

## COASTAL TOURISM. PARALLEL BETWEEN ROMANIA AND INDIA

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*Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to define the concept of coastal tourism and highlight this kind of tourism in Romania and India. The article presents the main tourist attractions in the Black Sea and Arabian Sea, which generate a number of tourists that fluctuate each year. Based on statistical data, the authors analyze some touristic indicators, such as: the tourist reception structure with tourist accommodation functions; the existing (installed) tourist accommodation capacity; the tourist accommodation capacity in operation; arrivals of tourists; staying overnight in the establishments of touristic reception; average length of stay.*

**Key words:** *coastal tourism, Black Sea, Arabian Sea*

### INTRODUCTION

Within the tourism sector, coastal tourism is one of the most important in terms of tourist flows and income generation [2,5,6]. Among the tourist destinations, the Romanian coastal regions are one of the most preferred by tourists. The coastal region is one of the main tourist destination in Romania according to the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics [8].

The increase in tourism flows in the coastal area is combined with emerging concerns regarding sports and leisure activities undertaken on the beach.

Coastal tourism offers some unique elements that characterize it as a place that attracts more and more tourists. The different types of coasts, depending on their own character, offer a diversity of tourist attractions, because the three elements: the sun, the sea and the sand that are found, are unique in nature.

Coastal tourism includes activities such as swimming, sunbathing and other recreational activities that can take place on the beach and include as a main condition the proximity to the sea. Maritime tourism also includes activities such as boating, yachting, cruising, water sports.

Due to its extraordinary beauty, cultural richness and diversity, the Romanian seaside has become the favorite vacation destination of tourists from Europe and other countries, making maritime and seaside tourism one of the important tourist sectors [3].

The Romanian coast is famous for its good quality and fine sand, comparable to that of the Mediterranean Sea. The water of the Black Sea has a low salinity compared to other continental seas. This fact allows the practice of underwater and water sports in good conditions. The beach area has an extremely low slope. There are large areas of 100-200 meters where the water does not exceed 1.5 meters deep, any risk factor being thus excluded. The beach is oriented to the east, which offers tourists the opportunity to admire the sunrise and a maximum brightness throughout the day.

The Romanian coast is one of the most beautiful regions of our country, with spectacular landscapes. The total length of the Romanian coast is 245 kilometers. The Romanian coast borders Ukraine to the north and Bulgaria to the south. In the eastern part lies Dobrogea. On an area of 163 km (more than half of its surface), the Romanian coast is dominated by the Danube Delta and coastal lakes, with an unique landscape. The most

frequented area by tourists is the fine sandy coast, which stretches from Cape Midia (Navodari) to Vama Veche (the border with Bulgaria), a coastal area totaling about 82 km.

The beaches on the Romanian coast are covered with fine sand and have a width that reaches in some places about 200 meters. However, there is a difference that can be seen between the beaches in the north of the coast (Navodari, Mamaia, Constanta) and the beaches in the south. There are some differences that can be noticed between the beaches on the north coast (meaning Navodari, Mamaia, Constanța) and the beaches on the south. The north beaches are wider and have a uniform shoreline. The south part have many narrower sectors or are bordered by high cliffs. The sun shines about 2,500 hours a year on the Romanian coast, an average that brings us closer to many coasts of the Mediterranean Sea.

In terms of accommodation, the tourists can find multiple accommodation options. The offer includes a number of 848 various tourist units, with a number of 85,081 accommodation places (year 2019) from the 12 seaside resorts: Navodari, Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Techirghiol, Costinesti, Olimp, Neptun, Jupiter, Cap Aurora, Venus, Saturn, Mangalia, to which are added May 2 and Vama Veche.

On the seaside the tourists can find multiple leisure opportunities, many restaurants and terraces, offering the opportunity to relax and enjoy Romanian dishes, international or fishing. Also, the tourists can find multiple possibilities to try all water sports, each resort having modern leisure facilities.

There are also possibilities to visit historical sites, museums, ancient ruins, churches, monasteries, nature reserves unique in the country and in Europe and many other attractions complete the picturesque Romanian coast.

The central objective of tourism in Romania is to substantiate a smart, sustainable and inclusive economic growth [4], able to provide the premises for the consolidation of a strong, proactive state and a balanced society, with an extended middle class, and in order to achieve this goal, envisages attracting more European funds, qualifying the tourism workforce, increasing the number of tourists, especially foreign tourists [1,7].

Constanța County, the main county in terms of maritime tourism, is located in the southeastern extremity of Romania, in the southern half of Dobrogea, belonging to the Southeast Region. It borders Tulcea County to the north, the Black Sea to the east, Bulgaria to the south and the Danube River to the west, which separates it from Călărași, Ialomița and Brăila counties. With an area of 7,071 km<sup>2</sup> (3.0% of the national area; 19.8% of the region), Constanța County ranks 8th in size nationally and second in the region, after Tulcea County [8].

The largest port on the Black Sea, the city of Constanta is attested from the sixth century BC, under the name of Tomis (then a Greek colony). The main attractions of the city are the Casino, built at the beginning of the 20th century, the Aquarium, the Dolphinarium and the Planetarium. In Constanta you can visit the Museum of Natural History and Archeology, the Museum of the Romanian Navy, the Museum of Ethnography, the Astronomical Observatory, the Musical Theater and the Dramatic Theater. The ethnic diversity of the resort is underlined by the existence of three religious monuments: the Orthodox Cathedral (1898), the Catholic Church (1908) and the Mosque (1910).

Talking about the coastal tourism in Indian realm, with the Indian Government making way to develop 17 new spots across the country for utilising the bountiful coastline of the country and making it one of the top coastal destinations. India has a 7517 km long coastline sprawling across the southern part of the country. Till 2017, India had not been able to attract many tourists as much as it should have. In 2017, Indian coastline hosted 10.4 million tourists while on the other hand, Thailand with a coastline of just 3219 km

hosted 35 million tourists. That is why the Government is now planning to revamp the Indian coastline in order to attract more tourists.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this paper is to make a radiography of coastal tourism at the level of the Romanian coast and that of India. In this regard, several indicators were analyzed, based on data provided by statistical institutions. In this regard we mention [9]:

1. The tourist reception structure with tourist accommodation functions reflects any construction or arrangement, which offers the accommodation service and other specific services for tourists. It includes: hotel, youth hotel, hostel, apartment hotel, motel, inn, tourist villa, tourist cottage, chalets for sale and fishing, bungalow, holiday village, camping, stopover, cottage, tourist pension, agrotourism pension, accommodation on sea and river vessels.

2. The existing (installed) tourist accommodation capacity reflects the number of tourist accommodation beds, excepting supplementary beds.

3. The tourist accommodation capacity in operation reflects the number of accommodation beds put at the disposal of tourists by the unit, in the period that the unit are open. It is expressed in beds-days.

4. Arrivals of tourists reflect all persons (Romanians and foreigners) who travel outside the locality where they normally reside, for a period of less than 12 months, and spend at least one night in a tourist accommodation unit. The main reason for the trip is not related to a paid activity in the places visited.

5. Staying overnight in the establishments of touristic reception reflects the 24 hour interval, beginning with the hotel hour, for which a person is registered in the evidence of the tourist accommodation establishment and benefits of accommodation in exchange for the fee paid for the occupied space on the premises, even if the actual duration of stay is inferior to the mentioned interval. The overnight stays for additional beds (paid by tourists) are also taken into account.

6. Average length of stay. It is calculated by dividing the number of overnight stays by the number of tourist arrivals.

### RESEARCH RESULTS

#### **Analysis of the accommodation capacity at the level of the Romanian coastal area between 2000-2019**

Accommodation possibilities for tourists obviously influence the development of tourism. Accommodation capacity greatly favors the volume of tourist flows in a certain area or tourist resort.

According to the official data provided by the National Institute of Statistics, in the last two decades the following situation is observed regarding the tourist accommodation capacity on the area of the Romanian coast (Table 1).

- The number of accommodation structures increased slightly, at the level of 2019 being by 10.9% more units than in 2000;
- The number of existing accommodation places decreased considerably, by 28.7%;
- Accommodation capacity in operation (number of places-days) increased by 4.5% during the analyzed period.

The situation can be explained by the fact that the new structures, although more numerous, are still smaller (smaller hotels, boarding houses, villas), compared to large units that have left the tourist circuit for various reasons (campsites, camps, hotels). The increase of the accommodation capacity in operation, at a slower pace than that of the

accommodation units, is due to the continued keeping in the tourist circuit of some non-functional units.

**Table1**

**The evolution of the accommodation capacity at the level of the Romanian coastal area, 2000-2019**

	Coastal area			Romania			% coastal area in total Romania		
	No. of units	Existing places	Places in operation	No. of units	Existing places	Places in operation	No. of units	Existing places	Places in operation
2000	764	119410	8730377	3121	280005	50197142	24.4	42.6	17.4
2002	758	116419	10390471	3338	272596	50752061	22.7	42.7	20.5
2004	844	116935	10383657	3900	275941	53988640	21.6	42.3	19.2
2006	919	118778	9422385	4710	287158	54499904	19.5	41.3	17.3
2008	934	116849	8571021	4840	294210	59187968	19.3	39.7	14.5
2010	1014	121003	8975469	5222	311698	63808286	19.4	38.8	14,1
2012	676	80840	9482602	5821	301109	74135614	11.6	26.8	12.8
2014	690	83625	9328874	6130	311288	77676817	11.2	26.8	12.0
2016	701	81635	8797917	6946	328888	83323220	10.0	24.8	10.5
2018	766	80665	9032938	8453	353835	89075891	9.0	22.8	10.1
2019	848	85081	9129918	8402	356562	88789656	10.0	23.8	10.3
2019/ 2000	+10,9%	-28,7%	+4,5%	+169,2%	+27,3%	+76,8%	-	-	-

Source: NIS, Tempo-online database. <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table> [9]

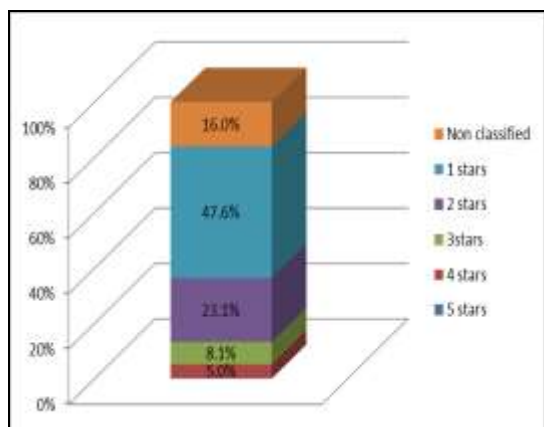
Comparing the coastal area with the situation encountered at country level, we find that the Romanian coastal area has a much lower growth trend, both in terms of number of units and accommodation capacity.

Analyzing the share of the Romanian coast in the country in relation to these indicators, we can see that both the share of accommodation units and accommodation capacity has been halved.

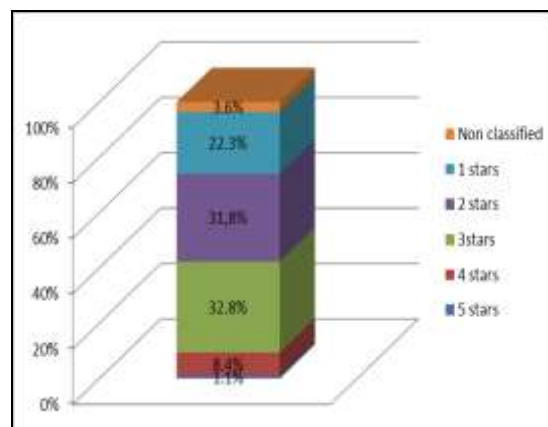
In addition, the reduction in accommodation capacity in operation on the coast compared to the situation at the country level is also due to the reduction of the tourist season, which has made accommodation units, and especially large hotels in tourist resorts, open from year to year, for an increasingly short period of time. The average period of operation of accommodation structures on the coast is 124 days, compared to the national average which is about 255 days.

As can be seen from Figure 2, at the level of 2019, a percentage of 86.9% of accommodation in the coastal area were rated at 1-3 stars (32.8% at 3 stars) and less than 10% at 4-5 stars. The high share of accommodation units/places in the lower comfort classes is explained by the large number of units built during the communist period.

Although some of these units have made substantial investments, there is still a "critical mass" of such structures rated at 2-3 stars in the tourist resorts on the Romanian coast. If we analyze in evolution (Figures 1 and 2) the structure of accommodation units by comfort categories, we notice an improvement of the situation registered in 2019 compared to 2000. The 5-star units increased from 0.2% in 2000 (two units) to 1.1% in 2019 (nine units). Also, the share of unclassified and 1-star units was significantly reduced.

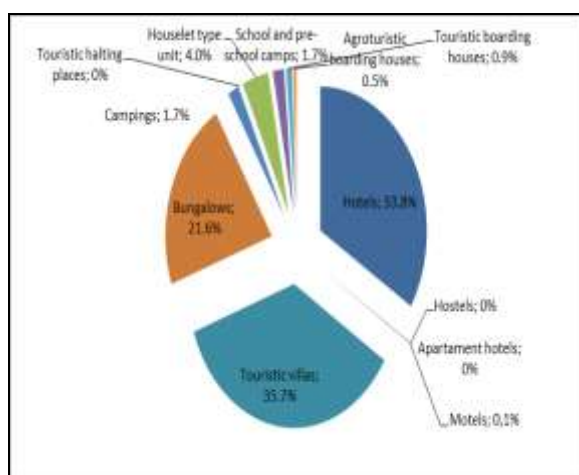


**Figure 1. Establishments of touristic reception by category of comfort, year 2000**

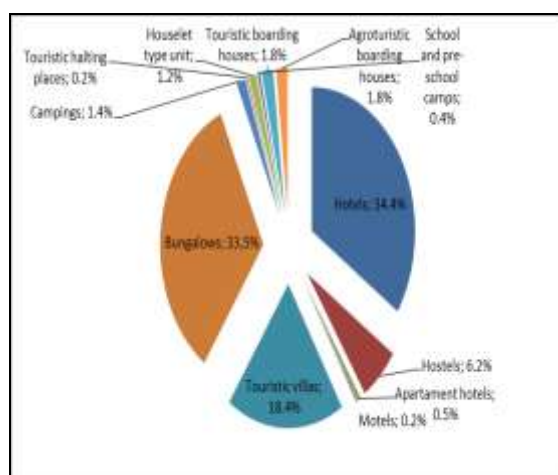


**Figure 2. Establishments of touristic reception by category of comfort, year 2019**

In 2000 (Figure 3), the three main forms of establishments of touristic reception on the Romanian coast were represented by touristic villas, with a share of 35.7% of the total accommodation units, followed by hotels (33.8%) and bungalows (21.6), these three forms totaling 91.1% of the total units. Motel units, hostel and apartment hotels were not present on the seaside.



**Figure 3. Establishments of touristic reception by type, year 2000**



**Figure 4. Establishments of touristic reception by type, year 2019**

At the level of 2019 (Figure 4), there is a diversification of tourist units by different types, but the hotels, bungalows and tourist villas are predominant. As can be seen from Figure 4, at the level of 2019, the accommodation units on the Romanian coast recorded the following percentages: campings 1.4%, touristic halting places 0.2%, houselet type unit 1.2%, touristic boarding houses 1.8%, agroturistic boarding houses 1.8%, school and pre-school camps 0.4%, hostels 6.2%, apartment hotels 0.5%, motels 0.2%, hotels 34.4%, touristic villas 18.4% and bungalows 33.5%.

Compared to 2019, in the recent year (2020) the percentage of accommodation units fluctuates from unit to unit, which is mainly due to the number of tourists and their preferences on accommodation. Also, the percentage of hotels decreased by 0.6% in 2020, compared to 2019, a significant decrease of 11.9%, being found in the case of bungalows. At the same time, significant decreases from 2019 to 2020 were registered in the case: motels, apartment hotels, hostels, touristic halting places, touristic boarding houses, agroturistic boarding houses. The tourist units that registered increases in 2020 compared

to 2019 are school and pre-school camps, houselet type unit, campings, tourist villas these being the main preferences of tourists on the Romanian coast, in 2020, when the pandemic significantly affected the coastal tourism sector.

**Analysis of tourist demand at the level of the Romanian coastal area between 2000-2019**

The tourist traffic in the Romanian coastal area will be analyzed in terms of the evolution and structure of three main indicators: tourist arrivals, overnight stays in accommodation structures and average length of stay, indicators that were analyzed for the period 2000-2019 (Table 2). It should be mentioned that due to the lack of data this analysis does not include day visitors (tourists who visit the seaside and do not spend the night here) or those who resort to private accommodation (accommodation for hosts/individuals, accommo-dation for relatives or friends).

**Table 2**

**The evolution of the main indicators of the tourist circulation at the level of the Romanian coastal area, 2000-2019**

	Tourists			Overnights			Average length of stay		
	Total	Romanian	Foreigners	Total	Romanian	Foreigners	Total	Romanian	Foreigners
2000	671638	638855	32783	4459151	4192999	266152	6.6	6.6	8.1
2002	684909	627103	57806	4290482	3855878	434604	6.2	6.1	7.5
2004	755455	671888	83567	4337590	3744221	593369	5.7	5.6	7.1
2006	686502	624690	61812	3745810	3300654	445156	5.4	5.3	7.2
2008	832589	791020	41569	4006420	3790974	215446	4.8	4.8	5.1
2010	702566	671182	31384	2934071	2800171	133900	4.2	4.1	4.2
2012	804198	767830	36368	3445753	3299224	146529	4.3	4.3	4.0
2014	747103	715778	31325	3248253	3085339	162914	4.3	4.3	5.2
2016	977386	942987	34399	4108284	3946729	161555	4.2	4.2	4.7
2018	1111389	1076044	35345	4553407	4433022	120385	4.1	4.1	3.4
2019	1153682	1119401	34281	4657955	4534514	123441	4.0	4.0	3.6
2019/ 2000	+71.7%	+75.2%	+4.5%	+4.4%	+8.1%	-53.6%	- 39.4%	-37.9%	-55.5%

Source: NIS, Tempo-online database. <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table> [9]

The number of tourists arriving in the reception structures with accommodation functions on the coast registered an oscillating evolution in the analyzed period, but with an obvious increase in the last 2-3 years as a result of the distribution, free of charge, by the Romanian Government holiday vouchers for employees in the budget system. For the most part, these holidays were spent at the seaside. Therefore, in the analyzed period, 2000-2019, the increase in the number of tourists was 71.7%. By types of tourists, Romanian tourists predominate, in proportion of 97%, and only 3% represent foreign tourists.

The number of overnight stays had a similar evolution to the number of tourists, with significant reductions in the period 2000-2010 (from 4.459.151 to 2.934.071 tourist days), but with consistent increases in recent years, reaching 4.657.955 tourist days in 2019. Throughout the analyzed period, there is an increase of 4.4% of overnight stays on the Romanian coast.

Regarding the overnight stays of foreign tourists, with small exceptions represented by the years 2002-2006, their number decreased continuously, at very accelerated rates. Even in recent years, when the number of foreign tourists has increased, due to the reduction of the length of stay, their overnight stays have decreased. Under these conditions, in the period 2000-2019, there was a decline of 53.6% in the number of overnight stays of foreign tourists.

Another worrying aspect is the reduction of the length of stay of tourists, and especially of the stay of foreign tourists. As seen in Table 2 the length of stay of foreign tourists decreased by less than half, from 8.1 days in 2000 to 3.6 days in 2019, that is, a decrease of 55.5%. Overall, the rate of decrease in the duration of tourists staying on the coast was 39.4% in the period 2000-2019.

#### Aspects regarding coastal tourism in India

Talking about the coastal tourism in Indian realm, with the Indian Government making way to develop 17 new spots across the country for utilising the bountiful coastline of the country. Out of the 17 projects that will be worked upon, as of now Kakinada beachfront has been developed. It now has modern landscaping, musical fountain, Glass Bridge for pedestrians, art gallery and a food arena. Also, laser shows happen on a daily basis with the sea and harbour on the backdrop [10].

Considering the general pattern that has been observed in India is that tourists from Russia and Eastern Europe are interested in visiting the coast in India. They visit Goa, stay in home stays or hotels located close to the beaches and then return back. They do not wish to visit the other destinations. That is why the Indian Government is taking some major steps for building a strong infrastructure and improves connectivity across the 17 coastal points in order to attract more number of tourists. However, with its spell bounding charm and diverse culture, the costal side of India is gradually becoming popular amongst tourists from India and abroad.

On the other hand, the Indian beaches mostly have a tropical climate. If you are planning for a beach holiday in India then the best time would be anytime between November till March. The beaches witness long stretch of sun and the average temperature during these months is approximately 30°C. During monsoon, you can also enjoy rainy season. However, beaches are mostly flooded during this time and swimming isn't considered to be safe then.

From end of March till October, it is considered to be off season for tourists in the coastal region. The rainy season starts in May and continues till September [11].

**Table 3.**

#### Number of approved Hotels and Hotel rooms in India, as on 01-04- 2020

S. NO.	Category of Hotels	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms
1.	One Star	7	209
2.	Two Star	23	688
3.	Three Star	527	17518
4.	Four Star	419	19652
5.	Five Star	205	25278
6.	Five Star Deluxe	178	40080
7.	Heritage Hotels	64	1919
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>105344</b>

*Source: Government of India, Ministry of Tourism [17]*

Talking about accommodation, plenty of accommodation options are available on the seaside in India (Table 3). A mix of luxury and affordable beach properties are available. Tourists may choose from homestays, luxury hotels, beachside resorts and private farmhouses to enjoy the beaches and the beauty of the coastal regions [12].

In India also, water sports and adventure sports also attract tourists to the coastal areas. River rafting, kayaking, wakeboarding, windsurfing, jet skiing, banana boat rides, you name it and you have it. Some of the most popular tourist destinations that offer these water sports in India are Goa, Gokarna in Karnataka, Andaman Islands, Kerala, Ladakh and Zanskar, Rishikesh, Nanital and Bhimtal, etc [13].

Table 4

Beaches in India

State	Beaches
ANDHRA PRADESH	Rishikonda Beach – Bheemunipatnam – Manginapudi Beach – Vodarevu Beach – Mypad Beach
GOA	Colva Beach – Dona Paula – Miramar – Anjuna – Vagator Beach – Arambol Beach – Agonda
GUJARAT	Porbandar Beach, Chorwad Beach – Bay Dwarka, Somnath & Veraval Beach – Mandvi Beach – Gopnath Beach
KARNATAKA	Devbagh Beach – Om Beach and the Kotle Beach – Parambur Beach – Ullal Beach – Murudeshwar – Malpe Beach – Maravanthe – Karwar Beach
KERALA	Lighthouse Beach – Rockholm Beach – Samudra Beach, Ashoka Beach – Kappad, Kovalam – Varkala – Thirumullavaram – Vypeen and Gundu Island – Cherai Beach – Alleppey Beach – Veli Beach – Bekal Beach – Shangumugham Beach
LAKSHWADEEP	Kavratti – Minicoy – Kadamat – Bangaram
MAHARASHTRA	Chowpatty – Bassien – Alibag Murud Janjira – Dahanu – Mandwa – Kihim Beach – Shriwardhan – Harihareshwar – Vijaydurg and Sindhudurg – Vengurla – Malvan
ORISSA	Puri – Chandipur – Gopalpur-on-sea – Gahirmatha Beach – Paradeep – Bolighai Beach – Konark Beach
ANDAMAN & NICOBAR	Corbyn's Cove – Beaches of Havelock Island – Beaches of Neil Island – Beaches of Chiriyu Tapu – Wandoor
PONDICHERRY	Beaches of Pondicherry
TAMILNADU	Pulicat – Covelong – Marina Beach – Pichavaram, Kurusada Islands – Vattikotai – Sadurangapattinam Beach – Mandapam – Mahabalipuram
WEST BENGAL	Digha Beach – Shankarpur Beach – Frazerganj – Ganga Sagar
DAMAN	Devka (or Dwarka Beach) – Jeypore Beach
DIU	Jallandhar Beach – Chakratith Beach – Nagoa Beach

Source: [13]

Not just this, The Indian surfing scenario even has a legit festival dedicated purely to surfing. The festivals are celebrated to witness the community vibe and to celebrate sea and sand [14].

The biggest surfing festival happens in Puri in India. Even Gujarat celebrates its beaches and sea [15].

Beach tourism basically began during Roman era, especially from 18<sup>th</sup> century. Since then sea, sun and sand have been providing the perfect base for coastal tourism in the country and it has even been identified as a niche tourism [16].

The coastal areas of India also have a good potential for attracting tourists from across the world. There are several factors which work in favour of the coastal charm of India ranging from the tropical locations to some of the most exclusive eco-systems of the world.

The Indian coastline offers a wide range of ecological features which can be explored by tourists and these include:

- a. Coast of Mannar, Kutch and Andaman and Nicobar Islands have coral reefs;
- b. The coasts of the western ghats have a serene natural beauty and a mix of land biodiversity as well as sea ports and thus it can become a favourite choice of tourists for cruise holidays;
- c. The Southern coast offers some drool worthy sea food as well as cultural activities including the age old boat race, the lagoons etc.;
- d. The Eastern coast has Delta as well as estuary which has a good potential for eco-tourism;
- e. Tourists are also exploring the potential of the Indian coastline in terms of water sports [16].

## CONCLUSIONS

A radiography of coastal tourism on the Romanian coast marks its strong points and weaknesses. Among the strengths of tourism we present the following:

- a rich and diversified tourist potential, with seaside, natural therapeutic factors, numerous ancient Greek and Roman vestiges, villages with special ethnofolkloric value, natural attractions, etc.;
- a large number of resorts;
- the touristic units differ in terms of type, the comfort category, the facilities and the prices;
- numerous spa treatment units;
- a diversified cultural offer;
- diversified and growing offer of cultural-artistic and sports events;
- the existence of tourist ports in Constanța, Eforie Nord, Mangalia, Limanu important tourist attractions;
- the existence of excursions for tourists staying on the seaside, offered by several local travel agencies;
- proximity to the Danube Delta, an important differentiating element at the destination level.

Among the weaknesses we mark:

- Romanian coast offers a tourism of national interest;
- foreign tourists represent only 3% of the total number of tourists;
- a short term of the tourists' stay, that accentuated decreases (from 6.6 days-tourist in 2000, to 4 days-tourist in 2019). The duration of the stay is quite short and decreasing, both for Romanian tourists and especially for foreign tourists;
- a overcrowding in the peak season (July-August) and on weekends. In these time the beach's carrying capacity is often exceeded;
- the tourist demand has an accentuated seasonality.

In India the tourism sector has a huge potential. The tourism sector is even making efforts to expand the E-Visa scheme and thus double the footfall of tourists. It has a potential of expanding by about 2.5% depending on high budget allocation and low cost healthcare facilities as per a study conducted by Yes Bank and ASSOCHAM.

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