



ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY REVIEW OF VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE-
CASE STUDY OF HAMPI

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Abstract

The paper includes a prologue note followed by the foundation of Vijayanagara Empire heralded a new era in the history of India.

The plan of analysis or analytical operation has been widely under taken by collecting carious source material mainly archeological and they have to be subject to close scrutiny we are sure we wise bring various hidden facts regarding Vijayanagara Capital city Hampi.

Keywords: Vijayanagar, Architectural survey, Dynasties fort, public building.



1. INTRODUCTION

The foundation of Vijayanagar Empire in 1336, heralded a new era in the history of Karnataka in particular and India in general. The name and fame of Kamataka not only reached its zenith, but also crossed the Indian borders and spread to foreign countries. The period of imperialism which was inaugurated by the Chalukyas of Badami rulers reached the climax during Vijayanagar period.

Vijayanagar empire was established with the noble intention of protecting Hinduism and Hindu Culture, which was facing life and death problem due to the invasions of Moham-medans from the north. As remarked by Dr.Krishnaswamy Iyengar, "The Vijayanagar Empire came in to existence for the purpose of saving South India from being completely conquered by the Mohammadans, to save Hindu religion and give it a chance for its natural development" ..

The invasions of Malik kafur and Muhammad Bin-Tughlaq against South India posed a threat to the very existence of Hindu culture and religion in Deccan. Prathapa Rudra lost Warrangal to Tughlaq and committed suicide in 1323 A.D. The Kakatiya kingdom disappeared. Mohammad-Bin-Tughlaq attacked Anegondi, occupied it in 1327 A.D. Viraballa III of Dwa-rasamudra also surrendered to him. The whole of South India was annexed to the Delhi Empire. But soon, the Hindus realized the need of fighting for their independence. Several attempts were made to overthrow the muslim rule, a "Great Liberation Movement" was started.

Taking advantage of incapability of Mohammad-Bin-Tughlaq, KapayaNayaka carved out an independent kingdom at Warrangal. Prolaya Vema Reddy founded the "Reddy King-dom" at Addanki as a part of this movement. Harihara and Bukka sons of Sangama established the Vijayanagar kingdom under the directions of sage Madhawa Vidyaranya in 1336 A.D. Thus Vijayanagar Empire which came into existence has made valuable contributions for the devel-opment of South Indian culture, the rulers also achieved political unity which was most essen-tial for the people of South India.

2. SOURCES

To understand the early history of Vijayanagar one has to depend upon various sources of information available in the form of literary evidences, inscriptions and coins.

The literary works like Rajakalanirnaya' and 'the Vidyaranya kalagnan' may be regarded as the earliest literature that refers to the origin of the Vijayanagar Empire. "The Madura Vi-jayam' composed by Gangadevi, W/o Kumarakampana deals with the conquest of Madurai by her husband. The 'Saluvabhyudayamu' is a historical eulogy of the second dynasty.(Praise).

The contemporary work "Rayavachakamu" and "Krishnaraja vijayamu" throws light on Krishnadeva raya's conquests. Telugu work "Amukta Malyada" by Krishnadeva Raya contains some historical facts also. A Sanskrit work "Achyutaramabhyudayam" by Rajanatha Dindima gives a different picture. of Achyuta Raya. "Varadambika parinayam" by Thirumalamba is also an important work.



Besides the indigenous sources, the foreign sources are also of great value. Muslim Travellers, Farista, Tabataba, Ibn-Batuta, Nicolo-konti, Abdur Razak, Domingo paes, Nuniz's information are of great value. With these sources it will be possible to bring out the history of the Vijayanagar Empire in a satisfactory manner.

3. POLITICAL HISTORY

The Vijayanagar Empire protected south India from the onslaughts of Muslim aggressors for a period of more than 250 years. The Hindu civilization and culture of south India were not only preserved but also promoted by the kings of Vijayanagar.

There were four dynasties ruled Vijayanagar from 1336 to 1680 A.D. They were

- i) Sangama Dynasty
- ii) Saluva Dynasty
- iii) Tuluva Dynasty, and
- iv) Aravidu Dynasty.

(i) Sangama Dynasty:

The dynasty of Harihara I (1336-56 AD) was named after his father Sangama. By 1340 he established himself in the valley of Tunga-Bhadra and the surrounding places. In 1342, Viraballala III, the Hoysala king was defeated and killed by the Sultan of Madura. After this Harihara conquered the Hoysala Kingdom without much difficulty. The brothers continued their career of Conquest and extended their infant kingdom up to Cauvery in the south. One of the historical events that occurred during his reign was the foundation of Bahmani kingdom to the north of Vijayanagar in Deccan Plateau by Alauddin Bahman Shah in 1347 A.D.

Harihara was succeeded by his brother Bukkaraya (1356-77) and Bukkaraya was followed by his son Harihara II (1377-1404) who assumed the titles of Maharaja Dhiraja and Rajaparameshwara.

The death of Harihara II was followed by a war of succession in which Devaraya I (1406-1422) emerged victorious. But for all practical purposes Devaraya II (1422-1446) has been considered as the greatest of the Sangama kings. He was also called

as Proudha Devaraya. The traditional wars with Bahmani Sultans continued. Devaraya greatly improved the finances of the state. He beautified the city of Vijayanagar and built the "Vittalaswamy Temple" in the Capital. Abdur Razak paid glowing tributes to the prosperity of the Vijayanagar kingdom at that time. Devaraya II was succeeded by Mallikarjuna and Virupaksha respectively.

ii) Saluva Dynasty:

In 1485 A.D. Saluva Narasimha, the chief of Penugonda usurped the throne and founded the Saluva Dynasty. Saluva Narasimha ruled only for 16 years. He was succeeded by



Narasimha II who was a minor. The real power was held by his general Tuluva Narasanayaka. After some time Narashimha II was imprisoned by Tuluva Narasanayaka who became the de-facto ruler.

iii) Tuluva Dynasty:

Tuluva Narasanayaka had two sons Vira Narasimha and Krishnadeva Raya. Narasanayaka was succeeded by his son Vira Narasimha (1505-09) who appointed Thimmarasu as his minister. Viranarasimha was succeeded by his half brother Krishnadeva Raya in 1509.

KRISHNADEVA RAYA 1509-29 A.D

Among the sovereigns of India in the 16 century KrishnadevaRaya occupies a conspicuous place in the niches of the temple of history. His Military victories were marvellous. His attempt to unify the whole of south India was a great success. He was the contemporary of Henry VIII Emperor of England. He distinguished himself as a maker of an era by his many sided personality He was a great warrior, administrator, patron of Art and Literature, and above all he himself was a poet and author of the brilliant works of literary value. His personal life was spotless.

According to Sewell, the author of " A Forgotten Empire" "KrishnaDevaRaya was physically strong in his best days and maintained his strength to the highest pitch by hard bodily exercises".

In the words of Sri Krishna Shastry, "KrishnaDevaRaya's kindness to the fallen enemy, his acts of mercy and charity towards the residents of all captured cities, his great military prowess which endeared him alike to his feudatory chiefs and to his subjects, the royal reception and kindness that he invariably bestowed upon foreign embassies. his imposing personal appearance his genial look... his solicitude for the welfare of his people and above all, the most fabulous wealth that he conferred on temples and Brahmanas, mark him out indeed as the greatest of the south Indian monarchs who shed a lustre on the pages of history".

KrishnaDeva Raya had the title Sangeetha Sahithya Samarangana Sarvabhauma" which indicates his love for fine arts. Sanskrit, Kannada and Telugu poets adorned his court. His service to literature was comparable with that of king Bhoja to Sanskrit literature. He was familiarly known as "Andhra Bhoja", His court was named "Bhuvanavijayam". The Astadigajas were the eminent luminaries in literature. He himself was the author of the works called " Amuktamalayda" and" Jambuvathi kalyana" Allasani peddanna his court poet wrote " Manucharitamu" and "Harikatha Saramsamu".

The Madhawa saint Sri Vyasatheertha or Vyasarayana was his beloved preceptor, whom he revered so much that left his throne vacant for the saint to occupy for the sometime. He was a great builder. The famous Krishnaswamy temple, Hazararamaswamy temple at the capital are attributed to him.



Besides these the Raya Gopurams and other structures are also available. He built the new city Nagalapura in memory of his mother Nagalamba. There also he caused the erection of grand structures and temples. During his reign of about 20 years the glory of the empire attained its highest watermark. Among Vijayanagar kings he shines as the Moon among the Stars.

Disintegration of the Empire:

Achyuta Raya who was nominated by Krishnadeva Raya to succeed him was challenged by Aliya Rama Raya son-in-law of Krishnadeva Raya. The reign of Achyuta Raya (1530-42 AD) was nothing but a constant struggle against internal enemies and external attacks. Thus the civil wars that followed Krishnadevaraya's death, largely contributed to the decline of the Empire.

In a civil war that followed after the death of Achyuta Raya, Sadashiva Raya supported by Aliya Rama Raya ascended the throne. But the real power was exercised by Aliya Rama Raya his brother-in-law.

Aliya Rama Raya wanted to recover the lost glory and prestige of the empire. He was an able commander, astute politician and a capable administrator. But he was mad after power. He interfered with the internal conflicts of the Deccan Sultans and played one against the other. His policy was to keep them dis-united and exploit their rivalries to his own advantage.

But this policy finally proved to be disastrous to the Vijayanagar Empire itself. The Muslim rulers forgot their former rivalries and joined together against Rama Raya, the result was the Battle of Talikota which was fought in 1565, in which Aliya Rama Raya not only defeated but was killed.

Dr. Eshwari Prasad described the effects of the battle in these words "The battle Talikota is one of the most decisive battles in Indian history. It sounded the death knell of the Hindu Empire in the south and produced a state chaos which invariably follows the collapse of a vast political Organization".

iv) Aravidu Dynasty

Tirumala brother of Aliya Rama Raya later on shifted the capital to Pengonda and deposed Sadashiva in 1569. The "Aravidu" dynasty was founded by him.

The Aravidu kings could not revive the old glory of Vijayanagar. There was a story of struggle for existence. Civil wars broke out in the kingdom. Consequently the empire was dismembered.

- a. The territories of Raichur and Mudgal were lost.
- b. In 1612, Raja Wodeyar founded the kingdom of Mysore.
- c. In 1624, the Sultan of Bijapur occupied the region of Kandanavolu.
- d. The feudatories of Adoni, Bankapur and others in the north proclaimed their independence.
- e. The Nayaka Kingdoms of Madurai and Tanjore got themselves separated from Vijayanagar.



e. Thus, the great empire of Vijaya Nagar came to an end with the death of Sriranga Raya III in 1680.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Case study of Hampi is being selected with a special intention to go deep in to the subject. In my opinion more research is yet to be done on the monuments of Hampi and need to throw much light upon their importance for the following reasons.

a. "Hampi" which is now called, was once the capital city of glorious empire and become famous by the name "Vijayanagar" in the annals of south Indian history. Therefore as a student of history one has to concentrate more on the study of past glory.

b. In a recent development, fortunately Hampi is being declared world Heritage site" by UNESCO has now gained "Universal Status" Kannadigas should feel proud. Though UNESCO is concentrating much of its attention for the internal development, it is not sufficient yet.

c. Even, the Tourism Development Corporation of Karnataka and Government, also concentrating much attention for the development of Hampi as a great tourist centre by conducting many historical and cultural programmes such as the 500th anniversary accession of Krishnadeva Raya and "Hampi Utsav which are being celebrated on a grand scale every year.

d. Excavation work is in full swing by the Archaeological Department of India at the historical site of Hampi and many new movements (Statues, Pillars, Coins etc,)are being unearthed every day. No doubt they definitely throw some new light on the historical events of Vijayanagar, provided if they are properly studied and should be made known to the readers also.

By taking into consideration of the above facts, I and my colleague decided to go in detail with some research work along with "field work in this regard.

5. CHAPTERS

For the convenience of Case Study" the following classifications are being made.

1. Fort:

The defence of Capital cities, usually protected by high walls has been an important factor for centuries, which structure is named as 'FORT These forts are tended to be square or rectangular and were usually of huge dressed stones. The medieval castles remained almost impregnable until gun powder came into use.

In older times the forts usually constructed either on the banks of rivers or on the top of mountains might be with the intention to secure natural protection. Like other capital cities of India, Vijayanagar also had a fort of its own. The writings of foreign visitors reveals so many facts and include some information with regards the city and Fort Vijayanagar city has a circumference of nearly 60 miles, and duly protected by a strong fort consisting of seven fortified walls one within the other the fort has one main gate and other six gates are constructed in such a way that one not facing in the same direction of the other The daily inflow of the public in to



the fort will be usually more and hence protection to the capital city is drawn much attention. 90,000 soldiers were always ready with arms in defence of the city.

The first circle in the fort was meant for the Royal family. Here were beautiful temples, Gardens, Fountains and mansions could be seen.

In circle 4, 3, and 2 lived the middle class people, the merchants and officials. In circles 7, 6 and 5 orchards, pools and temples are found.

Today we can see only the remains of the fort which needs further research work to know more about the same.

ii. Palace :

In the centre of Hampi city was the Royal palace. The foundation of the Royal palace and its adjacent buildings, the halls meant for ritual purpose, the servants quarters and those of the security guards have been unearthed. The steps leading from to the Palace to the Royal court have been preserved in all their originality.

Though some portions of the palace are now ruined, but the remains will tell the story of the glorious past.

iii. Temples:

The temple architecture of the vijayanagar period reached a high degree of excellence. The Vijayanagar rulers produced new style of architecture called "The Vijayanagar Style". Though it is often described as "Dravidian Style", it had its own distinct features.

In his monumental work *The Indian Architecture* (vol-1) Mr. Percy Brown observes that much of intricacy and rich beauty of the Vijayanagar type of temple was produced by the number and prominence of its pillars and piers, and the manner in which they were sculptured in to the most complicated compositions.. and it is by the artistically ingenious character of many of these supports that the buildings of this style may be identified"

Most of the magnificent temples are concentrated in the capital. The pampapathi Temple, the vittalaswamy temple, and the Hazara Ramaswamy temple may be regarded as the best examples of the Vijayanagar Architecture,

Apart from the Hindu temples, there are number of mosques, churches and Jaina basadis can also be found in the capital city which needs a detailed study separately.

iv. Statues :

Some of the sculptures (in stone and metals) of Hampe are as follows.

The Stone chariot, Badavi linga, Ugra Narasimha, Sasuvekalu Ganapathi, Kadale kalu Ganapathi, Veerabhadra, Tulabhara Sthambha etc.,

v. Public Buildings :

The other buildings are Lotus Mahal, Kudure Laya, Anelaya, Mahanavami Dibba. The excavations of 1991 thrown light on the debris of 16 palaces that might be destroyed after the battle of talikota.



vi. Miscellaneous :

Since 1985, the Archaeological Survey of India which is carrying excavation work have thrown new light upon many interesting things. A stepped well (may be kalyani) is excavated in 1990's.

Ruins of Security Force (Gaurds) Quarters near the palace have been traced. Many more are unearthed which also needs a detailed survey and research work.

6. PLAN OF RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The plan of analysis or analytical operation has been widely undertaken by collecting various source material mainly archaeological and they have to be subject to close scrutiny and here we have to eliminate errors, and try to bring the hidden truth. We are largely depending upon the direct source material only and by doing careful study. We are sure we will bring various hidden facts regarding the Vijayanagar capital city" Hampi"

7. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded by saying that, no doubt that the establishment of Vijayanagar Empire in the 14th century is an epoch making event in the history of India. The main object of the founders was to protect the Hindu culture. Evidently all the Vijayanagar kings were great patrons of religion, art, architecture and literature. Hindu religion and culture received a new impetus. The temples served as the centres of learning and great religious activity. Temple building activity of Vijaynagar rulers opened a brilliant chapter.

The Building activity initiated by Bukka Raya nursed by DevaRaya II, reached its highest watermark during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya. In Brief it can be said that Vijaynagar was an affluent cultured Centre of Hinduism and Hindu Culture. There is no exaggeration in the description given by the foreign travelers. The ruins which remains in the capital city speak of the great glory of the Great Empire

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