Chapter - VIII

Findings and Suggestions
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FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter is designed to list the main findings of the study and furnish suggestions for improvement of tourism industry in Orissa. The findings would be tabulated under three heads, namely, tourism sector in India, tourism sector in Orissa, inter-state appraisal.

8.2 Findings

8.2.1 Tourism Sector In India

Examining the tourism profile at the national level we have discovered the following salient facts:

a) The Government of India took long years to realise the socio-economic and cultural importance of tourism and even after it did, its actions have not been commensurate with the potential and needs of the sector.

b) Budgetary allocations have been meagre, never exceeding 0.3 percent of the total outlay constrained to China’s 3.8 percent.

c) International tourist traffic in India between 1951 and 1980 had grown at a faster pace than global average. During the eighties the growth rate fell to 3.2 percent against the global 4.8 percent, though in the nineties it climbed again to 4.41 percent against a global 4.2 percent.

d) Domestic tourist movement increased by 775 percent between 1980 and 2000.

e) Though the travel-receipts have shown a phenomenal increase in volume there has, in fact, being a slump in the share of world receipts, declining from 1.09 percent in 1980 to 0.66 percent in 1999.

f) The structure of tourism organisation in India has remained unchanged since its inception in 1958 and the recommendations of various bodies including the UNDP for restructuring the organisation into a dynamic one have not been implemented by the government.

g) The industry also suffers from improper planning and inefficient monitoring, lack of professionalism and administrative coordination, inadequate marketing and
image building efforts, poor public-private interaction, lack of infrastructural facilities and above all government apathy.

8.2.2 Tourism Sector in Orissa

Our study of the tourism industry in Orissa shows that

a) The government has never prioritised tourism as an economic activity and resource constraints continue to plague the sector.

b) Most of the planning has been for the development of cultural tourism, with other forms of tourism left unattended.

c) The focus of development has primarily been the golden triangle of Puri-Konark-Bhubaneswar and a few pockets in the eastern coastal region.

d) A huge gap yawns between planning and execution.

e) Creation of tourist accommodation has been given the top most priority, to the relative neglect of other aspects.

f) The international tourist arrival to Orissa which registered an amazing growth between 1960 and 1980 attaining a spectacular rise through 1974-1980, has remained more or less stagnant there after.

g) Orissa possesses immense tourism potential, with as many as 294 tourist centres identified by the end of 1999.

h) The western region is extremely rich in tourism resources and particularly so in eco-tourism, tribal tourism and adventure tourism.

i) The ‘KBK’ region has a huge tourism potential.

j) The picture of tourist arrivals in the western region, and KBK in particular has been dismal.

k) On the supply side, the western region including the KBK and the central region are too very deficient as compared to the eastern region with regard to accommodation, communication, tour-agency networks and so on.

l) In matters relating to creation of tourist facilities, tourism publicity, plan allocations-both state and central-for development of tourism resources, the western region, the KBK and the central regions have suffered considerable neglect because of which the industry has remained far below its available potential.
8.2.3 Inter-State Appraisal

The following are the main findings of the comparative study on tourism in Orissa, Rajasthan and Goa, against the national backdrop, as they relate to supply, demand, planning and execution:

a) Economically Orissa is much worse off than the country in general and the states of Rajasthan and Goa in particular.

b) Orissa possesses greater and more diversified tourism potential than the states of Rajasthan and Goa.

c) International tourist arrivals in Orissa grew at a very negligible rate between 1980-2000, the period during which the national growth rate was high. Between 1985-2000 the growth-rates of Rajasthan and Goa attained an appreciable enhancement while Orissa’s plummeted to a negative one.

d) The growth of domestic tourism in Orissa likewise is much below the national level and no better than in Rajasthan and Goa. Lack of demand has kept tourism resources in Orissa largely unexploited.

e) Non-availability of standard accommodation at most destinations in the state is one of the main reasons for tourist indifference.

f) In the absence of an international airport, inadequate air connectivity causes a major constraint for tourism in Orissa. The distance from the major ports of disembarkation like Delhi and Mumbai constitutes an associated handicap.

g) Roads leading to most tourist destinations in the state are of a poor quality. Inadequacy of comfortable tourist vehicles compounds the problem.

h) Orissa is well connected by rail with major cities and tourist generating centres outside the state. But more than 60 percent of the identified tourist destinations in the state are inaccessible by rail.

i) Shopping as a tourism product has not developed in Orissa. Rajasthan and Goa are somewhat better equipped in this regard.

j) Unlike Rajasthan and Goa, Orissa is yet to offer exciting and comfortable tour packages.

k) Rajasthan and Goa have better organised tourist-entertainment facilities than Orissa.

l) Food in Orissa is relatively very cheap, particularly for the low budget domestic tourists. This constitutes a major consideration.
m) Very few travel agents and tour operators of national and international repute dealing with inbound tourism operate in Orissa. This is a severe limitation.

n) A critical appraisal the comparative situations elaborated in the study has helped precisely identify areas of deficiency and promise:

i. Though the organisational structures in Rajasthan and Orissa are more or less the same, the productivity of labour of the DOT in Rajasthan is much better than that in Orissa.

ii. The budgetary allocations to tourism sector as a share of total plan outlay are less in Orissa than at the national level and in Rajasthan. Also in terms of volume the allocations are smaller in Orissa than Rajasthan, Goa, Kerala or even the neighbouring state of Andhra Pradesh. This is true even with regard to outlay per square kilometer per annum.

iii. Excessive prioritisation of tourist accommodation in Orissa has resulted in paltry outlays on facilities for entertainment, recreation and transportation. The promotion and publicity campaign has also suffered owing to scarcity of funds.

iv. Management of ‘information and publicity’ of tourism products has been far more effective in Rajasthan, Kerala and elsewhere than in Orissa.

v. Incentives offered to the private sector to develop the tourism industry in Orissa are also lucrative as in other states but they are not properly projected. So the private sector is not coming forward to invest in Orissa, as it has done in Rajasthan, Goa and other states. We find that public-private synergy for development of this sector is almost non-existent in Orissa.

vi. The tourism policy of Orissa is relatively more generic and less pragmatic, forward-looking and innovative than that of Rajasthan.

vii. A general lack of coordination is in evidence among various departments of the government of Orissa, as also between the state and the centre, in regard to development of tourism in the state. There is also an absence of rapport with international bodies like WTO, WTTC and foreign countries. Rajasthan has a much better track record in these respects.

viii. The managers of the tourism industry in Orissa have not been as knowledgeable and professional as in Rajasthan and Goa. The managers in Rajasthan in particular have shown a greater commitment and superior professionalism.
ix. Oriyas are not particularly distinguished for their entrepreneurship. This has had an adverse effect on the growth of tourism industry in Orissa. The government of Orissa can be faulted on this front for not having done enough to develop a culture of entrepreneurship. In particular, the government should have taken steps to generate a tourism culture in the state.

8.3 Suggestions

Suggestions, in broad terms, are already implicit in the findings. And, yet, by way of specifically listing them in relation to three major referents of tourism organisation and planning, tourism demand, and tourism supply, it may be mentioned that:

Tourism organisation in Orissa needs complete overhauling. A body called 'Tourism Development Authority' (TDA) needs to be set up to replace the Department of Tourism and the OTDC which, functioning with a fair deal of autonomy, should be made responsible for the development of tourism industry in the state. The body should be headed by a full time 'Chief-Executive' who should be a person possessing the necessary expertise and skill for tourism-development and a person of minimum rank of an Additional Secretary. He should report directly to the Chief Secretary and the Minister in-charge. Orientation courses and training programmes should be organised to develop professionalism among the employees manning the TDA.

Unscientifically identified tourist centres (294) of the DOT which have had absolutely no takers in the past years should be abolished from the list. The state should be divided into a few tourism regions each with a cluster of resources. Each such region should have a regional office of the TDA to take care of and augment tourism in their area. Such offices should be manned by a tourist officer, a statistician cum researcher and few ministerial staff. The job of the statistician cum researcher, besides collection of data, would be continually to ascertain tourist's responses and recommend improvements in tourism management. The present unproductive tourist offices and tourist counters should be closed down. Master plans may be prepared in consultation with the tourist officer and statistician cum researcher for future growth of tourism in each region.
A high-power committee called 'Tourism Advisory Board' with the Chief-Minister as Chairman, Tourism Minister as Vice-Chairman, the Tourism Secretary as Convener, the Chief-Executive, TDA as Coordinator and some representatives of travel industry as Members should be constituted to formulate broad policies, set out objectives and provides guidance to the TDA for attaining targets in a time bound manner. The Chief-Executive of TDA should be made accountable for lapses, if any. This committee should also monitor a forum to ensure the crucial public-private synergy.

Moreover, a ‘Coordination Committee’ consisting of the Tourism Secretary (Convener), the Director, TDA(Coordinator) and the Secretaries of various government departments like finance, revenue, forest and environment, transport, industry, home etc. as members, should be set up to ensure the much-needed coordination in matters relating to tourism.

The government should prioritise tourism development and make adequate budgetary allocations to the sector. Attractive incentives should be offered to encourage private investment. An investor-friendly climate should be created by sending out a definite message that the investor's interest will be protected by the government. Similarly the government should strengthen the exiting laws and instruct the police to be friendlier towards the tourists and provide them security from vandals, cheats and frauds.

A new tourism policy which is pragmatic, forward looking, innovative and practical should be enunciated.

For purposes of raising the demand of tourism products in the state, the tourism organisation has to enlarge its focus beyond cultural tourism and concentrate on beach tourism, eco and wildlife tourism, adventure tourism and tribal tourism, resources of which are in abundance.

They have to shift the focus of tourism development from the eastern belt to the richly endowed western, KBK and central regions, till the latter come on a par with the former.

Greater attention should be given to building the image of the state as an attractive tourist destination by allocating a major portion of the budget for promotion and publicity and tourist entertainment, and engaging in a high profile, imaginative
marketing venture. Special promotional measures should be taken to attract domestic tourists from states other than those which have been traditionally the major visitors. An effort should be made to offer something unique, as, for example, a tourist village in the interior tribal heartland providing the tourist an opportunity not only to enjoy the scenic surroundings and eco-reserves but also to see and feel the tribal lifestyles, and their culture and tradition. A bit of adventure tourism like mountain trekking or wildlife safari could make it a fascinating package.

Fairs and festivals should be made available as tourism products where a tourist might mix with the people, participate and get wholesome entertainment.

Tourism products should be showcased by organising FAM trips of renowned travel writers, reporters, television crews, travel agents and tour operators. But, of course, it must be ensured that their stay is comfortable and enjoyable so that they convey a favourable impression to others. Similarly the state should have a programme of hosting important dignitaries and events to catch the eye of the nation and the world.

MOUs should be signed with neighbouring states for development of tourism on a reciprocal basis.

The supply of tourism services in the state needs to be improved a great deal.

Bhubaneswar should have an international airport ensuring operation of more direct flights and bigger aircrafts to the state. A few of the 17 air-strips particularly those in the western and the central regions should be improved to allow landing of smaller air-crafts.

All tourist destinations should be connected with good motorable roads. The state government should prevail upon the centre to lay new rail lines connecting different tourism regions.

Apart from offering attractive incentives to private investors, more sops should be given to accommodators, carriers, tour-operators, travel agents, transport operators of national and international repute to start operation in Orissa. Special incentives should be announced for western, KBK and central regions.

There is scope of development of a few heritage hotels in Orissa. The palaces of some erstwhile princely states like the ones in Bolangir, Deogarh, Parikuda etc.
should be converted into heritage hotels to provide tourists the experience of a royal stay.

Lastly, the tourism organisation should make sincere efforts to create awareness on tourism among the masses. To this end the students of schools and colleges, apart from non-government socio-cultural organisations may in some ways be involved.

Commitment and professionalism are bound to yield results.