Chapter - III

ECO-AGRI-RURAL TOURISM CONCEPT, DEFINATION, MEANING, TYPES AND DISCRIPTION
3.1 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM CONCEPT

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.

With farms as the foundation or core elements, the CORE product domain is defined by on-farm tourism operators. The most common terms used are Agri Tourism and Farm Tourism which refer to the same phenomena as described in the LEADER definition as “hosting” and “holiday’s” but the key meaning relates to the use of tourism as a “supplement to” farm business.
Farm tourism is operational farms engaging in activities of a tourism nature to supplement their agriculture based income. Two categories of product arise from this, Farm Hosting and Farm Holidays. Farm Hosting involves the visitor and host developing a close relationship through shared time, meals and accommodation space. Farm tourism refers to active, working farms that supplement their primary agriculture function with some form of tourism business.
The AUXILLIARY product domain is created by direct and indirect stakeholders in tourism who are concerned with local, rather than on-farm or Regional, State or National issues. 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, food service, arts, crafts and any other direct providers of products or services to tourists.

Finally, the AUGMENTED product is most often the domain where governments or regional networks have influence over the rural tourism experience, but do not directly service tourists. The definitions used by such bodies reflect their broader concerns.
3.2 DEFINITION, MEANING

A) Various Definitions of Eco Agri Rural Tourism

i) 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.

ii) Agro-tourism activities carried out in non urban regions by individuals mainly employed in the primary and secondary sector of the economy.

iii) In Europe ‘rural tourism’ is usually used to describe agri tourism (tourism on farms) but expands to encompass basically all tourism activities in the countryside when needed.

iv) Agri – Tourism, Farm Tourism and Rurally located tourism – Rural tourism can be taken to mean farm tourism or agri tourism, but both are sub components of tourism in rural space. Agri tourism is when the purpose of the visit has a specific agricultural focus such as being with animals, enjoying a vineyard.

v) Farm tourism is when accommodation for rural tourists is provided on farms. The core activity is in the wider rural area (walking, boating) but the vast majority visitors are accommodated on farms, either working farms or farms converted to accommodation facilities.

vi) Rural tourism, or rurally located tourism, can include the above but also campsites, lodges, safari drives, craft
markets, cultural displays, adventure sports, walking trails, heritage sites, musical events indeed any tourist activity taking place in a rural area.

B) Definition

Agro tourism can be defined as activities that go on within the property generating occupations that complement the agricultural activities that continue to make up a part of daily life on the property with greater or lesser intensity. These activities should be understood as part of a process of adding services in the agricultural products and non material values existing on rural properties (landscape, fresh air etc.) using the free time of farm families and sometimes involving hired labour. Some examples of activities associated with agro tourism are ranch resorts, leisure fishing, hunting grounds, country lodging, country restaurants, farmers, makers local handicrafts, home industries and other leisure activities devoted to the revival of the local residents lifestyle.

Meaning

The tourism in the rural milieu consists of leisure activities carried out in the rural zone and includes varying forms defined on the supply side; rural tourism, ecological tourism or eco tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism, business tourism, youth tourism, social tourism, health tourism and sports tourism. The following activities are included in this concept like rural spas, rural convention centers, places for executive training, natural sports resorts, trekking, visits to relatives and friends, visit to museums, churches, landmarks and historical buildings, festivals, rodeos and regional shows, visits to
scenic landscapes and the natural environment, regional gourmet, camping sites, vacation camps, country hotels, ranch resorts, nature sports, such as canoeing, mountain climbing, fishing, hunting, country homes and town houses as second residences, among others. Therefore, tourism in the rural milieu involves leisure activities and forms of tourism practiced in rural areas, including besides agro tourism, activities that are not closely related to the productive agricultural properties of a region.

Presently, the urban population has been going for eco tourism as a way of relief from the daily routine of big cities. For this reason, it is one of the most dynamic emerging markets in our country.

As in the case of other forms of tourism, there are various concepts of eco tourism, however, the one that in our opinion best summarizes its particularities is Ceballos-lascurain’s (1987) “Eco-tourism is the act of taking a journey to natural areas that are relatively undisturbed or contaminated. The specific objective of the journey is studying, admiring or enjoying landscape and the wild fauna and flora, as well as any cultural manifestations, that take place in these areas”.

In most cases, eco tourism tends to generate little income for the local rural population. Visits are generally planned by travel agencies of large urban centers that barely employ local staff.

C) Agri Tourism, Definition and Meaning

Defining Agri Tourism – Agri tourism is defined as travel, which combines agricultural or rural settings with products of agricultural operations all within a tourism experience. The product
can be “experience itself”. Agri tourism can be defined as “A range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income for their business.

Meaning

Rural Tourism includes;

1. Agri Tourism: Tourism on the farms enables farmers to diversify their activities while enhancing the value of their products and property. Farm tourism also helps to reconcile farming interests and environmental protection through integrated land management in which farmers continue to play a key role. Tourists who choose farm accommodation rather than other kinds of accommodation facilities look for genuine rural atmosphere where they can share intimacy of the household they live in learn traditional crafts and skills with their hosts, make friends. Modern times we have almost forgotten these simple joys of life and above all enjoy home made food and drinks. Some specific food labels can help consumers establish a local produce and can be used as a selling point to tourist who want to taste home grown quality food and drink.

2. Heritage and cultural tourism in rural areas comes in a wide range of forms most of which are unique to an individual local and a valuable component of the rural tourism product. Heritage and cultural tourism includes
temples, rural buildings but may be extended to local features of interest including war remnants, monuments to famous literary, artistic or scientific people, historic remains, archeological sites, traditional parkland etc.

3. Eco Tourism: Many tourists visit rural areas for the purpose of bird and animal watching and learning about local flora and fauna.

Rural tourist destination as a product is definitely very fragile in ecological, social and cultural sense. Its development requires very specific approach that could help it remain sustainable in the long term.

Rural Tourist Destination – A Product: There are some critical factors responsible in the evaluation and development of rural tourism as a product. Some of these are:

- Changes in the preferences and needs of visitors.
- Destination of the natural and manmade environment.
- Change or disappearance of those attractions, which brought tourists to the area.
- Identification of potential consumer.
- Understanding the rural tourists buying behavior.

To be competitive rural tourism destination must possess basic tourist requirements.

- Such as hygienic accommodation and catering.
- It should be connected with the farm accommodation.
3.3 TYPES AND DESCRIPTION (AGRI – TOURISM)

a) Agri Tourism

Of all the characterizations of tourism in rural areas, agri tourism is perhaps the easiest to define. Many of the functionaries in rural tourism already agree about what agri tourism is and consensus appears to be grounded in on farm experiences. This includes farm stay, farm host and farm holiday experience. Where this document departs from the existing characterizations, is in strictly defining agri tourism as the eco tourism niche that the LEADER programmes use.

As an eco tourism product, agri tourism is on farm experiences where the tourist participates in the daily activities on farm and experiences the realities of rural living. The tourist’s desire is to share farm life and learn from the host, and in this sense is an experiential learning and self discovery experience. The farms are viable, working businesses that derive nearly all of their income from agricultural production.

These experiences are truly (intrinsically) authentic, in that they require a willingness for both the host and guest to develop.

b) Country Side Tourism

This term accommodates all of the other terms used to describe tourism in rural areas not captured by Agri tourism or Touri-agriculture. Countryside tourism is any tourist activity that takes place in the country side. The landscape, culture and activities available are the essence.

County side Tourism is broad enough to include non farm based offerings, such as bed and breakfast, local museums, cafes and
restaurants, arts and crafts, rural tours and the various types of farm stay where the degree of dependence on tourism and hence the extent to which the product is pitched for tourists, goes beyond the coincidental involvement described with agri tourism. The appeal to tourists is wider than that of Agri tourism or Rural Theme park and the experiences are a mix of staged and intrinsically authentic. It encapsulates important aspects of and experiences in the wider landscape beyond the concentration on farms. The influence of rural aesthetics is critical. It is conceptually located between Agri tourism and Touri agriculture because the experiences are a mix of authentic and staged experiences founded on the rural character of place.

c) Touri – Agriculture

In an effort to clearly distinguish the range of product offerings in rural tourism a new term is offered which more accurately reflects the true nature of providers at the Rural Theme park end of the product experience spectrum. Touri agriculture is the “farming” of tourists, where the cropping activity on farm is of tourism. Like other agricultural activities, it is located geographically in farming areas and is hence geographically authentic, requires the correct preparation of the “ground” before planting of the right seed to produce a crop. If done well, the reaped harvest provides an excellent return for working the land.

The term is generated by stating the primary purposes of the business first, hence touri agriculture. It distinguishes rural farm based businesses that are entirely or substantially dependent on tourism for income from traditional farms, as these businesses do not farm the
land in the traditional agricultural sense. It is distinct from agri
tourism in that the farmer seeks to appeal to the tourists perception
and romanticized ideal of rural life, and to exploit this by staging an
experience that reflects the tourists expectation. In agri tourism the
primary activity on farm is traditional agricultural pursuits and the
tourism activity is coincidental. In touri agriculture there is often a
complete absence of traditional farming activity, although the
properties have usually been productive farms in the past.

d) **Health Farm Tourism**

The Health Farm Tourism should be located in an area, which
is free from pollution and noise, and have a generally salubrious and
health promoting environment. There should be at least 20 let table
rooms with attached bathrooms. It should have at least six of the
following facilities:

1. Health Club
2. Gymnasium
3. Yoga / Meditation Area
4. Outdoor Exercise Areas
5. Indoor Games
6. Outdoor Games
7. Swimming Pool
8. Classroom
9. Jogging Tracks
10. Horse Riding Facility

It should include a farm to grow fruits, vegetables, herbs, and
grains (admeasuring at least 500 sq. mtrs.). It should be located on a
plot admeasuring at least 5000 sq. mtrs. It should have medical, paramedical personnel, alternative system of Medicine, Health Specialist, Diet Specialist, and such other full time staff of at least two persons.

Pioneering experiments in farm tourism started in foreign countries and they introduced novel ideas in farm tourism.

REFERENCES
03. Ibid, pg 276-277.
08. Bramwell B : *Rural Tourism and Sustainable Rural Tourism*.
09. Lokrajya.