

Incredible Architecture of Mahadev temple of Mudhol

Dr. Suryakanth P. Kokatanur

Assistant Professor of History, Sri.CMP. Government First Grade College, Lokapur-587122 Mudhol, Bagalkot (India)

ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 15 May 2019

Keywords

Architecture, Beams, Carvings, Ceilings, Designs, Door, Lintel, Pillars, Temple.

*Corresponding Author

Email: spk.mudhol[at]gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Karnataka is known for its richness in temple culture. From early Kadambas to Vijayanagara period many kings, subordinates and officers have built temples belonged to different religions. They also gave grants of various forms. Few temples having heritage importance are enlisted in world Heritage Sites. In Bagalkot district Pattadkal temples complex are also part of World Heritage sites. Mudhol is famous for many things. Ghataprabha river flows here and gave shelter to mankind from thousands of years. Whole Mudhol taluka region witnessed many beautiful temples. Most of the temples are belonged to Shiva religion. Among them Mahadev temple of Mudhol town is famous one. Locally it is called as Nelagudi Mahadev (Underground). It is known for its Architectural splendor. The temple is oldest temple of this region which resembles the architectural features of Chalukyas and Rastrakutas. All the parts of the temple are decorated with beautifully carved designs. Few are mythological and some are of flora and fauna. The ceiling, pillars beams, door panels, lintel are ornated. The designs which are carved on the pillars and lintel are similar to the few Badami Chalukyan temples of Pattadkal and Aihole.

1. Introduction

Mudhol is one of the historically important talukas of Bagalkot district of Karnataka state. Geographically it is located at 16.21' N 75.17 E 16.35N 75.28E. As per the inscriptional records the name of the Mudhol is *Mudhuvola*, means a beautiful city. During ancient period it was part of *Belugali-500* and *Jambukhandi-70*, well-known administrative units. It is homeland of famous Kannada poet *Kavichakravarti Ranna*, a Kannada poet of renown, is popularly known as "*Mahakavi*" or the great poet who wrote *Gadhayuddha* mahakavya. This taluka area had a rich cultural heritage. Several dynasties ruled over this region and left legacy of culture. They build many temples and liberal gifts were granted towards these temples and their associates. The temples of this area and inscriptions shed light on ancient history of the region.

Archaeological and literary records throw light on the history of this area. We have important epigraphical records of both stone and copper plates helps to understand the history of various dynasties who ruled over this area. They belonged to the Chalukyas of Badami, the Rastrakutas, the Chalukyas of Kalyan, the Kalchuri, the Rattas of Savadatti and Adil Shahi and their Jagirdar Ghorpades of Mudhol and the British ruled over this area. During their tenure they built many temples, and few inscriptions were issued and grants were also advanced towards temples for the maintenance and other activities of the temples. Few temples are in good condition, few are renovated and some are in ruined condition. Whole of Mudhol taluka region witnessed many beautiful temples. The architecturally these temples resembles different styles and features.

2. Methodology

I have used here historical method. This paper based on purely fieldwork. Collected the data. Photographs have been taken. They are being analyzed various previous works and documents have been considered while structuring this article.

3. Description of the of Temple

Mahadev temple of Mudhol is one of the oldest temple of this region. It is called as *Nelagudi* (which means under ground temple). It is 12 feet below the ground level. The temple is facing east, has *Garbhagruha*, *Antarala* and *Navarang*. It is a *nirandhar* temple, having ancient *Shivaling* in the *Garbhagruha*

(Sanctum sanctorum). The ceiling of *Garbhagruha* had a inverted carving of lotus. The side walls of the *Garbhagruha* are designed with arch type structure. The doorway of the *Garbhagruha* is decorated meticulously with beautiful sculptures. It is in trishakha model. Various sculptures like war scenes, erotic, dancing figurines, ardhagambha and pot like sculptures are engraved. In the trishakha panel either side various sculptures like the elephant, horses and riders are being erected. The animals like buffalo and lions are also engraved beautifully. In the middle shakha a pillar is beautifully designed with pots (*kumbh*) and Vishnu sculpture is in abhayamudra. He is holding shankh, chakra and gadha with other ornamental decorations. The pots are decorated with flowers and lotus like designs. The other designs carved in the doorframe are dancing and some erotic sculptures. In the lower panel of doorway the *dwarapalakas* are carved beautifully. *Dwarapalakas* are the door-keepers of the temples, and sculptures representing them are noticed invariably in all the temples.

The sculptures of these *Dwarapalakas* are found carved both in relief as well as in the round. The *Dwarapalaka* here is in a Vishnav form. He is holding *Shankh*, *Chakra* and *Gadha* in his hands. Legs are shown as standing with one of their legs firmly placed on the ground while the other leg is lifted across the other leg and shown as resting upon the mace. The left leg of the *Dwarapalaka* to the left side of the doorway is shown as lifted while the right leg of the *Dwarapalaka* to the right side is shown as lifted. Along with the *Dwarapalakas* his attendants are also beautifully engraved.

In the *lalata* beautifully carved Ganesha is engraved. *Uttaranag* part of the door is beautifully decorated with *makaratorana*. *Torana* is ornate and *Makara toranas* are very varied with endless permutations of elaborate patterns and designs. It is one of the beautiful carvings of this temple. The prominent presence of a pair of *makaras* carved either facing each other or facing opposite directions supported by two pillars either side. The framework of a *makara-toraṇa* consists of two split pilasters with a lintel and a *vajana* (or rarely a *kapota*). Above the *vajana* two *makaras* are placed at the two ends. From the mouths of the *makaras* come out long floriated tongues and join forming an arch or a semi-circle. The pinnacle of the arch or the semi-circle is crowned by a *kīrtimukha*. Its sides are decorated with elaborately carved *makaras* frothy or bushy peacock tails. A lion and a creeper scroll emerge from *makaras* mouth and a creeper scroll filled in with a flying *Gandharva* below. The tail of *makara* is elaborate and busy like that of a peacock and its legs resembles that of a loin. *Varuna* is seated on *Makara*.

A closed *antarala* is attached to *Garbhagriha* which connects *mantapa*. There is platform like structure in either side of *antarala* area which might have used for purpose of *pooja* of the deity. The doorway of *antarala* is simple with flower like frame, but it is ornated with *jalandras*. They are designed in octagonal shape which surrounds three sides of the door. In the lintel of the door beautifully executed figure of *Gajalaxmi* is decorated. *Gajalaxmi* is in seated posture and two elephants pouring the water on her either side.

Most attractive part of the temple is the *Mantapa*. Four beautifully carved pillars are installed in the centre of hall and a *Nandi* is also installed in the middle of this hall. One additional pillar is added as a support to the beam. The pillars are beautifully carved with various designs. Other than main four pillars other fourteen pilasters are also added the beauty of the temples. In the *Peetha* of *Adisthan* part they are square with *nasi* feature. Above this *pada* part is square and plain. The *danda* part is consisting of various designs like *Mahabharat*, *Ramayan*, *Puranic*, floral, birds like swan, lion, peacock, pots, avatars of *Vishnu*, *Shiva* *Ganesha*, *Kartikeya*, other designs are beautifully executed. Above this upside like *padma* is with *nasi* are created. *Ghata* part is also attributed with various designs. The other few pillars in the *mantapa* are decorated with *ghatam*(pot). The creepers designed like they are coming out of the pot. Along with this *padma* features highlighted the beauty of the pilasters. In *bodhige* part once again beautiful carvings have been erected. It is attached with *simha prabhavali* and miniature sculpture(*kudyashilpa*)Two plasters either side of *antarala* entrance are also beautifully carved. The sculptures of *Ganesha* and *Saptamatrikas* are kept in the *Mantapa* both of them were damaged. Recently old *Ganesh*, *Nandi* and *Saptamatrika* sculptures have been replaced by new ones. In the *Manatapa* we can also see the closed doors of Northern and Southern side walls. Lintel of these closed entrances are decorated with *gajalaxmi* sculptures. These must have been entrances of the temple. Now we can not see any features. Because the side walls of these part are renovated with modern granites tiles.

The beams of *Mantapa* is engraved with *Saptamatrika*, birds, *Gajalaxmi*, *Brahma*, *Shiva*, *Kalingamardhana* and other miniature sculptures have been beautifully embossed. Archers ,dancers, *makaratoranas*, *gandharvas*, wrestling, animals like horse, fighting of elephant, elephant, cow, *Ganesha*, *Shiva*,*Vishnu* and other designs have been executed all the beams of the temple.

The *Bhuvaneshwari* (ceiling) had a beautifully carved *Ashtadikpalaka* panel. The *Ashtadikalas* are eight in number. As their collective name suggests, they rule the eight quarters or the eight directions of the universe. *Ashta* means eight, “*dik*” means quarters or directions and “*palas*” means rulers. According to Hinduism each quarter is assigned to a particular divinity, who presides over it and acts as its chief guardian spirit ensuring the orderliness of the universe and the protection of its occupants. If the temple is a symbol of God’s abode, its ceiling is the sky. The *Ashtadikpalas* are rightfully the guardians of the sky, watching over us from eight different directions and keeping an eye on all our activities. The *Lord Shiva* with the centre, *Indra*, *Agni*,*Yama*, *Niruti*, *Varuna*, *Kubera*, *Vayu* and *Ehsan* are created. But the most of the part of this panel is damaged and renovated. Only three panels are in good condition. The cement plaster has been applied on damaged panels.

In the panel the western direction is occupied by *Varuna* . *Varuna* is the lord of the rain, the water and the sea. As *Varuna* is the God of the west, guardian of the direction. He is seated on *Crocodile*. His vehicle with his consort *Nalani*. His right hand is in *Varada mudra* and holding *padma* (lotus))in his left hand. Four musical attendants are also depicted in the panel. *Varuna* wears *kranda-mukuta*, *kundalas*, *torque*, *hara*, *yajnopavita*, long mala, *keyuras*, *wristlets* .

In the same panel Eastern portion is attributed to god *Indra*. *Indra* was considered amongst the most prominent deities of Vedic times. *Indra* is the Lord of East. He is a guardian of the eastern region. He is seated on his vehicle elephant with his consort *Sachi*. Six musical attendants are circumambulated him and playing different musical instruments. He is holding *Vajra* his weapon and lotus.

Since the temple is below the ground level and houses have been built around it. So its outside(*horabhitti*) walls are not seen can not be seen. The *Shikhara* part of the temple is fully renovated. The entrance doorway of *Mukhamantap* is built during *Rastrakuta* period with the *Gajalaxmi* in the lintel of the doorway. Two pots have been erected on the upper side of the door. The temple is fully painted and many features are not seen perfectly. The temple resemble the architectural features of *Badami Chalukyas* and *Rastrakuta*.

4. Conclusion

This temples is one of the important temple of this region which helps to rebuild the history and temple culture. The cultural and religious aspects of this area are also reflects in this temple. We came to know that, the Rulers who administered in this area gave shelter to the temples mostly, *Shiva* temples and its culture. They gave *Charities* and supported. But over a period of time the temples have been

damaged and few are in ruined conditions. The architectural features of this temple are resembles few features of temples of Aihole, Pattadakal of Badami Chalukyas and even Ajanta and Elllora. The structural features are incredible. Few parts of

temple are being renovated and painted all parts of the temple. We need to convince the local people of this area not to damage the originality of this temple. Because this is one of the oldest temple with many elegant carvings all around.

References

1. Belagali.D.N.(C.Ed). *Rannagannadi*, Souvenir ,64th Kannada Sahitya Smmelana, Mudhol
2. *Epigraphia Indica* , XXXII
3. Annigeri.A.M and Joshi B.R.*The Descriptive list of the Stone and Copper Inscriptions*, examined by the Kannada Research Institute during the year-1942-43, No..7,
4. *Annual Reports on South Indian Epigraphy* ,1942-43 ,No. 7.
5. *Inscription of Kulalali*, (un published) Identified by me.
6. *South Indian Inscriptions*, XI.I.I. No. 74,
7. Devarkondareddi(ed), *Shasana Samputa-9*, KVV, Hampi, 2005,
8. Hiremath.B.R., *Shasana Adhyayana*, KVV,Hampi,2012
9. H. Krishna Sastri, *South-Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses*, Madras Government Press,1916
10. K. J. Oijevaar, *The South Indian Hindu temple building design system*, Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands,2007
11. T. A.Gopinatha Rao.,*Elements of Hindu Iconography* Vol. II—Part I. The Law Printing House Mount Road Madras,1916