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[Torres-Delgado, Anna, and Jarkko Saarinen. "Using indicators to assess sustainable tourism development: a review". Tourism Geographies. 2014.](#)**textul lucrării:**

TOURISM AND POVERTY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE CASE OF INDIA AND ROMANIA Daniel BADULESCU

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Sustainable tourism has become lately an important issue addressing the question of over-exploiting and degradation of resources. The topic is quite more challenging and presents particular importance in the case of developing countries, facing also social issues and the poverty of large segments of population. This paper investigates, based on surveying experts' opinion, the impact of mass tourism vs. voluntary tourism vs. pro-poor tourism in India and Romania, two very different countries but facing similar challenges, and it highlights the similar issues but also the differences concerning the economic, social and environmental effects of these forms of tourism. Key words:

2tourism, pro-poor, volunteer, India, Romania. **JEL Classification: L83;**

O15; Z32. I. INTRODUCTION: THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: LUCK OR CURSE?

2The importance of the tourism industry for the world economy

is indisputable, with revenues reaching \$ 7,600 billion and more than 270 million people employed (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). Tourism has the capacity to promote regional development, to induce development of different related sectors, and it highly impacts the life and economic profile of the destination areas. The economic component of the tourism industry addresses three groups of stakeholders, i.e. tourists, local community, and local/central authorities (Reisinger, 2009; Elkan, 1975; Sadler and Archer, 1975; Gunn, 1977). Tourists enjoy the benefits of leisure and pay the costs of their stay. The resident population of the host region enjoys the benefits (not necessarily financial) of tourism, but faces the costs generated by the tourism industry. For the authorities, tourism industry generates revenues from taxes, creates jobs and contributes to the equilibrium of the balance of payments (Lickorish and Jenkins, 1997; Saarinen, 2007; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2012). It also generates development of peripheral regions which are lacking opportunities for industrial development, fosters development of related activities and improves the infrastructure.

4Unfortunately, the local population enjoys little benefits from this development,

as the tourism industry is partly controlled by international companies, leading to capital leakage from the destination region (Swarbrooke, 1998; Liu, 2003). In some cases, tourism development incentives generate inequities between regions and social classes (Tosun, Timothy et al, 2003), create mostly seasonal jobs, poorly paid and with limited opportunities for promotion and specialization

28(Lickorish and Jenkins, 1997; Saarinen, 2007).

In social terms, tourism is

30associated with the contact between cultures, behaviors, values and traditions. It

stimulates

27the emergence of new ideas, values and motivations for social and economic progress,

and it can revitalize the cultural life of a community, local craft and traditions (Brown, 1998; Nyaupane, Morais et al, 2006) but, as always, there is also a dark side, due to the negative socio-cultural impact of globalization and consumerism on local culture and population (MacLeod, 2004; Reisinger, 2009). Finally, the environment acts as a fundamental element of the tourists' experience. On one hand, the natural and cultural resources have benefited from tourism, through conservation action, protection or renovation, precisely because they are tourist attractions (Swarbrooke, 1998; Holden, 2009). On the other hand, tourism development consumes resources, creates waste and sometimes determines the II. TOURISM AND THE CHALLENGES OF degradation or even the destruction of natural heritage. Unfortunately, the local population pays finally the POVERTY IN TWO COUNTRIES: INDIA AND ROMANIA costs of environmental degradation resulting from the over-exploitation which is usually felt only after a The tourism industry has become the largest long period of time (Holden, 2009; Beeton, 2006). service industry in India, and it generates revenues of It is obvious that tourism industry has various about 37.44 billion US\$ in 2014, with expectations to

4consequences, which are influenced by a large number

increase with a steady 6.9% annual growth rate

32of factors, especially the ability and willingness of the

between 2015 and 2025. India is ranked as 11th in the

28community to accept or reject changes (Beeton, 2006;

Asia Pacific region and 65th overall, on the list of the Joshi and Dhyani, 2009). The real challenge is to world's most attractive destinations, and also as the foster that type of tourism activities that may 14th best tourist destination for its natural resources contribute to the overall economic, social and and 24th for its cultural resources, with many World environmental development, by promoting sustainable Heritage Sites, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, tourism and development (Goeldner and Ritchie, and strong creative industries (World Economic 2012). Forum, 2013). Indeed, the problems and challenges generated

36In the case of Romania, the tourism industry by the tourism

industry have determined the generated about 2.75 billion US\$ in 2014, and it is emergence of new forms of tourism, aimed at expected to increase with a steady 3.8% annual growth eliminating the negative effects and enhancing the rate between 2015 and 2025. Romania is ranked as positive ones (Saarinen, 2007). Beyond the somewhat 35th in the Europe region and 68th overall, on the list of ambiguous term of alternative tourism, several new the world's most attractive destinations (World forms have emerged, i.e. ecotourism, rural tourism, Economic Forum, 2013). pro-poor tourism, volunteer tourism etc. We are now Selected indicators concerning the tourism considering volunteer tourism and pro-poor tourism as industry in India and Romania, also illustrating the alternative, sustainable forms of tourism, addressing significant differences between the two countries (in the key issue of poverty that is faced by both India and terms of

population, size and distribution of tourism Romania, as to be discussed in the next section. resources) are presented in Table 1. As Weaver stated,

8volunteer tourism “encompasses a diverse array of experiences and

Table 1. Selected indicators for tourism industry,

8settings that involve tourists who receive no financial India and Romania
compensation while undertaking various forms of, Indicator India Romania
usually, organized social and/or environmental work

Direct contribution of tourism to GDP, 2.2 1.6 2014 (%) in the destination” (Weaver, 2006). The main
Direct contribution of tourism to 6.7 2.4

7difference between mass tourism and volunteer employment, 2014 (%) **tourism**
concerns **the benefits.** While for **the**

mass Domestic tourism visits, 2014 (million 1,280 6.5 tourism the

2benefits are calculated as the number of

visits) Foreign tourist arrivals, 2014 (million 22.57 1.9

7tourists arriving or total receipts, which will be felt, to arrivals) **some extent, by**
local people, volunteer tourism

Share of foreign tourists in total no. of 1.8 29

2generates direct benefits for local people, e.g. the tourists, 2014 (%)
construction or renovation of houses, medical or

Tourism density, 2014 (foreign 6.9 7.8 tourists /km²) educational services (Weaver, 2006). That is why
Seasonality (%) 49 42

2volunteer tourists are perceived **not as tourists**

either Concentration coefficient (Gini- 0.24 0.38 by the host community or by themselves. Struck) Source:

World Travel and Tourism Council (2015), Government of Pro-poor tourism is rather an approach and a India (2015), World Economic Forum (2013), Eurostat (2014), vision regarding the management and the general National Institute of Statistics (Romania) (2013), United Nations development of tourism than a specific tourism Development Programme (2013). product. It emerged from the idea

2that tourism can play a major role in eradicating poverty

and improving On the other hand, the issue of poverty is the situation of poor people (Joshi and Dhyani, 2009). significant in both countries. In India, the problem is Although the benefits of volunteer tourism and still acute, in spite of all the development during the pro-poor tourism are important, the main challenges past five decades, the share of the Indian population faced by these alternative forms of tourism come from

37living below the international poverty line of \$1.25

the motivation of tourists and non-profit organizations being of 32.7% in 2013 (United Nations Development involved, and their long-term effects on the weakest Programme, 2013). Moreover, India has 28.6% of its members (especially children) in the visited population in severe poverty and 16.4% of its communities (Weaver, 2006). population being vulnerable to poverty (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). In the last decades, due to impressive economic performance, India dramatically

22reduced the share of income poor people, from 49.4% in 1990 to 32.7% in

2010, but however, the income per capita income is still low, i.e. around \$3,400 in 2012 (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). Regarding the poverty problem in Romania, the data reveal not a very

4low standard of living of a large part of the population,

but a considerable gap compared to other EU member states. Thus, in 2006 the poverty rate in Romania stood at 13.8%, down sharply compared to 35.9% in 2000, yet about 2.5-3 times higher than in other Central European countries and nearly 5 times higher than in the prosperous western Europe (United Nations Development Programme, 2013). There is still a considerable risk of poverty, especially for the rural population. The poverty, the economic crisis and limited local options, but also the proximity to the more prosperous countries of the EU and freedom of movement have accelerated the process of labor migration, worsening the economic and social problems in the rural and poor areas of Romania. III. INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF TOURISM IN INDIA AND ROMANIA: METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS Starting from the situation of the tourism industry and the challenges of the poverty in two different developing countries, i.e. India and Romania, our research aims at investigating the

42economic, social and environmental impact of several forms of tourism in

those countries, by using a simple research instrument. In a first phase, we made an inventory of the main projects related to volunteer tourism and pro-poor tourism in both countries, projects which have been already finalized or still in progress. In the second phase, we listed the potential effects (i.e. negative, positive, potential) of classic mass tourism versus sustainable tourism. In the third phase, we have conducted a survey among experts to investigate their opinion on the impact of those previously mentioned actions/projects. Finally, we made a synthesis of the responses and figured out the main results and their significance. Among the main projects/actions and organizations involved in

7 **pro-poor tourism** and **volunteer tourism in India we have**

considered the following: ? The Responsible Tourism policy - designed to achieve poverty alleviation through tourism activities, launched by the Indian state of Kerala (Michot, 2006); ? The development of tourism potential of Cooch Behar district of West Bengal – meant to improve the living standard of the poor communities and to rejuvenate local economy (Basu Roy, Basu Roy and Saha, 2010); ? The project

5 **“From Tiger Conflict to Tourism Social Transformation, Poverty Alleviation and Conservation Initiative” in the Sunderbans, India”** (Bauer, 2006); ? **The** Uttar Pradesh plans **to**

begin pro-poor tourism development program in Buddhist circuit and Agra-Braj corridor (Times of India, 2013a; Times of India, 2013b) etc. For Romania, the main projects and organizations involved in pro-poor tourism and volunteer tourism are the following: ? The Romania Bear Sanctuary - project focused on the rescuing the European Brown Bears with the help of volunteers (Responsible Travel, 2015); ? Wild Carpathia Association - project aiming at promoting modern values, sustainable development in tourism, sport and

17 **environmental protection, awareness and involvement of civil society, political and economic decision makers in solving problems in these areas and related fields**

(European Youth Portal, 2015); ? Save Romania's virgin forests!- a project of

29 **World Wide Fund for Nature (World Wide Fund for Nature, 2015); ? The**

Living Heritage - a program aiming at preserving the genuine traditions in Apuseni Mountains, focusing on traditional activities, e.g. pottery, weaving, and wood sculpting (CAPDD Bihor, 2015); ? BIG BUILD - the largest construction and volunteering event of the year (Habitat for Humanity Romania, 2015). During the research, we used a simple instrument to assess the effects of mass tourism vs. volunteer tourism vs. pro-poor tourism, by simply integrating the evaluations and assessments of the experts. We targeted academics, experts and touristic projects' managers who have been involved in several types of tourism (i.e. mass, rural, volunteer, pro poor etc.). They were asked to assess the economic, social and

environmental effects, respectively, of mass, volunteer, pro-poor tourism, by using grades from 1 to 5 (where 1 means very low and 5 very high). For a better description of the effects, each category of effects was divided in three different subcategories (see Table 2), as follows: the economic impact was assessed through: a) revenues; b) benefits for the local community/for local authorities; c) contribution to reducing unemployment. The social impact was divided into: a) supporting the local culture and traditions; b) increasing the quality of life; c) direct contact between civilizations. The environmental impact was assessed through: a) conservation of landscape and wildlife; b) recycling the resources; c) clean energy consumption. The questionnaire was administered, during June-August 2015, to 36 experts, i.e. academics and touristic projects' managers, by using ResearchGate and LinkedIn professional platforms, several professional groups where the authors are members, and email. As professional experience, 17 of them are scholars affiliated to faculties or departments of Tourism, Business Administration, Geography and Hospitality; 5 of them are experts working for

41 **local, regional and national** public **institutions (i.e.** regional councils, governmental **agencies**

and offices), 9 are managers / representatives of private business ventures, NGOs and associations with touristic profile, and 5 are project managers involved in several types of tourism projects. As country affiliation, 19 of them are affiliated to Romanian institutions and entities, 5 are from India, and the rest from Turkey (2), Hungary (2), Italy (2) and international NGOs or foundations (6). The final grade (see Table 2) was determined as simple arithmetic mean of all individual assessments. Table 2. Assessment of the effects of mass tourism vs. volunteer tourism vs. pro-poor tourism, India vs. Romania

33 **tourism Volunteer tourism Pro-poor tourism** Mass **tourism Volunteer tourism**
Pro-poor **tourism**

Economic impact 11 6.4 5.1 12.1 6.5 4.8 Revenues/benefits for the local community (minimal leakages) 4.1 2.8 1.7 3.9 2.6 1.5 Revenues/benefits for local authorities 3.7 2.3 1.6 4.1 2.5 1.5 Reducing unemployment 3.2 1.3 1.8 4.1 1.4 1.8 Social impact 7.6 11.6 12.7 8.6 10.2 10.8 Support the local culture/traditions 1.7 3.2 4.0 1.5 3.1 4.0 Increase the quality of life 3.2 4.1 4.2 3.9 3.4 2.9 Direct contact between civilizations 2.7 4.3 4.5 3.2 3.7 3.9 Environmental impact 7.8 12.1 12.3 8.3 12.2 11.9 Conservation of landscape and wildlife 2.2 4.4 3.9 2.1 4.1 3.5 Recycling of resources 2.9 4.0 4.3 3.3 4.1 4.3 Clean energy consumption 2.7 3.7 4.1 2.9 4.0 4.1 TOTAL 26.4 30.1 30.1 29 28.9 27.5 Source: experts' assessments Explanatory notes: Figures showed in normal letters in the table represent the arithmetic mean of the individual assessments of the consulted experts, going from 1 to 5 (i.e.

24 **1-very low, 2-low, 3-medium, 4-high, 5-very high**). Figures **in bold italics** represent **the**

sum of the arithmetic means assigned to

4all three components of the economic, social and environmental

impact, respectively. IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION The positive economic effects of mass tourism seem to be obvious compared with the effects of both volunteer and pro-poor tourism, both for India and Romania. While the scorings recorded for “revenues” and “benefits for the local community/ authorities” are similar for the two countries, there are still differences, especially regarding the effect on “reducing unemployment”. Thus, experts consider that the effects on reducing unemployment are more important for Romania than for India. Concerning the least positive effects, the contribution of volunteer tourism to reducing unemployment is considered limited, probably due to the social and humanitarian focus of volunteer tourism travels and lack of formal organization of travels. In the same category of low effects we mention the contribution of pro-poor tourism to generating revenues for the local population and for authorities in Romania (see Figure 1). Figure 1 – Assessment of the economic effects of mass tourism/volunteer tourism/pro-poor tourism, India vs. Romania Concerning the social impact, we notice a shift of high scores from mass tourism to the volunteer and pro-poor tourism. The best positive assessments were assigned to the subcategory “direct contact between civilizations”, especially for India, but also to “increase the quality of life”, and still for India (see Figure 2). The scores for the same subcategories or forms of tourism are slightly lower in the case of Romania, which can be explained through the expectations regarding the contribution of new tourism forms in reducing disparities and social impact of poverty. The only subcategory where Romania scores highly is “supporting local culture/traditions”, with a score similar to the score for India. One explanation is that during the last 10-15 years, tourism promotion in Romania has been focused on the image of a country with beautiful natural landscapes and rich in genuine rural life and traditions. This image was conceived mostly as opposed to the image of continental Europe, in continuing loss of genuine relationship with authentic nature, life and traditions. Figure 2 – Assessment of the social effects of mass tourism/volunteer tourism/pro-poor tourism, India vs. Romania The environmental impact seems to be the most balanced, and the scores are quite similar and relatively high for both India and Romania, for most subcategories. As expected, mass tourism is considered to modestly contribute to “conservation of landscape and wildlife” (see Figure 3), but slightly improving its score for the ability of “recycling of resources and clean energy consumption”. This is basically the dichotomy of the tourism in general and of the mass tourism in particular. The huge size and scale of mass tourism, compared to the volunteer and pro-poor tourism, makes it certainly a major consumer of resources and a threat to the natural balance and protection of natural and cultural heritage. On the other hand, the most considerable and lasting effects happen when large firms (e.g. hotel chains) undertake measures to enhance sustainability. On micro level, both volunteer and pro-poor tourism are assigned with high scores for “recycling of resources” and “clean energy consumption”, with higher scores for Romania than India. This advance is reversed for “conservation of landscape and wildlife”, where India records better scores, mainly due to the exceptional scale and diversity of the landscape and wildlife in the Indian subcontinent. Figure 3 – Assessment of the environmental effects of mass tourism/volunteer tourism/pro-poor tourism, India vs. Romania In aggregate terms, the economic impact is considered to be the least balanced in the matrix of the three forms of tourism we have analyzed: significant in the case of mass

38tourism and limited in the case of volunteer tourism and

pro-poor tourism (see Figure 4). The environmental dimension is more balanced and features no major

differences among the three forms of tourism, which confirms that both countries, despite the major differences in their size, economic potential and geo-political structures, face similar sustainability

34 challenges and opportunities in the case of tourism

industry. Figure 4 – Assessment of the overall impact of mass tourism/volunteer tourism/pro-poor tourism, India vs. Romania Finally, if we aggregate the figures and calculate a total index of the three components, i.e. economic, social and environmental, of the tourist consumption for the three forms of tourism analyzed, we note that India displays clearly more positive effects of volunteer tourism and pro-poor tourism (i.e. volunteer tourism in India gets 30.1 points versus 28.9 in Romania, and pro-poor tourism records also 30.1 points versus 27.5 for Romania). On the other hand, Romania relies more on the positive effects of mass tourism (i.e. displaying a total of 29 points, compared to 26.4 for India). V. CONCLUSION Tourism

35 plays an important and complex role in the economic development and

social empowerment, while it is still quite difficult to integrate its role and contribution in a simplified and viable model. Classical, mass tourism has always been considered as a solution for reducing unemployment, creating economic options and valorizing the regions endowed with important and valuable natural and cultural resources, but industrially underdeveloped. In the same time, mass tourism is considered to generate inequitable transfer of income, overexploiting and degradation of resources, negative impact on the fragile traditional culture and on the environment, thus limiting the resources available for future generations. The new sustainable tourism can partially address these issues, but unfortunately it cannot compensate, through significant income, the expectations of the local people and economies from developing countries (Preeti Singh, 2012). Our survey-based research, regarding India and Romania, i.e. two very different countries but facing VI. REFERENCES similar challenges, showed that classical mass tourism still “rules” when it comes to economic contribution, but it is seriously left behind when the social and environmental impact is approached, and this is mostly the case of India. This simple indicator that we have used to investigate experts’ assessment showed that the economic impact is the less balanced, indicating both growth potential, and source for possible disequilibrium, both in India and Romania. Overall, the research results confirm our expectations. This is probably due to the ab initio assuming of a difficult comparison, due to the disproportion of the three forms of tourism (i.e. mass tourism, voluntary tourism and pro-poor tourism) in the global tourist consumption, and the disproportion of the two countries in terms of size, population etc. Despite of those important differences, we emphasized the existence of a common path, of similar challenges, of a possible integration of the economic, social and environmental commitments within all three forms of tourism. Consequently, mutual assimilation of positive experiences could contribute to diminishing the negative issues and to enhancing the positive effects, regardless of national, economic and cultural context. 1.

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