A Case for Design Optimisation of Systems for Growth of

Water Ways in VRV Region

by

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Abstract

Andhra Pradesh has the second largest coast line of 972 km in the country, next only to Gujarat which has approximately 1600 km of coast line. In the last couple of decades Gujarat has become the hub of merchant shipbuilding activity in the country whereas there is no perceptible growth in this sector in Andhra Pradesh despite the fact that Visakhapatnam is a major hub of maritime activity on the east coast of India. Further the Government of India has declared the National Waterway no.4 to be developed in the 12th Five Year plan. NW4 connects Bhadrachalam to Rajahmundry to Vijayawada (Eluru canal) to Chennai and Pudducherry via Buckingham canal. Kakinada is connected to Rajahmundry through Kakinada Canal and Wazirabad is connected to Vijayawada through Krishna river. It would seem as if this waterway has been devised to cater to the VRV region. The resources in this region include the industrial products of Visakhapatnam-Kakinada region, grains, vegetables and fruit products of the Godavari districts and raw materials of Bhadrachalam area. Today there is hardly any movement of cargo in the coastal/ inland waterways. Can we move different types of cargo in waterways in hinterland and in coastal waters connecting not only the VRV region but also from Kolkata up to Chennai, catering to the export- import trade of major ports in this region? This, of course, matches with the Government's view of encouraging coastal traffic.

Passenger transport via waterways on a regular basis is likely to be difficult at the beginning since the entire VRV region is well connected by rail and road network. If we can do a large value addition, passenger movement is possible. The first such attempt that comes to mind is the tourism industry. The area under consideration has many interesting features which could be exploited for tourism trade. Such features, apart from the normal flora and fauna of the entire region, include (i) the mud flats and mangroves of the Coringa national park near Kakinada with its own flora and fauna, (ii) The riverine islands of Godavari and Krishna rivers and (iii) The unique sand pit at Kakinada harbour. This area also includes places of many temples and monuments right from Visakhapatnam to Bhadracahala or Vijayawada or Wazirabad. If tourist circuits can be designed to cater (i) **Eco-tourism**

enthusiasts and (ii) **heritage tourism** enthusiasts, it will lead to massive growth in the VRV region.

Water sports is another area where there could be growth potential. Boat clubs, yatch clubs, clubs for water sports, competitions etc. could attract local youth to water sports.

To develop these activities for inland waters, coastal waters of integrated inland and coastal waters, it is not necessary to have big ships. Small vessels optimally designed to cater to cater to the needs of local area or limited lengths of travel should be sufficient. For this it is not necessary to have big and heavy industries, With abundance of steel workers in the Visakhapatnam industrial belt, it is possible that a large number of entrepreneurs could take up such boat construction, maintenance and repair works at local level all along the waterways providing indirect livelihood to large number of people. The Indian Maritime University at Visakhapatnam and a number of small consulting firms at Visakhapatnam can cater to the needs of optimised system design, jetty development, hydrogrphic studies and craft design. NSTL could be encouraged to take up any model testing work that may be required.