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BIDAR AS A TOURIST PARADISE

Introduction: Bidar is one of the 27 districts of Karnataka State. Geographically, it resembles the crown of the State occupying its northeastern tip. The district had a glorious past. It was ruled by the Mauryas, Satavahnas, Rashtrakutas, Chalukyas, Kakatiyas, Khiljis, Bahamanis, Baridshahis, Mughals and the Hyderabad Nizam. The treasure of culture, fine arts and architecture nurtured by successive rulers has contributed to its richness. The great revolution by Shivasharanas in the 12th century, encompassing social, literacy and religious fields emerged on this land.

The town of Bidar stands on a beautiful plateau and its situation is picturesque and climate gracious. The hill fortress enriched by the huge defense gates, walls with guard houses and subterranean passages offers the visitors a glimpse of the strong military power of the Muslim conquerors. And at the same time the graceful architecture of the buildings, each one conveying its own peculiar legend, gives glimpses of the spiritual qualities of Islamic culture. Bidar town has made a unique contribution to the socio-cultural history of Karnataka in particular and of the Deccan History in general.

Bidar is the northern most district of Karnataka state located between 1735 and 1825 north latitude and 7642 and 7739 east longitudes.¹ Its length from east to west is 93.4 km and from northeast to south west is 115.2 km. Total area of the district is 5458 km.

Bidar is a tiny district comprising five talukas viz. Aurad, Basavakalyan, Bidar, Bhalki and Humanabad. The district founded on the east by Nizambad and Medak district of Andra Pradesh, on the north and west Nanded and Osmanabad district of Maharashtra and on south by Gulbarga district of Karnataka.

Bidar Monuments: The historical monuments and sites in and around the Bidar city belong to different periods of history, Pre-Kakatiya, Tughlaq, Bahmani, Barid Shahi, Adil Shahi, Mughal and Nizam. As far the architecture is concerned there is an intermixture of Hindu, Turkish and Persian artisanship. Some of the designs and decorative patterns seen in the monuments of Bidar are unique in India.

In describing the monuments of Bidar the fort is dealt with first, as it contains some buildings which were the earliest to be erected when Ahmad Shah Wali Bahmani transferred the seat of government from Gulbarga to Bidar in 1424 A.D. The next group of monuments comprises the buildings of the town including the fortifications, a large number of which are coeval with the buildings of the fort. The third group embraces the tombs and shrines at Ashtoor which were erected by the Bahmani kings from A.D. 1436-1535. The Baridi tombs and the mausoleum in their vicinity constitute the fourth group, while the fifth, or last, group includes all monuments of historical, religious or architectural significance situated within a distance of six miles from Bidar.²

Bidar Fort: Bidar Fort is unique in India. It is built on a strategic location under the guidance of Turkish/Persian engineers. Indian workers and artisans worked with them. As a result indo-Persian architecture emerged in Bidar. Even during 15th century Bidar was a planned city. Not only palaces but also city is surrounded by protection wall with gates and moats. Bidar Fort was rebuilt when gun powder was introduced in India. It has many bastions filled with war cannons.

To enter the Bidar Fort one has to pass through three gates. The first gate built by a governor of Aurangzeb is comparatively small. It has no name.

It is considered one of the most formidable forts of the country, and is an interesting bulwark. It is said that Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahamani constructed a large and strong fort at Bidar between 1426 and 1432 A.D. on the

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site of an ancient fort which is even now known as the Purana Qila. It is situated in the eastern part of the town and has within it ruins of palaces, mosques and other buildings which had been built of trap rock. Stone and mortar were used to build the fort-walls.³

The fort has a triple moat on the Southern side, a double on the north-western and a single on the other sides. It has seven gates. Notable palaces and pavilions are Rangin Mahal, Chini Mahal, Turkash Mahal, Gangan Mahal, Takht Mahal and the Hall of Audience while the thousand cells is a subterranean structure. The Solah Khambh Mosque and the Virasangayya temple are also conspicuous. A beautiful cistern marks the site of Lal Bagh or Ruby Garden.

Gawan Madrasa: The most prominent and unique monuments of the city is Madarsa of Mahmud Gawan.⁴ In the centre of the old city there is the most imposing monument known as Madrasa of Mahmud Gawan. Mahmud Gawan who had come to Bidar from Gilan founded it in 1472 A.D. He was the Wazir of (Prime Minister) for three Bahmani Sultans. He was also a great scholar.

The Baridi Tombs: The Baridi tombs lie about two kms. West of Bidar town. There were formerly gardens around them. The tombs are Qasim Barid and Qasim Barid II, Amir Barid, Ali Barid, Ibrahim Barid and others.⁵

Chaukhandi : It is the tomb of Khali-Ullah who was the preceptor of Ahmad Shah. It is erected on elevated place. The building is octagonal in plan. There are traces of fine decoration on the walls of the building. This prominent building is altogether one of the excellent buildings constructed by the Bahmani's. it is on the way to Astoor.

Cultural and Religious Centers: Apart from Historical monuments, in and around Bidar city there unique cultural and religious centers. The most important among them are Narasimha Zara cave temple, Papanash Shiva Temple, Abul Faiz Darga, Shukla Tirth, Gurunanak Jhira, Siddharoodh Matha, Mailara temple and many Virasaiva Mathias etc.

Pilgrimage places: Jaharani Narasimha Cave Temple: This is an old Hindu cave temple dedicated to Lord Narasimha. It is excavated in a tunnel. There is a roughly carved image of Narasimha on a stone wall at the end of the cave. At this place the powerful diety as per the belief here is situated in cave of nearly 300 meters. One has to wade through water upto chest height to have darshan of the deity. It will be thrilling experience with bats and owls sitting on the roof top of cave but they will not do any harm to the devotees. In the year 1999 with efforts of an young IAS officer Mr.M. Maheshwar Rao who was working as Assistant Commissioner and was incharge of this temple committee got the cave Air conditioned and Electrified.⁶ A good number of devotees visit this temple.

Papanash Temple: Papanash Kshetra is another sacred place of Bidar city. As per the local traditional saying, the Shiva Linga idol in this temple is one of those installed by Shri Ram during the time of his journey back from Lanka. The location of the temple is a valley is mesmerizing to the eyes. Every year at the time of Shivarathri festival lot of tourists visit this place. A natural spring flows into a pond in front of the temple which is called 'Papanasha'. The Shivalinga hear is worshipped with much devotion. People have the belief that the water here would cleanse them their sins.⁷

Guru Nanak Jhira : Gurudwara Bidar is one of Holiest place for Sikhas. Every year this place attracts lots of tourists from all parts of the country particularly during the months of Novemeber and March. Legend has it that Saint Guru Nanak visited the place while the land was in the grip of a famine the Guru performed a miracle at the request of the locals and a spring of water from the laterite rock mountain burst out. Till this day crystal clear water flows from the laterite trap. The belief is that drinking of this water cures many ailments.

Dev Deva Vana (Botanical Garden): An Eco Tourism centre 6 km away from Bidar town on Bidar-Hyderabad Highway. With more than 200 medicinal plants, this Vana is believed to be something of a unconventional temple of plants.

Chidambara Ashram, Shri Siddharuddha Matha (Gumpa), Bidar: It was built in the year 1986 by Shri Shivakumar Swamiji. There are 12 Jyotirlingas on both the sides Shri Siddharudha statue. This is temple located at Manahalli Road, Bidar. This is also known as Gumpa. During last three decades Shri Siddharudha Matha has become the center of religious, educational and social activities. Shri Shivakumar Swamiji delivers Pravachana in the month of July (Shravana Masa), Navarathri and every Sunday evening. Lots of devotees has the spiritual trust in them. A visitor/ devotees who visits holy places in Bidar, if any devotee not visits this temple his yatra becomes incomplete. Every year lots of devotees from all parts of the India visits to celebrate Sadguru Siddharudha and Shivakumar Mahaswamiji Jayanti. This is celebrated in the month of November. The other historical places of Bidar are Mailar temple, Pond of Bommagondeshwara, Deva Dev Vana, Jalasangi etc

Humanabad : Veerabhadreshwara Jatra's at Humanabad and Changlare: Two very ancient temples of Lord Veerabhadreshwara in Humanabad Taluk one at Humanabad and one at Changlara village attract lakhs of tourists in the Month of January and November respectively for the yearly Jatra and cart pulling Mahotsav's. The temple at Humanabad constructed in 1725 is famous for its moving pillar.

Manik Prabhu Temple at Humanabad: It attracts lots of tourists in the Month of December at the time of Annual Celebrations. On the same occasion every year at Night long Classical Musical function will be held and till now the likes of Bhimsen Joshi, Zakir Hussain and many others have come here for this annual Jatra Mahotsav.

Basavakalyana: Basavakalyan was until recently known as Kalyani and has been also called Qasba Kaiyanabad in some Bahamani records. Situated 80 Kms South-West of Bidar town, it is the headquarters of the taluk of the same name. This place came to prominence towards the close of the tenth century C.E. When the capital of the later Western Chalukas was shifted here from Malkhed. It extended over a large area and attained great celebrity as the metropolis of an empire, as a centre of wealth and prosperity, as a seat of learning and as an abode of spiritual wisdom hallowed by illustrations saints like Basaveshwara, Allama Prabhu, Akka-Mahadevi, Channabasavanna and Siddharama. Vijnaneshwara, the renowned law-giver, and the author of a highly valued treatise on law known as Mitakshara, was at the court of Chalukya Vikramaditya VI. He goes into raptures while describing the splendors of the capital city of Kalyana and exclaims that no other city like Kalyana and exclaims that no other city like Kalyana existed in the past or present and would never exist in future. The great Sanskrit poet Bilhana who wrote "Vikramankadeva Charita" also adorned the court of Vikramaditya VI and he too has sung the glory of this city in glowing terms. The later Western Chalukyas ruled an extensive empire till the end of the twelfth century with a break of a few years when the Kalchuris had seized power.

It was at this place that there was the upsurge of the revolutionary Sharana (Virasaiva) movement led by Basaveshwara, Allama Prabhu and their associates, which attracted like-minded persons from various parts of India.

The illustrious Sharanas, who came from all strata of the society composed inimitable Vachanas here and founded the "Anubhava Mantapa" where they carried on deliberations. This protestant movement, which aimed at radical religious and social reforms, gained formidable popular strength. When the traditionalists and the imperial power headed by Kalachuri Bijjala clashed with it and made violent attempts to suppress it, there was an upheaval which shook up the imperial authority and brought about a different chain of social and political events.⁹

Basavakalyan's Historical Sites: The historical sites at Kalyan, are not preserved state. They are in ruins, spread over an extensive area including the adjoin villages of Sivapur, Narayanpur and Pratapur. Few secular antiquities have survived. No structural remains of the Chalukyan times, like the palace, administrative buildings and fortification are extant. An open, slightly elevated spot is pointed out as the site of Bijjala's

palace. The three villages named above must have been formerly included in the capital city. Their names bear historical significance. Pratapachakravarti, Narayanapur, as revealed by an epigraph, is a short-form of Rayanarayanapura, named after an epigraph, is a short-form of Rayanarayanapura, named after Chalukya title Rayanarayana.¹⁰

Jalasangi, Narayanpura, Umapur: The temples of these places, which were built by Chalukyas are adorned with Salabhiunjikas on their walls. The intricate carvings on the walls of these temples remind one of Aihole and Pattadakal temples. A Shilabalike of Jalasangi writing the name of Vikramaditya-VI is a rare sculpture.

Relics relating to Basaveshwara and other Sharanas are Basaveshwara Temple, Purush katte, Prabhudevara Gadige, Tirpurantaka Lake, Akka-Nagamma Cave, Basaveshwara Mahamane, Anubhva mantapa, uliya Chandayya's Cave¹¹ etc.

Bidriware: This tiny district Bidar is very well known for its artistic and metal craftsmanship right from 15th century A.D. 'Bidri Ware'. The Bidri articles are marketed locally and in big cities in India. There is a popular demand for these wares in foreign markets also.¹²

Folk arts: Some religious and social traditions of the past have come down to the present generation in the form of several interesting folk-arts: Bhajan-singing, Bayalata, Kolata, Gorta, Bulayihadu, Handi Pada, Shobana-pada, Devi-hadu, Beegara-hadu, Gondaligara-hadu, Karadi-mazalu, Nandi-kolu, Gee-gee pada, Lavani-Lullaby songs, etc., are in vogue in the district. These are recited or performed on the occasions of important jatras, observance of jayantis and various other religious and social functions.¹³ It will promote and encourage tourism in Bidar district.

Present Bidar: Bidar is a tourist destination. Its climate is gracious. Some of the monuments are unique. Bidri art of Bidar is world famous.¹⁴ Famous institutions like Indian Air Force, Karnataka Veterinary and Fisheries University is situated at Bidar. Bidar represents 'Unity in Diversity'. People belonging to different religious and communities live together peacefully. Bidar district is also known for a unique Self Help Group movement.

Tourist Paradise: At Basavakalyan, Bidar and other places there are historical monuments some of which are unique. The Mahamad Gawan build in 15th century is a unique monument in India. Bidar Fort has many important sites. Sculptures found at Narayanpur, Jalsangi, Umapur represent the glory of 11th century. Bidar is World famous for Bidri art. Colour paintings inside Astoor tomb is unique. Rangeen Mahal represents Turkish art. Surrounding Bidar there many natural water springs which attract tourists.¹⁵ Dev Dev Vana a newly established Garden has become a centre of attraction. The following places of Bidar District attract lots of tourist all through the year.

Implications: Through this research introduce the Bidar on the whole. To implement the development of tourism in Bidar. For this study help the policy makers to make policy and programmes for the development of Bidar. Preserve the uniqueness culture of Bidar district. Propaganda about the Bidar's monuments, folklore and crafts through which provide the employment to many artisans.

Conclusion: Bidar district is a mini 'India' culturally this tiny district is the cradle of diverse groups and cults. In and around Bidar there are many historical monuments, which even to this day stand as the grand testimony to the architectural beauty and religious harmony. Historical and cultural importance in Tourism Development in Bidar. It is a place of delight to poets, artists, archaeologists, historians, researchers and tourist.

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