

Tourism-Environment Impact Relationship on the Romanian Black Sea Coast

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Abstract

Tourism-environment relationship is very important, protection and preservation of the environment representing the primordial way for tourism development. Thus, planning and management for tourism growth is becoming essential in the context of sustainable development. Coastal areas are normally associated with mass tourism, large scale construction and infrastructure, intensive land development and extensive urbanization ,especially in case of resorts. The present paper aims to identify the key features which may intervene in the tourist development on the Romanian Black Sea Coast perceived as limits, constraints and bottlenecks on the basis of which tourism management decisions have to be taken. In this respect, the study will take into consideration the concept of tourism carrying capacity, meaning the maximum acceptable level of tourist development in an area and intend to stress out the main steps to implement this instrument to be used in the analysis of tourist potential but also as a policy tool in a strategy of tourist development for the Romanian Black Sea coast.

Key words: tourism, environment, sustainable, development, impact.

J.E.L. classification: L83,O13,O44,Q01,Q55

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest industries of the world and also one of the most important factors of global economic development. In the meantime, tourism industry is a space and resources consumer, participating implicitly to degradation and pollution of the environment and tourism potential. Among the many activities that can contribute to environmental destruction are included also tourism activities, when are developed irrational and uncontrolled in territory. The relationship between tourism and environment is a complex and two-sided one : on the one hand , the natural environment through its components , provides basic resources for the tourism sector , on the other hand tourism has an impact both positive and negative on the ecological environment , by transforming its components. Natural resources varied and complex, but mostly unspoiled and free from destructive activities, increase attraction and generate diversified activities, responding thus to varied motivations of tourism. Protection and preservation of the environment and tourism potential is emerging as a distinct activity, with specific problems which require the collaboration of specialists from various fields. It is obviously clear that the policies improving environmental sustainability are crucial factors , representing how a country can ensure that will continue to be an attractive destination in the future. One of the principles of sustainable tourism is that tourism development must comply with the characteristics of the venue /environmental, social, economic, cultural.(Nistoreanu,2008)

Consequently, the environmental impact of tourism in coastal areas shows specific issues also. Romanian Black Sea coast has a complex composition from the point of view of natural resources,

which increase the value of tourism and therewith generating an increasing need for focus on a well-observed development of tourism according to standards that guarantee the preservation of ecological balance and avoid the overuse of resources, pollution and other negative environmental effects. The main anthropogenic pressures identified in the Romanian coastal zone are related to increased development of socio-economic activities in the countryside of the coastal zone, of which tourism plays an important role.

2. Impact factors

Environmental quality is affected generally by two groups of essential factors: objective factors, resulting in the manifestation of adverse natural phenomena and subjective factors caused by human activities. Tourism-environment relationship is of great importance, protection and conservation of environment representing the primordial condition for tourism deployment and development. Tourism-environment relationship is of great importance, protection and conservation representing the primordial condition for deployment and development of tourism. This connection is complex and manifested in both directions. The natural environment through its components are basic resources of tourism, and on the other hand tourism activity has influence both positive and negative on the ecological environment, modifying its components. (Mazilu, 2007)

The relationships established between the two elements, namely the environment as factor and tourism as an activity, there are positive and negative influences. (Căpitan, 2015) The complexity of this relationship can be summarized as follows:

- **Environmental impact of tourism** determine: resource consumption; loss of cultivable surfaces;

land degradation; large amounts of household waste; decreasing purchasing power of the natives;

local architectural characteristics change and depends on the diversity impact. (Croitoru, 2007)

Negative effects of tourism activities is manifested mainly through improper use of environment in recreational and leisure purposes, coupled with a brutal intervention of man on the landscape and natural resources. And that happens especially in areas of great attraction, located in populated areas, or in close proximity to large urban agglomerations.

On the Romanian Black Sea coastal areas are frequently encountered the following situations with negative environmental impacts: uncontrolled travel circulation; lack of precise demarcations for resting places and camping in tourist areas or along routes; the harmful effect of automobile tourism felt through increased traffic in the resorts; misconception to exploit natural resources, especially natural cure factors affecting the tourism potential; improperly intensive visits to historical, architectural and art monuments; improper achieve of touristic investment objectives or un systematized development of tourist villages, especially resorts.

On the other hand it must be recognized that tourism can make their own contribution, significant not only to stop the degradation of the natural environment caused by activities undertaken, but also in the direction of protecting and preserving the environment by adopting specific regulations and effective.

- **Environmental influences on tourism**- natural tourism potential being given by the attractiveness of physical and geographical elements, such as: the relief like support of tourism activities; climate, microclimates, water and biosphere as tourism resources, existing protected areas. These influences could be perceived positive or negative depending on temporal dimension and destination nature. All these influences are encountered in the tourism activities on the Romanian Black Sea coastal areas.

Other aspects that can be considered and that may influence the socio-economic sphere are: an increasing awareness on the environment and its elements; more financial support for the environment; changes in the lifestyle of the locals; increasing the labor employment in the region; additional revenue from recreational activities; infrastructure development.

3. Tourism carrying capacity

Defined as the maximum acceptable level of tourist development in an area, the tourism carrying capacity (TCC) issues concern the number of tourists, visitor flows and spatial patterns of concentration/dispersion vis-à-vis the protection of nature and the functioning of ecosystems but also the quality of experience of visitors. (Coccosis et al, 2002)

Speaking about the carrying capacity, three components are taken into consideration: physical-ecological, sociodemographic and political-economic, which acquire different weight or importance in different destinations. These differences depend on particularities of the place, the type of tourism and the tourism-environment interface and are interrelated to some extent.

Coastal areas are among the most popular world tourist destinations and are normally associated with mass tourism, large scale construction and infrastructure, intensive land development and extensive urbanisation. Setting capacity limits for sustaining tourism activity in a place involves a vision about local development and decisions about managing tourism. Carrying capacity issues for the coastal areas usually refers to: tourist density, the use of beaches and tourist infrastructure, congestion of facilities, sea pollution, etc.

Coastal areas present a complexity of tourism potential with natural ingredients (beaches, sea, bio-climate, cliff mountainous landscapes, plateau or offshore islands, sometimes natural treatment factors (see Romania and others) but also created by humans (historical cultural relics, port facilities, rural settlements and urban tourist equipment). According to a study of National Institute of Research Development in Tourism, tourist resorts of the Romanian coast of the Black Sea are generally sized according to area of beaches, but for some resorts should be taken into consideration the existence of natural therapeutic factors that may also attract a large number of tourists (Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Saturn). The Romanian Black Sea Coast, through its position at the crossroads sea-land, configuration and dimensions of the beach (usually narrow and limited in size) is a fragile environment, both because of the dynamics of marine processes, leading to constant changes and sometimes deep (see beach Mamaia and cliff from Saturn) and pressure from tourists. All these are key elements in finding appropriate models for planning and organization of space on the coast. (INCDT, 2015)

Glavan, V. identify the following categories in terms of optimum tourism carrying capacity:

- *ecological*: which refers to how tourism affects the ecosystem and its restoration cost;
- *physical*: targeting the tourism development at which the facilities of the territory are saturated or begin to show damaged;
- *social - perceive*: which refers to the system of linkages between the saturation's level of locals and tourists reactions;
- *economic*: that express the location ability to absorb the tourist functions without negative consequences on the environment;
- *psychological*: expressing the level of comfort that tourists perceive at the destination area;
- *the exchange capacity*: representing a level of exploitation of a tourist destination, up to that maximum satisfaction is offered to tourists without having consequences on tourism resources or environment. (Glavan, 2003)

In spite of much literature, there is limited evidence of the TCC's application in practice. Implementation of TCC needs to be considered as a process within a planning process for tourism development. Overall measuring Tourism Carrying Capacity does not have to lead to a single number, like the number of visitors, the advice of specialists being to provide an upper and a lower limit of TCC, taking into consideration all the components involved, as previously explained. In this respect, we will take into consideration the concept and intend to stress out the main steps to implement this instrument to be used in the analysis of tourist potential but also as a policy tool in a strategy of tourist development for the Romanian Black Sea coast.

Using as a model a study that took into account coastal areas in Europe, we consider that the planning process of implementing TCC should include the following steps:

- Analysis of the system / identification of issues for the 3 components: Physical-Ecological ; Socio-Demographic and Political –Economic;
- Analysis of tourism development: Type and level of tourism development, flows, activities, tourist product, existing restrictions, etc.;

- Assessment- using the SWOT analyze/Identification of bottlenecks and constraints/Definition of Critical factors;
- Formulation of goals and objectives/definition of priorities/Definition of indicators, thresholds and desired levels;
- Elaboration of alternative courses of action (options)/ Impact Assessment of the various options;
- Selection of preferable option/Definition of TCC on the basis of key Critical factors;
- Strategy Formulation/TCC Policy Measures;
- Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation/TCC Indicators . (Coccosis et al,2002)

Following to be customized to the specific issues on each of the three components and in terms of indicators ,this proposal can become the basis for a useful working tool for stakeholders and also to implement strategies targeting the management of tourism/ environment relationship in the Black Sea coastal area.

4. Conclusions

Opportunities for sustainable tourism development and preservation of its competitiveness, is largely influenced by the quality of the environment, to preserve and attractive natural and cultural heritage and other values, goods and resources. Coastal areas are considered as the most valuable parts of many countries' territories, either with respect to their natural and environmental qualities or with regard to the their potential for national socio-economic development. The Black Sea has always had a great geopolitical importance for the riparian states, and Romania has the advantage of benefiting from a bidding geostrategic position in the Black Sea, tourism being an activity that can have a really big impact on sustainable development in this area. In spite of efforts tourism development is still of seasonal character. Seasonal overconcentration leads to increased pressure to environmental and cultural resources. Deterioration of limited water resources and urbanization along the coast are some of the major impacts of tourism development, but not the only. Marine spatial planning (MSP) is considered a key governance approach in delivering a sustainable maritime economy based on a healthy and productive marine and inland environment. Tourism carrying capacity (TCC) needs to be regarded as a management tool in this planning process, in order to maintain a balance between the tourism and the maritime and inland environment at the Romanian Black Sea Coast.

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