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## PRESERVATION OF FORTS IN HYDERABAD-KARNATAKA REGION



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### ABSTRACT

More than 50 forts are located in Hyderabad-Karnataka region as many of the rulers and dynasties were ruled this region since thousands of years. It is observed that the socio-economic life and religious life was rich during those days as revealed by these monuments. When these forts are visited, they were under ruins and remains. It is essential to regain these forts and monuments, so as to regain past heritage of the region. It is also useful to popularize the region by renovating forts and making them as tourist destinations. For this purpose, brief profiles and conditions of different forts located at six districts of

Hyderabad-Karnataka region were discussed. Further, it is essential to conserve and preserve these forts and as such, a few of the suggestions and conservation and preservation actions are also suggested to renovate these forts and monuments.

**KEYWORDS :** *Preservation of Forts , socio-economic life and religious life .*

### INTRODUCTION :

Hyderabad-Karnataka region is most backward in terms of education, agriculture, industry, employment, etc. in Karnataka state. But, the history and culture of the region is rich as many of the rulers such as Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Bahamani rulers, Adil Shahis, Vijayanagar rulers, Kalachuris, the Nizams of Hyderabad, etc. were ruled the region. At the time of reorganization of Mysore State, four districts, Bidar, Raichur, Gulbarga and Bellary were merged in former Mysore state. Later, these districts were divided and two new districts, Koppal and Yadgir were newly formed. Hence, presently, the Hyderabad-Karnataka constitutes total six districts, Bidar, Kalaburagi (Gulbarga), Raichur, Bellary, Koppal and Yadgir. As the region was most backward, to develop the region, special status was given under Article 371(J) of the Indian Constitution recently.

As already discussed, the region is rich in its history and culture. As such, there are temples, inscriptions, forts and monuments pertaining to ancient, medieval and modern historical period are located at different parts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The region is backward and consequently, these monuments are under ruins and it is essential to protect and preserve these

monuments so as to maintain the history and cultural heritage of this region. The present features and conditions along with brief history of few of the major forts located in Hyderabad-Karnataka region are described as under.

### Forts of Hyderabad-Karnataka Region:

More than 50 forts and other monuments are located across six districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka region. Majority of these fortresses are under ruins and remains. The different places where these forts are located are described as under.

#### I. Forts of Kalaburagi District:

##### 1. Kalaburagi

The fort was built by Raja Gulchand of Warrangal (but there are no evidences to prove that he was built the fort) and later it was strengthened and renovated by Alauddhin Bahaman Shah. The fort is has its own uniqueness in gaining protection from outside forces. There are dual thick walls surrounded the fort and there are two doors, which are made up of thick wood and strong steel is covered on these doors. It is noted that at the outside part of the doors, there are sharp sword-like nails, which were designed as to get protection against the possible attacks. At the centre of the fort there is big Jamia Masjid. In 1367, under the rule of Mohammed Shah Bahamani, the Masjid was built. The Mosque is designed by Rafi, an Irani Sculptor and there are many squares and domes are which made the Mosque as unique in Asia. Many of the people are living in the fort with their temporary settlements.

##### 2. Firozabad:

Firozabad is located in Kalaburagi taluka of the same district. Tajuddin Firoz Shah was built fort of Firozabad in 1400. The fort is built up with big lime stones. There are two buildings of each having two floors and it is assumed that these were palaces of queens. It is also having unique in beauty with Pyramid shaped designs at the ceilings. There is also a big Jamia Masjid in fort. Due lack of renovation or preservation efforts, the fort of Firozabad is almost ruined.

##### 3. Sannati:

The inscriptions revealed that, Sannati was ruled by Chalukyas of Badami and there are also remains of temples belonged to Rashtrakuta rulers. The village was built between 1st-3rd centuries and the fortress of Sannati is made up of burnt bricks. The present state of the fortress revealed that almost walls are disappeared by heightened bushes and earth. It is essential to excavate the area occupied by fortress, so as to get more historical background and culture of the times.

##### 4. Ijeri:

Ijeri is small village located in Jewargi taluka of Kalaburagi district. The inscription of Vikramaditya-VI of Kalyan Chalukyas mentioned this village as 'Irajeri' and granted this village to lord Shankara Narayana and scholars for learning. To protect attacks from north direction, Raja Venkatappa Nayaka-II (1773-1802) built fort in Ijeri. At South-east, there is two square shaped fort is built. The valley surrounded by the fort is already disappeared. There are bastions at different angles of the fort. Though, there are no special features inside the forts, the fort is in good condition.

##### 5. Chinmalli:

Chinmalli is located in Afzalpur taluka of Kalaburagi district. It was one of the popular religious

centre since 12th century. The fort of Chinmalli is surrounded to the village and there is Mallikarjun temple inside the fort. The fort has few bastions at different directions. It is located at the bank of Bheema river and there is route from Mallikarjun temple inside the temple to the river Bheema. Though, the fort is in good condition, still few parts of the fort are under ruin stage. No historical records to reveal the historical backgrounds are available about this fort.

#### 6. Malkhed:

Malkhed is located at the bank of Kagina river, it was capital city of Rashtrakuta now in Kalaburagi district and historically most popular as 'Manyakheta'. The originally fort was destroyed by Chola and Muslim rulers by attacking many times. Present fort was rebuilt in 17th century. The fort is built at the end of village and surrounded by river and ponds. It is peculiarly built as the outer walls especially at the ground level are most strong due to the threat of flowing water from the river during flood.

#### 7. Sedam:

Sedam is taluka in Kalaburagi district and is with fertile soil stretched between Kagina and Kamalavati river. Many of the rulers from Shatavahana to Kutub Shahi rulers were ruled this region. The inscription of Salotagi referred it as many of the beautiful places, wide garden and strong fort were located in Sedam and due to fertile soil, agriculture was predominant and many of the rich class elites were living in Sedam.

An inscription of 1106 described that Sedam fort walls were as height as sky, valleys as deepest, viewed from all directions and stretched along wide area of Sedam. It is also compared to Khandavavana and Tripura. More than 300 elites were living in this fort. Presently, the fort is destroyed and walls and doors were remaining in Sedam.

#### 8. Nagavi:

Nagavi is located in Chittapur taluka of Kalaburagi district. It was ruled by Chalukyas of Kalyan as pillar inscription of 12th century is located in Nagavi and it is described as Maha Agrahara. Many of the temples, houses, water tanks, residences of soldiers, etc. are under ruins in Nagavi fort. The fort is included religious places like Kali Masjid, Irappayya's Temple, Ishwar Temple, etc. A wide fort is also surrounded to Sanjeev Anjaneya temple. In this way, fort of Nagavi is built step-by-step covering different places and monuments.

### II. Forts of Raichur District:

#### 1. Raichur:

the Vishnuvardhana of Hoysala dynasty was won the fort in 13th century. The inscriptions disclosed that an officer, Vithalanath of Kakatiya dynasty was built the fort in 1294. Of course, the fortress is built with bigger stones and rocks, which were not used anywhere (except Malayabad fort near Raichur). Later, the doors of the forts were rebuilt by Sikandar Shah in 1673-74. Even a few of the pavilions were rebuilt by an officer Abdul Mohammed of Ibrahim Adil Shah in 1622-23. Further, the Vijayanagar rulers were also rebuilt the Navarang Darvaz at North direction. Many of the pictures such as wheels, Rama, Laxmana, Eagle (Garuda), Hanuman, Musicians, etc are carved on the doors of the forts. Many of idols of deities such as Vishnu, Krishna, Laxmi Narasimha, etc. were already ruined. Few of the conflicts and wars were made between Bahamani Kings and Vijayanagar rulers to win the fertile soil of the region and the fort located in Raichur. Even Adil Shahi rulers were also fought against

Vijayanagar rulers to get fort. As written by Domingo Paes, a Portuguese tourist, Vijayanagar rulers were encouraged their soldiers to ruin the fort by bringing their rocks and stones. In this way, the fort of Raichur was ruined during Vijayanagar rule.

## 2. Mudgal:

Mudgal is small village in Lingusugur taluka of Raichur district and. The Vijayanagar rulers built the fortress and there were many of the attacks from Bahamani and Adil Shahi rulers on Vijayanagar to seize the fort of Mudgal. The fortress is at rectangle shape and having two rounds. The walls are built with greater heights with strong rocks outside. Inside fort was built by Vijayanagar rulers and repaired by Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur during 1580-1627. There is pond outside the fort, which is always full of water during rainy seasons. The fort is mainly having two entrances with three doors inside the fort to enter inside the fort. It is most popular for beautiful pavilions, which were built during Vijayanagar rule. There are also many wells inside the fort. The different parts of the fort is identified by different names such as Basavana Diddi, Basavana Kottala, Basavana Neetu, Hanumana Kottala, Vinayaka Neetu, Fateh Buruzu, etc as disclosed by the inscriptions carved near those places. It is highlighted that there are more than eighty inscriptions and none of the forts have such numbers of inscriptions in Karnataka.

## III. Forts of Bidar District:

### 1. Bidar:

Bidar is it was most popular city during the rule of Kakatiyas of Warrangal and Chalukyas of Kalyan. Mohammed-bin-Tughlaq was seized the fort of Bidar from Kakatiyas in 1325. It was ruled by Nusrath Khan under Tughlaq rulers and Ameer Ali. Later, Jaffar Khan was defeated Tughlaq army and started to rule entire Deccan Plateau in 1347 renovated Bidar fort and opened two schools in the fort. Ahmed, Bahamani ruler shifted his capital city from Gulbarga (Kalaburagi) to Bidar in 1424 and started to build fort in 1429. In this way, the fortress built by early Hindu rulers was merged into the fort of Muslim rulers. Later, Barid Shahi rulers were made Bidar as their capital city. Though, Bidar was seized by Adil Shahi rulers of Bijapur, still it has not lost its significance. Mallik Shah, an officer under Ibrahim Adil Shah was renovated and repaired the fort. .

Fort of Bidar is built with lofty and strong walls and surrounded by valleys carved in lateritic soil. There are caves inside the walls of the fort. There are total 37 bastions and 8 doors around the fort. There are also domes with round shape and minarets in the fort. There is beautiful music room decorated by colourful roof in the fort. There are also recesses in the fort. It is renovated by the District Administration recently (2005).

### 2. Basava Kalyan:

Though, Basava Kalyan is town and taluka now, it was capital city of Chalukyas of Kalyana in 1048 and popularly known as Kalyan. Previously, Chola ruler, Rajadhiraja was won Kalyan and taken sculpture to establish in his kingdom. Vijnaneshwar was most intellectual, who was working under Vikramaditya-VI in Kalyana. Few years, Kalyan was become capital city of Kalachuri kings, then seized by Sevunas and Kakatiyas. The fort of Basava Kalyan was also seized by Tughlaq, Bahamani, Barid Shahi and Adil Shahis. In 1559-61, Sadashiva Nayak under Vijayanagar rulers seized the fort and later it was seized by Aurangzeb of Mughal Empire. Finally, the fort of Kalyan was under the control of the Nizams of Hyderabad.

Though, the fort of Kalyan was built by Chalukyas, due to attacks and rule of Muslim rulers, the fort was strengthened by Muslim rulers and monuments of Muslims are located in the fort. The fort is of



total three round with circle shape and many of the bastions were built by officers working in Muslim rulers. There are also minarets, towers, pavilions, etc, in the fort. There are decorative arts on pillars, walls and doors. There are ponds, dance rooms (Nrutya Mahal), seats, temples, ruined sculptures of Hindu deities, etc in the fort.

#### V. Forts of Koppal District:

##### 1. Koppal:

Koppal is district place, which was ruled by Ashoka of Maurya dynasty. It was famous Buddhist centre between 9th to 11th Century. Many of the rulers were ruled Koppal and significantly, during Vijayanagar, Bahamani and Adil Shahi rule, the fort was repaired or rebuilt. The fortress is built with seven rounds from sea level to hill top area. Of course, few of the pavilions and doors were already ruined and even the idols are ruined.

##### 2. Anegondi:

It is believed that Hoysala ruler Ballala-III was ruling Virupaksha Hosadurga or Hosapatna, which was renamed as Anegondi. Kampli and Anegondi were capital cities of Kampilaraya. In 1565, after destruction of Vijayanagar Empire, Anegondi was occupied by Sultan Ali of Adil Shah dynasty and in 17th century it was occupied by Mughal rulers. In 1774, it was occupied by Hyder Ali and later Tipu Sultan. After defeat of Tipu Sultan, the British were occupied Anegondi and handed over to the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1790. Anegondi was ruled by the Nizams of Hyderabad till independence. The fortress surrounded to Anegondi. Most of the inscriptions and idols are ruined by the repeated wars and as such, though fort is still attractive, the remains inside the fortress are destroyed.

##### 3. Kanakagiri:

The fort of Kanakagiri is built and developed by Vijayanagar rulers and Nayakas in 15th and 16th Century. Parasappa Nayaka (1436-1510), Navaba Udachi Nayaka (1510-1533) and Udachi Nayaka-II (1533-1578) of Gujjala clan have ruled the fort. There is meaningful proverb 'Those who have legs must see Hampi and those who have eyes must see Kanakagiri'. The walls located at north and north-east are good and the walls at other directions were destroyed. There are religious places such as temples of Kanakachala, Ramalinga, Krishna, Neelakantheshwar, Nagareshwar, Pampapathi, Jami Masjid, Mallikarjun, Veerabhadra, Chamundi, Sanjeev Murthy, Gajalaxmi, Prataparaya, Chidananda, Basavanna and Yallamma in the fort. Still the people are inhabited inside the fort and there are also inscriptions inside the fort.

##### 4. Yammigudda:

It is in Gangavathi taluka of Koppal district and wall is built only in eastern direction. Totally there are six bastions surrounded the fort. There are rooms for soldiers. There are also temples of Durga, Hanuman, Kanakachala, Ishwar and remaining parts of palace. Probably it was built in 16-17th century and no historical records are available about this fort.

##### 5. Katapur:

This fort is located in Kushtagi of Koppal district. It was administrative centre for 331 villages and Thimmappayya was feudatory, who belongs to Brahmin community. The fort was of 17th-18th century and ruled by Thimmappayya, Puttappayya, Hanumappayya, Rangappayya and such others were ruled till 1948. There are only remains of the fort and different temples namely, Dyamavva, Mahamaya,

Ishwar temples are located inside the fort.

#### 6. Hanumasagar:

This fort is located at Kushtagi taluka of Koppal district. The fort is built in square shape and there is Laxmi Venkateshwar temple inside the fort. Most of the parts of the fort is under ruins.

#### 7. Chalageri:

This fort is located in Kushatagi taluka of Koppal district. Probably it is built in 17-18th century and has two rounds of walls. There are temples of Hanuman, Ishwar, Dyamavva and Mysore Matha inside the fort. A well is also located inside the fort. A few of the families are living in the fort.

#### 8. Yalaburga:

During the rule of Vikramaditya-VI of Chalukyas, Ballala-I was crossed Tungabhadra river and seized Chalukya kingdom. During this time, feudatory of Vikramaditya, Achugi-II of Sindh rulers was defeated Ballala. Later, Vishnuvardhana was ruled this area and he seized Kammatadurga fort. As per the orders of Vikramaditya, Achugi and his son Perma was fought with Hoysala rulers and gained Belur and Dorasamudra. Hence, Yalaburga was become popular for bravery of rulers. The inscriptions have revealed that Ballala of Hoysala was ruling Yalaburga, Kurugodu, Doravadi, Bellary, Halagi, Manvi, Likkigundi, etc from 1195-1196. But, none of the sources are available and even monuments are in ruin stage.

#### 9. Kukanur Fort:

It is located in Yalaburga taluka of Koppal district. It is popular as Devaraya Gouda Desai, a feudatory of Vijayanagar Empire was renovated Mahamaya Temple in 1561. Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb built Jami Masjid in 1696. The fort of Kukanur is built with strong, square and big rocks, but half of the fort is already collapsed. Remains, inscriptions, temples, etc are remained.

### VI. Forts of Yadgir District:

#### 1. Yadgir:

The records revealed that Jayasimha, Kalyan Chalukya ruler was ruling from Yetagiri in 1019. It is assumed that the fort of Yadgir was built by Kalyan Chalukyas, but later the fort was rebuilt by Adil Shahi rulers and as such, remains of original fortress was disappeared. Ibrahim-I of Adil Shahi was built Moti Talao (Pond) and Patal Nagari well inside the fort in 1546. Later, in the memory of the Nizam's visit to the fort, one arch was built in the fort in 1785. The fort is built by hard rock's of bigger size.

#### 2. Sagar:

Sagar is located in Shahapur taluka of present Yadgir district. During Tughalaq rule, it was a town. Mubarrak Khilji, son of Allauddhin Khilji was nominated an officer to rule this area. In 1347, Sagar was become town under Bahamani Kingdom. Many of the monuments, buildings and forts were constructed in this area by Bahamani rulers. There are halls of different sizes and rooms of ruined palaces in the fort.

#### 3. Shahapur:

Shahapur is taluka place in Yadgir district. It is believed that the Sagar Emperor was ruled this area and these rulers of Sagar were built the fortresses and monuments in this area. The fort of



Shahapur (was known as Nusratabad) has inscription above the main door and it is revealed from the inscription that, the fort was built by Meer Mohammed, son of Haji Imad Khan was built the town and fort in 1558-59. The fort was renovated by Adil Shah in 1567-68. There are many archs and pavilions in the fort and are in the ruined stage.

#### 4. Vaganageri:

Vaganageri is village located in Surpur taluka of Yadgir district. Mohammed Adil Shah granted this village known as 'Karshihalli' to Pidda Naik and Pidda Naik was built fort here and also renamed it as 'Vaganageri'. Pidda Naik was ruled this region from 1639 to 1666. It was capital city of Surpur rulers till its seizure by Aurangzeb of Mughal Empire in 1705. There are total two forts, one at east and another at west.

The western fort was built by Pidda Naik and has two parts. It has stretched the one side area from town to hill. When Aurangzeb was seized the fort, he renovated the parts such as pillars, beams, monuments, etc. Mostly the fort is under ruined stage and occupied by few of the Maratha families of former soldiers. There is also blind inscription belongs to the rule of Aurangzeb. There is temple of Venugopalaswamy and the pillars and walls of the temples are decorated with the sculpture of deities and gods. The East fort of Vaganageri is new fort with two rounds. Due to lack of maintenance and renovation, this fort is under ruins.

#### 5. Surpur:

Surpur or Shorapur is taluka place of Yadgir district. It was capital city of Nayaka rulers. When Aurangzeb seized the Vaganageri fort in 1705 and passed away in 1707 at Ahmedabad, Piddanayaka was seized Vaganageri fort and created new city 'Surpur'. He built fort surrounding to Surpur and constructed Venugopalaswamy temple. Pamanayak (1727-1741) was built outer fortress and Vekatappa Nayak (1747-1752) built palace at the middle of the city. Later, Venkatappa-IV (1820-1848) has built more walls across the fort and even he built Naya Darbar palace and Taylor Manzil for Meadows Taylor.

Surpur fort is built with half circular bastions. There is small fortress inside the big surrounded fort and it was built with walls of 20 metres height. Venugopalaswamy temple is built by Bahari Pidda Nayak and Ramappa Nayak was built the conference hall. Later, Pama Nayaka-III was built outer hall and corridor. There are total 46 pillars carved beautifully at outer hall.

#### 6. Vanadurga:

The fort was built as per the wish of Queen Venkammamba by Bahari Bahaddur Raja Piddanayaka in 1806. The fort is built with two rounds and square of 250x250 metres. There are inscriptions written in Nagari script and Sanskrit and there are also pictures of sun, moon, wheel, etc in the inscriptions. The fort is built using hard and wide rocks and neatly carved stones are there inside the fort walls. There are also bastions at different directions. There are sculptures of lord Anjaneya inside the fort. There are also houses and a well inside the fort now. Most parts of this fort are collapsed and ruins are remaining.

#### Observations:

When the above discussed monuments were observed, it is found that the rulers were given adequate significance to religion and culture as there are many temples and other religious places inside and outside the forts. Few of these forts are with expertise sculpture as the pillars, doors and

rocks were carved neatly with the nature or religious pictures. Even few of the rulers during those days were given much importance to the historical records as many of the stone inscriptions were available in these places. Hyderabad-Karnataka region is dry with lower rainfall and as such, it is found that many of the rulers were used different techniques such as storage of rain water, irrigation system using these water, etc. Hence, it is essential to analyze the techniques used by these rulers to enrich agriculture by detailed studies. For this purpose, it is essential to protect and preserve these monuments and forts.

### Preservation and Protection:

Following precautions and measures should be taken to preserve and protect and forts and monuments in Hyderabad-Karnataka region:

1. It is suggested to prevent and control habitations of people, etc inside the forts;
2. Wherever there is open space inside the fort, garden should be developed so as to maintain beauty of the forts;
3. Renovation and rebuilding of few of the destroyed parts of these forts is essential;
4. Conservation of oil paintings, miniature paintings, painting on cloth, wood, ivory, etc. textile, manuscripts, books, photographs, metal objects, ivories, leather, other art objects, artifacts, ethnographic material, sculptures, etc is essentially needed;
5. Repairing, restorative and curative conservation of different parts of forts and monuments is suggested periodically;
6. Mortar, Bricks, Rocks, Stucco, Masonry and Cement should be used to strengthen and repair the walls of forts;
7. It is observed that saline action on walls and stone sculptures causing damages to forts and monuments and it is essential to remove salt and protect from salt action;
8. To avoid damages, forts and monuments should be cleaned using Chemicals such as Hydrofluoric Acid, Alkali, Potassium Hydroxide, Ammonia, Caustic Soda, Alkali, etc depending on the nature of such chemicals;
9. There are also damages from roots of trees and vegetation and it should be avoided by making regular cleaning;
10. The bats are also damaging the dark parts of fort walls, it is essential to fit electric lights in the dark parts of forts and also spray insecticides, so that the bats should not spoil the forts and even closing the entrance tightly helps to keep the bats away from dark parts of the forts;
11. Necessary actions should also be taken to control humidity, which spoils beauty of forts;
12. Legal protection should be enhanced, so as to control destruction and mutilation of the monuments and forts by visitors;
13. Wherever essential, it is needed to fix CCTV to avoid damage and deterioration to monuments and forts;
14. It is essential to make develop the forts and monuments as tourists destinations and make advertisements and publicity so that the tourists from all over the world can visit the same and also revenue should be generating from tourists, which can be used for the conservation and maintenance of these monuments and forts.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS:

History is base for every present activity and knowledge about historical background and principles is essential to develop socio-economic, religious, educational and technical knowledge. It is

highlighted that though there was no electricity during the historical period, there was ancient methods of Air Conditioning, Irrigation, Pumping of water, echoing of voice, etc. It shows that, historical developments are origin for the present inventions. Hence, it is essential to study the different monuments and forts, which were earlier accommodated different techniques, so as to develop and built modern technology based on ancient principles. It is essential to know about our culture and history, which is basic for our present socio-economic, educational and religious life. As such, the forts and monuments tell these facts. Compared to other countries, many of the western tourists from different countries visit India as tourist destination and there is income and revenue from these tourists. Hence, if the tourist destinations such as forts and monuments in the Hyderabad-Karnataka should be developed, then the tourist places will become developed and consequently, there is all round development of Hyderabad-Karnataka region.

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