

THE ENVIRONS OF DHARWAD FORT AREA: A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Geographers visualize the concept of one world one man and they alone can present true history of any region at any time. With this spirit in mind, an attempt is made here to re-touch and to rewrite the heritage history of Dharwad in the back drop of geographical aspects in general and the heritage monuments of Dharwad city in particular. Through explorations and archaeological findings, we have come to know many heritage sites, historical monuments, both of ancient and modern times. These heritage monuments span a long period in the history from 8th century to 19th century A.D. "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder", said John Keats. The history of Dharwad can be explained as a place of rest after a long sojourn through the saga of entire Karnataka. For centuries Dharwad acted as a gateway between Malenadu (western mountains) and Bayalu seeme [plains] and it became a resting place for the travellers. Another theory is, when this region was under the Vijayanagar Rule, one "Dharwad" [1403 A.D.] was in-charge and Dharwad got its name from him. There are some inscriptions that refer to Dharwad as Kampanasthana. With the archaeological surveys made by the archaeologists, the existence of Dharwad is traced back to 12th century and it is now at least 900 years old. The Dharwad city is located at the intersection of 14°17' and 15° 50" north latitude and 74° 48' and 76° east longitude, and presently spread over an area of 4265 km². the present population of the city is 218961 according to 2001 census. The present study is based on empirical observations through frequent visit to the fort. Hence the study is qualitative in nature.

Key words: Environ, Geographical Analysis.

Introduction

Before the 3rd century most of Karnataka was a part of the Nanda empire, later four centuries of Satvahana rule followed, who controlled large areas of Kamataka, next it was the Kadamba dynasty founded by Mayura Sharma, then the Vijayanagara empire flourished and attained its peak under Sri Krishnadevaraya's administration. In 1565, Karnataka and the rest of south India experienced a major geographical shift, when the Vijayanagara Empire fell to a confederation of Islamic Sultanate in the Battle of Talikota. Later it was the uprising of the British rule in Karnataka followed by the freedom movement by the late 19th century which gained momentum resulting in our Independence in 1947. Though Dharwad was under Bombay Presidency earlier to Independence, the language widely spoken being Kannada, it had the rich heritage of Kannada culture. With the dictum of growth of human civilization in the central part of the present Karnataka region, the Dharwad region too has encouraged the growth of population through the ages and has passed through pre-historical as well as modern ages and has not only established human civilizations but also maintained socio-cultural aspects and has built a saga of physical human settlements in its environs. .Historical and archaeological information are evident in plenty in this geography region.

Chalukyas ruled Dharwad during 12th century .A stone inscription indicates that there was a ruler by the name Bhaskara Deva in 111 A.D and later Dharwad became a part of the Vijayanagara empire. After the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire [1453 A.D], Bijapur's Adilshah captured Dharwad and built a fort. The fort was called Manakille and later it was called Nazaratabad. With this fort, the strategic importance of Dharwad increased and it thus became a part of every empire, to name a few. Aurangazeb, Shivaji, Aurangzeb's son Muazam. and

then. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao, Hyder Ali, Tippu Sultan and finally the British. During the early 19th century, when the British were expanding their kingdom, they faced a lot of opposition from the local rulers of Dharwad and nearabouts. To name a few, Baba Saheb of Nargund, Kittur Rani Chennamma and others.

During the early 20th century, the importance of Dharwad increased and it soon became a centre of freedom struggle. The first political conference in Karnataka was held in Dharwad [1902]. During non co-operation movement [1921], the first ever police firing in whole of India took place in Dharwad. Dharwad participated actively in Khilafat and Quit India movements. There were many police firings and lathi charges on people of Dharwad. A monument stands in the district of Dharwad in the memory of those who died in the struggle for independence. From August 15, 1947 to October 31, 1956, the district of Dharwad was in the Bombay province as the British government divided it. On November 1, 1956, after the re-organization of states based on languages spoken in the particular region, Dharwad became a part of the Karnataka state. So Dharwad has history of at least 900 years. There is an inscription to this effect at Hanuman temple at Bokypur lake near the village Garag about 18 km from Dharwad.

Study area

Dharwad lies between 14°17' and 15° 50' north latitude and 74° 48' and 76° east longitude, the southernmost district of Bombay, lies on the table land to the east of the north Kanara, sahyadris separated from the coast by a belt about fifty miles broad it has an area of 4500 square miles and has a population of 218961 and the density of population is 219 per sq km. the total geographical area is 111788 (area in hectares) according 2008-09 statistical data. Dharwad district has total geographical area of 4.27 lakh hectares, with cultivated area of 3.60 lakh hectares and Dharwad lies in the transitional zone. In this tract the rainfall is fairly assured with July - October are the peak rainfall months, with average rainfall of 700-750 that equates to 32 to 39 inches and it normally begins in the month of June.

The climate in Dharwad is hot with excessive rainfall during the monsoon session. The temperature may vary between maximum of 39°C in April - May and a minimum of 12°C in December. As Dharwad is just east of magnificent "Western Ghats", Dharwad is surrounded by hills. There are a number of hills and numerous lakes and smaller water bodies. On the western side we find mountains 'of Sahyadri, a river called shalmala originated in Dharwad but now she flows underground. Western part of Dharwad is called Malenadu, full of forestry of red soil, eastern part of Dharwad is called Belavala Nadu, flat land of black soil, Central part of Dharwad is Gadinadu, a mixture of both. Weather throughout the year is pleasant; especially summer evenings are cooler and geologically major part of the city has schist layers.

The town is spread between seven hills mainly - (1) Ettina Gudda (2) Malamaddi or Ullavi Basaveshwara hill (3) Mailaralinga hill (4) Rajatgiri hill (5) Madarmaddi hill (6) Tejaswinagar hill (7) Saraswatpur hill. There were nine lakes earlier but now only two exist, (1) Kelgeri (2) Sadhankeri. The Socio economic status of Dharwad is based mainly on the factors like income and occupation; Education, Wealth etc being standing in the advancing stages of development, as Dharwad is known as a land of Education.

Problem and its relevance

In Kautilya's Arthashastra [300 B.C], he has described four types of forts, one is the ground fort [Sthaladurga], second is the hill fort [Giridurga], third is the water fort [Jala durga] and the fourth is the forest fort [Vanadurga]. The description is given on the basis of the geographical [physical features], the environment prevailing here, it may be a plain area or a hilly area or an area surrounded by water or forest. He has made it clear in his book that describes

construction of different types of forts known as Shilpa Shastra as to how the architectural features of the fort should be in different Geographical areas. The fort built in Dharwad describes all these aspects. It has four lakes in cardinal directions, the Koppadkere in the north, on the east it is the Halakere, on the west Durga Devi kere and far south it is called the Kempakere. These were the water reservoirs and low lying areas where water used to get collected naturally during the rainy season. These lakes were the strategic points surrounding the fort area. So this fort area under discussion was an elevated one at the centre and this area became the focal point for the construction of the fort which was built with these considerations to make it strong and also to resist the attack of the enemies. Hence the problem is selected.

Objectives

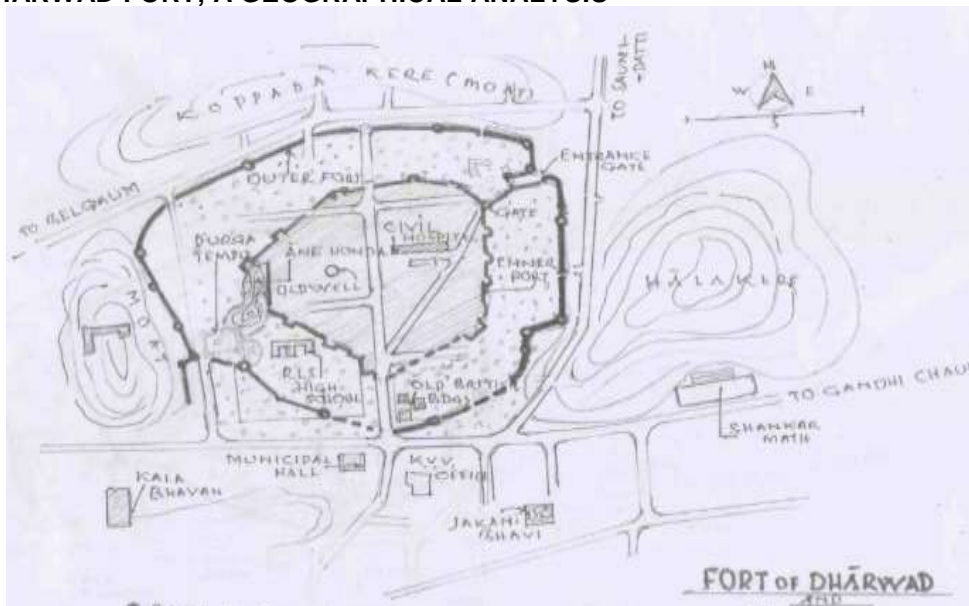
The main objectives of the present study are -

- To Analyze geographical environs of Dharwad fort
- To examine the temporal variations in Historical geography of Dharwad fort.

Data base and Methodology

The data information has been collected through field observations and studies and questionnaire method. The information has also been collected from gazetteers and government publications. Since the study is qualitative in nature the methodology adopted is inductive one.

DHARWAD FORT, A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS



The fort of Dharwad was existing during the Rastrakutas of Malkhed which now forms a part of Gulbarga District and the famous Durga Devi temple too belonged to the same period (says Dr. R.S.Panchamukhi) and later on it was renovated at the time of Kalyana Chalukya king Vikramaditya the 6th around 1117 A D along with his subordinate Bhaudeva. Another mention is made about the prominence of the fort of Dharwad in the Kalghatgi taluka, a place called Mishrikoti, where in an inscription of later Chalukyan period (12th Century A D) is found. Dr. M Siddique, Epigrapher from Nagpur, also makes a reference to the fort of Dharwad.

The fort of Dharwad has low enclosure walls (the inner fort and the external fort) its plan and layout is found circular to some extent, but it follows the last lower four line of the central area that is rising in a low profile, along the lakes as mentioned above, the shape may also be called "Andakriti". All along the fort wall, at regular intervals, rectangular bastions representing Hindu period and roused bastions of Islamic period and also the contribution of Maratha period to some extent, are provided to fight against the enemies. The water on the cardinal points of the lakes serves as the first defence sheet keeping away the enemies for a long distance. They serve as natural moats too. The main entrance to the fort is on the north east and it is the first enclosure wall, which is led by a 'Barbican' (Zig-Zag way) to confuse the entrants to the fort. In the first enclosure commoners used to stay and in the second enclosure which is the inner fort, the rulers and the royals stayed. The palace building is missing somehow; there is a deep well inside the central table land, which must have provided drinking water to the royals inside. In the year 1567 - 68 A D, a subordinate ruler Kishwar Khan having allegiance to king Adilshah of Bijapur captured the fort of Dharwad and also the fort of Torgal, and to prove this, there is a Persian inscription on the arc slab of the entrance gate which says that this fort is called "Nasratabad", but as days went by, the fort retained its name as Dharwad fort. The fort was captured by different rulers as detailed below. To mention a few,

1567 A.D.	Shivaji
1568 A.D.	Kishwar Khan of Bijapur
1685 A.D.	Azam Khan of Mughals who converted the Mailarlinga
1753-58	Baji Rao Peshwa, A Maratha Niler
1778 A.D.	Hyder Ali of Mysore appointed Mirza saitulla, Siyal Khan and Moinuddin Khan Khalandar
1790 A.D.	Prashuram Bhau of Jamkhandi State
1803 A.D.	Lord Wellesley
1817 A.D.	Major Neval (hoisted Union Jack)
1818 A.D.	Capt. Munore
1823-24	Capt. Thackerey
1830 A.D.	Dharwad became the district head quarters
1857-58	In this fort Nargund Mutineers were hanged
1947 A.D.	India attains freedom

This is how Dharwad Fort first made its importance felt in the History of India, and now it is in ruins. It is surrounded and occupied by the construction of the civil hospital, Karnataka High School and it has also become a residential area.

Some observations on the fort area of Dharwad

Geography is one of the ancient disciplines and this discipline is fully utilized by the fort builders, by skillfully adopting it in finding proper location, extant and use of natural resources for the construction. The architecture of this Dharwad fort in relation to local conditions and advanced techniques and methods of war is a unique one and compared to traditional architecture, it is highly advanced. Dharwad fort was never a capital of a kingdom nor it remained the headquarters of Mohammad Adilsha era or Subedars or some Muslim Governors, but it had its unique role in binding the two cultures, northern and southern which could be seen even in its name Dharwad.

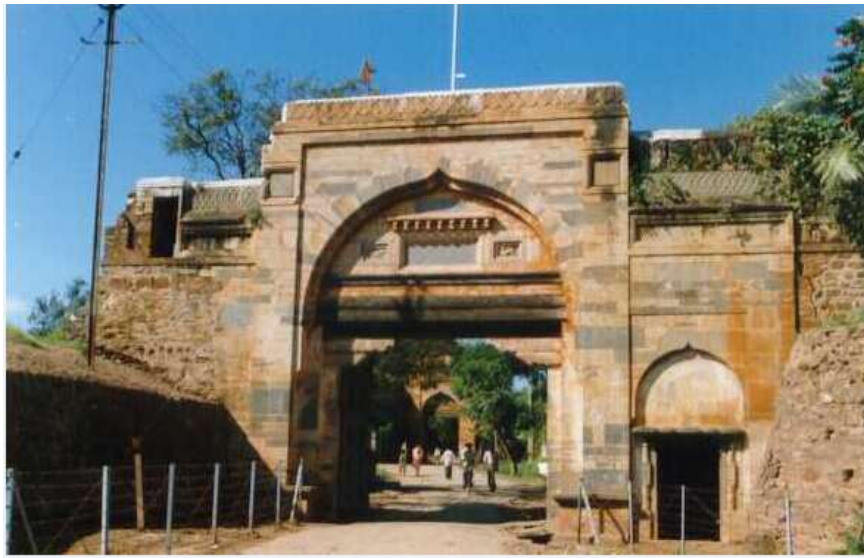


The extant remains of the fort denote -

1. Natural strategy.
2. Economic resources.
3. Political security in relation to contemporary existing conditions.

The natural strategy could be seen as it is surrounded by four lakes, as the area receives, good rains, it comes into the 'Malenadu area. It is surrounded by forest which is extended by the Sahyadri ranges in its nest. The Dharwad rock is abundantly available and these were used for the construction of the fort. The wood used as a building material was procured from the Sahyadri

forests. The economic resources helped the construction of many administrative set up in Dharwad along with the fort, to make more comfortable and convenient living for the human habitation. Political security in relation to contemporary existing conditions: The Archaeological survey department is trying its best to maintain the remains of the fort. An awareness is also brought among the people around, through several save heritage activities conducted by Educational institutions.



Conclusion

A unique type of socio cultural society is formed here because of many migrants from different states of India. It was occupied by the Muslims, Marathas, Kayasthas, Konkanis, Saraswats, Christians, Brahmins, and people of many different castes and religions which became a hub of concentration and all of them have made significant contributions to this area, and they are living together peacefully and this is still going on and will go on for many years to come.

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