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**Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple Development Laws:
A Spatial Approach**

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Abstract

The religious tourism has acquired new dimension in view of exponential rise in the pilgrims visiting temples and religious sites. The temples are generating huge revenues in terms of money and other donations in kind. The governments have enacted laws for better management of temple administration and finances with an aim to provide better facilities for the visiting pilgrims and devotees. The Karnataka Government recently enacted two laws for the development of Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple, Yallamma Hill, Savadatti taluk in Belagavi district. An attempt is made to analyse the two laws in the framework of space. Both the laws are explained in a conceptual, structural and functional construct. The necessity of two laws based on space is examined. The intent and rationality of enacting two laws is discussed in the decision-making framework.

Keywords: Religious Tourism, Temple Management, Spatial Approach, Pilgrimage, Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple

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Introduction

The temple management and administration play a vital role in the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is a religious activity that involves traveling to sacred places and sites. In this sense, pilgrimage is the oldest form of tourism (Singh and Singh, 1999). Thus, pilgrimage involves a tour to religious places. Both pilgrimage and tourism go together. The development and management of temples is a unique aspect of public administration and governance. Uniqueness is due to the religious space and worship by the people. The temple revolves around visitors to religious places, temples, or sacred sites, and the organization and management of the place. In addition, each temple or religious site has special events, rituals, festivals, procedures, and congregations.

The religious tourism has three facets, making it a 'sacred complex model' (Vidyarthi, 1961). The three facets are: sacred geography, sacred specialists, and sacred performances. The sacred geography is religious places which exhibits number of geographical features like hills, rivers, river beds, lakes, trees, ponds, gardens, caves, and so on. The sacred geography is layered space. The most inner layer is sanctum sanctorum, next layer where devotees have darshan of deity and the third layer space is meant for other rituals of sacred performance. Next layer space is fully public space meant for commercial, lodging, restaurant, transportation and such other facilities. This is a normal spatial construct of religious site /place, however, there are variations based on the custom, rituals and availability of space.

The sacred specialists or professionals are priests, gurus, preachers, and other persons facilitating the performance of religious rituals. The sacred performers perform various rituals specific to a person's faith, local customs, and traditions. Some of these may be obligatory as per the practices of people and the temple. The sacred performance is most important since it is believed that it is an instrument to transform from the material world to the divine world, as per the individual's belief and faith. In addition to these commercial and economic activities surrounding religious places, the aspect of religious tourism is equally important. The local traders, vendors, and various service providers are facilitators of visitors' needs. Their livelihood is dependent upon pilgrims and tourists. They are critical actors in religious tourism.

Further, these local traders and service providers are strategic partners in the temple development and management. They, being mostly local persons, have a lot of influence politically. It's because, unlike pilgrims and visitors, they form the electoral constituents (Shinde, 2018). This provides many opportunities and also poses challenges to the administration.

Mythology and History of the Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple:

In the mythology, Parasuram is one of the avatars of Vishnu. This is depicted in the Puranas. Srimad Bhagavata in IX Skandha Chapter 15 says that: "...Jamadagni married Renuka, the daughter of Renu King. Jamadagni had several sons by Renuka, beginning with Vasuman. The youngest of them was the famous Parasurama. Great men speak of him, the destroyer of the tribe of Haihayas, as a part of Vasudev. He rid this land of Kshatriyas in twenty-one campaigns (Srimad Bhagavata, The Holy Book of God, Vol. II, 2011:456). Sri Yallamma is said to be the same Sri Renuka, the mother of Parasuram and wife of rishi Jamdagni. The story often told is that Sri Renuka used to bring water from the nearby river Malaprabha for her husband's pooja and other sacred rituals. One day, Sri Renuka suddenly fell in love for heavenly minstrel and was

late in bringing water to the sacred rituals (Belgaum Gazeteer, 1864). This angered Rishi Jamdagni, and he ordered his son Parasuram to kill his mother for unchaste desires. As a devoted son, Parasuram killed his mother. Rishi Jamadgni offered a boon to Parasuram as a reward for sincere obedience in killing his mother. Parasuram requested the restoration of mother's life in return as a reward. Rishi Jamadgni fulfilled his son's request and Sri Renuka was restored to life. The Sarswati, a small stream which runs in the valley from the north, runs into the Malaprabha river. The main temple is in this valley. The temple shrine is said to be about 2000 years old. The temple in its present form might have been built within the 17th or 18th century (Belgaum Gazeteer,1864,2004: 612). Pilgrims from north Karnataka and south of Maharashtra visit on pilgrimage in large numbers. It is roughly estimated that, on average, yearly, one to two crores of people visit this religious place. On certain festivals and fairs, about 4-5 lakhs of people visit.

During the British administration the Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple was managed and administered by temporary municipality established in 1878. The main function was to improve communication, build rest houses for pilgrims and carry out sanitation works. (Belgaum Gazeteer , 1864,2004:613). In due course the panch committee (committee of five) was managing the affairs of the temple. The disputes between the panch committee and priests (poojaris) led to the establishment of Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 (Act 29 of 1950). This trust managed the temple administration till 1974. In 1974 Sri Renuka Yallamma Devasthanana (Administration) Act replaced the Trust management. This Act provided for appointment of priests under Section 11. The State had different laws for different regions for the management of temples and endowments. In 1997 a uniform law was enacted for the regulation of all charitable endowments and religious institutions in the state. The Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1997 is in operation. Now public temples are governed by this enactment and rules made there under. In Karnataka, the temples have been categorized into A, B, and C grades based on the number of pilgrims visiting and the resources the temple generates (Rule 3, The Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Rules, 2002). Further, a few temples are governed and administered by separate laws but under the administrative control of the Department of Muzrai. Some are managed by Boards and Trusts. Separate laws are enacted to develop the temples in order to provide better facilities to the pilgrims. Efficiently managing the temple resources is also one of the purposes of separate enactments.

The new ways of administering and managing based on space, place, and territory in the frame of the spatial approach are being attempted nowadays (Ali Madanipour et al., 2001). It is about making new spaces, meaningful spaces with connecting capability, which is the essence of the spatial approach (Cuthbert, 1996). The temples and religious sites can also be governed and managed by spatial approach.

Keeping in line with this, the Karnataka Government has enacted the following two laws for the development of Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple in Belagavi district.

1. Shree Renuka Yallamma Kshetra Tourism Development Board Act, 2023. (SRYKTDB) (Board)
2. Shri Renuka Yallamma Temple Development Authority Act, 2024. (SRYTDA) (Authority).

The laws are examined in the frame of the concept, structure, and functional aspects. Based on the objectives of the laws, a conceptual construct is drawn. Likewise, examining the provisions of the Acts, the structure of the governing instrument is constructed. The structural construct elaborates institutional arrangements and administrative procedures. The functional construct is analyzed on the basis of structure and operational aspects. The critical issues involved in the administration and development of the temple as per the new enactments are identified for their resolution. Before attempting the conceptual, structural, and functional construct a brief mythology and history of the temple is explained.

Conceptual Construct

The two laws approach the temple development from the point of view of space. The development of the temple is primarily focused on space. A spatial approach is necessary in view of the large number of visitors and in a floating order. Since temple places and sites are not necessarily permanent residential sites of large gatherings, the spatial approach to the development of pilgrimage centers is essential. Spatiality is, in essence, embeddedness and is a vehicle of communication and innovation (Ali Madanipour et al., 2001). The complex relations of people and space are to be properly designed to make the sacred performance satisfactory. This is facilitated by space, which tries to tailor people and sacred space. Further, the diversity of local situations for local needs, both institutional and material conditions, can be harmonized and synchronized. The spatial approach facilitates this effectively. The space offers new possibilities for people to perform sacred services with ease and satisfaction. These legislations adopt spatial approach to temple development. The main temple and its immediate surroundings, where major sacred rituals are performed, are assigned to the Authority. Section 2(g) of the SRYTDA specifies the temple area. It states that: " Sri Renuka Yallamma Temple means the entire area of Sri Renuka Yellamma Temple and lands acquired by the Government from time to time for the development of Sri Renuka Yellamma Temple and such other area declared by the State Government by notification." The Board area is specified in the Schedule to the SRYKTDBA. The area of operation of SRYKTDBA is Savadatti Yellamma Hill, Ramatheerth, Parasagad, Jogul Bhavi, except Renuka Temples. Presently, the Renuka temple has 88 acres of valley land where the main deity presides. The state government has allocated about 1097 acres of land to the temple, but this is under litigation. In order to have spatial development of the temple and the adjacent site the clear demarcation is essential. Since space is the core concept of development, the Board has provided for a security force for the protection of the Board's land from encroachments. The security force envisaged in the Board is analogous to the police; as such, it is invested with powers to investigate into the revenue loss of the Board. The chairman of the Board controls and supervises the security force.

Fusion of Pilgrimage and Tourism

The pilgrimage is primarily an act of faith. It revolves around rituals, offerings, prayers, and such other activities done religiously and traditionally. Tourism is basically recreation and to some extent educational. It is a leisure activity involving sightseeing and some kind of light sports. Tourism, per se an external experience like focusing on outward sights and exposure to cultural aspects. It does not focus on rituals or any such activities. Whereas religious tourism primarily focuses on inward experiences. It refers to travelling for religious and recreational needs by visiting places of religious significance and pilgrimage sites. It is basically to derive physical and metaphysical experiences (Shinde, 2018). With the advancement of better communication facilities and technological developments in the form of IT tools and aids,

religious tourism is growing exponentially. This growth trajectory has changed the religious tourism from informal to formal patterns of religious tourism (Gladstone, 2005). The informal mechanism is based on informal networks built on the basis of traditional practices of pilgrimage. It was facilitated by religious actors. Religious actors include priests, gurus, and religious functionaries. The formal pattern is evolved through new practices, mechanisms, procedures, and institutions initiated by the government and registered bodies working under the government supervision. The basic law, the Karnataka Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments Act, 1997, and rules made there under governs all Hindu temples. This law is administered by the Muzrai Department in the government. This is the earliest initiative towards formal religious tourism. Now new initiative in the form of new specific laws, a totally differentiated system of religious tourism is being attempted. In both Acts, there is a fusion of pilgrimage and tourism. Both Acts speak of making the SRYT an international pilgrimage, cultural, and tourist center (Section 20(4) SRYTDA and 17(1) of SRYKTDBA). Further, both laws aim at providing amenities to pilgrims, the public, and tourists.

The Structural Construct

The structural construct resembles an ephorate. The ephorate is an ancient Spartan usage denoting a collective body of political officials overseeing public works and cultural heritage. The public law exhibits the role of ephorates in governing structures (Martin, 2010) The two laws formulated for the development of SRYT also prescribe a kind of structure. The 'Authority' (SRYTDA) envisages an ephorate chaired by a political executive (minister) with its subsidiary entity chaired by district level bureaucrat. The Authority consists of the district in charge minister as a vice-chairman and the jurisdictional representatives of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament. Five members are nominated by the government; of these, one belongs to SC or ST and is a woman. One person is nominated by the government, a person knowing Hindu temple architecture, primarily from the Vishwakarma community. Further, it consists of seven ex-officio members: Chief Engineer PWD, Secretary, Finance Department, Secretary, Revenue Department, Commissioner of Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments, Deputy Commissioner, Belagavi district, Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Panchayat, Belagavi District and Chief Priest of the SRYT. The Executive Secretary is a member secretary of the Authority. Notably excluded is a representative from the Department of Tourism in the composition of the Authority.

Apart from this state level Authority, the Act specifies two monitoring committees, one at the district level and the other at the state level. The District level monitoring committee consists of eleven official members from the district and sub-district levels. The officer from the department of tourism and the chief priest of the temple are included in this committee. The secretary of the Authority is a member secretary of this committee. The State-level monitoring committee is headed by the Secretary of the Revenue Department in charge of Muzrai. Other members are commissioner Hindu Religious Institutions and Charitable Endowments, the Chief Engineer, PWD, MD, Hubli Electricity Supply Company, Chief Engineer, Urban Water Supply, DC Belagavi, Commissioner of Police, Belagavi, CEO. Zilla Panchayat Belagavi, and Director of Tourism. The Secretary of the Authority is a member Secretary of the State Level Monitoring Committee.

The district-level monitoring committee submits suitable proposals to the state-level monitoring committee. Section 18(5) states that: "The State Level Monitoring Committee shall

monitor the proposals submitted by the District level Committee and direct the Authority on all matters concerning the development of Sri Renuka Yellamma Temple. “ This provision raises a question whether the Authority headed by the Minister is superior to the State Level Monitoring Committee headed by the Secretary, Revenue, Muzrai. The important functionary secretary finance department is not included in the State-level Committee.

The Board proposed in the SRYKTDBA is an ephorate chaired by the district level bureaucrat with a supervisory entity chaired by the political executive, i.e., Minister. The Board comprises MLA representing the temple area, Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, Museums Heritage, Commissioner, Belagavi Development Authority, Director of Tourism, SP Belagavi, Superintendent of Archaeology, Dharwad, CEO, Belagavi Zilla Panchayat, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Belagavi, Superintending Engineer, Malaprabha Dam, the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Belagavi, the Deputy Environment Officer, Belagavi. The Commissioner of the Board is a Member Secretary of the Board. The notable omission is the representative from the Muzrai department, which is the administrative department of SRYT. The representative from the temple is also not included. The State Level Committee is chaired by the minister in charge of tourism. Two vice-chairmen, one is the minister in charge of the Muzrai department, and the other is the minister in charge of Belagavi district. The MLA and MP representing the SRYT area are members of the Board. The state government nominates five members who have knowledge and a history of SRYT. Of the five, one must be SC/ST and a woman. The Additional Chief Secretary and Development Commissioner, Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India, Principal Secretary, Finance Department, the Chairman of SRYKTDB., the Secretary, Department of Kannada and Culture, and the Principal Secretary, Department of Tourism are ex- officio members.

The State-level Committee monitors the activities of the Board and directs the Board on all matters concerning development. It approves the annual plan, budget, and expenditures above five crores (Section 12 (2)).

Key Functionaries

The Deputy Commissioner of Belagavi district is a key functionary since he is the Chairman of the entities under both laws. Under the SRYTDA, he is chairman of the district-level monitoring committee (Section 18(2)). This committee monitors the development works of the authority. The committee also has the responsibility of maintaining the temple. The proposals for development works and maintenance are submitted by this committee to the state-level monitoring committee for approval. In the SRYKTDB law, the Deputy Commissioner is the Chairman of the Board (Section 3(4)). It is a primary body under the Act and has the responsibility of preparing a development plan for the development and maintenance of the area earmarked for the Board. The development plan of the Board includes development of infrastructure for pilgrims performing sacred activities. The deputy commissioner is assigned a key role in the entire schema of SRYT development and maintenance. Additionally, the DC is the Chairman of the District Tourism Committee. This committee formulates district tourism plans and monitors the implementation of plans. It is responsible for utilizing the grants allocated to the tourism development of the district. As a district head, he has to exercise basic revenue and magisterial functions, [which are primary duties](#). These also have some bearing on the SRYT matters in times of large congregations during festivals and fairs. Thus, he plays multiple roles in the affairs of the SRYT.

The Authority has a secretary from the Karnataka Administrative Services (super time scale) or a Group A equivalent officer from the department of Muzrai (Section 10 (1)). He is assisted by the deputy secretary belonging to the Muzrai department. The Secretary is the Chief Executive and Administrative Officer (section 11 (1)). As a chief executive and administrative officer, he implements the resolutions of the Authority and implements the development works. He supervises and controls all officers and staff of the Authority.

The key functionary of the Board is the Commissioner. He is appointed from Group A senior scale officer from the state civil service. Like the Secretary of the Authority, he is also the chief executive and administrative officer of the Board. As such, he implements the resolutions of the Board and implements the works approved by the Board (Section 14).

Development Portfolio

Both Authority and Board are primarily constituted to take up the development of their respective spaces. The development portfolio is discerned through their powers and functions. The exercises in the development plan reveal the facets of development proposals. The Authority has been assigned a broad development agenda in Section 8. It says: “ the Authority shall have powers generally to do anything that in its opinion is necessary to give effect to the intent and provisions of the Act.” The intent of the Act, as set in the preamble, is to develop and maintain SYRT into an international pilgrimage, cultural, and tourist center. The powers and functions of the Board are extensively elaborated in Section 7 (1). Preparing a plan for the development of SRYT into an international pilgrimage, cultural, and tourist center, and for deliberation and propagation of the tenets of Sri Renuka Yallamma and other subsidiary deities. The general responsibility of both the Authority and the Board is the development of SRYT into an international pilgrimage center. It is to be done in their respective spaces as earmarked in the respective enactments. The Board has listed elaborate development works like land acquisition for the development, putting up public parks, gardens for tourist attraction, construction of choultries, lodging, commercial complexes, prayer and meditation halls, and basic civic amenities as defined in Section 2(a). The Authority in Section 20 has the power to prepare a development plan which includes development works and civic amenities as defined in Section 2(a).

The Authority has laid stress on environmental conservation and protection. The development plan has to include this. Section 20(p) states that:” prohibition of ear buds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice cream sticks, polystyrene for decoration, plates, cups, glasses, cutlery....PVC banners less than 100 microns, stirrers in the area of the Authority, for avoiding plastic pollution. “ This is necessary to maintain the environment to facilitate safe and clean pilgrimage.

The Board has made provision for the ‘Security Force’ in Section 5. This is an innovative initiative to strengthen the enforcement activities of the Board. Instead of depending upon the regular security force of the state government, having its own security force helps the Board in protecting its property effectively with ease. The menace of encroachments on public property can be efficiently tackled with this kind of force. The Karnataka Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act, 1974, has been made applicable in both the Authority and the Board by necessarily incorporating it in both Acts.

Functional Construct

The functional construct can be examined on two counts. Firstly, on the implications of structural construct as laid in the laws, and secondly, based on the actual operation and functioning of the structure. The two Acts have one target, i.e., pilgrims. Facilitating smooth, easy, and hassle-free performance of sacred duty is the basic aim of both laws. Ultimately, people come to this place to offer various services (sevas) to the deity. Performing respective rituals with ease and satisfaction is the aim of pilgrimage. The two laws have specific spaces through which the pilgrims traverse to perform their sacred duty. The two spaces intersect and sometimes overlap. This poses a challenge, and functionaries performing their duties under respective laws have to have a synchronized mechanism to create a hassle-free system. The satisfaction, happiness, and peace of pilgrims having performed the sacred ritual is the ultimate test of these laws. The proper queue system, facilities for performing sacred rituals, lodging facilities, drinking water, hygiene, and guidance are of utmost importance. This needs to be done at two levels. One during normal days and the other on festival days or days of special importance. During festivals and fairs, lakhs of people congregate, which requires a special system. The laws have provided a basic framework for providing the necessary infrastructure. The maintenance of infrastructure with due care and the management of these needs need to be institutionalized. Otherwise, infrastructure is created, but many times it suffers from a lack of efficient maintenance and management. In such an instance, infrastructure becomes inadequate.

The thin distinction between earmarked spaces and overlapping functions often create problems. A clear-cut role demarcation is needed. Both laws prescribe a development plan for their respective spaces. It appears that it's a segregated development plan and lacks coherence in treating the entire religious site as one unit. Thus, it's two laws and two sites. The role segmentation and insulation of institutional demands are provided in both Acts becomes stumbling block in the actual implementation of the laws. Function is one and target is one, i.e., a pilgrim, but approached through two laws and structures. The functional requirement of SRYT is one, but two laws and prescriptions therein often lead to role competition and role negligence, thus the target pilgrim is in confusion and sometimes in stress.

The state government has issued an order on 1st August 2025 and has appointed the Deputy Commissioner of Belagavi and the Chairman of the District Tourism Committee as the implementing officer of the following works.

1. The Central Government is providing assistance of Rs 100 crores under Special Assistance to the State for Capital Investment (SASCI).
2. The Central Government released funds of Rs 18.37 crores under the PRASHAD 2.0 Scheme.
3. The works are under the SRYTDA fund of Rs 97 crores.

Further, the government specifies that the SRYTDA fund must be utilized for providing basic infrastructure facilities within the premises of the temple. The temple development works are to be approved by the SRYTDA. The government order additionally constituted the Overseeing and Approval Committee consisting of secretary revenue department and tourism department. This is a new one apart from the committees provided in the two laws. It is observed from the various meeting proceedings that the above mentioned infrastructure development works are discussed, and some preliminary actions like appointment of

consultants for preparing project reports are initiated based on the discussion. After these initial beginning a new initiative of implementing these development works through the District Tourism Committee was surprising. Further, the rationale for bypassing the following ephorates in two laws is not revealed.

Authority	Board
Principal Authority (Section 3) (State Level)	-
District Level Monitoring Committee (Sec(18(2)))	Principal Board (Section 3) (District Level)
State Level Monitoring Committee Sec.18(4))	State Level Monitoring Committee (Section 7)

It appears that there is a lack of coordination in operationalizing the two enactments.

Is there A Necessity of Two Laws?

As seen above, the two laws are enacted for the development of SRYT with an aim to facilitate better facilities and services to the visiting pilgrims and worshippers. Two spaces have been carved out for the operation of two laws. Both laws have a common aim of making the SRYT a center of international pilgrimage, a cultural and tourist center. Further, to make it the center of deliberation and propagation of tenets of Sri Renuka Yellamma and subsidiary deities. The structure in two laws initiated for the realization of these aims is almost the same and, to some extent inverse manner. In SRYTDA, the Authority, headed by the Minister for Muzrai, is the principal body, whereas in SRYKTDBA, the Board, headed by the Deputy Commissioner, is the main body. The functions assigned to both bodies are similar, but operate in a space carved out for them. But the target and central figure is one. The SRYT and pilgrims are the main focus areas in which both laws attempt to operationalize.

There are a number of temples which are much bigger and that attract larger pilgrims, worshippers, tourists, and visitors. They are governed and administered by a single law. The Tirumala Sri Venkateshwara Temple is managed and administered under the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, 1987 (Act 30 of 1987). The Chapter IX and XV of the Act provide for the Board of Trustees and the day-to-day administration of the temple. A senior IAS officer works as the Chief Executive Officer. The TTD administration is like a mini government on its own. The Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanams (TTD) has most of the line departments like the government. It employs 14000 persons. The First Schedule of the 1987 Act lists temples under the TTD Trust. The main hill has seven temples, and in Tirupati, 20 temples, and in other places, 11 temples are under the trust. Additionally, the Trust maintains more than 20 educational institutions, which are listed in the Second Schedule of the 1987 Act. The temple complex has 16.2 acres of land, and the TTD in all holds more than 8000 acres of land. Of these 6003 acres, is non-agricultural land and the remaining 2085 acres is agricultural land (Indian Express 26-12-2020). As per Section 114 of the Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu Religious Institutions and Endowments Act, 1987, the Tirumala Hills is a notified village, and as such, the powers of civic administration and public health authorities are exercised by the Executive Officer of the Board. The temple is visited by more than 50 crores devotees every year and daily, around 60000 to one lakh people visit. On

certain festival days like Vaikuntha Ekadashi and Brhamotsava, it crosses over two to three lakhs. This place is considered the most visited religious place in the world, more than Eiffel Tower and Vatican.

The Kashi Sri Vishwanth Temple is managed under the Uttar Pradesh Sri Vishwanth Temple Act, 1983. It has a Board of Trustees to arrange for the due and proper performance of rituals daily and facilitate better facilities for worshippers. It maintains public order, health, and hygiene. The Board provides for proper worship for the visiting pilgrims by providing necessary facilities. It promotes research in Vedic culture. Yearly, more than one crore pilgrim tourists visit this place.

The Sri Jagannath Puri Temple in Orissa is also managed and administered by the Sri Jagannath Temple Act, 1954. It was further amended in 1960. The temple administration is conducted under this Act. It is also one of the major temples attracting a large crowd. Nearly six million people visit this religious place. The Shree Shirdi Sai Baba Temple is another major temple where, throughout the year large number of people visit for worship. About 4 to 5 million people visit this place every year. The Temple is governed and administered by the Shree Sai Baba Samsthan Temple Act, 2004. The Shree Sai Baba Samsthan Trust (SSST) looks after the temple and its functions. It has a Board of Management with a Chief Executive Officer who manages the daily rituals and performances. Further, it also plans and implements development activities. In addition to this, the Shirdi Town is being developed through the Shirdi Urban Development Authority by including larger surrounding areas. This is also aimed at providing better facilities and services to the pilgrims.

Karnataka is replete with this kind of temple and cultural places, which have similar management and development practices. The Malai Mahadeshwar Temple in Malai Mahadeshwar Hill in Chamarajanagar district and the Sri Chamundeshwari Temple in Mysore are governed by a single Act. The Kudala Sangama Development Board, 1994, aims to develop the Kudala Sanagma in to an international pilgrimage, cultural, and tourist center. The Kaginele Development Authority, 2009, and the Krantiveera Sangolli Rayanna Kshetra Development Authority Act, 2016 aims to develop the places connected with Sangolli Rayanna as an international heritage, cultural, and tourist center. These all are having single law that administers and maintains respective places of worship, along with taking up development activities. These are all headed by the chief minister in an ex- officio capacity. Having the chief minister as the chairman of the entity will certainly elevates the status of the ephorate. Further, it enables effective coordination among various departments and officers besides allowing substantial fund allocation for various development activities.

When these are already functioning and proven enactments, why are there two enactments for SRYT? These two laws are enacted within a span of one year, and the rationale for the two laws for SRYT is incomprehensible. However, it would have been proper and realistic for the two laws, one should have been aimed at the Yallamma Hill region development as an urban hub on the model of the Shirdi Urban Development Authority. The Shirdi Urban Development Authority is established with an intention to develop 106.12 sq.km of the Shirdi religious place in a planned manner with urban facilities and amenities. Private entities can be allowed to supplement government initiatives and efforts. A similar initiative can be initiated in SRYT by including adjoining human settlements within a radius of 2-3 kms of the Yallamma

Hill under the urban development authority law. The inclusion of the commissioner of Belagavi Urban Development Authority in SRYKTDB(Section 3(4)(iv)) is in this direction, but the Board's intent and functions are overwhelmingly tourism development. As seen concerning the Shirdi Urban Development Authority, now the trend is to develop religious sites and places on the basis of structural and regional plans adopted in the urban development planning process. This will facilitate a sound spatial approach in temple area development. In addition to this, the Yallamma Hill may be notified as a unit local administration, as done in the Tirumala Hills under local self- government and public health laws.

Conclusion

The utility of the two enactments for SRYT can be assessed only after their full implementation. However, the rationale behind enacting two laws with similar objectives requires critical examination from cognitive, decision-making, and legal perspectives. Policy and legislation are often instruments of political self-entrenchment, where decision-making may reflect bounded rationality due to incomplete information and institutional limitations. Certain provisions in the SRYTDA and SRYKTDB Acts raise concerns regarding the exclusion of tourism representatives and the absence of the Chief Minister as chairman, unlike similar religious and cultural development authorities in Karnataka.

From a legal perspective, such decisions may invite scrutiny under the Wednesbury principle of reasonableness, which requires consideration of all relevant factors and exclusion of irrelevant ones. The coexistence of two enactments with overlapping objectives, alongside the delegation of functions to other bodies such as the District Tourism Committee, suggests possible inconsistencies or inadequate consideration during the law-making process. Nevertheless, both enactments aim to transform SRYT into an international pilgrimage, cultural, and tourism center. Their success depends not merely on statutory structures but on holistic and coordinated implementation beyond departmental boundaries. Since religious spaces involve complex social, cultural, and spatial dimensions, balanced and integrated development is essential. Ultimately, the effectiveness of these laws will be judged by whether pilgrims and tourists experience peace, fulfillment, and meaningful spiritual engagement during their visit.

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