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YOJANA MAGAZINE ANALYSIS

(June 2024)

(Part 1/3)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

PART 1/3

- FORTS IN INDIAN HISTORY
- ROLE OF FORTS IN INDIAN HISTORY

PART 2/3

- GOLCONDA FORT
- FORTS & PORTS IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

PART 3/3

- INDIA ON UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST



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FORTS IN INDIAN HISTORY

Forts are historically significant **structures for defense** that have evolved from natural defenses to elaborate constructions **using local resources and technological advancements.**

HOW WAS SECURITY ENSURED?

They were **strategically built** based on the terrain, with **hill forts** on rocky terrains and **massive walls** in plains.

WAS DEFENCE THE ONLY PURPOSE OF FORTS?

Initially focused on defense, forts later incorporated **residential and religious structures**, expanding beyond military functions.

TYPES OF FORTS

Forts can be classified based on their physical nature, landscape in which they are located, functions which are performed from the fort, etc. These are:

- **Dhanva Durg or Desert Fort:** This type of fort is **surrounded by a desert or an arid stretch of land** which can inhibit the swift movement of enemies.

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- **Mahi Durg or Mud Fort:** This type of fort is **protected by earthen walls and ramparts**. Walls constructed of bricks and stones can also come under this category.
- **Jala Durg or Water Fort:** This type of fort is **surrounded by water bodies** which could either be natural (sea or rivers) or artificial (moats, artificial lakes etc.)
- **Giri Durg or Hill Fort:** This type of fort is situated on either the summit of a hill or a valley that is surrounded by hills.
- **Vriksha or Vana Durg, or Forest Fort:** This type of fort has a thick forest cover as a preliminary line of defense.
- **Nri Durg or fort protected by soldiers:** This type of fort primarily relies on manpower, i.e., a strong army to defend itself.
- **Palace Forts:** Fort complexes, including palaces for royalty and nobility, can transition from military outposts to administrative and residential hubs. Some forts serve dual purposes as strategic military stations and residential centers.
- **City Forts:** Forts can attract populations and lead to the development of cities nearby. Existing cities were sometimes enclosed within fortifications for protection, with complexes including schools, worship areas, residential quarters, palaces, and farms.

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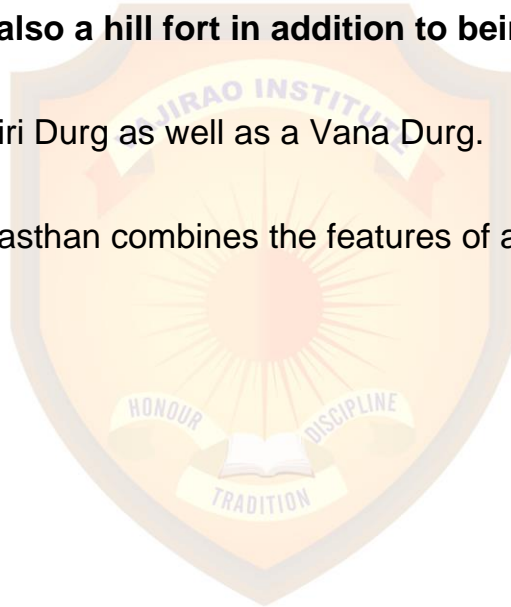
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- **Trading Forts:** Forts were built as hubs for commercial and financial activities, with some evolving from warehouses or trade links to fortified structures for protection. European forts in India exemplify this transformation.

Many a time, the forts of India display a **combination of these categories**. For example,

- The **Jaisalmer Fort** is also a **hill fort** in addition to being a **desert fort**.
- The **Kalinjar Fort** is a **Giri Durg** as well as a **Vana Durg**.
- The **Gagron Fort** of Rajasthan combines the features of a **water fort** and a **hill fort**.



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ROLE OF FORTS IN INDIAN HISTORY

The term **'fort'** typically refers to a strong protective structure or place, often enclosed by a **wall, wooden palisade, or fence**, and further protected by moats, ditches, or multiple fortified walls.

These structures were **guarded by warriors and strategically located** to enhance the defensive features of a town, city, or kingdom capital.

Over centuries, India has seen the **rise of numerous forts**, from **full-fledged complexes to minor defensive posts**, scattered across its landscape.

EARLY FORTIFICATION

Prehistoric Era:

Fortifications date back to prehistoric times when **natural and artificial means** were used for protection. The Harappan civilization (c. 3000-1500 BCE) provides the earliest archaeological evidence of fortified cities like **Dholavira and Harappa**, with impressive **walls and citadels**.

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Historic Period:

By the **4th century BCE**, fortified cities such as **Pataliputra, Kosambi, Ujjain, and Takshashila** emerged. These cities often had **ramparts, gates, and bastions** for protection.

FORTS THROUGH DYNASTIES

- **Rajput Forts:** Examples include Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, and Jaisalmer, characterized by their massive stone walls and strategic locations.
- **Sultanate and Mughal Forts:** Forts like Agra Fort and Delhi's Red Fort represent Mughal architectural grandeur with their extensive use of red sandstone and intricate designs.
- **Maratha and Sikh Forts:** Maratha forts like Raigad and Rajgad, and Sikh forts like Qila Mubarak in Patiala, illustrate regional defensive strategies and architectural styles.
- **Colonial Forts:** European powers built forts such as Fort St. George in Chennai and Fort William in Kolkata, incorporating European defensive techniques.

SIGNIFICANCE

- **Strategic Importance:** Forts were crucial for the defense of kingdoms, protecting against invasions and serving as military strongholds.

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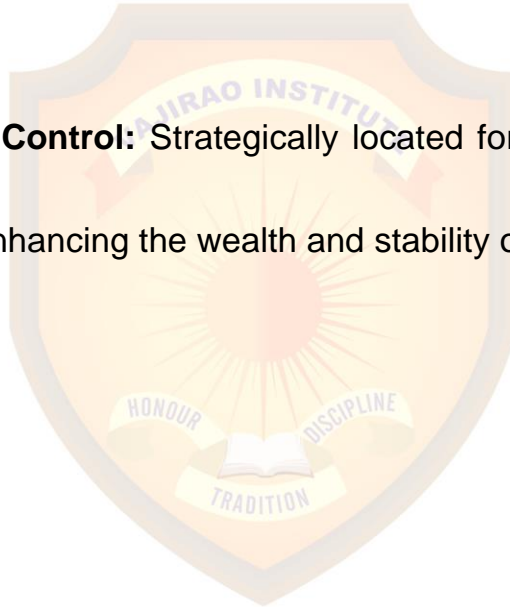
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- **Political and Administrative Centres:** Many forts served as administrative hubs and royal residences, symbolizing the power and authority of rulers.
- **Cultural and Architectural Heritage:** Forts are a testament to India's rich cultural and architectural heritage, reflecting the diverse influences and engineering prowess of different periods.
- **Economic and Trade Control:** Strategically located forts controlled trade routes and economic resources, enhancing the wealth and stability of kingdoms.



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