



## TOURISM POTENTIAL IN TIRUPATI DISTRICT

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## KEYWORDS :

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of travel is very old, the term 'Tourism' as we know or mean it today is of relatively modern origin. In both the domestic and international tourism has developed because of various factors such as increased leisure, higher standard of living and improved education and other relative factors. But the thing is it gave it real boost, is a means of speedy transport and communication.

In modern times, tourism plays an important role in the economic development of the country and providing employment and eradication of poverty. Nearly 10.7% of the total workforce in the world is absorbed by the tourism industry. It has currently provided employment to 212 million persons generating an income of US 655 billion dollars. The size of the tourism industry is more than 7 trillion dollars now. India is one of the fastest growing tourism destinations in the World. Andhra Pradesh has tremendous potential to become one of the foremost states in the tourism map of the country. Tirupati district is a home of temples and Historical Forts, beautiful waterfalls, scenic hills, forests, and wildlife, Zoological parks. Tirumala temple is considered the gate way for Andhra Pradesh Tourism. Tirupati district is endowed with a rich and unique culture. The arts, crafts, dance and dramas of district are much exciting to the tourists. This article is intended to identify the Tourism potentiality in Tirupati region and how it would be used as tourism resources to generate Economy and Employment to the local population.

## Significance of Tirupati District

Tirupati district is located between the Northern Latitudes of 13° 21' 54" and 14° 30' 40" and between the Eastern Longitudes 79° 5' 42" and 80° 4' 10". It is bounded on the east by Bay of Bengal, on the west by Annamayya and Chittoor Districts of Andhra Pradesh, on the North by SPSR Nellore and Annamayya Districts of Andhra Pradesh and on the south by Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu State. In respect of area, it is with an area of 9174 Square Kilometers which accounts for 5.63 percent of the total area of the state. The general elevation of the mountainous part of the district is 2500 feet above sea level.

Tirupati district would be formed from Tirupati revenue division from former chittoor district. Tirupati district is rich in tourist centres, like temples, Forts, Hill stations, beaches and Zoological parks. It has world famous pilgrim centres like Tirumala, Sri Kalahasti and great heritage sites like Forts and Palaces placed the Chittoor district at high place in Andhra History. It is boom time for India's Tourism and hospitality sector which offers almost all types of tourism at one destination. The district also provides a vivid kaleidoscope of landscapes, magnificent historical sites and misty mountain retreats, rich cultures and festivals.

## Tourism Resources in Tirupati District

All types of tourism centres are projected in newly formed Tirupati district. Tirupati district is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious with tremendous geographical diversity, hospitality, uniqueness and charm. The different types of tourism in the district are as follows:

## Temple Tourism

Tirupati district is visited by innumerable pilgrims from all over the globe. The pilgrim's main purpose in visiting the district is to visit the world famous Sri Venkateswara Temple at Tirumala. The statistical figures reflect that the top 3rd place in attracting the domestic tourists in 2019, having attracted 49.48 million tourists.

## Sri Venkateswara Temple, Tirumala

Tirumala is one of the holiest places in Hinduism and is well known as "Kaliyuga Vaikuntam" by its devotees. Sangam literature, the earliest of Tamil literature (dated between 500 BC to AD 300) mention Tirupati as Tiruvengadam which used to form the northernmost frontier of the Tamil kingdom. For the centuries to come Tirupati was richly endowed by the kings and emperors of various dynasties like The Pallavas of Kanchipuram (9<sup>th</sup> century AD), Cholas of Tanjore (10<sup>th</sup> century), Pandyas of Madhura (14<sup>th</sup> century AD), and Vijayanagara kings (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>2</sup> were committed devotees of Sri Venkateswara. During the rule of the Vijayanagara dynasty, the temple witnessed a lot of development, thus adding to its current reputation as the richest and most opulent in the world.

## Sri Kalahasteswara Temple, Srikalahasti

Srikalahasti temple is a holy place near Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh. It is located on the banks of the river Swarnamukhi, a tributary of the river Pennar. The temple was constructed by Rajarajendra Chola in 12th century. It is adorned with nearly 200 inscriptions from the fourth year of Rajaraja Chola I of 989 AD, to the reign of Sadasiva of Vijayanagara Era till 1565 AD<sup>3</sup>. This temple's main idol is the vayu (air) linga. Srikalahasti is an ancient religious place dating back to 3rd and 4th century AD, oft-quoted and adverted in the Hindu text and mythology. This is in fact considered as the Kailash of the South or Dakshina Kailasa. The name Srikalahasti is originated from 'Sri' meaning spider, 'Kala' meaning serpent and 'Hasti'<sup>4</sup> meaning elephant. The first story from the Srikalahasteswara sathakam of the temple speaks of the devotion of these beings to Lord Shiva. Vayu is incarnated as Lord Shiva and worshipped as Kalahasteswara. Goddess Parvathi devi is worshipped here as Gnanaprasunambika.<sup>5</sup>

Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation is planning to start Temple tourism Circuit in the state. This Temple tourism circuit is identified between three unified Rayalaseema districts which are Chittoor, Nellore and Kadapa. These three districts projected majestic temples and Popular pilgrim centres in the state.

Apart from these two temples, there are large number of Temples constructed in the district during the Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar Periods<sup>6</sup>. Among these the most important are Sri Govindaraja swamy Temple and Kodanda Ramaswamy Temple and Kapileswara Temples-Tirupati, Sri Padmavathi Temple – Tiruchanur, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple in Tondamanadu, Sri Parasurameswara Temple – Gudimallam, Sri Vedanarayana Swami temple –Naryanavanam, Sri Prasanna Venkateswara Temple-Appalyagunta, Penchalakona, krishnaswamy Temple and Chengalal Parameswari temples are the popular temples in

Tirupati district<sup>7</sup>.

### Waterfalls

The most attractive water falls in the district are Talakona, Sadasivakona, Kailasakona, etc. Apart from these there are many Thirthas at the sacred place of Tirumala. Among these, the most important are Swamypuskarini, Gogarbhama, Akasa Ganga, Papavinasanam, Jabali, Vaikuntam, Chakra, Ramakrishna, Kumaradhara, Thumbura Theertham, Sri Narasimha Pushkarini etc in Tirumala. Kapilatheertham, in Tirupati district.

### Talakona

Talakona is an important tourist center which is being attracted by tourists a lot. Talakona is situated near to Bakarapeta of Tirupati district. It is situated near to Tirupati – Madanapalli high way in the Seshachalam hills. With a height of 270 feet, it is the tallest waterfall in Andhra Pradesh. The waterfall has a distance of 49 Kms from Tirupati, 220 Kms from Chennai and 105 kms from Chittoor. The waterfalls are placed amidst dense forest surrounded by natural beauty and greenery.<sup>8</sup>

This holiday resort is suffering from several drawbacks such as 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 neighboring places, non-availability of tourist guides, absence of road markings<sup>9</sup>. These problems have to be rectified to improve the attracting quality of the place.

### Kailasanadhakona

Kailasanadhakona waterfall is situated in the valley of Nagari Hills near Puttur. The water here is said to be rich in minerals and possess curative properties. Epics reveal that Lord Kailasanatha swamy attended the marriage of Lord Venkateswara and Goddess Padmavathi at Narayanavanam and selected this waterfall for meditation. Hence, this place is called Kailasanatha Kona. Which is beautiful and picnic spot for the tourists.<sup>10</sup>

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.

### Heritage Tourism

Newly formed Tirupati District had number of Heritage centres which flourished under different dynasties. Now, the centres attracted number of tourists which are: Chandragiri fort, Palaces of Zamindars like Venkatagiri, Karvetinagaram, Srikalahasti, and Narayanavanam<sup>11</sup> apart from these, Tourism department identified Temples as Heritage centres like Pallikondeswara temple Surutupalle, Bokkasam Palam, Srinivasa Mangapuram and Srikalahasti, Gudimallam, Srivari Mettu, and Kanipakkam temples.

### Chandragiri Fort

Chandragiri was under the rule of Yadava rulers for about three centuries and came into control of Vijayanagar rulers in 1367. It came into prominence during Saluva Narasimha Rayalu. Chandragiri was the 4th capital of Vijayanagar Empire, Rayas shifted their capital to here when Golconda sultans attacked Penukonda. In 1646 the fort was annexed to the Golkonda territory and subsequently came under Kingdom of Mysore rule. It went into oblivion from 1792 onward.<sup>12</sup> The Raja Mahal Palace is now an archeological

museum. The palace is an example of Indo-Saranic architecture of Vijayanagar period.

This famous heritage centre is currently underexploited for tourism and infrequently visited by tourists and pilgrims staying in Tirupati. 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.<sup>13</sup> 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 apt utilization of the resources.

### Narayanavanam

The importance of this village is due to big temple dedicated to Lord Kalyana Venkateswara swamy. It is believed that the marriage of Lord Venkateswara Swamy with Goddess Padmavathi Devi took place here. This is the temple where in we can see both Venkateswara Swamy along with Padmavathi Devi in one temple complex.<sup>14</sup>

### Nagalapuram

Nagalapuram Temple is said to have been built by Sri Krishnadeveraya in memory of his mother Nagamba. It contains a few rare stone images such as Vinachara, Dakshinamurthy, Hayagriva, Bhuvanabha and Trivikrama. The sun festival in March is very important here. During the month of March the first rays of sun fall on the feet of the first day, on the abdomen on the second day, and on the face on the third day. The temple is maintained by the T.T.D and annual Brahmastavam is being celebrated in large scale.<sup>15</sup>

### Gudimallam

Gudimallam is well known for its unique Sivalinga in the Parasurameswara Temple. The temple is of granite stone dated back to the Satavahana, Cholas and Bana times. An inscription dated 1127 A.D. belongs to the period of Vikrama Chola records the reconstruction of the temple in stone. The sanctum enriches the unique Linga square at the bottom, seven sided in the middle and nut shaped at the top, corresponds to the erect of male organ containing the standing figure of Sivaparameswara over a stumpy dwarf figure in the front side. At present the temple complex has main Parasurameswara shrine.<sup>16</sup>

### Zoological Park and Bird Sanctuaries

#### S.V. Zoological Park

Tirupati district has a rich beautiful forests which has some beautiful and exotic species Seshachalam hills is famous for Red sandal wood. Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park is in Tirupati. It was established on 29 September 1987 and covers an area of 5,532 acres (22 square kilometers). It is the second largest zoo park in Asia.<sup>17</sup> For children this place could be a great fun. Among the prime attractions in the zoo are the White Tiger and White Peacocks. The other important animals are Giraffe, Deer, Lions, Macaque, Boabbons, Leopards, Wolf, Hyena, Chinkara, Sambar, Blackbuck, Nilgai, Slothbear, porcupine, Muntjal, Chital etc. The zoo is also abode for a variety of birds. Nearly 4.50 lakh people have visited the zoo park annually.<sup>18</sup>

#### Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary

Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary is a bird sanctuary in Tirupati district, near the village of Nellapattu. It has an area of 458.92 hectares. It is an important breeding site for spot-billed pelicans (*Pelecanus philippensis*). Nelapattu has two major plant communities, Barringtonia wamp forests and southern dry evergreen scrub. Southern part covers most of the sanctuary, including the 288 hectares of Kalluru Reserved

Forest and 88 hectares of unreserved forest.<sup>19</sup> The dominant tree and shrub species are *Manilkara hexandra*, *Maba buxifolia*, *Memecylon edule*, *Buchanania angustifolia*, *Zizyphus xylopyrus*, and others.

The *Barringtonia* swamp forests are found in the 83-ha Nelapattu tank. The predominant tree species is *Barringtonia acutangula* (Hijal). This tree also grows in uplands, but the tree species found at Nelapattu can grow in flooded conditions lasting for 5 to 7 months. The saplings can survive total submersion during the long duration of flooding. About 189 bird species can be found at Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, 50 of which are migratory.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the spot-billed pelican, it is an important breeding site for black-headed ibis, Asian openbill, black-crowned night heron, and little cormorant. Other migratory water birds that visit the sanctuary include northern pintail, common teal, little grebe, northern shoveler, Eurasian coot, Indian spot-billed duck, grey heron, Oriental darter, black-winged stilt, garganey and gadwall.

### Spiritual Tourism

Since time immemorial, India has been known for its spirituality, religious tolerance and its secular character. India is called the "Yogabhoomi" and the gateway to the heavens. Traditionally, an ashram is a spiritual hermitage. Additionally, today the term ashram often denotes a locus of Indian cultural activity such as yoga, music study or religious instruction. Ashrams have been a powerful symbol throughout Hindu history and theology.<sup>21</sup> Most Hindu kings, until the middle Ages, are known to have had a sage who would advise the royal family in spiritual matters, or in times of crisis, who was called the rajguru, which literally translates to royal teacher. In Chittoor district there are many famous Ashrams like Kalki Bhagavan - Vardaihpalem, Vyasasramam - Yerpedu, Sadasiva Swami - Nagari, Sri Brahmarshi Ashramam, Ramakrishna Matam - Tirupati, Shivananda Swami Ashramam - Ekambarakuppam is identified important spiritual centres in Tirupati district. These spiritual centers attracts most of the travellers from different parts of the country.<sup>22</sup>

### CONCLUSION

In recognition of vast tourism potential in the district, the state government has promoted APTDC and spent huge amount on different projects with the assistance of Central government. The tourist industry has been strong potentiality in the district. It attracts large number of tourists and contributing a lot to the Economy and Employment. The APTDC have to take proper interest for providing better comfort to the tourists. Transportation, Hospitality and food are the major aspects of the Tourism industry. These are putting them comfortably as their pocket permits, entertaining them and sending them back with sweet memories. Then this industry will draw more income and generate more employment in Tirupati district as well as in Andhra Pradesh.

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