

Sustaining sanctity of Tirumala calls for urgent initiatives

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(Continued from part-1)

Of several recommendations that I gave fifteen years ago, I recall a few which are even more relevant today. As a part of strategy, the TTD should have a standing task force of experts from multi disciplines not only for an environmental impact assessment of the Hill but to indicate ways of coping with the core of the mission centred around the sanctity and divinity of The Lord. For example can the temples that TTD intends to set up now {500?} with the aura be established at different locations in the country like the one proposed in J & K should ease the rush of pilgrims to the seven Hills without compromising individual satisfaction levels of a Darshan of the divine and receiving the Blessings of the Lord. “China Tirupati” (small Tirupati) near Eluru, some 300 km away from the Hill, is a good example for decades in catering the conveniences of many pilgrims. Chilukur Balaji temple in the outskirts of Hyderabad is another example. Visitors to these temples derive similar satisfaction as visiting the Seven Hills or as the next best.

Replicating Tirumala elsewhere:

I remember TTD simulating “Tirupati temple” with two or three day darshans at New Delhi with same pujaris performing same rituals same way as at the Hill with same decorations of the Dieties. Many in New Delhi I knew who wished to have Darshan at Tirupati were satisfied with local darshn. Another initiative is to establish similar murthies (idols) of Balaji and padmavati at many of the existing big temples across. The idea of such option is to keep up the high order of Lord Venkateswara without crowding the Hill and untoward incidents like a street fight inside the sanctum as happened in the last week. A simultaneous exercise is virtualising the All Mighty as one wishes availing the latest technologies including Artificial Intelligence tools and by recreating situation and feelings same way, including interface, interactivity and experiences from virtual Darshan and of desired seva individually or together as family.

No more weight:

The other important recommendation was about constructions on the Hill. This suggestion is far more serious and urgent. If a total freeze is not possible of any construction on the Hill and around, there has to be restraint and a ceiling on complexes of any kind and for any purpose. The recent Karnataka state govt. three complexes spread over seven acres in the centre of the Hill, over and above several complexes to cater to devotees from that state, hints at impending demands from others, including the big industry and corporate sector.

Disregard:

TTD should have been the first one to go for only electric buses to ply between Tirupati and the Hill. CNG also could have been explored. There is no shortage of resources to go at the earliest and restrain petrol and diesel vehicles going up the Hill. Strict regulations need to be implemented. In fact it is better that Bus operations are handled by a separate setup but under the directions of TTD.

Solar power:

The Hill should have gone solar all the way and all across the operations by now, including kitchen and cooking operations of TTD and all other establishments on the Hill. The wind mill experiment decades ago was pioneering in the country but not pursued seriously. Now is high time. The electricity standby could be limited to the main inner temple. Brahma Kumaris in Mt Abu set a good example a decade ago taking to solar in a big way and showed the way for others.

Concern for environment:

Tirupati has set good example for many about concern for environment much before it has become a national mission. Its landscape, tree plantation programme and nurseries continue to be more impressive than any such other place. This should receive now even higher priority and concern to ensure, sustain the Nature and the safety of seven Hills. No forest or even trees be cut for any activity. As I was tempted to visit nurseries and bring at least one plant every time I visited the Hill, pilgrims should be encouraged with tempting offers and plants for different climates, even by distributing a rare seed to every family visiting the temple.

Plastic should be banned:

Drainage outlets need a relook now and rain water harvesting should be taken up as a serious activity. Plastic use on the Hill, particularly for gifts, toys, should be prohibited. Many shops dealing with such material should strictly be closed down. No chemical plants or any hazardous material should be allowed in around ten kilometer range of the seven hills.

Evolving Scenario:

The kind of protests on Tirumala of even a few pilgrims, however isolated, witnessed last fortnight signal to what is in store if no focussed and strategic initiatives are taken now to cope with the evolving scenario. Tirumala is heading to witness more such unrest of pilgrims, apart from the employees and small traders. Although TTD cannot be blamed for all such issues, it has responsibility to be concerned about, anticipate, and develop methodologies like more reliable monitoring leading to preventive and proactive steps. These include factors such as tickets and time schedules, charges and the distinct facilities and access, treatment meted out to pilgrims inside and outside

the sanctum and of course the communication systems to do with pilgrims as well as those online aspirants.

Politicisation no good:

Politicisation of Tirumala affairs is no good for any, the way the political parties are transforming themselves into of late. It is better that Tirumala is kept out of political parties. The state govt's control of TTD should come under public transparency and checks and balance mechanisms. In fact, why should the TTD appointees be active political party functionaries?

A marvel:

Tirumala is a marvel of the world. The Hill and the activities there year round are more fascinating than any of the much visited places in the world. The atmosphere of bliss and blessedness is unparalleled and everything has to be done to ensure that. The kind of sevas, pujas, worships, darshans and series of festivals are much more curious than are being felt and realised now. So also the bhajans, music, prayers and even the decorations of the Deities. Significance of most of them is hardly known even to revisiting pilgrims as never any effort was made to truly explain to pilgrims particularly the younger age groups and consolidate the beliefs with logics and linkages to do with the Deities. The new technology today offers an opportunity to make a visit to Tirumala a life time experience to cherish.

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