

Chapter 5

Salar Jung Museum Library in the Heritage City of Hyderabad: An Analytical Review of Outreach and Engagement

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ABSTRACT

This is an analytical review of engagement and outreach of Salar Jung Museum Library's collection (MSS, printed, and digital). The chapter aims to visualize the benefits of being located in a heritage city, viz., Hyderabad, in India. The method adopted is first to trace impressions of researchers and scholars and second to gather data of its presence in libraries across the world. Tracing such variety and distinctness will open doors for further exploring the impact factors. The original collector, viz., Salar Jung, had open doors for diversity and open mind to welcome all cultural depictions of the world. Its diversity is evident in artifacts and resources that represent samples from East and West. So also is its inclusiveness – the entire collection is without bias of gender, race, or religion. The data analysis shows the engagement in heritage building is reciprocal. A study in the post-COVID era with a larger variety of data (viz., survey, virtual visits, digital impression) will reveal the full picture of reciprocity and will also highlight the actual needs and demands.

INTRODUCTION

The city of Hyderabad with its multicultural ethos was founded by Sultan Mohammad Quli Qutub Shah in 1591. He was the fifth ruler of the Golconda Sultanate which ruled the region in the Deccan. The Golconda Sultanate comprised of the Qutub Shahi kings or *sultans*. The kingdom was founded by Sultan Quli Qutub-ul-mulk who had come to the Deccan originally from Hamadan in Iran. The dynasty ruled from 1518 -1687 A.D with Sultan Abul Hasan Qutub Shah as its last king, when his rule ended in 1687 with the siege of Golconda Fort by Mughal emperor Aurangzeb with his army. The kings ruled both from

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the Golconda Fort and Hyderabad at different times. Sultan Quli had rebuilt the mud fort on the hillock which was originally built by the Kakatiyas in 1143 A.D and was called *Mankal*. He strengthened the defences of the hill and built strong ramparts. He renamed it as Mohammadnagar. The Golconda Fort had palaces, mosques, markets, houses, offices, gardens, fountains, public baths and was a bustling centre. The Golconda kingdom extended from Warangal to the Masulipatnam (now Machilipatnam) coast. The need for a new city was envisaged when the fort capital became very crowded. Golconda was large, prosperous and densely populated, its fame of diamonds and printed cloth attracted traders from Europe and Asia, the need for a new city was submitted via a petition to the Sultan by the nobility.

Hyderabad was subsequently built on the gridiron system in the form of a large double cross. The *Charminar* stands at the city centre, and four roads extend from its portals. The city was divided into 12,000 *muhallas* (precincts). The Charminar is the most famous Qutub Shahi monument. The Sultan built many public buildings and beautiful gardens. The Charminar is flanked by four arches, Charkaman, at a distance of 375 feet from the centre. The arched gateways are called *Sher-e-ali kaman* or *Sher-e-batil*, *Kali kaman*, *Machli kaman* and *Charminar ki kaman*. After studying the plans of Persian cities like Ispahan, Mir Momin Astarabadi the chief architect, made the design for the new city of Hyderabad. The Charminar which was built to commemorate the elimination of a plague also served as a city centre. It was completed in 1592. They were palaces around the Charminar like *Chandan Mahal*, *Sajan Mahal*, *Khudadad mahal*, *Nadi mahal* etc. which no longer exist as they were pulled down by invading Mughal armies. The Jama Masjid, the Mecca Masjid, Badshahi Ashurkhana, the Toli Masjid, the Khairatabad mosque, the Shaikpet *serai* with a mosque and the necropolis at Ibrahimbagh were developed during the Qutub Shahi rule of almost two centuries. The Hussain Sagar with a bund now famous as *Tank Bund*, was constructed and filled with water by Hussain Shah Wali, in-charge of public works during the reign of the Sultan Ibrahim Qutub Shahi. The city had many gardens, reservoir-fountains like the Gulzar Hauz, buildings and streets. During the Golconda times a diamond market thrived in the Karwan area. Jean Baptiste Tavernier was a French diamond merchant and traveller to India in the 17th century, who has left accounts of Golconda. The Goshamahal Baradari is probably the only well preserved palace built by the Qutub Shahis whose construction was started by Sultan Abdullah and completed by the last Qutub Shahi ruler, Sultan Abul Hasan Qutub Shah in 1684. It was used as a *secluded place* by royal ladies at that time. During Aurangzeb's conquest of the Deccan, he installed his son Shah Alam in this palace, which served as the Mughal headquarters in the south. Later, in the early 20th century, the Nizam of Hyderabad handed this palace over to the Freemasons of Hyderabad and Secunderabad and it has been in their care ever since.

After the Qutub Shahi rule ended in 1687, the Mughals ruled the area with the help of *viceroys* who later declared independence. They started the Asaf Jahi era of the *Nizam* rule of Hyderabad-Deccan and ruled between 1724-1948 A.D. They further developed the city with new roads, buildings, palaces and markets. The Salar Jung family were prime-ministers to the Nizams. The Chowmahalla Palace, now a tourist place of interest, the Purani Haveli now housing the Nizam's Museum and the Falaknuma Palace now turned a Taj group hotel are from the Asaf Jahi times. The Residency was also a palace built for Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick, British Resident at Hyderabad, 1798-1805. The Residency at Bolarum, Secunderabad built in 1860 by Nizam IV, Nawab Mir Farkhunda Ali Khan, Nasir-ud-daula, was also for use of the Resident. There were many developments in Hyderabad during the Asaf Jahi rule. The Nizam College was established in 1887 by amalgamation of Hyderabad College and *Madrassa-e-aliya*. The

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