

VIJAYAWADA

Kalachakra Museum regains lost sheen



P. Sujatha Varma

VIJAYAWADA:, JULY 25, 2016 00:00 IST

UPDATED: JULY 25, 2016 07:19 IST

It is renamed Amaravati Heritage Centre and Museum

It's always exciting to see old structures gain new life, especially when the transformation serves a social cause. The Kalachakra Museum in the ancient Amaravati town has been beautifully restored adding character to the significant building that was fast losing its sheen.

Left earlier to termites, rain water seepage and poor quality of replicas from far-away museums, the erstwhile Kalachakra Museum is being rehabilitated and has been officially designated aptly as the Amaravati Heritage Centre and Museum.

The development thrust given to the Amaravati Heritage Town by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has come as a manna from heaven for the few people passionately committed to safeguarding the highly endangered heritage resources of Andhra Pradesh.

“Amaravathi Heritage Town is the sum total of the historical sites, landscapes and waterscapes in the Amaravathi and Dharanikota panchayats and their immediate hinterlands in Guntur district. It is more than the simplistic exploitation and rabid opportunism that is characterising the money-making machines of the Telugu people. It is the layers of heritage significance from the Megalithic times around 9th century BC to the more recent 2006 Kalachakra Ceremony,” says Curator and International Heritage Advisor, Ancient Amaravati Town, Amareswar Galla.

Prof. Galla says the Centre will become the heritage hub for conserving, interpreting, presenting and safeguarding the heritage values of the Amaravathi Heritage Town illustrated by objects, art works and documentary heritage through exhibitions and public programming. It is, in short, the civic space for the local community groups and people from across Andhra, in all their diversity, to come together for promoting and celebrating their heritage values.

“It is also the orientation space for the start of the much-anticipated Amaravathi Heritage Walk that will, in the coming year, offer experiential education for both visitor and locals. In the long term, it will become the fulcrum or principal means for developing sustainable heritage tourism based on experiential visitation, immersing both domestic and international visitors,” he says.

Activity has returned to the museum which has become a converging point for workshops and other intellectual discussions involving people from all walks of life.

Local MLA Kommalapati Sridhar is determined to make it a ‘much visit’ educational centre for both formal and informal learning catering to school groups and adult education.

To be incubator of ideas

The heritage expert says that for a State battling severe shortage of qualified personnel, the Centre will become the incubator of ideas and planning for capacity building, enabling a multiplier effect for development of other heritage places in Andhra Pradesh from the demonstration projects developed through Centrally-sponsored HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojna) PRASAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive) and future schemes.

“The idea is to integrate people and their heritage into a proposed Amaravati eco-museum or landscape museum which would become the basis for responsible heritage tourism development through proper community engagement,” says Prof. Galla.

The centre will safeguard the heritage values the Amaravathi town.

Amareswar Galla

Curator and International Heritage Advisor of Ancient Amaravati Town