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SELECTED ASPECTS OF PALANI SRI PERIYANAYAH TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

The architecture of Periya Nayagi Amman temple has all the salient features of a perfect architecture. It consists of Karpagruha. Artha Mandapa, Maha Mandapa, Unjal Mandapa, Gopura and Navaranga Mandapa. The Karpagruha with no ornamentation is put up on an elevated place in the standing posture along with Periya Nayagi Amman in Tripanga stage. Next to the Karpagruha is the Arthamandapa. Though it is very narrow it abounds in rich artistic designs of the ancient days. On the walls also there are some relief sculptures of Dwarabalagas. There are also huge pillars with different decorations and carvings on it. Besides in the vidhana parts there is no ornamentation. The aim of the research is to carry out the architectural features of the above temple.

KEYWORDS: Karpagruha, Artha Mandapa, Maha Mandapa, Unjal Mandapa, Gopura, Navaranga Mandapa, Tribhanga, Dvibhanga, and Brahmakanta.,



INTRODUCTION

On the way to the Mahamandapa and on the walls different kinds of small sculptures are found. The partition that is found in the Mahamandapa belongs to the earliest days. On the walls, on the lower part of the pillars with Brahmakanta and Vishnukanta remind one of the days of the cholas. It is said that the big four pillars belong to the days of Vijayanagar. The lower part is fully submerged in the earth but the other parts are exquisite in sculptures and ornamentation. Each side of the pillars is beautiful with the rich carvings on it. Besides on the side of the pillars there are Nagabandham and the sculptures are in the moving postures. The pillars found in the Mahamandapa are otherwise known as combined pillars.

METHODOLOGY

To prepare the manuscript, Analytical, Comparrative and Discriptive methods have been used. On the middle part of the pillars are the Thadi Kalasam, Palagai and Padmam which enhances the beauty of the pillars. On the top of these pillars are 'Yali' in each pillar in the sitting posture. These 'Yalis' have been carved in such a manner as though supporting the Pothigai part of the pillars. The pothigai parts of the pillars show the artistic development of the early days. Four rows of pillars increase the beauty of the Mandapas. On the north side of the Maha mandapa, the Palliarai, is put up facing towards the south. At the entrance is 'Gajalakshmi's relief sculpture.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

Next to the Mahamandapa is the Unjal mandapa. There are different decorative pillars in different ways and models. The portion, that separate the

'Mahamandapa' and the Unjalmandapa consists of various pilasters and niches.

There are beautiful sculptures on the pillars of the 'Mahamandapam'. The pillars are of four, eight and twelve sides which show its development. The development of Devakosthas remind of the days of Vijayanagar Nayaks. This mandapa consists of two beautiful circular pillars. On this elevated place during festive occasions the God will be placed here and worshipped. It is a very beautiful square shaped structure with all the aesthetic designs about it. When its architecture is deeply analyzed, it is found, that it is based on the features of a perfect architecture Dravidian style.

There are various decorations being inducted into the parts of Athistana. On the upapeeda there is the elegant structure of 'Maha Padma' and on it rows of geese which is a collection is to be noted. Generally the part of kumuda will be in the circular shape or Tripatta. But here Vritta Kumuda is at its zenith in growth, like next is the Kapotha part which is very pretty and elegant, on it are being carved beautiful structures.

On the pillars of the Mandapa of Periya Nayagi Amman Temple one can see artistic and intricate designs, that rouses the imagination. But the four walls on the elevated place of the Unjal mandapa are fully circular in shape and the upper part clearly shows the organs like Malasthana and Padma which abounds in decoration. The highest development is found here. On the Vidhana part of the Mandapa different shapes of flowers are found. We can see various types of Kodikarukku designs near this part.

The other pillars found in the Mandapa depict the traditional art and architecture of the Vijayanagar. The art and architecture found in the Nataraja sanctum sanctorum over here shows the progress as well as the treasury of rich art. The development of art and architecture is at its heights, since it bears the highest status of the premises of Tanjore Periya Koil and the Subramanya Swamy Temple in it. The development of Pothigai and pillars reveals the traditional arts of nowadays.

One can see the highest progress of architecture in the sanctum sanctorum of Dakshinamoorthy. This is situated towards the south in the Mandapa, that is on the premises of Periya Nayagi Amman Temple. The salient features of architecture are, shown very lucidly. Among the eight parts the Maha Padma part is clearly depicted. The upper part namely Kumuta Pattikai has different features about it.

The architecture of Periya Nayagi Amman Temple

The sanctum sanctorum of Arulmigu Periya Nayagi Amman temple that faces towards the east has all the salient features of architecture. The temple parts like Athistana and Upapeeda are concealed. Except the part Kapotha, all the other parts are hidden. In the Kapotha here and there are niches. In the middle part of these niches there are various sculptures. In the wall or the pada are mutilated on are being transferred to some other place. On the wall, the pilasters are of eight-sided columns. On the lower part of the pilasters are various decorations and beautifully designed flowers are seen. Among them the Nagapantha has been cleverly carved. In the pilasters the elements like the Padma and Thadi are well engraved. On the upper part of the pilasters the Pothigas are carved in their full growth. Besides in the wall portion niches are also visible. Generally in the divine circle sculptures are not kept. In the niches the image of human beings are sculptured.

Prasthara consists of different Karna Kudus. In that Linga and the sculptures of bhudakana's head are carved. On the upper part of the Kapoda or Prasthara generally the 'Yali' sculpture is found. Likewise in the Kudus of Kapoda, there are sculptures of man's heads which reflect the days and traditions of the Pallavas. But here along with the sculptures of man, the sculptures of divine beings are also found. Hence they can be called as the artistic tradition of the later days. Sikhara consists of different Kudus. On the top of the Sikhara is the Sthubi.

The Gopura

The Gopura of Arulmigu Periya Nayagi Amman Temple is very grand and colossal in structure. Its gopuram goes upto the 'Prasthara'. Yet its incompleteness' invites anyone to need to it. If this 'gopura' would have been completed, it would have been the first one of its kind in this part. It has the salient features like a very tall Upana the Upapeeda and the pilasters put up in a series. This sort is found only here though they are

subject to the ravages of nature. It supports the other parts of the Gopura. The wall part of the Upana and Kapoda are opened. Between the Athistana and the Upana is the part of Kapoda. This and its niche consist of various sculptures. In the Athistana part the elements like the Padma, Kanda, Kapoda are shown clearly. Between Athistana and the part under the Pada there are different sculptures put up in a serial order. Among them each sculpture has been shown in two, which is to be noted. In the parts of the Pada, though there is a slight stunt in growth it has the novel artistic features about it with the pilasters put up in close proximity. The western part of the pilasters and the Kumpapanjara have been well carved. On the top are Kumpapanjara and structures like Kalasa are found here and there.

The development of architecture can be found in this temple at different stages. Here one can see the zenith of development of the architecture of the Dravidian style. It is to be understood that the features of the architecture have been followed from the artistic features of the Pallava, Chola, Pandya and the Vijayanagar Nayaks. All the features to be followed in architecture are well adhered here. In each elements there are new artistic features can be seen.

The Upana

In the architecture of south India, Upana has its own special significance. The organs of Vimana are being supported by the Upana. These structure have the architectural designs of the later period of the Nayaks.

Specially the elements by name Jagathi has been carved here. They are a little higher when compared with the other elements. In between this and the Mahapadma, Pothigai and elements have been interpolated. Mahapadma having been carved in Upana is a new effort. They are shown with beautiful designs. Next 'Kumuda' has been sculptured at different angles with various battikais. In the 'Upana' one can see first the 'Thiripattakumuda' and the Kumuda, contains seven patels and again Tripattakumuda, top of the kumuda there are the decorations of the small Padma. In upana, kapoda has been carved. In it there are Padma Idhal, Kudus, Yali face and Kodikarukku decorations. It is to be observed that there is Upana there can be no other elements like this.

Athistana

The next part of Upana is the Athisthana. Like in the Upana, there are also new elements in it. Here Jagathi forms the major part. Next to this, there is a small element like the pattikai and the beautiful Mahapadma on one side. At another part Kapoda has a newness about it. It is carved next to the Jagathi. There are peculiar hand crafts being carved very skillfully. One can see the beauty of the niches, that are put up in the longitudinal manner. The most important part is the Mahapadma, which is studded with the most beautiful and artistic designs. It is the Kadaka Virutta Kumutha that has been carved so big that it reminds one of the architecture of the Dravidian style. At certain places it takes up, this form, first Jagathi next Mahapadma and again Jagathi. Next to this in Athistana another evolutions of Kumuda have been depicted. The sculptors are allowed to send their imagination run riot and hence have presented the beautiful form of art. It is only in Athistana that one finds different forms of the Kumuda. First the Kumuda has been carved and then in par with it the Kadaga Virutha Kumuda has been carved. This shows another milestone in the architecture of the Dravidian style. Any artist loves newness and novelty. It is for this reason that efforts have been taken towards it. The best example are the various forms of the Kumuda. Besides due to the insufficiency of the place very small Padmas have been shown. Next to the Kumuda, elements like Kanda and Kala have been engraved. But there are no sculptures. In between these stages Pattikai has been shown. But in par with it the Patha has been shown which needs a special mention. In Athistana at two places, Kapoda has been carved. Under Athistana, in the padma has been shown, which is indeed a new attempt. In Athistana, one is astonished at the elements like Kapoda, Pada and also Virutha Kumuda.

Patha

Another feature of architecture that was traditional the Pada, which emerged from the Pandya, Chola and Vijaya Nagara Nayaks. It was not like in the days of the Cholas and the Pandyas. There are numberless features shown in its development. The beautiful wall pillars add greatness to architecture, and beautify the lower part. These really astonish anyone the Deva Kosta have the highest decoration about them. If the sculptures were kept there, really this temple would have been ranked the first in architecture. Besides on every pillars there are intricate designs on it. They also show different sizes and shapes. On the top of the divine forms of the Vimanas. In the arches are decorations of strets and niches which make it still more beautiful and the lower part of the wall pillars are four side. In the two sides the relief sculptures have been shown, which gets the credit, that it is only shown here. The pilasters are eight side. Next the Malasthana, Thadi, Kudam, Padma and Palagai have been well carved. They belong to the after days of the Nayaks. In the other pilaster there are the ciruclar structures on the four sides with flower decorations. But it's first shape is different. In another pilaster except for the eight side and circular shapes, thirty two sides have been shown, which shows the rapid growth, of art of these days. At certain places Thadi and Padma parts bear exquisite fine art.

The circular structure in the pilaster which is a new one introduced in the lower part of the pilaster has four sides, while the central part has circular shapes. In between these are the Nagabanda and Kodikarukku designs. It's Pothigai part and Kudus, show the other shape of it. Besides the Devakostha part has been first carved and then the suitable Athistana has been shown, which reveals the new artistic taste. This is also apt for the other structure. Similarly on the western part of the Devakostha there is the structure like the Vimana known as the gajabrushta shape which is known from this sculpture. In Arulmigu Natarajar sanctum sanctorum towards the lower part there are pilasters and Devakostha which cannot be seen elsewhere.

Prasthara

Prasthara which is one of the features in architecture has been very prominently exhibited in the single stoned carts in the days of the Pallavas. This was prevalent in the temples, that were being newly built. Its development can be seen in the state known as Kodungai in temples. Here the Prasthara is shown as in the Sangam age, where the temples were made of wood. It shows the great advancement of the artists. On the lower part of the Prasthara there are intricate and minute designs. Among them the structures like petals is really a new induction. There is regularity found in the artistic works. It is usual to show in the form of 'Bhudhaganas'.

The sculptures carved in the sanctum sanctorum namely the relief sculpture is equal to the main one. For each side there are four Kudus. This calculation has been kept up while the various aspects of sculpturing is found here. Likewise in other rows, next to the Prasthara the parts upto Sthubi are rich in Stucco art. In the temples the architecture, that were formed of stucco are abundant. This temple which is blank belongs to the 'tritala vimana' variety, which has the beautiful gajabrushta Sikhara. Among them there are also Kalasa.

Architecture of Natarajar Sannathi

There are more than ten pillars shown in front of the sanctum sanctorium. Though the lower part of the pillar is square in shape, there are designs in par with Athistana. Here Kapotha and kudus have been engraved. In the part of the Bramakanda there are sculptures that amaze and attract others. The next part of the collection of sculptures, contains eight sides. The central part of the pillars have equal area. Among them the decoration on it varies according to the pillars. Next to the central part, there are eight and twelve sides. On the Pothigai part of the pillar there are skilful and artistic designs on it. Since the traditional artistic trend belongs to the days of the Nayaks the Pothigai are brought out as Pushpa Pothigai very dexterously and skillfully. According to the place, the Pothigais have been carved, which needs to be examined. In a single pillar, since it is in the corner side three Pothigai have been depicted. This framework annexes with the artistic side of the other pillars in rows.

Though there are many pillars, each pillar is different from the other. The distance between each pillar has been regularized. Here there are Nagapandams and in the Utthara part the Kodikarukku designs are excellent. In the Vithana part the roof has been carved in equal measurement. If one goes to examine on the basis of the features of architecture this temple has the development in architecture after the days of the Nayaks.

The pillars of the Mandapa

In this Mandapa there are the Vahana and the Kodimaram. The Upa peedam of the Mandapam though is in the ordinary artistic structure, it has been shown tall. Among these four sides and twelve sides have been shown in excess. The Pothigais are very simple, and there are sculptures, that would have come into existences in the very early days. Anyway the Pothigai has never developed as that found in the sanctum sanctorium of Nataraja. Hence it can be the artistic trend or the initial stage of the Nayaks. But its Utthara part has been well carved. Besides they show as that in the days of the Pandya. Since in the front of the Mandapa there are more than eighty pillars it can be called as the hundred pillared Mandapa. The Vahana Mandapa and Navagraha were established later.

The four pillared Vahana Mandapa in this Mandapa has the artistic designs of the later days. The Athistana consists of the artistic trends of the Nayaks. There is a Upa Peeda with full decoration and also the Kapoda has been shown. In the Athistana the Mahapadma Kadakavirutha Kumuda, Kanda and Kapoda have been well wrought. The four pillars here also depict numberless artistic and decorative works. Besides these pillars also in the Bramakantha part have beautiful sculptures. Besides Pothigai and the Padma structures have been well revealed. It has developed in the sense of Prathara and Kodunkai. Here certain sculptures in their elegance have been depicted.

The architecture of Bairavar Sannathi

It consists of a very simple and of a few features of architecture, since the sanctum sanctorum in the Prathara, the Upa Peeda and the Adhistana have been shown very simple. At the lower part like the pilaster there are structures. Here the Prathara measures four Kudus. There is no decoration followed yet the suitable measurement has been maintained. It consists of the works of the grieva in Stucco. According to the sculptures of the Bairavar, Vahana has been exhibited. Sikhara is in a circular shape yet they are shown in small and big Kudus. Here the Kalasa belongs to modern period though it is the sub-sanctum sanctorium the Piranala has been put up in a simple manner according to the sanctum sanctorum. From Upana to Prathara there is the artistic work done with black stones and grieva Sikhara and Sthubi have been by stucco. The architectural designs and can be also carvings seen in the pillars of the Mandapa and on the walls.

The paintings of Arulmigu Periya Nayagi Amman Temple

The structure of the temple represents the Somaskandar structure. The first divine images are shown in beautiful drawing, in the three sanctum, sanctorums. Amidst the drawings Arulmigu Muthukumara Swamy's image is well brought out. He stands with the Vel in his hand, flanked by Valli and Deivanai. The Guru who does service for the God is also shown. According to the place of the God, the arches have been decorated in apt colours. On the left side of Muthukumaraswamy there is the image of Arulmigu Kailasa Nathar in solitude in the shape of a Linga seated on a five headed serpent. The Linga has been shown with artistic designs of flowers.

Near this beautiful collection of paintings there is the image of Vinayagar with the crown in the standing posture, drawn in beautiful colours. On the right side of Muthukumaraswamy there is the figure of Annai, Periya Nayagi in her divinity with the crown on her hand and Padma in her hand. She is dressed in beautiful clothes and adorned with decorative ornaments. The carving of Somaskanda in the divine cart to be taken on rounds is indeed a piece of fine art. At the back of the God and Goddess, there are the arches that are green in colour which enhance the beauty and elegance of these structures. The drawing and paintings is a

feast to the eyes.

From the second collection of sculptures one can understand the deep piety of the Nayanmars and the devotees, being rendered to the God and Goddess. Besides their praise of the divine not only exhibit their devout holiness but also the artistic elegance of the days of the Nayaks. It is also believed, that though the days may be the Nayaks, it was being sculptured and carved by the Saiva donors, who were under the Nayaks.

The Nayanmars are painted as coming in the holy chariot with the greatest divinity about them. They are followed by the dancing girls, who dance to the tune ascribed to them in the sense of dedicating it to the God and also rendering their happiness which they have got from their God. Next the painting of the instrument a lists, playing on the instruments with the natural fevour and enthusiasm is a finery of art. Along with them are sent the devotees, both men and women with a great religious fevour about them. The dance and the above said collection of paintings, put up on a chariot, represents the art of the days of the Nayaks, in their glory. For this collection of paintings, the prominent colours used are green, red and yellow, which adds a grandeur and splendour of their own, never to be forgotten in life. The Vithana part of these paintings is shown in its remained stage. The drawing adds beauty and form in the use of different and apt colours for the paintings on the walls and the beautiful arches that surround them.

CONCLUSION

The development of architecture can be found in this temple at different stages. Here one can see the zenith of development of the architecture of the Dravidian style. It is to be understood that the features of the architecture have been followed from the artistic features of the Pallava, Chola, Pandya and the Vijayanagar Nayaks. All the features to be followed in architecture are well adhered here. In each elements there are new artistic features can be seen. The sanctum sanctorum of Arulmigu Periya Nayagi Amman temple that faces towards the east has all the salient features of architecture. On the whole, the representation is like the entrance of Gods and Goddesses into the Earth, with the historian, the devotee and Nayanmars worshipping them. The dance of the skilful dancers, the playing of the musical instruments by the ladies are really a feast to the eyes of the on lookers. It is like seeing the rare art and life –like portrayal from the place where one stands.

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