A Case Study On “Beach-Tourism Potential Of Odisha”

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Abstract
Beaches have always been the key to the development since time ages and its varied potential has always given birth to various industries whether at its vicinity or at a distant place. The tourism industry is no way different and has utilised this potential many folds in substantial ways across the globe. Beach tourism tends to generate and cater to the tourist traffic that looks for avenues which will give a completely new experience to the tourists (SIT-Special Interest Tourism). Perpetually washed by the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal, Odisha lies on the eastern coast of India & endowed with exquisite & relatively virgin unexplored beaches each having a unique feature of its own. Identifying the major sea beaches across the state & analysing the statistical data in order to find out the potential of beach tourism in Odisha was the primary objective of the research. As the majority of the tourist (75%) travel for the purpose of business or holidaying & the higher duration of stay during the lean season by the foreigners clearly indicates the state’s Beach tourism potential. Hence the tourist infrastructure has to be revamped in the identified beach destinations to witness a higher foreign as well as domestic tourist inflow in the coming years. Finally the implication of the six 'S' in Odisha tourism policy that has been implemented successfully by Kerala would certainly rejuvenate the potential of Beach Tourism in Odisha.

Key words: SIT, Beach tourism, Six ‘S’, Tourism infrastructure

1. Introduction

S.E. Read (1980) suggest that Special interest travel is a travel for people who are going somewhere because they have a particular interest that can be pursued in a particular region or at a particular destination. Similarly the term special form of tourism or special interest tourism was used to describe the constantly increasing types of tourism in early 1990s. (Weiler and Hall, 1992) Tourist with such a special interest would certainly look for new avenues & destinations in order to obtain a more psychological & inherent pleasure. Here comes the role of beach tourism. Orissa with a vast coastal line of 482 kms represented by vast golden sandy beaches and various tribal communities living in the most aborigine style, it houses many relatively virgin or quite unexplored beaches. On the eastern coast of India, perpetually washed by the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal, lies the many splendour of State of Odisha. Endowed with a rich cultural heritage of old world charms and bestowed liberally with the bounties of nature, sometimes tender, sometimes awe-inspiring, it is a kaleidoscope of past splendours and present glamour, a fascinating state with unspoiled beaches, sprawling lakes, luxuriant forests, teeming wildlife, superb monuments, exotic handicrafts, traditional tribes, colourful fairs and festivals, scintillating music and dances. [5] It is a land of
unforgettable memories and hidden treasures. Many parts of this fascinating land remain relatively unexplored and this is the reason why it is considered to be a best place for developing as a SIT (Special Interest Tourism) destination. The coastal climate is a primary resource for beach based tourism. (A. Amengual, et. al., 2014). Hence this research basically eyes upon identifying the major beach destinations that includes renowned as well as unexplored beaches of Odisha & analysing the potential of Beach tourism in Odisha from the various statistical data obtained from Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha. Finally the recommendations made would surely help to promote Beach Tourism in Odisha and developing it as a major Beach Tourism destination.

2. Review of Literature

Today coastal tourism and marine tourism is the largest segment of the travel tourism industry. (M. Honey, 2007; D. Krantz, 2007). More number of tourists is getting attracted towards nature based tourism destinations like beaches, rivers & islands. M. Honey, et al., (2007) suggests that these trends are expected to continue due to the increasing demand for nature (sun, sand & sea) among the urban population of US, Europe and Asia. Many coastal countries like Maldives, Cuba, Kenya, Fiji, Bali, & Mauritius etc are highly dependent on tourism industry as it is their major revenue earning sector. M. Filip (2004) stated that the sandy beaches of Europe are considered to be of great economic importance from tourism point of view. In the same line it was found that the annual revenue generation form the state beach oriented tourism of California was about 61 Billion Dollar. (L. Pendleton, et. al., 2009). With a vast coast line of 7517 kms studded with beaches of large diversity (sandy, rocky, coral & mangrove), India has immense potential in the coastal tourism segment. (A.K. Sanyal, 2011). Government of India in its 10th Five year plan (2002-2007) has also taken necessary steps in order to promote beach and coastal tourism in Goa, Kerala & North Karnataka beaches. According to a research conducted on the online destination image of Goa it was found that its primary image is of a beach destination along with good tourist infrastructure, and attractive night life. (M. Dwivedi, et. al., 2009). As per one of the interim report submitted to Ministry of tourism, Government of India by IL&FS, the coastal state of Karnataka has given first priority to the development of beach circuit, in order to develop tourism in Karnataka. Further C. Gale et. al. (2013) analyzed that 40% of the people employed in beach resorts in Kerala are from nearby villages, which shows the potential of beach tourism as a tool for employment generation.

Odisha having a vast coast line of 482 Kms, possesses numerous virgin beaches but hardly any researches been carried out to fully explore these coastal regions and find out their potential as a beach tourism destination. Hence the present research tries to explore few of such destinations and measure the potential of Odisha as a beach tourism destination from the point of view of tourist arrival and their duration of staying at various beach destinations.
3. Objectives

1. To identify the various destinations with the natural resources (Sea beaches) that can be designed as a tourism Product.
2. To analyse the potential of Beach tourism in Odisha with respect to the tourist arrival and their duration of Staying at beach destinations.
3. To provide suggestive measures for promoting beach tourism in Odisha.

4. Research Methodology

In order to meet the objective, the primary data was collected from the coastal belts of Odisha state. Multistage cum purposive sampling was used to draw the sample. Initially the state was divided into two terrains, i.e. coastal belt and the interior belt. From the coastal belt six districts were identified namely Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri & Ganjam. Finally from each of the district two destinations were identified. Primary data were collected through overt observation, participants observation method of research at these destinations. Specifically the information regarding these unexplored beach destinations were gathered from the local people by direct interviewing method. Secondary data were collected through a detailed analysis of relevant published data from journals, Magazines, Newspapers, Govt. reports and other reports. Also, information was gathered from Orissa Statistical Bulletin (Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha) and Bureau of Immigration for tourist arrivals.

5. Data Analysis & Interpretation

MATERIALS/DATA

Odisha is surrounded by West Bengal on the north east, Jharkhand on the north, Chhattisgarh on the west and Andhra Pradesh on the south while Bay of Bengal washes its shores on the east. Owing to its peculiar geographical location and wide range of physical features, Odisha embraces a diversified floristic composition. Its golden sandy beaches, deep blue sea, pleasant weather provide the tourists with a wonderful opportunity to experience the natural scenic beauty of the place. [11] The sea beaches of the state draws several tourists from far and wide who are enthralled and enchanted by the captivating sight of the places.

Understanding the Market:

In the case of every country/state there are few sectors of tourism where the possibilities of developing special interest tourism are greater as compared to other sectors. These are called as favoured sectors. The advantage enjoyed by them is in terms of location, accessibility, facilities, services and image. Such a favoured sector of tourism in Odisha where the possibilities of developing SIT largely exists is Beach tourism. Associated with sacred environs of Lord Jagannath temple, or the eroticism of Konark's Sun temple, the wondrous beaches of Odisha, speaks eloquently of a living past and continuing present.

The various coastal destinations across the state that can evolve as a major tourist destination found during the research are,

1. **Mahodadhi (Sea beach of Lord Jagannath)**: Along with the sprawling white sandy beach of Puri lies the majestic temple of lord Jagannath which is a major attraction
for the tourists visiting Puri for taking the traditional purification dip. The Jagannath Temple is one of the four most important Hindu pilgrimage sites or the Char Dham. However, for decades now, both Indian and foreign beach lovers have made it their special haunt. Puri is strategically located east of the capital city Bhubaneswar within a trotting distance of 65 Kms.

2. Chandipur: Added to the seductive beauty, the beaches of Odisha is backed up by musical sway of casuarinas trees and creepered sand dunes, Chandipur is one such beach, but with a unique distinction on its own. Unlike other beaches, the sea water here recedes away from the shore line about five km twice a day, an unusual phenomenon, rarely found anywhere. You can see the sea literally vanishing before your eyes and also watch it coming back rhythmically at regular intervals; as if playing hides and seeks. It is located just 20 Kms away from Balasore on N.H.-5 and 320 Kms from Bhubaneswar.

3. Chandrabhaga beach: Situated 35 km from Puri, Konark is home to the Sun Temple, also called the Black Pagoda. Konark is a must visit for its historical and architectural importance. The Konark beach (Chandrabhaga beach) is said to be one of the finest and most romantic beaches on the eastern coast. The Sun temple has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The other attraction near the sun temple is Ramchandi temple where the river merges with the sea giving an exquisitely beautiful scenic experience.

4. Gopalpur on Sea: Hardly 16 km from Berhampur, the club of Southern Orissa, is the tiny town of Gopalpur on the Bay of Bengal. Enjoying the reputation of being a popular Beach Resort of Orissa, the deep and clear blue waters instantly provoke those who are good swimmers. The temptation of bathing here is irresistible. Not-so-good swimmers take the hands of the Nolias (local fishermen who help bathers) and enjoy a pleasant bath. White surf splashing on the golden sands makes Gopalpur-on-Sea as one of the finest beaches on the eastern coast.

5. Aryapalli: The beach at Aryapalli is quiet and charming where the waves speak volumes. Its bracing and invigorating climate adds freshness to the soul. A nature-loving tourist can enjoy the Sun, Surf and Sand amongst the green casuarinas plantations, far from the madding crowds. It is located at trotting distance of 30 km from Berhampur and 6 km from Chhatrapur (Ganjam).

6. Astaranga: This little beach 91 km from Puri presents a panoramic view, especially during sunset on a multi-colored horizon as though seeking to justify its name as "Colourful Sunset" of 8 colours (asta-ranga).

7. Balaramgadi: The confluence of the river Budhabalanga with the sea at Balaramgadi, located 2 km from Chandipur, presents visitors a scenic view with fishing and boating.

8. Balighai: The casuarinas fringed Balighai beach, located 8 km from Puri, is a famous picnic spot. The juxtaposition of gentle casuarinas-lined river with crashing, desolate
ocean coast is a strange and extremely beautiful one. One may also catch a glimpse of the shy Baliharina a kind of deer who inhabit the area. The Sea Turtle Research Centre is another attraction of this beach.

9. Pati-Sonapur: This virgin beach at Pati-Sonapur is one of the most exquisite on the east coast. Right on the confluence of the river Bahuda and the Bay of Bengal, the scenic beauty of the place is simply enchanting. It is located approximately 20 km from Berhampur, 35 km from Gopalpur and 4 km from the National Highway No.5 which connects Chennai and Calcutta.

10. Paradeep: A major port of Orissa, Paradeep also boasts of a fine beach where visitors can easily spend a couple of hours soaking in the sun or frolicking in the lovely blue waters. It is strategically placed at 94 Kms from Cuttack, the silver city.

11. Ramchandi: On the confluence of the river Kusabhadra and the Bay of Bengal, Ramchandi is a beautiful beach. Goddess Ramchandi, the presiding deity of the Konark region is worshipped here with reverence. Situated 7 km from Konark on the Marine Drive, Ramchandi is an ideal place to spend a couple of fun-filled hours.

12. Talasari: At a distance of 88 km from Balasore, 4 km from Chandaneswar and 8 km from Digha (West Bengal) is the tranquil beach at Talasari. One could behold with wonder the glistening glory of the Bay of Bengal spread like a bejewelled carpet as far as one's eyes could reach. The shimmering surface, the myriad twinkles all around give this calm beach a status of its own.

DATA ANALYSIS:
As Odisha is a land of geographical diversity, the beaches has also shown unique diversity among themselves creating a demand for their development and publicity, hence its scope for developing as a Beach Tourism destination truly exists within its compassion.[13] As many of these above places are well connected with road and rail routes and accommodation facilities ranging from budget to fine star category hotels, it’s potential as a major tourist destination need to be analysed from statistical point of view.

Table No. 01.

Statistics on Tourist arrival to Odisha :
1. As per the statistics on tourists arrival (Table No. 01) released by the Department of Tourism, there has been a consistent rise in tourist inflow into the State since 2001. During last ten years (2003-13), the State witnessed 144.68 percent growth in the tourist inflow to the state.
2. The reason for increase in tourist inflow can be attributed to improvement in air connectivity with the capital city of Bhubaneswar. In 2007, about 2.02 lakh tourists entered the State using flight services, which was 104.44 per cent higher than of 2006 figure. In last five years there has been 135.56% increase in tourist arrival by air travel
3. Similarly, there was a sizeable growth in volume of tourists using railway services. While 50.23 lakh people came by trains in 2007, the number was 44.29 lakh in 2006.
The growth was estimated at 13.41 per cent. Moreover, 1.34 per cent growth was recorded in tourists who used road connectivity.

4. The reason being Odisha has a total rail network of 2287 Kms and that gives around 3077.15 Crore rupees profit in 2008-09, which shows that its majorly used for travelling purpose in Odisha and more over Odisha has total road network of 2.38 lakh Kms. The total length of National Highway passing through the State is more than 3600 Km, this includes the highway connecting Kolkata & Chennai, a major transport corridor between East & South India and state highways count more than 5000 Kms of connectivity to various parts of the state.

5. As many as 502 new hotels were established in last nine years. In 2001, there were about 817 hotels in the State and now that has reached up to 1319 in 2010.

Tourist arrival to various Beach destinations:
1. Puri along with the beach and its unending tourist spots attracted most of the visitors. Puri town itself recorded 17.59 lakh domestic visitors and 14,627 foreign visitors. The day visitors surpassed the 50 lakh mark in 2006.[12]
2. Other places like Chandipur in Balasore, Gopalpur, Talasari also saw large inflow of travellers. Places like Balighai, Balaram gadi, Pati-sonapur, Ramchandi, Aryapalli also proved to be major tourist destinations.
3. The data available with the Tourism Department revealed the occupancy position of hotels in locations other than Puri is barely 50 per cent. The poor hotel occupancy of 33 per cent in Konark stands testimony to it.

Statistics on Purpose of Tourist arrival to Odisha:
1. According to a confidential survey done by a market research agency, of every 100 tourists visited, only two come to Orissa on pilgrimage signifying Odisha's importance as holidaying destination.
2. As per the survey, around 80 % of the domestic tourists come to Orissa for the purpose of holidaying, business or on official tours.
3. Destination Orissa is capturing the imagination of foreign tourists. Seven out of 10 come to the State for holidaying i.e. 70%
4. According to MR Patnaik, GM, OTDC this figure is mostly attributed to the inflow of foreign tourists for exploring the white sandy beaches of the state. The number could increase further if the State has an international airport and air connectivity to European and East Asian countries.

Statistics on Tourist Arrival during various times of the Year:
Chart: 1.1,
As per the statistics presented in Chart:1.1, the number of foreign tourist arrival in the year 2012-13 was found to be 41,317 during peak season and 23,402 in offseason/lean season, a clear representation of foreign tourist demands even during off season.

Chart: 1.2,
The statistic in Chart: 1.2, about the foreign tourist arrival clearly says that there has been a consistent rise in the foreign tourist arrival during lean season that has grown from 15,250 in the year 2008-09 to 23,402 in 2012-13.

**Chart: 1.3,**
As per the statistics presented in Chart: 1.3, the growth in foreign tourist arrival during lean season in last 5 years being 53% where as it lies at 17% in case of domestic tourists.

*Statistics on Tourist’s duration of stay at various times of the year:*

**Chart: 2.1,**
As per the statistics presented in Chart: 2.1, the average duration of stay by a foreign tourist in Odisha was found to be 12.7 days where as this figure remains at 3.9 days in case of domestic tourists.

**Chart: 2.2,**
The statistic in Chart: 2.2, reveals about the about the average duration of stay of a foreign tourist during peak and off season which is measured to be 11 days and 17 days respectively. The figure about the average duration of stay for domestic tourist lies at 5 days in peak season and 3 days in lean season.

### 6. Research Findings

The various results or findings of this research process that clearly demonstrates the potential of Odisha as a hub of Beach tourism destinations, are presented below,

1. There has been a consistent rise in tourist inflow into the State since 2001. During last ten years (2003-13), the State witnessed 144.68 per cent growth in the tourist inflow due to the improvement in air connectivity with the capital city of Bhubaneswar, an extensive rail network and well connected national and state highways.

2. There has been a major improvement in the hotel sector with the opening of more than 500 new hotels in the state in past few years that shows the improvement in terms of Tourist Infrastructure.

3. Tourist arrival to the beach destinations (Puri-Konark) is almost 40 % of the entire tourist arrival to Odisha that is clearly indicated from the occupancy position of hotels other than Puri is barely 50 per cent. [10]

4. Around 80 % of the domestic tourists come to Orissa for the purpose of holidaying, business or on official tours where as in case of foreign tourists it is around 70 %. [16]

5. The number of foreign tourist arrival during lean season is more than 50% of the arrival during peak season, hence the religious destinations of Orissa are not the lone reason of attraction rather the existence of various other tourist attractions leads to the cause..

6. The growth in Foreign Tourist Arrival in last 5 yrs during the lean season has been around 53 % against only 17 % growth in domestic tourist arrivals.

7. The average stay of a foreign tourist in Orissa during the lean period is higher than the stay during the peak period and the case is just reverse in case of domestic tourists.

### 7. Conclusion

Despite of the State being gifted with large diversities of natures like Kerala, a place considered to be heaven on earth and god’s own country (Lord Jagannath Dham) still the
tourist destinations are underdeveloped due to lack of interest and support. If these destinations be regularly publicised in various national and international tourism fairs and events and information are properly communicated with tourism centres of various countries with similar interest and desire then it would certainly attract them to have an experience of the nature’s own land and to bring their dream in to reality in the majestic Beaches of Odisha. In order to cope with the increase in foreign tourist arrival for holidaying purpose the major beach destinations have to be upgraded with facilities of international standard and Odisha has to incorporate the six ‘s’ in tourism policy that has been implemented successfully by Kerala. The six ‘S’ are: swagat (hospitality), soochana (information), suvidha (facilities), surakshya (security), sahayog (facilitation) and sanrachna (infrastructure development) in which parameters Orissa lags poorly. Then only Beach Tourism would certainly be of great curiosity for the tourists arriving with a special interest and the dream of projecting Odisha as a major beach destination on the world map would certainly come true.

8. Recommendations

1. As there has been a consistent increase in tourist arrival (105.08 %), and a tremendous increase in air traffic (above 135%) with a single airport in the capital is not sufficient enough to capture the beach tourism market.
2. Hence establishing few more airports at major coastal destinations and converting few of the major air strips in the state at least for domestic aviation purpose could make the beach destinations within the easy reach of the tourists.
3. In spite of the increase in hotel sector the lack of star category hotels in the state at major beach destinations is still a matter of serious concern.
4. As the tourist inflow to Orissa for the purpose of holidaying is almost 80%, so to increase the tourist traffic, Beach tourism potential of the state needs to be tapped.
5. Except Puri, Konark-Chandrabhaga beach & Gopalpur beach other beach destinations have not yet been spotted by the majority of the tourist hence those identified tourist centres needs to be properly publicised with required infrastructural support.
6. As the number of foreign tourist visiting the beach destinations is increasing regularly, these tourist centres need to be developed as per the international standard.
7. Growth in foreign tourist arrival during lean season suggest the intention being other than the usual with some special interest (exploring the Beach destination & holidaying) so these special interest purpose has to be thoroughly measured and strategies to be developed to tap these potential during the lean season.
8. As the average stay of a foreign tourist in Orissa during the lean period is higher than the stay during the peak period, various special interests could be created at these destination in order to give him a complete new experience & added value to the trip along with the beach tourism as a whole.

Finally conducting various nationalized and state level events and cultural programmes at various times of the year could attract domestic as well as foreign tourists to the destination. Konark Dance festival, Puri Beach Festival, Gopalpur Beach festival and Paradeep Bali Yatra are examples of few such initiatives taken by Govt. Of Odisha.
9. References


Chris, G., Piera, F., Philippa, M., & Joe, S. (2013). Local hospitality: Developing local employment in India’s tourism sector. City and Guilds & Equations, 1(1)


Table No. 01.

TOURIST VISIT IN ORISSA FROM 2001-2013

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<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>% Change</th>
<th>Foreign</th>
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Chart: 1.1, Foreign Tourist Arrival in the Year: 2012-13
Chart: 1.2, Foreign Tourist arrival during Lean season

Chart: 1.3, Growth in Tourist arrival during lean season in Last 5 yrs (2008-12)

Chart: 2.1, Average Duration of stay by a Tourist
Chart: 2.2, Average Duration of stay by a Tourist in Peak & Lean Period

- **Domestic Tourist**
  - Lean Period/off season: 3 Days
  - Peak Period/peak season: 5 Days

- **Foreign Tourist**
  - Lean Period/off season: 17 Days
  - Peak Period/peak season: 11 Days

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXx