



200 YEARS LATER

**RETRACING FRANCIS BUCHANAN'S JOURNEY OF 1800-01
THROUGH PARTS OF SOUTHERN INDIA**

**Chapter XIX: Journey from Hiriyur to Srirangapatna through the western & middle
parts of Mysore dominions.**

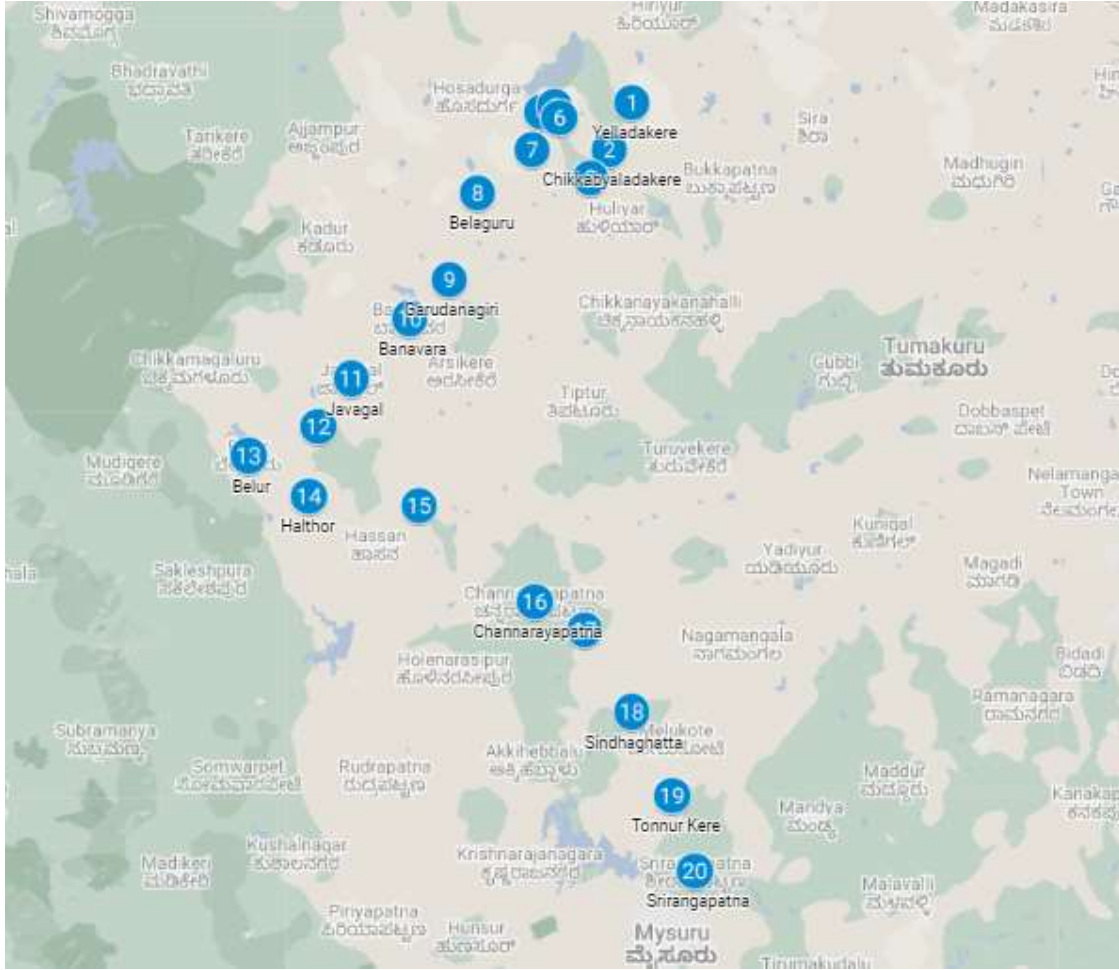
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FOUNDATION TO AID INDUSTRIAL RECOVERY (FAIR)

BANGALORE, INDIA

1. Yelladakere, 2. Chikkabyaladakere, 3. Kudure Kanive, 4. Mathodu, 5. Siddagondanahalli,
6. Malemallappa, 7. Doddathekalavatty, 8. Belaguru, 9. Garudanagiri, 10. Banavara, 11. Javagal,
12. Halebidu, 13. Belur, 14. Halthore, 15. Hassan, 17. Shravanabelagola, 18. Sindhaghatta
19. Tonnur, 20. Srirangapatna.



Yelladakere (anglicized: Ellady-caray)



East of the Vanivilas Sagar Dam, a privatized pig iron manufacturing facility operates in Hiriyr.

It's a small village located southwest of its taluk headquarters, Hiriyr, about 24 km away. The state highway SH 19 (Srirangapatna to Jeevargi) passes through this village. On the western side, a vertical hill range runs from north to south. In the olden days, the people of Yelladakere carried black sand from this hill for iron smelting.



Presence of talcose argillite, a type of rock commonly found in the Hiriyr region.



An old dilapidated house with walls built using talcose argillite slate for masonry work.

“The Talcose argillite of Heriru is here very common, and passes at times entirely into pure argillite, like the slatte used for the roofs of houses.”

-Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX

In terms of geology, Buchanan mentioned the presence of talcose argillite, a type of rock common in the Hiriyur region. It is a slate-like material that the locals once used for roofing their houses, though it is no longer in use. Nowadays, it is mostly used for wall boundaries.

[Chikkabyaladakere\(anglicized as Chica-bayli-caray\)](#)

Latitude and longitude: 13.7040° N, 76.5250° E





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 - The strata of the hills; Chikkabyalada Kere village is situated on the southern slopes of a hill running from north to south. 3 & 4 - Views of Chikkabyaladakere village.

Chikkabyaladakere is a small village now part of Hosadurga Taluk, located approximately 36 km away. The village is situated on the southern slopes of a hill that runs from north to south. According to the 2011 census, there are approximately 520 houses.



A stretch of the Kudure Kanive hill.

“At Chica-bayli-caray is a furnace for smelting iron ore, brought from a mine called cudure canavay, which is supplied with charcoal from the hills to the westward. The ore is brought upon from Buffaloes and asses. It is a small slaty fragments, that are broken to pieces with a stone, thus separated from much sand and earth. These small pieces, when fit for the furnaces, are about the size of hazel-nut.”



Clockwise from top left: 1 - A family at Chikkabyalada Kere who continues the blacksmithing tradition, producing small quantities of agricultural tools; 2 - Their traditional forging facility; 3 - A man showcasing a slag piece from the era when their ancestors practiced forging and iron smelting; 4 - Currently, they purchase raw materials such as iron flat bars and other metal supplies from nearby hardware shops for forging purposes.



Left to Right: 1 - Blacksmith forging small quantities of agricultural tools such as sickles, tongs, and axes; 2 - A metal bar from the Bangalore Fort gate, showcasing a rudimentary native forging style (image for representation purposes).

Francis Buchanan visited this place on May 3rd, 1801, and documented the iron-smelting furnace, the ore was brought from Kudurekanive, located to the south, and the charcoal came from the hills to the west. He also recorded the small-scale production of horseshoes and hobnails. The factory consisted of three anvils, with five men employed at each anvil: one who managed the iron and provided all the tools, one who managed the fire, one to work the bellows, one to hammer the iron as it was held by the foreman, and one who finished the nail by giving it a head. The maximum output for the five men at one anvil in a day was 1,200 nails.

Currently, I met one family who continues the blacksmith work of forging, producing a small quantity of agricultural tools like sickles, tongs, axes, and other equipment. The family members—husband, wife, and occasionally their son—carry out the work without employing any external labor. They still use charcoal as fuel, which they prepare themselves on their property, but now they use solar-powered blowers.

They purchase raw materials such as iron tubes, square tubes, and other metal supplies from nearby hardware shops in Tumkur. In further discussion, they mentioned that this business has been passed down through many generations, and they are reluctant to leave it, as it has been their main source of livelihood. However, with the availability of standard agricultural tools in city markets, local people now buy directly from shops, and the family's business has been steadily declining.

Kudure Kanive(anglicized : Cudera Canavay)

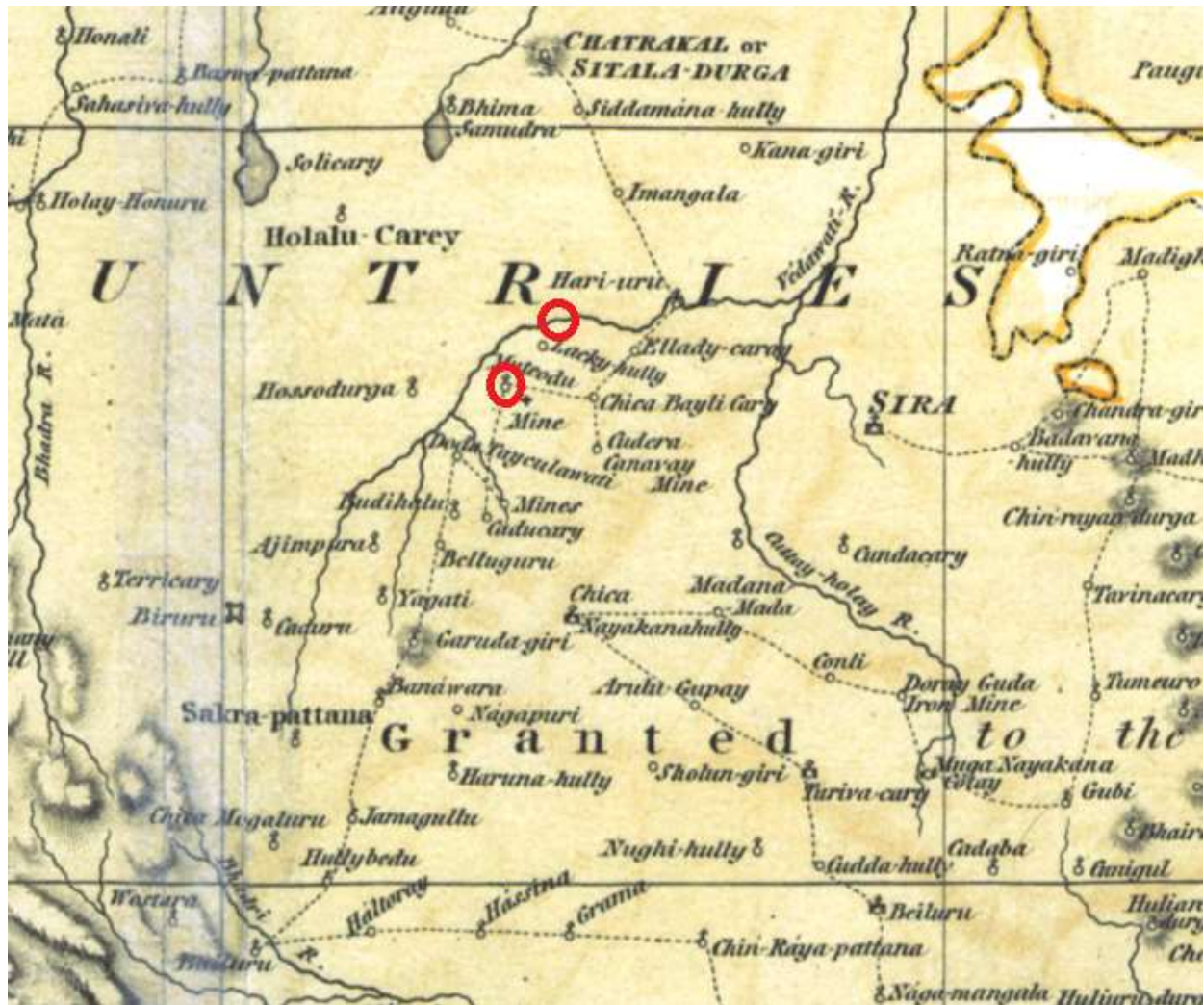


Clockwise from top left: 1 - A view of part of Kudure Kanive with iron ore mining on top of the hill; 2 - Reddish soil with iron-intrigued stones; 3 - A landscape view of Chikkabyalada Kere from Kudure Kanive; 4 - SH 19 passing through Kudure Kanive.

The Kudure Kanive forest, a small steep hill range with iron ore deposits, lies to the south of Chikkabyaladakere in Hosdurga Taluk of Chitradurga District. These hill ridges extend to Doray Gudda, with only Kudure Kanive and Doray Gudda being rich in hematite ore.

Mathodu(anglicized: Muteodu)

Latitude and longitude: 13.7719° N, 76.4032° E



Mathodu marked on an old East India Company map, showcasing its historical significance and Francis Buchanan's route through the region.



Clockwise from top left: 1 – Balegara Beedhi, where bangle manufacturers once lived in Mathodu village; 2 - A stone grinder, likely used by the Balegaras (glass bangle manufacturers); 3 - Siddarameshwara Temple in Mathodu; 4 - A dilapidated Thipperudra Temple, as mentioned by a passerby.

Mathodu is a small village located 10 km from its taluk headquarters, Hosadurga. Buchanan visited this place and documented that it was a center for the manufacture of glass used to make bangles, called 'ballay' in Kannada, which were worn around the wrists of native women.

It is believed that five colors of bangles were manufactured here: black, green, red, blue, and yellow, with black being the most in demand. The raw materials for making glass were sourced from nearby areas. The main ingredients included '**soulu mannu**' (washer's earth) and '**benachu kallu**' (powdered white quartz). Other ingredients were added depending on the desired colour, such as '**loha**' (brass or copper) and '**caricallu**' (iron ore stone with manganese).

Types of ornamental bangles produced included green, red, and black.

Green glass raw material constituents:

- Broken glass
- **Benachu kallu** (powdered white quartz)
- **Loha** (brass or copper)
- **Caricallu** (iron ore stone with manganese)

- Impure soda (**soulu**)

Black glass raw material constituents:

- Quartz
- Impure soda (**soulu**)
- Broken glass"

Unfortunately, no one is engaged in glass bangle manufacturing anymore, and only a few people are aware that this place once produced glass bangles. Sadly, no traces of the furnaces remain, although we were told that they were still intact about twenty-five years ago. The villagers were also uncertain about finding any old bangles made from Mathodu glass.

Our initial disappointment turned to satisfaction when we were shown pieces of discarded crucibles with a layer of glazed porcelain clinging to their sides. It felt as though we had found what we were searching for. Could we determine how old the crucibles might be? Not really, as no one could say for sure when glass-making at Mathodu ceased.



A dilapidated furnace at a glass bangle manufacturing site in Pavagada Taluk, as previously discussed in the Channapatna chapter.

In many places, we visited, we heard, much to our dismay, that remnants of the furnaces could still be found until the late 1990s and early 2000s, but have since been destroyed. While working on a project in Pavagada, we discovered a furnace in a small village called Hanumanabetta, about 18 km from Pavagada town. Nestled at the foothills of a hill covered with dense deciduous forest, we found a furnace, broken in half, measuring over 10 feet in height and 12 feet in width, in a dilapidated condition. The furnace was built using 2-inch-thick bricks and the interior was coated with ceramic clay. Scattered around the furnace were fragments of crucibles with quartz slag and traces of glass.

In 2011, Dr. Sashi Sivramrishna and Sandeep Rao from FAIR visited Mathodu and collected a few discarded crucibles with a layer of glazed porcelain, along with some photographs, which indicate that Mathodu was once a hub for glass bangle manufacturing. Unfortunately, no traces of the furnaces were found, although villagers mentioned that they were intact just about twenty years ago. Additionally, the villagers were not optimistic about finding any old bangles made from Mathodu glass.

Here are some of the photographs captured during the 2011 expedition to Mathodu in search of glass :



Clockwise from top left: 1 - The mantapa along the fort wall, Mathodu; 2 - Local interaction at the site of the glass furnace, Mathodu; 3 - The remains of the glass furnace at Mathodu; 4 - 'Soulu Mannu' (soda ash) found at the glass furnace site, Mathodu.

Currently, this traditional industry has vanished in the Old Mysore region as well as in southern Karnataka. However, a few traditional glass bangle manufacturing furnaces (Bhattis) are still operational in Bailhongal Taluk of the Belagavi district in Karnataka.

Marikanive Dam(Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam)

There is an interesting point that Buchanan mentioned regarding irrigation at Mathodu. Near this village, there was a fine reservoir. When the rainy season started early, this tank provided water for two crops of rice per year, and it never failed to supply water for at least one crop. Now, a dam was constructed across the valley of the Vedavathi River, located to the west of Mathodu and north of the village, forming a fine reservoir called Marikanive Dam(Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam)

“The Vedawati is distant one coss to the west. Its banks, according to the natives, afford many places where dams might be formed to great advantage. At a place called Mari Canavay, they say, that by building a mound between two hills 500 yards distant, an immense reservoir might be formed, which would convert a large proportion of Heriuru district(Taluk) into rice grounds”.

-Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX,1801



Marikanive Dam(Vani Vilasa Sagara Dam)





Clockwise from top left: 1 - Masonry work of the dam from the base; 2 - A marble tablet with information on the project, initiated in August 1898 and completed in August 1907 in the Marikanive Valley, led by Regent Queen Maharani Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana; 3 & 4 - Views of the Vanivilasa Sagara Dam.

Interestingly, 98 years after Buchanan's visit, a dam was constructed across the Vedavathi River. The project began in August 1898 and was completed in August 1907 in the Marikanive Valley. This initiative was led by Regent Queen Maharani Kempa Nanjammani Vani Vilasa Sannidhana.

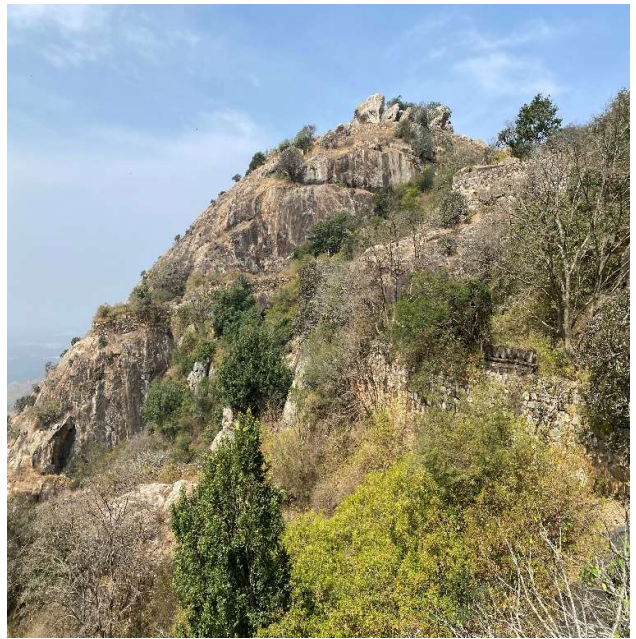
Francis Buchanan, in his quest to gather more information on the iron mines and iron smelting, visited the nearby vicinity, including Siddagondanhalli (Sida Gondana hully) and the Malemallappa Temple (Maleya Maluppa), where a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva can still be seen. He also visited Doddathekalavatty and Chickathekalvavatty (Chica Taycu-lawati), traveling westward of Kudure Kanive, where he reached the Kanive Ranganatha Swami Temple, which Buchanan referred to as the Temple of Ranga. From there, he traveled through Belaguru (Belluguru) and reached Garudanagiri.

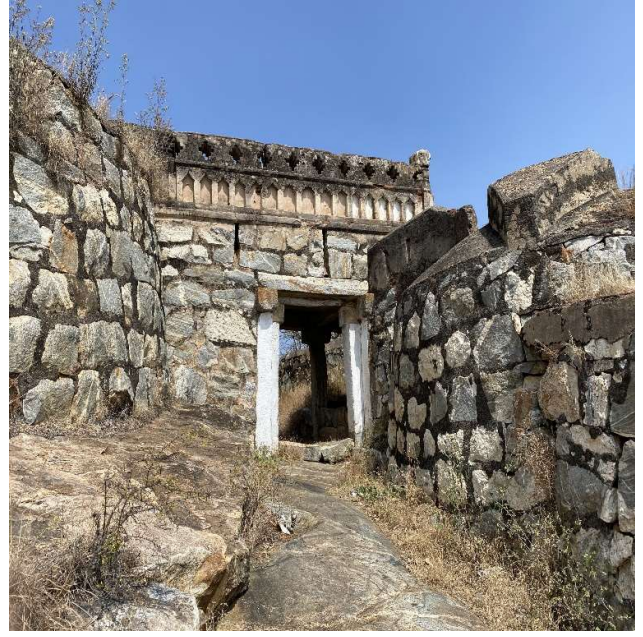
Garudanagiri(Garuda-giri)

Latitude and longitude: 13.480241°N, 76.240763°E

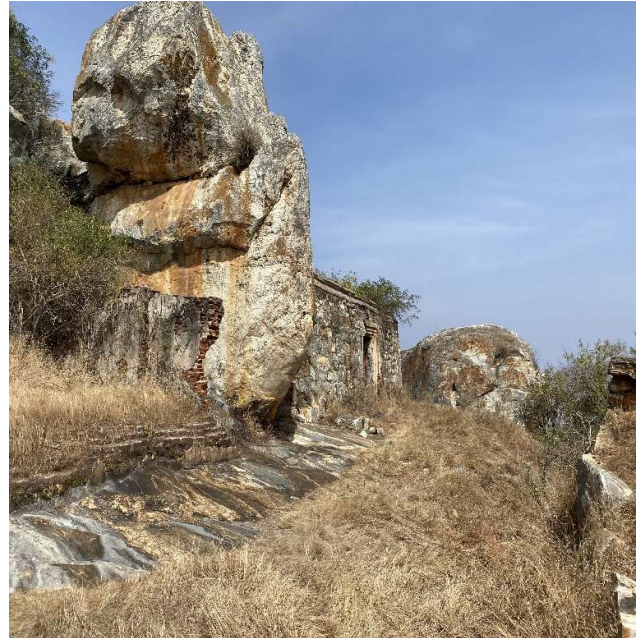


View of Garudanagiri Hill.





Clockwise from top left: 1 - View of Garudanagiri village from the top of the hill; 2 - Defensive fort wall ramparts atop the hill; 3 - The final fort wall gate at the summit; 4 - A 'done' masonry structure built across the ridges to collect rainwater, serving as a waterbody for use in olden days.





Clockwise from top left: 1 - A shrine dedicated to the Hindu deity Hanuman, with a carved stone tablet of Hanuman in front; 2 - Passage leading to the magazine house at the back of the Hanuman shrine; 3 & 4 - A magazine house, with an interior showcasing a rudimentary style.

Garudanagiri is a hill fort with a small village at its base, located about 30 km from its taluk headquarters, Arsikere, and 12 km from Banavara, in Hassan District. The name Garudanagiri means "hill of the eagle," as the hill resembles the rough shape of an eagle, which is how it got its name.

The village has around 200 houses, primarily built with Mangalore-style roof tiles. The terrain here is plain and relatively dry compared to the Tiptur region. The main crops grown in this area include coconut, ragi, and foxtail millet.

While traveling through this region, I came across several sites where coconut charcoal is manufactured, particularly between Garudanagiri and Banavara.

As I was heading toward the hill fort, locals shared a story about a youth who was killed by wild bees last year. They also mentioned mysterious deaths on the hilltop and the presence of wild animals like bears and leopards in the region. Additionally, an old lady living near the hill spoke of black magic rituals allegedly taking place there.

With the help of locals from Garudanagiri, I began climbing the hill. The fort is relatively small, constructed using stone with bastions built using sand and lime masonry. Many sections of the fort appear to have been repaired during Hyder Ali's rule, as the style of the entrance resembles those found in Madhugiri, Pavagada, and other forts.

In the past, tobacco was cultivated extensively in this region, but it is no longer grown here.



The street in Garudanagiri village.

“Throughout the chatrakal principality the roofs of the houses of the houses are terraced with mud, and this custom also commonly prevails over the eastern parts of Mysore, Sira, and Colar; but the fashion here is pent roofs. Although in every part of Karnatak the materials for building huts are excellent, yet those with pent, and those with terraced roofs, look equally means rugged.”

-Francis Buchanan, Chapter XIX





Clockwise from top left: 1 - Coconut shell charcoal in charge; 2 - Laborers removing the charcoal from the pit; 3 - A pile of raw coconut shells for the next batch; 4 - Powdered charcoal for various applications. Many coconut shell charcoal manufacturers can be found in the Garudanagiri region due to the abundance of coconut plantations.

To the south of Garudanagiri a Hirekal forest which is a thick shrub forest that houses a Kadekengal Siddeshwara temple and Bettadagavi temple.

Buchanan mentioned of there a sandal and lac were available and owing to the increasing of tigers, the collecting of these has been given up.

Banavara(Banawara)





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 - The dilapidated fort structure, now in ruins and filled with debris and waste; 3 & 4 - The Kote Anjaneya Temple near the fort entrance, along with the Kalikamba, Banashankari, and Channakeshava Temples, all of which remain accessible today.

Banavara is a town in Arsikere Taluk, about 14 km from its taluk headquarters, Arsikere. The Bangalore-Honnavaara Road (BH Road) passes through this town, and it is also situated along the Bangalore-Hubli train route.

The historian Buchanan once described Banavara as having "the best mud fort I have seen." However, the fort is now in a dilapidated condition, possibly due to damage caused by Ballu Khan, who expelled the local poligar, Timmappa Nayaka. Timmappa Nayaka was later defeated by the Ikkeri Kingdom, and the fort eventually came under the control of Chikka Devaraja Wodeyar of Mysore.

During Hyder Ali's rule, a fort named Nagapuri was constructed in a small valley west of Banavara, near the foothills of the Hirekall gudda(Hills), to protect the town from Maratha invasions. However, due to unhealthy living conditions in the valley, the residents were allowed to return to Banavara after eighteen months.

Near the old fort, a large masonry structure can still be seen at its center. This structure, now in ruins, is filled with debris and human waste. It is believed to have been the residence of the poligar who once ruled Banavara. The area is surrounded by several houses and temples that have survived the passage of time. Notable among these are the Kote Anjaneya Temple near the fort entrance, as well as the Kalikamba, Banashankari, and Channakeshava Temples, all of which can still be visited today.

Buchanan also documented the extensive cultivation of tobacco in Banavara, Garudanagiri, Kadur, and Channarayapattana. He provided detailed accounts of the tobacco farming process, from seedling preparation to transplantation. However, tobacco farming has completely disappeared in the region, replaced by extensive coconut cultivation.

Today, Banavara is a major market center for coconuts, playing a significant role in the region's economy.

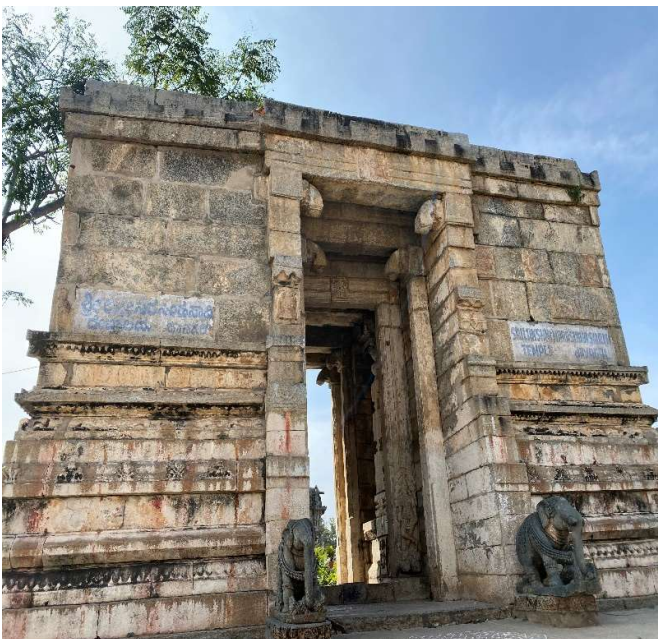
[Javagal\(anglicized as Jamagallu\)](#)



The Channakeshava Temple of Arakere, located near a lake between Banavara and Javagallu, is an ancient Hoysala temple featuring intricate sculptures on its outer walls depicting incarnations of the Hindu deity Vishnu, including Varaha, Kurmavathara, Matsyavathara, and others.

The stretch between Banavara and Javagallu consists mainly of plains with some undulating terrain, and I observed occasional potstone formations scattered across the rocky surfaces. Between Banavara and Javagallu, there is an ancient Hoysala temple near a lake — the Channakeshava Temple of Arakere. This temple, classified as a Trikutachala (three-celled) structure, falls under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

The temple's ceilings and walls are adorned with intricate decorations depicting stories from the Ramayana. These carvings are a remarkable example of ancient craftsmanship, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Hoysala period.





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 – Javagallu temple entrance with a beautifully decorated Hoysala-style elephant sculpture; 3 - Sculptures depicting Vishnu's incarnations and other deities; 4 - Layered carvings on the outer walls featuring elephants, horsemen, scrollwork, and scenes from the Ramayana and other Hindu myths.

Javagallu is a village located approximately 33 km from the taluk headquarters, Arsikere. It is home to the Lakshmi Narasimha Temple, an exquisite example of Hoysala architecture built during the mid-13th century. The sculptures on the temple's outer walls are arranged in layers starting from the base, featuring rows of elephants, horsemen, scrollwork, and scenes from the Ramayana and other Hindu mythological tales. Above the eaves, the temple is adorned with turrets at regular intervals, each topped with a kalasha (ornamental pot).



Left to Right: Javagal -1. A finely carved stone sculpture resembling a plantain flower motif; 2. A rudimentary carving on a pillar depicting a donation or service by the local chieftain (Palegar) Naginayakaru.

The Channakeshava Temple is a Trikutachala structure. The central sanctum houses an idol of Keshava, while the other two shrines are dedicated to Gopala on the right and Lakshmi Narasimha on the left.

The main crops in this area include coconut, jowar (sorghum), and ragi. Jowar is primarily grown as fodder for cattle, while vegetables like tomatoes and fruits such as pomegranates are also cultivated. In recent years, ginger cultivation has become popular among farmers, a practice introduced by Malayali farmers who lease land in the region. Initially, ginger farming was

highly profitable, and many local farmers earned significant income. However, in recent years, ginger prices have plummeted, leading to financial challenges for these farmers.

Beyond Javagallu, on the road toward Halebeedu, there is a Sufi dargah called Qualander Baba Dargah. Although Buchanan did not document this dargah, it has grown into a significant religious site, attracting numerous devotees from the surrounding region.

Halebidu(angliciozed:Hullybedu)



The entrance of the Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu.





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 - Outer view and interior of the Hoysaleswara Temple featuring lathe-finished, finely sculpted pillars; 3 - Sculpture of Lord Shiva and Parvathi on the outer wall; 4 - Hoysala-style Nandi Mandapa.

The terrain between Javagal and Halebeedu is mostly plain, interspersed with small hills. The region contains deposits of calcareous tufa, a sedimentary rock formed from calcium carbonate. This area lies approximately 12 km from Javagal.

Upon reaching Halebeedu, one can see a large ancient lake called Dorasamudra. This lake was once at the center of the great city known as Dorasamudra, Dvarasamudra, or Dvaratipura, which served as the wealthy capital of the Hoysala Kings. Founded in the 11th century AD, the city faced significant devastation during the invasions of General Malik Kafur in 1311 AD and subsequent attacks in 1327 AD. These invasions almost destroyed the city.

The splendor of Dorasamudra is not only evident in the historical accounts of its immense wealth, as described by Muslim historians, but also in its surviving architectural monuments, which are regarded as masterpieces of art. Among these, the most remarkable are the Hoysaleswara Temple and the Kedareshwara Temple.

The Hoysaleswara Temple, built around 1141 AD by King Vishnuvardhana, features four intricately carved entrances facing north, south, east, and west. The entranceways are adorned with beautifully sculpted lintels, showcasing the exceptional craftsmanship of the Hoysala era. This temple is the largest surviving structure in the Hoysala architectural style.

Constructed from chloritic schist, commonly known as greenschist or soapstone, the temple exemplifies the unique properties of this material. Soapstone is soft when quarried, making it easier for artisans to carve intricate details, but it hardens over time when exposed to air, ensuring the durability of the carvings.

“The temple has long been without a pujari, or a public worship, and has gone so far to decay, that it would be repaired with great difficulty. This is a pity, as it much exceeds any Hindu building that I have elsewhere seen.

-Francis Buchanan, 1801 A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Malabar and Canara

It is truly disheartening to know that invaders showed no regard for the beauty and sanctity of these temples, leading to their destruction. I often wonder how magnificent the temple would have looked in its original form, untouched by the devastation of two separate invasions. Despite the damage, the temple’s beauty still shines through, leaving one in awe of its grandeur. The only solace is that this temple, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, will be preserved for future generations, allowing them to witness this remarkable symbol of a bygone era.



Nandi (Basava): One sculpture crafted from balapam (potstone), the same material used for the temple, and another made of finely polished like a marble. Some temple pillars also feature a marble-like finish, reflecting exceptional artistry, Halebidu.

Buchanan documented two Basava (bull) sculptures associated with the temple — one made of balapam (potstone), the same material used to construct the temple, and the other crafted from finely polished marble. Even some of the temple's pillars exhibit a fine marble finish, showcasing exceptional artistry.





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 - Shanthinatha Basadi and the adjacent Adinatha Basadi in Halebidu; 3 - An inscription near the Parshvanatha Basadi in Halebidu; 4 - The idol of Shanthinatha inside the Basadi in Halebidu.





Clockwise from top left: 1 & 2 - A bullock cart near a dilapidated house; 3 - The region contains deposits of calcareous tufa, a sedimentary rock formed from calcium carbonate; 4 - A couple engaged in agricultural activity, winnowing horse gram on the road in Halebidu.

Halebeedu, now a thriving town under Belur Taluk, is located about 28 km from Banavara. This historic town draws numerous tourists, historians, and archaeologists, all captivated by its rich history and the extraordinary beauty of its sculptures. These sculptures embody the quintessence of Hoysala's artistic achievements and leave visitors spellbound.

With its growing prominence as a tourist destination, Halebeedu now boasts many hotels offering good food and comfortable accommodations to cater to the increasing number of visitors.

Belur(anglicized: Bailuru)



View of Yagach Dam near Belur

The terrain from Halebidu to Belur begins with dry land, but as one approaches Belur, the landscape becomes greener, passing through the Kallahalli forest, which is part of a deciduous forest region. Before entering Belur town, one must cross the Yagachi River, which is now dry and filled with suburban waste. Buchanan mentioned crossing a small river called Bhadri, originating from the Bababudangiri hills and flowing into the Kaveri. In his documentation, he referred to the Yagachi as Bhadri. This river eventually joins the Hemavathi and flows into the Cauvery basin.

A reservoir was constructed across the Yagachi River in 2001, with a gross storage capacity of about 3.17 TMCFT. This dam serves as a source of irrigation and drinking water for Belur, Chikkamagaluru, Arsikere, and Hassan.



From Belur, the Malenadu region (hilly area) begins, marking the start of the coffee estates. Cheekanahalli, Belur.

Belur is a taluk headquarters in the Hassan district, located about 39 km northwest of Hassan town. Belur is situated at the foothills on the eastern side of the Western Ghats. From Belur, the Malenadu region (hilly region) begins, marking the start of the coffee estates. Buchanan did not document coffee plantations near Belur, indicating that coffee had likely not been introduced to this region by 1801.



The stretch from Belur through Mudigere connects to the lower ghat regions, including Dharmasthala, Ujire, Belthangady, Bantwala, and Mangalore, via Charmadi Ghat, named after Charmadi village.

Buchanan mentioned that a considerable trade existed between Belur and Jamalabad. Even today, the stretch from Belur through Mudigere connects to the lower ghat regions, including Dharmasthala, Ujire, Belthangady, Bantwala, and Mangalore, via the Charmadi Ghat. The ghat is named after Charmadi village, the last settlement in the lower ghat region, and the road is renowned for its spectacular greenery and scenic beauty of the Western Ghats.

In earlier times, goods were actively traded between Belur and Jamalabad. Items exported from Belur included tobacco, jaggery, capsicum, cumin seeds, tamarind, iron, grains, buffaloes, onions, mustard, cotton cloth, thread, and kambali (handwoven blankets made from sheep wool). Imports from the lower ghat regions consisted of betel nut, ginger, pepper, turmeric, salt, and other goods.



Clockwise from top left: 1 - Royal emblem of the Hoysala dynasty; 2 - A sculpture on the outer wall of the Belur temple; 3 - View of the Channakeshava temple; 4 - Intricately carved bracket figures mounted at an angle on the exterior wall just below the eaves.

Belur is also known as Velapuri or Velur. The main temple of Chennakeshava was constructed during the reign of the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana in the 12th century AD. This temple, built to commemorate Vishnuvardhana's victories, is surrounded by other temples, including Kappe Channigaraya, Somanayaki, Andal, and others. The image of Chennakeshava also referred to as Vijayanarayana, stands 12 feet tall and is beautifully sculpted. Even today, daily rituals are performed at the temple.

The temple's architecture is exquisite, particularly within its interiors, and is often compared to the external architectural splendor of Halebidu. Stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata are intricately depicted in stone carvings, featuring women dancing, and playing instruments, as well as depictions of animals, birds, and elements from nature.



Cochineal rearing: Once a major dye export in the Americas, introduced to Belur by the British as an experiment (Image for representation only).

An interesting aspect documented by Buchanan in Belur was the practice of 'cochineal rearing.' He mentioned an English officer who introduced the cochineal insect to this region. Cochineal, a parasitic insect native to tropical and subtropical climates, typically lives on the pads of the prickly pear cactus or Nopal, which the locals planted as fencing along the boundaries of agricultural fields. The insects were scraped off with a small stick, collected in baskets, and then killed by pouring a little boiling water over them. They were dried for two days until the fine hairs were removed, after which they were ready for sale. Once dried and processed, the insects produced a brilliant carmine red color, a natural dye highly valued in earlier times.

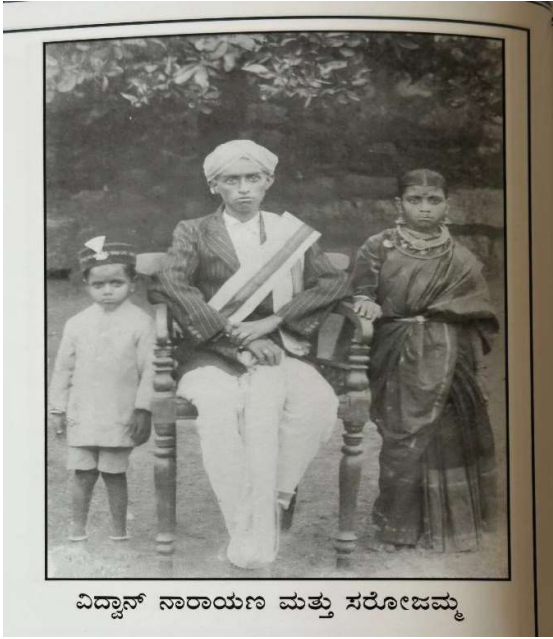
Historically, carmine dye was widely used in the Americas for coloring fabrics and became a significant export during the 16th-century colonial period. The production of cochineal is even depicted in the Codex Osuna (1565). However, with the invention of synthetic pigments and dyes like alizarin in the late 19th century, the use of natural dyes gradually diminished. It seems that cochineal rearing in Belur was introduced by the British as an experimental project.

Today, there is no trace of cochineal in this region. Even after inquiring with the agriculture department, I found no information about its historical presence, and they were unfamiliar with the insect's name itself. This lack of awareness makes Buchanan's documentation of this practice in the area all the more intriguing.

Cochineal rearing could be lucrative if successfully introduced in the dry regions on the eastern side of the Old Mysore region, such as Kolar, Chickballapur, Pavagada, Madhugiri, and others, as the climate of Mexico and these areas is similar.

"James Anderson, a physician in the Madras Medical Service, had a profound fascination for plants. In 1789, he established a nopalry in Marmelong (Mambalam, now part of Saidapet, Chennai) to cultivate cochineal insects (scale insects). 'Nopal' is the Spanish term for the Mexican prickly pear (a type of cactus), and a nopalry is a plantation of cacti designed for breeding cochineal insects that produce carmine dye. The nopalry was later discontinued, and the cacti were relocated to Bangalore's Lal Bagh in 1800. Anderson also owned a private garden in Nungambakkam, where the site of Anderson's Gardens – now a residence rather than the original garden – is situated today. Andrew Berry, another surgeon, and James Anderson's nephew, managed the Marmelong nopalry."

Halthore (Haltoray)



ವಿಡ್ವಾನ್ ನಾರಾಯಣ ಮತ್ತು ಸರೋಜಮ್ಮ



An old photo of a Sankethi family and a group of women wearing traditional 'Gandi saree.' Photo credit: Arun Bharadwaj.

Buchanan mentioned a significant population of Sankethi (Sankety) Brahmins in the Halthore region. They belonged to the Smarta Brahmin community, originally from the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. Dr. Kittel's Kannada-English Dictionary defines the term Sankethi as 'a sect of Smarta Brahmins in Mysore (state) speaking a corrupted form of Tamil.' The Sankethis migrated from Tirunelveli to various parts of Kerala and Karnataka around 800 years ago during the Hoysala period. They speak a distinct language called "Sankethi," which is a unique blend of Tamil, Malayalam, and Kannada.

Currently, no Sankethis reside in Halthore, a village approximately 22 kilometers northwest of Hassan. Only a few villages in the region now remain where Sankethis live, including DoddaMagge, Kowshika, Bettadapura, Rudrapatna, Ramanathapura, Basavapatna, Somanahalli, Hanasoge, Marithammanahalli, Harave, Mattur, Hosahalli, Chilkunda, Periyapatna, Lingadahalli, Madapura, Kanagal, and a few others in Hassan District.

Hassan (anglicized: Hasina)



The Goddess Hasanamba, the village deity of Hassan, from whom the town of Hassan got its name.

Hassan is the district headquarters of Hassan district. The original town was located at the village of Chennapatna, now a suburb of Hassan town. Chennapatna was founded in the 11th century by Bukkana Nayaka, a local chieftain under the Chola reign, and later came under the rule of the Hoysala kings. The town was eventually conferred by the Hoysala rulers to Sanjiva Krishnappa Nayaka.

According to tradition, on one occasion, a hare that Sanjiva Krishnappa Nayaka started hunting entered the town gates, which he perceived as a bad omen. In great distress, the goddess Hasanamba (the "Smiling Goddess") is said to have appeared to him and directed him to build a fort at the spot where the hare started and where he would find her image. Following her guidance, he constructed the fort and named the place "Hasana" in her honor.

Hassan, 1971 Gazztere of Karnataka

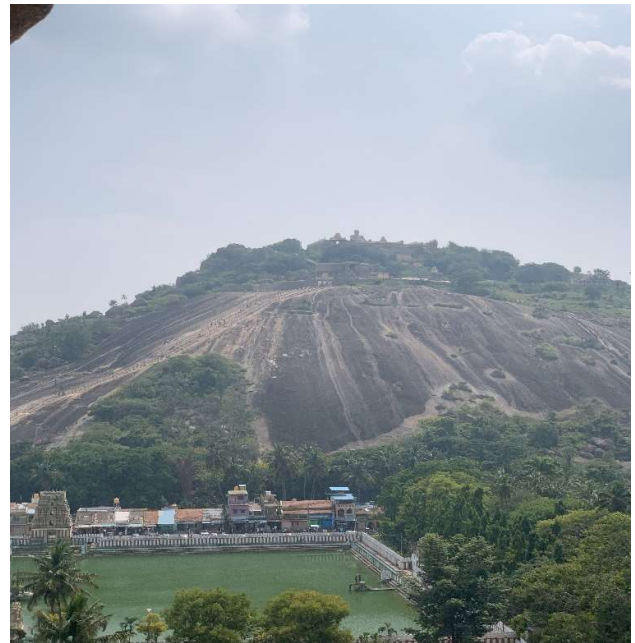
Hassan is now a rapidly growing city in Karnataka, with numerous agro-based medium and small-scale industries spread across the town. Several coffee-curing plants operate in and around the city, making them some of the largest industries in the region.

The city serves as an important hub connecting the state capital, Bangalore, to the port city of Mangalore via the Sakleshpur highway. This vital road facilitates the transport of essential crude-based fuels and petroleum gas from the Mangalore port to southern Karnataka and other regions.

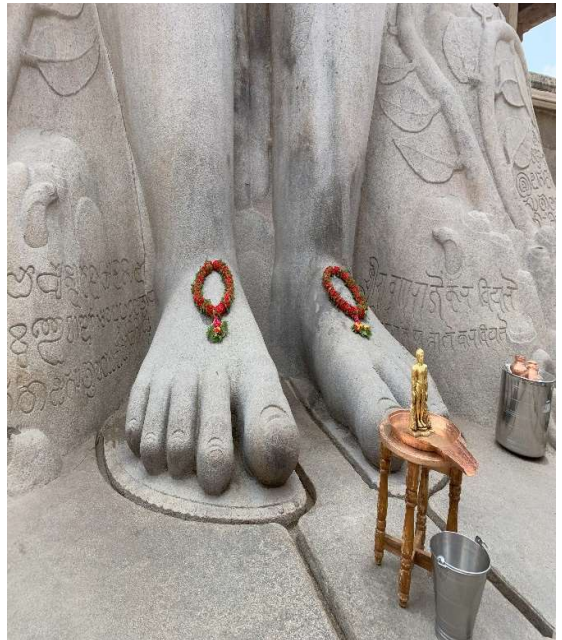
Additionally, Hassan is known for its thriving agro-warehouse system, featuring a prominent ginger market and wholesale trade of potatoes, vegetables, and onions. Every Tuesday, the city hosts a lively weekly fair, where local farmers set up stalls to sell their agricultural produce and other goods, creating a vibrant marketplace atmosphere.

Buchanan crossed Shanthigrama (referred to as Grama) and Channarayapatna (referred to as Chin'-raya-patna) before reaching Shravanabelagola (Sravana Belgula).

Shravanabelagola(Sravana Belgula)



L to R: 1 - View of Chandragiri with a large Kalyani nestled between two hills; 2 - View of Vindhyagiri, home to the colossal 57-foot statue of Gommateshwara.



Clockwise from top left: 1 - The colossal 57-foot statue of Gommateshwara (Bahubali); 2 - Side view; 3 - A close-up of the feet of Gommateshwara; 4 - A decorated stone pillar at Shravanabelagola.



L to R: 1 - A stone carving of Chavundaraya, a general and minister under Ganga king Rachamalla, dated 978 AD; 2 - Bhadrabahu cave, where Chandragupta Maurya spent his last days.

The landscape transitions into a terrain resembling that of Araluguppe, characterized by abundant coconut plantations. Two prominent hills dominate the area: Doddabetta (also known as Vindhyagiri) and Chikkabetta (Chandragiri). Vindhyagiri is home to the colossal 57-foot statue of Gommateshwara, surrounded by several stone structures, while Chandragiri houses numerous basadis (Jain temples) and inscriptions of historical significance.

Nestled between these two hills is a picturesque Kalyani (man-made tank) that enhances the scenic beauty and the tank serves religious purposes. The ascent to the summit of Vindhyagiri involves climbing a flight of 500 granite steps, leading to the towering image of Gommateshwara. The statue, a masterpiece of Jain art and devotion, was commissioned by Chavundaraya, a general and minister under Ganga king Rachamalla, in 978 AD.

Shravanabelagola is renowned for the Mahamastakabhisheka, a grand head-anointing ceremony held every 12 to 14 years. This sacred event draws Jain monks and devotees from across India, making it a significant spiritual gathering.

As a prominent tourist destination in Hassan district, Shravanabelagola connects visitors to other historical sites such as Belur and Halebidu, further enriching its cultural and historical appeal.

Buchanan, while passing through Sindhaghatta (Sindy-gutta) and the Tonnur Lake—both of which are elaborately described in Chapter III—proceeded to Srirangapatna. A detailed account of Srirangapatna has already been thoroughly documented in Chapter II...

Khanesumari (anglicized:Caneh sumareh)

Buchanan, in this chapter, referenced "Caneh Sumareh," a comprehensive report documenting resources, demographics, and activities for administrative and taxation purposes. The term "Caneh Sumareh" was initially unfamiliar to me, so I consulted others and eventually discussed it with my wife. She recalled encountering this term during her primary school days when groups of students, led by teachers, would visit their village and surrounding areas to collect demographic data. This included population counts as well as details like the number of domestic animals, such as cows, buffaloes, chickens, dogs, sheep, and other livestock.

This term aligns with Buchanan's account, which included specifics such as the number of families, houses, and ploughs in the region.

In this context, Buchanan mentioned "*During my stay in Srirngapatn),I procured the Caneh sumareh of the Mysore dominions. It contains a list of villages, public edifices, houses, families,ploughs and a few other particulars, with a classification of the inhabitants in each taluc,or district.*"

-Francis Buchanan, 1801 A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Malabar and Canara

