

**Report on**  
**Rejuvenate Economy Through Temples - A Case Study of Telangana**  
**(A study on Shri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy Temple, Vemulawada)**



By  
**Dr S. Lingamurthy**

## Executive Summary

### Theoretical Background:

- India is the land of temples to worship the divine trust (God and Goddesses) and functioning as sacred institutions to perform a range of services and activities such as spiritual fulfilment of the people, *dharmic* (righteous) discourses, arts, music, dance, economy, education, tourism, several social and cultural functions to integrate the society.
- Temples attracted generous offerings from the rulers in the past and society at present has made temples huge stocks of wealth such as land, jewellery, and monetary resources, making these temples powerful economic institutions in providing employment and livelihoods to millions of people directly and indirectly.
- Historically temples played a significant role in the all-round development of human beings, be it mental wellbeing or material progress through economic activities based on Dharma.
- Many small towns in Telangana like Vemulawada, Basara, Yadadri, Badrachalam, Ramappa, Kaleshwaram, Dharmapuri, Chilukuru, etc. are known as temple towns, economic activities developed around these temples very significantly over temple-based products business and gift items.
- From time immemorial, temples have been playing all basic economic aspects such as producers (agriculture), consumers (puja products and services), investors (permanent structures, educational and health institutions) and distributors (prasadam and free food distribution).
- Temples often had tanks, wells and irrigation facilities to boost the agricultural economy in the surrounding areas.
- Vemulawada 'Raja-Rajeshwara Temple' has its footprints on the society of at least four states Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka, devotees and pilgrims from all these places come to have a 'Holy Darshan'.
- Shri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy Temple is also called 'Dakshina Kashi', and those who are not affordable to go to Varanasi and have the holy darshan of Kashi

Vishwanath feel that at least visit Vemulawada Temple and internalise the divinity of Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

### **Methodology:**

- The study involved attempting an economic analysis of temples regarding “Shri. Raja Rajeshwara Swamy Temple located in Vemulawada”.
- Vemulawada is a small municipality which is 150 KM away from the state capital Hyderabad, 15 KM away from the District Headquarters Siricilla Town and 40 KM away from the erstwhile district headquarters Karimnagar Town.
- The Municipal Authority and various local business people, transportation, and hospitality business groups at Vemulawada are socio-economically dependent on the temple-based economy to a great extent.
- Temple impact on Vemulawada town expansion, number of people travel to the town has been compared with Husnabad Town which is having homogeneous characteristics in terms of demography, number of households and area of the town etc.
- This research has adopted a non-experimental research design for primary data purposes such as a cross-sectional research design to capture the extent of variability among the observations in the study area.
- This research has been carried out based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire (using google forms) from the business people, flower vendors, cart pullers, shop keepers etc. during the first week of September 2022.
- Interacted with 35 people about their economic activity and pattern of their business cycles in different seasons of the year in Vemulawada Town.
- The secondary data has been collected from various sources such as the Executive Officer office (EO-Office), Municipality Commissioner office, TSRTC, etc. From the EO office, data regarding temple revenue and expenditure from various sources has been collected from the financial years 2014-15 to 2022-23 and the data is available up to June 2022.
- Municipality revenue owing to the temple has been collected from the Municipal Commissioner's office, Vemulawada during 2014-15 to 2021-22.

With regards to the number of visitors to Vemulawada Town, TSRTC data has been collected from Vemulwada Bus Depot and Husnabad Bus Depot to understand the impact of revenue to the TSRTC due to the temple.

**Objectives: -**

1. To describe the economic importance of temple and temple network in the study area in comparison to other selected study area;
2. To evaluate and differentiate the earnings to the municipality owing to the temple;
3. To analyse direct and indirect employment in connection with the temple;
4. To study the livelihood pattern and their earnings in the study area; and
5. To advocate policy suggestions for the rejuvenation of the economy through the temple.

**Discussion:**

- All the devotees of the temple wishfully feel to offer kind or cash to the beggars as part of wealth distribution in front of the temple. In this process, an ecosystem has been developed in front of all the temples as economic inclusivity.
- Some of the beggars didn't seem to be poor and after the enquiry by the researchers got the information that those beggars were begging on temple premises with a reason that they have taken "Deeksha" varying from 5, 11, 21 to 41 days and for the sake of their day to day living expenses they are begging as a part of the tradition of *Deeksha*.
- Begging is not been considered a disconsolate economic activity rather it is considered part of ritual performance and profession by the majority of the devotees of the temple.
- Dargah has been built inside the temple, no Muslim goes to this Dargah but only Hindus perform puja here. This stands as abundant evidence of the religious tolerance of Hindus.
- The number of pilgrims who visited Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple from 2018 to 2022 was 3.63 crores. The total number of pilgrims who visited Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple was 1.10 crores in 2018, 1.13 crores in 2019, 53.32 lakhs in 2020, 51.63 lakhs in 2021 and 34.04 lakhs in 2022 (as of 30-06-2022).

- The number of pilgrims declined in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic and the temple was completely closed for three months i.e., from March to May 2020.
- Impact of the temple on Urbanisation, the temple stimulated the development of urban agglomeration and area expansion in Vemulawada.
- In the year 2010 Vemulawada town had spread to an area of 225 hectares which was less than Husnabad town of 228 hectares. But over 12 years, Vemulawada town has been extended additionally 205 hectares which is almost double the Husnabad town expansion of about 104 hectares in the year 2022.
- Revenue to Husnabad RTC depot was 16.53 crores and Vemulawada depot was 25.22 crores in 2017-18, and it was 16.77 crores to Husnabad, 25.05 crores to the Vemulawada depot in 2018-19, and it was 15.25 crores to Husnabad, 25.36 crores to the Vemulawada depot in 2019-20, and it was 10.58 crores to Husnabad, 14.58 crores to the Vemulawada depot in 2020-21, and it was 13.38 crores to Husnabad, 23.75 crores to the Vemulawada depot in 2021-22 respectively.
- **Impact of the temple on employment.** The temple is employing 501 persons in the form of temple staff at various levels, the temple is running a Sanskrit college, for which it employed 13 persons, and the temple is running a Sanskrit school (Veda Pathashala) as well for which it employed 7 persons, and the temple running a PUC (intermediate) college in which it employed 7 persons. The total direct employment provided by the temple stands at 528.
- **Impact of Temple on business activities.** There are around 22 types of shops. The total number of shops during normal days is 1,204 and the number of these particular types of shops increases three times during the peak season (festivals and some special occasions) as compared to the normal season.
- Shri Raja Rajeshwara Temple is completely funding two educational institutions namely Sanskrit Pathshala and SRR Intermediate and Degree College and both of the institutions are located in Vemulawada town with well-furnished infrastructure, faculty and supporting staff. In the above two educational institution total of 295 students are studying and among them, 185

are male students accounting for 62.71 per cent and the remaining 110 students are female comprising 37.28 per cent.

- Primary data reveals that the entire business which is surrounded by the temple is completely dependent on Temple.
- Even very tiny business persons (cart pullers, hawkers) get significant business every day and earn a profit of about Rs. 500-600 per day in a normal season and it will be three times higher during peak season.
- **Vemulawada Temple Revenue for the year 2021-22 is 206.68 crores comes from hundi (28.96 Cr); temple Sevas (Rs. 43.96 Cr); income from temple assets (Rs. 16.43 Cr); return from temple properties (Rs. 90.91 Cr).**
- For the last seven years (FY 2014-15 to 2021-22) accumulated revenue of the temple is 1056.76 Cr.
- Temple is paying tax to the Vemulawada Municipality Rs. 98.44 lakh every year
- Temple is paying to the State Government as an Endowment and Administrative Fund every year @12% of total revenue. During 2021-22, the temple paid Rs. 12.81 Cr to the Government of Telangana.
- Vemulawada Municipality getting surplus revenue through temple business activity Rs. 1.5 Cr. Whereas, Vemulawada Municipality spends Rs. 60 lakhs per annum for providing basic amenities & services for the pilgrims.
- Vemulawada temple is providing direct employment to 528 people and indirectly through business activities to about 1500 families and 2500 workers.