

THE SEASIDE SILHOUETTES

Description

I was born in this place, now a bustling city. It's a major seaport, which I visit often for various reasons. As it is popularly called, Kakinada town is my maternal native and the birthplace. A well-planned city, once home to the largest seaport. Whenever I reach the place, it evokes many of my childhood memories. For the past six decades, that vintage British-era take-it-easy mindset of the natives still captivates me.

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During one such visit, I learned about the favoured seafood market flourishing near the sea where the ancient Buckingham Canal originates. I set off very early one Sunday morning. My idea was to get the pictures, against the morning golden glow, of the boats reaching the shores with their harvest reaching the docksides.

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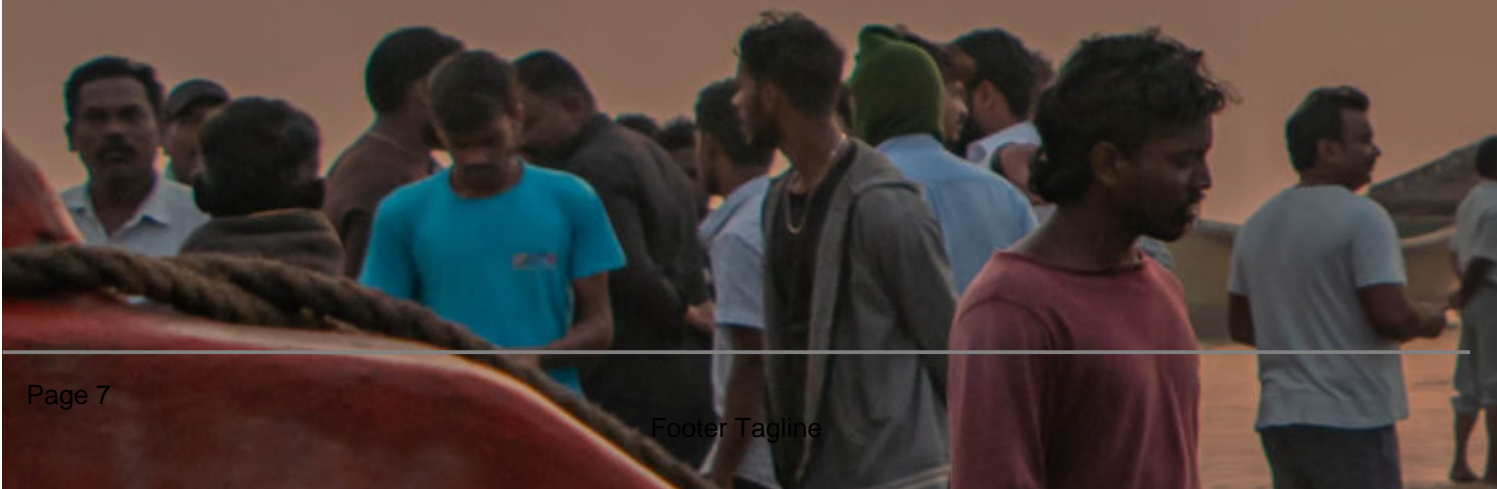
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The day was yet to break the first glare of the Sun. In that clouded darkness, I found it hard to check the route and a place to park the car. I expected a lonely shore and a few boats to explore with my camera.

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But the scene that opened up was a chaotic mob of people spread everywhere, hundreds of two-wheelers parked haphazardly, not an inch left to move about. The cacophonous group spread like a carpet up to the point where the coastline butting into the sea, a mix of sea-tanned rough hands and moderate folks squeezed into small lots to bargain for the freshly dumped fish and other marine catch. I wondered if these masses were being washed ashore by the tranquil sea now ready to paint itself in golden orange hues stretching into the horizon. As the daylight brightened, the crowd swelled and grew restless, as if waiting for the appearance of their favourite hero.

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The milling crowds, the tramps wearing skimpy shorts to wrap themselves, the bare-footed old, the sturdy women in assorted age groups. All pitched in and tied up in one hard-working activity â?? carrying fish in various sizes, baskets of live and quivering prawns and crabs, and lobsters off the boats to the makeshift selling area. The fishy smells turned me off, but I busied myself, bringing the hired hands, the child wage earners, and the womenfolk predominating the entire commotion into my camera frame.

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The silhouettes, the dark, yellowish outlines of the boats, hordes of eager groups circling the raw, slithery sea harvest assembled in small mounds, begging for the best bargains. These were the frames I had collected colorfully in a hurry, suspecting that the Sun would soon climb up and crowds would quickly melt away.

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After a two-hour footslog in the smudged seafront, in the decayed remains of fish, stinking smells, loud howls, exciting crowds, and selfie-mad teens, I walked, pinching my nose, out toward my car with the satisfaction of capturing the silhouetted life and flaming rhythms and realistic artistry at the seaside.

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Category

1. Places

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Author

eswarnadipalli

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