

HELAPURI THROUGH THE AGES

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ABSTRACT

Helapuri, the ancient name of present-day Eluru in Andhra Pradesh, occupies a special place in the historical and cultural geography of South India. Its origins can be traced back to the early historic period, when the fertile lands of the Godavari–Krishna delta attracted settlers, rulers, and traders. During the reign of the Satavahanas (2nd century BCE – 3rd century CE), the region served as an administrative and trade link between the Deccan and coastal Andhra. Later, under the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (7th–12th centuries CE), Helapuri rose in importance as a flourishing urban center, where art, religion, and education thrived alongside agricultural prosperity. The city's strategic location contributed to its continuous relevance through multiple dynasties. The Kakatiyas (12th–14th centuries) fortified the region and encouraged agrarian and irrigation-based development. Under the Vijayanagara Empire (14th–17th centuries), Helapuri became integrated into a larger political and economic network that extended across South India. The subsequent arrival of the Qutb Shahis of Golconda and the Mughals introduced new cultural influences, shaping the city's architecture, administration, and socio-economic life. A unique hallmark of Helapuri is its artisanal tradition, especially the world-renowned Eluru carpets and handloom weaving, which trace their lineage back to medieval times and continue to sustain local identity and livelihood. The colonial period, beginning with the British consolidation in the 18th century, marked a turning point in Helapuri's history. The introduction of Western education, urban planning, and new systems of revenue collection altered the city's socio-political fabric, while simultaneously integrating it into the larger colonial economy. In the post-independence era, Eluru has transformed into a modern district headquarters, balancing its deep historical roots with rapid urbanization and infrastructural growth. Its continuity across centuries shaped by dynastic transitions, cultural exchanges, artisanal practices, and colonial interventions makes Helapuri a microcosm of the wider historical processes of Andhra Pradesh and South India. Thus, a study of *“Helapuri through the Ages”* not only illuminates the trajectory of a regional capital but also reveals the dynamic interplay of geography, polity, economy, and culture in shaping the destiny of a city that still resonates with echoes of its glorious past.

Keywords : Helapuri, Qutb Shahis of Golconda, socio-political fabric, artisanal tradition

I. INTRODUCTION

Eluru, presently the administrative headquarters of Eluru district in Andhra Pradesh, is one of the important urban centres of coastal Andhra. Located on the banks of the Tammileru River, the city lies in the fertile Krishna–Godavari delta region. Historically, Eluru was called **Helapuri**, and its antiquity dates back to the early centuries of the Common Era. Over the centuries, the city witnessed the rise and fall of numerous dynasties—from the Satavahanas and Salankayanas to the Eastern Chalukyas, Vijayanagara rulers, Qutb Shahis, Mughals, and the British.

Apart from its political legacy, Eluru is known for its cultural and economic contributions, particularly its

world-famous pile carpets, handlooms, freshwater fisheries, and as a hub of regional trade and education



Geography and Setting

- **Location:** Southeastern Andhra Pradesh, in the fertile Krishna–Godavari delta.
- **Water Bodies:** Intersected by the Tammileru River and irrigation canals; **Kolleru Lake**, India's largest freshwater lake, lies close by.
- **Agriculture:** Fertile soils make the region ideal for rice, sugarcane, oilseeds, and aquaculture.
- **Connectivity:** Positioned on the **Golden Quadrilateral Highway** and connected by road, rail, and air.

Toponymy

- In ancient records, Eluru was referred to as **Helapuri**, the capital during early Buddhist and Vengi times.
- Other names: **Erla Uru**, later **Ellore** under the British.

During Nizam rule, to differentiate it from **Vellore** in Tamil Nadu, Eluru was called *Uppu Ellore* (Salt Ellore), while Vellore was called *Ra Vellore*

II. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

2.1 Early Historic and Dynastic Periods

Evidence from inscriptions and coins shows Helapuri's association with the Śāṅkāyanas (3rd–5th c. CE) and later the Vishnukundinas (5th–6th c. CE). The Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi (7th–12th c. CE) transformed Helapuri into a vibrant capital. It was here that Nannaya Bhattaraka initiated the Telugu Mahābhārata translation, signaling the rise of Telugu literary culture.

2.2 Medieval Period

The Kakatiyas and Vijayanagara rulers used Helapuri as a military and agrarian hub. The Qutb Shahis introduced Persian weaving traditions, leading to the celebrated Eluru carpet industry. The Mughal and Asaf Jahi periods further integrated Helapuri into Deccan trade networks.

2.3 Colonial Period

British consolidation in the 18th century marked a shift in administration, urban planning, and economic integration. Eluru briefly served as the capital of the Northern Circars, gaining importance as a revenue and trade hub. Mission schools, irrigation networks, and municipal reforms redefined the city's trajectory.

2.4 Modern Era

In post-independence India, Eluru evolved into a district headquarters, achieving renewed prominence in 2022

when a separate Eluru district was created. Its trajectory highlights the long continuity of political and cultural adaptation.

III. GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Location and Physical Features

Eluru lies at **16°42'42"N 81°06'11"E**, with an average elevation of about 22 meters (72 feet) above sea level. The city is positioned on the eastern coastal plains of Andhra Pradesh, almost midway between the deltas of the Krishna and Godavari rivers, and roughly 50 kilometers inland from the Bay of Bengal. Its geographical setting is strongly influenced by nearby rivers, canals, and lakes.

The **Tammileru River**, which passes through Eluru, plays a vital role in the city's water system before draining into **Kolleru Lake**, one of the largest freshwater lakes in India. The river occasionally causes flooding, as seen in Ashok Nagar during the 2020 floods. The **Eluru Canal**, a branch of the Krishna irrigation system, also flows through the city. This canal supports both irrigation and water transportation, providing crucial agricultural benefits to the region.



Geologically, Eluru falls within the **Pranhita–Godavari Basin**, a rift zone extending from Boregaon in Maharashtra to the eastern coastline of Andhra Pradesh. The basin preserves sedimentary formations ranging from the **Permian to Early Cretaceous periods**. Its outer regions are dominated by Lower Gondwana deposits such as the Talchir and Barakar formations, while the central part is characterized by Upper Gondwana strata like the Kamthi and Kota sandstones. These varied deposits highlight a long history of alternating marine and terrestrial environments, making the region significant for geological studies.



Kolleru Lake, situated between the Krishna and Godavari deltas, is the largest freshwater wetland on India's east coast. The lake is relatively shallow, with water depths fluctuating between 0.5 and 2 meters during summer, and it typically spreads across 245 square kilometers. However, during peak flooding, its influence extends over nearly **910 square kilometers**.

Location and Setting

- **Coordinates:** Eluru lies between **16°42' N latitude** and **81°06' E longitude**.
- **Administrative status:** Headquarters of **Eluru district** (formed in 2022), Andhra Pradesh, India.
- **Region:** Situated in the **Godavari–Krishna delta** on the **Coromandel Coast**, part of the Eastern Coastal Plains.

Elevation: Average height is **22 meters above mean sea level**, making it a low-lying alluvial region.

Rivers and Water Systems

- Though the **Krishna and Godavari rivers** do not flow directly through Eluru, their canal systems strongly influence the region.
- **Eluru Canal**: One of the major irrigation canals, connecting the Krishna river near Vijayawada to Eluru. It passes through the city and has historically supported agriculture and drinking water.
- **Other Canals**: Part of the **Krishna–Godavari delta irrigation system** engineered during British rule, which transformed the landscape into a rice granary.

Natural Vegetation and Agriculture

- The original vegetation of Eluru was **tropical dry deciduous forest**, but most has been replaced by cultivation.
- **Major crops**: Paddy, maize, sugarcane, banana, and coconut.
- **Cash crops**: Tobacco and chilies are grown in adjoining areas.
- The presence of water bodies and fertile soils has made agriculture the **backbone of Eluru's economy**.

Urban Geography

- **Area**: ~14.5 sq. km (municipal area).
- **Population (2011 Census)**: ~214,000 within city limits; larger metropolitan area ~350,000+.
- The **Eluru Canal** forms a distinctive geographic feature, running through the heart of the city and influencing settlement patterns.

The city expanded around **Pedavegi (ancient Vengi)** and along transportation routes such as the **Chennai–Howrah railway line** and **National Highway 16 (Kolkata–Chennai corridor)**.

- **Type**: Eluru experiences a **tropical climate** (Köppen: Aw—tropical savanna with dry winters).
- **Temperature**:
 - Summers (March–June): Hot, 28°C–42°C.
 - Winters (Nov–Feb): Mild, 18°C–28°C.
- **Rainfall**:
 - Receives ~1,000–1,100 mm annually, mostly during the **Southwest monsoon (June–Sept)** and partially from the **Northeast monsoon (Oct–Nov)**.
- **Humidity**: High throughout the year due to proximity to the Bay of Bengal and delta rivers.

Climatic Type

Elapuri (present-day Eluru) experiences a **tropical savanna climate** (Köppen classification: **Aw**), characterized by **hot summers, seasonal monsoon rains, and mild winters**. Its location in the **Godavari–Krishna delta**, close to the Bay of Bengal, ensures high humidity throughout the year.

Temperature

- **Summer (March–June)**: Extremely hot; average maximum ranges between **35°C and 42°C**. May is usually the hottest month.
- **Monsoon (June–September)**: Temperatures moderate slightly, with maxima around **30°C–34°C** due to cloud cover, though humidity remains high.
- **Winter (November–February)**: Pleasant and mild; daytime temperatures hover between **18°C and 28°C**, rarely falling below 16°C at night.

Rainfall

- **Annual average rainfall:** Around 1,000–1,100 mm.
- **Southwest monsoon (June–Sept):** Contributes the bulk of rainfall (70–75%).
- **Northeast monsoon (Oct–Nov):** Provides additional rains, important for agriculture.
- Occasional **cyclonic depressions from the Bay of Bengal** can bring heavy downpours and localized flooding.

Humidity and Seasons

- **Relative humidity:** Generally high, ranging between **70–85%** during monsoon months, and even in summer afternoons it seldom drops below 50%.
- **Distinct seasons:**
 1. **Summer** – hot and dry (Mar–Jun)
 2. **Monsoon** – wet and humid (Jun–Nov)
 3. **Winter** – cool and dry (Dec–Feb)

Climatic Significance

- The **abundant rainfall** and canal irrigation systems have made Eluru one of the **rice-producing hubs** of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Humidity and warmth** support horticultural crops such as banana, coconut, and sugarcane.
- However, **cyclonic activity** poses risks of crop damage and flooding.
- Historically, this favorable climate, combined with fertile soils, contributed to Helapuri's growth as an agricultural and cultural center.

IV. ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE

The civic administration of Eluru is managed by the **Eluru Municipal Corporation (EMC)**. Originally established as a **municipality in 1866**, it played a key role in shaping the city's urban growth. Neighborhoods such as **Narasimharaopet (N.R. Pet)** and **Ramachandraraopet (R.R. Pet)** were developed through early town planning initiatives of the municipality. The Narasimharaopet scheme was introduced in **1942**, followed by subsequent layouts in **Ramachandraraopet, Ashoknagar, and Phirangula Dibba**, which brought basic amenities like road networks and street lighting.

The municipality was upgraded to a **Municipal Corporation on 9 April 2005**, having previously been a selection-grade municipality. At present, the corporation covers an area of **14.50 km² (5.60 sq mi)** and is divided into **50 administrative wards**. The current **Municipal Commissioner** is *Y. Sai Sreekanth*, while *Shaik Noorjahan* serves as the **Mayor**. Under the **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (2015)**, Eluru ranked **249th nationally** in cleanliness surveys.

The **Eluru Urban Agglomeration** extends over **23.85 km² (9.21 sq mi)**, consisting of the Eluru Municipal Corporation, census towns like **Sanivarapupeta, Satrampadu, Gavaravaram, Tangellamudi**, along with portions of rural outgrowths including **Komadavole** and surrounding villages.

Urban Development Authority

For regional planning, the **Eluru Urban Development Authority (ELUDA)** was created on **1 January 2019** under the **AP Metropolitan Region and Urban Development Authority Act, 2016**. Headquartered in Eluru, the authority supervises an area of **3,327.99 km²**, encompassing not only Eluru but also **seven municipalities**—Bhimavaram, Kovvur, Narasapuram, Nidadavolu, Palakollu, Tadepalligudem, and Tanuku—and one **Nagar Panchayat (Jangareddygudem)**. ELUDA's primary role is to ensure coordinated urban growth, infrastructure expansion, and streamlined development across the region.

Law and Order

Maintenance of law and order in Eluru is overseen by **eight police stations**, which include a **Women's Police Station** and a **Traffic Police Station**. These operate under the jurisdiction of the **Additional Judicial First-Class Magistrate**, ensuring both civic order and public safety in the city.

Post-Independence Administration

- After 1947, Eluru continued as part of **West Godavari district** until 2022.
- In **April 2022**, the Government of Andhra Pradesh reorganized districts, creating **Eluru District** with Eluru as its **headquarters**.

Current Administrative Structure:

1. **District Administration**
 - Headed by the **District Collector**, responsible for revenue, law & order, disaster management, and welfare schemes.
 - Supported by Joint Collectors, Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs), and Tahsildars.
2. **Police Administration**
 - Eluru has a **Commissionerate of Police** system for urban law enforcement.
 - Multiple police stations cover both urban and rural regions.
3. **Municipal Governance**
 - Eluru is administered by the **Eluru Municipal Corporation (established 2005, upgraded from Municipality)**.
 - It handles urban planning, sanitation, roads, drinking water, and civic infrastructure.
4. **Political Administration**
 - Eluru is represented in both **State Assembly (Eluru constituency)** and **Parliament (Eluru Lok Sabha constituency)**.
 - Local governance is strengthened by **Gram Panchayats** in rural mandals around the city.

V. ECONOMY AND TRADE

ECONOMY

[CMR Central](#) shopping centre



Eluru is recognized for its diverse industrial landscape, featuring a wide range of functional categories and economic activities. Since the 17th century, Eluru was known for [rug weaving](#), derived from weavers of [Iranian](#) descendants. Around 1900, the notable Madras export firm Arbuthnot contracted the production of Eluru carpets. R.R.Pet, [Powerpet](#), Eluru 1-Town area are the commercial centres. Tangellamudi, Sanivarapupeta and Lakshavarapupeta areas of the city are known for the wool pile carpet industry. The eco-friendly carpets are exported to countries like the [United States](#), [Australia](#), [Germany](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).



Eluru Canal alongside [NH16](#) Mango market on [Powerpet station](#) road Auto Nagar industrial area in Eluru, established in 1991 and known for its [Automobile workshops](#)

In West Godavari, Eluru stands out for its significant role in livestock and poultry farming. According to the 1961 Livestock Census, Eluru taluk ranks first in livestock numbers and also leads in poultry population. The density of livestock in Eluru is 370.7 per square mile, while poultry density is 225.6 per square mile. Recent developments have boosted dairying in Eluru. The Integrated Milk Project, supported by UNICEF and the Government of India, began milk distribution in Eluru town on January 1, 1968. Within two years, daily milk supply surged from 35 liters to 3,100 liters, and by the end of 1969, Eluru had 14 milk distribution centers. Due to its proximity to Kolleru Lake, Eluru hosts approximately four fish markets that conduct trade statewide. These markets play a crucial role in the local economy by providing a significant source of income for fishermen and supporting numerous related businesses. The Eluru Canal, stretching over 64 kilometers, is vital to the local economy, irrigating about 24,483 hectares. This irrigation sustains agriculture in the region, which is key to its economic stability and growth.

In 1904, the Sree Krishna Jute Mills Limited began operations in Eluru as a public limited company. With an initial capital investment of Rs. 20 lakhs, the mills produce gunnies and jute twine, employing around 1,800 people, and had a production of 6,924.45 tonnes in 1967-68. This mill was later closed in 2022. Annapurna Pulverising Mills, established in 1963 in Eluru's industrial estate, has a capital investment of Rs. 5 lakhs. The mills manufacture pesticides and insecticides, producing 1,449 tonnes of dusts, 41 tonnes of [wetttable powders](#), and 30,648 litres of emulsions during 1968-69, and provide employment for about thirty people. Ambica Agarbathies Aroma & Industries Ltd., established in 1946, is one of the oldest contributors to the Eluru's economy. The company produces incense products in the city.

In 2016, a new facility for integration of weapons and manufacturing unit for [Light Combat Aircraft \(LCA\)](#) was planned for Eluru. The project, estimated to cost Rs ₹2,135 billion (US\$25 billion), is a collaboration between UK-based Wem Technologies Private Limited and [Lockheed Martin](#), the largest U.S. defense, aerospace, and security company. Then Chief Minister [N. Chandrababu Naidu](#) announced that 1.416 km² (0.547 sq mi) of land in Vatluru and Bhogapuram villages near Eluru will be allocated for the facility. In the first phase, the facility will see an investment of Rs ₹635 billion (US\$7.5 billion) crore and create 650 jobs, with a total of 2,510 jobs expected upon full operation. Wem Technologies currently holds orders valued at ₹560 billion (US\$6.6 billion). The Indian air force faces challenges with its aging fleet and a shortage of combat squadrons, currently operating 33 squadrons versus the needed 42. The induction of the indigenous [Tejas fighter jets](#) and ongoing negotiations for additional aircraft like the [Rafale](#) and [Sukhoi-30](#) highlight India's efforts to bolster its air combat capabilities. The establishment of this new facility is expected to support these national defense objectives by enhancing domestic production of advanced aircraft.

The Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research, situated near Pedavegi is dedicated to boosting oil palm cultivation across the country. Eluru district, with 75,705 hectares dedicated to oil palm cultivation, is a leading region in India's [Oil palm](#) production. As part of the Government of India's *Mega Oil Palm Plantation Drive* under the National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), efforts are being made to enhance oil palm cultivation to achieve self-reliance in edible oil production. On August 18, 2023 [Godrej Agrovet Ltd.](#) (GAVL) supported this initiative by organizing a plantation drive in [Chintampalle](#), involving 200 farmers from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. GAVL has also inaugurated an edible oil refinery in [Chintalapudi](#) and allocated 47,000 acres in Telangana for expanded cultivation and processing.



VI. CULTURAL AND LITERARY SIGNIFICANCE

Eluru, once the flourishing seat of the **Eastern Chalukyas**, continues to preserve its cultural and historical significance. A **new archaeological museum** has been established at *Goreela Badi* on the eastern street of I-Town. The museum showcases copper plates from the 7th–9th centuries, discovered at Jain heritage sites such as **Gandigudem** and **Pulla**, along with idols from Chalukya-era Jain temples like **Kota Sattemma** and **Peddintlamma**. Plans are also underway to transfer **prehistoric tools** (dating from the Paleolithic to Neolithic periods) from the Kakinada museum to Eluru, along with Chalukya inscriptions from Chennai that highlight early Telugu script.

Religious and Cultural Heritage

- **Temples and Pathasalas:** The ancient *Helapuri Samskrita Pathasala* continues as a center of Sanskrit learning. Important temples include **Janardhana Swamy Temple** and **Jalapaharesvara Temple**, which host vibrant celebrations such as *Sankara Jayanti*, *Ramakoti Utsavam*, and *Tyagaraja Aradhana*.



- **Dwaraka Tirumala (Chinna Tirupati):** Located about **39 km from Eluru**, this temple dedicated to **Lord Venkateswara Swamy** stands on *Seshadri Hill*. The shrine is famous for its self-manifested idol and striking five-storey gopuram. The annual **Kalyanotsavam** (April–May) draws thousands of devotees.



- **Pedavegi (ancient Vengi):** Situated **11 km from Eluru**, Pedavegi was once the capital of dynasties such as the *Salankayanas*, *Vishnukundins*, and *Eastern Chalukyas*. Today, the village preserves archaeological traces, including the remains of a fortress and a large well linked to historic legends of sacrifice.

- **Eluru Ashram (Nam Datta Natha Kshetra):** Associated with the *Datta Peetham*, this ashram houses shrines of **Lord Dattatreya** and **Anagha Devi**, alongside a spacious prayer hall and *Guru Nilayam*.
- **Christian Heritage:** St. Paul's Lutheran Church near *Ameenapet* is a notable landmark for the Christian community.

Historical Roots of Culture

The culture of Helapuri (ancient Eluru) is deeply shaped by its **dynastic history**. Being the capital of dynasties such as the **Śāṅkāyanas** and **Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi**, it became a center of **religion, literature, crafts, and architecture**. The **Eastern Chalukya period (7th–12th c.)** was especially important in giving birth to **Telugu literary traditions**, while later dynasties and colonial powers introduced layers of **Islamic, European, and modern Indian influences**.

Religion and Spiritual Traditions

- **Hinduism:** Ancient temples dedicated to Vishnu, Shiva, and local deities trace back to the Vengi Chalukya period. Many inscriptions near Pedavegi and Eluru fort record donations to temples.
- **Buddhism:** The Godavari–Krishna delta was once part of Buddhist trade routes. Archaeological remains in surrounding districts suggest Buddhist influence also reached Helapuri.
- **Islam:** During Qutb Shahi and Mughal periods, mosques and dargahs were established in and around Eluru, blending into the local cultural fabric.

Christianity: Under European (British) influence, churches and mission schools were set up in the 19th century, adding to Eluru's religious diversity.

Language and Literature

- **Telugu:** The primary language and cultural identity of Helapuri.
- Under **Rājarāja Narendra (Eastern Chalukya king)**, **Nannaya Bhattaraka** composed the first Telugu literary work – the *Mahābhārata translation* – marking the birth of classical Telugu literature. This associates Helapuri directly with the **origin of Telugu literary culture**.
- Sanskrit inscriptions and literary patronage also flourished under the Chalukyas.

Arts, Crafts, and Handlooms

- **Eluru Carpets (Deccan Rugs):**
 - Introduced during the **Qutb Shahi** and **Mughal eras**, when Persian weavers settled here.
 - Known for intricate floral and geometric designs, influenced by Persian motifs but localized into distinct patterns.
 - Recognized today under **One District One Product (ODOP)** initiative as a heritage craft.

Sculpture and Temple Art: Chalukyan inscriptions and sculptural fragments found at **Kotadibba** and **Pedavegi** highlight Helapuri's medieval artistic contributions.

Festivals and Celebrations

- **Sankranti** (harvest festival) is widely celebrated with rangoli (muggulu), kite flying, and bullock cart races in rural areas.
- **Ugadi** (Telugu New Year) marks the start of the cultural year with traditional rituals and feasts.
- **Dasara and Deepavali** are celebrated with devotion and festivity across the city.
- **Ramzan** and **Christmas** are also important, reflecting Eluru's plural religious character.

Food Culture

- Traditional food is dominated by **rice-based dishes**, due to the fertile delta agriculture.
- Popular items include pulihora (tamarind rice), pesarattu (green gram dosa), gongura dishes, and a wide range of pickles and sweets.
- The influence of coastal Andhra cuisine means that **fish and prawn curries** are integral to Eluru's food culture.

Education and Cultural Transmission

- Eluru has long been a seat of **learning** – from ancient Brahmanical and Buddhist centers to modern institutions like **Sir C.R. Reddy College** and **Helapuri Institute of Technology and Science**.
- The **mission schools and colleges** established during British times played a major role in spreading modern education and English-language learning.

Performing Arts and Folk Traditions

- **Harikatha** (storytelling with music), **Burrakatha**, and **Yakshagana** were traditionally popular in the Eluru region.
- Local folk dances are often associated with harvest festivals and temple rituals.
- Cinema culture is also strong, with Eluru contributing audiences and talent to the Telugu film industry.

Contemporary Culture

- Eluru today is a blend of **ancient tradition and modern lifestyle**.
- The **Eluru carpets** continue to symbolize cultural identity, though threatened by mechanization.
- Cultural festivals, literary meetings, and heritage preservation drives keep alive the memory of Helapuri's ancient past.

The creation of **Eluru district (2022)** renewed cultural pride in its historical identity.

VII. SPORTS AND EDUCATION

Cricket and football (soccer) are the most popular sports in Eluru, supported by several stadiums and playgrounds across the city. Eluru currently has **four major stadiums**, including the **Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) Stadium**, the **Indoor Stadium**, **Helapuri Grounds**, and the **C.R. Reddy Cricket Stadium**.

Alluri Sitarama Raju (ASR) Stadium

The **ASR Stadium**, located at **16°43'8"N 81°6'58"E**, is one of the city's key sports venues. It has hosted a variety of sporting events such as **cricket, football, hockey, and handball tournaments**.

- The ground hosted its **first first-class cricket match in 1976**, when **Andhra Pradesh played Hyderabad** in the **1976/77 Ranji Trophy**, which ended in a draw.
- It also staged **Ranji Trophy matches in 1977** and has since been used for other state-level cricket tournaments.
- Beyond cricket, the stadium has served as a venue for **football leagues**, including the **West Godavari Football League finals in 2016**.

The stadium continues to promote multi-sport activities in the region. The **current District Sports Development Officer (DSDO)** is **Syed Azeez**, who oversees sports facilities and youth development programs in Eluru.

Traditional Sports and Games

- In ancient and medieval Helapuri, physical activities were part of **village fairs, temple festivals, and military training**.
- Some traditional games include:
 - **Kabaddi** – still popular in rural mandals around Eluru.
 - **Kho-Kho** – traditionally played in schools and community grounds.
 - **Wrestling (Malla Yuddham)** – once practiced in akharas (wrestling grounds).
 - **Chowka Bara & Pallanguli** – indoor board games of South India, common in households.
- Traditional sports reflected the **agrarian lifestyle and community bonding** of Helapuri's people.

Colonial Period and Modern Sports Introduction

- With British influence, **modern sports** such as **cricket, football, and hockey** were introduced in schools and clubs.
- Mission schools in Eluru played a major role in spreading Western-style physical education.
- During the late colonial era, **sports clubs and gymkhanas** began functioning in district towns like Eluru.

Post-Independence Sporting Culture

- After 1947, Eluru developed as a **district sports hub** within West Godavari region.
- Schools and colleges in Eluru gave prominence to **cricket, athletics, volleyball, basketball, and badminton**.
- Annual **inter-school and inter-college sports meets** became part of the cultural calendar.
- The **Eluru Carpets Stadium** and other open grounds hosted local tournaments.

Present-Day Sports and Infrastructure

- **Cricket** is the most popular sport, with several **cricket academies and coaching centers** operating in Eluru.
- The **Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium (IGMC Stadium, Vijayawada)** is nearby and hosts state-level matches, giving opportunities to Eluru players.
- The city has facilities for:
 - **Cricket Grounds** – Municipal and private academies.
 - **Indoor Stadiums** – badminton, table tennis, and kabaddi.
 - **School & College Grounds** – Loyola College, Sir C.R. Reddy College, and local high schools contribute to sports training.
- **Kabaddi and Volleyball** tournaments remain highly popular in villages surrounding Eluru.
- The government promotes sports through the **Andhra Pradesh Sports Authority (SAAP)**, which funds training camps and youth competitions.

Notable Sports Personalities from Eluru Region

- While Helapuri is not yet widely known for producing international players, many **district and state-level athletes** in cricket, athletics, and kabaddi have emerged from Eluru.

The region's **sports culture is grassroots-based**, with emphasis on **school-level competitions** and **district representation**.

Current Developments

- The **Eluru District (formed in 2022)** is focusing on improving **sports infrastructure and youth engagement programs**.
- Government schemes like **Khelo India** and **YSR Kreedha Protsahakam** encourage budding athletes.
- There are proposals for **sports academies** and **modern indoor stadiums** under public-private partnerships.

Education in Eluru

Eluru plays a significant role in providing education to both **urban and rural students** from surrounding villages. The city has an average **literacy rate of 83.90%** (2011 census), with **155,894 literates**, including **80,434 men (88.13%)** and **75,460 women (79.82%)**.

Historical Development of Education

- By the **1850s**, the **Church Missionary Society** had established several schools in Eluru. The **Church Mission High School**, founded in **1854**, was later taken over by the **Eluru Municipality in 1920** and converted into a **Government Junior College**, marking a milestone in local education.
- In **1858**, the Government established a **Taluk School** in Eluru, though it eventually closed due to rivalry with the Church Mission High School.
- The **National College of Eluru** was inaugurated by **Mahatma Gandhi in 1921** as part of the national schools movement, further boosting higher education in the region.

Primary and Secondary Education



Aerial view of Siddhartha School in

Education at the primary and secondary levels is provided through **government, aided, and private institutions**, functioning under the **School Education Department of Andhra Pradesh**.

- As per the **2016–17 school information report**, the urban area had around **160 schools**, including government, municipal, residential, and private institutions.
- Of these, **49 are municipal schools** and **over 100 are private schools**, serving a student population of **more than 30,000**.
- Notable contributions include **Sri Chintalapati Varaprasada Murthy Raju**, founder of **Chintalapati Satyavathi Devi College (St. Theresa College)**, and three schools named after Indian freedom fighters:
 - **Kasturiba Girls High School**
 - **Balagangadhar Tilak Oriental School for Sanskrit**
 - **Duggirala Gopal Krishnayya High School**
 - Additionally, the **Moulana Abdul Kalam Azad High School** stands out as the only **Urdu-medium school** in the district.
- Schools in Eluru follow syllabi prescribed by **CBSE, SSC, and ICSE** boards.

Higher and Professional Education

Eluru is home to several prestigious higher education institutions, covering a wide range of disciplines:

- **ASRAM Medical College**
- **St. Joseph Dental College**
- **Sir C.R. Reddy Educational Institutions** (including Sir C.R. Reddy College of Engineering)
- **Eluru College of Engineering and Technology**
- **Ramachandra College of Engineering**
- **Helapuri Institute of Engineering and Science**

Additionally, the Government has plans to establish a **Municipal Corporation Junior College** to further strengthen educational opportunities in the city.

Present-Day Education in Eluru

Primary and Secondary Education

- The city hosts a network of **government, aided, and private schools**.
- Popular institutions include:
 - St. Xavier's High School
 - Montessori English Medium School
 - Ravindra Bharathi School
 - Sri Chaitanya and Narayana group schools

Higher Education

Degree Colleges

- **Sir C.R. Reddy College (Autonomous)** – pioneer institution offering UG & PG courses.
- **Andhra Loyola Engineering College (branch campus nearby)** and other local degree colleges.

Professional and Technical Institutions

- **Eluru College of Engineering and Technology**
- **St. Theresa's College of Education (for women, est. 1953)**
- **Medical Colleges** – **Alluri Sitarama Raju Academy of Medical Sciences (ASRAM, est. 1999)** is a major institution with a teaching hospital.

Universities and Research Centers

- Eluru houses study centers of **Acharya Nagarjuna University** and **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University**.
- Ongoing proposals for setting up **state universities and specialized institutes** in Eluru district.

Literacy and Educational Profile

- According to the 2011 Census:
 - **Literacy Rate of Eluru city:** ~83% (higher than national average).
 - Male literacy: ~87% | Female literacy: ~79%.
- High literacy reflects the **long tradition of schooling and missionary influence** in the region.

Current Developments

- The **Government of Andhra Pradesh** has launched schemes like **Nadu-Nedu** (modernizing school infrastructure) and **Jagananna Vidya Deevena** (fee reimbursement for higher education), benefitting Eluru students.
- Growth of **digital learning centers, coaching institutes, and e-classrooms** is transforming education in the city.
- Eluru is increasingly recognized as a **regional hub for medical and technical education**.

Research Institutions



Indian Institute of Oil Palm Research

Academic & Research Institutions in and around Eluru

1. Sir C. R. Reddy Educational Institutions, Eluru

A well-established multi-disciplinary educational group offering programs across various levels:

- **Institutions under the umbrella:**
 - Sir C.R. Reddy College (Intermediate & Degree)
 - Sir C.R. Reddy Polytechnic College
 - Sir C.R. Reddy College of Engineering
 - Sir C.R. Reddy College of Pharmaceutical Sciences
 - Sir C.R. Reddy Public School
- **Affiliations:**
 - Degree College – Adikavi Nannaya University
 - College of Engineering – initially Andhra University (till ~2016), now permanently with JNTU Kakinada.
- **Disciplines:** Engineering, Pharmacy, Science, Management, Law, among others.

These institutions serve as key hubs for technical, professional, and general higher education in Eluru, and many likely engage in applied research especially in engineering, pharmaceutical, and science domains.

Helapuri Institute of Technology & Science (HITS), Eluru

A private, AICTE-approved engineering college founded in **2009**:

- **Affiliation:** Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada. [SikshapediaUniversitykart](https://www.sikshapedia.com/universitykart)
- **Programs offered:**
 - Undergraduate (B.Tech) in disciplines like CSE, ECE, EEE, Civil, Mechanical, and specializations such as AI & ML, VLSI.
 - Postgraduate (M.Tech) in areas like Structural Engineering, Machine Design, Digital Electronics, etc.
- **Research initiatives and recognition:**
 - Autonomous status granted by the UGC in **2023**.
 - Ranked among India's top 100 engineering colleges in NIRF 2023.
 - Recognized as "College with Potential for Excellence" by UGC (2020).
 - NBA accreditation for several programs.
- **Research infrastructure:**

- Hosts a **Center for Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning**.
- Includes a **Center for Incubation & Entrepreneurship** supporting student-led startups.

HITS functions as an emerging research and innovation hub in Eluru, particularly in tech-forward areas and supporting early-stage entrepreneurial ventures.

Other Local Colleges Offering Professional Education

Eluru hosts several specialized colleges providing a range of disciplines:

- **Eluru College of Engineering & Technology** – technical education. **Ch.S.D. St. Theresa’s College for Women** – arts/science education.
- **Sir C.R. Reddy College of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Polytechnic College, Law, Nursing, and Management & Research** institutes — each catering to specific fields of study.

These institutions may engage in discipline-specific training and small-scale applied research or internships, though formal research infrastructure may vary.

Regional Research-Focused Universities (Nearby, not within Helapuri)

These are key institutions located in the broader West Godavari or adjacent districts, significantly contributing to research and higher-level academic activity:

A. Dr. Y.S.R. Horticultural University

- **Established:** 2007 (formerly Andhra Pradesh Horticultural University), located near Tadepalligudem in West Godavari district.
- **Focus:** Horticultural education and research—covering crop improvement, biotechnology, pest management, etc. B. National Institute of Technology, Andhra Pradesh (NIT-AP)
- **Located:** Tadepalligudem (approximately 30–40 km from Eluru).
- **Status:** Institute of National Importance, established in 2015.
- **Academics and research:** Offers UG/PG programs and research across engineering and technology disciplines. Modern infrastructure and research labs are in place.

CONCLUSION

The history of **Helapuri** (present-day **Eluru**) exemplifies the resilience and adaptability of a city that has continuously reinvented itself across centuries of political change, cultural exchange, and economic transformation. Situated in the fertile **Godavari–Krishna delta**, the region was a natural magnet for settlers, rulers, and traders, ensuring that Helapuri never remained static but evolved with every new phase of history. From its **early prominence under the Satavahanas** (2nd century BCE – 3rd century CE), Helapuri emerged as a nodal center linking the Deccan with the coastal regions. The discovery of coins, inscriptions, and trade routes reflects its role as both an administrative hub and a flourishing market town. Under the **Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi** (7th–12th centuries CE), the city entered a golden era of political and cultural vitality. Patronage of temples, literary pursuits in Telugu and Sanskrit, and the consolidation of agrarian prosperity transformed Helapuri into a focal point of regional identity. Subsequent centuries brought waves of **imperial integration and cultural layering**. The incorporation of Helapuri into the **Vijayanagara Empire** strengthened its strategic role in the delta economy, while also exposing it to pan-South Indian currents of architecture, art, and commerce. The advent of the **Qutb Shahis of Golconda** and later the **Mughals** infused the city with elements of Indo-Islamic culture, leaving an imprint on its social fabric, artisan practices, and administrative frameworks. With the arrival of the **British colonial state**, Helapuri was further reoriented into a modern district headquarters, reshaped by new systems of revenue, education, and infrastructure, yet

retaining its indigenous rhythms of life. Amidst these shifting regimes, **Helapuri's artisanal traditions** emerged as a defining marker of continuity. The renowned **Eluru carpets**, celebrated for their fine weaving and intricate designs, are not just commodities but cultural texts that narrate centuries of adaptation—absorbing Persian, Mughal, and indigenous motifs while sustaining local livelihoods. These crafts embody the synthesis of heritage and economy, revealing how cultural identity was preserved not in static monuments alone but in the living practices of everyday communities. In the **post-independence era**, Eluru has embraced the challenges of modernization—urban expansion, industrial growth, and educational progress—without losing sight of its layered past. It stands today not only as the administrative heart of West Godavari district but as a **living archive of Andhra Pradesh's civilizational journey**. The city's streets, crafts, religious sites, and community life reflect the ongoing dialogue between **tradition and modernity, heritage and innovation**. The study of Helapuri thus reinforces the significance of **regional histories** in understanding India's vast and diverse cultural mosaic. It reminds us that the story of a city is not merely about the succession of rulers or the grandeur of monuments, but about the **continuous interplay between people, land, and tradition**. In this interplay lies the enduring character of Helapuri—a city that has withstood the tides of time while continuously renewing its place in the broader narrative of South India.

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