

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON RELIGIOUS TOURISM DESTINATIONS OF ODISHA, INDIA

Dr. Soumendra Nath Biswas¹ & Dr. Puspanjali Mohapatra²

¹Associate Professor, Department of Hospitality & Tourism Management, Assam University (A Central University),
Assam, India

²PhD Scholar, Utkal University of Culture, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Received: 31 Aug 2022

Accepted: 02 Sep 2022

Published: 05 Sep 2022

ABSTRACT

Efforts have been made in this study to examine the impact of Covid-19 on Religious Tourism destinations of Odisha, the state of eastern India. Numbers of religious Tourism destinations are available in Odisha. The Role of Covid-19 and its economic, social and cultural impact on those destinations are the central idea of this article. This article begins with the understanding of intensity of Covid-19 and its effect on Tourism business in various religious places of Odisha, especially in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Konark that reveals socio-economic development of the local community in the site. Key issue of this paper is to find out the effect of Covid -19 presently and how to overcome it in post Covid times. This paper also describes the significance of service quality for the promotions of Tourism in the study area in post Covid phases that have direct impact to Local Economy.

The people of Odisha are religious in nature. Bhubaneswar is well known as a 'Temple City' of India. Puri is among the popular Chardham of India. Konark is international Heritage site. Every year millions of people used to visit to these destinations and experience the Kalingan style of Temple Architecture. The economies of these destinations are mainly depending upon Tourism. Tourists' inflow here influences the socio-economic life of the local people. In Odisha, due to the Covid-19, the lockdown has started from 22nd March, 2020. In many parts of Odisha complete shutdown was followed and Tourists activity was completely stopped. Because of that the Tourism business was suffered a lot and not only the economic problems, many social problems were also occurred. Appropriate proactive roles must be taken by the DMOs to shape and guide tourism development here in post Covid-19 times.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, Religious-Tourism, Coastal Tourism, Tourism Impact

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Tourism has been recognized as a major growth engine for socio-economic and cultural development in India especially in Odisha. Here, pilgrimages have become the major purpose for motivating people to travel. Religious Tourism has immense importance in many parts of the country including Odisha. Tourists from different part of the country are travelling to visit sacred place, taking part in religious festivals and events.

Religious tourism can be considered as special interest tourism "whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons" (Rinschede, 1992). Many experts in the field of Tourism studies believe that pilgrimage is probably the first form of tourism (Cohen, 1992). Religious tourism is mostly considered as the oldest form of people's

travel (Blackwell, 2007). Olsen and Timothy (2006) believed that religion has long been an integral motive for undertaking journeys and is usually considered the oldest form of non-economic travel.

Thirthayatra or visiting religious places is an important component in many regions. Every year millions of people travel to major pilgrimage destinations of Odisha which has good numbers of ancient temples. All religious places were closed by March 22, 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. At that time, the COVID-19 transmission was still in stage 2, and no clusters were reported in Odisha.

In India, especially in Odisha, Religious tourism is admired by most of the people. Huge gathering of tourists including community gathering may be noticed here during the celebrations of festivals. Many ancient and modern temples, mosques and churches have taken proactive measures and stopped allowing people to perform rituals.

Visiting Archaeological Monuments is one of the most important motivations for the tourists in Odisha. For special interest tourists, who are interested on ancient architecture and heritage, Odisha is the ideal tourism destination that offers its rich ancient archaeological and monumental wealth in an intact form. Diversities of monuments are found here. Odisha has archaeological sites of almost every religion like: ancient Hindu temples; early Jaina caves and temples; Buddhist monasteries; *chaityas* and *stupas*; mosques; churches; all have tremendous potential to attract both domestic and inbound tourists in the state.

The World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 as a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. The first confirmed case in India was reported on 30th January, 2020 in Kerala who had a travel history from Wuhan, China. Since then, the number of cases within the country is increasing rapidly. Government has taken many preventive measures to control its vulnerability. All activities related with public gathering like, weddings, social gatherings for rituals etc. were stopped. State Government has stopped allowing people inside the religious places. Many other preventive measures were taken including closure of educational institutes, shopping malls, gyms, movie theatres, hotels and tourism destinations etc.

Many organizations in Odisha have started adopting work from home approaches, many organizations have asked employees to take unpaid leave. During the lockdown period, public transportation has been shut down. During the shutdown period, everything was closed and public movement was completely restricted.

Objectives

The core objective of this study is to understand the impact of Covid-19 on Religious Tourism destinations of Odisha. However, the objectives in specific are:

- To understand the potential of religious tourism in selected area.
- To study the problems and threats of Covid-19 on religious tourism destinations of Odisha.
- To analyze the impact of Covid-19 on the study area.
- To provide suggestions of the post Covid mitigation strategy in religious tourism destinations of Odisha.

Black Swan Crisis in Odisha

Black swan Crisis symbolizes the unexpected crisis of large magnitude which has major impact. It is an unpredictable catastrophe that is beyond of expectation and has potentially rigorous consequences. This is characterized by extreme

rarity, severe impact, and the widespread disaster on mankind. Taleb (2007) defines mathematically the black swan problem as "stemming from the use of degenerate metaprobability". It is an extremely rare crisis with severe consequences and cannot be predicted before. It has huge negative impact on human being and cause catastrophic damage to the economy of the country that is very difficult to prevent.

Taleb (2007) had given three attributes of Black Swan event:

- Black Swan event is unpredictable
- Its result is severe and widespread consequences.
- Hindsight bias may take place that is after the occurrence of this crisis, people will rationalize that it may have been predictable.

Covid-19 in Odisha may have been considered as Black Swan Crisis because it is an unpredictable catastrophe and has severe impact on the socio-economical life of the people. It is so widespread consequences that everyone in the state irrespective of their economy and status has affected severely and will take several years to recover it.

COVID-19 in Odisha

The Odisha government on 13th March, 2020 declared Covid-19 as a 'state disaster' under the provisions of the Disaster Management Act-2005 and approved Covid-19 Odisha Regulations, 2020. Through this guideline, State Government issued advisories to maintain the followings:

- Duties and Responsibilities of the Hospitals.
- Duties & Responsibilities of citizens, institutions & media.
- Duties and Responsibilities of persons coming from abroad.
- Duties and Responsibilities of persons with no history of travel but having symptoms of Covid-19.
- Duties and Responsibilities of Panchayats, Municipal Bodies and Resident Welfare Associations, Hotels/ Lodges.
- Distribution of food grains & S.K. Oil to beneficiaries under NFSA & State Food Security Scheme for the allotment month of April-May-June 2020 (Circular issued on 17th March 2020).
- Renewal of licenses of 2590 private fair Price Shops (Circular issued on 20th March 2020).
- Media related guidelines (Circular issued on 21st March 2020).
- Create awareness to prevent abandoning of pets or inflicting cruelty in animals due to fear of spread of Covid-19 (Circular issued on 18th March 2020).
- Create awareness to prevent abandoning of pets or inflicting cruelty in animals due to fear of spread of Covid-19 (Circular issued on 18th March 2020).
- Guidelines to Factory Management (Circular issued on 17th March, 2020).
- Precautionary measures in Prison (Circular issued on 17th March, 2020).

The first corona virus case in Odisha was reported on 16 March, 2020 with a man who had returned from Italy. He had reached Bhubaneswar from Delhi by train to avoid airport screening. The Odisha Government had started taken measures to control its spread by closing School, colleges etc.

The Prime Minister of India, in his address to the nation on 19th March (Thursday) advised the people of the country to follow a Janta Curfew on March 22 (Sunday) and it was the starting point of following Lockdown in India including Odisha. The Janta Curfew was followed for 14 hours (7 am to 9 pm) on March 22, 2020. The Prime Minister advised people to stay inside the home and avoid public places during this period. He also clarified that, essential services like medical services police, media etc will not be affected during the curfew. That was the day Odisha started its lockdown and preventive measures have taken. Despite the proactive measures, the novel corona virus cases are increasing day by day even six months later.

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN ODISHA

Odisha, the eastern state of India is located between 17°49' N and 22°34' N latitudes and 81°27' E and 87°29'E longitudes. Odisha shares border with other states like West Bengal in North, Jharkhand in North West, Andhra Pradesh in South, Chhattisgarh in south west, and the Bay of Bengal in the East. It is one of the richest states in terms of diversified tourism resources. It has an ethnic history and culture which can be seen in many Tourism destinations of the state.

Odisha is a land of temples, in fact, the state capital, Bhubaneswar is popularly known as the 'Temple City'. With the resources of plenty of ancient temples, its sublime architecture makes the state a unique destination for spiritual improvement. Therefore, the motivation to visit Odisha transcends to the religious tourism.

Hinduism in Odisha

From the ancient time, the people of Odisha practised Hinduism and the state has large numbers of ancient temple in the country. The people of Odisha are religious in nature. The state is a haven for pilgrims. Bhubaneswar is well known as a 'Temple City' of India. Puri is among the popular *Chardham* of India. Konark is an international Heritage site. Every year millions of people used to visit to these destinations and experience the Kalingan style of Temple Architecture.

Buddhism in Odisha

Odisha is widely known for its ancient Buddhist sites where tourists are coming from Central, East, South and South-East Asia. Buddhism flourished in Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Udayagiri which is popularly known as the diamond triangle of Odisha. Dhauli is famous for Ashokan Rock Art which can prove that Buddhism was flourished in ancient India.

Jainism in Odisha

Jainasim and its Philosophy was a major faith of the Odia people during the early times. It is believed that *Mahavira* had visited the *Udayagiri* hills in 6th century B.C. During the 1st century B.C., it almost attained the status of the state religion during the time of King *Kharavela*, the third ruler of the *Chedi* Dynasty. *Kharavela* was a staunch Jain and a great patron of the culture. During the 13th year of his reign, he had excavated 117 caves in the *Udayagiri-Khandagiri* hills. The Rock edict of *Kharavela* in Pali Language can be seen in Elephant Cave (*Hati-gumpha*) and Queen's cave (*Rani-gumpha*). This is a wonderful record of Rock edict in Odisha.

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF ODISHA

Odisha has diversified tourism destinations but the temple architecture has become the prime motivation for Tourists visiting here. Odisha offers varied ancient temple monuments which are world famous for its architectural uniqueness and is important resources for tourists interested in experiencing heritage sites.

The uniqueness of Temple Architecture of Odisha is the Kalingan style of temple architecture that is found nowhere in India. Here, temple constructed during a long period of time especially from 6th Century to 15th Century A.D and many of those still exist. Kalingan style of Temple Architecture is amazing for its plan and elevation. In Odisha, through the evolution of temple architecture, the *Sikhara* (Curvilinear spire) types eventually become the dominant form. The temple has star-shaped layout or circular plan and the interior ground is square in shape. This style is also characterised by vertical offset projections called *rathas* or *pagas*. According to the number of the *pagas*, the temples are classified into *triratha*, *pancharatha*, *saptaratha* and *navaratha*.

The uniqueness of the Kalingan style of Temple Architecture is its stone work and abundance of sculptures. Beautiful stone carvings of human figures, erotic images, icons, animal figures, decorative designs and architectural motifs are found here.

In Odisha three types of temples are found. These are: *Rekha*, *Pidha*, and *Khakhara*. The *Rekha* is symbolized by sanctum with its curvilinear spire. *Rekha Deula* (shrine) is a tall building with a *sikhara* like the Lingraj Temple of Bhubaneswar. The *Pidha* is symbolized by the porch having pyramidal roof made of *Pidhas*. Example is the assembly hall of the Konark Sun Temple. The *khakhara* style is symbolized by a semi-cylindrical roof. *Khakhara* Temples are usually meant for *shakti* cult, like the Baital Temple in Bhubaneswar (dedicated to Goddess *Chamunda*); Gouri temple in Bhubaneswar and Brahmi temple of *Chaurasi* in Puri.

In the *Kalingan* style of Temple Architecture, each Part of the temple, from bottom to top, has a special name related with the human body. Here, both sanctum and the porch are divided into three parts. These are: '*bada*', '*gandi*' and '*mastaka*'. In initial period of temple architecture, the '*bada*' or the vertical wall portion of the temple was divided into *pabhaga*, *jangha* and *baranda*. In later period of temple architecture, '*bada*' was divided into: '*pabhaga*', '*talajangha*', '*bandhana*', '*uparajangha*' and '*baranda*'. The *mastaka* consists of the *beki* or recessed cylindrical portion and *amalaka* above *gandi*.

In Odisha, the Kalingan style of temple architecture was mainly bloomed during the middle of 6th century A.D. to 8th century A.D especially during the Sailodbhava period. The temple Architecture gained tremendous impetus under the dynasties of Bhaumakaras (736-950A.D.) and the *Somavamsis* (950-1112A.D). It was reached to the pick point during the *Ganga* period (1112-1435A.D.), after that unfortunately declined during the *Suryavamsi-Gajapati* dynasty (1435-1542A.D.).

ANCIENT TEMPLES OF ODISHA

In Odisha, till today, many ancient temples exist in many religious places like: Bhubaneswar, Jajpur, puri, Konark, Chaudwar, Khiching (Mayurbhanj district), Ranipur-Jharia (Bolangir district) etc. But till today Bhubaneswar has large number of ancient temples and becomes a distinctive place for the study of *Kalingan* style of temple architecture. Therefore 'Bhubaneswar' has been crowned as a 'Temple city'.

‘Lakshmanesvara’, ‘Bharatesvara’ and ‘Satrugnesvara’ Temple

These are the earliest group of ruined temples till existing in Bhubaneswar dedicated to lord Siva. Those temples were constructed by the Sailodbhava ruler during 6th century A.D.

Parasuramesvara Temple

In Bhubaneswar, the *Parasuramesvara* temple characterizes the standard type of early group of Odishan temple, built in the 7th century A.D. It is small but prolifically decorated.

Vaital Temple

The uniqueness of ‘*Vaital*’ temple is a *khakhara* style of oblong temple architecture dedicated to goddess *Chandi* (*Chamunda*). It is situated in Bhubaneswar and can be assigned to the 8th century A.D. It can be considered as the best preserved among the earliest specimens of the *Khakara* style.

Sisiresvara Temple

The *Sisiresvara* temple in Bhubaneswar is situated in the north side of the *Vaital* temple. It is a significant ancient temple in the evolution of temple architecture in Odisha.

Mukteswara Temple

The *Muktesvara* temple of Bhubaneswar is a very attractive since its elegant carvings and decorative elements. It was built in a transition point between the early and later phases of the *Kalingan* style of temple architecture in c.950 A.D. The uniqueness of this temple is its prolifically decorated *torana*.

Kedar Gouri Temple

This is situated near the Mukteswar temple in Bhubaneswar and dedicated to Shiva and Goddess *Gouri*. In the religious text book, *Kapila Samhita*, the name of this temple is mentioned. The temple was built by the king *Lalatendu Keshari*.

Rajarani Temple

In Bhubaneswar, the *Rajarani* Temple was built in the 11th century. It is believed that *Indraratha*, a *Somavamsi* king had built this temple and was initially known as *Indralingeswara* or *Indresvara* Siva. The typical reddish sandstone (known as *Rajarani*) was used for the construction of this Temple after which it is named as *Rajarani*.

Brahmesvara Temple

The *Brahmesvara* temple dedicated to Shiva is located in Bhubaneswar and was constructed by *Somavamsi* king during first half of the 11th Century A.D.

Meghesvara Temple

The *Meghesvara* temple in Bhubaneswar is a significant example of *Ganga* temple architecture. According to an inscription this temple was built by *Swapneswardeva*, during the time of King *Anangabhimadeva* (1190-98 A.D).

Bhaskaresvara Temple

This magnificent temple complex is dedicated to lord Siva and was built in the 12th century A.D. This Siva temple is facing towards west. Bhaskaresvara Temple is a living temple and enshrines a 2.74metre tall Shiva *linga*.

Lingaraja Temple

It is the biggest temple of Bhubaneswar and dominating the entire city. The height of this temple is about one hundred and eighty feet. It is the ideal form of *Kalingan* style of temple architecture and proud of the architectural tradition of Odisha. It is believed that this Siva temple was built by the *Somavamshi* king *Jajati Kesari-II*, in 11th century A.D. The main temple includes the *deul*, the *jagamohana*, the *natamandira* and the *bhogamandapa*. This temple compound consists of numbers of shrines constructed in different period.

Anata-Vasudeva Temple

This temple is devoted to lord Krishna and is only *Vaisnavite* Monument built in Bhubaneswar. According to an inscription, this temple was built in 1278 A.D. for praying lord *Baladeva* (Ananta), *Subhadra* and *Krishna* (Vasudeva). According to the *Kalingan* style of temple architecture, this temple consists of four structures: *vimana*, *jagamohana*, *natamandapa*, and *bhogamandapa*.

Sun Temple, Konark

The world heritage site, Konark is situated in a triangular point of the three renowned religious centre of Odisha is popularly known as the Golden triangle of Odisha. The Sun temple, konark is an architectural marvel heritage and showcases the beautiful epic in stone. It is also known as *Padma kshetra* or *Arkakshetra* and has been included in the list of World Heritage Monuments in 1984 by UNESCO. The presiding deity, Sun God was enshrined in the *Vimana* or the main temple which has been fallen off, but what remains at present is more than enough to attract the tourists from the world. According to the *madalapanji* (record written on the palm leaf of *Puri Jagannatha* temple), during c,1238-1264 AD the king *Narasimha Dev* had completed the construction of the Sun Temple at *Konark*. The temple was built in the structure of a huge chariot of the Sun God fitted with 24 wheels, and 7 horses in front of the temple. The walls of the temple contain superb carvings of divine, semi divine, human and animal figures, and erotic arts.

Lord Jagannath Temple

The sacred place, '*Srimandir*' is dedicated to Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe and situated in the heart of the town of Puri in Odisha. According to the *Dasgoba* Copper plate inscription, the temple was built by the Ganga dynasty King *Anant Barma Chodaganga Deva*, during circa second half of the 12th century A.D. and was completed by his grandson *Ananga Bhima Deva*.

This is one of the tallest (65.2 meters height) and most magnificent monuments in the country. The '*Srichakra*' (eight spoked wheel) of Vishnu and flag at the top of the temple tower indicate the presence of Lord within the sanctum. Puri witnesses the largest gathering of millions of devotees during the annual *Rathyatra* (car festival).

Some Other Ancient Temple of Odisha

- Trikuta Dham Temple
- Harishankar Temple
- Nrusinghanath Temple
- Pataleswar Temple
- Samaleswari Temple
- Ladubaba Temple
- Bhagabati Temple
- Kantilo Neelamadhyava
- Kakatpur Mangala Temple
- Baladevajew Temple
- Kapilas Temple
- Cuttack Chandi
- Dhabaleswar
- Panchalingeswar
- Taratarini Temple

TOURIST VISITS IN ODISHA

Table 1: Domestic and Foreign Tourists

Year	Domestic	% Change	Foreign	%Change	Total	% Change
2009	68,91,510	8.38	45,684	3.9	69,37,194	8.35
2010	75,91,615	10.16	50,432	10.39	76,42,047	10.16
2011	82,71,257	8.95	60,722	20.4	83,31,979	9.03
2012	90,53,086	9.45	64,719	6.58	91,17,805	9.43
2013	98,00,135	8.25	66,675	3.02	98,66,810	8.21
2014	1,07,90,622	10.1	71,426	7.13	1,08,62,048	10.08
2015	1,17,86,117	9.2	66,971	(-) 6.24	1,18,53,088	9.12
2016	1,28,42,899	8.97	76,361	14.02	1,29,19,260	9.00
2017	1,40,11,229	9.10	1,00,014	30.98	1,41,11,243	9.23
2018	1,52,08,540	8.55	1,10,818	10.80	1,53,19,358	8.56

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha

Above table depicts that during last ten years there were consistent growth in Tourists arrival in Odisha. In case of domestic tourism, every year there were double digit or near to double digit growth rate. In case of inbound tourism, there were continuous growth rate except in the year of 2015. The scenario of total tourist arrival in Odisha was very promising but that steady growth rate we will not see in the year of 2020. During this year the growth rate will be negative because of continuous lockdown and shutdown in the state.

DOMESTIC TOURIST VISITS IN ODISHA

Table 2: Local Tourists and Tourists from Other States

Year	Tourists of Odisha	Tourists of other States/UTs in India	Total
2009	41,39,456	27,52,054	68,91,510
2010	45,62,742	30,28,873	75,91,615
2011	46,57,402	36,13,855	82,71,257
2012	54,37,254	36,15,832	90,53,086
2013	58,81,714	39,18,421	98,00,135
2014	64,74,077	43,16,545	1,07,90,622
2015	70,71,367	47,14,750	1,17,86,117
2016	77,05,425	51,37,474	1,28,42,899
2017	84,06,401	56,04,828	1,40,11,229
2018	91,24,818	60,83,722	1,52,08,540

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha.

The above table illustrates that during the last ten years there were positive growth rate in case of local tourist's arrival and arrival of domestic tourists from other states. Destinations in Odisha have potentials to attract domestic tourists and year by year numbers are increasing.

Table 3: Tourist Visits in Odisha during 2018 (Month Wise)

Month	Number of Tourists			Proportion to Total (in %)	
	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign
January	17,10,393	10,368	17,20,761	11.25	9.35
February	11,04,373	8,869	11,13,242	7.26	8.00
March	10,59,260	7,964	10,67,224	6.97	7.19
April	10,14,806	5,683	10,20,489	6.67	5.13
May	11,63,243	5,456	11,68,699	7.65	4.92
June	10,44,242	5,100	10,49,342	6.87	4.60
July	10,03,814	9,874	10,13,688	6.60	8.91
August	9,43,126	8,446	9,51,572	6.20	7.62
September	9,25,019	6,955	9,31,974	6.08	6.28
October	14,07,482	9,181	14,16,663	9.25	8.28
November	16,14,034	14,836	16,28,870	10.61	13.39
December	22,18,748	18,086	22,36,834	14.59	16.32
Total	1,52,08,540	1,10,818	1,53,19,358	100	100

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha

The above table signifies that in case of foreign tourist's arrival, the pick season is October to March. Maximum numbers of inbound tourists are coming in the month of November, December and January. In other months also there were continuous flows of inbound tourists in the destinations of Odisha. In case of domestic tourism, the pick season is October to February but in other months the market share is also promising.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Since, Odisha had no experience earlier how to tackle with Pandemic scenario like Covid-19, it has disastrous effect on every sector including religious Tourism. Several weeks there were complete shut down and lock down. Every activity in this field was closed. All temples were closed for people gathering. Devotees were not allowed to enter inside the temple. All segments of Tourism like: inbound, outbound and domestic Tourism were affected. Transport system was totally closed for the tourists. Hotel bookings were cancelled. Tour packages already sold were also cancelled. This crisis is

creating huge negative impact on the economy. Economy of the country and the state is moving towards recession. Every professionals engaged in the religious tourism sector is facing challenge how to tackle with this economic crunch.

SUGGESTIONS TO OVERCOME THE IMPACT

Covid -19 had started in Odisha in the second half of March, 2020, even after six month the intensity is increasing day by day. It has been spread in almost every place in the state. Tourism industry is the most affected industry in the state and almost all the destinations especially the religious tourism destinations have suffered a lot. The adverse impact can be reduced by taking following measures:

- Tourism industry should take some precautionary measures to overcome from this adverse effect like cost control, yield management, human resource management, imparting skill development etc.
- The Government also should offer financial help and some fiscal benefits to the Tourism industry may be given.
- Tourism industry can take certain precautionary measures regarding pricing strategies and target marketing to have profitability and maintain cash flow in the near future. They can reduce distribution channel members and rearrange promotional tools.
- Employees skill, knowledge can be increased during this pandemic situation by conducting online training and development programme. So that employees will become techno savvy in this contemporary digital era.
- Initially in post Covid time, there will be certain travel restrictions and mass gathering will be avoided. People will not prefer mass tourism destinations at first.
- Especially in the city area, infection of Covid 19 is increasing rapidly after even six months of starting this pandemic and becoming difficult to control by the stakeholders. The tourism industry in the religious tourism destinations of Odisha must return to a 'new normal' stage slowly like baby steps.
- Utmost care must be taken on hygiene and sanitation in each and every places of the destination.
- Safety and security of the tourists must be maintained on priority basis.
- The code of conduct for 'Atithi deba bhaba' and 'Safe and Honourable Tourism' must be implemented in the destination.
- Skill development training must be given to the service providers especially to the tourist's guides, hospitality service personnel, local transporters, tourist police etc.

POST COVID SCENARIO IN RELIGIOUS TOURISM DESTINATIONS

The world will change in post Covid era and the demand of the Tourists will never be the same again. Tourists 'need' will change and explore destinations with more cautiously. Definitely people will step out from their home to see the new world especially they will visit in the pilgrimage place. Religious tourism has its own uniqueness. People will be motivated to visit pilgrimage place even without promotion. Perhaps this is the only form of Tourism where self motivation or inner urge is always there to visit pilgrimage place as a part of their religious belief. Whenever people will get opportunity to visit religious place, they will step out to satisfy their body, soul and mind. Also tourists will prefer to visit destinations

which are safe and hospitable. Initially local Tourists will visit more, inbound tourists will come less and slowly the numbers will increase.

Many services are turning contactless, while there are many more that cannot be contactless in the religious tourism destinations. Service providers in the sector may need to be acquiring additional skills or new skill to take safety precautions. The 'safety protocols' should not make the products uncomfortably expensive. The religious tourism sector should study the market trends, understand the need of the tourists accordingly redesigns the products and the finances also need to be managed. Initially during the post Covid phase there will be travel restrictions and tourists will be much more cautious about infections. Hygiene and sanitation to be maintain in priority basis.

CONCLUSION

Along with the other form of Tourism, the religious tourism also has affected tremendously in Odisha. Religious tourism is such a form of tourism where even promotion is not required. Self motivation is enough to visit in the pilgrimage place.

Odisha has rich heritage of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism which can attract tourists across the world. Rich heritage of temple architecture is the major attractions in golden triangle of Odisha. Bhubaneswar is well known as a temple city. Konark is internationally popular for the world heritage site with full of erotic arts. Puri is considered as among the four dhams of India and the place of Lord Jagannath. Architecture of ancient Jagannath temple attracts huge numbers of tourists every year in all seasons. Here *Jaina* sites have not been properly developed and highlighted the way Buddhist sites have been. Popular Buddhist Tourism destinations in Odisha are: *Dhauri, Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri, Udaygiri* and *Langudi*. The three Buddhist destinations *Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri* and *Udaygiri* are well known as Diamond Triangle of Odisha. *Khandagiri* and *Udayagiri* in Bhubaneswar are the two most important Jaina sites in Odisha.

The ancient *kalinga* or Odisha had enormously contributed for the development of Buddhism in the south and south-east Asian countries. After the *kalinga* war in Odisha in 261 B.C., Ashoka encouraged Buddhism and spread *Dhamma* in different places of the Indian subcontinent.

The first incident of an unknown viral disease was noticed in Hubei of China in December 2019, which was later named as Covid-19. By the time authorities came to know about morbidity of the virus many cities were infected (Ebrahim, and Memish, 2020). Tourism industry is very sensitive towards natural and manmade catastrophes and crises. Globalization resulted with a spread of deadly infectious diseases. As a result Tourist movement dropped largely with corona virus being first reported in China. The situation became severe when on March 11, 2020 the WHO declared covid-19 a pandemic (Dayrit and Mendoza, 2020). Many countries including India followed prolonged lockdown and shut down. As a result the tourist's movement was totally halted and the tourism industry have faced severe socio-economic problem in the country especially in Odisha.

REFERENCE

1. Asmundson, G. J. G. and Taylor, S. (2020). *Coronaphobia: Fear and the 2019-nCoV outbreak*. Editorial. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 70, 102196.
2. Brewster, Z., and Lynn, M. (2014). *Black white earnings gap among restaurant servers: A replication, extension, and exploration of consumer racial discrimination in tipping*. *Sociological Inquiry*, 84(4), 545 569.

3. Cohen E (1992) *Pilgrimage and tourism: convergence and divergence*. In: *Sacred journeys: The anthropology of pilgrimage*, 47-61. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
4. Conteh, L., Engels, T., & Molyneux, D. H. (2010). *Socioeconomic aspects of neglected tropical diseases*. *The Lancet*, 375 (9710), 239-247.
5. Dayrit, M. M. and Mendoza, R. U. (2020). *Social Cohesion vs COVID-19*. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3555152>.
6. Ebrahim, S. H. and Memish, Z. A. (2020). *COVID-19 the role of mass gatherings*. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1477893920300855?via%3Dihub>.
7. Biswas S.N. (2020), 'Odisha: The Land of Chromatic Tourism Destinations', Mousumi Prokashani, Kolkata.
8. Blackwell R (2007) *Motivation for religious tourism, pilgrimage, festivals and events*. In: *Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Festivals Management: An International Perspective*. CAB international.
9. Ministry of Tourism, India (2019). *Tourism statistics*. Retrieved from <http://tourism.gov.in/sites/default/files/Other/India%20Tourism%20Statistics%20at%20a%20Glance%202019.pdf>
10. Rinschede, Gisbert. 1992. "Forms of Religious Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 19/1: 51–67.
11. Taleb Nassim Nicholas (2007). *The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable*. London: Penguin.
12. Timothy D and Olsen D (Eds.) (2006) *Tourism, religion and spiritual journeys*. London and New York: Routledge.
13. *Tourism Breaking News*. (2020). *COVID-19 impact on industry*. Retrieved from <https://tourismbreakingnews.com/tag/federation-of-associations-in-indiantourism-and-hospitality/>
14. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/odisha-declares-coronavirus-as-state-disaster-orders-schools-colleges-to-close-till-march-31/story-19pb7PoqeqFiIuNiN0OdLP.html>.
15. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Declaration-of-COVID-19-as-State-Disaster-Revenue-andDisaster-Management-13-03-2020.pdf>
16. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Regulation-Regarding-Covid19-8301.pdf>
17. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/IEC-Collectors-09032020.pdf>
18. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/NFSA-SFS-6109.pdf>
19. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Renewal-licenses-fair-price-shops-22032020.pdf>
20. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Media-regulations-advisory-prevention-Covid-.pdf>
21. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Animals-pets-3975.pdf>
22. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Guidelines-Factory-Mgmt-2288.pdf>
23. <https://health.odisha.gov.in/pdf/Precautionary-Prisons-Covid19.pdf>