CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION
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ABOUT THE CHAPTER:
This chapter tries to explain some concepts and issues of rural tourism and its benefits. Tourism has many potential benefits for rural areas. Tourism can be an important source of jobs for non metro communities, especially for those that are economically underdeveloped. Because jobs in the tourist industry often do not require advanced training, local residents with few skills can readily work as food servers, retail clerks, and hospitality workers. Tourism also not only offers business opportunities to local residents, but it can serve as a vehicle for marketing a place to potential residents and firms, as today’s tourist may return later to retire or start a business locally. Rural Tourism can also enhance local quality of life. Some rural areas may be more willing to levy higher taxes on tourists because they are transitory, and, hence, may be perceived by local authorities as being more captive to user fees and other forms of taxation. This can lead to higher quality public services and lower local tax rates. Tourism can also support local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites. And tourism, which is generally considered to be a relatively clean industry, may foster local conservation efforts. With regard to demand, there are a number of specific factors in addition to rising incomes and populations. Improved communications mean that any rural areas are no longer considered remote and difficult to access, either physically or for business or personal information.

1.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Tourism is a rapidly growing phenomenon and has become one of the largest industries in the world. The impact of tourism is extremely varied. On one hand, it plays an important and certainly positive role in the socio-economic and political development in destination countries by, for instance, offering new employment opportunities. Also, in certain instances, it may contribute to a broader cultural understanding by creating awareness, respecting the diversity of cultures and ways of life. On the other hand, as a tool to create jobs, it has not fulfilled its expectations. At the same time, complaints from tourist destinations concerning massive negative impacts upon environment, culture and residents’ ways of life have given rise to a
demand for a more sustainable development in tourism. Different parties will have to be involved in the process of developing sustainable tourism.

Tourism is not, as many people assert, a clean and non-polluting industry. A major problem is the lack of a common understanding of what sustainable tourism or “ecotourism” means. This ambiguity leads to violations of environmental regulations and standards. Hence, the environmental problems evolving from tourism are manifold. First of all, the tourism industry is very resource and land intensive. Consequently, the interest of the tourism sector will often be in conflict with local resource and land use practices. The introduction of tourism will imply an increased stress on resources available. An influx of tourists into the area will lead to a competition for resources. Employees working at the tourist sites compound this competition. Almost as a rule, tourists are supplied at the expense of the local population. Tourist activities imply an intensified utilisation of vulnerable habitats. Investors and tourists do not necessarily possess awareness on how to use natural resources sustainably, and subsequently this utilisation often leads to a degradation of resources. Tourism is also a major generator of wastes. In most tourist regions of developing countries, sewage, wastewater and solid waste disposal are not properly managed or planned. Lastly, tourism is also responsible for a considerable proportion of increased volumes and mileage in global transport and hence the associated environmentally damaging pollutant emissions. The tourism industry has not shown sufficient willingness to compensate the cost of conservation of bio-diversity in, for instance, protected areas, even though they can profit from it.

1.2 RURAL TOURISM

World Tourism Organization (WTO) used rural tourism concept for defining that tourism product "that gives to visitors a personalized contact, a taste of physical and human environment of countryside and as far as possible, allow them to participate in the activities, traditions and lifestyles of local people." Rural tourism is tourism that takes place outside densely populated communities and tourist centres. It is often considered small-sized and connected to the farming industry and outdoor activities that offer the guests individual service. Rural tourism is local tourism, tourism “of the area,” sought after and controlled by local authorities. According to Bramwell (1993), the small scale of firms and their functional relationship with nature, heritage or traditional societies make them rural. The development of rural tourism has become a major
element of rural and regional development policies and, is one of the most important strategies for the diversification of economic activities in lagging and remote rural areas.

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. It has been argued that rurality as a concept is connected with low population densities and open space, and with small scale settlements, generally of fewer inhabitants. Land use is dominated by farming, forestry and natural areas. Societies tend towards traditionalism: the influence of the past is often strong. Government policies lean towards conservation rather than radical or rapid change. It follows, therefore, that rural tourism should be:

1. Located in rural areas.
2. Functionally rural, built upon the rural world's special features: small scale enterprise, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, "traditional" societies and "traditional" practices.
3. Rural in scale -- both in terms of buildings and settlements -- and, therefore, usually small scale.
4. Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families. It will often be very largely controlled locally and developed for the long term good of the area;
5. Sustainable -- in the sense that its development should help sustain the special rural character of an area, and in the sense that its development should be sustainable in its use of resources. Rural tourism should be seen as a potential tool for conservation and sustainability, rather than as an urbanizing and development tool; Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. Rural tourism has many potential benefits for rural areas between tourism and rural
Tourism can be an important force for developing disadvantaged rural areas. In particular, rural communities with few other options for development may perceive that tourism represents a panacea for growth. While tourism can certainly be an important component of a sound development plan, this is not always the case. Rural tourism impact varies greatly among rural
regions and depends on a host of factors including work force characteristics and seasonality issues. Figure 1 presents one way of viewing the complex nature of rural regions and tourism's role by mapping the links between elements and issues. The community is central to this process, and in many ways cannot be separated from any of the elements on the map. The cultural products model presented by Swarbrooke (1996), Figure 1, seems to cover most types of cultural attractions in rural areas for cultural conscious tourists. These attractions, however, vary greatly in their management or location in the region. Some of those attractions are informal, others free of charge and others again heavily dependent on income from tourists. Some are located along the main roads, and others are not that easy to access. Of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of rural environment, economy, and history.

1.3 RURAL TOURISM AS AN AGENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are a variety of terms used to describe tourism in rural areas, including farm tourism, agritourism, soft tourism and even ecotourism (Beeton, 2006). According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), rural tourism is defined as tourism taking place in the countryside (Reichel et al., 2000). Rural tourism is located in agricultural landscapes and is characterized by enjoyment of a tamed nature or highly modified landscape. It is about the land uses and human cultures that the interaction between humans and the land have created. It positions agriculture and farms as the foundation upon which the attraction is built (Knowd, 2001). Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism.

According to WTO it is considered that take part from rural tourism a wide range of activities like: climbing, riding, adventure tourism, educational travel, sport and health tourism, arts and heritage tourism). Rural tourism is that kind of tourism that occurs in nonurban settings where human activity is present. Rural tourism is that form of tourism offered by people from rural areas, with accommodation on small-scale and with the implication of important components of their rural activities and customs of life. Tourism it appears to be developing an elitist bias as broadening of its social base with participation from all sections of the society is clearly not visible.
Introduction

- Rural tourism has characteristics that set it apart from general tourism (A relaxing environment, open spaces and traditional village charm)
- Outdoor activities, wildlife, and beautiful natural scenery
- Opportunities for direct participation, e.g. fruit picking, eating at local inns.

Rural tourism is often functional, i.e. it relates to small-scale and traditional activities and enterprises, environmental aspects and heritage, and also no uniform, i.e. it reflects the complexities of the rural environment. Tourists in rural areas tend to be middle class and older, and to engage mostly in informal and unplanned activities. It can be argued that these features do not offer many suitable opportunities for expenditure However, there is increased diversity of activities, and the potential for further expansion attributed to changes in consumer demand and the provision of various attractions.

1.4 RURAL UPLIFTMENT

In order to gain some appreciation of what might be defined as a rural tourism industry, it’s helpful to see how the industry players describe the game they’re in, and what it is they produce for their markets. Definitions of Rural Tourism, and hence the Rural Tourism Industry, tend to be generated by the suppliers, or would-be suppliers, of rural tourism product. As is usually the case, there is no explicit acknowledgement that a ‘tourism industry’ only exists in rural areas if tourists find what is offered attractive enough to want to visit and consume. However, it is possible to synthesize a definition of what the rural tourism experience is from what each of the industry stakeholders and researchers have described about the different aspects of the industry that they are concerned about. Arriving at a definition of rural tourism is more often a function of what aspects of rural tourism activity the proponents or suppliers are concerned with, rather than some kind of consistent concept that is recognized around the world. However it possible to take the various definitions used by writers and formulate a picture of what rural tourism is and what elements create the rural tourist experience.

To build up a detailed picture that accommodates all the “operators” in rural tourism, the definitions found in the literature were organized by their degree of focus. The easiest definitions to identify were those that describe farm-based tourism. Rural tourism is located in agricultural landscapes and is characterized by enjoyment of a tamed nature or highly modified landscape. It is about the land uses and human cultures that the interaction between humans and the land have
created. It positions agriculture and farms as the foundation upon which the attraction is built. They tend to have a focus on aspects of rural product that go beyond a purely farm-related experience and so define rural tourism in terms of, not just the on-farm experience, but also the additional elements that make up a package of experiences for the rural tourist. So these operators often service the general population of their area as well as visiting tourists. They include hospitality, foodservice, arts, crafts and any other direct providers of products or services to tourists. Definitions that accommodate these parties define rural tourism in the following ways. Rural tourism is farm tourism and non-farm tourism in rural areas and communities, but does not include activities in outdoor recreation areas such as national parks, forest or wilderness areas.

**Agro tourism**

Tourism activities carried-out in non-urban regions by individuals mainly employed in the primary and secondary sector of the economy. In Europe 'rural tourism' is usually used to describe agritourism (tourism on farms) but expands to encompass basically all tourism activities in the countryside when needed. The first relies on defining it in terms of the percentage of revenues that benefit the rural community and so; tourism in the countryside benefits the population as a whole whilst agritourism benefits farmers directly. Rural tourism lies somewhere in between these two types of tourism. The second definition relies on the various elements that make up the rural tourism product, and therefore, if rural culture is a key component then rural tourism is used. However agritourism, green tourism, gastronomic tourism, equestrian tourism, hunting, etc can also be subsectors of rural tourism. The key distinguishing features include giving guests personalized contact in the physical and human environment of the countryside and allowing them to participate in activities, traditions and lifestyles of their rural hosts. Thus, there is also a strong educational element and so rural tourism is sometimes included as a subset of eco-tourism.

**Farm stay**

Bed, breakfast and other meals, accommodation and activities centered on a traditional pastoral farm where the visitor feels part of the ‘family’.

**Country stays**

Bed and breakfast but the focus is on the ambience of the setting with few farm-related activities.

**Rural Self-Catering Units**
Self-contained accommodation in converted shearing sheds, barns, workers cottages, etc,

**Camp/caravan Sites**

Attractive settings with level sites, suitable access and shade/shelter trees and facilities to support visitors (showers, toilets, etc),

**Backpacker Accommodation**

It can be more austere than other forms of accommodation but this trend is changing, needs to offer a range of accommodation grades, should be supported by a range of value-added elements that create an ‘experience’ (special activities, events, etc), and can be difficult to fill beds in colder months,

**Adventure**

Rural accommodation linked to specific adventure activities such as bushwalking, rock climbing, horse riding, hunting, etc

**Heritage** - properties that have a strong historical or heritage theme,

**Ecotourism**

Properties that have natural or man-made sites of significant ecological attraction where the visitor expects to learn something as part of the experience.

### 1.5 DRIVING FORCES IN RURAL TOURISM

Industry stakeholders define the rural tourism experience by what they offer as product. But they are simply responding to what they perceive as an increasing demand for experience of rural communities, and interpreting it via their own world views. This demand is driven by a range of forces that combine to create tourist interest in rural experiences. Tourism generating regions for rural tourism are highly developed and urbanized – the stresses of urban living and the remoteness from the natural environment has created a desire for escape from the monoculture of city living. Rural locations offer an idealized release from stress and the opportunity to re-engage with a simpler, quieter way of life that offers rest and relaxation. Demand fuelled by media, over-familiarity and congestion with traditional tourist resorts and increased interest in alternative attractions – with its voracious appetite for content and the resultant over-exposure of many traditional tourist destinations, the media have sought out new and interesting tourism experiences for their lifestyle productions.
Increasing environmental awareness and interest in the relationship between humans and the environment. Green issues have raised the attractiveness of rural experiences as ecologically sustainable tourism. Transport, communications, and the removal of political and economic barriers to travel has facilitated accessibility of rural areas. Increasing numbers of Free Independent Travellers and world-wide long-haul travel – many more travellers are FIT than in the past due to the increased capacity, especially in long-haul transport modes. When combined with increasing discretionary incomes, greater awareness of the range of experiences on offer, and greater mobility through private transport, the accessibility and attractiveness of rural destinations has been dramatically improved. A move toward short-break holidays - income and leisure time have changed so that shorter breaks with greater choice of leisure activities are sought. Changing work patterns have increased the popularity of shorter breaks that minimize the absence from work and the effect of absences on work flow and involvement. Better-educated travellers have increased interest in outdoor recreation, eco-tourism and special interest tourism - individualism drives a need for unique experiences and rural tourism, because of its fragmented nature and diversity of offerings, can satisfy this need.

An increased interest in heritage can be satisfied through rural tourism as rural areas are often the repositories of remnant heritage. Rural areas are perceived as more healthy, offering fresher air, cleaner water and the opportunity for outdoor recreation. Rural areas offer fresh, and sometimes, specialty foods. Tourism in rural areas represents a potential panacea for many of the effects generated by the forces described above. It also represents a panacea for the host communities, many of whom, face uncertain futures in the post-modern world. So rural communities have become interested in tourism, sometimes in response to increased visitation to their area driven by the kinds of forces described above, but more often in response to other pressures that rural economies are experiencing. The principal motivation for farmers, local authorities, state and national governments when considering tourism is a chronic need for rural community renewal.

1.5.1 RURAL TOURISM FOR ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Rural tourism integrates a wide range of economic activities and is now regarded as one of the world’s largest industries. In addition to strong overall expansion, the development of tourism is characterized by continuing geographic spread and diversification of destinations. Some key qualitative development trends include increased market segmentation; development of new forms
Introduction

of tourism related to nature, wildlife, rural areas and culture; and the introduction of new programmes in traditional package tours. Tourism planning is carried out at various levels, but at the local community level it includes sub-regions, cities, towns, villages, resorts, rural areas and some specific tourist attractions. Planning at the local level includes comprehensive tourism area plans; urban tourism plans, and land use planning for tourist facilities and areas of attraction. Special tourism programmes such as ecotourism and village and rural tourism are carried out at the local level. Research, education and training for tourism normally take place at the local level, as well as some tourism marketing, provision of information services and other management functions. The local level can also involve site planning, which refers to the specific location of structures and facilities based on a land use plan.

Sustainability is imperative for tourism planning as destinations encounter increasing pressure on the natural, cultural and socio-economic environments from tourism growth. It has been recognized that uncontrolled growth in tourism aimed at short-term benefits often can harm the environment and societies as well as destroy the very basis of tourism. Host societies have become more aware of such problems, along with some consumers who now demand higher environmental standards from tourism suppliers and greater commitment from tour operators and travel agents. Tourism also has the potential to bring economic benefits to host communities and help alleviate poverty and conserve natural and cultural assets, provided there is proper planning and management with a long-term vision.

WTO has defined sustainable tourism development as meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. Sustainable tourism development requires management of all resources to fulfill economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological diversity and life support systems. The key for achieving sustainable tourism is careful planning, systematic implementation of the plans, as well as continuous and effective management. This should include a comprehensive approach that considers environmental, sociocultural and economic, institutional and financial aspects, together with their mutual relations when formulating policies, strategies, programmes or projects. Ideally, local plans would be integrated into regional and national tourism policies and plans. The tourism sector both depends on and stimulates other economic activities. Quality tourism services and programmes cannot be provided without linkages to agriculture, food
production, transportation, construction, manufacturing, handicraft production, and other related economic activities. Tourism can facilitate the overall development of local economies by stimulating such related sectors. Local communities can benefit more widely from tourism if they are producers in related sectors. Domestic tourism should also be an important part of local tourism plans and marketing activities in order to help provide a more stable economic base for local tourism development. A strategic approach to local tourism development is also needed with a long-term vision accompanied by action plans formulated for the short and medium terms.

Local tourism development also requires a participatory approach, which means involvement of all sectors of society in decision-making processes for planning and management. Local stakeholders are comprised of diverse groups with a broad range of interests to be taken into account. There are usually a variety of views about the forms of tourism in any particular area. Differences may need to be resolved, making it important to consider all values and opinions, relations among groups and what role they can play in tourism development. Maintaining close cooperation and coordination among institutions and groups that are public, private, NGO and other community representatives is essential for tourism development to incorporate shared objectives. Public-private sector cooperation is growing quite rapidly in all parts of the world. The structure,

1.6 RURAL TOURISM BENEFITS

Tourism has many potential benefits for rural areas. Tourism can be an important source of jobs for non metro communities, especially for those that are economically underdeveloped. Because jobs in the tourist industry often do not require advanced training, local residents with few skills can readily work as food servers, retail clerks, and hospitality workers. Tourism also not only offers business opportunities to local residents, but it can serve as a vehicle for marketing a place to potential residents and firms, as today’s tourist may return later to retire or start a business locally.

Tourism can also enhance local quality of life. For example, tourism can serve as an important source of tax revenues for local jurisdictions. Some rural areas may be more willing to levy higher taxes on tourists because they are transitory, and, hence, may be perceived by local authorities as being more captive to user fees and other forms of taxation. This can lead to higher quality public services and lower local tax rates. Tourism can also support local culture in rural areas by encouraging restoration of local and regional historic sites. And tourism, which is
Introduction

generally considered to be a relatively clean industry, may foster local conservation efforts. With
regard to demand, there are a number of specific factors in addition to rising incomes and
populations. In many countries, a rapidly increasing elderly population5 has more free time to
travel, and is often more interested in health-related and ‘heritage’ activities in rural areas than other
age groups. There is increasing environmental awareness, and ‘green’ issues have raised the
attractiveness of rural experiences in terms of ecologically sustainable tourism. Improved
communications mean that many rural areas are no longer considered remote and difficult to
access, either physically or for business or personal information. Further factors include better
outdoor clothing, the growth of short break holidays, and individualistic reactions to mass tourism.

On the supply side, rural entrepreneurs, including farmers, have started up new businesses
or diversified existing ones, and holiday and hotel companies have shown increasing interest in
rural touring packages. The resources used by these providers vary enormously, from the electronic
technology just mentioned to ‘immobile’ assets that nevertheless can find new uses as the locations
for tourist attractions, accommodation or services. Longstanding buildings (temples, inns,
farmhouses, etc.) or countryside features (paths, water areas, etc.) can sometimes be used or
modified for tourism purposes; and similarly with human capital such as craftwork skills and local
knowledge. Because jobs in rural tourism often do not always require advanced education or
training, local inhabitants with relatively few skills (and often women) can work as waiters, retail
assistants or accommodation personnel. Nevertheless, there are barriers to overcome, including the
costs of asset conversion from agricultural to tourist use (access; health and safety; modernization;
perhaps language), and many ways for markets to ‘fail’. The latter include lack of information, local
monopolies, and unclear clear property rights. Perhaps more fundamentally, some rural people
may not be primarily profit-driven, with lack of entrepreneurship, pride in unmodified
traditionalism, and acceptance of decline and inferiority. Potential consumers of rural tourism also
need to be motivated (as well as informed) as to what is available, and how it can best be enjoyed.

1. Building Relationship between tourism and Culture

Across the rural regions of the developed world the issues of population decline,
economic change and community regeneration are universal. For over a century, the powerful
trends of industrialisation and urbanisation have steadily altered the economic and political
position of rural society. In the last 40 years those trends have intensified. Farm incomes have fallen in real terms. Technological changes have joined with falling incomes to reduce agricultural employment. In response, rural service provision has diminished: shops, schools, churches, professional services and transport facilities have all declined in numbers and in underlying vitality. Typically, rural populations have aged and become fewer in total. Many small towns and villages now struggle to retain their viability. Throughout the world, local, regional and central government agencies have intervened to address these issues, with various degrees of success. In recent years, the rural world has seen new challenges. Nature and landscape conservation is increasingly regarded as important. Historic buildings and "traditional" rural societies are receiving more attention. In some more accessible rural regions, there has been an influx of population, of people unhappy about big city living conditions -- a trend known as counter urbanisation. But for most parts of the countryside, rural decline issues remain important. Tourism on the contrary, presents a picture of thriving growth. From humble origins in the nineteenth century, tourism has expanded rapidly since the early 1950's. International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 millions in 1950 to an estimated 476 millions in 1992. About 60 per cent of this travel is for leisure purposes. Domestic (non-international) tourism, however, dwarfs even these massive figures. The World Tourism Organization estimates domestic travel numbers to be ten times the international total. Domestic tourism is also growing rapidly. The WTO estimates that, by 2000, tourism could be the world’s largest single industry. There are many factors behind the growth statistics. In the developed world, there has been a rapid growth in disposable income.

2. Rural Tourism Contribute to Rural Development

Rural tourism, while still only a minority tourism market, is already making a valuable contribution to rural economies. Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms, but also in terms of jobs, contributions towards funding conservation, encouragement to the adoption of new working practices, and the injection of a new vitality into sometimes weakened economies. In total, tourism promises 17 potential benefits to rural development. These are covered in detail below.

3. Job retention
Job retention is extremely important in rural areas where employment decline is often endemic. Tourism cash flows can assist job retention in services such as retailing, transport, hospitality and medical care. It can also provide additional income for farmers, and, in some cases, for foresters and fishermen. Job retention is not as politically glamorous as job creation, but, by helping the viability of small communities, it is critical to the survival of marginal areas.

4. Job creation

Job creation is a further possibility if rural tourism is successful. Job creation typically occurs in the hotel and catering trades, but can also take place in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage interpretation.

5. Job diversity

Job diversity is encouraged by rural tourism development. Most rural areas have little job variety outside farming and basic services. Better job diversity enriches rural society, and helps retain population levels. Pluriactivity can be a further useful by-product of tourism in the countryside. Pluriactivity is the term used when an individual or family carries out more than one type of job to maintain their income. A part-time farmer could also offer accommodation, assist the local administration in service tasks and act as a ski-instructor.

6. Service retention

Service retention is vital in rural areas: rural tourism can assist in three ways. Visitor information services can be provided by existing outlets, such as shops, thus increasing income flows if payment is made for acting as information outlets. Services can also benefit by the additional customers which visitors provide. The high levels of public transport in rural Austria and Switzerland are in part due to the support they receive from holiday-makers. This additional custom is not, however, automatic: to make the most of the potential, services often need to offer new products, to be available at different times and to understand the new markets. Finally, tourism's importance to national economies can strengthen the political case for subsides to help retain services.

7. Farm support

Farm support is a major issue on all political agendas. Many studies have shown that farm incomes can be bolstered by rural tourism, through accommodation enterprises of all kinds,
by developing open farms and other attractions, by increased sales of farm produce, and by increasing female activity rates through additional off-farm employment. Forestry is an important activity in many upland and climatically marginal regions. Forest regions have suffered serious socio-economic problems in recent years, partly because of the mechanisation of tree felling and processing, and partly because of falling prices following reduced timber demand. Rural tourism can assist forestry by diversifying income sources for forest communities if the special qualities of the forest environment for recreational use are realised and developed.

8. Landscape conservation

Landscape conservation has become an increasingly important form of heritage protection. Landscape is of crucial importance to rural tourism but, equally, visitor use is vital to the landscape conservation industry. Visitor use brings political benefits, can bring economic gains, and can provide jobs in maintaining and repairing traditional landscapes worn by recreational activities.

9. Smaller settlements

Smaller settlements in the countryside have always been at greater risk of losing viability because they are unable to support the many services which now require larger threshold populations to support them. Rural tourism can assist these smaller settlements to survive, because smaller places have a special attraction for visitors. Careful management of this process is, however, required.

10. Rural arts and crafts

Rural arts and crafts have a special place in the cultural heritage of regions and nations. Many commentators have noted that tourism can assist arts and crafts, both by recognising their importance, and by purchasing craft products. Income flows from these activities are well documented. Support between the arts and tourism can be a two-way process. Many communities now use arts and crafts festivals as a marketing mechanism to encourage visitors to come to their areas.

11. Cultural provision

Cultural provision has always been restricted in rural areas. The lack of major facilities such as theatre, opera, music and galleries has been one of the many factors encouraging rural depopulation. The festivals and other events described in the previous paragraph have enabled
rural areas to broaden their cultural provision, buying in artists and ensembles and supporting those purchases by ticket sales to visitors.

12. **Nature conservation**,  
Nature conservation, like landscape conservation, is a stated goal of most modern governments. It is, however, an expensive process. Rural tourism can valorise nature conservation in a monetary sense. Many estimates have been made of the value of nature to tourism.

13. **The historic built environment**  
The historic built environment can benefit from rural tourism in two ways. Many historic properties now charge for admission in order to maintain their fabrics and surrounding gardens and parklands. Secondly, there are important buildings from the past which have become redundant. Churches have lost their congregations, castles have lost their wars, farm buildings have become too small for modern equipment, railway stations have lost their trains, and canal warehouses no longer have barge traffic. The tourist industry can usually use these redundant buildings profitably and imaginatively: they can become attractions in their own right.

14. **Environmental improvements**  
Environmental improvements such as village paving and traffic regulation schemes, sewage and litter disposal can be assisted by tourism revenues and political pressures from tourism authorities. These help develop pride of place, important in retaining existing population and businesses, and in attracting new enterprises and families.

15. **The role of women**  
The role of women within the rural community was, in the past, a restricted one. Farming, forestry and mining were very much male occupations. Alternative jobs for women were few. Women were rarely involved in local politics. The widespread emancipation of women, coupled with the possibilities which rural tourism offers, have together done much in many areas to release the under-utilised talents and energies of the female half of the population. Studies show that tourism enterprises have increased the power of women within both the family and the community.
16. New ideas and initiatives

New ideas and initiatives will be essential if rural communities are to prosper into the twenty-first century. Efforts to support agriculture, forestry and service provision by state subsidies have done much to develop a culture of dependency within the countryside. The new challenges and the fiercely competitive nature of the tourism market could do much to encourage enterprise and new methods. There is also evidence that rural tourism can act as a catalyst to bring new businesses of many kinds into rural communities.

1.7 PROBLEMS WITH RURAL TOURISM

While many benefits can flow from rural tourism development, there can be problems. All economic structural re-alignments can disrupt sensitive environments. And, as the records of numerous rural aid agencies will testify, rural communities can be extremely resistant to new ideas.

1. The environmental threat

Rural tourism operates within sensitive natural environments. Some of the most attractive tourism destinations have the most sensitive environments. These include sea and lake shorelines, wetlands, high mountain areas, and polar areas. Many studies have highlighted the threats which tourism has already brought to the environment. Intensive skiing has destroyed vegetation and encouraged land-slips; climbing erodes rock faces, and, with modern equipment, destroys their natural condition; walking and riding wears out paths in heavily used areas; noise and litter drive out and injure wild creatures; existing farming practices are upset by fire, dogs and competition for labour. The peace, quiet and authentic nature of the countryside can be seriously compromised. All these issues can be tackled to some extent by the skilled management of the countryside; management of the order required is as yet rarely available.

2. The socio-cultural threat

Just as the influx of large numbers of visitors can disrupt the natural world, so also can visitors impinge upon the small scale, static, and well ordered socio-cultural world of the rural community. Earnings patterns change, success/failure relationships are altered, power structures are challenged. More fundamentally, sociologists have long recognised that the impact of
"advanced" cultures on "traditional" cultures almost always brings change to the traditional culture and not in the other direction.

3. The housing question

Some successful rural tourism areas have found that success in the visitor market has brought accommodation problems for local people. Small communities rarely have very much surplus housing. If they are to retain their character they must not expand too much or too rapidly. Visitor demand has three types of effect. Housing can be taken over for visitor accommodation, usually in the self-catering sector. Housing purchased as second-homes by city people is often rarely used, and brings little economic benefit to the local community. Housing can be purchased as retirement homes by holidaymakers who fall in love with their holiday areas. On retirement, the one-time holidaymakers gradually create a tendency towards a gerontocracy. All these impacts raise prices and create tension within rural societies.

4. The incoming entrepreneur

Many local farmers and businesses do not decide to enter the tourism market when opportunities present themselves. They may be insensitive to local tradition, cultures, working practices and architectural styles. They may use non-local suppliers for goods and services. They may repatriate their profits and capital gains out of the area. They have little loyalty to their new base of operations and often leave when trading conditions deteriorate. Less tangibly, but equally important, they set up tensions between locals and incomers, and do little to change the dependency culture common to many rural places.

5. Traffic congestion

Usually road traffic, but in some cases sea and air traffic -- can be a major problem if an area is successful in attracting tourists. Narrow roads can easily be choked by traffic both inside and outside settlements, parking becomes an issue, non-tourism business can suffer and, in extreme cases, emergency services cannot make urgent calls. The attractiveness of the area as a destination can decline, taking it down-market. There can be side effects on landscape and nature conservation. Traffic management techniques and better use of public transport can help, but the funds and skills necessary are not usually available.

6. The issues of planning, local control, public participation and partnership
In an ideal world, local people and businesses would control tourism development in such a way that the problems discussed earlier would be minimised and benefits maximised. Planning controls would ensure a carefully worked out balance of development between tourism-related and other land uses. Different types of tourism activity would be zoned into the regions best suited for those types of development. Employers and employees would undertake regular training courses to learn the skills of marketing, hospitality, interpretation and tourism planning. The community would feel that it had "ownership" of its industry in a broad sense. As a result the visitor would feel a genuine sense of welcome from the host population. But real world is rarely ideal. The financial power of the incoming entrepreneur, and the power of skilled outsiders including tour operators and tourist board officials, means that local control is seldom achieved. When locals do have power, they often do not have the foresight, experience or skills necessary. In some areas local politicians resent and resist development. In others, the promise of new jobs and income can be too great a temptation, leading to the acceptance of damaging schemes. In most cases tourism management is not practised because of cost and political implications. There have, however, been many experiments in introducing local participation into rural tourism development projects. Most are so recent that evaluation is not yet complete.

1.8 RURAL TOURISM AS SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY

The focus of any tourism development in rural areas, therefore, should be on sustainable development that protects or retains the intrinsic qualities of the countryside. Lane (1994) goes on to provide four further reasons for adopting sustainable development policies: (i) the need to implement sustainable management systems to protect fragile areas; (ii) the need to mediate between the conflicting aims of conservation and development; (iii) the need to encourage balanced, broad-based but community focused economic growth; and (iv) the need to maintain the ‘rurality’ of rural areas. These principles are, of course, common throughout the sustainable tourism literature and a number of other papers in the 1994 issue suggest means of operationalising them. Effectively, therefore, rural tourism is seen to be synonymous with sustainable tourism development, with all that is implied for the nature, scale, character and ownership of tourism development.
Development of disadvantaged areas

Rural tourism can be an important force for developing disadvantaged rural areas. In particular, rural communities with few other options for development may perceive that tourism represents a panacea for growth. While tourism can certainly be an important component of a sound development plan, this is not always the case. The local tourism impact varies greatly among rural regions and depends on a host of factors including workforce characteristics and seasonality issues. That is why tourism strategies must be consistent with local goals and be sensitive to sustaining a community’s character and traditions. Measuring the economic effects of tourism is a popular topic in the literature. Goldman and Nakazawa (1994) provide a nine step process for determining income multipliers to estimate local economic impacts resulting from tourism, while Johnson and Thomas (1990) offer a framework for estimating local employment effects of a museum in England. Some have cautioned that while tourism has been a high-growth industry in recent years, it often produces low-paying, part-time, and seasonal jobs (Bontron and Lasnier, 1997). However, others point out that such part-time positions offer important opportunities for those rural residents lacking higher education and advanced training since these individuals would generally not qualify for higher-paying, professional positions (Frederick, 1992).

The economic reasons for developing tourism are to generate new employment, improve local regional development, diversify the economy and increase income level and revenue from taxes (Pearce, 1989; Holden, 2000). Protecting the well being and health of individuals and promoting cultural awareness of the destination are among the sociocultural factors that induce the public sector to foster tourism development (Pearce, 1989). The government also undertakes stewardship of the environment and tourism resources so that the agents of development do not destroy the future basis for tourism development. The community includes both people who benefit from and those who pay costs associated with tourism development. Their concerns will focus highly on quality of life. Even though each stakeholder group has different goals and interests regarding sustainable tourism development, there are some goals of sustainability that they share (Figure 1.2). For instance, community and the tourism industry share the common goal of economic and sociocultural sustainability; economic and resource sustainability goals are shared between tourism industry and environment supporters, and local residents, government bodies and environmental supporters share sustainable resource use and protection goals.
Figure 1.2 is a generic model showing that diverse stakeholders do share common goals regarding sustainable tourism development. It suggests that sustainability can be reached only when stakeholder groups share goals (Moisey and McCool, 2001). It also suggests that sustainability requires involvement of all relevant stakeholders from the three major clusters so that a shared meaning and goals among destination stakeholders are achieved. Despite all the difficulties, securing the participation of key stakeholders in sustainable tourism planning and development is important in achieving sustainable destination development (Long, 1997). However, the concept of sustainable tourism development as a universal blueprint for ‘appropriate’ tourism development remains contested both generally and within the rural tourism context. Perhaps of more relevance to the present discussion, it is based upon three fundamental assumptions: firstly, that all tourists visit the countryside primarily to experience rurality; secondly, that sustainable tourism is the most effective (and universally appropriate and acceptable) means of achieving economic growth; and, thirdly, that the character and quality of rural areas should be protected or held stable while the world around them transforms or progresses.
The convergence of local and visitor lifestyles is proposed as an essential element of sustainable development, ensuring local participation and resulting in "a change-resistant tourists–locals' alliance. As pointed out by Hall, well-integrated, rural tourism can provide an important complement and counterbalance to coastal mass tourism that has characterised many countries with warm climates such as in south and rural tourism was pioneered in northern Spain, where tourism activity was relatively low, before its importance was recognised in the south might suggest that it is seen as a development substitute rather than an alternative, demonstrating a lack of understanding of its potential. Views of sustainability as the luxury of idealism remain, and these are, of course, to be found in countries grappling with political, economic and social crises. De Villiers, cited in Briedehhann, eloquently and simply puts the case: 'how can someone whose children are without food be expected to care about elephants?' Issues of sustainability, therefore, although still prominent in the rural tourism literature, have expanded to incorporate a wider range of issues that appear to draw tourism into widening policy concerns, and the achievement of 'sustainable' rural tourism becomes ever more elusive.

Sustainable tourism sees tourism within destination areas as a triangular relationship between host areas and their habitats and peoples, holidaymakers, and the tourism industry. In the past, the tourism industry dominated the triangle. Sustainable tourism aims to reconcile the tensions between the three partners in the triangle, and keep the equilibrium in the long term. Sustainable tourism aims to minimise environmental and cultural damage, optimise visitor satisfaction, and maximise long-term economic growth for the region. It is way of obtaining a balance between the growth potential of tourism and the conservation needs of the environment. Over a similar time-span, tourism in rural areas has grown, partly because of market forces, seeking different kinds of holiday, and partly as a result of government initiatives. This growth has been most noticeable in the countries of the developed world, where sophisticated economic diversification agencies have been hard at work promoting new uses for the countryside, influencing both potential providers of tourism facilities, and the markets for rural tourism through press and media contacts.

1.9 RURAL ECONOMIC RE-GENERATION

Tourism is seen as an agent for rural economic re-generation and as a way of valorizing conservation. The rural environment is, however, a very fragile one. It is easily either changed or damaged (or both) by rapid changes of any sort: tourism is a powerful agent for change. This is an
important issue because of the role rural areas play in many nations as repositories of both natural and historical heritage. It is also important commercially. Surveys show that ‘rurality’ is a unique selling point for holidays in the countryside. Customers look for high quality and ‘unspoiled’ scenery, for peace, quiet, and, to some extent, solitude, and for the personal attention which small-scale tourism enterprises can offer to their. Tourism growth can be an urbanizing influence, which by destroying rurality (or the illusion of rurality), can induce the onset of the destructive Resort Cycle much discussed in tourism circles (Butler, 1980). The case for sustainable tourism in rural areas is, therefore, a very strong one. The concept of sustainability in rural tourism must be a multi-purpose one if it is to succeed. It cannot be successfully based on a narrow pro-nature conservation ethic. It should aim to:

1. Sustain the culture and character of host communities.
2. Sustain landscape and habitats.
3. Sustain the rural economy.
4. Sustain a tourism industry which will be viable in the long term — and this in turn means the promotion of successful and satisfying holiday experiences.
5. Develop sufficient understanding, leadership and vision amongst the decision-makers in an area that they realize the dangers of too much reliance on tourism, and continue to work towards a balanced and diversified rural economy.

There are, however, many difficulties in implementing the principles of sustainability discussed above in a free market economy. The very concept of sustainability is fraught with ambiguity. Implementation is equally problematic: it involves numerous interested parties, with diverse aims and beliefs. One practical way forward lies in the creation of Sustainable Management and Development Strategies.

1.8 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING

Tourism planning is an ordered sequence of operations and actions conceived by the public sector to organize and control development in destination areas according to established political objectives. Proactive planning is to anticipate or bring about change, to look to the future, to find optimal solutions and to predict results is a kind of decision-making and policy-makings only one part of an overall planning ,decision and action process involving such things as bargaining and
negotiation, compromise, coercion, values, choice and politics. Occurring in various forms, institutions and scales, public planning tends to minimize negative impacts on destinations, and bring economic benefits and satisfaction to tourists. A lack of strategic planning runs the risk of ad hoc and reactive decisions and a deregulated, disorderly and inefficient activity, consequently leading to the dilapidation of physical and social capital on which both ecosystems and the local community depend. Reflecting the current political, social, cultural, economic and environmental dynamics, tourism planning is also strongly evolutionary.

1.8.1 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the well known Brundtland Report’s definition of sustainability (WCSD, 1987), several others can be found in the literature, expressing some of the characteristics attributed to the concept: it is full of multiple objectives, complex interdependencies, ambiguities, challenges, inaccuracies and controversies. These characteristics are evidenced in a variety of interpretations and in a spectrum of thought with an infinite possibility for trade-offs between environmental and socio-economic issues. The term ‘sustainable tourism’ emerged in the late 1980s as a consequence of the discussion about the implications of the Brundtland Report for the sector. Therefore, it is not surprising that the concept of sustainable tourism will reflect the same kind of debate (see Hunter, 1997) and will suffer from the same difficulties in operationalization, there is a great deal of rhetoric surrounding sustainable tourism this is often not translated into useful action because endless theories regarding the concept have not been operationalized. The need for moving from discourse to action has been claimed recurrently, encouraging the search for local solutions for sustainable tourism development that go beyond theoretical debates.

1.10 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The stakeholder concept, any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, the achievement of the organization’s objectives has been enthusiastically accepted by the literature on planning and management of tourist destinations. Local community, industry, public sector, activist groups, tourists, workers, competitors and even the media are the usual stakeholders identified. The WTO (1993) groups the key partners to STD into three large groups: industry, environmental protection associations and the local community, which consists of residents, local government and other local institutions. Since the improvement of the quality of life of the residents is the main
objective of tourism development, special attention has been given to the involvement of the population in the decision-making process. Public participation requires listening to different opinions and is rarely an easy or consensual process, and integrating and balancing complex, different and competing interests is difficult. A collaborative type of planning, ideally trying to achieve consensus in decision-making, even though not able to solve all conflicts, offers the opportunity to make a more balanced and informed decision, thereby contributing to the quality of life of the community. Similar relevance is given to the systematic and periodic analysis of the residents' social conditions and their attitudes and perceptions of tourism activity.

The differentiating features of rural tourism include its close association with the quality of the bio-physical environment, a high degree of plural activity among hosts, the importance of local culture and traditions, and the fragility of the rural economy in which it takes place. Accessibility (i.e. the ease with which people can reach, engage with, and use a site or attraction in both location and economic terms) is also a critical factor in the success of rural tourism. In the tourism context, rurality reflects a lifestyle, a set of values and a landscape desirable for its 'difference', relative isolation and pace of living, as well as for its special aesthetic qualities and even its spirituality; 'rural culture' is a key commodity of many rural destinations. The benefits of tourism to rural localities are dependent on a number of variables, including visitor numbers and their length of stay; the extent to which the tourism sector is serviced by local businesses; the proximity of urban centers (which may capture visitor spending on accommodation); the level and quality of local accommodation provision; the extent of tourism facilities such as visitor attractions; and the existence of sites of historic interest.

Tourism in rural areas can encompass many activities focused upon different types of resource, often with cultural and natural components. The range of potential activities that may be undertaken in a rural context include: touring; water-based activities; land-based activities; aerial activities; cultural and educational activities; conservation activities; gastronomic activities; health and fitness activities; and 'metaphysical' activities such as pilgrimage and retreats. Rural tourism goes beyond simply complementing traditional activities such as agriculture, and can act as a catalyst for a whole range of new entrepreneurial activities, partnerships and networks. Inevitably, however, there are contested opinions as to what is desirable in rural tourism development and, moreover, there is no universal agreement about the net benefits of rural tourism.
1.11 RURAL TOURISM AS INTEGRATED TOURISM

While there is much overlap with concepts such as ecological tourism, sustainable tourism and tourism durable, there is little consensus on the meaning of integrated tourism among tourism theorists and practitioners. It is clear that the concept is understood in a number of different ways, for example: institutional integration, as in the integration of agencies into partnerships or other formal semi-permanent structures; economic integration, as in the integration of other economic sectors with tourism, particularly retailing and local industries such as farming; policy integration, as in the integration of tourism with broader national and regional goals for economic growth, diversification and development; and personal integration, as in the integration of tourists into local communities as ‘guests’, such that they occupy the same physical spaces, and satisfy their existential and material needs in the same manner as members of the host society. Tourism literature has tended to define it in terms of the extent to which tourism is integrated into broader economic and social development contexts, goals and decisions (Sharpely, 2000; Swarbrooke, 1999); however, recently, the importance of local participation and control has been emerging, with integration defined according to the percentage of local people employed, the type and degree of participation, decision-making power, and ownership of resources in the local tourism sector (Mitchell & Eagles, 2001).

Clearly, therefore, the term ‘integration’ is both fluid and evolving. On the one hand, the concept of ‘integrated tourism’ can be understood as an aid to understanding tourism’s potential to sustain the rural landscape, and on the other it can be defined as tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human structures of the landscape in which it takes place. In practical terms, it is tourism that has clear connections with local resources, products and inhabitants.

End Words

Rural areas are increasingly adopting ‘cultural markers’ as key resources in the pursuit of local and regional development objectives. The potential range of markers includes regional cuisines, languages, crafts, folklore, cultural sites and landscapes, literary and art activities, music festivals and events. This attempt to localize economic control—“to valorize place through its cultural identity”—has been called the ‘culture economy’ approach to development. The word
Introduction

‘economy’ emphasizes the relationships between resources, production and consumption, while ‘culture’ tries to capture the local scale of interest and what is produced and consumed, rather than where this takes place. The setting of development within a framework smaller than the nation state, and often smaller than administrative regions, shows the importance of conducting analyses at the scale of regional and local landscapes. Conceptually, however, localities are fluid, multi-faceted and dynamic entities, and landscape is not necessarily either culturally or socio-economically homogenous. Local knowledge applied to local resources can be translated into products and into intellectual property, a process which often requires extra-local institutional and regulatory support, as in the case of protected denominations of origin or mechanisms.

Summary:

Rural tourism as an internationally recognised tourism product Rural areas have a special appeal to tourists because of the mystique enshrouding these rural areas with their distinct cultural, historic, ethnic and geographic characteristics. Tourism and its impact on rural communities are becoming increasingly prominent internationally. Special attention is being paid to tourism development in rural areas, where wildlife and indigenous cultures provide numerous opportunities for tourism, rural development and economic growth. Rural tourism is truly global, but little is known about this new tourism product in developing countries. The goals of rural tourism, such as economic growth and diversification, employment generation, increased investment, population retention, infrastructure and facility provision and conservation are fairly standard policy goals, but the actual strategic process by which they can be achieved is not standard. Little attention has been paid to the objective defining process or to strategy formulation. Although tourism is hailed as a tool for regional development, there is rarely a clear conception of rural tourism or of the role of tourism in rural regions or local communities which could inform strategy or planning. This is the background against which strategic guidelines for rural tourism development are considered. Rural tourism is distinctive by its projection of rural life, whether authentic or not. It is generally constructed around the built or natural environment, and includes programmes such as cultural festivals and traditional activities that often re-enact the past or provide a flavor of the traditional local or rural culture and its history. Rural tourism brings together the natural and cultural heritage, and this is what differentiates it from nature-based tourism. Local people and their way of life are a key component of rural tourism.
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Introduction


