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TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF VIRA RAJENDRA PERIOD AT KONGU NADU

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AIM:-

Worshipping the God has been a common practice from immemorial days. Ages before our ancestors worshipped nature as their god. In course of time due to the advent of civilization the idol worship was in vogue. Hence temples were built. During the Sangam period and after that are temples were found. They were called as “Kottam”, “Nagar” and “Palli”. In very ancient days our temples in the country were constructed of wood, later by bricks and limes. It was only later temples were carved out from rocks. Finally they built with block stones. Building with block stones by keeping them one over the other is called “Karrali”. It can be understood that temples were made of wood. In Tamilnadu especially in Chera kingdoms there were many temples made of wood. These wooden buildings very easily got destroyed due to rain and shine, they were replaced by the sheets of copper. This did not get easily destroyed.

KEYWORDS: Pallava, Chola, Pandya, Vijayanagara Nayaks, Kongu chola, Virarajendra, Manur Virarajendra Iswaramudayar, Thirukandiyur, Thirumurugan..,

INTRODUCTION

The scriptures state that in the ancient days, the kings used copper and golden plates for the temple “Vimana”. The “Sabha Mandapa” of Chidambaram even today is of wood. The Urdhvathandavamurthi shrine at Chidambaram was built of stones, the pillars and the Vimana structures say that in later days on the wooden ceiling sheets were thatched to protect from the weather. On later days the temples were built of bricks and lime. Since the temple buildings made of bricks can withstand the weather buildings were made of bricks.



This type of building was only there for a few centuries. They got destruction after 200 or 300 years. The temples during the time of Sangam age were built of bricks and wooden rafters and plastered by lime. These bricked buildings get ruined, when they are not renovated. The bricked buildings were ruined is being printed by Kodialur Uruthirangkannanar. The seventy eight bricked temples constructed by the Chola King Kochchengannan were later re- built in block stones is what is said by the researcher. After the Sangam age temples of different sort were built in later days.

The Age of the Pallavas

On the sixth century after the reign of Kalabharas the Pallavas captured the rule in the north. Mayilai Seeni Venkataswamy says that in the days of Kalabharas both Saivism and Vaishnavism also had their growth. It is not sure that before the days of the Pallavas temples were built the block stoned temples, that could resist the bitter weather, without the use of the lime wood and metal, Visithirasitthan alias Mahaendravarma –I built temples for Brahma, Siva and Vishnu by scooping the cave. This type of art can be found in Mandagapattu in South Arcot even at the present time.

The temples of the Pallavas can be divided into three types. The cave temples, the rathas and the structural temples that have been built. The researchers categorize the cave temples into two types. They are Mahendra type and Mamallan style.

However the rathas architecture was the rich treasures of the days of Mamallan itself. The stoned temples or the structural architecture can be divided into two types namely; Rajasimha and Nandhivarma style. Until the reign of the days of Asoka the cave temples architecture was very famous. It is an added credit to the Chalukyas and the Pallavas this vogue into south India. The Pallavas excavated big caves and brought out temples. The Chalukyas selected the soft sand. But the Pallavas excavated hard rocks and formed Hindu temples. Similarly thirty four cave temples were found of the traditional art and architecture of Pallavas. The cave temples of the Mahendra style bear many artistic skills. This type of temple pillars that had propped the mandapa and niche one sanctum. The upper and lower parts of the pillars were lotus flowered and on the middle of the pillars were eight petals i.e., Vishnu Kantha type. The potika portion of the pillar was carved in a Taranga shape. This type of temples can be found in Mandagapathu, Pallavaram, Mamantur, Koranganilmutham, Vallam, Mahendravadi, Thalavanur, Siyamangalam, Thrichirappally and Vilappakkam.

The Mahendra style of cave temples can be found in Arangandanallur, Chittannavasal, Jain monument, Thirukkokaranam Siva cave temple, Thirukalukundram, Olukalmandapam, Mamallapuram, Kodikkalmandapam, Dharmaraja Mandapa, Singaperumal Koil, Narasimha cave, Singavaram Aranganatha cave, Melacherri Sikkarippallaveswara cave, Saluvankuppam, AthiranaChandamandapa etc., this king was succeeded by Narasimhavarma –I known as Mamallan. Like his father he too was interested in the growth of the temples architecture. This innovative art forms bear testimonies to the growth of the Pallava art. The architecture of monolithic rathas at this time exhibit another dimension in the growth of the Pallava art. Among them there are many temples in the style of Rajasimha. One can see the Adhithana, Devakostha, the simha figures on the pillars and the relief sculptures of Somaskantha in the sanctum. Among them the shore temple at mamallapuram and its "Vimana" resembles the Dharmaraja ratha. On the four corners of the Prasthara, the lion figures are seen. The temples that manifest the greatness of the art during the pallava reign. The temple that was constructed by Rajasimha is the Panaimalai Siva temple. Similarly the other significant art form is the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi. The temple which put up in the style of Rajasimha is in the shape of a pyramid.

The development at its zenith can be seen in the Kanchi- Vaikunthaperumal temple. Nandivarma Pallava king by name Parameswaravarman built this structural temple. It is 108.2 feet in length, 79.2 feet in breadth. The vimana on the sanctum is square shaped and is 60- feet in height. In the four talas there are sanctum with circumambulatory path. There are many temples in the style of Nandivarma they are Parasurameshwara temple. Hence Pallavas were the pioneer of the Dravidian style of temple architecture.

The Age of the Cholas

The Cholas were of great renown in Tamilnadu from 850-1150 AD. They followed the systematic traditional features of the art at the start, built many structural temples and created a new epoch in South Indian temple architecture. Narttamalai Vijayalaya Choliswaram which is in the district of Pudukottai is an evidence to prove the greatness of art at the beginning stage. The main features are the round shaped Sikhara in the Vimana, Devakosta, decorative Kudus, Mukhamandapa, Prahara, Pillars in rows and the Sub shrines. Likewise Kannanur Balasubramaniam temple of the early Chola period was built during the rule of Aditya –I. One can see the sanctum, ardhmandapa, Mahamandapa, Prasthara, Yazhi friezes, the vimana on circular shape and the padma decorations. The Kumbakonam Nageswaraswamy temple was built in the features of the Pallava Cholas.

The Lalkudi Subthagiriswara temple in the days of Aditya Chola was constructed based on the traditional art style of the early Cholas. The sanctum is built with six elements of south India temple style like, adishthana, Pada, Prasthara, Griva, Sikhara, and Stupi. Srinivasanallur, Koranganatha temple has historical importance of its own. Nilakantasastri mentions it as Parantaka period. These temples have the dvitala vimana type.

During the days of Parantaka-I the highest architectural growth was found in Pullamangai Brahmapuriswara temple. It was built by Parantaka-I and got various donation by the king. It has many elements from the upana to stupi, which was later extended. The Erumbur Kadambavaneswara temple belongs to the chola king Patantaka-I the Perungudi Parameswara temple Karanthai Vasisthiswara temple and Kollimalai Arapaliswara temple belong to the early chola period. The Kodumbalur muvar temple is in the district of Pudukottai which had three sanctums and it was built by bhuthi Vikramkesari. To the stupi it has been built of stone. Thought it is in dilapidated stage, the craftsmanship can be understood. There signs are many to prove that there were many sub-sannathis around the temple. In the adishthana of the sanctum the kumuda and the padma petals have been aesthetically carved. The dvitala vimana has four faced i.e., brahma kantha structure. At the entrance there is a gopura and inside there is a well. According to the researchers it may be the days of the early Cholas and is rich artistic style.

Brahmadesam Thirualiswara temple reminds one of the early days of the cholas. Since the dynasty of the cholas was physically huge and great temples were built. Thirualiswara temple at Brahmadesam of Tirunelveli district has an artistic richness of its own, and there are excess of decoration found in the temple. In the prasthara, the kudas and beside it the vyala figures are carved. On the four side of the griva pancharas has been carved along with stupid. The garbhagi-riga and the ardhmandapa have been built on these days, while the maha mandapa later on. The medieval chola's art was considered as the days of the golden era. They show the gratness of the art of south India at its zenith. K.A.Nilakanda sastri says that these temples stood as the main base for the early temples. To prove as an example for the Dravidians exquisiteness in the art, Tanjore big temple can be cited. It is known as Dakshinameru and about two hundred and sixteen feet in height with thirteen talas which is a wonder to the whole world. Since its foundation is set up on a natural stone- rock the heavy weight can be resisted. Rajaraja in his twenty fifth year of rule placed kalasa. This temple was built completely by the same king on 1010 AD and was called Big temple.

Following the orders of the king his senapathi Krittinanraman alias Mummudi Chola Brahmarayan created two entrances for the temple i.e., gopura which faces to the east. The first one is called Keralanthakan Thiruvayil and the second one Rajarajan Thiruvayil. On both the sides the dvarabalagas sculpture is their majesty. With special reference to the architectural significance of the temple, the adishthana here is in the Pratibanda type. On the pada, next to adishthana, the pilasters, Kumbapanjaras, devakostas and the makara toranas have been engraved aesthetically.

Another important architecture following the above said feature is Gangai Konda Choliswaram. The total area of the temple is three hundred and forty feet length and ten feet breadth. On the four sides of the temple, there are the tall fortifications and pillars that are put up on an elevated place of nearly four feet in height. There are many subshrines. The father and son created astonished vimanas of two kinds in South India and have shown the development of the agamic background in the art of both architecturing and sculpturing. The vimana of Gangaikonda Choliswaram is one hundred and nine feet with eight talas. The Thirukkama Kottam i.e., Ambal shrine found here was built by Rajendra Chola has been proved with many sources. Another creation of Rajendra Chola-I reign can be found was built by a noble man by name Esana Sivapandithar. He was the Guru of Rajaraja the Great. In the days of the latter chola temples like Dharasuram and Thiripuvanam were built. Among them is the Dharasuram Iravathiswara temple which was constructed by Rajaraja II. This temple which is majestic thirumana mandapa Nandi mandapa and the palipida. The development of architecture and sculpture and also its grandeur can be witnessed.

The Kambahareswara temple, dedicated to Lord Siva was established by Kulottunka-III in Thiripuvanam, which is at a distance of 6 km from Kumbakonm. These are all last phases of the chola kings. The king Kulottunka III won over Pandya. To celebrate the victory he was crowned with the name Thiripuvana Viradeva. Hence to commemorate this joy he built this temple. This temple exhibits the different dimensional

development and the maturity of the Dravidian style of architecture. The Adhithana, Pada, Prasthara, Griva and the Sikhara adds splendor to the art.

The Pandya Age

The Pandyas were the ruling authority after the Cholas in the southern part of TamilNadu. During their reign many temples were built. They began to excavate cave temple from the rock at the start. The inscriptions say, that the Malaiadikkurichi cave temple was built by Maran Sendan in his seventh year of his reign in Tirunelveli. Cave temples like Anaimalai Narasimha, Thiruparangundram, and the foot of the Trichy Malaikottai, were excavated by the king Srimara Srivallabha Pandya. K.V. Soundararajan says there are more than fifty cave temples. Like the pillars of the Pallavas the upper and lower parts are square and in the middle the Visnukantha type is found. The potika is not enriched by the craft and the tarangapotika is in the form of waves in many places. We can see here only a little amount of simplicity. The Pandyas have also carved temple, and ratha type building of temples have begun from the ninth century. It consisted of garbhagruga, arhamandapa, and the mahamandapa. The temples which were built during the reign of the Pandyas can be found in Tirupattur, Kovilpatti, Ambasamudaram, Enathi. Thirualiswaram, Sevalpatti, Utthirakosamangai, Thirukurugudi, Madurai, Sinnamanur, Courtalam, Vijayanarayaniam and Sriviliputhur.

The structural temples in the days of the early Pandyas were of excellence in nature. Here the vimana either had one or three talas. These vimanas were made of stones with kuda, sala and panjara. The ashtanga vimana used in the days of the Pallavas were encouraged in the Pandya kingdom also. Such structure can be found in Madurai Kudalazhagar temple, Sowmyanarayana Perumal temple in Thitukostiyur, temple at Mannarkoil and Ambasamudram. During the eighth and ninth centuries the art of structural temples were remarkable. The Kudalazhagar temple in Madurai is rich in royalty and beauty. The historians and artists say that these temples paves the way for the temple architects of later days to build the Tanjai and Gangaikonda Cholapuram temples by the Cholas. In the temples of the later Pandyas many significant features can be found. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries their artistic creation reached its zenith. Gopuras, praharas and mandapas were built. They concentrated on building the outer praharas, subshrines and mandapas. Temples like Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswarar, Tirunelveli Nellaippar and the temples in Tenkasi were extended during the age of the Pandyas. Around the temples huge walls were also constructed beautifully. Pillars of the mandapa of these days experienced the growth of art. The pilasters, the Kumbhapanjaras, the Kostapanjaras, were fully decorated. The Pandyas who ruled Thamizhagam for nearly two hundred years contributed highly to the Dravidian art and architecture. But Kongu Chola King Virarajendra and his style of temple architecture is based on the Imperial Cholas.

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF VIRA RAJENDRA CHOLA PERIOD

A study about the Temple of Kongunadu during the rule of Vira Rajendra Chola is to show his interest in the Temple art. Like other rulers of Kongunadu he has constructed many temples and also renovated some temples. The inscriptions found in such temples were the evidences to draw the history of Vira rajendra Chola and also to know about the contributions of the people of Kongunadu for the development of Art and Architecture of the various temples of Kongunadu.

Karuvalur Vira Rajendra Vinnagaram

In the history records and inscriptional accounts, the temple is named as Vira Rajendra Vinnagaram. This temple is situated in Karuvalur, Tirupur District nearly 10 kms from Avinashi in Mettupalayam highway. In the year 1226 AD during the twentieth year of King Vira Rajendra's rule he built a pond by name 'Purosakulam' to the deity Vinnagara Perumal. The temple is having 150 feet length in the eastern side and 75 feet length in the east western side and 75 feet breadth in the north- eastern side in area including the Garbagraha, Arthamandapa, Antarala, Mahamandapa, Mukhamandapa, Vahana Mandapa, Palipita and Dweepasthamba.

Among these the Mahamandapa belonged to Vijayanagar and Nayak rules. This temple bears the features of the Dravidian Art 'Upana', which is the chief element of Vimana. This elements is found in many of

the temples of Kongu Chola. This temple bears the Upana, Adhithana, Pada, Prasthara, Griva, Sikara and Stupi. In Adhithana the element like Jagathi, Thiripatta Kumuda, Potika, Kanda and Vedika are also carved. In the Thiripatta Kumuda of this temple the stone inscriptions bear the details of Vira Rajendra Chola. Next to Adhithana, next important one is called the 'Pitti or 'Pada'. This is found in the down position of Prasthara and also on the top position of Adhithana. On the four sides pilasters i.e., Brahma kanda Pilasters the elements like Thadi, Kanda, Idhal Palaka, Thorana, Potika, Vettu Potika and Vira Kanda can be seen. Only in this temple, on the Pilasters and on the portions of the Pada the two types of Potika can be found. On the western side of the temple there are thorana and in it many relief sculptures were carved. The main features are the Makara thorana and Kumba thorana. Along with these there are Vyala friezes which are rich only in this temple. This special aspect belonged to the Vira Rajendra's days.

Next to Pada, the Prasthara is seen in full decoration along with Kudus. Beneath the kapota or prasthara the padma ornamentation is in a simplified manner. On the western side the sculpture of elephants are found. Next, the Tala, Griva, Sikara and Stupa are found. In talas, the karnakudus and Salas are found. The Vimana bears the circular shaped Sikara and on the four direction of the Vimana the Griva Kosta sculptures are found. The sculptures are bearing Dasavadara as their basis. On the Sikara there are mahanasi Kudus and also small Kudus. According to the art of building, the Vimana upto the Upana and prasthara is made of stones with stucco sculptures. The Arthamandapa of the temple is structures in a simple manner without pillars. The Mahamandapa is built with pillars of foursided (Brahma Kanda type), eight sided (Vishnu Kanda type) and twelve sided (Rudra Kandatype). On the pillars of such mandapas the sculptures of donors are carved. The same pillars are seen with flower decorations and with Nagabandhas. The Potikas in the pillars of the mandapa are facing the beams in the east- western direction. There is a thirty feet Dweepasthamba is seen. On its four sides, many sculptures are carved. The other portion of the Dweepasthamba the Malasthana, Thadi, Ithazhl and Palaka are found.

The deity Sri Venkataramana Perumal is seated with Sridevi and Bhudevi in this temple. The deity is six feet tall and his body is made of 'Navapashana'. It is seated with Samabhanga with its two upper hands bearing the Sangu and Chakra and the lower left hand is in folded form and the lower right hand is bearing the Abhaya mudra. The head bears the makuta and the body is decorated with dress up to knee and with ornaments. The heads of Sridevi and Bhudevi are with Krita makuta and their hands are bearing the Padmas. The two deities are in the sitting posture and are wearing the kandikai, Aaram and also many more ornaments. The Lord wears Makarakundala in his ears. The metal icon of Lord Venkataramana, Sridevi and Bhudevi are also kept in the mandapa. In the Arthamandapa Mahavishnu is seen in the seated posture. Near him the figure of Ramanuja, Kothandarama and Kalinganarthana are seen. In the Mahamandapa, the sculptures of Jayan and Vijayan are placed. They are nearly five feet in height and they are facing the Moolavar. They have long Makuda and their hands are bearing the Conch, Wheel and Gadhayutha. The ears are bearing the Kundalas of ancient type. The pillars are occupied with the male and female figures of very simple dress with Anjali mudra.

Among the various sculptures of the temple, the noteworthy sculpture is the figure of Sri Venugopala with flute in his hands. His two upper hands are bearing Conch and Wheel respectively. He is seated on five headed snake. The cows are standing near him and it shows that they are attracted by the music from the flute. Near the sculpture there is a sculpture of a donor. The other way shows that the human beings are attracted by the music from the flute.

In the Vahana Mandapa, the Garudazhvar's figure is seen with Anjalimudra facing the Moolava. It is nearly three feet in height. Apart from Garuda there are many miniature sculptures. Among them the figures of donor's and Vyala are of great importance. On the four sides of the Dweepasthamba the figure of the Garuda is carved with great dexterity. On the north and south parts of the Dweepasthamba the Conch, Wheel and figure of Anjaneya are found with the traditions of Agamas. In the Vimana there are more relief pictures. On the four parts of Vimana the Hanuman in sitting posture with Anjalimudra can be seen. In the first floor to the southern side of the Kosta, Mahavishnu seated with Lakshmi in the suhasana posture is the rarest of its kind. In the southern side of the Griva Kosta, there is Yoga naraimha sculpture with Conch, Wheel in the upper hands and Abhaya and Varda Mudra in the lower hands. The sculpture of the avataras of Vishnu namely Varaha, Kurma,

Machcha and Kalki are also carved in the Vimana of the temple. In the northern side of the Tala, the wonderful sculpture of Venugopala with Bama can be seen. In few thoranas the figures of Narasimha are seen.

Karuvallur Vira Rajendra Iswaramudaiyar temple

The temple of Sri Gangathiswara and Kamalambigai is popularly known as Vira Rajendra Iswaramudaiyar Temple. Here the Lord is seated in the form of Linga under five headed snake. During the rule of Vira Rajendra the worship of Siva was at its peak. Many Siva temples were built during his rule. This temple is famous for its various features. The presence of Dwarabalaga and the Nandhi sculpture in the Maha mandapa are of ancient in nature. To the side of the Devakostha the sculpture of Dhakshinamurthi is seen. He is seated in Virasana posture keeping Jatabara and the Yajnopavita across his chest. It is three feet tall having three eyes and four hands. One of his legs suppresses the anava in the form of Muyalaga. There is no better Guru than him. In this temple the figures of Brahma and Vishnu are shown as retrieved of their pride and appeared as pillars of fire. Siva is considered as the chief and Brahma and Vishnu are found worshipping Siva. Near the Lord Siva, Brahma is seen in the mould of Swan and Mahavishnu is shown as Varaha. The Lord coming out from the pillar is nearly carved. To the western side of the Thala the sculpture of Mahavishnu is seen in Suhasana posture with Conch and Wheel. The deity Annai Durga is seated in the Arthamandapa facing towards north. She is seated in this temple with Padmas in her upper hands and in the lower right hand with Abayamudra and the lower left hand is in folded posture. The sculpture is two feet height. She has an eye on her forehead.

The vahana of Siva is Nandhi and he is called as Nandhikesa. The face of Nandhikesa is in the shape of Rishaba and other parts are in human form and he is believed as the leader of Sivaganas. The Lord Brahma is installed in the northern side of the Vimana. Brahma is the leader of four Vedas that means Saraswathi. He is considered as Devakosta and Grivakosta deity of this temple His Vahana is Swan.

In the sub- shrine of the Moolavar, Ambal Kamalambikai is seated. The relief pictures of her different forms are seen in the Vimana. On the southern side of first tala, Annai appears as Meenakshi. In the Grivakosta she appears as Parvathi in the Suhasana posture. In Kongunadu, Ambal is called with various names like Surumbar Poonguzhli, Periyanyagi, MuyanguPonmulaivalli and Ambikai.

Lord Vinayaga is having a separate sanctum in this temple. It is considered that the trunk of the Vinayaga represents Omkara and the pot like belly of him is the Universe. Near the Ganapathi sculpture the figures of five elements i.e., Panchabudhas are found. There is a separate sannathi for Navagrahas with the particular sculptures. The Sanibhagavan sculpture with his vahana is there in the temple. At the east Prakara facing the Moolavar there are sannathi's for Surya and Chandra.

Pazhankarai-Pon Choliswara temple

The Pazhankarai Pon Choliswara Temple is situated on the Avinashi to Erode highway. The first inscription of this temple belongs to the days of Vira rajendra Chola. This temple is supported by the Upapita. The chief element of the vimana is Adisthana. Among the sub-elements of Adisthana the Jagati Thripatta Kumuda, Kanta and Pattika are of more important. The four pillars of the Pada are fully carved and decorated. The temple has many inscriptional accounts of the king.

The Maha mandapa of this temple is having four pillars with the sculptures of the donors. The four sided, eight sided and twelve sided structures are also found in the pillars. According to the structure of the pillars the Potika are put in the east western direction and north western direction. All the pilasters belong to the Brahmakanta type. This temple has a 'Mukamandapa. Like the Mahamandapa here too there are four pillars with the sculptures of the donors. The four sided eight sided and twelve sided structure are also found. There is a gap nearly eight feet between the pillars. The pillars are nine feet in height and four feet of circumference. Besides this mandapa, a four pillared mandapa with the Palipita and Vahana are found.

Manur- Sri Vira Rajendra Choliswaramudaiyar temple

The Choliswara temple was built by King Vira Rajendra Chola. This temple is most significant one among the other temples. Because it bears the information that this king ruled the two Kongus. It is named as Sri Vira

Rajendra Cholishwaramudaiyar Temple. This temple is situated at the Manur village in Palani.

Vijayamangalam- Kariamanicka Perumal Temple

Karimanicka Perumal Temple was constructed during the King Vira Rajendra's rule. In this temple there are Devakostas with Pilasters. On the four sided pillar, the Kalasa Idhazh and Palaka are engraved with distinct measurements. The Thoranas found in the western side of the Devakosta are formed with simplicity. The four pillars found in the Mahamandapa and ten pillars are installed nearly at a gap of time and bear the Vidhana. In the Mukamandapa there are ten pillars at a height of fifteen feet with a circumference of six feet. The description of some of the structure of the temple and the sculptures inside such temples shows the king's part in fusing the religious spirit among the people of Kongunadu during his rule.

Thirumuruganpoondi- Ambal Sannathi

Thirumuruganpoondi eulogized in history is located in Vadaparaisara nadu. It is very near to Avinashi which is on the Kovai Tirupur highways. A song has been sung by Sundaramurthi Nayanar for Thirumuruganpoondi Thirumurugantha. Besides it is a place where he composed Devaram. Hence, this place is very remarkable. Thirumuruganpoondi is historically a big town. The literature speak of this place as 'Managar'. In Devaram it has been cited as Poondi Managar Elaiyam Kavirayar who wrote about the Avinashi Purana calls it is Thirunagar, and Gnanaboomi. Arunagirinathar in his Thirupuhazhi mentions as Kongurajapuram. The god Thirumuruganatha is seated and to the west. Konerinmaikondan Thiripuvana Chakravarthi Virarajendra Chola built the Ambal Sannathi. This is one of his remarkable donations for the development of Saktham.

Kandeeswaram Sri Karunambigai Ambal Temple

Kandeeswara and Karunambigai Temple was built in the period of Vira Rajendra Chola. The temple was constructed in the name of Vira Rajendra Chola's son Nachinarkiniyar alias Kandiyadevan. This temple bears the artistic features of the Kongu Cholas. Lord Kandeeswara temple bears the Dravidian artistic style, and led the six elements to itself. Among them are the Upapita, Adhishthana, Pada, Prasthara, Griva, Sikhara and the Stupi. The Sanctum, Ardhamandapa, Mahamandapa, Vahanamandapa and the Dweepasthamba have been carved according to the agamas.

The architects who have carved the jagathi, beautiful devakostha have dexterously carved the apt prasthara. The prastharakudu, its beauty, under this the padma and to the west the vyala figures remind of the Karuvallur temple style. The Prasthara Kudus are of floral decorations. Next to the prasthara are the first thala, sikhara and Stupi which are stucco craftsmanship of the later days. Thevimana of Kandeeswara temple has many Grivakostha sculptures. The Sikhara structure with its Mahanasi features like the karbhagruha and Ardhamandapa. Among them is the Adhishthana, Pada and the prasthara which are the main elements. On the pilasters of the Mahamandapa also the vettupotika has been engraved.

The adhishthana is nearly seven feet in height and the pada about nine feet in length. All the prasthara kudas have the same architectural structures. The Karbhagruha is nearly fifteen feet in height and the Ardhamandapa twenty feet in height. In the inner part of the mandapas next to the Karbhagruha, there are four pillars that remind of the Kongu Cholas. In the Padapanda Adhishthana, the Jagathi, Thripatta Kumuda, Kanda, Patika and Vedika are seen. In the upapita nearly about five feet adhishthana has been constructed and supports the other elements.

Much important has been given to the measurement than of the ornamental aspect. On the pada part, the pilasters that are seven feet and devaskostas have been carved. In the Kandeeswara temple the karbhagruha devakosthastha and Ardhamandapa devakostha are found. The Pranala of this temple is formed with Kongu Chola impact.

CONCLUSION

The first two talas, the griva, sikhara and stupi are of the stucco work. The tala Kostas and the grivakosthas have been elegantly carved. Besides of the talas, the pilasters of stucco forms are found in many

numbers. Both sala and karnakudus are structured and in the sala portion model kalasas many in numbers are found. The Vahanamandapa belongs to the present days. In the Vahanamandapa, the eight pillars are made of stucco form. The palipita, Nandhi, Suriya and Chandra figures are very ancient. The pillar with puspapotika is a note worthy aspect. On the Pillars the Aswapada, the Kambu, Malasthana, Tadi, Idhazh and the Palaka have been engraved in the manner of the stoned pillar.

The Vimana of Sri Karunambigai Ambal Sannathi is decorated in block stones and the elements are carved properly. In the pada part are the devakosthas and they have the sculptures. The stone and stucco works are based decorations are found. The Vimana which belongs to twitala type has the four sided sikhara along with it. In the vimana there are the padma, nasikudus and the kalasa. Sri Karunambigai sannathi has the Karbhagruha, Ardhamandapa and the Mahamandapa. There are the four pillars of the stucco forms and the palipata in the Mukhamandapa. Though the pillars are stucco works like the stoned pillars there are malasthana, thadi, idhal and the palaka in the circular form. Thus, the king Vira Rajendra Chola showed his involvement in the temple building activities prevailed during his rule.

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