



Research Article

**BLOOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY IN AMARAVATHI,
ANDHRA PRADESH**

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in India. It plays a vital role in the economic development of a country. Tourism promotes national integration and international understanding. Tourism is an integral part of human life. It is a situation where person from one country, or region to other region and country for a short run period, is included in the concept of tourism. Now-a-days the tourism industry has a greater importance. Andhra Pradesh, after bifurcation, is banking heavily on the tourism sector for employment generation and to stimulate economic growth, and is taking all steps to strengthen the infrastructure also. Post-bifurcation in 2014, the Andhra Pradesh government brought the tourism sector into the limelight declaring it as one of the growth engines and spelt out a grandiose plan to give the much needed push to the hitherto neglected sector.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an important socio-economic activity. It provides enormous scope for economic development of a particular area. Tourism is an industry which is defined as travelling to places outside their usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose (leisure, business and other purposes) other than to be employed. It is as an industry that includes the totality of relationships and activities related to travel and the temporary stay of people out of their residence for the purpose of holiday, medical treatment, entertainment and the sightseeing of nature's beauty and cultural values of a country.

The Andhra Pradesh tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the overall level of economic activity and employment in Andhra Pradesh. Industries are normally classified according to their production. However, tourism is unique among industries. Its output is determined by the spending of money by tourists and other visitors.. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Andhra Pradesh. It plays a vital role in the economic development of the capital region Amaravathi. Of late, Amaravathi has become one of the popular tourist destinations in Andhara Pradesh. The enchanting River Krishna, Western Ghats, Canals, Bhavani Island etc make Amaravathi is a beautiful tourism spot. It attracts tourists from all over the world.It is a fact that tourists spend certain amount of money on accommodation, food,

drinks, entertainment and other, and hence, tourism is important as it contributes significantly to a state's economy. Andhra Pradesh is a young, multicultural that lure most visitors in recent times. People have always had the need to travel, explore and see different places and different people. Today, people travel for different reasons to all parts of the world. This desire to travel has resulted in a branch of industry named tourism.

Tourism at Amaravathi

Amaravathi is a small town located on the banks of the River Krishna in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. It serves as quiet a familiar name for the Buddhists in India and is a prime hub for pilgrimage and sightseeing for tourists. Thus, Amaravathi is also called the Abode of God. Andhra Pradesh Tourism has always been the frontrunner in attracting greatest number of tourists, inland and foreign. Amaravathi has naturally, ecologically, culturally and religiously rich and diverse variety of tourist destinations that are treasures of visual treat where one can continuously explore new experiences of gratification and delight. Bounding in natural resources, the state of Andhra Pradesh having the longest eastern coastline and with a trail of Buddha Period glory, houses and holds many heritage sites adorned with pristine splendor, the forts, citadels and architectural masterpieces built by the past Royal hegemony and its noble Emperors. The magnificent places, monuments, memorials, tombs and stately structures built by them reflect the art and craftsmanship, architecture and culture that originated on this land. There are beautiful dams, valleys, hills and ridges with the scenic dale, tranquil lake waters, swirling beach waves, meadows, resorts,

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hill stations, caves, virgin forests, which a visitor can enjoy. Temples and shrines of pilgrimage are the important destinations of tourist traffic and are a big source of revenue flow. AP Tourism consistently endeavours to embark on new and vibrant initiatives to attract tourists. Of later developments are the theme parks, Hi-tech hub, fun islands, fantasy worlds, and water sports grounds enabling sportive feats, trekking and cruise tourism.

Amartavathi (Andhra Pradesh) - Destination for Tourists

Are you a nature lover or like travelling? Undoubtedly, Amaravathi (Capital Region of A.P) is the destination. It has become an ideal tourist place in Andhra Pradesh for a holiday spot. Although there are several famous tourism places in Andhra Pradesh, but Amaravathi has become one of the top tourist attractions and sightseeing place. This is a lovely sight to watch and adding to the natural scenic beauty of the surrounding. Amaraligeswara temple is a popular tourist attraction. Tourists affirm that this temple is place of tranquility and happiness. Moving to the other tourism places, there is A Fort Called "Kondapalli Khilla" at a short distance from Vijayawada. This place is ideal for history lovers. The Kondapalli Ghat, which finds a special mention in travel guide of Amravathi, promises spectacular views of the surrounding valleys. It comes among other best places to visit in Amravathi for nature lovers. It is popularly referred to as an echo point of this hill station. The array of beauty makes Amaravathi is one of the best destinations to seek solitude and peace in Andhra Pradesh. This kind of holiday places with such pleasant weather conditions remains favorite choice of nature lovers and backpackers all round the year.

Amaravati City is the new capital of Andhra Pradesh and one of the upcoming well planned city, located on the southern banks of the Krishna river in Guntur district. Amaravati and surrounding region are famous for Kotappakonda, Bhattiprolu, Tobacco, Cotton, Chili Pepper, Amaravathi Village, Pankala Narasimha Temple and Buddhist Sites. The place has gathered attention from all over the world because of the Amareswara Temple that is situated here. Amaravathi is also famous for being the site of the one of the greatest Buddhist Stupas ever built. This stupa is believed to have been built before the establishment of the Mauryan Empire.

Prominent Tourism spots Around Amaravathi

Amaralingeswara Swamy Temple - is dedicated to Lord Shiva, situated on the southern bank of Krishna River at Amaravati town near Guntur City. The temple is one of the Pancharama Kshetras and said that Sivalinga was growing up in size.

Dhyana Budha Statue: The Dhyana Buddha statue in Amaravathi village at Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh is a 125 feet tall statue located in dhyana Buddha park, under the Amaravati mandal.

Mangalagiri Temple: Panakala Swami Temple and Lakshmi Naramisha Temple are situated at the foot of the Auspicious Hill. The city has three Narasimha Swamy temples, located at a distance of 38 km from amaravati.

Amaravathi Mahachaitya: Amaravathi Mahachaitya is a ruined Buddhist monument, under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India. The site has great stupa and important sculptures on the right bank of the Krishna River.

Bhattiprolu: Bhattiprolu village is a Buddhist town and well known for big Buddha stupa. The stupa and the script show the earliest evidence of Brahmi script in South India.

Krishna River: The Krishna River is the fourth biggest river in India and a major source of irrigation in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Amaravati Tourism plans floating hotel, boating and a new barrage on Krishna river has been planned near Amaravati capital city.

Undavalli Caves : Undavalli Caves are solid sandstone rock cut caves, located in Undavalli of Guntur district. The caves are located 22 km north east of Guntur City on a hillside and have a huge recreated statue of Vishnu in a reclining posture.

Kondaveedu Fort : Kondaveedu Fort is a hill fortress and proposed world heritage site, located in Kondaveedu village. The fort is going through a major development and restoration work by Andhra Pradesh department of Archaeology and Museums. It is situated in Kondaveedu village between Guntur and Chilakaluripet. About 25 kilometres (16 mi) from Guntur city and about 13 km from the side of Chilakaluripet. The nearest airport is at Vijayawada which is 58 kilometres (36 mi) away from Guntur. The fort as per history, was ruled by six Reddy rulers including Prolaya Vema Reddy, Anavota Reddy, Anavema Reddy, Kumaragiri Reddy, Pedakomati Vema Reddy and Raacha Vema Reddy for more than 100 years. The fortresses were once the capital of the Kondaveedu province erected on a high ridge of a small range of hills with average elevation of 1,500 feet (460 m) (highest point on the ridge is 1,700 feet (520 m)). Kondaveedu fort which was an abode for ancient temples is close to Phirangipuram area.

Gandhi Hill: Vijayawada, the land of Victory, is a popular tourist destination in Andhra Pradesh with a number of tourists visiting the famous Kanaka Durga temple here. In addition to the temple, there are a number of other attractions in Vijayawada worth visiting. Gandhi Hill, the first of its kind in the country is one such tourist spot, attracting huge crowds every day.

Kondapalli Fort is located at a distance of 16 km from Vijayawada city of Andhra Pradesh, India. The historic fort on the hill (Eastern Ghats) located to the west of the Kondapalli village was built by Prolaya Vema Reddy of Kondaveedu during the 14th century, initially as a pleasure place and a business centre, along with the Kondaveedu Fort in Guntur district. In later years, it was used as a military fortification. The forest hill range, about 24 kms (15 miles) in length, extends between Nandigama and Vijayawada. Apart from the fort, which is a major tourist attraction, another important artistic rural product of Kondapalli is the crafting of colourful toys, called the Kondapalli toys. Poniki, a special type of light wood is used to make the toys which generally resemble the characters of ancient myths and epics.

Kanaka Durga Temple: is a famous Hindu Temple of Goddess Durga located in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. The temple is located on the Indrakeeladri hill, on the banks of Krishna River. The Kanaka Durga Temple is a famous shrine dedicated to the Goddess Durga. This ancient temple finds mention in many sacred texts and Vedic literature as well and is a revered temple among devotees and followers. People visit this temple every year to show their respect and devotion to the Goddess Supreme and seek her blessings.

Bhavani Island - is one of the largest islands situated in the midst of the Krishna River, in Vijayawada. It is located at the upstream of Prakasam Barrage and is considered as one of the largest river islands in India; with an area of 133 acres. The vast expanse of the island proves to be the perfect place for a relaxing weekend. This is an exhilarating place and tourism spot for people those who like adventure sports and water slides.

Tourism Helps the Economy of A.P.

Employment opportunities: Tourism brings the jobs to the people around it. The employment can be direct as tour guides, accommodation, and food providers, travel service providers etc to indirect employment like the suppliers of these services from whom they take the necessary goods. All the above services employ people to work and pay them wages, helping to boost the local industry.

Alternative Ways of Income: In rural areas of India, there are limited ways to earn the income. Farming, fishing, laboring, there are the major employment sources for the people in rural areas. Tourism creates the alternative ways to earn income for the people in rural areas

Improved Infrastructure: The growing tourism brings in the extra income which results in higher tax payments. The local government bodies can use this money to improve the infrastructure such as building roads, amusement parks, gardens, social places, the betterment of transport and accommodation services, maintaining public hygiene and providing better medical services too.

New Business Opportunities: Tourism brings new business opportunities for people. In order to solve the problems of the tourists, new businesses and services can be introduced. The new business, in turn, increases the employment as well.

Cultural Benefits: Apart from the monetary benefits from tourism it also encourages the cultural growth of the tourist places. Andhra Pradesh has a rich cultural heritage and it would give people immense pleasure and pride to showcase their culture in front of the world. Tourism also helps to maintain the traditions and culture of the region. It also helps to maintain the historic places like forts and palaces which otherwise would have destroyed.

CONCLUSION

The major constraint in the development of tourism in Amaravathi is the non-availability of adequate infrastructure, accessibility to tourist destinations, accommodation and trained manpower in sufficient number. Poor visitor experience, particularly, due to inadequate infrastructural facilities, poor hygienic conditions, accidents and harassment of tourists in some places are factors that contribute to poor visitor experience.

The tourism infrastructure in Amravati should be strengthened. Airports and railway stations should provide information to the tourists about the tourist destinations. State Government owned resorts should be properly managed. The government should take necessary measures to restore the ancient splendor of the monuments. Sincere efforts could help to further develop the A.P. tourism industry. Tourism in Amaravathi can become a viable industry if effective steps are taken. First of all, red-tapism should be ended. All bottlenecks and harassment to tourists that scare them should be removed. People at the helms of tourist affairs such as officials of ministry of tourism, hoteliers, and other service providers to tourists should be given proper instructions and behavioural with tourists.

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