

## COMMON ELEMENTS OF DRAVIDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE—A STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

*The South Indian temple architecture is known as Dravidian architecture. The South Indian temple has many architectural features. This article will explain the common elements of the Shivan temples in Tamilnadu.*

**KEYWORDS:** *South Indian Temple, Dravidian Architecture, Architecture, Kongu Region*

### INTRODUCTION

Hindu temple architecture as the fundamental type of Hindu architecture has numerous assortments of style, however the fundamental idea of the Hindu sanctuary continues as before, with the basic element an internal sanctum, the garbha griha or belly chamber, where the essential Murti or the picture of a god is housed in a straightforward uncovered cell. On the outside, the garbhagriha is delegated by a pinnacle like shikhara, additionally called the vimana in the south. The place of worship assembling frequently incorporates a walking for parikrama (circumambulation), a mandapa gathering lobby, and at times an antarala waiting room and yard among garbhagriha and mandapa. There may promote mandapas or different structures, associated or disconnected, in enormous sanctuaries, together with other little sanctuaries in the compound.

These terminologies are common across all temples built in Dravidian architecture and not specific to Shiva temples in Tamil Nadu.

### GARBHAGRIHA OR SANNIDHI

Garbhagriha is a Sanskrit word meaning the inside of the shrine sanctorum, the deepest shrine of a Hindu temple where resides the murti (idol or icon) of the primary deity of the temple. Accurately the word means "womb chamber", from the Sanskrit words garbha for womb and griha for house. Only pujari are allowed to go in the sanctum.

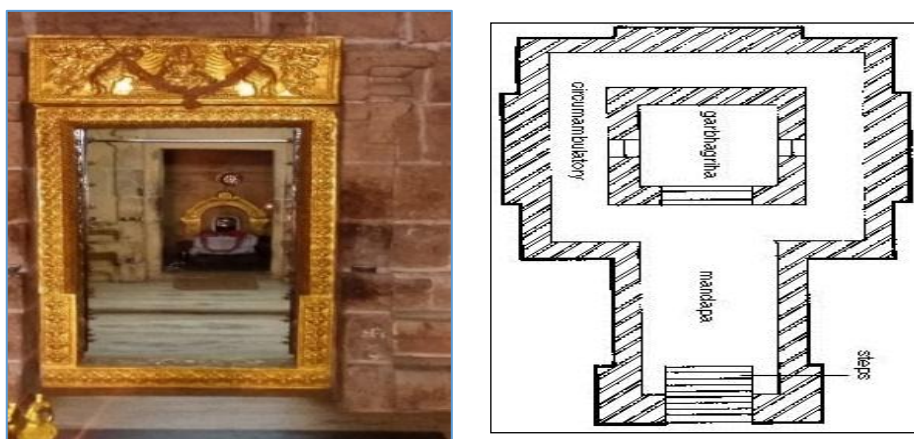


Figure 1: Garbhagriha-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

## LINGAM

The Lingam is a portrayal of the Hindu divinity Shiva utilized for love in Hindu sanctuary. The lingam is the chief god in most Shiva sanctuaries in South India. The lingam is regularly spoken to with the Yoni, an image of the goddess or of Shakti, female imaginative vitality.

Figure 2 shows the mix of lingam and yoni addresses the “joined two-in-solidarity of male and female, the unapproachable space and dynamic time from which all life makes”. A correlative hypothesis proposes that the Lingam speaks to the start and consummation Stambha column symbolizing the boundless idea of Shiva.

The proliferation of linga reverer on a vast scale in South India is accepted to be from Chola times (late seventh century A.D.), through RigVeda, the most established writing insights about loving Shiva as linga. Pallavas spread Somaskanda as the foremost type of love, marginally digressing from the Shaiva agamas; Cholas being strict shaivas, set up lingams in every one of the sanctuaries. Svayambu lingam demonstrates a lingam that appears without anyone else accord and not raised by individuals.

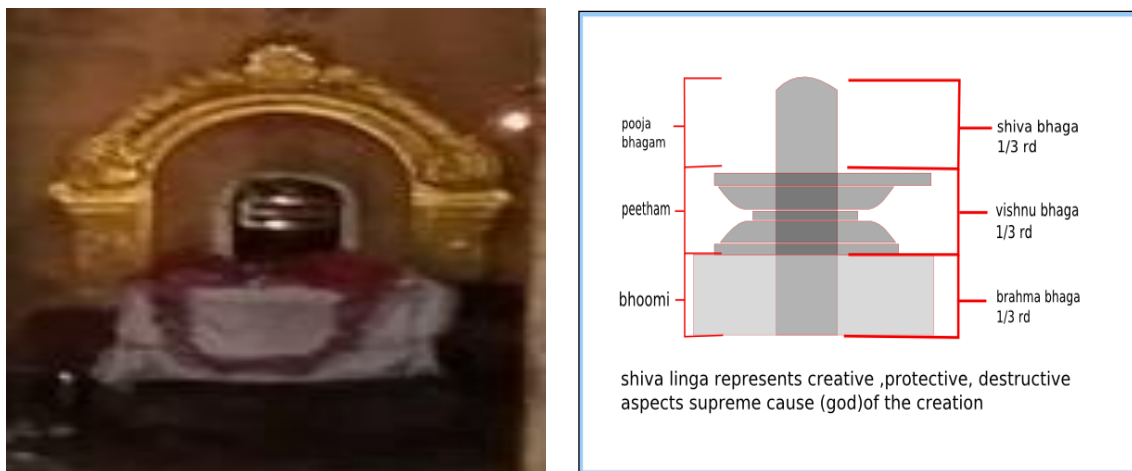


Figure 2: Lingam-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

## VIMANAM

The tower above the garbhagriha or Shrine sanctorum in a Hindu temple is called Vimana. The towering rooftop of the other divinities is also called the vimanam.

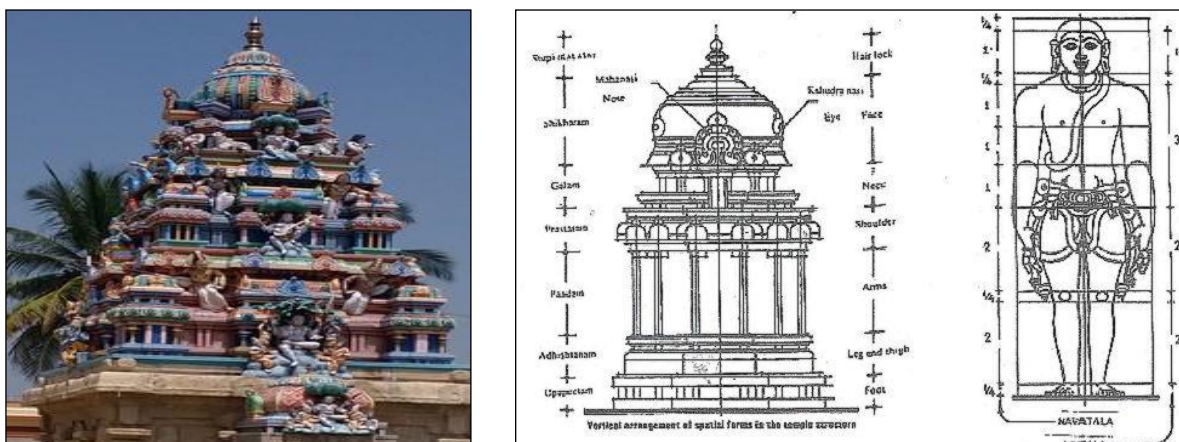


Figure 3: Vimanam-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

**PILLAR**

The Hindu sanctuary comprises of tall, thin, unattached, bar supporting segments, columns and pilasters.

The plinth stones put over the establishment stones go about as the holding divider for the rubble compacted earth with in the plinth territory of the structure. Over this compacted rubble are laid stone chunks for the ground surface of roughly 200 mm to 300 mm.

The stones of the plinth are place one above the other and they are made stable with the self-weight.

The number of courses of stones at the plinth varies according to the size of the temple from 3 to 10 numbers.

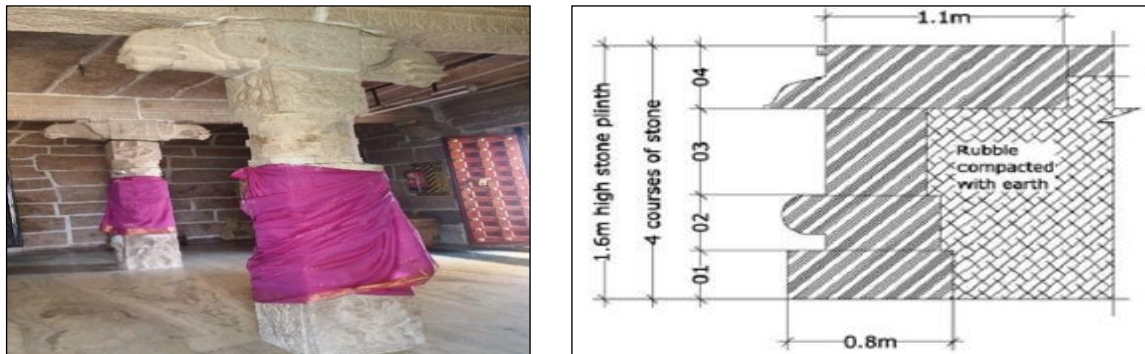


Figure 4: Inside Pillar-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

Different Types of Dravidian Brackets are given Below:

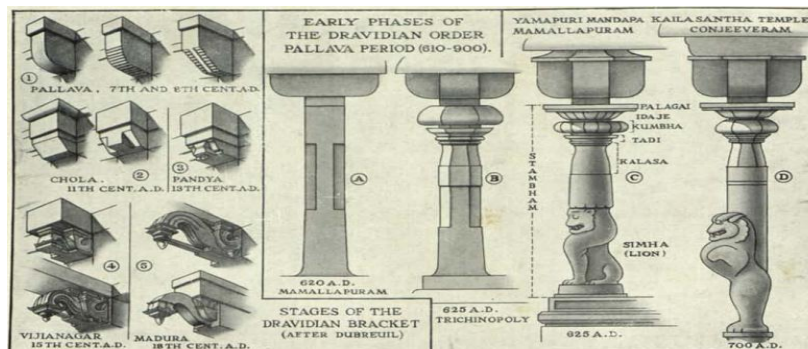


Figure 5: Types of Dravidian Brackets.

**MANTAPAMS**

The yards or Mandapas (or Mantapams), which dependably cover and go before the entryway prompting the cell.



Figure 6: Mantapam inside-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

## PRAKARAM

The prakaram is the outer path of the Hindu temple shrine. It may be surrounded or open and are naturally surrounded for the inmost prakaram. Hindu Temple prayer hall is built in front of the temple's shrine garbhagriha in the first prakaram.



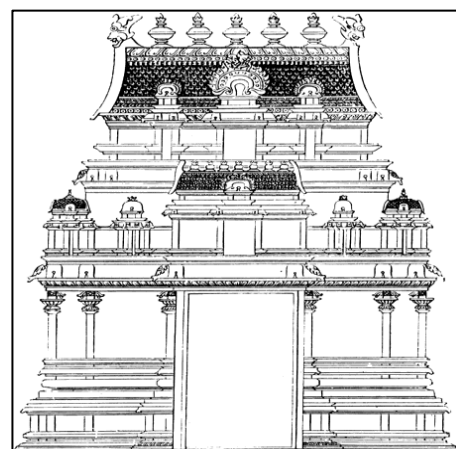
**Figure 7: Outside Prakaram-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.**

## GOPURAM

A Gopuram is the entrance of the Hindu temples in south Indian style. This method a prominent feature of Kovils and it is a Dravidian architecture. They are topped by the kalasam, a rounded stone or metal finial. The gopurams function as entrances of the temple through the walls that surround the temple.

Pallava dynasty is the origins of the early structures of gopuram's. In twelfth century under the Pandya rulers these entrances became a leading feature of a Hindu temple's outer appearance, finally unbearable the inner sanctuary obscured from view by the gopuram's huge size. It also controlled the inner shrine in amount of ornamentation. The Hindu shrines have more than one gopuram. The gopuram increases from a square or rectangular granite or brick base to a pyramidal structure with multiple layers.

A portion of the sanctuaries have numerous little gopurams and built into many dividers in levels around the primary hallowed place. Rajagopuram is the prime one of all the gopurams inside the sanctuary. It is regularly the most ordinarily utilized passage and the tallest of all.



**Figure 7: Gopuram-Arulmigu Kadai Eswaran Temple.**

## FLAGPOST

The flag post in front of either the garbhagrha or the mantapa is another common feature. It represents the flag post of the 'King of kings. The emblem made of copper or brass fixed like a flag to the top of the post varies according to the deity in the temple.



Figure 8: Flagpost-Sri Nageswaraswami Temple.

## PILASTERS

These magnificent architectural designs are carved as a projection on walls with placing of deities within it. The pilasters are positioned on both sides of the main shrine.

## THE WALLS

The zone between the superstructure and the base of the Hindu sanctuary architecture comprises of dividers, columns and pilasters.

The dividers (walls) in the Hindu sanctuary design are built as composite stone workmanship with an infill of stone and block with lime and mud. The thickness of the stones shifts from 300 to 4500 mm. The normal thickness of the workmanship divider changes from 800mm - 1200mm. Through stones are given at normal interims to reinforce the dividers.



Figure 9: Walls with Courses of Masonry in the Sri Nageswaraswami Temple Koduvai.

## TEMPLE TANK OR TEPPAKULAM

Temple tanks or Teppakulam are wells or reservoirs built as part of the temple complex in the Dravidian temple architecture. They are called Teppakulam, pushkarini, Kalyani, Kunda, server, Tirtha, talab, pukhuri, etc. Some temple tanks are said to cure various diseases and maladies when bathed in.



**Figure 10: Temple Tank or Teppakulam-Arulmigu Kongu Vadukanathaswamy Temple.**

## CONCLUSIONS

This article on Hindu Temple Architecture spotlight the common elements of Dravidian temple architecture. It would be helpful to get knowledge of South Indian temple architectural features.

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