr. S.P. Sati, Registrar		
18:00-20:00 Hrs	Cultural Programme at Auditorium	Artists & Students of COF & COHA






Day-2: 28 <sup>th</sup> October, 2025		
Session- III		
<b>Time:</b> 09:30-11:30 Hrs		
<b>Venue:</b> Committee room at Hotel		
<b>Sub-Strategies and Innovations for Sustainable Growth of Agri-eco-tourism in India</b>		
	<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Dr. R. S. Chandel, Vice Chancellor, Dr. YSPUHF, Solan Dr. V.P. Chovatia, Vice Chancellor, JAU Junagadh
09:30- 10:30 Hrs	<b>Keynote Address-I</b>	<b>Speaker:</b> Prof S.C. Bagri <b>Topic:</b> Strategies and Innovations for sustainable Growth of Agri-eco-tourism in India
10:30-11:30Hrs	<b>Panel Discussion</b>	<p><b>Panelists</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. P. L. Patil, Vice Chancellor, UAS, Dharwad</li> <li>• Dr. A.K. Panda, Vice Chancellor, Ch. SK HPAU Palampur, HP</li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. K.B. Kathiria, Vice Chancellor, AAU, Anand</li> </ul>
<b>Rapporteurs:</b> Dr. S.P. Sati, Registrar and Dr. Amol Vasishth, ADR		
11:30-12:00 Hrs	Tea Break	
12:00-13:00 Hrs	IAUA General Session	
	<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya
	<b>Discussion</b>	All Vice Chancellors
	<b>Convener</b>	Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA
<b>Rapporteurs:</b> Dr. A.K. Joshi, Dean, COH and Amol Vasishth, ADR		
13:00-14:00 Hrs	Plenary Session	
	<b>Co-Chairs</b>	Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar Dr. Bijendra Singh, Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya
	<b>Recommendations</b>	Technical Sessions I, II & III
	<b>Remarks</b>	Co-Chair
	<b>Convener</b>	Dr. Arvind Bijalwan, Organizing Secretary VCSG UUHF and Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA
<b>Vote of Thanks:</b> Dr. Arvind Bijalwan, Organizing Secretary		
14:00-14:30 Hrs	<b>Valedictory Session</b>	



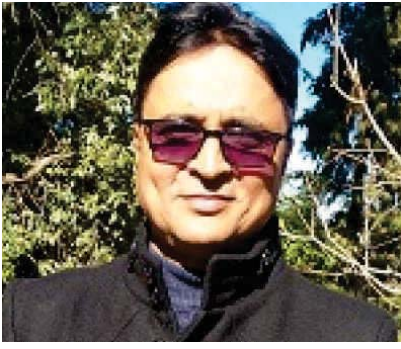


## List of participant Vice Chancellors and other dignitaries

Sl.No.	Photo	Name, Designation and contact
1		<p><b>Dr. Parvinder Kaushal</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali Uttarakhand University</b>  <b>of Horticulture &amp; Forestry,</b>  <b>Bharsar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>Email: vc27uuhfm@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9805185890</b></p>
2		<p><b>Dr. Bijendra Singh</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture and</b>  <b>Technology, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh</b>  <b>Email: vcnduat2018@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 800492452</b></p>
3		<p><b>Dr. K. B. Kathiria</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Anand Agricultural University, Anand, Gujarat</b>  <b>Email : vc@aaui.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9998009960</b></p>
4		<p><b>Dr. V. P. Chovatia</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Junagadh Agricultural University, Junagadh, Gujarat</b>  <b>Email : vc@jau.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9879644344</b></p>

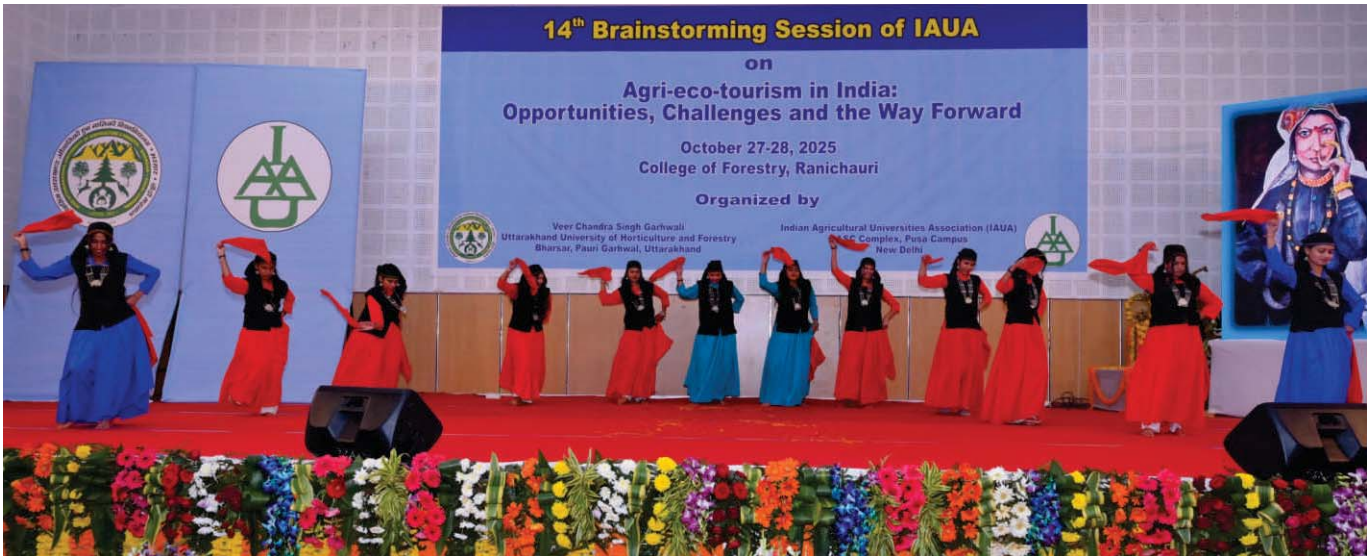
5		<p><b>Dr. P.L. Patil</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>University of Agricultural Sciences, Yettinagudda</b>  <b>Campus, Krishinagar, Dharwad (Karnataka)</b>  <b>Phone (O) : +91- 836 – 2447783, 2214201</b>  <b>E-mail: vc@uasd.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9448861025</b></p>
6		<p><b>Dr. Indra Mani</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Vasantrao Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth,</b>  <b>Krishinagar, Basmat Road,</b>  <b>Parbhani - 431 402,</b>  <b>Maharashtra, India</b>  <b>E-mail: vcmou@rediffmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9868656885</b></p>
7		<p><b>Dr. Ashok Kumar Panda</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>CSK HPKV, Palampur - 176 062 (HP), India</b>  <b>Phone: +91-1894-230521 (O)</b>  <b>E-mail: vc@hillagric.ac.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9418040256</b></p>
8		<p><b>Dr. Sanjay G. Bhave</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Dr. Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth,</b>  <b>Dapoli, Dist. Ratnagiri (MAHARASHTRA) INDIA Pin</b>  <b>No. 415 712.</b>  <b>registrar@dbskkv.ac.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9422556565</b></p>

9		<p><b>Dr. Rajeshwar Singh Chandel</b>  <b>Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>Dr Y. S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, HP</b>  <b>Email: vcuhf@yvspuniversity.ac.in</b>  <b>Contact: 8219677767</b></p>
10		<p><b>Dr. Tej Pratap,</b>  <b>Former Vice Chancellor of GBPUAT, Pantnagar &amp; Vice Chancellor of Sri Sri University, Sri Sri Vihar, Ward No – 3, Godi Sahi, Cuttack – 754006, Odisha, India</b>  <b>E.mail- tpartap52@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9078800135</b></p>
11		<p><b>Dr. S.P. Singh</b>  <b>Former Vice Chancellor,</b>  <b>HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E.mail- spsecology@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact- 9758765300</b></p>
12		<p><b>Shri Pandurang Taware,</b>  <b>Father of Agri-tourism, India</b>  <b>Deep Bunglow Chowk, Model Colony, Shivajinagar, Pune, Maharashtra, India</b>  <b>Email: sales@agritourism.in</b>  <b>Contact: 9226432980</b></p>
13		<p><b>Shri Prem Chand Sharma, Padamsri awardee</b>  <b>Progressive Farmer</b>  <b>Village- Hatal, PO- Hatal, Tyuni, District- Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India</b>  <b>Contact: 9411110501</b></p>

14		<p><b>Prof S.C. Bagri</b>  <b>Former professor and Head of the Centre for Mountain Tourism and Hospitality Studies (CMTHS) at Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University (HNBGU), Srinagar Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E.mail- bagri_sc@hotmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9412079836</b></p>
15		<p><b>Dr. Anil Kumar</b>  <b>Director Education,</b>  <b>Rani Lakshmi Bai Central Agricultural University,</b>  <b>Gwalior Road, Jhansi-284003, U.P.</b>  <b>Email: directoreducation.rlbcau@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9411195450</b></p>
16		<p><b>Dr. Dinesh Kumar</b>  <b>Executive Secretary</b>  <b>IAUA, NASC Complex, New Delhi-110012</b>  <b>Email: esiaua.newdel-hi@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9811129226 / 8448071700</b></p>
17		<p><b>Dr. Arvind Bijalwan,</b>  <b>Professor and Director Academics,</b>  <b>College of Forestry, VCSG Uttarakhand University of Horticulture &amp; Forestry, Ranichauri, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India,</b>  <b>E.mail- arvindbijalwan276@gmail.com,</b>  <b>Contact: 9412983808</b></p>
18		<p><b>Dr. T. S. Mehra</b>  <b>DEAN, College Of Forestry, VCSG UHF, Ranichauri Distt. Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E-Mail : deanranichauri2013@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 7005507550</b></p>

19		<p><b>Dr. Amol Vasishth</b>  <b>Additional Director Research,</b>  <b>VCSG Uttarakhand University of Horticulture and Forestry, Bharsar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E.mail- adruuhf2024@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 8849909047</b></p>
20		<p><b>Dr. J.C. Kuniyal</b>  <b>Head of the Department,</b>  <b>Forest Resource Management, College of Forestry,</b>  <b>VCSG UUHF, Ranichauri, Distt- Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E.mail- jckuniyal@rediffmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9418154941</b></p>
21		<p><b>Dr. S.P. Sati</b>  <b>Registrar</b>  <b>VCSG Uttarakhand University of Horticulture and Forestry, Bharsar, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand</b>  <b>E.mail- registraruuhf@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9027586692</b></p>
22		<p><b>Dr. Ajay Kumar Joshi</b>  <b>Dean, College of Horticulture,</b>  <b>VCSG Uttarakhand University of Horticulture &amp; Forestry,</b>  <b>Bharsar-246 123, District -Pauri Garhwal Uttarakhand, India</b>  <b>Email: deanhortbharsar@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 8219611436</b></p>
23		<p><b>Dr. M.S. Yadav</b>  <b>Dean, College of Hill Agriculture,</b>  <b>VCSG Uttarakhand University of Horticulture &amp; Forestry, Chirbatiya, Distt- Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand, India</b>  <b>E mail: cohachirbatiya2013@gmail.com</b>  <b>Contact: 9934313050</b></p>

## Glimpses of Cultural Programmes



### Executive Committee, IAUA

Dr. M.S. Chauhan, President, IAUA & Vice Chancellor, GBPUAT, Pantnagar  
 Dr. D.R. Singh, Treasurer, IAUA & Vice Chancellor, BAU, Sabour  
 Dr. Bijendra Singh, Member, IAUA & Vice Chancellor, ANDUAT, Ayodhya  
 Dr. Z.P. Patel, Member, IAUA & Vice Chancellor, NAU, Navsari  
 Dr. Anupam Mishra, Member, IAUA & Vice Chancellor, CAU, Imphal  
 Dr. J.K. Jena, Ex-Officio Member, IAUA & DDG (Fisheries Science), ICAR, New Delhi  
 Dr. Parvinder Kaushal, Ex-Officio Member & Vice-Chancellor, VCSG UUHF, Bharsar  
 Dr. Dinesh Kumar, Executive Secretary, IAUA, New Delhi

### Core Committee for 14<sup>th</sup> Brainstorming Session at VCSG UUHF, Bharsar

Prof. Parvinder Kaushal, Vice Chancellor  
 Prof. K.S. Pant, Director Research  
 Prof. A. K. Joshi, Dean, College of Horticulture  
 Prof. T.S. Mehra, Dean, College of Forestry  
 Prof. M.S. Yadav, Dean, College of Hill Agriculture  
 Prof. B. P. Nautiyal, Director, Placement  
 Prof. V. P Khanduri, Chief Personnel Officer  
 Prof. S. P Sati, Registrar  
 Prof. Amol Vasishth, Additional Director Research  
 Prof. Arvind Bijalwan, Director Academics  
 Prof. J.C. Kuniyal, Head, Forest Resource Management, COF





**Veer Chandra Singh Garhwali  
Uttarakhand University of Horticulture & Forestry (VCSG UUHF)  
Bharsar-246123, Uttarakhand, India**