

# Hindu Temples and their Architectural Styles in Telangana - A Study

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**Abstract:** Hindu temple was the pivot around which the life in India in the past revolved. Of all the constructional activities of the early medieval society in India, temple building was the fore-most. Our surviving monuments are temples alone and they bear ample testimony to the fact that the medieval society was after religion and its medium of expression was the temple. The society in the Chalukyan and the Kakatiyan kingdoms of Telangana region was no exception in this regard. The temple became a symbolic representation of the various social activities in the medieval history of the Deccan. Numerous Sanskrit texts like the Manasara, the Suprabhedagama, the Silparatna and the Isanasiva Gurudeva Paddhati describe the method of construction of the Hindu temples and classify these temples on the basis of style and location. According to these texts, there are three styles; Nagara style, Dravida style and Vesara style. Many styles of temple art and architecture flourished in Telangana region. Of these, the Badami Chalukyan, the Vemulawada Chalukyan, the Kalyani Chalukyan and the Kakatiyan are important. This paper explores Hindu temples and their architectural styles in Telangana region of Deccan.

**Keywords:** Architectural Styles, Dravida Style, Deccan, Hindu Temple, Nagara Style, Telangana Region, The Chalukyas of Badami, The Chalukyas of Vemulawada, The Chalukyas of Kalyani, The Kakatiyas of Warangal, Vesara Style.

## 1. Introduction

Hindu temple was the pivot around which the life in India in the past revolved. Of all the constructional activities of the early medieval society in India, temple building was the fore-most. The money, the energy, the skill and the art of the land were exhibited in this singular religious activity. Our surviving monuments are temples alone and they bear ample testimony to the fact that the medieval society was after religion and its medium of expression was the temple. The society in the Chalukyan and the Kakatiyan kingdoms of Telangana was no exception in this regard. The temple became a symbolic representation of the various social activities in the medieval history of the Deccan. For a modern researcher, it is the largest repository, where not only the religious, but also the political, social and cultural aspects of history are preserved on stones, often found mutilated. There was hardly any village without a temple. When new villages were constructed, the architects invariably make provision for a temple by leaving proper site for it. Numerous Sanskrit texts like the Manasara,<sup>1</sup> the

Suprabhedagama,<sup>2</sup> the Silparatna<sup>3</sup> and the Isanasiva Gurudeva Paddhati<sup>4</sup> describe the method of construction of the Hindu temples and classify these temples on the basis of style and location. According to these texts, there are three styles; 1. Nagara style, 2. Dravida style, and 3. Vesara style. That structure which is round from either the base or the kantha or gala or neck is Vesara style; that which is six or eight sided from the base or at the neck is Dravida style and that which is four sided from the base to the sikhara is Nagara style. Most of the extant temples are square below the roof. Therefore, the expression four sided, is to be taken to refer to the superstructure above the roof. Even here, in most cases, the prastara or the lower portion of the Vimana is always four sided. The Isanasiva Gurudeva Paddhati makes the position clear when it states that the differences among temples should be decided on the basis of the differences in the sikhara.<sup>5</sup> The Silparatna supports this view, by stating that the temple whose sirsha or sikhara and kantha or neck are eight sided is Dravida style; that which has a round kantha or neck and sikhara is Vesara style and that which has a sikhara of four sides is Nagara style.<sup>6</sup> The Manasara is in agreement with this view.<sup>7</sup>

The Vastu texts also give a geographical classification of temples. They divide India into three regions viz., the country between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas which is designated as Nagara style; the area between the Vindhyas and the Krishna which is named Vesara style and that between the Krishna and the Kanyakumari which is known as Dravida style. It is clear from what has been stated above that the stylistic classification relates to the structures, while the geographical classification relates to the regions.<sup>8</sup> This same set of three names namely, Nagara, Dravida, Vesara, appear in both classifications. On this basis, it has been held by recent scholars that both the classifications are identical. But this is untenable. Because in the so called Nagara style area, we find temples which belong to both the Nagara and Dravida styles. Similarly, in the second or Vesara region, we find temples with round or amalaka sikhara as well as those with four sided and six sided sikharas. In the third or Dravida region, again we find temples with round, four faced, six sided and ayatasa or oblong and gajaprasta or apsidal sikharas.<sup>9</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the geographical classification is against the stylistic classification.

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Since the stylistic classification accords with the nature of all extant temples, it has to be taken as the most reliable basis for the classification of the temples.

*Various Styles of Temples in Telangana Region:* Many styles of temple art and architecture flourished in Telangana region. Of these, the Badami Chalukyan, the Vemulawada Chalukyan, the Kalyani Chalukyan and the Kakatiyan are important.

## 2. The Badami Chalukyan Style (A.D. 543-753)

The Chalukyas of Badami made valuable contribution for the evolution of art and architecture which had an influence on the temples of Telangana in later times. The temple building movement in the Deccan originated at Aihole about the beginning of the 5th century A.D. and flourished for about three centuries.<sup>10</sup> The Lad Khan temple (Chalukyan Shiva Temple at Aihole in the State of Karnataka) dated to A.D. 425-450 is considered the oldest early Chalukyan temple at Aihole, which was one of the cradles of Indian temple architecture.<sup>11</sup> In the later half of the 7th century A.D. as the surviving monuments show, the temple structure in its medieval aspect was beginning to assume a prescribed form in the Badami region.<sup>12</sup> A good number of temples were built at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal by the early kings of this dynasty. The influence of this early Chalukyan art and architectural tradition traveled from its epicenter to the far distant areas in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh like Alampur, Mahanandi and Satyavolu which stand as living testimony to the genius of the great builders, who followed the course of this great art tradition, which continued in Telangana region also during later times. The Chalukyas evolved a new idiom to embellish their monuments and thus, became pioneers in the field of temple architecture.

### 1) Plan

The Badami Chalukyan temples with curvilinear Vimanas and amalaka sikharas exhibit a variety of plan starting with the mere garbha-griha and ending with the complex containing garbha-griha, antarala, porch, pradaksinapada, walled enclosure and another porch. Among the Badami Chalukyan group of temples at Alampur in Jogulamba Gadwal district, the temple of Bala Brahma has undergone many alterations and several additions have been made to the original structure, while Araka Brahma is reconstructed later in its interior. The other seven of the Nava Brahma temples can be classified into two main divisions based on the ground plan. Garuda Brahma, Kumara Brahma, Padma Brahma, Svarga Brahma, Veera Brahma and Visva Brahma belong to the category of Hall-Temples. Of these temples, Svarga Brahma and Kumara Brahma temples only have an ardha-mantapa or porch before the hall. In the Svarga and Visva Brahma temples in the garbha-griha, four pillars are arranged around the pitha with linga and yoni, making a sort of gallery round it. The Taraka Brahma temple, which differs from these in plan, comprises garbha-griha, antarala and ardha-mantapa.<sup>13</sup> The Badami Chalukyan hall-temples at Alampur and Aihole exhibit the influence of Buddhist Chaityas in their ground plan.

### 2) Walls

The walls are plain and devoid of decoration. The garbha-griha walls have no angles and recesses, unlike the walls of the

Triratha and Pancharatha patterns of North India.<sup>14</sup> The wall plan of the hall-temples of the Badami Chalukyan period at Alampur consists of a rectangular hall with the shrine situated near one end. In this scheme, besides the shrine walls, walls enclose the entire hall. Thus, a narrow passage is left on the three sides of the shrine i.e., between the walls of the hall and the walls of the shrine. Hall-temples went out of fashion, after this period and the shrine became separated from the hall or mantapa.

### 3) Doorways

The doorways are adorned with carvings and beautiful sculptures at the bases. The architraves (in classical architecture, an architrave is the lintel or beam that rests on the capitals of columns) are decorated with the kuta, sala, panjara series and the corner beams with lions projecting. The hall in the Badami Chalukyan hall-temples at Alampur is entered through a doorway.

### 4) Ceiling and Roofing

The halls of the Badami Chalukyan group at Alampur are divided, longitudinally, into a central nave and two side aisles by inserting rows of pillars before the shrine. The central roof is raised by a comparatively deep sculptured prastara, considerably above the lower sloping roof of the sides. The pillars and pilasters support the running prastara. The prastara consists of two bands decorated with scroll design and gables with a broad central portion in between them ornamented with shallow compartments. The central nave (the nave is the central part of a temple, stretching from the main entrance or rear wall) is covered over with flat slabs lying across from one architrave to the other, and the side aisles are covered by similar slabs which slope down ward to the outer walls. The under surfaces of the slabs covering the central nave are sculptured. The arrangement of these parts at Alampur is similar to the arrangement in the Badami Chalukyan temples at Aihole and Badami.<sup>15</sup>

### 5) Niches

The Kostas or niches are usually plain and in some cases project a little forward. Between the top of the niche and the cornice above the walls, there is empty wall space.

### 6) Vimanas

The Vimana above the garbha-griha has the konika and raha pagas adorned with vertical rows or gable (a gable is the generally triangular portion of a wall between the edges of intersecting roof pitches) arches.

### 7) Pillars

There are many varieties of pillars in this style of temples. The first variety is the massive square pillar with a big capital. It is decorated with simple brackets, or with sculptured brackets, or with torana alone and sometimes it may be decorated with taranga with a patta in the centre, plain or with an animal figure. The second variety is the ornate pillar with a lion on the pada, purnakalasa at the bottom and the top, fluted shaft and sculptured fillets. In some cases, it is decorated with lions projecting from the ends and supporting the roof. The third variety is the square pillar with circular and semi-circular medallions and the last variety is decorated with life size figure brackets belonging to either deities or mithunas.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Vemulawada Chalukyan Style (A.D. 750-973)

The next phase in the historical period of the Telangana region begins with the reign of the Chalukya collateral branch called the Vemulawada Chalukyas, who continued their rule contemporaneous with the Rashtrakutas and got extinct also with them in A.D. 973. The Vemulawada rulers flourished as the subordinates of considerable prominence under the Rashtrakutas. The Chalukyas of Vemulawada made copious contribution to the growth of temple architecture and Vemulawada preserves to this day excellent examples of Hindu temples known to be the earliest in the Telangana region. They also patronized Jainism and built temples to Jain Tirthankaras at several places like Vemulawada in Rajanna Sircilla district, Sanigaram, Repaka in Siddipet district, Korutla in Jagtial district and Nagunuru, Bommalagutta near Kurkiyala village in Karimnagar district. The temple building activity in Telangana region gained momentum with the advent of the Chalukyas of Vemulawada, who built their shrines with lasting materials especially in dressed stone.

#### 1) Plan

The plan of these temples shows an interesting variety. The earliest temples found at Vemulawada are single shrines built by the Chalukyas of Vemulawada. Their ground plan consists of garbha-griha, antarala and mukha-mandapa. But the antarala in these early temples has not yet acquired the definite shape of a closed chamber with a doorway. The space intended for it connecting the garbha-griha and the pillared hall is open in the shape of an ardhmandapa without a doorway. In the garbha-grihas of the Bhimeshwara and Kedareshwara temples at Vemulawada, found pillars are arranged around the pedestal with Linga, making a sort of passage and gallery around it. This is an early Chalukyan feature found in some of the temples at Alampur and Mahanandi.<sup>17</sup> Some of the temples are inside prakaras while the others do not have the prakaras.

#### 2) Walls

In the temples of the Chalukyas of Vemulawada and the temple at Choppadandi of the Chalukyan times, the shrine and the hall are completely enclosed by walls. The wall treatment of some of the Vemulawada Chalukyan temples differs from that of the other temples in Telangana. The walls of the Nagareshwara, Kedareshwara and Raja Rajeshwara temples at Vemulawada and the Siva temple at Choppadandi rise with pilasters consisting of slender shafts dividing the outer surface of the walls into well-proportioned areas and giving to the whole a functional framework of great architectural value.<sup>18</sup> On the outer surface of the walls of Kedareshwara temple, the figures of Ganapati, Brahma, Siva, Vishnu and Saraswati are carved beautifully in between the pilasters. In the Bhimeshwara temple at Vemulawada the walls of the antarala portion contain Vatayanas (latticed windows) admitting plenty of air and light into the temple. The northern Vatayana houses the beautiful figure of Mahishasuramardini.<sup>19</sup> The architectural grandeur and artistic qualities imbibing the peculiarities of the typical architecture of the Chalukyas of Vemulawada, the old temples at Vemulawada are inspiring and instructive examples of 9th and 10th centuries A.D.

#### 3) Stamba or Pillars

The four central pillars of the Bhimeshwara temple at Vemulawada are unusually tall because sloppy pent roof is adopted. These pillars are fashioned in chitrakhanda form of decoration. The base of the pillars contains niches on four sides.

#### 4) Doorways

The Vemulawada Chalukyan hall-temple of Bhimeshwara is entered through a doorway, while the halls in the Kalyani Chalukyan and Kakatiya temples do not have one as they are entered through the porches. However, the Raja Rajeshwara temple at Vemulawada with doorways on three sides of their halls is exceptions.

#### 5) Ceiling and Roofing

The method of ceiling and roofing of mukha-mandapas in the Vemulawada Chalukyan temples differs from that of the Kalyani Chalukyan and Kakatiya temples. The hall of the Bhimeshwara temple at Vemulawada consists of four central pillars which are unusually tall and the other pillars are short because a sloppy pent roof is adopted, which is a peculiar feature not found in any other temples of the Telangana region. The halls of some of the temples are flat-roofed. The early tradition of laying flat roof, as found in the temple No.17 of the Gupta period at Sanchi is continued in the medieval times also.<sup>20</sup> Such roofing is found in the halls of the Nagareshwara and Kedareshwara temples at Vemulawada in Rajanna Sircilla district, Bhimeshwara temple at Sanigaram in Siddipet district and in the temples at Mallannapet, Chilvakoduru in Jagtial district. The halls of the temples at Bejjenki in Siddipet district, Katkuru, Thimmapur and Gangadhara in Karimnagar district are also flat-roofed but the ceiling of their central compartments between the four central pillars is laid in Kadalika karana process.<sup>21</sup>

#### 6) The Superstructure or Vimana

The base of the vimana contains a row of tall pilasters. The vimana of this period have horizontal rows of diminishing size containing the series kuta, sala and panjara. The temple of Raja Rajeshwara at Vemulawada contained a sikhara in stepped pyramidal form before it was renovated a few decades back. The other variety of the stepped pyramidal form is that it consists of diminishing tiers. No recesses enter between them. The steps are vertical edged. Simple and unornamented stepped pyramidal sikharas are found on the Nagareshwara temple at Vemulawada.<sup>22</sup>

### 4. The Kalyani Chalukyan Style (A.D. 973-1189)

The power of the Rashtrakutas waned towards the end of the 10th century A.D. and the main line of the early Western Chalukyas of Badami emerged from the obscurity of two centuries as the later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. They rose to prominence again in A.D. 973 and ruled for a further period of two hundred years. They were great builders and one dominant style of Indian architecture known as the later Chalukyan style derives its name from them. Number of epigraphs in Telangana alone represents this dynasty. The Hindu temple remains of the Rastrakuta period here are very few, but the Chalukyas of Kalyani vigorously carried on temple building activity. The most active period of temple construction

in Telangana was under the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

#### 1) Plan

In the temples of the Chalukyas of Kalyani, in Telangana, the principal shrine is not a part of the hall and the ground-plan consists of garbha-griha, antarala, navaranga and porch. These temples can be classified on the basis of the number of shrines they possess into; Single-shrine temples, Trikutas or Triple-shrine temples, Quadruple-shrine temples. The single-shrine temple with porches on the three sides of the hall and the Trikutas with a porch at the entrance are resolved into cruciform plan.<sup>23</sup> The important example of a star-shaped plan in Telangana are the Ramalingeshwara temple at Nandikandi village in Sangareddy district, the Keshava Swamy temple at Gangapuram in Mahabubnagar district and the Viranarayana temple at Kolanupaka in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district. Quadruple-shrine temple; the Pacchala Someshwara temple at Panagal of the Kalyani Chalukyan time in Nalgonda district.

#### 2) Walls

The plan of the hall-temples at Choppadandi (Karimnagar district) of the Kalyani Chalukyan times, the shrine and the hall are completely enclosed by walls. In the Keshava Swamy temple at Gangapuram (Mahabubnagar district), the Someshwara and Viranarayana temples at Kolanupaka (Yadadri district) of the Kalyani Chalukyan time, the shrine and the halls are completely enclosed by walls. Most other temples of the Kalyani Chalukyan period contain porches. In this scheme only the shrine is enclosed by walls, whereas the hall and the porches are open and have a short parapet wall.<sup>24</sup> The main walls of the temple may be conveniently studied under three divisions: the Vedika or Pabhaga or Panchakarma, the central portion of the wall and Kapota or Cornice.

#### 3) Doorways

The Kalyani Chalukyan temple at Gangapuram (in Mahabubnagar district) with doorways on the three sides of the hall and the temple at Dichpalli (in Nizamabad district) with doorways on the three sides of the front chamber and a doorway for the hall are exceptions.

#### 4) Ceiling and Roofing

The roof contains a row of yalis in the front and the series kuta, sala, panjara and kuta behind it. In most of the Kalyani Chalukyan temples, the ceiling of the mandapa is divided into nine compartments by beams resting on the capitals of pillars supporting the roof. These compartments follow the principle which the vastu texts call as Kadalika-karana process.<sup>25</sup> This process involves the insertion of triangular slabs at the angles of the square compartments. Five stones are used instead of one. Usually instead of two tiers and five stones, three tiers and nine stones are used. In case of five tiers, seventeen stones are used. This device has a pleasing effect because it removes the flatness of the ceiling which otherwise would have been drab or monotonous. In the Kalyani Chalukyan temples of Raikal, Valgonda in Jagtial district, Nandimedaram in Peddapalli district, Nagunuru, Kothapalli and Godisala in Karimnagar district, the ceiling of the hall in all its nine compartments is laid in Kadalika-karana process. The method of laying the ceiling in Kadalika-karana process was also prevalent in the north Indian temples of the contemporary period. This process is found in

the Shiva temple of the 10th century A.D. at Pandrethan which is 5 kms. to the south-east of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir State.<sup>26</sup>

#### 5) Vimana

The base of the vimana contains a row of tall pilasters. The vimana of this period have horizontal rows of diminishing size containing the series kuta, sala and panjara. All these temples arc of the Nagara order.

#### IV. The Kakatiyan Style (A.D. 1000-1323):

The Kakatiyas had built innumerable temples and patronized various performing arts. They expressed their love towards the arts by building temples and creating wonderful sculpture on them besides a good number of loose icons meant for cult worship. The plastic art culminated during the Kakatiya rule, which was really a testimony to their aesthetic sense. The Kakatiya art was represented on the architectural members like pillared mandapas, adhistanas, and padavargas, prastharas, beams, ceiling and vimana portions which provide space to exhibit the architectural exuberance. There are two types of temples; 1. A single-shrine temples, 2. A Triple-shrine, generally known as Trikuta. Among the single shrines, there are five varieties; The first variety contains the garbha-griha, antarala and mandapa with three porches on the three sides. The second variety contains the garbha-griha, antarala and mandapa with a single porch. The third variety contains only the garbha-griha and antarala. The fourth variety contains the garbha-griha behind an open mandapa. The fifth variety contains only the garbha-griha.

#### 6) The Base or Adhistana and Upapitha

The bases of these temples are of two varieties. A few temples contain a double base with the upapitha and a broad pradaksina at its top and the adhistana built above it inside the pradaksinapada. All other temples have the adhistana only. Generally, the adhistanas of the Kakatiyan temples at Palampet in Mulugu district, Ghanpur in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district possess decorations, which include creepers, and vajra-bandha motifs. The adhistana of Swayambhu temple in Warangal fort (in Warangal Urban district) is decorated with friezes (in architecture, the frieze is the wide central section part of an entablature and may be plain in Ionic or Doric order, or decorated with bas-reliefs) of elephants, horses, hamsas and gajavyalas. The Kakatiya sculptor maintained always judicious balance between architecture and art, because the adhistanas of the Kakatiyan temples are neither plain nor crowded with ornamental designs and figure sculpture.<sup>27</sup> The kaksasanas on the adhistanas were also decorated with sculpture. They are carved with a frieze of elephants. The kaksasanas at Palampet temple are richly decorated with gods, goddesses, male and female figures of dancers, musicians and erotic figures, some Puranic themes such as Mahisasuramardini and Narasimha slaying Hiranyakasipu etc.<sup>28</sup> The kaksasana at Ghanpur temple was decorated with a row of horses, beautiful female figures who are engaged in plucking the flowers from the trees and occasionally monkeys removing the drapery of the females, this theme repeatedly found at many Kakatiya monuments.

#### 7) Walls

The architectural treatment of the exterior wall of the early

Kakatiyan temples was left plain. From the reign of Rudradeva the evaluation of the exterior wall decoration has begun with a plain central band gradually structural pilaster, projections and recesses, sthambhika, vimana models and the rows of gods, goddesses, male and female figures, musicians, dancers and animals were sculptured upon the exterior walls of the Kakatiyan temples.<sup>29</sup> The artists of this time adopted numerous devices for decorating the outer side of the walls of the temples. The wall surface contains alternating recesses and projections. The central projection contains miniature shrines one and sometimes three one above the other. The other projections contain a pilaster or a kosta or sala or a miniature shrine of the Nagara order. The recesses contain a pilaster with a miniature vimana of horizontal bands or a kuta-kosta or vimana under a creeper.

#### 8) *Ceiling and Roofing*

On the edges of the roof are to be found a row of miniature vimanas built of bricks. This is the peculiar feature of the Kakatiya style. The ceilings are considered to be one of the central principal features of the temple interior. They are intended to increase the decorative effect of the temple interior. Generally, the central ceiling of the sabha-mandapa is the focal point of attraction in the temple. The sculptors of the period concentrated their skill and attention and used black basalt for this part. Most of the ceilings of the temples are decorated with susniapatta (flower with eight petals), batasunia (flower with sixteen petals) and chaukphula or chaudaphula (flower with four petals). The triangular corners are decorated with leafy patterns, kirtimukhas, gods, goddesses and dikpalas. The Kakatiyan sculptors employed different techniques in moulding and designing this part of ceiling. In some cases, the triangular slabs are very artistically ornamented with floral scrolls, beaded patterns, uyalas and swans etc. The central part of the ceiling is adorned with a full-blown lotus with a central pendant. But in the Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanamakonda and the main temple at Palampet ceilings a massive cylindrical pendant projection radiating from its centre is noticed. Every inch of this pendant is richly decorated with figural and floral decorative devices. Siva in the form of Nataraja and astadikpalas are sculptured on the pendant.<sup>30</sup>

#### 9) *Pillars*

The pillars are of two varieties. One variety is made of black granite and lathe turned polished and decorated with various geometrical and bead designs and human and deity sculptures. The second variety is made of sand stone and is mostly plain, though in a few cases, there is figure sculpture of a high order. The pillar is the most important architectural structure of the temple. The pillars of the Kakatiyan temples not only increase the interior elegance of the temple by the very nature of their distribution in the sabha and mukha-mandapas but also they give unlimited depth to the interior of the temple.<sup>31</sup> The height, grandeur and loftiness of the temple mainly depend upon its pillars. In the Kakatiyan temples, the pillar never loses its fundamental character of being an architectural member, although it is carved intricately and exquisitely.<sup>32</sup> The pillars of the Kakatiyan temples possess beautiful lustrous polish and exhibit various designs and motifs.<sup>33</sup> Decoration of the pillar is

plenty, but it's tastefully distributed over the foot, shaft, and capital including the brackets.<sup>34</sup> Mostly, the four pillars of the ranga-mandapas were highly polished and sculptured beautifully with the scenes of Puranas and ornate with minute detail, where as the other pillars of the temples bear very little ornamentation.

#### 10) *Kapota or Cornice*

The kapota or cornice normally represents the particular part of roof, which projects beyond the walls of the temple. It helps to spread and balance the weight of the roof and the superstructure and also protects the walls and exterior sculptures of the temples from rain and projected factors.<sup>35</sup> The Kakatiyan temples contain both short and projected cornices. Short cornices are normally flat, thick and not projected considerably. Projected cornices are massive, impressive, imposing and projecting more than the feet from the base of the roof. The top edge of the cornice is decorated with a row of semi circular elevations. The undersides of these kapotas are divided into various compartments by introducing horizontal and vertical rafters, which are adorned with a series of hanging lotus bud motifs. Such motifs can be seen at Palampet in Mulugu district and Ghanpur in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.<sup>36</sup>

#### 11) *The Sikhara or Superstructure*

The sikhara or superstructure is the portion of the temple, which is normally found on the top of the garbha-griha. Most of the Kakatiyan temples have semi flat-roofs. They were constructed with bricks and stones. Nagara Sikhara,<sup>37</sup> Bhumija Sikhara<sup>38</sup> and Dravida Sikhara<sup>39</sup> are the various types of the Siharas which were found in the Kakatiyan temples.

#### 12) *Doorways*

The Kakatiya architects and sculptors dedicated the best of their care, attention and skill in designing and decorating the doorways and created masterpieces of art.<sup>40</sup> No amount of description can justify the charm, beauty, variety and vivacity that were exhibited in the form of skills in carving every inch of the doorways. They are meticulously planned, magnificently, designed and ornamented. Generally black basalt, granite and sandstone were selected for the purpose. The doorways of the Kakatiyan temples at Swayambhu Temple in Fort Warangal, Ramappa Temple at Palampet, Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanmakonda are richly decorated with floral scrolls, vyalas, and figure sculpture. They are meticulously designed with foliating projections. Richly carved lintels surmount the doorways. The Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanmakonda and the temple at Palampet have pancha sakha door jambs exquisitely designed and decorated with gaja-vyala, sthambha, lata, and manusya and ratna pushpa. In some cases, these doorjamb sthambhikas are adorned with floral scrolls, female figures, leafy patterns, beaded bands, and geometrical patterns. These jambs look more like sculptured panels exhibiting the skill of the sculptors than the upright posts of a doorframe. They are the masterpieces of Kakatiya sculpture and art.

#### 13) *Lintels*

The lintels of the most of the Kakatiyan temples are arranged in the layers one above the other. The lower one is very intricately carved with creepers and figure sculpture. The lintels of Thousand Pillar Temple at Hanamakonda are decorated with

dancing Narasimha and Nataraja. The lintels of the temples at Jakaram and Ramanujapur in Mulugu district are carved with saptarisis, dikpalas and Sivanataraja.

#### 14) Architrave

The Kakatiya sculptors very charmingly decorate this particular part of the doorways. They are decorated with Nagara vimanas of either three or five, figure sculptures like Siva Nataraja accompanied by musicians and dancers.<sup>41</sup> In some cases the whole panel is canopied by a richly designed floral arch issuing from the mouth of the makaras placed on either extreme ends of the architrave. The best ornamented architraves of this type are found in the Thousand Pillar Temple, Shivalayam at Machilibazar, Ramalingeshwara Temple at Ramannapeta in Warangal city, Venkateswara temple at Gudibandal area in Hanmakonda, Palampet in Mulugu district, Nidigonda in Jangaon district, Ghanpur in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

#### 15) The Vimanas:

These vimanas contain diminishing rows of extended kutas and wide salas or miniature vimanas. There is often the sukanasa added at the front base of the vimana.

#### 16) Miniature Vimanas

These are found in the recesses on the outer side of walls, on the outer side of the low vedis on the adhistana on the architrave, above the beam and canopies of the entrances of the antarala and garbha-griha and mukhamandapa. The miniature vimanas contain five to nine talas of horizontal band of diminishing size and sometimes a conical band in the centre of the front face. They sometime contain an avatasra part above the gala and are sometimes crowned by sikharas of the Vesara order.<sup>42</sup>

#### 17) Miniature Shrines

Miniature shrines are complete temples with a canopy above and a low parapet with an opening in the centre in the front. There is a kapota above the walls and a vimana of horizontal bands of diminishing size crowned by a Nagara or Vesara sikhara. These shrines are found on the side walls of the antarala, on the architrave above the entrances and on the outer side of the walls of the grabhagriha.<sup>43</sup>

#### 18) Carved Entrances

A remarkable feature of this style is the dvara fixed in a large and wide frame consisting of the wall portion, pillars, pilasters and jambs with sculptures. Another feature relating to these dvaras is the projecting canopy above the cross beam.

#### 19) The Subsidiary Shrines

The major shrines are surrounded on the four sides by a cluster of minor shrines.

#### 20) Bracket Figures

The most striking feature of the Kakatiyan temples is the bracket figures. They are gracefully designed and beautifully modeled to provide added elegance to exterior of the temple.<sup>44</sup> Two types of bracket figures are noticed in the sculptural representation. The first type represents the decorated architectural pieces (lateral brackets) <sup>45</sup> and the second type represents (Madanika), animal of mythical animal vyala.<sup>46</sup> The most beautiful representations of the Madanika are found at the

Ramappa temple of Palampet. The facile handwriting of the Kakatiya sculptors and their easy manipulation of the chisel reached its climax of graceful fluency in modeling, designing and carving this madanikas.<sup>47</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

In short the medieval temple was not only a place of worship, but also the venue, where the very social life is reflected. In a word, the temple was the nucleus of the village or town. There was hardly any village without a temple. When new villages were constructed, the architects invariably make provision for a temple by leaving proper site for it. In the early medieval period, the temple played a very significant role as an institution of multifarious activities. The temples and its art and architecture reflex the socio and cultural life of the people.

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