



## Kandhamal– A Unique Tourism Destination: A Case Study

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### Abstract

*Odisha in the Eastern Coast of India attracts thousands of Domestic and Foreign tourists every day to various places of tourist interest such as scenic beauty of Koraput, historic monuments of Puri-Bhubaneswar, sea beaches of Puri, Chandipur, forest of Similipal, wildlife of Bhitarkanika, waterfall like Duduma, handicrafts like Sambalpur Saree, water bodies like Chilika, classical dance like Odissi, folk dances like Chhau. Out of thirty districts in Odisha, Kandhamal is one of the highly tribal dominated districts. Natural scenery with ghats, waterfall, sanctuary, hill station, religious place, rivers, festivals, dance, and handicrafts of Kandhamal attracts the tourists to the district. The distinct ethnicity live and culture of various tribal groups living in this region boost the tribal tourism in Kandhamal district. Kandhamal is an un-written book for the anthropologists who read social structure of tribal life and culture. The study tends to examine the tourist arrival to Kandhamal district and highlights the unidentified tourist centres. The study also tries to grasp certain problems regarding the low tourist flow to the district.*

**Keywords:** Heritage, Tourists, Domestic, Foreign, Tribal, Scenic etc.

### Introduction

Odisha is a multi-destination of tourist attraction in India, where 62 tribal groups reside in different parts with their rich cultural heritage and it boosts the development of tribal tourism. The state is endowed with mountain, jungle like Similipal, lake like Chilika, pilgrims, historical places etc. Art works of Appliqué, Metal Crafts, Silver Filigree, Pattachitra, stone carving, handlooms recognized Odisha worldwide. Odisha offers immense pleasure to the visitors through its rich and varied topography, vibrant culture and captivating festivities. Tourist both domestic and foreign gets impressed by the Odisha's life style, tradition, art, craft and natural heritage.

Odisha lies on the eastern coast of India having an extension of 17.49° and 22.73° and 81.37 E and 87.53 E with an area of 155707 Sq. Kms<sup>1</sup>. As per the Statistical Bulletin, 2018 of Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha, 1,53,19,358 tourists visited during the year 2018. A comparative table is given below for better understanding of the tourist flow to Odisha year wise.

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**Table-1: Trend of Tourist arrival in Odisha during last Five year (2014-2015 to 2019-2020)**

Year	Domestic		Total	% Growth	Foreign	% Growth	Total	% Growth
	From Odisha	Outside Odisha						
2014-15	66,30,499	44,20,852	1,10,51,351	9.81	72,215	7.14	1,11,23,566	9.79
2015-16	72,40,304	48,27,391	1,20,67,695	9.20	67,364	(-)6.72	1,21,35,059	9.09
2016-17	78,67,321	52,45,407	1,31,12,728	8.66	77,496	15.04	1,31,90,224	8.69
2017-18	85,56,603	57,04,943	1,42,61,546	8.76	1,02,995	32.90	1,43,64,541	8.90
2018-19	93,05,282	62,04,247	1,55,09,529	8.75	1,13,721	10.41	1,56,23,250	8.76
2019-20	90,20,922	60,14,671	1,50,35,593	(-) 3.06	1,00,567	(-) 11.57	1,51,36,160	(-)3.12

**Source:** Statistical Bulletin 2018, Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha<sup>2</sup>

The above table-1 analyzed the trend of tourist visit to Odisha. The domestic tourists are continuously increasing to Odisha from 2014-15 to 2018-19 but foreign tourists decreased in the year 2015-16 and 2019-20. The growth rate of domestic tourists was highest i.e.9.81 percent in the year 2014-15 whereas growth rate of foreign tourist was highest i.e. 32.90 percent in the year 2017-18. The growth rate of total tourist was highest i.e. 9.79 percent in the year 2014-15. From 2014-15 to 2018-19, there has always been a positive change in terms of domestic tourists to Odisha whereas in terms of foreign tourists to Odisha there has also been a positive change except 2015-16 which showed a negative change i.e. -6.72. The year 2019-20 showed a negative change in both domestic and foreign tourist i.e. - 3.06 and -11.57 respectably. The negative change was showed due to COVID-19 pandemic in worldwide.

### Objectives of the Study

The present study attempts to analyze the prospects of tourism industry in Odisha special reference to Kandhamal district. The specific objectives of the study is

1. To analyze the tourist trend to Kandhamal district.
2. To identified unidentified tourist centers of the district.
3. To review the origin and growth of tourism industries in Kandhamal district.
4. To suggest concrete measures for the growth of tourism industries in Kandhamal district.

### Study area

In 1<sup>st</sup> January 1948, Boudh and Kandhamal constituted the new district with its headquarters at Phulbani. In 1<sup>st</sup> April 1986 the name of the district was changed to Phulbani. On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994, Boudh became a separate district<sup>3</sup>. Phulbani is renamed as Kandhamal vide the Notification of Government of Odisha No. DRC/136194, 44250/R dated the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1994 due to the local demand<sup>4</sup>. Literary the land of the Kandhas is known as Kandhamal, which is one of the district of Odisha with 53.6 percent of ST population. The district is situated within the longitudes 83<sup>0</sup> 30' and 80<sup>0</sup> 35' in the East and latitudes 19<sup>0</sup> 34' to 20<sup>0</sup> 34' in North<sup>5</sup> with a geographical area of 7654 Sq. Kms. The Kandhamal district is bounded by Boudh district in the North, Rayagada district in the South, Ganjam and Nayagarh district in the East and Kalahandi district in the West. The total population of the Kandhamal district is given below in the Table-2 as per the census 2011.the district has 2587 villages (including 170 Uninhabited villages) covering 153 GPs, 12 Blocks, 2 NACs and o1 Municipality under two subdivisions<sup>6</sup>.

**Table-2: Population of Kandhamal district (Census 2011)**

Total Population	ST Population	%	SC Population	%
7,33,110	3,92,820	53.6	1,15,544	15.8

The percentage of ST was more than 50 percent in every block except Chakapada, which is shown in Table-3. It implies that, the Kandhamal district is fully flourished with the culture and heritage of tribal people. The culture of Kandhamal district comprising of the arts, crafts, fairs, festivals, traditions, dances and lifestyle of the native people is unique and diverse.

**Table-3: Percentage of Scheduled tribe in Blocks of Kandhamal district<sup>7</sup> (Census 2011)**

Si. No	Name of the Block	ST Population (%)
1	Khajuripada	50.27
2	Phulbani	56.36
3	Phiringia	57.80
4	Baliguda	50.29
5	Tumudibandh	61.28
6	Kothgarh	59.34
7	Daringbadi	63.06
8	Kajamandi Nuagaon	51.83
9	Raikia	56.65
10	G.Udayagiri	65.64
11	Tikabali	54.84
12	Chakapada	<b>45.45</b>

Majorirty of the people speak in Odia dialect. The second language is Kui, which is spoken by about 30% of the people.

## Discussion

The Kandhamal district accommodates a number of tribes and other ethnic caste group who are distinguished by their respective cultural identities. 44 Scheduled tribes reside here out of 62 tribes in Odisha. Kandha is the highly populated tribe in Kandhamal. Kandhamal has attractive natural scenic beauty with mountains, sanctuary, rivers, waterfalls, yatra like dalkhai, lathyatra, bali yatra, khala yatra, hulapada yatra, kandula yatra, kalas yatra, kandhei yatra, bandhagada yatra, baraladevi yatra, bana puja, thakurani yatra etc, dance like dhangada dhangadi dance(Lasani Enda), krahenda dance, dalkhai dance, baaji enda, gaani enda, sangadala enda, kalisi dance, ghumura dance, ler-enda, basa dakina enda etc, handicraft like dhokra, tribal jewellery, stone carving, bamboo craft, applique, cane work etc. it attracts the tourist round the year.

### Tourist Centre in Kandhamal district

There are 358 identified tourist centre in Odisha as on March, 2020. Out of which 06 identified tourist centers are in Kandhamal district. The table- showed the name of such tourist centers along with their importance.

**Table-4: Identified Tourist Centre by Department of Tourism**

Si. No.	Name of the Center	Importance	Distance from Dist. Hqrs.(in Kms)
1	Balaskumpa	Religious place and scenic beauty	15
2	Belghar	Scenic beauty and adventurous trekking	165
3	Chakapada	Religious place	55
4	Daringibadi	Snowfall and Scenic beauty	104
5	Phulbani	District Head Quarter and Religious place	00
6	Putudi	Waterfall and scenic beauty	16

Source: Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha<sup>8</sup>

**Table- 5: Last two Years Tourist trend to Identified Tourist Centers, Kandhamal District**

S.No.	Name of the Centre	Year 2017			Year 2018		
		Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total
1.	Balaskumpa	57820	--	57820	65490	--	65490
2.	Belghar	8290	--	8290	9540	--	9540
3.	Chakapada	82555	--	82555	89540	--	89540
4.	Daringibadi	85215	--	85215	95655	--	95655
5.	Phulbani	120210	247	120457	128314	256	128570
6.	Putudi	41090	--	41090	46280	--	46280

**Source:** Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha<sup>9</sup>

The above table is analyzed the trend of tourist visit to identified tourist destination of Kandhamal district. The domestic as well as foreign tourists are continuously increasing to the tourist spot.

#### **Other attraction of Kandhamal:**

This region has charming natural scenic beauty with undulating mountain, roaring rivers, waterfalls, meadows, wildlife sanctuary, ghats and primitive and colorful tribal like Kandha, Gond, Munda, Saora, Shabar Lodha etc. There are many unidentified tourist centers, which need to be identified and development programme can be taken up by the district Administration of Kalahandi near future. The detail unidentified tourist centers, its importance and distance from the district head quarter is discussed in table-6.

**Table-6: Unidentified Tourist Centre in Kandhamal district**

Si. No.	Name of the Center	Importance	Distance from Dist. Hqrs.(in Kms)
1	Katramala	Natural beauty, waterfall	35
2	Pakadadarah	Waterfall	18
3	Kalinga	Scenic beauty and Ghat	50
4	Ludu Waterfall	Waterfall and Picnic spot	165
5	Balanda Parha	Tribal Village	52
6	Bandhagarh	Religious Place	28
7	Baligurha	Sub-Divisional Headquarter and Commercial place	83
8	Ghumusar Udayagiri	Scenic spot and weekly market	58
9	Ganingia and Rabingia	Old Village	51
10	Guma	High Altitude	103
11	Kumbharkhol	Religious place	40
12	Phirngia	Weekly market	30
13	Raikia	Market centre	80
14	Tikabali	Market	37
15	Kotgarh	Wildlife Sanctuary	149

#### **Highlights of Kandhamal Tourist Destination<sup>10</sup>**

A place full of natural beauty is a part of our beautiful physical universe. In real term on the eyes of beholders this place is nature's paradise. This place touches the heart of the visitors due to its scenic beauty, wild life tourism and for its ghat roads which leads towards very beautiful scenic beauty. From the point of view of tourism, we found their pine jungles, waterfalls, dense forest areas, coffee gardens, temples etc. This district is also famous for its rich handicrafts. This area lies in high altitude zone including 7654sq kms geographical area.

### **Daringbadi:-**

“Daringbadi” – the place is blessed with natural beauty and cool climate. Daringbadi is known as “Odisha’s Kashmir”. This hill station is situated in the high land area which is covered by dense forest. Snowfall is the centre of attraction during winter season and it gives heavenly feelings at that time. Daringbadi is situated 3000ft or 915m above the sea level.

### **Putudi Waterfall**

Odisha’s one of the prominent waterfalls ‘Putudi’ is situated at a distance of 15km from Phulbani. This water fall is surrounded by dense forest which creates thrilling for scenic beauty in the mind of visitors. Due to its scenic beauty it attracts film producers as a beautiful shooting spot.

### **Belghar**

“Belghar” is known as the paradise for elephant lovers. This place is situated above 2555ft from sea level. “Kutia Kandh”- a primitive tribe of Odisha inhabited in this particular place whose economy is based on food gathering and hut dwelling. It is one of the finest places for nature camp. Cane work of this tribe is also another point of attraction.

### **Balaskumpa**

The saviour of the world” Barala Devi’s” place is known as Balaskumpa. Dashahara or Durga puja is the main occasion celebrated in Balaskumpa. Near to this holy place ‘Pilasalunki’ dam is situated which is famous for scenic beauty. It attracts people for sightseeing and picnic.

### **Chakapad**

Lord Shiva’s place Chakapad is a religious place of Kandhamal. Birupakshya (lord Shiva) temple is built on the banks of river Bhutaganga, which is famous and important place of Saivism. Here all the temple features, trees and lord Shivas’s linga leans towards the south. Shivaratri and Shitalashti celebrated here with great devotion. At Chakapad visitors also attracts towards Anandeswar and Jageswar temple which are the places notified with huge devotion towards lord Shiva.

### **Baligurha**

Baligurha town is the sub-divisional headquarters and also the largest sub-division of Odisha. The scenic beauty of this place attracts tourists. Tourists also attracts towards lord Jagannath temple which is the centre of devotion of that particular area.

Kutikia village of Baligurha is famous for mats. This handicraft of this particular village attracts tourists. For natural and scenic beauty people attracts towards Kanjalagu area of Baligurha. This place Baligurha is also commercial hub of Kandhamal district from where turmeric, timber, mustard is exported.

### **Katramala**

Hub of natural beauty Katramal is 35km away from Phulbani. Beautiful waterfall among the lush green wood covered by dense forest is the centre of attraction. Really it thrills the mind of the visitors when they see the fishes of pool which jump out of the water to catch the food. Tourists enjoy the moment by throwing food in to the pool. Rocky hills and dense forests beauty attract visitors for amusement and relaxation. It is one of the best places for picnic.

### **Kalinga**

This place is blessed with the amazing waterfall, sky touching mountains, thick greenery. The zigzag ghat road also thrills heart of the visitors. The thakurani temple is a place of devotion here. It covers 11kms long ghat road. The Silvi Culture Forest Research station is also a centre of attraction for visitors.

### **Balanda Parha**

The Sauras or Savaras, one of the most ancient tribes who belongs to Munda ethnic group habitat in this place of Western Odisha. Visitors take interest to visit this place to know about the expert hunters and climber's tribe Savara, whose life history is also related with Hindu myths and puranas. This place is situated in the extreme north-west of the Kandhamal sub-division.

### **Ludu Waterfall**

This beautiful waterfall is located inside the Kotagarh sanctuary near Subarnagiri. This amazing waterfall is surrounded by deep green forest and rocky hills. This is a calm and beautiful place far from the noise of the city. Here water falls in five streams over a rocky platform.

### **Bandhagarh**

Bandhagarh is situated on river bank of "Bagh" which is a shrine of goddess Bararaul. Here goddess is placed in the shape of block of stone which is unearthed by a Kandha man at the time of ploughing. In the month of Jaistha a big fair is held where a large number of Kandha people assemble. In this occasion singing and dancing among Kandha boys and girls became the centre of attraction which concludes with match- making.

### **Guma**

Near Sarapunguda, a place known as Guma situated at a height of 2,300 feet (701.04 mt.) above the sea level is considered as the origin place of tribal people. This place is famous for its scenic beauty in high altitude.

### **Kumbhakhhol**

This village is situated in the Kandhamal sub-division. The road which passes through this village is an old military road, on which troops used to pass between the central provinces and the Madras

presidency. Hill- god of the penjei ghati of this area is a shrine. The Kandha tribal people nearby village worship the deity.

### **Phirngia**

This village is located at a distance of 30km from Kandhamal district headquarters. Lord Jagannath temple and goddess Pitabali temple is a famous religious place of Phiringia. This is an important commercial place both for agriculturalist and forest dwellers.

### **Phulbani**

It is the administrative head quarter of Kandhamal district. This place is situated 1600 feet above the sea level. This place is surrounded by different variety of flora and fauna, lot of small and big waterfalls are placed around it. This area is situated on the east bank of river Pila Salki. This is the place of peaceful tribal people. There are many religious places dedicated to lord Jagannath, Lord Shiva and goddess Narayani.

### **Raikia**

This is a commercial place of Kandhamal where people found turmeric, ginger, mustard, hill-brooms etc in huge amount.

### **Tikabali**

This is also a business hub situated 37km away from Phulbani , where in weekly market forest and agricultural products are sold. This is an important trading place where we found both retailer and wholesaler. The Tikabali Agency Marketing society is a big marketing society in the state. Magha mela is organized here on the full-moon day of month Magha (January) where great numbers of nearby tribal people assemble here in their traditional costumes.

### **Kothgarh Wildlife Sanctuary**

It is located in the Baliguda subdivision with an area of 399.5 Sq. Kms. Major wildlife species seen in the sanctuary are tiger, elephant, gaur, sambar, spotted deer, fowl and varieties of reptiles.

### **Festivals of Kandhamal**

The tribal culture is very distinct, vibrant and colorful. The tribal's of Kandhamal district observed numbers of festivals round the year. Some important festivals attract domestic tourist from Odisha and outside the Odisha are discussed in table no.7.

**Table-7: Place of Tribal Festivals to be visited**

Si No	Name of the Festivals	Place	Period
1	Maghapurnima Yatra	Keredi, Kainjhar	February
2	Dolajatra	Phulbani, Khajuripada, Barikumpa, Linepada,	March



		Chakapad	
3	Thakurani Jatra (Narayani Jatra)	Phulbani	April, May (Alternative year)
4	Dashahara	Balaskumpa, Baliguda, Phulbani, G. Udayagiri, Raikia	October
5	Kalipuja	Nuapadar, Phiringia	November
6	Ramnavami	Bisipada	April
7	Meru (Danda Jatra)	Various places of the district	April

Source: Odisha District Gazetteers, Kandhamal<sup>11</sup>

### Handicraft attraction of Kandhamal district

Black dhokra, tribal jewellery, red stone carving, wood craft, bamboo craft, cane work of Kandhamal is the traditional crafts produced by different communities at a small scale in various parts of the district also attracts tourist. A detail analysis is discussed in table-8.

**Table-8: Handicrafts, Tribal Arts and places to be visited**

Si. No	Art/Craft	Place	Distance from Head Qrt. (in Kms)
1	Terracotta & Bamboo Handicrafts	Sudrukumpa	14
2	Terracotta Handicrafts	Ratang	--
3	Cane works	Tumudibandha	114
4	Dokra	Barakhama of Baliguda Block and Tudubali of Tikabali Block	88 & 46
5	Stone Ornament (Necklace) and Utensil	Pusangia of Baliguda Block	91
6	Diamond pattern Bed Sheet	Gadabisha of G. Udayagiri Block	85
7	Applique works	G. Udayagiri	59
8.	Tribal Jewellery	Barakhama of Baliguda block and Phiringia	88 & 26
9	Red stone carving	Pusingia of Baliguda block	91
10	Bamboo Craft	Dandimaha of Darinngbadi Block, Tandipanga of K.Nuagaon block	102

Source: Odisha District Gazetteers, Kandhamal<sup>12</sup>

### Major findings

Tourist arrival in the Kandhamal district has kept very low. In the year 2019 only 256 foreign tourists and 4,35,075 domestic tourists visit different tourist spots of Kandhamal district. There are a

number of factors responsible for the low tourist trend to the district and immediate attention is needed to resolve it. The growth of tourism depends on the existence of attractive tourist spots, proper transport and communication facilities including well connected Rail networks. It is also depending on safe accommodation for which we need good hotels and guesthouses of high standard. Some important problems are as follows.

- (a) Kandhamal district have attractive tourist spots but lacks of transport and communication facilities. The district has not rail network.
- (b) Apart from poor transport and communication facilities, the absence of good accommodation in the tourist centers deprive the tourist.
- (c) Safety point of view from last two decades Kandhamal is highly unsafe zone due to Naxalite movement and community riots.
- (d) The absence of effective promotional campaign to attract the tourist to the district.
- (e) Lack of public interest toward the tourism sectors of Kandhamal district.

## Conclusion

Promotion of tourism is essential for a less developed district like Kandhamal in point of tourism. To make Kandhamal a tourist hub, we need must is a well-developed transport and communication facilities, development of tourist spots, maintain law and order and create a sound environment for tourist attraction. A tribal museum to be established at Phulbani with the tribal material aspects of culture can be displayed and tourist will gain firsthand knowledge about the tribal tourism destination of Kandhamal district. Encourage the local small and medium sized enterprises and national tourist offices to market the tourist destination. Government takes initiatives for effective promotional campaign. Private sector participation, administrative improvement, travel and tourism research, adoption of integrated and coordinated tourism development programmes and mass participation is needed to developed and attracts the tourist to Kandhamal district.

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