

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF TOURISM IN ANDHRA PRADESH – A CASE ANALYSIS OF CHITTOOR DISTRICT

Dr. Pujari Krishnaiah

ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overall view of the tourist facilities required and facilities available interrelationship in the context of Chittoor district tourism. The study shows clearly the gap between demand and supply in terms of availability, quality and variety of accommodation, food and transport related facilities and many other allied services. However, the state government and its agencies like Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (A.P.T.D.C.) are making efforts to narrow down the gap. The study reveals that the supply in terms of the various tourist facilities is not only insufficient but also ineffective. Therefore, the researcher felt to bring out the Problems and prospects of the twelve dominant attraction centres in particular and of the remaining subsidiary attraction centres and future subsidiary attraction centres in general.

Keywords: *Tourism, population, industry, development and government.*

*Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Mekelle University, Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is developing rapidly all over the world and has its impacts on social, cultural and economic set-up of different countries. As tourism has assumed a new dimension, it becomes essential to make an in-depth study of various aspects related to it". The impact of the Tourism Industry, particularly on the host country, state, region or district is multifarious. This is reflected in the economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental aspects of the country "In today's economic and political environment, one industry, more truly a segment of the economy moves to the forefront as the greatest single opportunity for economic, cultural and political exchange. Tourism in its broadest, generic sense can do more to develop understanding among people, provide jobs, create foreign exchange and raise living standards than any other economic force known.

Literature Review

Bijender K. Punia (1997) in his book on "Tourism Management : Problems and Prospects," expressed that the tourism in the last few years particularly, tourism has come into its own, and is now making inroads, into the country's economic health in its capacity as one of prime foreign exchange earners. He also said that country like India with heterogeneity of religious, cultures, and ethnic groups, tourism is an important factor not only for maintaining and promoting communal harmony and peace but also for strengthening the economic base. Tourism, although late, on the scene, it is now fast growing industry, earning foreign exchange for the country.

Objectives of the study

- To evaluate the specific Problems and prospects of the tourist industry in the district and
- To suggest measures for effective organization.

The environmental Problems and prospects of these centres are also discussed in detail

Tirumala & Tirupathi

Problems:

The Tirupathi town in particular and the Tirumala town in general are facing population explosion as narrated in chapter II. Due to huge migration of population from the surrounding rural areas and from the states of Tamilnadu and Karnataka and enormous yearly increase of pilgrims/tourists, these towns are facing several general Problems as follows.

- Degradation of livable environment in the towns because of shortage of accommodation and existence of very high density of population in the core areas of the towns. This led to several Problems due to the road pattern in the service network in these towns which is not properly planned for such a high densities, practically the roads are very narrow and irregular in the centre and also in the wards which are inconvenient to augment the services.
- Inadequate traffic and transport system that is insufficient mass transportation system, existence of rail and road level crossings on the major roads, high amount of through traffic from the rural vicinity, high concentration of peak hour traffic, encroachments on the roads and lack of parking places leading to inconvenience, congestion, road accidents, delays, urban tensions and heart diseases. The narrow roads without pavements are inconvincing the pedestrians.
- Deterioration of areas of historical and cultural importance owing to various developments such as origin of slums and other unrelated business establishments which are taking place in and around the towns. The activity is changing the natural environment of the areas.
- Inadequacy of facilities and services and uneven spatial distribution.
- No proper underground drainage system, drinking water and sanitation are perpetual problems.
- The signage system is not properly implemented and observed.
- Gardens and public places are inadequate.
- The Tirupathi town is polluted in all spheres of life owing to existence of slums, dense population, very heavy vehicular traffic, absence of gardens and public places, roadside plantation, absence of underground drainage and the like.
- Poor road connections to major agglomerations and to many existing attractions.
- Limited number of flights and
- Lack of variety of attractions.

The Problems pertaining to pilgrims/tourists are as follows :

- The signage regarding the places of interest inside and outside of these two towns is not adequate. The tourists are finding difficult to know about the places of interest, in other words publicity/information regarding the local places of interest is not fourth coming.

- Inadequacy of transportation linking the local places of interest with that of the important places inside the town.
- Enough security is not provided to the satisfaction of the tourists, therefore, the tourists are feeling insecure.
- The available transportation to reach Tirumala from Tirupathi is inadequate.
- The tourists are unhappy over the prevailing corruption or malpractices in these tourist centres.
- Accommodation available at Tirupathi and Tirumala is inadequate and expensive.
- Though there are number of private hotels, the absence of Janatha hotels is creating food Problems to the tourists because food in the private hotels is costly.

Prospects:

To achieve the required developments in the two towns in order to sustain the tourist inflow of present and future, the following strategy for implementation is needed.

- New terminal and extension at Tirupathi airport to increase passenger capacity and number of flights.
- New highway schemes and on local scale in Tirupathi.
- Broad, lengthy, quality roads, road widenings and pavement improvements and upgrades.
- Ongoing underground drainage to cover drains.
- New power cables.
- Coach and Railway station improvements.
- An effect signage system with simple and effective designs kept in busy public places, airports, bus stations, roadsides, shopping streets and museums which make easy for the people to find their way around and to other places of interest and feel comfortable in the unfamiliar surroundings.
- Publicity/information regarding other places of interest in the district would be through booklets, talks, demonstrations, tourist guides, pamphlets, wall posters, brochures, information boards, view points and videos.
- Media such as lasers, audio, video visual, touch, sounds, drama, story- telling, may be used to bring visitors back another day or to bring their families or friends together.
- Activity opportunities for youth and families in a new sizeable and self contained visitor zone.

- Free and paid accommodation at Tirumala and low priced paid accommodation at Tirupathi.
- Online reservation for accommodation and sevas at Tirupathi and Tirumala and linking of all information centres distributed all over India with that of Tirumala and Tirupathi.
- School of temple management and hospitality industry.
- Existing attractions have to be developed and new attractions have to be created to strengthen the economic activity of the area.
- Enhance the spiritual experience of pilgrims by developing the natural beauty of the area owing to the parks and gardens nearer to the temples.
- Develop the Sri Venkateswara Natural and National Sanctuary to facilitate the pilgrims for picnics, viewing, walking and visiting theerthams to enjoy the occasional bathings.
- Improve the urban environment of Tirupathi.
- Create new improved facilities and leisure activities by providing additional hotel, retail commercial establishment and entertainment attractions which also generate economic and employment opportunities.
- Conceive new attractions to attract tourists with varying price thresholds that range from price sensitive, low budget visitors to affluent visitors.
- Attract international visitors from targeting countries of South East Asia and the Indian Ocean, which have concentrations of Hindus of ethnic origin and have interest in visiting these two temples.
- Additional power, water supply and wastage treatment projects are required to supplement the future necessities.
- Improve the telecommunication facilities to improve tourism through online booking services.
- Provide visitors with more flexible and wider accommodation to their satisfaction. Alternative accommodation is also to be conformed at the time of booking.
- Information on timings for darshans and various sevas must also be available online.
- Initiate and implement all types of care to protect the interest of the visitors during Brahmotsavas, the most important and spectacular festival in these towns.
- Propagate Hindu religion and culture through dance and dramas, harikathas, audio and videos, posters and books.

- Multilingual guides services of both government and private to cater the needs of visitors in the area.
- Conduct package tours to all important tourist centres of the district from Tirumala and Tirupathi.
- Establish craft bazar at Tirumala and Tirupathi, execute rope way either from Alipiri or from Srivari Mettu to Tirumala and organise tourist facilitation centres at various places of Tirumala and Tirupathi.

Srikalahasthi :

- The maintenance and restoration of the temple area is very slow and poor, therefore the same would be largely and immediately improved.
- The surrounding facilities and infrastructure is a main requirement to increase tourism.
- Parking arrangements for vehicles are poor causing congestion and noise pollution immediately outside the complex, which have to be rectified at once.
- The main route to the temple is in poor condition with unchecked vendors and hawkers who harass the tourists/pilgrims and robe of their peace of mind. The way this has to be improved.
- Access from the temple complex to the river Swarnamukhi can be opened up to have a close association of the two.
- Enforce planning restrictions on temporary buildings that are coming up around the temple, which will degrade the ecology of the temple complex.
- Open the tourist information centre, which can provide all the necessary information to the tourists and increase the publicity.
- Appoint tourist guides in turn to help the tourists, which saves time and makes their trip easy and satisfactory.
- Bring up flower bearing and shade bearing plantations around the temple, to control the pollution of temple complex.
- Construct free and low priced accommodation centres, which can attract more tourists or middle income group.
- Establish craft market near the temple complex.
- Beggary is noticed as a serious problem, which can be reduced by providing them Ashrams, where they can be engaged in handicrafts work or workshops.

- Package trips shall be conducted from this place to the neighbouring tourist centres, which compels the duration of the stay of tourists.

Tiruchanur :

Sri Padmavathi temple is located here and is maintained by T.T.D., therefore the temple complex is pucca and well built, but other related ecological aspects are not well developed.

Pilgrims visiting this centre expressed their unhappiness over the following. :

- The streets are not well planned, roads are not properly laid and maintained hence, causing more density and congestional problem. These have to be planned properly and executed effectively.
- Parking arrangements for vehicles are poor causing dust and noise pollution to the temple complex. The parking arrangements have to be made in a more spacious lot away from the temple complex.
- Free choultries and paid cottages may be constructed in the outskirts of the temple complex to reduce the pressure of the tourists for accommodation in Tirupathi.
- The small and donzen like marriage choultries may be replaced with good and modern marriage halls.
- Strict security is required to avoid washing of cloths in the Pushkarini to maintain cleanliness and purity of water and to provide pilgrims a holy place for bathing.
- A green belt may be proposed and executed encircling Tiruchanur for better ecological balance.
- Moderate hotels and craft bazar is ideal to be located here for the purpose of marketing, which creates employment.
- The road from Tirupathi to Tiruchanur and Tiruchanur to Renigunta shall widened so as to withstand to the ever-increasing traffic and to avoid road accidents.
- The existing poorest sanitation facilities may be rectified through a planned programme.
- For this purpose, the drainage canals shall be constructed, dust bins shall be kept at the road centres and if possible underground drainage shall be taken up by T.T.D.
- More publicity shall be made available in this centre and shall be included in the package programme that starts from Tirupathi and for which guide services are necessary.

Kanipakam:

- The three important temples namely Varasiddi Vinayaka, Lord Siva and Venugopala Swamy temple, which are now under different managements and located separately shall be brought in to one complex and under one management to avoid confusion in attracting pilgrims and performing sevas. This modification certainly improves pilgrim numbers and the income.
- The parking lot for taxi and cars near the temple is inadequate and polluting the temple complex. Care should be taken to provide to require parking lot just little away from the temple complex.
- There is no proper bus stand in this settlement for buses, vans and mini vans. Therefore, A.P.S.R.T.C. shall establish pucca bus stand with shelters and toilets.
- The absence of sanitation is creating environmental problem, therefore, drainage system shall be brought in.
- Accommodation and hoteling facility may be provided either by the temple management or by the private sector for atleast one-day stay of the pilgrims.
- Shopping complex with handicrafts and pilgrim interested goods shall be established to gain economic standards and to get employment for the local people.
- This pilgrim centre shall be included under package programme that starts from Tirupathi.
- Motels shall be established on the roadside between Chittoor and Kanipakam.
- The government or the temple management shall try to purchase the surrounding private land to extend the above said facilities.
- Information centre is necessary here to propagate existence of these temples.
- The pilgrims/tourists are facing Problems due to the absence of public convenience. They may be constructed at the proper and convenient places.

Narayanavanam :

- The temple is maintained by T.T.D., therefore it can construct free choultries or paid rooms for oneday stay of the pilgrims.
- Gardening can be taken up in the vast land available within and outside the temple to attract the pilgrims.
- The roads from Puttur to Narayanavanam shall be properly laid to reach the temple quickly and comfortably.

- The poor drainage may be improved and maintained properly to reduce the sanitation problem.
- The increasing pilgrim numbers require two more buses to conduct package trips connecting this centre because the available one is not sufficient.
- Development of places of public convenience shall be taken up.
- Protected water supply is a basic need here.
- The importance of the temple and the handloom industry of this place shall be propagated through information centres, brochures and pamphlets.
- Shopping complex with handicrafts and handlooms shall be brought up, which shall create good market for handlooms and increased economic standard of the area and generates local employment.

Boyakonda:

- The increasing pilgrim numbers to this centre are facing acute Problems due to the absence of even the basic facilities. Therefore, this centre requires the following facilities to be established to develop this centre as a major centre of attraction.
- All weather motorable roads.
- Tar topped road from Madanapalle, Punganur, Chowdepalle etc., and their maintenance.
- Introduction of frequent transport facility – shuttle services.
- Construction of bus shelter.
- Maintain the cleanliness of Puskarini to provide holy bath and to avoid contagious deceases.
- Construct separate dressing rooms for ladies near the Puskarini.
- Construct free choultries.
- Provide vessels for cooking and pooja articles near the temple to facilitate pilgrims.
- Arches can be constructed at the junctions of main roads from Madanapalle, Chowdepalle, Jogindlu, Pattavandla palle and approach roads leading to this centre, which indicates and attracts the pilgrims coming from Karnataka and Tamilnadu states.
- The main temple tower shall be constructed and the main gate may be repaired to attract the pilgrims.

- Required number of buses shall be run from Chowdepalle via Boyakonda to Madanapalle and Punganur to facilitate huge number of pilgrims and to earn more money.
- The road under occupation near Chowdepalle mandal officer shall be acquired by the government to provide direct link to Boyakonda.
- The deforestation shall be protected to maintain the ecological balance of the area.

Srinivasa Mangapuram:

- The temple is under the control of Archeological Department of India but maintained by T.T.D. The Archeological Department is often interfering in the development of the temple complex by the T.T.D. This normally hindering the development, therefore T.T.D. must be given complete authority to take up expansion activities of the temple.
- More publicity shall be given about this temple at Tirupathi itself.
- Direct bus facility from Tirupathi shall be introduced for easy reach.
- Guide services shall be provided.
- Package tours to this centre shall be increased.
- Shopping complex is a must here.
- Develop gardens and tree plantations inside and outside of the temple complex.
- Short stay accommodation shall be created to reduce pressure on Tirupathi.
- Pucca bus shelter and places of public convenience shall be created.

Chandragiri Fort:

This famous heritage centre is currently underexploited for tourism and infrequently visited by tourists and pilgrims staying in Tirupathi. The site is rather difficult for the non-expert visitors to interpret at present with scattered heritage buildings and absence of way markings, organised circulation, information boards, leaflets or displays.

The suggestions for Chandragiri to increase visitation by bringing up environmental and other related improvements in the area around the two palaces of Rani Mahal and Raja Mahal, the route upto the old fort, signage and car parking will create a greater sense of arrival and aptutilization of the resources.

The garden around the two royal palaces if improved will play a more significant role in diversifying the attraction of Chandragiri fort. They should contain existing and new water features, picnic areas, refreshments, seating, footpaths and paved areas.

This commercial potential resource can be used nighttime by introducing a “Sound and Light Show” which also generates income. The following important issues if taken up, the Chandragiri fort will be a major attraction in the future.

- Renovation of historical buildings.
- Arrangement of tight security.
- Street lighting and lighting the two palaces.
- Way marking of attraction.
- Provision of food and refreshments
- Propaganda about the site.
- Improvement of toilets and public places.
- Acquisition of government lands occupied by encroachers around the fort.
- Creation of new gardens and tree plantation.
- Upgradation of accessibility.
- Provision of pedal boats in the lake opposite to Raja Mahal to attract children.
- Arrangement of ropeway to the nearby hill with 800 m height.
- Conducting or package programme from here to Kalyanidam, Talakona and Srinivasamangapuram.
- Bringing up flower gardens inside the fort and
- Establishment of shopping complex with a craft bazar and many others.

Horsley Hills:

This unique hill resort is let down by the poor state of buildings and the inadequate service infrastructure. The site’s ability to attract more and more visitors is diminishing due to difficult journey from Tirupathi on poor roads and lack of signage. Horsley hills being a natural asset is an ideal target but could not provide leisure destination to many outside of Tirupathi. The following improvements if taken up increase visitation and transform this site into a model hill station and can earn lot of currency and provide employment opportunities.

- Creation of parks and gardens, scenic walks, picnics, trekking, which are in high demand from visitors to Tirupathi and Bangalore.
- Establishment of four star hotels and a Janatha hotel will attract the weekend population of Bangalore and of Andhra Pradesh as well as the meetings of industrial boards and corporate markets.
- Renovate and upgrade existing hotels.
- Improve access and parking lots.

- Increase the number of bus trips from Trupathi and Madanapalle.
- Solve the problem of drinking water, which is causing Problems to the present day visitors.
- Maintenance of street lighting is a must.
- Protect the existing 11,000 hectares of Horsley hills forest from deforestation and forest fires for a good environment.
- Take necessary steps to avoid felling of sandal wood trees and take up sandal wood tree plantation in the new sites.
- Construct check dams against slopes to create water source.
- Introduce social forestry by planting fruit bearing trees and firewood.
- Improve coffee plantation on the slopes of Horsley hills.
- The forest department and the private sector should involve and take care of the forest to protect the environment of Horsley hills.
- Avoid road accidents by laying and maintaining good roads from various places leading to this centre.
- Night watch is a must to encourage a free movement of tourists.

Talakona :

This holiday resort is suffering from several draw backs such as inadequate water supply, inadequate accommodation, non-availability of food or refreshments, inadequate publicity, improper sanitation facilities, inadequate security to the tourists, erratic electric supply, poor roads, and access from neighbouring places, non availability of tourist guides, absence of road markings. These Problems have to be rectified to improve the attracting quality of the place.

Besides the government and private sector should involve in the development of gardens, social forestry, check dams against slopes and protect the existing natural forest in turn to protect the natural environment at this place. These activities may certainly increase the visitation.

Kailsanadhakonda :

This holiday resort is connected to the surrounding places with poor conditioned roads and limited number of buses. This place is not known to the visitors except to the local people. No other infrastructure such as shops on small scale, indication boards, drinking water, and uninterrupted electric facility is available, degrading the interest of many people to visit this

centre. Therefore, the concerned should concentrate in the development of these issues to attract more and more tourists and their contributions to generate potentialities.

The remaining 22 centres of the district are suffering from the absence of basic infrastructure and could not attract more and more pilgrims/tourists. If the following infrastructure or necessities if instituted either by the government or by the private sector these centres may have existence on the tourist map of Chittoor district. They are :

Publicity, good roads, proper access, necessary way indicators or road signage, accommodation, hotel and restaurants, guide service, good gardens, sanitation, toilets or public places, security, protection of forest, required employment for maintenance of the centres, proper spending of the contributions/allocations, curbing malpractices and harassment of tourists.

SUGGESTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Decentralise tourism development to districts and the local bodies. Establish district tourism promotion councils, which act as the promotor of the tourism growth.
- * Encourage private sector in the tourism industry and provide a frame work for private-public partnership.
- * Bring in awareness of the industry about potential for employment and economic development.
- * Encourage participative tourism where local communities participate and gain while transforming unique experience to the visitors.
- * Generate responsible tourism due to which industry will be responsible, to its environment and thereby to develop sustainable tourism.
- * Involve the local communities near by the attractions and develop the meaningful economic linkages.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the two major centres of pilgrimage Tirumala and Tirupathi though receiving annually million of pilgrims and income, greatly established infrastructural but suffering from several drawbacks either in terms of providing facilities to the pilgrims visiting or in the physical development of the towns.

The other pilgrim/tourist centres of the district inspite of possessing favourable physical conditions are suffering from various problems, which are explained in detail, centre wise in chapter VI of this work. The reason for under development of these centres is the backwardness of these areas because initially they lie in one of the backward districts of the

Rayalaseema region. Neither the central government nor the state government has taken care of these centres to develop them suitable for visiting.

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