



BANURGAD: WATCHING CENTER OF MARATHA KILLE (MAHARASHTRA)

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Abstract

The great Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj could protect and developed his empire only because of his forts which were located in between the ranges of Sahyadri. His forts were witness of Royal Empire. He captured the region of his enemies by his will power and act of bravery. He founded Hindavi Empire. Among the forts "Banurgad" or 'Bhopalgad' stands for to control Adilshahi and Mogal Empire. It was supposed that this fort was built by the 'King Bhupanshingh'. and was captured by Shavaji after Afzalkhan's death.

Banurgad is one of the important fort in Sangli District. Firangoji Narasale was an Officer whom they called 'Killedar' and Vitthalpanth Bhalerao was an officer whom was a title "Sabnis" after 2nd April 1679. The fort was captured by the army of Sambhaji as Delerakhan. The Great War was fought and Firangoji tried his level best to retain the fort but when he face Sambhaji he decided to retreat himself on 17th April 1679. The fort was captured by enemy. This observing centre was converted within the range of enemy. Even though Bhupalgad is 'a glory of. By gone age of Sangli District.

Keywords: Fort, Empire, Maratha.

Introduction -

Forts have vital importance in Indian war policy. Shivaji's empire was also surrounded by a chain of forts. To keep kingship and to protect it the Kings gave priority to build and maintain forts. These forts were a symbol of security and Safety places of Maharashtrian citizens. To protect God and religion also women and subjects Shivaji build and maintain the forts. The other king and officers sometime oppose as well as sometime co-operate him. Shivaji handle those persons in a proper manner. His policy was known as Sam-Dam-Bheth and Dandha. Taking co-operation and providing facilities about the region Shivaji handle the empire tactfully for the span between 1630 to 1680 that is about 50 years he struggle by heart with his opponent. He had Established sub-empire as like Chakan, Pune, Baramati and Indapur to develop his kingdom.

Shivaji is a person who dare and act properly. He had vision of optimisticness and he was endowed by nature also. Because of hilly region and natural surrounding he can keep his forts safe and sound. He had selected proper places for forts which were supported by storage of water and food.

The statement of Sukracharya states that one armed person fought against 100 people, 100 warriors can fight against ten thousand and people so far Empire has to take shelter in the fort. This policy was implemented by Shivaji. He not only built forts on ground but also at the bank and surrounded by sea. Because of it he can control Adilshahi and other enemies.

According to Mr. Krishnaji Anant out of 240 forts 111 were built by Shivaji. Mr. Ramrao

Chitnis counted them 317 and Chitragupta counted 361¹. A multy number of soldiers were defeated by only few numbers of Maratha soldiers because of only forts. Hence the moghal empire was shocked deeply.

Ramchandrapanta Amattya in his letter of order states about the fort that instead of forts we should not role any one. The policy of fort and it's protection was so powerful so that the enemy has to give much more time. Than their expectation due to which there were unable to succeeded. The fort officers were appointed as per division of their work so they can easily protect the fort. Shivaji also trying to test these officers, if he found good he will gave him promotion².

Fort in Sangli District

Maratha army was developed because of the co-operation and participation of persons from all caste and communities. Shivaji also appointed loyal officers to protect the forts. So in future Panhala, Satara, Raigad, Bhupangad forts become mile stones in the history.

To maintain Maratha Empire the fort Banurgad in Sangli district play a Vita Role. It is a symbol of Empiry.

Forts in Sangli District within Maratha Empire are in Sahyadri Mountain and its rages. Hilly forts are very important one of them is 'Prachitgad'. This fort support Maratha Empiry upto 18th June 1818. Another one is 'Bhahadurgad' the fort of Palasi. The army centre of Bagani as well as Tasgaon centre was run by Patwardhan supported by the Maratha Empire.

Banurgad as control centre of south Hindvi Empire

The fort Bhupalgad is situated on the boundaries of Sangli and Solapur districts of western Maharashtra. It acquires a vast region from the hilly ranges of Sitabai up to the bank of river Yerala. It was believed that the King Bhupal built the fort on behalf of his name the fort formally known as Bhupalgad (Banurgad). It is within the region of village Banurgad in Sangli district hence it is known as Banurgad. It is situated at the height of 500M³. It is vast one and it was surrounded by missive wall from all direction on Northwards there was a forest. Now the surrounding wall is ruined to enter in the fort there were spy ways.

According to enemies it has less importance but Shivaji gave much more importance as observing spot to control the mishaps. Shivaji had spent a lot of money and stocked various instruments on this fort. To reach at the fort following are the few ways:

- (1) From Pune to Satara – Karad – Vita – Khanapur – Palashi – Banurgad(Bhupalgad). (Distance from Bombay – 384 km.)
- (2) From Kolhapur or Kokan – Sangli – Tasgaon – BhivaGhat – Palashi. (Distance from Sangli 55km, Khanapur 17 km.)

The battle of Banurgad (Bhupalgad) 2nd April 1679.

Shivaji Has built a strong and concrete fort near Manjara mountain ranges and named it Banurgad (Bhupalgad). He put weapons and Wealth in it. That News went to Diler Khan Aurangzeb ordered to Dilerkhan, Masoodkhan and Sambhajiraje to attack on Banurgad(1679)⁴. (ki 5/6)

For the expand of the empire of Maratha Shivaji decided to conquer Banurgad fort in Dec.1678 After the death of Afzalkhan. Sambhaji had joined his hands to Dilerkhan and Masoodkhan and attacked on this fort in 1679. Firangoji(Adilshah) Narsala was the incharge fort officer Bijapur of Banurgad fought against enemy with the help of native people. He fought against enemy bravely and sincerely one massive pillar was collapsed and its result was that hundreds of people died. Dilerkhan and Masoodkhan hid behind Sambhaji for safty. Firangoji was unable to kill Sambhaji as the son of his master. Though Shivaji provided/sent 1600 soldiers but Dilerkhan defeated them. In that war 700 maratha people soldiers were killed⁷. At last enemy took that fort under their command on 17th April 1679

Baharj Naik monument –Bahirji was the chief secret agent of Shivaji⁸. He was a man of plan and skillfull in his duty and job. He praised by all, unfortunately he was arrested

and killed at the feet of lord Shambhu Mahadev temple.

Baharji Naik monument – Baharji was chief officer of C.I.D. department of Shivaji⁸. He was so skillful in his job. That is why everyone praised him. Unfortunately he was arrested or died at the feet of Lord Shambhu Mahadev temple.

Firangoji Narasala (Killedar)

Firangoji Narasala was the killedar and strong warrior and chief of army of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 17th century. He fought very bravely against 10,000 soldiers of Shahistekhan who attacked on Chakan fort with only 600 soldiers for 60 days war. He was the Killedar of Chakan in Pune District. Shahistekhan surprised at his bravery and valour and also attempted to Mughal emperorship but he denied. He visited Shivaji and apologized for the accepting defeat from enemy. He escorted the fort for two months so the king was happy and satisfied on his duty. He exclaimed that if Shahistekhan wasted 60 days fighting for a little fort, how many days he will waste for Swarajya. Shivaji praised and rewarded Firangoji for his great work and made him killedar of Bhupalgad (Banurgad)⁹.

Analysis / Conclusion :-

- (1) Chhatrapati used that fort to watch and command on enemy.
- (2) It was the weapon house of Maratha in Southern area / region.
- (3) Watching center of Maratha army.
- (4) To control and command on trade and commerce.

Present use of the fort :-

- (1) To control and command on the trade of Maharashtra & Karnataka.
- (2) To control & Prohibit on unofficial trade & commerce.
- (3) Used as centre of atmosphere.
- (4) Tourism, and picnic center.

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