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ТУРИЗМЪТ И ГЛОБАЛНИТЕ КРИЗИ

**TOURISM AND THE GLOBAL CRISES
ТУРИЗМ И ГЛОБАЛНЫЕ КРИЗИСЫ
TURISMO Y CRISIS GLOBALES**

**ИЗДАТЕЛСТВО "АЙ АНД БИ"
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СБОРНИК ДОКЛАДИ ОТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ,
ОРГАНИЗИРАНА ОТ КАТЕДРА „ТУРИЗЪМ“ НА СТОПАНСКИЯ ФАКУЛТЕТ НА
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SENIOR TOURISM: A STUDY ON ACCESSIBILITY AT THE AREIA VERMELHA MARINE STATE PARK IN THE CITY OF CABEDELO/PB

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***Abstract:** The elderly tourist is a potential audience for the tourism sector, since they like to travel, although since 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic such trips are interrupted, they always seek to travel at any time of year in order to minimize the seasonal period, which is one of the biggest challenges of tourism today. As a result of age advancement, many elderly people have some kind of reduced mobility, whether temporary or not, and due to this they seek to choose a destination or a tourist attraction that aims to know where there are minimum conditions of accessibility, so that their stay in the city is pleasant, comfortable and safe. In this study, we sought to observe if the Areia Vermelha Marine State Park (PEMAV) is in accessibility conditions to meet the needs of the elderly tourist. The results showed that the park does not have accessibility conditions, especially when it comes to the elderly public with some kind of limitation, such as difficulties of locomotion in the case of an elderly person in a wheelchair or vision as an elderly person with low vision. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to make these public urban spaces accessible, giving equal opportunities for all who wish to visit the tourist attraction and enjoy the warm and crystal clear waters of the beach, providing them with a quality tourist experience, in the effective search for an inclusive tourist development.*

Keywords: Accessibility. Areia Vermelha. Cabedelo. Third age. Tourism.

1. Introduction

The tourism sector has accompanied the gradual growth of the elderly population in Brazil and worldwide, with this it began to glimpse the opportunity to create customized tourism products and services aimed exclusively at the elderly audience, satisfying them in their needs and desires (Nascimento & Santos, 2016), considering that this potential audience likes to travel and tends to “loyal to the quality tourism products” (Santos Junior, 2012, p. 251). Point out Vanzella, Evangelista & Brambilla (2018, p. 57) that the elderly tourist “has been seeking new discoveries, thus arousing the interest of the tourism sector”.

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The elderly tourist for already enjoying retirement, in most cases, end up looking for new trips, new social interactions, which can be performed at any time of year as a way to mitigate the tourist seasonality of a destination (Cunha, 2004; Melo, Silva, Vanzella & Brambilla, 2019), since it has time and income. According Nascimento & Santos (2016, p. 3) the tourist activity “enables the exchange of experiences and, consequently, socialization”, providing quality of life for these people, so corroborate on the same aspect Cunha (2004) and Ashton, Cabral, Santos & Kroetz (2015).

However, since 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has been ravaging the world and, as is known, the elderly have become a risk group, due to the comorbidities that advancing age presents in this public, being, at first, the most affected public in this pandemic. With this, the health agencies in the world, federal, state and municipal spheres, as a form of prevention and of not spreading the disease on a larger scale, decided for the isolation and social distancing. This not only impacted the economy, but also tourism. In the perspective of the arrival of the vaccine and its immunization, it is believed that this public will soon resume the trips that were interrupted during this period.

Based on this premise and realizing this growth of elderly tourists, is that tourist destinations should have a greater concern in making their public spaces accessible. The Ministry of Tourism (MTur), through the booklet “tips to serve well elderly tourists”, deals with accessibility and its importance for the inclusive tourism development of a locality (Brazil, 2016). Accessibility that must be in line with the standards of the Brazilian Association of Technical Standards - NBR 9050/2015.

Melo, Vanzella & Brambilla (2019) reinforce by saying that the absence of these accessibility conditions for the elderly tourist in these tourist destinations can end up hindering access as well as contributing to accident risks.

Tourism is understood as an economic activity that contributes to the development of a region or locality and is seen as a factor of economic development by public managers, in order to bring competitiveness to the entire tourist trade, as well as contributing to the generate jobs for the local population where the tourist activity is being developed.

In order for this tourism to be developed, it is necessary that the public administration, through incentive programs for tourism development, invest financial resources so that this locality may have a minimum tourist infrastructure, such as, for example, making public spaces accessible to all people, giving equal opportunities to the most distinct public and making inclusive tourism development occur, eliminating barriers, whether communicational,

attitudinal and architectural, making the tourist experience unforgettable for those who have awakened their desire to know the tourist destination.

That is why it is of paramount importance that public policy actions in tourism "involve senior citizens' accessibility issues to develop tourism and social inclusion in a destination, because the more accessible a destination is, the greater the tourist demand will be" (Melo, Vanzella & Brambilla, 2019).

This research is justified by the fact that the port city of Cabedelo was one of the municipalities contemplated by the Investe Turismo Program of the Ministry of Tourism (Mtur) in partnership with the Brazilian Agency for International Promotion of Tourism (Embratur) and the Brazilian Service of Support to Micro and Small Enterprises (Sebrae), in 2019 (Paraíba, 2019a), whose investment was for the tourist region of the Piscinas Coast, thus encompassing the natural pools of Areia Vermelha (Brasil, 2019b), one of the most visited attractions of the municipality, second only to the Fluvial Beach of Jacaré which has as a tourist attraction the sunset to the sound of Ravel's Bolero, instrumented by saxophonist Jurandir do Sax.

It aims to analyze the accessibility conditions of the Marine State Park of Areia Vermelha in order to verify if these conditions meet the needs of the elderly public, which often, due to age, has some limitations, and this reduced mobility may be temporary or permanent.

The Areia Vermelha Marine State Park (PEMAV) or Areia Vermelha Island, as it is popularly known, is a Conservation Unit (UC) created by State Law 21.263 on 28 August 2000 (Paraíba, *s.d*), located in the municipality of Cabedelo, which is part of the metropolitan region of João Pessoa, the Paraíba state capital and is under the care of the Superintendence of Environmental Administration (Sudema), a state public agency. This UC is formed by a reddish-coloured sandbank, surrounded by reefs and that only appears in periods when the tide is low, in which it receives around 40,000 tourists per year (Paraíba, 2019b). To access the park, which is 1.5 km from the coast, it is necessary to use water transportation such as boats, speedboats, kayaks, among others, which leave from the beaches of Poço and Camboinha, for the displacement of visitors to the place (Brazil, 2019a).

2. Methodological procedures

This article was developed based on the Project of Scientific Initiation that is part of the Institutional Program of Scholarships for Scientific Initiation (PIBIC) through the Pro-Rectorate of Research of the Federal University of Paraíba (Propesq/UFPB) under the Group of Culture and Studies in Tourism (GCET). It began on 01 September 2020 and is still in

progress, with completion scheduled for 30 August 2021, whose title is "Third age, tourism and accessibility: a study in the city of Cabedelo - PB".

Initially, it was used the bibliographic, documentary and descriptive research with quantitative approach, whose research instrument was the application of the check list with accessibility items in line with the technical standard NBR 9050/2015, in which the field research and observation in loco were performed in the period February 2021.

The research took place in Areia Vermelha Marine State Park (PEMAV), popularly known as Areia Vermelha Island. The Conservation Unit is a tourist attraction of the northern coast of Paraíba, which is located in the port city of Cabedelo and has a large number of visitors among local residents and tourists, especially on weekends and holidays, at low tide.

3. Analysis and discussion of results

As a research instrument a check list with accessibility items was prepared and applied according to the NBR 9050/2015 standards, some aspects were observed, whose results will be discussed below:

3.1. Support point for specific assistance

As for the existence of a support point for specific assistance for tourists of the third age, it was found that there is no space for this specific assistance, nor focused on accessibility. As there are also no trained personnel to reach these tourists when it comes to accessibility.

3.2. Accesses

Initially, it is necessary to clarify that access to the park is by small boats such as motorboats, catamarans or other types of water transport such as jet skis, kayaks, water bicycles, so that in certain transports, the boarding itself makes it impossible for the elderly person to access the boat that will take them to the park, in case the elderly person has some type of reduced mobility, so that both boarding and disembarking the elderly person will have difficulties.

As it is an area with a land bank and reefs that only appear during the low tide period, it was observed that the park does not have a regular surface, nor does it have ramps, not even those that can be installed provisionally for the duration of the visitation to the park, to facilitate the mobility of these elderly tourists who may have some type of reduced mobility, such as those who have mobility difficulties (wheelchair users, for example) or low vision, which may

occur as a result of advancing age, avoiding the accident risk. It was also verified that there is no type of tactile, non-slip or anti-vibration floor (Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Panoramic image of the Areia Vermelha Marine State Park



Source: Paraíba Destination website, 2021.

Figure 2. Areia Vermelha (Red Sand)



Source: personal archive, 2021.

3.3. Communication and signage

Regarding these aspects, it can be observed that throughout the perimeter of the park there is no type of signage or communication, according to the standards of NBR 9050/2015 that could be alerting tourists, such as emergency signage or even temporary information.

3.4. Beach

It was contacted with regard to the public of elderly tourists who have some mobility or even for people with disabilities when it comes to accessibility, that the popularly known Areia Vermelha beach is not accessible, as it does not have ramps, adapted benches or amphibious chairs, items that can provide an unforgettable tourist experience to this specific audience if there were in the park. As well as it does not have monitors to assist the reception, well-being and fun of this potential public in the natural pools of Areia Vermelha (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Natural pools Areia Vermelha



Source: Viajali website, 2021.

4. Final Considerations

When the subject is accessibility, it is noticeable that many destinations and tourist attractions do not have minimum accessibility conditions in their public spaces or no accessibility at all, such as the Marine State Park of Areia Vermelha, which makes the environment inaccessible when it comes to the elderly tourist, occurring since the displacement to the boat, especially when you have some kind of reduced mobility, as well as during their stay in the park, given that there is no item of accessibility in place as amphibious chairs, qualified monitors to meet the public in specific, ramps, signs or a point of support for accessible service.

The absence of these conditions makes the elderly tourist with some kind of mobility, whether temporary or permanent, not to frequent the place or the destination because they cannot see practices to make that city recognized for having an accessible tourism or that attraction for not being accessible. This same absence also brings insecurity and discomfort to move around the perimeter of the park, which may cause accidents during the visitation.

It is of the utmost importance that public management turns its attention to these urban spaces that are not yet accessible or not accessible, that always seek to present a more inclusive tourism, to give equal opportunities to those who wish to know the tourist attraction, but do not do it for lack of accessibility conditions in the place, making it difficult to get around, especially when it comes to the elderly tourist. The availability of accessible boats, temporary ramps, amphibious chairs and trained monitors for service are opportunities given, initially, to make the attraction accessible.

It is also expected that with the immunization against Covid-19 of this public, there will be an increase in elderly tourists who will seek outdoor attractions, such as the object of study,

being an excellent opportunity for tourism growth after the pandemic, however, for this to occur it is necessary to observe the conditions of accessibility.

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