

Tourism and Social Development Strategy in Algeria after the CoronaPandemic- The Case of El Tarf City



Houria BENHAMZA

Chadli Ben Djedid University – El Tarf

ABSTRACT: This article deals with the tourism development strategy and the Corona crisis, and what this pandemic has left on jobs, to social and hotel services in Algeria, especially in El Tarf, and the disruption of many projects with a local development endeavor, which necessitated the adoption of a new strategy by travel and tourism agencies to cover the deficit and to face the crisis, And that is by its orientation towards exploiting digital technology, virtual space, tourism media and encouraging local tourism as an alternative to facing this crisis after the Corona epidemic.

KEY WORDS: Tourism; Tourism agencies; Development; Tourism culture; Corona pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the most important bases of economic development, as many countries have recognized that tourism is an export industry that contributes to sustainable development in the face of current economic shifts and increased global competitiveness.

The obstacles facing Algeria's tourism sector, which suffers from a narrow view of society and its great exclusion as well as to the absence of social tourism culture with the crisis of the phase that accompanied the Corona pandemic spread and its consequences for economic and tourism activity. Then, ideas began to develop tourism awareness and developing tourism culture in order to become an effective economic sector that contributes to attract hard currency from other than hydrocarbons, expanding tourism investment and building performance and human efficiency in tourism, but that was accompanied by a significant decline in light of the Corona crisis. Therefore, the promotion for local tourism was a strategic dimension for the development of local tourism and for overcoming difficulties and financial inability.

Through this overview of the importance of the activation of tourism culture in Algeria and its role in achieving development, in the content of this article, we will make a sociological analysis of the reality of the tourism sector and its relationship to local development in the light of the Corona epidemic. By answering the following main question: **What is the impact of Corona pandemic on tourism activity and development in Algeria, especially in El Tarf?**

The subject of our research includes the following elements:

1. The importance of social tourism for development.
2. Tourism culture and the role of tourism media.
3. The role of the tourism sector in achieving development in Algeria.
4. The effects of the Corona pandemic on the tourism sector in Algeria (El Tarf).
5. Tourism development strategy after the Corona pandemic.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

2.1 Definition of tourism:

Tourism is defined as hitting the ground, i.e. moving and walking from one location to another in a particular country, territory or around the world. As well as, the World Tourism Organization also defines tourists as all people who are in a place for 24 hours with a view to obtaining entertainment, including holidays, sports and relaxation.

Tourism is a phenomenon of human activity that is long known as temporary population transfer. Some people have their residence or home moving to other place or countries for non-residential purposes, but for recreation and commerce. In addition, it is a group of businesses and functions that serve tourists and contribute to the provision of accommodation, transportation and recreational sites, and tourism as a means of marketing (Bouamoucha, 2020).

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Therefore, tourism has several meanings that can be illustrated in two important points:

- First: tourism benefits the movement of a person from his/her country of origin to another one asking for something.
- Second: it benefits temporary movement, not migration, and therefore they have specified the length of the tourist's stay as more than 24 hours and less than 12 months.

2.2 Tourism development:

There are various concepts concerning tourism development in which it reflects the goal of achieving balanced increase in tourism resources or of increasing productivity in the tourism sector through optimal use of tourism productive resources. Some authors have defined it as the expansion of facilities and services base in order to meet the tourists' needs. Others focus on the offer side.

"Tourism development must not be limited to the development of offer only by building hotels and tourism villages spread over different areas, but the meaning of tourism development must be extended to the development of both offer and demand in order to satisfy the tourists desires and reach national, sectoral and regional objectives that have been already pre-established as a benchmark for measuring the degree of required tourism development " (Al-Adjimi, 1992).

In addition, " Tourism development takes the form of integrated industrialization, which means the establishment and construction of tourist centers that include the various services that a tourist needs in the course of its stay and the appropriate format of financial capabilities of the different categories of tourists " (Hasanine, 2006).

From the previous definitions, we conclude that tourism development remains essentially an integral part of economic and social development.

2.3 Tourism media:

It is a recent use term, especially for many media professionals and researchers. As well as, it is defined as : " All objectives, non-personalized and informal media efforts to improve the vision of tourism that attend for the preparation and transmission of a message or a set of messages aimed at creating a tourist awareness or developing the tourist image of a state or region in particular markets and audiences by using media to attract the interest of prospective tourists in such markets, whether in the country or abroad and led them to conduct into tourism " (El Harbi & Al-Sehli, 2011).

Another definition emphasizes that tourism media includes both formal governmental and informal mass media that influence the values and trends of citizens and customers towards the tourism sector, it means : " addressing the public whether in the country or abroad with a substantive and mental approach , using attraction and excitement factors of tourism grants with a view to persuade the public, raising interest in tourism and its benefits for the individual and the state, as well as encouraging him to figure out tourism attractions, awareness-raising and good treatment of tourist" (Al-Sehli, 2011).

2.4 Corona epidemic:

Corona or "Covid-19" is a pandemic and infectious disease caused by the SARS Virus from dangerous viral strain. It was discovered in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019 when The Health Organization warned of its spread in the world and its risks to human health and to the economy. The consequences of this pandemic emerged in a fast pace around the world. In 2020, infections reached more than 4 million cases and thousands of deaths with the appearance of variants (Delta, Alpha and Omicron) which made the epidemic difficult to control. (WHO, 2020)

This is according to warnings issued by the World Health Organization between 2020/2021.

3. FACTORS CONTROLLING TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Tourism varies according to the diversity of human desires and different trends. These types recreational tourism, cultural tourism, sports, religious, social tourism, etc....

Tourism in this diversity is a link of interest to many researchers in clarifying its importance, economic and cultural dimensions; it is an effective means of cultural and social friction among people. Besides, it is a flexible source of income in the hard currency of developing countries in order to improve their national income and the development of other factors, especially in the light of economic shifts.

Moreover, tourism is a key challenge to the development aspirations of many tourism countries. Hence, this imposes economic openness on these countries to domestic private and foreign investment and advancing the international partnership process. Tourist spending generates income for travel and tourism agencies as well as creates jobs, thus increasing employment and national income. In addition to that, social tourism contributes to the construction of new hotels and provides comfort, mobility and entertainment services coastal features.

Statistics show that many states have been able to cover their balance of income and trade with tourism revenue during the

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period of economic crises previously known to the world. For instance: "Spain's revenue in 1963 amounted to \$704.6 million, an increase of \$202.8 million over 1962, 48.8%. The average number of tourists to Spain in 1951 and 1958 was 18%, which rose to 24.6% between 1958 and 1962. So, Spain's tourism income was sufficient to cover the trade deficit, with a surplus of about \$44 million" (Hatem, 1993).

Among the major factors contributing to tourism development are the following (Zitoun, 1999):

- **Factors due to tourist:** it is the sum of desires and ideas that belong to the tourist her/himself in which they prompts him to visit a particular country or region that is linked to the interaction of culture, personal composition, religious conviction and belief with news and propaganda about the tourist country.
- **External factors affecting the tourist:** the geographical location of the tourist country, being close or distant from the tourist-exporting country, as well as the tourist stability, economic and social situation of the tourist country.
- **Factors associated with the tourist country:** these includes tourist trips prices, existing facilities, accommodation, means of transport and the extent to which travel programs are organized as well as to the effectiveness of tourism advertising.
- **Market factors:** tourism, like other economic sector is affected by the law of offer and demand and the issue of competition for tourism and race to attract the greatest possible number of tourists.
- **Factors related to the role of advertising media:** this is illustrated by the effectiveness of the advertising on which travel agencies and tourism companies rely on through presenting invitations and posters.

4. TOURISM AWARENESS AND IMPORTANCE FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The role of media in general is evident in its various sectors by achieving public convergence around ideas, goals and programs for change and social development. This can be through education as a core function of the media. Media rises to the role of partner in development and comprehensive sustainable development process. The great role of media in the field of education and culture has made it possible to figure out educational media and its modern tools in the educational process in mass culture (Saeed, 2008).

Tourism media is a set of aspects of activity carried out by media organizations to form a tourist knowledge base for the public to influence their attitudes and ideas. It may then enhance its behavior towards tourism to attract as many tourists as possible both inside and outside the country through various media tools. " Tourism media is a necessary feature of the tourism industry in which it plays a major role in this field through multimedia such as : radio, audio, press, exhibition, films, print...There is an urgent need for its effective role in the process of tourism development" (Ghamraoui, 2012).

Therefore, tourist media functions include:

- ✓ Supporting tourism and improving national income.
- ✓ Achieving a dynamic increase in sales and tourist demand on local products.
- ✓ Reaching out to investors and finance centers for tourism projects and saving in marketing costs.
- ✓ Convince clients to inquire about services and try to improve them.
- ✓ Competitive function, which is better served or good than other foreign goods.
- ✓ Preservation and dissemination of cultural gains and legacies.

If the media has an important role in the development of the tourism sector, the formation of tourism awareness depends on the media and its functions. So: "Creating a tourism awareness and culture is the key area of tourism development and that information is actually able to create a tourism awareness and culture, especially since it is supposed to find those principles for tourism's recovery. The primary public information function is to form a public opinion capable of guiding and changing the tourism image because tourism must be a community responsibility not assigned to the Ministry and all bodies involved in the development and improvement of society in tourism planning" (Ghamraoui, 2012).

Thus, Tourism may contribute to the development of the State economy and to the improvement of social services in which this requires a number of proceedings which are summarized as follows:

- ✓ The presence of centers at tourist sites to regulate the movement of tourists and provide them with the necessary information.
- ✓ Provision of visitor centers that require comprehensive location information with the necessary guidance on how to handle the site.
- ✓ Laws and regulations must be in place to ensure that tourist arrivals are controlled and provided with services, information, security and protection without damaging the environment.
- ✓ The need for solid management of natural and human resources in the region that can sustain them.

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- ✓ Awareness-raising and environmental education by sensitizing local population about the importance of the environment and its preservation.
- ✓ Determining the absorptive capacity of the tourist area, so as to determine the numbers of tourists arriving in the tourist area without congestion and overcrowding in order not to affect the natural and social environment on the one hand and tourists on the other to be amazed with an attractive environment that provides them with all the services and recreational activities.

Through the above, tourism awareness and culture must be disseminated through various means and institutions, media, educational clubs and institutions, etc... all that in order to form a generation that preserves its tourism gains and secures its economy and wealth. Also, it is able to overcome difficulties and crises, especially in the light of epidemics, including the economic damage the world is suffering today due to the Corona pandemic.

5. THE REALITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN ALGERIA DURING THE CORONA PANDEMIC:

Tourism is a vital sector that provides income to the State and contributes to the economic development. However, the problems facing this type of tourism hamper its role and development effectiveness. Like any other activity in life, tourism is exposed to various risks and crises of varying severity, causes and consequences from one country to another. Among the major risks and crises facing the tourism sector are the following:

- ✓ The dangers of the corona pandemic and its spread in the world.
- ✓ Risks of environmental pollution and imbalance.
- ✓ Poor base processing of tourism – oriented structures.
- ✓ Differences between developed and developing countries, particularly in the field of production and technology.
- ✓ Competition for foreign investment under unfair terms for developing countries.
- ✓ Competition, requirements for achieving comprehensive quality standards and unequal opportunities between the North and the South.

One of the most important risks that we will address in this research paper is the repercussions of the spread of Corona in the world and the effects of this epidemic of social crises on the global economy and national income, by disrupting projects significantly, especially after low oil revenues and low economic growth, including on tourism revenues.

- ✓ Tourism stopped by more than 80 to 90%.
- ✓ Suspension of projects for the completion of hotels.
- ✓ Disruption of employment opportunities (loss of 100.8 million jobs) in the world.
- ✓ Flights stopped and the closure of tourist agencies.
- ✓ Reduced international arrivals due to the prohibition of movement, quarantine and trips of all kinds.

In Algeria, the situation is similar, where the decline in oil revenues reflected a 21.2 % decline in fiscal revenues, with a barrel of oil less than \$30. There is twice the contribution of the tourism sector to the GNP, which does not exceed 1.8%. As well as, employment represents little but no authorized employment, especially in the private sector or in semi-tourist jobs such as restaurant and cafe workers. There is an absence of tourism recreational activity, the large deficit and limited availability of infrastructure and hotels with the lack of competition (both in the private and public sectors).

In the face of this deficit and the crisis health situation in Algeria, the few existing tourism activities have been affected by the closure of the entire headquarters and tourism agencies, i.e. by 90% to 3000 tourist agencies across the country.

Currently, the government and trade unions in the tourism and transport sector apply urgent solutions, including:

- ✓ Increase financial support and strengthen preventive and health systems, such as vaccination, and the need for a health passport for vaccination during transportation and travel.
- ✓ Postponement of payment of bank loans by hotels and tourist agencies.
- ✓ Launch incentive programs to reduce internal agency losses (by encouraging domestic trips to shopping centers, health spas, desert and mountain areas, etc.)
- ✓ Adopting virtual tourism to publicize market and advertise to Algerian tourist destinations, especially through websites and pages.
- ✓ Promoting local tourism through organized activities and local investment in order to encourage private and local enterprises (trade events, exhibitions, seminars and conferences, etc.).

Today, the state has devoted considerable attention to the tourism sector, given both economic and social importance, drawing up a legislative text defining how to develop the tourism sector, protect interests and create special laws for tourist expansion areas. Moreover, The State has also adopted privatization of the sector by issuing an appeal to investors dealing with

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the National Tourism Development Agency, which is responsible for the operation of some 174 tourist expansion areas, re-equipping and restoring hotels, and taking care of their services, including several tourism projects in the province of El Tarf, especially in the city of El Kala.

6. THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON THE TOURISM SECTOR IN ALGERIA (EL KALA AS A MODEL)

6.1 Touristic monuments in Algeria

Despite the growing importance of the tourism sector in many countries around the world, Algeria is not yet up to the intended level to achieve its objectives. Its achievements remain very limited compared to neighboring countries despite that Algeria have impressive regions and coastal strip extending over a distance of 1200 km. Besides, the diversity of the climate that makes tourism in Algeria continue throughout the year, as well as the vast desert that is one of the world's most beautiful deserts, in addition to the multiplicity of monuments and traditions. All of this is considered a tourist reserve that extends across the whole country such as: The Tassili, Hoggar, Castle of Beni Hamad, Tipaza's and Cherechel monuments and El Casbah in Algiers. Also, the varied arts and customs through traditional industries, without forgetting the mineral spas spread eastwards, as well as the areas that need little attention, so that Algeria becomes a global tourist pole.

Algeria has great tourism potential, but the lack of interest in it during its development course at an earlier stage has prevented it from being exploited and recognized locally and internationally. The diversity of terrain from the coastline towards the inland highlands and into the vast desert, with different tourist attractions in each region, three types of tourism should be distinguished in Algeria: Coastal tourism, Mountain tourism and desert tourism. (Karziz, 1999)

6.2 Historical Overview of the City of El Kala (Geography and Civilization):

The city of El Kala is a stimulating model for tourism development, as it is considered one of the coastal cities with a wide movement towards tourism development, a special interest in expanding hotel institutions in this region and allocating a huge budget for the restructuring of the hotel sector by providing the infrastructure of appropriate roads, environmental and coastal interface, etc. Awareness of the importance of tourism and its role in the development of the national economy is an issue.

The ancient city of El Kala was called « Toneza », a subdivision of the Roman city of "Hippo". Historians have agreed that it is a Phoenician designation which it has been a fortress to defend the area and a commercial maritime center since the Numidian period, situated on a privileged waterfront which has made it a defensive and commercial location along the seacoast and an excellent centre for commercial and military activity (Khaldoun, 1996).

The port represents a 600m deep and 150m wide bay of more than 6 hectares built since the colonial era. In 1875, Moshe who was then in charge for mapping the Algerian coast, submitted a report to the Minister of the Navy indicating the importance of the port of El Kala. An amount of 470000 French francs was allocated to the completion of this fortress, as it was the closest area to the border of the second French colony, Tunisia (Khaldoun, 1996).

6.3 Social tourism requirements and the extent of their application in the City of El Kala:

The interest in the tourism sector in Algeria came some time ago, as the state carried out a comprehensive scientific and statistical study of the tourist reality, in what is known as the tourist market. And interest in tourism investment, so the state was tasked with restructuring the city, since tourism today is an integrated industry characterized by the breadth of its activities and the multiplicity of its types, and what distinguishes it also is that it is considered an economic activity that affects many development issues, the most important of which is economic development.

Providing the requirements of the tourist offer and the level of tourism services, as well as the cultural and security level, freedom of trade in services and various policies related to economic activities (Saidi, 2013).

The tourism strategy of El Kala is embodied through its intensive development work and its objectives to attract tourists and to the current crises and difficulties and focus on the following elements:

- Transportation of all kinds to facilitate inbound and outbound movement, especially towards the beaches.
- Expansion of accommodation and hotels services that attract tourists, especially in terms of hospitality, food and residence.
- Advertisements to attract tourists through agencies, online and other modern means, to spread the image of the city and the level of services available in the tourism sector.
- Concern to security and entertainment through concerts and festivals, especially during the season of frequent tourist trips (Coral Festival).

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- A program to intensify hygiene campaigns in view of the small size of the city and the increasing number of arrivals in summer.
- Involve the major local and foreign investors to create a tourist market while providing facilities on contracting and operating in this sector.

The previous Business Plan for the Tourism Development Orientation Program set out the material objectives of the first phase (2008/2015), aimed at meeting international and national demand that will increase the number of tourists to 2.5 million (Saidi, 2013).

Tourism and travel agencies also contribute directly to the domestic product in particular by stimulating domestic and foreign tourism, offering several services: Omrah throughout the seasons, pilgrimages, airplane tickets and hotel reservations across the country and all over the world, train tickets, national and international tourist trips, Visa, home rental, tourist vehicles and other services (dtaftarf.com).

It is noticeable that the province has 19 accredited tourism and travel agencies, including 14 principle agencies and 5 branches which are distributed across 6 municipalities: 9 in the municipality of El Tarf (including: El Morjane Tour, DIDA Travel Agency, Al Abbed Travel and Tourism, Coquillage...) Also, 2 in the municipality of El Kala, 1 in the municipality of Ain Assel, 4 in the municipality of Drean, 1 in the municipality of Ben M'hidi and 2 in the municipality of El Besbes.

Accredited tourism and travel agencies can use tour guides to organize trips and accompany tourists on visits to museums, historical monuments and various archaeological sites in the province of El Tarf, thus providing jobs and contributing to local income, stimulating traditional industry and expanding trade in the province.

7. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AFTER THE CORONA PANDEMIC

In view of the pandemic, tourism agencies in the province of El Tarf have relied on virtual tourism by developing technical services and technology for media publicity to disseminate the tourism service, especially local ones (on Facebook pages). Accordingly, the service relies on a group of media professionals who communicate with each other and attend meetings and webinars via electronic devices to record major tourism events and its activities in the province in various tourism agencies.

It has been said that virtual tourist routes can be considered as an alternative to visit tourist sites. Hence, the marketing of virtual tourism routes is leveraging global market share as well as adding high comparative and competitive advantage by using these technologies and reducing costs. In addition to that, the protection and preservation of historical site sand of architectural and artistic works of human heritage (Mohamadi, 2021).

Tourism in El Tarf was considered to be the main engine of development in the region (according to the Directorate of Tourism in El Tarf) by sending many projects which has already been offered but were not set off for reasons that related to this pandemic and its repercussions. Most of the projects have been stopped by the suspension of trips and the disruption of the relocation of the companies that were scheduled to restore the important hotels and tourist stations in El Kala.

- The land border with the neighbor Tunisia has been closed, thus disrupting the arrivals to and from Tunisia.
- Suspend all flights, both from inside and outside the country.
- The quarantine that was in the summer of 2020 during 3 months was fully implemented.
- Income for tourism agencies has decreased to -75% in 2020 compared to 2018.
- Employment was disrupted as a significant number of tour guides were laid off.
- Some restaurants and shops are closed due to lack of funding and financial support.

Updating the web pages and websites related to tourism by introducing the region and its new capabilities and achievements, and interacting with the customer and the tourist directly, identifying the requirements of individuals and providing the necessary information about the places of entertainment and the natural, archaeological and historical places. And work to provide safety and educate the Algerian citizen in the sense of responsibility towards the protection and preservation of the environment. Orienting tourists towards accommodation centers, hotels, restaurants, parks, beaches and the area's environmental characteristics and sites by providing pages and publications via the Internet, as well as developing the urban structure with all services such as transportation, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, etc... to achieve tourism development and develop interest in local tourism and make the best use of it.

The tourism sector is one of the goals of sustainable development and a basic strategy for the state in light of the current economic transformations, especially as a method for local development and for building a post-oil economy, as it contributes to improving the balance of payments, raising the domestic product, creating jobs and reducing the unemployment rate. Regions, equality in income distribution and compensation for the economic deficit recorded in light of the spread of the Corona virus, where a decrease in GDP and a deficit in the balance of payments were recorded, as previously explained.

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Based on several indicators, Algeria suffers from a significant weakness in the field of tourism, although it sits and includes many tourist components, archaeological and natural sites, and has a diverse tourist heritage. As a post-epidemic strategy, the state should be interested in forming frameworks in the field of hotel and tourism, giving attention to digital development and paying attention to developing the sector and providing it with networks and special pages for tourism guidance, as it contributes to the growth of this sector and increases investments and tourist flows towards Algeria. Also, plans to build future tourism by choosing competencies in line with the nature of the national tourism market, and taking global experiences, especially with regard to solutions that can overcome the negative effects of the Corona epidemic.

7. CONCLUSION:

The tourism sector and tourism institutions operate in an atmosphere of cultural diversity and technological change, and it is the sector most affected by crises in the world, especially the crisis of the Corona epidemic, so it is exposed to many risks and difficulties that must be faced with a scientific plan and preserve the elements of demand and available tourism supply as well as contribute positively to solving These problems are commensurate with the type of problem or the nature of the crisis and the introduction of global experiences.

As a result, some recommendations can be proposed: working on the embodiment of an integrated strategy by 2424 to advance the tourism sector and tourism development, while contributing to the actual implementation of projects, advancing the telecommunications sector with technological progress and digitization, forming qualified human competencies, programming many scientific forums and forums and disseminating them on the widest scale to adopt new ideas To develop the tourism sector after the Corona pandemic.

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