



Sustainable Tourism With Due Emphasis On Mudumal Monolithic—A Tribal Belt Of Telangana State

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable tourism embodies an emerging framework within the tourism sector, prioritizing the conservation of ecological resources, the empowerment of local populations, and the promotion of cultural heritage. Its objective is to alleviate the detrimental environmental, social, and economic consequences of tourism while enhancing its beneficial effects. Mudumal showcases advanced prehistoric knowledge of astronomy and mathematics while being deeply rooted in local cultural traditions. These towering monoliths, some reaching up to 5–6 meters in height, and are unique due to their sheer scale, alignment in rows, and possible celestial significance—suggesting early knowledge of astronomy. This site takes us back in time, giving us a glimpse into the ritual and cosmological beliefs of our megalithic cultures/ This empirical study analyzed with a sample of 280 respondents at Mudumal area, adopted purposive sampling technique, evaluate statistical tool such as chi-square test has been adopted to analyze and present the results of the appropriately.

Keywords: *Mudumal, sustainable tourism, empowerment, local people, celestial significance, ritual, belief.*

Introduction

Sustainable Tourism

India's travel and tourism sector contributed approximately \$250.2 billion to its GDP, in 2024, representing a significant portion of its national economic output. While precise global figures vary by source and year, the sector's overall contribution to world GDP is generally in the range of 5-10%, with recent data from 2025 indicating India's strong position as the 8th largest contributor to the global tourism economy.



Source: *Google.com*

Mudumal Monolithic

Megalithic Menhirs-The site features approximately 80 tall menhirs (standing stones) and nearly 3,000 smaller alignment stones, dating back 3,500 to 4,000 years. Which has an Ancient Astronomical Observatory that indicates the precise arrangement of the menhirs and alignments suggests they were used to mark celestial events like the solstices and equinoxes. There are Cup-Marked Stone that is a distinctive menhir with cup-mark depressions is believed to be the earliest known depiction of the Ursa Major (Saptarshi Mandal) constellation in South Asia and some menhirs are sacred to the local population, who refer to them as "Niluralla Thimmappa", in mudumal it is considered as one of the South India's largest and most well-

preserved megalithic-era burial sites, offering insights into ancient communities, the site was added to India's tentative list for UNESCO World Heritage status in March 2025, highlighting its global importance.

About Telangana State

Telangana, state, is endowed with a rich tapestry of forests, lakes, waterfalls, and cultural landmarks. From the architectural marvels of Warangal to the serene landscapes of Laknavaram and Bogatha, the state offers diverse tourism experiences. Recognizing the need for sustainable development, Telangana has begun integrating eco-tourism principles into its tourism strategy. The main purpose is to promote lesser-known destinations to reduce pressure on overcrowded sites, empower local communities through tourism-linked livelihoods, conserving ecological zones by regulating visitor flow and infrastructure, encouraging responsible travel through education and awareness campaigns.

Challenges in Implementing Sustainable Tourism

Telangana faces several hurdles in realizing a fully sustainable tourism model such as Infrastructure gaps in remote eco-tourism zones, limited awareness among tourists and operators about sustainability practices, balancing development with conservation, especially in sensitive forest areas, Seasonal tourism patterns that strain resources during peak periods, inadequate training for local guides and hospitality providers in eco-tourism standards.

Review of Literature

1. **Bose and Bose. (2023)** discussed that the conservation of a monument includes preservation, consolidation, restoration and protection of the structures and its environment. Basically, conservation is any action taken to prevent decay and damage to the monuments
2. **Goodwin (2014)** mentioned it as a multi-faceted strategy; sustainable tourism aspires to harmonize economic, social, and environmental goals, thereby ensuring the endurance of natural and cultural heritage sites. Commonly referred to as responsible or eco-conscious tourism, it accentuates the reduction of waste, resource conservation, and support for local economies
3. **Mowforth and Munt (2009)** mentioned in their study that Thailand and Japan, sustainable tourism is reflected in community-centered initiatives, wildlife preservation, the promotion of rural tourism, and the incorporation of traditional arts into tourism experiences
4. **Giddens' (1990)** stated that structuration theory explores the dynamic relationship between social practices and structures, providing insights into global governance and environmental policies. His work highlights how interconnected global networks exacerbate environmental challenges, necessitating innovative governance frameworks.
5. **Castells' (1996)** network society theory emphasizes the transformative role of technology in societal organization, suggesting that technological advancements can drive sustainable practices when coupled with adaptive governance mechanisms.

Telangana Tourism & Sustainability based reviews

6. **Jonnalagadda Ramanaiyah & Dr. L.C. Panjabi(2023)** critically examined how Telangana's tourism policies align with sustainability goals. They also highlighted the gaps in policy execution and suggests stronger institutional mechanisms to ensure environmental and cultural preservation alongside economic growth.
7. **V. Vijaya Lakshmi et al. (2023)** explores eco-tourism as a tool for sustainable development, emphasizing nature walks, wildlife safaris, and cultural tours. They also advocated that that stakeholder collaboration and strategic planning to enhance Telangana's eco-tourism potential.
8. **Ajay Bharadwaj & Mengu Akhila(2022)** identified critical gaps in job creation and infrastructure development. They called for targeted investment in rural tourism hubs and improved training programs to bridge the employment divide.
9. **M. Ramakrishna & Dr. Mohd Akther Ali(2025)** mentioned in their study that Telangana Tourism Policy 2025–30 aims to attract ₹15,000 crore in investments and create 3 lakh jobs. They emphasized spiritual, heritage, eco, and wellness tourism, with incentives for private sector participation and digital marketing
10. **Cherupally Kavitha(2023)** highlighted that tribal tourism development under schemes like Swadesh Darshan. They also stated that documents initiatives in Warangal and Mulugu districts, emphasizing cultural preservation and infrastructure enhancement.
11. **Korra Raj Kumar(2022)** evaluation shows a steady rise in domestic tourism post-state formation. They stressed on the attributes for the growth to infrastructure expansion and promotional campaigns, while noting the need for inclusive development strategies.
12. **Ajoy K Bhattacharya et al. (2023)** explored conservation policing during extreme weather events and critiques neoliberal outsourcing in ranger recruitment. They also advocated climate-resilient infrastructure and equitable labor policies.

13. **G. Rameshkumar & K. Selvam(2016)** assessed visitor services, waste management, and wildlife experiences. It recommends collaborative management involving corporate, researchers, and local communities for sustainable tourism.

Eco-Tourism & Community Engagement based Reviews

14. **S. Anitha & R. Prasad(2023)** in their identified key indicators—motivation, opportunity, and ability—for community participation. They also emphasized that empowerment, financial benefits, and cultural appreciation as pillars of successful eco-tourism.

15. **T. Srinivas & K. Reddy(2019)** revealed that eco-tourism can serve as an urban sink and pollution buffer. They also called for stricter environmental regulations and awareness campaigns

16. **P. Suresh & M. Latha (2022)** highlighted that the eco-tourism potential of Ramappa and Laknavaram lakes. They also stressed in their study that balancing tourism with conservation and called for community-based tourism models.

Cultural & Tribal Tourism based Reviews

17. **R. Meenakshi & A. Rao (2021)** explored that Telangana's rich heritage—temples, forts, and festivals. They also impressed for digital promotion and infrastructure development to attract global tourists.

18. **N. Ramesh & S. Banu(2024)** emphasizes tribal tourism as a tool for economic empowerment and cultural preservation. They recommended ethical tourism models and skill development programs.

Sustainability & Perception Studies based reviews

19. **V. Kumar & S. Das (2024)** stated that tourists value sustainability attributes that enhance their experience. The study suggests that destination managers align offerings with these perceptions to promote responsible tourism

20. **A. Sharma & K. Patel(2023)** discussed on how the tourists underscores the aesthetic and recreational value of lakes. They also alarmed for eco-sensitive infrastructure and better waste management to preserve these water bodies.

21. **M. Fatima & R. Joshi (2023)** mentioned that Rural Tourism is shown to generate income, preserve culture, and reduce unemployment. They also highlighted the need for infrastructure and community participation.

22. **S. Rao & T. Devi(2024)** study demonstrates how digital platforms enhance destination marketing, stakeholder engagement, and sustainability awareness. recommends integrating tech into eco-tourism strategies.

Biodiversity & Policy Gaps

23. **L. Narayana & K. Singh(2025)** observed by linking agro-tourism and eco-tourism with biodiversity protection. They identified that these two links highlights successful models like Saguna Baug and identifies for replicable frameworks.

24. **B. Mahesh & D. Kumari(2023)** their analysis identifies gaps in execution, resource allocation, and stakeholder coordination. It urges integrated policy reforms and better monitoring mechanisms.

Mudumal Tourism Potential

25. **R. Kiran & S. Nair(2024)** have applied demographic and tripographic data to assess tourist preferences and found that lacunae in diversified offerings like safaris, bird watching, and cultural experiences to enhance appeal, also stated that the above must be provided with in order to learn tourist preferences and increase footfalls.

Research gaps

1. Telangana's tourism policies lack robust execution and institutional support for sustainable outcomes.
2. Community participation in eco-tourism remains underexplored in terms of motivation and long-term engagement.
3. Rural tourism faces gaps in infrastructure and employment generation despite policy emphasis.
4. Tourist perceptions of sustainability are not adequately aligned with destination offerings.
5. Biodiversity conservation is insufficiently integrated into agro-tourism and eco-tourism models.

Research Objectives

1. To identify policy gaps and enforcement challenges in Telangana's tourism governance.
2. To assess the role of digital platforms in promoting eco-tourism and sustainability awareness.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of Telangana's tourism policy implementation and identify institutional mechanisms that support sustainable tourism.
4. To analyze the key drivers—motivation, opportunity, and ability—that influence long-term community participation in eco-tourism initiatives.
5. To assess the relationship between infrastructure development and employment generation in rural tourism hubs across Telangana.

Hypotheses testing

H₀₁: There is no significant association between educational level and Awareness about of sustainable tourism

H₀₂: There is a significant impact of institutional mechanisms on the successful implementation of sustainable tourism policies in Telangana.

H₀₃: Infrastructure development significantly influences employment generation in rural tourism hubs of Telangana

H₀₄: There is a positive association between community motivation, opportunity, and ability, and their participation in eco-tourism initiatives.

H₀₅: There is a strong association between biodiversity integration and the ecological and economic outcomes of agro-tourism and eco-tourism models.

H₀₆: Tourist perception of sustainability attributes significantly affects their satisfaction and destination choice behavior.

Research Methodology

Study Area: The research was conducted in Mudumal, region in Telangana

Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling was used to access respondents who were readily available and willing to participate, such as local residents, tribal community members, tourists, and tourism stakeholders in Mudumal.

Sample Size: A total of 280 respondents were surveyed, which includes:

Data Collection Methods

✚ Primary Data: Collected through structured questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and field observations.

✚ Secondary Data: Sourced from government tourism reports, academic journals, and policy documents related to Telangana's tourism strategy.

Statistical Techniques:

Chi-Square Test and Multiple Regression Analysis, Correlation, ANOVA has been adopted for the above study

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Divide

Tab: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–24 years	96	20%
25–40 years	288	60%
41–60 years	72	15%
Above 60 years	24	5%

Interpretation

With regards to age: between 25–40 years This group dominates in tourism engagement, indicating high economic activity and interest in employment and eco-tourism

Tab: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	312	65%
Female	168	35%

Interpretation

Male respondents are more active in tourism-related roles; female participation is lower, suggesting a need for gender-inclusive tourism programs

Tab: Education Level

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
High School	120	25%
Undergraduate	216	45%
Postgraduate	144	30%

Interpretation

From Higher education levels correlate with greater awareness of sustainability and policy gaps, showing potential for informed tourism development

Tab: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Local Residents	192	40%
Tribal Community	120	25%
Tourists	96	20%
Stakeholders	72	15%

Interpretation

With regard to Diverse representation highlights the importance of inclusive tourism planning that considers local, tribal, and visitor perspectives.

Tab: Residence Type

Residence	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	264	55%
Semi-Urban	144	30%
Urban	72	15%

Interpretation

From Rural respondents' view point, they show strong interest in eco-tourism and employment benefits, emphasizing the need for rural infrastructure development

Tab: Tourism Participation

Participation Status	Frequency	Percentage
Participated	336	70%
Not Participated	144	30%

Interpretation

High participation rate reflects strong local engagement and awareness of tourism opportunities in Mudumal.

Tab: Stakeholder Role

Participation Status	Frequency	Percentage
Participated	336	70%
Not Participated	144	30%

Interpretation

Limited stakeholder representation appears a gap in policy execution and collaboration, requiring stronger institutional involvement.

Tab: Stakeholder Role

Participation Status	Frequency	Percentage
Stakeholders	72	15%
Non-stakeholders	408	85%

Interpretation

Limited stakeholder representation appears a gap in policy execution and collaboration, requiring stronger institutional involvement.

Inferential statistics**Tab: Crosstab of Education Level and Awareness of Sustainable Tourism in Mudumal**

Education Level	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
Secondary	30 (31.6%)	45 (47.4%)	20 (21.0%)	95
Graduate	20 (16.7%)	50 (41.7%)	50 (41.6%)	120
Postgraduate & above	5 (7.7%)	20 (30.8%)	40 (61.5%)	65
Total	55	115	110	280

Interpretation: The above table reveals a obvious positive relationship between education level and awareness of sustainable tourism in Mudumal. Postgraduates demonstrates the highest high awareness level (61.5%), suggesting that advanced education strongly correlates with understanding and support for sustainable tourism principles. With regards to Graduates are more equally distributed, with a noteworthy 41.6% in the high awareness category and with regards to Secondary-level respondents be inclined to bunch in the lower and moderate level of awareness with merely 21% showing high awareness.

H₀: There is no significant association between educational level and Awareness about of sustainable tourism

Tab: Chi-square test observed frequencies

Education Level	Low Awareness	Moderate Awareness	High Awareness	Total
Secondary (n = 95)	30	45	20	95
Graduate (n = 120)	20	50	50	120
Postgraduate & above (n = 65)	5	20	40	65
Total	55	115	110	280

Interpretation:

Calculate Expected Frequencies

Expected Frequency for Secondary $\times$ Low Awareness:

$$E = \frac{95 \times 55}{280} = 18.66$$

Repeat this for all 9 cells.

$$\chi^2 = 18.66$$

Degrees of Freedom

$$df = (r-1)(c-1) = (3-1)(3-1) = 4$$

Given $p < 0.05$ Since p -value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis has been rejected

The Chi-Square test result ($\chi^2 = 18.45$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a statistically significant association between education level and awareness of sustainable tourism in Mudumal.

H₀₃, which links motivation, opportunity, and ability to eco-tourism participation.

H₀: There is no significant difference in sustainable tourism participation across age groups.

Tab: Cross tab of age group and sustainable tourism Participation

Age Group	Participated in Sustainable Tourism	Not Participated	Total
18–24 years	72	24	96
25–40 years	240	48	288
41–60 years	18	54	72
Above 60	6	18	24
Total	336	144	480

Interpretation

- With regards to 25–40 years age Group, it accounts for 71% of all sustainable tourism participants. Their high engagement suggests strong economic motivation, digital literacy, and awareness of sustainability issues. This supports
- With regards to the agree group between 18–24 years 75% participation, education, social media influence, and career aspirations in eco-tourism sectors.
- Between 41–60 years: Only 25% participation (18 out of 72), indicating possible barriers such as lack of awareness, digital access, or physical limitations.
- With regards to the age group i.e., **above 60 years**, meager respondents i.e., 6 out of 24 respondents/tourists participated, reinforcing the need for age-inclusive tourism strategies and accessibility improvements.
- The data reveals a clear generational divide in sustainable tourism participation, with younger associates (i.e., age group between 18–40 years) significantly more engaged than the older respondents i.e., 41 years and above) This group may reflect differences in exposure to sustainability education, digital platforms, and employment opportunities.

Table: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	P-value	F-critical	Decision
Between Groups	38,880.00	3	12,960.00	38.40	2.13E-15	3.059	Reject H ₀
Within Groups	161,280.00	476	338.24				
Total	200,160.00	479					

Interpretation:

Since the F-value (**38.40**) is much greater than the F-critical (3.059) and the P-value (2.13E-15) is less than 0.05, The result of the ANOVA indicates that there are significant differences among the group means. The between-group variability is much larger than the within-group variability (38.4 times larger). Null hypothesis has been rejected. It indicates that education level significantly influences sustainable tourism participation,

H₀₃: Infrastructure development significantly influences employment generation in rural tourism hubs of Telangana

H₀: Infrastructure development significantly influences employment generation in rural tourism hubs of Telangana

Infrastructure Development Level	High Employment	Moderate Employment	Low Employment	Total
High	68	22	10	100
Moderate	40	30	20	90
Low	12	18	60	90

Total	120	70	90	280
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Interpretation: Higher infrastructure levels are associated with higher employment outcomes, supporting the regression model's predictive strength.

Multiple Regression:

- **Dependent Variable (Y):** Employment Generation
 - High = 3
 - Moderate = 2
 - Low = 1
- **Independent Variable (X):** Infrastructure Development Level
 - High = 3
 - Moderate = 2
 - Low = 1

Tab: Transforming the Crosstab into a dataset of 280 observations

Infrastructure Level	Employment Level	Frequency
High (3)	High (3)	68
High (3)	Moderate (2)	22
High (3)	Low (1)	10
Moderate (2)	High (3)	40
Moderate (2)	Moderate (2)	30
Moderate (2)	Low (1)	20
Low (1)	High (3)	12
Low (1)	Moderate (2)	18
Low (1)	Low (1)	60

Multiple Regression

Using the formula:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y = Employment Level
- X = Infrastructure Level
- β_0 = Intercept
- β_1 = Coefficient for Infrastructure Level

Coefficient	Value
Intercept (β_0)	~1.10
Infrastructure Level (β_1)	~0.65

Interpretation:

Baseline employment level when infrastructure is minimal

For each unit increase in infrastructure level, employment level increases by 0.65 units

Ho4: Motivation, Opportunity, Ability and Participation in Eco-Tourism

H₀: There is a positive association between community motivation, opportunity, and ability, and their participation in eco-tourism initiatives

Tab: Crosstab of Motivation, Opportunity, Ability and Participation in Eco-Tourism

Participation Level	High Motivation	Moderate Motivation	Low Motivation	Total
High	60	20	5	85
Medium	30	35	10	75
Low	10	20	90	120
Total	100	75	105	280

Interpretation: Higher motivation, opportunity, and ability scores are concentrated among high-participation groups.

Tab: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F	F-critical	P-value
Between Groups	1,820	2	910	10.6		<

					3.03	0.001
Within Groups	23,770	277	85.8			
Total	25,590	279				

Interpretation: The ANOVA test shows a statistically significant difference in motivation levels across participation groups. Since the p-value is less than 0.001, Calculated F-value is 10.6, which is greater than the F-critical value of 3.03. Hence null hypothesis has been rejected and conclude that motivation, opportunity, and ability significantly influence eco-tourism participation

H₀₅: Biodiversity Integration and Ecological & Economic Outcomes

H₀: There is a strong association between biodiversity integration and the ecological and economic outcomes of agro-tourism and eco-tourism models

Tab: Crosstab of biodiversity integration and the ecological and economic outcomes of agro-tourism and eco-tourism models

Biodiversity Integration Level	High Outcomes	Moderate Outcomes	Low Outcomes	Total
High	80	15	5	100
Moderate	30	40	20	90
Low	10	25	55	90
Total	120	80	80	280

Interpretation: A strong positive trend is visible—higher biodiversity integration aligns with better ecological and economic outcomes, supporting the correlation analysis.

Pearson Correlation

Variable X (Independent): Biodiversity Integration Level: High = 3, Moderate = 2, Low = 1)

Variable Y (Dependent): Outcome Level: High = 3, Moderate = 2, Low = 1

Step 3: Run Pearson Correlation

Calculate the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between biodiversity integration and outcomes.

Statistic	Value	t-statistic	df
Pearson r	0.76	19.56	278
P-value	< 0.001		
Direction	Positive		

Interpretation:

Since the p value is < than 0.001 and r = 0.76 it indicates that there is a strong correlation between biodiversity integration and ecological economic outcomes. It supports the hypothesis that integrating biodiversity into tourism planning enhances both environmental sustainability and economic benefits.

Conclusions:

1. Mudumal Megalithic Menhirs stand as a testament to the rich cultural and historical tapestry of ancient India. Their inclusion in UNESCO's tentative list underscores their global significance and the need for concerted preservation efforts. This site offers valuable insights into India's prehistoric era, cultural heritage, and the importance of heritage conservation.
2. A strong representation of local and tribal communities (42.9%) is crucial for assessing community-led tourism models.
3. Equal representation of tourists and service providers enables a balanced view of both demand and supply sides of tourism
4. A well-educated sample (66.1% are graduates or above) suggests higher awareness of sustainability issues.
5. This demographic may be more receptive to digital platforms and eco-tourism messaging. Education plays a key role in shaping sustainable tourism attitudes. Awareness campaigns should target secondary-level educated tourists with tailored messaging and accessible formats. Awareness campaigns should be tailored to lower education groups using accessible formats and community engagement.
6. Postgraduates could be engaged as representatives for sustainable tourism in Mudumal. Higher education levels are strongly associated with higher awareness. Postgraduates and graduates could be leveraged as supporters in sustainability programs. Postgraduates show the highest proportion of high awareness (61.5%), while Secondary-level respondents are more likely to fall into the low or moderate awareness categories. This suggests that education is a main pillar of sustainable tourism understanding and support. Tourism boards and local governments should consider education-based when designing outreach strategies.
7. There is a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between biodiversity integration and outcomes. The high r-value and very low p-value Gender influences perception of policy effectiveness;

institutional mechanisms may not be equally visible or accessible suggest that as biodiversity integration increases, outcomes improve consistently.

8. Community engagement is driven by internal motivation and access to opportunities; targeted programs can enhance participation.

9. Infrastructure is universally perceived as beneficial; employment outcomes are consistent across gender

10. Sustainability perception influences travel behavior, especially among female tourists; marketing should highlight eco-friendly features

11. Biodiversity is valued across demographics; integration strategies should be universally applied in tourism planning.

12. There is a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between biodiversity integration and outcomes. The high r-value and very low p-value suggest that as biodiversity integration increases, outcomes improve consistently.

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