



Forts tourism in Telangana: A study on Khammam fort

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Abstract

Telangana region has been ruled by great dynasties such as Sathavahanas, Kakatiyas, Chalukyas, Mughals, Qutubshahis, Asafjahis. Kakathiya's contributions to architecture are considered most impressive while Sathavahanas ruled Telangana region for about 400 years right from the 2nd century B.C. to beyond the 2nd century A.D. Among Kakathiya's, Prataparudra, was a great ruler who ruled till A.D.1323. Telangana State has an inflated history, which is offered over by the erstwhile rules and it holds a rich tapestry of architecture, forests, monuments, heritage buildings, museums and other attractive places. It is a state of built on the ancient relics and this states crafts, arts and world-renowned and bespeak of old traditions and rich culture. This state has its diverse and have many rich heritage places and monuments which can be visited like most famous places which are located in Hyderabad, Charminar, Golconda Fort Qutab Shahi Tombs, Falaknuma Palace, Slargjung Museum and Buddha Statue in Hussain Sagar Lake. Other than Hyderabad there are so many places to visit namely Bhongir Fort, Paigah Tombs, Nagunur Fort, Chowmahalla Place, Warangal Fort and Kakatiya Kala Thoranam: Khammam Fort was built during 950 A.D. when the region was under the control of Kakatiya kings. However, the fort could not be completed during their reign and the Musunuri Nayakas and the Velama Kings took it upon themselves to complete its construction. In 1531, during the rule of the Qutb Shahis the fort was further developed and many new buildings and rooms were added into the fort. It is a fine example of both Hindu and Muslim architecture since it drew influences from both styles, and rulers of both the religions were involved in its construction.

Keywords: Telangana, forts, tourism, Khammam

Introduction

Telangana is famous for its rich culture, traditions and heritage. The state was known for being a key-trading regions along the coast and throughout its history has had many foreign communities coming here to do business. The spice trade here led to many of the traders fighting against one another to take control of the region, which in turn led to the construction of forts that were symbols of power and marked the territories of the traders. With the passage of time these forts have lost much of its past grandeur. Tourists coming to Telangana will always be fascinated by the vast cover of green and the various other attractions that it has to offer, but for those who want a taste of history, they should visit these forts. Here is a look at some of the marvellous forts of Telangana ^[1].

History of forts

We all know that India is popular for its historical monuments. Of all these historic monuments, forts are the most alluring. India is dotted with a number of forts which speak loud of the country's rich and glorious past. A visit to the forts of India is the best way to uncover the real treasure of Indian history. These forts form great reminders of the bygone eras and their rulers. In Indian Military history forts have played a significant role right from the earliest times down to the recent past. The term *Fort* implies a strong hold affording protection and security to the inhabitants of those who take refuge in it. In Sanskrit language it is commonly known as *Durga* – a place inaccessible of approach; or impassable tract ^[2]. Historical Forts in Telangana are innumerable and portray the historical heritage of this Indian state, which were created by rulers of various royal dynasties including Kakatiyas, Qutb Shahis and others.

To understand the history of forts, one needs to realise that various forts in a geographical region had different defence bastions and served different purposes. While some served as frontiers of kingdoms, others merely acted as centres of trade and commerce. These frontiers too kept changing from time to time. and hence no two forts can be compared to each other without understanding the role they served in the right perspective. Historical Forts in Telangana can be attributed to the ancient rulers of the southern portion of the country, who had erected these marvellous historical monuments. Even today, the forts are well preserved and serve as beautiful tourist locales, being thronged by historians and travellers from India and also abroad.

Popular forts in Telangana

Generally, the forts are four kinds i.e. *Giridurgas*, *Staladurgas*, *Jaladurgas* and *Vanadurgas*. Some of the important forts in Telangana is below:

The Golconda fort

Golconda Fort is located in the western part of Hyderabad city and is about 9 km. from the Hussain Sagar Lake. The Golconda fort, and other Qutub Shahi dynasty Monuments of Hyderabad (the Charminar, and the Qutub Shahi Tombs) were submitted by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO in 2010 for consideration as World Heritage Site. They are currently included on India's tentative list. The outer fort occupies an area of three square kilometres, which is 4.8 kilometres in length. It was originally known as Mankal, and built on a hilltop in the year 1143 A.D. It was originally a mud fort under the reign of Rajah of Warangal. Later it was fortified between 14th and 17th centuries by the Bahmani Sultans and then the ruling Qutub Shahi dynasty.

Golconda was the principal capital of the Qutub Shahi kings. The inner fort contains ruins of palaces, mosques and a hill top pavilion, which rises about 130 meters high and gives a bird's eye view of other buildings. Golconda fort is undoubtedly one of most magnificent fortress complexes in India. The history of Golconda Fort goes back to early 13th century, when it was ruled by the Kakatiya's followed by Qutub Shahi kings, who ruled the region in 16th and 17th century. The fortress rests on a granite hill 120 meters high while huge crenulated ramparts surround this structure. It was initially called Shepherd's Hill, meaning *Golla Konda* in Telugu while according to legend, on this rocky hill a shepherd boy had come across an idol and the information was conveyed to the ruling Kakatiya king at that time. The king constructed a mud fort around this holy spot and after 200 years, Bahamani rulers took possession of the place. Later the Qutub Shahi kings converted this into massive granite fort extending 5km in circumference. The fort is considered a mute witness to historic events. The Qutub Shahis reign at Golconda ended in 1687 A.D. when it was run over by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, who intentionally left it in ruins

Golconda still boasts of mounted cannons, four drawbridges, eight gateways, and majestic halls, magazines, stables etc. The outermost enclosure is called Fateh Darwaza meaning Victory gate, after Aurangzeb's army marched successfully through this gate. At Fateh Darwaza one can witness fantastic acoustical effects, which is one among the many famous engineering marvels at Golconda. Clapping your hand at a certain point near the dome entrance reverberates which is heard clearly at the hill top pavilion, almost one kilometre away. This served as a warning note to the inhabitants of the fort of any impending danger. Of course it now amuses visitors. The fort gains an impressive place among the architectural marvels and heritage structures of India and is a testimony to Hyderabad's glorious past.

The Warangal Fort

Warangal Fort is one of the ancient forts in South India and is also one of the popular tourist attractions in Warangal. It was built in the 13th century and is around 2 km. from the main city centre. Hundreds of tourists come to the Warangal Fort to get a feel of the grand architecture of South India. The fort was built during the Kakatiya dynasty. The fort has four ornamental gates, known as Kakatiya Kala Thoranam, that originally formed the entrances to a now ruined great Shiva temple. The Kakatiyan arch has been adopted and officially incorporated into the Emblem of Telangana after the state bifurcation. The Fort is included in the "tentative list" of UNESCO World Heritage Site. The monument was submitted by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO on 10/09/2010.

The Warangal Fort in Warangal was destroyed by the invaders and as such only the ruins of the fort can be seen. There is a mud wall of around 20 feet which surrounds the entire fort while the second layer is of granite. The fort consists of impressive stone gateways which have a height of around 30 feet. They are carved out of single rock. The gateways are known as *Kirti Toranas*. They consist of beautiful carvings of Lord Vishnu carried by Garuda and surrounded by attendants.

The Warangal Fort was built in the reign of king Ganapatideva, who shifted the capital from Hanamkonda to

Warangal. There are some remains of ancient temples and sculptures which date back to the ancient Kakatiya period. There are 45 towers in the fort and pillars which are spread over an area of 19 kms. There is a temple of Mother Earth called *Swayambhudevi Alayam*.

The Warangal Fort is an important attraction in the itinerary of Warangal tours. Warangal is also easily accessible from various parts of the country. The nearest international airport is located in the city of Hyderabad which is well connected with Warangal. The road network connects the area with other parts of the country. Buses ply between Warangal and other cities like Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore, Hubli, Tirupati and other places.

The bhongir hill fort

Bhongir fort is located on Hyderabad – Warangal Highway in Yadadri district. The construction of the fort was initiated by the Chalukyas of Kalyani (10th century A.D.), and later it was subsequently developed and strengthened by the Kakatiyas (12th – 13th century A.D.) of Warangal. This is an important fort of historical importance in Yadadri Bhongir district and represents the historical significance of Telangana state. Later on it was passed onto the hands of Qutub-Shahis of Golconda and Asafjahis of Hyderabad (17th – 18th century A.D). Interestingly the hill fort is located on a monolithic hillock. The historic temple offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region. There are ruined palaces, gateways, tanks, secret pathways etc. inside the fort. It is one of the earliest forts in the Deccan region. The inner walls represent different styles in their construction. The fort witnessed several battles between the Kakatiyas and Gajapathi's of Orissa. The ruins of this fort are of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era.⁶³ It was located strategically on an ancient trade route, connecting the east costal area.

The Gandhari Fort

Gandhari fort or *Gandharri kota* is situated in the reserve forest, about 4 km. from Mancherla - Bellampally road in Mancherla district of Telangana. The fort was constructed connecting the four peaks of hillocks, locally known as Gandharigutta which is situated in between Jalagutta and Oragutta. Even today there is a relatively thick forest cover around the hillocks indicating that the fort was a Vanagiridurga (Hill fort situated amidst forest area) during its heyday. Such forts are considered to be of great importance in the era which has seen the glory of dynastic rule in this region, situated in the northern part of Telangana region.

Rock cut cells, gateways, four-armed Bhairava, chained Elephant with a man in its trunk, Rock cut cave temple with seven hooded Naga, Ganesha, Hanuman and *Savathula bavulu* are some of the highlights of this fort. The construction work of the fort was believed to have started early as Rastrakuta era and continued till 16th century A.D. It believed that Rajgonds had ruled this area ^[40]. The ruins of the fort stand strong even to this day, showing the expertise of the rulers who had reigned here centuries ago.

The Elgandal Fort

Elgandal fort is located nearly 15 km. from Karimnagar town and is well accessible by road. The Elgandal fort at Elgandal village on the left bank of river Maner is situated

near Karimnagar town on Karimnagar-Vemulavada Road. It was constructed during the Kakatiya period, and later on passed on to the hands of Qutub Shahi's of Gokonda. In the year 1756 A.D. the fort was strengthened by the Qiladar namely Mirza Khan Dhimsa. There are two stone fortification walls i.e., the outer and the inner. There are two mosques imposingly constructed one on the top of the hill and the other at the foot of the hill. The exterior walls are decorated with floral designs in stucco. Interestingly, there are two dilapidated temples, one is dedicated to Narasimha swamy on the top of the hill and the other is Hanuman temple at the foot of the hill. Inside the fort area are ammunition building, mosques, two jail khana, wells and other structural edifices.

The Ramagiri Fort (Built during Kakatiya regime)

A fort located on Ramagiri hillocks is located near Begumpet village in Kamanpur mandal in Peddapalli district, and near the PWD road leading to Manthani. This famous fort built in stone with several bastions is spread over a very large area of several kilometers. The Ramagiri hill with very vast area is known for its beautiful natural surroundings with rare species of plants and several kinds of medicinal roots. The fort played an important role from the early times to the period of Asafjahis. The fort was under the control of Gundaraja of Manthani and Edaraja of Ramagundam. They were defeated by the Kakati Prola II and the entire area of Polavasa, Manthani and Ramagundam were under the control of Kakatiyas. After the fall of Kakatiyas, Anapothanayaka of Racherla Padmanayaka family occupied Orugallu and appointed Muppabhupala as the ruler of Sabbinadu with his capital at Ramagiri during 14th century A.D. The Bahamani Sultan Ahmed shah I (1422-1436 A.D.) invaded Telangana region in 1433 A.D. and occupied the Ramagiri fort. After Qutub Shahis of Golkonda the fort was under the control of Mughals and finally Asafjahis and their Deshmukhs ^[49]. There are many important structures on the hill fort viz. Sitaramalayam, Ramasthapita Lingam, The footprints of Rama and Janikimata, Sitaram Kolanu (Well), mosques, tombs and a good number of wells on the hill. Asvasala (Horse stable) Gajasala (Elephant stable), Cherasala (prison), Durbar hall (Royal court), cannons and cannon balls etc are also located on the hillock.

The Pratapgiri Fort (Built by Prataparudra of Warangal)

Pratapgiri village is located nearly 30 km. from Bhupalapally town and is well accessible by road. The Pratapgiri village is located in the thick forest of Kataram and Mahadevpur mandals in Jayashakar Bhupalapally district. There is a small fort built in stone, and only fortification walls are existing now in the reserve forest at about 6 km, interior of the village Pratapgiri. According to an undated inscription on the wall of the fort, it was constructed by Mucchananayaka who bears a string of titles viz. *Iruvattu ganda*, *Ganda gopala*, *Kamchi rakshapalaka*, *dayagajakesari*, *ariraya-gaja-kesari* etc. This is an important fort of historical importance in Jayashakar Bhupalapally district and represents the historical significance of this district. As *dayagajakesari* and *ariraya-gaja-kesari* are the titles of Kakatiya kings, this fort is believed to have been built during 13th- 14th century A.D. during the period of Kakati Prataparudradeva and named

after him as "Pratapagirikota". The ruins of this fort are of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era, which makes them strong to this day ^[48].

The Koulas Fort

The village of Koulas is a historical place, situated in Jukkal Mandal of Nizamabad district. According to local tradition, Koulas was originally called, 'Kailas', as five Sivalingas were established by the Kakatiya rulers in five corners. The Koulas, Bodhan and Nizamabad kingdoms together were called Indur in ancient times. Koulas Fort was constructed at the present site by Rashtrakutas during 9th century A.D. The Fort was captured by Chalukyas of Kalyani dynasty in the third quarter of 10th century A.D. The mud fort was later captured by Kakatiyas of Warangal and it was part of Kakatiya kingdom till A.D.1323. After the advent of the Muslims the fort was successively under the control of Bahamanis, Qutub Shahis, Naikwaris, Mughals, Maratas and finally Asafjahis. Raja Gopal Singh Gour was appointed as the Raja of Koulas and his successors held this fort till 1947 A.D. The Fort is approximately one kilometre in length and seven hundred meters in width. It has 52 bastions (the prominent bastions are Hussaini, Mallika, Mula and Kadika Burz), three temples (Venkateswara temple, Ramalayam and Mahadev temple), it wo mosques, five wells, four granaries and other structures such as Rani mahal, Elephant well (Enugula bavi) etc. Jagdamba Bhawani canon also known as Navgarji tope is the largest canon of the world of its time. Raja Gopal Singh made this is in the year 1728 A.D. There are five more canons inside the Fort ^[56]. Visitors need to trek about 3 km to reach the Koulas Fort. It is advisable to take a villager as a guide from the Koulas village to visit the fort. The Koulas dam is about 20 km away from the fort and attracts a large number of birds in winter.

The Rachakonda Fort

Rachakonda Fort is located 16 km. from Choutuppal in Nalgonda district, which is located on Hyderabad-Vijayawada National highway. The fort was built by Racherla chiefs of Velama community who made this as their capital. This is an important fort of historical importance in Nalgonda district and represents the historical significance of this district. The fort is built on two lofty spurs of the hill. The forts were built of long and massive stone blocks measuring over 15` x 1.10` x 1.6` without any mortar as binding material. There are also square bastions in it, another example of the Hindu nature of the fort. The historic fort offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region. Later the fort was conquered by Sultan Quli Qutub Shah I (1518-43) and hence added to his Golconda kingdom. It played an important role in medieval history of Deccan ^[62].

The Devarakonda Fort

Devarakonda is located nearly 50 km. from the district headquarters of Nalgonda. Devarakonda fort is on the way to Nagarjunakonda, a famous Buddhist centre in the State. The fort is surrounded by a range of hills and at one time was considered as a formidable strong hold. The historic fort offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region. The antiquity of the forts goes back to Western Chalukyas period and it was subsequently strengthened by

the Kakatiyas and finally became a strong hold of Velma Chiefs. The ruins of this fort are of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era. Apart from Rachakonda, Devarakonda was another capital of Racherla Velma chiefs. Inside this fort there are two temples dedicated to Siva and Rama ^[64]. This is an important fort of historical importance in Nalgonda district and represents the historical significance of this district.

The Nalgonda Fort

There is a hillock in the Nalgonda town which is locally known as Kapiralagutta. On this hillock, stone fortification walls constructed during the period of Kakatiyas are noticed. This is an important fort of historical importance in Nalgonda district and represents the historical significance of this district. After the fall of the Kakatiyas this area fell under the control of Qutub Shahis of Golkonda and Asafzahi. The ruins of this fort are of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era. During their period, some of the portions of fort walls strengthened. The historic fort offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region.

The Pangal Fort

Panagal Fort is one of the Famous Hill Forts in Telangana. It was built by Kalyani Chalukya Kings during 11th and 12th Centuries A.D. It is located about 30 Kms away from Wanaparthi towards Kollapur and is well accessible by road. This is an important fort of historical importance in Wanaparthi district and represents the historical significance of this district. The fort is spread across hundreds of acres with Seven Gateways / Entrances. The Main entrance is called as Mundlagavini and is a special attraction of this fort. It was built with huge granite rocks. The historic fort offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region. The ruins of this fort in Wanaparthi district is of archaeological significance ^[74]. The famous stories like Balanagamma, Mayalapakir of stage and cinema have a connection with this place.

The Koilkonda Fort

Koilkonda is situated near Mahabubnagar town. As per the local history the fort was constructed by Koya tribal kings in the medieval period and hence known as Koilkonda or Koyyala konda fort. The height of the fort is 244 meters from the sea level. The ruins of this fort in Mahabubnagar district is of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era. Although the fort was constructed by the Kakatiyas of Warangal initially, the Qutub Shahis of Golkonda strengthened and added several structures. The historic fort offers a lot of scope to understand the rich legacy of the region. Inside the fort there is a Dargah known as Fatima Bee Dargah and two more Hindu temples. This is an important fort of historical importance in Mahabubnagar district and represents the historical significance of this district. Moharam Festival is being celebrated by locals every year. King Ibrahim Qutub Shah was received by the ruler of Koilkonda and extended support to the King during

his return from Vijayanagaram to Golconda. Here is a stone inscription pillar belonging to the period of Ibrahim Qutub Shah. It played an important role in Medieval History of Deccan region ^[75].

The Medak Hill Fort (Built by Kakatiyas of Warangal)

Medak is a historical town situated near Hyderabad. In ancient times this town was known as Siddapuram. In course of time, the name was changed into *Methuku* which subsequently came to be known as Medak. This is an important fort of historical importance in Medak district and represents the historical significance of this district. The fort at Medak was originally constructed by the Kakatiya kings and later developed by the Qutub Shahi kings. The fort which stands about 90 meters above the surrounding plains is one of the important hill forts in the Deccan region.⁷⁹ The ruins of this fort in Medak district is of archaeological significance and they represent the various methods used in construction during that era. It was built on a rocky knoll and then fortified with bastions and walls which rise one above the other in several tiers. Inside the fort a Dutch-made 10 feet long brass gun was placed.

These forts in medieval times acted as the security guard to all the cities of Telangana.

Khammam Fort

Khammam Fort was built during 950 A.D. when the region was under the control of Kakatiya kings. However, the fort could not be completed during their reign and the Musunuri Nayakas and the Velama Kings took it upon themselves to complete its construction. In 1531, during the rule of the Qutub Shahis the fort was further developed and many new buildings and rooms were added into the fort. It is a fine example of both Hindu and Muslim architecture since it drew influences from both styles, and rulers of both the religions were involved in its construction. Today, the fort stands proud after having completed more than 1000 years of its existence. It is a major tourist spot and holds the place of pride in the history of the state. Tourists coming here can explore this fort and admire its marvellous architecture.

Khammam located in the state of Telangana is a beautiful city situated on the banks of river Munneru, a tributary of river Krishna. The city holds an important place in the history thanks to the famous Khammam Fort. It is an important tourist destination and attracts millions of travellers from across India. Khammam town is located between 17° 17' of the Northern latitude and 80° 10' of the Eastern longitude ^[2]. It is about 190 km. from Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana state.

The name of Khammam

The name of the town Khammam derives from the name of the hill of *Stambadri* (name of an old temple called Narasimha Swamy Temple on a small hill top in Khammam town believed to have existed since Treata Yuga) later it became *Stambadri*, *Kambadri*, *Khammammettu*, at last when it became the district headquarters, it is known to be *Khammam* ^[3].

History of Khammam Fort

Primarily the forts served defensive purpose, but later on they also assumed to have administrative importance as well, since a fort came to mean the headquarters of the king

from where, he used to administer the kingdom. Being a headquarter with a fort Khammam played a prominent role in the medieval Telangana and Andhra. The following verse in *Varahapurana* of *Haribhatta* shows the significance of Khammam Fort.

*Amdra Mandala Durgaharalataku
Vimala Nayaka Ratna Bhavamu Bhajinci
Yunnatonnata Saila Sampurnamagucu
Sakalaputa Bhedanamulanennikaku nekka* ^[4].

He described it as *Nayakamani* (central jewel) the more important, embellishing the thread of the necklace of forts of *Andhradesa*. Regarding the construction of the fort of Khammam there are some local legends, which run as follows:

The legendary brothers Ranga Reddy, Lakna Reddy and Velama Reddy came to Khammam in 950 A.D. with a fortress here and a tank on the eastern side of the town known as Laknaram tank after the name of Lakna Reddy ^[5]. According to the records of village headmen, the fort was constructed by the two brothers named Akki Reddy and Anki Reddy of *Kondaparti* who came to this town along with the Kalinga Gajapatis of Orissa. While residing at *Velugumetla*, a village nearby town, they got *Parusavedi* from *Chennakesava Swamy* and were asked in a dream by God to construct the fort. Hence with the help of *Parusavedi* they got the permission of the kings of the time and began the fort construction in 997 Saka Era or 1075 A.D. The construction was completed in 1006 Saka year or 1084 A.D. and died without any heirs. At that juncture the village headman known as Kollipaka Basavaraju went to Rajahmundry and brought persons of Nandapani, Talluru and Gudluru families to rule over the region ^[6].

Regarding the headman ship of Kollipaka dynasty, the writer of the book *Sthambhadri* mentions about a copper plate grant issued by the Kalinga Gajapatis. According to the grant Kollipaka Adiraju got in *firmana* nearly fifty villagers along with Velugumetla and Khammammett ^[7]. Another legend say that, during the time of *Kakatiya Mahadevaraju* at Warangal, the Reddy brothers Akki Reddy and Anki Reddy whose occupation is cultivation got a treasure while tilling the land. They presented it to the king. He was pleased with their selflessness and returned the amount to them for enjoyment. They came to Khammammett and constructed a fort and some tanks. While the construction of the fort was on they made Velugumetla as their administrative unit. In due course of time Velugumetla was divided into seven villages. They are: 1. Puttakota, 2. Gollagudem, 3. Rajannapet, 4. Ballapalem, 5. Gopalapuram, 6. Rudramakota, 7. Abbutallu. These villages can be identified with the ones near the present Khammam⁸ who bear the same names.

According to the legends it is clear that the fort was constructed during the period of *Kakatiyas*. But it is not clear that this fort was constructed by the kings of Warangal. It was constructed only by the local Hindus (Reddis) who hailed from Warangal. There is an dated inscription in Telugu prose carved on the stone wall to the right of the main gate of the fort, recording the construction of the fort gates (Western and Southern) by a certain Tippa bearing the title of *Kakatiya Rajya Sthapanacharya* on the palaeographic grounds the inscription is dated to the 14th Century A.D ^[9].

The Khammam fort is a hill fortification occupying an area of about four square kilometres. It is also called as *Durg* or *Quilla*. The fortification is of dressed stone with cyclopean walls at two levels with bastions at the ground level and the other without them at the top of the hillock. The lower wall of the fort skirting the foot of the fort (*Durg*) on the West and North-West is in a rectangular shape and an open *peta* almost entirely around it. Around the rampart of the lower fortification there was a moat and the water filled in was connected with the nearby tank. Now this moat (ditch) is not existing which is completely filled up with rubble and houses are constructed there. The outer fortification, which was in mud, once encompassing Puttakota, Gollagudem, Rajannapeta, Ballapalem, Gopalapuram and Rudramakota, is not existing now.

The first enclosure or the rampart of the lower fort is about 15 feet thickness and the facing is composed of large blocks of granite. The Southern face was strengthened under the French Superintendence and has a brick and *Chunnam* parapet with regular walls which are high and by no means of judiciously planned. The height of the lower fort varies from 40 feet to 80 feet. This enclosure has six semi-circular and nine square bastions for the stationing of the army. The surface of the bastions has the breadth exceeding nearly 14 feet with a staircase. Cannons were at one time mounted on the bastions. Some are in their original positions and others are today broken and disturbed. The size of the big and small cannons is 6 feet and 4 feet respectively. At the corner of each bastion there is also a water pot, filling with water during the time of war. The lower portion of the fortification wall was constructed with dressed stone blocks arranged one by the other without any mortar. Above the stone-wall (rampart), there is a brick parapet wall constructed with lime mortar as binding material. The lower fort is capable of mounting about 60 guns. It is today crumbling.

Fort Entrance Gateways

The fort has ten entrances. Among them the lower fort gate on the western side is the main one behind the fort on the Eastern side there is another gate, which is called *Pattar Darvaja* or *Rati Darvaja*. At present we can see only two entrances to the lower fort. They are on the Western and Southern side consisting a narrow passage with curves. The exterior stone blocked wall of the fort is having the figurines, such as fighting scenes, animals, foot prints and erotic figurines etc., are carved in bas reliefs.

The Main Entrance Gate

It was constructed with huge granite stones. The door-jambs and lintel are finely carved. On the door-jambs of the gate we can see the Sun and Moon symbols on either side. On the lintel portion at the centre is carved the *Ganga* on a *Makara* in a rectangular frame. On either side of this figurine *Sanka* and *Chakra* symbols are carved at the ends. About 5 semi-circular stone arches are fixed above the gate as decorative pieces. The floral designs are carved at the lower portions of the door-jambs. The original wooden doors before entrance gate are donated to local Narasimha Temple, Brahman Bazar by the fort trustees. Recently two cannons are erected on either side of the entrance on pedestals by the State Archaeology Department, brought from somewhere inside of the fortification.

Before the main entrance on the right wall there is a Telugu inscription ^[10] in prose belonging to the 14th century. There

is a mention in the inscription about a certain Tippana bearing the title of *Kakatiya Rajya Sthapanacharya*, who built Western gate. The inscription is published by the State Archaeological Department. *Ganesha* sculpture is carved below the left side wall of fort entrance.

There is an old Mosque

Inside the fort, probably constructed during the period of Zafar-ud-Daula. It was recently removed. He also built a mahal in the fort, the ruins of which can be seen near the masjid or mosque in the fort. According to the contour of the hillock there are two separate mud constructions completely in dilapidated condition without roof. One of them has the partitions appearing like rooms. According to the local people version these constructions might have been used as granaries or elephant stables. People occupied one side of these mud constructions and converted into a living house.

There is a well with steps to the water level near the Southern side entrance of the lower fort. This well was dug during the period of Zafar-ud-Daula on his name, locally known as *Zafar Bowli*. The well helps to avoid the difficulty of bringing water from the tank or from the outside or from the top of the hillock. The well is of 60 feet long and 20 feet wide. On the North-Western side of the inner fort there is one more well, dug by the same person but is small in size.

There is a way to reach the inner fortification, which was constructed on a hillock about 100 feet from the ground level. Of the fortification wall the lower portion was constructed with dressed stone blocks arranged one over the other without mortar. The height of the stone wall is roughly 10 feet. Above the stone construction a brick construction can be seen. The entrance of the inner fortification is consisting of pillars without any decorations. The inner fortification gate is square in shape with a height of 30 feet. On either side of the inner fortification entrance gate there are two bastions for watch and ward. There is also a staircase on the right of the entrance to reach the bastions. On a plain surface at the top we can see the completely ruined building remains, on the Eastern side of the fort at one stage a huge natural boulder blocks were utilized for the fortification. Nearby the palace remains (platform) there is a natural water resource, well of *Koneru* (holy tank) pond. On one side of this *Koneru* (holy tank) there is a well. There are steps to reach the water level. The water was utilized for drinking purpose.

There are about six big cannons and some other small cannons on the platform. On one cannon there is a Persian inscription¹¹ *Rafikh-Nawab-Ruk-ud-Daula Zafar-ud-Daula, 1135 Hijri* (A.D. 1768). Two small cannons were preserved in Municipal office. Zafar-ud-Daula constructed the brick walls of the fort. He had a nickname *Dhamsa*¹² for his cruel deeds. On his nick name there is a village near by the town known as *Dhamsala Puram*.

On the Eastern side of the outer limits of the fort, at present, there is an entrance gate locally known as *Pattar Darvaja* or *Rati Darvaja* from there about half a kilometre, there is a tank, locally known as *Lakaram Cheruvu*, probably constructed on the name of Lakna Reddy. It is the main water source for both drinking and irrigation purpose. Most portion of the entire wall of the inner fort is in intact condition since having the iron rods at the foundation to arrest the tilling. The evidences of iron rods can be seen here and there. There are rock cut staircases at different

places, especially near the *Koneru* the palace, the Ghee Bowli and the bastions. The water let-outs are in pre-planned position to come out to Zafar Bowli, which is in separate position in the lower fortification, probably for the Queens' bath and Kings usage.

The evidences of secret pathway to go from the fort can also be seen just below the harem remain. But it was completely covered with rank vegetation. Probably, this secret pathway was utilized for escaping during the time of enemy attacks. The brick construction of the walls above the original stone construction was by the French. It was plastered at the top. During the time of Asaf Jahis, this fort was the residence of an *Amildar* who held the butchery here. At that time *Khanapur* was originally the *Kusbah* and Khammam was a fort built for the confinement of offenders.

Tourism Developments of Khammam Fort

The historic Khammam fort, a living testimony to the majestic grandeur and architectural marvel of the bygone era, is poised to get a face lift with the government departments drawing up grand plans to beautify and develop the majestic edifice.

- Illumination of the fort, including installation of solar streetlights atop the fort, introduction of the sound and light show at the historical edifice and development of a park at the entrance of the fort, are some of the initiatives in the pipeline.
- With the Telangana government laying renewed focus on the historical edifices of architectural significance, the government departments turned their attention on beautifying the Khammam fort and safeguarding the protected monument from future encroachments.
- A proposal to develop a park and set up a canteen besides illuminating the fort at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 crore has already been submitted to the government, says Suman Chakravarthi, District Tourism Officer, Khammam.
- The plan also envisages provision of amenities and introduction of sound and light show at the fort on the lines of the Golconda Fort in Hyderabad, he elaborates.
- A plan is on the anvil to install solar streetlights at the fort, says G. S. V. Prasad, District Manager, New and Renewable Energy Development Corporation.
- Recently Minister for Roads & Buildings Tummalala Nageshwar Rao has mooted the proposal to set up solar streetlights at the fort well before the next Independence day celebrations in 2017.

The fort reveal past history, culture and art and architecture to present generation and attracting the tourists from all part of the State.

Table 1: Number of Tourists Flow to Khammam Fort

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Tourists	No. of Foreign Tourists
1.	2011	1,40,000	130
2.	2012	1,76,500	190
3.	2013	1,82,540	210
4.	2014	2,35,564	236
5.	2015	2,48,251	288
6.	2016	2,83,600	313

Source: D.T.P.C. Office Records, Khammam.

Suggestions & Conclusion

Tourism, if it is to be a vehicle of culture, prosperity and peace, must conserve without damaging, protect without plundering, and create without destroying. Carrying capacity in eco-tourism provides local benefits environmentally, culturally and economically. Ecotourism is “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well-being of local people”. Our goal is to enable people to enjoy and learn about the natural, historical & cultural characteristics of the various forts in Telangana State while preserving the integrity of the forts and stimulating the economic development opportunities in local communities. The following implemented will improve the face of tourism in the coming years.

1. Development of Infrastructure at the Forts

Various tourism facilities such as accommodation facilities, eateries, toilets, information centres, etc. could be developed at all destinations. For this, the incentive policy proposed will encourage private partnership in tourism related activities and infrastructure development.

2. Accessibility to the Forts and Wayside Amenities

Approach roads could be identified to various forts in Telangana. The roads should be assessed for suitability (carrying capacity, quality, etc.) and could be considered for further development. Wayside amenities should also be planned while developing roads.

3. Development Control Regulation at Destinations

‘Development Control Regulations’ could be prepared to work as guidelines for development at and around the forts.

4. Strengthening of Bed and Breakfast Scheme

The Bed and Breakfast scheme creates facilities for travellers at remote region forts (where hotel accommodation is not available) and could provide income to the local people. With the increasing interest in the rural way of life and the advent of rural tourism, the Bed and Breakfast Scheme would offers excellent potential for the mutual benefit of the tourists and the local population. This Scheme could be strengthened to form a part of rural micro-financing projects.

5. Recreational Facilities at Forts

Entertainment facilities such as children’s sports, horse rides, light and sound shows (based on feasibility) could be arranged at selected forts. Providing recreation and entertainment at the various forts could convert day tourists into staying tourists.

6. Public-Private-Partnership

Specific forts could be identified where public-private partnership is possible. Conservation plans could be prepared for the identified these forts.

7. Cultural Tourism

Distinctive aspects of Telangana State’s rich culture and tradition could be identified and promoted as an integral part of Telangana State’s tourism. Identifying and promoting the State’s folk arts and organize folk dance and music programmers’ at the forts could be arranged.

8. Crafts

Since Telangana has a number of exclusive handicrafts; the government could undertake the availability of the handicraft products at the various forts, which could promote the handicrafts industry in the state.

9. Information Kiosks

Government of Telangana Sate could create kiosks at important airports, railway stations, bus stations and important forts to provide tourism information on an interactive basis with links to the tourism portal and on-line booking systems.

10. Creating Awareness

Create awareness among people about the importance of tourism, how to identify and plan tour options and on how to be an enlightened tourist. This could also include creating awareness about safety and environmental awareness.

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