



Study of Rural tourism its Driving Forces and Benefits

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Introduction : Rural tourism simply means a form of tourism taking place in rural areas or settlements, providing employment and income to local population and offering individualized holiday products to consumers. Rural tourism is based on accommodation service which is complemented by additional services and facilities relying on the local social, cultural and natural resources, which are exploited according to the principles of sustainable development.

According to Rátz & Puczko, it seems to be simple to define rural tourism as ‘tourism that takes place in the countryside’, but this definition does not include the complexity of the activity and the different forms and meanings developed in different countries. According to a broader definition, ‘rural tourism includes a range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourists to their area in order to generate extra income for their business’. If this broader concept is accepted, rural tourism covers not only farm tourism, which is what rural tourism means for most people, but also special interest nature holidays, touring in rural areas, and the services include accommodation plus events, festivities, gastronomy, outdoor recreation, production and sale of handicrafts and agricultural products, etc. (Rátz & Puczko 1998). However, it is impossible to find a concrete universal definition of rural tourism. It can be different from country to country and time to time, but it has many potential benefits for including employment growth, an expanded economic base, repopulation, social improvement, and revitalization of local crafts. At the same time, tourism is not the solution to all the problems that are there in the rural areas but it has number of positive attractions. It is one of the many opportunities that rural communities might consider to improve productivity and income.

2.2.1 Driving forces of rural tourism

During this research, the author read quite a deal of articles and texts written by different authors and he came up with a summary in general about the major driving forces of rural tourism.

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- This is a modern age or the age of urbanization. Most of the people live in big cities amidst the monotonous hustle and bustle of the busy city life. All the noise pollution and not so natural surroundings of the cities wear people out sometimes and they want to escape to rural settings where they can have that stress-free life and the opportunity to re-engage with a simpler, quieter way of life that offers rest and relaxation.
- Attractive advertisements on different media, curiosity and boredom created by visiting traditional touristic destinations repeatedly might also attract the tourists towards the rural settings for some rural tourism.
- Desire to be close to nature.
- Also because these days all the transportation and communication facilities have made the rural places more accessible.
- Rural areas are often perceived as healthier, with fresher air and food and the opportunity for outdoor recreation.
- Rural destinations also portray special culture, art and way of life of their own which are very attractive to people.
- Desire for authentic experiences including talking with local people because authenticity is believed to be found in genuine country experiences and lifestyles.

2.2.2 Benefits of rural tourism

Rural tourism is beneficial not only to the local people but also to the tourists, government and the landscape. The author has listed down some of the important benefits of rural tourism:

- Rural tourism is obviously a small scale industry so it cannot create jobs like the government itself, but it can help in the job retention. Especially it helps in increasing the flow of retailing, transportation, hospitality, medical care, farming and fishery.
- It creates jobs for the local people in tourism related places like hotels, catering, retailing, transportation, communication and heritage interpretation.
- It definitely gives opportunity to the youth of the place to get involved in tourism related activities.
- It helps the new businesses boom. Handicraft business and local food business come in



demand when the flow of tourists increases.

- It helps in the preservation of rural culture and heritage, because when people understand that their culture and heritage are the source of their prosperity, they are inspired to preserve their culture and heritage.
- Tourism brings money and that money could be used on the maintenance of the place.
- Environment of the place is also improved because like in our daily life, when we are expecting visitors, we clean the house as much as we can; local people try to keep their village clean for the tourists.

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