



S.A.S. GOVERNMENT DEGREE COLLEGE
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

2018-19

Visit to Polavaram Project

Title of the activity: Polavaram Education tour

Date: 13-12-2018

Name of the Resource person: P.Bhaskara Rao

Purpose of the tour: To understand the present and past condition of the project Polavaram.

No.of students participated: 18

History and other information:

The Polavaram Project, located on the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh, is a multi-purpose irrigation project granted National status by the Indian Government. Its reservoir extends up to 150 km back from the dam on the Main River and approximately 115 km on the Sabari River side, affecting parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. The project boosts tourism in the Godavari Districts, covering attractions like the Papikonda National Park. Additionally, the Polavaram hydroelectric project and National Waterway 4 are under construction nearby. The project is situated 40 km upstream of the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage in Rajamahendravaram City and 25 km from Rajahmundry Airport.

The Polavaram Project has a history dating back several decades. The idea for the project was conceived as early as the 1940s, with proposals for harnessing the waters of the Godavari River to address the irrigation needs of the region, particularly in the drought-prone areas of Andhra Pradesh. In 1941, Sir Arthur Cotton, a British engineer renowned for his contributions to water resource management in India, proposed the construction of a dam across the Godavari River near Polavaram. However, it wasn't until much later that serious efforts were made to initiate the project.



The project model



Participants in the field

In 1978, the Government of Andhra Pradesh commissioned the detailed project report for the Polavaram Project. Subsequently, in 1980, the Central Water Commission granted technical clearance for the project. Over the years, the project faced various challenges, including funding issues, environmental concerns, and disputes over water sharing with neighboring states. Despite these challenges, the project continued to progress, with various governments at the state and central levels showing commitment to its completion. In 2005, the Government of India declared the Polavaram Project a national project, signifying its importance for national development and committing to providing financial assistance for its completion.

BRIEF REPORT:

Introduction:

The Polavaram Education Tour embarked on December 13, 2018, orchestrated by the Department of History, aiming to provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the Polavaram project's historical evolution and its contemporary significance. Led by P. Bhaskara Rao, a seasoned historian, the tour sought to illuminate the project's journey from its inception to its current status as one of India's most ambitious irrigation and hydroelectric endeavors.

Historical Context:

The Polavaram project traces its roots back to the mid-20th century, amidst post-independence India's fervent efforts to modernize its infrastructure and propel socio-economic development. In the 1940s, the idea of constructing a dam across the Godavari River at Polavaram emerged as a solution to address the region's perennial water scarcity and to mitigate the devastating impacts of recurrent floods. Subsequent decades witnessed meticulous surveys, studies, and planning exercises aimed at assessing the project's feasibility and potential benefits.

The project gained momentum in the 21st century, culminating in its designation as a national project in 2014 under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act. This pivotal moment marked a significant shift in the project's trajectory, elevating its status and garnering renewed attention and resources for its realization. The historical significance of this designation underscores the project's enduring importance in India's developmental narrative and its pivotal role in regional prosperity and resilience.

Tour Highlights:

The tour commenced with a historical overview of the Polavaram project provided by P. Bhaskara Rao. Through insightful narratives and archival materials, participants were

transported back in time to witness the project's humble beginnings and the visionary aspirations that propelled it forward. Emphasis was placed on the socio-economic and political context surrounding the project's conception, highlighting the challenges and opportunities that shaped its evolution over the decades.

Site visits to key project infrastructure, including the dam site and irrigation canals, provided participants with tangible insights into the project's engineering marvels and the scale of its operations. Interactions with local communities and project officials further enriched participants' understanding of the project's socio-cultural dimensions and its impact on livelihoods and landscapes.

Conclusion:

The Polavaram Education Tour, approached through a historical lens, proved to be a transformative learning experience for all participants. By contextualizing the project within its historical trajectory, participants gained a deeper appreciation of its significance and the complex socio-political dynamics that have shaped its journey. As India continues to navigate its developmental challenges, the lessons gleaned from the Polavaram project serve as a testament to the enduring legacy of visionary initiatives and the transformative power of historical understanding in shaping our collective future.

Signature of department in charge

signature of the principal