

Cultural Heritage Places of Devanahalli Taluk, Bangalore Rural District-An Overview

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Introduction:

Culture and Heritage are being used to promote destinations and enhance their competitiveness and attractiveness. Many locations are now actively developing their tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets as a means of developing comparative advantages in an increasingly competitive tourism market place. The State of Karnataka is famous for its rich cultural heritage right from the beginning.

Topography:

The Bangalore Rural District is situated in the table-land of Deccan Plateau and comes under Arkavathi and South Pinakini River basin area, comprising four taluks such as Devanahalli, Doddaballapur, Hosakote and Nelamangala. Devanahalli Taluk is in the north-east of the district. It consists of four hobli's (Hamlets) such as Devanahalli Kasaba, Vijayapura, Channarayapatna and Kundana. The South Pinakini forms a part of its eastern boundary and receives all the smaller streams. The place undulates in gentle curvatures, the valley being fertile and well cultivated. The elevated parts are covered with low jungle. There are a few small hills and rocks to the north and west, but generally speaking it is an open country, healthy and well supplied with good water.

Pre-History: Devenahalli Taluk is famous for pre-historical sites. They found at Managondanahalli, Koira, Koira-Hosur, Aruvanahalli, Jyothipura and etc, A few of the cromlechs were excavated by Archaeological Department of Mysore in 1917 and found to contain pots of different sizes and bowls at Managondanahalli.

Importance and Historical Background:

Devanahalli is a town and headquarter of Devenahalli Taluk situated on Bangalore-Bellary Road, i.e., N.H.7. Devanahalli is the birth place of Tippu Sultan and it is the site of the newly constructed Bangalore International Airport. Devanahalli emerged as a stregic important place during the reign of Nada Prabhu's of Avathi, Hyder Ali & Tippu and Wodeyar's of Mysore. Devanahalli Taluk was a part of Gangawadi and later came under the control of Rashtrakutas, NolambaPallavas, Cholas, Hoysalas, Vijayangara Rulers and Wodeyars of Mysore. *It is famous for places of cultural heritage and have been discussed as under.*

Devanahalli: Devanahalli town is situated, 23 miles (35 km) north of Bangalore, on the old Bangalore-Bellary Road. (NH-7) The history of Devanahalli dates back to the 15th Century. Devanahalli appears to have been originally named as Devanadoddi from Deva, its head man in about 1501. Malla Byregowda, a son of one of the refugees from Kanchi, who settled at Avathi, is said to have built a fort with the consent of Deva, a feudatory chief at Devanadoddi and change the name of the place to Devanahalli or Devandhalli. Devanahalli was subsequently found by one of the family of refugees who, settling at Avathi, became the founders of the Magadi, Chickaballapur and other lines of the chiefs. During the rule of

Chickappa Gowda, Devanahalli was annexed by Mysore army under the leadership of DalwayeeNanjarajaiiah. The Marathas conquered it several times from Mysore. It fell in 1749 after a gallant defence of 8 months and hence forward annexed to Mysore. In this siege, Hyder Ali was first gained distinction as a volunteer horseman and at Devanahalli his son and successor Tippu was born.

The important monuments of Devanahalli are:

Venugopalaswamy temple at Devanahalli:

It is a good Dravidian structure with a fine gopura and a four-pillared mantapa in front, and has a specious inner prakara. The garbhagriha has a standing Venugopala image of Vijayanagar style, is about 4 feet high, is flanked by his consorts Rukmini and Satyabhama. There is a Dravidian shikhara over it. To the right in the sukanasi is kept the metallic image of the god and to the left figures of Alvars. The navaranga is supported by four black stone pillars carved with figures on all sides. Some of the figures worthies of note are Hayagriva, dancing female figures with attendant musicians, a conch-blower, a Kinnara with the lower half of the body in the form a bird and a huntress getting a thorn taken out of her leg. The last figure occurs in several places. The mukhamantapa has niches over the front roof, and they have fine stucco figures. The brick shikhara has many stucco figures all around. The outer walls have frieze of large images illustrating scenes mostly from the Ramayana. A silver cup (EC 9, DV-83) and a gong (EC 9, DV-84) belonging to the temple bear inscriptions stating that they were presents from Hyder Ali and a subordinate of the Peshwa Balaji Rao respectively. The inscription (EC 9, DV-16) which is in this temple, was issued by Gopalagowda, AvathiNadaprabhu.

Fort, Devanahalli: Initially, it was a mud fort, built by Malla Byregowda of Avathi with the consent of Deva, a feudatory. Hyder Ali commenced rebuilding the fort. It was built of stone, in an oval form, flanked with circular bastions and two cavaliers on the eastern face, and was not quite completed when invested in 1791 A.D. by an army under Lord Cornwallis. The fort is spread an area of 20 acres. The roughly oval east-oriented fortification veneered with dressed masonry has many as 13 semis circular bastions/Burz and two Batheries. A specious battlement is provided towards the inner side of the fortification. The fort has entrances decorated with out plaster work at the east and west. The bastions are provided with gun points built in brick and line.

The Monument of Tippu: A pedestal with a tablet is seen to commemorate the birth place of Tippu Sultan south-west outside the fort, stating that Tippu Sultan was born here in 1751 A.D. It is about 6 feet tall with pillared enclosure and square top and bears a stone tablet.

The Someshwara Temple at Gangavara:

Gangavara is situated on the right bank of the river South Pinakini, near the head of Hoskote Taluk. The inscriptions and remains at this place show that it was a place of some importance in the 8th century under the Gangas and subsequently under the Cholas. The Someshwara is very old dilapidated structure. Its interest lies in a lion pillar among others of the outer Prakara. This a relic of the Pallava style usually met with a in all the Pallava style usually met with a in all the Pallava temples in the South India. The temple consists of the usual Garbhagriha, Sukhanasi, Navaranga and Mukhamantapa with a small Gopura over the sanctum-sanctorum. Dwarf pillars and plain structure without ornamentation coupled with the usual characteristic features of the early Dravidian style go to show that this temple must be

one of the earliest Dravidian buildings in the State, perhaps much earlier than the temple at Nandi which is assigned to 10th Century A.D. The temple has its Mahadwara to the north and is crowned by boat-shaped low granite Chola tower. There are two cylindrical pillars with seated lions for the pedestal resembling Pallava pillars at Kanchipuram and elsewhere in the mukhamantapa. The Garbhagriha facing east, enshrined with a linga and elephant motifs face each other on the shukhanasa door frame. The present Navaranga has a low roofed wall, four of whose pillars have circular cross sections in typical Ganga style. The other pillars are rude octagonal Chola works. The south wall of the Navaranga opens into another hall used formerly. The prakara are seen as images of Surya, Chandra, Ganapathi, Durga and some naga stones etc.

Kundana-Hill Fortifications and its Heritage:

The Kundana hill is a flat-capped rock about 200 feet high (3,305 feet above the sea level), rising in a steep precipitous ascent on the west, south and north and sloping gently towards the east. The pathway leads up from the east through four fortifications mostly of the late Vijayanagar and Pallegar periods and having stone doorways. Some of these walls have large blocks at the bottom without plaster or cement, while others are made of small pieces of stone piled upon one another. The hill top is about 100 yards long and 50 wide and oval in shape. On the top there are a natural stone pool, about 20 feet in diameter, a temple of Channarayaswamy facing east, a number of old type stone foundations and basements a stone pillar about 13 feet high with a square bottom, an octagonal shaft and a roundish top. Most of these relics appear to belong to the late Vijayanagar days.

In the 13th century Kundana seems to have been the royal residence of the Hoysala King Ramanatha, who had possession of the South and east of the Hoysala dominions. Since in many inscriptions of Ramanatha Ballala Kundanadanelevidu is mentioned, it has been surmised that one of the foundations here is that of his palace. This matter is very doubtful. The temple of Channakeshava has a front hall with a low roofed cave about 10 feet square. After this is one more cell, where the main diety of Janardhana with two consorts are installed. It is of Pallegar or post-Vijayanagar workmanship. Above the garbhagriha is a natural rocky shikhara. In front of it is a small Anjaneya temple (modern).

Nallurpatna/Nallur and its heritage:

It is a ruined city 6 miles South-East of Devanahalli. It is stated to have been of great extent and ruled by rich and powerful line of Kings. In the time of the last of these, Chanda Raya, the city was captured, after maintaining an obstinate defence for three years, during which the enemy was twice forced to raise the siege. Its fall was due to an act of treachery on the part of the king's daughter, who being married to the chief the Gubbi in the Hoskote taluk, had accompanied her husband to the war, and made known the existence of the subterranean passage by which the city was supplied with water from a distance. Chanda Raya is said to have blown up his palace containing his family and treasures, while the enemy were scaling the walls.

Channarayaswamy Temple: In the outskirts of Nallur village, amidst a tamarind grove is seen a beautiful temple of Chanaraya swamy now deserted. It has been built in later Vijayanagara style and outer walls and niches have beautiful sculptures of Kalinga Mardana, Gopika vastrapaharana, Gopala Krishna etc. The ceiling of the temple has fallen and there is no image in the garbhagriha. Many antiquities are lying near the temple.

Tamarind Grove-Bio diversity heritage site - Nallur:

It is India's first Bio-diversity Heritage site, situated at Nallur, in Devanahalli Taluk of Bangalore Rural District. It is 9 km away from Devanahalli town towards Devanahalli-Hoskote Road and 46 km away from Bangalore. This site covers an area of about 53 acres consists of nearly 300 tamarind trees. It has been declared as Biodiversity Heritage site by Govt. of Karnataka. This heritage site is believed to have its origin during the period of Chola dynasty that reigned over the region during early 13th century A.D. The grove is protected conserved since then as it is believed as a sacred grove. It comprises in Survey No.1 of Nallur Amrai village of ChannarayapatnaHobli, Devanahalli Taluk. The centurion old trees look like fossils with standing all the natural vagaries. One of the trees (tree No.155) is confirmed to the 410 years old as per carbon dating and remaining trees are 200 years old. We can find trees with 5 different types of inflorescences and 3 types of trunks. Tamrind grove site is a plain land with red loamy soil and Harbours birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and plants.

Koira and its Heritage: It is a place of historical interest in the Kundana hobli. A stone indicating the history of Sarangadhara, a famous king of olden days is lying near the villages. Koira and adjoining villages are famous for Koira rock stone. It is generally used for construction of temples and sculptures. The koira rock stone was used in the construction of Vidhana Southa and Vikasa Soudha of Bangalore.

Aradeshahalli and its Heritage: It is located at a distance of 16 km from Devanahalli and 4 miles South-West of Kundana. There was a vast ashmound in front of the Ishwara temple, indicating that it was a pre-historic site. The place has three hero-stones of Rashtrakuta period preserved neatly in a safe place near Gopalaswamy temple, out of which one of Akalavarsha and two relating to Punnad Kings. (*EC IX DV-42, DV-41 & DV-43*) The inscription on the bigger hero-stone associated with answering a turugol (attack on cattle) states that when Akalavarsha Sri Prithvivallabha was ruling, his favourite Gangavamsha's son Govinda was protecting Salne-300 and Kunnugil-500, NandigundaPasuvannamoliGanigavunda came crossing the whole Nad and one hero Mumenayaka of the Nandi temple died while protecting the robbed cows. This hero-stone has well engraved war scenes with the hero shown as fighting valourously and after successfully driving the cows back to the village. (*EC IX DV-42*)

Jalige and its heritage: It is situated on the way to Aradeshahalli, 10 km from Devanahalli. The place name is found referred as Jalige Sime in a record dated 1345 A.D. (*EC 9, DV-3*) The Rama temple here, built in Vijayanagara style, has seated figure of SriRama, about 2.5 feet tall with two hands, the right hand being in the Abhaya attitude and the left resting on the Knee. To the right Srirama is a standing figure of Lakshmana and to the left, image of Seetha. The image here is said to have been installed by king Janamejaya. In the Chamundi temple stands and inscription announcing the grant to Chamundeshwari on the Chamundi hills by Krishnaraja Wodeyar-II of Mysore. (*MAR 1914, P.No.18*) This inscription stone itself is worshipped as Chanudeshwari.

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