



VICTORIA JUBILEE MUSEUM (VIJAYAWADA)

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During the Victorian era the fore runners of the museum movement toyed with the excellent idea of establishing the museum in some chosen parts of the British Empire. The Golden Jubilee coronation ceremony of the Queen Victoria in 1887 A.D. was chosen to augment this museum movement.¹

The Victoria Jubilee Museum at Vijayawada came into existence to commemorate the Silver Jubilee Celebration of Queen Victoria. This museum was originally named as Victoria Jubilee Museum and Technical Institute of Bezawada. The antiquities which came to light from this region and the samples of the industrial products and handicrafts of this region were exhibited in this museum. Under the auspices of Robert Sewell, a reckowned historian, the then Krishna district Collector, took interest in the construction of this Museum. At that time, the present Prakasam and Guntur districts were under the jurisdiction of Krishna district. As a historian and Collector he published number of

¹ Sarma, P.V., "Victoria Jubilee Museum", Archaeology of Andhra Pradesh, Victoria Jubilee Museum-Vijayawada Centenary 1887-1987 (Souvenir)- Edi. Krishna Sastri, Dr.V.V., Director of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1987, p. 69.

reports on Historical Monuments and antiquities of the district and out of his efforts only this Museum came into existence.

The Victoria Museum and Technical Institute of Bezawada presently Victoria Jubilee Museum, Vijayawada was kept under control of the District Board, Krishna and later under the Zilla Parishad, Krishna till it was taken over by the Department of Archaeology and Museums,

Government of Andhra Pradesh in 1962. The laudable intentions of the British Government were that the Museum shall be used for exhibition of nature, scientific of other curiosities, works of art, articles of commercial interest, manufactures, agricultural or other products and all such things for public understanding. It is also intended for the location there in of Technical School or Technical Institutions, as a place of meeting ground for the intellectual or other advancement and the general welfare of the public, not only belonging to the Krishna district alone but also to some extent to the whole presidency and the adjacent dominions of His highness the Nizam. A sister institute by name Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute, Bombay founded in 1887 for the same purpose held classes for mechanical, electrical and textile engineers and trainmen for the above courses.

The Victoria Jubilee Museum had been enriched with number of priceless antiquities ranging from the dawn of human civilization to the recent past, after it was taken over by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. During recent years, the Department of Archaeology and Museums of Andhra Pradesh launched a programme of opening a museum in every district and is successful in its venture so far, in setting up five district Museums at Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Kakinada,

Karimnagar and Mahatoobnagar. The Victoria Jubilee Museum,

Vijayawada was the first district museum of this department.

Plan of the Museum: Museum building itself is an antique and have to be preserved for posterity. It has Victorian architectural features and constructed in heavy masonry with thick walls. It is South facing rectangular building measuring 71' x 71'; 51' x 51' East-West and NorthSouth respectively. This has verandahas on three sides i.e., west, south and east. The verandah has large piers and arched ways on its outer edge.

The Museum building is located approximately three acres of land and enclosed by a compound wall. This compound wall has single entrance on South which face the Bandar Road. The Museum building has a continuous first floor on three sides over the outside corridor.

It can be approached through flight of steps on both sides. These staircases are arranged inside on both sides to the hind wall of the building. The storey is demarkated on outer side by the arrangement of sculptural freaze as a horizontal band, which contains animals like Camels, Deers, Elephants, hunting Dogs and Horse-riders. The wall of the first floor on its outsider arranged with windows for proper ventilation. On front side the central three windows are arranged with arched tops. The top of the wall has flat kapota the underside of that is. arranged with bud like hangings made of wood. Over the kapota comes parapet wall. The four corners of the building on its top are arranged with square kuta like structures with kalasa and stupi as crowing elements². On the top the corners are arranged with minar like structures. On front side at the centre Garutmanta in anjalihasta is erected in a Nasika like structure. The building has door on

² Anuradha, V. "Victoria Jubilee Museum", Lions Publication, Vijayawada-1984, pp.22-23.

each side. Only the Southern Central door using as main entrance into the building. The main entrance of the building at corridor the steps are flanked by two Saivaite Dvarapalas (i.e.

PI-II.A-18; B-22). In front of the building the life size statue of Rao Bahadur Meka Venkatadri Raya in his military attire of the Andhra Warrior of 18th century holding a big sword and oval shaped shield at his back standing on a on a high pedestal attracts the passer by even from the main road. The big iron gun placed on a pedestal before the statue also belongs to 18th century A.D. One could have a glimpse of the prowess and power of the might Andhra warrior of the age.³

On right side to the building in the compound the stone sculptures are erected in two rows on a high pedestals to a eye line.

On North-west corner to the building one administrative office building with east facing is constructed hind to this office building the Dutch cemetery is erected.

Exactly behind to the Museum building at a distance south face building which is newly constructed for the display of Numismatics.

On North-East corner to the Museum building toilets are also constructed (P1.1-32).

The entire Museum compound is arranged with well gland jaren which enhance the beauty of the building.

Administration: The Victoria Jubilee Museum is administered by the State Archaeological Department of Andhra Pradesh. In this premises Assistant Director's office is also located. Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam districts are under the

³ Avadhani, V.V.S., "Guide Book to Victoria Jubilee Museum- Vijayawada"- Edi. Ramesan Dr. N., Secretary, G.A.D. & Director of Archaeology & Museums, Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, 1976.

jurisdiction of this Assistant Director's office. This office has two Administrative wings.

One is Assistant Director office staff, another is Victoria Jubilee Museum staff.

Guide Lecturer is maintaining the Museum Office and controlling one record assistant, six Museum attendars, two attendars, three gardeners, two watchmen and a sweeper. Guide Lecturer is assigning the duties to these attendars and watchmen.

Display of Sculptures and other objects: The Sculptures in this museum are exhibited in an order in the corridor of the building and also in the garden. All these sculptures are arranged on stone pedestals to the eye line level. All these sculptures which are on display are hailed from some temple or belong to the one of the other architectural component of a temple may the Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. Proper display of these sculptures with full details give a through knowledge of the architectural scheme of a temple or iconographic and artistic details. For explanation these sculptures are given numbers. The sculptures in the right wing of the corridor are grouped into "A", where as the sculptures in the left wing are grouped as "B". The sculptures in the garden are mentioned as "C". Inside the ground floor and first floor the objects are displayed in island show cases, wall show cases and also in two round show cases which themselves have antiquity value. The paintings are arranged on the wall.

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