



## SALIENT FEATURES OF TOURISM IN PIPILI, ODISHA – A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY

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### **ABSTRACT**

*As part of the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) undertaken by the Government of India in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the entire Pipili Block in the Puri District of Odisha has been brought under the Rural Tourism Scheme under the Tenth Five Year Plan. Pipili is a craft hub in Odisha. The primary tourism product in Pipili is its huge repository of appliqué handicrafts, the authenticity of which has attracted tourists from far and wide. However, there are other attractions in Pipili Village as well as in the town that easily draw visitors to this destination. In this paper, the possibilities of growth of Pipili as a rural tourist destination in the near future have been envisaged. Particular emphasis has been laid on the cultural geography of the area. Both primary and secondary sources of information have been used in preparing the article. Primary survey involved intensive field work on the part of the author. The results show that there is immense potential for the development of cultural tourism in Pipili, although the problems in this regard cannot be overlooked. The study advocates the overall improvement of tourism infrastructure in Pipili and adequate training for restaurant and hotel owners on tourism management and hospitality.*

**Keywords:-** Appliqué Handicrafts, Crafts Village, Pipili, Rural Tourism Scheme, Tourism Infrastructure.

## 1. Introduction

Cultural Tourism has emerged as a thrust area in the development policy of the National Governments in the present era, especially in Third World countries. It has been defined as “the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs” (Dhar, 2010). In the recent period, culture has become a marketing tool to attract travelers with special interest in heritage and the arts. Cultural heritage tourism has multifarious positive impacts such as facilitating harmony and understanding among people and reinforcing identity and preserving cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument.

Since time immemorial, craft tourism has occupied a prominent place in India, as Indian handicrafts are renowned the world over and attract tourists from far and wide. Odisha has played a major role in this respect. “The crafts of Orissa are a rare combination of utility and beauty....” (Dua, 2013 ).

Along with the growth of cultural tourism, particular emphasis has been laid on the development of rural tourism as a contemporary issue in India. Under the Tenth Five Year Plan (Mohanty, 2014), thrust has been given to promote village tourism in various parts of India, with the idea of endowing the rural areas with a positive identity as a creative hub under the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP) of the UNDP (United Nations Development Project). The primary objectives of the Endogenous Tourism Project are to ensure a continuous inflow of tourists into the village with the ultimate aim of increasing the income and livelihood opportunities of the village inhabitants. The other objective is to showcase rural life, art, culture and heritage in villages, which have core competence in art and craft, handloom and textiles and/or an asset base in the natural environment.

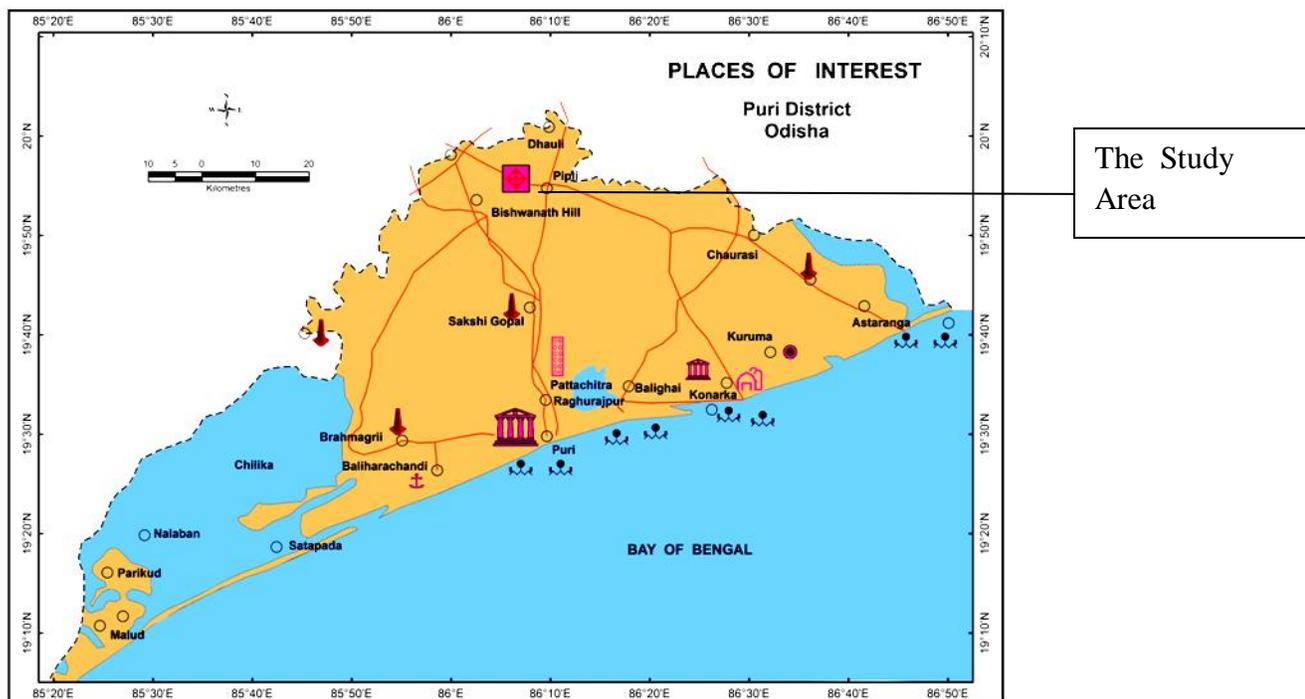
### *The study area*

The area for study here includes Pipili Block in the Puri District of Odisha. The Pipili Block is made up of 19 *Gram Panchayats* (G.P.s) with 326 villages and one Notified Area Council (N.A.C.). The N.A.C. comprises 16 wards. It is located in Pipili

Tehsil, on latitude 20°07' North and longitude 85°50' East. and has an average elevation of 25 metres. It is under the jurisdiction of Pipili Police Station. The *Gram Panchayats* included in Pipili Block are Puba Sasan, Pamasara, Orakal, Dandamkundapur, Laxminarayanpur, Poparanga, Bharatipur, Chandradeipur, Gobindapur, Hatasahi, Jagannathpur, Jashuapur, Kauti, Mangalpur, Nuasasan, Rupdeipur, Sahajpur, Saraswatipur and Teisipur. All the *Gram Panchayats* in Pipili Block as well as the N.A.C. have been brought under the Rural Tourism Scheme. Pipili is located at a distance of 40 km from Puri and 16 km from Bhubaneswar. It lies at the junction where the Konarak Road branches out from the Puri-Bhubaneswar Highway. Very recently, a bypass has been constructed connecting Puri and Bhubaneswar and Pipili has been diverted along a new route.

As indicated in Figure 1, the destination itself forms an integral part of the Golden Triangle – Puri-Konarak-Bhubaneswar and is located on the newly formed Tourist Circuit in Odisha. Besides, it is surrounded by other places of tourist interest such as Sakshigopal, Raghurajpur and Dhauri. Not far away is Chilka, Asia's second largest lagoon and a well known wetland under the Ramsar Convention, thronged by tourists throughout the year.

Pipili is well-connected with all the three modes of transport – roads, railways and airways. The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar. It is also the most convenient railway station for tourists visiting the destination, although Khurda Road is closer. Pipili was previously located on N.H. 203, the highway running between Puri and Bhubaneswar. Recently, a new highway has been constructed connecting the two cities.



### LOCATION OF PIPILI

Figure 1

Pipili is primarily inhabited by the *Darji community* who are tailors by profession. According to the 2011 Census, the total population of Pipili Block is 159,750 (Census of India, 2011). The rural population far exceeds the urban population.

#### *Purpose*

This paper deals with a number of issues and the objective of study here is multi-dimensional. The main objectives are –

- To ascertain the tourism potential of Pipili and realise the extent to which it can act as an attraction for cultural and craft tourism ;
- To highlight the aspects of rural tourism development in the study area;
- To understand the basic infrastructure available for tourists in Pipili and evaluate the superstructure that is coming up;
- To determine the role played by appliqué artisans in the growth of cultural tourism in Pipili;
- To find out the problems associated with tourism in the area and to suggest appropriate remedial measures.

### *Database and methodology*

The research is exploratory in nature. Both descriptive and analytical methods have been used for the study. Initially, secondary information was collected from books and periodicals as well as pilot survey reports, monographs, dissertations and news dailies.. This was followed by field work. Frequent visits were made by the researcher to the area of study, during which observations were made and photographs were taken. The sampling technique was used for survey. This involved both purposive sampling and random sampling. For purposive sampling, data was collected through interviews. The Director of Tourism and Culture, Bhubaneswar, the Tourist Officer, Puri, the Block Development Officer (B.D.O.), Pipili and such other persons were consulted. For random sampling, a set of questionnaires was put to the respondents. The respondents in this case included the applique entrepreneurs and the village artisans.

In the next phase, the data collected was compiled and thoroughly analysed. Appropriate cartographic diagrams were drawn using statistical methods. Tables were prepared where necessary. Maps were also provided.

## **2. Discussion**

### *Pipili – The Craft Hub of Odisha*

The unique attraction of Pipili is its main street, studded with colourful appliqué shops. Applique work is the primary means of livelihood here (Jena, P.K.). At one time, appliqué was exclusively a craft practised by the *Darji community* (Samal, 1998). However, with time, the once uni-caste profession of *chandua making* has become a multi-caste profession. Both Hindus and Muslims are equally deft in the craft-work and participate actively in the artistry. Interesting features of the craft hub are the handicraft itself and the huge women participation in the work. While men do the machine stitching and finishing, most of the hand-stitching is done by the village women. Stitches used for appliqué work are of six categories – *bakhia*, *taropa*, *button-hole*, *ganthi*, *chikana* and *ruching* (Mohanty, 2008). The coloured pieces of cloth are stitched and laid out and designed into garden umbrellas, canopies, bags, wall-hangings and a host of utility items. With time, changes have been brought about in the appliqué products of Pipili (Podder, 2011). But the basic artifacts of this craft centre are the traditional items, namely the *chandua* (canopy used in the temple), *chhatra*, (traditional umbrella), *alata* (large fan

used in temple rituals) and *tarasa* (hand-fan) (Mohapatra, 2005). There are about 65 families engaged in this profession in the entire Pipili Block (Tourist Office, Puri). Applique craft of Pipili displays amazing dexterity on the part of the artisans in putting together small pieces of cloth to make excessively colourful designs. This category of craft has recently received Intellectual Property Protection through the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 (Abraham, 2010). All the stages of manufacturing, trade and export of appliqué items from Odisha in the international market are conducted from Pipili. In fact, Pipili has been brought under the Rural Tourism Project based on its appliqué craft – its unique selling point (USP) and its community of talented artisans.

Pipili also provides scope for shopping a variety of other items such as *dokra* – a mix of brass and metal. Tourists may also purchase work of the *pifa* variety, which can be spotted over cooking vessels, tumblers as well as plates and sculptures of gods and goddesses made by brass casting. Horn work, lacquer work and wooden carved items are also available here.

#### *Other tourist attractions in Pipili*

The other tourism products in Pipili are mostly intangible. A large part of these attractions comprises festivals which draw tourists from the surrounding regions. In fact, from the study conducted by this researcher, it may be safely predicted that Pipili will serve as an important destination for Festival Tourism in the near future. The place is well known for communal harmony. A large number of festivals including *Rathyatra*, *Dussehra*, *Id* and *Urs* are celebrated here. Danda Mukundapur is famous for poet *Bhakta Salbeg*, a Muslim follower in love with *Lord Jagannath*. The *Nrusinghanath Festival*, held every year on *Baishakh Chaturdoshi*, (in the month of April), the *Jaigopal Festival* celebrated on *Champak Dwadoshi*, (in June) and the *Bhakta Dasia Bauri Pitha's janmatithi*, celebrated in *Kartik* (October-November) attract tourists in a big way. The Jaigopal Temple here is another source of attraction for pilgrims.

A group of Dutch and Portugese edifices and churches also act as tourist spots in Pipili.

#### *Tourist inflow and growth of tourism infrastructure in Pipili*

Pipili was brought under the Rural Tourism Scheme, sanctioned by the Government of India (GOI) in the year 2004. Here, the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with GOI-UNDP, is implementing the Endogenous Tourism Project (ETP). The project components have been divided into two distinct groups – hardware and software. The main objective is to develop strong community-private partnerships. The other objectives behind recommending Pipili for development as a Rural Tourism Village in Odisha are to evaluate the involvement of the tourism industry in promoting the destination; to assess the impact of the Rural Tourism Scheme on Pipili, with special emphasis on impacts upon tourist arrivals, employment generation for the local people, income generation and other socio-economic aspects of lives of the local people and preservation and improvement of tourism resources; to evaluate the campaign launched by the agency implementing the project for attracting tourists; to analyse the perception and expectation of tourists about the amenities available and to suggest improvements at the site on the basis of the collected data.

**TABLE NO. 1**  
**BREAK-UP OF SANCTIONED AMOUNT UNDER DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Sl. No.	Item	Amount (in lakhs)
1	Artisans' Village	98.46
2	Watch Tower and Water Tank	13.59
3	Tourist Amenity Centre	38.25
4	Landscaping and Children's Park	90.92
5	Ambience Illumination	50.00
6	Tourist Reception Centre	15.00
7	Parking	27.75
8	Compound Wall	16.50
9	Food Court and Public Convenience Centre	43.50
10	Craft Centre	16.50
11	Interpretation Centre	23.25
12	Artisans' Lounge	24.00
13	Waterkund	25.26
	Total	482.98

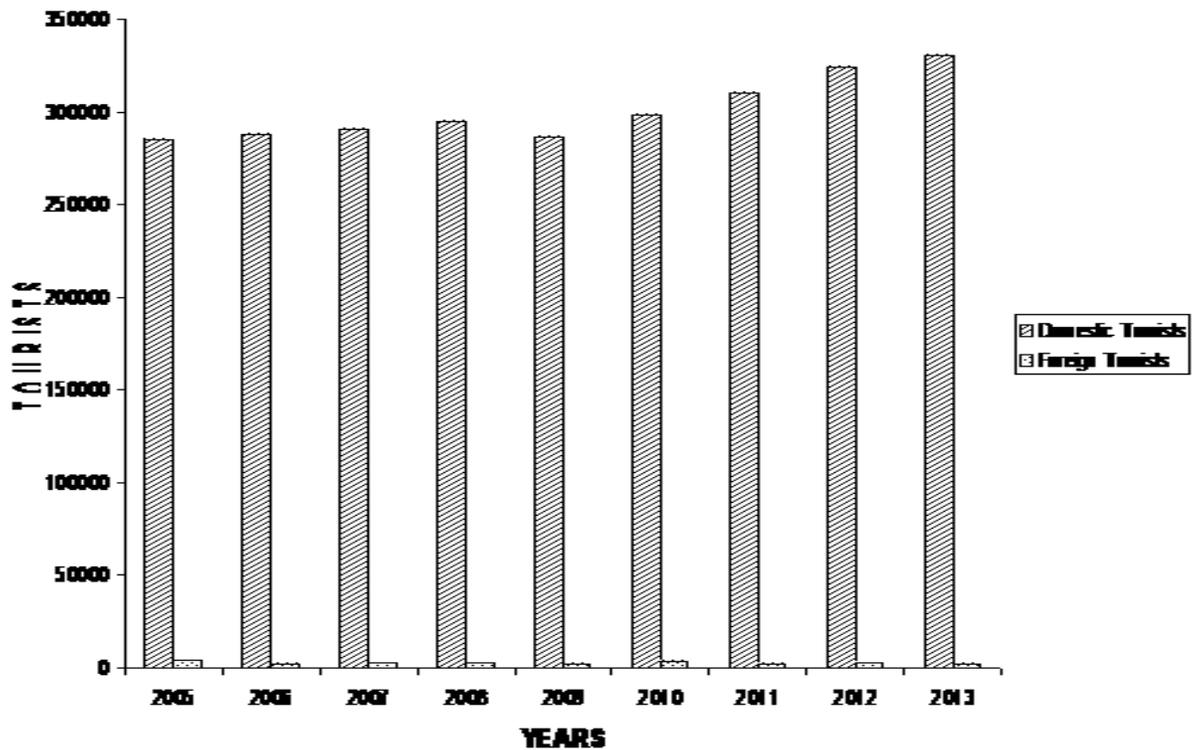
Source : Tourist Office, Puri.

Under the Rural Tourism Scheme, village amenity centres and *Vishram sthals* (rest sheds) are to be set up and local residents are to be trained in hospitality related professions such as lodging, cuisine and guiding.

Initially, the executing agency for the Rural Tourism Project was DRDA (District Rural Development Agency), Puri. The implementing partner was Darbar Sahitya Sansad, an N.G.O. Later, the task of implementation was assigned to OTDC (Odisha Tourism Development Corporation). 21 craft selling centres (artisans' units) and 2 side boundary walls have been completed under 1. Preparation and 2. Sales-cum-display. Construction of Craft Village/Shops (Blocks A,B,C and D) is fully complete. Development of parks, fencing, compound wall, provision for improvement in solid waste management and sewerage management, bio-gas and solar lighting, procurement of eco-friendly modes of transport for moving within the tourism zone, refurbishment of the monuments, signage, etc. have been undertaken for improvement of infrastructure at site. A Tourism Centre has been built by the OTDC and a private helipad is coming up.

The software component of the Project is being handled by IITTM (Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management) which has undertaken preparatory activities, tourist service capacity building and livelihood promotion. Among other software components are craft popularisation, art and culture based entertainment, market promotion, etc.

Secondary data shows that in general tourist inflow to Pipili has registered an increase since 2005 (Statistical Bulletins, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014). The inflow of domestic tourists has shown a steady rise with time, the only exception being the year 2009. On the other hand, foreign tourist inflow has fluctuated over the years.



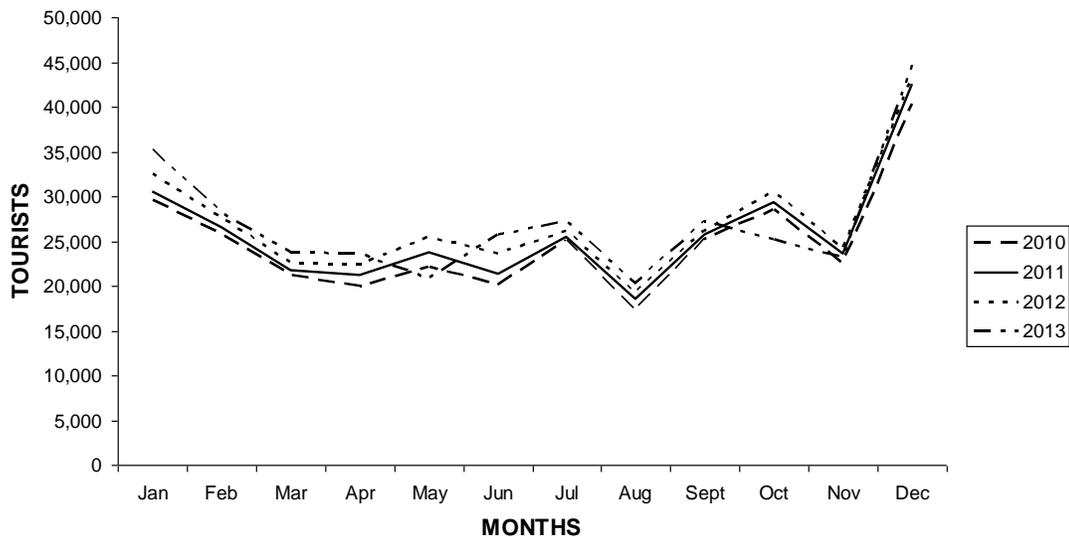
PIPILI – INFLOW OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN TOURISTS , 2005-2013.

Figure 2

Tourist visits to Pipili are seasonal in nature (Statistical Bulletins, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014).. Chi-square testing has been attempted for the distribution of domestic as well as international tourists over the years 2010-2013 in Pipili. The testing has yielded calculated values much higher than tabulated values, which means that null hypothesis is accepted in both the cases, i.e., the distribution of both domestic and international tourists over the years is uneven. This confirms the seasonal nature of tourism in Pipili.

As indicated by the graph in Figure 3, there is a sharp rise in the inflow of domestic tourists from October, the rise between November and December is markedly steep showing that December-January is the peak season for domestic tourist visits in Pipili. It may be noted that the inflow of domestic tourists is much less in January than in December. From February onwards, the inflow of domestic tourists registers a decline,

however, there are sporadic fluctuations. There is again a considerable rise in the inflow of domestic tourists in October. This is because most of the inbound tourists to Odisha are from West Bengal and October is a month of festivals and long holidays in West Bengal. From the graph, the lean season for domestic tourist visits to Pipili appears to be quite long, extending from February to September.

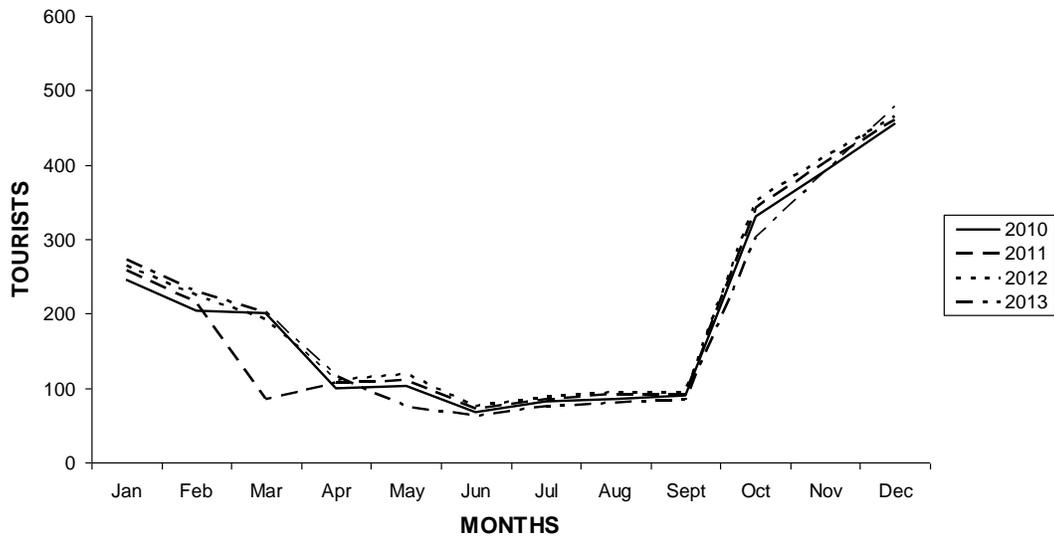


### PIPILI – MONTHWISE INFLOW OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS, 2010-2013.

Figure 3

Data Source : Statistical Bulletins – 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014.

For foreign tourists also, the lean season extends from February to September, India being a tropical country with oppressive heat in summer. The graph shows an abrupt rise between September and October, i.e., in autumn, as the weather becomes pleasant. The inflow of foreign tourists continues to rise until December, the month of maximum inflow. The number of foreign tourists visiting Pipili remains quite high in January, but shows a slight fall in February. Thereafter, it declines drastically. Between June and September, the number of foreigners visiting Pipili remains low and more or less steady.



PIPILI – MONTHWISE INFLOW OF FOREIGN TOURISTS, 2010-2013.

Figure 4

Data Source : Statistical Bulletins – 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014.

*Problems associated with tourism development in Pipili:-*

The first major obstacle in exploiting India’s rich tourism potential is, of course, resource constraint. As with all tourist destinations, this has been the case with Pipili as well. Lack of infrastructural facilities limit tourist visits to the village. There is not a single provision to accommodate tourists within Pipili. Hence, the entire volume of tourists coming to Pipili turn out to be day visitors. There is seldom any tourist who stays back to enjoy the ambience of a Crafts Village.

The inflow of foreign tourists to Pipili through the years has been meagre. This is because of the following reasons –

- Social and religious constraints come in the way of development of international tourism in Odisha.
- Pipili is not publicised well as a tourist destination in the international market and very few people in foreign countries are aware of its attractions as a craft tourism centre.

- There are government imposed restrictions on photography and other activities in various parts of India, which discourage foreign tourists to visit the country..
- There are no hotels in Pipili and foreign tourists visit the handicraft shops only on their way to Puri or Bhubaneswar. As a result, the bulk of the foreign tourists form day visitors. Tourists seldom enter the village proper. Moreover, with the construction of the new road (bypass) between Puri and Bhubaneswar, the foreign tourists travelling between the two pilgrimage centres no longer enter Pipili and this has adversely affected the artisans' trade in appliqué items.
- It has been noticed that there is no brand positioning statement to capture the essence of the indigenous appliqué items of Pipili. Hence, all potential customers coming from other countries do not have adequate knowledge about the artifacts sold to the domestic and foreign tourists.
- Inadequate infrastructural facilities affect inbound tourism in the village. Public services are lacking and often non-existent.
- From Figure 2, it is obvious that after 2005, foreign tourist inflow to Pipili has fallen drastically from above 4000 to a little above 2000 and thereafter it has fluctuated around 2000-2500. This is primarily due to security constraints. Terrorist attacks and political unrest have adversely affected international tourism in the past few years.

The inhabitants of Pipili have reported that traffic is a great problem near the craft hub. As the road here is narrow, it forms a bottleneck for the vehicles, causing traffic jams near the *chandua* market. In fact, the bypass connecting Puri and Bhubaneswar has been constructed to solve this particular problem. Tourists now take this alternative route and hence, the artisans complain that visitors to Pipili have declined in number.

Tourism in Pipili has systematically led to commoditisation of the appliqué products. Major changes have come about in the appliqué items of Pipili as craftsmen have to give undue emphasis on the production of the most popular and stereotyped goods, which have already gained a market among domestic and international tourists..

Pricing strategies present another problem. The artisans of Pipili are unaware of the true value that the consumer places on the appliqué handicrafts or the base prices of local economic conditions in the tourists' home community. Moreover, they have very little knowledge of the various approaches to pricing. As a consequence, they rarely charge a price that reflects the true craftsmanship and scarcity value of the product.

#### *Proposals and Suggestions:-*

From the above discussion, it is obvious that the vital problem with development of rural tourism in Pipili is lack of basic infrastructure. Diversification of tourists' accommodation, the construction of hotels and lodges will solve the problem to some extent. Besides, training has to be provided to the restaurant and hotel owners on tourism management and hospitality as well as health and hygiene so that quality food is made available to the visitors.

Parking facilities for tourist vehicles are essential near the craft hub.

According to Mutsuddi and Roy, (2014), where there is enough potential for the growth of rural tourism, local community based organisations are needed for managing tourism within the village. Pipili is lacking in these. Besides, the State Government and NGOs are required to take more initiatives to improve tourism at village level. Workshops may be conducted to motivate the village people to get involved in rural tourism so that more benefits can be derived from the tourist industry.

### **3. Conclusion:-**

From the preceding account, it appears that Pipili has abundant natural and man-made resources (particularly cultural) for attracting tourists. As a consequence, tourist inflow to this place is on the increase. However, as a tourist destination, it is fraught with certain problems which may come in the way of development of rural tourism in the near future. The greatest positive aspect of this paper is that the researcher has pointed out these problems so that they can be taken up for further study and the solutions suggested may be considered for the sustainability of rural tourism in Pipili in the long run. It is recommended that the Odisha Tourism Development Corporation considers these hindrances seriously and takes immediate action to relieve both the host community and the tourists.

In conclusion, it may be said that the paper is not without limitations. Although field work conducted by the researcher has been extensive, there is heavy reliance on secondary data. Besides, scope for statistical analysis in this paper is limited.

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Tourist Officer, Puri,  
Applique artisans and entrepreneurs of Pipili  
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