



"Exploring Tourist Perspectives on Post-Pandemic Tourism in Andhra Pradesh- A Field Study in Kurnool District."

D. Ramanjulu ,D. Krishnamoorthy

Lecturer in Economics ,

GDC(A) Nagari, Chittoor Dt.

Andhra Pradesh,India

Professor of Economics (Retd)

Department of Economics

Sri Venkateswara University- 517502, Tirupati, India

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted the global tourism industry, reshaping traveller preferences, behaviours, and expectations. This study focuses on understanding post-pandemic tourism through the lens of tourists visiting the Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh, a region known for its historical, cultural, and natural attractions. Employing a field-based approach, the research captures first-hand perspectives on the conditions in the tourism destinations

Data were collected through a pre-structured questionnaire in personal interviews with domestic tourists. The findings reveal a significant shift towards safety-conscious travel, a preference for open-air and less-crowded destinations, and a heightened interest in sustainable tourism practices. This study analyzes tourists' opinions on tourism staff behaviour post-Covid. Their satisfaction level is assessed based on the cost of facilities like accommodation and transportation, using a five-point scale.

The survey aims to identify specific problems experienced by tourists during their travels. This study offers actionable insights to help rebuild tourism resilience and promote sustainable growth in the post-COVID-19 era. The tourism policy for 2024-2029, led by the TDP coalition government, focuses on creating a vibrant tourism ecosystem designed to attract more visitors in the coming years. This mission-driven approach is expected to address the issues highlighted in the field survey.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Andhra Pradesh Tourism, Kurnool District, Field Survey, Sustainable Tourism

Introduction:

Employment, entertainment, and enlightenment—collectively referred to as the 3Es—constitute the fundamental aspirations of every individual. Tourism emerges as a notable example among the limited activities that concurrently address these goals while promoting economic development. Though the act of travelling dates back to the earliest days of civilization, tourism as a structured industry is a relatively modern development. It serves as a crucial element of the service sector. Today, it has transformed into one of the most dynamic



and prosperous sectors within the global economy. By transcending national borders, tourism fosters connections among diverse socio-economic and cultural communities, thereby enhancing mutual understanding and contributing to the realization of a unified 'Global Village.'

World Tourism Organization (WTO), has defined "a tourist as a temporary visitor staying for at least 24 hours in a country visited when the purpose of the journey can be classified under one of the following headings":

- i. Leisure, recreation, holiday, health, study of religion and sports or,
- ii. Business, family, and mission meetings.

Literature Review and Research Gaps

The study of tourism as an academic subject has gained attention in recent years. American Geographers such as M.C Murry (1930), Brown (1935), Carlson (1938), and Eiselen (1945) showed their interest during the 1930s. In Britain, the study of sea resorts was conducted by Gilbert (1939 and 1949) while in France by Miede (1933) and in Germany by Poser (1939). But, most of the literature started coming to light after the Second World War, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Many scholars in the world and India have written books and articles in various reputed journals dealing with their views on different issues of tourism.

Only a few studies have focused on tourism in Rayalaseema, a region in the state of Andhra Pradesh, particularly in the former Kurnool district. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted tourism, which, in turn, has affected the overall economy of this region. As a researcher in tourism and a resident of this area, I chose to study the opinions and perspectives of domestic tourists in the district during the post-COVID-19 period, specifically in 2022-23.

Objectives of the study

1. To enlist the major problems of tourist places in the study region by eliciting the opinions of the tourists and pilgrims in the context of Covid-19
2. To suggest practical measures towards accelerated development of safety tourism in the study district



Methodology of the Study

In the first stage, Out of several tourist places in Kurnool district, three prominent tourist places were selected based on the three criteria i. popularity and potential of the place, ii. the number of tourists that visited and iii. the availability of infrastructure facilities. The three areas are, i) **Belum Caves** which are known for Historical & Archeological tourism, ii) **Orvakallu**, which is a celebrated Eco and cine tourism centre and iii) **Mahanandi**, which is famous for Temple & Spiritual tourism.

In the second stage, 50 visitors from each place were selected. From three places **150** tourists were randomly selected. The aim is to gather realistic information on the problems as well as the facilities available for tourists.

Kurnool District Profile

The erstwhile Kurnool district is one of the 13 districts in Andhra Pradesh and gets its name from its chief town, Kurnool. This was Andhra Pradesh's capital from October 1, 1953, to November 1, 1956. The name "Kurnool" is believed to have originated from the word "Kandanavolu."³ The district ranks 10 in population with 40,53,463 People accounting for 4.63 per cent of the total population of the state as per the 2011 Population Census, while in area it occupies the 3rd place with 17658 Sq. Kms., which accounts for 6.41 per cent of the state's total area. By 2022 April 1, this District includes 3 Revenue Divisions, 54 Revenue Mandals 53 Mandal Parishads, One Municipal Corporation, 4 Municipalities, 4 Nagara Panchyats, 909 Gram Panchayats 921 Revenue Villages.

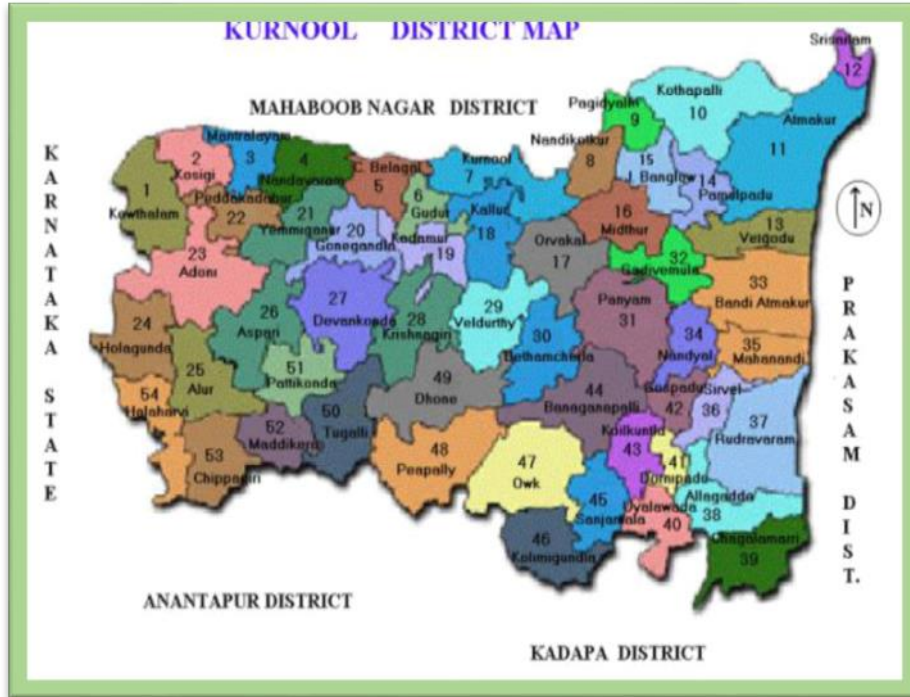
Nallamalas and Erramalas are two important mountain ranges in the district running parallel from North to South. The major parts of the forest area are confined mainly to the Nallamalas including its extensions, the Erramalas as well as part of the Velikondas. The total area under forests is 340669 Hec accounting for about 19 per cent of the total geographical area of the district. Important minor forest produce are Tamarind and Beedi leaves. This district features several important rivers, including the Tungabhadra, its tributary Handri, the Krishna, the Kunderu, and the Gundlakamma.

Popular tourists places in this district are Srisailam, Mahanandi, Ahobhilam, Yaganti, Beum caves, Orvakal, Mantralayam, Adoni fort, Kondareedy Buruju, Jumma Maszid, Jian Temple of Adoni, Kethavaraam Rock paintings, Emperor Asoka rock edict, Jonnagiri village,



Nallamala forest,Byerluti Jungle Safari,Sri Bugga Ramalingeswara swami temple- Kalvabugga, Rollapadu Bird Sancturay and so on

Combined District Map



Source: Wikipedia

Tourists visit to Kurnool District

During the 7 years between 2016 and 2022, on average 59.06 lakh tourists visited the district with a coefficient variation of 40.16 per cent during the period under study. However, during the seven years, the tourist visit has registered a negative growth rate of -11.32 per cent. Between the years, 2016 and 2017, the domestic tourists decreased significantly by - 7.12 per cent from 75.51 lakh tourists to 70.14 lakh tourists. But between the years 2017 and 2018, there was a recovery with domestic tourists increasing by 15.63 per cent to 81.10 lakhs.

Whereas, between 2018 and 2019, one can witness a major deceleration in tourist visits by -16.14 per cent possibly due to economic or regional issues. Between the years 2019 and 2020, a sharp decline of -71.23 per cent was recorded owing to the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns. But, some recovery was witnessed in 2021, as domestic tourism grew by 59.23 per cent compared to the earlier year. But in 2022, the decline reappeared with a -10.72



per cent decrease reaching total tourists to 27.82 lakh, which was less than half of the pre-2019 number of 68.02 lakh.

On the whole, during the seven years from 2016 to 2022, the inflow of domestic tourists into the district decelerated by the CAGR of -11.32 per cent, foreign tourists by -22.30 per cent and total tourists by -11.13 per cent. Foreign tourists made up only a tiny fraction of the total tourists visiting the Kurnool district throughout the period, peaking at 0.067 per cent in 2017 and falling to a paltry 0.0001 per cent in 2022, highlighting their small contribution to overall tourism in the district.

Kurnool district accounted for 4.93 per cent of Andhra Pradesh's tourists in 2016. Later, there was a declining trend in Kurnool's share from 4.30 per cent in 2017 to 2.87 per cent in 2019. Further, it lowered to 2.26 per cent in 2020 indicating that Kurnool was becoming less significant in the state's tourism landscape.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data – Perceptions of the Tourists

The opinion of the domestic tourists visiting three places- Mahanandi, Orvakal and the Belum Caves is collected through a field survey by the circulation of the pre-structured printed questionnaire to randomly selected tourists at the location. These locations attract both domestic and international tourists seeking unique experiences ranging from spiritual pilgrimages to archaeological explorations.

Understanding the tourism experiences and perceptions of domestic tourists is crucial for the sustainable development and effective management of these destinations. This survey focuses on assessing the satisfaction levels, preferences, and suggestions of domestic tourists visiting Mahanandi, Orvakal, and Belum Cave in the Kurnool district.

NATIVE STATES OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS

The survey indicates that, according to Table 1, most tourists visiting Mahanandi are from Andhra Pradesh, comprising 34 per cent of the total. There is an equal number of tourists from Karnataka and Telangana (30 per cent each). Fewer tourists from other states (6 per cent).

Table: 1 Origin of Tourists (In Number)



Tourist place	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Telangana	Other States	Total
Mahanandi	17	15	15	3	50
Orvakal	20	12	14	4	50
Belum Caves	20	14	10	6	50
Total responses	57	41	39	13	150
per centage (%)	38.00	27.33	26.00	8.66	100.00

Source: Field Survey

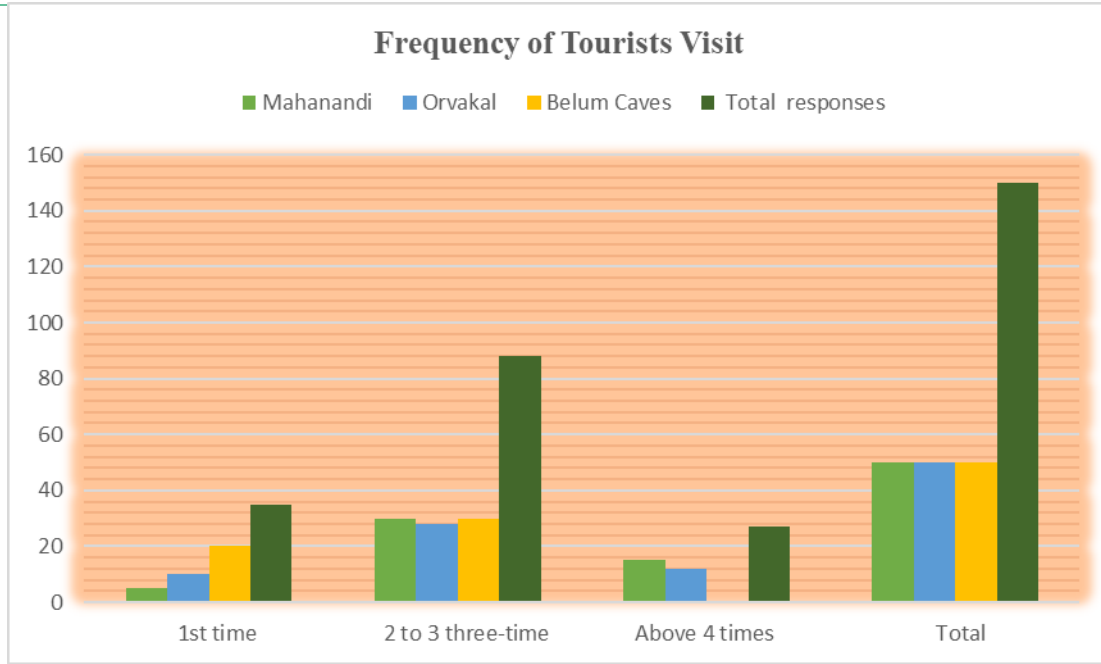
In Orvakallu, the highest number of visitors are from Andhra Pradesh (40 per cent). Karnataka tourists make up 24 per cent and Telangana 28 per cent. Other states account for 8 per cent of the visitors. In Belum Caves, Andhra Pradesh leads again with 40 per cent of the visitors. Karnataka contributes 28 per cent of the number of tourists. Telangana has 20 per cent of the visitors. Other states have a significant share of 12 per cent.

NUMBER OF TIMES TOURISTS VISIT

The volume and size of business turnover at a tourist destination primarily depend on both the number of tourists and the frequency of visits by each traveller to a location within a year. More frequent visits can lead to a greater volume of business.

The site of Mahanandi experiences a higher frequency of visitors who have made more than four visits, in comparison to Orvakal and Belum Caves. Belum Caves, in contrast, draws a notable number of first-time visitors, a phenomenon possibly attributed to its widespread appeal or unique attractions. Both Mahanandi and Belum Caves demonstrate a considerable rate of return visitors, ranging between two to three visits, hinting at their strong allure or cultural significance. This is depicted in Figure 1

Figure-1



MODE OF TRANSPORT

The survey results in Table.2 indicate that the most frequently used mode of transportation is a separate rented vehicle, with 55 responses, accounting for 36.66 per cent of the total. The second most common mode is the common bus (private travel bus) with 50 responses, making up 33.33 per cent of the total.

Table- 2 Mode of Transport

Source: Field Survey

PLACE OF ACCOMMODATION

Mode of Transport	Mahanandi	Orvakal	Belum Caves	Total	Per centage (%)
Own vehicle	10	10	15	35	23.33
Separate rented vehicle	20	20	15	55	36.66
Common bus (private travel bus)	15	15	20	50	33.33
Train	5	2	0	7	4.66
Flight	0	3	0	3	2.00
Total	50	50	50	150	100.0



When tourists visit a destination, one of the most significant factors influencing their decision to stay or to leave is undoubtedly the quality and availability of accommodation facilities. According to Table. 3, in Mahanandi, most visitors (50 per cent) do not stay overnight. Of those who do, 40 per cent stay in private lodges and 10 per cent stay at relatives' houses. In Orvakal, the largest share of accommodation options is in private lodges (44 per cent), followed by the tourism department choultries (12 per cent).

There is also a notable number of visitors (14 per cent) staying at relatives' houses, and 30 per cent of visitors do not stay overnight. At Belum Caves, the majority of accommodation (48 per cent) is provided by private lodges, with 12 per cent staying at relatives' houses. Additionally, 40 per cent of visitors do not stay overnight.

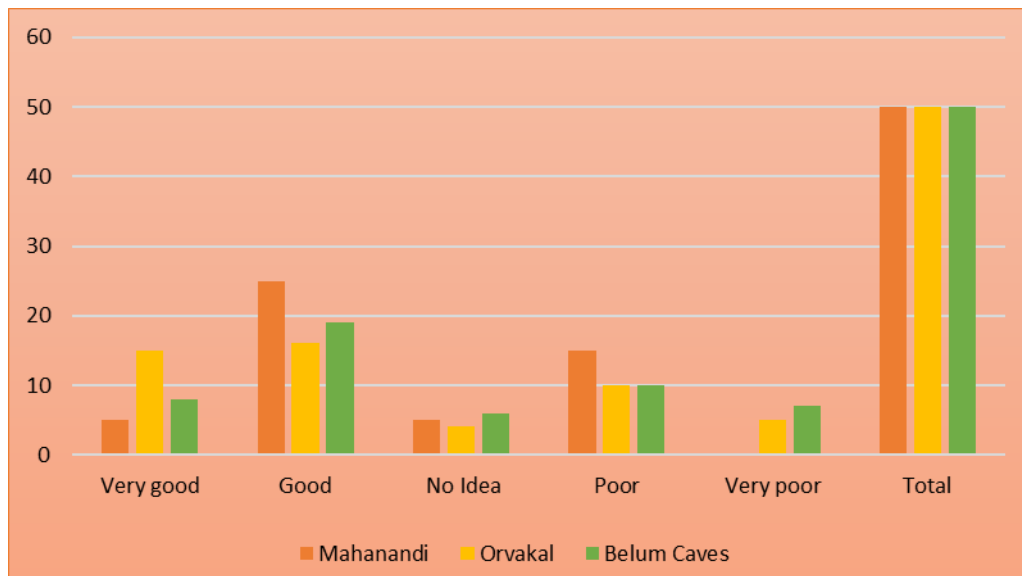
Table- 3 Place of Accommodation

Source: Field Survey

Accommodation	Mahanandi	Orvakal	Belum Caves	Total	per centage (%)
Private Lodges	20	22	24	66	44.0
Tourism department choultries	0	06	0	6	4.0
Local community choultries	0	0	0	0	0.0
Relatives house	5	7	6	18	12.0
No stay at night	25	15	20	60	40.0
Total	50	50	50	150	100.0

COVID PRECAUTIONS AND SAFETY MAINTAINED AT THE VISITING PLACE

The Covid pandemic has made people concerned about the safety of new places they plan to visit. Many individuals have been hesitant to go to even previously popular tourist destinations. In light of this situation, a question was formulated and posed to tourists regarding their current feelings about safety conditions at three specific locations and measured on Five- point scale.

**Figure-2****COVID Precautions and Safety maintained at the Visiting Place**

The majority of tourists (40%) rated the COVID precautions as "Good." About 18.66% rated them as "Very Good," indicating that some tourists were satisfied. However, there is notable dissatisfaction, with 23.33% rating the precautions as "Poor" and 8% rating them as "Very Poor." A smaller segment of tourists (10%) stated they had "No Idea," which may reflect either indifference or a lack of visibility regarding the safety measures in place. Variations are there among three tourist places responses.

In the comparison as revealed in Figure .2, Orvakal excels with the highest "Very Good" ratings, whereas Belum Caves presents significant improvement opportunities due to its elevated "Very Poor" ratings. Addressing the concerns raised by these visitors through the enhancement of safety measures could lead to overall satisfaction and guarantee a safer and more enjoyable experience for all tourists.

BEHAVIOUR OF TOURISM OFFICE STAFF

The behaviour of tourism office staff plays a crucial role in shaping a tourist's overall experience. First Impressions Matter. Tourism office staff are often the first point of contact for visitors. The field survey posed the same question and asked respondents to rate their satisfaction at three different locations on a five-point scale which is presented the Table 3.

**Table: 3 Behaviour of Tourism Office Staff**

Behaviour of the Tourism Office Staff	Mahanandi	Orvakallu	Belum Caves	Total	Per centage(%)
Very good	14	20	13	47	31.3
Good	20	15	16	51	34.0
No Idea	05	03	06	14	09.3
Poor	11	12	15	38	25.4
Very poor	0	0	0	0	00.0
Total	50	50	50	150	100.0

Source: Field Suvey

Very Good" and "Good" ratings together account for 65.3% of the total responses, with Orvakallu showing the strongest performance (20 "Very Good" and 15 "Good" ratings). Responses indicating "No Idea" made up 9.3% of the total, suggesting some tourists had insufficient interaction with the staff. However, "Poor" ratings constituted 25.4% of the responses, with Belum Caves receiving the highest number (15), indicating areas for improvement in staff behaviour. Notably, no respondents rated the service as "Very Poor," implying that while improvements are needed, the behaviour is generally acceptable.

ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT FACILITY AT REASONABLE COST

Tourists' decisions regarding the selection of a destination principally take into consideration accommodation and transportation expenses. These costs generally represent a substantial portion of overall travel expenditures. Furthermore, elevated accommodation rates may compel tourists to shorten their stays, thereby affecting the overall economic benefits. The same point was gathered from the tourists of the THREE places, which are mentioned in Table: 4.

**Table: 4 Accommodation and Transport Facility at Reasonable Cost**

Accommodation & Transport facility cost	Mahanandi	Orvakal	Belum Caves	Total	per centage (%)
Very good	15	15	05	35	23.32
Good	17	20	14	51	34.00
No Idea	4	5	5	14	09.34
Poor	14	10	16	40	26.67
Very poor	0	0	10	10	06.67
Total	50	50	50	150	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Overall 23.32% of respondents rated the facilities as "Very Good," indicating a notable level of satisfaction, especially in Mahanandi and Orvakal, where 15 respondents each expressed this view. In contrast, Belum Caves received only 5 "Very Good" ratings.

The highest percentage, 34% of tourists, rated the facilities as "Good," reflecting moderate satisfaction. Orvakal had the best score in this category, with 20 respondents, followed by Mahanandi with 17 and Belum Caves with 14. Meanwhile, 9.34% of respondents remained neutral, showing a lack of strong opinions about the facilities across all locations. Dissatisfaction was reported by 26.67% of tourists, with Belum Caves receiving the most "Poor" ratings (16 respondents). Only 6.67% rated the facilities as "Very Poor," and all of these ratings were attributed to Belum Caves.

Belum Caves is prominent in visitor dissatisfaction, indicating a need for significant improvements in accommodation and transportation facilities. In contrast, Orvakal achieved the best overall ratings, boasting the highest percentage of "Very Good" and "Good" feedback, with no reports of "Very Poor" experiences. Mahanandi also received favourable reviews but has opportunities for improvement, particularly in addressing and reducing instances of "Poor" feedback. Destinations that manage to keep accommodation and transport costs competitive without compromising quality tend to attract more tourists.

SPECIFIC PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

In addition to facilities and comforts, every traveller encounters various challenges at their destination, such as inadequate infrastructure, cleanliness issues, safety concerns, market



prices, and potential cheating by local traders. Table .6 displays tourists' opinions across three locations in the survey.

Table- 6 Specific Problem Identified

Problem	Mahanandi	Orvakal	Belum Caves	Total	per centage(%)
Infrastructure facilities	10	8	20	38	25.33
Clean, hygienic ness	10	12	5	27	18.0
Safety	15	20	10	45	30.0
Market Cost	10	10	9	29	19.33
Fraud of local traders	5	0	6	11	7.33
Total responses	50	50	50	150	100.0

Source: Field survey

Belum Caves had the highest percentage of responses regarding infrastructure facilities, indicating that visitors there are more concerned or dissatisfied with these facilities compared to Mahanandi and Orvakal. Orvakal has the highest percentage of respondents concerned about cleanliness and hygiene, suggesting that it might be perceived as less clean compared to the other two places. Orvakal stands out as the place where safety is a more significant concern among tourists, with 40 per cent of respondents highlighting this issue.

Market cost is fairly evenly distributed among the three places, with Mahanandi and Orvakal having equal concerns in this area. Belum Caves shows a higher percentage of respondents reporting concerns about fraud by local traders, while Orvakal had none reporting this issue. Infrastructure Facilities and Safety are significant concerns across all three places, with Orvakal showing higher percentages in Safety concerns. Cleanliness and Hygiene are notably higher at Orvakal, indicating potential issues with cleanliness management. Market Cost is a concern but fairly consistent across the three places. Fraud by Local Traders is reported mainly at Belum Caves, suggesting potential issues with local market operations or tourist interactions there. These perceptions can help for improvements and address specific concerns at each tourist place to enhance visitor satisfaction and experience.

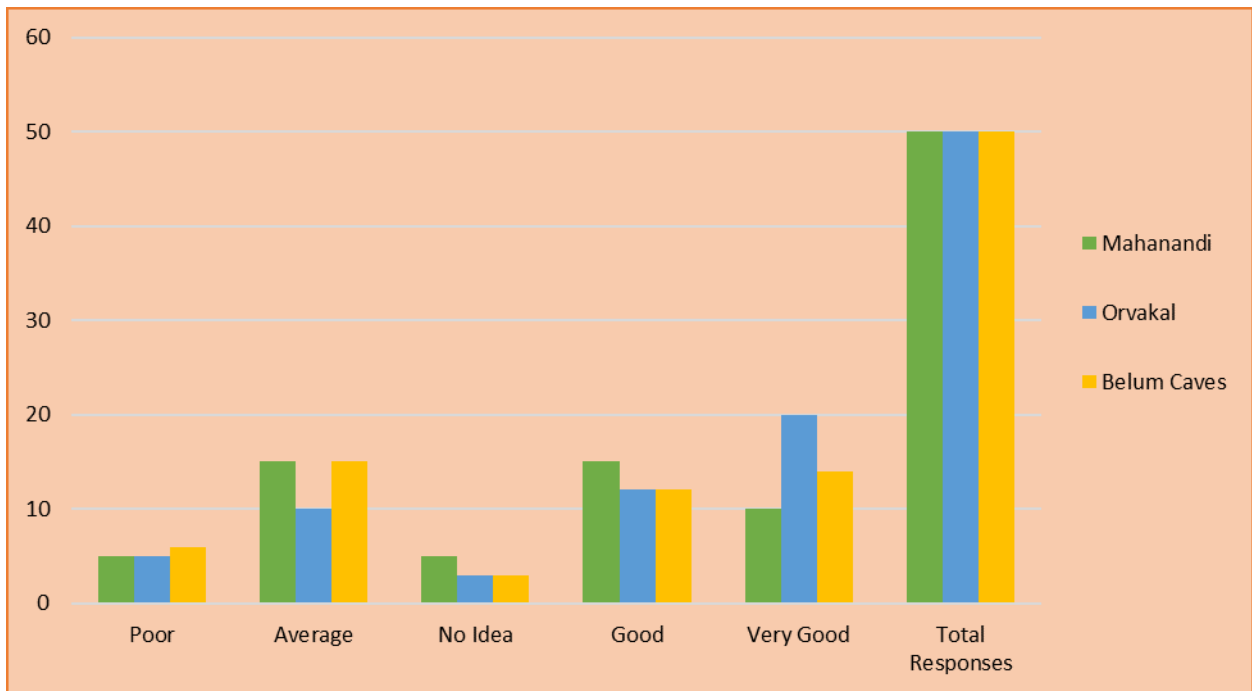


OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH THE PLACES

Finally, the tourists' overall satisfaction at three locations is gathered from 150 visitors, as shown in Figure -3. The clustered Bar Chart shows the distribution of satisfaction levels for each tourist place side by side, making it easy to compare the satisfaction levels across the three locations.

Figure- 3

Overall Satisfaction with the Places



Orvakal emerged with the most favourable ratings in the "Very Good" category, thereby demonstrating a robust appeal to tourists. Conversely, Belum Caves exhibited more polarized feedback, reflecting both a significant number of high "Very Good" ratings and a comparatively high number of "Poor" ratings. Mahanandi displayed a balanced distribution of satisfaction, indicating a stable but less prominent performance.

Overall, the satisfaction levels at the three sites were predominantly positive, with 81.99% of responses categorized as either "Good" or "Very Good." Orvakal was mostly distinguished for its elevated "Very Good" ratings, whereas Belum Caves and Mahanandi presented opportunities for improvement in addressing dissatisfaction and enhancing the overall tourist



experience. These implications can guide efforts to enhance visitor satisfaction and experience at each tourist place, thereby attracting more tourists and improving overall tourism quality.

Conclusion:

The field survey results indicate that nearly 40% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the facilities, improvements, and safety measures in these areas, rating them as Poor or Average.

The Belum Caves received the highest percentage of responses regarding infrastructure facilities, indicating that visitors there are more concerned or dissatisfied with these amenities compared to Mahanandi and Orvakal. In contrast, Orvakal had the highest percentage of respondents expressing concerns about cleanliness and hygiene, suggesting that it may be perceived as less clean than the other two locations. Additionally, safety emerges as a significant concern among tourists at Orvakal, with 40 per cent of respondents identifying this issue.

It is advisable for the administrative authorities of Andhra Pradesh, both at the state and district levels, to enhance infrastructure facilities, particularly by improving road connectivity. Furthermore, the implementation of Swachh Bharat initiatives will promote optimal hygiene conditions. Additionally, it is imperative to establish necessary safety measures, such as police patrolling and the installation of closed-circuit cameras in densely populated areas. These initiatives will not only attract a greater number of tourists but also contribute to the sustainability of tourism within these destinations.

References

Allison, G.L. (1984). **Tourism Principles, Practices, Philosophies**. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Ansari, Z.A., Bashir, M., & Pradhan, S. (2022). Impact of coronavirus outbreak on travellers' behaviour: scale development and validation. *International Journal of Tourism Cities*.

Bakari, S.J. (2021). *A Rapid Appraisal of COVID-19 on Global Tourism*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/350124131>

Bhatia A.K., (2002), "*Indian Tourism Management*," Sterling Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi



Bramwell, B. and Alletrop, L., (2001), "Attitudes in the Danish Tourism Industry to the Roles of Business and Government in Sustainable Tourism", *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol. 3, pp 91 -103.

Candela, G., and Figini, P., (2012), "*The Economics of Tourism Destinations*", Springer-Verlag, Heidelberg, Berlin.

De Abreu, N., (2008), "*Sustainable Tourism in Goa (A pictorial view of tourism)*", Conference on Tourism in India – Challenges Ahead, 15-17 May 2008, IIMK, pp 124-128.

Fotiadis, A.K., Polyzos, S., & Huan, T.T. (2020). The good, the bad and the ugly on COVID-19 tourism recovery. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 87, 103117.

George, P.O., (2004), "Impact of Tourism on the Cultural Heritage of India", *The Journal of Business Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, Dec. 2004, pp 86.

Krishnaiah, P. (2012). Problems and Prospects of Tourism in Andhra Pradesh—A Case Analysis of Chittoor District. *International Journal of Research in Economics & Social Sciences*, 2(1), 48-61.

Manda, Hemalatha., & Palleti, Sujatha. (2019). The Impact of Tourism on Economic Growth and Development in Andhra Pradesh. *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*.

<https://www.unwto.org/glossary-tourism-terms>

<https://wtcc.org/research/economic-impact>

<https://kurnool.ap.gov.in/about-district>

<https://apfinance.gov.in/downloads/>

<https://aptourism.gov.in/awards-recognitions/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Tourism_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Tourism_(India))

<https://tourism.gov.in/about-us/about-ministry>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AndhraPradeshTourismDevelopmentCorporation>

Tourist guide to Andhra Pradesh in <https://books.google.co.in/books?id> visited on 15/4/2022

<https://kurnool.ap.gov.in/document-category/hand-book-of-statistics>

Cuest.fisioter.2025.54(4):707-721