CHAPTER-2

AN OVERVIEW OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY IN ODISHA

2.1 Introduction

Odisha, the land of splendid natural resources and cultural marvels, has always been an exotic hub for explorers, tourists and migrants since the Aryan age. Odisha has been endowed with a colossal variety of nature’s fortune, flora and fauna symbolizing the inimitability of the lifestyle and culture of the state’s socio-cultural inheritance that can only be administered tenderly, through a single-hair brush step by step. No suspicion that the minuscule artistic masterpiece of pattachitra has journeyed the convolution of features it has in that genre. No doubt, yet again, that the close circuitry of its exertions on silver wires has fashioned its dazzling filigree. But the sight is two fold. If it can contract its vision to the deluxe spot of detail, it can broaden them to the enormity. With the advent of modern industrialization and urbanization, there has been a notable transformations in the lifestyle, pattern of living and business scenario in the state. It instills full potential to explore, utilize and exploit its resources to the optimal level in order to cater the crazily changing needs of the gennext globatarians worldwide.

This chapter provides a general overview of tourism and hospitality scenario in Odisha and focuses particularly on star hotel industry in Bhubaneswar. It further discusses on the growth and development of Odisha. This chapter also examines the attractiveness of tourism in and around Bhubaneswar city and the initiatives that have been devised by the Odisha Government in order to cope with the predicted future influx of tourists.

2.2 Odisha Tourism

“Asransham Bharata Srestho, Deshanam Utakala srutah, Utikalasya Samodesha Nasti Nasti Mahi Tale” (Pani, 2008)

As transcribed by saint poet Kapil Muni, there is no such place like Utkal (ancient Odisha) exists in the universe. And for this reason today, Odisha is considered as “the Soul of Incredible India”. Geographically, the state of Odisha is surrounded by West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh from its four corners (Figure 2.1).
A clear blend of religions, cultures, spiritualities, nature and art makes the state inimitable. Odisha bears a strong historical heritage including several temples and astounding monuments; which attract tourists from far across the globe. This land of archetypal magnetism with its greenery, benevolently congregates the ancient grandeur with the recent progress and growth. This is the land of archetypal magnetism where opulent ancient architectural beauty congregates with recent progress and growth. Odisha, with its nature’s bounty and vivid flora and fauna; represents the uniqueness created by the blend of ancient culture and lifestyle of the state’s cultural legacy. The varied forms of art that has taken birth on this cultural enriched land meticulously capture the intricate details of this heritage land. Either it’s ‘Pattachitra’ which gently tells a story frame by frame or ‘Filgree’, close circuitry work of silver wires, that creates stunning ensembles. These arts provide a dual vision to the viewer as one can narrow their eyes to view finest details or can widen them to witness the massive image. The legendary rural artifacts and craftsmanship of handloom artisans provide an inimitable cultural identity to the state.

As a holiday destination, Odisha forms a comprehensive package of art, craft, sculptures, tribal culture, picturesque beauty and palatable cuisines that provides an
enthralling experience to the travelers. Furthermore, Odisha is a tourism delight for domestic and foreign travelers as it is enriched with vivacious culture, heritage and wide-ranging topography.

2.3 The Development of Tourism Sector in Odisha

Through a harmonious blending of rich cultural heritage, spirituality and mesmerizing nature’s beauty Odisha has been considered as a travelers’ paradise. Thus, Odisha has huge potential for the growth and development of tourism sector. Odisha attract visitors across the globe for its cultural essence, spiritual heritage, architectural marvel, art and crafts, dance and music and the natural biodiversity. There is huge scope for tourism to prosper because of the serene, scenic and sublime splendor. Major attractions are the temples of Bhubaneswar aka ‘The Templecity’ and Puri that embodies miles of the cleanest silver beaches and the magnificent Sun Temple of Konark. Bhubaneshwar, Puri and Konark together make an opportune and appropriate triangle for tourists. The added feather to the hat is the ‘Diamond Triangle’ which comprises of three Buddhist sites, aka Triratna, Ratnagiri, Udaygiri and Lalitgiri. These three vertices of diamond triangle together with golden triangle is now the high prioritized area for the department of tourism in Odisha. Odisha tourism is a significant sector for generating direct and indirect employment, earning through foreign exchange and ultimately leading to sustainable growth and inclusivity. For, this reason The National Geographic Traveler magazine has enlisted Odisha in “50 Tours of a Lifetime” in the 2013 edition.

Odisha, located in the eastern coast of India, attracts thousands of domestic and foreign tourists every year to visit the various places of tourist interest. As per the Statistical Bulletin of Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha 1, 07,90, 622 domestic and 71, 426 foreign tourists totaling to 1, 08, and 62,048 have visited during the year 2014 with increasing rate of 10.08%.

2.4 Bhubaneswar Tourism – City of Temples

Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha, is also considered as the ‘Cathedral of East’ encompassing a rich historical heritage and is the foremost tourist hub of the state. Bhubaneswar is a significant Hindu pilgrimage site in India having more than two thousand temples and shrines existing in and around the city. The word ‘Bhubaneswar’ is originated from the word ‘Tribhubaneswar’ which means ‘Lord of the three worlds’
which was the capital of Kalinga Kingdom in ancient period. Travellers across the
globe mainly prefer to visit Lord Jagannath temple in Puri, Sun temple at Konark, and
some of Bhubaneswar’s ancient temples like Lingaraj temple, Rajarani temple,
Mukteswar temple, Khandagiri and Udaygiri caves later to Nandankananan Botanical
Garden and Zoological park etc. (Patra, 2011). Bhubaneswar, the central point of
Golden Triangle that integrates Puri and Konark, makes an ideal tourist destination
with a synergistic combination of historic architectural legacy with extensive
infrastructure and modern metro style amenities to cater all types of tourists since the
early medieval period, Bhubaneswar has been on the map of every dynasty, ancient
travelers, earning name and fame due to its architectural wonders, religious influence
and captivating cultural heritage. Furthermore, the city of Bhubaneswar is well
connected to different parts of India through mediums of road, rail and air. Presently,
Biju Patnaik International airport has been renovated and extended to connect with
different Asian countries at the primary level. Today, Bhubaneswar is a fastest
developing city of India that portrays huge growth in Information and communication
Technology, Technical Education, Organized Retailing and Real estate. “Progress
through Partnership” is the mantra to accomplish global competiveness and growth
inclusivity. The modern architectural design of Bhubaneswar, a peaceful and
progressive city, strikingly contrasts with multi-coloured tapestry of history and old
soaring monuments of sandstones.

2.4.1 Tourist Attractions in and around of Bhubaneswar
Bhubaneswar forms one of the vertices of the ‘Golden Triangle’ the other two are Puri
and Konark. Golden Triangle comprises of major tourist destinations to which tourist
flocks from different states and countries. Puri is famous as the land of Lord Jagannath
and its golden beach whereas Konark is renowned globally for the Sun Temple and the
magnificent rock cut sculptures and architecture. Bhubaneswar, The Mandir Malini or
Temple city has its own significance for the huge range of temples and shrines having
its unique style of features specific to Kalingan ethnicity i. e. Indo Aryan Nagara
architecture (Chand, 2005). The royal grandeur of this iconography is reflected in the
temples and monuments.
Bhubaneswar also connecting to many other popular tourist spots like Bird Sanctuary of Chilika lake, National Park Nandankanan, and Dolphin Sanctuary at Satapada. Bhubaneswar also linked to the Buddhist circuit of Lalit giri, Udaygiri and Ratna giri known as triratna or ‘Diamond Triangle, which is now the high prioritized area of the state to propel Buddhist Tourism (Figure 2. 2). The flourishing greenery covering a wide variety of flora and fauna, including Chandaka and Nandankanan are two of the eco-tourism attractions of Odisha. The diversified and rich collection of ancient artifacts in state museum and handicraft museum attracts historians, archeologists and researchers from different parts of the globe.

The best season to visit the place is from September to June. September to November is ideal for sightseeing and outings. December to January is wonderful for those who likes frosty climate. February to June is superlative for all tourist activities in Bhubaneswar. And the best time to explore the brackish picturesque lagoon of Chilika for watching birds and dolphins is from November to February.

2.5 Odisha Hospitality

People across Odisha strive to believe in the golden principle of “Atithi Devo Bhava” or ‘Guest is God’, as it epitomizes the hospitality culture and tradition of state’s Tourism.
Due to the growth of tourism sector and rising demand for accommodation facility, in early 1980s, for the first time in India, industrial status awarded to the hotel sector by Odisha Government. Sahu (2013) in his article pointed out that hotel and tourism industry is a high priority industry for foreign investment as well as revenue generation. And along with government effort, participation of private sector, administrative inclination, an extensive research on travel and tourism, implementation of integrated and co-ordinated tourism development programmes and mass involvement, tourism in Odisha can be developed similar to other states. According to Das (2013), hotel sector in Odisha is one of the emerging sectors of the state witnessing extensive growth rate over the last 20 years. Odisha government immensely supported the growth and development of hotels like Trident, Mayfair and Swosti, etc. In 1985 the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) was established which is the largest body made up of tour operators and travel agents, travel trade owners and professionals’ of hotels and tourism educational institutions in Odisha. The members of the association operate in close cooperation with each other with one common motive i. e. promotion of tourism industry of Odisha.

2.5.1 Rising Trend in Hotel Industry in Odisha

Hotel and tourism industry are interrelated to each other. As per economic survey 2014-15, there has been tremendous increase in the number of hotels in Odisha. As reported by Statistical survey, 2014; at present there are 1689 number of hotels including low, medium and high segment category, operating at different places in Odisha. And it is clearly visible from figures that, since last six years there has been escalating growth in Odisha hotel industry. And the growth of hotel industry has significant contribution to the tourism sector. Government of Odisha is also giving high priority to the development and promotion of both tourism and hotel industry. According to economic survey, 2014-15 hotel sector contributes to 13.09 percent share in the real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Odisha by the end of 2014. Since past 20 years, the number of hotels increased drastically with 5.83 percent compound annual growth (Figure 2.3). Many popular brands of hotels evolved remarkably throughout the state. Exclusively in the capital city of Bhubaneswar, many premium segment hotels like The Trident, Swosti Group, Mayfair group developed to serve elite class of customers.
There are also some major upcoming hotel projects in the state of Odisha. One of the many ambitious hotel projects that are to come up namely, The Welcome Heritage, which is a joint venture between ITC Hotels and Maharaja of Jodhpur. And then there is the BMR Group’s, which has one billion rupees plan to set up two boutique hotels in Odisha.

However, the growth trend of star hotels in Odisha is intimidating. From 2012 to 2014, number of star classified hotels decreased from twenty five to ten in 2014. On the other hand the number of rooms and beds have increased at the rate of around 8% and 14% from 2013 to 2014 as presented in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.4 below.

Table 2.1: Rooms and Beds Status of Star Hotels from 2012-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Hotels</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>3078</td>
<td>1258</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2012 Bhubaneswar had nine numbers of star hotels, but by the end of 2013 there are only five numbers star hotels were operating. Recently, Odisha Tourism Department reported and rated Ginger hotel, Bhubaneswar as 3 star in the year 2014. Which has a thematic flair of self-reliant entry and exit with pricing in the moderate range.

### 2.6 Star Hotel Scenario in Odisha

Hotels are one of the significant elements of tourism sector as it provides accommodation to the travellers. Hotel industry has considerable contribution in overall tourism sector through their qualitative service delivery and modern amenities. Thus, ministry of tourism formulated certain standards and norms to classify hotels according to the services and facilities served by the hotels. Classification of hotels can be done on the basis of location, size of properties, star system etc, depending on their location, facilities infrastructure and amenities provided. Hotels can be broadly rated in to various star categories according to quality in service facilities and luxury services provided to the customer. The idea behind hotel rating system is to help out the customer in choosing the right kind of hotel suiting to the budget and the facilities and services that they can expect during the stay. According to Egbert (2010) hotels grading system is usually based upon the ambience, infrastructure, service, overall experience,
staffs, hygiene, air conditioning, restaurant, safety and security, etc. In general star rating is simply a quality indicator with extensive guidelines to evaluate the service quality, amenities, and level of customer satisfaction of hotels. In Indian context, star classifications of hotels are of six types. Hotels classified according to Five Star Deluxe and Five Star usually cater to sophisticated customers including foreign tourists, business travelers, top government officials and political group. Usually 5 Star category hotels are established to provide high degree of customized services to elegant class of guests. Along with the basic amenities these hotels have additional services to pamper and delight the guests. In general, Five star rated hotels belongs to luxury segment offering high quality of services at a very high price rate (Lasune, 2012). The next two types are Four Star and Three Star preferred by midlevel executives and leisure tourists. The last two types; Two Star and One Star belongs to budget category that meant for mediocre domestic tourists found in smaller towns and in and around tourist places.

2.6.1 Basic Amenities of Star Hotels

Never the less multiple restaurants providing gourmet cousins, state-of-the-art ambience, pubs having dynamic range of beverages, 24X7 room services, electronic gadgets in every room, spa massage therapy and gym are few of the exclusivity of 5-star hotel services. 3 Star hotels offers all most every luxurious services for a comfort stay including exotic rooms, aesthetically designed lobbies, multiple restaurants, laundry&valet, gym, spa, convention centres, etc. However, 2 Star hotels are comparatively equipped with fewer amenities. They usually have small or medium sized rooms with limited amenities with a telephone connection, T. V. set, room service and a restaurant.

2.6.2 Status of Star Hotels in Bhubaneswar

A wide range of hotels in Bhubaneswar provide accommodation to people of different classes. Bhubaneswar has different ranges of hotels to serve all kinds of customers; mainly ranging from budget category to luxurious star rated hotels. According to ministry of tourism, there are total of 10 number of star hotels exist in Odisha having 723 rooms and 1446 beds in 2013-14. Bhubaneswar being the capital city and tourist hub of Odisha it has maximum number of star hotels ranging from 3 star to 5 star deluxe category. There are five numbers of star rated hotels operate in Bhubaneswar as on 2013-14. Among them there are three 3 Star Hotels and two 5 Star Deluxe hotels as
shown in Table 2.2. The Trident, Mayfair Lagoon, Hotel Swosti Premium, The Swosti and Hotel Crown are famous in the Odisha market to offer sophisticated facilities for the elegant class of guests.

Table 2.2 : Star Hotels Scenario in Bhubaneswar as on 2013-14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Star Category</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>Beds</th>
<th>Conference Hall/Banquet</th>
<th>Restaurants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Trident</td>
<td>5 Star Dlx.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>May Fair Lagoon</td>
<td>5 Star Dlx.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hotel The Crown</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hotel Swosti Premium Ltd.</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hotel Swosti</td>
<td>3 Star</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


2.6.2.1 The Trident Hotel

It belongs to Oberoi Group pioneer of premium segment hotels in India. It has 62 rooms and 124 beds. They have a reputation for excellence and offer quality and value for money. These hotels have ideal locations with culturally backed state-of-the-art facilities. They have reliable service and caring environment. It becomes the ideal choice for business folks, tourists, guests and leisure travelers. Elegantly rooms are inspired by the traditional architecture of the city, blended with ethnic touch and seamless cultural feelings.

2.6.2.2 May Fair Lagoon

Mayfair chain of hotels is pioneer in introducing star hotel culture, a diamond in the Odisha Hospitality Industry. Mayfair Lagoon is a 5-star Deluxe resort/hotel located in the prime of the city. The hotel is gateway for primarily leisure and business tourists in Bhubaneswar. The hotel is well-equipped, spacious and fully furnished with 96 rooms and 192 beds. They have different food courts, multi-cuisine restaurants and bars, spas, fitness centers, health clubs, lagoon for boating, landscaped gardens and tranquility.
with plenty. They reflect royal lifestyle, luxury, culture, ethnic values and pleasant stay in ambience.

2.6.2.3 Swosti Group

Swosti Group is pioneer in the hotel industry in Eastern India. They are popular a brand and innovative in approach. The hospitality service offer exciting tour packages for life time experience. Swosti Premium Ltd. and Swosti Hotel are the two leading 3-Star hotels located in Bhubaneswar.

Swosti Premium has the largest Convention Hotel of East India with unique hospitality. Apart from 147 luxurious rooms and 294 beds, this hotel is endowed with swimming pool, health club, Scottish bar, banquet halls, video conferencing, ethnic & thematic restaurants, free wi-fi internet and discotheque. They also provide occidental ayurvedic body massage.

Hotel Swosti is a Boutique Hotel from the Swosti Group of Hotels having 54 rooms and 108 beds. It epitomizes comfort and leisure being centrally located in Bhubaneswar. The first ISO 9001-2008 accredited hotel in Odisha. It was awarded with national & international awards for providing, since last twenty years, hospitality services with human touch and catering to tourism sector. They are famous for the authentic quality cuisine.

2.6.2.4 The Crown

The Crown is another 3-star property in Bhubaneswar to cater to the elite class of customers. It has 68 rooms aesthetically designed luxurious rooms with ethnic grandeur. It has exclusive coffee shop, theme based Indian cuisine restaurant culturally oriented-Bollywood, Chinese restaurant-Mainland China, board room, business center, four banquet halls, health club and swimming pool and bar providing exotic range of spirits. Moreover, it boasts of building a niche of its own in the domain of hospitality and tourism in Odisha.

2.7 Conclusion

Odisha, lately has become popular amongst international and domestic tourists because of factors like one-of-a-kind cultural heritage, natural biodiversity, handloom and tribal shopping, nightlife, temples and food & culture. According to the discussion in this
chapter, tourism and hospitality is of greater significance in Odisha. As an important source of income for the Odisha national economy, growth in tourism not only directly contributes to Odisha’s Gross Domestic Product, but also has significant influence on people of Odisha. Furthermore, the raise in percentage of tourist arrival led to an increase in demand for more, and higher-quality of accommodation units in the state. Hotel industry in many ways represents the state’s growth and prosperity. Since, a decade hotel sector has a phenomenal growth and its contribution to the GDP of the state. Amongst service sector, the 'trade, hotels and restaurants' is the leading subsector with 22.40 % share. Nevertheless, the growth in terms of rooms and beds are not keeping pace with the growth trend of tourists inflow to Odisha. The number of star classified hotels also decreasing significantly. Department of Tourism needs to form different policies for the brand endorsement of Odisha through these star hotels. Furthermore, star hotels in Bhubaneswar need to keep revamping and reinventing itself to ensure quality service and customer satisfaction through relationship marketing to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.