



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

---

## Sustainable Tourism Development at Puligundala Project, Khammam Telangana: Conservation, Community Participation and Destination Management

---

**Dr. M. Krishna Sumanth**

Assistant Professor in Tourism, Department of History and Tourism Management

Kakatiya University, Warangal

Email: Sumanthnaidumk@gmail.com

---

Article Received: 15-01-2025 Article Modified: 10-02-2026

Article Accepted: 20-02-2026 Article Published: 22-02-2026

DOI: 10.37854/UIJMR.2026.3.2.190

---

### Abstract:

Eco-tourism has become one of the most important approaches to sustainable tourism development in the contemporary world. It connects tourism growth with environmental conservation, community participation, livelihood generation, and responsible visitor behaviour. Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project, located in the Kanakagiri Reserve Forest area of Khammam District, Telangana, is an emerging nature-based tourism destination with significant potential for sustainable destination development. The area is known for its forest landscape, water body, seasonal waterfall experience, trekking possibilities, bird watching, boating, cottages, and jungle safari facilities. This article examines Puligundala as a sustainable eco-tourism destination from the perspectives of conservation, community participation, visitor experience, and destination management. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on secondary information, official tourism details, media reports, and conceptual understanding of eco-tourism. The article argues that Puligundala can become a model eco-tourism destination in Telangana if it is developed through scientific planning, plastic-free practices, trained local guides, community-based management, visitor regulation, interpretation facilities, and biodiversity protection. The study also highlights the academic relevance of Puligundala for tourism education, field visits, and environmental awareness.

**Keywords:** Puligundala, Eco-Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Khammam, Telangana, Community Participation, Conservation, Destination Management.



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the world and has become an important instrument for regional development, cultural exchange, employment generation, and environmental awareness. In recent years, the concept of eco-tourism has gained international importance because it promotes responsible travel to natural areas while supporting conservation and improving the welfare of local communities. Unlike conventional mass tourism, eco-tourism gives priority to nature protection, low-impact travel, local participation, and environmental education.

India has vast potential for eco-tourism because of its forests, rivers, waterfalls, hills, wildlife, tribal cultures, and rural landscapes. Telangana also possesses rich natural and cultural resources that can be developed through sustainable tourism models. Forest-based destinations, reservoirs, waterfalls, wildlife habitats, and rural landscapes can become important eco-tourism centres if they are planned and managed responsibly.

Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project in Khammam District is one such promising destination. Located in the Kanakagiri Reserve Forest area, Puligundala combines natural beauty, forest environment, water-based recreation, trekking opportunities, bird watching, and community livelihood potential. The destination has recently attracted attention as an emerging eco-tourism site in Telangana. Its development is significant not only for tourism promotion but also for conservation education, rural employment, community participation, and sustainable destination management.

Puligundala should not be viewed merely as a picnic spot or recreational place. It has the potential to become a model eco-tourism destination where tourism, ecology, education, and local development can work together. If properly managed, it can serve as a practical learning destination for students of tourism management, environmental studies, geography, forestry, and rural development.

Eco-tourism is a responsible form of tourism that focuses on natural areas, environmental conservation, and community welfare. It encourages tourists to understand and respect nature rather than exploit it. The core principles of eco-tourism include conservation of natural resources, protection of biodiversity, participation of local communities, environmental education, minimum negative impact, respect for local culture, and sustainable livelihood generation.

Eco-tourism is especially important in forest and rural areas because it can provide alternative income opportunities to local communities. Local youth can work as guides, drivers, trekking assistants, boating staff, safari coordinators, and eco-volunteers. Women self-help



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

groups can participate in food services, local products, handicrafts, and visitor support. Thus, eco-tourism can contribute to both conservation and rural development.

However, eco-tourism must be carefully planned. If tourism grows without proper regulation, it may lead to plastic pollution, overcrowding, disturbance to wildlife, damage to vegetation, water contamination, and commercialization of natural spaces. Therefore, every eco-tourism destination requires a strong management system based on carrying capacity, waste control, visitor discipline, safety standards, and local community involvement.

Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project is situated in the forest landscape of Khammam District, Telangana. The destination is associated with the Kanakagiri Reserve Forest area and is known for its scenic water body, forest surroundings, seasonal waterfall experience, and peaceful natural environment. The site offers opportunities for trekking, boating, bird watching, jungle safari, camping, nature walks, photography, and environmental education.

The water body is one of the major attractions of Puligundala. It enhances the scenic value of the destination and supports boating and relaxation activities. During the rainy season, the flow of water creates a waterfall-like experience, which increases the visual appeal of the place. The surrounding forest area adds ecological value and provides opportunities for nature observation and bird watching.

Puligundala also has potential for soft adventure tourism. Trekking routes, forest trails, and hill surroundings can attract students, youth, adventure lovers, and nature tourists. The introduction of facilities such as cottages, boating, and jungle safari can improve visitor experience, provided these facilities are managed according to eco-friendly principles. Accommodation facilities should follow sustainable practices such as waste management, water conservation, limited construction, use of local materials, and strict visitor guidelines.

The destination is also suitable for educational tourism. Tourism students can study destination planning, eco-tourism management, visitor behaviour, interpretation, community participation, and conservation practices. Environmental science and geography students can study biodiversity, forest ecosystems, water resources, and human-nature relationships. Thus, Puligundala can become a field-based learning centre for higher education institutions.

Community participation is one of the most important elements of successful eco-tourism. Without the involvement of local people, eco-tourism cannot become sustainable. Puligundala has the potential to create employment and income opportunities for nearby communities. Local youth can be trained as nature guides, trekking guides, bird-watching assistants, safari coordinators, boating support staff, and eco-volunteers. Such training will not



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

only provide employment but also create a sense of ownership and responsibility among local people.

Women self-help groups can play a significant role in Puligundala's tourism development. They can manage food stalls, local snacks, eco-friendly products, handicrafts, souvenir counters, and visitor assistance services. This can strengthen rural livelihoods and promote inclusive tourism development. Local products such as millet foods, bamboo crafts, forest-based products, herbal items, and traditional snacks can be promoted as part of the visitor experience.

Community-based monitoring can also improve destination management. Local people can help monitor cleanliness, tourist behaviour, plastic use, fire risks, and damage to natural resources. When local communities receive direct benefits from tourism, they become active partners in conservation. Therefore, Puligundala's future development should be based on a community-based eco-tourism model rather than a purely commercial tourism model.

Puligundala is located in a forest environment; therefore, conservation must remain the central principle of tourism development. Tourism activities should not disturb wildlife, damage vegetation, or pollute the water body. Loud music, littering, off-road movement, uncontrolled camping, and irresponsible visitor behaviour should be strictly prohibited.

Waste management is one of the most important requirements for Puligundala. Plastic pollution can seriously damage the ecological character of the destination. Puligundala should be promoted as a plastic-free eco-tourism zone. Single-use plastic bottles, covers, and disposable plates should be discouraged. Waste segregation, daily collection, composting of organic waste, and recycling systems should be introduced.

Visitor regulation is also essential. Every eco-tourism destination has a carrying capacity, which means the maximum number of visitors that can be allowed without damaging the environment. Puligundala should have separate carrying-capacity limits for trekking, boating, safari, camping, and cottage stay. Online booking, entry time slots, and group size restrictions can help regulate visitor flow.

Safety is another major component of destination management. Trekking routes, boating areas, water bodies, and safari routes should have proper safety systems. First-aid facilities, trained staff, emergency contact points, life jackets, warning boards, and communication systems are necessary. Bilingual signboards in Telugu and English should be installed to guide visitors and promote responsible behaviour.

An eco-tourism interpretation centre should be established at Puligundala. It should provide information about the forest, water body, biodiversity, birds, eco-tourism rules, safety



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

guidelines, and local community products. Interpretation improves visitor awareness and transforms tourism from simple recreation into meaningful learning.

Puligundala has strong potential to become a model eco-tourism destination in Telangana. Its forest landscape, water body, seasonal waterfall experience, trekking routes, bird watching potential, boating, cottages, and safari facilities make it suitable for sustainable tourism development. The destination can support conservation awareness, rural livelihood generation, educational tourism, and responsible recreation.

However, Puligundala's success depends on proper planning and continuous monitoring. The destination should not be allowed to become overcrowded or commercialized. Plastic-free practices, visitor regulation, trained local guides, safety measures, interpretation facilities, and biodiversity monitoring are essential. Local communities, especially youth and women self-help groups, should be given an active role in tourism services.

Puligundala should be promoted as a "Nature Learning and Eco-Tourism Destination of Telangana." Universities and colleges should be encouraged to conduct field visits, research projects, and environmental awareness programmes at the site. Tourism students can prepare project reports on visitor satisfaction, community participation, waste management, bird watching tourism, carrying capacity, destination marketing, and conservation education.

Government departments, local bodies, forest officials, tourism stakeholders, academic institutions, and community organizations should work together to develop Puligundala scientifically. Eco-tourism revenue should be used partly for conservation activities and local welfare. Digital systems such as online booking, visitor feedback, and destination monitoring can improve transparency and management efficiency.

Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project is an important emerging destination in Telangana with strong potential for sustainable tourism development. Its natural beauty, forest environment, water body, seasonal waterfall experience, trekking opportunities, bird watching, boating, cottages, and jungle safari make it a valuable eco-tourism site. However, the success of Puligundala should not be measured only by the number of tourists. True success lies in ecological protection, visitor discipline, local livelihood generation, community participation, and long-term sustainability.

Puligundala should be developed as a responsible eco-tourism destination rather than a mass tourism spot. Scientific planning, plastic-free practices, carrying-capacity control, trained guides, safety systems, interpretation facilities, and biodiversity protection are necessary for its sustainable future. If conservation and community participation remain at the centre of



# United International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (UIJMR)

An International Peer-Reviewed and Refereed Multidisciplinary Journal

ISSN: 3048-6726 [www.ujmr.in](http://www.ujmr.in) Impact Factor: 6.934 (SJIF) Vol-3, Issue-2 (February), 2026

development, Puligundala can become a model eco-tourism destination in Telangana and a valuable field-based learning centre for tourism education.

The destination represents the best values of eco-tourism: protection of nature, benefit to local communities, education of visitors, and sustainable regional development. With responsible management and academic involvement, Puligundala can emerge as an internationally relevant example of community-oriented eco-tourism development.

## References

1. Khammam District Official Website. "Eco Tourism–Puligundala Project." Government of Telangana.
2. Telangana Today. "Puligundala Ecotourism Project in Khammam is open for nature lovers." Published April 2026.
3. Telangana Today. "Puligundala Eco-Tourism Project in Khammam set to open for nature lovers." Published February 2026.
4. Telangana Today. "Wooden Bridge to Enhance Trekking Experience at Puligundala Waterfalls in Khammam." Published April 2026.
5. Ataavi. "Bird Walk at Puligundala Project, Khammam, Telangana."
6. Sumanth, M. Krishna. "Sustainable Eco-Tourism Development at Puligundala Project, Khammam District, Telangana: Conservation, Community Participation and Destination Management." Department of History and Tourism Management, Kakatiya University, Warangal, 2026.