Ginjee Fort - A Tourism Icon of Villupuram District in Tamilnadu - A Case Study

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Introduction
Ginjee Fort or Senji Fort (also known as Chenji, Junji or Senchi) in Tamil Nadu, India is one of the surviving forts in Tamil Nadu, India. It lies in Villupuram District, 160 kilometres (99 mi) from the state capital, Chennai, and is close to the Union Territory of Puducherry. The fort is so fortified, that Shrooji, the Maratha king, ranked it as the "most impregnable fortress in India" and it was called the "Troy of the East" by the British. The nearest town with a railway station is Tiruvannamalai and the nearest airport is Chennai (Madras), located 150 kilometres (93 mi) away.

Originally the site of a small fort built by the Chola dynasty during the 9th century AD. Ginjee Fort was modified by Kamarbar during the 13th century. As per one account, the fort was built during the 15th - 16th century by the Nayaks, the landowners of the Vijayanagara Empire and who later became independent kings. The fort passed to the Marathas under the leadership of Shrooji in 1677 AD, Bajaur sultans, the Moguls, Carnatic Nawabs, French and the British in 1761. The fort is closely associated with Raja Tej Singh, who unsuccessfully revolted against the Nawab of Arcot and eventually lost his life in a battle.

The Ginjee Fort complex is on three hillocks:
Krishnagiri to the north, Rajagiri to the west and Chandrayandurg to the southeast. The three hills together constitute a fort complex, each having a separate and self-contained citadel. The fort walls are 13 km (8.1 mi) and the three hills are connected by walls enclosing an area of 11 square kilometres (4.2 sq mi).

1 It was built at a height of 800 feet (240 m) and protected by a 80 feet (24 m) wide moat. The complex has a seven-storied Kalyana Mahal (marriage hall), granaries, prison cells, and a temple dedicated to its presiding Hindu goddess called Chennambam. The fortifications contain a sacred pond known as Amanakulam. On the top of the hill, there are many fortifications. The fort, in modern times, is maintained and administered by the Archaeological Survey of India. The fort is one of the prominent tourist destinations in Villupuram district.

The Bajaur Nawabs who held the fort from about 1460 to 1677 AD called it Bajaurabad, while the Marathas who succeeded them called it Chandry or Chand. The Moguls, on their capture of the fort in 1698 AD, named it Nusratgadh in memory of Nawab Zulfiqar Khan Nusrat-Jang, the commander-in-chief of the besieging army. Later, the English and the French called it Ginjee or Junji. The early Madras records of the English give the spelling Gingee or Chengee.

As per Tamil legend, the tragic tale of Raja Tej Singh, popularly known in Tamil as Thesingu Raasan, is associated with the fort. The true life story of Tej Singh and his general, Mubboob Khan (aka Masudhukaran), who were friends, has inspired many poems, street plays, and countless other stories. He was the son of S面板a Singh and revolted against the Nawab of Arcot, and was defeated and killed in the war that followed. Though Ginjee became a part of the Nawab's territory in 1714, the young and courageous Tej Singh became a legend and his life, love and brave but tragic end were eulogised in various ballads.

The main source for the first two hundred years of the history of the place is the "Complete History of the Carnatic Kings" among the Mackenzie manuscripts. According to historian Narayanan, a small village called Melacerru, located 3 mi (43 km) away from Ginjee is called "Old Ginjee" has traces of fortifications from about 1200 AD.

Ananda Ram of the shepherds community (Koran), accidentally found a treasure in one of the caves of the Western hill while grazing his sheep. Making himself the head of a small band of warriors, he defeated the petty rulers of the neighbouring villages and built a small fortress on Kamalagiri, which he renamed Anandagiri after himself. The Koran dynasty ruled Ginjee from 1190 to 1330 AD, and was succeeded by the chief of a neighbouring place called Kollingam, who belonged to the Kurumbi caste and ascended the throne of Ginjee. He was a feudatory of the powerful Cholas. Ginjee came into the hands of various ruling dynasties of South India, starting from the Cholas.

Tourism in a broader sense has existed for a long time in the Himalayas:
In the form of pilgrimage to Hindu sanctuaries that are located high up in the mountains. With the arrival of the British in the 19th century, summer resorts, so-called Hill Stations, were established. Examples for these foundations are Darjeeling, Namital, Mussorie or Shimla. Nowadays, these Hill Stations are most frequented by members of the Indian and Pakistani middle-class. "Modern" regions - activities such as trekking...