

# **THE TOURISM IN THE RURAL ZONE AS INSTRUMENT OF COMBAT TO THE DEGRADATION OF THE LANDS IN THE SEMI- ARID NORTHEASTERN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The tourism is today, thankfully, an important alternative to the economical dynamization of stagnated areas that have potentiality for its development. Among the different modalities of tourism, some can, with success, be developed in the rural area - among them the ecotourism and the rural tourism. Considering that the tourist activities need to promote the environmental conservation so that the same ones reach its sustainability, once when degrading the environment in which they happen, they degrade themselves. The objective of the work is it of evaluating the potentialities for the development of the tourism in the rural areas as instrument capable to avoid or to minimize the degradation of the lands in semi-arid environment in the Northeast Region of Brazil, having the environmental education as guide base of the handling of those activities for the several involved actors. The research focuses the Poles of Development of Eco-tourism in the area, confronting the socioeconomic realities to the tourist possibilities offered by the natural resources and cultural patrimonies. It grew starting from cabinet studies and of field, propitiating the recognition of the discrepancy among the potentiality for the development of the tourism in the rural area and its occurrence, demonstrating the divergence among the speech contained in the National Politics of Tourism and its practice, once this continues to motivate, in different ways, the tourism in the coastal areas, where they are driven the largest amount of financial investment, so much in

infrastructure terms as in training of human resources. But, at the same time, it was also possible to identify areas where tourist activities are being capable to promote the decrease of the human pressure on the natural resources, especially in what it concerns to the vegetable covering and the soil, that promote the degradation of the lands and, in certain cases, the origin and intensification of the phenomenon of the desertification.

**Key words:** Tourism in the Rural Areas; Sustainability; Northeast Region of Brazil.

## **INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The progress of the technology was not capable to minimize the environmental degradation. In many marry created forms to increase it, in others it didn't assist the realities and local needs and, in many other it is not accessible in function of the costs of its acquisition and operational resources.

In compensation, the gradual increase and constant use of the natural resources, on one side justified for the increase of the population, combined to the incentive to the consumption, and for other, the real need of resident people's survival in areas economically depressed made to increase the pressure on the natural resources.

This last cause if it shows in a more vehement way in areas environmentally in troubles in what it concerns the most frequent forms of use and handling of the soil. It is the case of the Northeasterner semi-arid, whose social and environmental characteristics, built through the historical and geological times, represent, today, apparent fetter to the development, exacerbating contrasts that reproduce in disparities intra and inter-regional.

In that context, the tourism has been showing as an important alternative to the public and private initiatives for representing a possibility to create income, employment and, like this, the social insert of the inhabitants' from the localities with stagnated economy or disjointed from the regional and national economy, could be used to promote the local development.

The current tendency of the tourism is from adjustment to a sustainable philosophy so that the activity can stay in the economical sense and in the sense of the conservation of the natural environment and of the local cultures. Therefore, in response to the environmental crisis,

different modalities of tourism have been looking to adjust the tourist practices to the conservation of the environment where they grow, so that the same ones reach their sustainability, once that they degrade the environment in which they are, they degrade themselves. Like this, the objective of this work was to evaluate the potentialities for the development of the tourism in the rural areas as instrument capable to avoid or to minimize the degradation of the lands in semi-arid environments of the Northeast Area of Brazil, having the Environmental Education as a guide statement of the handling of those activities for the several involved actors.

### **Possibilities and Limits of the Tourism in the Rural Zone in the Semi-arid of the Northeast of Brazil**

The Brazilian semi-arid presents multiple potentialities for the accomplishment of the Tourism in the Rural zone for offering exotic landscapes of rare beauty, product of the interactions among the climate, the geology, the forms of the relief, the hydrograph, the vegetable covering, the fauna, the cultural multiplicity and the use forms and occupation of the soil, being able to contribute for the recreation and reorganization of the local economy with the retaking of old agricultural activities associated to several services, contributing to enlarge the creation of income of several municipal districts and for the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants affected for the phenomenon of the drought and, at the same time, minimizing the pressures on the natural resources.

As it points Shavings (1996, p.94), the European experiences of local development suggest that it combine “proposed of valorization of the agricultural products with plans of development of the craft and of linked activities to the tourism and the culture, such as fairs and parties centered in regional and local themes: products, work, traditions, games and songs, food, flavors and smells.”

The development of the Tourism in the Rural Zone presupposes the recreation of old activities, which can be incorporate to the local trade, what suggests an increment of alternative sources of income and the improvement of the life quality of the population to a wider portion of the population (Selva; Coutinho; Oliveira Neto, 2001). Seen under other point of view, the planned visit and guided of the tourist and of the visitor to the semi-arid will make possible that local cultural lines are explored, as typical food, dances, craft, old

legends, etc., taking to the involvement of the local populations, as well as to an exploration of the natural zone in a sustainable way.

Affirms Zimmerman (1998) that to offer a product that assists to the consumer's of the tourism profile, it is necessary that is obeyed the following beginnings: family attendance and preservation of the roots, harmony and environmental sustainability, identity authenticity, quality of the product, besides the local community's involvement. Reinforces the author that "the regional associativism for the activity, serves as an accelerating agent of the development and growth of the tourism" (p. 101), because powdered individual units hinder the marketing.

### **Tourism in the Rural Zone and Environmental Education as Instruments of Combat to the Environmental Degradation in the Semi-arid Northeasterner**

Among the different modalities of Tourism that can happen in the Rural Zone, the rural tourism, the eco-tourism, the ecological tourism, the historical-cultural tourism and the religious tourism can represent valuable instruments of contribution to the minimization of the effects of the environmental degradation, besides of the desertification, in the semi-arid.

The Brazilian official organ responsible for the planning and coordination of the tourism, the Brazilian Institute of Tourism – Embratur –, it points out that the tourism requests natural spaces well conserved, in which the characteristics of the vegetation are maintained, relief, etc., and preservation of the local culture, having as objective the sustainability of the tourist activities, through public politics referred to the tourist activities (Embratur, 1994).

It happens, then, the need to insert the Environmental Education in the most several segments of the society, including the public managers and their teams, as training instrument and sensibilization for the environmental subjects in global and local level, seeking the knowledge and the valorization of the local cultures, as well as the environmental conservation, gone back to the sustainable development and consequent improvement of life quality for the current and future generations.

In the semi-arid of the Brazilian Northeast, the experiences of Tourism in the Rural Zone relatively recent, punctual and little motivated, opposite to what happens in the coastal areas, and when they happen they are located around the medium cities that have buildings and

attractive rural activities, units of environmental conservation and great enterprises agro-industrials or hydroelectric, even so with low representation and reduced potential to minimize the social-economical inequalities, when they don't stimulate them.

Activities related to the operation of rural properties, where the tourist or visitor participates in the day by day of the property, have opportunity to know the local habits and the natural components of the environment where the properties are inserted; visits to thematic parks, many of them full of prehistoric registrations and monumental works built by the natural elements during followed years; productive units, especially those that are located in the medium course of the San Francisco river, also stage of great engineering works in the construction of hydroelectric plants that became attractive tourist (Selva; Coutinho, 2001), they are some of the current tourist opportunities of the semi-arid Northeast.

Even recognizing that already happen tourist activities well happened in the semi-arid Northeastern, in function of its punctual character, those are not enough to do the Tourism in the Rural Zone a real instrument of combat to the degradation of the semi-arid lands when providing access to the income through the conservation of the environment, condition requested by the tourism, contributing, like this, for the development with local base and the liberation of the populations of the semi-arid Northeast of the politics of emergential attendance that it affects in a negative way the self-esteem of the country people to each lingering drought.

### **NEEDS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM IN THE RURAL WAY**

Considering the natural and historical-cultural potential that the areas of the semi-arid environment dispose, the development of the tourism is a way that addresses the population of these areas better life conditions, once that it promotes the recreation and local dynamization and the populations start to dispose of alternative sources of income with the introduction of no-agricultural activities and of the services of them derived.

More than the simple and located initiatives of use of the environmental and cultural potentialities, the tourism in the semi-arid needs a model that can foment and to subsidize public politics and private incentives to the development in infrastructure level, training and

popularization, so that the investor can be capable to take advantage in a planned way of the opportunities and to create conditions of social investment in the local base.

It would be naive to think just the development of the Tourism in the Rural Way for the presence of tourist potentialities and men and women's will that inhabit the semi-arid, when those areas potentially appropriate to the development of the tourist activities are isolated in the immensity of the Northeastern semi-aridity and they are ignored as destinies to the ones that they look for the tourism in the center originators. This way, the individual effort or have small local groups it is not enough for the reach of significant results.

In the same way, she cannot also accept that the barriers to the development of the Tourism in the Rural Zone are, exclusively, reflexes of the performance of the public power in their different levels. Necessary it is, to find the point of balance of the responsibilities starting from the inherent functions to each one of the involved sections.

The infrastructure lacks to the tourism, as basic sanitation, amplification and maintenance of the way mesh; of reliable studies that point the tourist potentialities making possible the insert of places, recognize the positive potentials and negative impacts to the populations and to the natural and antropoc elements that form the different semi-arid environment; of safety to the physical integrity and of the public and private patrimony; of access to terminals compatible with effective norms; of a planned route in way to benefit a larger number of local inhabitants and to satisfy the demands, are, among another, real fetter to the development of the tourism, being him in semi-arid rural environment or not.

## **CONCLUSIVE CONSIDERATIONS**

In the Northeast of Brazil, especially in the Semi-arid Tropic, there is not doubt on the unsustainable character of the conventional models of development, not just for its impotence to maximize and to distribute the economical well-being, improving the quality of the communities' life, as for its incapacity to modify the structural nature of the poverty, to create social opportunities, finally, to guarantee the human rights and to protect the ecosystems of the caatingas.

Before the subjects that it is placed, the Rural Tourism in the Semi-arid of the Northeast Area of Brazil represents another economical strategy of performance of the Federal and State Governments in cooperation with the local power, the productive section and the organized society that it will be able to, since drifted in the molds of a tourism with sustainability, to represent an instrument of important importance to revert the economical and social state installed in the semi-arid environment, as one more viable form of coexistence with the local ecological conditions.

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