



HERITAGE VALUES AND TOWNSHIP MANAGEMENT – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KGF IN KOLAR

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the gradual phases of development of Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) as a township and spotlights the necessity to conserve heritage values in KGF through application of township management. KGF became a bustling township following the starting of gold mining. John Taylor Company acquired the right so mining around 1880 and continued to work till 1960. The mining here is closed now and KGF area is an abandoned township with. The areas were a bustling township throughout the mining period, but now looks desolated and deserted. But there are certain structures considered as geological monument by the National geological Survey of India. But structural construction in Robertsonpet and Andersonpet can also be considered for conservation as it carries invaluable heritage value. As the John Taylor Company started mining activities lots of British nationals came and settled in KGF and created amenities which best showcased their true living back in England. The location got electricity connection, recreational facilities, pure drinking water plant, Cinema Hall, Tennis court, Swimming pool, dairy, bakery, telephone operating system, prayer halls, churches, residential villas and so on. The need for conserving this structural construction arises as they carry immense heritage value.

Keywords: *KGF in Kolar, Heritage Values, and Township Management.*

Introduction

Mining was considered as a thrilling profession at the turn of the 20th century. It was considered as a modern industrial activity. The Government of Mysore was very enthusiastic to start Gold mining in Kolar as the government was under great pressure to pay subsidy to the British. The royalty paid through British Mining companies would help them financially.

KGF- Initial phases towards becoming a Township

Contributions of Sir Donald Robertson - Sir Donald Robertson, the Resident at the court of Mysore Government, is credited with envisioning uninterrupted power supply for KGF and he evolved the idea of starting a Hydroelectric Plant at Shivana Samudram. Maharaja of Mysore was very much pleased by the Resident's moves in supporting Mysore Government in lessening the burden of funding the subsidy amount as gold mining companies paid royalty to Mysore Government. Sir Donald Robertson is also credited with drafting a constitution for Mysore. He worked towards providing Civic amenities to KGF people. He insisted on providing clean drinking water to both labourers and residents. Sir Donald Robertson joined John Taylor Company at KGF after his retirement from Mysore Civil service. He died in till 1930. The achievements of Sir Donald Robertson.

Establishment of Robertson Pete- Mining industry expanded under the John Taylor and Sons Company It employed 4500 employees The Township came in 1901 as new town it was meant to house the population of people working in KGF mines. It was renamed as Robertson in 1902 The re-naming was due to insistence from Maharaja of Mysore who demands the new town be named after the Robertson who was the resident of the Mysore state. A town hall was built in **Victorian Architectural**



style with arches, canopies and a large garden was name as the king George Hall. The KGF Club in Oorgaum and the King George G Hall Cosmopolitan club companies paid royalty to the British government were established providing facilities for badminton, tennis, cards, carom, snooker.

Establishment of Water Purification Plant- A water purification plant came up in 1902 in **Bethamangalam** near Kolar which further helped the township to become more supportive. Bethamangalam reservoir supported the workers and new residents of KGF to access to clean and clear drinking water.

Establishment of Hydro-Electric Plant- Dewan M. Vishweshwaraiah planned to set up a first Hydro-electric plant at Shivanasamudram. He envisaged the supply of electric power can support mining companies to work faster and for longer hours. He planned to get electric supply to KGF through Shivanasamudram waterfalls. A Power transmission Unit was installed in KGF. The Commissioning of the **Cauvery Falls Power Station** in 1902 changed the system for working in KGF and until then all machinery in KGF worked through Steam power. The Power supply was uninterrupted and sufficiently available.

Establishment of hospital- A hospital was established in **Champion Reefs** Area to cater to health issues. A hospital was considered an ominous necessity because both the Englishmen and local labourers were working in severe heat, mud and sludgy soil. The respiratory difficulties were often felt and Hospital was nothing but an immediate necessity.

Establishment of KGF Club- The iconic **KGF Club** came up in 1895. It was meant for the use of British officers in KGF and it served as a place of recreation and entertainment for Englishmen only. The English men congregated here and discussed several subjects of common interest and spent time resourcefully.

Establishment of Small Movie Hall- The development of the township was further made contemporary as a small movie hall was added. Oorgaum This movie hall was a very small movie hallway but it was built in English style. Though it showed only English movies, it entertained the Englishmen and made their life colourful.

Establishment of Recreational Amenities- There were other basic recreational amenities provided such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and golf and football fields. These recreational and leisure time activities were conceived as substitute to compensate hectic day of work. They also supported to attract other Englishmen from London who aspired to visit or invest or settle in KGF. These spare time activities were innovative to the local people and they too enjoyed the additional time viewing their masters enjoy.

Establishment of Milk dairy- The establishment of milk dairy at Oorgaum was another feather in the cap of township development. Oorgaum dairy was started with handful of Jersey cows and a small pasteurizing unit was added later. This dairy plant supplied milk to Englishmen villas and local houses around the mining area. This dairy delivered fresh bread every day and supplied to Englishmen Villas freshly. The dairy was very popular and there were also small bakeries which came up later in the vicinity.

Establishment of Manual telephone operating system- Next significant step which helped the growth of township further was the establishment of a tiny and manually operated telephone exchange room. It



was supported with an operator working on receiving or sending calls. This was the first manual telephone system and KGF was almost looking similar to a busy England village.

Establishment of places of Worship- Most of the British and Anglo Indians were Catholic. The oldest was the **Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church** built around 1884. **St Anthony Church** was built in 1912, the Anglican **St Michael** came up in 1904 and **All Angels Church** came up in 1905. These churches were built with the funds raised by **India Church Association** situated in London. **St Michael and All Angels Church** was the first Church to be built in KGF. It was later moved to Robertson pet. It was meant as a place of worship exclusively for the officers of the **John Taylor and Sons Company**. St Paul Anglican Church with Rev L Giffard Pollard appointed as the main Chaplin of the **St Paul's Anglican Church** in December 1901 . These buildings were built in the **Victorian style** using bricks and stones. They were administered by Church of England Madras Diocese with the Chaplin being appointed by **John Taylor and Sons Company**. The **Society of Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts** Rev. James Sharp as chaplain who was a very popular as a church head. This church could accommodate 60 people at a time and the prayers were conducted in English and Tamil languages. The Church funding was one of the essential and genuine responsibilities of the Englishmen here and it was hailed in the contemporary British records as the noblest investment.

Establishment of residential houses- This small-town area around Robertson pet came up with small shops and vendor units. Non mining residents made use of this small town for their daily needs. Labour Contractors, Marwari money lenders and shop keepers started building residential houses and the area too became a busy area very soon.

As a result of these a township developed in KGF and there was a gradual insertion of Anglican style in building. People migrated from Salem, Chittor, Dhampuri, Krishnagiri etc and worked in KGF as labourers. The following is the chart showing the population surge in KGF.

Population growth in KGF-

1891	7085
1911	37,964
1921	90,000

Heritage Value Management-

The heritage value encompasses conservation of tangible & intangible, natural and cultural, movable and immovable kinds of historical assets. There is indispensable need to document assets inherited from the past and transmit to future generations by virtues of their irreplaceable value. Natural and cultural heritage sites, museums, libraries, and archives collections around the world are increasingly becoming the collateral victims of natural disasters, armed conflicts, desertion, abandonment, etc. As a result, vintage structures look abandoned and places which can bring revenue to state exchequer through proper conservation management supporting tourism activities are completely cornered. This leads to destruction of heritage.

There is a need to apply conceptions and conventions concerning heritage management as drafted by UNESCO. UNESCO offers a unique platform for international co-operation and dialogue fostering mutual respect, appreciation and understanding of built heritage. These legal instruments support the development of national policies for heritage protection with an emphasis on preservation management



and training. As heritage is a valuable factor for empowering local communities and enabling vulnerable groups to participate fully in social and cultural life.

The application of such strong conservation policies in KGF will redefine tourism prospects in KGF. The electricity plant, water plant, Cinema Hall, Tennis court, Swimming pool, dairy, pasture plant, bakery, telephone room, churches, residential villas, and such other building which are in a deserted state can be conserved and reused to attract tourists.

Conclusion

Thus, the KGF became an English township and the development of this place was very gradual, modest and memorable. Even now the remnants of this township are visible but in a dilapidated condition. It is can project several answers to archaeological restoration. The city, its history, its traditional progression towards becoming an Englishmen parish etc are too interesting topics for a researcher. Hence, the entire township can be restored to its past glory and can be made more supportive to tourism development in the area.

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