

Rural Tourism for Local Economic Development

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ABSTRACT *Efforts in according to strengthening the economic development of rural areas are comprehensive, given the largeness of its tourist value, viewed from economically, environmentally, socially and culturally. It is understandable that the initiation of such potential and especially keeping its, requires specific actions to support and continuous monitoring. Even if the forthcoming general interest mainly lies in the implications of effort but managers/local entrepreneurs. Set of objectives pursued by the paper refers to contributions of tourism and its contribution to rural economic development. In this way, it tries in the paper, motivation to find alternative tourism models that support sustainable rural development.*

KEY WORDS *Rural tourism, Local Economic Development, Rural Space, Sustainable Rural Development, Alternative tourism*

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1. Introduction

Rural search for peace, rest and recreation is a general trend in current tourism practice at regional, national, European and international, so that most EU countries, rural tourism gives primary attention by local development policies. Tourism in rural areas and communities is an alternative to consider for two reasons: first village, and on the other city. The rural tourism will be able to solve problems considering: policy regarding planning, village-town balance, Being outlined such a social change that allows the population of the city to find roots, cultural values, relaxation, tranquility lost or forgotten.

According to UNWTO, despite persistent economic uncertainty, tourist arrivals to Europe reached 503 million in 2011, accounting for 28 million of the 41 million additional international arrivals recorded worldwide. Central and Eastern Europe and Southern Mediterranean destinations (+8% each) experienced the best results. Although part of the growth in Southern Mediterranean Europe resulted from a shift in traffic away from the Middle East and North Africa, destinations in the Mediterranean also profited from improved outbound flows from markets such as Scandinavia, Germany and the Russian Federation.

2. Rural Tourism

Development and rural planning problem is one of the most complex contemporary themes, because in essence involves balancing the requirement of conservation of rural economic, environmental, social and cultural of the country on the one hand and modernization tend rural

life on the other. In both rural development and planning is at the confluence of the expansion of urban areas, the aggressive development of rural industry and the requirement due to possible areas to maintain its current size.

Balanced development of the countryside can be seen as a long-term improvement of living conditions of the country but according to the imperatives of economic, environmental, social and cultural self-respect due to population. (Nina Hanciu, 2002, p.110)

Tourism development in rural areas aims to solve key business objective outside motivation and satisfaction of tourism and economic issues related to the depopulation of areas caused by migration of rural population to urban centers. By ensuring the practice of Profitable in villages seeks to stop labor and return migration from urban to areas of origin, increasing the stability of the active population, improve living conditions, protect and conserve the environment as a factor of recreation and rehabilitation creative potential of the individual, creating conditions for carrying out other economic activities, industrial, commercial, rural areas.

The concept of sustainable tourism, where rural tourism is very well defined, such as preserving the natural environment, traditions, customs, culture, and the satisfaction or fulfillment for the tourist town full of sophisticated services and hotels.

With rural tourism component, agro tourism, scientific and professional will require forms of ecological tourism (ecotourism). The contribution of tourism to rural development is important if local people participate in its development, it is also a means to protect the environment, economic and cultural-historical traditions, rural local.

For the purpose of World Tourism Organization, tourism is a form of rural tourism includes any tourism activity in rural areas organized and run by local people, drawing on local tourism resources (natural, cultural, historical, human) and facilities, tourist, including pensions and agro farms.

Rural tourism is based on three axes: space, people, products because (Florina Bran, Marin Dinu, Tamara Simon, 1997, p7)

- The area without human existence can not support the coexistence;
- People without space or products have only a limited capacity to receive;
- Products that are not based space and people have only a short existence and can not deliver sustainable development locally

Tourism in the countryside or in full software is increasingly desirable nature of city dwellers with money, but stressed, eager to return to nature, the life of the rural community. All these forms of tourism are called ecotourism, and their development in Romania is only the beginning. These activities constitute an important contribution to economic development in rural areas will have an impact on their future development. (Puiu Nistoreanu, 2005, p.42)

In Romania the term is used a lot of tourism, assuming that the peasant farm-stay guest house, farm-household consumption of agricultural products that participation in a more or less specific agricultural activities. (Rodica Minciu, 2004 p.89)

Rural tourism instead included all tourism activities undertaken in rural areas, primarily pensions and agro farms, and small restaurants and hotels or other accommodation. Rural tourism is in general and ecotourism in villages that are closer to nature tourists that respects and protects.

Agritourism, as economic and social activity should become a component of sustainable tourism, and as such the ten principles for sustainable tourism development can be applied in this case: (Vasile Glăvan, 2003, pp 20-21)

- *Sustainable use of tourism resources;*
- *Reducing overconsumption and wastage of tourist;*
- *Maintaining natural diversity, social and cultural development of rural;*
- *Integration of tourism planning and national development strategy, regional and especially local;*
- *Supporting local economies by supporting tourism development initiative groups and local touristic offer support to protect the environment and cultural property environment;*
- *Consultation of experts and the public in the development of tourism and local economy to avoid conflicts of interest between political factors, government, on the one hand and tourism entrepreneurs and people on the other side;*
- *Sustainable development of tourism must be maintained through training, qualification, improvement, training of locals, civic training, adequate sociological;*
- *Promotion of tourism marketing in the tourism market by studying the local area and queen or nationally and internationally;*
- *Research and monitoring of rural tourism activities and actions to protect and conserve the environment and tourism resources.*

3. Types of Tourism

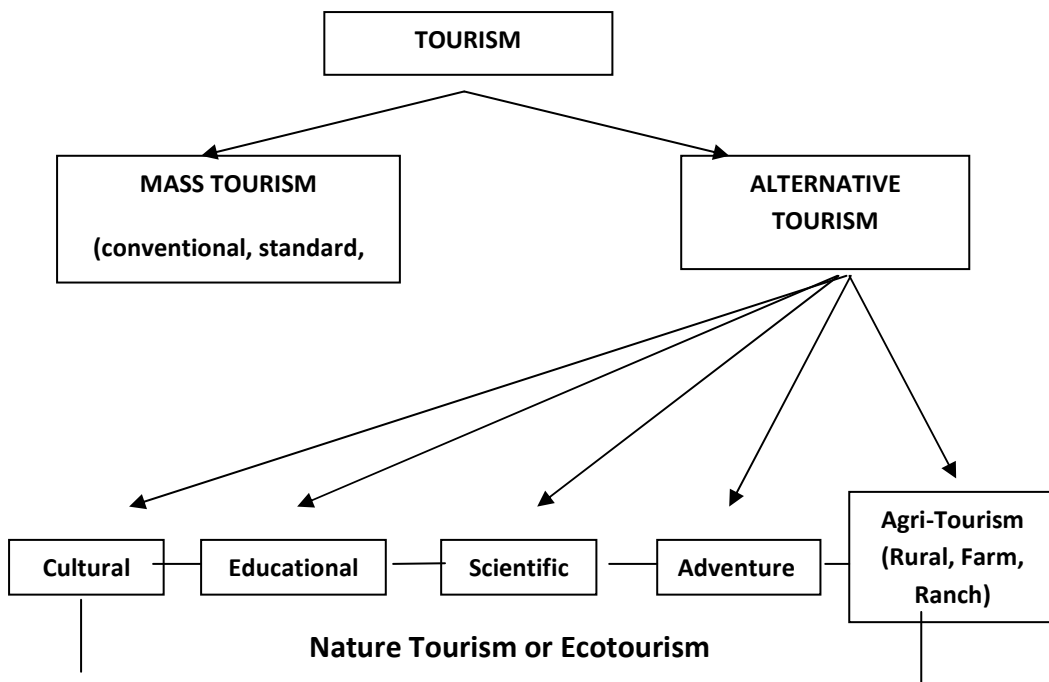
Tourism is synthesized from mass and alternative tourism. Mass tourism is characterized by large numbers of people seeking relevant to their culture holidays in popular resort destinations. Alternative tourism is sometimes referred to as “special interest tourism” or “responsible tourism” and its usually taken to mean alternative forms of tourism which give emphasis on the contact and understanding of inhabitants’ way of living and the local natural environment (Smith & Eadington, 1992). As to the specific forms of alternative tourism, Mieczkowski (1995) identifies such forms as cultural, educational, scientific, adventure, agri-tourism, with rural, ranch and farm subsets.

Alternative tourism can be broadly defined “as forms of tourism that is made to be friendly to the environment and to respect social and cultural values of the communities, and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences” (Wearing & Neil, 2000, p.38).

The characteristics of alternative tourism include its minimal negative environmental and social impacts, and also help to develop other sectors of the local economy as agriculture. Finally, alternative tourism also fosters the involvement of local people in the decision making process and includes them in the tourism development process.

Using these criteria, alternative tourism exceeds purely a concern for the physical environment that typifies green tourism, to include economic, social and cultural considerations.

“Thus alternative tourism can be viewed as being synonymous with the concept of sustainable tourism development” (Holden, 2000, p.137).



Source: Adapted by Mieczkowski, 1995, p.459

3.1. Ecotourism

Ecotourism is an alternative to traditional tourism and the tourist offer, because it receives tourists who show desire for cultural heritage knowledge of host communities.

Ecotourism destinations providing holiday less affected by the weaknesses of standard tourism, lack of services that original, urban congestion, etc. need to organize holidays early.

Ecotourism is represented "as a form of tourism developed in natural areas, whose purpose is knowledge and appreciation of nature and local culture, which requires conservation and ensures active involvement, generating benefits for the local population (Nistoreanu, 2003, pg 72).

A general definition is based on three criteria, namely:

- a) advocate for environmental conservation;
- b) include significant participation of the community hosts;
- c) is a profitable industry and self-sustaining

Table 1. Distinct Characteristics of mass tourism & ecotourism features

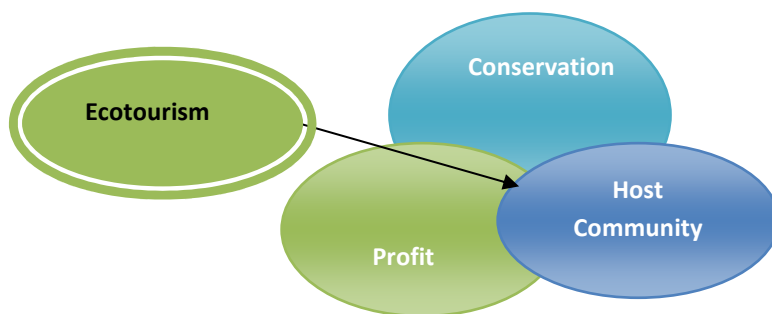
Characteristics of mass tourism	Ecotourism features
Large groups of visitors	Small groups of visitors
Urban	Rural
Marketing activities based on tourism	Eco-marketing activities
Average prices of the tourist market penetration	Filtering high market prices
Increased impact on the natural environment	Low impact on natural environment
Advanced control options	Limited control possibilities
Management based on the principles of macroeconomic	Management based on principles of local economy
Impersonal relations between tourists and host	Relations between tourists and host family custom

Characteristics of mass tourism	Ecotourism features
community	
General objectives of local development	Local objective of development
Behaviour-oriented leisure activities	Loyalty in the training and education to behave appropriately for the natural environment
Intensive development of tourism facilities	Reduced development of tourist facilities

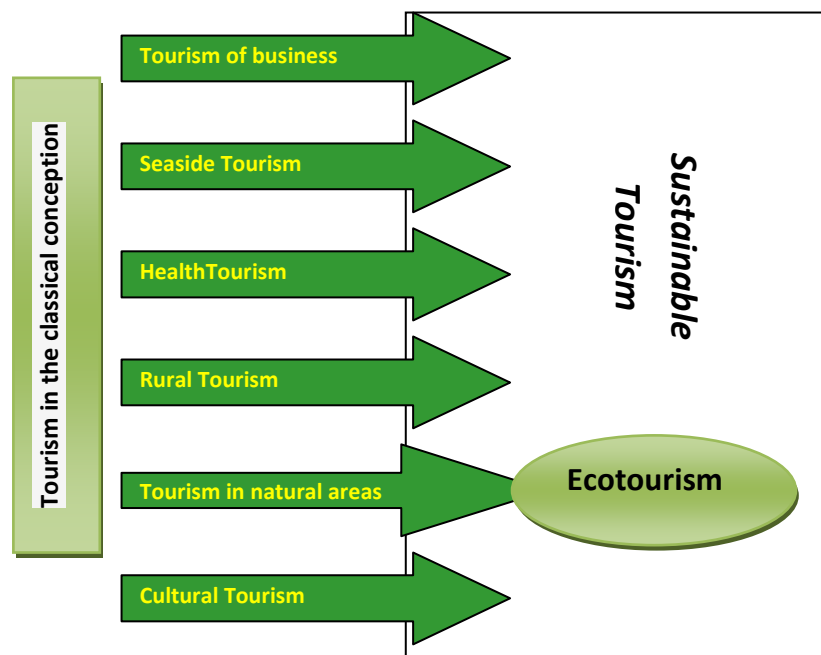
Source: Adapted by Anca Turtureanu & all - *Ecotourism - the Main Form of Tourism - Exploitation of Protected Natural Areas* Acta Universitatis Danubius. Œconomica, Vol 7, No 2 (2011), p.70.

Trying to summarize all the above we can define three principles of ecotourism as:

Ecotourism Principles



Transition from Classic Tourism to Ecotourism



Source: Adapted from Sambotin D., Sambotin, A.; Patrascoiu, M.; Coroian, A., Merce, II - *Ecotourism - a model of Sustainable Development of tourism means*, Scientific papers Journal, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Banat Timisoara, Series I, Agricultural Management, 2011, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 224.

3.2. Sustainable Rural Development

In the shift from an “industrial to a “risk” society (Eagles 1992), the need for development to be “sustainable” becomes paramount. Local communities become important in terms of actions taken to pretend their own natural environment, and also form part of wider alliances to preserve the environment globally (Richards & Hall, 2000). Place based communities have become more interested to the concept of sustainability, which integrates environmental, economic, political, cultural and social considerations. In this way there is recognition that to be sustainable, the preservation of the “natural” environment must be grounded in the communities and societies, which exploit and depend upon it (Richards & Hall, 2000).

4. The Impact of Rural Tourism

4.1. Social and Cultural

Vincent (1980) argues that rural tourism development requires that close-knit communities adapt to the incursion of capitalism in the expansion of tourism, where family independence, traditional values and cultural traditions may be adversely affected.

The role of women in rural tourism has also belatedly attracted interest as a highly seasonal and unstable economic activity, since tourism is one of the few opportunities taken up by women but also contributes to the marginal status of women in the rural workforce.

Increasingly, native people are becoming involved in tourism to help meet their own goals of independence and cultural survival, yet tourism development carries special risks for them. There are also special problems related to obtaining financing for projects, training with cultural sensitivity, attitudes towards work and service, and making decisions communally (Smith, 1997).

4.2. The Economic impact

The economic impact of rural tourism has been a fruitful area for research among a range of social scientists, often emphasizing or challenging the role of tourism as a panacea for all the economic and social ills of the countryside (Getz, 1981).

Butler and Clark rightly acknowledge, tourism in rural areas is not necessarily the magic solution to rural development, given its:

“Income leakages, volatility, declining multiplier, low pay, imported labor and the conservatism of investors. The least favored circumstance in which to promote tourism is when the rural economy is already weak, since tourism will create highly unbalanced income and employment distributions. It is better supplement for a thriving and diverse economy than as a mainstay of rural development”(Butler and Clark, 1992, p. 175).

4.3. The environmental effect

A number of recent special issues of journals have also focused on sustainability and rural tourism. However, it is apparent that tourism in rural context displays many of the features of the symbolic relationship, which exists between tourism and the environment. For these reason it is appropriate to consider the tourism resource base, emphasizing supply and demand features in relation to the business aspects of Rural Tourism (Page and Getz, 1997).

4.4. Overall

Primary producers and rural communities have increasingly turned to tourism as an alternative means of achieving sustainable economic growth and development through restructuring, and greater diversification, of economic activity. Hall (1998) for example, has observed "tourism has emerged as one of the central means by which rural areas can adjust themselves economically, socially and politically to the new global environment". Hall (1998) perceive that expansion of tourism in rural areas as designed to:

- Sustain and create local incomes, employment and growth;
- Contribute to the costs of providing economic and social infrastructure;
- Encourage the development of other industrial sectors;
- Contribute to local resident amenities and services;
- Contribute to the conservation of environmental and cultural resources.

5. Conclusions

Rural tourism could be a strategy for sustainable development for rural areas and also could be a tool for product differentiation for area that is at stagnation stage of the Destination Life Cycle model of Butler (1986). We can to say that:

- Not all areas are suitable for economic development
- Not all communities wish to be developed or are suitable for development
- Not all forms of tourism activity are acceptable in every location
- There may have to be employed to prevent or repair environmental damage caused by visitor pressure

Rural tourism is a good opportunity for agricultural based communities but the setting of objectives and the final tourism development plan needs caution. For better results the whole range of the stakeholders has to participate in the planning stage. Slow and stable steps needs for this kind of planning in order conflicts and mistakes to be avoided.

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