

## **CHAPTER - XII**

### **TOURISM : MILES TO GO**

Tourism is a unique activity that involves itself with many different sectors of the economy. Properly managed it confers benefits in terms of social, psychological and, more importantly, economic wellbeing. Travel and tour enhance quality of human experience in spiritual as well as material way (Krippendorf 1987<sup>1</sup>). A number of developing countries have greatly benefited from this sector as a significant contributor to their national income.

#### **MAJOR TOURIST SPOTS : GOLDEN TRIANGLE AND AROUND**

In India, many states, Orissa in particular, have remained at a dormant stage despite having enormous potential to attract tourists, both internal and international, which can increase enormously the wellbeing of the people of the State. The State provides virtually all the facets of tourist interest. From time immemorial the State is famous for religious tourism. Lord Jagannath at Puri and Lord Lingaraj at Bhubaneswar are the two deities visited everyday by thousands of devotees. Puri, apart from being the seat of Lord Jagannath, is one of the 'peethas' founded by Adi Sankara. A trip to Puri is considered sacred to every Hindu who pines for atleast one visit to this place of worship during his or her lifetime. This city by the sea has one of the largest sandy beaches of India that attract tourists from all over the country and abroad, and a sea bath is always a memorable experience. The annual car festival (Rath Yatra) is an event that draws millions of devotees and tourists from all over India and also foreign countries providing an excellent opportunity to the culture tourists to have a glimpse of the great heritage of Orissa. Puri, which is being groomed as a focal tourist spot has the unique advantage of providing religious, cultural and leisure tourism with a sizeable hospitality sector that suits every pocket. The recent addition to the festive moods of Puri is the 'Beach Festival' organised during late November or early December by the Hotel Association of Orissa which attracts both classical and folk dancers from major

centres of the country who perform under open air in the sea beach. The exhibition of sand sculpture by famous artists is another unique event of the Beach Festival.

Puri too has the tradition of being an important seat of Ayurveda with large number of 'kavirajs' (Ayurvedic doctors) practising this time-honoured form of medicine. It has a full-fledged Ayurveda Hospital and a College, which if properly groomed and focussed, could attract large number of both eastern and western tourists looking for this form of treatment.

Bhubaneswar, the capital city of the State is known as Temple City of India having about 500 temples. The most frequented temple by thousands of devotees is the Lingaraj Temple of Lord Shiva built in the 11th century. The Mukteswar temple and the Rajrani temple are among the finest temples of Orissa with superb stone carving of animals, flowers and human figures representing magnificent forms of Orissan art and architecture. This city is the gate-way to Orissa with Biju Patnaik airport and a major Railway station in the South Eastern Railway section that receive large number of visitors entering the place for business, official work, sight-seeing and religious pursuit. At a distance of 20 km. from the centre of the city, life throbs in one of the largest and the magnificent Zoological Parks of the country known as Nandan Kanan. Endowed with a natural lake, it attracts migratory birds during the winter months. The Lion Safari of the zoo is the largest in the country. Of the other tourist attractions of Bhubaneswar are Dhauli with King Ashoka's rock edict, the Buddhist Temple (Shanti Stupa) built with Indo-Japanese collaboration, and the rock-cut caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri, and Rani Gumpha with ornate carvings.

Puri, Bhubaneswar and Konark comprise the legendary Golden Triangle. The Sun Temple of Konark (known as Black Pagoda of the east) built in the shape of a celestial chariot with twelve pairs of wheels and seven horses is a 13th century architectural marvel depicting all aspects of life. The erotic art of the temple is astounding. Much of the postures of the Odissi form of dance are found in the beautiful statues of the temple. Every year during the Konark Dance Festival many celebrated classical dancers from all over the country come to this place and dance on the Amphitheatre located against the backdrop of the marvellous temple. With the jingle of the ankle bells and the light foot work of famous classical dancers from all over the country, the maids carved on the ancient stone come alive creating an atmosphere of eternal serenity and an

experience of life time for the audience that witness the show travelling from far off places for the occasion.

One finds the three jewels of ancient centres of Buddhism, not very far from the State capital. They are the Laleet Giri, Udayagiri and Ratnagiri. This “Tri-Ratna Triangle” of Orissa could be developed into a great tourist attraction for the Buddhists from all over the world.

To the lover of nature, Chilika Lake, Asia’s largest salt water lagoon with estuarine character provides an array of aquatic species and a boat ride in the lake particularly in winter is an experience that remains ever fresh in the minds of the visitor. The lake attracts millions of birds from the cold regions of Europe during the winter season providing a spectacular sight for the tourists and ornithologists alike. It takes hardly an hour and a half from Bhubaneswar to reach this beautiful lake on NH-5.

### **Connectivity to Golden Triangle**

Given the limited time a tourist, particularly a foreign tourist, has at his disposal, quick mobility without loss of time is the key to attract him/her to visit a particular place. Development of Bhubaneswar’s Biju Patnaik airport to an international airport, failing which, making Calcutta airport as the port of entry for all east and south east flights and linking those with connectivity to Bhubaneswar through domestic flights can bring in a large number of tourists to Orissa. Orissa’s rich culture, heritage and ecology can attract a substantial number of eastern, southeastern and foreign tourists who look for such culture or eco - tourism. Also needed is a good four-lane road connecting Puri and Konark with Bhubaneswar for a faster connectivity in the Golden Triangle.

### **Other Tourist Places**

Orissa also provides an array of other tourist attractions. Barbati Fort, built by the Ganga dynasty on the bank of river Mahanadi in Cuttack, although in ruins, fascinates those who pine to have a glimpse of history. In and around Cuttack are such places like the Gada Chandi inside the fort, the Charchika temple at Banki, Mahavinayak and Chandikhol at a distance of about 40 km. from the city of Cuttack. The famous Viraja temple and Dasaswamedha ghat on the bank of river Baitarani

in Jajpur are the places which no Hindu tourist would like to miss. The water sports complex in Jagatpur is yet another attraction for the lovers of water sports.

Gopalpur-on-sea, a unique sleepy resort in Ganjam district with its deep sea was once an ancient port which still draws thousands of tourists. Taptapani, the hot sulphur spring which is about 50 km. away from Berhampur town provides an ideal health resort with facilities of reasonably-priced accommodation. Those who love nature with all its grandeur and deposits of flora and fauna, Similipal, a National Park with its tiger reservoir, is a home for many rare species of trees and animals. Besides, it has 231 species of birds. This National Park is spread over 2750 sq. km. and has a number of water falls where any tourist would like to spend some quiet moments. In the district of Kendujhar, the rock shelter called Ravana Chhaya is worth seeing. In Sitabinj the wall paintings are magnificent. The waterfalls, Sanghagra, Badaghagra and Khandadhar are rich tourist treasures of Kendujhar district.

In the district of Kalahandi, the Phulri Jharan, a perennial water fall of 16 meters high is a place of scenic beauty. Karlapat is yet another charming place with its treasure of wild lives which the eco-tourists would always like to visit. For those who are religiously inclined 'Bhabani Shankar' is an ideal place of visit to worship Lord Shiva.

In Bolangir, it is Harishankar, on the south slope of Gandhamardan hills that draws thousands of pilgrims for the Shiva temple and the water fall. Ranipur - Jharia, one among the four hypaethral temples dedicated to sixty-four yoginis of India, is a place that is frequented by many not only from within the State, but also from other States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. Sonapur, a newly formed district situated on the confluence of river Mahanadi and Tel, is famous for its Paschima Lanka with a cluster of temples. Those who are inclined to have a first-hand knowledge of how a Bomkai silk saree is woven, it is the place, where one finds hundreds of artisans busy in weaving the most beautiful silk sarees of the country. In Sambalpur district for the Hindu tourists there are famous temples like Samaleswari in the town itself. The other famous temples around the district, Nrushinghanath and Huma's leaning Shiva temple are located at a distance of 164 km. and 32 km. away from the town. Ushakothi is yet another wild life sanctuary with its rich inhabitants of elephants, leopards, bisons, black panthers and many other species of

birds and animals. Hirakud Dam, the temple of Modern India with two of its famous minars, the Jawahar Minar and the Gandhi Minar on both sides is a place, about 10-15 km. away from Sambalpur town, is visited by tourists from neighbouring States. In Sundargarh, apart from the Rourkela Steel Plant, Vedavyas and Hanuman Vatika are two places that attract tourists from far off places.

### **Handloom and Handicrafts**

Every tourist wants to buy something as memento to carry back home or a gift for someone dear. The alluring art and crafts of Orissa provide an array of articles of artistic value which a tourist can hardly ignore. The beautiful silk fabrics of Orissa are as diverse as they are beautiful both in design and colour. The most distinctive feature of Orissa's handloom sector is the tie-and-dye design which hardly has any parallel anywhere in the country. The applique works of Pipili provide a range of articles - from bags, parasols and even garden umbrella and skirts and tops which a tourist will always cherish to carry back home. The Patta Chitras of Puri and the silver filigree work of Cuttack are perfect items of souvenirs. Silver filigree work of Cuttack in particular provides a range of items varying from home decoratives to body decoratives providing pleasure to every eye which suits every pocket.

### **TOURISM AS A GREAT CONTRIBUTOR TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Tourism has assumed tremendous importance in many countries and, in India, in many States, it could be a major contributor to GDP. Dubey (1995)<sup>2</sup> made an estimate of income multiplier of this sector in India which is 3.2 to 3.6. His estimate of employment elasticity for hotel and restaurant sector only works out to 89 for every 10 lakh rupees spent. The contribution is much higher in comparison to agriculture and manufacturing sectors, where it is only 44.7 and 12.6 respectively.

Tourist industry is a labour intensive service industry with an array of activities comprising many items of hospitality, travel, transport, and marketing. If both direct and indirect employment generation of this industry is examined one could find this to be quite impressive.

Tourism, although declared as an industry to encourage and facilitate investment has failed to grow both in terms of tourist inflow as well as a significant contributor to NSDP (its contribution

being negligible). Domestic tourist inflow between 1990-91 to 2000-2001 has gone up from 11.97 lakhs to 15.26 lakhs registering an increase of about 24 per cent over the base year (Table-12.1). The increase is not very encouraging. With regard to foreign tourists the number of tourists visiting Orissa is very small and its flow is marked by fluctuations too. In 1990-91 as many as 29.43 thousand foreign tourists visited the State. The highest number of such tourists is recorded in the year 1997-98 registering a flow of 35.39 thousand. In the post-cyclone year of 1999-2000 it went down sharply to 21.43 thousand. In the year 2000-2001, it went up to 25.57 thousand still falling short of the base year (1990-91) figure of 29.43 (Table -12.1).

Even in the face of a virtual stagnant tourist inflow, the estimated tourist spending has shown a remarkable increase. The total spending of domestic tourists in the State has gone up from Rs.73.96 crore in 1990 to Rs.493.76 crore in the year 2000 registering a growth of more than six times (Table 12.2 - Col.2). Such is also the case with foreign tourists whose spending in the State (in spite of their decreasing number) has gone up to Rs.30.55 crore in the year 2000 from Rs.5.98 crore in 1990. The growth shows a six times increase in a decade's time (Table 12.2 - Col.3).

Spurt in the growth of tourist spending provides the clue that the State offers many avenues for spending, which could grow enormously with considerable multiplier effects on income and employment, if this sector is groomed to attract larger number of tourists.

That tourism could provide a good number of direct employment (apart from sizeable indirect employment) in the State as reflected in Table -12.3. While in 1996-97, the total number of persons directly dependent on tourism sector was 26.66 thousand, it increased to 46.10 thousand in 2000-2001 registering a growth of more than 70 per cent over a period of only five years. Hotel industry has grown well in the State as reflected in Table- 12.4. The total number of hotels has increased from 480 to 769, hotel rooms from 9761 to 15,668 and number of beds from 18,779 to 29,560 between the year 1990 to 2000. The number of star hotels has also gone up both at Puri and Bhubaneswar. But the occupancy rate is not very encouraging. Unless the level of infrastructure in the State is adequately developed, we cannot probably expect higher occupancy rate in the hotels.

## **PRIORITY IN TOURISM - CIRCUIT DEVELOPMENT**

In the short run apart from the existing Bhubaneswar - Konark - Puri circuit there are a couple of more tourist circuits which can be taken up for an all out development. In the western Orissa the religious-eco tourist circuit comprising of Nrusinghanath on the slope of Gandhamardan hills in the district of Bargarh, Harishankar in the district of Bolangir and the temples of Sixty-four Yoginis could be given topmost priority to attract tourist flow not only from within the State but also from the neighbouring States of Chhattishgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. Gandhamardan hills would provide a unique spot for the eco-tourists. It is necessary to develop good motorable road connecting these three places on a priority basis. There is also the need for providing accommodation at a reasonable price in these places to attract large-scale tourist inflow. Tour operators from the neighbouring states may be encouraged to run charter bus services to this circuit.

In the south, the tourist circuit comprising Chilika Lake (overlooking Badkul or Rambha) - Gopalpur- on- sea, Berhampur and Taptapani (the hot spring) provide yet another tourist region with great potential. This circuit provides the pleasure of a boat ride or bird watching in Chilika, a sea bath or water surfing in Gopalpur- on- sea, a bath in the hot spring amidst deep forest at Taptapani are some of the unforgettable experiences which both domestic and overseas tourists could love to have. The four-laning of the National Highway from Bhubaneswar to Berhampur would contribute in a big way in drawing tourists into this circuit.

The tribals and their habitats in Kondhamal, Koraput and Kalahandi districts provide yet another different type of tourist attraction. Those searching for tribal art and culture would find a rich treasure in these three districts. The flora and fauna of the forest is a paradise for nature and eco-tourists, the potentiality of which is yet to be exploited by tour operators, particularly those involved with foreign tourists. There is a need to impress upon tour operators operating in the metropolis to launch such eco or nature tourism in south and western Orissa.

It is very necessary to attract tourist from east and Southeast Asia particularly to the three jewels of ancient centres of Buddhism - Laleetgiri-Udayagiri and Ratnagiri in recent years. There has been

a spurt in the living standard of the people of the east and far east countries. Through conducted tours and chartered flights from Kolkata or Bhubaneswar, tourists could be taken round these ancient centres of Buddhism. This source can reap great incomes for the people of Orissa and the exchequer provided the roads connecting these three places are widened and made motorable in all weathers. For a successful draw of overseas tourists to this circuit, Kolkata airport should be made the port of entry for all flights coming from the east and the far east.

The tourist treasure varies from historic monuments to places of worship, from colourful tribal culture to beautiful handloom and handicrafts, from wild life to well orchestrated festivals, from sandy sea beaches to geo-thermal health sites, from unique depository of flora and fauna to rich sources of marine species. Above all, the people of Orissa, inspite of their poverty, are distinguished for their hospitality.

It is true that the State with its limited resources cannot think of any significant investment in the development of infrastructure in all these tourist circuits, even if they promise great financial returns. Hence, there is an urgent need to encourage private investment in the infrastructural sector such as road, transport, hotels etc. The private sector, if encouraged properly through adequate ancillary supports, would invest liberally as the investment could easily be recovered through collection of tolls and fees. A friendly atmosphere needs to be created to attract private investment in the tourism sector.

Max Muller, the eminent German Scholar once wrote, "if we were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty which nature can bestow - in some parts a veritable paradise on Earth - I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts - I should point to India"<sup>3</sup>. What Max Muller wrote of India is more true for the State of Orissa which is a unique reservoir of all those beautiful things that God and human hands created for the posterity to look on and on.

The list of tourists' attractions of Orissa catering to every facet of tourism is unlimited. The State is lagging far behind in converting these into money-spinning abodes. The private sector is extremely shy to invest in building the infrastructure for lack of proper encouragement. The State

which has failed to take full advantage of these potential sources of high-income and high-employment generating natural and manmade assets due to severe resource constraints, must now act vigorously with a missionary zeal. There is now an urgent need to create an institutional set up which should be government-led but private sector-driven with an objective to benefit the people of the State through income flows on a sustainable manner.

**Table - 12.1**  
**Tourist Flow to Orissa**

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
1990-91	11,96,861	29,428
1991-92	12,42,746	30,445
1992-93	12,59,003	26,335
1993-94	13,09,330	25,824
1994-95	13,28,057	25,978
1995-96	13,71,642	30,218
1996-97	14,09,178	35,318
1997-98	14,33,246	35,390
1998-99	14,75,406	31,622
1999-2000	12,60,873	21,433
2000-2001	15,25,992	25,565

Source: Govt. of Orissa, Dept. of Tourism & Culture, Bhubaneswar.

**Table - 12.2**  
**Estimated Tourist Spending in Orissa**

(Rs. in crore)

Year	Domestic	Foreign
1990	73.96	5.98
1991	86.37	6.33
1992	99.85	6.40
1993	108.75	6.43
1994	124.39	7.44
1995	139.76	8.82
1996	151.85	11.31
1997	479.32	41.61
1998	489.64	32.26
1999	443.56	30.55

2000	493.76	NA
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Source: Govt. of Orissa, Dept. of Tourism & Culture, Bhubaneswar.

**Table - 12.3**

**Number of Hotels that have Come up in Orissa during the Last 10 Years**

Year	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms	No. of Beds
1990	480	9,761	18,779
1991	506	10,221	19,526
1992	508	10,534	19,983
1993	531	10,963	20,816
1994	559	11,508	21,466
1995	608	12,467	23,383
1996	634	13,036	24,441
1997	672	13,710	25,826
1998	694	14,207	26,946
1999	733	14,939	28,223
2000	769	15,668	29,560

Source: Govt. of Orissa, Dept. of Tourism & Culture, Bhubaneswar.

**Table - 12.4**

**Number of Persons Dependant on Tourism Sector  
Directly during 1995-96 to 2000-2001**

Year	No. of Persons Employed
1995-96	---
1996-97	26,659
1997-98	31,962
1998-99	36,383
1999-2000	35,101
2000-2001	46,103

Source: Govt. of Orissa, Dept. of Tourism & Culture, Bhubaneswar.



## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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  6. Dept. of Tourism Govt. of Orissa ***Exotic Orissa***.
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  8. - do - ***Konark, the Sun Temple***.
  9. - do - ***Puri, Place of all seasons***.
  10. - do - ***Chilika, The blue Lagoon***.
  11. - do - ***Bhitarkanika – A Wonder in the Wild***.