CONCLUSION
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The present study entitled, FORTS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE IN THE HISTORY OF HIMACHAL DURING THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD, has been undertaken with a view to have a comprehensive idea of the history, antiquity, geography, topography and the related issues concerning the Kangra, its fort and its rulers during the ancient and medieval period. The main objective of the present study is to ascertain the issues and attempt an answer to the related problems.

Before going into details, it would be appropriate here to know about the geography, topography and history of Himachal Pradesh, where the celebrated Kangra fort still exists in its ruined form. Himachal Pradesh has a hilly and mountainous tract. Geographically it forms part of the Punjab Himalayas and thus presents an intricate pattern of mountain ranges, hills and valleys.

Himachal known as 'Dev Bhumi' to the ancients, is situated in the heart of western Himalayas. To the north lies the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh in the south-east, Haryana on the south and Punjab on the west, whereas on the east it forms India's border with Tibet. It is bound between 30° 20" to 30° 12" north latitude and 75° 45" to 79° 4" longitude. The territory is almost mountainous with altitudes ranging between 350 to 7000 mts. above sea level.
Geographically, the territory can be divided into three zones: (i) The Outer Himalaya (ii) The lesser Himalaya, and (iii) the Great Himalaya. The first zone consists of low hills of the Shiwalik, extending from Ravi river to Yamuna in the south of the region. The second zone consists of the higher mountains on the height of 1200 to 1500 feet cut into deep ravines and precipitous defiles. This zone includes the Dhauladhar and Pir Panjal ranges. The third and very important zone is the Great Himalayas or Northern zone. It consists of high mountains and ranges. These ranges are snow clad at a height of 500 to 6000 mts above sea level. The great Himalayan ranges separate the drainage of the Spiti from that of the Beas. The Zaskar range separates Spiti and Kinnaur from Tibet.

While discussing the geographical conditions of Himachal, the rivers of the Pradesh can not be avoided. The whole drainage system in the plains mostly depends upon Himachal Pradesh. Because of the snow-clad ranges of Himachal, the rivers are full of water throughout the year.

The main channels of drainage in the region are the Chandra-Bhaga, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and the Yamuna. The unique distinction of Himachal region is that it provides water both to the Indus and the Ganga basins. These rivers play most important part in the Indian geography. These rivers also help us to understand the drainage system of the Pradesh much better.
There is much diversification in the climate of Himachal Pradesh. In this state, some areas are coldest whereas the others are warm like the plains of Punjab. There is also great diversification in the distribution of rainfall in the Pradesh. In Himachal there are three seasons in the year. First of all it is Barsat or rainy season. It starts from July to September month. Second season is the cold season called Hyund which starts from December and ends in the last week of February. The third season is hot season called Jaunda and it starts from March and ends in the month of June.

Several studies have been undertaken relating to the history and antiquity of the fort of Kangra and its history, both of specialized as well as of general category. However, most of these are concerning history or travel accounts. The available sources include religious literature, Persian histories, numismatic sources, epigraphs, travellers' accounts and modern works.

The modern state of Himachal comprises the former hill states and the areas ceded by the Punjab. Himachal Pradesh first came into being as centrally administered territory on 15th April, 1948 by the integration of about 30 former Punjab Hill States. The Pradesh had an area of 28,102 kms until October, 1966.

On 1st November, 1966, as a result of the reorganization of the state of Punjab, certain parts of Punjab were transferred to Himachal Pradesh under the
"Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1955". These comprised the districts of Kulu, Shimla, Kangra, Lahul and Spiti, and parts of Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur and Ambala districts. Himachal Pradesh in its present form has an area of 55,673 sq. kms and is bigger than the modern states of Punjab, Haryana and Kerala etc.

The kingdom of Jalandhar, Trigarta or modern Kangra was originally a large state with an area of 18 miles long and 35 miles wide. The strongest point of present Kangra valley is its fort, known with different names such as Jalandhar, Trigarta, Bhimnagar, Susarmapur, Nagarkot, Kot Kangra, Katoch and Kangra etc.

The fort of Kangra was the centre of warfare activities and is said to have been invaded from time to time, which included the Turks, the Mughals, Sikhs, Gurkhas and the British. In the early medieval period, Kangra’s limits were restricted by the foundation of new principalities or independent states like Suket and Bhangal in the east and Pathankot and Nurpur on the west. Situated on island type mound formed by Banganga and Manjhi rivers, the fort stands even today as an unsurmountable citadel, preserving in itself several episodes of its hoary past and still bears testimony of its once glorious past.

The earliest rulers of Kangra are said to be hailing from the Katoch dynasty founded by Susarma Chandra of the Mahabharata period. Cunningham was the first to
draw our attention to the antiquity and history of the royal family of Jalandhar Trigarta based on the Puranic literature. The first historic reference is found in Al Utbi’s Tarikh-i-Yamini which gives a detailed account of Mahmud Ghazanavi’s invasion of Kangra during the eleventh century A.D. Subsequently the fort frequently changed hands between the Katoch rulers and the outside powers till the final occupation by the British in the nineteenth century.

Among the various rulers who attempted to annex the fort during the pre-Mughal period, the most important were Muhammad Tughluq and Sultan Feroze Tughluq, whereas during the Mughal rule, emperors Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb are recorded in the Persian histories to have sent various campaigns to Kangra with a view to annex the fort. However, of these emperors, only Jahangir claims to have met with success. He boasts of being the first Muslim ruler to obtain victory. In his autobiography the Tuzuk-i-Jhangiri, he writes "From the time when the voice of Islam and the sound of the established religion of Muhammad reached Hindustan, not one of the Sultans of lofty dignity had obtained victory over it."

Although Kangra and its rulers have been referred to as tributary to the Mughals, the various accounts give an impression that guerilla warfare was continued against the Mughals by the Katoch rulers such as Hari Chand and
Bhan Chandra etc., till the close of the seventeenth century. The Mughal hold over Kangra and its adjoining areas was practically broken in the middle of the eighteenth century during the period of Raja Ghamand Chandra, who was the first to take possession of the fort soon after the death of Nawab Saif Ali Khan, the last Mughal governor.

However, it was the Katoch chief Sansar Chandra (the illustrious grandson of Raja Ghamand Chandra) who took full advantage of the decaying Mughal empire and gradually regained an independent status. The whole period of Maharaja Sansar Chandra may be divided into four parts: 1775 to 1786, 1786 to 1806, 1806 to 1810 and 1810 to 1813 A.D. The first period begins with his struggle for the possession of the Kangra fort wherein he was obliged to take outside assistance from Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. The second period is marked by the annexation of the fort and his hold over the area extending from Jammu to Ravi. In the third and fourth phase he is engaged in a conflict with the hill chieftains under the leadership of Gurkha commander, Amar Singh Thapa and seeking Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s assistance in expelling the Gurkha forces. The military help sought form Maharaja Ranjit Singh, however, cost Sansar Chandra the fort of Kangra. As per the agreement with the Sikh ruler, Sansar Chandra had to vacate it in 1809 A.D., whereafter the Sikh ruler annexed the fort and appointed his own Qiladar.
Kangra fort subsequently passed on to the Britishers (as a result of the defeat of the Sikhs in the Anglo-Sikh wars) who consolidated their hold over the entire hill territories as a Paramount Power. The British did not restore the ceded hill territories to their legitimate chiefs and instead retained the portion between Sutlej and Ravi as their own territory. The rest were restored to Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu. Thus the hill states of Kangra, Guler, Jaswan, Nurpur, Suket, Mandi and Kulu came under the British control.

The new arrangement continued till sometime the earthquake of 4th April, 1905, A.D., when the stronghold was almost demolished. On April 7, 1909 A.D., the ruined Kangra fort was taken by the Archaeological Survey of India under Chandigarh Circle, through "Ancient Monuments Preservation Act" VII of 1904, vide notification No.33, Section 3. Till today this monument is protected by the archaeological department and an Assistant Conservation Officer has been established to look after and maintain the old and ruined fort.

No study of Kangra fort will be complete without the definition, concept and evolution of the forts in general. The meaning of the fort implies stronghold, offering protection and security to the inhabitants sheltered in it. Primarily, the term 'fort' denotes defence i.e. defence not only from the rain and sun but also protection from enemy's attacks. Forts were often
built in times of peace designed to protect political institutions etc. Thus various factors prompted the birth and development of fortification system from the very ancient period.

During the historic phase, a fort was constructed within a boundary covering the whole fort from all around to prove its importance. Forts were the important parts of a town or a state, which played a vital role to protect the state. The discovery of impressive citadels at the centres of Harappan civilization suggests the presence of a ruling aristocracy which was provided security and comfort by fortification.

In the Vedic period a powerful king of one tribe cherishing the ambition of extending his domination over the neighbouring tribes also contributed in a large measure for the increase in fortification and warfare activities. Several Janpadas or tribal states started paying greater attention to fortification. It was always the main object of an invading army to demolish the forts and fortifications first of all before any attempt was made to penetrate into the country. Gradually the construction of ramparts, forts and fortification played significant role in the history from the very ancient period. The proliferation in the art and science of forts and fortification provides an index to the political and military climate. The Gangetic valley gives us information about the fortification of the period.
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In the literature of the Vedic period mention is made of Pur or fort with hundred walls (Satabhuji) which were erected always in the internal parts of hills. Further forts of stone and sometimes of sun-dried bricks
stood on the Indian soil right in the time of the Vedas and perhaps even earlier. The history of fortification dates back to 6th or 7th century B.C. The metropolis in ancient India were invariably surrounded by strong fortification, either natural or artificial.

In the epic period, the Mahabharata also refers the forts as Pura or a fortified capital city which was the centre of administration. Jain literature also makes stray reference to forts and fortified capital cities of India like Rajagriha, Champa, Mathura, Varanasi, Aavanti, Kampila and Kaushambi etc.

During Puranic period, Agni Purana describes many excellent fortifications. It lays down the rule that the king should make his residence in a fort which should be impossible for enemy's army and free from rogues and thieves. Further, the Skanda Purana compares that a fort has thousand elephants and one million horses' strength.

The Smriti Shastras encouraged the use of forts by a king whose treasure was protected by an able officer in the fort. Manu said that fortresses were highly esteemed for the purpose of defence and also preferred hill forts which were used by the kings.

The various literary sources, notably Arthasastra, Manusmriti, Vastu Shastra etc. have classified different forts on the basis of their situation, plan, shape and material used for construction. Kautilya's Arthasastra is most important amongst several treatises on the subject,
which classified forts into eight categories, Devadurga, Abdurga, Gufadurga, Giridurga Jaladurga, Dhanvanadurga, Khaninodakadurga and Vanadurga. As against this, Manusmriti and Mahabharata classified forts into six types on the basis of material used for construction and methods adopting for protecting these forts. Of these forts manu regarded Giridurga as the best of all forts and most suitable fort for security.

Further subdivision of Giridurga included Bhadradurga, Atibhadradurga, Chandradurga, Ardhachandra- durga, Nabhadurga, Sunabhadurga, Ruchiradurga and Vardhamanadurga. The places mentioned as nagara may also be called forts for all practical purposes. These kinds of forts were always situated at central points in the kingdom to meet its military requirements in times of need while frontier outposts on the borders of the kingdom were meant to prevent intrusions of the enemies. Manasara discussed seven type of forts, whereas, Visvakarana's Vastu Shastra classifies the fort into twelve kinds.

The Sukrmiti Shastra, makes valuable deviation from the earlier works and adopts an eight types classification, taking into account the different parts of the fort such as; Parikhadurga Vanadurga, Dhanvadurga, Jaladurga, Giridurga, Sainyadurga, Sahayadurga and Parighadurga.

Another important aspect relating to forts is methods of attack and its capture. Kautilya enumerates
that there are five types of methods to capture a fort. They are Upajaya, 'अपजाय' Asparpa, 'असपर्प' Yamana, 'यमना' Paryupasan, 'पर्युपसन' and Avamarda, 'अवमर्द'.

During the medieval period we find a large number of forts and fortifications, spread throughout India including Himachal Pradesh. The importance of a fort as a politico-military institution came to be realised on a wide scale. Hence few forts as a matter of military expediency were large in size, complex and equipped with upto date materials machinery and arsenal.

While the idea of a fort as a defensive structure remained constant, the fort as a military structure appears to have undergone several changes from time to time in its size, methods of construction, disposition of various structures, addition of defensive equipment etc, depending on contemporary trends of warfare, methods of attack and defence and weapons and armory of warfare.

The first criterion that governs the construction of a fort is the selection of site. The second is the availability of strong building material available locally or in close proximity. The third and most important criterion is the strategical importance of a site both from political and military aspects. The last criterion that governs the construction of forts is the availability of other potentialities offered by the hills, like the availability of water resources.
The main parts of fort included moat, rampart, gateways, bastions, towers, turrets, secret passages besides stables for houses and elephants, magazines, granaries and barracks for soldiers. The architecture of forts depends to a large extent upon the building material and methods used for construction in vogue in a particular period. Strict principles or rules were laid down by the works on architecture in the matter of construction of forts except in regard to their plan.

During the late medieval period we witness several Muslim constructions. During this period there developed a vigorous style of military architecture. Its chief feature lay in the use of lime and mortar as joining material, besides bricks and tiles to serve as decorative or ornamental devices in the super-structure over the gateways and ramparts. The most important feature of the period is the new device of arcuate order as against the indigenous order of trabeate i.e. pillar beam lintel style.

The main basis of dating forts is their architectural style comprising its shape. The strength of fort or its capacity to defend lies primarily in its natural situation, new military devices incorporated into it and a strong garrison consisting of abundant stocks of men material, wealth, weapons, water, food and other essential requirements. This is more true with regard to Kangra fort.
Among the famous forts of the erstwhile kingdom of Kangra, the fort of Kangra is superior in architecture and topography. Kangra fort is situated 4 km. away from Kangra city on Jwala Mukhi-Hoshiarpur road. On the way towards south across the Banganga river, there is a place called Chandi from where a narrow road leads westward for about 1½ km to reach Kangra. There is another route that passes through old Kangra. Both the roads are at equidistance and reach at the main gate of the fort. Our evaluation of work depends upon what is extent. Some of the important buildings and parts of the fort, whose measurement have been attempted for the first time in this study is the main contribution for the importance of Kangra fort, include: moat, rampart, gateways, bastions, towers, secret passageways, besides stable for the horses, elephants, magazine, granaries, barracks for soldiers, civilian quarters and finally the royal palaces of the citadel.

The important gates of Kangra fort have been named as Ranjit Singh Gate, Ahani Darwaza or Iron gate, Amiri Darwaza or Nobles gate, Jahangiri Darwaza, Andheri or Darkgate, Darshani Darwaza or Mahalon Ka Darwaza and Western Darwaza.

The antiquity of the fort is further established on the basis of a large number of temples and images of various gods and goddesses within its walls. The most celebrated temple is that of Laxami Narayan temple. The
others are, Ambika Devi temple, Jain Adinath temple and a small Shiva temple. The images installed within the fort are those of, Ambika Devi, Adinath, Shivaparvati, Brahman Devi, Indra, Varaha, Narsingha, Aditi Devi, Durga, Ichhapurti Devi, Ganesha, Hirana, Bhairava and Mahavira.

The account of Kangra and its celebrated fort may not prove as a conclusive study but it is a first serious attempt to present a comprehensive view of history of Kangra, its antiquity, early political history, geographical description and fortification, classification structure, methods of defence of forts during the various phases of history, with special emphasis on the geographical and architectural description of Kangra fort on the basis of field survey, measurements and photo plates the Kangra fort which till today stands as one of the most impressive structural ruins in Himachal Pradesh.