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## **The World Heritage Site Hampi in Karnataka-Its Preservation & Conservation of Secular Structures-A Study**

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### **Abstract:**

*Hampi or Pampaksetra or Kishkinda founded around the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century constitutes an event of great significance in the history of south India in particular & in the history of India in general. The famous empire Vijayanagara (City of Victory) with its capital Hampi stands on the banks of the river Tungabhadra. It stood as a bulwark against Islam and protected Hinduism in Karnataka. The ruins of Hampi, even in this desolate condition give us a glimpse of the ancient grandeur of the capital, thus the author wants to draw the attention of the research scholars historians guides etc as to not to forget this empire & preserve the structures. The author has chosen the primary & secondary sources.*

**Keywords:** *Kishkinda, Pushkarni, Pampaksetra, Vijayanagara, Mandi, Bazaar, Mahadewaera, Mahal.*

### **1. Introduction**

Hampi, the legendary Pampakshetra, located on the banks of the river Tungabhadra, in Karnataka is a place of remote antiquity. It came to limelight during the 14<sup>th</sup> century when it was made the capital seat of the then founded Vijayanagara Kingdom. Many believe that it was once the legendary Kingdom of "Kishkinda". The Persian Ambassador Abdul Razzak, who visited this city in 1442 A. D has seen and described Hampi as "The city of "Bidjanagar" is such that the pupil of the eye has never seen a place like it, and the year of intelligence has never been informed that there existed anything to equal it in the world"

Another version by a Portuguese traveler and a horse trader, Fernao Nuniz, in 1535 A.D.said about Hampi that- "What he saw seemed as large as Rome and very beautiful to the site-the king very great and strong, buys 13000 horses every year". Hampi and its areas are dotted with many historical monuments and the kings of Vijayanagara developed architecture of their own, which is a mixture of Dravidian style, the Chalukyan style and the Hoysala style. Many such secular structures have been found in Hampi and the surrounding areas.

I am extremely happy to note that, the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Mysore, Government of Karnataka for captivating the attention of millions of people across the globe to preserve this site, i.e. Hampi in Karnataka.

The government of Hampi and the Government of Karnataka have also taken keen interest in resurrecting the legacy of this glorious city of the past. The resurrection work is being carried out continuously. The UNESCO, realizing the importance of the relics of the city of Hampi, has declared them as "Monuments of World Heritage".

Hampi has been haven for tourists and academicians, from India and abroad in the recent decade. Tourism facilitates people of the different parts of the globe to meet and understand each other. As our country is very rich in beautiful monuments of the past, they are our most precious cultural possessions, thus it is our responsibility to preserve and present these monuments and their environs to the tourists in such a manner that they communicate the essence of our civilization, our tradition and our goal of peaceful living effectively to the entire world. The year 2009 A. D. was special as it marked the 500<sup>th</sup> year of coronation of Shri Krishnadevaraya, one of the most powerful emperor of the Vijayangara royal dynasty.



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Figure 1

Although there are scholarly books, research papers and archaeological excavations and explorations on Hampi, which are still going on, the present paper is highlighting upon its rich cultural heritage that was once , and the present day is seriously demanding to Preserve and Conserve, the already “CITY OF RUINS”.

The secular structures in Hampi can be termed as the Royal Center or Enclosures, of which the Lotus Mahal ,Elephant Stables, Mahanavami Dibba, The Queens Bath, The Pushkarni, The Tulabhara Spot, Bheemas Gate, The Virupaksha Bazaar also known as Pamparatha Veedhi, Teru Veedhi , The Huge Monolithic Statue of Nandi (Eduru Basavanna) The Mantapa built in the outer Prakara of the Tiruvengadanatha ( Achutyaraya temple), The Kings Audience Hall, Swimming Pool and The Stepped Tank, etc. are termed as the secular structures, which have no definite design for their plans, depending upon the necessity and function they are planned. Even some of the Forts, Gateways, Streets, Pavilions, Houses, Ponds, are in the dilapidated condition in different directions in the parts of the city.



Figure 2

### 1.1. Need of the hour

The efforts made by UNESCO, the Archaeological Survey of India and the Directorate of Archaeological and Museums in Karnataka are trying their level best to restore the ruined monuments to their Original forms, yet the efforts made are very little when compared to the efforts to be made in this direction.

## 2. Major Problems That Posing Threat Are

1. Encroachments on monuments in Hampi are going on incessantly, which are to be stopped immediately.

Primary Threats to Hampi World Heritage Site is Urbanization and Unplanned Development Encroaching infrastructure and uncontrolled construction of buildings in this area are a constant threat to Hampi as only 58 of the 550 total monuments hold heritage protection status. Encroaching urbanization continues to threaten the site as a result of the ever-increasing population and growing pressures from tourism. The most recent threat is a proposed new BRIDGE constructed at Kamalapur.



Figure 3

2. Visitors or Tourists visiting these places should be instructed strictly so that they should not destroy the beauty of these monuments by inscribing upon the walls, pillars, rocks etc. For instance: In the Lotus Mahal, or Kamal Mahal the interiors walls are defaced and also in the Queens Bath and other secular structures in Hampi which are losing their beauty and glamour by such activities by our own people which can be seen in the picture.



Figure 4



Figure 5

3. The monuments are under threat of falling down due to bad maintenance, or due to rainfall or any other natural calamity.

4. Hydraulic conservation is needed in Pushkarni, the stepped pond, a large swimming pool in the Royal Enclosure, an underground drain that supplied water to various parts of the enclosure and a tank near soole bazaar etc.



Figure 6: the Pushkarni



Figure 7: the Stepped Tank

5. The Mantapas and rocks having cracks due to mining activities in and around these protected places.



Figure 8: The Mantapas



Figure 9: Bhimana Mahadwara

6. Pollution of River Tungabhadra by humans and animals.



Figure 10: River Tungabhadra

### 7. Creating awareness among the Local people.

The local people residing in and around these places should be instructed and also an awareness should be created amongst them, so as not to use the ruined monuments materials which are becoming good source of building materials for the construction of their houses, dwelling places, compound walls etc. Human vandalism and ravages of time and weather are consuming the relics built out of soft media like bricks, cement, mortar and wood.



Figure 11: Work Going On

8. Provision should be made like fixing of C.C.T.V. cameras in these areas and also to appoint security guards on day and night shifts. Hampi has a rich cultural heritage. There are numerous beautiful buildings, like the temples, mosques, forts, and palaces etc., which belong to the medieval period. There are paintings, inscriptions, sculptures, coins, literature, handicrafts, pottery, dresses etc. which are available, here and remind us of the rich and glorious cultural heritage of the Vijayanagara period. Thus constant effort for preservation and protection of these monuments is very important. The government, experts, organizations and individuals are responsible for the protection of these monuments.

Immediate attention should be taken regarding the maintenance of the roads and, streets in and around Hampi for the smooth transportation of the vehicles and also for the visitors and tourists to visit this place. A walk through Hampi can be both mysterious and rustic. The boulders, the fallen temple stones, the broken palace basements all have a story to tell. We need to preserve them for the future.

### 3. Conclusion

The monuments, and structures reflect the past glory and grandeur of the Vijayanagara Empire, though it opened a glorious chapter in the annals of History, but the pages are fading away, thus it is an urgent hour and need that the decision should be taken by the Archaeological Survey of India, and the Government of Karnataka, to Preserve and Conserve these precious monuments, so that the future generation might witness this "WORLD HERITAGE SITE"

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