

THE IMPERATIVE NEED FOR TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN RAYALASEEMA REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH

¹K Sadvika, ²Dr.P.Madhavi

¹Research Scholar in Economics, ²Assistant Professor in Economics
Department of Women's studies
Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh

Abstract- Rayalaseema, a region in the southern part of Andhra Pradesh, India, is a hidden gem that holds immense potential for tourism. Blessed with rich history, diverse landscapes, and a unique cultural heritage, Rayalaseema has the ability to attract tourists from all over the world. However, in order to tap into this potential, it is crucial to prioritize and invest in tourism infrastructure development. Tourism infrastructure development in Rayalaseema will have a significant positive impact on the local economy. The influx of tourists will create a demand for various goods and services, leading to the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. Accommodation providers, restaurants, souvenir shops, and tour operators will witness an upsurge in business, generating employment opportunities for the local population. Additionally, increased tourism revenue will contribute to the overall economic growth of the region. This paper focuses on the development of tourism infrastructure in rayalseema region for the last 5 financial years i.e, 2018-19 to 2022-23.

Key words: Infrastructure, Development, Rayalaseema, Tourism,

INTRODUCTION

Andhra Pradesh is a state on the southern coast of India. It is the seventh-largest and tenth-most populous state in the region. Andhra Pradesh consists of two regions namely Kostaandhra and Rayalaseema. Rayalaseema is located in the southwestern part of the state of Andhra Pradesh. The region is bordered by Tamil Nadu state in the south, Karnataka state in the west, and Telangana state in the north. This area was called the Ceded Areas during the British Raj. This refers to the time when the Nizam of Hyderabad ceded the Ali Khan region to the British as part of a subsidiary alliance. Chilukuri Narayana Rao, a Telugu speaker and activist from Anantapur, considered the term "ceded" to be derogatory and coined the term Rayalaseema as these areas were once ruled by Vijayanagara king Sri krishnadevarayalu. Rayalaseema was honored by the Vijayanagara kings calling it Ratnala Seema or the land of diamonds. At the Andhra Mahasabha and Ceded District Conference held at Nandyala in November 1928, he presented a resolution to this effect which was accepted by other delegates of the conference.

A well-developed tourism infrastructure plays a crucial role in attracting visitors from around the world. It not only provides essential amenities and services but also contributes significantly to a country's economic growth. Tourism infrastructure refers to the physical and organizational structures that support the tourism industry. It includes transportation networks, accommodation facilities, tourist attractions, restaurants, and other amenities. A well-planned and efficient infrastructure enhances the overall tourist experience, ensuring their safety, comfort, and convenience. Efficient transportation networks are the backbone for successful tourism industry. Well-connected highways, railways, and airports make it easier for tourists to travel to and within a destination. A well-developed transportation system not only improves accessibility but also reduces travel time, making it more convenient for visitors to explore various attractions. Tourists require a range of accommodation options to suit their preferences and budgets. From luxury resorts to budget-friendly hotels and cozy homestays, a diverse range of accommodation facilities is essential to cater to the needs of different travelers. By providing comfortable and safe lodging options, tourism infrastructure ensures visitors have a pleasant stay. It also encompasses the development and maintenance of tourist attractions. Whether it's historical landmarks, natural wonders, cultural sites, or theme parks, these will attract and accommodate more visitors. Well-designed pathways, information centers, and visitor facilities enhance the overall experience and encourage tourists to explore more. Dining options, sanitation, hygiene other amenities are crucial for a positive tourism experience. Restaurants, cafes, and street food vendors serve as cultural ambassadors by introducing visitors to local cuisine. Additionally, the availability of public restrooms, information centers, and recreational facilities, play park further contribute to a visitor-friendly environment.

Investing in tourism infrastructure can yield numerous benefits like it attracts more tourists, leading to increased visitor spending. This, in turn, stimulates economic growth by generating revenue and creating job opportunities. The tourism industry, in collaboration with local businesses, can drive entrepreneurship and boost the local economy. Enhanced tourism infrastructure not only benefits tourists but also improves the quality of life for local residents. Upgraded transportation networks, improved public spaces, and better amenities create a more livable and sustainable environment. The local community can enjoy better connectivity, enhanced public services, and increased recreational opportunities. Investing in sustainable tourism infrastructure promotes responsible and eco-friendly practices. This includes energy-efficient buildings, waste management systems, and conservation efforts to protect natural and cultural heritage. Sustainable tourism infrastructure ensures the long-term viability of the industry while preserving the destination's unique identity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Enhancing tourism infrastructure acts as a catalyst for economic growth. The impact of investment on 3 components tourism infrastructure namely transport and communication, hotel and restaurant, recreation facilities shows a positive relation in the long run(Quang Hai) Through empirical research ,it is found that there is a positive relation between tourist arrivals and infrastructure development (seetanah et.al.)

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To examine the tourism infrastructure development in rayalaseema region

Source of data

For this study, data is collected from secondary sources. The secondary data is collected from articles, government reports and webpages.

ANALYSIS

Royalaseema accounts for about 30 percent of Andhra Pradesh's population and 40 percent of the state's geographical area. This region consists of 4 districts namely Ananthapur, Chittoor, Kadapa and Kurnool before realignment of districts in 2022 . Now additional four districts were added from existing districts i.e. Annamayya, Nandyal, Sri sathya sai and Tirupati. Rayalseema is chronically drought prone for centuries. It is the second most driest region in India after Rajasthan. Agriculture is highly dependent on rainfall. This makes agriculture unsustainable and unprofitable. The region suffers due to drought and poverty. Irrigation potential has not been significantly developed in the Rayalaseema region since independence. Majority of the region consists of small and marginal farmers mainly from poor and marginal communities .Although the region is rich in crops like tomato, papaya, banana, mango, etc., there are no units worth mentioning in terms of agriculture and food processing. If agriculture does not produce a surplus, the demand for industrial products and services is also limited, which limits overall demand-driven development. The area contains valuable natural minerals such as barytes, iron ore, gold, diamonds, limestone, asbestos, quartz, mica, copper, kaolin, granite, dolomite, uranium. In addition, there are many reputable red sandle in the area. The rich mineral base can be optimally utilized for the development of mineral-based industries and auxiliary units. Despite the huge industrial potential, no profitable steps have been taken so far. In such confinements, tourism can act as a catalyst for economic development of rayalaseema . Rayalaseema is a region that boasts a rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes, and a vibrant history. Often overshadowed by its neighboring regions, Rayalaseema has quietly gained popularity among adventure seekers, history enthusiasts, and nature lovers. Rayalaseema is home to several historical marvels that offer a glimpse into the region's glorious past. The magnificent Belum Caves, one of the longest cave systems in India, invites visitors to explore its intricate maze of underground chambers. The ancient temples of Lepakshi, adorned with exquisite carvings and sculptures, narrate stories of royal patronage and architectural brilliance and lepakshi designs are using on sarees . The formidable Gandikota Fort, also known as the Grand Canyon of India, stands as a testament to the region's strategic importance in history. From picturesque hills to cascading waterfalls, Rayalaseema is blessed with awe-inspiring natural beauty. The ethereal Horsley Hills, nestled amidst dense forests, offers panoramic views and serves as a tranquil retreat for nature enthusiasts. The pristine Talakona Waterfalls, cascading from a height of 270 feet, provide a refreshing escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. The enchanting Ahobilam Forests, with its abundant flora and fauna, beckon wildlife lovers to explore its hidden treasures. For those seeking spiritual solace, Rayalaseema has a plethora of sacred sites. The revered Srisailam Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is perched atop the Nallamala Hills and attracts devotees from far and wide. The ancient temples of Tirupati, housing the world-famous Lord Venkateswara Temple, offer a divine experience and a chance to witness the grandeur of Indian temple architecture. The historic Yaganti Temple, known for its unique rock formations and the sacred Pushkarini, is another spiritual gem worth visiting.No trip to Rayalaseema is complete without savoring its delectable cuisine which is known for its rich flavors and unique blend of spices..

LIST OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN RAYALASEEMA

DIST S.No..	ANANTAPUR	CHITTOOR	KADAPA	KURNOOL
1.	Bugga Ramalingeswara Swamy Temple	Chandragiri Fort	Attirala Parasurama Temple	Ahobilam
2.	Chintala Venkataramana Swamy Temple	Horsley Hills	Chennakesava Swamy Temple	Belum Caves
3.	Gooty Fort	Iskcon Temple	Danavulapadu	Coles Centennial Church
4.	Hemavathi Temples	Sri Kalahasti	Gandikota	Kondareddy Buruju
5.	Kadiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple	Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple	Kondandarama Swamy Temple	Mallikarjuna Swamy Temple

6.	Lepakshi	Talakona	Nithya Pooja Kona	Mahanandi
7.	Penukonda Fort		Pedda Dargah	Orvakallu Rock Garden
8.	Thimmamma Marrimanu		Siddavatam Fort	Rollapadu wild life sanctuary
9.				Sri Raghavendra Swamy Temple

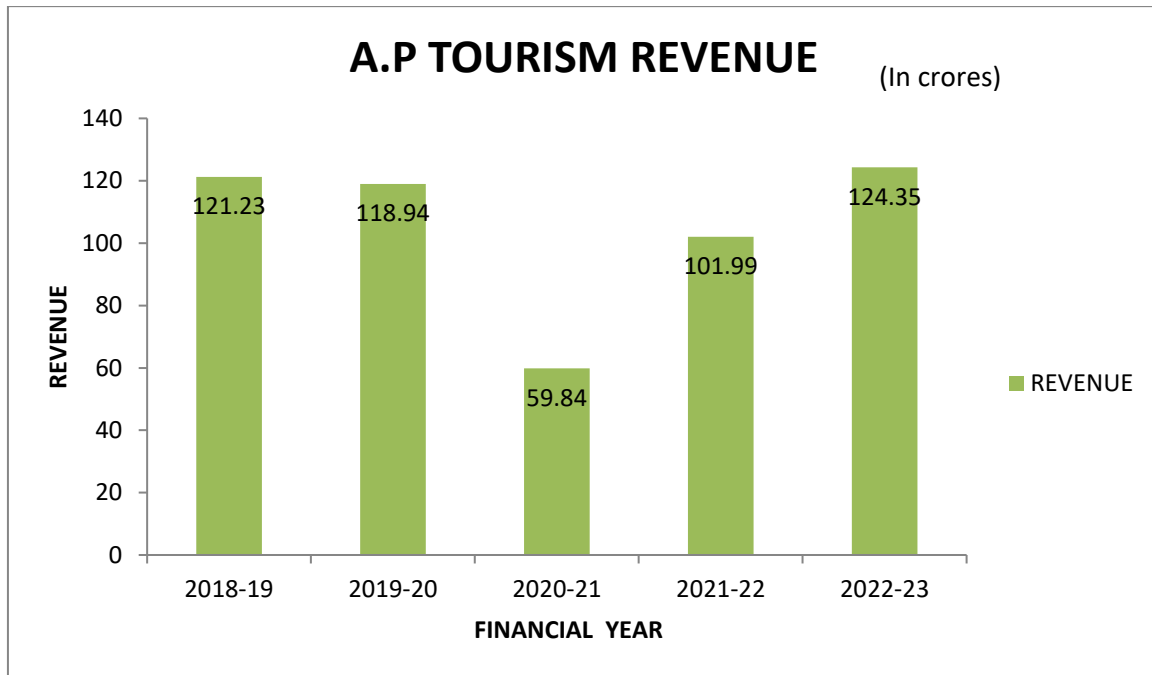
Source : AP Tourism Authority

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN RAYALSEEMA REGION FOR THE RECENT FIVE YEAR PERIOD

YEAR	DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY
2018-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation has established information and booking centers at various places in and outside the state to assist tourists visiting Andhra Pradesh and promote tourism activities in AP. One of the main booking offices is at Tirupathi. It operates hotels/resorts, roadside services and restaurants at various locations in the state to provide hassle-free service to tourists visiting the state. It offers exclusive catering at Belum Caves in Kurnool district. It set up transport units in Tirupathi, launched tourist buses and organized local and inter-state tour packages. Created Sound and Light Show, Dynamic Lighting and Chandragiri, Belum Caves and Ropeway at Srisailam. Rs.121.23 Crore income received from operations during the period year 2018-2019. 4744.93 lakh Central Financial Assistance (CFA) project sanctioned for the development of Srisailam temple.
2019-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the first time in the state, incentives such as investment subsidy, sales tax, toll concessions etc. are being offered for tourism investments. Approved Hub and Spoke model for the comprehensive development of tourism. 5 tourist centers are planned. one is the Tirupati center and the other is the Anantapuram center. Tirupati Center plans to connect Tirupati, East Godavari and West Godavari. Anantapuram Center plans to connect Kurnool, Kadapa and Anantapuram. In 2019-2020, the turnover was 118.94 crores
2020-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tirupati hub was converted to Tirupati-Chittoor-Nellore. Proposed AP tourism policy 2020-25. The ongoing project is Srisailam Temple Pilgrimage Tourism Development. APTDC has set up a 500-seater restaurant at Tirumala. Water fleet is available in srisailam. Government of AP allotted Rs.2000 lakh for tourism infrastructure development in the year 2019-2020, the government approved two jobs namely Dr. YSR Memorial at Rajiv Knowledge Valley at Idupulapaya, YSRKadapa District and build control rooms to monitor all boats working on waterways . APTDC's revenue for the financial year up to November 2020 was Rs. 59.84 crores. The state government took several measures during this period to help the state fight COVID-19 effectively. Haritha Hotel, Nellore and Sri Padmavathi Nilayam, Tiruchanoor APTDC Hotels have been made quarantine centers to facilitate stay and treatment for apparently affected people
2021-22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of basic amenities near Narasimha Swamy Temple in Kurnool District 6 Crores. Billasurgam Caves Development in Kurnool District valued at Rs 3 crore. Development of tourist facilities at Abbireddypalle in Kurnool district, valued at Rs.3 crore. The income of APTDC in the financial year 2021-22 to December 2021 was 101.99 crores.
2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecotourism is developed in SV National Park. Preparations are being made to train local youth guides. To create a huge amusement park in Tirupati, which already attracts millions of tourists every year, creating an opportunity for their stay to benefit the local economy. Provision of tourism services and water sports facilities at chitravathi balancing pool in YSR Kadapa district is estimated at 5.6 crores, 50 direct and 50 indirect jobs. Development of a 5 Star Hotel, International Convention Center and Family

	<p>Entertainment Center under Novotel brand in Tirupati District, Peru. The investment is estimated at 126.48 crores to create employment for 500 people. T</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he giant spiritual and heritage center at Penukonda in Sri Satya Sai district, estimated to cost Rs 200 crore under PPP mode, will create 10,000 jobs. • Horsley Hills is identified as a holiday and camping destination. • Proposed for Heritage and Adventure Mega Tourism Center at Gandikota, Kadapa. The estimated cost is 1,000 crores, which will create 4,000 jobs. • APTDC revenue for the fiscal year 2022-23 to December 2022 is Rs 124.35 crore.
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Source: AP Economic Survey (2018-2023)



The above table shows the APTDC revenue for the last 5 years which is representing a V shape recovery. In the Pandemic period tourism affected to a great extent which can be clearly seen through decline in revenues

Conclusion

Rayalaseema, with its historical marvels, natural beauty, spiritual sites, and delightful cuisine, is a treasure trove waiting to be explored. To attract domestic and international visitors ,tourism infrastructure is a vital component. By investing in transportation networks, accommodation facilities, tourist attractions, and amenities, destinations can attract more visitors and stimulate economic growth. By enhancing accessibility, preserving cultural heritage, boosting the local economy, and promoting sustainable tourism, this region has the potential to become a sought-after destination for travelers. Moreover, improved tourism infrastructure enhances the overall experience for tourists and contributes to the sustainable development of a destination. By prioritizing tourism infrastructure, countries can harness the potential of the tourism industry as a driver of economic prosperity and social well-being.. It is imperative for the local government and stakeholders to recognize the importance of investing in tourism infrastructure development to unlock the economic and cultural potential of Rayalaseema. With careful planning and sustainable practices, Rayalaseema can emerge as a thriving tourism hub, benefiting both the local population and the tourists who seek to explore its treasures.

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