



# Promoting and Facilitating Splendour and Vision of Buddhist Tourism In 4 Districts (Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, Gajapati) Of Odisha

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**Abstract:** The promotion and facilitation of Buddhist tourism in these areas are investigated in this thesis, with a focus on urban planning issues. This thesis explores the promotion and facilitation of Buddhist tourism in these districts, focusing on the urban planning aspects. It highlights the necessity for cultural preservation, infrastructure development, and sustainable practices while identifying gaps and obstacles in promoting and supporting Buddhist tourism. The study examines the socio-economic effects of Buddhist tourism, including job creation and economic growth, and makes recommendations for best practices based on lessons learned from successful case studies. Overall, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of how urban planning can play a crucial role in promoting and facilitating the splendour and vision of Buddhist tourism in Khordha, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Gajapati districts of Odisha, and ultimately pave the way for the sustainable development of this important cultural and historical tourism niche.

**Keywords** – (OTDC) Odisha Tourism Development Corporation, Buddhist Tourism, Economic Development, Cultural preservation

## I. INTRODUCTION

A significant world religion, Buddhism began in India in the fifth century BCE and gradually spread to other continents. Throughout history, religion has had a significant impact on a variety of cultures and societies. Buddhism began to spread in India and then gradually made its way to Sri Lanka, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Buddhism developed into various schools and traditions as a result of the frequent adaptation of Buddhist teachings to local cultural and religious practices. The practice of Buddhism has also become widely accepted in other parts of the world, such as Europe and the Americas. Buddhists are thought to number over 500 million today, making them the fourth most numerous religion in the world. During its early history, Buddhism had a profound influence on India's culture and spirituality. However, the religion had largely vanished from India itself by the 12th century CE as a result of a number of factors, including political upheaval and the rise of Hinduism.

Asoka's invasion of Orissa in 261 BC marked a turning point not only in Asoka's life but also in the development of Buddhism in India. It was only after this event that Buddhism began to spread throughout Orissa. The stupa architecture is thought to have first appeared in the immediate area of Sisupalgarh during the post-Asokan eras. The traditions in Buddhist literature and the sculptural ruins at Ratnagiri, Lalitagiri, and Udayagiri in the districts of Cuttack and Jajpur, which are linked to Hinayana and early Mahayana forms of Buddhism, provide evidence for Buddhism in the early Christian era. In Odisha during the post-Gupta era, the Mahayana and Hinayana schools of Buddhism coexisted. However, the Mahayana form became more popular, particularly around the time of Huen-tsang's visit to Odisha (639–41 AD). Due to royal support, Buddhism grew in popularity at the beginning of the Bhauma era (7th century AD).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Importance of Buddhist Tourism in Odisha

Odisha's extensive collection of historic Buddhist sites demonstrates the religion's deep ties to the area and its importance throughout history. These locations draw visitors who want to learn more about the region's religious and cultural heritage.

### B. Potential Benefits of Promoting Buddhist Tourism

Buddhist tourism can help ensure the preservation of historical buildings and artefacts, protecting them for upcoming generations. Additionally, the expansion of tourism in the area has the potential to support economic growth, produce employment opportunities for locals, and promote entrepreneurship and small business growth.

### C. Challenges in Promoting and Facilitating Buddhist Tourism

To give tourists a comfortable and enjoyable experience, it is crucial to improve tourism infrastructure, including transportation, lodging, and amenities. For the effective promotion and facilitation of Buddhist tourism, it is also critical to raise awareness of the historical importance of Buddhist sites and to coordinate efforts among local authorities, tourism officials, and other stakeholders.

### D. Urban Planning Aspects of Buddhist Tourism Development

Urban planning is essential for ensuring the preservation of historical sites and incorporating them into the district's overall development. This entails incorporating sustainable practices that lessen the impact of tourism on the environment while also designing and enhancing infrastructure to support tourism growth.

### E. Socio-economic Impacts of Promoting Buddhist Tourism

Buddhist tourism can give locals job opportunities by bringing tourists to the areas, especially in the hospitality, transportation, and handicraft industries. As a result, the local economy may expand, income levels may rise, and local communities may be encouraged to support entrepreneurship.

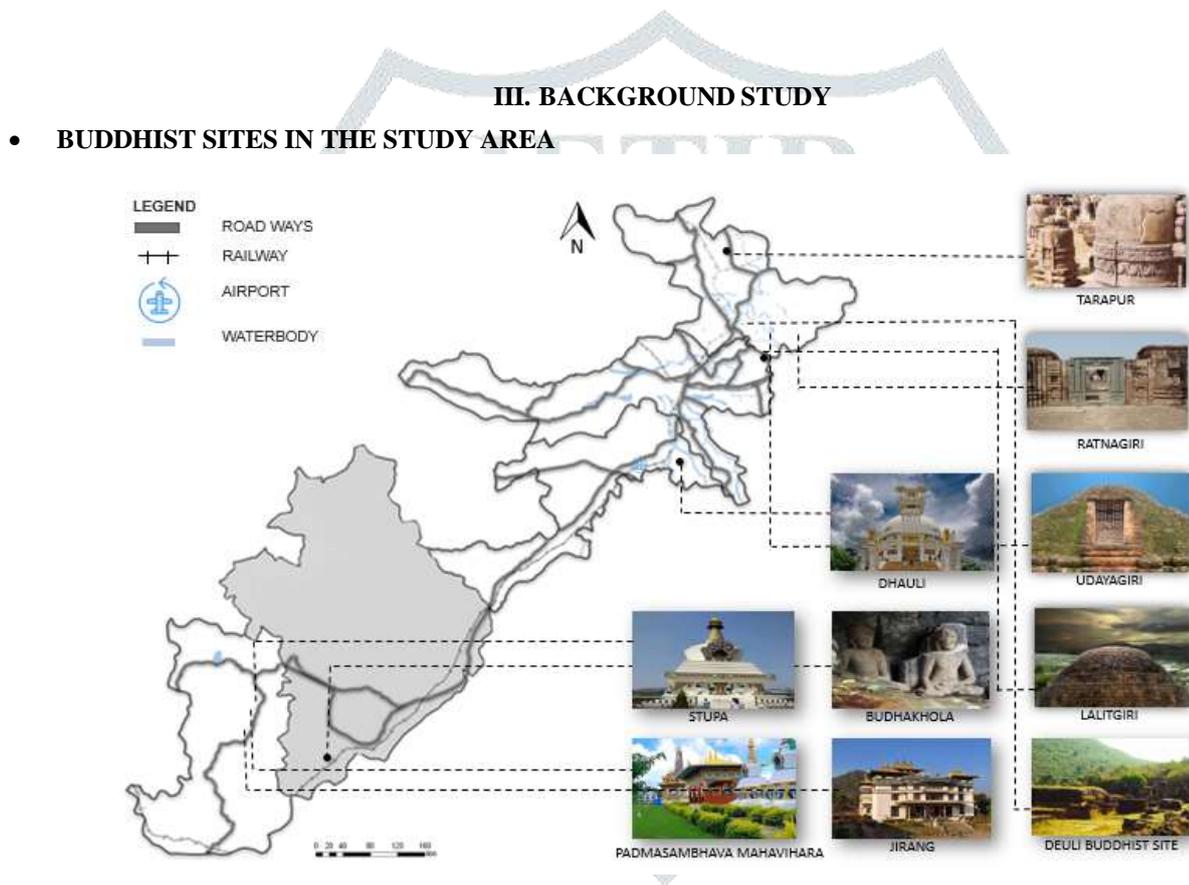


Fig 1.1 Map showing Buddhist site in the study area

- DHAULIGIRI**

A place marked by the tranquilly of the Daya River, Dhauligiri Hills is located 8 kilometres from Bhubaneswar. It's worth seeing Ashoka's renown rock decrees. Additionally, Dhauli Hills is where the path of dharma, which only allows peace and love into your lives, was adopted. As he internalised Buddhist teachings to the core, the idea of dharma-vijay evolved into his ultimate goal. The point of the brutal battles was to benefit and serve mankind. As a result, Buddhism's spiritual and religious practises spread throughout the world. The Vishwa Shanti Stupa is located on Dhauli Hills in Bhubaneswar. The five umbrellas that make up the Shanti Stupa's dome structure stand in for the five pillars of Buddhism. There is a list of pilgrimages to the Lord Buddha that draw a variety of devotees when it comes to going on a Buddhist pilgrimage. Here is a list of various Buddhist pilgrimages that every disciple of Lord Buddha should make time to travel to these sites.

The Japan Buddha Sangha and the Kalinga Nippon Buddha Sangha constructed the white dome-shaped Shanti Stupa on top of Dhauli Hill in 1972. The stupa is 22 metres tall and is surrounded by a garden. It is made up of four golden statues of the Buddha in various poses and is a representation of peace and nonviolence. The Japanese Buddha Sangha and the Kalinga Nippon Buddha Sangha constructed the Shanti Stupa in 1972. The stupa was erected to celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's birth and to encourage nonviolence and peace.

- **UDAYAGIRI AND KHANDAGIRI**

In the Indian state of Odisha, two adjacent hills named Udayagiri and Khandagiri are situated close to Bhubaneswar. Numerous significant Buddhist sites, some of which date back to the first century BC, are located on these hills.

Numerous significant Buddhist sites, including the well-known Rani Gumpha (Queen's Cave), which features intricate carvings depicting stories from the Jataka tales, can be found on Udayagiri hill.

- **LALITGIRI**

One of the main Buddhist centres in Odisha is Lalitgiri, also known as Naltigiri (Lat. 20° 35' N and Long. 86° 15' E) in the Birupa-Chitrotpala Valley of the Cuttack district. The distance to the state capital, Bhubaneswar, is 90 km. C.S. Banari, the Sub-collector of Jajpur at the time, made the initial discovery of the Lalitgiri archaeological remains in 1869. The site's true nature and significance were discovered in 1905 by M.M. Chakravarty, the sub-divisional officer for Jajpur at the time. Two relic caskets were kept in khondalite containers inside the ruins of a large stupa that was perched on top of a hill, according to the excavation. The relic, or dhatu, was kept inside the innermost gold casket and was arranged like a Chinese puzzle box in the form of a tiny bone fragment. The structural remnants of a large, east-facing apsidal chaityagriha that measures 33 by 11 metres and has a 3.3-meter-thick wall with a circular stupa in the centre are another significant find at the site. This building's discovery in Odisha was a first of its kind in the context of Buddhism. The Kushand Brahm inscription, a collection of shell inscriptions, are additional significant finds from this region.

- **UDAYAGIRI**

In the Indian state of Odisha's Jajpur district is the Buddhist site known as Udayagiri. The location, which is on a hilltop, is well-known for its old caves, rock-cut artwork, and inscriptions. The distance between Udayagiri and Bhubaneswar, the state capital of Odisha, is about 100 km. Given that there is evidence of continuous habitation and development from the third century BCE to the thirteenth century CE, it is one of the largest and oldest Buddhist complexes in Odisha.

- **LANGUDI**

A Buddhist pilgrimage destination in the Indian state of Odisha known for its historic stupas and monasteries is Langudi. It is roughly 25 km from Jajpur and 85 km from Bhubaneswar, the state capital. It contains significant Brahmi and Sanskrit inscriptions that contributed to the spread of Buddhism and the well-known Langudi Rock Inscription of King Kharavela.

- **RATNAGIRI**

One of the most significant and well-preserved Buddhist complexes in Odisha is Ratnagiri, which has historical traces of continuous habitation and growth from the 5th to the 13th centuries CE. It was a significant centre of Buddhist learning and scholarship, drawing scholars and pilgrims from all over Southeast Asia and India.

- **DEULI BUDDHIST SITE AND SUNSET POINT**

Deuli is conveniently reachable by road and is situated about 65 kilometres south of Bhubaneswar. Numerous Buddhist stupas, chaityas, and monasteries from the sixth and seventh centuries AD are still visible at the location. The Archaeological Survey of India has since excavated and partially restored the site since it was first discovered in the 1980s. The location offers a calm and peaceful atmosphere and is surrounded by lovely greenery.

- **JIRANG**

Jirang is the biggest Buddhist monastery in Eastern India and is also referred to as Padma Sambhava Mahavihara. The Tibetan spiritual leader, Dalai Lama, inaugurated it in Chandragiri, Gajapati district, Odisha state, in 2010. For visiting Buddhist monks from all over India, it serves as a residence and college.

The tourist influx percentages for various buddhist sites in the Odisha districts of Khorda, Jirang, Cuttack, and Jajpur are highlighted in the thesis journal. According to the data, Khorda district draws the most visitors, representing 48% of the total influx. Jirang comes in second with 29% of tourists in the region. 15% of tourists come to the Jajpur district, while only 8% come to Cuttack. These percentages show how different the districts' levels of tourism activity are, with Khorda being the most popular. The results provided insightful information for tourism planning and development strategies in the area by shedding light on the popularity and potential of these sites.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

- Problem Identification
- Need of The Study
- Formulation of AIM, Objective, Scope and Limitation
- Literature Study
- Data Collection – Primary and Secondary Survey
- Data Analysis
- Recommendations

## V. DATA ANALYSIS

These locations have a lot of social potentials because they are connected to Odisha's rich historical and cultural heritage. They hold significant religious and cultural value and provide tourists with one-of-a-kind opportunities to discover and gain knowledge of the area's rich cultural history. Annual Tourist Inflow, Average Stay Length, and Frequency of Fairs and Festivals are the social characteristics.

In the districts of Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Gajapati in Odisha, the thesis on promoting and facilitating the splendour and vision of Buddhist tourism explores both domestic and foreign tourist influx. However, the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing travel restrictions caused a decline in tourist numbers from 2019 to 2021. Despite this drawback, it is noteworthy that the number of tourists tends to be higher in the months of January, February, September, October, November, and December. This is largely because of the pleasant weather during these months. This information is essential to the thesis because it emphasises how important it is to comprehend seasonal patterns and take advantage of opportune weather conditions to effectively promote Buddhist tourism. The thesis aims to revitalise tourism in these four districts and create a magnificent and culturally immersive experience for both domestic and foreign visitors by focusing on marketing efforts and improving visitor experiences during these months.

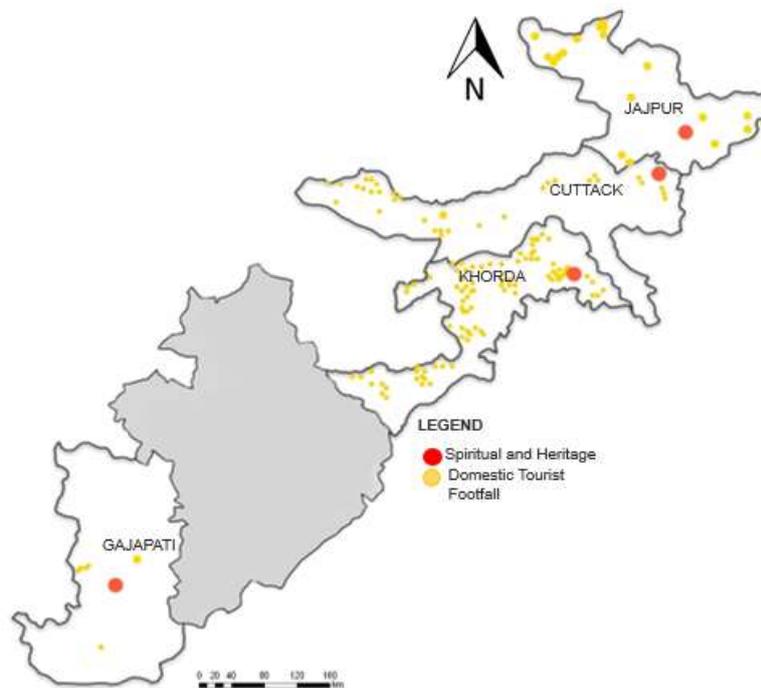


Fig 1.2 Map showing the tourist influx in the study area  
SOURCE: OTDC

### A. FESTIVALS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

Several Buddhist festivals and cultural events are held in the Odisha districts of Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Jirang, showcasing the area's extensive Buddhist heritage. These celebrations and cultural activities are important for promoting Buddhist traditions, keeping them alive, and drawing tourists. Here are a few of the holidays and customs that are observed in these areas:

- **Khorda: Kalinga Mahotsav:** This celebration honours the historical importance of the Kalinga War and promotes peace and nonviolence, two fundamental Buddhist principles. Vesak, or Buddha Jayanti, is a festival that commemorates the Lord Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death (parinirvana). It features religious rites, processions, and lectures on Buddhist principles.
- **Cuttack: The Dharmarajika Maha Stupa Festival** is held there to honour the historic Buddhist structure and features rituals, prayers, and cultural displays. **Ashokastami:** This holiday honours King Ashoka, who was instrumental in the spread of Buddhism. In order to receive blessings, devotees go to temples and pray.
- **Jajpur: Ratnagiri Mahotsav:** This celebration honours the area's extensive Buddhist heritage and is held at the Ratnagiri Buddhist complex. It consists of religious ceremonies, cultural events, and exhibitions.
- **Jirang: Monlam Chenmo,** also known as the Great Prayer Festival, is an important Buddhist holiday that is observed with elaborate rituals, chanting, and prayers for prosperity and peace throughout the world.

**Saga Dawa:** This celebration honours Lord Buddha's conception, enlightenment, and parinirvana. Devotees participate in a variety of religious activities, such as praying and walking around holy places.

**Maha Parinirvana Diwas:** This day, which commemorates the anniversary of Lord Buddha's passing, is marked by religious rituals, meditation sessions, and talks on the core principles of Buddhism.

Locals and tourists alike can participate in these festivals and cultural events to learn more about Buddhism, experience the region's distinctive cultural heritage, and become immersed in its traditions.

## B. PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTE

In addition to having unique physical characteristics, the four districts of Khorda, Jajpur, Cuttack, and Jirang in the Indian state of Odisha face some difficulties in promoting and facilitating Buddhist travel. Khorda has a variety of landscapes, including plains, hills, and a coastline, but it also has problems, like poor infrastructure and little knowledge of Buddhist sites. Jajpur has beautiful scenery, including rivers, hills, and forests, but it faces problems with connectivity, lodging options, and infrastructure development. Due to its strategic location and historical significance, Cuttack faces challenges such as a lack of targeted marketing, little public awareness, and infrastructure needs. Jirang, which is renowned for its hilly terrain and natural beauty, has issues with connectivity, accessibility, and infrastructure for the tourism industry.

## C. ACCOMMODATION

The lodging options in the Indian state of Odisha's districts of Khorda, Jajpur, Cuttack, and Jirang are crucial to promoting and facilitating Buddhist travel. The capital district of Khorda has a variety of lodging choices, including hotels, guesthouses, and resorts. However, issues like the requirement for more affordable options and raising the calibre and standard of already-existing accommodations must be addressed. There are not many places to stay in Jajpur, so more hotels and guesthouses are required to meet the rising demand from tourists. A variety of lodging options are available in Cuttack, a significant cultural and commercial centre, but to meet the needs of Buddhist tourists, the city's overall quality and hospitality services still need to be improved. Jirang, being a remote location, has issues with its inadequate lodging infrastructure, necessitating the construction of hotels and guesthouses to ensure that travellers have a comfortable stay. In order to successfully promote the splendour and vision of Buddhist tourism in these districts, it will be necessary to overcome these obstacles through the expansion and improvement of lodging facilities.

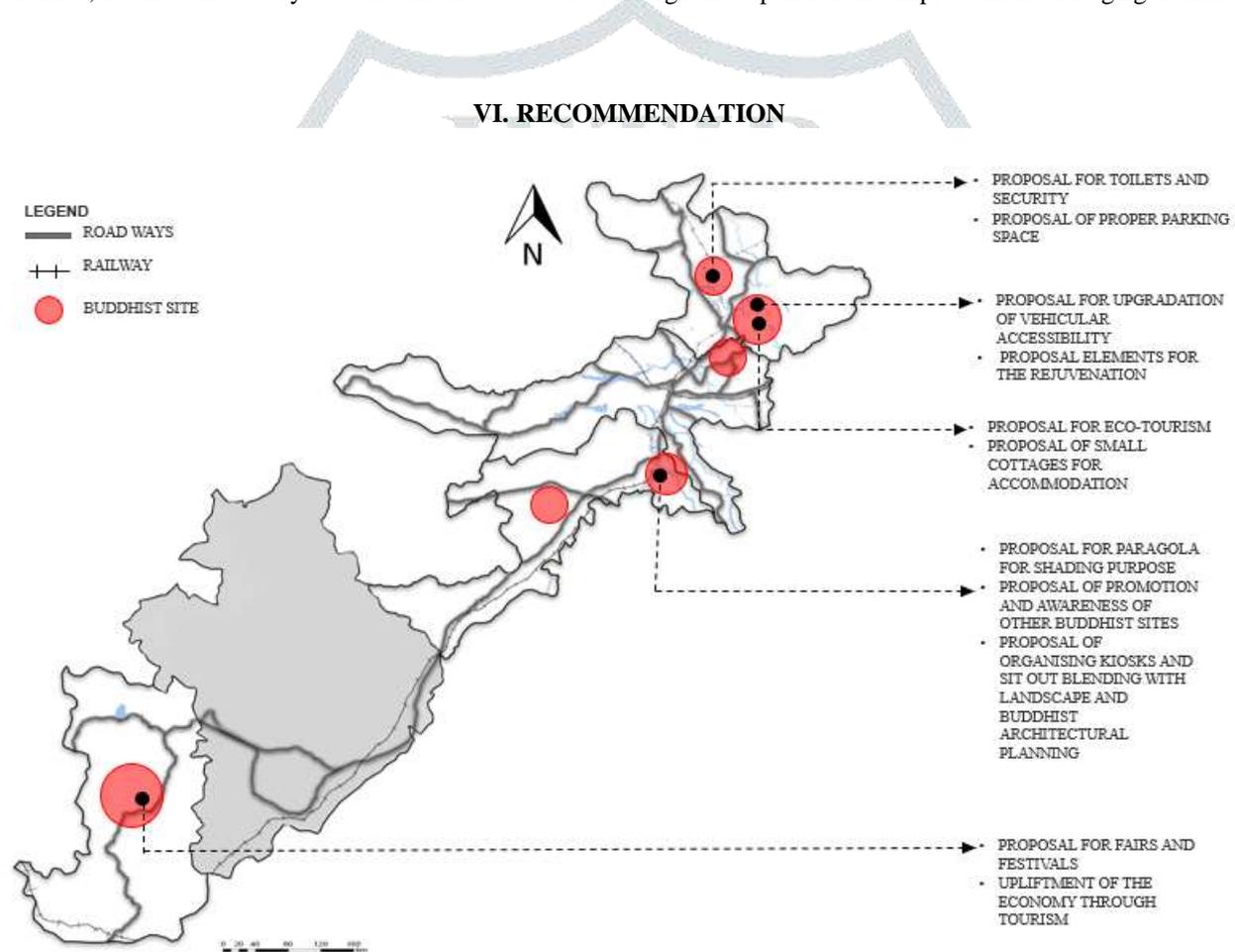


Fig 1.3 Map showing the recommendation or the study area.

## A. LANDSCAPE DESIGN, SIT-OUTS

The districts of Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Gajapati in the Indian state of Odisha can greatly benefit from the promotion and facilitation of Buddhist tourism by incorporating sit-outs, landscape design, kiosks, and pavements as part of urban planning. Buddhist architectural design elements not only improve the urban environment's aesthetic appeal but also have a psychological effect on people, sparking interest in and curiosity about visiting Buddhist sites. The availability of sit-outs offers areas for reflection and relaxation, enabling guests to fully experience the spiritual ambience. The experience is further enhanced by thoughtful landscape design that incorporates Buddhist motifs, gardens, and water features, which create a calming and serene atmosphere. Kiosks act as centres of information, educating tourists about Buddhist history and regional customs. Tourists can easily navigate and explore the districts thanks to the thoughtfully designed pavements. By incorporating Buddhist architecture into urban planning, the districts can pique people's interest and arouse their curiosity, encouraging them to visit and explore not only the Buddhist sites in the area but also its other tourist attractions.

## B. ECO-TOURISM

Eco-tourism in a Buddhist site is highly important and significant, as it has the potential to promote sustainable tourism practices while preserving cultural and natural heritage.

- **Sustainable tourism practices:** Eco-tourism emphasizes responsible tourism practices that minimize negative impacts on the environment and preserve natural resources. By promoting eco-tourism in a Buddhist site, we can encourage sustainable tourism practices that help to protect and preserve the natural environment.
- **Cultural preservation:** Many Buddhist sites are rich in cultural heritage, including ancient temples, monasteries, and other architectural wonders. By promoting eco-tourism in these sites, we can help preserve the cultural heritage and promote awareness of Buddhist values and traditions.
- **Economic development:** Eco-tourism can provide significant opportunities for economic development, especially in rural areas where traditional economic opportunities may be limited. By promoting eco-tourism in a Buddhist site, we can create new economic opportunities for local communities while supporting the preservation of cultural and natural heritage.
- **Education and awareness:** Eco-tourism provides an opportunity for visitors to learn about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainability, as well as the cultural and historical significance of a site. By promoting eco-tourism in a Buddhist site, we can raise awareness about the importance of sustainable tourism practices and promote cultural understanding.
- **Community involvement:** Eco-tourism can involve and benefit local communities, as it provides opportunities for community members to participate in tourism activities and benefit from tourism revenue. By involving local communities in the planning and implementation of eco-tourism initiatives, we can ensure that they are sustainable and benefit the community.

## C. PROMOTION OF HANDICRAFTS AND ARTIFACTS

The Jeerang Monastery's promotion of handicrafts and artefacts has the potential to significantly contribute to the preservation of traditional skills and methods while generating employment opportunities for regional artisans and craftspeople. The monastery can aid in the preservation of cultural heritage and guarantee the continuity of traditional craftsmanship by showcasing and promoting these handmade goods. In addition to giving local artisans a means of support, the production and sale of handicrafts helps the area's economy as a whole by drawing tourists and generating income. Additionally, promoting regional handicrafts can support the local community's sense of pride and identity while promoting the passing on of traditional skills to future generations.

By supporting and promoting the local handicraft industry, Jeerang Monastery can contribute to the sustainable development of the region while preserving and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the area.

## D. IMPROVING VEHICLE ACCESSIBILITY

Several suggestions can be made for the promotion and facilitation of Buddhist tourism in the districts of Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Gajapati in Odisha, India, in order to improve the visitor experience and support environmentally friendly transportation options. To prevent on-street parking and maintain a smooth flow of traffic, there must first be sufficient car parking facilities. Parking zone maintenance, as well as the provision of public restrooms and water facilities, can be paid for with the money collected from minimal parking fees. Incorporating electric vehicles into the tourist industry can also provide a greener transportation choice that can handle all weather conditions and cut down on carbon emissions. To meet the needs of various visitors, electric vehicles can be divided into different categories (two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and four-wheelers). Moreover, establishing a bike-sharing programme via a Mobile application can promote healthy and environmentally friendly transportation. To support the bicycle-sharing system, sufficient parking spaces should be made available frequently. The districts can improve visitors' access, lessen traffic, and encourage sustainable transport options by putting these recommendations into practice.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is significant potential for cultural heritage preservation, economic growth, and sustainable development in the districts of Khorda, Cuttack, Jajpur, and Gajapati in Odisha by promoting and facilitating Buddhist tourism's splendour and vision. The thesis has identified the need for strategic interventions in urban planning, lodging, physical attributes, and transportation through the exploration of historical significance, cultural heritage, and existing tourism infrastructure. The districts can improve the visitor experience and spark interest in visiting Buddhist sites by incorporating elements of Buddhist architecture and building sit-outs, landscape designs, kiosks and pavements. Additionally, Jeerang Monastery's promotion of regional handicrafts and artefacts can aid in the preservation of traditional skills and create job opportunities for local artisans. Additionally, adding parking lots for cars, electric cars, and a bike-sharing programme can increase accessibility, ease traffic, and encourage tourists to use sustainable transportation options. By implementing these suggestions, the districts will be able to capitalise on Buddhist tourism's potential while promoting cultural understanding, economic growth, and sustainable practices. This thesis emphasises the value of comprehensive planning and stakeholder cooperation to advance the splendour and vision of Buddhist tourism in these four districts of Odisha. This will lead to job creation and support socio-economic development.

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