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## THE IMPACT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT ON URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:**

*By their nature, tourism activities cause certain effects on the environment. They may vary depending on the extent of tourist activities, and also on the factors contributing to their increase or decline. All these effects have led to the notion of “the impact of tourism activity on the environment”. Environment in general is affected by these actions, but this paper focuses mainly on the impact of tourism development on the urban environment. We divided these effects into four categories: economic effects, socio-cultural effects, political effects and effects on the natural environment, aiming to discover the implications for each of these categories.*

*We consider this subject to be an actual one because the usage of nature and cultural values through tourism without discrimination and random in time and space can produce adverse effects on all components of the urban environment.*

**Key words:** *tourism, development, sustainability, impact, urban*

Looking to sustainable tourism as a purpose, we can say that any activities related with tourism development come with certain changes in an area. For sustainability to be achieved, these changes must be kept within acceptable limits. Sustainable tourism can be best achieved through careful planning, through development and proper management of the tourism sector on the basis of few simple principles that must be followed. (Mazilu, 2005)

The impact of tourism on the environment may take the form of different effects, from the economic to the socio-cultural, political or natural.

The results of these effects should not be neglected or treated with sufficient seriousness, because they can create imbalances in the local community or can make the community members to reject visitors, resulting in damage that the local community will suffer, as a whole.

Some of the effects mentioned above are felt strong enough also in urban areas, some of which are especially characteristic to natural environments, less populated.

### **Economic effects**

Tourism can be a way (sometimes the only one) to achieve a higher capitalization of all types of resources. Tourism is able to provide, under certain conditions, the prosperity of disadvantaged cities, can be a remedy for de-industrialized regions. Tourism activity ensures the development of resource-poor areas, by making tourism facilities, favouring the use of different local labour resources and creating better living conditions for residents. It emerges, in that way, the role of tourism in economic and cultural development of the regions concerned, even causing mutations in their evolution.

Through the fact that it is human labour intensive, tourism plays an important role in the economy. It creates new jobs, thus helping to attract surplus labour from other sectors, thereby abating unemployment in cities. Because it is an area that belongs to the service sector, in which the importance of the human factor is higher than in other economic sectors, investments in tourism tend to generate higher growth and faster in terms of employment than similar value investments made in other sectors (Neto, 2003).

The spending made by tourists with reason and judgement can help create better opportunities for businesses, households and local artisans, supporting a certain growth in target areas. (Iordache, Ciocină, Decuseară, 2005)

The tourism multiplier can have a particular importance in terms of economic effects that are generated by tourism.

The tourism multiplier refers to changes of tourists additional spending in income, production, employment and balance of payments of a country or a region. Tourist expenditure for accommodation, food, transport, treatment, recreational, investment and tourism-related exports generates incomes. A portion of these revenues leave the economy under the form of expenditures required for tourism imports, as domestic savings or charges paid to the financial administration, but what remains will enter in a second round of spending, generating again income. The process will continue repeatedly, the flow of income decreasing in geometric progression until those amounts leave the economic system.

The tourism economic multiplier measures the current economic performance of tourism and short-term effects of changes in tourism industry. It is designed as a tool to study the economic impact of tourism expenditure over revenue, income, employment, state taxes and imports, starting from the general economic policy, and can be used both in establishing and monitoring macroeconomic policies. Also, since the multipliers can be calculated for all sectors of the economy, through its effects, the tourism multiplier helps us compare tourism demand growth to a similar increase in other sectors.

### **Socio-cultural effects**

Tourism has profound socio-human significance. Act, by its nature, both directly on tourists and also on the population from the visited areas. Social impacts caused by tourism can occur by changing the quality of life of residents in those tourist areas.

In order not to create problems for local community members, it feels very keenly the need to focus on rules of behaviour for both visitors and residents. It is also necessary to monitor the effects created by the mutual interaction between local communities and tourists. Visitor satisfaction can be strongly affected not only by the local's behaviour, but also by other visitors and actions. Generally speaking, social conditions affect visitor satisfaction rather than natural conditions. Desire for solitude, the possibility of conflicts between visitors and different perceiving of other visitors behaviour, are all factors that can affect tourists' satisfaction.

Crowds of people may adversely affect, with few exceptions, visitor satisfaction. What visitors consider to be crowded or less crowded depend on individual perception, which is influenced by visitors characteristics and by situation or location. Conflicts may arise between those who are arriving for recreation and those whose primary purpose is not recreation. Conflicts arise especially in cities with multiple uses, where human activities interfere. There may be conflicts between different types of visitors, for example between those who walk and those who come by car. Conflicts usually occur when small groups meet large groups, or even when some organised groups meet other unorganized people. People behavior can affect visitor satisfaction directly or consequential through environmental impacts such as waste or vandalism. Other factors that may affect visitors are noise, air pollution and visual elements.

Tourism is, above all this, ***an element*** that fosters communication, exchange of ideas, of information, stimulating cultural horizon broadening with effect on intellectual training. One of the most important functions of tourism lies in its role as comforting, in its quality to contribute to the regeneration work capacity of people, both in resting forms or in spa treatments forms. Also tourism is a means of education, raising the level of training, of culture and civilization of the people.

Looking on tourism as a form of intercultural contraposition, we find that the population of the host city is concerned, in a relatively high degree, in transmission of cultural information about their village. However, besides this information, can be passed from one group to another other information or habits, related with articles of clothing, special folk art and local knowledge, music, words.

It can be seen that, in general, trade is done mainly at the level of symbols: folk music, crafts, gourmet products, dances, folk instruments, handicrafts and many others. By combining these symbols and revaluation in tourism activity, Romanian urban areas will be subject to favourable or unfavourable economic and social effects. The favourable effects are consequences of economic activities, while those unfavourable are consequences of the environmental changes, which can be disastrous:

- favourable effects: the development of activities from small production and services, the emergence of new jobs;
- unfavourable effects: landscape degradation, pollution in all its forms, changes in consuming habits.

Like any economic activity, tourism is a combination of positive and negative elements to be correctly estimated and combined in proportions that can make the result (tourism product) as much attractive as possible. Knowledge and awareness of possible adverse effects will lead to fair sizing of business and tourism phenomenon so that mutations of any kind to be positive and favourable.

Being the place of meeting and rerouting of some fundamental intercultural opposition, tourism creates conditions for people to become aware by the existence of other peers of different cultures. Awareness of originality, the differences and commonalities may serve for making new tourism products such as: improving speaking language of visited community, initiation in instrumental and vocal music, learning the crafts (pottery, wood carving, weaving, painting on glass etc.), learning traditional dances from the visited area or specific elements of local cuisine etc.

Primary interest for locals has to be represented by the need to communicate, and only then by the need to promote their business. It seeks to do so, in very different ways, personal relationships between people from different cultures. These personal relationships will contribute to the knowledge of reality and understanding attitudes between guests and hosts, highlighting the novelty of urban environment.

### **Political effects**

The political impact is determined by the tourism policy position of the government regarding hospitality, which should have the following lines:

- ✓ being a priority sector of the economy, tourism should pursue its future development with the support of central government and local governments;
- ✓ making best use of natural resources, cultural and urban environment, ensuring their protection;
- ✓ rising the quality of tourist facilities and tourist services by improving human resources policy;
- ✓ modernising and extending general infrastructure for the benefit of tourism development;
- ✓ the role and size of private sector in tourism must be increased considerably.

### **Effects on urban natural environment**

Tourism activities, by their nature, cause certain effects on the environment. They vary depending on the extent of tourist activities, the factors contributing to their increase or decline. All these effects have led to the notion of *the impact of tourism activity on the urban environment*. The obtaining mode of tourism impact is largely determined by supply and demand in tourism. Environmental pressures will determine the impact of tourism according to the ability affordability of the area.

Impact control methods influence in a higher manner the demand for tourist activities and, by consequence, their development.

Impact of tourism activities regards also the human elements, but especially the natural ones. Among the damages that may be made of the natural environment we find:

- pressures created by noise and vibrations, which is particularly found in urban and rural areas along transport routes, through increasing traffic on these roads;
- changes in composition of flora and fauna species, destruction of green areas, parks, clearing natural vegetation for development of tourist facilities;
- pollution: water pollution by domestic waste, air pollution by motor vehicle exhaust, pollution of soil by compaction, noise pollution;
- erosion: soil compaction that leads to increased storm runoff and surface erosion, damage to river banks;
- degradation of natural resources: water resources decreased by over demand, increased risks for natural fires;
- negative visual impact: the construction of large hotels, huge recreational and commercial areas, littering of waste resulted from tourist traffic.

Not all urban tourist areas face particularly aggressive practice of tourism or with a form of tourism that produce a major impact on them. However, practicing "tourism events" by certain groups of people, coupled with the lack of environmental education, often leaves traces in the urban landscape.

To limit the environmental impact, in recent years was often used a set of indicators to determine the maximum capacity of receipt for a tourist area.

The existence and evolution of man and society as a whole are determined by the quality of the environment. In this sense, the environment, defined by all natural and anthropogenic factors in close interaction, influences the ecological balance, resulting in living, working and social development perspectives. Efficient conduct of tourism activities implies a suitable environment with high quality both in natural conditions and those created by man.

Fitting and recovery through tourism of nature and cultural values without discrimination and random, can produce in time and space adverse effects on all components of the urban environment.

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