



EXPLORING ODISHA'S UNCONVENTIONAL TOURISM: A TAPESTRY OF HIDDEN TREASURES

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the realm of unconventional tourism in Odisha, India, with an emphasis on under-explored locations that offer unique and informative experiences to travellers who are seeking to have some point of difference. This study highlights the richness of these bizarre options which are available to the adventurous traveller using a diverse range of attractions. These destinations include unexplored wilderness at Simlipal National Park to culturally vibrant towns of Raghurajpur and Pipili. The mysterious Chandipur Beach, with its disappearing tides, as well as the daring terrains of Daringbadi and Deomali, are other examples of Odisha's potential as an offbeat tourist destination.

Besides that, the paper highlights the dedication of the state towards sustainable and community-based tourism practices. This commitment will make such out-of-the-ordinary experiences not only memorable but also make a positive impact to the communities that will host them and to the campaigns of environmental protection. This paper aims at giving a detailed knowledge about the unconventional tourism scene in Odisha by taking a keen analysis and personal narratives. It is expected to make tourists explore the road less traveled and discover the gems that lurk in the shadow in the culturally rich and naturally diverse area of India.



INTRODUCTION

People go to nations or locations outside of their typical surroundings for the objectives of personal, professional, or business tourism. Tourism refers to the movement of people to the new surroundings, which is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon. It also means the act of moving people or people to another to entertain, recreate or pursue a personal desire. Tourism brings revenue to the economy; it brings thousands of new jobs, leads to the further development of the infrastructure, and promotes the sense of a cultural exchange. There is international tourism as well as national tourism and regional tourist.

In recent times, one of the cornerstones in terms of spreading culture and growth of the economy, tourism has come under the umbrella of radical transformation. In several nations, the tourism sector is an important economic activity. It does this through the provision of lodging facilities, transportation and dining establishments through different tourist attraction sites. It serves as the biggest income earner and source of employment in certain locations; this serves to bolster the local economy and gives aid to small businesses. The tourist sector has led to the creation of significant numbers of both Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and jobs. It is absolutely necessary for us to have a solid understanding of the most recent tendencies and points of view in the tourist business as we make our way through the complexity of a world that is undergoing fast change.

The growing interest of travellers in doing things in a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible way has resulted in the phenomenon of sustainable tourism having become a significant trend. United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) highlights the appropriateness of businesses which are environmentally responsible to enhance a more inclusive and environmentally friendly industry. The virtual reality (VR) tourism has been made possible due to advances in technology that have allowed tourists to see places without necessarily having to move out of the comfort of their homes.



Such technologies are now rapidly deployed and have already been a lifeline to the business amid travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 epidemic. Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2013) argue that such companies as Google Earth VR and Oculus are offering their customers the immersivity experience that enables them to virtually tour the globe.

The tourism industry in the global business is facing an ever changing environment of problems among these are the following; natural calamities, health epidemics, and geopolitical disputes. The management of crisis and quick recovery have become very important areas of interest. Ritchie and Jiang (2019) confirm that the keys to the process of safeguarding the sector against unexpected shocks are robust solutions, such as the diversity of destinations and the elaboration of preparation plans.

Tourists are always willing to develop stronger ties with the locals they tour, and thus authenticity and cultural involvement is gaining popularity more than ever. Community-based tourism programmes provide locals with greater agency and act to facilitate cultural breaks. Through activities like Airbnb "Experiences" and websites like WithLocals, among others, travellers can now access opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences with the hosts of the destinations they explore like never before (Sigala, 2017).

The area of tourism, which is constituted by the continually changing tapestry of human interconnection and exploration, is at the edge of brand-new and intriguing opportunities. Sustainable practices implementation, cross-cultural communication encouragement, use of technical innovations, and resilience are all the necessary actions. Tourist industry can go on to thrive and help make the world a more linked and a more enriched society provided that the industry identifies the changes that are taking place and react suitably to the transformations.

INDIA in the modern world tourism industry.

The epidemic of Covid-19 is now restraining the global tourist industry, devastating both physical and financial dimensions of the global tourism. To this date, there has not been any sign that the industry needs to flourish. Based on the results of numerous statistical researches, the top 10 countries with the highest number of tourists they were able to attract in 2019 include the



following: France, Spain, the United States of America, China, Italy, Turkey, Mexico, Thailand, Germany, and the United Kingdom out of 140 countries total. Similarly, the United States, Spain, France, Thailand, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Australia, Germany and China comprised the top 10 countries regarding the amount of money they received as a result of tourism. In 2019, there were 1.45 billion arrivals of tourists from other countries all around the world. The travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report in 2019 ranked India in position number 34 among the 140 nations. After the comparison with the 2017 report, the position of India has moved up six positions. This industry also contributed 16.91 lakh crore rupees, equal to 220 billion dollars, and providing 42.673 million employment which is 8.1 percent of the total employment in the country. It is believed that the industry will recover over 1.32 trillion rupees in the coming year 2028 which is almost 10 percent of our GDP. India is also gaining prominence these days as a major player in regard to medical tourism. In this regard, 1,84,298 foreigners visited India to get medical treatment. It seems to be taking the correct path. In 2019, it is estimated that about 11 million foreigners visited India. This is an increase of 3.5 per cent as compared to the last year. India as far as the provision of infrastructure providing transportation services to visitors, is ranked the 13th, as far as the provision of air transport facilities, India is placed at the 33rd and as far as the provision of the sea transport facilities, India is placed at the 28th level. When it comes to the availability of truly beautiful natural tourism pages India ranks 14th and when it comes to the services it renders in terms of cultural and business traveling, the country ranks at the 8th position in the world. The country does a dreadful job however in provision of star-rated accommodation to the traveller as compared with other countries. The country stands at the sixteenth place in the world in terms of the tourist industry lucrativity, and then in the seventh position in Asia. Travel visas and passports have been brought closer to the people in form of redressal and the authority given to the embassies of the home countries of the visitors (Garg & Sharma, 2021). This was in a bid to lure more tourists to come to India, who are of other countries.

ODISHA and TOURISM sector.

The Indian state of Odisha may be found on the country's eastern coast, right next to the Bay of Bengal. On the north east side, it is bordered by West Bengal. On the north it is bordered with



Jharkhand. It is bordered by Chattisgarh on the west. Andhra Pradesh is to the south. The Odishi state has a rich cultural history that can be traced back thousands of years. It boasts of ancient temples, of its traditional dance forms (such as Odissi) and of its traditional arts and crafts (such as Pattachitra paintings). There are several monuments of historical importance in the state, such as the Sun Temple at Konark is a UNESCO World Heritage and the Jagannath temple in Puri which is regarded as one of the four most venerable pilgrimage locations among Hindus. Odisha is blessed with extensive range of beautiful landscapes. Its bordering length is long and some of its beaches including the Puri Beach and the Chandipur Beach remain untouched and undeveloped. The state has also various green forests, national parks and waterfalls some of which are the most spectacular, the Simlipal National Park and the Duduma Waterfalls. Some of the most significant sectors of a diversified economy in Odisha are agriculture, mining and manufacturing. This is because the larger part of Indian mineral production is funded by the state since it houses the largest mineral deposits and it happens to be one of the most populated states in India. Odisha boasts of a megaplex of cultural, historic, and natural attractions and this has given rise to the increased dependency of the state on the tourism industry. The state has been working towards concerted efforts to encourage tourism, through introduction of ecotourism programmes and also by enhancing infrastructure development. As of 2021, the state of Odisha has been able to implement several development projects in the roads, infrastructure, education, and healthcare sectors. Moreover, the state also actively participates in coping with natural disasters and creating infrastructure that is vulnerable to climate disasters (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2021).

Odisha has a great potential to create employment opportunities, alternative sources of revenues, foreign currency earnings, and value addition to the economy through the tourist industry. The industry can now create 89 jobs with an investment of one million rupees as opposed to 45 jobs in the primary and 13 jobs in the secondary sector. The number of individuals indirectly employed in the tourist industry is almost three times higher than directly employed individuals. It is an industry which has a high dependency on human labour. Existing at 541 compared to the national average of 418 journeys in a day, domestic tourist activity in the state of Odisha is very much higher. To be more exact, Odisha can boast about 357 various tourist attractions located all across the 30 districts of the state. There are a total of 28 places, the most of any district, and



they are all held by Cuttack. Similarly, Balasore and Ganjam districts have 22 and 22 major destinations respectively, Puri holds 21 and Mayurbhanj and Khurda have 19 each. In addition to this, the state is home to a number of distinct tourism attractions centres, such as the Golden Buddhist site and wild life tringles, amongst other things (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2021).

UNCONVENTIONAL TOURISM

In recent years, people tastes towards travelling have changed and due to this change, interest towards alternative tourism has been on the rise. As travellers they are becoming more concerned with exploring outside of the set of experiences tourist destinations provide. They are heading towards less familiar areas so as to explore hidden treasures and experience unique cultural practices.

Dark Tourism:

An example of a rare type of tourism is a tourism that involves visiting places that are related to sadness, homicide, or historical atrocities, which is referred to as dark tourism. Such a vacation allows the travellers to gain deeper insights into some important historical events and the impact said events had on the destinations they visited.

Culinary Tourism:

The skill of cooking and the significant part that food plays in culture and society are being celebrated via the rising field of culinary tourism. Increasingly, more tourists are making their list of places to visit not only due to their aesthetic appeal but also because of more gastronomics that are available at such places.

Urban Exploration:

Urbex, which is also known as urban exploration, is an activity of exploring closed off or abandoned urban spaces. This unorthodox kind of tourism appeals to explorers as well as history aficionados since it gives visitors the opportunity to learn about long-lost stories and experience the haunting beauty of deteriorating architecture (Bradley, 2013).



Voluntourism:

And that is what makes up the concept of volunteering tourism, when travelers who do volunteer work to the communities and causes, they explore get to travel and contribute back into the society. This form of tourism fosters the exchange of various culture and it also provides the traveller with a mission as he or she is not at home.

Adventure Tourism:

The target market of adventure tourism includes individuals highly addicted to adrenaline seeking a hyperactive experience in new and bizarre environments.

Lucky travellers experience a world of unique experiences due to the emergence of unusual tourism. Regardless of whether an individual is geared towards the more seriousness of soul sucking tourism or the sensual blisses of delicacies tours, or the rush of adrenaline of adventure tours, there is a niche that is waiting to be tapped into. Such off the beaten track travelling experience does not only assist the traveller in making a life-long memory but also a deeper understanding of the world, in general.

ODISHA'S UNCONVENTIONAL TOURISM

Located on the eastern coast of India, the state of Odisha is often praised due to its rich cultural heritage, the many ancient temples, and exceptionally clean beaches. But outside these popular destinations Odisha has a treasure trove of weird and less-travelled destinations that present those who visit with an experience they could never have had before. This section discusses some of the other types of tourism that Odisha offers, shedding some light on some of the hidden treasures that await those adventurers to explore them.

Simlipal National Park- Eco-Tourism:

Despite the fact that Odisha is known to have some of the most abundant forests and a great variety of indigenous wildlife, Simlipal National Park is a hidden gem to ecotourists. This biodiversity hotspot is the home of a stunning number of flora and fauna, some of the most famous among which, are the royal Bengal tiger and the quintessential melanistic leopard.



Clients can get to know the numerous various ecosystems in the park and engage in all three types of activities: guided hikes, off-road vehicles, and nature walks (Dandapat, 2020).

The Arts and Crafts Villages of Raghurajpur and Pipili:

Raghurajpur and Pipili are two villages near Puri, which give an insight into the rich creative heritage of Odisha. All these villages are found in Pipili. Carving, unlike Raghurajpur and Pattachitra paintings centuries old scroll painting, Pipili is called the land of colourful appliques. Both of these towns are in the state of Bihar. Tourists have a chance to observe craftspeople at work, ask questions regarding the work and even participate in workshops (Das, 2006).

Chandipur Beach:

Chandipur is an awesome specimen of a natural phenomenon that has given it a name of vanishing beach. During low tide, the sea may recede to 5 km away leaving a broad expanse of untouched sand. The surreal scenery that is formed when there are sharp changes in topography between low and high tides can give the beachgoers an unreal experience.

Daringbadi:

Eastern Ghats Daringbadi, a remote location, is also often known as the Kashmir of Odisha because of the bleak weather and picturesque views that can be observed in that particular area. The hill station is a relief indeed to the stifling heat of summer and is heaven to anyone who loves the natural world. There are several options for hiking and birding thanks to the landscape's abundance of coffee plantations, pine woods, and waterfalls (Rout, 2021).

Deomali:

Odisha has the highest point in the state known as Deomali which is 1,672 metres above the sea level. This mountain is located in the Koraput district and this is a mountain which joins up the beautiful sights of the hills and valleys that are within the surrounding area. It has become the ideal place to be among those attending to hiking and other adventure enthusiasts who wish to encounter a different mountain experience than that of the typical mountain (Behera, 2021).



Tribal Tourism:

Odisha, an Indian state, hosts numerous indigenous tribes, each possessing its history, tradition and lifestyle. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to immerse and understand culture and it is offered by getting to know these communities with responsible tourism programmes.

Community-Based Eco-Tourism:

Other projects that are available throughout the state enable local communities to be socially engaged and gain access to the tourism sector. These not only maintain cultural heritage, but also lead to sustainable economic development.

Subsurface mysteriesSpiritual and Wellness Tourism:

Places of meditation, yoga and inward reflection can be located in Odishas serene and religiously important sites, including the Dhauli Shanti Stupa and ashrams which are plentiful in the state.

Odisha's off-the-beaten-path tourism possibilities provide for an interesting excursion away from the typical tourist destinations. The wild splendour of Simlipal National Park and artistic villages of Raghurajpur and Pipili should offer a rewarding vacation experience. Such pearls are located throughout the area. In the simplest sense, the Odishi tourist experience is a landscape of experiences combining cultural diversity of the state, its natural beauty, and vibrant culture. It also prompts tourists to look beneath the surface and guarantees to deliver experiences that are authentic, eye-opening and leave an indelible mark on the soul.

Discussion of ODISHA: Unconventional Tourism.

Over the past few years, tourism products in Odisha have gained significant popularity as they are unconventional. Such services give a unique and diverse collection of experiences that tourists are in need of different things than the usual tourist destinations. This investigation delves into the fundamentals of unconventional tourism in Odisha and examines its relevance:



1. Cultural Richness:

Things like attractions, tourism in Odisha are great assets to the state; therefore, the existence of the rich cultural heritage has acted as a great lure to bizarre forms of travellers. The diverse culture is represented by ancient temples, Native tribes of the tribes, traditional art forms which one can have in this state.

Significance: Unusual tourism aids in safeguarding and spreading the Odishi cultural heritage as well as creating business opportunities to handicrafters and locals living in the state.

2. Natural Beauty:

Strength: The water falls, dense forests and untouched beaches in this state give one the much needed relief after working hard in the city. These clean surroundings are an oasis of serenity and calmness to outdoor sports lovers and nature Christians.

Significance: Unusual tourism contributes to the dissemination of environmentally friendly practices, as well as the protection of natural zones. It makes a contribution towards the maintenance of Odisha's one-of-a-kind ecosystems.

3. Sustainability:

Strengths: Community-based and eco-tourism programmes in the state of Odisha are marvelous illustrations to display how seriously the state takes the issue of ecologically responsible tourist activities. When practiced responsibly, tourists and their visiting towns can enjoy the long-term benefits of tourism.

- Significance: All of these off-the-beaten-path tourist sites would be more committed to preserving their charm to future generations provided they follow the guidelines of sustainability, which are imperative in reducing the adverse influences brought about to the local environment and culture.



4. Economic Impact:

•Strength:The state's economy is diversified via the use of unconventional tourism since it creates money in areas that may not have traditionally profited from tourism.

Significance:It makes the region less dependent on a few tourist attractions that are famous and promotes an even distribution of economic benefits of tourism.

5. Authentic Experiences:

StrengthYes, the off-the-beaten-path destinations in Odisha are not so business-oriented and commercial; this is appealing to tourist seeking authentic experiences.

•Significance:Real life experiences form a stronger bond between the visitors and the sites they visit, and these impressions are lasting and urge tourists to get back to the respective sites.

6. Challenges:

•Infrastructure:It's possible that certain off-the-beaten-path places don't have the necessary infrastructure, which might put off potential visitors.

Awareness:To promote alternative tourist activities, one needs to work hard in raising awareness and apprising the travellers with other sightseeing sites.

7. Future Growth:

Opportunities:Odisha has a gigantic potential of expansion of the alternative types of tourism which are untapped. The potential of this industry may be unlocked by investments in infrastructure, marketing, and ethical tourist practices.

•Diversification:Some of the opportunities that the state could exploit in order to diversify its tourist offerings are in adventure tourism, cultural events, and wellness retreats.



CONCLUSION

Due to its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes and their great sites, India has become an attraction to all persons across the globe when it comes to travel. Travel and tourism industry in India is a business that is alive and doing well and also contributes significantly to Indian economy. Odisha is a destination that leaves a permanent mark to any traveller since it contains the cultural richness of the state with the natural beauty of the lands in the state. The non-stereotypical tourist places available in Odisha provide an attractive and alternative option to the tourist trail that is a common feature of most holidays. When in search of something rare and life-altering, Odisha will have its well-kept secrets, where one will find the wild Simlipal National Park and its untamed wildlife, artistic master-pieces of Raghurajpur and Pipili, along with the enigmatic Chandipur Beach. These experiences will not only be memorable, but they will also have a significant influence not just on the environment, but also on the communities in which they are located thanks to the dedication of the state to community-based and environmentally conscious tourist programmes. Odisha motivates visitors to have a closer connection with the natural environment, cultural heritage and recent history of the state through these nontraditional modes of tourism. It enables one to be transported to some world of discovery, that the ordinary can be transformed too spectacular. As travelers explore beyond the familiar trails, the resulting color palette is rewarding and imprints an everlasting memory on their minds and their hearts. Unconventional tourism in Odisha is not a case of going out of the box; it is an invitation to exploring, learning and enjoying the beauties that are available past the hack and slash road.

Finally, unconventional tourism in Odisha is a huge asset to the state that provides an expansive range of cultural, ecology and environmental conscious experiences to tourists. It can not just boost the economy of the region, but can also promote responsible tourism, and preserve the cultural and environmental resources of the state to the next generations. Since it is gaining recognition and support, it can do all these things.



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