



THE SPECTACULAR HISTORY OF KURNOOL FORT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KONDA REDDY BURUJU

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ABSTRACT

In common idiom, the phrase 'fort' refers to a fortress that provides safety and security to those who seek refuge within it. Fortification simply means "to protect a village, city, or place by erecting a wall or rampart around it." The requirement for the security given by a robust wall of forts must be recognised in the context of conflicts.

The Kurnool fort is one of the town's most notable landmarks, located in the centre of the city. Achyutadevaraya (1530-1542 A.D.) of the Vijayanagara empire is supposed to have erected the current Kurnool fort (Kandenavolu Durgam). The fort was important in the history of Vijayanagara. In comparison to the rest of Andhra, the Rayalaseema region has a higher number of forts due to its smaller geographical area.

The finding of Ashokan edicts at "Rajula Mandagiri" and "Erragudi" confirms that these Deccan provinces were part of the Mauryan empire. These regions, which formed a separate province, were ruled by Aryaputra, who had his capital at Suvarna Giri. Some historians associate Suvarna Giri with Jonna Giri in this district's Patti Konda taluk. Following the Maurya's, the province was ruled by Satavahanas, Badami Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas, and Warangal Kakatiya's. After fall of the Kakatiya dynasty in 1323 A.D., this district fell under the control of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, who divided the Deccan and south India into five provinces and appointed governors to each.

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Araviti Gopala Raja was Kurnool's last Hindu king. He was beaten by Abdul Wahab, a Bijapur sultan's general. Konda Reddy, a Palegar of Prathakota in Nandikotkur taluk, was the one who refused to recognise Abdul Wahab's suzerainty. Konda Reddy was imprisoned and died in this underground cell. As a result, it was given the name Konda Reddy buruju. It's broken into four sections.

KEY WORDS: Kurnool, Kandenavolu, Ashokan's edicts, Kautilya's Artha Sastra, Araviti, Palegar.

Objectives:

Objectives of the study is to study the valuable historical monuments of the Kurnool under the rule of Vijayanagara Dynasty.

Methodology:

For this study I used the secondary data from the well-known books, articles and also website is selected for this study.

INTRODUCTION:

The study of forts and fortifications is essential for understanding India's defence system and military architecture. Today, the only accounts of forts available are volumes of Gazetteers and district guides. The work of N.S. Ramachandra Murthi is the first attempt to analyse the forts of Andhra Pradesh. His "Forts of Andhra Pradesh from the Beginning to the 16th Century A.D." opens with a description of India's great forts, detailing their features with references from numerous original sources, and then devotes extensive length to the minor forts.

In comparison to the rest of Andhra, the Rayalaseema region has a higher number of forts due to its smaller geographical area. Furthermore, the majority of Rayalaseema forts were built during the Vijayanagara period. The Rayavachakamu provides interesting statistics about the number of forts maintained by the Vijayanagara empire, naming four types: Giri Durga, Sthala Durga, Jala Durga, and Vanadurga. Rayalaseema was home to all four classic fort typologies.

Fort design is heavily influenced by the building materials and methods or principles of construction that were popular at the time. An assessment of the Vijayanagara empire's Rayalaseema forts reveals that they adhered better to the rules put down in works on governance (Rajaniti) and building (Vaastu). As previously stated, all four types of forts mandated by Kautilya's Arthasastra prospered. In terms of construction technique, the

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Vijayanagara forts are distinguished by 'Cyclopean masonry,' which involves stacking huge blocks of stone one on top of the other without the use of any joining material such as chunnam or mortar, which became popular only later, as in the Muhammandans' constructions.

The forts of the Vijayanagara period, such as Hampi, Chandragiri, Penukonda, and Gandikota, reflect the same type of construction, with stone veneering only on the surface and a huge earthen wall serving as the core on the inside. Although cyclopean masonry was also used in later works, its main distinguishing feature was the employment of lime and mortar as connecting materials in addition to brick and tiles, to serve as aesthetic devices in the superstructures above entrances and ramparts.

As previously noted, the fortress wall of Penukonda and Gandikota has a base of stone masonry supporting a superstructure of burnt bricks, as demonstrated by fortification remains. This phase is also known as Indo-Muslim or Indo-Saracenic, because there are noticeable foreign influences such as Persian and Turkish.

Meaning and Definition:

In common parlance, the term "fort" denotes a fortress that provides safety and security to those who seek refuge within it. It is generally known as 'Durgam' in Sanskrit, which means 'difficult to approach, difficult to access, or inaccessible'.

It is referred to as 'Pura' in Vedic literature, which means a fortified city, thereby equating a city and a fort. Its Telugu equivalent is Kota, which is similar to Tamil 'Kottai' and Kannada 'Kote'. In Telugu inscriptions, the fort is referred to as Palu, Kottamu, and Kota. According to P.K. Acharya, Kota means a hut and a shed. The word 'Durga' also refers to a fort or a fortified city. Durga also means a structure that is difficult to get into: hence, a ratified place or a fortified city.

Fortification:

Fortification simply means "to protect a village, city, or place by erecting a wall or rampart around it." The requirement for the security given by a robust wall of forts must be recognised in the context of conflicts. A king without a fort is said to be like a snake without poison or an elephant without a rut, both of which are readily overrun by others. As a result, Kautilya included Durga as one of the seven elements of states at the start of the historical period.

Kurnool Fort:

Kurnool Fort is one of the town's most recognisable landmarks, located in the centre of the city. Achyutadevaraya (1530-1542 A.D.) of the Vijayanagara empire is supposed to have

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erected the current Kurnool fort (Kandenavolu Durgam). The fort was important in the history of Vijayanagara.

The finding of Ashokan edicts at Rajula Mandagiri and Erragudi confirms that these Deccan provinces were part of the Mauryan empire. These regions, which formed a separate province, were ruled by Aryaputra, who had his capital at Suvarna Giri. Some historians associate Suvarna Giri with Jonna Giri in this district's Patti Konda taluk.¹

Following the Maurya's, the province was ruled by Satavahanas, Badami Chalukyas, Rastrakutas, Kalyani Chalukyas, and Warangal Kakatiya's. Following the fall of the Kakatiya dynasty in 1323 A.D., this district fell under the control of Muhammad-bin-Tughluq, who divided the Deccan and south India into five provinces and appointed governors to each. The reign of these governors proved unpopular, and there were uprisings throughout the Tughluq empire, resulting in the founding of the Reddi, Rayas of Vijayanagara, and Bahmani kingdoms.

The Reddi monarchs viewed themselves as masters of the south eastern portion of the Kakatiya realm and ruled over the eastern portion of Kurnool district. During Harihara's reign, Adoni, a section of Kurnool in the west ranging from Ahobilam to Srisailem, came under Vijayanagara and quickly became an important town.²

The material on the history of Kurnool fort up to the rise of the third dynasty is scant. Araviti Ramaraju is said to have been a general under Krishna devaraya's father, and that at the latter's request, Araviti Ramaraju expelled Yusuf Adilsha from Kurnool, and that he was then brought to Kurnool as a Jaghir by the ruler of Vijayanagara. The defeat of Yusuf Adilsha is also mentioned in Venkaiah's Telugu poem Ramurajeeeyamu, where the poet asserts that Araviti Ramaraju made Kurnool his capital.³ According to the same text, Araviti Rama Raya's father, Araviti Bukka, married Abbaladevi, the daughter of the chieftain of Nandyal, and her descendants ruled as feudatory chiefs at Nandyal.

During Krishnadevaraya's reign, Aliya Rama Raya and his brothers were in charge of the districts of Adoni, Gutty, Penukonda, Gandikota, and Kurnool, and those districts appear to have been under their special responsibility all along. Everything points to the district of Kurnool being the principality of the Araviti monarchs before they became Vijayanagara emperors.⁴

When the Vijayanagara kingdom fell in the well-known battle of Tallikota in 1565 A.D., the Sultan of Bijapur received his portion of the territorial conquests, which comprised the Doab, Adoni, Nandyal, and Kurnool. However, the Bijapur did not occupy these regions for over forty years. Only the Bijapur general Abdul Wahab, an Abyssinian, seized Kurnool in the early seventeenth century, which was held by Gopala Raju, a grandson of Rama Raya. The

raja fled through the fort's northern gate known as Gopal Darwaja, Abdul Wahab, and then overran Nandyal, Sirivel, and Bethamcherla. We governed as the governor of Kurnool from Bijapur for sixteen years, from 1602 to 1618 A.D. His brother Mahammad Khan succeeded him as ruler of the area from 1618 A.D. until 1680 A.D.⁵

Aurangzeb besieged Adoni, Kurnool, and Nandyal in short succession after 1687 A.D., renaming Kurnool and Nandyal Qamar Nagar and Ghazipur, respectively, in 1724 A.D. Nizam-ul-Mulk invaded the Deccan, conquered and murdered Kurnool's Jagirdar, and established the Asaf Jahi dynasty. In 1767 and 1768, Hyder Ali of Mysore collected tributes from the nawabs of Kurnool and Cuddapah, respectively.⁶

There are two competing stories of how Khizr Khan got to be the Jagirdar of Kurnool. According to one story, Aurangzeb, the Deccan subedar, bestowed the Kurnool Jagir on Khizr Khan in 1651 A.D. Another account has Mohammad Adilsha of Bijapur bestowing the Jagir title on Khizr Khan Panni. Following the death of Khizr Khan, his brilliant son Dawood Khan was appointed Jagirdar of Kurnool in recognition of his significant services to the Mughal empire. He was a well-known Pathan general with exceptional ability and abilities. In the Carnatic invasion, Aurangzeb appointed him as a deputy to Zulfikar Khan, son of the grand Wazir Asad Khan. Dawood Khan took the citadel of Gingi, the Karnataka's then capital, in 1698 A.D., while Kurnool was held by his deputy.⁷

Fort and fortification:

The fort was made of red sandstone. The stones are thought to have been taken from Jagannatha gutta in the borders of Kurnool. The fort is made up of the following structures: Konda Reddy-Buruju, Gopal-diddi, Erra buruju, round bastions, fort walls, and so on.

Gopal-diddi or Darwaja:

It is named after Araviti Gopala Raja, Kurnool's last Hindu king. It serves as the fort's northern entrance. It is located on the Tungabhadra River's southern bank. The northern entrance known as Gopala- Darwaja has an intriguing backstory. The Hindu leader Gopala Raja was a natural hero, but his local forces were overpowered by Abdul Wahab's invading army. Fearless, he bathed in the Tungabhadra River early in the morning, worshipped his adore deity, Sri Venugopala swamy, and marched against the Muslim army. He fought valiantly against overwhelming odds, killing many troops before dying a hero's death at the steps of Sri Anjaneya Temple near the doorway. The fort's walls are adorned with sculptures such as the mythological lion, Boddu-devara (Yellamma or Sunkulamma), and others.

Konda Reddy Buruju:

Araviti Gopala Raja was Kurnool's last Hindu king. He was defeated by Abdul Wahab, a Bijapur sultan's general. Konda Reddy, a Palegar of Prathakota in Nandikotkur taluk, was the one who refused to recognise Abdul Wahab's suzerainty. Konda Reddy was imprisoned and died in this underground cell. As a result, it was given the name Konda Reddy buruju. It's broken into four sections.

Underground floor:

There is an underground floor on the eastern side. It contains a small garden and a guard room, and it is supported by four rows of pillars at the southwest corner. The first floor is accessible via a flight of forty stairs.

First floor:

There are four large guard rooms and two small guard rooms on this floor. There are steps leading to the second level on both the left and right sides. Steps in the middle lead to an underground chamber or cellar. It is believed that an underground tunnel connects Konda Reddy fort to Alampur via the Tungabhadra River. It had to be a private chamber of a powerful minister or commander.

Second floor:

Seven stone guard rooms are present. They are looking west. On the western side, there are thirty-four storey structures with little gaps. The rulers used gunpowder to assault the adversary via the two apertures. These constructions bear Vijayanagara symbols such as lions and elephants. These sculptures, despite their little size, are quite appealing.

Third floor:

Seven brick guard rooms are present. They are looking east. There is a stupa-like structure that is nearly forty feet tall.

Nawab's palace and boat:

It is situated on the banks of the sacred Tungabhadra River. A route leads from the Sri Nagareswara Swamy Temple to the Nawab's Palace. It served as the official house of the Araviti dynasty's Hindu kings. It's a lovely structure. It was afterwards occupied by Muslims. The boat-shaped residence of the nawab is located in the middle of the Tungabhadra River,

and it must have been the summer palace. It has a number of rooms. It is now in ruins. A fort wall stretches from Sri Saibaba temple to Bandla Metta on the banks of the Tungabhadra River. The 6-foot-wide walls were built primarily to defend the town from floods caused by the Tungabhadra and Handri (Aindravathi) rivers.

Circular bastions can also be found at Bandla Metta, the fruit bazaar, and Harishchandra ghat (Hindu burial place) near Jammi tree on the banks of the Handri (Aindravathi) river. There are sculptural images of Lord Vishnu's ten incarnations, such as fish, tortoise, and other forms of serpent, lion, elephant, horses, and so on, on the fort wall near Madhava street. Stone was used to construct the eastern gate leading to the Tungabhadra River. It is incredibly large and draws the attention of people. The modest arch-style entry adjacent to Sri Narasimha Swami Temple is an excellent example of Vijayanagara architecture. Khanderi is a street close to the nawab's residence. It has some ancient buildings that have fallen into disrepair.

Erra Buruju:

One of the ruined defences of the Kurnool fort, Era-buruju ('Erra' means 'red,' and buruju' means watchtower), is now in the heart of Kurnool (next to Victory Talkies). It was named after the red sandstone used in its construction. It is round in shape (almost 300 feet wide) and was once enclosed by a moat. A flight of steps on the southern side (Minchin Bazaar) connects it.

There are two ancient temples of goddess Yellamma at the foot of Era-buruju, the Pedda Yellamma Temple (on the southeastern side) and the Chinna Yellamma Temple (on the north-eastern side).

Both temples have been refurbished, and new idols have been erected. In the instance of the Pedda Yellamma temple, the sculptural vestiges of the original goddess Yellamma (such as the goddess's left leg and bust) have been preserved. In both temples, daily pujas are performed. Locals are certain that Erra-buruju has a secret treasure.

Animal sacrifice:

Since time immemorial, mankind has sacrificed animals as a communal tradition. Buffalo (Devara Dunnapothu in Telugu) is reported to be sacrificed to the goddess Yellamma. The sculptural images of a buffalo and the goddess Yellamma (Boddu devara, as locals name it) on the walls of this Era-buruju support this.

Conclusion:

The rulers of traditional India recognised the importance of forts and fortifications, and many forts were built around significant cities and capitals with the special patronage of contemporary monarchs. During the mediaeval period of Indian history, the science of

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creating forts and fortifications was given greater importance. Most of the forts were occupied by these kings, who extended them with certain necessary additions for strategic and defensive purposes.

According to the study, there was a significant increase in the number of forts and their distribution throughout Andhra throughout the same time period. In the Vijayanagara empire (14th to 16th century A.D.), the institution of fort had its heyday in the body politic. During this time, the fort's significance as a politico-military institution became widely recognised. As a result, a considerable number of villages or towns in Rayalaseema became fortified, based on their strategic location and vulnerability to foreign invasions.

Furthermore, during the Vijayanagara period, the forts were elevated to the status of a district or province (sima or rastra), and their capture represented the conquering of the entire country. As a result, several vital forts in Rayalaseema, including as Penukonda, Chandragiri, Udayagiri, Gutty, and Adoni, obtained Rajya or province status and built fort complexes. Furthermore, forts like as Gandikota, Siddhavatam, Kurnool, Gurram Konda, and others served as sima headquarters. These forts were crucial in the Vijayanagara empire as fortresses in the eastern province.

According to the available literature on antiquarian remnants, there were as many as 82 forts or fortified villages of various sizes strategically located throughout Rayalaseema. About ten of them appear to be significant in terms of their intact state of preservation and the role they played from a political and military standpoint. The surviving forts served as the Nayankara or local leaders' headquarters.

In comparison to other areas of Andhra, the Rayalaseema region has a higher number of forts due to its smaller geographical area.

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