



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### LOCATING THE TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF GANJAM DISTRICT IN THE TOURIST SCENARIO OF EASTERN INDIA

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#### ABSTRACT

Ganjam is the largest district of Odisha. According to the British administrators it was the most beautiful district of Madras Presidency. Being the meeting place of Aryan and Dravidian cultures, with delightful assimilations from the fascinating life style of the tribals, the district serves as the cultural bridge between the Dravidian culture of South and Aryan culture of North. The tourist spots of district are full of scenic beauties. But many of them have not yet received the publicity they deserve. An humble attempt has been made in this paper to highlight the tourist potentiality of the district.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ganjam is the largest district of Odisha. According to the British administrators it was the most beautiful district of Madras Presidency (Maltby, 1918). Covered by the dense forests, soaring mountains, murmuring springs, gurgling rivers secluded dales, deep valleys, captivating beaches and sprawling lake, the district of Ganjam is a kaleidoscope of past splendor and present glory. Being the meeting place of Aryan and Dravidian cultures, with delightful assimilations from the fascinating life style of the tribals, the district serves as the cultural bridge between the Dravidian culture of South and Aryan culture of North (Behuria, 1994). The tourist spots of district are full of scenic beauties. But many of them have not yet received the publicity they deserve. An humble attempt has been made here to highlight the tourist potentiality of the district.

#### Chilika Lake

Spreading over 1165 Sq. Kms. the lake Chilika is a veritable paradise for the tourist's. Separated from the Bay of Bengal and studded with beautiful islands, it is the largest inland lake of the country. Queen of natural beauty, it has the richest variety of aquatic fauna and is a bird watcher's paradise when

migratory birds (even from far off Siberia) arrive in winter. Sunset and sunrise are memorable experience here. One can enjoy the view of Dolphins at Chilika mouth near Satpara. There is a break-fast island with a Bungalow on it. The Barkuda Island is full of spotted deers. The lake is also famous for the temple of goddess Kalijai. The scenic beauty of the lake can best be enjoyed from Rambha where there is a Pantha Nivas of the State Government (Behuria, 1994).

#### Narayani

Narayani, another place of tourist importance is situated on the top of the Bhaleri Mountain 6 Kms from Kespur and 9 Kms from Barkul. The valley is surrounded by Sal and mango groves which make the place ideal as a picnic spot. There is a perennial spring rushing from the mountain, which supplies clear water to the visitors. The statue of goddesses Narayani is very beautiful. The sculptor has proved his brilliance by using all his skill in making the statue. The goddess is worshipped here as ten armed Mahisasura Mardini Durga. It's a beautiful place for picnic and tourists (Gopinath Mohanty, 2004).

#### Nirmal Jhara

Situated near Khalikote on Chhatrapur-Khallikote Road, Nirmala Jhara is another spot of antiquity. The place is famous for three temples like Jagannath, Radhakanta and Nilakantheswar and a stream. Though, the temples are small

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but rich in architectural designs. It was the pleasure resort of the Rajas of Khallikote (Rath, 2004).

### **Tara Tarini**

The shrine of the twin Goddesses Tara and Tarini is situated on the top of a hillock at a distance of 25 Kms from Berhampur. A flight of 999 steps on the eastern side of the hill leads to the top of the mountain where the shrine of Tara Tarini is situated. There is also a zigzag motorable road by which one can reach the shrine at the hill top by four wheelers. The temple erected for the deities is of modern origin. The view of the district, surrounding landscape from the top of the hill is quite enchanting.

### **Purushottampur**

The town of Purushottampur is situated at a distance of 40 Km from Chhatrapur. There are a large number of temples in and around Purushottampur. The most famous of which is that of the temple of Sundar Madhava. Purushottam Gajapati- (1466-1997 A.D.) the king of Orissa built this temple in order to commemorate his victorious campaign against the King of Kanchi and the town is named after him.

### **Jaugda**

Jaugada is situated at a distance of 25 Kms from Berhampur. The place is of great historical importance as one of the famous rock edicts of Ashoka is located here. The Ashokan inscription at Jaugada is inscribed on a rock face of 30 feet long and 15 feet high elevated about 12 feet on a mass of granite stone. The place is visited by researchers, historians and tourists in large number (Hultzs, 1925).

### **Tampara**

Located in the east of Chhatrapur, Tampara Sagar is a great reservoir of fresh water which looks like mini-Chilika. Surrounded by Mango grooves and Kewda flower trees it is a beautiful place for boating and amusement. In summer it is a great attraction for enjoying the boat journey.

### **Sunapur**

Sunapur is situated at a distance of 22 Kms from Berhampur. The river Bahuda falls into the sea at Sonepur. In the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is the principal port and shipping center. But due to the silting of the soil and inundation at the confluence and broad day robbery near Bhaliagada and Pallur hills the port was abandoned. Now it is a beautiful place for picnic.

### **Bhairavi**

Situated at a distance of 15 Kms from Berhampur, Bhairabi, also known as Matridi is a famous center of Saktism. It was the presiding deity of the Sadhavas of ancient Kalinga who left for sea voyages from the port of Pallur. The goddess is highly revered by the people of the locality. Except the temple of goddess Bhairabi, there are 108 temples including the temple of Jagannath at the Shrine. The place is quite exciting for the tourists and visitors.

**Kureisuni:** Kureisuni near Baghalati Irrigation project is an important shrine of Saktism. Situated at a distance of 62 Kms

from Berhampur on the foot of Bengeisahi hill (Kerandimala range of Moutanin) it is the abode of Goddess Kureisuni, the presiding deity of the Surangi Raj family. The valley of River Bahuda, the Baghalati Dam, the dense forests around the shrine and the different species of the jungle are the points of attraction for the tourists.

### **Jarada**

Village Jarada is the capital of the Ex-Zamindari estate of that name. It is situated at a 50 kms south west of Berhampur. The place is famous for the temple of Sri Partha-Sarathi. According to local traditions, the Sabaras of Jarada worshipped one Kittunga Jaganta who later on became Partha Sarathi and subsequently Jagannath. But the present temple of Partha-Sarathi was constructed during the reign of Gajapati Purushottam Dev (1466-1497 A.D.) on his way to the conquest of Kanchi. Partha Sarathi is the presiding deity of this temple and the Rath Yatra is the main festival here which attracts a large number of people (Mardaraja, 2014).

### **Potagarh**

The town of Ganjam which was once the capital of the district and a famous port, is situated at a distance of 32 Kms from Berhampur. Once it was adorned by beautiful buildings, but the outbreak of a severe epidemic brought down the population of the town from 30,000 in 6,000 in 1815 which compelled the authorities to shift their headquarters to Chhatrapur. Since then the town lost its importance.

### **Sorada**

Situated at the confluence of the two rivers i.e. Rushikulya and Jarau and at a distance of 109 Kms from Berhampur, Sorada is a small town of exciting scenic beauty. The place is famous for the Temple of Panchanan where five *lingas* are appeared in one spot. The temple of Goddess Kandhuni Devi- the presiding deity of the town is also a beautiful place for picnic and tourists. Sorada reservoir is another attraction of the place, where the view of sunrise is quite amazing. Govt. of Odisha made a praise worthy step by constructing a beautiful garden near the reservoir.

### **Krushnagiri and Jhadeswar**

The Krishnagiri Hill near Khallikote is an important religious centre since early times. It has a number of caves. These caves are the sanctuary of purity and devotion that hosts the sages and saints into its enriching spirituality. At the foot of the hill are found the temples of Jhadeswar and Mukteswar. Both the temples were constructed by Chadaganga Deva the Raja of Ganga dynasty in 12<sup>th</sup> century AD (Rajaguru).

### **Marada**

Situated at a distance of 60 kms from Berhampur, the village Marada is famous for its temple which was constructed to conceal the three images of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra when the world famous temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri was attacked by the Muslim Subedar of Cuttack, Mahammed Taqi Khan in 1733 A.D. The images of the three deities were kept there for about two and a half years till they were brought back to Puri in 1736. The masons and carpenters of the village Mathura were engaged in the

construction of the temple day and night and completed it in the record time of 2 months. The temple still stands in grand silence which eloquently speaks about the glorious regional tradition of Lord Jagannath (Hunter, 1855).

**Buddhakhol:** Situated at a distance of 5 kms from Buguda, Buddhakhol is a place of Buddhist remains and great scenic beauty. Amidst natural surroundings, there is a cluster of five temples on the top of the hill dedicated to Lord Siva, popularly known as Panchu Mahadev. At the upper most part of the hill a perennial stream forms a waterfall. There are number of caves where Buddhist monks were said to have performed meditation in old days.

**Buguda:** Buguda is a small town situated at a distance of 80 kms from Berhampur. The place is famous for the temple of Biranchinarayan (Sun God). The temple was built by King Srikar Bhanj of Ghumusar between 1790 to 1799 AD. The temple is built in the form of a chariot driven by seven horses. The paintings of this temple are a landmark in the history of mural paintings. The image of Biranchinarayan which is installed in the sanctum of the temple was recovered from the ruins of Malatigada.

**Kulada:** Kullada a small village near Bhanjanagar is fondly remembered as the birth place of great Oriya poet Upendra Bhanj. The capital, fort and the palace of the Bhanja Kings of Ghumusar was located here the ruins of which are still visible. The place is famous for the temple of Byaghra Devi, the family deity of the Bhanja ruling family of Ghumusar. Goddess Byaghra Devi is greatly revered by the local people (Taylor, 1838).

**Tapta Pani:** Taptapani (Tapta means hot, Pani means water) which is situated at a distance of 51 kms from Berhampur on Brahmapur-Mohana state High way is famous for its perennial hot sulphur spring. Set amid lush-green forests by the side of Singharaja mountain, the spring gushes forth from within the rocky soil in the form of large bubbles. The sulphur present in the water is said to cure skin diseases like scabies and eczema. The water is channelised into a pond where people take their bath. The OTDC has set up pipelines to transport the water from the spring to the nearby panthanivas making it available at the opening of the tap inside the bathroom. The presiding deity of the place is of Goddess Kandhuni Devi. The deer park attached to the spot also enhances the beauty of the place. Tourists, both Indian and foreign throng the place in large number throughout the year.

#### **Gopalpur-On-Sea**

Gopalpur formerly known as Mansurkota is famous for its golden sea beach. Situated at a distance of 16 Kms from Berhampur, it was once a major port of the district for maritime trade and navigation.

The quiet and charming beach, cluster of coconut and palm-trees, lovely sand dunes beautiful light house and the sea-breeze which tempers the intense heat of the summer makes the place a pleasant residence for the tourists.

#### **Aska**

Situated at a distance of 40 Kms from Berhampur, Aska town occupies a distinct place in the geography of Orissa. It is the nerve center of seven M.L.A. Constituencies i.e., Khallikote, Kodala, Kabisuryanagar, Sorada, Hinjili, Jagannathprasad and Aska. The Aska Multipurpose Cooperative Society was once the largest cooperative organisation of Asia for which the town was known as Samabaya Nagari of Orissa. The town is famous in Orissa for its Khambeswari Temple, Tridibeswar temple, Sugar factory and the Utkal Ayurvedic Pharmacy, which are worth visiting. The District of Ganjam is the cradle of a large number of folk dances, musics and songs. If the Government of Orissa take steps to establish a Museum or a Auditorium to preserve the folklore tradition of Ganjam or to develop the cultural tourism by way of Supply of CDs, VCDs on folk dances, folk music, folk art, folk songs to the tourists and endeavor for tourism awareness through fairs, festivals, electronics media, newspapers and campaigns it will definitely attract thousands and thousands of tourists to the district. Tourism is the largest industry of the world. It has the potentiality to become a major revenue generator for the country, especially in terms of foreign exchange. But India receives only 40 percent of world tourists. The share of Odisha in general and Ganjam District in particular is very small and insignificant. So, due emphasis should be given for the management of this industry to attract a large number of tourists, both foreign and island.

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