



TREND OF TOURISM IN BHITARKANIKA, ODISHA

KEY WORDS

Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Potential, Natural Resources, Cultural Resources.

Dr. Sridhar Samal

Head, Department of Geography Kendrapara Autonomous College Kendrapara, odisha-754211

ABSTRACT

The state of odisha presents a paradoxical picture of poverty amongst plenty. In spite of successful plan periods, some sectors continue to be under-developed. Despite being endowed with vast tourism potential and natural resources, the state continues to be one of the least developed states of India. Although during the last 50 years of planned development, it has achieved substantial progress in some selected sectors. Some other potential sectors like tourism: a fundamental factor for sustainable development. Hence, the tourism planners have to re-examine and react in a manner which will ensure sustainable tourism development without compromising the environment and community. With this objective, the present researcher will undertake a study on "Bhitarkanika" to identify tourism potentials in terms of natural and cultural resources and suggest measures for ensuring sustainable tourism development in the region under study. The study is based on the data collected through primary and secondary sources most of which have been published.

INTRODUCTION:

At the turn of the new millennium, tourism has emerged as the most promising and prosperous industry in the world. Compared to all other industries, it has had huge impact on economy, environment and society. World travel and tourism council (WTTC) highlights that tourism contributes 10.2% to world GDP, employs 10.6% of global work force, serves as the largest industry involving 3.2 billion people, accumulates 10.7% of global capital investment, accounts for 10.9% of consumer spending and generates 655 billion us \$ annually as tax revenue. Bill gates, the wizard of it industry states that "tourism is one of the three sectors of priority at the global level". The earth summit 1992 held at Rio-Da-Jenerio has made the concept of tourism a fundamental factor for sustainable development. In this era of globalization and liberalization, the planners of tourism have to re-examine the geo-political, socioeconomic and environmental impacts of contemporary tourism and act in a manner, which will ensure sustainability without compromising the requirements of the future. The national tourism policy of india-2002 defines that our mission is to promote sustainable tourism as a means to economic growth, social integration and promoting the image of India as a country with glorious past, a vibrant present and bright future.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study trend of tourism development in general and Bhitarkanika region in particular. Consideration of the contribution of sustainable tourism to overall growth and development of socio-economic and environmentally significant in the study region.
- To analyse the existing infrastructure facilities available for sustainable tourism development in the area under study and suggest key points for policy makers and planners.
- To study tourism potential of the region in form of natural and cultural resources and to harness prospects for poverty reduction and employment generation through sustainable tourism development. Identification of opportunities and potentialities on the one hand and challenges on the other in achieving sustainable tourism development.
- To suggest measures and policy options for harnessing tourism development in the region under study in particular.

METHODOLOGY:

The data used in this study has been collected through survey method based on primary data through using questionnaire at Bhitarkanika tourist centre. Secondary data was used to support primary data. The major sources of information were information were various journals, new reports, research articles, tourism research agencies and institutions.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

The primary objective of the questionnaire survey was to obtain an insight about changing dynamics in respect of trend of tourism in form of natural and culture resources and harness prospects for sustainable tourism development. The questions asked pertained to various factors of sustainable tourism which are sustainable development policy, safety and security, tourism infrastructure, natural resources, cultural resources, sustainable tourism activity resources, entrepreneurship, humanitarian aspects, health and image. The final questionnaire was consisted of 10 questions of which some were closed and some were open ended.

The simple procedure adopted was a case of convenient sampling. The target responds were tourists at Bhitarkanika. About 160 questionnaires were administered of which only 150 were returned. The final analysis was done with 150 questionnaires, the others being non-satisfactory. For the analysis of the discrete data the non-parametric test has been used in this research study is the chi-square test.

The chi-square test is used with discrete data in form of frequencies. It is a test of independence and is used to estimate the likelihood that some factors other the chance account for the observed relationship. Since the null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between the variables under study, the chi-square test merely evaluates the probability that the observed relationship results from chance. The chi-square test represents a useful method of comparing experimentally obtained results with those to be expected theoretically on some hypothesis.

The difference between the observed and expected frequencies are squared and divided by the expected number in each case and the sum of this quotient is χ^2 . The more closely the observed results approximate to the expected, the smaller is the chi-square and the closer the agreement between observed data and the hypothesis being tested. On the contrary, the larger the chi-square the greater the probability of a real divergence of experimentally observed from expected results.

An analysis was done on the basis of questionnaire obtained from tourists and the inferences are drawn from the data to understand the changing dynamics and challenges ahead for sustainable tourism development in the region understudy.

Table 1.1 Tourist Arrival in Kendrapara District (2009 – 2012)

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2009	431907	260	432167
2010	474463	398	470486
2011	480079	418	480497

2012	487020	314	487334
------	--------	-----	--------

Source: Statistical Abstract of Odisha – 2012

Table 1.2 Tourist Arrival in Bhitarkanika (Study Area, 2009 - 2012)

Year	Number Of Tourists
2009	43547
2010	43069
2011	45451
2012	43653

Source: Statistical Abstract of Odisha – 2012

Table 1.3 Tourist Composition in Odisha (2005 - 2012)

Year	Domestic	Foreign	Total	% Change
2005	4632976	33310	4666286	12.3
2006	5239896	39141	5279037	13.1
2007	5944890	41880	5986770	13.6
2008	6358445	43966	6402411	6.9
2009	6891510	39684	6937194	8.3
2010	7591615	50432	7642047	10.2
2011	8271257	60722	8331979	9.00
2012	9053086	64719	9117805	9.43

Source: Statistical Abstract of Odisha – 2012

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS:

- It can safely be stated that there is huge tourism potential which are not yet tapped to promote tourism in Bhitarkanika in a sustainable manner. The plans and policies adopted so far to boost tourism development in Bhitarkanika is far attractions of eco-tourists and nature lovers.
- As regards to tourism infrastructure, the region lags behind and is facing the major challenges to deal because if tourism infrastructure has not been improved the potential which exists for sustainable tourism development will be taken away by other states.
- As regards to status of entrepreneurship in tourism sector, it has been observed that the local community is not very enthusiastic about adopting sustainable tourism as profession as there is no awareness and training facilities for them.
- So far as accommodation is concerned, accommodation plays a significant role and is very key infrastructure of a tourist destination. There is a limited accommodation facility available in the area.
- In terms of image of the destination, or perception of tourists as a sustainable tourism destination, the state has not done sufficient. The need for government is to promote and support sustainable tourism development by developing educational awareness programmes and by including a policy of sustainable tourism development in all national and local tourism development agreements.
- As regards to health standards, tourists were not happy with the status and type of facilities available in the district it is because diversifying tourism evolves a lot of risks and therefore needs basic health facilities and emergency health care for the development of the destination in a sustainable manner.
- Bhitarkanika like other fertile mangrove swamps the world over, has suffered in the hands of encroachers. This area has experienced heavy influx of migrants from east Bengal and before abolition of zamindari large tracts of mangroves were leased to the migrants for agriculture. As a result mangrove forests came under heavy biotic pressure.
- There is a huge livestock population within the sanctuary area

who are dependent on the forests in absence of any worthwhile pasture lands. Nutritive fodder is available from trees like *Avicenna* and this prompts the villagers to rear cattle. An estimated 70,000 cattle are found within the sanctuary.

- With high human population in and around and sanctuary having frequent interface with the wild animals and their habitat, the conflict is bound to arise. There have been instances of crocodiles eating away the human beings and attacking the cattle. Crop damage by wild animals has also been reported.
- A threat to the survival of sea turtles has attracted worldwide attention and government has also expressed its concern in this matter. Olive Reedlays have been nesting in Gahirmatha and nearby beaches along the Orissa coast due to various factors. But of late, things have become difficult for them and for last two nesting seasons there has been no mass nesting.

SUGGESTIONS:

- There is a strong need for development of infrastructure facilities because the available accommodation facilities for tourists are inadequate and not satisfactory for domestic as well as foreign tourists.
- The concept of public-private partnership (PPP) is needed to unlock development opportunities in creating tourism infrastructure. It is because infrastructure plays a vital role in sustainable tourism development with huge backward and forward linkages, physical infrastructure covering transportation (roads, railway and ports) power and other basic necessities are very vital for sustaining economic growth and improved quality of life in the district.
- Aggressive marketing campaign must be carried out for the image building of destinations in the region. Celebrity endorsements in the destinations could help to market tourism and brand building.
- There should be proper training and education for the local youth regarding for the locals will help generating willingness for employment and entrepreneurship in tourism sector.
- In the present scenario, there is no such law that encompasses all aspects of tourism through the demand for one has been picking up. It has been argued that in fact that "legislation on tourism seeks to define in clear unambiguous terms the rights and responsibilities of its various segments vis-à-vis user and vice-versa and to provide for legal protection of the rights and enforcements of the responsibilities thus defined" (Mishra and Ravindran – 1998).
- Diversifying the areas of tourism in the study area like adventures tourism, medical tourism, beach tourism, pilgrimage tourism, wild life tourism, eco-tourism has a huge potential for growth and development. The area is famous for unique mangroves eco-system rarely seen in any part of the world.
- All the rivers and creeks in the sanctuary should be declared as reserved forest. Department should effectively regulate fishing in these areas. There are number of rivers where traditional fishing has been going on since many years, all such rights should be preserved.
- Emphasis should be laid on enforcing the provisions of the Orissa marine fishing regulations Act and Rules.
- Special drive has to be initiated for large scale eviction of encroachers from forest land in the sanctuary as well as Mahanadi delta. The need for immediate eviction of the encroachments is it for agriculture or aquaculture is taken up.
- There is an acute shortage of firewood and timber in the sanctuary area. In order to reduce the pressure on existing mangrove forests, steps are required to be taken.
- Turtle nesting beaches are being damaged due to number of factors like unplanned casuarines plantations along the coast, erection of high intensity light sources on the coast and construction of fish-landing stations close to the nesting

beaches. Any planting has to be done on the coast after leaving about 100 meters wide beach sand for turtle nesting.

12. There is an immediate need to conduct a survey and verify the nationality of the settlers for issue of eye cards and take necessary action as per the law of the land. There is no doubt, that this is a difficult exercise but something is to be done right now before there is an Assam like situation.

CONCLUSION:

On the basis of summarization and findings in the preceding chapters it may now be safely submitted that the basic questions rose relating to the aims and objective of the study have been most humbly dealt with and answered to a reasonable extent. Finally, it may be concluded that no study is complete in itself. In other words, it operates under certain basic framework. In the process of study simultaneously it raises some basic questions which can be taken up for further research. This particular study has made a judicious balance between both these aspects. Promotion of sustainable tourism in the area requires development of planning tools, capacity building, awareness raising, local government, guidelines for good practices and actual implementations.

REFERENCES:

1. A.K Bhatia, (1996). "International Tourism Management" Sterling Publications, New Delhi.
2. M.Mallick, (2006). "Tourism in Odisha", an Employment Perspective" Vision Vol. Xxvi, No.4 Oct-Dec-06.
3. S.Chadha & C's Kar, "Bhitarkanika, Myth and Reality", Natraj Publishers, Derhadun.
4. Panda, Mishra And Parida, (2004). "Tourism Management" – The Socio-Economic And Ecological Perspective, University Press- Hydrabad.
5. Economic Survey (2012). Govt. Of Odisha, Bhubaneswar.
6. George Mc.Intyre, (1993). "Sustainable Tourism Development-Guide For Local Planners", WTO, Madrid.
7. S.C Bagri, (2003). "Potential in Tourism Promotion", Himalayan Ecotourism Society', Derhadun.
8. P.Bhalla, (2004). "Potential of Tourism, A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh", Sonali Publications, New Delhi.
9. Ray G.C (2005). "Geography Of Odisha", Kitab Mahal, Cuttack.
10. M. Ranga (2003). "Tourism Potential In Indoor", Abhijit Publications, New Delhi.