Atomic Energy Central School No.3 Rawatbhata

Lesson Seven: New Architecture-Hampi

Class-12 Sub- History

Hand out- Module 2 (2/2 of Lesson 7)

Topic: Vijaynagara: the capital and its environs

**Vijaynagara: the capital and its environs**

Vijaynagara was characterized by a distance physical and lay out and building style.

1. **Water resources:**

* The most striking feature about the location of Vijaynagara is the natural basin formed by the river Tungabhadra which flows in a North- Easternly direction.
* One of the greatest achievements of the Vijaynagara Empire was the irrigation and water supply network, especially since the region was extremely rocky.
* A massive city like Hampi needed a consistent supply of water round the year.
* The only source of water nearby was the Tungabhadra River.
* So, the rulers of Vijaynagara got built embankments to store water.
* They also constructed reservoirs of varying sizes and made arrangement to store rain water.
* A very large tank was built in the fifteen century which is now called Kamalapram tank.
* One of the most prominent waterworks to be seen among the ruins is the Hiriya canal.

**2. Fortification and roads:**

* The different parts of the city of Vijayanagara were enclosed with the great fortress walls.
* There were seven lines of forts.
* These encircled not only the city of Vijayanagara but also its agricultural land and forests.
* The outermost wall linked the hills surrounding the city.
* Abdul Razzaq, an ambassador sent by the ruler of Persia to Calicut in the 15th century was greatly impressed by the fortification and mentioned seven lines of forts.
* Abdul Razzq noted that “between the first, second, third walls there are cultivated fields, gardens and houses”.
* The fort was entered through well guarded gates, which linked the city to the major roads.
* Archeologists have studied roads within the city and those leading out from it. The roads linked different part of the city Vijayanagara.
* They also led out of the city.
* They went through the whole valley. They avoided rocky terrain.
* Many important roads started from temple gateways ,
* They were linked by bazaars.

**3. The urban core:**

* Archeologists have found fine Chinese porcelain in some areas including in the north- eastern corner of the urban core and suggest that these areas may have been occupied by the rich traders.
* Tombs and mosques located here have distinctive functions yet their architecture resemble that of mandapas found in the temples of Hampi.
* Field surveys indicate that the entire area was dotted with numerous shrines and small temple.

**The royal centre:**

* Royal Centre is where the Vijayanagara kings and their private households lived and conducted the daily business of ceremony and government.
* A good deal of the zone is subdivided into irregular interlocking compounds by high slender walls built of tightly fitted granite blocks that face a rubble core.
* The Royal centre was located in the South-Western part of the settlement.
* It included over 60 temples, the patronage of temple and cults were important for the rulers who were trying to establish and legitimate their authority through association with the divine housed in the shrines.

**The Mahanavami dibba:**

* Based on the form of the building as well as on their functions some of the structure has been assigned some name.
* The ‘kings palace’ is the largest of the enclosure but has not yet used as royal residence.

It has two places for

* 1. The audience hall
* 2. The Mahanavami dibba
* The Mahanavami Dibba is massive platform located on one of the highest points of the city Vijaynagara.
* Rituals associated with the structure probably coincided with Mahanavami.

**Lotus Mahal:**

* The royal centre of Vijayanagara had beautiful buildings.
* It was named as the Lotus Mahal.
* Named by the British travelers in the 19th century.
* It seems to be romantic name.
* However it is not clear to many historians what the building was used for.
* Mackenzie considered it to be a council chamber, a place where the king used to meet his advisers.
* While most temple were located in the sacred centre, there were several in the royal centre as well.

**Hazara Rama temple:**

* One of the most spectacular of these is one known as the Hazara Rama temple.
* This was probably meant to be used by the king and his family.
* The Hazara Rama Temple, which served as a royal chapel, is the hub of the enclosures of the Royal Centre.
* One of the principal roads of the city that runs to the northeast from the temple, through a gateway in the enclosure wall, is lined with lesser shrines.
* The compound southeast of the Hazara Rama Temple is linked with the public and ceremonial life of the Vijayanagara kings.

**The sacred centre:**

**Choosing a capital:**

* According to local traditions, these hills sheltered the monkey kingdom of Vali and Sugriva mentioned in the Ramayana.
* Temple building in the region had a long history going back to dynasties such as the Pallavas, Chalukays, Hoyasals and Cholas.
* Rulers very often encouraged temple building.
* The very choice of the site of Vijaynagara was inspired by the existence of the shrines of Virupaksha and Pampadevi.
* In fact the Vijayanagara kings claimed to rule on behalf of the god Virupaksha.

**Virupaksha temple:**

* Virupaksha Temple in Hampi is dedicated to lord Shiva.
* Virupaksha temple located in Hampi 350 km from Bangalore in the state of Karnataka.
* Hampi is a temple town in South India and is acknowledged as one of the World Heritage Sites of UNESCO.
* Virupaksha temple is the main centre of pilgrim at Hampi and has been considered most sacred place.

**Gopurams and mandapas:**

* Raya Gopurams or royal gateways often dwarfed the towers of the central shrines and signaled the presence of temple from great distance.
* They were also probably meant as reminders of the power of the kings, able to command the resources, techniques and skills needed to construct these towering gateways.
* The Virupaksha temple was built over centuries while inscriptions suggest that the earliest shrine dated to the nine-tenth centuries.
* It was substantially enlarged with the establishment of the Vijaynagara Empire.

**Vitthal temple-**

* The principle deity of temple was Vitthala a form of Vishnu generally worshiped in Maharashtra.
* A characteristic feature of the temple complexes is the chariot streets that extended from the temple Gopurams in straight line.

**Plotting palaces, temples and bazaars:**

* In 1976, Hampi was recognized as a site on national importance.
* Then in the early 1980s an important project was lunched to document the material remains of Vijaynagara in detail through extensive and intensive surveys, using a variety of recording techniques.
* John M Frinz, George Michell and M S Nagaraja Rao, who worked for years at the site.
* They wrote” in our study of these monuments of Vijaynagara we have to imagine a whole series of vanished wooden elements- columns, brackets, beams ceilings, and towers decorated with plaster and painted perhaps brightly.”