

HISTORICAL TOUR 2019-2020

TO

AMARAVATHI AND UNDAVALLI CAVES

Guntur Dist.

Date: 24-2-2020

By

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND TOURISM

Sri YN College (A)

Narsapur

A Historical Tour was organized by the Department of History and Tourism on **24-02-2020 at AMARAVATHI AND UNDAVALLI CAVES, Guntur Dist.** In this tour 3 Staff members and 21 Students Participated.

HISTORY OF UNDAVALLI CAVES

After bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, the State government has taken the decision to construct the new capital at Amravati. Several historical places assumed prominence as tourist attractions



Undavalli caves are one of those important places. With the government actively promoting tourism, the Undavalli caves gain importance and every tourist who is visiting the Amaravati region would be interested to have a glance at these ancient caves, which were said to be carved out of the hillocks during the rule of the Vishnukundina Dynasty between 420 and 620 Common Era (CE).

Vishnukundins Dynasty ruled Deccan, Odisha, and parts of South India during the 5th and 6th centuries. The early kings like Govinda Varma and his son Madhav Varma I of the Dynasty appeared to be patronized

and promoted Buddhism. Under their rule, Buddhism flourished and the Buddhist monks carved out monasteries out of the hillocks at various places like Undavalli, Moghalrajapuram, Indrakeeladri situated in and around Vijayawada city and Bhairavakona in Nallamala forest. Buddhist monks used these caves as rest places.

Among them, the Undavalli caves are very popular and a destination for tourists who visit Vijayawada. These caves are situated in Undavalli village which is very near to Prakasam Barrage on the River Krishna. Undavalli caves are a monolithic example of Indian rock-cut architecture and the finest testimonials to ancient sculptors of the 5th to 6th centuries. After Madhav Varma II, son of Madhav Varma I took over the reign of the Vishnukundins Empire, he favored the promotion of Vedic Brahmanism.

Most likely, during his period, the second floor of the four-storied structures at the Undavalli has been turned into a sanctum sanctorum of Lord Vishnu in a reclining posture which was sculpted from a single block of granite inside the second floor of the caves. Undavalli caves are an example of how many Buddhist artifacts and stupas in Andhra were converted into Hindu temples and deities. In fact, the Undavalli caves were said to be originally Jain caves resembling the architecture of Udayagiri and Khandgiri. The main cave is one of the earliest examples of Gupta architecture, primarily primitive rock-cut monastery cells carved into the sandstone hills. The first floor of the four-storied cave complex still retains the Jain style including Tirthankara sculptures.

A glance at the four-storey rock-cut complex reveals the ground floor with an unfinished low-pillared hall with eight pillars. The first storey accommodates a triple shrine at back originally dedicated to the Trinity—Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. Sculptures on the walls represent Vaishnava deities. Likewise, the second storey has a pillared rectangular

shrine of Lord Vishnu on a serpent. It appears that sculptures of Siva and Vaishnava and a few like the Vaishnava Alvars were sculptured later on. The top floor was unfinished with a 5-metre long statue of Lord Buddha in reclining position. On the second floor's courtyard, there are statues of three unknown sages sitting in penance positions. The State Tourism department prepared a nice lawn on the premises of the caves and tourists could spend their time in a pleasant atmosphere.

AMRAVATHI:

Amaravathi Known as the Capital of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravathi is a planned city on the banks of the River Krishna. Amaravathi is renowned for being a site of a Buddhist Stupa which is a semi-hemispherical structure containing Buddhist relics and is often called the Abode of God.

Located 32 kilometers north of Guntur District, Amaravati is a prime hub of pilgrimage and sightseeing. The original structure was established during the reign of Emperor Ashoka and is now a meditation site in the city. Being built on a 217km riverfront, the city is designed to have 51% of green spaces. Its foundation stone was laid on 22 October 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the separation into two states in the year 2014, Hyderabad was declared the capital city of the then newly formed state Telangana.

It led to Amaravathi being chosen as the Capital of Andhra Pradesh. The word Amaravathi in itself was derived from the ancient capital of the Satavahana dynasty. Pilgrims visit this town almost throughout the year owing to the number of temples and shrines that adorn the little town in different parts.

STUDENTS OUTSIDE AT VIJAYAWADA RAILWAY STATION.

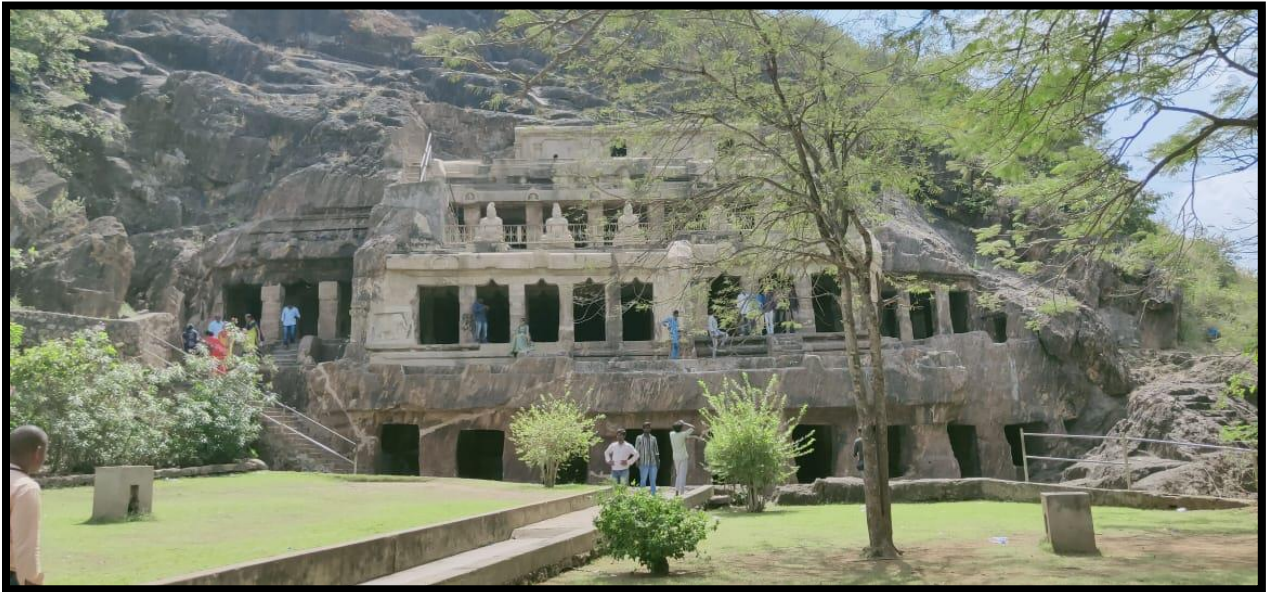


STUDENTS & STAFF GROUP PHOTO AT UNDAVALLI CAVES.



STUDENTS CAPTURING THE SIGHT.

THE PICTURE OF LORD VISHNU



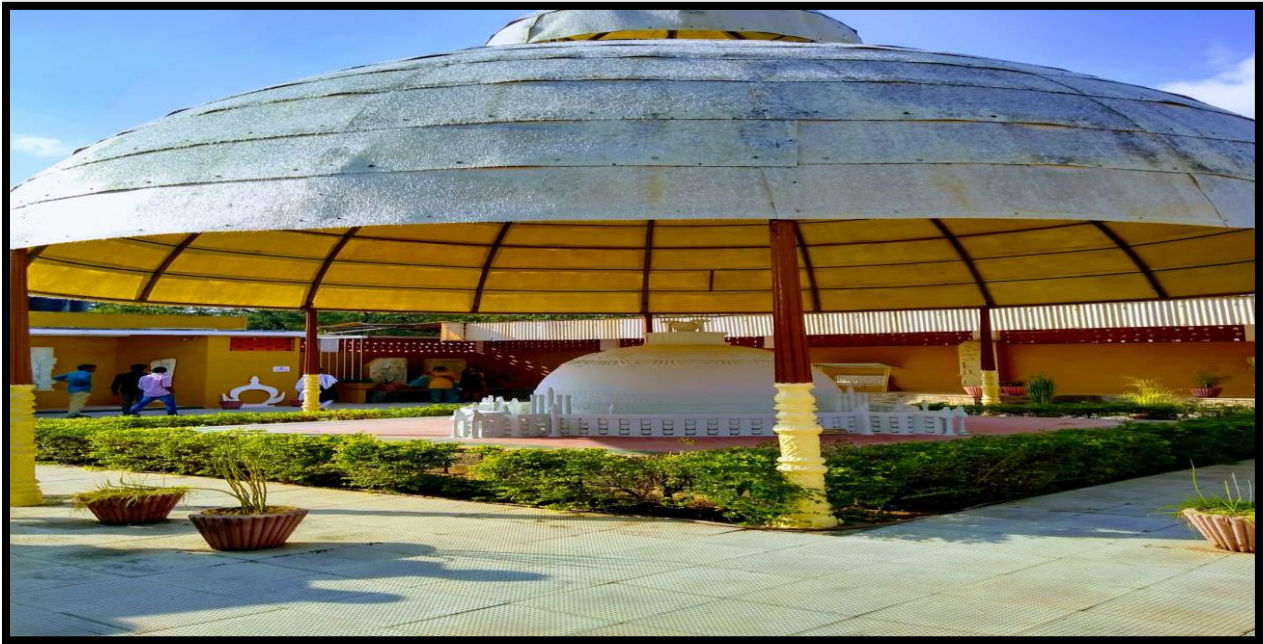
LANDSCAPE VIEW OF UNDAVALLI CAVES

STUDENTS AND STAFF AT UNDAVALLI CAVES



A STATUE OF GAUTHAMA BUDDHA AT AMARAVATHI

BUDDHIST STUPA AT AMARAVATHI



GROUP PHOTO OF STUDENTS AT BUDDHA STATUE.

AMARAVATHI TEMPLE TOWER



Conclusion:

Study tours give practical knowledge to the students and help them to understand geographical conditions of that historical place. Apart from class room teaching tours enhance students interest towards the subject.

Study tours give awareness on Indian Ancient Art & Architecture as well as socio-economic conditions of that period. These tours help students to get comprehensive knowledge on Ancient Indian Culture.

Thank You.