

UGC - MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT

ON

**STATUS OF TOURISM IN TELANGANA
REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
OF
THE MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT
ON
STATUS OF TOURISM IN TELANGANA
REGION OF ANDHRA PRADESH

This research project is a 2 year investigation into the status of tourism destinations in Telangana region of erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh (Now Telangana is separated from Andhra Pradesh to become 29th state in India) conducted from April, 2013 to March, 2015. This Major Research Project is funded by the University Grants Commission, New Delhi , with a grant of Rs,5,15,600/-.

The second phase of Telangana movement, demanding a separate statehood for Telangana region in Andhra Pradesh, had provided an impetus for this research project. The people of Telangana region alleged that every sector in this area including tourism is being neglected. No sizeable amount was sanctioned in the state budget to develop the tourism sector in term of revitalizing the existing tourism destinations and development of innovative tourism destinations. This made tourism sector undiscovered and untapped in spite of immense potential. I, the Principal Investigator of this project, being a citizen of Telangana region (Nizamabad district) had seen the problem from a different perspective. I wanted to investigate the status of major tourism destinations in Telangana, in order to offer recommendations for revitalization of tourism sector in Telangana to attract both domestic and foreign tourists.

No earlier research had been conducted to ascertain the status of tourism in Telangana. Further, I do emphasize that this research is a first of its kind in Telangana region.

This is an exploratory research aimed at understanding the current status of tourism in Telangana, in terms of the objectives such as – identifying the current and potential tourism products in Telangana region, examining the behavior of the

domestic tourists visiting tourism destinations in Telangana, studying the nature of travel agents in Telangana, and to offer suggestions for revitalization of tourism destinations in Telangana in order to enhance the tourism traffic in the region, ultimately contributing to the economic development of this newly formed state.

This empirical research utilized both primary and secondary data. The primary data had been collected from 2 types of respondents. Domestic tourist visiting tourism destination in Telangana and Travel Agents in Telangana. Based on the Simple Random Sampling method, the well structured Questionnaires were distributed to 4500 domestic tourists at various tourism destinations in 10 districts of Telangana, out of which 3862 filled in questionnaire were received back. The process of questionnaire design involved a few testings, corrections and re-corrections till a final structured questionnaire is developed. The main contents of the questionnaire for domestic tourists included different attributes like—Awareness levels, sources of travel information, frequency of travel, trip planning, purpose of travel, companion during travel, spending habits, length of the trip, perceptions about prices of tourism elements, brand image of Telangana, perceptions about the requirements in tourism in Telangana, repeat visit and recommendations to friends, colleagues, and relatives. And, out of 115 Travel agents contacted over the telephone, only 100 travel agents gave their responses. The main contents of the questionnaire for travel agents included different attributes like—experience in travel business, services offered by travel agents, perceptions of travel agents about the attractiveness of the tourism destination, the promotion of the destinations in Telangana and the profitability of the travel agency business in Telangana. Principal Investigator and the Project Fellow have toured extensively in all the 10 districts of Telangana to gather the data from tourism destinations. Extensive data editing was undertaken before the final data could be analyzed using manual process and the SPSS.

The extensive field work by the principal investigator (I), in all the 10 districts in Telangana helped to gain firsthand knowledge about the status of tourism in Telangana. This had enabled to identify certain drawbacks such as – poor quality tourism products, less interested local people, low participation by private sector, lack of tourism promotion, lack of image to tourism and the inattentive role of the government in tourism sector in Telangana.

This study had revealed many things unheard of tourism sector in Telangana. It is found that there is at least one tourism destination in each district of Telangana, having an immense potential to be developed into a national level tourism destination. But it is very much unfortunate to have found that the destination management in almost all the tourism destinations in 10 districts of Telangana is completely ignored. It is very much painful to have found the ambience at all the tourism places to be worst with narrow and unswept roads and huge garbage mounds.

It is found that as many as 25% of the respondents are not aware of all the tourism destinations in Telangana. The most common purpose of travel was found to be pilgrimage in Telangana, necessitating revitalization of religious tourism in Telangana. In choosing accommodation option at tourism destinations, the respondents were found to be cautious. Many of the respondents preferred free accommodation and budget hotels for staying at tourism places in Telangana, indicating a desperate need for affordable facilities during travel. Nearly 3/4th of the respondents want their trip to be planned by themselves indicating a need for providing a sizeable quantity of information to the people. The train was found to be the most preferred mode of transportation. The general length of stay was found to be 5 to 7 days. It is found that the respondents expect a bundle of elements such as— Satisfaction, low cost services, comfort and security at the tourism destination. The prices of tourism elements such as accommodation, food, Souvenirs and other service charges at the tourism destinations in Telangana were perceived by the domestic tourists to be reasonable.

It is unfortunate to have found that only less than 50% of the respondents agreed that Telangana as a tourist destination has a good image/reputation. More than 60% of the respondents disagreed that Telangana as a tourism destination is well developed. It is unfortunate to have found that only 27% of the respondents opined that Telangana offers a great variety of tourism destination to see and enjoy. Infrastructural facilities such-as –Access roads, power, water supply, sewage and telecommunications at tourism destinations in Telangana region are not perceived to be well developed. It is a matter of serious concern to have found that only 14% of the respondents like Telangana as a tourism destination. It is to be noted seriously that there is a requirement of improvements in the tourism facilities such as-Accommodation, cleanliness and attractiveness at the tourism destinations in Telangana. It is

unfortunate to have found that only less than half of the respondents are willing to visit tourism places in Telangana repeatedly. Only less than half of the respondents were found to be ready to make recommendations regarding tourism destinations in Telangana to their friends/relatives and colleagues.

Regarding the perceptions of the travel agents, it was found that they are experienced in travel business and are well aware of tourism destinations in Telangana, and opined that the tourism destinations in Telangana are not attractive, and the turn out of the foreign tourists is low. They further opined that the promotion of tourism destinations in Telangana is moderate. More than 50% of the respondent travel agents are happy with the travel business in Telangana.

This extensive research offers recommendations for the development of tourism sector in Telangana. Primarily a “Two- Phase tourism strategy” is recommended with phases- Revitalization of existing popular tourism destinations in Telangana, (See the district wise recommendations for requirement of revitalization at the tourism destinations) and identification and creation of manmade innovative tourism products.

Further, the recommendations are made in two categories based on the findings of this research.

1. General recommendations.
2. District-wise recommendations.

In general recommendations, it is suggested that the Telangana government should concentrate on the development of ambience at the tourism destinations, repositioning of tourism destinations, development of rural tourism, adoption of tourism destinations, establishment of tourism information booths, nomination of tourism ambassadors, development of tourism circuits, customization of tours, involvement of NSS volunteers in destination management and finally introduction of river cruising.

Apart from the general recommendations, district wise recommendations are also offered in this report for the revitalization and development of tourism in all the 10 districts of Telangana state.

It is sure, that findings and recommendations of this research project act as a road map for the development of tourism sector in Telangana state. The Department of Tourism, Telangana state, TSTDC (Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation) and other policy makers may use this project report as a manual for formulation of strategies and drafting plans for the development of tourism sector in the state.

No doubt, this comprehensive project report paves way for exploration of potentiality of tourism in other undeveloped states in India. This research opens the doors and initiates further research in the tourism areas such as hospitality, service quality, tourism entrepreneurship, medical tourism, adventure tourism, Heritage structures and the forthcoming Godavari Pushkaralu in Telangana.

Sd/-

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