

HINDU TEMPLE ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF SOME SHAIVA TEMPLES OF THE COASTAL BELT OF ODISHA IN EASTERN INDIA

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Abstract

The artistic technique and architectural features of the extant Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha are the important aspects of the Hindu temple art of Odisha in Eastern India. The extant temples of the coastal areas of the undivided Cuttack and Puri districts possess the features of Kalinga style of temple architecture of Odisha. Really, some Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha are very important considering their religious significance and artistic techniques. The earlier art historians and senior scholars had not dealt with detail in all the Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha, for which, five temples are taken here for the subject of our discussion. These five Shaiva temples are such as 1. Vandeshvara Temple at Chahata, 2. Grameshvara temple at Mahanga, 3. Gatishvara Temple at Sundargrama, 4. Nrutyeshvara temple at Nasikesvara, and 5. Sankaresvara Temple of Narua-Sankaresvara. The aim of this article is to focus on artistic techniques and architectural features alongwith the religious significance of the above Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha in Eastern India. Methodologically, both the primary and secondary sources have been used for the writing of this article.

Keywords: Indian, art, architecture, Shaiva, temples, coastal-belt, Odisha.

I. INTRODUCTION

The region of coastal-belt of Odisha is well-known for its historic Hindu monuments in Eastern India. The Prachi valley is an important centre of temple building activities in the coastal-belt of Odisha. It lies between the Devi river and the Kushabhadra river in the coastal-belt of Odisha. Prachi is an ancient river, which is considered as most sacred by the people of Odisha (Das, 1958, p.5). Shaivism was the dominant religion in the coastal-belt of Odisha from the 7th century onwards and reached the peak of its glory during the Somavamsi period in the 10th-11th century A.D. The extant Shaiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha prove that the region was well-known as a place of Shaivism in the medieval period of Odishan history. Some of the Shaiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have also been erected in the modern period. A good number of Shaiva temples are

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existed in the coastal areas of the undivided Cuttack and Puri districts and they represent the *Kalinga style* of temple architecture of Odisha. In fact, Odisha is famous for its large numbers of temples for the purpose of worship of various deities of different sects of Hinduism. Indian *Shilpashastras* recognize 3 major styles of temples such as *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* (*Ishana Shiva Gurudeva Paddhati* and other Texts). In Odishan temple architecture, each temple type / order and its individual part has been given a distinctive name (Mohapatra, 1982, p.14). All the extant temples of coastal belt of Odisha possess the *Kalinga style* of temple architecture, which is an offshoot of the *Nagara Style* temple architecture of central India (Mohapatra, 2007, p.25). *Kalinga Style* of temple architecture is divided into four types such as *rekha*, *pidha* (*bhadra*), *khakhara* and *Gauriya* (Bose, 1932, p.78). All the extant Shaiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha represent both the *rekha* and *pidha* types of the *Kalinga Style* temple architecture of Odisha. They have been meticulously documented by the principal author as far as practicable. The temples of Odisha form a class by themselves and these Hindu monuments can be conveniently labelled as “Kalinga style” (Behera, 1993, p.1). Practically, Odishan temples practice the most compacted and standardized architectural set in India (Fergusson, 1875, p.414). Odishan temple architecture with its uniqueness and distinct nomenclature was included in the other types of temples of India such as *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* raising their number to four i.e. the *Kalinga style* (Panigrahi, 1985, p.371). In fact, the Odishan temples are remarkable for the profusion of sculptures. In this connection, Stella Kramrisch aptly comments that “Architecture in Odishan temples is but sculptures on a gigantic scale” (Kramrisch, Vol.1, 1946, p.218). It is known from the practical field study that most of the earlier dilapidated Shiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have been renovated in the last quarter of the 20th century. Most of the minor Shaiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have not been covered by the earlier scholars in detail. In this respect the present authors attempt to focus on the detailed art and architecture along with the religious significance of five Shaiva temples of the coastal belt of Odisha, which have been clearly discussed in the subject.

II. METHODOLOGY

Both the primary and secondary sources have been utilized in the writing of present article. The primary data have been collected through Gazetteers, Texts, unpublished thesis, the practical observation, public opinions, hearsay accounts and interview methods during the period of experimental field survey. The collected data with regard to the art, architecture and religious significance of four Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha is primarily based on practical observations and the earlier scholarly works. The secondary data are Books, Journals, Periodicals, Proceedings, Manuscripts, Antiquities, Records, Reports, etc. The data collected from both the primary and secondary sources are critically examined and discussed in this article.

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

Some Shaiva Temples of Coastal-belt of Odisha

A good number of Shaiva temples are found in various sites of the coastal-belt of Odisha in Eastern India. Among all the extant Shaiva temples, five temples have been taken here for the subject of our discussion. The names and sites of these five Shiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha are viz; 1. Vandeshvara Temple at

Chahata, 2. Grameshvara temple at Mahanga, 3. Gatishvara Temple at Sundargrama , 4. Nrutyeshvara temple at Nasikesvara, and 5. Shankaresvara Temple at Narua-Shankaresvara. Different aspects like art, architecture along with the religious significance of the above five Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha are briefly discussed below.

3.1. Vandeshvara Temple of Chahata

The Vandeshvara temple is situated at Chahata in the Nimapara Police station of the Puri district of Odisha. It is located about 2 kms from Amareshvara, on the right bank of the river Prachi in the coastal-belt of Odisha (Mohapatra, 2017, p.170). The local people believe that there was a harbour (*bandara*) existed at this place. The overseas maritime traders usually paid respect to Vandeshvara Mahadeva before starting of their voyages. The presiding deity has been named accordingly. Another view opined by the old priest of the temple that due to the location of the temple on the embankment or *bandha* of the Prachiriver, the temple came to be known as Vandeshvara. The present temple has been built on the ruins of the ancient temple (Mohapatra, 1986, Vol.I , p.200). It comprises of *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. The temple is made of sand stones and bricks. It is facing to the eastern direction. The *vimana* of the temple is a *pancha-ratha* (Donaldson, 1985/86, Vol.III, p.1186) *pidha deula* and it is around 25 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.170). The *bada* wall of the *vimana* is decorated with flower medallion, peacocks and full blown lotus flowers. Now, the principal niche of the *bada* of the southern side is completely plastered with cement. The central niches of the western and northern sides are accommodated with Ganesha and Varaha respectively. Ganesha is the *parshvadevata* of the western side. The Ganesha image is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He displays *abhaya mudra*, rosary (*japa mala*), a *patra* of sweets balls and *parashu* (hatchet) in his four hands. Mouse is portrayed on the right of the podium. Male attendant figure is carved on both sides of the deity. The back side of the head of deity is decorated with *makara* headed trefoil arch crowned by the *kirtimukha* motif. The image Ganesha wears a *sarpayajnopavita* in his body. It measures 21 x 12 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.170). The image Ganesha is made of chlorite stone. Varaha is the *parshvadevata* of the northern side. The Varaha image is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He displays *chakra* in upper right hand, the lower right hand holds the hand of a female figure possibly Pruthvi, the upraised left arm bears the figure of goddess Pruthvi and the lower left hand displays *sankha*. The background of the slab of deity is decorated with lotus flower with stalk. Flower medallion is decorated on both side top corners of the slab. Garuda figure is not found on the pedestal. The chlorite stone image of Varaha measures 11 x 18 ½ inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.171). P.K. Ray remarks that the Varaha image was brought from other ruined temple (Ray, 1975, p.19). The right side eastern outer *bada* wall of the *vimana* is fixed with an image of Narayana. The image Narayana is engraved in standing pose. The lower part (torso) of the slab of Narayana image is completely missing. The image Narayana shows *chakra*, *varada mudra*, *sankha* and *gada* in his four hands. The behind of the head of deity is decorated with *prabhamandala*. Flying *apsara* figure is carved on both side top corners of the slab. The sand stone image of Narayana measures 20½ x 26½ inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.171). The image Narayana seems to have been brought from other ruined temples (Ray, 1975, p.19). The left side eastern outer *bada* wall niche is housed with the figures of Savitri-Satyavana (Astika-Jaratkaru). This image is a work of the modern cement. The *gandi* of the *vimana* is of the pyramidal superstructure ,which contains the seven *pidhas*. The centre of the *gandi* on the southern side is projected with a *jhapasimha*. *Dopichha* lions are noticed on the top of *kanika pagas*. The *mastaka* comprises of

elements of *neck*, *ghanta*, *neck*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, three *kalasas* (Borner and Rath Sarma, 1966, p.147) superimposed one above another, trident (*trisula*) and flag (*dhvaja*).

Shivalinga within the *Shaktipitha* is found worshipped in the sanctum. The *Shivalinga* is installed 2 feet below the floor of the sanctum. A brass image of Chandra Shekhara is being worshipped in the backwall of the sanctum. It is considered as the *Chalanti pratima* of the presiding deity. The sanctum has also preserved an image of Mahisamardini Durga. She is also being worshipped in the sanctum. The image Mahisamardini Durga is engraved in standing pose on the body of Mahisasura. The right side five hands of goddess Durga hold *khadga*, *nagapasha*, *chakra*, *trisula* and arrow while the left side hands possess bow, shield, *pasankusha*, rein of the *asura* and the attribute in upper hand is missing (Mohapatra, 2017, p.172). Here Devi Durga is piercing the head of the *asura* by trident. Both the figures of lion and buffalo are engraved on the podium. The image of goddess Durga is depicted in *ugra* posture and it is made of black chlorite. This image is noticed in the north-west corner of the sanctum. The *navagrahas* are finely engraved on the architrave. These are of the modern cement work. Nandi and Bhruni figures are portrayed on either side of the doorway wall. Both sides of the doorway wall above the Nandi and Bhruni figures are decorated with scroll work.

Both the *jagamohana* and *natamandapa* are of the modern flat roof of the twentieth century. A bull pillar of 2 feet high is noticed at the middle of the *jagamohana*. The *jagamohana* has two doorways. There is another bull figure installed in front of the *natamandapa*. A small *mandapa* is erected on the south-east corner of the temple complex.

The local people say that the Vandeshvara temple was constructed after the Sun temple of Konarka. The iconographic features of the *parshvadevata* image Ganesha indicate that the Vandeshvara temple might have built in the later part of the Ganga period (Mohapatra, 2017, pp.172-73). The temple has been renovated in the twentieth century. The temple is built on the ruins of the earlier dilapidated temple.

3.2. Grameshvara temple of Mahanga

The temple of Grameshvara is located at Mahanga in the Niali Block of the Cuttack district of Odisha. It is found about 7 kms from Niali Bazar and 3 km from the Prachi river (Mohapatra, 2017, p.184). The temple comprises of *vimana* and *jagamohana*. It is built in sand stones and laterite blocks. The temple has been renovated in 1910 as said by the local people. The *vimana* is of the *pancha ratha pidha deula* and it is about 30 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.185). The *pista* of the *vimana* consists of two horizontal mouldings, which are separated by intervening recess. The *pista* of the *vimana* measures 2 feet 6 inches in height. The *bada* is *panchanga* (Behera, 1993, p.4) type i.e. having five component parts. The three sides central niches of the the *bada* of *vimana* are accommodated with the images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Parvati. Ganesha is the *parshvadevata* of the southern side. The image Ganesha is engraved in standing pose on the podium. Mouse, is engraved on the right of the podium. The bottom part of the pedestal is decorated with scroll work. Male attendant figure holding jackfruit is portrayed on both sides of the deity. The deity Ganesha displays rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in upper left hand, *parashu* in lower left hand and the right side upper hand is broken from the elbow portion. The behind of the head of deity is ornamented with *makara* headed trefoil arch crowned by the *kirtimukha* motif. *Apsara* figure is portrayed on the top corners. The sand stone image of



Ganesha measures 14½ x 29 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.185). Ganesha is the original side deity of the temple. Kartikeya is the *parshvadevata* of the western side. The Kartikeya image is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He is engraved with holding trident, rosary, *dambaru* and the rooster cock in his four hands. Peacock is found portrayed on the right of the podium. The sand stone image of Kartikeya measures 9½ x 15½ inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.186). The original Kartikeya image is not available there. The present Kartikeya image has been housed in 1980's. Devi Parvati is the *parshvadevata* of the northern side. The image of Devi Parvati is engraved in standing pose on the podium. She displays as usual attributes in her hands. Due to restriction and covering by clothes, the detail iconographic features of Devi Parvati could not be documented by the author at the time of survey. The *gandi* of the *vimana* is of the pyramidal superstructure, which comprises of 5 *pidhas*. *Deula Charini* figures and *Dopichha* lions are noticed in their respective places of the *gandi*. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* comprises of *beki*, *amalakashila*, *beki*, *amala*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* and *ayudha* (trident). The *kalasa* is encircled with a *naga* figure of the modern cement work.

Shivalinga within the *Shaktipitha* is found worshipped in the sanctum. Inner back wall of the sanctum is relieved with the figures of Shiva and Parvati. Separate *navagraha* figures are found inserted in the architrave. All the *grahas* are portrayed in *yogasana* pose. The local people say that these *grahas* are inserted within 40 years. They are of the modern work. The additional doorframes are decorated with creeper along with the flower medallions, flower buds, etc. The additional doorframe is flanked by the designs of bamboo on both sides and these are of the modern cement work. Figures of Nandi and Bhrunji holding trident and *chauri* are depicted in either side *pidha mudi* niche of the doorway wall of the sanctum.

The *jagamohana* is of the *pidha* (Borner and Ratha Sharma, 1966, p.155) *deula* and it is about 24 feet high from the temple surface. All the components of the *bada* are devoid of decorative element except standing female figures fixed on both sides of the upper parts of all the three doorways. The *gandi* of the *jagamohana* is a pyramidal superstructure, which comprises of five *pidhas*. The centre of the middle *pidha* is planned out by seated lion figure on each side. *Deula Charini* figures and *Dopichha* lions are found fixed in their respective places of the *gandi*. The *mastaka* of the *jagamohana* contains of *beki*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri* and *kalasa*. The *kalasa* of the *mastaka* is flanked by inverted parrots. A Bull pillar of 1½ feet high is noticed near the doorway of the sanctum. The *jagamohana* has three doorways. The northern and southern side doorways are devoid of decorative embellishments. The eastern side doorframe is decorated with creepers with flowers and medallions. Standing female figure is fixed on both side upper parts of the doorways. Two huge lions are found seated posture on both sides of the doorway. A new bull figure is installed on the octagonal pillar of 3 feet high (Mohapatra, 2017, p.187). It is noticed in front of the *jagamohana*. A *Tulasi Chaunra* is found on the southern side of the *jagamohana*.

Additional Shrines

Besides the temple, there are two additional shrines also noticed on the southern side of the temple complex. They are the shrines of *Bhagabata gadi* and Trinatha.

I. Shrine of *Bhagabata Gadi*: There is an additional flat roof shed, which preserves the palmleaf manuscript and *Bhagabata pothi* (Mohapatra, 2017, p.187). It is noticed on the southern side of the *jagamohana*. It is built in 2002 A.D. The shrine faces to north.

II. Shrine of Trinatha: There is another additional flat roof shed also found near the *Bhagabata gadi*. It has been built within 16 years before the present. The shrine of Trinatha faces to east. The shrine preserves the stone images of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara along with an image of Ganesha as the presiding deities (Mohapatra, 2017, p.188).

The public opine that the Grameshvara temple of Mahanga was erected before the attack of Kalapahara in 1560's A.D. The iconographic features of the side deities indicate that the Grameshvara temple might have constructed in the early part of the 16th century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2017, p.188). The priest of the temple remarks that the earlier dilapidated temple has been repaired in the 1st quarter of the twentieth century.

3.3. Gatishvara Temple of Sundargrama

The temple of Gatishvara is situated at Sundargrama in the Kantapara Block of the Cuttack district of the coastal-belt of Odisha. The temple is located approximately 28 kms from Bhubaneswar and 1 k.m. from the river Prachi (Mohapatra, 1986, Vol.II, p.87). It is a renovated temple of that village. This temple comprises of *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. The temple is built in burnt bricks and stones (rare). It is facing to the eastern direction. The *vimana* is of the *pancha ratha pidha deula* and it is around 25 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.262). The three sides central niches of the *bada* are accommodated with *parshvadevatas* Ganesha, Trivikrama and Mahisamardini Durga. Ganesha is the *parshvadevata* of the southern side. The Ganesha image is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He possesses broken tusk, rosary, a *patra* of sweet balls in and *parashu* in his four hands. The female attendant figures are engraved in standing pose with flanking the deity. The behind of the head of deity is ornamented with trefoil *makara* headed arch. Flower medallion is decorated on both side top corners of the slab. The image Ganesha is made of *Baulamala pathara*. It measures 16 x 10 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.262). The image Ganesha has been made in 2002 A.D. The original Ganesha image was eroded by nature. So this (modern) image is housed in that niche. Trivikrama is the *parshvadevata* of the western side. The Trivikrama image is engraved in standing pose on the podium. He displays *gada* in upper right hand, *padma* in lower right hand, *sankha* in lower left hand and the upper left hand is broken. The right leg of deity firmly puts on the pedestal while the left leg uplifts towards heaven and it touches the Brahma image. There is a *Balidana* scene depicted beneath the uplifted leg of deity. Figures of Shridevi and Bhudevi are flanked on either side of the deity. The sand stone image of Trivikrama measures 17 x 9 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.262). This image is haphazardly housed in the central niche of the western side. Trivikrama is not the usual side deity of the Shiva temple. The image Trivikrama is made within six years. Perhaps, the earlier side deity of the western side was in eroded condition. So, the image Trivikrama has been recently housed in its place. Mahisamardini Durga is the northern side *parshvadevata* of the temple. The image of Goddess Durga is engraved in standing pose and she is depicted killing the Mahisasura. The right side two hands hold *khadga* and trident but the attributes in other two hands of the right side are not clearly visible. Two hands of the left side hold the hair of the *asura* and *pasha*, which lies on the neck of *asura* (demon). Attributes in other two hands of the left side are not clearly visible. Here goddess Durga is designed piercing the heart of *asura* by a trident. Lion is noticed at the right of the podium. The image Durga is made of soft sand stone and it is eroded by nature. Perhaps, it is the original side deity of the temple. This image may be assignable to the 19th century A.D. It measures 11 x 15 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.263). All the side deities are accommodated in the *pidha mundi* niches. The local people say that the original *parshvadevatas* of the southern and western sides have been replaced by the modern images due

to severe damaged condition. The *gandi* of the *vimana* is of the pyramidal superstructure and it con, which comprises of 5 *pidhas*. The *gandi* also continues the *pancha ratha* plan of the *bada*. A nude female figure is depicted seated posture on the *raha paga* of the second *pidha* of the *gandi* from the lower. It is projected out on the three sides of the *gandi* except the front. The centre of the fourth *pidha* from the lower has been projected out by *jhapa simha* on each side. *Deula Charini* figures and *Dopichha* lions are finely fixed in their respective places of the *gandi*. These two sculptural elements are supporting the *ghanta* of the *mastaka*. The *mastaka* comprises of elements of *neck*, *ghanta*, *neck*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja* (flag).

Shivalinga within the *Shaktipitha* is found worshipped in the sanctum. According to Prabhat Panda, the priest of the temple, the original *Shivalinga* of the temple was completely eroded and also in broken condition. The present *Shivalinga* has been recently installed in place of the original *Shivalinga* of the sanctum. The floor of the sanctum is about 3 feet below from the floor of the *jagamohana*. The back side wall niche of the sanctum is accommodated with the stone image of Chandra Shekhara and another brass image of Chandra Shekhara. The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana*. *Dvarapala* figures are noticed on both sides base of the door frames. They have been depicted on the *dambaru* shaped pedestal. The middle of the doorway lintel is engraved with flower medallion. Recently, *navagrahas* are inserted in the architrave above the doorway lintel. They are made of modern cement.

The *jagamohana* is of the *pidha deula* and it is around 16 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.264). The *gandi* and *mastaka* of the *jagamohana* have usual components of the Odishan *pidha deula*. The *jagamohana* has three open doorways. Two huge lions are set up on both sides of the eastern doorway. These lion figures are watching the main doorway of the *jagamohana*. The *natamandapa* is of the modern flat roof structure. The roof of the *mandapa* is supported by four square sized pillars. The *natamandapa* is open in all sides. There is a circular bull pillar of 3 feet high noticed at the middle of the *natamandapa*. The *natamandapa* of the temple has been built in 2004 A.D.

There is a *yajnamandapa* noticed in front of the *natamandapa*. The conical roof of the *yajna mandapa* is supported by 14 circular pillars. The *yajnamandapa* has been built in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Additional Shrines

Besides the main temple, there are two additional shrines erected in the temple premises. They are Bilasuni and Lord Jagannatha.

A. Shrine of Bilasuni: There is an additional shrine of Goddess Bilasuni erected on the northern side of the main temple. According to the local people, the Bilasuni shrine is the contemporary of the main *deula* of the temple complex. The shrine of Bilasuni is of the *pidha deula* and it is around 16 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, pp.264-265). The *mastaka* comprises of *beki*, *ghanta*, *beki*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* and *ayudha* (*chakra*). The sanctum of the additional shrine preserves an image of goddess Bilasuni as the presiding deity. Really, the presiding deity of the shrine is the image of Varahi, which is locally worshipped as goddess Bilasuni (Ray, 1975, p.4). She is conceived as “Gramadevati” of that village. Due to restriction and covering by clothes and flower, the detailed study of the iconography of goddess Bilasuni could not be documented by the author at the time of survey. Some of the loose sculptures of the earlier Gateshvara temple are also found preserved inside the sanctum of the shrine. The sanctum has one doorway and it is devoid of sculptural

embellishments. The *jagamohana* and the *natamandapa* of the shrine are recently built by the efforts of villagers. Lion figure is installed on the floor of the *natamandapa*. It is conceived by the local people as *vahana* of goddess Bilasuni.

B. Shrine of Lord Jagannatha: There is a shrine of Lord Jagannatha also recently built on the northern side of the temple complex. The shrine is of the *pidha deula* and it is around 25 feet high from the temple surface. According to the local people, it was built in 2002 by the villagers. *Daru* images of Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra are found to be worshipped in the sanctum of the shrine. They have been installed on the *dambaru* shaped *simhasana* of 3 feet high. The doorway of the sanctum is completely plain. The shrine has a *jagamohana* of the *pidha* order and it is also built at the same time of that shrine.

The temple is surrounded by a boundary wall, which is made of laterite blocks and burnt bricks. It has two gates; one on the eastern side and another on the northern side respectively. The local people say that the present temple is not older than 200 years before the present. The architectural features of the *vimana* indicate that the Gatishvara temple was possibly erected in the nineteenth century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2017, p.265)

3.4. Nrutyeshvara temple of Nasikesvara

The temple of Nrutyeshvara is situated approximately 4 kms from the Ananda Bazar Chhak at Nasikesvara in the Kakatpur Block of the Puri district of Odisha (Mohapatra, 2017, p.147). The site of the temple is approachable from Kakatpur on the newly constructed road from Kakatpur to Nasikesvara. The temple is dedicated to Lord Nrutyeshvara Shiva, who is locally considered as one of the *Dvadasha Shambhus* on the bank of river Prachi (Panda, 1969, p. 75). The *Prachi Mahatmyam* records that Nrutyeshvara or Natyeshvara, the eleventh *Shambhu* in enumeration, is found (Behera, & Dhal, 1992, p. xii). The temple of Nrutyeshvara is a repaired shrine of that locality. The local people say that the temple has been renovated about 50 years before the present. The temple of Nrutyeshvara comprises of *vimana* and *jagamohana*. It is built in both sand stones and bricks. Both the buildings of the temple are thickly plastered with modern cement. The temple faces to east. The *vimana* is of the *saptaratha* (Donaldson, 1985/86, Vol.III, Leiden, p.1187) *rekha deula* and it is around 35 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.147). The base of the *pista* is a square of 15 feet. The *pista* measures 3 feet 2½ inches in height. A *Deula Charini* figure is found to be installed on the right of the western side *pista* wall. The *pista* and *bada* are not built accordingly the architectural Texts of the Odishan temples. The three sides central niches of the *bada* are housed with the *parshvadevatas* of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. All the side deities are accommodated in the *rekha mundi* niches. Ganesha is the southern side *parshvadevata* of the temple. The image Ganesha is engraved in *ardhaparyanka* pose on the podium. Mouse is engraved on the right of the podium. The Deity displays *ankusha*, broken tusk, *nagapasha* and a *patra* of sweets balls in his four hands. The behind of the head of deity is adorned with *prabhamandala*. The image Ganesha measures 9½ x 13 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.148). The deity Ganesha is made of sand stone. There is a similar small image of Ganesha is found installed on the left side of deity Ganesha. There is a flat roof structure of 10 feet high supported by two pillars erected in front of the deity Ganesha. Kartikeya is the western side *parshvadevata* of the temple. The image Kartikeya is engraved in *sthanaka* pose on the podium. Peacock is engraved on the right of the podium. The deity Kartikeya displays *gada*, which is broken, one hand is feeding the peacock, rooster cock and the lower left hand is broken from the wrist portion. Both side top corners of the slab



are engraved with full blown lotus flower. The sand stone image of Kartikeya measures 15 x 8½ inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.148). There is a similar small sized four armed image of Kartikeya also found to be worshipped on the left side of the deity Kartikeya. Goddess Parvati is the northern side *parshvadevata* of the temple. Due to restriction and covering by clothes and flowers on the body of devi Parvati, the detailed iconographical features of Devi Parvati could not be documented by the present author at the time of survey. Lion, the *vahana* (Gopinath Rao, Vol.1 Part-II, 1914, p.360 and Das, Vol. 1, 1997, p.219) of devi Parvati is found noticed in front of Devi Parvati. It is mounted on the top of the circular pillar. There is a modern flat roof erected in front of Devi Parvati. Two lions are noticed on both sides of that flat roof shrine. The *gandi* is of the curvilinear superstructure and it comprises of seven *pagas*. All the *pagas* of the *gandi* are thickly plastered with modern cement. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* comprises of the elements of *beki*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, stone vessel, *trisula* and flag.

Shivalinga within the *Shaktipitha* is found worshipped in the sanctum. The *Shivalinga* is installed one foot below the *Shaktipitha*. The bottom of the sanctum is around 8 feet below from the floor of the *jagamohana*. The *jagamohana* is of the *pidha deula* and it is around 28 feet high from the temple surface (Mohapatra, 2017, p.149). The *gandi* comprises of three *potalas*; the lower, middle and upper *potalas*, which contain four, three and two *pidhas* respectively. The *mastaka* comprises of elements of *neck*, *ghanta*, *neck*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja* (flag). Inner walls of the *jagamohana* are devoid of decorative elements. Two bulls, the conventional mounts of Lord Shiva are noticed near the doorway of the sanctum. There is a square sized bull pillar of 5 feet high noticed in front of the *jagamohana*. The humped bulls are installed on the top of the pillar. There are a series of bulls preserved in the small shed, which is noticed in front of the *jagamohana*. The local people say that these bulls were donated by devotees to Lord Nrutyeshvara Shiva.

There is an additional modern flat roof shed of 8 feet high erected on the northern side of the *jagamohana*. This shed is closely attached to the northern side *bada* wall of the *jagamohana*. The northern side additional shed also preserves some images. They are Patita Pavana, Gaja-Lakshmi, Narasimha, Varaha, Shiva and Savitri-Satyavana (Astika Jaratkaru). The *Daru* image of Lord Patita Pavana is found on the plain podium and it is noticed inside the shed. The image Gaja-Lakshmi is engraved in *padmasana* pose on the double petalled lotus pedestal. The back-side two hands of Gaja-Lakshmi hold full blown lotus flower. The elephants holding upturned jars in their proboscis are depicted pouring water on both sides of the head of Gaja-Lakshmi. Here the Gaja-Lakshmi image is carved in *abhisheka* pose. It measures 13 x 9 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.150). The behind of the head of deity is devoid of decorative elements. The image Gaja-Lakshmi is finished with sand stone. The image Narasimha is engraved in *sthanaka* pose on the podium. The upper right hand holds *chakra* while the upper left hand displays *sankha*. The lower two hands of the deity are involved in taking out the intestines of Hiranya Kashyap (Mohapatra, 2017, p.150). The image Narasimha is about 1 foot high and it is made of sand stone. There is an unidentified figure (not clearly visible) engraved on the front side of the pedestal. The figure may be Garuda, the *vahana* of the deity.

There is a small image of Varaha also preserved inside the modern flat roof shed. The image Varaha is engraved in standing pose on the podium. The upper right hand of deity displays *chakra*, the lower right hand holds the hand of a female figure possibly Pruthvi, the upraised left arm bears the figure of goddess Pruthvi and the lower left hand possesses *sankha* respectively. The top corners of the slab of deity are decorated with flower

medallion. There is a stone slab containing the bust of Lord Shiva and his head is encircled with snake. He displays as usual attributes in hands. There is a *simhasana*, which preserves the images of Astika-Jaratkaru. In this sculpture the female figure is identified as Jaratkaru, the sister of the Naga king Vasuki and the male figure on her lap is as her son Astika (Donaldson, 1985/86, p. 1079). The two armed image of Devi Jaratkaru is designed with seated posture. The right arm lies on the right lap of Astika and the left arm on the behind of Astika respectively. Here Astika is depicted in sleeping posture on the laps of Devi Jaratkaru. There is a *kuthara* (axe) is found depicted on the left of the pedestal. The figure Yamaraja is engraved in standing pose on the right of the podium. He displays *gada* and *kalapasha* in his two hands (Mohapatra, 2017, p.150). The image Astika-Jaratkaru is made of modern cement. It has been built in the last decade of the twentieth century. This Astika-Jaratkaru image is worshipped by local people as Savitri-Satyavana. Besides, the images of *navagrahas* are found preserved near the eastern side of this modern shed. All the nine *grahas* are made of modern cement.

A boundary wall is erected around the temple complex. The two side boundary walls of the temple complex are completely destroyed by the Super cyclone of 1999.

The villagers opine that the Nrutyeshvara temple was originally constructed earlier than the Sun temple of Konarka (Mohapatra, 2017, p.151). Most probably, the Nrutyeshvara temple was initially built in the Ganga period. The present temple is completely a renovated temple of that locality.

3.5. Sankaresvara Temple of Narua-Sankaresvara

The temple of Sankaresvara is located at Narua-Shankaresvara in the Kakatpur Block of the Puri district of Odisha. This temple is situated at a distance of around 5 kms from Kakatpur in the coastal belt of Odisha (Mohapatra, 2017, p.213). It is completely a renovated temple. The local people say that the earlier ruined temple has been renovated in 1970's by Kshetra Mohana Mohanty of Kerendiapala. This temple comprises of *vimana* and *jagamohana*. It is made of ancient bricks (Ray, 1975,p.24) and sand stones (rare). The temple faces to east. The *vimana* is of the *pancha ratha pidha deula* and it is around 25 feet high from the temple surface. The *pista* portion is completely buried under the earth. The three sides central niches of the *bada* are accommodated with the *parsvadevatas* of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. Ganesha is the southern side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image Ganesha is engraved in standing pose on the podium, which is completely plastered with modern cement. He holds broken tusk, rosary, a *patra* of *sweets balls* and *parashu* in his four hands. The sand stone image of Ganesha measures approximately 2 feet in height. The lower part of the slab of deity is plastered with modern cement. Three diminutive Ganesha images are found installed near the deity. Kartikeya is the western side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image Kartikeya is engraved in standing pose on the pedestal, which is plastered with modern cement. The upper right hand of deity is broken from the elbow portion, the lower right hand is feeding the peacock, the upper right hand holds the rooster cock and the lower right hand lies on the tail of the rooster cock. The sand stone image of Kartikeya measures 13½ x 20½ inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.214). Debashena figure is engraved on the left of the podium and she is lifting the legs of the rooster cock. Peacock is noticed at the right of the pedestal. Flower medallion is ornamented on both side top corners of the slab. Devi Parvati is the northern side *parsvadevata* of the temple. The image of Devi Parvati is engraved in standing pose on the podium. She displays *chakra* in upper right hand, *shankha* in lower right hand, *khadga* in upper left hand and the stalk of lotus flower in lower left hand respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.214). The image Parvati is made of sand stone. Due to covering of clothes and restriction, the

iconography of Devi Parvati could not be documented in detail by the author at the time of survey. Two lion figures are installed in front of Devi Parvati. They are being considered as the *vahanas* of Devi Parvati. There is a modern shed of the ajbest roof built above the two lion figures. All the side deities are accommodated in the *pidha mundi* niches. The *gandi* is of the pyramidal superstructure, which contains of three *potalas*. Each *potala* contains three *pidhas*. All the *pidhas* of the *gandii* are decorated with *tankus*. The *raha paga* of the middle *potala* on the eastern side is decorated with *pidha mastaka* design, which is encircled with a *naga* (snake). It is a modern cement work. *Dopichha* lions are fixed on the top of *kanika pagas* of the *gandii*. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* comprises of *beki*, *ghanta*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa*, *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja*. The local people say that the original *vimana* was in ruined condition. But the present structure is built on the ruined platform of the original temple. It has been rebuilt 38 years before the present.

Shivalinga within the *Shaktipitha* is found worshipped in the sanctum. Here the *Sivalinga* is not visible. It is installed 3 feet below the *Saktipitha* as said by the priest of the temple. There is a *kanaka mandapa* of the flat roof order noticed above the presiding deity. Both sides base of the door frames is decorated with *khakhara mundi*, which is recently plastered with modern cement. The middle of the doorway lintel is carved with Gaja-Lakshmi image, which is depicted in *abhisheka* pose. Elephant figures holding jars in their upturned proboscis are depicted pouring water on both sides of the head of Goddess Lakshmi. *Navagrahas* are carved in *yogasana* posture with usual attributes in their hands. Each *graha* is depicted in the decorated arch.

The *jagamohana* is of the modern flat roof structure and it is around 12 feet high from the temple surface. It has been built in 1989 by the cooperation of the villagers. The *jagamohana* has three doorways. Bull, the conventional mount of deity is noticed in front of the sanctum doorway. There is another bull installed on the square sized pedestal of 2½ feet high. It is noticed in front of the *jagamohana* hall. A masonry *mandapa* has been erected before the *jagamohana*. Devi Bāndavati is being worshipped near the open *mandapa*. Detached stones and pillars of the earlier (original) temple are found in the temple premises. It indicates that the temple was built in the medieval period. There are some loose sculptures preserved on the southern side *bada* wall of the *vimana*. They are Narasimha, *Deula Charini* figures, etc. A *Sivalinga* within the *Saktipitha* is being worshipped in the name of Baidyanatha noticed on the southern side. A bull figure is installed in front of the *Sivalinga*. Besides, some small *Sivalingas* and *Sivalinga* within *Saktipitha* are also preserved on the southern side of the temple.

Narasimha: The image of Narasimha is engraved in standing pose. The lower part of the slab of deity is completely broken. He holds *chakra* in upper right hand and *sankha* in upper left hand while the lower two hands are involved in taking out the intestines of Hiranya Kashyap (Mohapatra, 2017, p.216). Flower medallion is engraved on both side top corners. The chlorite stone image of Narasimha measures 31 x 16 inches (Mohapatra, 2017, p.216). The image Narasimha is eroded by nature.

The local people say that the earlier (original) temple of Sankarashvara was possibly erected by the Nalaraja of Golaragarh. The priest of the temple remarks that the original temple is not older than 400 years before the present. The ruined temple of the earlier period has been renovated in 1970's by Kshetra Mohana Mohanty of Kerendiapala (Mohapatra, 2017, p.216). On the basis of the iconographies of the extant sculptures and architectural features of the base of the *vimana*, the original temple might have been made in the 16th century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2017, p.216).

IV. CONCLUSION

We come to know that the above five Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha have been renovated in the twentieth century A.D. Some of the basic features and peculiarities are noticed from the above discussed Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha. The principal niches of the western and northern sides of the *vimana* of the Vandeshvara temple of Chahata are accommodated with the images of Ganesha and Varaha. The presence of Varaha image as *parshvadevata* indicates that it was haphazardly housed at the time of renovation of the temple. Most probably, this Varaha image was brought from the ruined Vaishnavite shrine located nearby the temple site. The Narayana image inserted in the right side eastern outer *bada* wall of the *vimana* of Vandeshvara temple was also possibly brought from other ruined temple site of that area. The ten armed image of Mahisamardini Durga noticed in the north-west corner of the sanctum of the Vandeshvara temple represents the iconographic features of the Ganga art of Odisha. Though the Grameshvara temple of Mahanga is a small shrine, but its sanctum preserves a huge *Shivalingam* within the *Shaktipitha* as the presiding deity, which is rare and unique in the whole PrachiValley of the coastal-belt of Odisha. Iconographic features of the *parshvadevatas* of the Grameshvara temple of Mahanga indicate the artistic designs of the late Gajapati period of Odishan history. There is a peculiar thing noticed at the Gatishvara temple of Sundargrama. Here the three sides central niches of the *bada* of *vimana* are accommodated with the *parshvadevatas* of Ganesha, Trivikrama and Mahisamardini Durga. Most probably, the original *parshvadevata* images of Kartikeya and Parvati of the temple were eroded by nature, but the present images of Trivikrama and Mahisamardini Durga are haphazardly housed for the sake of decoration in later period. Iconographic features of the *parshvadevata* images of the Nrutyeshvara temple suggest the Odishan art of the medieval period. The image of Narasimha is preserved in the southern side *bada* wall of the *vimana* of the Shankaresvara temple. Most probably, this image of the site was brought from any nearby ruined Vaishnavite shrine of that locality, which has not existed till now. The art and architecture of the above Shaiva temples of the coastal-belt of Odisha have been executed by the artists and architects of the Kalingan school of art of Odisha. The artistic techniques and architectural features of the above Shaiva temples occupy a unique place in the history of Hindu temple art of Odisha in Eastern India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to Prof. K.S. Behera (late), Prof. C.R. Mishra (late), Prof. P.K. Nayak, Prof. H. K. Satapathy, Dr. P.K. Routray, Prof. K.K. Basa, Prof. B. Tripathy, Dr. B.K. Ratha, and Prof. Harihar Panda for their encouragement and valuable suggestions in the preparation of this article.

We express our profound reverence to **Prof. Achyuta Samanta**, the Hon'ble Founder of KISS, Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar who encouraged us for the writing of this article.

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