

IMPACT OF ECO-TOURISM ON KOYA TRIBALS IN JAYASHANKAR DISTRICT OF TELANGANA STATE – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Eco-tourism has drawn the attention of the world community as positive contributor towards the preservation of the natural and cultural resources and also towards the development of tourism. Eco-tourism is one type of tourism which provides opportunity to connect the nature's lover with the natural environment. The Telangana state has tremendous potentiality for Nature and Ecotourism. The new district Jaya Shankar has been a very important centre for cultural and pilgrimage ever since the beginning of the historical period. This district has great diversity of culture, tradition and natural resources which makes it very attractive tourist destination. There are few rich eco tourist sites in the district, which has been attracting the good number of tourists around the year. The Koya tribal's are one of the pre dominant people of the southern region of the country. The present habitat of the Koya's comprises the area of Eturnagaram, Mulug taluk of Jaya Shankar district. The impact of ecotourism on host communities can be much more. This research paper analyzes the various impacts of ecotourism on koya tribal community people in the district.

Key Words: Eco-Tourism, Natural Environment, Tradition, Eturnagaram, Koya tribals.

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INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Tourism is a driving force for Poverty Alleviation and universal Social Harmony. India is one of the few countries of the world with an array of tourism resources from bio cultural diversity to a wealth of histories and antiquities. India, with its rich culture, heritage, ancient monuments, world famous temples, architectural masterpieces, wild animals' sanctuaries and scenic sports, remains a great attraction for the tourists.

Today, ecotourism is one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. Its potential for growth is virtually unlimited. Eco-tourism is considered as a distinct form of tourism development by replacing the conventional 'mass tourism', having strong moorings in sustainable, equitable, and community based efforts for improving the living standards of local, host communities living on the fringes of natural settings. As defined by the *Ecotourism Society*, it is the responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people. Any tourism program which is: nature – based, ecologically sustainable, where education and interpretation is a major concept and where local people are benefited can be called ecotourism. Ecotourism is a growing niche market within the larger travel industry, with the potential of being an important sustainable development tool. Considering the values of Ecotourism the United Nations declared the year 2002 as the “**Year of**

Mountain and Ecotourism”

Telangana state occupies a strategic position in the Indian sub-continent. The state has thick forests, where, the newly formed Jayashankar district is blessed with an enormous variety of flora and fauna. The district is spread over an area of 6,175 square kilometers with Bhoopalpally as its headquarters. The population of district is 7.05,054. The district has tremendous potentiality for Nature and Ecotourism. The natural assets like forests and wildlife remains unexplored and untapped from the tourism point of view. To gain the pleasant experiences, the tourists have been visiting different eco tourist sites in the district. Due to the tourist visits, there is a direct positive impact on the Koya tribals, those are living in and around of Eтуру Nagarm forest zone in the district.

NEED FOR STUDY:

1. To highlight the hidden potential eco tourist sites of Jayashankar district.
2. To access the eco tourism impact on Koya tribals in the district.
3. The Study will benefit policy makers to identify and understand the problems and constraints which cause to attract more tourists to the Jayashankar district, which was newly formed.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the Concept of Ecotourism.
2. To study the Ecotourism potentials in Telangana state and Jayashankar district.
3. To focus and analyze the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary as study area Ecotourism destination.
4. To showcase the Eco-Tourism impacts on Koya community Tribals.

HYPOTHESIS:

The study endeavors to test the following hypothesis evolved in the light of the said objectives.

H₀: There is no impact of eco tourism destinations on tourists.

H₀: There is no Impact of eco tourism on Koya Tibals and their socio-economic and cultural development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study based on primary and secondary sources. The relevant data for study has been collected from both the primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected by using the structured closed questionnaire with the sample size 60 & secondary data was collected from various websites, Journals & Books. The data collected through questionnaire were classified tabulated analyzed through simple percentage method. Further the data was analysis with chi-square test.

CONCEPT OF ECO-TOURISM:

Ecotourism is a new concept in tourism, which was originally sparked off by the idea of making harmonious co-existence with nature a reality once again. Today, ecotourism is one of

the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. Its potential for growth is virtually unlimited. Any tourism program which is: nature – based, ecologically sustainable, where education and interpretation is a major concept and where local people are benefited can be called ecotourism. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as “*responsible travel that conserves the environment and sustains the well - being of local people*”. Clearly, at a time when traditional conservation through enforced protection of natural areas was being questioned for its effectiveness and social impacts, strategies such as ecotourism offered considerable potential for integrating conservation with development. Ecotourism refers tourists to travel to a particular natural site largely for amenity and recreational purpose.

ECO TOURISM ACTIVITIES:

The main activities involved in Eco Tourism are non-consumptive like *Bird Watching, Trekking, Nature Trails, River Rafting, Rock Climbing* and more importantly mere watching of the scenic beauty of Hills, Valleys, Meadows, Water bodies and the natural processes and practicing to Live in Nature. These activities do not have any negative impact on the environment but at the same time the different segments of society like professionals, Businessmen, Politicians, Common men, School Children, etc., who are involved in these activities are exposed to the nature and its intricate linkages in the maintenance of Ecological Balance and it is expected that many of them will inculcate Environmental Consciousness.

Table – 1

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF ECO-TOURISM

Local Employment	Directly in the tourism sector and in other support and resources management sector
Domestic Industries	Profitable industries area generated such as hotels, restaurants and transport systems handicrafts etc.
Economic Diversification	Diversifies the local economy especially in rural areas.
Foreign Exchange	Generates foreign exchange from visitors/inbound tourists.
Improves	Improves intercultural understandings.

Understanding	
Local Government Support	Encourages local government to provide additional resources to promote development
Recreational Facilities	Creates recreational facilities which can be utilized by local communities well as domestic and international visitors.
Promotes Conservation	Promotes conservation by convincing government authorities and the general public of the importance and value of natural areas.

Source: Ecotourism and Environment Handbook

ECO-TOURISM POTENTIALS OF TELANGANA STATE:

The newly established state Telangana of South India has tremendous potential to become one of the foremost states in the tourist map of the country. It has an area of 1, 14, 840 km and consisting of the ten north-western districts of Andhra Pradesh with Hyderabad as its capital. The State has approximately 29,162 sq. kms of rich forests and diverse flora & fauna provides ample scope for promoting Eco-Tourism. The natural beauty of the state has not been exposed to the visitors till now. The new districts of *Adilabad, Komuram Bheem, Kamareddy, Jayashankar, and Kothagudam* have thick forests. These forests and the adjoining tracts are the home to rich and varied animal and birdlife. An increasing number of tourists now prefer to visit our state for its attractive natural environmental sites instead of visiting traditional cities or taking beach based holidays.

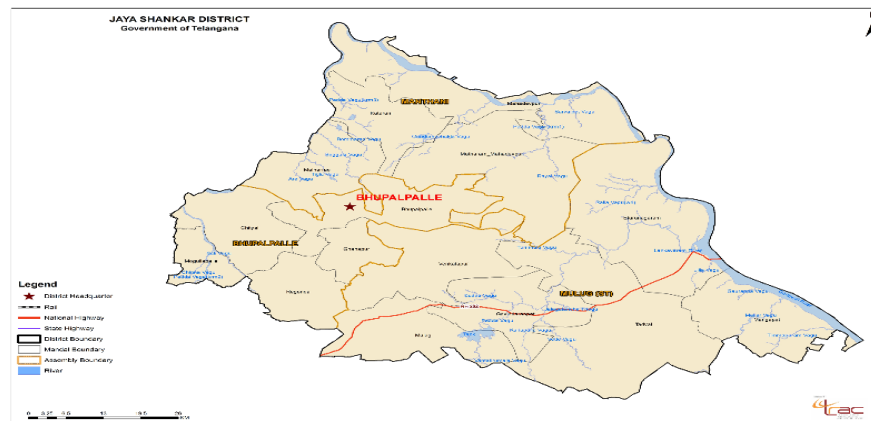
BRIEF PROFILE OF JAYASHANKAR DISTRICT:

Jayashankar is situated in the northern east part of Telangana state. The total area of the district is 6,760.29 square kilometers and Bhoopal Pally is its headquarters. The district is administratively divided into 20 mandals with 575 revenue villages. The total population in the district is 856453 according to 2011 census report. In the tourism point of view, this new district is a multi dimensional tourist hub for **Pilgrimage tourism** (*Kaleshwaram – Sri Muktheswara Swamy Temple, which is a Shekthi Petham*), **Tribal tourism** (*Sammaka and Saralamma Fair at Medaram, which is Asia's largest fair*), **Heritage tourism** (*Ramappa temple and Ghanpur*

Group of monuments). To explore these tourist centers, good numbers of tourists, visitors and Excursionists have been visiting around the year. The accessible facilities are good to reach any of the tourist destinations with quality road connectivity. The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) buses are widely available from Hyderabad, Warangal, and Khammam to all the tourist sites. To cater the needs and wants of the tourists quality hotels, restaurants and Government Guest Houses are available. The well trained professional tourist guides are also available on behalf of Department of Tourism, Government of Telangana.

Map – 1

Jayashankar District Map



ECO-TOURISM DESTINATIONS:

Jayashankar district is well endowed with a rich gamut of picturesque and relatively undisturbed landscapes, forests and wildlife and cultural diversity. Nearly 30% of the land in this district is covered with forest. The tropical dry deciduous forest have been stable for centuries and are the climatic climax type of forest and enjoys an annual rainfall of 1049.4 mm. It is home to several rare, endangered and threatened species. Major part of Tourism in Jayashankar district is centered on nature and wildlife. It is in this context that “Ecotourism” has gained its bearing in the district. Ecotourism also had the potential to play an important role in creating environmental as well as cultural awareness amongst all the stakeholders-local communities, tourists, government and private sectors. Some of the major Ecotourism destinations in the district are:

- Pandavulagutta at Mulugu

- Laknawaram Lake
- Ramappa Lake
- Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary
- Manthani Fort and Mutharam Forest Zone

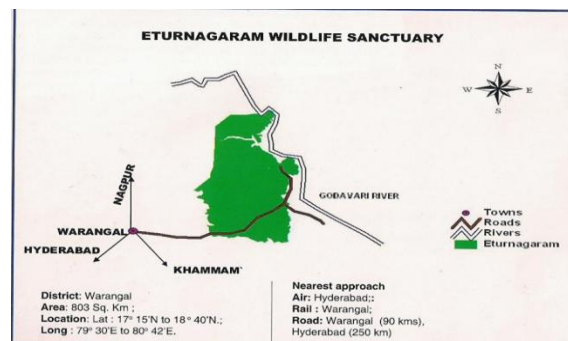
The above eco-tourist centers are quite unique in the district. Where as to assess the ecotourism impact on koya tribal's we the researchers have choose the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary as study area. This sanctuary has been playing the key role as eco tourist centre, which is living its impact on Koya tribal's.

ETURUNAGARAM WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

The Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary is one of the oldest sanctuaries of the state. Eturnagaram was declared as a sanctuary in G.O.No:1289 (Rural Reconstruction) dated **30.1.1935** as per the provisions under Hyderabad Forest Act NO.II of 1955 F and extends over an area of 806.15 Sq.kms. This sanctuary is well known for its rich biodiversity and is located on the banks of River Godavari. The forest of the sanctuary contains predominantly teak with miscellaneous species supporting both herbivorous fauna besides harboring a variety of avifauna. The topography of the land is undulating from slopes to gentle slopes from west to east. Dayyam Vagu a perennial water source divides sanctuary into about two halves. The sanctuary area is rich in pre-historical evidences. The climate is normally hot round the year. The temperature often reaches 45°C during summer.

MAP – 2

Location of Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary



Source: Office of the Wildlife Sanctuary

The wildlife scenario in the sanctuary is as follows.

Mammals: Tiger, Pather, Wolf, Wild dog, Jackal, Sloth bear, Nilgai, Sambar, Spotted deer, Four horned antelope, Chinkara, Black Buck, Giant squirrel etc.

Reptiles & Birds: Crocodiles, Python, Cobra, Krait, Star tortoise, Monitor Lizard etc., and a variety of Birds.

The below table – 2 highlights the tourist and visitor arrivals to this sanctuary right from 2013 to 2016 and details of revenue earned by Dept. of Forest has been presented.

Table – 2

Tourist and Visitor Arrivals, 2013-2014

Year	Tourists	Visitors	Total	Revenue Earned By Forest Dept.
2013	1169	941	2110	63514
2014	1320	1427	2747	67702
2015	1594	1709	3303	71475
2016	1837	1982	3819	73891

Source: Office of the Wildlife Sanctuary.

OBJECTIVES OF TOURIST VISITS TO WILDLIFE SANCTUARY:

To access the objectives or purpose of tourist visits to this sanctuary are as follows.

Table – 3

Objectives of Tourism Visits

Sl.No	Objectives	Yes	No	Total
1	To enjoy forest area	8	2	10
2	To experience the nature	9	6	15
3	To visualize tribal's & their socio – cultural and economic conditions	7	3	10
4	To purchase forest products	8	4	12
5	To purchase the wildlife species	9	4	13
Total		41	19	60
Percentage		68.33	31.67	100

Source: Field Survey

In the above table the opinions of tourists regarding the actual behind objectives of visit to this Wildlife Sanctuary has also collected in survey. The results show that keeping in view the image of nature based tourist location, 41 tourists (63.33%) have expressed their positive opinion behind the objectives of their visit to Wildlife Sanctuary. The remaining 19 tourists (31.67%) have expressed their negative opinion towards their visit to Wildlife Sanctuary. On the whole the majority of tourists have been holding good and positive opinion on Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary as their holiday spot.

H₀: There is no impact of eco tourism destinations on tourists.

Chi Square Test

Person chi-square	Table value	Calculated Value	df	P value	Remark
	9.49	11.50	4	0.02	Highly Significant

It is noted that the above table that the 'P' value is less than 0.05 and hence the result is highly significant. Hence, the hypothesis "there is no impact of eco tourism destinations on tourists" does not hold well. From the analysis it is concluded that there is highly significant association between the eco-tourism and tourists.

The district is under **ITDA (Integrated Tribal Development Authority)** where so many developmental programs are undertaken for the welfare of the tribal communities. Ecotourism is increasingly becoming an important part of such overall development of the district and the tribal communities residing there. Ecotourism as an economic activity has been successful in providing them with an important alternative source of employment.

BRIEF PROFILE OF KOYA TRIBALS:

The Koyas are one of the predominant autochthonous people of the southern region of the country. The present habitat of the Koyas comprises the area of Mulug (Eturnagaram) Revenue Division of *Jayashankar and Bhadradi Kothagudem and Khammam* districts. The most outstanding physical feature of the Koya country is the Godavari and this river exercises a

profound influence on Koyas' economic, social and cultural activities, living on its banks and in the hills as well as plain areas of both sides of the river tract. Koyas generally restrict to the foot hills and adjoining plains and in some areas penetrated far in to the hills and in many of villages on the Godavari banks, there is a mixed Koya-Reddi population.

The Koyas popularly known as 'Dorala Sattam' are believed to be the section of the Gondi speaking race, and though strongly influenced by neighboring Telugu speaking people, they retained a good many of typical cultural traits of Koya culture. Koyas characteristic settlement is groups of hamlets scattered over the village land at places convenient for cultivation of their fields and seldom are the houses concentrated in a large compact village. The Koya language is a typical dialect of Telugu spoken with the characteristic hill-accent. There are dialectal variations among the speeches of different areas of Koyas. The Koyas living in the Godavari gorges speak very ancient type of speech which is perhaps close to Gondi or Kui, the dialects of Gonds, Khonds and Jatapus respectively which are essentially Dravidian.

Koyas are divided in to several functional sub-divisions, such as *Gutta Koyas*, *Gommu Koyas*, *Kammara Koyas*, *Musara Koyas*, *Gampa Koyas*, *Oddi Koyas*, *Doli Koyas*, *Kapu Koyas*, *Matwa Koyas*, *Linga Koyas*, *Gutta or Raccha Koyas* are those who live on the hills; Gommu is applied to the Koyas living on the river bank. The river side villages are called Gummu villages. The Gutta and Gommu koyas are the real Koyas and speak dialect of their own. Koyas worship goddess Mamili, Kommamma, Katurudu, Adamarazu, Korra Raju, Mutyalamma, Kudidevara etc. The goddess Mamili is blood thirsty goddess. In order to ensure good crops, human beings were sacrificed to Mamili goddess up to 19th century. This practice is replaced now by an animal sacrifice to the goddess. Muthyalamma is the goddess, who is supposed to preside over small pox and cholera.

ECO-TOURISM IMPACTS ON KOYA TRIBALS:

The impact of eco tourism on tribal life has caused much concern among anthropologists with a view to commercialization of their culture and economy.

Table – 4**Impact of Eco-Tourism on Socio –Economic Infrastructural Developments of Koya Tribal's**

Response	Impact of eco tourism on Koya Tribal's			Total
	Socio-Economic	Culture	Infrastructure	
Positive	30	05	05	40
Negative	06	08	06	20
Total	36	13	11	60

Source: Field survey

The above table reveals the Questionnaire respondent on issue of the eco tourism impact on the Koya tribal's socio-economic, cultural and infrastructural developments. The questionnaire was served to 60 tribals as sample size. As respondents to the questionnaire majority of the tribal's accepted the eco tourism is an asset to life styles and have been supporting well in the overall socio-cultural and economic development.

H₀: There is no Impact of eco tourism on socio-economic, cultural and infrastructural developments of Koya tribal's.

Chi Square Test

Person chi-square	Table value	Calculated Value	df	P value	Remark
	9.49	11.50	4	0.02	Highly Significant

It is noted that the above table that the 'P' value is less than 0.05 and hence the result is highly significant. Hence, the hypothesis "there is no Impact of eco tourism on socio-economic, cultural and infrastructural development" does not hold well. From the analysis it is concluded that there is highly significant association between the eco-tourism and socio-economic, cultural and infrastructural development of Koya tribal's.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

A survey on impact of Eco-Tourism on Koya tribal's with a sample size of 60 was conducted with the support of questionnaire. The majority of the respondents agreed that the eco tourism is influencing a lot the social conditions of Koya tribal's and indirectly supporting well in their economic, cultural enhancements and infrastructural developments. The research findings are as follows.

1. Eco-Tourism – A Vehicle for Social Development:

The overall result indicates that the eco tourism is a vehicle of social development in of Koyas. Out of 50 respondents 40 (80%) were expressed positive impact of eco tourism on social development.

2. Eco-Tourism Enhances the Standard of Living of the Local Community:

80 Per cent of the respondents expresses that the eco tourism helped in improving their standard of living and through disposable income with better lifestyle and educational facility. The host community showed positive attitude towards tourism which in turn increased their involvement in the way they have treated tourist. They are enthusiastic and thrilled by the development of the tourism and increased tourist flow in the village.

3. Eco-Tourism Inspire Community Pride:

80 Per cent of the respondents expressed a sense of pride about their cultural significances. The host community is so proud that the people from the various parts of the world come to see the cultural aspects like folklore, customs, costumes, and food habits etc.

4. Tourism & Infrastructural Development:

80 Per cent of the respondents agreed that eco tourism helped in enhancement of the local infrastructure with better connectivity such as increased frequency of buses from Eturnagaram, Mulugu, Warangal and nearby areas.

SUGGESTIONS:

The following are the suggestions for better development and implementation of Ecotourism sites in Jayashankar district to protect the natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of tribal people by the way of contributing foreign exchange:

1. The Central & State Government should plan to build world-class infrastructural facilities in all eco tourist centers to attract the large scale of domestic and foreign tourists as many as possible.
2. The Central & State Governments should allocate necessary funds from time to time for the purpose of improve Road ways, transportation, ensure clean and hygienic environment and provide safety and security conditions at eco tourist spots.
3. Pay more attention on environment protection, more emphasis should be placed on encouraging eco friendly sustainable tourism. For this, awareness should be created and there should be people's participation in the mission.
4. Trained tourist guides and language translators are required in between the tourists and tribal people.
5. Agencies, corporations, groups and individuals should follow ethical and other principles with respect the Koya tribal culture and traditional practices.
6. Good information, research and communication on the nature of tourism should be made available.
7. The forest and tourism departments must organize seminars in the nearby areas for providing training on the Dos and Don'ts at the eco tourist sites in the district and required behavioral attitudes with tribal's.

CONCLUSION:

Eco-tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live. It is typically defined as travel to destinations where the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible ecotourism includes programs that minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. The analysis above indicates that the Eturnagarm Wildlife Sanctuary has vast potentiality as wonderful eco tourist site among the other eco tourism sites in the Jayashankar district. This eco tourist site has been living its impact on Koya tribals in a positive manner. Due to the huge visits of tourists the host community Koya tribal people have been gaining socio, cultural and economic benefits. There are some difficulties or bottlenecks in ecotourism. If these bottlenecks are taken care of, then the place can develop as an attractive destination for ecotourism.

Ecotourism can be an important part of the economy of the region because as it is a tourist destination and most of the tourists visit the region to spend their time to have a look at the beauty of the tourist spots and to have a feel of the beautiful and natural environment. But at the same time there can be some threats, which need to be taken care of. To overcome these threats several steps can be taken so that the whole concept of ecotourism can be implemented in a better way and can contribute its best to the jayashankar district of Telangana state.

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