

APPROACH TO THE CONCEPT OF RURAL TOURISM

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Abstract: *This work on the concept of rural tourism approaches resulted chronological various definitions of rural tourism over the past 25 years in the literature. Although it seems simple to define rural tourism as tourism that takes place in rural areas of the country, this definition does not include the complexity of the forms developed different meanings in different countries so far. Therefore, rural tourism includes tourism activity itself (accommodation, guesthouse, tourist movement, running programs, provision of basic services and supplementary) - economic activities (mainly agriculture, but also the practice of traditional occupations) and how to party leisure segment, for those who require this type of tourism. Rural tourism develops in close connection with the local economy, which leads to interdependence between tourism activities and local economy.*

Keywords: *definitions, concepts, tourism, rural*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the economic activity that is organized and conducts recreational travel or other purposes, achieved through organizations, specialized agents, companies or on their own for a limited time and industry that contribute to tourist needs.

The first significant scientific studies and research on tourism were made in the 1970 year. By then most of the studies show positive implications of tourism and trying to promote tourism.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

For analysis of several aspects of rural tourism research was conducted by scientific reading, organization and systematization of information and ultimately benchmarking data, performed both in theory and in practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Chronological addressing various definitions of rural tourism over the past 25 years in the literature revealed the following study.

Rural tourism as terminology, is composed of two terms: tourism and rural. Tourism is an economic activity characterized by a set of goods and services to peoples, tourists, taking part in such activity, and the rural is viewed differently from one country to another [11] (Randall 1985, Robinson 1990): Italy and Spain localities to 10,000 inhabitants, Austria, until 1000 inhabitants and density to 400 inhabitants/km², Denmark up to 200 inhabitants and in Scotland to 100 inhabitants/km².

Perhaps the simplest definition of rural tourism is given by H. Grolleau "rural tourism is a concept that includes all tourism activities taking place in rural areas" [4].

The same Grolleau's opinion and in the same work we find a more generous definition, more inclusive[4] "rural tourism is a concept that includes tourism activities organized and managed by local people and is based on a good connection with the environment, natural and human".

Does rural tourism have intrinsic qualities or it's just a simple tourist activity that takes place in a rural setting [5]? If so, what are those features that rural tourism should have in order to really merit the attribute of rural? Some features could be: approach to nature, not crowded, quiet, an environment "non-mechanized", personal contacts (as opposed to irrationalism and anonymous from urban), etc.

Rural tourism is the kind of tourism that have the following features [10]:

- ✓ is located in rural area;
- ✓ is functionally countryside, that is built on the typical features of the rural world: small businesses, enterprises, open spaces, contact with nature and the natural world, cultural heritage, societies and traditional practices;
- ✓ is the area kind scale, ie small in terms of buildings, settlements, and streams;
- ✓ is traditional in character;
- ✓ is locally controlled and developed long-term benefit of local community;
- ✓ is varied, corresponding rural complexity.

Exactly the same definition [1] is used by Professor Alecu, in 2006, quoting Page and Professor Nistoreanu [9] in 2010 year.

Addressing the rural tourism sector like any other economic activity to progress together with profit for those involved, it requires several components [14]: attractions, investment, appropriate infrastructure, good and diversified services, hospitality and advertising. To run this set of factors, the involvement of entrepreneurs and government needs to join.

A group of teachers from the Academy of Economic Studies from Bucharest consulted literature sources in English, French, German and Spanish, which then they have harmonized and developed the following definition "Rural tourism is an activity focused on destinations in rural areas, having a functional accommodation structure and other heterogeneous services." [12]

According to several authors, the lack of a widely accepted and total comprehensive definition, the term commonly used is "green tourism", to distinguish it from other forms of tourism, such as "white tourism" for winter sports, "blue tourism" for sea holidays and "tourism of lights" for urban tourism [3].

The LEADER program defines rural tourism as "all activities practiced in rural area" The rural tourism is a concept covering tourism activity undertaken and managed by local people and based on local human potential and natural potential [7].

According to Nilsson (2002), the rural tourism is based on rural area, farm and the farmer, but based on the idea that rural tourism should be a complementary activity to agriculture though from research works [2] it was found that the tourists are not overlz interested in farms.

After 23 years, the exact same simple definition presented by Grolleau in 1987, "Rural tourism is a concept that includes all tourism activities taking place in rural areas" is categorized as widely accepted by professor Nistoreanu [9].

Rural tourism covers all tourist activities placed in the villages in rural areas beyond the areas affected by coastal or mountain resorts [8].

According to the methodology adopted by the romanian Ministry of Tourism , the

Research Center for promoting the international tourism and ANTREC association, rural tourism embraces all tourist activities carried out in rural areas, aiming the capitalization of natural potential and villages [13].

For the purposes of the World Tourism Organization and many European associations, rural tourism is a form of tourism that includes any tourist activity in rural areas organized and led by local people, taking advantage of local tourism resources (natural, cultural, historical, human) and tourist facilities and structures, including hostels and agritourism farms [15].

Simple definitions are used by most of the authors in the field, authors who cited works on Google Scholars [6]

Citations from 1970 - 2007		Citations from 1998 - 2007	
author	No. citations in Google Scholars	author	No. citations in Google Scholars
Crompton John	3382	Hall Michael	1311
Urry John	2626	Buhalis Dimitrios	967
Hall Michael	2530	Urry John	954
Cohen Erik	2216	MacCannell Dean	923
Butler Richard	1841	Williams Allan	654

CONCLUSIONS

So it seems simple to define rural tourism as tourism that takes place in rural areas of the country, but this definition does not include the complexity of activities, different forms and the meanings developed in different countries so far.

"Rural tourism is a concept that includes all tourism activities taking place in rural areas". But there are specialists who consider that a trip with a carriage or a picnic or other activity carried out during the day in a remote corner of the country, could not be considered "rural tourism".

"Rural tourism is a concept that includes tourism activities organized and run by local people and is based on a close connection with the environment, natural and human." This definition omits involvement in rural tourism activities of organizations or individuals outside the local community (tour operators, investors, and so on).

To distinguish the rural tourism from the urban tourism we can draw a parallel between the two types:

Rural tourism	Tourism in urban
takes place in an open space	an acute lack of space
rural settlements have less than 10 000 inhabitants	Over 10000 people
is sparsely populated	Extremely populated
outdoor activities	indoors
underdeveloped infrastructure	Well defined;
family businesses	national or international scale
activities extended to agriculture	independent
distance between work and home is small	significant
influenced by seasonality and agricultural works	is less affected by seasonality
number of people who attend rural areas (guests) is small	significant
relationships that are established between host and tourist are personal	formal
amateur management	professional
equipment and old buildings generally	new

relaxing atmosphere, quiet, new, no templates	trends of industrialization, automation and oversimplification, lack of personalization of services, reducing tension and keeping warm hospitality and urban stress
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Corroborating previous definitions we can conclude that rural tourism is the kind of tourist services in rural areas, services involving investors, tour operators, local and central governments. These services include accommodation, meals (with a focus on traditional local cuisine) and all leisure activities according to the desires of tourists.

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