

Impact of Tourism on Rural Development

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Abstract

Among the many activities man contributes to environmental damage are tourism activities, carried out irrationally and uncontrolled, in the land. Unlike other negative impacts on the environment of some activities such as agricultural ones – whose effects can be, hopefully, rather limited – tourism can contribute significantly not only to stop the degradation of the natural landscape, but also to protect and conserve the environment by adopting specific, efficient regulations.

Keywords: ecotourism, environmental conservation, rural area, sustainable development, sustainable tourism

1. Introduction

Relief, hydrographical network, landscape, spa natural resources, nature monuments, etc., to which we should also add anthropic resources such as architectural and art monuments, archaeological and historical sites, etc. are components of the environment and also tourism offer and attraction resources that favour multiple forms of tourism such as hiking, relaxation and recreation tourism, health tourism or cultural tourism, etc. The more varied, complex, and genuine these resources are, the more attractive they are and the more diversified the activities they generate are thus responding to a wide variety of tourism motivations [1, 3].

Therefore, the tourism – environment relationship is of particular importance with environmental protection and conservation as a first rate condition for tourism development. Any destructive or changing activity impacting the most important features of the environment has a negative impact on tourism potential, i.e. reducing or even exhausting its resources and its ecological

balance, which endangers, ultimately, the health and even the existence of future generations [2].

2. Materials and methods

To edit the present paper, we have studied specialty materials concerning the impact of tourism activities on the environment and on sustainable development, as well as scientific works concerning the extinction of some plant species because of uncontrolled, irresponsible tourism activities.

3. Results and discussion

Some researchers [3] consider that tourism has two different types of impact on the environment: positive and negative. **Positive effects** - tourism-aimed environmental conservation activities: ecotourism, sustainable tourism, nature tourism, responsible tourism. **Negative effects:** environmental pollution; ecosystems degradation; environmental aesthetics diminution. Destructive tourism activities result in improper use of the environment for recreational and leisure purposes together with man's brutal intervention on the

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landscape and on natural resources. The lack of regulations concerning visitors' behaviour and of monitoring of the area or of the sites favours environmental quality damaging activities that endanger the integrity and conservation of the sites. Such cases are more and more numerous in Romania:

In areas or on tourism sites outside marked routes specially managed that attract large numbers of visitors particularly during week-ends and where the tourism traffic is uncontrolled. We should mention here the extinction of some flower species caused by the abusive flora picking – particularly plants declared monuments of the nature – and the neglect of the serious implications of uncontrolled activities on environmental factors. This is the case of some plant species protected by the law because critically threatened such as *edelweiss* (*Leontopodium alpinum* Cass.), *mountain carnation* (*Dianthus tenuifolius*) and its variety *Piatra Craiului carnation*.

- Pollution has increased because of the enduro or motorist tourism in places not long ago inaccessible to this means of transportation.
- The misconception surrounding the valorisation of natural resources, in general, and cure natural factors, in particular, affect tourism potential through its non-scientific and irrational exploitation and through improper tourism investments. This results in the following:
 - neglect of the main general principles of protection and exploitation of spa mineral substances, mineral and thermal-mineral waters, in particular, such as:
 - protecting hydrological and sanitary areas from pollutants;
 - avoiding the exhaustion of resources;
 - carrying out geological works in accordance with research stipulations and specialty projects;
 - limiting resources depending on homologated spa mineral substances;
 - protecting and avoiding other activities that could damage the cure factor (e.g., therapeutic sludge);
 - over sizing resorts from the point of view of their holding and cure.

- Lack of systematisation of tourism localities, particularly of resorts, agri-tourism farms, and rural boarding houses;
- Improper facilities for cave visitation – very highly attractive tourism sites: made without observing specific techniques, these works result in total or partial degradation; such is the case of the Peștera Muierii (Parâng Mountains), of the Peștera Ialomiței (Bucegi Mountains).

4. Conclusions

In its essence, the concept sustainable development claims wise usage and conservation of the resources in order to maintain their long-term viability. The success of the formula is due to the following two aspects:

- the perspective of development for the defenders of continuous growth;
- the perspective of sustainability for the environmentalists and for the defender of slow growth.

As a conclusion, we can say that sustainable development is an attractive opportunity to continue economic growth without exhausting the sustainable capacity of the natural environment, of the socio-cultural environment, and of the economic environment.

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