“Girija Kalyana” the Story is about the wedding of the most popular mythical character Shiva and his cosmic mate Parvathi who is known by the name Girija, as she is the daughter of King Giriraja according to this story cited from Shiva Purana. By closer introspection of Hampi's heritage, local folklore, culture, people and celebrations, we see different and eminent scenes and events from the story of Girija Kalyana to be embedded in the lifestyle.

The important aspect to be noted is, the relation between Hampi and Girija Kalyana. Hampi has essentially been a Shaivite region - which reveres god Shiva as the Supreme Being, located on the banks of Tunga-Bhadra river. Many places related to Shaivism can be found in Hampi. Namely, the foremost is the “Panchalinga” which marks the outskirts for Hampi, where the Lord Virupakasha temple is the center of the area, hence these places are also called as “Hampiya Meregalu” or “Hampiya Gadigalu” literally meaning the borders. The five lingas are named, Somanatha, jambunatha, kinnaresvara, vanibhadresvara and mulavirupaksha. Colossal temple complexes with superior architecture, large mountains in the landscape, can be seen around these five places. This depicts the magnitude and scale of Hampi being a prominent centre for Shaiva Siddhanta (Philosophy of Shiva).

Second and the most important fact being, these stories are not just created, but exist in the essence of the local folklore, culture, festivals, people and thus embracing the philosophy behind. The local geographical/topographical details of Hampi and its tradition is cited in many Puranas. Namely, Shiva Purana, Vaishnava Purana, Jaina Purana, Sthala Purana and Janapada Purana. The subject of our Interest “Girija Kalyana” the story is an excerpt from the Shiva Purana, hence making this the most important relation to Hampi.

Girija Kalyana, as the name suggests is the story about the penance undertaken by Girija or Parvati and the ordeals faced by her in the effort to marry Shiva. The epic wedding of Shiva and Paravati is followed after the “Manmatha Vijaya” or annihilation of Manmatha who tries to break Shiva's intense “Tapas” or meditation.

These stories have been adapted with the local folklore. Many events from the story are quite famous which are verses sung by the Folk singers / Oral narrators mostly passed down through ancestors, through speech with no text references. Events leading to Shiva's second marriage and other events of love between Shiva and Parvati, are well embraced by the local folklore in the banks of Tunga-Bhadra river.

The Shiva Philosophy in this region was thus encouraged by the local communities whose class were divided by their labor, to name a few are the Grazers(Pashupalaka samudaya), Farmers/agri (Krushika samudaya), Tribals (Budakattu Samudaya) and Nomads (Alemaari samudaya). And all these communities and their culture relates to Shiva and his philosophy, thus participating in all annual rituals and festivities since ages.
And in particular we have observed that Girija Kalyana the event, is celebrated as festivals in each of the local communities annually, and thus showing this to be a important social knot between the local population allowing for the culture to grow and evolve. One of the local celebration or ritual is the “Phala Pooje” observed during the end of November or begin of December, called “Sharad Ritu” as per the Hindu Calender. This ritual marks the engagement of Shiva and Parvati. This ritual is performed in the Kodandarama Temple, Near the Chakra Teertha.

All rituals which encompasses a Hindu wedding is performed with the idols of Virupaksha and Hampamma. People from all communities in the local area believe in these rituals to bring good luck to one self and their family, and have been following the tradition, till date. After the engagement rituals, follows the Wedding preparation. The Wedding rituals are performed in the Virupaksha temple. The center of the temple complex has the Kalyana mantapa or the marriage altar which is a dedicated place in the temple for the marriage event. To the left of the marriage altar is a “Yajna Shaale” used to perform the formal shaivite wedding rituals like Homa and Yagas meaning sacrifices offered through fire. The marriage altar is decked with flowers and silk, the idols from Virupaksaha temple, namely the “Utsava moorti”, “Meravanige moorti” and “Kalyanada Moorti” all having different purposes is brought to the Marriage altar.

The Seers from the “Vidyaranya Math” also play an important role in the wedding rituals. As all events follow a traditional Hindu/Shaivite wedding protocols, and thus the seers are observed to be from the Bride and Groom's family. The local communities get together being the witness for the wedding, and they also bring new clothes as gifts to the newly wed couple.

The events proceed, “Mangalya daarana”(Tying the holy knot), “Ungura shastra (exchange of rings)”, “Vastra vinimaya (exchange of cloths)”, “Muttina nyvedya (Offering of pearls)” and exchanging garlands and so forth. These rituals are performed during late evenings, and these have already been documented by us.

Following the wedding, there is week long celebration in the temple, which is called the “Kalyanotsava”, which also is the annual fair. During this week long fair, the “Meravanige moorti” or the idols meant for processions, are decorated in different, ornament, flowers and silk, and carried on differently decorated carts or “Ratha”. The week long rituals are named as following based on the design of the Cart used for the day: “Chandra Mandala Utsava (Moon-cart)”, “Garudotsava (Eagle-cart)”, “Nandi Utsava (holy cow-cart)”, “Sooryotsava (Sun-cart)”, “Ashvatotsava (horse-cart)”, “Shayanotsava (snake-cart)”, and “Gajotsava (Elephant-cart)”. The fourth day of the fair, is observed to be most auspicious, people bring Clothes and ornaments as offerings to the god, and the Wedding or Kalyana is on the final day of this fair.

The day after the Kalyanotsava fair, is called “Rathotsava”, and the significance of this event is that, the newly wed couple is carried out in the Main temple cart, into the “Raja Beedi” or main street.
And finally the culmination of the Wedding celebrations is observed with, an event called “Teppotsava” meaning ride in a saucer shaped boat. The newly wed couple is taken out on to Tunga-Bhadra river in the saucer shaped boat (Teppa). This event is celebrated on a full moon night, and to mark this, the day is also called as “Hampi Hunnime” or also “Phala Poojeya Hunnime”.

The local adaptation of Girija Kalyana into the lifestyle and culture of the local communities is an astounding fact, and in relation to this we have some observations. Shiva and Parvati.

On the top or roof of the Marriage altar or the Kalyana Mantapa, we can see beautiful mural paintings depicting the Girija Kalyana scene, also showing the other gods attending the epic wedding, with other prominent Seers (rishi/munis and Mahatmas) blessing the newly wed Shiva and Parvati. This mural paintings show, that Girija Kalyana has been a part of Hampi's heritage.

Also, as mentioned earlier, the local communities from villages in and around Hampi, have their own versions of celebration of the Girija Kalyana, performed on the same day of “Hampi Hunnime”. People in Hampi, participate in the week long fair to be a part of the epic wedding, and people who cannot visit the Virupaksha temple, celebrate the marriage rituals at home, like how it is done in the temple.

Apart from these, Hampi's Girija Kalyana is found to be cited in a collection of ancient texts from different regions called the “Sthala puranas”. For example, After losing Sati, Shiva goes into deep meditation (Tapas). Per the ancient texts, it is said that Shiva sat for his meditation in the todays “Moola Virupaksha” temple in Hemakoota.

Further, knowing of Shiva's meditation, the demonic forces in the world go crazy, haunting the Seers, not allowing them to perform their duties. All the seers needed help from Shiva, in order to destroy evil. However, all seers and gods know how angry Shiva could get, it could even destroy the Universe. Finally the Seers and gods zero up on Manmatha (God of Love) and his mate Rathi, and advice them of precautions required, while they should disturb Shiva and get him out of his meditation for the good of the World. Manmatha succeeds in his mission. However, angry Shiva burns him to ashes with his Third eye. And this place of Annihilation of Manmatha, per the ancient texts is today's “Manmatha Kunda” in Hemakoota, this part of the story is quite famous with the folk and theater community, played under the name of “Manmatha Vijaya” literally meaning win over Manmatha. Similarly, other places like “Hanumantha Pampa Sarovara”, “Ratnakoota” are related to geographical/topographical evidence for this Story to have occurred in Hampi, and we can also see this documented by Poet Harihara in his work Pampa Mahatme.

Harihara was a famous Kannada poet and writer in the 12th century, observing the heritage, culture, folk, temple celebrations and other factors from the ancient texts, he wrote “Girija Kalyana” which is a Champu-Kavya a mixture of prose and poetry. Also, the local folk and other
arts like theater have embraced this story and culture, and allowed for it's evolution and existence until this 21st century. The street singers, and folk artists have sung excerpts from Girija Kalyana, passing it over to their new generations, mostly through speech. These stories reflect the local community's cultural coherence.

To conclude, Throughout history of Hampi and it's heritage, we can see the downfall of empires like “Vijayanagara empire”, even societies “Vaishnava Samaaja”, “The Rashtrakoota samaaja”. But still we see excerpts from ancients texts and stories, embedded into common peoples lifestyle, culture and society and thus allowing for everlasting preservation. With further research and study, we find such a close relation to “Girija Kalyana” and to the local societies. Like how Hampi is famously referred to as the Mythical city of “Kishkindha“(City of Apes-from Ramayana), we now can see this place with new light, as region of “Girija Kalyana” too.

**Note:** Main source of Girija Kalyana(Video Links,Image Links and Pdf's)