THE EFFECTS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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Abstract

In this paper we have approached aspects related to an issue of present interest referring to the necessity of promoting a management of sustainable tourism so that we can have a development of this sector with respect for the environment, while bringing prosperity to the different local communities.

The objectives of this study concern the necessity of promoting a sustainable tourism, which is based on a series of documents developed by The World Tourism Organization and other bodies, as the program “Agenda 21 for the industry of travel and tourism: towards a sustainable development” is. The study also highlights a series of indicators of life quality, emphasizing the role the tourism has in improving the life quality.

Key words: management, sustainable development, life quality, tourism

JEL Classification: L83, M10

1. Introduction

The development of the sustainable tourism meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and increasing the chances and opportunities for future. It is seen as a way of management of all the resources in such a way that the economic, social and aesthetic needs to be fully satisfied, maintaining, at the same time, the cultural integrity, the essential ecological dimensions, the biological diversity and the life system.

Sustainability for tourism, as well as for other industries, has three interdependent aspects: economic, socio-cultural and environmental. Sustainable development involves permanence, which means that the sustainable tourism requires the optimal use of resources (including the biological diversity) and of negative, socio-cultural and ecological impact, maximizing the benefits on local communities, national economies and on nature conservation. As a natural consequence, sustainability refers to the management structures necessary to accomplish these desiderata.

The purpose of achieving a sustainable tourism should be subordinated to regional and national plans of social and economic development. Actions may cover:

- Economic targets (gains growth, the diversification and integration of activities, the control, the enhancement and zoning of development);
- Social areas (the amelioration of poverty and of the inequality of incomes distribution, the protection of the indigenous socio-cultural patrimony, the participation and involvement of local community);
- Ecological areas (the protection of ecosystems functions, the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity).

Some professionals prefer to talk about a sustainable development of tourism, rather than a sustainable tourism, for at least two reasons: one would be that, in order to ensure a sustainable tourism it should be integrated into all the aspects of development, and the second is that some aspects and components of tourism – such as long distance air transport – can simply not be sustainable under current technologies, even with the use of the best practices.

The impact of tourism, seen on economic and socio-cultural plan and in relation to environment and biological diversity, includes positive and negative aspects. In the socio-economic and cultural dimension of tourism development, the negative impact on different segments of the population may include the social degradation of local communities, the effect on customs, traditions and lifestyle and the effect on the occupation level structure and incomes distribution.

On the ecologic plan, the negative impact may take into account the depreciation of human resources, the alteration of ecosystems, the contamination and pollution from different sources due to tourism activities, waste production, and the alienation of fauna and species.
In building up a sustainable development policy, the assessment of the economic effects of tourism development is important and, consequently, both the positive impact should be taken into consideration – which, in most cases, does not require any additional argument – and also the negative impact.

From this perspective, a closer analysis of the negative effects is useful in order to provide the opportunity of developing some actions to eliminate the disadvantages and increase the benefits of developing this sector of activity.

2. The system of sustainable development indicators

It is a widely recognized fact that sustainable development includes, simultaneously, social, economic and environmental objectives. Consequently, the evaluation of sustainable development requires the approaching of these areas and their interaction by focusing the attention on different types of capital. It is difficult to build an integrated system of indicators, which meet these needs, so the conditions for completeness of information to be ensured.

The economic, social and ecological dimensions of the sustainable development can be captured by indicators of connection, of relation among these areas, indicators about which we can say that they are at the border among the indicators of the three types of capital, as shown in the next figure:

![Diagram of sustainable development indicators](image-url)

**Figure nr.1 System of sustainable development indicators – processing United Statistics Division**

In a wider context of use, economic development means economic growth, accompanied by other factors such as ensuring the sustainability of economic growth and increasing the total welfare, which means, for example, corresponding changes in gains distribution and economy structure.

An important aspect is that, in July 2011, a resolution was adopted by UN, which however does not have a tying judicial nature that happiness should become the index of a country’s development.
One can speak of a state where the overwhelming majority of population understands the harmony among health, education, culture, material values and faith as happiness, passed on as an economic value and where the leaders put the welfare of citizens above their own interests. We can therefore speak of a new form of globalization.

If we look at the “Human Development Index”, as an indicator of connection, to the amount of which tourism contributes, we can see, in the table below, that Romania falls in group II, [4], having the position 50:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>HDI Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very high Human Development Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Norway</td>
<td>0.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Australia</td>
<td>0.850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Netherlands</td>
<td>0.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. USA</td>
<td>0.837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. New Zealand</td>
<td>0.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Canada</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ireland</td>
<td>0.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Barbados</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very high Human Development Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Uruguay</td>
<td>0.658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Palau</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Romania</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Human Development Report 2011 – Sustainability and Equity

The maximization of global welfare, described by the concept of sustainable development, requires taking into consideration the environmental system with all its components: of state, pressure, impact and response. The need of an integrated approach may be accomplished by realising some researches in quantitative terms. Scientific approaches, including specific surveys, can be used to identify or confirm the most prominent environmental issues, locally, regionally or globally.

As it shown, there are plenty of indicators that aim to characterize the economic development, taking into account aspects such as quality of life and human development. The main philosophy of these indicators is to move attention from maximizing the income per capita to minimizing the poverty. The issue concerns not only how much is produced, but what is produced, on what ways, for whom and with what impact.

Tourism has the potential to contribute to promoting social development through the effects on the employment plan, income redistribution and poverty alleviation. The hospitality industry can help to the re-evaluation of the position of customs and traditions, constituting itself as a means of transmitting the cultural values. This also leads to a sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity and environment.

3. The effects of the sustainable tourism for urban communities

Tourism can bring, if properly planned, developed and managed, substantially benefits. These positive effects refer to the following aspects. [6]:

- The new jobs generated by tourism development. In particular, tourism can provide jobs for youth, women and local minority ethnic groups. Jobs in tourism are not only those related to hotels, restaurants and other travel companies, but also other sectors such as agriculture, fishing and manufacturing industry. In some less developed economic areas, jobs provided by tourism can reduce the youth migration in searching for jobs;

- Tourism development can stimulate the development of local tourism companies. Tourism generates opportunities for local investment of capital to create jobs, to increase the income and profits realized by enterprises and, particularly for developing a type of enterprises that did not exist in the area;
The income growth generated by new jobs and the existence of tourism companies, involves the improvement of the standards of living for locals. If the commercial enterprises are run and owned by investors, profits also remain in the area;

Tourism generates income from local taxes, which can be used to improve the community facilities, services and infrastructure;

The employees in tourism area learn new skills and become familiar with new technologies, which lead to the development of local human resources. Some of these skills are transferable to other economic activities;

It is a necessary to develop an adequate infrastructure for tourism (schools, water supply systems, electricity, telecommunications and waste management). This infrastructure must be designed to serve the local communities so that they benefit from improvements. Tourism development allows the recovery of infrastructure improvement cost;

Tourism can provide new markets for local products, such as the agricultural and fisheries, arts, crafts and, thus, it stimulates other local economic sectors. The development of tourist facilities can also contribute to the development of local construction industry;

Tourism stimulates the development of retail, of some cultural and recreational facilities, new and modern, such as specialty stores, parks, cultural centers and theaters. All these can be used both by locals and tourists. Often, tourism allows the recovery of costs generated by cultural activities and facilities, such as theater shows, which local communities could not afford without the presence of tourism;

The environmental quality of an area can be improved thanks to tourism development, because tourists prefer to visit attractive, clean and unpolluted places. The use of land and transport network can also be improved as tourism serves as a catalyst for revitalizing some areas or regions;

Tourism development is also justified by the fact that tourism contributes to ensuring the financing resources for the conservation of natural areas, arts, crafts, archaeological and historical areas, of some cultural traditions, because these items should be maintained and improved if tourism is proving to be a sustainable and successful activity;

Tourism involves, from the local people, a greater concern about the environment as well as another sense of their own cultural identity, when they notice that tourists enjoy their cultural, natural and historical patrimony. In this respect tourism can stimulate the revitalization of some issues of cultural patrimony, aspects neglected by the factors of modern development.

Through a careful planning, the systematic implementation of planning and an intelligent management, the benefits can be maximized and issues minimized. However, some failures are inevitable in any investment, including tourism. Each community must decide how to maximize benefits, minimize issues and how to accept the risks that may result from tourism development.

4. Case study on the assessment of local attractions in tourism development

Each area or community, which is considered in development, in terms of tourism, or expands an existing tourism sector, should carefully evaluate its tourism resources. This assessment will determine whether the area has potential for the initiation or development of tourism and, if so, what is the most appropriate type of tourism that could be developed.

This exercise becomes a feasibility study prior to the development of tourism and where there is a potential for development, it provides a basis to conduct a detailed study of tourism planning.

We propose to study a list that can be used to carry out a preliminary investigation on tourist attractions in Gorj County.

In what concerns the natural resources we propose the following components:

- beaches,
- marine environment (fishing, corals, etc);
- forests;
- waterfalls;
- lakes, caves;

Referring to archaeological and cultural attractions we highlight the following aspects:

- protected areas (parks and reservations);
- archaeological settlements;
- historical cities, buildings and urban neighbourhoods;
architectural and traditional villages;
- customs and traditional costumes;
- traditional handicrafts and craft settlements;
- traditional modern and economic activities;
- modern and traditional historical events;
- museums of all kinds;
- centres and cultural facilities;
- educational and scientific centres;
- rural landscapes and villages (hamlets).

A number of other elements refer to the quality of environment, infrastructure, services and tourist facilities, the human resources development, factors that influence the tourism development. In what concerns the environmental quality we can analyze on a scale from 1 to 10 the following elements: air quality, water quality, environmental purity, the attractiveness of environment, the buildings and public spaces state, crowds, and other factors.

In what concerns the infrastructure we analyze the following aspects: access roads in the area, transport within the area, water supply, energy capacity, wastewater and waste management, solid waste, telecommunications, postal services and other.

Tourist facilities and services refer to the following components: accommodation, size-structure, restaurants and their quality, trips and travel services, guides services, shopping (specialties, crafts), tourist information services, banking and foreign exchange services, medical services and facilities, protection and security services, other facilities and services.

Human resources development regards: the qualification of current employees in tourism, the existence of some programs and facilities for training in tourism, the availability of the future skilled workforce and other considerations related to human resources development.

The analysis of the factors influencing tourism development is particularly significant and it is materialized in: the existing and potential tourism market, the costs and benefits of travelling to that area, the competing destinations, a sense of community inoculated to the tourist, political stability, financial and organizational capacities, safety and public safety, public health, hygiene and sanitation and other factors of influence.

5. Conclusions

The sustainable tourism development in any area should be a priority and must be based on several principles, namely: natural, historical, cultural resources and other resources must be preserved for continuous use in the future, bringing, at the same time, benefits to modern society; the tourism development must be planned so as not to create serious problems to the natural and socio-cultural environment in the area, the general quality of the environment in tourist areas must be maintained, and where necessary, improved, the satisfaction of tourists must be maintained at high-level and the tourism benefits must be extended at the level of the entire society.

Tourism has a huge potential to create prosperity and improve the ambient environment of destinations in which it develops. Incorrectly planned and managed tourism can be detrimental even for the resources it is based on. Environmental and cultural degradation can be avoided by adopting and applying some appropriate planning measures.

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