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## AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF ARCHITECTURE OF THE VYAGHRAPEDESVARAR TEMPLE AT SIDDHALINGAMADAM



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### ABSTRACT:

This Study is made an attempt to bridge gap between the existing literature on this study of vyaghrahadesvarar temple in Siddhalingamadam. This study ionops the architecture of physical appearance of temple with the relativity of it is structure the study is mainly based on the primary as well secondary source of literature and delimited with architecture and relativity of temple the objective of the study is to find out the appearance of the by the existing literature and methodology adopted for the study stress on descriptive cum analytical and further supported with historical method in order to achieve the objectives .

**KEY WORDS :** Adhithana - Moulded base; types; kapata bandha, mancha bandha, pandabhanadha etc., Padmabandham- A frieze of lotuses, Pancharam- A decratilincan motif, Tritala- Three storeyed, Vimana- Superstructure of the holy of the holies, Yali- Mythical dragon, leogryph, combining features of a lion and elephant.

## INTRODUCTION:

The Vyaghrapadesvarar temple is on the southern bank of the Thenpennaiyaru at Siddhalingamadam. The temple is about 8 km south-east of Tirukkoyilur in Villupuram district. The **tritala vimana**, east-facing Siva temple, has constructed out of stone basement and lay-out of the temple is a **square sanctum** and an oblong **Ardhamandapa**. It highlights Tribhuvanachakravarthin, Raja raja Deva (Raja raja II or Raja Raja III), who offered a gift of money to a Brahmin woman, the shrine of Kshetrapala Pillaiyar and the myth behind it depicts the transformation of that Brahmin woman into a Devi of the temple (ARE 407 of 1909). Its inscription belongs to Tirukkoyilur, Vijayanagar and Nayak rulers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

A record of Maravarman alias Tribhuvanachakravartin Vikrama Pandya Deva registered that a merchant of stringer set up a shrine of Alagiya Tiruchchirrambalam Udaiyar in the northern prakara. He offered a gift of land to this deity (ARE 393 of 1909).

Though S.R. Balasubramanyam passed his consent that the Kailasanatha temple perhaps came into existence during the period of Chola occupation of the Pandya country, he doubted about the originality of the present structures. They have not provided any Chola epigraphy in the temple. According to him the present structures of the temple is of a late fifteenth century. However, this date and style are contrary. Further, architectural and sculptural characteristics of this monument like *Yalivari* of the base *pranala*, water-reservoir, *malasthana* motifs, corbel, *kapota*, kudu and the sculptures find in the inner and outer-circumambulations. This architecture apparently indicates the temple foundation probably in the middle of the eleventh century C.E.

M.A. Dhaky, rightly pointed out that the stylistic evidence and *pranala* of the temple ascribes late eleventh century. A stray fragmentary of Tiruvirattanam temple or Kilur inscription of Rajaraja I is found on the steps of a bathing place, which analyses the chronology, stylistic evolution and architectural traits of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple at Siddhalingamadam in detail.

## Basement

The Vyaghrapadesvarar temple is founded on **pratibandha** base. Since the basement is buried a little into the modern flooring around the temple, it shows only **tripatta kumuda** and **yali frieze** having gaping mounts of makaras at the corners. The yali frieze displays full *yalis* occasionally mounted by warriors holding swords and shields, and miniature relief carvings of opposing *yalis* or pearl strings in the gaping mouths of the *makaras*.

The **pranala** is placed in the *yali* frieze of the plinth, and it exhibits three developments of its early Pandya counterparts in Tirukkoyilur region. Firstly, it has been increased in length and finally, a square sink is placed below the *pranala* to collect the ablution water. Mouldings of wall-kanta and lotus-petalled vary run above the base of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple. While examining the base of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple, one can easily observe and compare the blending of the Chola traits with the native Chola elements. Mounted warriors holding swords and shields in the yali frieze and advanced *pranala* with water reservoir are the important Chola features. It has joined the prevailing native Pandya features such as straight **jagati**, **tripatta kumuda** and full **yalis**.

## Wall

On each side the sanctum wall of the moderate vyaghrapadesvarar shrine is partitioned into **karna** and **bhadra** section with a deep recess in between them. While the *bhadra* section carry niches, the recesses bear **koshtapanjaras**. Square pilasters are arranged on this of corners of the wall segments.

The pilasters of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple tally with those of other Chola monuments in Tirukkoyilur regions namely the Tiruvirattanam Temple and the Trivikramaperumal shrines in many respects, but differ significantly in the treatment of padma moulding which, though carved with petals, does not project out of the Palaka, instead it is hidden under. Like the pilasters of the Chola temples in Tirukkoyilur regions such as the Tiruvirattanesvarar and the Trivikramaperumal temple, some of the pilasters in the Vyaghrapadesvarar shrine also employ some new types of decoration depicting opposing warriors and opposing *yalis* inside the *malasthana* and in some instances, the malasthana itself is made as if being released from the open mouths of three simhas. In addition to this, delicately carved floral design is found at the centre and on the corners of the lower section of the palaka.

The niches of the vyaghrapadesvarar temple are shallow and empty which obviously proves the fact that the Chola monuments freely borrowed the native Pandya architectural characteristics. The niches are placed on the yali frieze of the base. The niches instead of the usual lintels uphold *kapotas* with *simhamuka kudas* and a row of circular bosses at the bottom. These decorated *kapotas* carry *makaras toranas* on all sides, often depicting riders mounted on the *makaras* and rows of simhas emerging from the mouths of the makaras as seen in several Chola country. The circular depressions at the *toranas* contain miniature images of divinities.

The *Koshtapanjaras* that appear in the wall-recesses of sanctum in the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple almost duplicate its niches. They slightly differ from the niches because the *salas* are replaced by *simhamuka kudas (panjaras)* at the top.

#### Entablature

The *vajana* of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple is adorned with bhuta frieze. The *bhutas* are portrayed in the usual postures of dancing, fighting, merry-making, playing distinctive musical instruments and acrobatics.

The Vyaghrapadesvarar temple carries slanting *kapota* as seen in many Chola temple in Chola heartland. On each side, the *kapota* of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple is decorated with three pairs of floriated *simhamuka kudas* in the alignment of the pilasters, and the circular cavities of these kudas are blank. The frame of the kudas exhibits exuberant scroll work. A row of circular bosses, a surviving example of the nail-heads in the wooden architecture, runs along the bottom edge of the *kapota*.

The yali frieze of the Vyaghrapadesvarar shrine depicts full *yalis* running in profile and *makara* busts projecting at the corners.

#### Superstructure

The superstructure of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple holds two stories that of the Tiruvirattanam temple in the Chola region. Consisting of *Karnakutas*, *panjaras* and *Salas* runs around each story of the fine structures. While the *Sala-niches* of the lower story carries fine stone images of the usual deities, those of the upper story possess modern stucco images of gods. Apart from these images, seven more stone sculptures depicting various from these images depicting different Siva, kept in the spaces between the *Salas* and the *Panjaras* of the upper storey. Originally, these sculptures have been placed either in the *Panjaras* or in the *Karnakutas*. It has already accommodated stone icons. A pair of stucco Nandi's with a Buda in the middle appears on each corner of the *griva-platform*. While the square *griva* contains recent stucco figures of deities in the niches, the square *Sikara* terminates by a metal, has four large *Simhamukanasis* crowning the *griva-niches*.

The architectural analysis of the Vyaghrapadesvarar temple at Siddhalingamadam clearly reveals the fact that it belongs to the beginning or in the middle of the eleventh century C.E., Certainly,



it is a Chola monument displaying several Chola stylistic features mixed with some Pandya architectural elements.

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