

## A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE HUB – A STUDY ON VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT

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### Abstract

Indian Culture and heritage played a great role in the World. Among 29 States Andhra Pradesh is a considered as rich cultural heritage hub. The cultural heritage attracts the tourists. Andhra Pradesh Tourism was developed at a higher rate and tourist visitor's number increasing rapidly. Tourism is a potent tool to economic development of the state. The debate surrounding the role of tourism in the retrievals of history has gained much importance recently. Several scholars have argued that cultural heritage tourism plays an important role in discovering identity of the kingdoms ruling at different periods. The district of Vizianagaram was ruled by the Maharaja's of Gajapathi's families. The Vizianagaram district was a rich cultural hub in coastal Andhra. The King's of Vizianagaram was developed highly cultural heritage and tourist places. Thus, cultural heritage tourism is found to be high potential source with which dominant narratives of history, culture and identity are always reckoned. The promotion of cultural heritage tourism was increasing in the district. In this paper, the author attempt to study the cultural heritage development in vizianagaram district was analyzed in various ways. The main objective this paper is to study the cultural developments of the districts. The methodology used in this study is secondary sources like reports, News papers, magazines, Books etc. The major finding of the study was observed to improve the rich cultural heritage and tourism in the new areas in the district.

Key words: Culture, Heritage , Potent tool, High potential, Heritage tourism

### INTRODUCTION

The cultural heritage of India refers collectively to the thousands of distinct and unique cultures of all religions and communities exist in India. India has 29 states with different cultural heritage and civilizations and one of the most populated countries in the world. Over the centuries there has been significant fusion of cultures between Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Sikhs, and various tribal populations in India. India is the birth place of cultural heritage. India is one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures.

The sunrise Andhra Pradesh State is the second rich cultural heritage mine after India. Among 29 states, the Andhra Pradesh state was the best cultural heritage place. The district Vizianagaram as its head quarters some parts of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam were craved to create the new district. Vizianagaram has fabulous place and other tourist attractions that would satiate even the most fastidious sightseers. Architectural wonders, historical buildings, religious destinations and nature spots in this district leave tourists with sweet and unforgettable memories. Vizianagaram is located about 60 km from Visakhapatnam. With its imposing quadrangular stone fort, Vizianagaram reflects the past glory of valiant rulers.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the historical importance of Vizianagaram district with great Rulers
1. To observe the tourist development cities in this district.
2. To identify pilgrimatic places in the district.
3. To observe the great persons and their contributions to cultural development
4. To suggest the methods to sustain the cultural heritage in the district.

**METHODOLOGY:** In this study the author used the Secondary data from Books, News paper, Reports, and Reviews etc. And information from tourist guides.

**I-Great RULERS OF VIZIANAGARAM:** Historically Vizianagaram was ruled by different kings of Kalinga. The area including Srikakulam with north was integral part of the domain of Eastteren Chalukyas of Vengi during the rule of Kubja Vishnuvardhana (624-64). During his rule the vengi kingdom had been expanded from Srikakulam to Nellore. Vizianagaram was under the rule of Kakatiya Dynasty of Warangal during the rule of Ganapathi Deva in 13<sup>th</sup> century. The area was

overrun by the neighbouring Gajapatis for some time. Vizianagaram kings waged battles several times and finally succeeded in driving out the Gajapatis. The area was also under the rule of Krishnadevaraya of Vizianagaram Empire too. The Nizams of Hyderabad also ruled the area between 1707 and 1753. The French defeated and ended the rule of Nizam in 1753. The French were driven out by the British during the Anglo French war in 1756.

The important event of the history in the district was the battle kings, which is popularly known as Bobbili Yuddam.

**II -Major tourism circuits in Vizianagaram** includes forts of Vizianagaram and Bobbili fort and temples.

**Vizianagaram Raju –I** laid the foundation for the fort in 1713 on the day of vijaya Dasami. The victory arch was the main entrance of the fort. It has the temple of Lord Hanuman on one side and Goddess Laxmi on the other. Goddess Laxmi is also called as Kota Shakti, guardian of the fort. Rajas of Vizianagaram sought the blessings of the Goddess prior to embarking on any military expedition. The west gate is rear entrance to the fort and that was built in Rajastani style. It connects the fort to the pedda Cheruvu and royal Tomb. The quadrangular stone of the fort is evidence of technology and skill fullness of the builders in those days.

**KUMILI:** Kumili is located 20 km from Vizianagaram. This small village is famous for a group of temples built by local devotees over a period of 10 years. The temples have attractive sculptures, murals and images. The temples within the complex are dedicated to Ganapathi, Siva, Kalikadevi, Navagrahalu, Satyanarayana Swamy, Anjeneya Swamy and Venugopala swamy. The village, once the seat of the erstwhile Vizianagaram Kingdom, also has the ruins of a mud fort.

**GOVINDAPURAM:** Govindapuram is located about 20 km from Vizianagaram. A pilgrim centre, it is also known as Mukti damam. The temple here is renowned for its architectural brilliance and exquisite sculptures. It is also the place where the essence of the Bhagawad Gita has been artistically delineated. The Gyana Ratham, depicting Lord Krishna on the chariot, is an impressive image that enthalls visitors.

**BOBBILI FORT:** in Bobbili town of VZM district of Andhra Pradesh is one of the important forts in the state. It is associated with the zamindar of Vizianagaram and rulers of Bobbili and is being visited by lots of tourists. Peddarayudu of Velama Community is believed to be the founder of this town. In the historical war of Bobbili 1757, the Bobbili rulers lost the land and, in the wake of the war, the fort became ruined beyond repair. The Rajas of Bobbili and the neighboring land lords of Vizianagaram had been at loggerheads for some period and, over the years, their unrelenting feud brewed into a major battle. The French openly supported the Vizianagaram landlords. Somehow, in the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Bobbili rulers retrieved the land and had a new fort built. The new fort built by the successors of this lineage showed their better economic position, prosperity and their concern for the security of their country in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The fort has an impressive entrance and façade of the fort has high walls.

The four significant parts within the fort are: 1. The Durbar Hall 2. The Palace of the Prince 3. The palace for guests and 4. The Rajas Palace. The fort complex has two Hindu temples, one being family temple dedicated to Venugopala Swamy.

### III- Piligrimatic Places in the District

**RAMATHIRTHAM:** Located about 13km from Vizianagaram town, Ramathirdham is famous for the 1000 year old Sri Rama temple situated on the Bodikonda hill. The beautiful Koneru lake is in the vicinity of the temple, which was constructed by Puspati kings during 1650 -1693 AD entirely upon a huge rock. Nearby, on a hill known as Gurubhaktula Konda, are the remains of a maha stupa measuring 19 feet high and 65 feet wide, a monastery, chaitya, monastic cells, two votive stupas, a solid stone stupa, an enclosed courtyard and a pillared hall. Close at hand are the ruins of a shrine with images of Jain Thirthankaras. Further, upon the hill, underneath a massive hanging rock, one can see several Jain sculptures.

**PUNYAGIRI:** Punjyagiri is located 4 km from Srungavarapukota and 25km from Vizianagaram. It is home to one of the oldest Shiva temples. The sanctum sanctorum of the temple has an underground water source which ensures that the Shivalinga is ritualistically bathed in perpetuity. In the nearby Trimurthy cave, there are three lingas over which water drips constantly. It is considered a very sacred spot and a large number of devotees flock here during the Mahasivarathri festival. Legend has it that if one bathes in the nearby waterfall and then has a darshan of Lord Shiva, he would attain moksha.

**RAMANARAYANAM:** A spiritual project was constructed by the NCS charitable trust about five and a half years ago at Korukonda Road in Vizianagaram. The structure was built in the shape of Rama Dhanussu in two floor. Sri Maha Vishnu temple on one floor and Sri Rama Temple on the other. Linking both the temples in the shape of bow is the pranava Margam that comprises all important khandhas of saint Valmiki's Srimadramayana in visual form. Lord Vigneswarra temple is situated at the entrance in the shape of an arrow which contains fountains. A 60 foot tall Hanuman statue is also situated in the complex. Temples of Goddess Lakshmi and Guaura Saraswathi, are also there in the complex. A meditation centre vedapatasala and devotional libraries are a few knowledge centres in the complex.

**Cultural Heritage Special:** a) Crafts: The saraswathi veena which finds a mention in almost all ancient texts, is an integral part of carnatic music and Bobbili has the distinction of being the town where this special variant of Veena is made with great workmanship. Over the past three centuries, a unique style of playing the veena has evolved, earning the accolades of connoisseurs in Indian and international circles. This singular achievement was achieved with complete mastery in the art of making Saraswathi Veena at Bobbili. The instrument made here is noted for the depth and fullness of tone as well as for

its exquisite design and pattern. It is a symbol and remainder of India's rich cultural heritage. The uniqueness of these vee-nas is that they are carved from a single block of wood. Vizianagaram is also famous for Jute crafts, why because number of jute mills is located in its surroundings.

**JAMMI VRUKSHAM:** This is another important historical place named by Jammi Vruksham. The Jammy Vruksham is located on the banks of Gowthami river, 10 k from vizianagaram. Legend has it that the Pandavas hid their weapons in this tree before embarking on the final year of their exile (Agyathavasam) During their stay, King Dharma Raju and Kunti Deve installed the idols of Sri Thripurantha swamy and Sri Janardhan Swamy at this place. About 500 years ago, villagers found an idol of Sri Madhava Swamy and installed it between the two temples and named it Sri Venugopal Swamy temple.

#### **IV-Great Persons to sustain the culture and heritage in the District.**

**Cultural activities by the people:** Vizianagaram is also known for eminent personalities such as Gurajada Apparao, Social reformer who wrote kanya sulkam drama. The famous statement Desamante Matti Kadoi Desamante Manujuloy, was derived from his pen during the freedom struggle.

Another important person, **Dwaram Venkata Swamy** Naidu, who is the founder of music college in the city. He was born in 1893 and sacrificed a lot to the development of Music in the city. Likewise, Adi bhatla Narayana Das, renowned Harikatha exponent, was born in Ajjada village of Vizianagaram. He was appreciated by the famous writer Ravindranath Tagore in Culcutta for his performance of Harikatta in Sanskrit and Hindi too.

Another famous personality **Kodi RamaMurthy** was born in 1885. He worked as a Physical education teacher in Brauch college (Higher School) in Vizianagaram. He was known to have good knowledge in vayu sathbhavana and Jalas-thambhana skills.

The world famous dancer **Dr. Dasari Yatiraja sampath Kumar**, a classic and folk dancer. P. Vijayananda Gajapathi Raju, former BCCI president, and P. Suseela, playback singer are other renowned personalities from the district. Popular cultural heritage in Vizianagaram district is famous devotional dance which invokes the Rain God with its vigour, rhythm and tempo. Also performed during festivals, the dance sees 15 to 20 vibrant artists with dreams around their necks creating, mesmerizing beats and heart stopping aero bricks.

**SUGGESTIONS:** to sustainable cultural Heritage in VZM district.

1. To provide pollution free methods in the district.
2. To protect the old historical Fort, colleges and Temples in the district.
3. To keep the swachh policies and procedures in the tourist places of the district.
4. To create more awareness among domestic and foreign tourists about the importance of district culture and heritage.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Culture and heritage are part and parcel of human being lives. In Andhra Pradesh before and after bifurcation, the culture and tourism played an important role. The tourism development leads to state economic development. The contribution of tourism industry to GSDP is placed at high rate. Vizianagaram district is one among 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh which is a rich cultural heritage hub and have developed many tourist places. These places are visited by both domestic and foreign tourists. The tourism sector leads to development of district.

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