



## Plight of Odisha tourism: A conceptual study

Dr. Sasmita Mohanty

Assistant Professor, Hospitality & Tourism Management, School of Hotel Management, SOA Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

### Abstract

Tourism is considered to be one of the fastest growing sectors across the globe. In fact, it has become the mainstay for economic development for various countries generating foreign exchange, income and job opportunities. The state of Odisha has been one of the key tourism hubs in India due to the presence of picturesque tourist spots and places of historical and religious importance. However, despite its richness in natural resources and scenic beauty, the district of Koraput as a tourist destination is finding it tough to attract the domestic as well as foreign tourists due to various factors. The objective of this conceptual study is to identify these factors that are road blocks towards the growth of tourism in the district and suggest appropriate remedial measures.

**Keywords:** tourism, Odisha tourism, Koraput tourism, remedial measures

### Introduction

Odisha state is vastly rich in its natural resources such as rivers, hills, fountains, pilgrims and historical places. With its rich and varied topographical regions and myriad cultures and languages, the state has plethora of tourist destinations that offer immense pleasure and enjoyment to domestic as well as international tourists. The tourism sector is one the largest labour intensive sectors that offers direct and indirect employment with the help of the support services like hotels, restaurants, retail, transport, etc. The sources of attracting a large number tourist are manifold and such place that has a huge scope for religious and recreational tourism is Puri where devotees in large numbers throng to Lord Jagannath temple. However, Odisha's full potential for tourism is yet to be realized. There are 30 districts in Odisha with various tourist places. One such district is the district of Koraput which is considered to be highly potential as far as the development of growth of tourism is concerned owing to its rich natural resources is selected for the present study.

### Koraput – A Backdrop

There are a theory that explains that Koraput is derived from 'Karaka-Pentho' were the literal meaning of Karaka is hail-stone. Another theory is that the term Kora is the Sun God who was worshipped by the local tribals since time immemorial. The district of Koraput was ruled by dynasties like Surya Vansha, Satavahans, Nalas, etc. It officially became the district of Odisha state on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1936. It was in the year 1992 that the district of Koraput was further divided into districts like Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Rayagada. The present Koraput district is located between 18 degree 13' and 19 degree 10' North Latitudes and 82 degree 5' and 83 degree 23' East Longitudes. The total area of Koraput district is 8,807 square kilometres. It surrounded by Nabarangpur in the north, Bastar district (Chattisgarh State) in the west, Malkangiri

district in the south and Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts (Andhra Pradesh) in the south.

However, in spite of being rich in its natural resources and abundant beauties and favourable climate, the district is considered to be one of the most backward districts in India. The major inhabitants of the district are the several tribes who preferred to be called as 'Adivasis' which means the 'original inhabitants'. There are as many as many as fifty one tribes in Koraput district and they have been categorised into three major groups - Dravidian race, Auto-Asian race and Kolarian race. During Sundays the Adivasis can be seen selling vegetables and fruits of organic origin in markets popularly known as Hat Poda. The Hat Poda or the 'haat' has a significant role in the lives of these communities and represents their identity. The Adivasi languages, tradition and culture are very closely intertwined with their ecosystem. Climatic condition of the district is warm and humid.

### Koraput Transportation

The district Headquarters Koraput is well connected by road and the cities such as Jeypore, Koraput and Sunabeda have rail connectivity with major towns and villages. A few of the railway stations in the district that connect some of the town and villages are Koraput, Daman Jodi, Baiguda, Dumuriput, Kakri Guma, Jeypore and Ambagaon. There are as many fourteen railway stations on a single line railway track with Koraput railway station serving as a junction.

### Tourism in Koraput District

There are many important tourist destinations in Koraput District such as Duduma, the largest waterfall in Odisha; Deomali, the highest mountain peak in Odisha; Kolab Dam; Gupteswar Temple and the Sabara Sri Khetra Temple which is likened to Jagannath Temple, Puri. Although this temple is worshipped and admired by thousands of local denizens of the

district, it has still not achieved the kind of recognition it deserves and many tourists are not aware of its existence.

### **Deomali Peak**

Deomali is the highest mountain range in Odisha with a height of approximately 1672 metres above the sea-level. It is about 35 kms from Koraput and is a great tourist destination. It falls on the way on national highway 43 towards Visakhapatnam. The mountain top has flat surface and a beautiful scenic view of the mountain. The ideal time to visit this place is during winter. There are accommodation facilities for the tourists for overnight stay.

### **Gupteshwar Temple**

The temple is located around 60 kms from Jeypore in Koraput District and is known as the abode of hidden God. It is famous for its Bolbum Yatra held during the Sravana period of Oriya Calender. It is located near the Odisha border and is separated by Chhattisgarh State by the Kolab River. The Stalagmite and Stalagmite cave (made up of lime stone) was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by a hunter. According to Hindu mythology, the by temple was unearthed by Lord Rama during his exile period. Hence, the surrounding hills were named after Lord Rama as Ramagiri hills. The temple has thousand steps and the entrance is flanked by tree on the either side. The prime attraction in the temple is the massive Shiva Linga which is believed to be growing in size with the passage of time. BolBom yatra is the major attraction where thousands and thousands of devotees take bath in the Maha Kund and offer their prayers near the Shiv Linga. In Shivaratri festival, lakhs of devotees from neighbouring states throng the temple to get a glimpse of Shiva Linga. It is also believed that the people come to this temple to worship the Lord to get cured from several diseases.

### **Kolab Dam**

The Kolab dam is constructed on Kolab River at an altitude of 3000 feet. The reservoir is a major tourist attraction for boating where tourists spend their weekend picnic in Kolab Botanical Garden situated beside the dam. There are as many two hundred varieties of flower plants in this botanical garden.

### **Duduma Water Fall**

It is situated in Lamtaput Block of Koraput district. It is 157 metres high water fall on river Machkund. One can see the awe inspiring gorge that the river forms as it plunges from the hills. Duduma is about 92 kms from Koraput and about 200 kms from Visakhapatnam.

### **Sabara Shrikhetra**

Koraput is situated 22 kms away from Jeypore and is about 2,900 ft. above the sea- level. Sabara Shrikhetra, the modern Jagannath Temple has come up on the hilltop. Shrikhetra is normally referred to as Puri Jagannath, the uniqueness of this temple is that no section of the society is barred from entering into the temple.

### **Surya Mahal**

Surya Mahal is centuries old palace and is an architectural

wonder. However, due to negligence from the concerned authorities, it has been in a state of serious attention.

### **Literature Review**

Kabita Kumari Sahu (2013) <sup>[5]</sup> cited various problems pertaining to the growth of tourism in the state of Odisha. According to her in order to make Odisha the ultimate destination for tourists, the following areas need special attention such as well-developed transport and communication facilities, creation of eco-tourism and adventure tourism spots and development of various tourist spots.

Anupama Sharma *et al.*, (2012) <sup>[1]</sup> concluded that although tourism as an industry is growing by leaps and bounds and contributing towards the growth and development of the society, there are some major issues which can be eradicated by the concerted endeavours of government, tourism organisations, media and local communities.

Amutha Joseph (2012) <sup>[2]</sup> harped upon the promotion of sustainable tourism. She opined that through augmented tourism policies, capacity building and awareness programmes in and around local areas and proper guidelines for inclusive growth, sustainable tourism can become a reality. This in turn will support the eradication of poverty, production and consumption. She concluded by saying that all these can be achieved only by the support from all the stakeholders including the people from the industry.

Suratha Kumar Das (2013) <sup>[12]</sup> suggested that the growth of tourism has gained momentum over the last few years in the form of health tourism, religious tourism, sports tourism, educational tourism, agri-tourism, etc. He expounded that the Odisha tourism sector can sustain its growth through innovations and value added services.

D.S. Bhardwaj, Manjula Chaudhary and S.S.Boora (2006) <sup>[3]</sup> elucidated that tourism will be the next big thing in India and it is going to be the largest employer of manpower in the coming decade. According to them the major issues the tourism industry is facing is the customer satisfaction with respect to quality of food, service and accommodation facilities.

Motiram (2007) <sup>[9]</sup> opined that there is an huge impact of globalization on mass tourism in India. According to him, the tourism sector has amassed huge foreign exchange and created huge employment opportunities which in turn have facilitated the development of infrastructure in India. He finally suggested that in order to attract more and more foreign tourists, India has to develop infrastructure facilities.

J. Vijayan (2007) <sup>[14]</sup> in his study found out that the involvement of local people has a positive impact on the economy of destination. He suggested that, the government of India should take initiatives to train and educate the local youth for the overall development of tourism sector.

Manish Srivastava (2009) <sup>[8]</sup> explained that heritage tourism has a huge potential in India. He found out that the foreign tourists are satisfied with food, accommodation and culture in India, however, there is a huge dissatisfaction in terms of infrastructure facilities like poor roads, delays in immigration formalities, poor airport facilities, incompetent guides and poor maintenance of heritage destinations.

Viju Mathew (2009) <sup>[13]</sup> expounded tourism functions at two levels viz., micro and macro considering all dimensions of

sustainability and competitive advantage.

Lalith Chandralal (2010)<sup>[7]</sup> pointed out that a large number of local population perceive that there is a positive impact of tourism on local community. The positive impacts are job opportunities, increase in real estate value, city image and infrastructure facilities.

### Relevance of the Study

Tourism Industry in Indian can attract foreign as well as local tourist. Odisha is enriched with enormous potentialities of tourism like eco-tourism, rural tourism, tribal tourism, medical tourism and agri-tourism. Koraput happens to be dream destination for both domestic as well as foreign tourists, however, over the last few years, the district of Koraput has failed to attract tourists both domestic as well as international due to lack of infrastructure like transport and communication, safe drinking water, toilets, accommodation facilities, amusement and recreation facilities. On this backdrop, it is of a paramount importance to carry out a conceptual study on the factors responsible for the hindrance towards tourism in the district.

### Objectives of the Study

The present study attempts to analyse the potentiality of tourism in Koraput district. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To study the factors responsible for the hindrances in the growth of tourism in Koraput
- To suggest remedial measures for the growth of tourism in Koraput

### Research Methodology

Secondary data analysis was adopted to carry out the research. The analysis involved extensive study of the state specific tourism policies, programs and trends; views and trends of Koraput District.

### Problems & Hindrances in Tourism in Koraput District

There are four focus major areas i.e., people, infrastructure, destination and systems/policies that are problematic areas that need major attention as far as the growth and development of Koraput Tourism is concerned. These are as follows:

#### People

- Tourist guides are not well educated and knowledgeable to handle domestic as well as foreign tourists
- Tourist guides are not trained to provide better services such as counselling/suggestions as when required by the tourists.
- There are many institutes small and big, offering courses in hospitality and tourism management including Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management and Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, Bhubaneswar. However, there is a dearth of a quality institution offering education in travel & tourism management in southern Odisha, especially in Koraput region (Minglebox, 2012). Hence, qualified tourist guides proficient with adequate training and knowledge about hospitality and tourism related products is the need of the

hour in the district of Koraput for the benefits of tourists and betterment of tourism as a whole.

### Infrastructure

- Tourist destinations do not have proper rail-road connectivity for the convenience of tourists and travelers
- Airport service is not available at Koraput or nearby areas
- As far as the air connectivity is concerned, the nearest airports to Koraput are Visakhapatnam Airport which is 208 kms, Swami Vivekananda Airport, Raipur which is 391 kms and Rajahmundry Airport, Rajahmundry which is 401 kms. The nearest local airport is Jeypore Airport, Jeypore which is 21 kms and Jagdalpur Airport which is 100 kms (Travelmath, 2014). Jeypore Airport is not functioning to its fullest capacity and most of the times, the services are not available to the travellers. All the mentioned airports are quite far away from Koraput, hence, it is not convenient for the tourists to travel from such a long distance. The rail-road density is very low and very limited number of railway stations exists in Koraput. Currently, nine express trains and two passenger trains run via Koraput district.

### Systems/Policies

- There are no proper rules and regulations for the convenience of domestic and international tourists
- Tourist information centres are not available at strategic points like railway stations, bus stops, etc.
- Safety & security of tourists are not given the topmost priority in Koraput
- All though rules & regulations are in place for both domestic as well as international tourists, there should be a single window point - of - contact for all the official formalities and clearances of the tourists, particularly, the foreign tourists who have to undergo various legal procedures upon their arrival to the destination. The fact remains is that there is not a single tourist information centre in Koraput till date and moreover there are only three tourists centres in the entire Odisha state (Odisha tourism, 2012). As far as the safety and security of the tourists are concerned, very few security personnel are deployed in different destinations with inadequate arms and ammunition. Hence, there should be special police patrolling services round the clock so that miscreants can be kept at bay.

### Destination

- Water and adventurous sports are not available for tourists' entertainment
- For any tourism destination to grow, it is pertinent to have added facilities for the entertainment of the tourists. Water sports and adventurous sports are some of the biggest draws that can attract thousands of tourists every year. Other than the regular tourist spots, the department of tourism need to focus on the above mentioned activities to boost the economy of the place. This will enable the tourism department to retain the tourists for a longer duration. The topography of Koraput is ideal for adventurous sports like parasailing or boating. A boat house, aimed at providing boating facilities to tourists was

inaugurated four years ago. Today, the boats are lying dilapidated and the service has been stopped due to lack of maintenance. There are no signboards for most of the important places.

### Remedial Measures

In the view of the above mentioned road-blocks in the growth of tourism in Koraput district, the researchers have suggested the following:

- The government should plan for an exclusive tourism circuit in Koraput district.
- Priority should be given to the rail-road transport and airport facilities for better connectivity to all major tourist destinations in and around Koraput district
- The government should plan to open a quality institute offering travel & tourism studies for generating skilled manpower
- Topmost priority should be given to safety & security of tourists with trained and security personnel offering patrolling services round the clock
- The government should give more emphasis on promoting the Koraput tourism by allocating budgets on advertisements in various mass media like television, social networking sites, website, etc.

### Conclusion

Tourism infrastructure and recreational facilities are a incongruity in Koraput district despite the fact that the Tourism Department has been providing funds for the purpose. In the last five years, five crore has been provided for tourism development in Koraput. The cave temple of Shiva at Gupteswar, Duduma waterfalls, vast heritage wealth of Subai and Nandapur, Sabara Srikhetra at Koraput, Deomali-the highest peak in Odisha, that is ideal for aero-gliding and trekking and Maliguda, a small hill-top village where Indias highest broad gauge is located are all part of Koraput. All these can make a grand tourism package to boost the tourism in the area. In the last five to six years, not a single project has been undertaken by the department of tourism, Odisha. A sizeable amount from the revenue generated through tourism should be allocated for the growth and development of tourism in Koraput district. The state government can work out on projects in PPP model for inclusive growth on a concerted basis to remove the hindrances found from this study.

### References

1. Anupama Sharma *et al.*, Role of Tourism in Social and Economic Development of Society. International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Sciences. 2012; 1(3):10-31.
2. Amutha D. Role of Tourism for Development of India. Social Science Research Network, 2012.
3. Bhardwaj DS, Manjula Chaudhary, Boora SS. International Tourism-Issues and Challenges, Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2006.
4. HRAO. Tourism can end naxal problem in Odisha. Retrieved From [http://www.traveltechie.com/news/Tourism-can-end-Naxal-problem-in -Odisha/4322](http://www.traveltechie.com/news/Tourism-can-end-Naxal-problem-in-Odisha/4322), 2012-2015.
5. Kabita Kumari Sahu. Growth and Prospects of Tourism in Odisha. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention. 2013; 2(5):22-28.
6. Koraput tourism. Sabara Srikhetra. Retrieved From <http://koraputtourism.in/sabasrikhetra>, 2013-2014.
7. Lalith Chandralal. Impacts of Tourism and Community Attitudes towards Tourism: A Case Study in Sri Lanka, South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage, 2010; 3(2):41-49.
8. Manish Srivastava. Assessing International Heritage Tourist Satisfaction in India, Indian Journal of Marketing. 2009; 39(4):49-54.
9. Motiram. Globalization: Potentials and Prospects of Mass Tourism in India, South Asian Journal of Social Political Sciences. 2007; 7(2):115-118.
10. Orissa review. Koraput district. Retrieved from <http://orissa.gov.in/e-magazine/orrisareview/2010/december/engpdf/148-151.pfd>, 2010-2015.
11. Orissa tourism. Guidelines and Proforma for Permission to move in the PVTG are in tribal districts. Retrieved from <http://odishatourism.gov.in/Portal/>, 2012-2015.
12. Suratha Kumar Das. Growth and Prospects of Odisha Tourism. Odisha Review, 2013, 125-134.
13. Viju Mathew. Sustainable Tourism: A Case of Destination Competitiveness in South Asia, South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage. 2009; 2(1):83-89.
14. Vijayan J. Tourism Development and Involvement of Local People at Destination, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, 2007.
15. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koraput\\_district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koraput_district)
16. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gupteswar\\_Cave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gupteswar_Cave)
17. <http://www.musafirnamah.com/koraput-tourism-hit-infra-woes/#.V-9XPNR96t8>
18. <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/steps-to-boost-tourism-in-koraput-in-odisha/article8705151.ece>
19. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odisha\\_Tourism\\_Development\\_Corporation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Odisha_Tourism_Development_Corporation)
20. [www.odisha.gov.in/samachar/2015/Nov/data/...2015/new/ssmishra\\_061115BBEE.pdf](http://www.odisha.gov.in/samachar/2015/Nov/data/...2015/new/ssmishra_061115BBEE.pdf)
21. [https://www.google.co.in/?gfe\\_rd=cr&ei=GRH6V86GK7TG8AfD\\_5CoCA#q=odisha+tourism+2015&start=10](https://www.google.co.in/?gfe_rd=cr&ei=GRH6V86GK7TG8AfD_5CoCA#q=odisha+tourism+2015&start=10)