

Culultural Heritage and Tourist Places of Chickaballapur Taluk -An Overview

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Introduction:

Chikaballapura is the Taluk headquarters of the newly created Chickaballapur District, which is carved out from Kolar Taluk in 2007. It is about 58 km away from Bangalore. It is known for historical monuments, hill stations, and educational institutions. Chickaballapur Taluk is also known for pre-historic sites such as Neolithic and Megalithic sites. Chickaballapura Taluk has seen the growth of dynasties such as Banas, Gangas, Nolambas, Hoysalas, The Rulers of Vijayanagara and Nadaprabhus. The Taluk has several ancient temples which are popularly by their architecture and sculpture. Nandi Hills and Nandi draw the attention of both tourists and devotees. The Chickaballapura Taluk has several culultural heritage and tourist places. They are discussed as follows:

Nandi Hills:

Bangalore may boast of many places of tourist interest, but none has enraptured the public and the royalty alike as Nandi Hills did. Known as Karnataka's Ooty. Apart from being tourist spot, the place also holds interest to college students, researchers and bird watchers, owing to the variety of flora and fauna atop the hills. Nandi Hills is a famous hill station and tourist spot in Karnataka. It is situated in Chickaballapura Taluk and about 60 km from Bangalore. It is situated at an altitude of 1479 meters or 4851 feet, above the sea level. The rivers Arkavathi, Chitravathi, Papagni, Uttara Pinakini or Pennar, Dakshina Pinakini or Ponnaiyar and Palar take their birth at Nandi Hills, Nandi Hills has impressive flora and fauna with around 150 different varieties of species. The weather a Nandi Hills is pleasant throughout the year. The Yoga Nandishwara Temple on the top of the Nandi Hills has the architecture of Dravidian style. The fort was built by paleygars of Chickaballapur and later strengthened by Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan. The precipice to the south west has the name Tippu's Drop, where it is recorded by many scholars as the place where the prisoners condemned to death were pushed down the precipice to the valley below. In the hill to the north there is a spot called Hyder Drop which also has a precipice.

The building Tippu Sultan used to stay while camping at Nandi Hills is now called Tippu Bungalow, and it is preserved as a monument. The Cunningham lodge was renamed as Gandhi Nilaya, because of Gandhiji's visit and stay at Nandi Hills. The other places of interest on the Nandi Hills are, Amritha Sarvora, Gavi Veerabhadra Temple, Kudure Metlu (Horse steps). Nellikai Basavanna, Hanuman Temple and garden. Tourism Ministry works with the objective of development of tourism of tourism and the promotion of tourist activities in and around the hills area. The hills are also among the few sites in the Country where aero sports such as parasailing and micro light flying are conducted.

Nandi: It is situated in Chickaballapura Taluk. It has become well known by the Bhoga Nandishwara Temple, one of the major temples of the state built in Dravidian style. The original temple belongs to a period prior to the 9th century A.D. with later additions during Chola, Hosala and Vijayangara periods. In this Bhoganandishwara temple complex, there are two separate Garbhagrihas in one straight line, with separate Nandimantapas. The temple to the North is dedicated to Lord Bhoganandishwara and the Southern one to Lord

Arunachaleshwara. The Bhoganandishwara temple was built in 806 A.D. by queen Rathnavali, wife of the Bana ruler Banavidhyadhara. (CB-106)

It has Banalinga in the squarish garbhagriha. In front of this are found the sukhanasi and the navaranga. The four pillars in the centre of the navaranga are circular and executed in Ganga style. There is a monolithic Nandi sculpture in front. To the west of the Navaranga has a specious kalyamantapa richly decorated. The Mukhamantapa having 12 pillars is large with platforms at the entrance gateway. At the backside of the temple within the enclosure, there are three small shrines where the idols of kamaleshwara and the goddess Apeetha, Kuchamba and Girijamba are installed. (MAR 1914, 1932)

The Arunachaleshwara temple hearby, is more or less built at the same time and on the same lines and style as that of Bhoganandishwara temple. The only record which may be considered is connection with its construction is a stone slab in the compound bearing an inscription in old kannada which appears to state that in the reign of Nolambadhiiraja. i.e., about 880 A.D., Puliyan, son of Ainurvachari, received some gifts for constructing a gopura in the courtyard of the Nandi temple. The temple has garbariha, sukanasi and navaranga with the square shaped shikhara on top of the garbhagriha. The central portion of this temple has been repaired during the Vijayanagar period as indicated by its pillars. A Kannada Inscription at the foot of the Thandaveshwara figure belongs to the Nolamba period as determined on the grounds of palaeography. The Mukhamantapa in front of the temple is ascertained to be the creations of pre-Vijayanagara or Post-hoysala period, as chlorotic stone has been used here, of the various festivals held in this temple such as Brahamarathotsava/Car festival, (Feb/March), Karthika Depam, Maharashivarati etc.

Rangasthala:

It is situated on Chickaballapur-Gowrbidanur, highway about 3 km from Chickaballapur, and famous for Ranganathaswamy temple. The temple is belonged to the pre-Vijayanagara or Hoysala Period. The Ranganatha temple is a large Dravidian structure of some architectural merit with lofty Mahadwara, about 18 feet high, facing south. The temple consists of a garbhagriha, sukhanasi, navaranga, mukhamantapa and a veranda running figure of Sheshashyana Ranganatha, about 4 feet long, with the head to the west, canopied by a five-hooded snake, the figures of Sridevi and Bhudevi being seated at the feet. The Mukhamantapa a fine structure, stands on an ornamental plinth, supported by 24 sculptured pillars. The veranda, which is on a lower level, has 14 sculptured pillars which are loftier and larger in size than those of the front hall. All the pillars are sculptured in three panels on all the sides. The roof of the mantapa also is carved out of stone attractively in Vijayanagar style. The stone rings and jumping monkey figures are wonderful. In the Navaranga are kept metallic figures of Ranganatha with consorts, Vishvaksetna, Ramanujacharya, Nammalvar and Chakrattalvar. There are two elephants at the sides of the steps leading to the front hall. The balipitha and the pedestal of the dhvajastambha or flag-staff, which are similar in design, are artistically executed. The Vimana over the garbhagriha resembles that of the temple at Srirangam, being in the shape of a basket, and is carved with figures, etc, of the various festivals held in this temple, such as, Bramhotsava, Mukkoti Ekadashi, SriRama navami etc.

Srinivasa Sagara Dam: It is situated in Chickaballapur Taluk and about 15 km from Chickaballapur and 65 km from Bangalore. The dam creates an overflow due to which there is a mini waterfall. It is the perfect place to chill and enjoy the flow of water. The place gets particularly beautiful during the rainy season. Tourists are flocking to the Srinivasa Sagara dam which is overflowing following incessant rains.

Muddenahalli: It is situated 5 km away from Chickaballapura. It is the birth place of Bharata Ratna Sir M. Visveswaraiah. A museum in memory of Sir M. Visweswaraiah has been opened in his house at Muddenahalli. It has a wide collection of writings and photographs of him on display, right to the next ancestral home of Sir M. Visveswarayya alongside the museum is his Samadhi. Muddenahalli is also famous for Sri Satya Sai group of Institutions.

Avalabetta: It is located in Chickaballapura Taluk, is about 35 km from Chickaballapur and 90 km from Bangalore. Avalabetta is emerging as tourist destination. It is one of the few trekking destinations near Bangalore, it is an ideal place for nature lovers and adventurers. According to the Sthalapurana, the history of the hillock is steeped deep in mythology. It is said that during the time of Samudra Manthan (churning of the ocean), the sea yielded all kinds of creatures, both good and bad. One of the novel creations of the ocean was cow, which landed on the hillock, with time, a large number of cows started frequenting this place, hence, the hill received the name Dhenugiri, or Cow hill. There are even some marks on the hill which are said to have been created by the paw of the cow, as it landed here. Avalabetta is a popular among the youth, especially trekking enthusiasts. However, it is still one of the best destinations near Bangalore. The attractions of Avalabetta are as follows:

Beak Rock: The unique about hill top is that the edge of the cliff, it is an almost unsupported cliff, projecting away from the main hillock. It is enough to sit upon or stand. The youngsters who came here can be seen making poses and taking selfies at the rock.

Lakshminaryan Temple: It is a typical Dravidian style, with a pyramidal tower above its sanctum. Locals offer cow milk to the local deity.

Hilltop pond: It is on the hill top. The area also has little water spots formed in the stone over time

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