



A STUDY OF HISTORICAL AND HERITAGE SITES IN WARANGAL

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Abstract: Warangal, located in the Indian state of Telangana, has a rich historical heritage and played a vital role in shaping the region's history. It is the second largest city in Telangana and served as the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty which was established in 1163CE. The monuments left by the Kakatiyas include fortresses, lakes, temples and stone gateways which helped the city to become a popular tourist attraction. The kings of the Kakatiya dynasty ruled the Telugu speaking regions from Warangal as their capital during the period from 1000 to 1323 CE. Early Kakatiya rulers had served as feudatories to the Rashtrakutas and Western Chalukyas for more than two centuries. During the rule of the Ganapathi Deva (1199-1262 CE), Rudrama Devi (1262-1289 CE) and Prathapa Rudra (1289-1323-CE), the kingdom of Kakatiya emerged as a powerful state and there was all-round development. The Kakatiya rulers patronised scholars and artists and promoted literature and fine arts like music, dance, sculpture art and architecture. On the walls of the temples we find depiction of the social life of the people. It is proposed to discuss the historical and heritage sites of Warrangal.

Keywords: Ramappa Temple, Thousand Pillar Temple, Emakshi Temple, Siddeswara Temple, Ramappa Tank, Laknavaram Tank.

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Introduction

Warangal is located in the Indian state of Telangana, has a rich historical heritage and played a vital role in shaping the region's history. It is the second largest city in Telangana. Warangal served

as the capital of the Kakatiya dynasty which was established in 1163CE. The monuments left by the Kakatiyas include fortresses, tanks, temples and stone gateways which, in the present, helped

the city to become a popular tourist attraction. The Kakatiya Kala Thoranam was included in the emblem of Telangana by the state government and Warangal is also touted as the cultural capital of Telangana.

The Kakatiya Kings had CE ruled the Telugu speaking regions from Warangal as their capital during the period from 1000CE to 1323 CE. Early Kakatiya rulers served as feudatories to Rashtrakutas and Western Chalukyas for more than two centuries. During the rule of the Ganapathi Deva (1199-1262 CE), Rudrama Devi (1262-1289 CE) and Prathapa Rudra (1289-1323-CE), the Kakatiya Kingdom emerged as a powerful state and there was all-round development (Satyanarayana: 1982:18).

The rulers and their subordinates had constructed several large irrigational tanks for providing water to the people for drinking and also for agriculture. The writings of the foreign travellers like Marco Polo of Venice, Italy are testimony to the prosperity and glory of the Kakatiya kingdom (Satyanarayana: 1982:18).

The Kakatiya rulers had patronised scholars and artists and promoted literature and fine arts like music, dance, sculpture art and architecture. The Kakatiya rulers had constructed several temples, tanks and forts etc. The Warangal fort is very famous for its strength, art and architecture during the medieval times which can now be regarded as heritage sites.

Tanks in Warangal District

The **Ramappa Tank** is situated in the Venkatapur Mandal of Warangal district and is located at a distance of three kilometres from Palampet and 65 Km from Warangal city. The tank is situated near the famous tourist attraction Ramappa Temple. This tank was excavated during the Kakatiya Dynasty to serve the purpose of irrigation. The tank site has many facilities including accommodation and motor boating for the entire tourist coming here (Naresh: 2020:104).

The Pakhala Tank located 50 km away from Warangal city is a 30 square kilometre tank

nestled amidst lush green forests and hills. The lake also borders a wildlife sanctuary located near its shore. The chirping of birds mingled with rejuvenating breeze and tranquillity makes it a favourite spot for picnics and nature enthusiasts.

The tank was excavated by the king Ganapatideva during the Kakatiya times in 1213 CE. It was useful for agricultural and other activities. Even today, it can be seen fulfilling its function of providing water for irrigation. About three lakh acres of land depend on its waters. The tank has been providing a natural haven for wild animals amidst hills and a plateau with a safe climate. A wide range of flora and fauna can also be spotted near the tank (Parabrahma Sastri: 2012: 194).

The **Laknavaram Lake** is a scenic man-made lake that boasts of immense natural beauty in the form of forests and hills. It is located in Govindaraopet mandal in the Mulugu district of Telangana, 80 kilometres away from Warangal. It houses 13 small islands and also has 160 metres long hanging bridge that connects the 3 islands. It is a popular for a picnic, boating and stunning sunset views. There is also a resort with four cottages near Laknavaram Cheruvu Lake that is run by the state government that are easily accessible via a ferry from the main banks of the tank (Parabrahma Sastri: 2012: 194-195).

The **Ganapasamudram Lake** in Kota Gullu was excavated by King Ganapatideva, the king of Kakatiya dynasty who ruled during the period of 1199–1260 CE. An inscription on a slab at the temple refers to Ganapathi Reddy who installed Lord Ganapateshwara and donated land during the reign of Ganapatideva in the cyclic year of “Jaya Nama Samvatsara, Vaisakha Sudha Trayodasi, Bruhaspati Vasaram” (corresponding to 1234-35 CE). A big water tank was built near this temple. A few thousand acres of land has been brought under cultivation through this tank (Parabrahma Sastri: 2012: 194-195).

The **Darmasagar Lake** is said to be one of the places where Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita from the Ramayana stayed when they were in

exile. Dharmasagar lake has been the prime source of potable water and one of the three summer storage tanks to Warangal for the last 30 years. The drinking water problem of Warangal has been solved as its principal source; Dharmasagar lake has been remodeled from lake into a balancing reservoir of Devadula project to hold 1.5 tmcft of water to cater to the needs of the people of Warangal and to irrigate 50,000 acres of land in the surrounding villages (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharmasagar>).

The Bhadrakali Lake is situated near the famous Bhadrakali Temple in Hanamkonda area of the Warangal city itself and is one of the largest lakes of this region. The lake stretches to two kilometres in distance. The lake is connected to the Maneru dam via the Kakatiya canal and was initially formed for drinking water resources. The lake is another man-made example of the Kakatiya dynasty and was dug up for the purpose of irrigation and water supply. The lake is surrounded by beautiful hills that add to the charm of the Bhadrakali Temple (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhadrakali_Lake).

Temples in Warangal District

The Ramappa Temple at Palampeta

The Ramappa Temple is located at Palampeta, a small village in Venkatapur Mandal of the Warangal district. It is situated about 75km North-West of Hanamakonda. It is near the bund of famous Ramappa Lake which was constructed in 13th century during the Kakatiya period. According to the inscription, setup in the temple, the Rudreswara temple which is popularly known as Ramappa Temple was built by the famous Kakatiya general Recherla Rudra, in 1213 CE during the reign of Kakatiya Ganapatideva. He constructed a big tank and the temple of Rudreswara. He gifted two villages, named Upparapalli and Borlapalli, for the enjoyment of this god. He also constructed Kateswara and Kameswara temples on the either side of the Rudreswara Temple. Yazdani regards this magnificent temple as the brightest gem in the galaxy of medieval Deccan temples (Naresh:

2020:104).

The Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanamkonda

The Thousand Pillar Temple is located in Hanamkonda town in Warangal Urban District. It was built by the Kakatiya king Rudra Deva-I (1158-1195 CE) in the year 1163 CE. There are several pillars in the temple and also in the *Kalayanamandapa* built in front of the main temple. Hence, the temple is popularly known as thousand pillar temple. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and it is also called as Rudreswara Temple. It was constructed as a trikuta temple (Triktalayam)¹⁰. (Naresh: 2020:104).

The Swayambhu Sri Shambhu Lingeswara Swamy Temple at Warangal

The Swayambhu Temple is located in Warangal Fort just beside the natural lake known as ‘Gundu Cheruvu’. This temple was built by King Prola I (1052-1076 CE) of the Kakatiya dynasty, according to *Prathaparudra Charitra* and *Siddeswara Charitra*. The city of Warangal was also known as *Shambhulinga Nagaram* named after this temple. This temple has three gateways in eastern, northern and southern directions (Naresh: 2020:90).

Ganapur Group of Temples at Ganapur

Ghanapur group of temples are located in Warangal (Jeyashankar Bhupalapally) district in the Telangana State. It is 80 km away from Warangal city and 20 km away to Bhupalapally Town. This temple is popular as “Ghanapeswaralayam”. There is one large temple surrounded by several other small temples “Upalayalu”. All these put together are known as Ghanapur group of temples. According to historical sources, these temples were constructed by King Ganapathi Deva (1199-1262 CE) of the Kakatiya dynasty (Venkataratnam: 2008:264).

Siddeswara Swamy Temple at Hanamkonda

The Siddheshwara Temple is an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Shiva and is located very

close to Hanamkonda in Warangal. The temple's architecture is stunning and bears resemblance to the Chalukyan style of architecture. The temple pillars have been carved out beautiful with intricacy that leaves ones fascinated.

This is an important Shivaite temple in Warangal. Devotees throng to this holy temple during the Maha Shivarathry festival. The temple has a majestic look and the surroundings are serene and secluded (Sarma: 1972: 123).

The **Bhadrakali Temple** Goddess Bhadrakali is one of the ten great manifestations of the Supreme Goddess of Hindu mythology and the Bhadrakali temple at Warangal is devoted to the god of rage and fury and protector of the goodness from the darkness. The temple is in a real sense an ancient one – dating back to 625 CE to the era of the Chalukyan kings. Tourists love to have a glimpse of the Bhadrakali temple mainly because unlike most of the other temples of the Goddess and her various manifestations in South India, the deity of this temple does not have the calm and soothing ambience about it. The temple enshrines the Goddess Kali, the mother Goddess in Hindu mythology, adorned with weapons in all the eight arms and the statue of the Goddess is in the sitting posture with a crown in her head. The structure of the temple is in the amazing architectural style of Chalukyas. With its roots too deep into Indian history as well mythology, the Bhadrakali temple attracts thousands of devout visitors every year - those who want to have *darshan* of the Shakti manifestation as well as those who just want to explore a great architecturally and historically significant site (Naresh: 2020:90).

The **Padmakshi Temple** is a temple dedicated to Goddess Padmakshi, dating back to early 12th century CE and houses instance of some exquisite architecture and a pillar that gather about itself much fascination by its visitors (Rama Rao:1966:3).

Conclusion

The Indian subcontinent is known for ancient culture and civilization since remote times. The

Geophysical conditions of the country played a vital role in shaping the life and culture of the people. The river systems like Sindhu, Ganga and their tributaries moulded the cultural life of the people. Similarly, in South India, the Godavari and Krishna and their tributaries have been instrumental in the growth of native civilization. These water resources not only served as source of life for human beings but also for the origin and growth of different types of species. The water bodies, the forests and the hills have been providing shelter to various kinds of flora and fauna. The early man used to live in the forests and his life depended on the natural resources and various living beings around him. In the process of attainment of civilization, man has been struggling hard to establish his supremacy over the nature and animal kingdom.

Warangal located in the Indian state of Telangana, has a rich historical heritage and played a vital role in shaping the region's history. It is the second largest city in Telangana. The monuments left by the Kakatiyas include fortresses, lakes, temples and stone gateways which, in the present, helped the city to become a popular tourist attraction. The Kakatiya Kala Thoranam was included in the emblem of Telangana by the state government and Warangal is also touted as the cultural capital of Telangana. The rulers and their subordinates had constructed several large irrigational tanks and providing water to the people for drinking and also for agriculture. The Kakatiya rulers had patronised scholars and artists and promoted literature and fine arts like music, dance, sculpture art and architecture.

On the walls of the temples can be seen the living conditions of the ancient people. They depict the different kinds of festivals and fairs that have been celebrated by the people of Warangal region. Similarly, temples and lakes in Warangal district area are still being used as tourist sites for a pleasant and enjoyable life. If they are preserved, they will serve future generations as well.

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