



INCREDIBLE CITY ADMINISTRATION OF VIJAYANAGARA EMPIRE

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ABSTRACT:

The city of Vijayanagara gradually grew in size and shape. The capital city's total area during the reign of Krishnadevaraya was 25 sq. km. After him, the city had several towns and a large temple complex. In actuality, the Puras or towns were lived by the common people. As a result, the Vijayanagara city was made up of both the royal enclosure and the commoner's settlements.

For the benefit of the royal family, the Vijayanagara kings showed interest in constructing palaces, watchtowers, great baths, Mahanavami Dibba, open platforms, and entertainment structures like Lotus Mahal and tanks inside the royal enclosure. Therefore, as implied by the name, only royal men and women were permitted inside this enclosure. As a result, the palace had direct control over and management of this area.

The municipal organization was running by in-charge of the city. Municipalities were crucial to the management of towns throughout ancient India. Banavasi, Badami, Kalyan, and Dwarasamudram were some of the ancient capital cities of Karnataka that benefited from an organized municipal administration. Epigraphical sources give great information about the "Pattana Swami's" position and duties and also civic amenities, taxes gathered, and social services provided by the merchant guilds for the study of municipal administration.

For the reconstruction of the history of municipal administration in the Vijayanagara City, there are very few inscriptional sources. But the municipal administration in Vijayanagara City is mentioned in passing in literary sources and foreign accounts. Other than the Vijayanagara City, there were other cities throughout the Vijayanagara empire where the municipal bodies construct shops, supplied drinking water, provided rest houses, and provided feeding and rest houses, indicating how well developed this municipal administration in the urban areas was.

Key words: Temple, Pura, Setti, Swami, Tanks, Anicuts, Mathas, Foreigners.

Introduction:

During the Vijayanagara era in ancient Karnataka, various guilds were founded in the city to encourage trade and commerce. Because of its size and prosperity, Vijayanagara City attracted a lot of international traders. Precious stones, silk fabrics, salt, and sugar were brought to the city from various parts of the empire. Trade,

business, and industry expanded as a result in the City. Foreign visitors have noted the bustling business done in Vijayanagara City in their accounts. The inscriptional evidence shows that "Setti Pattana Swami" mayors were in charge of overseeing the numerous suburbs.

Here, we can see how well-developed city management was during the reign of the Vijayanagara Empire. How the city was created, the function of the municipal administration, the beautiful water supply system, wells, tanks, roads, drainages, the building of anicuts, as well as the building of homes for foreigners who came to Vijayanagara city to do business. The security provided to visitors and the sanitary system during festivals and gatherings were both excellent. All of these cases might be viewed in the Vijayanagara ruins in surprise.

Formation of Extension Areas:

One observes a number of extension areas in the Vijayanagara City for the first time in Karnataka's history. A careful examination of the emergence and development of Puras (town) such as Virupaksha Pura, Vitthala Pura, Krishna Pura, Nagala Pura, Achyuta Pura, and Sale-Tirumala Raya Pura reveals that, unlike modern cities, the Vijayanagara city gained importance and expanded equally in all directions. It was also not overpopulated. In terms of the city's overall development, religion was crucial. The temple served as the Pura's beating heart. The stone pavers used to build the roads leading to this temple were of high quality. Only the neighbourhood municipal body could have made this happen.

Nicolo Conti, Abdur Razzak, Paes, and Nuniz, four foreign travellers, spoke of the long, wide, and beautiful roads. They added that the Nagara was primarily a business organization. It was particularly interested in business and industry because it was an administrative body.

However, during the Vijayanagara period, many industries, including oil mills, textile, leather tanning, silk cloth dyeing, sugar, metal industries, and the weapon industry, were completely managed by the municipalities. Today, the development of industries and commerce is outside the purview of municipal administration. Because they wanted to profit greatly from such businesses. Even trade and commerce, as well as the establishment of markets in the Pura's main streets, were managed by municipalities, whose administration was under the control of the area's top businessmen through their guilds.

A record of A. D. 1535 at Hosapete refers to the Setti Pattana Swami of Tirumaladeviyavara Pattana, Varadarajamma Pattana and Krishnapura.¹ The heads of the towns were known by different names like, "Ubhaya nanadesi", "Pattana Swami", "Mahavaddavyavahdri", "Pattaviyavari", "Setti", "Swami", "Prithvi setti", "Purapati", "Nagareswara", "Pattanadhiswara" and "Mahaprabhu"².

The head of all the mercantile companies in the city was probably the "Pattana Swami or Setti". The fairs were organized by the local leaders in each area of the Capital City. Taxes on merchants were used to pay for these fair's expenses. Municipalities set the taxes for bazar shops. Even the large community of weavers, who paid taxes, contributed to the collection. Titles and honors were bestowed upon the town's top businessmen. The town assembly was called by different names like 'Nakara, or a 'Nakhara', 'Nagara Samuha' or Samuha.

The local's interests were protected by the town assembly, a representative body. The paramount power of the high officials of the state ordinarily did not interfere with the rights of this assembly. Remission of taxes or making gifts took place with its permission. There was a strong sense of oneness among its members. Its members were known as "Nagarattar". The "nagara-karanattar" and the "nagara-madyastha" were among the officers of the nagara. The council, whose members went by the names Nagara Swamulu, Patiana Swamulu, or Nagareswara, was in charge of running the city unit. The council would meet in the palace of the Nagareswara and the members were properly seated. The place of the meeting was known as the mukha-mantapa.³

Through a secret agent, invitations were sent to the Puras representatives so they could attend the meeting. Members who failed to show up for the meeting received penalties. "Mahima setti" was the title given to the assembly's leader. The Pattana Swami not only held charge of the collection of taxes in the city but also, he had a voice in revenue administration. When making land grants, the Pattana Swamis approval was obtained. According to epigraphs, Pattana Swami also donated liberally to temples and carried out other charitable deeds.

An epigraph dated A.D.1535, found near the Assistant Commissioner's Office, Hosapete, mentions that Abbaraja Timmapa, an agent of the Pradhana Tirumala Raya made a gift of the mulavisa (cess) with the consent of the Setti-Pattana Swamis of Tirumaladevivarantana Varadaraianmana records of the city, it is stated that Pattana Swami gifted the income of some shops for the maintenance of temples and for the service of local gods. For example, an inscription found near Kotisankaradevara Bagilu, records the donation of the income from a shop for lighting a lamp to God Mallikarjuna by Setti Pattanasvami.⁴

Similar to the previous epigraph, another one from the year 1525 A.D., that is inscribed on a slab found in a mandapam next to the fort on the path from the royal centre to the Matanga hill mentions the Pattana Swami's donation of income from a shop to the Adinarayana Deva temple for its upkeep.

Responsibilities of the Municipality:

The Municipality was created to offer essential and important public services like safe drinking water, effective transportation, sanitary conditions, and security.

System of Water supply:

The provision of drinking water was regarded as the city administration's top priority in Vijayanagara City. Karnataka's mediaeval period saw the first appearance of a large metropolis with numerous Puras and suburbs. It was not only the imperial capital but also a major centre of religion, trade and commerce, drawing traders from all across the empire and the wider world.

Tanks, wells, and ponds were built with great care due to the city's dense population. Several epigraphs and archaeological remains help us to know the work undertaken in this regard. For example, an inscription dated A.D. 1410 found near the Kadalekalu Ganesa temple states that providing drinking water to men and animals was considered as important social responsibility.⁵

The river Tungabhadra, dam, tanks, wells, ponds, and these sources were the principal sources of water supply for Vijayanagara City. As a result, the entire City was served by a well-organized network of water delivery

systems. The Tungabhadra River was a never-ending stream. Water was piped through the city to the tanks built in various locations even during the summer. This was just discovered in one of Hosapete's expansion colonies.

Tanks:

Around and at Vijayanagara, tanks cut off multipurpose. The water kept in tanks and reservoirs was used for residential, religious, and other reasons in addition to meeting agricultural needs. As a result, the city is home to numerous beautifully constructed temples that are either next to or on the banks of tanks. One famous one is the Manmatha Honda or tank, which continues to serve the Virupaksha temple today. In the first part of the 16th century A.D., the Balakrishna, Vitthala, and Tiruvengalanatha tanks were all constructed in a similar manner.

To honour the memories of the king's mother Nagaladevi, a tank was built and given the name Nagambika Samudra at the recently established Nagalapuram. According to an inscription discovered in the Ranganatha temple in the present-day village of Nagenahalli, the priest Ranganatha Dikshita constructed this tank in the year 1516. Additionally, the rapidly growing capital city's water supply was a major concern for the state's government. To ensure that the newly created city had access to clean water, King Krishnadevaraya built a sizable reservoir close to the capital. In this regard the emperor was assisted by a certain Portuguese Joadella Ponte, who was sent by the Governor of Goa.

Even Nuniz refers to this tank. Even today it is called "Rayara-kere" situated in the southwest part of the present town Hosapete⁶ Bhupathi Kere is mentioned on an inscription from A.D. 1534 that was discovered south of the Achyuta Raya temple. The other inscriptions of a mandapa at Matanga hill and of the Balakrishna temple also make reference to this tank. Kamalapura Tank is the largest tank in the city of Vijayanagara. The Pattabhi Rama temple's inscription makes reference to this tank. Plans were put in place to meet the diverse demands of the city's citizens, particularly those who resided near the citadel.

There is enough evidence to show that there was a good network of open channels and sealed earthenware pipelines which distributed water to the palace and other buildings situated in this area. The same inscription of the temple refers to the tank of Anantapura.⁷ Another inscription mentioning Krishnarayasamudra was discovered on Malyavanta Hill. A Rampura tank in Kaddirampura is mentioned in yet another epigraph discovered at Prasanna Virupaksha. For the benefit of Chikkaraya, Nala Timmana a Boyi built another tank. It is mentioned in an inscription from 1539 that was discovered near Sitarama Tanda, east of Kamalapura. Despite being located outside the city, the Rama Sagara and Bukkasagara reservoirs served the city and its suburbs by providing water.

Wells:

People also dug wells close to mosques, temples, and entranceways. A devotee named Nagappa constructed a well. According to two inscriptions with dates of A.D. 1377 and A.D. 1390 that can be found to the west of the Heinakuta. In a similar way another well was constructed at the end of the Rathabidi of the Virupaksha temple. In inscriptions it is mentioned as Mahadevi-Akka-Bhavi. There was another well called Benakana Bavi near Ganesa statue built by an individual called Devarayain A.D.1411.⁸ In a same vein, an inscription discovered

at a mosque close to Singdrada Hebbagilu records that Ahmed Khan constructed a well in 1439 in honour of his king Devaraya II.

This demonstrates unequally that people were considerate to visitors that arrived in the city. Pilikunchalaka, the son of Kabiruravuta, also built a well. A well called Aresankara Bavi was constructed near Aresankara Bagilu and also near Udayagiri Bagilu in the Vijayanagara city. Two wells called Linga Bavi and Ranganatha Bavi were constructed near Betekara Hebbagilu.⁹ A woman built a well next to the Sarasvati temple. As a result, the wells that have been built close to the entrances remind one of the wells that were built alongside the roadways in ancient India during the rule of Ashoka.

Wells were built close to the entrances for the convenience of both travellers and merchants, as well as for the usage of animals. As one travels from Vijayanagara city towards Hosapete, one notices an intriguing well on the boundaries of the neighbourhood Malapanagudi. An inscription dated A.D. 1412 found at Mallikarjuna temple describes it as Malige-Kupa-arama i.e., well-cum rest-house with a roof. This octagonal well was established here to serve the needs of travellers. This well was built by an individual called Hegde Sovanna-Anna.¹⁰ Besides wells ponds also were built for the benefit of people and animals.

All of the aforementioned cases demonstrate that the citizens and the city government saw delivering water as their sole responsibility. The Rulers built wells and tanks inside their enclosures as part of their unique preparations for royal enclosures. Portuguese hydraulic engineers from Goa were invited. The best illustration was the stepped tank that was built close to Mahanavami Dibba. This tank received water from another tank through a channel system. Additionally, there was a plan in place to deliver water to the nearby Mahanavami Dibba Queen's Bath.

Water Mangers or Tubs:

There were numerous mangers where water was given in addition to wells. An epigraph inscribed on a water manger and kept now in a mandapam of the Kamplimatha in the Virupaksha Bazar mentions that this was caused by Abbaraja Timapa.¹¹ Near Kodanda-Rama temple, another stone water mangers can be seen, on this it is stated that this was caused by Kattalebayya son of Tulubnavasi. Another stone water mangers are located in the northeast of Malyavanta hill i.e., on the right bank of mangers Kaluve. This manger was built by a woman by name Obayavve, for the service of God Raghunatha.¹²

Anicuts:

Bukka II and Devaraya II significantly increased the size of Vijayanagara City. The provision of drinkable water to the Capital City and its suburbs was a pressing demand. In order to meet that need as well as other requirements king Bukka II arranged for the construction of an anicut across the river Tungabhadra about three kilometres to the north of Virupaksha temple of Hampi and also the right bank canal to carry water from this anicut, called 'Turthu Kaluve' or "Turthu canal" and sometimes as "Turthu anicut".¹³

The river Turthu Kaluve, which flows through the remains of the capital city, is frequently referred to as "Hiriya Kaluve" in epigraphs. The canal's course and its subsidiary channels, which can still be seen today,

demonstrate the effective service the builders provided to the locals, their gardens, and other agricultural fields in that large urban area. In this regard, the chronicler Nuniz made some intriguing observations, noting that the monarch had brought into the city a great river that was located five kilometres away. The city found this water supply to be quite helpful.

People were able to create gardens, orchards, sizable tree groves, vine yards, and numerous plantations of lemon, orange, rose, and fruit bearing trees as a result. Along with this anicut, several anicuts were built close to Vijayanagara City on the right banks of the river Tungabhadra. These anicuts were the Hosur Anicut, Rama Sagara Anicut, and Kampli Anicut. Similar to it, anicuts were built on the left bank as well. Such as Sannapura anicut, Sivapura anicut, and Huligi anicut. These are recognised by the names of the places close by.

Outstanding of water supply and drainage system:

System of water supply:

The outstanding civil engineering achievement was the water supply and drainage system. The excavations in the royal enclosure bear ample testimony to this.¹⁴ The enclosures total of nineteen large and small tanks were fed by a system of water channels. When all of the tanks were full, the water was not permitted to be wasted and instead was transported through underground tubes to neighbouring cages. Nearly every channel followed a wall or went underneath. Watertight lime concrete slabs were always used to plug the canals.

An important well was drilled at the location where the main aqueduct split off. It sheds light on their worries about water supplies at the time there was no supply from the primary source. Another illustration of their success is the fact that the tanks were filled sequentially, and if the water level in the first tank dropped, the second one was immediately filled. Such perfection was attained in water works.

Drainage System:

In order to collect rainwater and waste water pouring from the Royal Enclosure, manholes were placed at regular intervals along underground drains. These manholes helped the water exit the Enclosure. On the southern side, a huge drain in between the enclosure and the wall enclosing the garden, was built to collect the water from small drains coming from the enclosure. But in the northern area many small drains directly carried the water out of the enclosure. All the drains were lined with slabs or lime-concrete as in the case of water channels.

As a result, the stone troughs, stone cistern, stone aqueducts, water channels, ponds, tanks, tiered tanks, Queen's Bath, Octagonal Bath, etc. demonstrate the advanced technology used to deliver water to the citizens of the metropolitan metropolis. Some of the water works are still functioning well more than 500 years later and meeting the needs of the locals.

Roads:

A good road system connected each of the Puras throughout the city. To facilitate trade and business, long, broad highways were built directly in front of the temple complex. On either side of the highways, stores were constructed. The weekly market hubs were there. Visitors from other countries have made particular mention of

the city's lovely roads. The roads and businesses built on either side were recounted by Kanakadasa in his Mohana Tarangini. In addition to this, as Vijayanagara was the provincial capital, all the commercial hubs were easily accessible via extensive roadways for both administrative and commercial needs.

Paes observed that there were as many as thirty-four roads in the royal enclosure.¹⁵ The aesthetics of the roads were enhanced by numerous entrances, internal small gates, and wells. The Pattana Swamis benefited the commercial community by improving transportation since they had excellent civic awareness. There is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that many traders travelled from various sections of the empire. A lot of people used carts for transportation.

Education:

Mathas and temples were teaching institutions. The guilds and businesspeople gave generously to promote education. Agraharas dominated the delivery of higher education. The top merchants and Pattana Swamis invited the Brahmin academics to lead Agraharas after recognising their abilities. Saiva saints were in charge of Mathas, where they imparted knowledge on the Saiva Purana, Kannada language, literature, ayurvedic medicine, etc.

In those Mathas religious discourses were held for the benefit of people. Festivals celebrated on grand scale provided an opportunity to increase the prestige and revenue of the Mathas. Social ceremonies were also held in the Mathas. The flourished important Agraharas in the Krishnapura, Nelalahunise, Nagaladevipura,¹⁶ Kumaragiri. Even Abdur Razzak noticed the Brahmanical colleges and schools attached to the temples of the city. The educational centres were also under the control of municipality in the Vijayanagara City.¹⁷

Houses for Foreigners:

Travellers from other countries were drawn to Vijayanagara City because of its prosperity and magnificence, in clouding Barbosa and Paes and Nuniz from Portugal, Abdur Razzak from Persia, and Nicolo Conti from Italy. They toured to various regions of the city and the empire while staying in the city as royal guests.

Additionally, it was the responsibility of the city government to offer them decent housing, security, and direction. Much attention was paid to their wellbeing and safe travel. Good homes were thus built for them at the expense of local government in the city and other regions of the empire. Likewise, traders from China, Portugal, and Arabia arrived in the city. Also provided for them were guest homes, food, and protection. A separate committee was established in Pataliputra's city government centuries ago to take care of foreign guests, and the committee-built accommodations for their stay. Similar to this, the municipal government of Vijayanagara City built guest homes for the merchants who travelled from various regions of the empire and surrounding countries.

Security to foreigners:

Before Independence, municipalities were in charge of the police department. The municipal government was in charge of keeping the city secure and maintaining peace and tranquilly. There were many distinct communities, including foreign traders, in the Vijayanagara City. There were numerous mosques, temples, and other secular buildings. One is genuinely surprised by how peacefully and prosperously people of various faiths

coexisted. There were Talavars, or guardians. in each ward, according to several inscriptions.¹⁸ They performed security guard duties and upheld public safety.

Sanitation:

The Vijayanagara City had the characteristics of a global metropolis. The standout characteristics of sanitation included straight and broad streets, good stores, a well-organized water supply source, and an effective communication system. Provision of guest houses, feeding centres for merchants and foreigners reveals that municipal authorities gave attention to sanitation. Weekly markets were held in every Pura.¹⁹

Festivals and fairs were held occasionally in all temples. Mahanavami festival, a royal festival attracted a large number of feudatory rulers and people from different parts of the empire. Providing clean facilities to a large number of people during festivals was undoubtedly a difficult task. There is proof that they were successful in halting the spread of epidemic diseases. Even in modern times, only the proper attention from the authorities made this possible. Such diseases were not present in the city due to an adequate water supply.

Conclusion:

The city management was thus greatly advanced during the rule of the Vijayanagara Empire. How the city was created, the function of the municipal government, the beautiful water supply system, wells, tanks, roads, drainages, the building of anicuts, as well as the building of homes for foreigners who came to Vijayanagara city to for the business purpose. The security provided to visitors and the sanitary system during festivals and gatherings were both excellent. All of these cases might be viewed in the Vijayanagara ruins in awe.

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