

Fort Ranikot-Inexplicable Fort of The World

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ISSN (p) 2521-5027Ghayoor Abbas¹¹ Culture Tourism and Archaeology Department Govt: of Sindh

Abstract: The article contains history of Fort Rani kot and geographical information about fort is also highlighted in article which will be source of information for readers. It is spread over 32km and contains various portions in the shape of walls, watch towers, spring, hills ranging in height from 500 to 2000 feet and internal forts which are obviously meant for residential and artillery purpose. At present fort is maintained through various agencies to retain its original shape and article reflects upon current status of fort. Sindh Government after 18th amendment have taken over possession and various facilities are provided for visitors/heritage lovers and symposiums/seminars are arranged by government and other social welfare organizations for information of general public.

Keywords: Ranikot, Geography, Shape, 18th amendment, Welfare organization.

1. Introduction

Fort Rani Kot the Great wall of Sindh and believed to be one of the largest fort of the world (fort Enclosure), is situated in the hilly area at about 30km southwest of Sann Town District Jamshoro Sindh under Kherthar mountain range. Its elevation varies from 500 to 1500 feet. Fort Rani kot falls amongst the largest fort of the world after Great Wall of China which has length of 359km and kumbhul Garh or Kumbhul Fort 38km long. It is spread in approximately 32 kilometers in circumference in which manmade rampart are built.



Vulnerable places to cover Rani kot Valley into large fortified area. Total length of manmade wall is about 10 km. Fort Rani kot has four entrances, namely San Gate, Shahpeer Gate, Amri Gate, & Mohen Gate. There are also some gapes in the wall from which Rain water flows inside. the fort. These entrances are usually without water and always dry, so people use them as “entrances”. Within Fort Rani kot, there are two more forts:

1) Fort Miri Kot

2) Fort Sher Garh.

Each Fort has five a bastion. Beside these two forts there is a fort wall on the northwestern side of Fort Mirikot which is called Mohen kot. At this juncture one natural spring exist. Mr Badar Abro renowned writer in his book “Rani kot” has encompassed various aspects of history and has stated that originally this fort was constructed in early ages about 539 BC however in the time of various rulers the maintenance of Fort was carried out and same was used as Military base. In the days of Talpur Rulers intensive repair work was carried out and fort was used as defensive line to prevent outside attack particularly from English kingdom. He is of firm opinion that contention needs further study and exploration through modern techniques. Various authors have extended their opinion with regard to name as Rani kot. However according to popular theory, the name comprises of three words viz “Nain” ‘Roon” & “Kot” which means Rain River, spring and fort. Apparently, it is also believed that Rani kot is originally “Nairron Kot” which was conquered by Mohammad bin Qasim. However, no final note in this regard is available hence this topic needs further research.

2 The Great Wall of Sindh

The Great wall of Sindh in Fort Rani kot is ancient existing wall which is spread in radius of around 08 to 10 kilometers and has been constructed on uneven mountains to serve the purpose of security. The wall is constructed with stones lime and chioli and has been repaired at various intervals by the rulers of Sindh. The Great wall of Sindh and Great Wall of China are stated to look similar but in fact these differ from each other by five angles as elaborated by Mr: Taj Siraii.



The differentiating points are briefly mentioned here under:

1. The Great Wall of China is constructed on even surface whereas Great wall of Sindh is constructed on uneven hilly tracks and it surrounds one side of Rani kot Valley from where chances of attack by intruders was expected. 2.
2. The bastions of Great Wall of China are rectangular whereas some bastions of great wall of Sindh are rectangular and some of them are constructed in round shape. The construction of bastion in round shape relates to era of Muslim rulers and it is presumed that these changes might have been made in those days.

3. The Great Wall of China has Parapet Walls on both sides whereas Great wall of Sindh has supporting walls outside.
4. The Great Wall of China is ten feet wide whereas walls of Rani kot Fort are about 7 feet in width. The Great Wall of China has gates/ways on inner & outer side whereas great wall of Sindh does not have any such gates from which it is concluded that this wall was constructed for Military purpose only.
5. The fifth and final distinction is that wall of China has been constructed in such a way that stone bolder and earth filling is used in the wall and front portion is sealed with burnt-bricks, whereas in construction of Great wall of Sindh only stone Lime and shingle are used.

3. Fort Mari Kot

Miri kot is central fort; it has carved and angulated entrance with a safe tortuous Path. From the Military point of view, Miri kot is Located at a very safe and central place in the heart of Rani Kot Valley with residential arrangements including a water wall. In fort Miri kot residential accommodations appear to have been constructed at later stage perhaps in the days of Talpur Rulers who might have made this arrangement for safe keeping of families in case of outside attack. Such contention is authenticated by people who live in the surrounding of Fort Miri kot since their ancestors. The Arch of main gate contains the statue of Peacock and Sunflower which were used as symbol by Sasani dynasty. It is contented that Fort Miri kot was built much earlier than Regime of Talpur Ruler.



4. Sher Garh Kot

The second fort looks like a giant eagle's nest is located on a mountain at height of approximately 1700ft and its area is little less then area of Fort Miri kot. From the design and the structure, it appears that this fort was constructed for watch and ward purpose. From Sher Grah Fort entire area can be over seen easily and communication with other watch towers which are located at different distances was quite easy.



5. Mohen Kot

Mohen kot is located northwest side of Fort Miri kot and has area of 80x100 yard. The entire flooring and steers are plastered the fortress is built at height of around 1500 feet from valley the Mohen Gate is also located beneath this fortress. The main purpose of this fortress was to keep eye on forces of enemy coming from northwestern side. The structure and location appear to be wisely chosen because it is not possible to cross or penetrate from this site hence to prevent attacks this fort is ideally located.



6. Paryon Jo Tarr (Spring in Rani Kot)

The geographical study of Fort Rani Kot has revealed that source of water was also main cause for construction of fort in this area. The water flowing from spring is neat and clean and is fit for human use. The local people called this spring as “Paryon jo Tarr” which means Bathing place of Fairy. The spring is located in the vicinity of Mohen Gate & Mohen kot. The spring water encircles in the jurisdiction of fort and usually does not flow outside premises of fort except in rainy or monsoon season. It originates from hills and flow downwards. The local people have constructed retaining barriers and they utilized water for agriculture and domestic purpose. Generally, water does not reach terminating point river Indus. However, in rainy season or due to torrential rains quantity of water increases and it flows in river Indus.

7. Current Status

Prior to 18th amendment the administrative control of Fort Rani kot was with Department of Archaeology of federal government. However, after 18th amendment Government of Sindh took over

the possession and initially conservation work was carried out through Endowment Fund Trust work was executed and some work is still in progress. The Authorities of Endowment Funds Trust (EFT) initially started conservation work of Fort Miri kot and extensive repair of fort was carried out. Similarly, conservation work of Sher Garh Fort was also carried out. At present conservation work of southern wall or Great wall of Sindh is under progress. In the year 2016 Sindh Government Started Rehabilitation work of huts/Landhi which were initially built by Talpur Rulers in 1832 and were used as residence for the of military officials at that time. These huts/landhi have been restored in original shape and are being provided as residential accommodation to the tourists who wish to spent night at Fort Miri Kot. The huts have modern Facilities.



The existing facility of lavatory blocks which was provided by District Council Dadu in the past have has been upgraded and same is available for use of tourist who reached Miri kot. Apart from this the arrangements for cleanliness in the premises of Fort Miri kot have been made and facility of Solar Fog Light has also been provided which gives a very pleasant look at night. In order to monitor all these arrangement office block along with resident for in-charged has also been built. The facility of canteen and tuck shop has also been arranged outside premises of Fort Miri kot. Looking to interest shown by visitors and increase in their number the government have approved construction of Rest House near Fort Miri kot which will contain all modern facilities and about 40% work has been executed. The data of tourist who visited Fort Rani kot and reached Fort Mirikot 01st of March to 31st December 2017 is summarized here under:

S#	Month	Group	Male	Female	Children	Total No.
01	March2017	86	720	132	78	399
02	April	34	348	26	25	116
03	May	15	106	6	14	140
04	June	16	138	0	02	253
05	July	33	203	21	29	179
06	August	17	134	32	13	94
07	September	11	86	5	03	396
08	Octomber	27	330	66	00	1003
09	November	85	665	171	162	1523
10	December	120	1105	228	150	---
Grand Total		444	3835	687	511	5033

Due to proper arrangement and guidance the response from general public is very positive and such fact can be verified from response given on social media and it is expected that in the year 2018 number of visitors will increased manifold. In view of positive response from general public the Department of Culture Tourism & Antiquities Sindh has floated request for rehabilitation of road from Indus highway (Sann Stop) to Sann Gate and Up Gradation of internal road from San Gate to Fort Miri kot including completion of remaining work of bridge



On execution of this job the vehicles will reach fort Miri kot easily which will be source of increase in number of visitors. The department is evaluating the proposal for providing Trekking facility for pedestrian up to “Prayon jo Tarr (Spring) so that natural beauty may be viewed by visitors and Hiking for reaching at Sher Garh Fort will also be considered. To extend proper guidance and information about this site necessary Sign and guiding board containing information have been erected at various places and in future this facility will be enhanced for guidance of visitors.



In the year 2017 prominent events held at fort Miri kot are mentioned here under:

Date	Description of event	Name of organizer	No. of people who attended the event
14/01/2017	Mach Karachi	Culture Tourism & Antiquities Department Sindh	500 approx.
12/2/2017	Visit of Great Wall of Sindh	Hyderabad Gymkhana	600
4-5/11/2017	Exploration visit & full moon Night at Fort Rani Kot	Rover Adventure Club Pakistan	150
31/12/2017	Celebration of New year Night	All visitors including local people	300

The Culture Tourism & Antiquities Department have taken this matter as a challenge and various works in this field are being executed under the patronage and guidance of Minister, Secretary, & Director General (Antiquities & Archaeology) who have made sincere efforts for conservation and improvement of this national heritage and steps are under way to get this Site included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage. It is expected that in future this protected site will attract visitors' scholars and researchers from country and abroad.

8. Conclusion.

The Culture Tourism & Antiquities Department have taken this matter as a challenge and various works in this field are being executed under the patronage and guidance of Minister, Secretary, & Director General (Antiquities & Archaeology) who have made sincere efforts for conservation and improvement of this national heritage and steps are under way to get this Site included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage. It is expected that in future this protected site will attract visitors, scholars and researchers from country and abroad.

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About Authors

Ghayoor Abbas is working as an Assistant Curator at Culture Tourism and Archaeology Department, Government of Sindh.