

Aurangzeb – The Least Favourite Ruler of Mughals

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By

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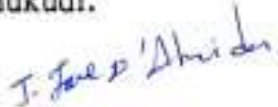
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "Aurangzeb – The Least Favourite Ruler of Mughals" is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History and is a record of work done during the year 2023 by P. Angel a bonafide student of the Department of History, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "Aurangzeb – The Least Favourite Ruler of Mughals" submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi affiliated to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Place :Thoothukudi

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Introduction

The history of Aurangzeb is practically the history of India for sixty years. His own reign (1658-1707) covers the second half of the seventeenth century and stands forth as a most important epoch in the annals of our country. Under him the Mughal Empire reached its greatest extent, and the largest single state ever known in India from the dawn of history to the rise of the British power was formed. From Ghazni to Chatgaon, from Kashmir to the Karnataka, the continent of India obeyed one sceptre. Islam made its last onward movement in India in this reign.

The empire thus formed, while un- precedence in size, was also one political unit. The reign of Aurangzeb is also marked by the upspringing of the Maratha nationality out of the ashes of their short-lived kingship and by the appearance of the Sikh sect in the role of warriors and armed opponents of the ruling power. Thus the supreme factors of Indian history in the 18th and early 19th centuries owe their origin to Aurangzeb's reign and policy.

Aims and Purpose

This project, throw flood of light on the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb and his character. It helps the present generation to know the history of Aurangzeb and his impact in the every aspects in the history of India till today. This study reveals the life history, his attitude towards his father, brothers, sisters and Hindus. From this study review his own thoughts and action were the causes for the decline of Mughal Empire.

Methodology

Different research methods have been used in this project. They are analytical method and descriptive method. The source materials have been critically analysed and investigated. The descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Review of Literature

The present study on “Aurangzeb – The Least Favourite Ruler of Mughals” is based on historical method. Primary and secondary and published sources are utilized. Biographies of Aurangzeb written by different authors and contemporary books available in different libraries are consulted.

Outline of the Chapters

This study has four chapter excluding the introduction and conclusion. The introduction gives the relevance of the topic with the detailed account of the sources collected for writing the project. The first chapter describes the Early Life of Aurangzeb and his viceroyalty of Deccan. The second chapter refers to the War of Succession. The third chapter describes his policy towards the Hindus. The fourth chapter explains the administration under Aurangzeb and the project work ended with conclusion.

Chapter One

Early Life

Muhi-ud-din Muhammad Aurangzeb, who ascended the throne of Delhi as Alamgir, was the sixth child of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. He was born at Dohad in the night of 24th October 1618 A.D.¹

From 1622 till the end of his father's reign, Shah Jahan was under the old Emperor's disfavour and was driven into rebellion in self-defence. But the prince's efforts were unsuccessful, and he had at last to submit to his father and give up his young sons, Dara and Aurangzeb, as hostages. These two reached Jahangir's court at Lahore in June 1626. Shortly afterwards Jahangir died, Shah Jahan ascended the throne and the two boys were brought to him at Agra by Asaf Khan on 26th February 1628.

Thus, at the age of ten he came to a settled life; and arrangements were evidently now made for his regular education. Mir Muhammad Hashim of Gilan is recorded as his teacher. Bernier speaks of Mulla Salih as his old teacher, but the Persian histories do not bear this statement out. That Aurangzeb had a natural keenness of mind and quickly learnt what he read, can readily be believed. His correspondence proves that he had thoroughly mastered the Quran and the Traditional Sayings of Muhammad (Hadis) and was ever ready with apt quotations from them. He spoke and wrote Arabic and

¹Haqkip.D. Sonkhajang. *History of Mughal India*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation. 2018. p.54.

Persian like a scholar. Hindustani was his mother tongue, the language used by the Mughal Court in private life. He had some knowledge of Hindi, too, and could talk and recite popular sayings in that language. Aurangzeb wrote Arabic in a vigorous and masterly naskh hand. In this he used to copy the Quran.

Two such manuscripts of his transcription he presented to Mecca and Medina, after richly binding and illuminating them. Painting he never appreciated. Music he banished from: his Court, in the outburst of devotion which marked the completion of the tenth year of his reign. Fine china-ware he liked. But he had none of his father's passion for building. No masterpiece of architecture, no superb or exquisite mosque, hall, or tomb marks his reign.

All that he built were common place necessary things, such as the mosques which marked the scenes of his victories and the numberless sarais which he built along the imperial highways running to the south and the west. Except one, the Pearl Mosque in the Delhi palace, which was begun on 10th December 1080 and completed in 5 years at a cost of one lack and sixty thousand Rupees, (A.D 488). Its mosque at Lahore is not the best one in that city. The tomb of his wife Dilras Banu at Aurangabad was his grandest building.

On 13th December 1634, he got his first post in the Mughal peerage, with the rank of a Commander of ten thousand horse. Next September he was sent to the Bundela expedition (1685) in order to learn the art of war and the control of men by actual experience.²

² Baig. M.R.A. *The Muslim Dilemma in India*. New Delhi:Vikas Publishing House.1967.p.43.

Aurangzeb's First Viceroyalty of the Deccan

Towards the close of Akbar's reign, the Mughal Empire began to expand southwards beyond the Narmada river. Shah Jahan on his accession in 1627, which just followed Malik Ambar's death, began a vigorous policy in the Deccan. The affairs of the Deccan having been at last settled and the Mughal boundary clearly marked and publicly recognized by the local princes, Shah Jahan returned to Northern India, leaving Aurangzeb (14th July, 1636) as viceroy of the Deccan, with his seat at Aurangabad.

This town, founded by Malik Ambar, at the village of Khirki, was allowed by Shah Jahan to be named Aurangabad after his third son. Aurangzeb married four wives. By them he had 10 children both boys and girls. They are Zeb-un-Nisa, Zinat-un-Nisa, Zundat-un-Nisa, Muhammad Azan, Muhammad Akbar, Muhammad Sultan, Muhammad Muazzam, Badr-un-Nisa, Mr-un-Nisa, Muhammad Kambakhsh.

Episode of Hira Bai

Besides the above four there was another woman whose supple grace, musical skill, and mastery of blandishments, made her the heroine of the only romance in the puritan Emperor's life. Hira Bai surnamed Zainabadi was a young slave-girl in the keeping of Mir Khalil, who had married a sister of Aurangzeb's mother. During his viceroyalty of the Deccan, the prince paid a visit to his aunt at Burhanpur.

There, while strolling in the park of Zainabad on the other side of the Tapti, he beheld Hira Bai unveiled among his aunt's train. The artful beauty "on seeing a mango-tree laden with fruits, advanced in mirth and amorous play, jumped up, and plucked a mango, as if unconscious of the prince's presence." The vision of her matchless charms stormed Aurangzeb's heart in a moment; "with shameless importunity he took her away from his aunt's house and became utterly infatuated with her."

So much so, that one day she offered him a cup of wine and pressed him to drink it. All his entreaties and excuses were disregarded, and the helpless lover was about to taste the forbidden drink when the sly enchantress snatched away the cup from his lips and said, "My object was only to test your love for me, and not to make you fall into the sin of drinking " Death cut the story short when she was still in the bloom of youth. Aurangzeb bitterly grieved at her loss and buried her close to the big land at Aurangabad.

Ending of First Viceroyalty

Aurangzeb's first viceroyalty of the Deccan ended strangely in his disgrace and dismissal, in 1644. At Jahanara's intercession the Emperor restored Aurangzeb to his favour and on 16th February 1645, sent him off to Gujarat as Governor. His viceroyalty of this province ended in January 1647, when he was appointed to Balkh. But even in this brief period of less than two years he showed his administrative capacity and firmness.

After the Balkh expedition, Aurangzeb acted as governor of Multan and Sindh from March 1648 to July 1652. During this period he was twice called away from his province to lay siege to Kandahar and to try to wrest that fort from the Persians, (January to December 1649 and March to July 1652), His new province contained the

wildest and most untractable Afghan and Baluch clans. What Aurangzeb could do in that short time was to strike down the most notorious brigand chieftains and secure a nominal profession of allegiance to the Emperor from the border clans.

War with Kandahar

In the seventeenth century, when the Portuguese navy dominated the Indian Ocean and nearly closed the sea-route from India to the Persian Gulf, the commercial importance of Kandahar was no less than its strategy. All westward-bound merchandise from India and even the Spice Islands had to follow the land route through Multan and Kandahar to Persia and thence to Europe. In 1615 fourteen thousand loaded camels annually passed into Persia by this route, and the city of Kandahar grew rapidly in wealth and size as a most convenient centre for the exchange of commodities.

From its position Kandahar was naturally a bone of contention between the rulers of Persia and India. In 1522 Babur gained it from its Afghan ruler, but the Persian king conquered it in 1558. Then Akbar bought it from its Persian prince-governor in 1594; but in Jahangir's old age, Shah Abbas the Great took it after a siege of 45 days (1623). In 1638 his Persian governor Ali Mardi Khan, afraid of his master's wrath, delivered the fort to Shah Jahan. But the Persians were not to be denied: in February 1649 they finally wrested it from the Mughals, after a siege of 57 days, while Shah Jahan delayed sending a relieving force.

Imperial prestige required that Kandahar should be won back from the Persians, and three costly sieges were undertaken by Shah Jahan's sons, but all to no avail. The first expedition, under Aurangzeb and the wazir Sadullah Khan, 50,000 strong,

arrived before Kandahar on 14th May 1649 and completely invested the fort: but their lack of large cannon made it impossible for them to assault the fort, which was far superior in the calibre and range of its artillery. As the Delhi Court historian frankly admits, "The Persians had grown expert in the capture and defence of forts, by their long wars with the Turks. They were masters of tire-arms and artillery.

They held such a strong and well-provisioned fort, with big guns and skilful gunners.... So the imperialists failed with all their efforts" On 5th September, Aurangzeb began his retreat from Kandahar, after having wasted 3 months and 20 days before it, though in a pitched battle some 24 miles south-west of Kandahar, his generals Qalich Khan and Rustam Khan Deccani signally defeated a large Persian army and pursued it beyond Kush-i-Nakhud.

Preparations were made on a grander scale for a second attempt to recover Kandahar. Again Aurangzeb and Sadullah Khan appeared before the fort and laid siege to it (2nd May 1652). Batteries were raised for breaching the walls and trenches were run towards the ditch of the fort; an attempt was made to drain the ditch dry and a night attack on the peak of the ridge behind the Forty Steps towers was delivered.

But all the efforts of the Mughals failed. "The trenches could not be carried any nearer in face of the severe fire showered from the fort walls... The enemy issued on three sides, and from sunset to dawn fired their muskets incessantly from loopholes in the fort-walls, so as to give no opportunity to Aurangzeb's workmen to make progress." In fact, the Persian artillery was as excellent as the Mughal was inefficient. The Indian gunners were proverbially bad marks men and their fire produced no effect on the fort-walls.

Within a month of opening the siege, the work of draining the ditch and running mines had to be suspended for lack of materials. The Persians made repeated sorties killing and wounding the Mughals in the trenches and damaging their guns. Even after two months of bombardment the fort-walls were unbreached, and it would have been madness to deliver an assault on such a fort. Finally, by Shah Jahan's order the Mughal army raised the siege and began its retreat from Kandahar on 9th July.

Shah Jahan was very angry with Aurangzeb for this ill- success, which he wrongly ascribed to the prince's incapacity. But in truth it is unjust to blame Aurangzeb for the fall to take Kandahar. Throughout the siege he was real in command. The Emperor from Kabul directed government through Sadullah Khan. His sanction had to be taken for every important step.³

Second Viceroyalty of the Deccan

On his return from Kandahar to Kabul, Aurangzeb was appointed subahdar of the Deccan for the second time (1652). After nine months halt at Burhanpur on the way, he arrived at his capital, Aurangabad in November 1653 and there spent the next four years, leaving it only to invade Golkonda and Bijapur and finally departing on 5th February 1658 to contest the throne of Delhi.

Since Aurangzeb had laid down the viceroyalty of the Deccan in May 1644, the Mughal administration there had not prospered. True, the country enjoyed unwanted repose, but much cultivated soil had lapsed into jungle, the cultivators had declined in number and resources, and the revenue had fallen off greatly. This wretched state of

³ Mukhia. Harbans. *The Mughals of India*. New Delhi:Blackwell Publishing. 2004.pp.94-99.

things was the natural result of a succession of short viceroalties and incompetent viceroys.

On his arrival in the Deccan, Aurangzeb was faced with a serious financial difficulty. Everywhere Aurangzeb found signs of maladministration, the work of his predecessors. The actual collection was sometimes only one-tenth of the normal assessment. The new viceroy found it impossible to make both ends meet. At this time the civil and military expenditure of the Deccan, exclusive of the salary derived by the officers from their jagirs, produced an annual deficit of Rs. 20,36,000, which was made good by drawing on the reserve stored in the treasuries of the Deccan.

The financial wrangle between father and son dragged on for years. Shah Jahan wished to put a stop to the drain of money to the Deccan, and here was Aurangzeb asking for cash from other provinces in the place of jagirs in the Deccan.

When appointing him to the Deccan, Shah Jahan had urged Aurangzeb to pay special attention to the improvement of the peasantry and the extension of cultivation. Aurangzeb had promised to do his best for these objects. He only pleaded for a sufficiently long tenure and the men and money necessary for his purpose, as the depopulation and ravage caused by a generation of warfare, followed by ten years of maladministration, could not be undone in two or three years. Very soon his viceroyalty was destined to become memorable forever in the history of land-settlement in the Deccan.⁴

⁴ Rao.Hari.V.N.*History of Modern India*. Chennai:Rochouse Sons Pvt.Ltd.1958.pp.62-78.

Causes of Aurangzeb's differences with the Emperor

Aurangzeb's second viceroyalty of the Deccan was marked by a series of wrangles with his father. Either Aurangzeb's enemies had got hold of the Emperor's ears, or the latter failed to appreciate the prince's difficulties in the South. Aurangzeb was misunderstood, suspected, and unjustly reprimanded from the very beginning of his term of office. And the bitterness of feeling thus aroused was one of the reasons why the War of Succession was conducted so heartlessly and unscrupulously.

Chapter Second

War of Succession

Illness of Shah Jahan and Rebellion of His Sons

On 7th March, 1657, Shah Jahan completed three decades of his reign and began the 31st year. The reign had been as prosperous as it had been long. The wealth of India under this Great Mughal dazzled the eyes of foreign visitors, and on gala days ambassadors from Bukhara and Persia, Turkey and Arabia, as well as travellers from France and Italy, gazed with wonder at the Peacock Throne and the Kohinur and other jewels. The white marble edifices which he loved to build were as costly as they were chaste in design. The nobles of the empire eclipsed the kings of other lands in wealth and pomp. The bounds of the "protected empire" had been, stretched farther than in any preceding reign.⁵ Within the country itself a profound peace reigned.

The peasantry were carefully cherished; harsh and exacting governors were in many cases dismissed on the complaint of the people. Wealth and prosperity increased on all hands. A kind and yet wise master, Shah Jahan had gathered round himself a band of very able officers, and made his court the centre of the wit and wisdom of the land. But one by one the great ministers and generals who had contributed to the glory of the reign were being removed by the pitiless hand of Death.

And, as the giants of old passed away, the Emperor found no worthy successors to them among the new faces and younger men.

⁵ Mehta.J.L.*Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*.New Delhi:Sterling Publishing House.1988. p.474.

Shah Jahan had four sons. All of them were past youth, and all had gained experience as governors of provinces and commanders of armies. But there was no brotherly love among them. The ill-feeling between Dara and Aurangzeb. In particular was so bitter and had continued growing bitterer for so many years past, that it was the talk of the whole empire, and peace had been maintained between them only by keeping Aurangzeb far away from the court and his eldest brother.

Shah Jahan had given clear indications that he wished to leave the crown to Dara, the eldest of his four sons by the same mother. In order to train him in the administration of the empire and to smooth the transfer of the supreme authority to him, the Emperor had kept Dara by his side for many years past, and allowed him to govern his viceroyalties by deputies. At the same time the Emperor bestowed on him rank and privileges which raised him to an almost royal position. All had to buy or beg Dara's mediation before they could approach the Emperor.

His father's excessive love did him a distinct harm. He was always kept at court and never, except at the third siege of Kandahar, sent to conduct campaigns or administer provinces. Thus, he never acquired experience in the arts of war and government; he never learnt to judge men by the crucial test of danger and difficulty; and he lost touch with the active army. Hence, he was rendered unfit for that war of succession which among the Mughals served as a practical test for the survival of the fittest.⁶

On 6th September, Shah Jahan suddenly fell ill of strangely and constipation at Delhi. For one week the royal physicians toiled in vain. The malady went on

⁶ Sarkar.Jadunath.*History of Aurangzeb.Vol.I&II.*Calcutta:S.C Sarkar Publications.1912.p.320.

increasing. The daily darbar was stopped; the Emperor even ceased to show his face to the public from the balcony. After a week the doctors atlast got control over the malady. But the improvement in the Emperor's condition was slight, and so he decided to go to Agra and die there quietly in sight of the tomb of the wife he had loved so well. He entered Agra city.

During Shah Jahan's illness Dara constantly watched by his bed-side, and tended and nursed him most carefully, and showed no indecent haste to secure the crown for himself. Early in the course of his illness, when Shah Jahan despaired of recovery, he set himself to prepare for the next world. Calling to his presence some confidential courtiers and the chief officers of the State, he made his last will before them and ordered them to obey Dara henceforth as their sovereign.

Dara, however, did not assume the crown, but continued to issue orders in his father's name, while attempting to strengthen his own position. He removed Mir Jumla, the confidant and partisan of Aurangzeb, from the wazirship (end of September) and sent orders to Mir Jumla, Mahabat Khan and other Imperial officers to return from the Deccan to the court with their contingents.⁷

By the middle of November Shah Jahan had recovered sufficiently to be told of important matters which had hitherto been kept from him. One was that Shuja had crowned himself and was advancing from Bengal. With Shah Jahan's consent an army, 22,000 strong, was sent Agra under Sulaiman Shukoh who was appointed governor of Malwar vice Shaista Khan recalled to court. Qasim Khan was induced to accept the command of the second army by being created governor of Gujrat. Shah Jahan besought

⁷ Majumdar.R.C.*The Mughal Empire*. Vol.VII.Bombay:Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.1974.pp.220-227.

these generals to spare the lives of his younger sons, to try at first to send them back to their provinces by fair words if possible, otherwise by a demonstration of force and not except in extreme need to resort to a deadly battle.

During Shah Jahan's illness Dara at first allowed no one but one or two ministers in his confidence to have access to the Emperor. He also watched the ferries and stopped all letters and messengers going to his brothers in Bengal, Gujarat and the Deccan, and kept their agents at the imperial Court under watch lest they should send any report to their masters. But these precautions only wrought greater mischief.⁸

The princes and people in the distant provinces naturally concluded from this stoppage of news that Shah Jahan was dead, and all the confusion and disorder of a Mughal succession broke out. Everywhere lawless men began to cause tumults, the peasants refused to pay the revenue, the Zamindars tried to rob or conquer their rivals, and the frontiers were violated. The local authorities were paralysed by uncertainty and anxiety about the future, and law and order suddenly disappeared in many places.

No doubt, letters in Shah Jahan's hand and seal reached the princes assuring them of his recovery, but they maintained that these were really written by Dara, an expert imitator of Shah Jahan's handwriting, and that the late Emperor's seal was necessarily in the possession of the usurper. The three younger brothers, therefore, very plausibly asserted in their letters to the Emperor that their loving minds had been unsettled by these alarming rumours, and they were marching on Agra to see their father with their own eyes and satisfy themselves as to his real condition.

⁸ Mahajan, V.D. *Mughal Rule in India*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Co. 1971. pp. 169-192.

Muhammad Murad Bakhsh, the youngest son of Shah Jahan, was the black sheep of the imperial family. He had been tried in Balkh, the Deccan, and Gujarat, and he had failed everywhere. A foolish, pleasure-loving and impetuous prince, his character had not improved with age; he had not learnt to apply himself to business or to bridle his passions. But Murad possessed the reckless valour of a soldier.

Knowing the prince's incapacity, Shah Jahan had tried to remedy the mischief by sending to him a very capable and honest officer named Ali Naqi as his revenue minister and chief counsellor. Ali Naqi's pure and vigilant administration raised against him a host of enemies among the flatterers and boon companions of the prince. A conspiracy was soon formed by Murad's favourite eunuch against the hated minister.

A letter in Ali Naqi's hand and seal, professing adhesion to the cause of Dara, was forged and given to a courier, who contrived to get himself arrested by Murad's road patrol, without betraying its real authorship. Murad was revelling in his pleasure-garden when the intercepted letter was brought to him a little before dawn. The prince, who had not slept off his night's debauch, burst into wrath and ordered Ali Naqi to be dragged to his presence. Quivering with pent-up wrath, he ran Ali Naqi through with his spear, shouting, "Wretch in spite of all my favours you have turned such a traitor".

In the meantime, soon after receiving the news of Shah Jahan's serious illness, Murad and Aurangzeb had opened a confidential correspondence with each other by means of trusty messengers. They also wrote to Shuja inviting his co-operation against Dara, but the long distance prevented their forming any definite or working agreement.

Between Murad and Aurangzeb, however, a plan of concerted action was soon matured. From the very beginning Murad placed himself under Aurangzeb's guidance.⁹

Murad proposed that the brothers should march at once from the South and attack Dara before he had time to consolidate his power and to win over the captains of the imperial army posted far and near. Aurangzeb pressed him not to take any compromising step or set up the banner of revolt openly, but to wait, to dissimulate, and to send hollow friendly letters to Dara, till they should know for certain that Shah Jahan was dead.

Aurangzeb had suggested to Murad that a diversion should be made against Dara by instigating the Persians and Uzbeks to invade Afghanistan, which was then a province of the Mughal Empire. Murad, therefore, wrote to the king of Persia reporting the rumour of Shah Jahan's death and begging armed aid from him. The latter wanted to wait and verify the news.

A solemn treaty for the partition of the empire on the following terms was drawn up by Aurangzeb, sworn to on the Quran, and sent to Murad. Murad was to hold the Panjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Sindh and reign over them as an independent king. The rest of the Mughal dominions was to belong to Aurangzeb. One-third of the prize of war was to belong to Murad and two-thirds to Aurangzeb. His preparations being now complete, Murad set out from Ahmadabad on 25th February 1658 and effected a junction with Aurangzeb's forces at Dipalpur in Malwa on 14th April.

⁹ Sarkar.Jadunath. *History of Aurangzeb.Vol.III*.Calcutta:S.C.Sarkar Publications. 1914.p.354.

Policy on the eve of the War of Succession

From 4th October 1657, when Aurangzeb retired from the war with Bijapur, to 25th January 1658, when he began his march towards Hindustan as a claimant to the throne, he passed through a most anxious and critical time. Events which he could not possibly control were moving fast.

His present position was daily growing more untenable. While the future was ominous. But the difficulties, great and complex, which he overcome raise to the highest pitch our admiration for his coolness, sagacity, power of managing men, and diplomatic skill.¹⁰

The news had got out that the Emperor had ordered peace to be made and recalled the additional troops sent to the Deccan. Thus a cruel fate threatened to snatch away from Aurangzeb's grasp the fruits of his long and costly war with Bijapur, just when he was about to taste them. Aurangzeb, therefore, determined to play a game of boldness in order to realize the terms of the treaty before the Bijapuris could recover from their recent defeats or learn of the full extent of the weakness and distraction of the imperial government.

But this policy of facing round to Bijapur and making military demonstrations in the South had its drawbacks too. The longer Aurangzeb delayed in maturing his plans for contesting the throne, proclaiming himself a claimant, and marching on Hindustan, the greater was the time that Dara would gain for recalling the chief captains from the Deccan, winning over officers and men far and near,

¹⁰ Verma.Nirmal.*History of India - Mughal Period*.Jaipur:ABD Publishers.2006.pp.331.352.

consolidating his own power and effectually counteracting Aurangzeb's possible designs.¹¹

If, on the other hand, Aurangzeb concentrated his forces, made a public claim to the throne, marched northwards and openly broke with the imperial government by enlisting troops then he would, no doubt, check Dara in time, he would secure the 1657 adhere of ambitious adventurers. But at the same time all hope of getting Parenda or the promised indemnity would be gone, and his other enemies in the South would raise their heads; the fruits of the last two years warfare in the Deccan would be totally lost to him.

Aurangzeb had from the first decided not to raise the banner of rebellion before knowing for certain that Shah Jahan was dead. But the quick march of events forced his hand. Dara's plan with regard to the South was now fully unfolded: he had induced the helpless Shah Jahan to remove Murad from the viceroyalty of Gujarat and to transfer the subah of Berar from Aurangzeb to Murad, so as to make the two brothers quarrel.

Further, Dara had sent two armies against his two brothers in the South (close of December) and recalled Shaista Khan (a strong supporter of Aurangzeb) from his province of Malwa to the court, while Mir Jumla now received an imperial letter of recall from Aurangzeb's side which it would have been flat rebellion to disregard.¹²

¹¹ Sathianatheir.R.A *Political and Cultural History of India.Vol.II*.Madras:S.Viswanathan Printers. 1973. pp.424-451.

¹² Ali.Athar.M.*Mughal India-Studies in Polity Idea's, Society and Culture*.New Delhi:Oxford University Press.2006. pp.262-266.

Aurangzeb's preparations for contesting the throne

From the fatal field of Samugarh, Dara reached Agra with a few attendants and shut himself up in his house in the city. There was universal alarm and lamentation in the royal family, Shah Jahan sent word to Dara to come to the fort and see him; but Dara was utterly broken down in body and spirit, and declined saying, "I cannot show my face to your Majesty in my present wretched plight. Permit me to go away with your farewell blessing on the long journey that is before me."¹³

The miserable prince, with his wife, children and a dozen servants, set off from Agra towards Delhi at 3 o'clock in the morning. Mules laden with gold coins from the palace treasury were sent with him by order of Shah Jahan and he took away as much of his own jewels and cash as he could transport in that hurry. For the next two days small groups of his followers began to join him on the way, so that his force was raised to 5,000 men by the time he reached Delhi.

After the battle of Samugarh, Aurangzeb went to Murad, and congratulated him, saying that the victory was due entirely to his younger brother's heroism and that Murad's reign would date from that day. He even nursed the wounded Murad affectionately.

In two marches from the battle-field the victors arrived in the garden of Nur Manzil or Dhara outside Agra. Here they stayed for ten days. Every day large numbers of courtiers, nobles and officers deserted the imperial side and joined them, and so did the former officers of Dara.

¹³ Sarkar.Jadunath.Vol.III.Op.cit.,p.250.

The day after Samugarh, Aurangzeb wrote to Shah Jahan directly, excusing his late actions as forced upon him by his enemies. On reaching Nur Manzil he received a reply in Shah Jahan's own hand, inviting him to an interview. This, after some hesitation, Aurangzeb declined to do, at the advice of some of his friends (especially Shaista Khan and Khalilullah) who told him that Shah Jahan had formed a plot to get Aurangzeb murdered by his Tartar guard-women as soon as he would enter Agra fort.

The mask was at last thrown away, and on the 5th of June the prince began the siege of Agra fort, after sending his eldest son Muhammad Sultan to occupy Agra city and maintain order there. Shah Jahan had shut the gates of Agra fort, prepared to stand a siege there. It was one of the strongest forts of that age and Aurangzeb's artillery was quite ineffective on its defences. Success by breaching and assault was therefore out of the question. A regular investment would have detained the victorious brothers there for months and even years and thus given Dara time to raise a new army.

So, Aurangzeb sent his men to make a sudden rush and seize the outside of the water gate of the fort which opens on the Jamuna. Thus the water-supply of the garrison was cut off and they began to suffer the horrors of thirst in midsummer. The few old and long disused wells within the fort yielded only a bitter water unfit for drinking. At this, many of the Emperor's officers, pampered idlers of the court, slipped out of the fort.

For three days Shah Jahan held out under these conditions. He had made a pathetic personal appeal to Aurangzeb entreating him not to kill a living father by thirst, but to that letter Aurangzeb had replied, "It is your own doing." Then, amidst raging thirst, with only despair and treason around him, the aged Emperor decided to yield. On

8th June he opened the gates of the fort to Aurangzeb's officers and became a prisoner within the harem of the palace being confined to the quarters behind the Hall of Public Audience.¹⁴

He was deprived of all power; a strong force was posted in and around the fort to prevent rescue, and careful watch was kept on his eunuchs lest they should carry letters from him outside. The vast treasures of Agra fort-the accumulations of three generations of prosperous rulers of India, passed into Aurangzeb's possession.¹⁵

On 10th June Princess Jahanara visited Aurangzeb to try the effect of her personal influence and sisterly persuasion. She proposed, in Shah Jahan's name, a partition of the empire among the four brothers. Aurangzeb naturally declined. On 13th June Aurangzeb set out from Agra city towards Delhi in pursuit of Dara. But on the way, at Mathura, he had to halt because an alarming situation had arisen on account of Murad's jealous and wilful conduct.

This prince's courtiers were telling him how power was daily slipping out of his grasp and Aurangzeb was becoming all in all. He was keen on reigning as king, but Aurangzeb seemed to be putting off the fulfilment of that desire to a more and more distant future. Therefore, Murad must assert himself, if he was not to be made a cat's paw and then thrown away by Aurangzeb.

The situation was very critical. But Aurangzeb's plan was quickly formed and skilfully carried out. He first pulled Murad's suspicion to sleep by presenting him with 20 lakhs of rupees and 255 horses and invited him to a feast for celebrating his complete

¹⁴ Agarwal.J.C.*Medieval History of India*.New Delhi:S.Chand &Co.2004.pp.209-223.

¹⁵ Chandra.Satish.*Essays on Medieval Indian History*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.2003.p.329.

recovery from his wounds and for maturing a plan of campaign against the fugitive Dara. Lastly, Aurangzeb heavily bribed and won over to his side Murad's favourite body-servant Nur-ud-din Khawas, who induced Murad to accept his brother's invitation and enter Aurangzeb's camp when returning from a hunt.

Murad was cordially received by Aurangzeb, well fed, plied with wine, and when asleep deprived of his arms and made a prisoner. At midnight the captive was sent in a covered ladies' fawda, under a strong cavalry escort to Salimgarh and thence to the state-prison of Gwalior. This "excellent stratagem" had been carried out so smoothly that Murad's followers did not hear of his fate till it was too late. Next morning his leaderless soldiery were taken into Aurangzeb's service and even his devoted officers had no course left open to them but to submit to this new master.¹⁶

The entire establishment and property of Murad passed into Aurangzeb's possession. Murad lived for three years in the fortress of Gwalior, but an attempt at escape which his friends outside had planned and which narrowly missed success through Murad's own thoughtlessness, determined Aurangzeb to get rid of him. At the Emperor's instigation, the second son of Ali Naqi demanded retaliation in blood from Murad for the murder of his father at Ahmadabad in 1657. This, under the Islamic law, the judges were bound to grant. So, on 4th December 1661 the luckless aspirant to the throne of Delhi was beheaded by two slaves in the prison cell of Gwalior and his corpse was buried within that fort.

Then, learning that Dara had gone out of Mughal India, he began his return march to Hindustan up the Indus. But Dara's family were utterly opposed to the idea of

¹⁶ Mahajan.V.D.*Muslim Rule in India*.New Delhi:S.Chand&Co.1978.pp.158-182.

migrating to Persia. His beloved wife, Nadira Banu, was seriously ill and the privations of a journey through the desolate Bolan Pass and the inhospitable region of Kandahar would have killed her. Dara, therefore, changed his mind and looked about for a chieftain in that neighbourhood who would give him a safe shelter and the services of his clansmen.

On the way to Dadar, Nadira Banu succumbed to hardship and want of medicine and rest. Dara was frantic with grief at losing his life's companion. "The world grew dark in his eyes. He was utterly bewildered. His judgment and prudence were entirely gone." He sent her corpse to Lahore for burial in the graveyard of the saint Mian Mir (his own spiritual guide), under escort of all the 70 troopers still left at his side and his most devoted officer, Gul Muhammad.

He offered his companions a free choice between returning to their homes and accompanying him to Persia. Thus it happened that not a single devoted follower now remained with Dara, and he became utterly helpless and dependent upon his host's fidelity. Cupidity overcame the Afghan's gratitude and fidelity to plighted word. He treacherously arrested Dara and his younger son and two daughters and delivered them to Bahadur Khan. When the prisoners arrived at Delhi they were paraded through the streets of the capital with disgrace.

That evening Aurangzeb held a private consultation with his ministers about Dara's fate. Danishmand Khan (Bernier's patron) pleaded for his life, but Shaista Khan, Muhammad Amin Khan, Bahadur Khan, and the Princess Raushanara from the harem demanded his death for the good of church and state.

The pliant theologians in the Emperor's pay signed a decree stating that Dara deserved death on the ground of his deviation from Islam. That very night Nazar Beg and some other slaves visited Dara's prison in Khawaspura, tore away Sipih Shukoh from his father's arms and hacked Dara to pieces. By Aurangzeb's order the corpse was placed on an elephant, paraded through the streets of the city a second time, and then buried in a vault under the dome of the tomb of Humayun.¹⁷

Prince Muhammad Shuja, the second son of Shah Jahan and governor of Bengal, was a man of great intelligence, elegant taste, and amiable disposition. The story of Shah Jahan's illness, with the usual exaggeration, reached Shuja at Rajmahal, then the capital of Bengal, and he immediately crowned himself Emperor with the title of Abul Fauz Nasir-ud-din Muhammad, Timur III, Alexander II, Shah Shuja Ghazi.

Aurangzeb, after crowning himself at Delhi, wrote a friendly letter to Shuja, adding the entire province of Bihar to his viceroyalty and promising him other favours. In the meantime, Aurangzeb after abandoning the pursuit of Dara at Multan had hastened back to Delhi by forced marches and strongly reinforced his army near Allahabad with men and money.

But there was no help for it, if Shuja wanted to avoid the fate of Dara Shukoh and Murad Bakhsh at the hands of Aurangzeb. So, on 12th May 1660, he finally left the home of his ancestors and the province which he had ruled for twenty years, and for Arracan with his family and less than forty followers; ten of these were Sayyids of Barha, famous throughout India for their valour and devotion to their master. The plot

¹⁷ Sarkar.Jadunath.*History of Aurangzeb.Vol.III*.Calcutta:S.C.Sarkar Publications.1914.p356.

and "planned the assassination of Shah Shuja. Shah Shuja with a few men fled into the jungle. The Maghs....pursued the poor prince, cutting his body into pieces."

When Shah Jahan opened the gates of Agra fort to his victorious son, he became a prisoner for the rest of his life. Shah Jahan was now completely ringed round by enemies. No one could interview him. Every remark made by the captive was promptly reported to Aurangzeb by official spies. Even writing materials were withheld from the ex-Emperor.

The fall of the most magnificent of the Great Mughals was robbed of dignity by Aurangzeb's Insatiable cupidity, which led to many sordid wrangles between father and son for the possession of the crown jewels worn by Shah Jahan or kept in Agra fort. The captive Emperor could never forget that he was their lawful owner and that his son was an usurper without any moral right to state property.

The correspondence between Shah Jahan and his son became intolerably bitter. At last the old monarch bowed to the inevitable and like a child that cries itself to sleep, he ceased to complain. Blow after blow fell on his stricken heart. First Dara Shukoh, then Murad Bakhsh, then Sulaiman Shukoh, were done to death by Aurangzeb. Shuja and all his children were driven to destruction among the unknown horrors of the land of the Maghs.

Another no less saintly but more tender comforter he had in his daughter Jahanara, whose loving care atoned for the cruelty of all his other offspring. This princess, a disciple of the saint Mian Mir, now practically led the life of a nun in the

harem of Agra fort, nursing her aged and forlorn father with the devotion of a mother and daughter in one, while she also looked after the orphan daughters of Dara and Murad whom she had gathered under her protecting wings.

That deliverance, so wistfully desired but so calmly waited for, came in January 1666. On the 7th of that month, Shah Jahan was seized with a fever. Soon other complications appeared. He had now completed 74 years of age and had gone through much hardship before his accession to the throne. The intense cold of midwinter lowered his vitality.

Finally, while the sacred verses were being solemnly intoned, amidst the wail of the women and the sobs of his attendants, Shah Jahan, retaining full consciousness to the last and gasping on the resting-place of his beloved and long-lost Mumtaz Mahal, repeated the Muslim confession of faith, and murmured the prayer,

“O God make my condition good in this world and the next, and save me from the torments of hell-fire”. A moment later he sank peacefully into eternal rest. It was a quarter past seven in the evening.

The body lay in the octagonal tower (Musamman Burj) where life had departed, in full view of the Taj Mahal, where he wished his mortal remains to mingle with those of his queen. The officers in the fort broke open the door at the base of staircase of the tower, which had been walled up during Shah Jahan's captivity, and took the coffin out.

Then, conveying the coffin over the amuua in a boat, they reached the Taj Mahal, and buried him by the side of all that remained on earth of his consort Mumtaz

Mahal. The public grief at the death of Shah Jahan was universal and sincere. Aurangzeb's treatment of his father outraged not only the moral sense of his contemporaries but also the social decorum of the age. In February 1666 his father's death took him to Agra. So long as Shah Jahan lived in captivity, Aurangzeb had naturally avoided Agra and held his court at Delhi, Aurangzeb first sat on the throne on 21st July 1658, but his second or grand coronation took place on 5th June 1659.

Chapter Three

Aurangzeb's Religious Policy

By the theory of its origin the Muslim state is a theocracy. Its true king is God and earthly rulers are merely. His agents bound to enforce His law on all. The civil authorities exist solely to spread and enforce the true faith. In such a state infidelity is logically equivalent to treason, because the infidel repudiates the authority of the true king and pays homage to his rivals, the false gods and goddesses. Therefore, the toleration of any sect outside the fold of orthodox Islam is no better than compounding with sin.

And the worst form of sin is polytheism, the belief that the one true God has partners in the form of other deities. According to Islamic theology, in the path of God," by waging war against infidel lands (dar-ul-fiarb) till they become a part of the realm of Islam (dar-ul-Islam) and their populations are converted into true believers. After conquest the entire infidel population becomes theoretically reduced to the status of slaves of the conquering army.

Political Disabilities of Non-Muslims

Non-Muslim, therefore, cannot be a citizen of the state: he is a member of a depressed class; his status is a modified form of slavery. He lives under a contract with the State: for the life and property that are grudgingly spared to him by the Commander of the Faithful he must undergo political and social disabilities, and commutation-money.

He must pay a tax for his land (khara), from which the early Muslims were exempt; he must pay other exactions for the maintenance of the army, in which he cannot enlist even if he offers to render personal service instead of paying the poll-tax; and he must show by humility of dress and behaviour that he belongs to a subject class. No non-Muslim can wear fine dresses, ride on horseback or carry arms; he must behave respectfully and submissively to every member of the dominant sect.¹⁸

Religious Persecution

Cold blood was resorted to in order to convert heathen subjects. In addition to the poll-tax and public degradation in dress and demeanour imposed on them, the non-Muslims were subjected to various hopes and fears. Rewards in the form of money and public employment were offered, to apostates from Hinduism.

The leaders of Hindu religion and society were systematically repressed, to deprive the sect of spiritual instruction, and their religious gatherings and processions were forbidden in order to prevent the growth of solidarity and a sense of communal strength among them. No new temple was allowed to be built nor any old one to be repaired, so that the total disappearance of all places of (Hindu worship was to be merely a question of time. But many of the more fiery spirits of Islam tried to anticipate the destructive hand of time and forcibly pulled down temples.¹⁹

In this later age, particularly among the Turks, the old Arab toleration of false faiths appeared sinful. Outside their own realms, the destruction of temples and the slaughter of Hindus sanctified every war of aggression.

¹⁸ Sharma.K. *History and Culture of India*. Delhi: Ritu Publication.2014.pp.44-54.

¹⁹ Habib.Irfan.*Medieval India Research in History of India*.New Delhi:Oxford University Press.1992.p.327.

Thus a frame of mind was produced in the Muslim community which habitually regarded plunder and homicide as the purest of human acts, as "exertion (bad) in the path of God." The murder of infidels (kafir-kushi) is counted a merit in a Muslim. It is not necessary that he should tame his own passions or mortify his flesh; it is not necessary for him to grow a rich growth of spirituality. He has only to slay a certain class of his fellow beings or plunder their lands and wealth, and this act in itself would raise his soul to heaven.

Influence of the Quranic Political Ideals on the Muslim Population and the Subject Creeds

Nor has been conducive to the true interests of its followers. Muslim polity formed "the faithful" into a body with no other profession than war. As long as there were any fresh lands to conquer and any rich kafirs to plunder, all went well with the State." The dominant body prospered and multiplied rapidly; even arts and industries, literature and painting of a certain type were fostered. But when the lide of Muslim expansion reached its farthest limit and broke in vain on the hills of Assam and Chalgaoon, or the arid rocks of Maharashtra, there was nothing to avert a rapid downfall. The State had no economic basis, and was not able to stand a time of peace.

For, the cruel kindness of the government had unfitted the dominant people for avocations of peace and the silent but deadly struggle for existence. War is the only trade they have a natural aptitude for, and peace means to them "unemployment," vice and downfall.

The settled principle of Islam ended by making the Muslims a privileged class, nourished on state bounties, naturally prone to indolence in peace times and unable to stand on their own legs in the arena of life. Public office came to be regarded as the birthright of the faithful, and so every inducement to display superior ability or exertion was taken away from them.

The vast sums spent by the state in maintaining pauper houses and in scattering alms during Ramzan and other holy days and joyous ceremonies, were direct premium on laziness. Thus a lazy and pampered class was created in the empire, who sapped its strength and was the first to suffer when its prosperity was arrested. Wealth bred indolence and love of ease; these soon led to vice; and vice finally brought about poverty and ruin.

At the same time, the treatment of the subject people prevented the full development of the resources of the state by them. When a class of men is publicly depressed and harassed by law and executive caprice alike, it merely contents itself with dragging on an animal existence. The Hindus could not be expected to produce the utmost of which they were capable; their lot was to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to their masters, to bring grist to the fiscal mill, to develop a low cunning and flattery as the only means of saving what they could out of the fruits of their own labour.

Amidst such social conditions, the human hand and the human mind cannot achieve their best; the human soul cannot soar to its highest pitch. The barrenness of the Hindu intellect and the meanness of spirit of the Hindu upper classes are the greatest condemnation of Muhammadan rule in India. The Islamic political tree, judged by its fruit, was an utter failure.

Destroyer of Temples

Aurangzeb began his attack on Hinduism in an insidious way. In the first year of his reign, in a charter granted to a priest of Benares, he avowed that his religion forbade him to allow the building of new temples, but did not enjoin the destruction of old ones. During his viceroyalty of Gujarat 1644, he had desecrated the recently built Hindu temple of Chintaman in Ahmadabad by killing a cow in it and then turned the building into a mosque. He had at that time also demolished many other Hindu temples in the province. An order was issued early in his reign in which the local officers in every town and village of Orissa from Katak to Medinipur were called upon to pull down all temples.²⁰

Next, on 9th April 1669, he issued a general order "to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and to put down their religious teaching and practices." His destroying hand now fell on the great shrines that commanded the veneration of the Hindus all over India, such as the second temple of Somnath, the Vishwanath temple of Benares, and the Keshav Rai temple of Mathura. The holy city of Mathura has always been the special victim of Muslim bigotry. It stood on the king's highway between Agra

²⁰ Truschke, Audrey. *Aurangzeb-The Man and The Myth*. Haryana: Penguin Books. 2017. pp.106-113.

and Delhi. Aurangzeb appointed a "religious- man," AbdunNabi, as faujdar of Mathura to repress the Hindus.

On 14th October 1666, learning that there was a stone railing in the temple of Keshav Rai, which Dara Shukoh had presented to it. Aurangzeb ordered it to be removed. And finally in January 1670, he sent forth commands to destroy this temple altogether and to change the name of the city to Islamabad. The destruction of Hindu places of worship was one of the chief duties of the Muhtasifs or Censors of Morals who were appointed in all the sub-divisions and cities of the empire. In June 1680, the temples of Amber, the capital of the royal state of Jaipur, were broken clown. In 1674 he confiscated all the lands held by Hindus as religious grants in Gujarat.

Jaziya or Poll-tax on Non-Muslims

For permission to live in an Islamic state the unbeliever has to pay a tax called Jaziya, which means substitute money, fee, the price of indulgence. It was first imposed by Muhammad, who bade his followers "fight those who do not profess the true faith, till they pay jaxlya with the hand in humility." The last two words of this command have been taken by the Muslim commentators to mean that the tax should be levied in a manner humiliating to the taxpayers: the taxed person must come on foot and make the payment standing, while the receiver should be seated.

Women, children below fourteen and slaves were exempted from the tax; blind men, cripples and lunatics paid only when they were wealthy; monks were untaxed if they were poor, but if they belonged to rich monasteries the heads of these religious houses had to pay. The impost was not proportioned to a man's actual income, but the assesseees were roughly divided into three classes according as their property was estimated at not more than 200 dirhams ("the poor"), between 200 and ten thousand dirhams ("the middle class"), and above ten thousand ("the rich").

Money-changers, cloth-dealers, landowners, merchants, and physicians were placed in the highest class, while artisans, such as tailors, dyers, cobblers, and shoemakers were counted as "poor." This last class paid only when their professional income left a margin above the cost of maintaining themselves and their families. Beggars and paupers naturally escaped from the tax.

The Hindus of Delhi and its environs gathered together and pileously cried for the withdrawal of the impost. But the Emperor turned a deaf ear to them. Next Friday, the whole road from the gate of the fort to the Jama mosque was blocked by a crowd of Hindu suppliants. They did not disperse in spite of warning and the Emperor after waiting vainly for an hour to go to the public prayer ordered elephants to be driven through the mass of men, trampling them down and clearing a way for him.

A temperate and reasoned letter from Shivaji urging the impolicy of the new impost and appealing to Aurangzeb to think of the common Father of mankind and the equality of all sincere beliefs in God's eyes, met with no better success.²¹

²¹ Sarkar.Jadunath. *History of Aurangzeb*.Vol.V.Calcutta:S.C.Sarkar Publications.1918.pp.350-361.

Anti-Sikh Policy

Towards the close of the 15th century, there arose in the Panjab a Hindu reformer named Guru Nanak, who called upon the people to prefer the essence to the form of religion, a living faith to a dead mechanical ritual, and the spirit to the letter of their scriptures; he insisted on the unity of the God head underlying the multitude of the idols of popular worship, invited earnest believers to his fold without distinction of caste or creed, and tried to form a brotherhood of the elect. The aims of Nanak were abandoned by his sect when his successors in the leadership of the Sikhs set up a temporal dominion for themselves and made military drill take the place of moral self-reform and spiritual growth.

The Sikh gurus throughout the 16th century from Nanak to Arjun the 5th guru, won the reverence of the Mughal Emperors by their saintly lives and they had no quarrel either with Islam or the state. Before the reign of Aurangzeb the Sikhs were never persecuted on religious grounds and their collision with the Mughal government, which began in Jahangir's time was due entirely to secular causes and the change in the character of the gurus was solely responsible for it.

Under Arjun, the 5th guru (1581-1606), the number of Sikh converts greatly increased and with them the guru's wealth. He organized a permanent source of income. A band of agents were stationed in every city from Kabul to Dacca where there was a Sikh, to collect the tithes and offerings of the faithful; and this spiritual tribute, so far as it escaped peculation by the agents, reached the central treasury at Amritsar. The guru was treated as a temporal king.

Guru Arjun in a weak moment blessed the banners of Khusrau, the rival of Jahangir for the Mughal throne and even gave money help to that prince. On the defeat of the pretender, Jahangir fined the guru two lakhs of rupees for his disloyalty to the king de jure. The guru refused to pay the fine and stoically endured imprisonment and torture, which were the usual punishments of revenue defaulters in those days. Worn out by being forced to sit in the burning sand of Lahore he died in 1606. Now at last open war broke out between the Sikhs and Islam. The Mughal government under Aurangzeb did succeed in breaking up the guru's power.

At the end of the 17th century the great empire founded by Akbar and raised to world-famed prosperity and splendour by Shah Jahan, was in a state of hopeless decay: administration, culture, economic life, military strength and social organization, all seemed to be hastening to utter ruin and dissolution.

The material waste caused to the empire by this quarter century of warfare was frightful. In the internal administration the break-down of Aurangzeb 's government was equally conspicuous. The officials became incorrigibly corrupt and inefficient, all the forbidden exactions were revived by the local governors in violation of his orders, the Emperor in his old age was disobeyed by his distant officials, and the administration lost its efficiency.

At first he had courageously struggled with disease, and had through sheer strength of mind continued for some days to transact business as usual and even to peep out of his bedroom window to reassure the public that he was alive. But the strain of this work only increased his malady, till he was seized with great pain, which at times made him senseless. The wildest rumours spread about his death and wars among his sons.

His domestic life was darkened, as bereavements thickened round his closing eyes. His best-loved daughter-in-law, Jahanzeb Banu, died in Gujarat in March 1705. His rebel son Akbar had died in exile in a foreign soil in 1704. Still earlier, his gifted daughter, the poetess Zeb-un-nisa, had ended her days in the prison of Delhi (1702).

And now Gauharara Begam, the sole survivor among his numerous brothers and sisters, died in 1706 and the news of it dragged out of his heart the pathetic cry, which he repeated again and again. "She and I alone were left among Shah Jahan's children." In May 1706, his daughter Mihr-un-nisa and her husband laid Bakhsh (Murad's son) both died together in Delhi, and next month Buland Akhtar, the son of Akbar. Two of his grand-children died shortly before his own death (1707), but his ministers mercifully withheld the news from the sipling man.

The last years of Aurangzeb's life were unspeakably gloomy. In the political sphere he found that his lifelong endeavour to govern India justly and strongly had ended in anarchy and disruption throughout the empire. A sense of unutterable loneliness haunted the heart of Aurangzeb in his old age.

One by one all the older nobles had died out, and the sole personal friend and survivor of the general on in which his youth had been nurtured that was now left to him was Asad Khan, the wazir and even he was some five years Aurangzeb 's junior. As the aged monarch looked round his court circle he only found on all sides younger men,

timid sycophants, afraid of responsibility, afraid to tell the truth and eternally intriguing in a mean spirit of personal greed and mutual jealousy.²²

His sole companions, when free from the ever-engrossing State affairs, were his daughter Zinat-un-nisa, already an old maid, and his last wife Udipuri, a low animal type of partner, whose son Kam Bakhsh broke his imperial father's heart by his freaks of insane folly and passion. Four days after sending away the last of his sons from his side, the aged and worn-out monarch was seized with a severe fever; but for three days he obstinately insisted on coming to the court room and saying the five daily prayers in full congregation.

In the morning of Friday, 20th February 1707, Aurangzeb came out of his bedroom, went through his morning prayer and began to count his beads and repeat the Islamic confession of faith in the oneness of the God head and the prophetship of Muhammad. Gradually unconsciousness creep on, his breathing became harder and harder; but such was the mastery of that indomitable spirit over the natural weakness of the body that his fingers continued to move over his rosary and his lips to gasp out the Kalimah, till about eight o'clock when all was over.

He had ever wished to die on the Muslim Sabbath Friday, and that prayer had been granted by a gracious deity to one of his truest servants. Muhammad Azam arrived in the camp on the 22nd and after mourning for his father and consoling his sister

²² Majumdar.R.C.*An Advanced History of India*.Bombay:Macmillan Publication.1974.pp.484-519.

Zinat-un- nisa Begam, he took part in carrying the corpse a short distance, and then sent it away to Khuldabad near Daulatabad for burial in the enclosure hallowed by the earthly remains of the saint Shaikh Zain-ud-din.

A low simple tomb, without any marble platform below or dome over it, but having the trough in its covering slab filled with earth for growing green herbs (in imitation of his sister Jahanara's tomb outside Delhi), now covers all that remains of the greatest of the Great Mughals save one.

Chapter Four

Administration under Aurangzeb

The Administrative System

The Muslim state was essentially a military government and depended for its very existence on the absolute authority of the monarch, who was also the supreme commander of the faithful in war. He had no regular council of ministers. The wazir or dewan was the highest officer below the Emperor and the other ministers were in no sense his colleagues but immediately inferior to him.²³ Many important questions were decided by the Emperor and the wazir alone without the knowledge of the other ministers.

But none of the ministers, not even the wazir himself, could serve as a check on the royal will; their office depended entirely on his caprice. They, therefore, could not form a cabinet in the modern sense of the term. Every Muslim sovereign is, in strict theory, the head of the church and the state alike; he is the Khalifa of the age to his subjects. The chief departments of the Mughal administration were:

1. The Exchequer and Revenue (under the Diwan or Chancellor).
2. The Imperial Household (under the Khan-i-saman or High Steward).
3. The Pay and Accounts office (under the Bakfishi or Paymaster).

²³ Lane.Poole. Stanley. *Rulers of India. Aurangzeb and The Decay of the Mughal Empire*. Calcutta: S.Chand&Co.1971.pp.106-118.

4. Canon Law (under the Qazi).
5. Religious endowments and charity (under the Sade of Sadrs).
6. Censorship of Public Morals (Muhtasib).
7. The Artillery

The Imperial Diwan received all revenue papers and despatches from the provinces and field armies, and decided all questions connected with the collection or assessment of the revenue. He also appointed and controlled the diwans of all the provinces. All orders of payment had to be signed by him. He wrote letters "by order" in his own person communicate the Emperor's wishes, and often drafted royal letters to important persons and foreign rulers.

The salary bills of all officers both civil and military had to be calculated and passed by the Bakhshi, and in the case of a field army the payment also was made through his department. At the end of Aurangzeb's reign, owing to the great expansion of the empire, there were one Chief Bakhshi (called the First Bakhshi) and three assistants, called the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Bakshis. Each field army was placed under a general appointed for lie occasion. Though at several periods officers invested with the title of 'chief of the army'. The Emperor alone was the commander-in-chief.

The Khan-i-saman or high Steward was the head of the Emperor's household department; he controlled all the personal servants of the Emperor, supervised his daily expenditure, meals, stores, &c, and accompanied him during his journeys. The state factories or Karkhanahs were managed and paid by him.

The Emperor was theoretically the highest judge in the justice and religion how administred realm, and used to try cases personally every Wednesday. But the court held by him was a tribunal of the highest appeal rather than a court of first instance.²⁴

The Qazi was the chief judge in all criminal suits of the Muslims and most civil cases, and tried them according to Muslim law, assisted by a mufti, who stated the abstract law bearing on the case after consulting Arabic books on jurisprudence, while the Qazi pronounced the sentence. The imperial Qazi, called the Qazi-ul-quzat, always accompanied the Emperor and appointed and dismissed the local qazis of the cities and large villages in every province.

The Chief Sade (called the Sade-us-sadur) was judge and supervisor of the endowments of land made by the Emperor and the princes for the support of pious men, scholars and monks. It was his duty to see that such grants were applied to their proper purpose and also to scrutinize fresh applications for grants. He was also the Emperor's almoner and had the distribution of the charity fund of the state. The provincial sadrs were appointed and supervised by him,

It was the duty of the Muhtasib to regulate the lives of the people in strict accordance with the Quranic rules and to enforce the Prophet's commands by putting down the drinking of distilled spirits, bhang and other liquid intoxicants, gambling and the practice of immorality as a profession or in public.

²⁴ Jayapalan.N.*Socio-Cultural History of India Since 1556*.Bombay:Atlantic Publishers.2000.p.499.

The punishment of heretical opinions, blasphemy against the Prophet and neglect of the five daily prayers or of the fast during the month of Ramzan, also lay within his province. The demolition of newly built temples was entrusted to him.

The administrative agency in the provinces of the Mughal empire was an exact miniature of the central government. There were the governor (officially styled nazim and popularly subafidat), the Diwan, Bakshis, Qazi, Sadr, Bugutat (keeper of government property and official trustee) and the Muhtasib, but no Khan-i-saman. Each subadar tried to play the Emperor within his own jurisdiction.

The provincial administration was concentrated in its town. At important centres or sub-divisions there were fanidars to maintain order, punish rebels and wrongdoers, and assist in the collection of revenue when opposed. The villages were neglected and either contemptuously or through insufficiency of official staff, left to live their own lives, as small self-governing units or "village communities."

In the big cities the kotwal or prefect of police not only enforced law and order, but had also to discharge many functions of a modern municipality, control the markets (weights and prices), and maintain the Quranic rules of morality.

The central government kept itself informed of the occurrences in all parts of the country by means of spies and news-reporters, both public and secret. These agents formed four classes: Waqai-navis, Sawanifi-nigar, Kiutia-navis (secret letter-writer), and Farkaraf (spy and courier). They had to send reports at regular intervals. Every public office had an open reporter or chartist attached to it. All the reports reached the Emperor through the Postmaster-General (Daroghia-i-Dakefauki).

In spite of the repeated prohibitions of the Emperors, many local officers (and even subahdars) used to exact illegal cesses under an immense variety of heads and from all classes of artisans, traders, labourers and people in general. A list of 67 such suburbs is given with explanatory notes in Mughal administration.²⁵

A further source of oppression was the practice of some subahdars to seize the goods of merchants in transit pay an inadequate price or no price at all for them and then sell these goods in the open market for their own profit or appropriate the choice articles to their own use. Only a strong and vigilant Emperor could stop it.²⁶

²⁵ Mahajan.V.D.*History of Mughal India*.New Delhi:S.Chand&Co.2008.pp.158-181.

²⁶ Burn.Richard.(ed.). *The Cambridge History of India.Vol.IV*.Calcutta:The University Press.1937.pp.222-258.

Conclusion

Aurangzeb is known as "The Last Great Mughal Emperor," who controlled the country nearly sixty years. Many detractors claim that his brutality and religious behaviour rendered him unfit to manage his empire's heterogeneous populace. His private life was simple, pious and austere. He was not a slave to his passions and scrupulously abstained from indulging in prohibited food, drink or dress. He was an ardent student of Muslim theology and an expert Caligraphist, and tried to "Educate his children in sacred law". But it is a pity that he seldom encouraged art and letters.

The only literary production which received his patronage was the "Fatawa-i-Almalgiri" which has been regarded as "the greatest Digest Muslim Law" made in India. He was a pious Muslim, and with the zeal of a puritan. He scrupulously observed the injunctions of the holy Quran". The imposition of Sharia and Jizya religious fees on non-Muslims, as well as the doubling of custom tariffs on Hindus and the destruction of temples, sparked a religious revolt against him, leading to his downfall. The character and policy of a personality like Aurangzeb is indeed a perplexing task. Some have taken into consideration mainly his faults and not his good qualities, which they have mostly ignored. The Emperor's three surviving sons fought one another in a war of succession.

In less than two years his second son Muazzam killed the other two, Azam and Kam Baksh in battle and ascended the Mughal throne under the name Bahadur Shah. On the surface everything appeared to be business as usual. A succession struggle was expected and usually rejuvenated Mughal power. But instead deep rooted problems plagued this next phase of Mughal rule.

In total five kings ascended the Mughal throne in the thirteen years after Aurangzeb's death as compared to four kings in the previous 150 years. In the face of such political instability the Mughal royal family lost sway over the nobility and found themselves unable to exercise even the basic functions of kingship such as consistent tax collection. Corruption ran rampant throughout the imperial administration and many areas broke off from the Mughal state.

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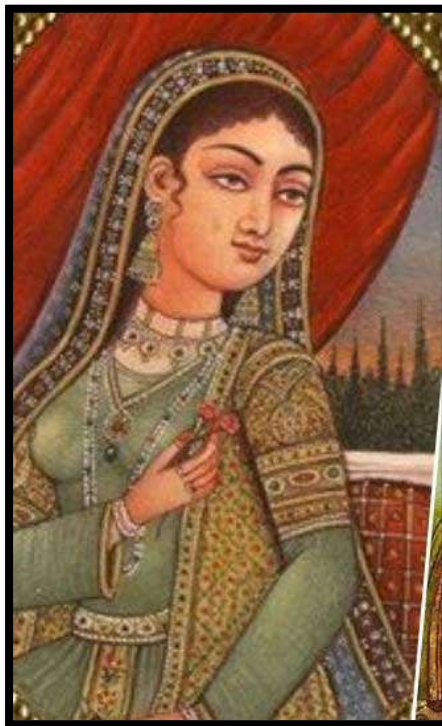
Shah Jahan with His Four Sons – Dara, Murad, Shuja and Aurnagzeb



Roshanara and Jahanara



Muhi-ud-din Muhammad Aurangzeb



Dilrus Banu begum



Hira Bai



Tomb of Aurangzeb

BHARAT RATNA ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE - A STUDY

Project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

By

A. ANTONY ARPUTHA JEROLIN

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled “ **BHARAT RATNA ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE - a STUDY**, submitted to **St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi**, affiliated to **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli**, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of **St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi**, for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts in History** and is a work done during the year **2022 – 2023** by **A. Antony Arputha Jerolin**, a bonafide student of **Department of History, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi**.


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “ BHARAT RATNA ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE - a STUDY” submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous) Thoothukudi affiliated to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History, is my original work and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Antony Arputha
Jerolin

Place: Thoothukudi

Signature of the Candidate

Date: 5.4.2023

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an Indian politician who served three terms as the 10th Prime Minister of India, first for a term of 13 days in 1996, then for a period of 13 months from 1998 to 1999, followed by a full term from 1999 to 2004.

Vajpayee was one of the co-founders and a senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He was one of the founding members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, a party linked to the Hindu organisation Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), of which he was the president between 1968 and 1973.

He was a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu nationalist volunteer organisation. He was the first Indian prime minister not of the Indian National Congress to serve a full term in office. He was also a renowned poet and a writer.¹

He was one of seven children of Shri Krishna Behari, a secondary school teacher and Hindu scholar. Shri Vajpayee's rise in public life is a tribute to both his political acumen and Indian democracy. Seeing Shri Vajpayee's writing ability, oratory, leaders like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Deendayal Upadhyay got their attention. He was a part of 'Quit India Movement'. For some time he worked as a journalist. He was also a good poet. Later, he joined politics. He founded the Bharatiya Janata Party. He used his knowledge and experience to strengthen it. Vajpayee ji was a very popular leader.

¹ Rama Chandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, Harper Collins, India 2007, p.560.

Over the decades, he has emerged as a leader who commands respect for his liberal worldview and commitment to democratic ideals. He was a member of the Indian Parliament for over five decades, having been elected ten times to the Lok Sabha, the lower house, and twice to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house. He served as the Member of Parliament for Lucknow, retiring from active politics in 2009 due to health concerns. He was among the founding members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS), of which he was president from 1968 to 1972. He served as the Foreign Minister in the government of Morarji Desai from March 1977 to July 1979. In 1980, he left the Janata Party, and helped form the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJS merged with several other parties to form the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general election. In March 1977, Vajpayee became the Minister of External Affairs in the cabinet of Prime Minister Morarji Desai. He resigned in 1979, and the Janata alliance collapsed soon after. Former members of the BJS formed the BJP in 1980, with Vajpayee its first president.

He was leader of the BJP parliamentary party between 1980 and 1984, 1986 and between 1993 and 1996. He was the leader of the Opposition in the 11th Lok Sabha².

A student of political science and law, it was in college that he developed a keen interest in foreign affairs, which he put to skillful use while representing India at various multilateral and bilateral fora.

Shri Vajpayee had embarked upon a journalist's career, which was cut short in 1951 when he joined the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the fore-runner of today's Bharatiya Janata Party, the leading component of the National

²Jaffrelot Christophe, *Hindu Nationalist Movement And Indian Politics*, C.Hurst and co Publication, India 1996, p .45.

Democratic Alliance, He became the Minister for External Affairs in 1977 when the Janata Party formed the government.

An ardent champion of women's empowerment and social equality, Shri Vajpayee believes in a forward-looking, forward moving India, a strong and prosperous nation confident of its rightful place in the comity of nations. He stands for an India anchored in 5000 years of civilisational history, ever modernising, ever renewing, ever re-energising itself to meet the challenges of the next 1000 years.

India's second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, was conferred upon him in recognition of his selfless dedication to his first and only love, India, and his more than half-a- century of service to society and the nation. In 1994, he was named India's 'Best Parliamentarian.' The citation read: "True to his name, Atalji is an eminent national leader, an erudite politician, a selfless social worker, forceful orator, poet and litterateur, journalist and indeed a multi-faceted personality...Atalji articulates the aspirations of the masses... his works ever echo total commitment to nationalism."³

During his tenure as prime minister, India carried out the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. Vajpayee sought to improve diplomatic relations with Pakistan, travelling to Lahore by bus to meet with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. After the 1999 Kargil War with Pakistan, he sought to restore relations through engagement with President Pervez Musharraf, inviting him to India for a summit at Agra. On October 13, 1999, he took charge as the Prime Minister of India for the second consecutive term as the head of a new coalition government the National Democratic Alliance. He has completed his

³Chitkara, MG, Sarma ,Bamsi Rama , *Indian Republic Issues and Perspective* ,APH Publication, India 1997, p.265.

tenure of 5 years as the Prime Minister of India. Now, he is one of the most respected political leaders of India.

Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is the only leader of the country who has been equally respected not only in his own party but also in the opposition party. While his image has been very popular as a liberal, judicious, fearless, simple-minded politician, while his eloquent orator, his passionate heart full of poet's sensibility, his personality who is faithful to Indian cultural values impresses everyone.

The administration of Narendra Modi declared in 2014 that Vajpayee's birthday, 25 December, would be marked as Good Governance Day. In 2015, he was conferred India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, by the president of India, Pranab Mukherjee. He died in 2018 of age-related illness.⁴

Aims and purpose of Study

- To learn about formative years of Vajpayee.
- To trace out the political Career of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- To be aware of the achievements of Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- To know about the role of Vajpayee in defining foreign policy of India.

Sources of Study

Different source have been used to trace 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee'. Source materials have been classified into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are based on News Paper. The Secondary sources based on books.

⁴Rama Chandra Guha, Op.cit., p.664

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is analytical and descriptive method. The source material have been analyzed. The descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Outline of the Chapters

This Project divided into Four Chapters excluding introduction and Conclusion.

- ❖ The First Chapter explains the Early Life and Education.
- ❖ The Second Chapter describes the Political Career.
- ❖ The Third Chapter gives the detailed account of the Vajpayee as Prime Minister
- ❖ The Fourth Chapter speaks about the Achievement and Honour of Vajpayee

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Vajpayee was born into a Hindu Brahmin family on 25 December 1924 in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. His mother was Krishna Devi and his father was Krishna Bihari Vajpayee. His father was a school teacher in their home town. His grandfather, Shyam Lal Vajpayee, had migrated to Morena near Gwalior from his ancestral village of Bateshwar in the Agra district of Uttar Pradesh.

Vajpayee did his schooling at the Saraswati Shishu Mandir in Gwalior. In 1934, he was admitted to the Anglo-Vernacular Middle (AVM) School in Barnagar, Ujjain district, after his father joined as headmaster. He subsequently attended Gwalior's Victoria College, Agra University (now Maharani Laxmi Bai Govt. College of Excellence) where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Hindi, English and Sanskrit. He completed his post-graduation with a Master of Arts in political science from DAV College, Kanpur, Agra University.¹

It was the year in which Mahatma Gandhi became the president of the Indian Nation Congress, which spearheaded the country's freedom struggle. Vajpayee's parents, who interestingly had the same first name Krishna Devi and Krishna Bihari Vajpayee, were residents of Morena in Gwalior, which was the one among the 565 princely states under the Raj. Vajpayee, along with older brother Prem studied at the Government Higher Secondary School at Gorkhi in Gwalior

¹Jaffrelot Christophe, Hindu nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, C.Hurst and co published, india 1996, p. 47

where their father served as the Seventh Headmaster, from 1935 to 1937. Krishna Bihari was a poet too and Vajpayee's role model. The son's early memory of the father was that of a gifted orator equally proficient in Hindi and English. It was from him that the young Atal learnt the basic of oratory, including voice modulation, pauses and the habit of choosing apt words even if they happened to be rare. The ideas of handpicking the right expression or word was to make the unfamiliar, familiar by bringing it back to use.

As the young boy Vajpayee was a good student with special interest in reading, especially the classics and poetry. Meanwhile, Vajpayee had also spent a few years schooling in Badnagar where he would meet and befriend kavi Pradeep also known as Ramchandra Narayanji Dwivedi, young Atal's poetic sensibilities. As a schoolboy, he composed a short ballad that is now sung in many RSS Shakhas : 'Hindu tan man, Hindu jeevan ,rag, rag mera Hindu parichay'.

Atal would soon go 'astray' according to RSS insiders, and get influenced by the leftist movement, briefly becoming a members of the All Indian Students Federation (AISF), which was a feeder organization of the Communist Party of India (CPI). Thousands of Students across the country had come under the spell of leftist philosophy that had begun buffeting the world at the height of the First World War.

The AISF was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru in a meeting presided by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 1936. When Vajpayee was aged twelve. Nehru and Bose were considered pro- socialist. It was the biggest and perhaps the only

nationwide student organization at the time. Vajpayee was an AISF member for a short period as a young adult.²

Around the time Vajpayee strayed towards the leftist camp, Gandhian nationalism was growing from strength to strength. It was not strange in those days for someone who grew up in a Brahmin household, prayed without fail before the family deity Boode babu, attended RSS meeting and actively took part in the Arya kumarsabha functions to veer towards Marxism and then to the movement steered by one of history's most successful mobilizers of the people: Gandhi. Vajpayee's father, in fact, feared that his young sons, especially prem and Atal, may get attracted to Gandhi and take the plunge into the world of politics. He had observed Gandhi's influence on prem and dreaded the prospect of Atal following suit.

Atal was quick to act on the recommendation of Shastri, whom he considered a great organizer and an intellectual. Unknown to him then, this decision was to change his life and set him on the road to one day becoming the prime minister of India. The Vajpayee family was a staunch adherent of Sanatan Dharma, i.e. orthodox Hinduism. Though as a sanatani, Atal would not be expected to have been exposed to the Arya Samaj, whose tenets are different from those of Sanatan Dharma, it so happened that the boy was introduced to the Arya Kumar Sabha, whose purpose was to cultivate character and a sense of purpose in young boys.

Atal's grandfather, Pandit Shyam Lal Vajpayee, had migrated to Gwalior from his native village of Bateshwar—on the edge of the Chambal ravines and on the banks of the river Yamuna—located about 70km from Agra. The village was in directly British-ruled India, in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh to be

²Ramchandra Guha, *India after Gandhi*, Harpercollins, India 2007, p.662.

precise. Shyam Lal's son, Krishna Bihari, was a school teacher and resided in the Shinde Ki Chavani area of Gwalior when Atal was born to him and his wife Krishna. It was on Christmas day, at five in the morning, when the newborn opened his eyes with church bells chiming in the background. Atal had several elder siblings; three brothers, Avadh Bihari, Sada Bihari and Prem Bihari and two sisters, Vimala and Kamala. Another sister, Urmila, was born after him.³

Atal belonged to an ordinary Indian middleclass family which relied heavily on education and culture in their children's upbringing. A Brahmin by caste, Atal had a belief system of high morals inculcated in him. His grandfather, Shyam Lal, was a Sanskrit scholar, and was fond of poetry, routinely peppering his conversation with shlokas. His father, Krishna Bihari, was also fond of literature and composed poetry in Khari Boli and Braj Bhasha. Thus, it was no surprise that the young Atal also developed a love for reading and composing poetry.

On coming of age, Atal was admitted to the Saraswati Shishu Mandir. As was the widespread practice in those days (and maybe even now), Atal's year of birth was entered as 1926 though in reality he was born in 1924. His father thought that reducing the official age of his son would give him two extra years of service; not knowing that his son would never be in service, much less government service where age mattered.

In 1935, Krishna Bihari became the headmaster of a government school in the Gorkhi locality of Gwalior; later he became the inspector of schools. Meanwhile, Atal continued his education and spent more time reading literature than the books

³ Ahuja M.L, Electoral Politics and General Elections in India, Mittal publication, India 1998, p.208

prescribed for his courses. However, he was academically strong, and scored good marks. Yet his father felt that Atal was being pampered in school and once even asked his teachers to mark his papers conservatively.

As a young lad, Atal was not immune to the political influences of his immediate environment. In August 1942, the Quit India movement caught fire everywhere in the country, with top Congress leaders led by Mahatma Gandhi locked up in jail. Gwalior too did not remain isolated, though princely states were often less affected by the troubles in British India. There were demonstrations, boycotts and even arson in Gwalior. Atal, then seventeen, and Prem Bihari, his immediate elder brother, showed signs of being influenced by the movement. Krishna Behari was alarmed. He did not want his sons involved in political activities, especially as he was a government employee. To keep them out of trouble, he packed the boys off to the native village in Bateshwar—a peaceful pilgrimage centre commemorating Lord Shiva.⁴

By 1939, fourteen-year-old Atal had begun going to shakhas of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) which had newly started operating in Gwalior. The organization had started in Nagpur in 1925, a few hundred miles south of Gwalior.

It had quickly spread in the Central Provinces, especially amongst Marathispeaking people. Gwalior too had a large Marathi population—not surprising since the rulers, the Scindias, were themselves Marathas—and the RSS soon made inroads there as well. The boys who went to the shakha along with Vajpayee were mostly Marathis and, therefore, the swayamsevak spoke in their

⁴ Guha *Op.cit.*, p.633.

mother tongue. This did not discomfit Atal. He enjoyed the physical exercises and games and especially the bauddhiks (intellectual discourses). In the beginning, Atal's father did not approve of this activity. On the eve of his becoming prime minister, Atal's sister Vimala told Rediff in an interview that Atal attended the RSS shakhas on the sly and that she, two and a half years older than him, would throw his khaki shorts over the wall for him to pick up from outside the house and go to the shakha. His old-time associates say that Atal would go to the shakha, come what may, such was his interest in the activities of the shakha.

Went to see the first-year course of the officers' training camp (OTC) of the RSS in Nagpur. Here he came in close contact with Apte. Atal had gone there to understand how the camp was being conducted. He had been invited because the management at RSS thought that he had the potential to take on leadership roles in the organization. Atal attended the valedictory function of the OTC where he caught a glimpse of the then sarsanghchalak or leader of the RSS, K.B. Hegdewar. A few months later when Hegdewar, popularly known as Doctorji, fell ill, Atal went to see him. This was an indication that the young Atal was drawn heavily towards the RSS. Years later, when Atal was the prime minister, Narayanrao Tarte told Tara Shankar Sahai of Rediff in an interview: 'Atalji's natural interest in affairs pertaining to RSS convinced me that he would be an asset in the organization.' Atal affectionately referred to Narayanrao Tarte as Mamu. It was Tarte who introduced Atal to the inner circles of the RSS.

In 1941, when Atal was in the final year of high school, he joined the OTC. The OTCs are conducted by the RSS to train their members to hold higher responsibilities, concentrating specifically on administering the working of shakhas.

Till 1947, Atal worked for the RSS at the shakha level, independently running a shakha at a place called Shandila near Lucknow. He ran the shakha in the morning and later through the day composed poetry and sought the company of writers.

Needless to add, Atal was greatly influenced by the ideology of the RSS and the means by which it operated. In fact, in an article written years after his retirement from active politics, Atal said that the 'RSS was his soul'. He went on to say how the RSS influenced people's opinions. One incident recalled by Atal relates to his elder brother, who too went to the RSS shakhas. At a winter camp of the RSS, his brother, conscious of his high caste status as a Brahmin, told the camp organizer that he would not eat along with the others but would prefer to cook his own food. The camp organizer assented and gave him all the provisions to cook food. This he did for one day, but the next day gave up the idea and stood in line along with the others to partake of food from the community kitchen. Atal referred to the incident to explain how the RSS is able to break down social barriers and bring about a feeling of togetherness.

Even before he had joined the RSS, Atal was quite influenced by the Hindu way of thinking. This is clear from a poem that he wrote when he was in class 10. Titled 'Hindu Tan-man, Hindu Jeevan', in the poem, Atal declares, 'Rag Rag Hindu meraparichay.' Alluding to the temples vandalized in India by Muslim invaders, Atal goes on to ask in the poem: 'Koi bataye Kabul meinjaakarkitne masjid today.'⁵

⁵Chitlaram G. Sarma, Bamsi Rama, *Indian Republic Issues And Perspective*, APH Publishing, India 1997, p.268.

He was also quite influenced by a book called *Amar Kirti Vijay Pataka* that had been penned by Mahatma Ramachandra Veer a contemporary activist for Hindi and for a ban on cow slaughter. Ramachandra Veer (who belonged to a region between Jaipur and Alwar in north Rajasthan) had argued in his book that the history of India over the last thousand years should be seen as that of 'struggle and victory' and not of 'defeat and slavery'. Most Hindu-inclined historians saw the saga of India from 1000 ad onwards as that of disgrace of the Hindus and their subjugation to the Muslims. Ramachandra Veer, however, gave it a positive spin in his book and this greatly moved Atal and apparently changed the direction of his life.

Atal studied Hindi, Sanskrit and English for his Bachelor of Arts degree from the college. Since there was no college in Gwalior offering a master's degree, Atal went to Kanpur on a government scholarship to study for his master's in political science at DAV College. The college was affiliated to Agra University. Atal passed his master's with flying colours, securing a first class. After completing his postgraduation Atal took admission in law classes. Incidentally, one of his classmates there was none other than his father, Krishna Bihari. He was a man strong spirit and determination; and even though he had retired from service, he wanted to keep himself intellectually busy. For some time the father and son stayed together in the same hostel room. However, Atal could not complete his LLB as India achieved independence and his professional and academic plans changed.

Vajpayee was a veteran Parliamentarian who was elected 9 times to the Lok Sabha and 2 times to the Rajya Sabha. He played a pivotal role in India's post-Independence domestic and foreign policy. During his student life, he joined the

Quit India Movement of 1942. As a student of political science, Vajpayee developed an interest in foreign affairs which reflected in his skills while representing India at various bilateral and multilateral forums. Atal was very interested in debating. In 1944, he went to debate in Allahabad. This was documented by Rajendra Singh, a lecturer at the University of Allahabad, who later became the sarsanghchalak of the RSS. Atal arrived late after his turn was over, but he requested the judges that he be allowed to speak. Atal said that he had been delayed because the train was running late and that he had come to Allahabad only to speak at the debate. By that time the judges had more or less decided on the results of the competition, but on Atal's pleading, allowed him to speak. Within a few minutes the tables had turned and the audience was enthralled. When the results were declared, Atal stood first. Two years later, Rajendra Singh recollected, there was a public oration in Kanpur which was to be addressed by a well-known leader. As was the usual practice, lesser-known speakers, amongst them Atal, spoke before the main speaker. The leader, however, once young Atal had spoken, felt no need to speak, saying that Atal had articulated very well all that he had wanted to say and there was no need for anyone to say anything anymore.⁶

In 1953, Atalji was appointed as the personal secretary of the first Jana Sangh president, Dr.Syamaprasad Mukherjee. Simultaneously, the secretary of the Jana Sangh was also made. While stepping into the electoral fray for the first time in 1955, he had to face defeat in the by-election of the seat vacated by Vijayalakshmi Pandit. Elected to the Lok Sabha for the seventh time in 1957, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1991, 1996 and 1998. In 1962 and 1986, he was nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha. He was the foreign minister during the Janata Party

⁶Bose Sumantra, *Transforming India*, Harvard University Press, India 2013, p.79.

rule from 1977 to 1979. He was also the National President of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 1980 to 1986. As foreign minister, he drew the attention of member nations towards disarmament, apartheid policy, etc. In 1999 AD, Vajpayee ji called N. D. A. (National Democratic Alliance) led a new coalition government.

His activism started in Gwalior with Arya Kumar Sabha, the youth wing of the Arya Samaj movement, of which he became the general secretary in 1944. He also joined the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in 1939 as a swayamsevak, or volunteer. Influenced by Babasaheb Apte, he attended the Officers Training Camp of the RSS during 1940 to 1944, becoming a pracharak (RSS terminology for a full-time worker) in 1947. He gave up studying law due to the partition riots. He was sent to Uttar Pradesh as a vistarak (a probationary pracharak) and soon began working for the newspapers of Deendayal Upadhyaya: Rashtradharma (a Hindi monthly), Panchjanya (a Hindi weekly), and the dailies Swadesh and Veer Arjun.⁷

⁷Chitkara, *op.cit.*,p-275

CHAPTER II

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POLITICAL CAREER

Early political career (1947–1975)

In 1951, Vajpayee was seconded by the RSS, along with Deendayal Upadhyaya, to work for the newly formed Bharatiya Jana Sangh, a Hindu right-wing political party associated with the RSS. He was appointed as a national secretary of the party in charge of the Northern region, based in Delhi. He soon became a follower and aide of party leader Syama Prasad Mukherjee. In the 1957 Indian general election, Vajpayee contested elections to the Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament. He lost to Raja Mahendra Pratap in Mathura, but was elected from Balrampur. In the Lok Sabha his oratorical skills so impressed Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru that he predicted that Vajpayee would someday become the prime minister of India.

Vajpayee's oratorical skills won him the reputation of being the most eloquent defender of the Jana Sangh's policies. After the death of Deendayal Upadhyaya, the leadership of the Jana Sangh passed to Vajpayee. He became the national president of the Jana Sangh in 1968, running the party along with Nanaji Deshmukh, Balraj Madhok, and L. K. Advani.

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Vajpayee was arrested along with several other opposition leaders during the Internal Emergency imposed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1975. Initially interned in Bangalore, Vajpayee appealed his imprisonment on the grounds of bad health, and was moved to a hospital in Delhi. In December 1976, Vajpayee ordered the student activists of the ABVP to tender an unconditional apology to Indira Gandhi for perpetrating violence and disorder. The ABVP student leaders refused to obey his order.

Gandhi ended the state of emergency in 1977. A coalition of parties, including the BJS, came together to form the Janata Party, which won the 1977 general elections. Morarji Desai, the chosen leader of the alliance, became the prime minister. Vajpayee served as the minister of external affairs, or foreign minister, in Desai's cabinet. As foreign minister, Vajpayee became the first person in 1977 to deliver a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in Hindi.

From his early political life, leaders from across the political spectrum realized that Atal had qualities that would make him universally acceptable. Jawaharlal Nehru recognized his great potential and often promoted him by inviting and introducing him to visiting dignitaries, even though Atal was then a first-term

¹Ullekh NP, *The untold Vajpayee politician and paradox*, Random House, India 2018, p.33.

parliamentarian. Under normal circumstances, a prime minister of the stature of Pandit Nehru would not have been expected to shower so much attention on a first-termer, especially one who came from an opposition party and did not belong to the same social background as him. In another example of Atal's universal acceptability, in the early 1970s, Pratipaksh, a journal of the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP), carried an article highly critical of his role in the Quit India Movement. The writer, Arun Kumar, who was a party official, remembers how George Fernandes, widely known as a hot-headed, left-leaning trade unionist, was furious².

Even Indira Gandhi had sought Vajpayee's opinion before sending the army to storm the Golden Temple during Operation Blue Star in June 1984. A few weeks before the operation, when Atal had gone to Bangalore for a naturopathy treatment, he had told Indira Gandhi over the phone that there must be other ways of flushing the militants out of the temple, and had warned her that the course of action she was mulling would have consequences. As later events showed, Indira Gandhi, hurtling to disaster, did not heed his advice, but she did seek his counsel nevertheless. Vajpayee, of course, admired her courage but did not agree with her politics. He compared her with Goddess Durga after the war for liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 and had no hesitation in saying so on the floor of Parliament. At the same time, he was often very harsh on Indira and sometimes even mocked her proclivity to concentrate all power in her own hands in a rhyme, often recited at public meetings in the 1980s: 'Indira Gandhi number ek, number do hai kaun? Kewal number ek, number do kaun hai; naari number ek baaki sub das numberi!'

Another evidence of Atal's likeability came on 26 January 1992, when he was conferred the Padma Vibhushan by the Congress-led Narasimha Rao

²Coomi Kapoor, *The Emergency a personal history*, penguin uk, uk2016,p-46.

government that was in office at the time—an act unusual in the fact that it is not common for ruling parties to bestow this honour on opposition party representatives. In fact, Narasimha Rao also appointed Atal as the leader of the official Indian delegation to the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) in Geneva in 1993. This was a crucial meeting because the Indian delegation had to face allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir.

Perhaps it was this ability to invoke trust that made him acceptable to the bosses of his alma mater, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Atal's lifestyle was far removed from that of a conservative pracharak; still, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, RSS bosses not only tolerated him but also promoted him. In fact, he was a kind of poster boy for the RSS, in spite of efforts made by political opponents to dislodge him through rumour mongering about his being hand-in-glove with top leaders of the ruling Congress party. Some rivals like Balraj Madhok espoused extreme ideologies but the RSS sarsanghchalak M.S. Golwalkar, in those heady days of the 1960s, had the practical sense to back Atal, realizing that only a man holding the middle ground could help the the political wing of the RSS expand and consolidate. Incidentally, many analysts maintain that Golwalkar believed in extreme ideologies—some of which were clearly reflected in his writings.³

In 1957, at the age of thirty-three, Atal reached Parliament for the first time. This was fairly early, considering that in those days, many old freedom fighters, some of them in their late seventies and even eighties, were ruling the roost. What brought him to the Lok Sabha were his superb oratorical skills. The then bosses of the fledgling Jana Sangh (founded in 1951), realized that Atal's way with words and the passion that he brought to his speeches were invaluable assets. Parliament helped

³Ajai Raj k., *India's Nuclear Diplomacy After PokhranII*, person Education India, india 2009, p 162.

Atal blossom, with greats like Jawaharlal Nehru and many others inspiring him. Atal's abiding interest in foreign affairs was something that was cultivated in Parliament, and his impassioned speech on Tibet in 1959 is considered by many as one of the best ever delivered on the floor of the House by any member. In his speech delivered in Hindi, Atal pointed out (and subsequent events proved that this apprehension was correct) that 'the whole aim of China is to reduce the Tibetans to a minority in their own country and destroy the Tibetan personality. It is a new phenomenon, a new type of imperialism'.

Over a period of time, Parliament was to become his second home and when Atal lost an election in 1984, he was like a fish out of water. Parliament taught him the value of democracy and democratic traditions and fashioned his political ideology. He learnt the value of cooperating with other parties on a common agenda, as well as the art of governance. Other than Nehru, Atal was greatly inspired by Jayaprakash Narayan who had come out of his retirement to launch a crusade against corruption and had united the opposition parties in their struggle against the overbearing Congress party. He was also buoyed by his experience of working as a minister in the Morarji Desai government. Although Desai had a Congress lineage, Atal realized that the former's politics was not very different from his own. Desai was old enough to be Atal's father and would admonish him at times when he felt that his minister had gone a little too far.⁴

The earliest political influence on Atal was of course that of the founder of the Jana Sangh, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, who was himself a greater orator. In fact, Shyama Prasad's speech on Kashmir on the floor of Parliament had inspired Atal. It was the early demise of Shyama Prasad that pushed Atal to the forefront

⁴ Myra Macdonald, *Defeat is an orphan, how Pakistan lost great south asianwar*, London 2017, p27.

because the loss of the great orator, it was felt, could only be made up by Atal. Young Atal's fortunes rode on the strong support he got from the longtime party secretary, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. From Deen Dayal, Atal learnt the value of being acceptable to all and striving for policies to do so. After the 1962 elections, Atal strove to form a common parliamentary group comprising the Jana Sangh, the Swatantra Party and the socialists. The leader of the socialists, Ram Manohar Lohia, was seen as a nationalist by the Jana Sangh. Atal's proposal came at a time when his rival leader in the party, Balraj Madhok, was pushing for a merger of the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party. But Atal knew that this would never materialize because the two parties had disparate support bases, so he pushed for a more feasible and practical course of action. In 1974, when the more moderate leader Jayaprakash Narayan came on scene, Atal supported him and his movement wholeheartedly on practical considerations. Atal's point of view was that it was becoming increasingly difficult to defeat the Congress electorally because of the enormous amount of money that the party commanded.

Atal had an inborn talent for oration and forging alliances even before he joined a political party. In college, in Gwalior, Atal stood for elections for the post of secretary of the students' union and he put up his own candidate for the post of the president. This candidate was weak, and was up against a resourceful opponent. However, Atal's aggressive campaigning ensured that his candidate won.

It was the influence of his Janata government experience that made Atal insist that Gandhian socialism and positive secularism be the mottos of the newly formed BJP in 1980. However, just as it was adopting a moderate line, unlike the more uncompromisingly Hindu line of its older avatar, the Jana Sangh, the ruling Congress was becoming an increasingly Hindu party! This was during Indira

Gandhi's second tenure (1980–84) when the Assam, Punjab and Kashmir problems started raising their heads. Indira's strident statements, and her visible, highly publicized visits to temples and to religious gurus, evoked the vision of a Hindu leader. Thus, there was a role reversal—the Atal-led BJP adopting a moderate line and the Indira-led Congress taking a turn to the right on political issues. Atal realized that the BJP was suffering from a Jana Sangh hangover and this had to be jettisoned, whether through portrayal of the Janata Party manifesto as its own or through moderate and carefully calibrated statements.⁵

After the appalling showing in the elections, Atal was sidelined and the reins of the party were handed over to his lieutenant Lal Krishna Advani who aggressively promoted the party on a Hindu agenda for the next decade, culminating in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Advani, a refugee from Sindh, had been an RSS worker from a young age and had been deployed to assist the Jana Sangh parliamentary party with drafting and other legislative work. Atal and Advani were great friends. They were both bachelors at that time (Atal never married and Advani only many years later). They would often go to see movies together in New Delhi's Connaught Place (now Rajiv Chowk) and spend their free time together. Undoubtedly a lot of time was also spent talking shop and confabulating on strategies for the party. Later, Advani became an MP himself. When Atal became the Jana Sangh president in 1968, after the sudden death of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Advani was close at hand to assist him in consolidating his hold over the party organization. In that way, Advani gave invaluable assistance to Atal and, when the latter stepped down after five years, he took on the mantle of presidentship after

⁵ Rodrigo tavares, *Understanding regional peace and security*, Goteborg university, goteborg2006,

Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia refused it. In the Janata government of Morarji Desai, both Atal and Advani held cabinet positions. They later launched the BJP together.

When Advani became the president of the BJP in 1986 and effectively the boss, Atal found himself marginalized. Those who know him say that he was despondent for a while but put a brave face on it. Advani, on his part, also showed him great respect. Efforts were made to persuade Atal to join the new opposition party led by V.P. Singh that was coming up to challenge Rajiv Gandhi, but he did not respond. This was construed as an inability to take a decision, but Atal's RSS background was too ingrained in him to allow him to jump ship. He might have been critical of some aspects of the thinking of the RSS but his way was to try to ensure that the shadow did not fall on the BJP, not to quit the party that he had formed.

Atal was not comfortable with the Ayodhya movement and would express his reservations in private conversations. But publicly he went along with the party. He had novel ways of protesting; when it was suggested that he become the leader of the party in the Lok Sabha so as to relieve Advani of the burden, Atal refused. Possibly he had a premonition about what would happen in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992, and thus kept away from the holy town. When the Babri Masjid was demolished, he said that it was the saddest day in his life. In April 1991, however, Atal had told a VHP rally that the construction of a temple at Ram Janmabhoomi was necessary because 'national honour' had to be restored. Atal was arrested after the demolition but he held the Government of India responsible for what had happened, saying that it had not pushed for an early decision from the Allahabad High Court in the matter of 2.77 acres of land around the masjid. Had such a decision been taken before 6 December, kar seva would have started and no untoward incident would have taken place. This line of argument by Atal found an

echo in the political resolution of the national executive meeting of the BJP in Delhi three weeks after the demolition. On 17 December, Atal also brought a no confidence motion in the Lok Sabha where he stated that the top ranks of the BJP, RSS and VHP had been trying to rein in the kar sevaks

The Ayodhya movement seemingly increased the support base of the party but the leadership had to be changed. Advani himself realized that his image had become that of a hardliner and only a softliner could lead the party to victory. There was no acceptable face in the BJP other than Atal. Murli Manohar Joshi- who had led the party in 1991 and had organized an Ekta Yatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir-did not have the ability to swing moderate votes, and neither did leaders like Sunder Singh Bhandari (considered very rigid) or even Bhairon Singh Shekhawat (who was closest to Atal in terms of ideology). Atal was the only credible choice. In addition, Atal belonged to the Hindi heartland and was a Brahmin. Till the turn of the century, being a Brahmin was a great asset for a national leader. Atal was one, but he did not take his sacred thread very seriously.

Atal's acceptability became an even more crucial factor in the run up to the party making it to the center. For constituents of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)—like Chandrababu Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Naveen Patnaik of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Nitish Kumar of Janata Dal (United) [JD(U)]—Atal was the glue that bound them together. The BJP may have been the single largest party in the Lok Sabha, but without Atal no other party was willing to ally with the saffron party. Such was the stature of Atal.⁶

Ironically, the problem that Atal faced was from his parent organization, the RSS. To insulate himself, Atal surrounded himself with liberal leaders in the BJP

⁶ Guha, *Op.cit.*, p.679.

like Jaswant Singh and George Fernandes of the Samata Party. Brajesh Mishra- former secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs who was Atal's principal secretary as well as the national security advisor- was also a close ally. All of Atal's novel political moves were planned through this team. A close aide of his says that Atal depended on those whom he was comfortable with. He knew the dictates of governance and wanted the advice of those who were best suited for the role. The RSS kept up its pressure on him, demanding its pound of flesh in governance; but Atal kept it at bay, especially when Rajendra Singh was the sarsanghchalak. Rajendra Singh and Atal had known each other for more than forty years and this made their relationship easy. However, trouble mounted when Rajendra Singh completed his tenure and was replaced by K.S. Sudarshan. Meanwhile, a clandestine campaign started in some quarters in the party that Advani should be made the prime minister, because, after all, he was the leader of the Ayodhya movement that had popularized the party.

It is this popularity of the party that had taken it to the doors of power. Sometime towards the end of 2001, Rajendra Singh (then already retired) was goaded to visit Atal and recommend to him that he become the president of India. Singh suggested that since at that time Atal's knee was troubling him, if he became the president, his life would become easier without any loss in his stature. Atal must have realized the motives behind the suggestion but kept his own counsel. Advani writes in his memoirs that the next day Rajendra Singh reported the matter to Advani. Incidentally, stories also started appearing in the press about the failing health of the prime minister, especially after his knees had been replaced.

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A particularly damaging piece appeared in TIME magazine, undoubtedly based on (incorrect) information supplied by political rivals. It presented a rather dismal picture of Atal's health, alleging that he had a damaged liver and one of his kidneys was non-functional. It also suggested that Atal required a midday siesta and that he was often not able to pay full attention during meetings. Obviously a lobby seriously campaigning for Atal's removal was at work.

Troubled days started for Atal after the Godhra riots and their handling by the Gujarat state administration. With national and international pressure being mounted on the Atal government to change the BJP-run Gujarat government, Atal was highly embarrassed. He decided to get rid of Chief Minister Narendra Modi. But, because of the pressure mounted by the hardliners in the party led by Advani, this could not materialize. Atal had to retreat; it was the first time in so many years that his leadership had been questioned. Soon thereafter, in July 2002, Advani was promoted to the rank of deputy prime minister from home minister; but he continued to handle the home portfolio. Sensing that Atal was now getting weaker, other elements in the party, not comfortable with liberalized economic policies, started questioning some of the reforms moves. Labour leader Dattopant Thengadi, who was the main architect of the Swadeshi movement, publicly called Atal's finance minister (artha mantri) anarth mantri from a public platform. This was an open demonstration of the differences within the Sangh Parivar regarding the government's economic policies.⁷

Atal was able to balance the Ayodhya issue very finely. This was in spite of the pressure from the Sangh Parivar on one side and the NDA constituents on the other. In May 1996, Atal said: 'If the problems related with religion are not resolved

for a long period of time, the result is what happened at Ayodhya.' On 6 December 2000-the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition-he said that the Ram Janmabhoomi movement was an 'expression of national sentiment that was still to be realized'. But a week later, under pressure from his NDA allies and also the opposition, Atal backtracked and got the NDA to issue a resolution saying that status quo must be maintained at the disputed site till the Supreme Court delivered its verdict.

At the end of the same year, in his musings from Kumarakom where he had gone for a break, Atal clarified that the reference to the Ram temple and national sentiment was in the 'past tense' and that 'we cannot forever be shackled to debate on demolitions, either of the distant or recent past, India must move on'.⁸

Atal's greatest achievement is, however, his move to normalize relations with neighbouring Pakistan. This was a mission fraught with trouble because of the internal power structure in Pakistan. Many analysts averred that the existence of Pakistan depended on the country maintaining continuing hostility with India. Atal had a bloody nose to show for his peace initiatives, his journey to Lahore in 1999 being reciprocated by Kargil. However, this did not deter him. He gave it back to Pakistan by evicting it from Kargil and again initiated peace moves. Atal was also not on the backfoot because of the allegations made by his detractors that the zeal shown by him was prompted by a desire to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and not because of any genuine interest in peace. The stories about his wanting a Nobel Prize started after then American assistant secretary of state for South Asia, Karl Inderfurth, stated: 'Leaders of India and Pakistan are certain to win the Nobel Prize if they succeed in implementing their resolve to live in harmony.'

⁸Ghatate NM, *Atal Behari Vajpayee Decisive Days*, Shipra Publication, New Delhi 1999, p.56.

In His Early Political life, Atal was greatly influenced by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. About eight years older than Atal, Deen Dayal belonged to the same region in north India as him. He was a Brahmin like Atal but had led an impoverished life after his father died young. Deen Dayal had grown up in different places of north India like Mathura and Agra thanks to the transfer of his guardians. Like Atal, he too had joined the RSS and was impressed by the dedication of the organization. When the Jana Sangh was founded by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in 1951, with the support of the RSS, a few pracharaks were seconded to the new political party. Among them was Deen Dayal Upadhyaya who greatly impressed Shyama Prasad. In turn, Deen Dayal was very taken with Atal, whose work as editor of *Rashtradharma* and *Panchajanya* had been observed by Upadhyaya from close quarters. Deen Dayal averred that Atal, with his youth, energy and writing skills, would be of great assistance. Thus, the young man was introduced to Shyama Prasad. The president of the Jana Sangh used to publicly say that if he had three associates like Deen Dayal, he would change the political face of India. Thus a recommendation from Deen Dayal held great value for Shyama Prasad. Little wonder then that Atal Bihari soon became an assistant to Shyama Prasad, helping him in his political work, especially relating to Kashmir. In his autobiography, L.K. Advani recalls his first meeting with Atal in 1952, when the latter was accompanying Shyama Prasad on a train journey to Rajasthan to popularize the fledgling party. Advani says that Atal came across as a 'young, intense looking political activist, lean and imbued with youthful idealism and carried around him the aura of a poet who had drifted into politics, something was smouldering in him'.

While pursuing his graduation in Gwalior, Atal met Rajkumari, a woman who would become Radha to his Krishna soulmates bound by undying love though

not matrimony, born in 1925 as Rajkumari Haksar in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, to Govind Narain and Manmohini Haksar, she was the second cousin of Indira Gandhi, a fact that the young Atal may not have known when they first met in college. Rajkumari also called 'Bibi' lived briefly in Old Delhi before moving to Gwalior with her family, where her father got a job with the Scindia family's education department, another fortuitous link between Atal and Rajkumari.⁹

Their love story began with a billet-doux he left for her in a book but took an entirely unique route. They would go on to become the most unconventional couple in Indian politics: he would remain a bachelor; she would marry another man; he would adopt her daughter; and they would all live together in the same household with several dogs, cats and security guards for over five decades, till she passed away in 2014 at the age of eighty-eight.

When asked why he hadn't married all his life, Vajpayee would always reply, nonchalantly, 'I didn't get the time.' After completing his BA Magna cum laude from Victoria college, Vajpayee enrolled for an MA in political science at the DayanandAnglo-Vedic College in Kanpur, more than 260 Kilometers from his home town. By then, he had been the general secretary of the Arya Kumar Samaj and was a frequent visitor to the RSS Shakhshas. Yet, his primary association was with the Arya Samaj, which was founded in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati, to propagate Vedic philosophy. Dayanand, who was born in 1824 and died in 1883 from poisoning, had a great influence on many intellectuals and leaders, including Bhagat Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose. He is widely credited with popularizing the term 'Swarajya', and for advocating India's freedom.

⁹ Rafiq Dossani, *India Arriving, How This Economic Powerhouse is redefining Global Business*, American 2008, p.154.

After completing his BA Magna cum laude from Victoria college, Vajpayee enrolled for an MA in political science at the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College in Kanpur, more than 260 Kilometers from his home town. By then, he had been the general secretary of the Arya Kumar Samaj and was a frequent visitor to the RSS Shakhshas. Yet, his primary association was with the Arya Samaj, which was founded in 1875 by Dayanand Saraswati, to propagate Vedic philosophy. Dayanand, who was born in 1824 and died in 1883 from poisoning, had a great influence on many intellectuals and leaders, including Bhagat Singh and Subhas Chandra Bose. He is widely credited with popularizing the term 'Swarajya', and for advocating India's freedom.

Vajpayee was deeply inthened by the Arya Samaj philosophy, which was gressive on the one hand and reactionary on the other. This school of thought that certain camatan corthodox Hinda) belets are unessential and a hindrance to the growth of Hinduism would have a lasting impression on young Atal Unlike older forms of Hindu culture, this philosophy permined anglicized education and meat eating. In fact, the Arya Samaj itself had spin over these issues. Vajpayee's association was with the moderate college faction of the Arya Samaj led by Hans Ray and Lala Lajpat Rai The more militant and openly revivalist faction was led by Lekh Ram and Munshi Ram, who insisted on brahmacharya (celibacy) and Velic training. But both factions agreed on the threat that Hinduism faced from the Abrahamic religions and even bomegrown ones.¹⁰

Vajpayee went to Kanpur to pursue higher studies, funded by the Scindia royal family of Gwalior, whom he naturally revered. He received Rs 75 a month as part of scholarships. That Sir Jivajirao Scindia offered his subjects on the condition that

¹⁰ Myra *Op cit.*, p.64

they would work for him for at least three years after completing studies. The money Vajpayee received was a princely sum in the 1940s. Later, the royal family would refer to him as its 'creation'. Many veteran journalists in Delhi remember that Vajpayee was in awe of the Scindia family and would touch the feet of Jivajirao's widow, Vijayaraje Scindia, who later became his party colleague. Senior journalists in Gwalior remember that Sambhajirao Angre, a retainer and a close confidant of Vijayaraje, often stated that Vajpayee was 'our ward, our guy'.

Incidentally, the Scindias were staunch allies of British rule in India. In her much-recited poem eulogizing the Rani of Jhansi, Subhadra Kumari Chouhan, the gifted poet who passed away in 1948 at the young age of forty-three, had mentioned the Gwalior family as a 'friend of the British'. In fact, there was an attempt to get rid of that line from school textbooks in Madhya Pradesh some years ago.

Vajpayee did his master's in political science from DAV College (then under Agra University) at a time when India was going through its most politically charged period in history: on the cusp of Independence from Britain. Atal was a favourite of his teachers, especially Dr Madan Mohan Pandey. He used to visit his guruji's home nearby to discuss contemporary politics and academic matters. Teachers who knew Pandey quote him as saying, "Vajpayee was a high performer and a sober boy." Vajpayee's favourite authors were Sarat Chandra and Premchand, and the poets he drew inspiration from were Harivansh Rai Bachchan, Suryakanth Tripathi 'Nirala' and Bal Krishna Sharma Naveen

Atal was much younger than Nehru's daughter, Indira, and, therefore, the prime minister had some paternal affection for him even though they came from different backgrounds and subscribed to different ideological beliefs. Shyama

Prasad Mukherjee, who had been the Jana Sangh's leader in the Lok Sabha earlier, used to clash bitterly with Nehru on the floor of the House. Atal was too young to be pugnacious in front of Nehru, and his detractors used this to question his credentials. Balraj Madhok, his bitter enemy in the Jana Sangh, is quoted by Hindustan Times journalist Pankaj Vohra in his blog many years later, as saying, 'When I criticized Nehru in Parliament on [sic] the wake of the Chinese aggression, Vajpayee told me that I would never get elected to Lok Sabha again. Acharya Kripalani who was sitting nearby told me that do not take him seriously since he is Nehru's planted man in the opposition.' One does not know how true this incident is or whether it merely reflects Madhok's feelings about Atal. Madhok not only saw Atal as a rival in the party but also as somebody who leaned towards being a liberal. Perhaps along with the RSS, Atal was also getting influenced by Nehru and his policies and even his style. This feeling, amongst other things, had been strengthened by a little-known essay that Atal wrote in 1960. Ramachandra Guha, historian and public intellectual, writing in the Hindu on 4 July 2004, quoted from this essay to highlight Vajpayee's vision of what India should be: 'The Jana Sangh must be open to all Indian citizens irrespective of creed or sect. The decision to keep the party's doors open to all citizens is not prompted by any considerations of political expediency. The Jana Sangh holds that the state by its very nature is a secular body and therefore it should not align itself with any particular religion or sect. The party is opposed to politics linked to religion and also feels that religious institutions should confine their activities to their particular fields. In the partition of the country we have already had a grim experience of the consequences of mingling politics with religion.'¹¹

¹¹ Kingshuk Nag, *A Man For All Seasons*, Rupa Publication Pvt Ltd, New Delhi 2016, p23

Nehru's positive attitude towards Atal was in evidence once again in 1961 when he decided to constitute a National Integration Council (NIC). The council was conceived as a group of senior politicians and public figures that would look for ways to address the problems of communalism, casteism and regionalism that were issues dividing the country. Nehru nominated Atal as a member of the NIC. However, by the time the first meeting of the council was held in 1962, Atal had lost his seat in the Lok Sabha in the third general elections. In what was a blow to the Jana Sangh and him, Atal lost his Balrampur seat narrowly to Subhadhra Joshi of the Congress by about 2,000 votes.

However, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya could not allow Atal to remain out of Parliament. So, in the same year Atal was sent to the Rajya Sabha. To retain his position, Atal was made the head of the Jana Sangh parliamentary party. Deen Dayal did not want to lose the advantage they would have with Atal as the leader. There was now a familiarity with him in the top political circles. This helped establish the Jana Sangh in the upper echelons of power, the same way as organizational work helped ground the party among people. In the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha, Atal Bihari was elected from UP and began his term in the Upper House from 3 April 1962. His six-year term was till 2 April 1968.

As a member of the Rajya Sabha, Atal was active as a legislator and, in 1966-67, he was elected the chairman of the Committee on Government Assurances. This was a committee of MPs whose function was to scrutinize the assurances, promises and undertakings given by ministers on the floor of the House and report whether these have been implemented or not. In 1966, as per official statistics, the government made 436 assurances on the floor of the Rajya Sabha and in the

following year, 495. The Vajpayee-led committee found that all the assurances were implemented. As a Rajya Sabha member, Atal

After asking Deen Dayal again, RSS chief M.S. Golwalkar decided that now that the party was over ten-years old, somebody from within its fold should be elevated to the post. The choice fell on Bachharaj Vyas, an RSS karyakarta from Nagpur. Belonging to Nagpur, Vyas was extremely close to the RSS heads, especially Balasaheb Deoras who was then high up in the RSS hierarchy and a few years later became its sarsanghchalak or chief. In fact, Vyas was a swayamsevak of the sangh shakha of which Deoras was the karyavaha. Though a sincere man, Vyas, besides being extremely self-effacing, had no knack for public affairs except at the organizational level. The RSS bosses thought that Vyas's personality had undergone a metamorphosis after coming in touch with the organization and, therefore, he could well be elevated to head the Jana Sangh. Deoras later remembered Vyas's 'metamorphic change' in a speech. He said that when he joined the RSS, Vyas had difficulty meeting and mixing with people. When he first attended a Sangh camp, he was not comfortable partaking of common meals prepared in the community kitchen and served to all. When Dr Hegdewar (the sarsanghchalak) came to the camp and was told about Vyas's problem by Deoras, he did not crack down on Vyas. Rather, he instructed the camp organizers to allow Vyas to come with his own utensils and give him grains and raw vegetables so that he could cook his own meals. For the entire duration of the camp, Vyas cooked his own food. But the next year, he went to Hegdewar and told him that he was a changed man and was ready to eat with everybody e

The RSS bosses may have thought that Vyas was a changed man, but two upcoming Jana Sangh leaders thought little of him. One of them was Atal Bihari

Vajpayee and the other was Balraj Madhok. The two were so incensed that they refused to attend the annual meeting of the party in 1965 in Vijayawada where the change of leadership was to be formalized and Vyas was to be installed as the new president

Orientation Towards RSS

This reveals Vajpayee's true spirit of commitment towards the ideals of our Constitution and his love for the people of India. It was his love for his motherland and faith in the ideals of secularism that inspired him to actively participate in the Indian political scene. It was this even burning spirit in him that guided Vajpayee not to divert his path of following the set ideals and principles of his life. Vajpayee's dynamism in politics, nurtured after he joined the RSS in the early phase of his political career being influenced by its ideals. Furthermore, Vajpayee's formal induction into politics coincided with the launch of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the first genuine non-Congress party, on the eve of the first election in 1951. Vajpayee's charisma attracted the then political bureau and he received recognition from none other than Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee as the Party's rising star. Consequently, Vajpayee was fielded as the "Jana Sangh" candidate from three constituencies in the 1957 election, Lucknow, Mathura and Balrampur. He was defeated in Lucknow and forfeited his deposit in Mathura but won in Balrampur; making him one of the four Jana Sangh Member of Parliament (MP)'s who were elected to the Lok Sabha that year. This was the first entry of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Indian political scene as a representative face of the RSS political philosophy. This was also a major turning point in his political career. The young MP, representing a little-known constituency, soon became a star attraction and in later years took his party from strength to strength in the State legislative assemblies as well as the Parliament. A noteworthy

feature of Vajpayee is that, in the initial years of his career, he was a staunch follower of the RSS and followed its ideals quite rigidly. This is evident by his speech in a party meet, when he unequivocally stated "The Sangh is my Soul". However, before assessing Vajpayee's involvement with the RSS, it is important to review the background and the core ideology of the RSS.

The 800-year-long resistance of the Hindus to Islamic rule had its own lesson for the British. Seeing that physical repression would not be of much avail, the British, through subtle and not-so-subtle ways, attempted to subvert the Hindu mind itself. They did succeed in part; and a Westward-looking social segment was created, mainly through enforcing their new system of education tailored to generate armies of clerks and "brown sahibs". Needless to say, in such an environment, a cleavage developed between the society and its cultural roots and legacy, which resulted in putting the nation's identity at stake. It was to such a national self-oblivion that a cure had to be found. The Congress leaders' policy of appeasement of the Muslims remained one of the symptoms of the malaise. It is an irony of history that even after paying the ultimate price of vivisection of their cherished motherland-the Hindus have been treated as second-order citizens by successive governments of independent Bharat. This was indeed foreseen by Dr. Hedgewar. Years of his thinking had convinced him that a strong and united Hindu society alone is the sine qua non for not only an all-round prosperity but for the very survival of Bharat as an independent sovereign nation. Social cohesion alone could ensure national integrity. Hedgewar's response to this challenge was the founding of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh in 1925. The sweep and amplitude of one great mind can be fully grasped only by minds with a like vision and imagination. Thus, even in the early days of the Sangh, it drew praise and approval from eminent

stalwarts including Mahatma Gandhi, Savarkar, Subhash Chandra Bose, Madan Mohan Malaviya and others.¹²

This reveals Vajpayee's true spirit of commitment towards the ideals of our Constitution and his love for the people of India. It was his love for his motherland and faith in the ideals of secularism that inspired him to actively participate in the Indian political scene. It was this everburning spirit in him that guided Vajpayee not to divert his path of following the set ideals and principles of his life. Vajpayee's dynamism in politics, nurtured after he joined the RSS in the early phase of his political career being influenced by its ideals. Furthermore, Vajpayee's formal induction into politics coincided with the launch of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the first genuine non-Congress party, on the eve of the first election in 1951. Vajpayee's charisma attracted the then political bureau and he received recognition from none other than Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee as the Party's rising star. Consequently, Vajpayee was fielded as the "Jana Sangh" candidate from three constituencies in the 1957 election, Lucknow, Mathura and Balrampur. He was defeated in Lucknow and forfeited his deposit in Mathura but won in Balrampur; making him one of the four Jana Sangh Member of Parliament (MP)'s who were elected to the Lok Sabha that year. This was the first entry of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Indian political scene as a representative face of the RSS political philosophy. This was also a major turning point in his political career. The young MP, representing a little-known constituency, soon became a star attraction and in later years took his party from strength to strength in the State legislative assemblies as well as the Parliament. A noteworthy feature of Vajpayee is that, in the initial years of his career, he was a staunch follower of the RSS and followed its ideals quite rigidly. This is evident by his

¹²Dixit JN, *Indian and regional Developments through the prism of indo -pak Relations*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi 2004, pp- 64-65.

speech in a party meet, when he unequivocally stated "The Sangh is my Soul". However, before assessing Vajpayee's involvement with the RSS, it is important to review the background and the core ideology of the RSS.

When The Janata Government came to power, Atal Bihari Vajpayee was appointed external affairs minister. This was natural because India's relationship with other countries had been a subject of great interest to Atal ever since he entered the portals of Parliament in 1957. On 26 March 1977, when Atal went to his ministerial office after taking oath in the Morarji Desai government, he instinctively realized that something was missing in the room. He had been there many times before as an MP and thus had a fairly good idea about what was there in the room. He soon spotted a vacant space on the wall and it immediately occurred to him that what was missing was a portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru that used to hang on the wall.

Later Career

In 1979, Desai and Vajpayee resigned, triggering the collapse of the Janata Party.^{[15][21]} The erstwhile members of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh came together to form the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980, with Vajpayee as its first President.

The 1984 general elections were held in the wake of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination by her Sikh bodyguards. While he had won the 1977 and the 1980 elections from New Delhi, Vajpayee shifted to his home town Gwalior for the election.

Vidya Razdan was initially tipped to be the Congress (I) candidate. Instead, Madhavrao Scindia, scion of the Gwalior royal family, was brought in on the last day of filing nominations. Vajpayee lost to Scindia, managing to secure only 29% of the votes.

CHAPTER III

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VAJPAYEE AS PRIME MINISTER

A veteran Indian politician Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the 10th Prime Minister of India. Vajpayee's Prime Ministerial tenure included three non-consecutive terms – the first for 15 days (from 16 May 1996 to 1 June 1996), the second for a period of 13 months (from 19 March 1998 to 26 April 1999), and the third for five years (from 13 October 1999 till 22 May 2004). He was the first Prime Minister since Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru to take charge as PM for two successive mandates.

Vajpayee was sworn in as prime minister in May 1996 but was in office only 13 days, after failing to attract support from other parties. In early 1998 he again became prime minister, in elections in which the BJP won a record number of seats, but he was forced to make a shaky alliance with regional parties. In 1999 the BJP increased its seats in parliament and consolidated its hold on government.

During a BJP conference in Mumbai in November 1995, BJP President Advani declared that Vajpayee would be the party's prime ministerial candidate in the forthcoming elections. Vajpayee himself was reported to be unhappy with the announcement, responding by saying that the party needed to win the election first. The BJP became the single largest party in Parliament in the 1996 general election, helped by religious polarisation across the country as a result of the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Indian president Shankar Dayal Sharma invited Vajpayee to form the government. Vajpayee was sworn in as the 10th prime minister of India, but the BJP failed to muster a

majority among members of the Lok Sabha. Vajpayee resigned after 16 days, when it became clear that he did not have enough support to form a government¹.

Second term: 1998–1999

Second Vajpayee ministry

After the fall of the two United Front governments between 1996 and 1998, the Lok Sabha was dissolved and fresh elections were held. The 1998 general elections again put the BJP ahead of others. A number of political parties joined the BJP to form the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), and Vajpayee was sworn in as the prime minister. The coalition was an uneasy one, as apart from the Shiv Sena, none of the other parties espoused the BJP's Hindu-nationalist ideology. Vajpayee has been credited for managing this coalition successfully, while facing ideological pressure from the hardline wing of the party and from the RSS. Vajpayee's government lasted 13 months until mid-1999 when the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) under J. Jayalalithaa withdrew its support. The government lost the ensuing vote of confidence motion in the Lok Sabha by a single vote on 17 April 1999. As the opposition was unable to come up with the numbers to form the new government, the Lok Sabha was again dissolved and fresh elections were held.

¹ Sharma SK, *Prime Minister Of India*, Anmol Publications Pvt Ltd, New Delhi 2007, p.613

Nuclear tests

Pokhran-II

In May 1998, India conducted five underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran desert in Rajasthan, 24 years after its first nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) in 1974. Two weeks later, Pakistan responded with its own nuclear tests making it the newest nation with declared nuclear capability. While some nations, such as France, endorsed India's right to defensive nuclear power, others including the United States, Canada, Japan, Britain and the European Union imposed sanctions on information, resources and technology to India. In spite of intense international criticism and steady decline in foreign investment and trade, the nuclear tests were popular domestically. In effect, the international sanctions imposed failed to sway India from weaponising its nuclear capability. US sanctions against India and Pakistan were eventually lifted after just six months².

Lahore summit

In late 1998 and early 1999, Vajpayee began a push for a full-scale diplomatic peace process with Pakistan. With the historic inauguration of the Delhi-Lahore bus service in February 1999, Vajpayee initiated a new peace process aimed towards permanently resolving the Kashmir dispute and other conflicts with Pakistan. The resultant Lahore Declaration espoused a commitment to dialogue, expanded trade relations and mutual friendship and envisaged a goal of denuclearised South Asia. This

² DAS Sujata K, *Atal Bihari Vajpayee Prime Minister of India*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi 2004, p.45.

eased the tension created by the 1998 nuclear tests, not only within the two nations but also in South Asia and the rest of the world.

AIADMK's withdrawal from coalition

The AIADMK had continually threatened to withdraw from the coalition and national leaders repeatedly flew down from Delhi to Chennai to pacify the AIADMK general secretary J. Jayalalithaa. However, in May 1999, the AIADMK did pull the plug on the NDA, and the Vajpayee administration was reduced to a caretaker status pending fresh elections scheduled for October 1999.

Kargil War

In May 1999 some Kashmiri shepherds discovered the presence of militants and non-uniformed Pakistani soldiers (many with official identifications and Pakistan Army's custom weaponry) in the Kashmir Valley, where they had taken control of border hilltops and unmanned border posts. The incursion was centred around the town of Kargil, but also included the Batalik and Akhnoor sectors and artillery exchanges at the Siachen Glacier.

The Indian army responded with Operation Vijay, which launched on 26 May 1999. This saw the Indian military fighting thousands of militants and soldiers in the midst of heavy artillery shelling and while facing extremely cold weather, snow and treacherous terrain at the high altitude. Over 500 Indian soldiers were killed in the three-month-long Kargil War, and it is estimated around 600–4,000 Pakistani militants and soldiers died as well. India pushed back the Pakistani militants and Northern Light Infantry soldiers. Almost 70% of the territory was recaptured by India. Vajpayee sent a

"secret letter" to U.S. President Bill Clinton that if Pakistani infiltrators did not withdraw from the Indian territory, "we will get them out, one way or the other" - meaning he did not rule out crossing the Line of Control (LoC), or was the use of nuclear weapons.

After Pakistan suffered heavy losses, and with both the United States and China refusing to condone the incursion or threaten India to stop its military operations, General Pervez Musharraf was recalcitrant and Nawaz Sharif asked the remaining militants to stop and withdraw to positions along the LoC. The militants were not willing to accept orders from Sharif but the NLI soldiers withdrew. The militants were killed by the Indian army or forced to withdraw in skirmishes which continued even after the announcement of withdrawal by Pakistan³.

Third term: 1999–2000

The 1999 general elections were held in the aftermath of the Kargil operations. The BJP-led NDA won 303 seats out of the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha, securing a comfortable and stable majority. On 13 October 1999, Vajpayee took oath as the prime minister of India for the third time.

A national crisis emerged in December 1999, when Indian Airlines flight IC 814 from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by five terrorists and flown to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The hijackers made several demands including the release of certain terrorists like Masood Azhar from prison. Under pressure, the government ultimately caved in. Jaswant Singh, the minister of external affairs at the time, flew with the terrorists to Afghanistan and exchanged them for the passengers.

³ Venkatesan G, *History of Contemporary India 1947-2014*, V.C Publication, New Delhi 1991, pp-415-416

In March 2000, Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, paid a state visit to India. This was the first state visit to India by a U.S. president in 22 years, since President Jimmy Carter's visit in 1978. President Clinton's visit was hailed as a significant milestone in relations between the two nations. Vajpayee and Clinton had wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and international developments. The visit led to expansion in trade and economic ties between India and the United States. A vision document on the future course of Indo-U.S. relations was signed during the visit.

Domestically, the BJP-led government was influenced by the RSS, but owing to its dependence on coalition support, it was impossible for the BJP to push items like building the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, repealing Article 370 which gave a special status to the state of Kashmir, or enacting a uniform civil code applicable to adherents of all religions. On 17 January 2000, there were reports of the RSS and some BJP hard-liners threatening to restart the Jan Sangh, the precursor to the BJP, because of their discontent over Vajpayee's rule. Former president of the Jan Sangh Balraj Madhok had written a letter to the then-RSS chief Rajendra Singh for support. The BJP was, however, accused of "saffronising" the official state education curriculum and apparatus, saffron being the colour of the RSS flag of the RSS, and a symbol of the Hindu nationalism movement. Home Minister L. K. Advani and the Human Resource Development Minister (now called Education Minister) Murli Manohar Joshi were indicted in the 1992 Babri Mosque demolition case for inciting a mob of activists. Vajpayee himself came under public scrutiny owing to his controversial speech one day prior to the mosque demolition.

These years were accompanied by infighting in the administration and confusion regarding the direction of government. Vajpayee's weakening health was also a

subject of public interest, and he underwent a major knee-replacement surgery at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai to relieve intense pressure upon his legs.

In March 2001, the Tehelka group released a sting operation video named Operation West End which showed BJP president Bangaru Laxman, senior army officers and NDA members accepting bribes from journalists posing as agents and businessmen. The Defence Minister George Fernandes was forced to resign following the Barak Missile scandal involving the botched supplies of coffins for the soldiers killed in Kargil, and the findings of an inquiry commission that the government could have prevented the Kargil invasion.

Vajpayee initiated talks with Pakistan, and invited Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf to Agra for a joint summit. President Musharraf was believed to be the principal architect of the Kargil War in India. By accepting him as the President of Pakistan, Vajpayee chose to move forward leaving behind the Kargil War. But after three days of much fanfare, which included Musharraf visiting his birthplace in Delhi, the summit failed to achieve a breakthrough as President Musharraf declined to leave aside the issue of Kashmir.⁴

2001 attack on Parliament

On 13 December 2001, a group of masked, armed men with fake IDs stormed Parliament House in Delhi. The terrorists managed to kill several security guards, but the building was sealed off swiftly and security forces cornered and killed the men who were later proven to be Pakistan nationals. Vajpayee ordered Indian troops to mobilise for war, leading to an estimated 5,00,000 to 7,50,000 Indian soldiers positioned along the

⁴ Bimal Prasad, *Indian Foreign Policy*, Vikas Publication House Pvt Ltd, New Delhi 1979, pp-188-189.

international border between India and Pakistan. Pakistan responded by mobilising its own troops along the border. A terrorist attack on an army garrison in Kashmir in May 2002 further escalated the situation. As the threat of war between two nuclear capable countries and the consequent possibility of a nuclear exchange loomed large, international diplomatic mediation focused on defusing the situation. In October 2002, both India and Pakistan announced that they would withdraw their troops from the border.

The Vajpayee administration brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 2002. The act was aimed at curbing terrorist threats by strengthening powers of government authorities to investigate and act against suspects. It was passed in a joint session of the parliament, amidst concerns that the law would be misused.

Another political disaster hit his government between December 2001 and March 2002: the VHP held the Government hostage in a major standoff in Ayodhya over the Ram temple. On the 10th anniversary of the destruction of the Babri mosque, the VHP wanted to perform a shiladaan, or a ceremony laying the foundation stone of the cherished temple at the disputed site.^[89] Thousands of VHP activists amassed and threatened to overrun the site and forcibly perform the ceremony. A grave threat of not only communal violence, but an outright breakdown of law and order owing to the defiance of the government by a religious organisation hung over the nation. The incident, however, ended peacefully with a symbolic handover of a stone at a different location 1 km away from the disputed site.⁵

⁵Sharma SK, Op.cit., pp-624-626

2002 Gujarat violence

In February 2002, a train filled with Hindu pilgrims returning to Gujarat from Ayodhya stopped in the town of Godhra. A scuffle broke out between Hindu activists and Muslim residents, and the train was set on fire, leading to the deaths of 59 people. The charred bodies of the victims were displayed in public in the city of Ahmedabad, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad called for a statewide strike in Gujarat. These decisions stoked anti-Muslim sentiments. Blaming Muslims for the deaths, rampaging Hindu mobs killed thousands of Muslim men and women, destroying Muslim homes and places of worship. The violence raged for more than two months, and more than 1,000 people died. Gujarat was being ruled by a BJP government, with Narendra Modi as the chief minister. The state government was criticised for mishandling the situation. It was accused of doing little to stop the violence, and even being complicit in encouraging it.

Vajpayee reportedly wanted to remove Modi, but was eventually prevailed upon by party members to not act against him. He travelled to Gujarat, visiting Godhra, and Ahmedabad, the site of the most violent riots. He announced financial aid for victims, and urged an end to the violence. While he condemned the violence, he did not chastise Modi directly in public. When asked as to what would be his message to the chief minister in the event of the riots having taking place, Vajpayee responded that Modi must follow raj dharma, Hindi for ethical governance.

At the meeting of the BJP national executive in Goa in April 2002, Vajpayee's speech generated controversy for its contents which included him saying: "Wherever Muslims live, they don't like to live in co-existence with others." The Prime Minister's Office stated that these remarks had been taken out of context. Vajpayee was accused of doing nothing to stop the violence, and later admitted mistakes in handling the events. K.

R. Narayanan, then president of India, also blamed Vajpayee's government for failing to quell the violence. After the BJP's defeat in the 2004 general elections, Vajpayee admitted that not removing Modi had been a mistake.⁶

2002-2004

In late 2002 and 2003 the government pushed through economic reforms. The country's GDP growth exceeded 7% every year from 2003 to 2007, following three years of sub-5% growth. Increasing foreign investment, modernisation of public and industrial infrastructure, the creation of jobs, a rising high-tech and IT industry and urban modernisation and expansion improved the nation's international image. Good crop harvests and strong industrial expansion also helped the economy.

In May 2003, he announced before the parliament that he would make one last effort to achieve peace with Pakistan. The announcement ended a period of 16 months, following the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, during which India had severed diplomatic ties with Pakistan. Although diplomatic relations did not pick up immediately, visits were exchanged by high-level officials and the military standoff ended. The Pakistani President and Pakistani politicians, civil and religious leaders hailed this initiative as did the leaders of the United States, Europe and much of the world. In July 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee visited China, and met with various Chinese leaders. He recognised Tibet as a part of China, which was welcomed by the Chinese leadership, and which, in the following year, recognised Sikkim as part of India. China-India relations improved greatly in the following years.

⁶Venkatesan G, Op.cit. ,pp 423-424

Vajpayee remained a bachelor for his entire life. He adopted and raised Namita Bhattacharya as his own child, the daughter of longtime friend Rajkumari Kaul and her husband B. N. Kaul. His adopted family lived with him.

Unlike purist Brahmins who shun meat and alcohol, Vajpayee was known to be fond of whisky and meat. He was a noted poet, writing in Hindi. His published works include *Kaidi Kaviraj Ki Kundalian*, a collection of poems written during the 1975–1977 emergency, and *Amar aaghai*. With regard to his poetry he wrote, "My poetry is a declaration of war, not an exordium to defeat. It is not the defeated soldier's drumbeat of despair, but the fighting warrior's will to win. It is not the despirited voice of dejection but the stirring shout of vi.⁷

DEATH

Vajpayee had a stroke in 2009 which impaired his speech. His health had been a major source of concern; reports said he was reliant on a wheelchair and failed to recognise people. He also had dementia and long-term diabetes. For many years, he had not attended any public engagements and rarely ventured out of the house, except for checkups at the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences.

On 11 June 2018, Vajpayee was admitted to AIIMS in critical condition following a kidney infection. He was officially declared dead there at 5:05 pm IST on 16 August 2018 at the age of 93.^{[143][144]} Some sources claim that he had died on the previous day. On the morning of 17 August, Vajpayee's body, draped with the Indian flag, was taken to the Bharatiya Janata Party headquarters where party workers paid their tributes until 1 pm. Later that afternoon at 4 pm, Vajpayee was cremated with full state honours at

⁷ Bimal Prasad, *Op.cit.*, p. 191.

Rashtriya Smriti Sthal near Raj Ghat, and his pyre was lit by his foster daughter Namita Kaul Bhattacharya. Thousands of people and many dignitaries attended his funeral procession, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Ram Nath Kovind. On 19 August, his ashes were immersed in Ganga river at Haridwar by Kaul.⁸

Reactions and tributes

India reacted to Vajpayee's death with grief and thousands of tributes poured in through social media platforms. Thousands of people paid their respects during his funeral procession. A seven-day state mourning was announced by the central government throughout India. The national flag flew half-mast during this period.

- Afghanistan: Former Afghan President Hamid Karzai was among several foreign dignitaries present at former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's funeral in New Delhi. He recalled that the departed leader was "the first to offer us civilian planes, Airbuses at the time we were starting out".
- Bangladesh: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed "deep shock" at the demise of former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and said it is a day of great sadness for the people of Bangladesh. Paying tribute to Vajpayee, Hasina termed him as "one of the most famous sons of India" and a highly respected person in Bangladesh.
- Bhutan: Bhutan king Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck attended the funeral ceremony in New Delhi.
- China: In a statement, the ministry of foreign affairs said the Indian leader was an "outstanding Indian statesman and had made outstanding

⁸ Ghatate NM, *Atal Bihari Vajpayee Decisive Days*, Shipra Publication, New Delhi 1999, p39.

contributions to the development of Sino-Indian relations". "China expresses its deep condolences on his death and sincere condolences to the Indian government and people and the relatives of Mr Vajpayee. Premier Li Keqiang has sent a condolence message to the leaders of India," the statement said.

- Israel: Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu conveyed his condolences calling Vajpayee "a true friend of Israel". Foreign Ministry of Israel also extended its condolences on the passing of Vajpayee and in a statement described him as "a genuine friend of Israel".
- Japan: Remembering Vajpayee's visit to Japan in 2001, the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe said, "On behalf of the Government and people of Japan, I would like to convey my sincerest condolences to the Government and people of India and the bereaved family. His Excellency Vajpayee visited Japan in 2001 as the then-Prime Minister and made significant contributions to the friendship between our two countries as a good friend of Japan. It is him who established the cornerstone of Japan-India relations today". Terming Vajpayee as an eminent leader of India, Abe added, "I pray from the bottom of my heart that his soul may rest in peace".
- Mauritius: On 17 August, the government of Mauritius announced that both Mauritian and Indian flags would fly at half mast in the honour of Vajpayee. During the World Hindi Conference in Mauritius, PM Pravind Jugnauth announced that the cyber tower towards which Vajpayee contributed to be set up in Mauritius would be henceforth named as Atal Bihari Vajpayee tower.

- Pakistan: Pakistan's interim Minister for Law and Information Syed Ali Zafar met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and extended Pakistan's condolence on the death of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Zafar was among the foreign dignitaries who attended Vajpayee's funeral in New Delhi. Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf mourned the demise of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, calling him a great man. He said that Vajpayee's demise was a great loss for both India as well as Pakistan.
- Russia: Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a message of condolences to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the demise of Vajpayee. Putin termed the former prime minister as "outstanding statesman". "Atal Bihari Vajpayee rightly commanded great respect around the world. He will be remembered as a politician who made a major personal contribution to the friendly relations and privileged strategic partnership between our countries. The President of Russia conveyed words of sincere sympathy and support to the family of the deceased, the Government and the people of India", the message read.
- Sri Lanka: Various Sri Lankan leaders paid rich tribute to the three-time PM, hailing him as a "friend of Sri Lanka". In a tweet President Maithripala Sirisena said: "Today, we have lost a great humanist and a true friend of Sri Lanka. Former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a visionary leader and an ardent defender of democracy. My condolences to his family and millions of his admirers around the world". Leader of Opposition R. Sampanthan said that India has lost one of its "most regarded intellectual[s] and [statesmen]". "He served the great country of India with

humility and honesty, and he was much loved and respected by millions of people across the world. Former three-time Prime Minister Vajpayee is also an exceptional orator and a leader with a great sense of humour, his speeches within the Indian parliament and outside will always be remembered", he said in a statement, extending his condolences on behalf of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka.

- United States: U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo said Vajpayee recognised early on that the US-India partnership would contribute to the world's economic prosperity and security and the two democracies would continue to benefit from his vision. "On behalf of the people of the United States of America, I extend my heartfelt condolences to the people of India on the recent passing of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee", Pompeo said in a statement yesterday. He recalled Vajpayee's address to the Congress in 2000, when he had famously characterised US-India ties as a "natural partnership of shared endeavours". "Today, our two countries and our bilateral relationship continue to benefit from Prime Minister Vajpayee vision, which helped promote expanded cooperation", Pompeo said. He said the American people stand with the people of India "as we mourn Prime Minister Vajpayee's passing".⁹

⁹Rama Chandra Guha, *India After Gandhi*, Harper Collins, india 2007, pp-663-665.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

ACHIEVEMENTS AND HONOURS OF VAJPAYEE

Atal Bihari Vajpayee has received many rewards and as leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party he had achieved a lot.

- Bharat Ratna (2015)
- Padma Vibhushan (1992)

Foreign honours

- Bangladesh:

Recipient of the Bangladesh Liberation War Honour (2016)

- Morocco:

Grand Cordon of the Order of Ouissam Alaouite (13 February 1999) ¹

Achievements

- In 2012, Vajpayee was ranked number 9 in Outlook magazine's poll of The Greatest Indian.
- In August 2018, Naya Raipur was renamed as Atal Nagar.
- In October 2018, four Himalayan peaks near Gangotri glacier named after his name. ²

¹Press Information Bureau Dated 30.1.2016

²Mhrd.gov.in. Dated 29.10.2013

Awards

- 1993, D. Lit. from Kanpur University³
- 1994, Lokmanya Tilak Award⁴
- 1994, Outstanding Parliamentarian Award⁵
- 1994, Bharat Ratna Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant Award⁶

Published works

Vajpayee authored several works of both prose and poetry. Some of his major publications are listed below. In addition to these, various collections were made of his speeches, articles, and slogans. ⁷

Prose

- National Integration (1961)
- New Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy (1979)
- Gathbandhan Ki Rajneeti
- Kucha Lekha, Kucha Bhashana (1996)
- Bindu-Bindu Vicara (1997)
- Decisive Days (1999) ⁸
- Sankalp-Kaal (1999)
- Vicara-Bindu (Hindi Edition, 2000)
- India's Perspectives on ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Region (2003)

³The News Minute Dated 6.1.2017

⁴New York Times Dated 18.8.2018

⁵Business Line Dated 17.8.2018

⁶The Indian Express Dated 29.11.2014

⁷Frontline Dated 28.9.2013

⁸The Times and India Dated 23.7.2019

- Na Dainyam Na Palayanam
- NayiChunouti : Naya Avasar⁹

Poetry

- Kaidi Kaviraj Ki Kundalian
- Amar Aag Hai (1994)
- Meri IkyaavanKavitaen [hi] (1995) Some of these poems were set to music by Jagjit Singh for his album Samvedna.¹⁰
- Kya Khoya Kya Paya: Atal Bihari Vajapeyi, Vyaktitva Aur Kavitaem (1999)
- Values, Vision & Verses of Vajpayee: India's Man of Destiny (2001)
- Twenty-One Poems (2003)
- Chuni Hui Kavitaeyin (2012)

An English translation of a selection of some of Vajpayee's Hindi poetry was published in 2013.

Legacy

The administration of Narendra Modi declared in 2014 that Vajpayee's birthday, 25 December, would be marked as Good Governance Day. The world's longest tunnel, Atal Tunnel at Rohtang, Himachal Pradesh, on the Leh-Manali Highway was named after Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The third longest cable-stayed bridge in India over the Mandovi River, Atal Setu was named in his memory. The Government of Chhattisgarh changed the name of Naya Raipur to Atal Nagar.

⁹The Hindu Dated 25.7.2017

¹⁰The Express Tribune Dated 6.4.2013

In popular culture

The Films Division of India has produced the short documentary films *Pride of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee* (1998) and *Know Your Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee* (2003), both directed by Girish Vaidya, which explore different facets of his personality. Vajpayee also appears in a cameo in the 1977 Indian Hindi-language film *Chala Murari Hero Banne* by Asrani.

In 2019, Shiva Sharma and Zeeshan Ahmad, owners of Amaash Films, acquired the official rights of the book *The Untold Vajpayee* written by Ullekh N P, to make a biopic based on Vajpayee's life from his childhood, college life and finally turning into a politician.

Aap Ki Adalat, an Indian talk show which airs on India TV, featured an interview with Vajpayee just before the 1999 elections. *Pradhanmantri* (lit. 'Prime Minister'), a 2013 Indian documentary television series which aired on ABP News and covers the various policies and political tenures of Indian PMs, includes the tenureship of Vajpayee in the episodes "Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 13 days government and India during 1996–98", "Pokhran-II and Kargil War", and "2002 Gujarat Riots and Fall of Vajpayee Government".¹¹

¹¹Chitkara, M.G, Sarma, Bamsi Rama, *Indian Republic Issues and Perspective*, APH Publishing, India 1997, p. 269.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Although considered a pragmatist, Vajpayee assumed a defiant posture in the face of Western criticism of India's testing of several nuclear weapons in 1998. He had earlier been praised for his conciliatory gestures toward India's Muslim minority. In 2000 his government began an extensive program of divestment of public funds from several key state-run industries. In 2002 Vajpayee's government was criticized for its slowness in reacting to riots in Gujarat in which some 1,000 people (primarily Muslims) died. Nevertheless, in 2003 Vajpayee made a concerted effort to resolve India's long-running feud with Pakistan over the Kashmir region. Under his leadership, India achieved steady economic growth, and the country became a world leader in information technology, though the poorer elements of Indian society often felt left out of the economic prosperity. In 2004 his coalition was defeated in the parliamentary election, and he resigned from office. Vajpayee announced his retirement from politics at the end of 2005. In late December 2014 he was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour.

He thought about every section of the society. He was honored with Padma Vibhushan, Lokmanya Tilak Award, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant Award and Bharat Ratna. He is also known as 'Bhishma Pitamah' of Indian politics. Thoughts of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's entire life and his entire thoughts have been devoted to the nation. For the sake of serving the nation, he gave up even the idea of a householder's life. As an unmarried Prime Minister, he has been a Prime Minister with an honest, uninteresting image. He never saw his own interest while in politics. He has deep faith in democratic values. Despite being a Hindutva, his image has been of a secular

human, not a communal one. As a writer, his major books include My 51 Poems, New Dimension of India, Foreign Policy, Four Decades in Parliament and his collection of speeches. Conclusion: He is one of the successful Prime Ministers of the country. Seeing his extraordinary eloquence, Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan said that- "Saraswati resides in his throat." So Nehruji bestowed him with "the world-renowned image of a wonderful orator." He died on 16th August 2018 in New Delhi, God rest his soul. His contributions towards Indian politics will always be remembered. We are proud of them.

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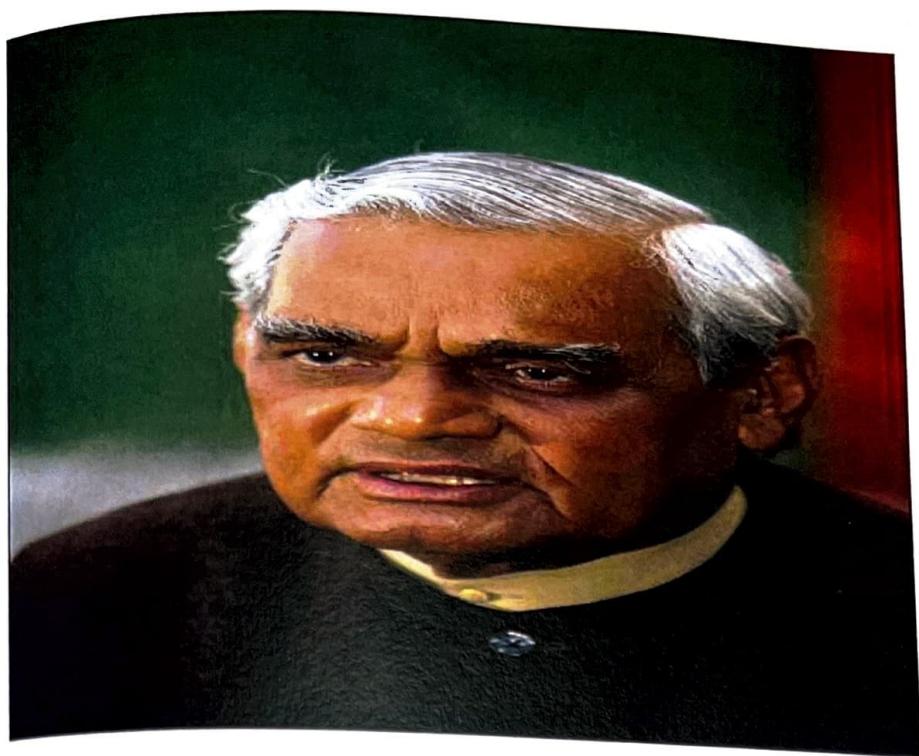
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ILLUSTRATIONS



Atal Bihari Vajpayee



Atal Bihari Vajpayee addressing a rally at Ramlila Grounds 1976.



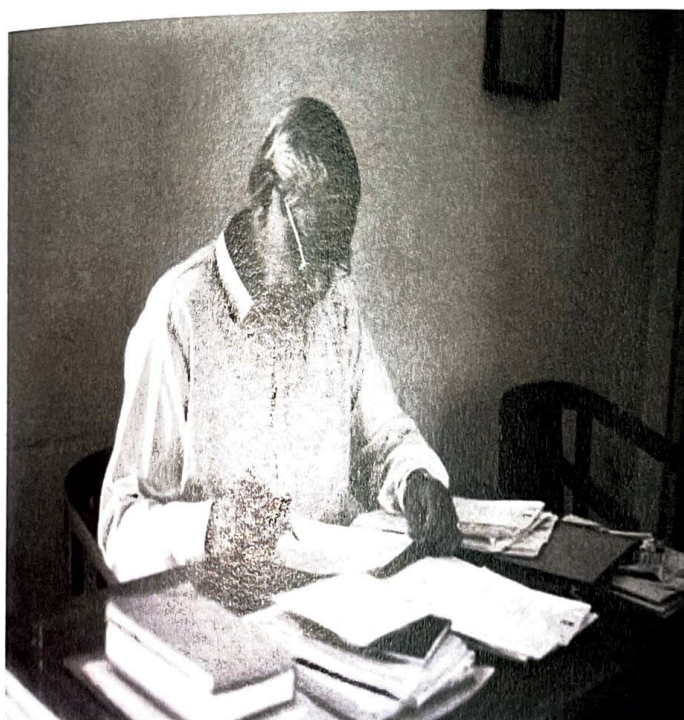
Atal Bihari Vajpayee being sworn-in as a minister in the Janata Party Government installed by President B.D. Jatti.



**Vajpayee and Rajnath Singh during the voting for 2007
Indian Presidential election**



Prime Minister Vajpayee with Indian troops and other dignitaries at Kargil after the war in 1999



Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Indian Politician, New Delhi, Indian, 2000.

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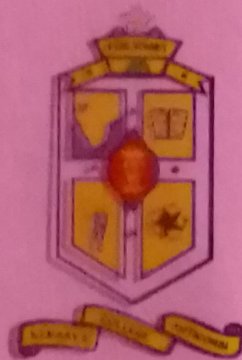
for the award of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

By

Gowsiga Devi. R

(Reg. No: 21APH103)



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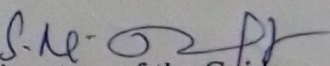
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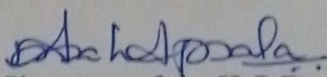
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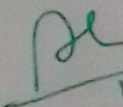
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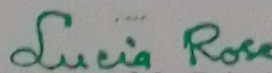
This is to certify that the project entitled "Foreign Accounts of Ancient India", submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History and is a work done during the year 2022- 2023 by R Gowsiga Devi, a bonafide student of Department of History, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.


Signature of the Guide


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "Foreign Accounts of Ancient India" submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous) Thoothukudi affiliated to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History, is my original work and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Place: Thoothukudi

Date: 5.4.2023

R. Gowsiga Devi
Signature of the Candidate

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Travellers of other countries who came to India have written travelogues or accounts of their travels. Foreign Accounts are a travel journal, also called road journal, is a record made by a traveller, sometimes in diary form of the travellers experiences, written during the course of the journey and later edited for publication. Accounts from foreign travellers play an important role in determining and reconstructing Indian history especially during ancient India. Their account has been able to throw light on various aspects such as contemporary administration, proceedings of Royal court, religious ideas, cultural heritage, architectural wonders, splendid sculptural representations, trade routes, trade contacts and common practices, during their visit.

Foreign accounts are the primary sources written in the contemporary period. But it should be taken into account only after critical analysis of the data. Most of the foreign accounts are pre-conceived and their accounts were reflected in the backdrop of foreigner's culture and history. Sometimes the historians find it difficult to map the places given in the foreign accounts. So the foreign accounts are the original documents and care should be taken in translation work also. Sometimes the historical facts were misinterpreted, so it should be taken with great caution in reconstructing the history.

In ancient times, a number of travellers from Greece, Arabs, Western Asia, and China visited India. These foreign travellers had no obligation to any king of the region therefore their accounts are unbiased which provides first-hand information on the subjects they touched upon. The invasion of Alexander provided a passage to the various Greeks and Roman explorers and travellers to India.

S.NO	Foreign Travellers	Country
1	Deimachus	Greece
2	Megasthenes	Greece
3	Hiuen-Tsang	China
4	Fahien	China
5	I-Tsing	China

Alexander's invasion is not mentioned in any of the Indian sources. Megasthenes, Seleucus' ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya given a precise account of interior India. It has been preserved in pieces quoted by classical writers like Arrian, Strabo, and Justin.

Pliny in his book 'Natural Historia' described the trade relation between Rome and India, Indian animal and plants. Periplus of the Erythraean Sea travelogue is an anonymous work which gives us impartial and objective information on the Indo-Roman trade during Early Historic period. It informs about the ports on India's coast-line, trade-centres in India, the trade-routes-connecting trade centres and ports, distance between centres, the list of items-of-trade, the annual volume of trade, the rates, types of ships etc. So, it is essential to learn about the foreign accounts of ancient India as it is the prime mover of the course of history.

Aims and Purpose

- To reveal the contemporary life of ancient Indians
- To reconstruct unbiased history of ancient India
- To know about travelogues and their experiences
- To be aware of history in different perspectives

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is analytical and descriptive method. The source materials have been analyzed. The descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Outline of the Chapters

This Project divided into Four Chapters excluding introduction and conclusion.

- ❖ The First Chapter deals with the Travelogue of Megasthenes.
- ❖ The Second Chapter gives the detailed Account of Fahien.
- ❖ The Third Chapter describes the account of Prince of Plgrim - Hiuen T - Sang.
- ❖ The Fourth Chapter speaks about the Account of I-tsing.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

TRAVELOGUE OF MEGASTHENES

The ancient Greeks knew of the existence of India as early as the *heroic* times, for articles of Indian merchandise are mentioned in The Homeric poems. But they had little real knowledge of the land. They considered it to be an *Eastern Ethiopia*, resembling Egypt. This analog - proved a fruitful source of error, for example the division of the body politic into seven castes by Megasthenes is mainly to be traced to this source. Till the Persian wars had no knowledge of India and have little detailed definite information regarding Megasthenes himself. "Megasthenes was sent on an embassy to Sandrokottos at Palirn- bothra". "He remained for sometimes with the Indian King, and wrote a history of Indian affairs, that he might hand down to posterity a faithful account of all that he had witnessed." "Megasthenes, was the historian who lived with Seleukos Nikator." "Megasthenes who lived with Sibyrtios the satrap of Arachosia and who says that he often visited Sandrakottos, King of the Indians"- these are some of the scanty references to Megasthenes in our ancient authorities.¹ From these source it is evident that "Megasthenes was the representative of Seleukos at the court of Sibyrtios, Satrap of Arachosia, and that he was sent from hence as the King's ambassador to Sandrakottos at Palim- bothra." His stay in India cannot be determined, but he probably set out for Palimbothra between 302 and 288 B. C.E

Megasthenes

Megasthenes was a Greek diplomat, historian and ethnographer whose extensive writings about the cultures of India gave an insight into the lives of ancient Indians during the rule of Chandragupta Maurya. Although his book, the *Indica* was lost in the currents of time, it has been reconstructed to a certain extent using literary sources from later authors.

¹ Schwanbeck, *Megasthenes and Arrian; A Bird's Eye View of Their Accounts*; Indian Culture, pp. 1-5.

Megasthenes was the first person to describe ancient India, and for that reason he has been called "the father of Indian history". Megasthenes became an ambassador for Seleucus I to the court of Chandragupta Maurya in Pataliputra.

Nature of Source of Information

Megasthenes related truthfully what he saw and what he was told, Thus the amount of reliance to be placed on any particular narration depends on the nature of his source of information. The Brahmins in authority were his informants, and these are generally to be trusted. By way of an example, this refers to his account of the Sramans and judgement of it by this standard.

- There are *omissions* in Megasthenes, for example he says little about the *religion* of the Indians, and nothing at about their *literature*. In this connection remember the complete work of Megasthenes is not available today.
- Some of his *mistakes* are of a nature into which even the most careful observer may be easily betrayed, as when he tells that the *Vipasa* flows into the *Iravati*; others again are due to his misapprehension of the meaning of Indian words, such as his assertion that the Indians had no written laws; while a third class of mistakes is due to the fact that he naturally looked at things Indian from a Greek point of view.
- Megasthenes thus occupies an important place among the sources from which Greeks derive their knowledge of Indian antiquity, though his narrative requires, not seldom, to be corrected and supplemented, He gives a picture of India and of Indian institutions at a definite period of history. This is all the more valuable, as dates in

Indian history and the state of things at any particular time are difficult to ascertain from Indian literature.²

The Journey of Megasthenes

The journey of Megasthenes to Palibothra made Europeans acquainted with a large extent of country, of which they had not hitherto any knowledge. Accordingly, what Megasthenes observed during his progress to Palibothra, and his residence there, made such impression upon his own mind, as induced him to publish an ample account of India, in order to make his countrymen more thoroughly acquainted with its importance.³ From his accounts the ancients seem to have derived almost all their knowledge of the interior state of India, and from comparing the three most ample accounts of it, by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and Arrian, they appear manifestly, from their near resemblance, to be a transcript of his words. His account however, of the dimensions and Geography of India, is curious and accurate.

He was informed, as has been already mentioned, that they were prepared to oppose him on the banks of the Ganges, with an army consisting of twenty thousand cavalry, two hundred thousand infantry, and two thousand armed chariots; and Megasthenes relates, that he had an audience of Sandracottus in a place where he was encamped with an army of four hundred thousand men.

Ambassador

Chandra Gupta Maurya was the founder of the Maurya dynasty. The Greek traveller Megasthenes visited the court of Chandra Gupta Maurya. Megasthenes was an ambassador of Seleucus I Nikator to Chandragupta Maurya in Pataliputra. He visited India during the reign

² Frykenburg R.E., *Dehli Through The Ages*, Delhi Oxford University Press, Bombay, 1986, pp.254-256.

³ Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India*, Oxford University Press, New York, United States of America, 1977, p.58.

of Chandragupta Maurya, but when he came to India or how long he stayed in the country is uncertain. Date of Megasthenese's visit or visits to Indian is uncertain and still disputed among scholars. He visited the Mauryan capital Pataliputra, but it is not certain which other parts of India he visited. He appears to have passed through the Punjab region in north-western India, as he provides a detailed account of the rivers in this area. He must have then traveled to Pataliputra along the Yamuna and the Ganga rivers. During his tenure in India he observed and noted the culture, daily routine, social structure etc of the people of the Mauryan Empire. The compilation of his works today is known as *Indica*.⁴

Slavery

In reviewing the statement of Megasthenes regarding the absence of slavery in ancient India, the practical position of the Sudra in Hindu society and the impression which that was likely to make on the mind of a Greek observer accustomed to contemplate the Helots as a non-citizen servile class.

The condition of Sudras therefore was much better than that of the public slaves under some ancient Republics and indeed than that of the villains of the middle ages, or any other servile class with which Indians are acquainted," Again "The condition of a Sudra in the Hindu system was infinitely preferable to that of the *Helot*, the *slam* or the *serf* of the Greek, the Roman and the feudal systems."⁵

Megasthenes Account of India

Megasthenes has written an account of India and also that of Chandragupta's reign in his book entitled "*INDICA*". This book is not at present available but most of the passages are found in the form of quotations in the writings of various Greek and Roman authors.

⁴ Haul H.K., *Trvellers In India An Anthology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1979, pp.200-203.

⁵ Gokale B.G, *Ancient India History and Culture*, India Maps and Atlases Publications Private Ltd, Bombay, 1952, pp.50-53.

From these passages Megasthenes had tried to reveal that he had seen in India its geography, government, religion and society. Most of the scholars attach a great importance to the informations received from Megasthenes. For instance Dr V.A.Smith remarks, "*Megasthenes is a thoroughly trustworthy witness concerning matters which came under his own observations*". He has written in detail about Chandragupta Maurya's administration as well as the Indian society in the Mauryan Period.

Megasthenes Indica

Megasthenes Indica can be reconstructed using the portions preserved by later writers as direct quotations or paraphrases. The parts that belonged to the original text can be identified from the later works based on similar content, vocabulary and phrasing, even when the content has not been explicitly attributed to Megasthenes.⁶ Later writers such as Arrian, Strabo, Diodorus, and Pliny refer to Indica in their works. Among these writers, Arrian speaks most highly of Megasthenes, while Strabo and Pliny treat him with less respect. The first century Greek writer Strabo called both Megasthenes and his succeeding ambassador Deimachus as liars, and stated that "no faith whatever" could be placed in their writings. As per historians, Indica served a legitimizing purpose for Seleucus I and his actions in India. It depicts contemporary India as an unconquerable territory, arguing that Dionysus was able to conquer India, because before his invasion, India was a primitive rural society. Dionysus' urbanization of India makes India a powerful and impregnable nation.

Evidence of Indica Through Writings of Philosophers

- Indica is mentioned in the writings of later writers such as Arrian, Strabo, Diodorus, and Pliny.

⁶Subramaniyan N, *History of Tamilnadu*, Vaikai Atchagam, Madurai, 2009, pp.70-76.

- Arrian holds the highest regard for Megasthenes, whereas Strabo and Pliny hold him in lower regard. Strabo, a first-century Greek writer, labelled both Megasthenes and his successor, Deimachus as liars, claiming that "no faith whatever" could be placed in their works.
- It paints modern India as an unconquerable area, stating that Dionysus was able to conquer India because it was a primitive agricultural civilization prior to his invasion.
- India becomes a great, invincible nation as a result of 'Dionysus urbanisation'.
- According to Paul J. Kosmin, Megasthenes underlines that no foreign force has ever conquered India (since Dionysus), and no Indians have ever attacked another nation.
- This portrayal of India as an isolated, invincible country is an attempt to vindicate Seleucus' peace treaty with the Indian emperor, through which he abandoned territories he could never secure, stabilised the East, and obtained elephants with which to turn his attention against his great western rival, Antigonus Monophthalmus.

Indica

- Megasthenes 'Indica' deals about the history of Mauryan India.
- The original work has since been lost, although pieces of it have survived in later Greek and Latin works.
- Megasthenes 'Indica', according to the text reconstructed by J. W. McCrindle, depicts India as follows:

Geography

- India was a quadrilateral-shaped country bordered on the southern and eastern sides by the ocean.

- As far as the ocean, the Indus river constitutes the country's western and north-western borders.
- India's northern boundary reaches the Tauros extremes. From Ariann to the Eastern Sea, it is bounded by mountains known to Macedonians as the Kaukasos.
- Paropamisus, Hemodos, and Himaos (the Himalayas) are some of the local names for these mountains.
- Scythia, inhabited by the Scythians known as Sakai, is beyond the Hemodos. Bactria and Ariann, in addition to Scythia, border India.⁷

History

- The Indians, like the Greeks, lived off of fruits and wore animal skin clothing in their early days.
- Dionysus, according to the most renowned Indian academics, entered and conquered India.
- When his army became too tough to handle, he led them to the Meros Mountains for recuperation, which gave rise to the Greek mythology of Dionysus being nurtured in his father's thigh.
- Dionysus taught the Indians how to produce plants, create wine, and worship among other things. He built numerous significant cities, as well as laws and courts.

Flora and Fauna

- India features a number of mountains with various types of fruit trees
- India is a home to a diverse range of animal species.
- Because of the amount of food on Indian land, Indian elephants are significantly stronger than Libyan elephants.

⁷ <https://prepp.in/question/megasthenes-a-greek-historian-visited-india-in-the-62867c6bde8ad211119aafdd>

- Elephants are extensively tamed and trained for battle.
- Elephants have a gestation period of 16 to 18 months, and the oldest elephants can live up to 200 years.

Economy

- Indian soil is rich in gold, silver, copper, and iron.
- A variety of tools, weapons, decorations, and other things are made from tin and other metals.
- India's plains are extremely fertile
- Irrigation is commonly used.
- Rice, millet, a grain called bosporum, other cereals, pulses, and other food plants are the principal crops.
- As rain occurs in both summer and winter, so there are two agricultural cycles every year.
- Rice, millet, bosporus, and sesamum are seeded around the summer solstice.
- Wheat is seeded in the winter.
- There have never been any famines in India.

Food and Clothing

- When the Indians have supper, a table is set in front of each individual, similar to a tripod, and the liquor is made from rice rather than barley.
- There are golden bowls on top of it, into which they first put rice, boiled like barley, and then many delicacies prepared according to Indian recipes.
- They like finery and decoration, despite their style's fundamental simplicity.
- Their robes are gold-embroidered and embellished with costly stones, and they also wear floral muslin outfits.

- Some have assistants strolling behind them holding umbrellas over them since they value beauty and use every gadget at their disposal to improve their appearance.

Society

They have a strong artistic background. Slavery is prohibited under a law enacted by ancient Indian sages. The law treats everyone equally, yet it permits the property to be dispersed unequally. India's population is split into seven endogamous and hereditary castes.

- Philosophers
- Farmers
- Herders
- Artisans
- Military⁸
- Overseers
- Councilors and
- Assessors

Military

Pliny in his Natural History gives a list of the tribes and races which inhabit India, a list evidently borrowed from Megasthenes. In the enumeration of these, he incidentally speaks of the military strength of some of the more important of the powers and principalities of Ancient India.

⁸<https://byjus.com/free-ias-prep/megasthenes/>

- The king of the *Calingae*, had 60,000 foot-soldiers, 1,000 horsemen, 700 Elephants to keep watch and ward.
- The king of the tribes which inhabit the regions between the left bank of the Ganges and the Himalayas kept underarms 50,000 foot-soldiers, 4,000 Cavalry and 400 Elephants.
- Next came the *Andarai*, a still more powerful race, possessing numerous villages, and thirty towns defended by walls and towers which supplied its king with an army of 100,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants.
- The Prasii however surpass in power and glory every other people, and their king has in his pay a standing army of 600,000 foot- soldiers 30,000 cavalry, and 9,000 elephants, hence they conjecture the vastness of Indian resources.

Philosophy

Megasthenes divides thinkers into two groups, one of which he names the Brachmanes and the other the Sarmanes. He tells us that the Hylobioi are the Sarmanes who are regarded in the highest regard. Physicians are next in line to be honoured after the Hylobioi because they research the nature of man. In addition, there are sorcerers and diviners. Some of them are interested in philosophy, and some of them in women.

Chandragupta Maurya's Administration

The foreigners are adequately taken care. Special officials are assigned to guarantee that no foreigners are injured, and judges penalise those who take advantage of foreigners unfairly. Foreigners who become ill are seen and cared by doctors. In India, foreigners who die are buried, and their belongings are transferred to their families. Megasthenes has given us the following useful information regarding the Mauryan administration.

King

Megasthenes gives the detailed description of the personal life of Chandragupta Maurya. He led a very splendid life and his palace was unique in its beauty. The king did not sleep in one room for two continuous days. He did not favour meeting the people too much. He left his palace only on four occasions-

- to accompany his armies in the battle-field,
- to administer justice,
- to perform sacrifices, and
- to go on hunting expeditions.
- Special spies had been appointed for the safety of the ruler.
- A great number of these spies were women.

From Megasthenes, it is evident that Chandragupta Maurya showed a great respect to his Chief Minister Chanakya (or Kautilya) who lived in a small hut near the royal palace.

Military System

Chandragupta Maurya had maintained a huge army which was about seven lakhs in number. It comprised 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, about 1,000 elephants and 8,000 chariots, each chariot having three men in it.⁹ Megasthenes explains that the whole administration of the army was in the hands of the Army Department consisting of 30 members. This department was further divided into six boards of five members each. These boards were in-charge of

- Infantry,
- Cavalry,

⁹ Meierindle, J.W, *Ancient India As Described By Megasthenes And Arrian*, The Education Society's Press, Byculla, 1950, pp.80-84.

- Fleet, including ships and boats,
- War-chariots,
- War-Elephants, and
- Transport and Supplies.

Civil Administration

Megasthenes has written a lot about the civil administration of Chandragupta Maurya. He writes that the king was an autocrat and he was the master of unlimited powers. He kept himself fully aware of the main events of his empire through his spies. Several trained officials were appointed to look after the work of civil administration. Every care was taken for the welfare of the public. Many canals had been dug for irrigating the land and roads were made for the convenience of the travellers and promotion of trade. Roads were provided with mile-stones for the convenience of the travellers. At short distances Sarais were also built and shady trees grown on both sides of the roads. Because of these measures, trade and commerce of the country was also on the high. The public had to pay many taxes such as land-tax, customs, fines, excise duties. There was some sort of Sales-tax existing in those days, which was about 10% of the sale price. The land-tax, which was normally of the total produce, was the main source of revenue.

Megasthenes illustrates that the laws were very severe for ordinary offences hands and feet were generally cut off. Law courts were established throughout the length and breadth of the empire and the king himself took a great interest in the administration of justice. The country was divided into provinces, and very able officers were posted and those who looked after the welfare of the people and maintained law and order. The provinces were divided into districts and each district had many villages in it. The in-charge of the district was known as Sthanik while that of a village was called 'Gopa'.

Administration of Pataliputra

Megasthenes has thrown a good deal of light on the Municipal administration of the Mauryan capital, i.e. Pataliputra. It was a magnificent city and was situated on the confluence of the Ganges and the Son. It was encircled on all sides by a strong wooden wall. A special moat about 600 feet broad and thirty feet deep was surrounding the whole city to make it more secure from any attack from any quarter whatsoever. This channel was always filled with water from the Son river. The royal palace was made of wood and was unique in its beauty and magnificence. It was provided with beautiful parks, artificial lakes and every means of enjoyment. To manage the affairs of Pataliputra a special committee of 30 members had been organised. This committee was divided into six boards of five members each. Each board was assigned special duties and they were in-charge of the following.

- (i) Arts and crafts
- (ii) Comforts of the foreigners and strangers
- (ii) Registration of births and deaths
- (iv) Checking of weights
- (v) Measures for the promotion of trade
- (vi) Manufactured goods and their sale; and
- (vii) Collection of Municipal taxes.¹⁰

Indian Society

Besides dealing with the Mauryan administration Megasthenes has provided very valuable information regarding the Indian society in the Mauryan period.

Division of the Indian Society- According to Megasthenes the Indian society was divided into seven classes or 'castes':

¹⁰ Williams Jackson, A.V, *Historic Accounts of India By Foreign Travelers*, pp.120-122.

- The first class was that of the Philosophers who were though small in number, the most honoured members of the society.
- The second class was composed of the king's councilors who were in-charge of the various departments and gave consultation to the ruler when asked for.
- The soldiers constituted the third class and were represented by the Kshatriyas.
- The fourth class was of the minor officers who helped the King and the Governors in the discharge of their duties.
- The fifth class was that of the who constituted the bulk of the population.
- The sixth class was composed of the merchants, traders, artisans and boatmen who controlled the trade and commerce of the country.
- The seventh class comprised the hunters and such other men who made their living by hunting and keeping cattle.

Lifestyle of the People

According to Megasthenes, the Indians were very truthful people. Theft was very rare. They had faith on each other and litigation was not so common. The Brahmans occupied a high place in the society and they were respected everywhere. The people were happy and prosperous. They led a very simple life and did not lock their houses. The slave system was not then known in India. But he writes that the people had no fixed hours of meals, and they went on eating all the time. They took wine very rarely, and that too on certain occasions and sacrifices. Megasthenes was much impressed by the sugarcane "reeds that produce honey without bees" and cotton, which he described as the "vegetable wool".¹¹

¹¹ Sanjay Subramanyam, *The Political Economy of Commerce Southern India (1500-1650)*, Foundation Books, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 2004, pp.322-327.

Strange Description of Indian Society

Megasthenes has written some strange things about the Indian society. He writes, "There are some people who had one eye in the middle of their fore-head and there are others who had no nostrils. There are some tribes in India who had ears reaching down to their feet so much so that they could sleep in them. There are to be found in India dog-headed men." It appears that Megasthenes had written these things on heresy. These are mere fables and cannot be believed. It is because of such accounts that Strabo regards Megasthenes a liar and his account full of fables. Again according to Dr. V.A. Smith, "His work has sometimes discredited unfairly because he permitted himself to embellish his text by the insertion of certain incredible marvels on heresy testimony."

Legacy of Megasthenes

Modern scholars such as E. A. Schwanbeck, B. C. J. Timmer have characterized Megasthenes as a generally reliable source of Indian history. Schwanbeck finds faults only with a Megasthenes description of the Gods worshipped in India.

Brown is more critical of Megasthenes, but note that Megasthenes visited only a small part of India, and must have relied on others for his observations: some of these observations seem to be erroneous, but others cannot be ignored by modern researchers.

Thus, although he was often misled by the erroneous information provided by others, his work remained the principal source of information about India to some of the subsequent writers.

Megasthenes 'Indica' is a very important source of Indian history. Indica has importance in the reconstruction of ancient India under the Mauryan Empire. It shows us the

rich culture and economy of India and also helps us to understand the administration, diverse culture, and philosophy of Ancient Indian people.¹²

¹² Mahajan V.D, *History of India*, Chand Publications, New Delhi, 1966, pp.101-103.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

ACCOUNT OF FAHIEN

Fahien was born into a family surnamed Gong in Pingyang Wuyang during the Jin Dynasty of ancient China. Fahien was a Chinese Buddhist monk. He saw Ashoka's palace at Pataliputra and was impressed. He began his arduous journey around the age of 60, visiting sacred Buddhist sites in Central, South, and Southeast Asia between 399 and 412 CE. He spent almost ten years in India.

Early life

Fahien was born in 337 CE to Tsang Hi in Pingyang Wuyang, modern Linfen City, Shanxi. Fahien was orphaned at an early age and spent most of his adult life in Buddhist monasteries.¹ Fahien was a Chinese monk who left Chang'an (present-day Xi'an) in 399 CE to set forth on an expedition through Central Asia to India, and ultimately Sri Lanka at the age of 62. During a visit to Chang'an, he was taken aback by the torn and weathered state of the Books of Discipline (Vinaya Pitakas) which contain the monastic code for Buddhist monks and nuns. In 399 CE, Fahien was accompanied by four others on a mission to visit the land of the Buddha and search for Buddhist texts. He reached Purushapura (Peshawar) and recollected how Buddha had predicted the birth of a king named 'Kanishka', who would build a magnificent stupa at this place. Fahien made his way towards Northern India and took note of a very different vegetation from his own land of Han (China). The only familiar plants he noted were the bamboo, pomegranate and sugarcane. He visited India in the early fifth century during the reign of Chandragupta II (Gupta Empire) and entered here from the northwest and reached Pataliputra. In

¹ Vincent A. Smith, *The Oxford Student's History of India*, Clarendon Press, 1919, London, pp.69 -72.

a Mahayana monastery, he found a copy of the Vinaya Pitaka, containing the Mahasanghika rules written in Sanskrit. Hence, he lived in Pataliputra for nearly three years, learned Sanskrit and wrote the Vinaya rules. He travelled to many cities associated with the life of the Buddha – Sravasti, Sarnath, Bodh Gaya, Vaishali, Rajgir, etc and wrote about Taxila, Pataliputra, Mathura, and Kannauj in Middle India. An important city that Fahien visited was Mathura. He indicates that the city was prosperous, peaceful and that most people seemed to be teetotalers and vegetarians. Fahien is renowned for his pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Buddha. He followed the course of the Ganga eastwards, reached Champa and then Tamralipti (was an ancient city in West Bengal) He travelled across Pakistan, Nepal, Northern India and eventually to Sri Lanka, and claimed that demons and dragons were the original inhabitants of Ceylon. Fahien spent two years in Sri Lanka and decided to return, along a precarious sea route, to China. Today, there is a cave in the district of Kalutara in Sri Lanka named after Fahien. It is believed that he resided there. After he returned home at the age of 77, the next decade until his death, he translated the Buddhist Sutra along with the Indian Sramana Buddha-bhadra and compiled a travelogue filled with invaluable accounts of what life was like, the places he saw and the nature of Buddhism at the turn of the 5th century.² He recorded his observations in a travelogue titled *Foguoji (A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms; also known as Fahien's Account)*. Fahien died in Jingzhou in China, at the age of eighty-eight. Fahien (337 CE – c. 422 CE), also known as Fa-Hien, Fa-hsien, and Sehi. Fahien was three years old, his father decided to let him become a novice monk for the blessings and protection of the bodhisattvas. However, he was too young to live independently in the Buddhist temple, therefore he remained at home. A few years later, Fahien suffered from a serious illness. His father then sent him to a Buddhist temple, in which he surprisingly recovered after two nights. After that, he was unwilling to go home and

² Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Volume One, Penguin Books Ltd, Harmondsworth England, 1966, p.140.

stayed at the temple.³ When Fahien was 10 years old, his father died. Considering the great difficulty for his mother to independently support the family, his uncle advised Fahien to return home to the secular life, but Fahien refused. In order to facilitate his mother visiting, Fahien subsequently built a small house for her outside the temple. One day, when Fahien, along with dozens of monks, was harvesting rice in a rice field, a group of famine victims came to steal the rice. All the monks fled except for Fahien. He said to the famine victims: "If you need the rice, you can take it as your pleasures. However, you should know, the reason why you are so poor and hungry today, is that you had never done any alms giving in the past lives. If you now still want to grab the other's rice, you will be hopeless. I am worried about your future lives!" Then he returned to the Buddhist temple and the famine victims gave up on their theft. Hundreds of monks in the temple all admired the behavior of Fahien.

Chinese Pilgrims

The knowledge of events in the Gupta period and age of Harsha largely derived from the narratives of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, who crowded into India as the holy land of their faith, and eagerly sought for Buddhist books, relics, and images. The earliest of these pilgrims was Fahien (399-413 CE), who came overland through Khotan and returned to China by sea. He remained for six years in the dominions of Chandragupta II Vikramaditya studying Buddhist literature and was much pleased with the country. Pataliputra was still a flourishing city, with numerous charitable institutions, including a free hospital. In Malwa the penal code was mild, and the people were not worried by official regulations. Order was well preserved, and the pilgrim was free to pursue his studies in peace. Although the Gupta king was himself an orthodox Vaishnava Hindu, but Buddhism flourished and was fully tolerated.

³ Xican Li Guangzhou, *Fahian's Biography and His Contributions To Asian Buddhist Culture*, (Article), August 2015, pp.1-2.

Journey

Fahien's travelogue, "A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms", described his journey. His memoirs are an important independent record of early Buddhist practice in India. He brought with him a large number of Sanskrit texts, the translations of which influenced East Asian Buddhism and serve as a preamble to many historical names, events, texts, and ideas.

Fahien was a Chinese pilgrim who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta II on a religious mission from 405 to 411 CE collecting Buddhist manuscripts and texts and studying at Indian monasteries, described the country as a generally happy one. He travelled by foot from China to India and returned by sea route.

The Travels of Fahien

Khoten Processions of Images

Yu-Teen is a pleasant and prosperous kingdom, with a numerous and flourishing population. The inhabitants all profess our Law, and join together in its religious music for their enjoyment. The monks amount to several myriads, most of whom are students of the Mahayana". They all receive their food from the common store. Throughout the country' the houses of the people stand apart like (separate) stars, and each family has a small tope reared in front of its door. The smallest of these may be twenty cubits high, or rather more-. They make (in the monasteries) rooms for monks from all quarters, the use of which is given to travelling monks who may arrive, and who are provided with whatever else they require. The lord of the country lodged Fahien and the others comfortably, and supplied their wants, in a monastery called Gomati, of the Mahayana school. Attached to it there are three thousand monks, who are called to their meals by the sound of a bell. When they enter the refectory, their demeanour is marked by a reverent gravity, and they take their seats in regular order, all maintaining a perfect silence.

No sound is heard from their alms-bowls and other utensils. When any of these pure men require food, they are not allowed to call out (to the attendants) for it, but only make signs with their hands.

Towards North India

Fahien went westwards towards North India, and after being on the way for a month, they succeeded in getting across and through the range of the Onion mountains. The snow rests on them both winter and summer. There are also among them venomous dragons, which, when provoked, spit forth poisonous winds, and cause showers of snow and storms of sand and gravel. Not one in ten thousand of those who encounter these dangers escapes with his life. The people of the country call the range by the name of 'The Snow mountains. 'When had got through them, they were in North India, and immediately on entering its borders, found themselves in a small kingdom called T'o-Ieih, where also there were many monks, all students of the Hinayana. In this kingdom there was formerly an Arhan, who by his supernatural power took a clever artificer up to the Tushita heaven, to see the height, complexion, and appearance of Maitreya Bodhisattva, and then return and make an image of him in wood. First and last, this was done three times, and then the image was completed, eighty cubits in height, and eight cubits at the base from knee to knee of the crossed legs. On fast-days it emits an effulgent light. The kings of the (surrounding) countries via with one another in presenting offerings to it. Here it is,—to be seen now as of old.

Woo-Chang, or Udyana Monasteries

Crossing the river, (the travellers) immediately came to the kingdom of Woo-chang "", which is indeed (a part) of North India. The people all use the language of Central India, 'Central India' being what should call the 'Middle Kingdom.' The food and clothes of the common people are the same as in that Central Kingdom. The Law of Buddha is very (flourishing in Woo-

chang). They call the places where the monks stay (for a time) or reside permanently Sangharamas"; and of these there are in all 500, the monks being all students of the Hinayana. When stranger bhikshus' arrive at one of them, their wants are supplied for three days, after which they are told to find a resting-place for themselves. There is a tradition that when Buddha came to North India, he came at once to this country, and that here he left a print of his foot, which is long or short according to the ideas of the beholder (on the subject). It exists, and the same thing is true about it, at the present day. Here also are still to be seen the rock on which he dried his clothes, and the place where he converted the wicked dragon. The rock is fourteen cubits high, and more than twenty broad, with one side of it smooth. Hwuy-king, Hwuy-tah, and Tao-ching went on ahead towards (the place of) Buddha's shadow in the country of Nagara ; but Fahien and the others remained in Woo-chang, and kept the summer retreat. That over, they descended south, and arrived in the country of Soo-ho-to .

Soo-Ho-To Legend of Buddha

In that country also Buddhism ' is flourishing. There is in it the place where Sakra, Ruler of Devas, in a former age, tried the Bodhisattva, by producing a hawk (in pursuit of a) dove, when (the Bodhisattva) cut off a piece of his own flesh, and (with it) ransomed the dove. After Buddha had attained to perfect wisdom, and in travelling about with his disciples (arrived at this spot), he informed them that this was the place where he ransomed the dove with a piece of his own flesh. In this way the people of the country became aware of the fact, and on the spot reared a tope, adorned with layers of gold and silver plates.

Gandhara Legends of Buddha

The travellers, going downwards from this towards the east, in five days came to the country of Gandhara ', the place where Dharma-vivardhana, the son of Asoka, ruled. When Buddha was a Bodhisattva, he gave his eyes also for another man here; and at the spot they have also reared a large tope, adorned with layers of gold and silver plates. The people of the country were mostly students of the Hinayana, Takshila, legends, the four great topes. Seven days' journey from this to the east brought the travellers to the kingdom of Takshaila, which means 'the severed head' in the language of China. Here, when Buddha was a Bodhisattva, he gave away his head to a man; and from this circumstance the kingdom got its name. Going on further for two days to the east, they came to the place where the Bodhisattva threw down his body to feed a starving tigress these two places also large topes have been built, both adorned with layers of all the precious substances. The kings, ministers, and peoples of the kingdoms around via with one another in making offerings at them. The trains of those who come to scatter flowers and light lamps at them never cease. The nations of those quarters call those (and the other two mentioned before) ' the four great topes.

The Three Predecessors

Fifty le to the west of the city bring (the traveller) to a town named Too-wei , the birth place of Kasyapa Buddha . At the place where he and his father met, and where he attained to parinirvana, topes were erected. Over the entire relic of the whole body of him, the Kasyapa Tathagat, a great tope was also erected. Going on south-east from the city of Sravasti for twelve yojanas, (the travellers) came to a town named Na-pei-kea, the birth place of Krakuchanda Buddha. At the place where he and his father met, and where he attained to pari-nirvana, topes were erected. Going north from here less than a yojana, they came to a town which had been the

birth place of Kanakamuni Buddha ". At the place where he and his father met, and where he attained to pari-nirvana, topes were erected.

Kapilavastu - Desolation Legends

Less than a yojana to the east from this brought them to the city of Kapilavastu but in it there was neither king nor people. All was mound and desolation. Of inhabitants there were only some monks and a score or two of families of the common people. At the spot where stood the old palace of king Suddhodana there have been made images of the prince (his eldest son) and his mother, and at the places where that son appeared mounted on a white elephant when he entered his mother's womb -, and where he turned his carriage round on seeing the sick man after he had gone out of the city by the eastern gate, topes have been erected. The places (were also pointed out) where (the rishi) inspected the marks (of Buddhahood on the body) of the heretofore (when an infant); where, when he was in company with Nanda and others, on the elephant being struck down and drawn on one side, he tossed it away where he shot arrow to the south-east.

Administration

Political and Administration conditions

- Fahien did not record anything specifically about the political condition of India. He did not even mention the name of Chandragupta II during whose reign he visited the country.
- He simply inferred that the administration of the Guptas was liberal, the people enjoyed economic prosperity and the burden of taxes on them was not heavy. Mostly, fines were exacted from the offenders and corporal punishment was avoided and, probably, death penalty was absent.

- The primary source of income of the state during that time was land-revenue and people could move freely from one land to another.
- Monasteries, Sanghas, temples and their property and other religious endowments were free from government taxes.
- The kings and the rich people had built rest-houses where every convenience was provided to the travellers. Also, hospitals were built to provide free medicines to the poor.
- The Fahien account suggests that the administration of the Guptas was benevolent and successful; there was peace and security within the empire.

Religious Condition

- Based on Fahien's recordings, people observed tolerance in religious matters because Buddhism and Hinduism both flourished side by side during that time.
- Buddhism was more popular in Punjab, Bengal and the region around Mathura.
- The Hindu religion was more popular in the 'middle kingdom' (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and a part of Bengal) which formed the heart of Chandra Gupta II's dominions.

Society

- People during the 5th century i.e. during Fahien's visit to India were prosperous, happy, liberal and simple in morals.
- Mostly, they were vegetarians and avoided meat and onions and they avoided alcohol and other intoxicants.
- There were houses built for dispensing charity and medicine and gave large donations to temples, monasteries, Sanghas etc.
- The rich people vied with each other in practice of benevolence and righteousness.

- Public morality was high and people were content with their lives.

City of Pataliputra:

Fahien lived in Pataliputra for nearly three years and studied the Sanskrit language. He described that there were separate Sanghas both of the Hinayana and Mahayana sects, which provided education to students gathered from all parts of India. The Palace of Emperor Asoka also existed at that time, about which Fahien remarked that "it might have been built not by men but by Gods".⁴

Fahien was also very much impressed by chariot-processions. He mentioned that on the eighth day of the second month of every year, a huge procession carrying images of the Buddha and Bodhisattavas was arranged by the people. The rich people of Pataliputra had established a big hospital in the city where free medicines and food were distributed to the poor people.

Other Cities

Fahien described that places like Bodh-Gaya, Kapilvastu, Sravasti, Kusinagar etc. which were the religious places of Buddhism no longer existed as cities. This suggests that Buddhism was no more popular in the 'Middle Kingdom'. Fahien visited Malwa as well and praised its climate.

Trade and Sea Voyages

Fahien described internal and foreign trade of India as well as its ports. According to him, both internal and external trade of India was in a progressive stage and the Indians carried on sea-voyages. According to him India had trade relations with China, countries of south-east Asia

⁴ Majumdar R.C, *An Advanced History of India*, MacMillan and Co., Ltd, 1953, pp.152, 185.

and western Asia as well as with Europe. On its western sea-coast, India had ports like Cambay, Sopara and Baroach while on its eastern coast Tamralipti was a famous port from where Fahien went to Sri Lanka on an Indian ship.

Thus, the account of Fahien, though not sufficient by itself, provides some useful information about the social, economic, religious and moral conditions of the Indian people of the Gupta age.⁵

Criticisms

- Fahien, in comparison to Hiuen Tsang, had not been so observant and informative with regard to social, economic and political conditions of the society. Hiuen Tsang had completely described the period of king Harshavardhana but Fahien did not mention name of Chandragupta Vikramaditya.
- Fahien presented an idealized picture of Indian society, happy and content people enjoying life of peace and prosperity.
- Fahien's account contains very few descriptions of lives of ordinary people and these tend to be rather idealized. He focused mainly on Buddhist monasteries, Buddhist practices. Buddhist pilgrimage sites etc.
- Descriptions given by him like no corporal punishment, no theft, no sale of liquor, vegetarianism etc are contemporary sources and need to be refuted.
- Fahien came to India as a Buddhist adherent and wanted to present India as an ideal to Chinese people, so, he did not display descriptive and analytical approach.⁶

⁵ Gokhale B.C, *Ancient Indian History and Culture*, Sheth Printers, AR Sheth and Co, Princess St.Bombay-2, June 1958, pp.249-251.

Fahien's Memoirs

- Fahien's memoirs provide a stand-alone account of the society and culture of the locations he visited, notably ancient India around the year 400CE
- His translations of Sanskrit writings, which he brought to China, are useful for determining the dates of works, personalities, and Buddhist traditions.
- Many historical names, documents, events, and concepts within have a terminus ante quem.
- Central Asia towns like Khotan were Buddhist, according to Fahien with the clergy reading Indian texts in Indian languages.
- The monks were adored by the locals, Fahien reports a flourishing Buddhist society among non-Buddhists in Taxila.

In India and Srilanka, he depicts elaborate rites and public worship events in honour of the Buddha, which he describes with the patronage of the monarch. Fahien also mentions a stupa and two monasteries nearby, both of which are credited to Ashoka. According to Fahien, the towns of Magadha were the largest in the Gangetic plain region, which he refers to as central India, and roughly 600-700 monks were living there, learning their lectures from masters from all over. Fahien mentions the Chandala and they were the only ones who broke the Dharma. Fahien mentioned that the authorities interfered as little as possible with the subject, leaving them free to prosper and grow wealthy in their own way. Fahien studied Sanskrit without interruption for three years at Pataliputra and the roads were open and clean for travellers.

⁶ Michael Edwards, *Everyday Life In Early India*, Printed and Bound In Great Britain By Jarrold and Sons Ltd, London, New York, 1969, pp.249.

Fahien's account show that India was probably never ruled better than during Chandragupta Vikramaditya's region.

He was 77 years old when he reached the Chinese coast his *A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms* was the first eye witness account of the Buddhist practices and pilgrimage sites in Central and South Asia written in Chinese. Daozheng, one of the Chinese monks who accompanied Fahien, was so moved by the Buddhist sites and monastic institutions in India that he decided not to return to China.⁷

⁷Williams Jackson A.V, *Historic Accounts of India By Foreign Travellers*, The Grolier Society, London, 1927, pp.30-33.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

PRINCE OF PILGRIM - HIUEN T - SANG

The prince of pilgrims, the illustrious Hiuen Tsang, whose fame as master of the law still resounds through all Buddhist lands, deserves more particular notice. His travels described in a work entitled Records of the western world, which has been translated into French English and German, extended from 629 to 645 CE, and covered an enormous area, including almost every part of India except the extreme south. His book is a treasure-house of accurate information, indispensable to every student of Indian antiquity, and has done more than any archaeological discovery to render possible the remarkable resuscitation of lost Indian history which has been recently affected. Although the chief historical value of Hiuen Tsang's work consists in its contemporary description of political, religious, and social institutions, the pilgrims has increased the debt of gratitude due to his memory by recording a considerable mass of ancient tradition, which would have been lost but for his care to preserve it. *The Life of Hiuen Tsang*, composed by his friend Hwui-li, contributes many details supplemental to the narrative in the records, though not quite so trustworthy.

Etymology

The proper spelling of Hiuen Tsang's name has been the subject of considerable discussion and the variation in practice has been, and still is very great.

It must, of course, be remembered that to a French reader the initial *H* is in practice silent. Professor de Lacouperie also held that Hiuen Tsang was the best mode of spelling the name, and have therefore adopted it. Beal's spelling, Hiuen Tsang, which his books have made more or less familiar to English leaders is nearly the name.

Hiuen Tsang (602 CE - 664 CE)

- Hiuen Tsang was born in 600 CE. in Guoshi Town Luozhou (near present-day Luoyang, Henan) and died in 664 CE. in China.
- He was the youngest of four children, and his family had a long history of intellectual prowess.
- He had a classical education before adopting Buddhism. In 629 CE, troubled by discrepancies in sacred texts, he travelled to India to study religion at its source.
- He travelled Central Asia on foot and landed in India in the year 630 CE and went to the famed Nalanda monastery in India to study.
- During his tenure in India, Hiuen Tsang paid a visit to Assam (Kamarupa) in 642- 43 CE and attended King Bhaskar Varman's court.

Pilgrimage

Hiuen Tsang started his pilgrimage to India in either 627 or 629 CE, according to two East Asian versions. The 627 CE version is found in *Guang hongming ji* from Daoxun and is also in Japanese and Korean texts. The 629 CE is found in Chinese and western versions. This confusion, though Pilgrimage merely of two years, is of significance to western history.¹ The date when Hiuen Tsang pilgrimage started is not resolved in any of the texts that Hiuen Tsang himself wrote. Further, he did not write his own biography or travelogue, rather he recited it to his fellow monks after his return from India. Three of his immediate collaborators wrote his biography, and thus leaving three versions and with variant details. All three of these versions begin his pilgrimage in 629 CE. Yet, one version by Huili, states that met Hiuen Tsang Yabghu

¹ Vincent A Smith, *The Early History of India*, Atlantic Publishers and Distriputers, New Delhi, 1904, pp.14-15, 21, 25-26.

Qaghan, someone who died in 628 CE according to Persian and Turkish records. If this detail in Hiuen Tsang biography and Persian-Turkish records are true, then Hiuen Tsang must have left before Qaghan's death, or in 627 CE. In other words, some of the details in the surviving versions of Hiuen Tsang biography were invented or a paleographic confusion introduced an error, or the Persian-Turkish records are unreliable. The Japanese version is based on 8th to 10th-century translations of texts that ultimately came from Hiuen Tsang's monastery, which unfortunately has added to the confusion. Most sources state that Hiuen Tsang started his pilgrimage in 629 CE.

Hiuen Tsang - The Traveller

In CE 627, Tang China was at war with the Gokturks, and Tang Emperor Taizong had forbidden foreign travel. In 629 CE, Hiuen Tsang managed to flee the empire by convincing Buddhist guards at Yumen Cross to allow him pass through Liangzhou (Gansu) and Qinghai. He travelled west to the Tian Shan after crossing the Gobi Desert to Hami City (then Kumul). In 630 CE, he met the Buddhist ruler of Turpan, who assisted him in preparing for his trips. His artwork 'Travel to the West' (Si-Yu-Ki) depicted the Flaming Mountains near Turpan, China's hottest point. He visited Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Tashkent, and Samarkand in Uzbekistan), as well as the Iron Gate and the Pamir Mountains (a mountain range that runs across Central Asia, South Asia, and East Asia, where the Himalayas meet the Tian Shan, Karakoram, Kunlun, and the Hindu Kush). He visited various Buddhist temples and relics upon his arrival in Afghanistan, notably the Nava Vihara, the world's westernmost vihara (as described by Hiuen Tsang). In Afghanistan, he encountered Dharma Simha, a non-Mahayana monk with whom Hiuen Tsang studied early Buddhist scriptures, and discovered over 3,000 non-Mahayana monks, including Prajnakara. He also obtained the important Mahavibhasa manuscript, which he later translated

into Chinese. Hiuen Tsang and Prajnakara saw hundreds of non-Mahayana temples in Central Afghanistan, as well as two massive Bamiyan Buddhas carved out of the rockface.² They resumed their trek and arrived in Kabul, where they found over 100 monasteries and 6000 monks, the majority of them Mahayana monks. Around the year 630 CE, Hiuen Tsang landed in Gandhara (then the northwestern Indian subcontinent), which is today in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Here he met the first Jains and Hindus he would encounter on his travels. On his journey out of Danapur (now Jalalabad, Afghanistan), he travelled via the Khyber Pass and arrived at Purushapura, Gandhara's capital (Now Peshawar in Pakistan). Here he came upon the Kanishka Stupa.

Hiuen Tsang's Recordings

Hiuen Tsang was known for recording the events of the reign of the northern Indian emperor, Harsha.

- He praised emperor Harsha and described him as a laborious king. During his reign, the kingdom was free from revolts and was well governed, Traitors were given death sentences while offenders were tortured or given physical punishments. The burden of taxation was less and the main source of income was land revenue. However, travelling was not much safe during the time.
- Harsha divided his kingdom in four parts; one was for administrative routine of the state; second was distributed among government employees; the third was given to scholars while the fourth was given in charity to Brahmanas and the Buddhist monks.
- Hiuen Tsang wrote that the army of Harsha consisted of 60,000 war-elephants, 50,000 strong cavalry chariots and 1,00,000 strong infantry

² Shuman Hwui, Li, *The Life of Hiuen Tsang*, Turner & Co. L Broadway House, 1911, pp.2-3.

- He described Harsha as a perfect devotee of Buddha but Hinduism was more widely popular in India at that time as compared to Buddhism.
- There was complete tolerance among people of all religious faiths and people changed their religions voluntarily
- He described the city-life of India that the houses were constructed with woods, bricks and dung. People wore cotton, silk and wool.
- The streets were circular and dirty.
- Prayag was an important city while Kannauj was beautiful.
- Shravasti and Kapilavastu had lost their religious importance
- Nalanda was the center of Buddhist learning.
- Education in India was given between Nine to Thirty years of age which was mostly religious.
- Education was provided orally and their script was Sanskrit.
- Indians were lovers of education, literature and fine arts.
- He also described that the Caste system was rigid with no purdah system
- Women were also provided with education but the practice of Sati also prevailed.
- People were simple, honest and observed high morality. They avoided meat, onion and liquor in their food and drinks.
- Hiuen Tsang described that Indian used all types of jewellery and ornaments and praised the quality of Indian Pearls and ivory.
- He said that Indians had brisk trade with foreign countries and had prosperous ports and sea coast in the East as well as West.

- India exported cloth, sandalwood, medicinal herbs, ivory, pearls, spices etc. to foreign countries and imported gold, silver and horses.
- Hiuen Tsang described India as a rich and prosperous country.

Kingdom of Agni

In 630 CE, he arrived in the kingdom of Agni (Yanqi, in a place called Turpan). Here he met the king, a Buddhist along with his uncle Jnanachandra and precept Mokshagupta, who tried to persuade him to quit his journey and teach them Buddhist knowledge. He declined and they equipped him further for his travels with letters of introduction and valuables to serve as funds. Hiuen Tsang observed that the country of Agni had more than ten monasteries following the Sarvastivada school of Hinayana Buddhism, with two thousand monks who ate "three kinds of pure meat" with other foods, rather than vegetarian food only that would be consistent with Mahayana Buddhist teachings. Therefore, the Buddhists in this country had stagnated in their Buddhist teachings.

Kingdom of Kuchi

Moving further westward, Hiuen Tsang met about two thousand Turkish robbers on horses who had looted others. The robbers began fighting with each other on how to fairly divide the loot. After the loot had thus been lost, they dispersed. Hiuen Tsang there after reached the country of Kuchi. This country of 1000 li by 600 li, had over one hundred monasteries with five thousand monks following the Sarvastivada school of Hinayana Buddhism, and studying its texts in "original Indian language".³ The biographies of Hiuen Tsang then describe implausible tales of a dragon race. This region was created by dragons from the waters metamorphosing into horses to mate and create dragon-horses, also into men and mating with women near this region

³ Samuel Beal, *Si-Yu-Ki Buddhist Records of The Western World, Vol-I*, Ballantyne Press, London, 1888, pp.7-17.

to create dragon-men who ran as fast as the dragon-horses. These were men who would massacre an entire city and leave a deserted place.

Baluka and other kingdoms

Further west he passed Aksu before turning northwest to cross the Tian Shan and then Tokmak on its northwest. He met the great Khagan of the Gokturks. After a feast, Hiuen Tsang continued west then southwest to Tashkent, capital of modern Uzbekistan. Hiuen Tsang describes more monasteries, such as the Eastern Cakuri monastery and Ascarya monastery, with Buddha's footprints and Buddha idols.

According to Hiuen Tsang's accounts, mystical light emanated from Buddha's footprints on "fast days". In the country of Baluka, the Sarvastivada school of Hinayana Buddhism was in vogue. He crossed the countries of Samarkand, Mimohe, Kaputana, Kusanika, Bukhara, Betik, Horismika and Tukhara. These had cities near rivers or lakes, then vast regions with no inhabitants, little water or grass. He describes warring factions of Turk chieftains in control, with "illness and pestilence" rampant. From here, he crossed a desert, icy valleys and the Pamir range (which link Tian Shan, Karakoram, Kunlun, Hindu Kush and the Himalaya mountain ranges). Here, observed Hiuen Tsang, the wind is cold and "blows with a piercing vehemence" (Li Rongxi translation). Ferocious dragons live here and trouble the travellers particularly those who wear "reddish brown" color clothes. Thereafter, he crossed past a salty sea, one narrow from north to south and long from east to west, he calls the Great Pure Lake. He describes supernatural monsters, fishes and dragons living in this lake. The Hiuen Tsang travelogues then rush through the names of many countries, stating that more details are provided in the return part of his journey, as he crosses into country of Baktra.

He adds that the Hinayana Buddhist schools were followed in all these regions. In the capital of the country of Baktra, states Hiuen Tsang, is a monastery with a Buddha's idol decorated with jewels and its halls studded with rare precious substances. The Buddhist monastery also has an image of Vaishnava deity as its guardian. The monastery and the capital attracted repeated raids from the Turk chieftains who seek to loot these precious jewels. This monastery has a large bathing pot that looks dazzlingly brilliant and has a Buddha's tooth relic and Buddha's broom made of "kasa grass". Outside is a vihara built ages ago, and many stupas to honor the *arhats* (Buddhist saints).

Kingdom of Bamiyana

South of Baktra is the country of Kacik then the Great Snow Mountains with valleys "infested with gangs of brigands" (Li Rongxi translation). Crossing this pass, thereafter is the country of Bamiyana (a part of modern Afghanistan). There, state his travelogue is a colossal statue of standing Buddha, carved from a rock in the mountains, some one hundred and forty feet tall and decorated with gems. This valley has Buddhist monasteries, and also a colossal copper statue of the Buddha, that is over a hundred foot tall. He was told that it was cast in separate parts and then joined up together. To the east of a monastery in the Bamiyana valley was a reclining Buddha entering Parinirvana that was over one thousand foot long.

The people and the king of this valley serve the Buddhist monks, records Hiuen Tsang heading east and crossing the Black range, he describes the country of Kapishi, where the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism had come in vogue. It had over 100 monasteries with stupas. More than 6000 monks, mostly Mahayana, studied here. Along with these Buddhist monasteries, states his travelogue, there were over ten Deva temples (Hindu) with "heretical believers who go

about naked and smear dust over their bodies", translates Li Rongxi. Furthermore, in the same capital region, there is a Hinayana monastery with 300 monks at the northern foothills.

The citizens of this country, adds, Hiuen Tsang fondly recall "King Kanishka of Gandhara" (2nd-century CE, Kushan empire). To its east are the "City of Svetavat temple" and the Aruna Mountain known for its frequent avalanches. His travelogue then describes several popular legends about a Naga king. He also describes miraculous events from a Buddhist stupa, such as raging flames bursting out of them leaving behind stream of pearls. The citizens here, state Hiuen Tsang's, worship pieces of Buddha's remain's that were brought here in more ancient times. He mentions four stupas built in this area by king Ashoka.⁴

Hiuen Tsang - In India

Hiuen Tsang, he entered India as he crossed the Black range and entered the country of Lampa. His travelogue presents India in fascicles separate from those for Central Asia.

The country has three seasons: hot, cold, rainy according to some Buddhists; while others say it is four three months each of spring, summer, monsoon, and autumn.

He travelled across Swat Valley to Uddayana, where he witnessed 1,400-year-old monasteries that formerly held 18,000 monks.

On his approach to Burner Valley and Shahbaz Garhi, he crossed the Indus River at Hund and arrived at Taxila.

He observed most of Taxila's Sangharamas (temples and monasteries) ruined and deserted due to local royal struggle.

Hiuen Tsang discovered over 100 monasteries and over 5,000 monks when he landed in Kashmir in 631 CE. In 634 CE, Hiuen Tsang travelled via Chiniot and Lahore before landing in

⁴ Romila Thapar, *History of India*, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Australia, 1966, pp.143-146.

Matipura (known as Mandawar today near Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh). At Matipura Monastery, Hiuen Tsang studied under Mitrasena.

Among the places he visited in India were Jalandhar in Punjab, Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Bairat in Rajasthan, and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. Hiuen Tsang witnessed 100 monasteries in this area with 10,000 monks (both Mahayana and non-Mahayana) and was impressed by King Harsha's support for both scholarship and Buddhism. He spent some time in the city studying early Buddhist scriptures.

Hiuen Tsang visited Givishan (Kashipur), Ayodhya, the seat of the Yogacara school, and Kaushambi during Harsha's rule in 636 CE. He then travelled north to Shravasti in Uttar Pradesh, and lastly to Terai in Nepal.

His last stop before arriving in Lumbini was in Kapilavastu (the birthplace of Buddha). Hiuen Tsang travelled from Lumbini to Kushinagar, Sarnath, Varanasi, Vaishali, Patiputra (Patna), and Bodh Gaya in the year 637 CE. He also went to Bhagalpur's Champa Monastery.

Hiuen Tsang spent five years studying at Nalanda, the premier Indian institution in Bihar at the time. Hiuen Tsang studied logic, grammar, Sanskrit, and the Yogacara school of Buddhism in Nalanda.

At Nalanda, Hiuen Tsang met the venerable Silabhadra (expert of Yogacara teaching and personal teacher of Hiuen Tsang).

While studying Buddhism at Nalanda University in India, Hiuen Tsang discovered eleven commentaries on Vasubandhu Hiuen Tsang and Harshavardhan Crossing the rivers Yamuna, Shrugna, and Ganga, Hiuen Tsang travelled south to Kannauj, the magnificent capital of northern Indian King Harsha Vardhan's domain.

Hiuen Tsang was returned to Kannauj at King Harshavardhana's request to attend a large Buddhist Assembly.

The gathering was attended by neighbouring kings, Buddhist monks, Brahmans, and Jains.

Hiuen Tsang was also summoned by King Harsha to the Kumbh Mela in Prayag, where he witnessed King Harsha's extravagant gift-giving to the poor. The king then bid him farewell in grand style.

After a 16-year voyage that included the Khyber Pass, Hindu Kush, Kashgar, Khotan, and Dunhuang, Hiuen Tsang returned to China and landed in Chang'an on the 7th day of the first month of CE 645.

Hiuen Tsang - Literary works

The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions, written by Hiuen Tsang, is the longest and most extensive description of Central and South Asian countries left to posterity by a Chinese Buddhist traveller.

In 657 CE Sanskrit Buddhist books were retrieved and translated by Hiuen Tsang. He acquired the greatest Buddhist education he could get across India. Much of this effort is described in the Life of Hiuen Tsang, Huili's companion volume to Xiyu Ji, the Biography of Hiuen Tsang.

His rendition of the Heart Sutra serves as the foundation for all Chinese comments and recitations of the sutra in China, Korea, and Japan.

During the reign of Emperor Harsha, the Chinese explorer Hiuen Tsang paid for a journey to India. He went on a trip during that time (CE 627- 643). When he returned to China, he authored his book 'Si-yu-ki,' or 'Record of the Western Countries,' which included a thorough

description of India under Harsha's rule. His travelogue divides India into fascicles that are distinct from those of Central Asia. During Emperor Harsha's reign, the Chinese adventurer Hiuen Tsang funded a trip to India. During that time, he went on a trip (CE 627-643). When he returned to China, he wrote a book called '*Si-yu-ki*,' or '*Record of the Western Countries*,' which featured a detailed account of India under Harsha's dominion.⁵

⁵ Gokale B.G, *Ancient Indian History and Culture*, AR Sheth and Co, Princess St. Bombay -2, June 1958, pp.272-278.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

ACCOUNT OF I-TSING

I-tsing (635–713 CE), also known as I-ching or Yijing, born Zhang Wenming, was a Tang-era Chinese Buddhist monk famed as a traveller and translator. His account of his travels is an important source for the history of the medieval kingdoms along the sea route between China and India, especially Srivijaya in Indonesia. A student of the Buddhist university Nalanda (now in Bihar, India), was also responsible for the translation of many Buddhist texts from Sanskrit and Pali into Chinese.

Formative Years

I-tsing a 7th century Chinese Buddhist pilgrim who has left behind an account of his travels to India. His name may correctly be pronounced as Yijing and is also written as I-ching. Born in 635 CE in Fan-Yang (modern Cho-Chou) near present-day Beijing, he began a secular education at the age of seven. His teacher died when he was twelve, it was at this time that he devoted himself to the study of the Buddhist Canon. In his fourteenth year (648 CE) he was admitted to the Order.

After his ordination in 654 CE, I-tsing spent five years in the study of the rules of discipline (Vinayapitaka) which remained his main interest and formed the main topic of his writing.¹ The pilgrim was aware of Fahien's travels and also of the immediate example of Hiuen Tsang, - he was in Changan when Hiuen- tsang's funeral took place there in 664 CE- and was inspired by them to go to India.

¹ Gokale B.G, *Ancient Indian History and Culture*, Sheth Printers Sheth and Co, Bombay, 1952, pp.94-97.

Purpose of Travel

I-tsing left for India from Canton by sea in 671 CE, arriving in India in 673 CE. After visiting the sacred Buddhist sites in Magadha, he resided at the great Nalanda monastery for ten years (676-685 CE), devoting himself to the study of the Vinayapitaka. He left India in 685 CE for the city of Shri Bhoja or Sri Boja, known as Shri Vijaya, le Palembang in Sumatra, which at that time was very much under the cultural influence of India. Here he devoted himself to the translation of Buddhist Sanskrit texts.

In 689 CE I-tsing returned to China to obtain assistance for his translations. He then returned to Sri Vijaya, and remained there for five more years. He returned to China in 695 CE during the reign of the well-known for his translations. He then returned to Sri Vijaya, and remained there for five more years, during the reign of the well-known patron of Buddhism, the Empress Wu Zetian. Thus, I- tsing's stay abroad roughly covers a period of twenty- five years (671-695 CE). He received much acclaim on his return, but like his predecessor Hiuen-tsang, I-tsing devoted the remaining years of his life to the translation of Buddhist works. He died in 713 CE at the age of 79, during the reign of the Chinese Emperor Zhongzong.

Works

Apart from his translations, I-tsing has left behind two important works. The Qiufa Gaoseng Zhuan (Chiu-fa Kao-seng Chuan) is a series of brief biographies of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims he met or heard of while he was in India.²

This work is interesting that it gives an impression of the numbers of pilgrims who went to India but have left no records of their own. His major work, Nanhai Jigui Neifa Zhuan (Nanhai Chi-kuei Nei-fa Chuan) meaning A Record of the Buddhist Religion sent Home from the

² Chand S, *The Cambridge Shorter History of India*, Rajendra Printers, New Delhi 55, 1969, pp.87-88.

'Southern Sea' is quite unique among the records left by the Buddhist pilgrims. It is possible that because of the monumental Xiyu Ji of Hiuen-Tsang, I-tsing did not write any travelogue describing India and the surrounding areas. He, however, described the Buddhist practices in India in their orthodox interpretation of the Rules of Discipline (the Vinayapitaka).

I-tsing wrote about relationship between the various "vehicles" and the early Buddhist schools in India. He wrote, "There exist in the West numerous subdivisions of the schools which have different origins, but there are only four principal schools of continuous tradition." These schools are namely the Mahasamghika, Sthavira, Mulasarvastivada, and Sammitiya nikayas. Explaining their doctrinal affiliations, he then writes, "Which of the four schools should be grouped with the Mahāyāna or with the Hinayana is not determined." That is to say, there was no simple correspondence between a monastic sect and whether its members learned "Hinayana or "Mahayana" teachings.

Buddhism in Srivijaya

I-tsing praised the high level of Buddhist scholarship in Srivijaya and advised Chinese monks to study there prior to making the journey to Nalanda in India.³

In the fortified city of Bhoga, Buddhist priests number more than 1,000, whose minds are bent on learning and good practice investigate and study all the subjects that exist just as in India, the rules and ceremonies are not at all different. If a Chinese priest wishes to go to the West in order to hear and read the original scriptures, he had better stay here one or two years and practice the proper rules.

I-tsing visits to Srivijaya gave him the opportunity to meet with others who had come from other neighboring islands. According to him, the Javanese kingdom of Ho-ling was due east of

³ Nilakanda Sastri K.A., *A History of South India*, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1955, pp.27,332.

the city of Bhoga at a distance that could be spanned by a four or five days' journey by sea. He also wrote that Buddhism was flourishing throughout the islands of Southeast Asia. "Many of the kings and chieftains in the islands of the Southern Sea admire and believe in Buddhism, and their hearts are set on accumulating good actions."

Srivijaya also written Sri Vijaya or Srivijaya in Indonesian or Malay was a dominant aristocratic Indonesian city-state based on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia, which influenced much of Southeast Asia. Srivijaya was an important centre for the expansion of Buddhism from the 8th to the 12th century. Srivijaya was the first unified kingdom to dominate much of the Indonesian archipelago.

Journey to Srivijaya

In 687 CE, It-sing stopped in the kingdom of Srivijaya on his way back to Tang China. At that time, Palembang was a centre of Buddhism where foreign scholars gathered, and It-sing stayed there for two years to translate original Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures into Chinese. In the year 689 CE he returned to Guangzhou to obtain ink and papers and return against to Srivijaya the same year.

Impact of Journey

In 695 CE, he completed all translation works and finally returned to China at Luoyang and received a grand welcome back by Empress Wu Zetian. His total journey took 25 years. He brought back some 400 Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. The *Account of Buddhism sent from the South Seas* and *Buddhist Monk's Pilgrimage of the Tang Dynasty* are two of I-tsing's best travel diaries, describing his adventurous journey to Srivijaya and India, reporting on the society of India, the lifestyles of various local peoples, and more.⁴

⁴ Majumdar R.C, *An Advanced History of India*, Durga Printing Works, Agra-4, August 15 1947, p.191.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Foreign accounts are written by foreigners and they were not indigeneus people. So their accounts are neutral and unbiased to a greater extent- At the same time as they were unaware of the customs and traditions of the local people, sometimes it was misunderstand. The Chinese pilgrims stayed here for several years and learnt the language of the people. But after they have returned to their homeland they did the translation work. On this translation work, the historical facts are sometimes misinterpreted.

Foreigners visited India for many purpose like political, trade and commerce, religion etc. Though the purpose of their visit is defined but they dealt with all the aspects of the contemporary life of the people.

Foreign Accounts dealt beyond the frontiers of their motherland inspired others to have political ambitions, religious pursuits and trade. This moulted the beliefs and faith of the people across the frontiers in Asia.

The Translations work points out history, geography and the identification of Greek and Chinese proper names with their Sanskrit originals sum up the views of the best and the most recent authorities who have written on these subjects. So the general description was based chiefly on the foreigners account. So foreigners accounts should be taken with great caution to reconstruct history after critical analysis of data.

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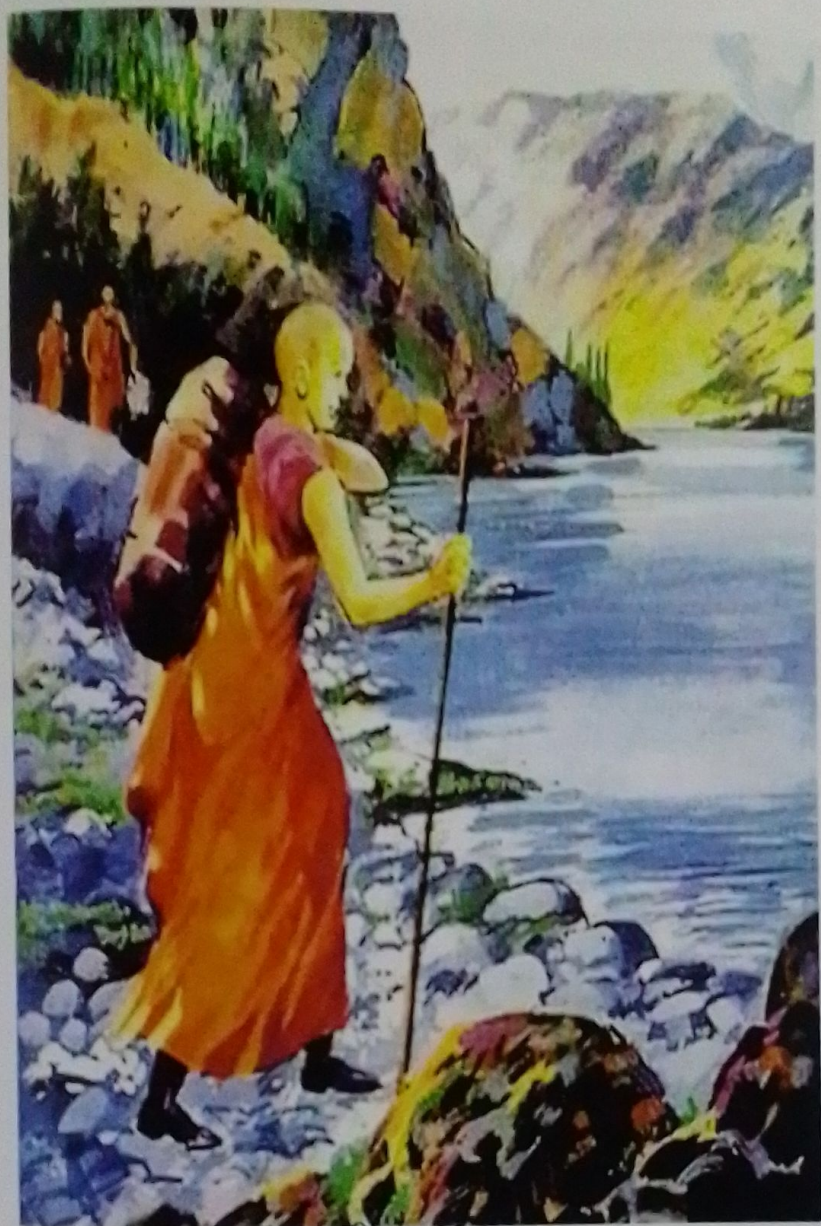
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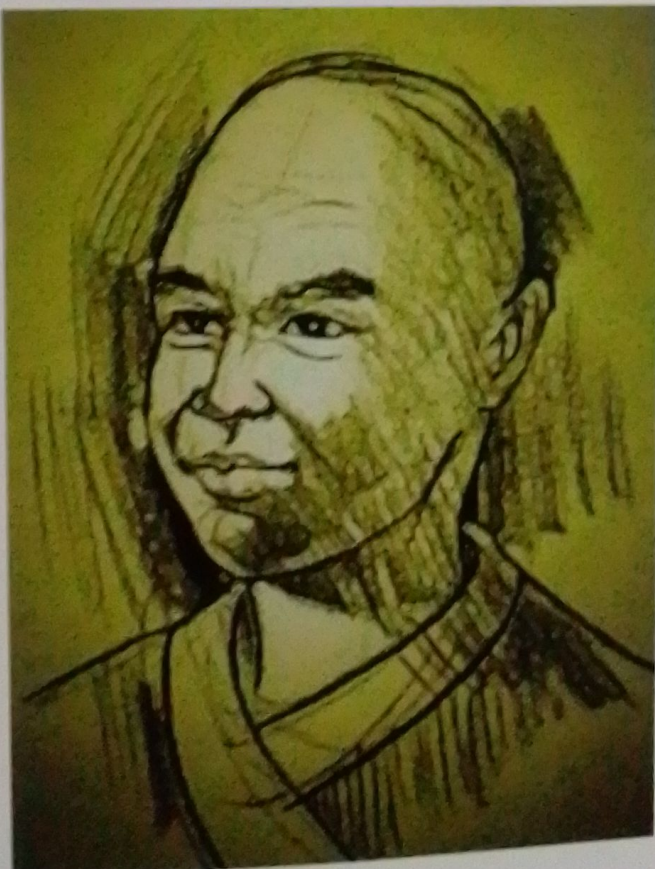
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PROMINENT MODERATES OF INDIA

Project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

By

KAROLIN REBY .W

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St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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2022-2023

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "**Prominent Moderates of India**" submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History and is a work done during the year 2022– 2023 by **W. Karolin Reby** a bonafide student of Department of History, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.


Signature of the Guide


12/4/2023
Signature of the Examiner


Signature of the H.O.D
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Principal
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II M.A History

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "**Prominent Moderates of India**" Submitted to **St. Mary's College (Autonomous) Thoothukudi** affiliated to the **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli**, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History, is my original work and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Place: Thoothukudi

Date: 5.4.2023

W. Karolin Reby
Signature of the Candidate

INTRODUCTION

It is the day a united India was born, the day when the whole country became a political unity, when several princely states were still deciding what to do. Leading India into this new age was the Indian National congress founded 130years age after the seeds for it were sown at a Theosophical society convention in Madras in 1884 when Col. H.S. Olcott and A.O.Hume called for the founding of an Indian political party to speak for the people of India.

Allan Octavian Hume arrived in India in 1849 CE to serve in the Bengal civil service. He was only 20 years old. He was to become a secretary in the Government of India in 1870 but was virtually hounded out of this criticism of the Government. His concern about the attitudes of the British began after the Great revolt of 1857 when many of the promises made to India by kept or only half-heartedly implemented.

The National congress is a national body; it is not a sectional sectarian or communal body, because, it claims to represent all interests and all community, no particular class, on particular interest. Its membership has been and is open to all men and women who love Indian and are prepared to work and suffer for her sake. There were Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians and ever European and Anglo- Indians. They have contributed more to its growth. It was conceived in the brain of an Englishman and noble minded Parsis, sir Pheroy shah Mehta and Dadabai Naoroji. Its presidents have been chosen from different provinces and different communities. Bengalis, Parsis, Tamilians. Punjabis, leaders from U.P., Maharashtra and other province has been among its presidents. Thus, it shows it shows its character.

Banerjee laid down the following as the objects of the congress in the first address all the earnest works for country's cause in the various parts of Indian. The eradication and elimination of all possible race, creed or provincial prejudice among all lovers of the country

and the fuller development and consolidation of national unit. The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in the various parts of the Empire. The eradication, by direct friendly personal intercourse, of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign. The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinion of the education, classes in India on some of the social questions of the day. The determination of the lines upon, and methods by which, during the next twelve months, it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests. They should be educated and made fit for higher positions in the administration. The legislatures should be thrown open to election, and the right of interpretation and discussion of the budget should be relaxed. The taxes should be moderate. India should have direct representation in British parliament at the rate of two members from each province. Land revenue should be reduced and permanent settlement of land should be made.

It indicates that in the early years of the congress, the political leaders of Indian were far from British rule. In fact, they wanted to improve the lot of Indian masses under the shadow of British skill; they had no idea of cutting off all connections with the British throne. They stood only for representative institutions for India. They did not believe that, the interests of Indians cut across the interests of the English; these for them were rather complementary and supplementary.

Aims and purpose

Indian National Congress a Political party from 1885 to 1947 which got independence to India from British through Ahimsa and Satyagraha which occupied a unique position in the world history. It set an example for many Afro-Asian countries to fight through non- violence

to promote peace. So it is very essential to inspire the youth to walk on the pathway of non-violence in the midst of contemporary issues in the present world.

Sources of Study

Different sources have been used for this project. Both primary and secondary sources have been consulted for writing this project. The secondary sources are mainly books written by various authors.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is analytical and descriptive method. The source materials have been critically analyzed and investigated the descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Outline of the Chapters

The Project consists of Four Chapters excluding introduction and conclusion. The first chapter explains the believes, demands and achievements of the Moderates. The second chapter deals with the life and works of Dadabhai Naoroji. The Third chapter speaks about the contribution of Surendranath Banerjee. The Fourth chapter analyses the role of Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

CHAPTER I

EARLY NATIONALISTS

Indian nationalism arose in the latter half of the 19th century as a result of various factors like western education, socio-religious reforms, British policies and so on. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was formed which played a significant role in India's freedom movement. The movement was initiated by Indian nationalists as well as people belonging to the Congress party that demanded Independence from British rule. The time period from 1885 to 1905 can be called the 'Moderate Phase'. The leaders of this phase are called moderates.

The history of the Indian National movement can broadly be divided into three phases:

1. The Early Nationalist phase (1885-1907)
2. The Assertive phase (1907-1916) and
3. The Gandhian Era (1915-1947).

The Early Nationalists

In its initial years the congress was led by a group of leaders known as the Early Nationalists. The Early Nationalists, also known as the Moderates, were a group of political leaders in India.¹ They believed in demanding reforms while adopting constitutional and peaceful means to achieve their aims.² The members of this group were drawn from the educated middle class consisting of professionals like lawyers, barristers, teachers and officials, who drew inspiration from western thought. Their emergence marked the beginning of the organised national movement in India. Many of them were educated in England and felt that the British intended to be just to Indians but they were unaware of the true state of affairs in India.

¹ Burke, S. M., Al-Din Salim, *The British Raj in India: An Historical Review*, Oxford University Press, 1997, New York, pp. 325–332.

² Burton Stein, *A History of India*. Vol. I. Oxford University Press. New Delhi, pp. 254–255.

The Early Nationalists included leaders from all parts of the country as:

- I. W.C. Banerjee, Rashbehari Ghosh, Surendranath Banerjee and R.C. Dutt from Bengal;
- II. Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale Pherozeshah Mehta and Justice Ranade from Maharashtra and Gujarat;
- III. P.R. Naidu, Subramania Iyer and Ananda Charlu from Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu;
- IV. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya from Uttar Pradesh;
- V. Liberal Englishmen like Hume and Wedderburn.

The Early Nationalist leaders who led the congress and the National Movement in its initial years were staunch believers in open-minded and ‘moderate’ politics.³ They believed in loyalty to the British crown. B.C. Pal an early nationalist leader, said in 1887, “I am loyal to the British government is identical with loyalty to my own people and my own country.” They wanted that Indians should have their proper and legitimate share in the government.

They asked for constitutional and other reforms within the framework of the British rule as they had faith in the British sense of justice and fair play. They believed that continuation of the British connection with India was in the interest of both England and India. At an early stage, the nationalists considered their association with England an advantage by considering British rule had done much good by removing various anomalies. Influenced by western thought, culture, education, literature and history, the demands of the early nationalists were not considered extreme but of a relatively moderate nature.⁴ They concerned themselves with the demand for reforms. Their demands were moderate in nature.

³ David Ludden, *India and South Asia: A Short history*. pp. 135–197.

⁴ Bhattacharya, D. C., Ghai, K. K., *Indian History*, Dayal Publishers. 2009, pp.60–61.

Beliefs of Early Nationalists

- i. The Early Nationalists had faith in the sense of justice play, honesty and integrity of the British.
- ii. It was their hope that the British would grant 'Home Rule' to Indians. They relied on the solemn pledges made by the British government.
- iii. They believed that the British rule had many benefits. For example, it aided in cleansing social ills like sati, untouchability and child marriage.
- iv. They were of the opinion that Britain would help Indians govern themselves according to western standards.
- v. They said that the main obstacle in India's progress was social and economic backwardness of Indians and not the British colonial rule.
- vi. They relied on constitutional and peaceful methods to achieve their aims. They believed in patience and reconciliation rather than in violence and confrontation.

Constitutional Reforms

The Early Nationalists wanted a larger share in the government of their country. They believed that eventually India should move towards democratic self-government. However, that did not ask for immediate achievement of their goal as they feared that the government would suppress their activities. They, therefore, aimed at winning freedom through a gradual process.⁵ They made the following demands:

- i. Abolition of India council.
- ii. Expansion of the Legislative council and Legislative Assemblies-both at the centre and in the provinces.

⁵ Jim Masselos, *Indian Nationalism: An History*, Sterling Publishers. Bangalore:1991, pp.157–158.

- iii. Increase in the membership of Indians by including some members elected by local bodies like chambers of commerce, universities, etc., in these councils and by giving greater powers to them. They demanded Indian control over the public purse and raised the slogan 'No taxation without representation'.
- iv. By the beginning of the 20th century, they made a demand for Swarajya or self-government colonies of Canada and Australia.
- v. Adequate representation of Indians in the Executive council of the Viceroy and those of the Governors.⁶

Economic Reforms

The economic issues raised by the Early Nationalists included:

- i. Reduction in land revenue and protection of peasants against unjust demands of the zamindars.
- ii. Reduction in expenditure on the army and the money thus saved to be spent on welfare activities such as health and education.
- iii. An enquiry into India's growing poverty and famines.
- iv. Availability of cheap credit to peasants through agricultural banks.
- v. Development of banking, irrigation, medical and health facilities for the people.
- vi. Industrial growth through trade protection. That means that a heavy tax should be imposed on imported goods and the government should give loans for the development of iron, coal, paper and sugar industries in India.
- vii. Total abolition of salt Tax and the duty on sugar.⁷

⁶ Nanda S.P., *History of Modern India*, Dominant Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2003, p.354-355.

⁷ Sharma, L.P., *Indian National Movement and Constitutional Developments*, Lakshmi Narain Agarwal, Agra, 2007, pp.67-68.

Administrative Demands

The Early Nationalists made the following demands in the administrative sphere:

- i. Demand for Indiansation of services through simultaneous Indian civil service examinations in England and India.
- ii. Complete separation of the executive and the judiciary. They made this demand to protect Indians from the arbitrary acts of the police and the bureaucracy.
- iii. Increase in the powers of the local bodies and reduction of official control over them.
- iv. Repeal of the Arms Act and License Act.
- v. Wider employment of Indians in the higher grades of administrative services.
- vi. Spread of primary education among the masses.
- vii. Improvement of the police system to make it honest, efficient and popular.⁸

Defense of Civil Rights

The Early Nationalists defended civil rights whenever the British government tried to curtail them. In fact, it was because of the political work done by the Early Nationalists that democratic ideas began to take root among Indians. The Early began to take among Indians.

The Early Nationalists demanded the following civil rights:

- i. Removal of the restrictions imposed by the British Government on the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press.
- ii. Abolition of the preventive Detention Act and restoration of individual liberties.
- iii. Restoration of right to assemble and to form associations.⁹

The Early Nationalists were practical and they wanted to win freedom by a gradual process. They did not aim at high demands because they wanted to work on the lines of least resistance. Besides, they did not want to arouse serious opposition.

⁸ Bhattacharya, D. C., Ghai, K. K., *Indian History*, Dayal publishers, 2009. pp. 55, 60–61, 88, 92.

⁹ *Ibid.*,

Methods

The method, popularly known as constitutional agitation Method was followed by the Early Nationalists. They believed in the policy of constitutional agitation within the legal framework, and slow orderly political progress. The methods adopted by the Early Nationalists had two objectives.

First Set of Methods

Their first objective was to educate people in India in modern politics, to arouse national political consciousness and to create a united public opinion. For this purpose, they relied on the following methods:

- i. They held meetings where speeches were made and resolutions for popular demands were passed.
- ii. They made use of the press to criticize government policies.
- iii. They sent memorandums and petitions to government officials and the British parliament. These petitions were carefully drafted with facts and arguments. Though these petitions were addressed to the government, their real aim was to educate the Indian people.

Second Set of Methods

The second objective of the British government and the British public. To achieve this objective, they followed the following methods:

- I. They made use three p's i.e. petitions, prayers and protests. They sent petitions, requests and letters of protest to the British government to look into the problems of the Indians.
- II. A British committee of the Indian National congress was up in London in 1889, which published a weekly journal, India, to present India's case before the British public.

- III. Deputations of Indian leaders were sent to Britain. These political leaders carried on active propaganda in Britain. For example, Dadabhai Naoroji spent a major part of his life in Britain to create awareness among British people and politicians about the plight of Indians.¹⁰

Achievements of the Early Nationalists

The Early Nationalist represented the most progressive force of the time. They made the following contributions to the Indian national movement:

1. The Early Nationalists created national awakening among people that they belonged to one common country India. This made Indians conscious of the bonds of common political, economic and cultural interests that united them.
2. The Early Nationalists trained people in politics by popularizing the ideas of democracy, civil liberties, secularism and nationalism.
3. The Early Nationalists did pioneering work by exposing the true nature of the British rule in India. They made people realize the economic content and character of British imperialism. By doing so, they weakened the foundations of the British rule in India.
4. Their political and economic programmes established the truth that India must be rule in the interest of the Indians.¹¹
5. The efforts of the Early Nationalists led to the following reforms:
 - I. The appointment of a public service commission in 1886
 - II. A resolution of the House of commons (1893) for simultaneous examination for the I.C.S. in London and India
 - III. Appointment of the Welby commission on Indian Expenditure (1895)
 - IV. The Indian councils Act of 1892.¹²

¹⁰ David Ludden, op.cit., pp. 135-137.

¹¹ James, Lawrence, *Raj: The Making and unmaking of British India*, Vol. I. St. Martin's Griffin. 2000 pp.323–s324

These achievements of the Early Nationalists served as a base for the national movement in later years. The nationalists were, thus, able to build a national movement while undermining the political and moral influence of imperialist rule. This helped in generating anti-imperialist sentiments among the public. But, at the same time, the nationalists failed to widen the democratic base of the movement by not including the masses, especially women, and not demanding the right to vote for all.

¹² Jim Masselos, *Indian Nationalism: An History*, Sterling Publishers, Bangalore, 1991, pp. 122–123.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AND WORKS OF DADABHAI NAOROJI

Dadabhai Naoroji was an outstanding intellectual and selfless patriot who devoted his entire life to the service of the nation. He was universally loved and adored by the people as the 'Grand Old Man of India' and the 'Father of Indian Nationalism'.

His Life Sketch

Dadabhai Naoroji was born on 4 September 1825 in a priestly Parsi family of Bombay. His father, Naoroji Palanji, died when his son was only four years old and Dadabhai was brought up by his mother, who though uneducated, had boundless courage and fortitude, and managed to give a good education to her son. Dadabhai was educated at the Elphinstone Institute and later graduated from Elphinstone College, Bombay, in 1845. He was the product of pre-university English education but was eager to get her son married. Thus, Dadabhai was married at the age of eleven to a seven-year-old Parsi girl Gulabi thus revealing that child marriage was not the monopoly of the Hindu society. They had three children; one son and two daughters.¹

After his graduation, Dadabhai was appointed head assistant at his alma mater, the Elphinstone Institute, and in 1850, he shifted to Elphinstone College as assistant professor of mathematics and natural philosophy. In 1855, he went to England to join as a representative of Cama & Co., the first Indian firm to open a branch in London. But soon differences cropped up between the company's management and himself because he did not want to be party to their 'fraudulent and deceitful conduct'. He parted company with Cama & Company in 1859. In the meantime, he was appointed professor of Gujarati at the University College, London.

¹ Grover, B.L., and Aleka Mehta, *Indian Modern History from 1707 to the Modern Times*, S.Chand & Company, Ltd., New Delhi, 2010, p.336.

He held that post for ten years till 1865-66. In 1859, he started his own firm Dadabhai Naoroji & Co., which flourished for a while and then ran into bad days. After that, Dadabhai concentrated more on political and economic issues facing India and educating the people in England through speeches and writings about the plight of Indians under the British Rule.

Early career

During 1865 to 1876, Naoroji travelled back and forth between India and England. He was an admirer of the Western system of education like a number of his contemporaries. Thus, he was active in the field of education during his sojourns in India, establishing several schools including those for girls, and also worked towards improving the teaching methods and efficiency of the existing schools. He was also active in the social reform movement concerning the Parsi and Hindu communities. Back in London, Dadabhai gradually became the most distinguished member of the small band of Indians who made England their centre of activity for political advancement of India by awakening their democratic instinct and liberal principles about which they were noted in the world. In order to carry out this work more effectively, he in collaboration with W.C Bannerjee, started a society in 1865 called London Indian Society. Dadabhai was the president and Bannerjee its secretary. The society was amalgamated within a year with another society known as the 'East India Association' which was formed in 1866.² In 1869, Naoroji came to India for a brief period during which he started a branch of the East India Association in Bombay and undertook a lecturing tour to educate the Indian people about the objectives of the association.

In 1874, Naoroji was appointed Dewan of Baroda state, but resigned after a year due to differences with the Maharaja and the British Agent stationed there. In July 1875CE, he was elected member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation and to the Town Council but the following year, he resigned from both and left for England. In 1883, he was nominated as

²Majumdar, R.C., *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Calcutta, Firma K.L.M. Vol.1, 1988, pp.339-340.

Justice of peace and was elected to the corporation for the second time. In January 1885, when the Bombay Presidency Association was formed, He was made one of its Vice-presidents. In August the same year, he was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council.³

Role in Congress

He played a memorable role in the Indian National Congress, presiding over its session in 1886 and 1893. But the most memorable one was that of 1906 at Calcutta, when he was asked to preside and patch up the differences between the ‘moderates’ led by Gokhale and ‘extremists’ led by Tilak. Naoroji had stayed above internal quarrels in the Congress, thus earning the respect of both the factions. The conflict between the two factions thus did not come out in the open at Calcutta but resulted in ugly scenes and a split at Surat next year. There was no Naoroji in 1907 to serve as a peacemaker. The 1906 session of the Congress is also significant because the idea of swaraj was propounded by Naoroji from the congress platform for the first time, though it is meant for self-rule within the Empire at that time.⁴

Member of British Parliament

Early in 1886, he went England to contest the election to the British Parliament, but did not succeed only once in 1893 from Central Finsbury Constituency in London. He sat as a Gladstonian Liberal, the party which stood for Home Rule for Ireland. He was the first Indian to become a member of the British Parliament. However, his speeches outside the Parliament proved more effective than those he delivered inside, which were not many anyway. The British Public heard him as he delivered inside, which were not many anyway. The British public heard him as he was a liberal and a moderate, who believed that India had benefited greatly from the British connection. Like other ‘moderates’ he had full faith in the sense of justice and fair play of the British people.⁵

³ Sharma, H.D., *100 Great Lives*, Rupa Publications, 2006, p.370.

⁵Sharma, H.D., (ed.),*100 Best Pre-Independence Speeches*, New Delhi, Harper Collins,1998, pp.51-52.

Admirer of the British Rule

Dadabhai Naoroji was a great admirer of the British rule in India like his contemporaries. He had faith in the British fair play and justice. He considered the British rule in India as a blessing. Thus, he said, "I, for one, have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice loving, fair minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our gracious Queen's proclamation of 1858 will be realised." Dadabhai was of the opinion that India could progress only if the political connection with England. The self- government of his conception was self-government under the British paramountcy. Dadabhai Naoroji had firm in British sense of justice and fair play.

In spite of Dadabhai's admiration of the British Rule in India, he pointed out that the relations between England and India had to be established on the basis of justice, righteousness and liberality. He wanted that England should rule India for India's good rather than the good of England. Dadabhai never hesitated to criticize the evils of the British administration in India. However, he was of the firm conviction that the British people possessed deep traditions of equality, justice and fair play, that they loved freedom and would help India to obtain Swaraj.

Political Career

According to Dadabhai Naoroji, self- government was the only remedy for the ills of India. He said at the gathering of the London Society. "There is only one remedy to the present dishonourable, hypocritical and destructive system. That remedy is self-government under British paramountcy."

On November 10 at dinner party in U.K. Dadabhai said. "The colonies were prospering with self- government whereas India was perishing without it. After all great events have been happening abroad, Japan and Russia, and I do not think our present

statesmen will shut their eyes to the obvious results of these great events. If the whole population of India said once for all that they were determined to have self-government their claim would not be and could not be made in vain.”

Dadabhai demanded self-government under the British empire. He said, “The moment a people came under the British flag, they are free and fellow British citizens. We Indians have been free citizens as if it were our birth right from the first moment we came under the British flag.” Dadabhai Naoroji also demanded Indianisation of Services, introduction of representative institutions and just and equal financial relations between India and England.⁶

Methodology

Dadabhai Naoroji believed in the method of prayers and petitions. He advocated peaceful and constitutional methods for achieving the political goal, Dadabhai said, “The whole parliament, press and platform is simply all agitation is the civilized peaceful weapon of moral forces and infinitely preferably to brute physical force when possible.” Dadabhai had complete confidence in the justice and fair play of the British people and he was sure that our demands would be conceded gracefully. However, Dadabhai never believed in the politics of mendicancy nor he considered prayers and petitions as a method of political mendicancy. He explained “these petitions are not any begging for any favour any more than the conventional ‘your obedient servant’ in letters makes a man an obedient servant. It is the conventional way of approaching higher authorities. The petitions are claims for rights or for justice or for reforms – to influence and put pressure on parliament by showing how the public regard any particular matter.”⁷ Dadabhai also emphasised educating the British people about the un-British character of the British rule in India. He was of the opinion that the British public did not know the pitiable conditions of Indians. So’ he suggested that

⁶ Jeyapalan, N., *Indian Political Thinkers & Modern Political Thought*, Atlantic Publishers, Delhi, 2003, pp. 25-26.

⁷ Munni Rawal, *Dadabhai Naoroji : Prophet of Indian Nationalism, 1855–1900*, Anmol Publications, New Delhi 1989, p. 56

Indian delegations should be sent to England to educate the British people about the terrible mental, moral and economic drain to which Indians was being subjected. To achieve the political goal, the Indians must agitate, otherwise the Britishers would naturally conclude that they were satisfied. According to Dadabhai, thus, agitation was the life and soul of political life, but it should be peaceful.⁸

Dadabhai Naoroji was a passionate lover of liberty in all sphere of life. He demanded that the Indian people must enjoy some basic liberties as the British themselves enjoyed. Dadabhai said, “British is the parent of free and representative government and, that we as her subjects and children are entitled to inherit the great blessings of freedom and representation.”

Champion of Rights

Dadabhai Naoroji was a great champion of rights. He demanded certain basic rights for the Indian people. Dadabhai proceeded to enumerate them in the form of demands. First, he wanted Indian administration particularly in higher jobs. Dadabhai explained, “They could not rise, they could not develop their capacity for higher government, because they had no opportunity. The result was, of course, that their faculties were stunted”. He strongly advocated that there should be simultaneous examination in India and England for recruitment to the civil services.

Secondly, Dadabhai demanded the introduction of representative institutions in India. The Indians should be given more representation to the legislative bodies. He was opposed to the idea of limited franchise. Thus, he said, “just as the administration of the U.K. in all services, departments and details is in the hands of the people themselves of that country, so

⁸Mehrotra S.R., (ed.), *Dadabhai Naoroji: Selected private papers*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi 2016,p.74.

should we in India claim that the administration in all services, departments and details should be in the hands of people themselves of India”.

Thirdly, Dadabhai demanded just and equal financial relations between Indian and Britain.⁹

Faith in the Moral Basis of Authority

Dadabhai Naoroji had deep rooted faith in the moral foundations of political authority. Like Prof. T.H. Green, he believed that the political authority should be based on moral foundations rather than on brute force. In his presidential Address at the Lahore session of the Congress in 1893, Dadabhai said, “You can build up an empire by arms or ephemeral brute physical force; but you can preserve it by the eternal moral forces only”. Justice, generosity and humanity alone constitute the real basis of political power. According to Dadabhai, if England would embark upon a policy of irritation, it was bound to lead to the disintegration of the empire.

Political Outlook

In the beginning Dadabhai Naorji was an admirer of the British rule in India. He had deep faith in British fair play and justice. Dadabhai considered the British rule in India as a blessing. But in his later days, a transition took place in his political outlook. Due to the reactionary activities of the British government in India, Dadabhai showed considerable interest in the activities of the activities of the extremist leaders Lal, Bal and Pal. The whole matter, Dadabhai said, “could be compressed in one word, “Self-government” Swaraj. “In his presidential address at the Calcutta session of the Congress (1906) he said “If I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen. I say, be united, perishing by

⁹ Jeyapalan,N., *op.cit.*, p.27.

more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the world.”¹⁰

Dadabhai's Drain Theory

Dadabhai's best contribution in the national welfare was that he was the British Indian, who propounded the theory of drain of wealth' of India.¹¹

According to Dadabhai Naoroji the Indian economy was subjected to a heavy drain. The inevitable consequence of foreign domination was the drain of wealth from India to Britain. Dadabhai pointed out that India had the lordliest and costliest administration in the world. The extravagant cost of Indian administration intensified the disastrous effect of the drain. The British people had no idea about the pitiable and miserable conditions of the Indian people. So, Dadabhai set himself to the difficult task of exposing the astounding expenditure of the rulers. It was a very difficult task as official data were inadequate and misleading. In spite of this, Dadabhai dedicated all his energy to the task.¹²

According to Dadabhai Naoroji, the existing financial relations between India and England were unjust and unfair. He said, the existing system of government was despotic for Indians and Un-British and suicidal to Britain. In the first paper of his book 'Poverty and Un-British Rule in India'. Dadabhai calculated that the yearly average income per head in India was 40 shillings, roughly equivalent to Rs.20 and commented, "even for such food and clothing as a criminal obtains there is hardly enough of production even in a good season, leaving along all luxuries, all social and religious wants, all expenses of occasions of joy and sorrow and any provision for bad season." Dadabhai did not accept the view that India's poverty was due to over-population or the interplay of economic laws. In this connection he said, "There is the strong argument of over population. They taste and so far truly, of the

¹⁰ Masani, R.P., *Dada Bhai Naoroji*, Kavyalay Publication, Mysore, 1968, p.112.

¹¹ Agarwal, R.C., *Constitutional Development and Indian National Movement*, S.Chand & company Ltd., New Delhi, p.319.

¹² Ganguli B.N., *Dadabhai Naoroji and the "Drain Theory"*, Asia Publication House, Bombay, 1965, p.109.

increase by British drain. They talk of the pitiless operations of economic laws, but somehow they forget that there is no such thing in India as the natural operation of economic law. It is not the pitiless action of the British policy, it is the pitiless eating of India's substance in India, and the further pitiless drain to England, in short, it is pitiless perversion of economic laws by the sad bleeding to which India is subjected that is destroying India".¹³

After examining the figures of imports and exports from India between the years 1835 and 1872. Dadabhai pointed out that the value of exports that of imports by 500,000,000. Thus, according to Dadabhai, this did not represent the total tribute which India annually paid to Britain. The interest had been calculated and the drain would have amounted to a higher figure. In a letter sent to the Daily News on April 3, 1905, he pointed out that during 10 years from 1892 to 1899 and 1902 to 1903, England imported from India goods worth 4,988,913,359 and exported worth 3,421,438,153 thereby making a net gain of 1,467, 441, 206, the average drain in India was 34 million. The drain was in the form of vast amount of wealth taken away by the Britishers to England. This was as under:

- a) Expenditure of European officials in England for their various wants both there and in India, i.e., expenses of the Government of India in England.
- b) Payment of pensions to the British officers,
- c) Payments to the war office for the maintenance of British troops in India,
- d) Money sent by the British professionals to England from India.¹⁴

Thus, Dadabhai wrote in his book, "this drain consists of two elements first, that arising from the remittances by European officials of their savings, and for their expenditure in England. And the second, that arising from similar remittances by non-official Europeans. Calculated in terms of statistics, Dadabhai pointed out that this drain came to 30 to 40 million pounds annually.

¹³Halija, P.D., *Economic Thoughts of Dadabhai Naoroji* (ed.), Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 2001, p.162.

¹⁴ Jeyapalan, N., *op.cit.*, p.29.

According to Dadabhai, this drain of wealth from India to England was the basic evil that prevented just and fair relations to as India and England. Another evil which Dadabhai referred to was as to how this drain from India was being brought back in the shape of British Capital in India. Thus, Dadabhai said, “As the drain prevents India from making any capital, the British by bringing back the capital which they have drained from India itself secure almost a monopoly of all trade and important industries, and thereby further exploit and drain India, the source of the evil being the official drain.” In his evidence before the Indian expenditure commission, Dadabhai said, “At present we suffer it as an evil being the official drain.”

In his evidence before the Indian expenditure commission, Dadabhai said, “At present we suffer it as an evil because we are helpless and on the ground, and foreign capital comes in and develops the resources for their benefit, and carries away the whole profit that is obtained out of these resources. We are simply used as common labourers, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. That is the only position to which we are reduced.” He demanded that the British capital in India should complete on fair and equal terms and that it should not enjoy a monopoly position. Dadabhai again pointed out, ‘In India in the construction of the rail road, a large amount of the loan that goes towards the payment of Europeans goes out of the country. Then, again in the working of the railway there is the same drawback, leaving therefore, hardly any benefit at all to India itself and the whole interest of the loan must also go out of the country.’¹⁵

Dadabhai Naoroji believed in the policy of free trade, but the conditions in which India was placed, he felt that could only be disastrous. Free trade between England and India was, said Dadabhai, “something like a race between a starving, exhausting invalid, and a strong man with a horse to ride on. Before powerful English interests, India must and dose go

¹⁵ Dada Bhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi 1962, p.97.

to the wall.” However, he felt that free trade was possible only between countries which had equal control over their own resources. But in India, the infant industries were ruined in the name of free trade. They needed protection. Dadabhai accepted that India could be prepared for free trade in case the drain of wealth from India was brought within reasonable limits.

In addition to the economic drain Dadabhai also referred to ‘The Moral Drain’ of the country. Thus, he said, all experience and knowledge of statesmanship, of administration or legislation, of high scientific or learned professions, are drained away to England when the persons possessing them give up their service and retire to England. This migration of experience amounted to moral drain’. This was not the position under Mughal rule. The Muslims made India their home and contributed to her culture and progress.¹⁶

On the role of the state in creating the condition of economic progress, Dadabhai closely followed Mill’s enunciation of economic development in the underdeveloped countries. He enquired how far these pre-conditions of economic development were present or could be created in India. According to Dadabhai, India’s problem was one of production rather than of distribution. He said, “Any poverty in the countries of Western Europe is not from want of wealth or income, but from unequal distribution. In India with such a low level of production or income, the question of its right distribution is very far off indeed.” He recognized the importance of the over-heads of economic development in a pre-dominating agricultural country. Dadabhai Naoroji was a sincere believer in state initiative in the economic sphere.¹⁷

Dadabhai’s Views about Colonialism

Dadabhai was also a socialist in his views. He had love and sympathy for the labourers and workers. Dadabhai attended an international gathering of socialists at

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Deshmukh, C.D., *Economic Developments in India - 1946-1956: A Personal Retrospect*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1957, pp.152-153.

Amsterdam from the 14th August to the 20th August, 1904. At the conference of Democrats, held on July 29, 1905, he moved a resolution demanding the establishment of a universal and published a scheme for setting up of industrial Commissioner's Courts for the recognition and protection of labour and all wage earners.

Dadabhai was opposed to the policy of imperialism and colonialism. He said, "Colonial possession alone gives the monopoly guarantee against all contingencies in the struggle with competitors. Including the contingencies, the latter will defend themselves by means of a law establishing a state monopoly. The more the capitalism is developed, the more strongly, the shortage of raw-material is felt, the more intense the competition and the hunt for sources of raw-materials throughout the world, the more desperate is the struggle for acquisition of colonies."

CHAPTER III

CONTRIBUTION OF SURENDRANATH BANERJEE

Surendranath Banerjee was noteworthy son of India. He played a very significant role in the development of the liberal tradition in modern India. His life and activities form an integral part of the history of the Indian national movement. He did commendable service for the enlargement of the rights and liberties of the people.

Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, justice M.G.Ranade and Gokhale, He belonged to the liberal school of thought. He was also an admirer of British rule in India. He had faith in the British fair play and justice. According to Surendranath Banerjee, India could get peace, prosperity and advancement only under the British Empire. Like other liberal thinkers, he also had faith in the constitutional methods. He was a good orator and writer. He was regarded by many as the life and soul of the national movement in India.¹

Early Life

Surendranath Banerjee was born on November 10, 1848 in the Jaltola of Calcutta. The atmosphere in the Banerjee family was one of a tie between the old world forces and the new. Surendranath's grandfather was an orthodox Hindu and his father Durga Charan had deep faith in western Culture and Civilisation. He wrote in his autobiography, 'A Nation in Making', "Thus, in our home the two conflicting forces of those times met." However, the peace of the family was not disturbed by this conflict. Brought up in such an atmosphere, Surendranath Banerjee represented a fine synthesis between the two Extremes of Hindu conservatism and western civilization. He inherited his father's revolutionary zeal and his grandfather's basic traditionalism.

Surendranath received his education in a village Pathshala. Afterwards, he was admitted to the Dovetone college where he graduated in 1868. He had a distinguished

¹ Jeyapalan, N., *Political Thinkers and Modern Indian Political Thought*, Atlantic Publishers, Delhi, 2003, p.53

educational career both in school and college. He was sent to England in 1868 where he joined the University College. He competed successfully for the civil service examination but it was rejected on the ground of being over-age. Surendranath appealed to the court of the Queen's Bench. The court asked the civil service commissioner to show reasons for his rejection. The result was Surendranath was restored and sent to India.

Later on, he was appointed as Assistant Magistrate at Sylhet. But after two years, he was dismissed from service on some charges. Then, he went to London to plead his case before the authorities at the Indian Office, but he could not achieve success. Surendranath Banerjee's dismissal from service created a nation-wide resentment. In this connection, he wrote, "My case excited very strong feelings in the Indian community and the general belief among the country men was that if he were not an Indian he could not have been put to all this trouble and that the head and front of my offence was that he had entered the sacred premises of the Indian Civil Service, which so far had been jealously guarded against invasion by the children of the soil. Many years afterwards a Lieutenant Governor stated that it was a wicked proceeding." But his removal from far as the country was concerned. As C.Y. Chintamani remarks, "the loss of the government became the gain of the country."²

In 1876, Surendranath was appointed as Professor of English in the Metropolitan Institution. In 1881, he joined the Free Church College as Professor of English literature. For 37 years, i.e., from 1875 to 1912, Surendranath Banerjee was fully engaged in active teaching work. He loved his students. He was a great educationist with a missionary zeal.

Surendranath attached more to importance of education than politics. Thus, he wrote, "political work is more or less ephemeral, though nonetheless highly useful. Educational work has in it the element of permanent utility. The empire of a teacher is an ever enduring

² Sharma, H.D., *100 Great Lives*, Ruba Publications Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi, 2006, p.35.

empire, which extends over the future. The teachers are the masters of the future. I cannot think of a nobler calling than theirs.

Political career

Surendranath Banerjee began his political career sometimes in 1875. He founded the Indian Association in Calcutta on July 26, 1876. The main object of this association was to agitate for the introduction of representative government in India.³ The Indian Association played a very significant role in the political life of the country. In 1876, Surendranath was elected a Member of Calcutta corporation. Four times, he was elected a Member of Bengal Legislative Council in 1894, 1896, 1898 and 1900. In 1913 Surendranath was elected to the Imperial Council. For several year he also edited the Bengalee Journal.

Surendranath was one of the founders of the Indian National Congress and was its President at Poona in 1895 and again at Ahmedabad in 1902. He served in the Indian National Congress till 1918. Afterwards, he along with other moderate leaders, organised a party, with the liberal federation.⁴ Surendranath also gave evidence before the Joint Select Committee. In 1921, he became the minister for Local Self-government and Public Health in Bengal. Surendranath visited England several times; in 1890 as a member of a delegation sent by the Calcutta Corporation, in 1896, to give evidence before Welby Commission, and in 1910 to represent Indian in the Imperial Press Conference.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 threw up several leaders who tried to mould the public opinion against this act of lord Curzon. Surendranath was perhaps the most prominent among them. "The strong leadership and personality at the Barisal Conference, made him the uncrowned king of Bengal".

³ Majumdar, R.C. *History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol. I*, Firma KLM, Calcutta, 1988, p.328.

⁴ Sitaramayya, & Pattabhi, B., *The History of the Indian National Congress (1885–1935)*. Working Committee of the Congress. 1935, pp. 12–27.

Surendranath was a moderate like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gokhale and others. They believed in British dispensation and generosity and advocated constitutional methods as a means for achieving a representative form of government. The schism between the Extremists who believed in agitation and the Methods, which came out in the open at the Surat session in 1907, weakened the Congress which was controlled by the Moderates like Surendranath, Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale. The decline in the popularity of the Congress also resulted the climax of his political career in 1906, and then set in his decline. After 1916, the Congress party came under the control of the Extremists. When the Montague Chelmsford reforms were announced in 1918, the Congress leadership decided to oppose the reforms. On the other hand the Moderates led by Surendranath wanted to try the reforms as they believed that the proposed reforms were a step towards representative government. When a special session of the Congress was held in Bombay in 1918 to discuss the issue Surendranath and other Moderates boycotted it. They held a separate conference on 1 November 1918, under the presidentship of Surendranath. It was styled as the All India Conference of the Moderate party' which became the nucleus for the 'National Liberal Federation of India', Formed soon after. Thus, Surendranath walked out of the history of India's struggle for freedom. His becoming a minister of local self government and health in the Bengal cabinet in 1921 and being knighted the same year further tarnished his image as a great national leader. He came down from once famous Surrender Not Banerjee' to Sir Surrender', in the eyes of the masses.⁵

The views and thought of Surendranath Banerjee are available to us through his work "A Nation in the making." "He discussed in detail the political, social and economic problems of his times in this book. Surendranath was influenced by the self-sacrificing career of Joseph

⁵ Roy Chaudury, *Gandhi and His Contemporaries*, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1972,p.229.

Mazzini. He imbibed the teachings of English liberal political thinkers, like Burke, J.S. Mill, Macaulay etc. He was also inspired by the Indian liberals.

Admirer of the British Rule.

Like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice Ranade, etc., Surendranath Banerjee was an impeccable leader of the British rule in India. For him the British rule was a blessing in disguise and was in the interest of the people India. He had deep faith in the British fair-play and justice. Thus, he said, "To England we look for inspiration and guidance... We have been fed upon the strong food of English constitutional freedom. We have been taught to admire the eloquence and genius of the great masters of English Political Philosophy." He further wrote, "The noblest heritage which we can leave to our and our children's children is the heritage of enlarged rights, safeguarded by the loyal devotion and the fervent enthusiasm of an emancipated people. Let us so work with confidence in each other, with unwavering loyalty to the British connection, that we accomplish this object within a measurable distance of time."⁶

Surendranath Banerjee regarded the British rule in India as provincial, as one of the dispensations of the God of History. At the anniversary meeting of the Bhawanipur Students Association held on April 28, 1877, he referred that there were three main categories in England's mission to India:

- i. To help towards the eradication of those evils which afflict Indian Society.
- ii. To help in the formation of a manly, energetic, self-reliant Indian character.
- iii. To introduce the art of self-government in India.

It was the British Empire which brought the dynamic political concepts of the West into contact with the old idealism of the East.⁷

⁶ Sharma, H.D., *op.cit.*, p.38.

⁷ Banerjee, A.C., *Indian Constitutional Documents 1858-1917*, Calcutta, p.140.

In 1878, While addressing a meeting of the Students Association, Surendranath said, "It was England's mission in the East to save, to regenerate, to emancipate from the chains of ignorance, error and superstition, 250 millions of human beings, to heal the wounds that have been inflicted on them by the rapacity of their former rulers, to develop in them a self-reliant, manly energetic character, to separate through the land, the great blessings of peace, contentment and happiness; but above all it is England's noble mission in the East to help towards the consummation of Indian Unity to reconcile the jarring conflicts of the diverse Indian nationalities, to bring them nearer together, to evoke in them a sentiment of brotherhood and make them feel that they have to make common cause for the redress of common grievances." Hence, Surendranath regarded the British rule in India beneficial for its peace, prosperity and progress.

Constitutional Methods

Like other Indian liberals, Surendranath was also an advocate of the constitutional agitation. He believed in peaceful and constitutional methods. He was deadly against the use of violence. Thus, he said, "Constitutional agitation will secure for us those rights and privileges, which in less favoured countries are obtained by stemmer means. But peaceful are the means to be enforced, there is a stem duty to be performed by every Indian. And he who fails in that duty is a traitor before God and man." But he observed that this method was slow and needed great patience In his presidential address at Ahmedabad in 1902. Surendranath said. "Yet there are those who take a desponding view of the situation who say that our methods are faulty, that we wasted our time and breath, or that at any rate the results achieved have not been commensurate with the sacrifices incurred or the efforts put-forth. The question is asked what is the good of persevering mn methods and in sacrifices, when the out-turn of them all is so insignificant I ask Has the time come for the final judgment? I ask results inadequate? Even if they were, what are twenty years in the life-time of a nation? The

triumphs of liberty are not won in a day Liberty is a jealous goddess, exacting in her worship and claiming from her votaries prolonged and assiduous devotion Read history, learn from it the inestimable lesson of patience and fortitude and the self-sacrificing devotion which a constitutional struggle for constitutional liberty involves."

Local-Self-government

Surendranath Banerjee demanded self-government under the British Empire. In the legislature, he did commendable service for the enlargement of the rights and liberties of the Indian people. Thus, he observed that political rights were conducive to the material progress of the country.⁸ Throughout his life, Surendranath Banerjee had fought for the Indianisation of the services. He demanded that Indians should get more share in the administration. The Civil Service Examination should also be held simultaneously both in England and India. In support of self- government in India, he wrote, "Political inferiority involves moral degradation... A nation of slaves would never have produced a Patanjali, a Buddha, or a Valmiki. We want self-government in order that we might wipe off from us the badge of political inferiority and lift our heads among the nations of the earth and fulfil the great destinies that are in store for us under the blessing of Divine Providence. We want self-government not only in our own interest but for the sake of humanity at large... It is our mission to become once again the spiritual guides of mankind, but we cannot fulfill that mission unless and until we ourselves are emancipated, we ourselves are free. That is the first indispensable equipment for the discharge of that great mission." To him, self-government was the essential condition for national reconstruction

Lover of Liberty

Surendranath Banerjee was a staunch advocate of the concept of Liberty. He imbibed love for liberty from the writings of Macaulay, Mill, Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, etc. He realised that

⁸ Jeyapalan, *op.cit.*,p56.

people could learn from the British constitutional history rights and privileges for the Indian people. It was in the interest of the ruled and the rulers. Thus, he said, "Every nation must be the by nature with her own hands and in her own eternal book." arbiter of its own destinies such as the omnipotent fact inscribed According to Banerjee. "If power were vested in us to legislate, to control the finance and to carry on the administration through and by our own men, in accordance with principles laid down by our own representatives, we should have self-government in the truest sense, and possess the simplest facilities for developing our powers and faculties and taking our legitimate place the nations of the earth."⁹

His Views about Politics and Morality

Like Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Surendranath Banerjee wanted to spiritualise politics. According to him politics and Morality should not be separated. They should go side by side. In his speech at Calcutta on 27th September 1888, on the Ram Mohan Roy Memorial Meeting he said, "Politics based upon religion or deep moral earnestness is the one thing that is needed for this country. Politics divorced from a high moral purpose becomes the paltry squabble for power in which humanity can feel no interest. Take the case of the Home Rule agitation. Withdraw from it the personality of Mr. Gladstone and his intense moral earnestness, withdraw from it the deep favour of the Irish Patriots, and it becomes a miserable struggle for political power in which the deeper interest of humanity are lost sight of. Take again the case of the Pilgrim Fathers, the founders of American greatness.... They preferred exile to the miseries of a life where their conscientious convictions had to be sacrificed.... They developed themselves into statesmen, and became the founders of the noblest government and the freest race that the world has ever seen." Like Cicero and Burke, he emphasised the need of moral foundations of political power. He did not accept the Machiavellian concept of state and politics. In his presidential address at the Poona Congress of 1895. Surendranath

⁹ *Ibid.*,p.57.

Banerjee said, "I desire to place the moral consideration in the forefront that which is morally indefensible cannot be politically expedient. Politics divorced from morality is no politics at all. It is political jugglery of the worst description"¹⁰

Faith in India's Past

Surendranath Banerjee had deep faith in India's past. According to him, India was the cradle of religions and the holy land of the east. It produced great taints like Valmiki Vyasa, Buddha, Sankcara, Panini, Patanjali, etc. He "In the morning of the world on the banks of the Ganges and on the banks of the Jamuna the Vedic Rishis sang those hymns which represent the first yearning of infant humanity towards the Divine ideal... we were the spiritual preceptors of mankind.... our past takes us back to the dim twilight of history. In those days, when the world was sunk into barbarism we were the guides and instructors of mankind." in his speech on 'The Study of Indian History' delivered on 24th June 1876 at Calcutta, he said, "Let us sit at the feet of our ancestors and hold communion with the master-minds of ancient India. Such communion is pleasing in these days of gubernatorial repression, in these days of political lifelessness and political stagnation, and when the future outlook is indeed so truly gloomy....in studying the past history of your country, you will find much that is antiquated, much that is obsolete, much perhaps, that will excite ridicule and laughter. But let not nay such feeling overcome you. Approach reverentially the sacred records of your sires. Remember, that you are studying the sayings and doings of your revered ancestors, of those for whose sake alone you are now remembered, for whose sake alone the intellectual elite of Europe even now feel a deep and an ardent interest in your welfare. If you cannot attain the intellectual eminence of your ancestors, why not strive to emulate their moral grandeur. The

¹⁰ Das, M. N., *India Under Morley and Minto: Politics Behind Revolution, Repression and Reforms*. Routledge. 2017, p. 120.

road to moral greatness is not so steep or so slippery... upon the moral regeneration of your country depends its intellectual, its social and its political regeneration."¹¹

Advocate of National Harmony

Surendranath Banerjee was a great lover of National harmony. According to him, national unity was the path to the promised land of freedom, hope and faith. He said, "I have a strong conviction and an assured belief that there comes a time in the history of a nation's progress, when every man may verily be said to have a mission of his own to accomplish. Such a time has now arrived for India.... the celestial mandate has been Issued that every Indian must now do his duty, or stand condemned before God and man." Surendranath wanted all-India Unity on the political plane too. He toured the whole of the country and got remarkable success. He wrote, "For the first time under the British rule, India with its varied races and religions had been brought upon the same platform for a common and unified effort. Thus, was it demonstrated. that whatever might be our differences in respect of race and language or social and religious institutions, the people of India could combine and unite for the attainment of their common political ends the ground was thus prepared for this great national and movement." He also did positive efforts to promote friendly feelings between Hindus and Muslims. He believed that progress peace and prosperity could be attained only in United India.¹²

Role of Students in Politics

According to Surendranath Banerjee, "The students should certainly discuss politics may even subject to proper control and guidance, take part for the students should not indulge in party politics which were against the principles of morality and righteous. According to Banerjee, true politics must be based on moral principles It is said that once he refused to join the Calcutta University Institute because the students were excluded from discussing politics

¹¹ Shewan,M.A., *Surendranath Banerjee*,Himalaya Publishing House Pvt.,Ltd.,2017,pp.59-60.

¹² Jeyapalan, N., *op.cit.*,p.59.

there. He was of the view that it was unwise to exclude students from politics. He also emphasised on the need of student discipline

Economic Ideas

Like Dadabhai Naoroji and Justice M.G. Ranade, Surendranath Banerjee also discussed causes on the growing poverty of India. He was moved by the deplorable and miserable conditions of the Indian people. According to him, the economic condition of the people has an intimate bearing upon their political advancement. In his presidential address at the Poona Congress 1895, Surendranath outlined a five-point scheme for the stoppage of the material retrogression of the country:

- i. the revival of old Indian industries and the setting up of new ones;
- ii. moderation in the assessment of land tax which would be fixed for a fairly long period so that the peasants could be free from economic harassments
- iii. the remission of those taxes, which adversely affect the poor people;
- iv. the stoppage of the economic drain and bleeding of India by the adoption of suitable governmental regulations and
- v. the increasing employment of Indians in the public services in place of a costly foreign administrative agency.

Surendranath suggested the government to improve the economic conditions of the people. He also preached the use of Swadeshi goods in place of Videshi goods. In this connection, he said. "Swadeshism will save us from famine and pestilence and the nameless horrors which follow in the train of poverty. Take the Swadeshi vow and you will have laid broad and deep the foundations of your industrial and political emancipation. Be Swadeshi in all things, in your thoughts and actions, in your ideals and aspirations. Bring back the ancient days of purity and self-sacrifice. Restore the Aryavarta of olden times when the Rishis sang the praises of God and did good to men... Swadeshi does not exclude foreign ideals or foreign

learning or foreign arts and industries, but insists that they shall be assimilated into the national systems, be moulded after the national pattern and be incorporated into the life of a nation. Such is my conception of Swadeshism." In this respect, the Swadeshi movement was many-sided. It touched the three principal aspects of life, economic educational and political.¹³

Surebdranath Banerjee was one of the foremost leaders of the Indian National Congress for three decades after its inception. The schism between the Moderates and the Extremists resulted in the steady decline of the Moderate Party, of which Surendranath Banerjee was the most powerful pillar. The Home Rule League and the emergence of Gandhi ji caused people to lose faith in the Moderate Party's program, and the publication of the Montagu Chelmsford Report signaled the start of a war between the Moderates and the rest. With the passage of time, Banerjee's political sensibilities became more moderate. He left Congress after the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 because he supported the reforms rather than Gandhi's non-cooperation. Later He retired from active politics.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp.60.-61.

CHAPTER IV

ROLE OF GOPAL KRISHAN GOKHALE

Gopal Krishan Gokhale, one of the pillars of congress organization during the period of moderates and the mentor of Gandhi, was one of the prominent personalities of modern India. He was a great disciple of Ranade, the mentor of Gandhi and the idol of Motilal Nehru. Gokhale was one of the most respected statesmen of India.

He belonged to the liberal school of thought in modern India. He was the admirer of British rule in India believed in the British fair-play and justice. But Gokhale never hesitated to criticize the wrong policies of the government. "Mahatma Gandhi accepted him as his political Guru. He described Gokhale as the ideal servant of India and most perfect man in the political field. Gokhale was a scholar, a maker of Modern India, a politician, a social reformer, an economist and one of the most brilliant parliamentarians. He devoted his whole life for the service of the motherland.

Formative years

Gopal Krishan Gokhale was born on May 9, 1866, at Kotluk, a village in Ratnagiri district in a Ghitpavan Brahmin family.¹ The Gokhale family had played an honorable part in the national history of the Marathas. Gopal Krishan Gokhale belonged to a middle caste family. Waste not, was the motto of the caste to which he belonged.

Gokhale received his education at his home village. After the death of his father, Gokhale's family shifted to Kolhapur. Gopal Krishan Gokhale passed his matriculation examination in 1881 at the age of fifteen. In January 1882, he joined the Raja Ram College at Kolhapur. In the beginning, Gokhale was a shy student but afterwards he gained a reputation

¹ Nanda, B.R., *Gokhale, Gandhi and the Nehru's Studies in Indian Nationalism*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1973, p.12.

for an exceptionally sharp memory. He graduated in 1884 at age of 18.²In 1886, Gopal Krishan Gokhale became a member of the Deccan Education Society and was appointed professor of History and Economics at the Fergusson College, Poona. He was a selfless and dedicated worker of Deccan Education Society. He served the society for 20 years on a salary of Rs.75 per month.

Gokhale took keen and active interest in the activities of public life. For several years he acted as the editor of journal of the Sarvajanik Sabha. At the age of 22, Gokhale became the member of the Bombay Legislative Council.³ In 1904, he received the title of C.I.E. At the age of 39 Gokhale became the president of the Indian National Congress. He also visited England seven times: in 1897,1905, 1912, 1913,and 1914.

In 1905, Gopal Krishan Gokhan founded the Servants of India Society.⁴ The main object of this organization was to train young men in the responsibilities of public service.⁵ Gokhale said:”A sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken and public life must be spiritualized. Love of country must so fill the heart that all else shall appear as of little moment by its side.” The servants of India society played a very significant and important role in the political life of india. In 1905, he was one of the delegates of a commission sent to England by the I.N.C.to persuade the British parliament not to enact the partition of Bengal.

In his Budget speech of 1907 in Indian Legislative Council, Gokhale demanded the introduction of free primary education. In 1911, he introduction a bill in this connection in the Indian Legislative Council. In 1908, he also gave evidence before the Hobhouse

² *Ibid.*,p.41.

³ Jayapalan N., *Indian Political Thinkers –Modern Political Thought*, Atlantic Publishers, Delhi,2003,p.63.

⁴ Ramachandra Guha(ed.),*Makers of Modern India*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2012, p.99.

⁵ Sharma, H.D., *100 Great Lives*, Ruba Publications, New Delhi, 2006,p.210.

Decentralisation Commission. In 1910 and 1912, Gokhale fought for the cause of Indian labourers in Natal. He also visited South Africa in 1912 on the request of Mahatma Gandhi to help in satyagrah movement there⁶ and dedicated his life for the cause of Indians.

Sources of Inspiration

Gopal Krishan Gokhale was one of the most respected Indian statesmen. It was the ambition of Gokhale to spiritualise public life. For his political faith, he got inspiration from many sources. He was much influenced by the lives and activities of Justice M.G. Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji and Sri Pherozeshah Mehta and under their influence, he joined the Indian National Congress. Gokhale was highly influenced by the philosophy and work of Ranade, specially by his social and economic ideas and, moreover, by his pure and fervent patriotism.

At the same time, Ranade and Gokhale alike transformed politics of India and spiritualized it by insisting on self-surrender, complete dedication to the cause of the country and purity of motive and action.” Gokhale also got inspiration from the life and thought of Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, particularly by his nationalism and by his pure, simple and self- sacrificing life.

In matters of party organization and technique. Gokhale was inspired by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. He was influenced, up to some extent, by the philosophy of Tilak too. In addition to this, he was influenced by his personal circumstances. His forefathers, the Chitpavan Brahmins have certain distinctive qualities. They were practical, ambitious, personable and industrious. Gokhale inherited his uprightness and habits of unselfish application from his family.⁷

⁶ Jayapalan N., *Makers of Modern India: Gokhale, Gandhi, and Tagore*, Book Enclave, New Delhi, 2006, pp4-5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.5-6.

No wonder Gopal Krishan Gokhale was also influenced by the Western culture and civilization. He was described by many as the child of the Western traditions. He imbibed his liberalism from the study of English literature. According to him, the European history presented a well-marked evolution of the democratic principles. He was impressed by Burke's 'Reflections on French Revolution,' Gokhale studied the works of British liberals like J.S. Mill, Gladstone and others and derived his concept of nationalism and liberalism from them. He was also influenced by the German economist, Prof. List. Gokhale was a practical-minded and realistic political thinker. He combined idealism with realism. The following are the main elements of the political faith of Gokhale.

Belief in the British Rule

Like Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice M.G. Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta and other liberals, Gokhale was also an admirer of British rule in India. He had deep faith in the British culture and civilization. He accepted the British rule in India as divinely obtained. He was of the firm conviction that through the British rule God was preparing India for self-government.

In 1912 he remarked: "Not England's profit but India's moral and material well-being was to be the object of the rule. Englishmen were not to form a governing caste in the country; the people of India were to be helped to advance steadily to a position of equality with them so that they might in due course acquire the capacity to govern themselves in accordance with higher standards of the West.

According to Gokhale, the British rulers gave peace and order and Western education to the country. He believed in the harmonious of India and England. He wanted that India should remain a member of the British Empire.

In his budget speech of 1903, Gokhale said, "The India of the future will, under providence, not be an India of diminishing plenty, of empty prospect, or of justifiable discontent, but one of expanding industry, of increasing prosperity, and of more widely

distributed comfort and wealth. "I have faith in the conscience and purpose of my own country, and I believe in the almost illimitable capacities of this. But under no other conditions can this future be realized than the unchallenged supremacy of the paramount power, and under no other controlling authority is this capable of being maintained than that of the British crown.

Thus, Gokhale accepted the supremacy of the paramount power and considered the British connection with India as a blessing. Hence, he was a typical moderate.⁸

Faith in British Liberalism

Gopal Krishan Gokhale had firm faith in British liberalism. Like Dadabhai Naoroji, he held the view that the British would do justice to india.

In his budget speech of 1902, he said. "What is needed is that we should be enabled to feel that we have a government national in spirit though foreign in personnel a government with subordinates all other considerations to the welfare of the Indian people, which resents the indignities offered to Indians abroad as though they were offered to Englishmen, and which endeavours by all means in its power to further the moral and material interest of the people in India and outside India.

The statesman who evokes such a feeling among the Indian people will render a great and glorious service to this country and will secure for himself an abiding place in the hearts of our people. He will do more he will serve his own country in a true spirit of imperialism not the narrower imperialism Which regards the world as though it was made for one race only and looks upon subject races as if they were intended to be mere foot stools of that race but that nobler imperialism which would enable all who are included in the Empire to share equality in its blessings and honours."

⁸ *Ibid.*,p7.

Gokhale has deep faith in the British fair play and justice. He was of the opinion that the British rule alone could secure peace and prosperity to the country. He advocated a policy of loyal cooperation to the British crown.⁹

Local self government

Gokhale stood for Dominion Status for India as integral part of the British Empire. He also wanted to attain swaraj like Tilak but he knew that attainment of Swaraj was not immediately possible under the existing political circumstances. However, he used the term self government instead of Swaraj.

Gokhale recognized that our advance towards self-government could only be gradual because at each stage of the progress, it must be necessary for us to pass through a brief course of apprenticeship before we are enabled to go to the next one for it is a reasonable proposition that the sense of responsibility required for the proper exercise of the political institutions of the West can be acquired by an Eastern people through practical training and experiment only.

Though Gokhale was admirer of the British rule and considered its connection with India as beneficial, he never hesitated to condemn the wrong policies of the bureaucracy. He observed that, "The bureaucracy in India was becoming frankly selfish and openly hostile to national aspiration". He strongly criticised the ruling bureaucracy for its gross irresponsibility and extreme callousness to public will in partitioning Bengal. He made strong protests against the oppressive rule of the bureaucracy.¹⁰

⁹ Budget Speech 1906, p.123.

¹⁰ Benaras Presidential Address (1905), p.698

Political Programme

It goes without saying that Gopal Krishan Gokhale wanted Indianisation of services and demanded Indians to be given more representation in the legislative councils. At the Banaras session of the Congress, Gokhale categorized a set of nine demands:

- i. A reform of the legislative councils by raising the proportion of elected members to one-half and by requiring that the budgets be passed by the councils;
- ii. The appointment of at least three Indians to the India council;
- iii. The creation of advisory boards in all districts throughout the country; the district magistrates were to consult these compulsorily in important matters of administration;
- iv. The recruitment of the judicial branch of the Indian Civil Service from the ranks of legal profession;
- v. The separation of judicial and executive administration;
- vi. The reduction of the heavy military expenditure;
- vii. The expansion of primary education;
- viii. The growth and extension of industrial and technical education; and
- ix. The alleviation of rural indebtedness.¹¹

In 1905 and afterwards, Gopal Krishan Gokhale supported the Swadeshi movement. But he did not subscribe to Boycott. However, Gokhale distinguished the Swadeshi movement from the movement of boycott of British goods. He also worked at improving relations among different communities. This was the programme that Gokhale set for himself and worked unselfishly throughout his life.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Constitutional Methods

Gokhale had deep faith in constitutional methods. Like Dadabhai Naoroji, Justice M.G. Ranade, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranth Banerjee and their followers, Gopal Krishan Gokhale also believed in the peaceful and constitutional methods for attaining his political goal of self-government. He was not a political mendicant. His method was that of constitutional agitation.¹²

In the words of Gokhale:” constitutional agitation is agitation by methods which we are entitled to adopt to bring about the changes we desire through the action of constituted authorities. Thus to define it, the field of constitutional agitation is a very wide one, but there are two essential conditions-one that the methods adopted are such as they are entitled to employ, and secondly, that the changes desired must be obtained only through the action of constituted authorities by bringing to bear on them the pressure of public opinion.”¹³

This method included free speech, free association, free press, meetings, processions, delegations, constructive criticism of the government, etc. The method of constitutional agitation also included prayers and petitions but it did not include the use of violence, preaching of hatred, etc.

Gokhale believed in the method of persuasion. He said,..“redress must be obtained through the constituted authorities.. the idea that we should leave the authorities, severely alone and seek to attain our goal independently of them is inadmissible and absurd”.He was opposed to adopting the method of passive-resistance of the type preached by Tilak. He did believe in passive-resistance, but pleaded that it should be used only as a measure of defence rather than of attack. He wanted that the passive-resistance movement should be moral,

¹² Speeches of Gopala Krishna Gokhale, 3rd edition, p.1029.

¹³ Joshi, T.M., *Gokhale and Modern India*, p.6.

spiritual and to be carried on without any intention of vindictiveness. However, Gokhale wanted that this method should be used only when all other means of redress have failed.¹⁴

Spiritualisation of Politics

Gokhale believed that the political authority should be based on moral foundations. On June 12, 1905, he established the Servants of India Society to spiritualise public life. He wanted that “a sufficient number of our countrymen must now come forward to devote themselves to the cause in the spirit in which religious work is undertaken. Public life must be spiritualized.”¹⁵

Gokhale firmly declared that unless our political movement was informed by the spirit of religion it would be barren. He said, “The principal moral interest of this institution (Servants of India Society) is in the fact that it represents an idea and embodies an ideal. The idea is that Indians of the present day combine themselves together, and putting aside all thoughts of worldly interests, work for a secular purpose with the zeal and enthusiasm which we generally find in the sphere of religion alone.”

To him ‘Spiritualisation of public life’ meant the adoption of a religious attitude towards politics. He wanted to raise politics to the level of religion. Gokhale never understood religion in its dogmatic sense but in the sense of ethics and moral principles.

He believed that political activities could lead to salvation and freedom only when they were based on religion or in other words, spiritualized.” To Gokhale, political field demanded the highest qualities. It should not be regarded as domain of the irreligious. Hence, the principle of the purity of means is thus very much clear in the political thought of Gokhale.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Political Ideas of Gokhale*, Vol.2, p.215.

¹⁵ Jayapalan N., *Indian Political Thinkers – Modern Political Thought*, op.cit., p.68.

¹⁶ Joshi, T.M., op.cit., p.76.

Gokhale as a State-interventionist

Gokhale believed in the positive attitude towards the role and functions of the state. The main purpose of the state is to further the moral and material interests of the people. The state after all exists to make individual members composing it nobler, happier, richer and more perfect in every attribute with which we are endowed..

Gokhale had firm belief in the concept of the welfare state. He wanted that the state should remove hindrance and hardships from the path of the development of the personality of the individual.

Gokhale demanded free and compulsory education. In his own words, “Elementary education for the mass of the people meant something more than a mere capacity to read and write. It meant for them a keener enjoyment of life and a more refined standard of living. It meant the greater moral and economic efficiency of the individual. It meant a higher level of intelligence for the whole community generally.”

He demanded that the use of liquor, opium and tobacco should be stopped and wanted the state to legislate to stop these evils. He also suggested state intervention in the industrial and agricultural sphere. It is clear that Gokhale was a moderate par excellence.¹⁷

Impact of Western Education

Gopal Krishan Gokhale attached great importance to western system of education for the liberation of the Indian mind. He observed that in 1833 England was called upon to make her choice between two courses to try to bring up the people of India in ignorance and superstition, or to open to them the floodgates of Western knowledge thereby aiming at gradually raising them to the level of her own noble traditions. Guided by her noblest instincts, she deliberately preferred to instruct the people of the country in western learning. Gokhale was of the view that Western learning was essential for our progress in science and

¹⁷ Jayapalan N., *Indian Political Thinkers –Modern Political Thought*, op.cit., pp69-70.

industry. He wanted that the social and political institutions of the country should be reformed in the image of the west.¹⁸

Lover of Liberty

Gopal Krishan Gokhale was a great lover of liberty. He was highly influenced by J.S. Mill, the great English liberal thinker. To Gokhale liberty did not imply absence of restraint. He was of the view that liberty could be allowed only to the individuals with a certain sense of self-restraint, self-discipline and self-organisation.

Gokhale wanted the freedom of contact and free criticism of the government. He pleaded for the freedom of the press. Thus he said, “The press is in one sense like the government, a custodian of public interests and any attempt to hamper its freedom by repressive legislation is bound to affect these interests prejudicially and can’t fail in the end to react upon the position of the government itself.” Like J.S. Mill, Gokhale pleaded for the establishment of representative institutions in India. Thus Gokhale has abiding faith in the principle of liberty. He considered it essential for the progress of humanity.¹⁹

Advocate of Hindu Muslim Unity

Truly speaking, Gokhale was a great advocate of the Hindu Muslim unity. He was of the view that unless these two communities developed a spirit of cooperation, no possible. Gokhale was against those movements which tended to develop among the Hindus the spirit of class consciousness against the Muslims. That is why he never appreciated the Ganapathi and shivaji festivals started by Tilak. Gokhale also opposed the principle of special representation of the religious minorities. He wanted the union of all communities in public matters. So he pleaded for separate representation of the Muslims in order to secure their cooperation.²⁰ Thus he said: “There are acute class differences in the country today and any

¹⁸ Jayapalan N., *Makers of Modern India: Gokhale, Gandhi, and Tagore*, op.cit., p13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.14.

²⁰ Gokhale, *The Indian Moderate and the British Raj*, p.246.

scheme of representation by means of election by men in whom they have confidence, any scheme of description which secures this really, in my opinion, promotes the true interests of unity in the country.” He wanted to decrease communal differences between the Hindus and the Muslims.²¹

Influence of Economic thought

Gokhale’s economic ideas are exemplary. Under the inspiration of Justice M.G. Ranade, Gokhale was led to take an active interest in the economic affairs of the country. He devoted time and energy to study Indian’s economic problems. Gokhale’s contribution to the economic field was massive and significant. It was expounded in his writings and speeches his evidence before the Welby commission, his speeches in the Bombay Legislative Council and Imperial Legislative Council on Budgets and his addresses in various conferences.

Gokhale took pity on the economic condition of the people. According to Gokhale, India was essentially poor because she was agriculturally backward. Not only this, the British were killing Indian industries with the result that there was increasing unemployment and lower living standards of the Indian people. While the British rule provided security of life and poverty, England’s policy of developing the Indian market for her own advancement of industries brought about a rapid decline of the Indian urban handicrafts. The result was increased pressure on agricultural prosperity.

Gokhale wanted the government to help agriculturalists. He demanded that government should open co-operative societies and agricultural banks. These banks should provide facilities to the peasants to borrow at the lower rate of interest for their constructive and production expenditure. Gokhale also wanted to decrease land revenue.²²

²¹ Ramachandra Guha., *op.cit.*, pp.105-108.

²² Kale Govind Vaman, *Gokhale and Economic Reforms*, Aryabhushan Press, 1916,pp.107-115.

The Servants of India Society

The most important gift of Gopal Krishan Gokhale to India was the establishment of the famous, the Servants of India Society. The foundation stone of the Servants of India Society was laid in poona on 12th 1905 by Shivram Hari sathe, an old time colleague of Gokhale in sarvajanik Sabha.

The main object of Gokhale in establishing this society was to train the educated youngman in responsibilities of public service in a spirit of self sacrifice.²³

The Servants of India Society will train men prepared to devote their lives to the cause of the country in a religious spirit, and seek to promote, by all constitutional means, the national interests of the Indian people. Its members will direct their efforts principally towards:

- i. Creating among the people, by example and by precept, a deep and passionate love of the motherland, seeking its highest fulfillment in service and sacrifice;
- ii. Organizing the work of political education and agitation, basing it on a careful study of pubic life of the country.
- iii. Promoting relations of cordial goodwill and co-operation among different communities;
- iv. Assisting educational movements, especially those for the education of women, the education of backward classes and industrial and scientific education;
- v. Helping forward the industrial development of the country; and
- vi. The elevation of the depressed classes.²⁴

²³ Shiv Rav,B., *India's Freedom Movement*, ORIENT Longman Ltd., New Delhi, 1972,P.31.

²⁴ Watt,Cary A., *Education for National Effieciency:Constructive Nationalism in India, 1909-1916*,Modern Asian Studies, 1997,pp.339-374

Every member of the Society was required to take pledges at the time of admission.

Those seven vows were:

- i. That the country will always be the first in this thoughts and he will give to her service the best that is in him.
- ii. That in serving the country he will seek no personal advantage for himself.
- iii. That he will regard all Indians as brothers and will work for the advancement of all, without distinction of caste or creed.
- iv. That he will be content with such provision for himself and his family, if he has any, as the Society may be able to make. He will devote no part of his energies to earning money for himself.
- v. That he will lead a pure personal life.
- vi. That he will engage in no personal quarrel with any one.
- vii. That he will always keep in view the aims of the utmost zeal, doing all he can to advance its work. He will never do anything which is inconsistent with the object of the Society.²⁵

The members were given an allowance of Rs.50 per month and they were to receive a five years training, covering economic and social studies and practical work. The Society had its branches at Bombay, Nagpur, Madras and Allahabad. It played a very commendable role in uplifting the people of the country in economic, social and political spheres.

Legacy

Gopal Krishan Gokhale was one of the greatest personalities of modern India. He was one of the pillars of congress organization during the period of moderates. He did commendable service for the people of India. He took keen interest in all spheres of public activities, i.e., political, Economic, Social, religious and educational. He believed in the

²⁵ Srinivasa Sastri, V.S., *Lectures on Life of Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, The Bangalore Printing and Publishing Co.Ltd., Bangalore, 1937, pp.51-52.

purity of means and wanted to spiritualise politics. Mahatma Gandhi regarded him as his political Guru.

He always fought for the rights and the privileges of the Indian people. He never hesitated to criticize the wrong policies of the government and always gave constructive suggestions.

Gokhale's another contribution was in the field of education. He demanded that the government should allot more funds for the cause of education. He also opposed the interference of the government in educational institutions. In 1910, he moved a resolution in the council for 'free and compulsory education'. He also emphasized on the need of technical and higher liberal education.

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi "This is what Gokhale meant when he spoke of 'public life being spiritualised'. All who conduct themselves in such a spirit of dedication will always see their way clear before them and claim a share in the legacy which has left for us all. Such devoted workers will be endowed with all such gifts as they need, as the lord has promised, and Gokhale's life is an illustration of that promise having been abundantly fulfilled".

CONCLUSION

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, the different phases of Indian life were permeated with the spirit of the renaissance and a great awakening. The people of India got conscious of humiliation; they had face at the hands of traders hailing from a land 6,000 miles away from India. Hence, they were induced to strive for redemption of India from the state of all round degradation. The spirit of revival not only affected society, religion, and literature, but also Indian political life. Many leaders of public opinion in India felt, the necessity of establishing political organization for the purpose of attracting the attention of the British Government to the grievances of the people.

The impact of British rule, thus, led to the evolution of a new structure of agrarian relations that was extremely regressive. The new pattern was neither capitalism nor feudalism, nor was it a continuation of the old Mughal arrangement. It was a new structure that colonialism evolved. It was semi- feudal and semi- colonial in character. The British policy only helped to transfer resources from peasants and craftsmen to merchants, money lenders and foreign capitalists. One of the most important consequences of British rule was the progressive decline and destruction of urban and rural handicraft industries.

There was another negative aspect to India's industries progress under British rule. The distribution of industries was extremely lop-sided and concentrated in a few regions and cities of the country. Even irrigation and electrical power facilities were very unevenly distributed. This gave rise to wide regional disparities in income patterns, of economic development, and social stratification. At the same time, most of tradition intelligentsia at the lower levels suffered a sharp decline when the spread of modern school and colleges led to the closure of the tradition pathashalas, madrasas, and the traditional centre's of higher learning. Many of the traditional intellectuals were also bitterly hostile to modern culture and

the religious and social reform movements, both on ideological grounds and because they undermined their own hold over society.

Anand Mohan Bose Surendra Nath Banerjee, they found the Indian Association in July 1876. The first issue taken up by the new association for agitation was that of the reform of the system of the Civil Service Examinations. The associations sent Surendra Nath Banerjee as a special delegate to others parts of the country to canvass for the agitation. He was perhaps the first modern Indian to gain all – India popularity. In order to bring the common people into the current of the broad political movement, the leaders of the Indian Association organized agitation in favour of the rights of the tenants against the Zamindars and the plantation workers against the foreign tea planters.

The association also opened branches in different towns and villages of Bengal and in many cities outside Bengal. The younger element were also active in other parts of India. In 1884, M. Viraraghavachari, G. Subramania Iyer, Ananda Charlu and other formed the Madras Mahajan Sabha. In Bombay, Pherozheshah Mehta, K.T. Telang, Badruddin Tyabji and other formed Bombay Presidency Association in 1885.

The British Indian Association was started in Bengal in 1851 and remained,; an active power in the land for nearly half a century'. In Bombay, the leading political body was the Bombay Association in Maharashtra and the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha was the principal of the public work.

Thus the congress as a national institution which fought for decades incessantly for the freedom of the country realized its ideal. Its many sided activity which penetrated to the villages, its championship of the lowliest and the lowest, its unfaltering espousal of the cause of India freedom, had endeared it to the people of the country. pre Independent I N C had a set goal of getting freedom. There was a rationale and purpose behind their goal. After

Independence the goal changed to aggrandizement of wealth and power. For the congress of pre Independent India, nation came first.

They were jailed and also suffered for the sake of India. Patriotic fervor were highest. After Independence congress men are more concerned about their family and children. Now family comes first. Pre Independent India had leaders who were selfless and did not develop their family members at the cost of other. Mahatma Gandhi never projected any of his children. The success of pre Independent congress is because none of the leaders thought of projecting their family members.

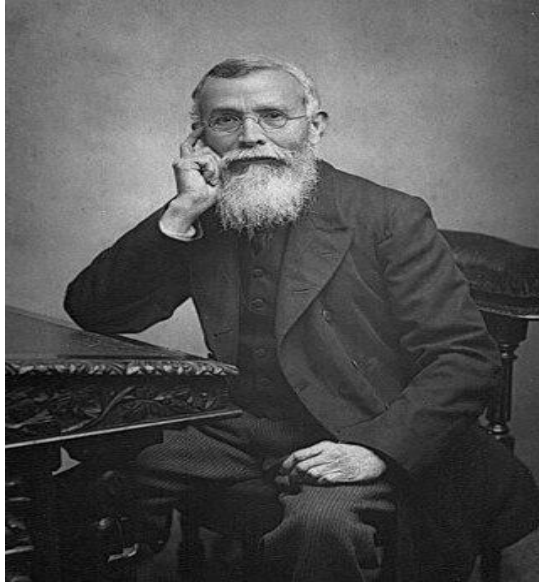
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Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917)



Surendranath Banerjee (1848-1925)



Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915)

PALLAVAS ART AND ARCHITECTURE –AN ICONIC REPRESENTATION

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

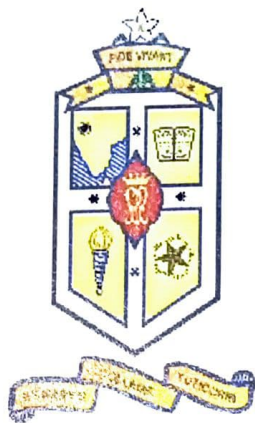
for the award of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

By

MUTHULAKSHMI. P

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St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Reaccredited with "A⁺⁺" Grade by NAAC

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2022-2023

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This is to certify that the project entitled “ **Pallavas Art And Architecture**

- **An Iconic Representation**”, submitted to **St. Mary's College (Autonomous),**

Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, in partial

fulfilment of the requirements of **St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi**, for


the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History and is a work done during the year

2022– 2023 by **P. Muthulakshmi**, a bonafide student of Department of History,

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **"Pallavas Art And Architecture – An Iconic Representaion"** submitted to **St. Mary's College (Autonomous) Thoothukudi** affiliated to the **Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli**, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History, is my original work and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Place: Thoothukudi

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Pallava art and architecture represent an early stage of Dravidian art and architecture which blossomed to its fullest extent under the Chola dynasty. The first stone and mortar temples of South India were constructed during Pallava rule and were based on earlier brick and timber proto types.

Three great dynasties of South India rose to power in the second half of the 6th century CE. These dynasties were to exercise not only tremendous political power but were to create architectural works of exceptionally high standards, the Chalukyas of Badami, the Pallavas with their capital at Kanchipuram and the Pandyas of Madurai ruled for long periods. The Chalukyas ruled for nearly two hundred years, when the Rashtrakutas destroyed their power. The Chalukyan experiments in rock-cut cave temples were the first outside the Ajanta-Ellora region and their temples set the standard of structural temple architecture in Southern India.¹

The Pallavas of Kanchipuram, successors of Simhavishnu remained locked in battles over territorial supremacy with the Chalukyas but learnt some lessons in architecture rock-cut and structural from their arch adversaries. Mahendravarman I took the bold step of excavating the hardest granite rocks for the mandapas, mostly dedicated to Shiva. These early efforts of Mahendravarman I were destined to be epoch- making, an influence which outlasted the political career of the Pallavas. Rock-cut architecture in the non- Buddhist traditions of faith was an extremely daunting task, “an important departure,” as K.R. Srinivasan explains, “from the conventions where stone for long had a funerary association, the result of more than a millennium- old megalithic tradition, evidenced by a great profusion of that periods monuments found scattered over the South, advancing into the first half of the millennium after Christ. The sting, traditional association of stone with the dead prevailing

¹ Rajayyan, K., *Tamil Nadu- A Real History*, Ratna Publications, Trivandrum, 2005, p.105.

among the peoples of the South must have been a deterrent to the adoption of stone as material in temple building till about the close of the sixth century, and in carving images of gods for worship till the first half of the seventh". "But the Pallavas got over difficulties presented by strong conventions against use of stone for religious purposes and want of experience in cutting through the hardest charnockite rock available around Mamallapuram.

Aims and Purpose of Study

The Purpose of this study is to explore the various features about the monolithic rathas, Mandapas and sculptural temples of Pallavas Architecture. This deals with heritage monuments under the Jurisdiction of ASI, more particularly pertaining to the studies of Shore Temple at Mamallapuram. The primary objective of ASI is to reserve and conserve the country's cultural heritage for the benefit of the future generations. By this study it will help you to explore the town and its beautiful monuments in detail.

Sources of Study

Different sources have been used to trace the 'Pallavas Art and Architecture'. Source materials have been classified into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are mainly based on South Indian Inscriptions and Reports. The secondary sources are mainly books and website related to virtual treasure trove of Pallavas art and architecture.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is analytical and descriptive method. The source material have been analyzed. The descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Outline of the Chapters

This Project divided into Five Chapters excluding introduction and conclusion.

- ❖ The First Chapter explains the **Historicity of the Pallavas**.
- ❖ The Second Chapter gives the detailed account of the **Pioneer of Rock- Cut Architecture**.
- ❖ The Third Chapter describes the **Free Standing Monolithics**.
- ❖ The Fourth Chapter speaks about the **Temple Architecture**.
- ❖ The Fifth Chapter explains the **Open Art Gallery**.

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

HISTORICITY OF THE PALLAVAS

Introduction

The Pallavas emerged as a formidable power in South around 4th century A.D. and were at the height of their power in the 7th A.D. They were able to sustain their rule for about 500 years. They built great cities, centres of learning, temples and sculptures and influenced a large part of South East Asia in culture. The Pallavas came into power in the south after the fall of Andhras. There is a great controversy regarding the origin of Pallavas.¹

Theories of the Origin of the Pallavas

According to Dr.K.P.Jaiswal, "The Pallavas were neither Dravidians nor foreigners but good Brahman aristocrats from the north military by, profession". The Chinese pilgrim Hieun Tsang who visited Kanchi, the Pallava capital, in about 640 A.D. also lends support to this theory.

Another theory is that the Pallavas were connected with Ceylon. The Chola kings had a liaison with a Naga Princess. Then was born a man who ruled Kanchi. The Pallavas were thus descendants of the Naga family.² In course of time they established their own kingdoms independently, still other scholars say that they were branch of the Brahman royal dynasty of Vakatakas of the North. They were great warriors. Some say they were Kshatriyas. A writer says that the Pallavas were the feudatory chieftains of the Satavahanas. According to Dr. V.A. Smith, "They constitute one of the mysteries of history". In fact nothing definite can be said about the origin of the Pallavas. But this much is sure that they were feudatories of the Andhras, who declared their independence and came to power in about the middle of the fourth century A.D. By 350 A.D. they had established themselves on

¹ Venkata Ramanayya, *Essay on the Origin of the South Indian Temple*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, 1985, p.61.

² Revathy Girish, *Architectural Tourism*, Wisdom Press, New Delhi, 2012, p.140.

the east coast of India between the Krishna and Kavery rivers. Nagas after Padava's successors to Gupta period, so theory of being Nagas seem at most probable.³

The Pallavas were feudatories of Andhras who declared their independence and came to power in the middle of the 4th century A.D. In 350 A.D. they established themselves on the east coast of India between Krishna and Kaveri Rivers. The Pallavas were the dominant power in the south from 550-750 A.D. The whole of South India was under their influence. The Pallavas ruled from Badami, Ellora and Kanchi.⁴

The Great Pallavas

Sixth century A.D. was the most glorious epoch of pallava history. They rose to power in about 325 A.D. and they were able to establish their kingdom on the east coast of the country. The eminent rulers of this dynasty were:

Shivakanda Verman

He was great king who ruling during the 4th century. It is surmised that the early Pallavas ruled the all ranged between the river Krishna and the Bellary district. It was he who performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice and became the lord paramount of the south.

Vishnugopa

He was another king who was defeated by Samudragupta. He was out of the twelve kings who were humbled by Samudragupta.

Simhavishnu

He extended his sway upto kaveri at the cost of cholas. He also defeated the Pandyas and the Malavas in the course of his southern excursion. He was a devotee of Vishnu.

³ Radhey Shyam Chaurasia, *History of Ancient India Earliest Times to 1200 A.D.*, Atlantic publishers & Distributors (p) Ltd, New Delhi, 2008, p.226.

⁴ Revathy Girish, *Cultural Heritage of India*, Wisdom Press, New Delhi, 2010, p.142.

Mahendra Verman I

Simhavishnu was succeeded by his son Mahendra Verman I about the beginning of 7th century A.D. A few years his accession there began a deadly and long drawn struggle between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas for supremacy in the south. He originally professed Jainism but later on became the devotee of lord Shiva. He was a magnificent builder. Many rock cut temples were excavated by him at Trichnopoly, Chengalpattu and North and South Arcot districts. He also got many temples built in honour of Brahma, Isvara and Lord Vishnu. He also built irrigation works. Mahendra Verman was defeated by Pulakesin II and the territory of Vengi was given over to Pulakesin.

Narasimha Verman I

He was succeeded him after death his in 630 A.D. and he ruled upto 668 A.D. He was the most famous Pallava ruler. He was a great conquerer. He defeated Pulakesin II in three battles. He captured Valapi the capital of Pulakesin II. He continued to add parts of the Chalukya kingdom to his kingdom.

He sent a naval force to Ceylon which was successful in its mission. Hieun-Tsang visited his kingdom. He records that Kanchi was a very big city having more than one hundred monasteries of the Buddhists and about 10,000 monks used to live there. There were 80 other temples of the Hindus and the Jains. The people were very fond of learning. The country was very fertile. There were a large number of magnificent temples built by the Pallava within the city itself. It is from Hieun-Tsang that we come to know Dharam pala the theologian and rector of Nalanda belonged to Kanchi. Narasimha Verman was great builder like his father. He laid foundation of a new city which was known as Mahaballipuram. He beautified this city with many beautiful shrines, the chief among them was the dharamraja Ratha. After the death of Narasimha verman in about 645 A.D. the pallava empire began to fall with a rapid speed, in glory but rule continued.

Mahendra Verman II

Mahendra Verman succeeded Narsimha Verman. He ruled from 645 to 670 A.D. There was no event of any importance in this regin. He was succeeded by Parmeshvara Verman I who ruled for about twentyfive years. He was a worshipper of lord Shiva. The Chalukyas became still more powerful and defeated the Pallavas.

Narasimha Verman II

He was succeeded him in 695 A.D. and he ruled for about 27 years upto 722 A.D. He got the famous Kailashnath temple built at Kanchi. There were many literary figures in his court. He sent an envoy to China.

Rajasimha

Rajasimha (700-728 A.D.) began this mode of construction which did not restrict the choice of the location to places where boulders or hillrocks were available. Experiments were first made with different kinds of stones like grey-white granite in the Olakkannesvara temple, aharde blackish leptinite in the Shore Temple, and the hard red or pinkish gneiss in the Mukundadanayanar and the Talagirisvara the tree former at Mamallapuram and the last named at Panamalai.⁵

Parmeshwara Verman II

He was succeeded Narasimha Verman II in 722 A.D. and he ruled for eight years whereafter Nandi Verman II was the future ruler of the kingdom. He ruled for about 70 years i.e. upto 800 A.D. The Pallavas recovered Kanchi which was captured by Chalukyas. He fought against the Pandyas and the Rashtrakutas. He conquered some territory of the Eastern Chalukyas. Dantidurga married the daughter of Nandi Verman. He was worshipper of Lord Vishnu. ⁶

⁵Edith Tomory, *A History of Fine Arts in India and the West*, Orient Longman Ltd, New Delhi, 1982, p.125.

⁶Radhey Shyam Chaurasia, *op.cit.*, pp. 227-230.

He got the famous Mukateshwara temple built at Kanchi. Thus Pallavas were great builders.

Danti Verman

Danti Verman succeeded him and there were some other unimportant kings but the Cholas defeated them at the end of the 9th century. The Pallavas continued for some time more as local chiefs under Cholas. After the 17th century the Pallava dynasty disappeared altogether.⁷ Thus Pallavas ruled for a very long period. The temples played an important role in the social and cultural life of people in ancient and medieval India. Many of these structures which were made in stone or bricks survive to this day and are a reflection of the architectural magnificence and the crucial role these temples had in the sociocultural space of the society. Though the temples and structures were largely of Hindu faith, many Buddhist and Jain temples were also constructed in this period that are an important source of information about their art and architecture.⁸

Pallava Architecture

The Pallavas built a number of temples in the present Tamil Nadu region. The earlier ones were rock-cut while those in the later stages were structural temples. The most famous of them is the 'shore temple' at Mahabalipuram (now Mamallapuram). The temple is built on the shore and is facing east. It is unique as it has three shrines, the east and the west ones are dedicated to Lord Shiva and middle one to Lord Vishnu. A structure of Nandi (bull), Lord Shiva's Mount lines the temple wall. Evidence of a water tank and gopuram is also found there.

The Pallava temples are further classified as per the rulers and the features of temples.

These subgroups are:

⁷ Chopra, P.N., *History of South India (Ancient, Medieval and Modern)*, S. Chand & Company Ltd, New Delhi, 2003, p. 66.

⁸ *South Indian Inscription, Vol.VII, No. 304.*

- a) Mahendravarman group- These were early rock-cut temples constructed during the reign of king Mahendravarman-1 (7th century CE), e.g. Tiruchirapalli temple.
- b) Narshima group- These temples marked the second stage of the pallava architecture. The temples were carved out of monolithic rocks and also had intricately carved sculptures, e.g. mandapa and panchrathas of Mahabalipuram.
- c) Rajsimha group- Under Narasimhavarman II (also known as Rajsimha), structural temples were built. This was a marked departure from the construction of the rock-cut temples to real structural ones, e.g. kailasanath temple at kanchi and shore temple at Mahabalipuram.
- d) Nandiverman group- This style of architecture was common during the reign of Nandiverman pallava. The temples were smaller but they were structural temples. E.g. Vaikunda Perusal temple at Tirunelveli and Mukateshwara temple.⁹

The Pallavas Temples introduced a new technique called the Dravidian Style. The popularity of the Pallava Rulers lies in their administration nor in the literature produced during their times but their contribution made in the field of Art. According to Dr. Nilakanta Sastri their architecture and sculpture constituted a most brilliant chapter in the history of South Indian Art. The Pallava Rulers were great patrons of Art. The Pallava architecture developed in different style.

The Pallavas were not only great rulers but they were also great builders. Their rock cut and structural temples and architectural works have a great charm of their own and they occupy a high place among the ancient monuments of India. Their edifice are the noblest monuments in South India and they showed a regular evolution of Pallava Art.

⁹Madhukarkumar Bhagat, *Indian Heritage, Art and culture*, G.K publication (p) Ltd, New Delhi, 2019, p.7.9.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

PIONEER OF ROCK-CUT ARCHITECTURE

Introduction

The Pallava dynasty was the pinnacle of Rock-cut architecture, with a massive rock carved out in various shapes and sizes. This great phase of rock-cut architecture in Tamil Nadu was inaugurated by Mahendravarman I, who had the first cave temple, dedicated to the Trimurti, excavated at Mandagapattu. It was like reviving the ancient tradition of cutting into the hard quartzose gneiss, nearly forgotten since Ashoka had the rock-cut caves excavated at Barabar, Nagarjuna and Sitamarhi hills in the 3rd century BCE. The pillars are carved in the front side of rocks that serve as the "Mandapa" and the back side is left to build the sanctum of the Gods. "Dwarapalakas" are royal gate keepers carved in the entrance to this temple, which later became a feature of most South Indian Temples.¹

Trimurti Mandapa

The Trimurti Mandapa is called 'Lakshitayana' and the dedicatory inscription reads, "This brickless, timberless, metalless and the mortar-less mansion of Lakshita, was caused to be made by king Vichitrachitta for Brahma, Isvara and Vishnu". Lakshita was one of the titles of Mahendravarman I, who is here called 'Vichitrachitta' or the "Curious minded". The Mandagapattu cave temple is believed to be the first of its kind in Tamil Nadu. The interior contains three oblong niches on the rear wall to house, perhaps, wooden plaques or paintings of deities. The only sculptural decoration is provided by the two dwarapalas with tall crowns and heavy clubs, looking energetic and athletic features which were to become permanent tokens of the Pallava art.

¹Surendra Sahai, *Temples of South India*, Prakash Books India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2010, p.37.

Satrumalla's cave

Mahendravarman I is credited to have nearly ten rock-cut temples excavated in different parts of his kingdom. The Satrumalla's cave temple at Dalavanur shows a marked improvement in both plan and relief carving. It has elegantly carved lotus medallions on the two outer pillars. The well formed kapota with nasis, the graceful makaratorana between the two pillars, and an elaborately planned interior with monolithic pillared porch on the inner shrine projecting into the large Mandapa are some of the remarkable features of the Dalavanur mandapa.² The outer pillars are divided into square sections on top and base with an octagonal section in the middle. The two dvarapalas are two armed. Only the cave temples at Mandagapattu and Dalavanur have two armed dvarapalas. The makaratorana remained for long a feature of the Pallava sculptural decoration, seen at the Daraupadi Ratha in Mamallapuram and the Kailashanatha temple in Kanchipuram. The nasis housing busts of gandharvas have the characteristics pallava spade- shaped finals.

By and large the cave temples of Mahendravarman I are small in concept and execution. The pillars are short and well inter- shaped, and the sanctum is cubical and small with pilasters on both sides. The ornamentation on the exterior is limited to nasis on the entablature. Sometimes the rectangular interior is divided into an anterior and posterior part, the ardha and mukha mandapas by an inner row of pillars, also demarcated by a difference in floor levels. Sculptural decoration is limited to the reliefs of only two dvarapalas. There is no linga in the sanctum which was occupied by perhaps a wooden plaque or paintings. The inner shrine is placed in alignment with the inter columnar space between the outer pillars.

Narasimha Varman I, also called Mamalla, who succeeded Mahendravarman I was a renowned warrior king who defeated the Chalukya ruler, Pulikeshin II. He vigorously pursued the architectural schemes initiated by his predecessor and excavated many rock-cut

²Mohideen Badusha, A.H., *History of Indian Architecture*, Sulthans Publications, Triunelveli, 2009, p.46.

mandapas at Mamallapuram. He is renowned chiefly for the monolithic rathas, the unique rock-cut examples of wooden forms of Buddhist architecture in the Northern India as seen on the reliefs at the Stupas of Sanchi and Amravati. Narasimha Varman I is responsible for the cave temples at Mamallapuram, which evidence considerable advancement on the earlier examples. The elaborate planning of the interior is seen on the front and rear sections of the mandapa divided by an inner row of pillars and a shrine projecting from the central niche. The kapota is decorated with nasis and the appearance of a hara of miniature vimana models- mostly comprising salas with a rectangular plan and barrel- vaulted roof, interconnected by short lengths of cloisters the harantara. The pillars are tall and extremely elegant but their most distinguished feature is the introduction of the squatting lion or vyalas at the base. These lion- based pillars went on to become the most representative feature of the Mamalla style. Hereafter, a lavish sculptural decoration of the mandapas, mostly large relief panels depicting deities and episodes from Hindu mythology.

Whereas, it has been generally observed that these excavation have been inspired by Buddhist and Jain examples of similar work on the Western Ghats, it is equally important to note that these cave temples are wholly Shaivate and Vaishnavite in faith, despite the disparity and antagonism separating them.

Dharmraja Mandapa

The Dharmraja Mandapa has been excavated near the lighthouse and the Mahisasuramardini Mandapa. It is triple shrined, carved on the same adhisthana with three sets of steps and a chandrasila below. The central shrine projects into the ardhmandapa and the two lateral shrines are recessed. The Dharmraja Mandapa is named "Atyantakama- Pallavesvara- griham" the Isvara Temple of Atyantakama Pallava, a title of paramesvaravarman. It carries features of both the Mahendra and Mamalla styles but the inscriptional evidence suggests it's dates between 672 and 700 CE, when this small Mandapa

was excavated despite the rulers engagement in wars. The Dharmraja Mandapa was dedicated to Shiva, though the three shrine niches suggest its dedication to the Trimurti. Later on, this Mandapa was appropriated by the Vaishnavas, who had their symbols of chakra and sankha curved on the facade. The Dharmaraja mandapas stands surrounded by huge boulders near the road leading to the Five Rathas at the end of the craft market road.³

Mahisasuramardini Mandapa

The Mahisasuramardini mandapas is one of the most charming cave temple Mamallapuram, noted for its two spectacular relief panels depicting the great goddess, Mahisasuramardini, and the reclining Vishnu. It stands at the southern end, close to the lighthouse. The rock is topped with the small structural temple of Olakkannesvara without the superstructure.⁴

The elevation of this mandapas has suffered much damage both by natural forces and vandalism. There are no base mouldings and some portion of the rock kept for the excavation of steps has been left protruding from the ground. The mandapa has four central pillars and two pilasters. One of the central pillars was completely broken and had to be replaced by a plain ungainly shaft up to the height of the cornice. One more pillar is also much damaged. The original pillars on the façade are of the circular variety with sixteen facets and are mounted on circular bases. The pilasters have square bases. Above the cornice are the portions of the rock still left finished into a pair of nasis over each bay and topped by a hara of five salas. But the unfinished exterior gives no indication of the grand reliefs on two large panels on both north and south walls of the interior.

The ceiling and the mandapa floor have also been left unfinished. On the rear wall of the mandapa are three shrine cells. A raised platform in front of the central shrine has two

³ Longhurst, A.H., *No.33, Pallava Architecture, Part II*, Memories of the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, 1998, p.10.

⁴ Edith Tomory, *op. cit.*, p.126.

lion-based pillars. The shafts of the circular pillars are decorated with bands of lotus petals and looped garlands. The whole arrangement of the projecting porch and ornate pillars is reminiscent of the Dalavanur mandapa belonging to the Mahendra period. The new accent on ornamentation alone indicates the evolution of a certain style, most clearly seen on the two lion-based pillars, which have a broad and thin abacus on top of the capitals and an unmistakable refinement. The shrine cells are provided with a pair of dwarapalas on each opening.

The central shrine contains a large bas-relief of the Somaskanda group including a Nandi and an additional figure of a devotee. Brahma stands behind, four armed and four-headed. Vishnu is depicted as four-armed with his attributes. Surya also appears between Shiva and Vishnu. Sometimes, Shiva is seen here as Chandesanugrahamurti. The floor in front of the bas-relief has a circular socket with surrounding circular grooves perhaps to accommodate a detached lingam. This provision seems to have been made at a much later stage when relief images in stone came to be used.

The entrance of the southern shrine is guarded by two-armed dwarapalas in semi profiles. The dwarapala on the left side has curved bull's horns on both side of his crown. The dwarapala on the right side has hood of a serpent over his right shoulder. The entrance has no pilasters, jambs and lintels as part of the Pallava style of entrances and niches on mandapas and rathas. All the three shrine entrances are guarded by dwarapalas.

The panel on the northern wall is a masterpiece of sculptural art, an amazing specimen of the Pallava conception of feminine beauty. It depicts the petite figure of the eight armed Durga as Mahisasuramardini, subduing the demon it is a panel of exceptional beauty, grace and poise. The goddess rides a lion holding a bow with her outstretched left hand, while the right hand appears to be drawing the bowstring.

Ramanuja Mandapa

Not very far from the Mahisasuramardini Mandapa is the Ramanuja Mandapa , dedicated to Shiva. It is particularly noteworthy for the reliefs of two identical model vimanas on either side of the facade complete from upana to stupi with square platforms with all the moulding. The kudus on the kapota show a certain change as the entire cavity is filled with lotus medallions instead of the familiar gandharva heads. Lotuses also appear on the arch-face. The shovel-like finial has not been cut out on their top but was perhaps inserted in a socket provided for this purpose. Jali screens are also seen on some of the kudu arches. The rectangular mandapa interior contains three shrines, the central shrine projecting about two feet into the hall. The Vaishnavas, who appropriated the mandapa in later years removed all Shaivite reliefs and planned to build a front mandapa on six roughly cut pillars. The new additional mandapa could not be completed beyond the initial stages and the mandapa named after the Vaishnava saint, now stands in a pathetic state.

Varaha Mandapa

The varaha mandapa is a small but extremely elegant cave temples with two central pillars and two pilasters on its front. These pillars are positioned over a moulded adhisthana with three steps at the centre. The lower half of these pillars is formed by sejant vyalas, squatting on their haunches. Their front legs are straightened and stiff. The vyalas on the pilasters look inward. The upper portion of these pillars has the familiar components i.e. kalasa, tadi, kantha, kumbha and pali. The thin square phalak or abacus adds its own grace to the pillars, which are highly refined in craftsmanship and conception.

Kotikal Mandapa

The kotikal mandapa is close to the Trimurti mandapa and the large monolithic cistern called the 'Gopi's Churn'. It is an unfinished mandapa. The oblong hall with a square shrine projecting three feet into the ardha mandapa has little sculptural decoration except the two

dwarpalakas. These female figures show considerable charm and wear large and dangling ear-rings and some other ornaments. Their slim and graceful figures are depicted in a tribhanga pose.

The Kotiakal mandapa was depicted to Durga and on the basis of the comparative thinness of the pillars and the absence of sculptural representation of the Deity in the shrine it belong to the earlier part of Narasimhavarman I rule.⁵ There are very few shrines exclusively dedicated to female deities at Mamallapuram except the Draupadi Ratha, attributed to the same patron. The dwarapalakas at both these shrines Kotikal mandapa and Draupadi Ratha also show some similarity.

Koneri Mandapa

The Koneri Mandapa is a five celled cave temple, overlooking the koneri-Pallam tank. The facade at this mandapa comprises four pillars and two pilasters. There appears a considerable improvement in the design of pillars the corbels and beam are more slender and elegant in comparison with the earlier examples. The ardha mandapa also contains a similar arrangement of pillars. The pillars are fully formed with capitals of the 'order' in the inner row. The abacus is conspicuously absent. On the rear wall of the excavation are carved out five shrine fronts sharing the same adhisthana. Only the central shrine projects into the archa-mandapa ahead of the two lateral shrines on each side. Each shrine is flanked by shallow niche with fine bas-relief of dwarapalas differing in detail from one another, though forming regular pairs. Some of these figures are badly mutilated. The Vaishnavas who destroyed all the vestiges of its Shaiva features, also carved their symbols chakra and sankha on the façade. The Koneri Mandapa is attributed to the beginning of the Mamalla style.

⁵Surendra Sahai, *op. cit.*, p.40-41.

Panchpandava Mandapa

The Panchpandava Mandapa next to the Arjuna's Penance, is the largest cave temple at Mamallapuram. This massive and most elaborately planned cave temple has also been left unfinished. The vyala based pillars and the hara of kutas and salas over the kapota indicate a grand scale of planning. The most façade comprises six sejant vyala pillars. The most remarkable feature of these pillars relates to the vyala caryatids springing forth from the top of the phalaka, one facing front and the other two facing out on either side. The lateral vyalas with riders on their backs are a rare feature on such pillars. No other cave temple of either the Mahendra type or the later Mamalla type has this feature. Single caryatids, however, appear at Badami cave temples, structural vimanas of the pallavas and early cholas.

Krishna Mandapa

The Krishna mandapa, next to the Panchpandava mandapa, is actually a boulder on which has been carved out a scene from the Krishna Lila. Here Krishna is shown lifting the mount Govardhan to save the lives of his people from the torrential rains caused by Indra. He is being watched by a group of lovely village maidens. In a charming vignette from village life, a cowherd is shown milking a cow. The calf is being licked by the mother. A gopi stands with her pile of milk-posts, a herd of cows and some wild animals including lions, a bull perched on a high top. These small vignettes from Krishna's life create the most fascinating bas-relief at Mamallapuram, which is partially bidden from view by the structural pillared ball erected by the Vijayanagara rulers. This has also protected the relief from the fury of the elements. The pillars obstruct a full view of the panel but it is magnificent all the same and certainly deserves a close, leisurely observation for its emotive depiction of scenes from simple village life.

Yali Mandapa

The Yali Mandapa or the so called Tiger Cave at Saluvankuppam, 3 km from Mamallapuram, is really not a cave temple but a large open-air pavilion. The carving of massive yali-heads on top of the small cell, only 6 feet in height and 4 feet in depth, create a very ornamental façade. These vyali –heads are conventionalized but show the extremely artistic use of the freedom from constraints of working with in prescriptions of iconographic canons. Four rock-cut steps lead to the floor of the pavilion, where two gigantic pillars with rampant lions with riders flank the cell opening. The most spectacular aspect of the mandapa is the bold carving of eleven vyala-heads on the semi-circular cornice. Perhaps this large pavilion was meant to house the image of Durga but, like most other cave temples, it remains unfinished. The Pallavas were great Shaivites and held Durga, a manifestation of Shiva's Shakti, high esteem. Her image has been carved at various important places in Mamallapuram the Mahisasurmardini mandapa, Trimurti, and Varaha mandapas, the Draupadi Ratha, on a gigantic boulder in the sea near the Shore Temple, etc.

Atiranachanda Mandapa

Close to the Tiger Cave is Atiranachanda Mandapa with massive pillars and dwarapalas. The shrine contains a fluted linga in front of Somaskanda group. Atiranachanda was one of the titles of Narasimhavarman II, also called Rajasimha who credited for all the structural temples at Mamallapuram. Atiranachanda is a rectangular cave with simple pillars, having a central sanctum shrine excavated in the rear wall. The back wall of this sanctum contains a carved, paneled sculptures, depicting Somaskanda, Shiva, and Parvati seated on a common pedestal, with the child Skanda seated on the mother's lap. At the back are shown Brahma and Vishnu, to the right and left of Shiva, both adoring Somaskanda. In the centre of the sanctum is a fluted linga with sixteen facets. The upper part of the linga, is called the puja

bhaga. Flanking the sanctum are carved dwarapalas. The side lateral walls are also carved with semi finished Somaskanda images in the centre.⁶

⁶Nagaswamy, R., *Mahabalipuram Monumental Legacy*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2008, pp.28-31.

CHAPTER III

CHAPTER III

FREE STANDING MONOLITHICS

Introduction

The Pallava period marks the transition from rock cut to structural temples. Instead of carving caves out of the living rock as his forebears had done for centuries in India, the sculptor architect with surprising aplomb proceeded to chisel down the granite outcrop into free standing monolithic models of structural buildings much like the romantic gardner pares thick hedges into shapes of animals and birds. The stone carver's perseverance resulted in the famous "*Seven Pagodas*" or *Rathas* of Mahabalipuram. Due to the disposition of the outcrop, a narrow and long whale-backed hump of none too great dimension the seven virtual architectural models are of moderate size and aligned along a single axis. Though for some obscure historic reason the work of finishing and polishing "the models" was abandoned, the artists managed to present to the king an array of distinctly comprehensible temple forms. Each of these eight subsequently named after the heroes of the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata.¹

The Panch Pandava Rathas

The Panch Pandava Rathas at Mamallapuram are the most outstanding Pallava contribution to Indian architecture. The uniqueness of these rathas lies in the fact that these have been carved-out from the top of the huge rock downward thus reversing the process of structural temples, which are built from the base up to the summit ultimately or owned with a stupid or the final. These rathas are the earliest representations of the characteristic Dravidian vimana, complete in all its formal elements with an upana or base of the adhithana, sanctum with the surrounding walls and niches, the upper storeys demarcated

¹Satish Grover, *The Architecture of India Buddhist and Hindu*, Vikas Publishing House pvt.Ltd, New Delhi, 1980,pp.107-108.

with heras of kutas and salas, and the ultimate sikhara crowned with stupid fitted separately after completion of the work.

These five rathas stand in a small group close to the sea beach at the southern end of Mamallapuram. Four of these rathas Dharmraja, Bhima, Arjuna and Draupadi have been carved out of a single whale-backed rock. The Nakul SahadevRatha has been carved out of a small boulder, close to the Draupadi Ratha separated only by another rock fashioned into a free-standing elephant. The nomenclature of these rathas has nothing to do with the pandava brothers of the Mahabharata, but a mere persistence of a tradition.² The choice of the different types of the monolithic vimanas speaks well of a pre-determined design of the individual types, and also their location which was governed by the basal width and total height of the rock at a particular point.³ The small Draupadi and Arjuna Rathas, both square in form, stand at the northern end of the massive rock which is lowest at this end. The horizontal stretch of the rock in the middle was ideally suited for the Buddhist chaitya form of the Bhima Ratha, The southern segment of the rock is the tallest and also the broadest at the end. It has been carved out as the Dharmraja Ratha, the grandest of these four rathas. The Nakul Sahadeva Ratha has been carved out of an independent globoid rock. Together, these five rathas form a group of monolithic monuments, the grandest sculptural achievement of the Pallava sculptors, now included among the World Heritage sites by UNESCO.

The Draupadi Ratha

The Draupadi Ratha is a small elegant temples with a vimana fashioned like a village hut, a familiar sight on the Indian countryside. Since the form chosen for this ratha required a sloping roof over the square, cubical cell, some ornamental element of the elevation like the prastara or entablature and the griva had to be omitted from the scheme of things. The stupid

²Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture Buddhist and Hindu Periods*, CBS Publishers & Distributors Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, p. 80.

³Piyush Chauhan, *Indian Architecture Ancient to Modern*, Axis Book pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2011, pp.112-113.

meant to crown the summit of the vimana was not part of the initial work; it was carved separately to be fixed at the top after work at the rathas was fully completed. At present, the stupid lies on the adisthana. The height of the Draupadi vimana is small, occupying as it does, the lowest section of the ridge.⁴

The shrine interior is a small cell containing the relief depicting a four-armed Durga being adored by worshippers one of whom is shown performing self decapitation. Four dwarf ganas are shown hovering over the goddess. The niches on the exterior walls also depict Durga. On the eastern niche, the deity appears resting her feet on the severed head of the buffalo demon. A small boulder in front of the Draupadi Ratha has been fashioned into a standing lion, Durga's vehicle. Two dvārpalakas occupy the oblong niches on both sides of the entrance, which is decorated with an intricately carved makaratorava with riders resembling in style the torana over the Durga niche at the Trimurti cave-temple.

The exterior walls at the Draupadi Ratha are articulated with plain pilasters of the tetragonal variety. On the east, north and south sides of the shrine are placed images of Durga under simple provided by the rows of recumbent lions and elephants alternately. These animal heads have been fully revealed only recently after the Tsunami waves removed much sand lying round these rathas.

The Draupadi Ratha is also important for another reason, as it shows the growing emphasis on female energy. In due course of time, the larger temples in Tamil Nadu found place for a separate Amman shrine, dedicated solely to the female principle. The Hinduism of the later periods is characterized by increasing emphasis on the female energy.⁵

⁴Preeti Tripathy, *Art and Architecture of India Ancient to Modern*, Anjali Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, 2021, pp.151-153.

⁵Longhurst, A.H., *op.cit.*, p.16.

The Arjuna Rathas

The central sculpture shows Shiva, with legs crossed, learning on Nandi. The Arjuna Ratha has only two storeys, body of the temple being square of plan with pyramidal ascending storeys, crowned by an octagonal cupola. Horseshoe-shaped windows project from between the edges of the cupola, topping and integrating the pilasters. A flexed cornice, with kudu-arches is carried around each tala and above it rises the string of miniature shrines, consisting of salas with karnakutas at the corners, connected by harantara sections. In the wall niches of the upper storey, framed by pilasters, are beautifully figure sculptures of divine couples, here only carved down the waist. The miniature shrines adjoin directly the wall of the temple without any intervening space for an ambulatory passage being left in between.

The small shrine chamber, facing west, has a tiny verandah in front with lion-pillars. A pedestal is carved from its rear-wall for the image of the deity. All central niches contain divine figures to the south it is Shiva Vrisabhantika, learning on his bull, to the east Skanda is riding on his elephant and to the north Vishnu is mounting his vehicle Garuda.⁶ Other niches contain royal couples, kings and queens expressing by their presence not only their close relationship to the divinity of the shrine, but also by their bearing the culture of the Pallava court.

The Bhima Ratha

The Bhima Ratha, an oblong two-storeyed temple with a Barrel roof has an uncommon, almost archaic look, making the timber for of its original model very distinct. The ground floor or aditala of the Bhima Ratha is approximately in the same state of incompleteness as the Dharmaraja Ratha. The pillared hall was designed to surround the oblong shrine chamber with an ambulatory passage. This shrine chamber was to house the reclining figure of Vishnu, the rough outlines of which can be made out in rock. The shrine was

⁶Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India from Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, Oxford University press, Madras, 1966, pp.460-461.

designed to be open to the west in its full length with only two pillars on the front side.⁷ The Mandapa was to surround the longitudinal shrine like a verandah with a circumambulatory passage. Its lion-based pillars are in various stages of completion where as the corner buttresses are just roughly hewn out.

Dharmaraja Ratha

The Dharmaraja Ratha is a three storeyed monolithic temple, all storeys being accessible and each conceived to have a shrine chamber. The temple is square up to the architrave of its upper story and octagonal in the part of its clerestory. The string of miniature shrines on each storey re separated by an aisle from the richly segmented walls of the temple, leaving a passage to walk around. The niches in the walls on all three storeys, flanked by slim pilasters, contain a large number of figure sculptures. This type of temple is square in its base with pyramidically recessed storeys and crowned by a domical roof is not only beautiful as such, but became the model of innumerable South Indian temples which evolved from it in various ways.⁸

The ground floor or aditala was conceived to have a pillared hall around the central shrine with entrances on all four sides, the principle one opening on to the west. The lion-based pillars and pilasters are all incomplete, whereas the entablature above them, consisting of beam and cornice are cut in full detail, Beneath the cornice, decorated with kudu-arches, is a frieze of bhutaganas. On the top of the kapota are figurations of prostrate beings, monkeys, lions and humans, forming open water chutes, a novelty in early Pallava architecture. A frieze terminates the ground floor architrative, which is the base of the miniature shrines of the first floor or madhaytala.

⁷Revathy Girish, *op.cit.*, pp.146-148.

⁸Sharmin Khan, *History of Indian Architecture Buddhist, Jain and Hindu Period*, CBS Publishers & Distributors pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2014, pp.95-96.

The Nakul Sahdev Ratha

The Nakul Sahdev Rathas is a double storeyed , apsidal-ended shrine carved out of a rock standing apart from the whale backed larger rock, which has been sectioned and carved into four separate rathas. From the rear side this ratha looks like the back of an elephant. A small rock standing close to this ratha has been fashioned into an elephant suggesting in its own way the classical nomenclature of this form of structure hastiprastha. This form is one of the oldest in style, derived from the tradition of the Buddhist rock-cut chaityas. On the outer southern side, tree large gabled latanasi contains the relief of a miniature single-storeyed hexagonal vimana. The shrine image on the nasi is flanked by two cantilevered vyala figures.

The Ganesha Ratha

The Ganesha Ratha stands near the 'Descent of the Ganges' panel. It is dedicated to Shiva and faces west. It is double -storeyed with a rectangular, sala-shaped vimana. Nine stupis crown the ridge, which gives the elevation a highly ornamental appearance.

The Ganesha Ratha is a small temple with no ambulatory passage. The exterior walls are articulated with pilasters but with little ornamental effect.⁹ The mukhamandapa has two dvarapalas positioned in the tall niches within pilasters on the corner piers. The two lion-based indrakanta pillars with capital components and two tetragonal pilasters with elephant-head bases form the simple mukha mandapa.

It is generally believed that these rathas at Mamallapuram are "the oldest examples of their class known and the prototypes of the style. Work on most of these rathas began during the reign of Narasimhavarman I and continued under the patronage of his successors. It has not been possible to date them with any certainty for one particular reason. All these rathas have been cut in granite and show no signs of age or effects of the elements. Not a

⁹Nagaswamy, R., *op.cit.*, p.57.

single ratha, out of nine, has been completely finished in work. Even in the smaller rathas like the Draupadi and Nakul-Sahdeva the sculptural reliefs remain in need of the final strokes of the chisel. Perhaps work on these rathas was still in progress, when it was suddenly stopped by either some natural catastrophe, which forced the artisans to run for life or the Pallava as suffered a terrible political setback. These magnificent monoliths at Mamallapuram stand as the marvels of Pallava art.¹⁰

¹⁰Surendra Sahai, *op. cit.*, pp.52-59.

CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

THE TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

The Shore Temple is the first of the structural temples built by the Pallava monarch, Narasimhavarman II, also called Rajasimha. The Shore Temple is actually a complex of three shrines.¹

Structure of the Shore Temple

According to a recent Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) report, the monument at Mahabalipuram (now Mamallapuram) in Tamil Nadu is the most visited centrally-protected ticketed monument for foreign visitors during 2021-22. Shore Temple, overlooking the Bay of Bengal, is one of the most prominent monuments of Mahabalipuram.²

This is one of the oldest temples in south India. It belongs to the 8th century A.D. and is a good example of the first phase of structural temples constructed in Dravidian style. A straight path opposite to the Krishna- mandapa adjoining Arjuna's penance leads to the sea. The Shore Temple, an example of a masonry temple of Rajasimha's time. The vimana top here is somewhat narrow and elongated and the Shore Temple is considered to be the first shrine in South India constructed with granite stones. There are a row of caved bulls and in the veranda there are three raised platforms. Two of them are platform for a flagstaff.

The oldest edifice sits bordering the Bay of Bengal, its walls lined with sculptures of Nandi, the bull beloved of Shiva. The temple is a combination of three shrines.³ The main shrine is dedicated to Shiva and a small shrine, is dedicated to a reclining Vishnu and had water channeled into the temple, entering the Vishnu shrine. The two Shiva shrines are octagonal in configuration. The entrance is through a transverse barrel vault gopuram. The two shikharas have a pyramidal outline. The outer wall of the shrine to Vishnu and the inner side of the

¹ Surendra Sahai, *op. cit.*, p.61.

² <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/places/the-shore-temple-in-mahabalipuram-a-unesco-heritage-site-near-chennai-is-a-testimony-to-stunning-architecture-of-the-pallava-rulers/cid/1902076>

³ Mohideen Badusha, *A.H.*, *op. cit.*, p.46.

boundary wall are extensively sculptured and topped by large sculptures of Nandi. The temple's outer walls are divided by plasters into bays, the lower part being carved into a series of roaring lions.

The temple has a Garbha Griha in which the deity, Shiva Linga, is enshrined, and a small mandapa surrounded by a heavy outer wall with little space between for circumambulation. At the rear two shrines facing opposite directions. The Durga is seated on her lion vahana. A small shrine may have been in the cavity in the lion's chest.⁴

The Seashore temple complex at Mamallapuram has for centuries attracted mariners skirting the shore from Puducheri to Chennai and further to the north. The complex consists of three structural temples and a few rock cut sculptures. At present two towers are visible from a distance, the tallest one being a sharp pyramidal tower with a pointed stupid on the east facing the sea. The other is a smaller one facing west, looking like a younger brother of the former. Both these temple dedicated to Shiva were built by Rajasimha Pallava. Sandwiched between them is a Vishnu temple dedicated to the reclining form as Anantashayi. This image and the temple structure covering it were originally carved out of rock. The rest of the structure was built and then dressed with sandstone. While the two Shiva temples were built on a square plan, the Anantashayi temple was constructed on a rectangular plan. The Vishnu temple also had a rectangular tower, which has since crumbled, with only the portion upto the first tier surviving.

The bigger Shiva temple has a close enclosing wall, which probably had some sculptures. The east facing sanctum of this temple has a tall, highly polished, sixteen faced Shiva linga, planted in the centre. At the back wall of the sanctum, a Somakanda image can be seen. The linga seems to have been displaced and replanted, but with a wrong orientation. The sanctum is preceded by a small ardha mandapa. The inner wall on the south of the ardha

⁴Revathy Girish, *op. cit.*, pp.161-162.

mandapa has an image of Brahma (facing north) and the northern wall has a sculpture of Vishnu facing south. The outer northern wall of the sanctum is fairly well preserved and house sculptures of Tripurantaka Shiva and Durga.

The rock cut image of Vishnu as Anantashayi has four hands. One of the left ones is damaged above the wrist but restored in cement now. The side walls of this Vishnu temple have sculptures of Krishna lila; Krishna felling the demon Kesi in horse form; Krishna dancing on the serpent Kaliya in Kaliya mardana form and Vishnu on Garuda rescuing Gajendra from the mouth of a crocodile.

The smaller Shiva temple facing west houses a Somaskanda on the rear wall of the sanctum. It also had a linga in the sanctum but that is now missing. This small temple had a small mandapa in the west, which was preceded by a larger one. The bases of these two mandapas have survived but their superstructures are gone. These two mandapas and the temple complex seemed to have had two concentric enclosures. The inner enclosure had a central entrance or gopura on the west. There are two sculptures of great significance at this entrance. The one on the south portrays an Ekapadamurti with three heads, one body, and one leg depicting the unity of the Trimurti Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma. The other one facing south but found on the northern jamb portrays Nagaraja standing beneath the five hoods of a cobra. Beyond the entrance on the west there are three fairly large balipithas, or the temple altars, two for the Shiva temples and one for the Anantahsayi temple.

The walls of the enclosure have survived only partially from the bottom but originally had a row of nandis on top of them. All of them have fallen, but the restorers of late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have rearranged them. The inner walls of the inner enclosure had a series of panels portraying the history of the Pallavas. Some of the surviving panels can still be seen. It is relevant to note that the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Kanchi, built about fifty years later than the Seashore temple, by the same Pallava king, portrays the history of

the Pallavas from its mythical beginning to the building of that temple.⁵ There are label inscriptions that mention the episodes connected with each sculptural depiction. The tradition of portraying the history of a dynasty in a sculptural sequence is first seen in the Seashore temple.

There are a number of inscriptions relating to this temple complex found here. A label inscriptions found on the lintel of Anantashayi Vishnu Temple, calls it Narapatisimha Pallava Vishnu griha, Narapatisimhaa is a title of Rajasimha. The balipitha of this temple carries inscriptions in Sanskrit, written in Pallava grantha, extolling the greatness of Rajasimha. All his well known titles are mentioned in them. It is evident that these three temples were built by Rajasimha.

An important new discovery was made on the floor of the Shore temple adjacent to the enclosure wall. A small tank like structure has been uncovered with stone revetments. The centre had a stone lined well probably used for drawing abhisheka water. By the side was found a partly rock cut and partly structural miniature temple, circular in plan and elevation, with a small socket in the centre, housing an image of Shiva as Tripurantaka. The base of this miniature temple is in the form of square, with octagonal and circular plans one over the other, resembling a yantra.

The Diving Varaha

The most striking discovery was of a rock cut boar representing Lord Vishnu in his Varaha incarnation. The damaged Boar appears to be pressing its hind legs with great force and bending forward, with its head down as if powerfully charging, ready to plunge into the ocean to lift Mother Earth. According to legend, the Earth was submerged under the deep waters of the ocean and the Varaha dived into the waters and lifted her above the waters. There are many Varaha sculptures in India and in most cases the Boar is shown with its head

⁵ Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

slightly lifted up to suggest that it has lifted the Earth. This is the only illustration where its head is lowered in the act of plunging into the waters. In order to understand this we need to be aware of the situation in which it is located. The artist has placed the varaha right on the coast, on the shore, where the waves dash against it, thus integrating its location and environment, and suggesting that it is actually diving into the ocean. It is an extraordinary location chosen carefully to make the creation look realistic. This seems to be one of the finest portrayals of not only the Varaha, but also of the aesthetic approach of the artists of Mamallapuram.

The selection of monuments such as the Varaha, Arjuna's penance, and Krishna Govardhanadhari reveals that the Mamallapuram artists were great masters at integrating nature and environment into their artistic creations. The Varaha is carved on a rocky pedestal bearing the various names of Rajasimha such as Rajasimha, Ranajaya, Shribharah, and Chitra Karmukha in Pallava Grantha characters. The inscription abundantly proves the artistic sensibility of Rajasimha, an 'Ocean of Art' and the patron behind all the creations at Mamallapuram. This sculpture has one more interesting appeal. During the rainy season, or even at high tide, the tank gets filled with water. At that time the boar remains submerged under water presenting a fascinating spectacle worth seeing.

The Lion Temple

Within the enclosure of the Shore temple, to the south of the triple temple, is a majestic, seated lion, partly carved from a rock and partly sculptured separately and placed in position. In its torso, almost representing its heart, is a square socket serving as a miniature cave sanctum, in which there is a carved image of Mahishasura Mardini. The lion itself is the temple of the Goddess and she is seated in her sanctum. This sculpture suggests the Upanishadic concept that likens the heart to a guha where the supreme being is said to reside.

A beautiful headless deer relines beside the lion. Between the two stands a headless dwarfish gana.

A few hundred yards away, to the south of the temple, are a few low rocky outcrops. These have also been converted into pieces of art. They are miniature replicas of what has been seen at Tiger cave. They represent a miniature tiger cave, the horse and elephants with howdahs, and a seated lion. These further illustrate the artistic instinct of the patron and his artistic.⁶

The Kailasanatha Temple

The Kailasanathar temple (Kanchipuram) is located towards the west of Kanchipuram city. It is considered one of the seven sacred cities under Hinduism.

History of the Temple

Narasimhavarman II Rajasimha built this great Shiva Temple at Kanchipuram and named it after his own name-Rajasimha Pallavesvara –Rajasimhesvara. The temple was built around 700 CE with additions in the 8th century and restorations in later centuries. It is the first structural temple built in South India by Narasimhavarman II(Rajasimha). The Kailasanathar temple became trend setter for other similar temples in South India.⁷It is believed that Raja Raja Chola I (985-1014) visited the temple and drew inspiration from this temple to build the Brihadeeswara Temple.

Structure of the Temple

The Kailasanatha Temple stands in a rectangular courtyard, within an enclosure. This enclosure wall contains 58 small shrines, all opening toward the central edifice. The sanctum is placed at the western end of the enclosure.⁸ The cells along the eastern wall face west,

⁶Nagaswamy, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 69-75.

⁷Edith Tomory, *op. cit.*, p.126.

⁸The New Indian Express, 30 June, 2022.

while those on the west, north and south sides open to the east, as dictated by long traditions of religious considerations.

The small shrines built on the inner side of the enclosure wall add tremendous splendour and beauty to the architectural composition of the Kailasanatha. All these shrines are square based and double storeyed without haras. The griva and the octagonal shikharas form the crowing elements, which are covered with elegant minute carving. The mahanasis on these shikharas have shival-shaped tops, typical of the Pallava art. The cavities are occupied by heads of celestial maidens. The porches of these small shrines also illustrate the well-planned scheme of architectural details. The Characteristic Pallava lion- based pillar appears on these porches but the sala shrines or the gopura- like shrines have Naga figures on the front pillars.⁹

The Main Vimana

The main vimana of the Kailasanatha is a large and massive four-storeyed structure with an octagonal shikhara, built on a east-west axis with the sanctum facing east. It is integrated with seven abutting sub-shrines on the corners and oblong ones on the diagonal and cardinal axial. All these shrines contain images and have independent entrances. The two shrines flanking the entrance to the sanctum contain images of dancing Shiva.

On the exterior of the Kailasanatha, beyond the Mahendravarman's shrine, stand eight independent vimanas on the north –east corner. These vimanas are built in sandstone. Granite slabs have been used only at the lower sections as at the main edifice. These vimanas are also double storeyed and crowned with large stupis. The porch has lion- based pillars. There is no hara over the prastara cornice but the stupis are covered with some elegant reliefs

⁹Sharmin Khan, *op. cit.*, p.104.

and the nasis contain heads of celestial maidens. Each and every cell at the Kailasanatha contains a Somaskanda group.¹⁰

The vimana of the Kailasanatha shows commendable architectural genius, particularly in its integrating the main vimana and the projecting shrines achieved by offsetting of the adhisthana and walls of the exterior. The cornice over the abutting shrines continues over the outer wall of the ambulatory. The kutas and salas over these corner and lateral sub-shrines "act almost as a hara over the first tala". The ambulatory wall is covered by flat stone slabs on which rises the superstructure of the vimana. Nandis occupy the four corners of the square fourth storey. The octagonal griva is decorated with figures of Shiva, Dakshinamurti, Vishnu, and Brahma. The shikhara acquires a highly ornamental quality with the nasis containing models of the vimana.¹¹

The Pillared Mandapa

The pillared mandapa at the Kailasanatha stood at the eastern end of the platform, separated by a few yards but both these structures were joined by another mandapa built during the sixteenth century. The central pillared opening of the original mandapa has doorkeepers. The two goddesses- Lakshmi and Saraswati appear on the southern side, and the northern side has Durga and Jyeshta. The original Pallava mandapa has twelve columns. The columns on the facade are of sandstone but those at the centre of the vimana of the Kailasanatha is in the form of a the mandapa are shafts of granite. These columns carry some tiered pyramid raised on an adhisthana of granite slabs but the upper important inscriptions. Vikramaditya II, The Chalukyas ruler whose structures are all built in sandstone, conquered Kanchipuram in the 8th century and was so awestruck by the architectural splendor of this Pallava masterpiece that he did not cause any damage to the structure nor did he plunder its rich wealth jewels and gold etc.

¹⁰Edith Tomory, *op. cit.*, pp.223-224.

¹¹Revathy Girish, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-160.

The Gopura

The Kilasanatha has the distinction of including gopura like shrines in the architectural scheme. However, it has to be noted that the two shrines on the north and south sides of the sanctum wall are merely imitative of the gopura. These are sala-topped shrines and not gateways or entrance. Their presence is only ornamental. However, the entrance on the western side of the courtyard, now sealed, is a small functional gopura doorway. It is not a shrine though it is topped by the sala-shikhara, characteristic of the gopura.

The Mahendravarman's shrine

The Mahendravarman's shrine built by Mahendravarmā III, is axially aligned with the Rajasimha's mandapa. This shrine stands on the eastern part of the enclosure. The structure is oblong and double-storeyed with a prominent sala-shikhara built in sandstone. The hara is missing and, though it is a Shiva shrine there are no Nandis or goblins on the shikharas. The vimana faces east. The sanctum contains a prismatic dharalinga of basalt. A Somaskanda panel appears on the rear wall of the shrine interior. The entrance is flanked by reliefs of the Ganga and the Yamuna. A large relief depicting a royal couple appears on the rear outer wall of the shrine. The grand edifice of the Kailasanatha stands in front of the royal couple, perhaps Rajasimha with his chief queen.¹²

Iconographic of the Temple

The Kailasanatha Temple is a veritable Eldorado of Shaivite iconographic forms. The large images of Shiva in the shrines abutting the vimana are particularly grand. These images of are all nearly 9 feet in height with very impressive proportions. The smaller shrines in the courtyard contain reliefs depicting the favourite themes of the Pallava sculptors. Most of these reliefs are covered with stucco, which somehow survives only in patches and exposes the severely weathered texture of the sandstone. The restoration work in plaster has been

¹²Edith Tomory, *op. cit.*, pp.223-224.

done rather ruthlessly, highly unfair to the original work. At some shrines, the sandstone reliefs are bold and clear. One such example is the Kiratarjuniya relief in a shrine on the southern wall. It shows the hero of the Mahabharata in combat with the Kirata. This theme also alludes to the spectacular panel at Mamallapuram and also to one of the titles of Rajasimha- 'Yuddarjuna' and 'Samhara Dhananjay', both referring to Arjuna in battle. In fact, the choice of themes selected for depiction on reliefs can be related to the Pallava ruler's assessment of his own qualities and caliber.¹³

The sculptural programme at the Kailasanatha includes running reliefs of ganas which are depicted in different moods and have a refreshing quality because of the freedom from iconography consideration. The excellence of carving is characteristic of the Pallava tradition in stone craft. The granite figures have not suffered any erosion and the carving retains its crispness.¹⁴

Paintings of the Temple

The Kailasanatha is noted for another the paintings which have survived in some of the smaller shrine cells. A careful observation will at once reveal fading remnants and rough outlines of paintings under the thick layers of stucco. The cells on the south east corner contain Somaskanda groups, which were originally painted in various hues- green, red, yellow ochre and an occasional touch of blue. Usually, the outlines are drawn in black and dark brown chocolate colour. The technique followed is that of fresco paintings- colour applied on wet surface which was subsequently finished only after a superfine coating of lime plaster. The most remarkable Pallava work of art is a neatly finished face Vishnu, which is part of a Somaskanda group in a cell on the northern wall.

¹³ Mohideen Badusha, A.H., *op. cit.*, pp. 50-52.

¹⁴ Surendra Sahai, *op. cit.*, pp.81-85.

Nandi Mandapa

At the extreme south east corner of the ground facing the Kailasanatha Temple is a detached Nandi Mandapa. Though it stands in a highly ruinous state, it must have been an impressive structure to begin with. The four lion based corner pillares have survived as mere stumps. A grand but much repaired Nandi sits at the centre of the adhisthana. The Nandi keeps its vigilance over the temple as its gaze directed towards the sanctum. At the north-east corner of the complex has been built a stepped tank meant perhaps for the ritualistic bathing before entering the temple for offering homage to Shiva, Lord Kailasanatha.

The Ekambaresvara Temple

History of the Temple

Ekambareswarar Temple located in Kanchipuram. The shrine of 'Ekambam' is mentioned by name even earlier in the 5th Century CE. The shrine is also mentioned by Aiyadigal Kadavarkon, identified as Pallava Simhavarman III, the father of Simhavishnu, founder of the Palalva dynasty of rules. The Pallava rulers who succeeded Simhavishnu were devout Saivites. Mahendravarman I was instrumental in popularizing Saivism in Tamil Nadu. Cave temples dedicated to Shiva were carved out of solid granite rocks in different parts of his kingdom in the 6th Century CE.¹⁵

Structure of the Temple

The presiding deity at Ekambaresvara is Shiva, seated on an eternal source of light in the form of a linga under the mango tree, which is regarded as vedic tree. The goddess is sometimes called Lalithambika and Elavar Kuzhali. The mango tree is regarded 2500 years old and its four branches yield fruits of four different tastes –sweet, sour, astringent and bitter. The small raised platform on which a small shrine has been built functions as an open ambulatory. There is no separate shrine dedicated to the goddess. The mango tree and the

¹⁵Sharmin Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

shrine are surrounded by a corridor containing a long row of linga -one huge linga and 1008 small stone lingas. Also noteworthy are the sculptural representations of 63 Nayanamars and Uthsavamurthis. A small Nandi pavilion stands opposite the mango shrine.

The temple occupying approximately 23.5 acres of land. It has five enclosures built around the small central sanctum housing the grand Shivalinga, the source of eternal light. The inner shell of the temple is entered through a long and elegant, columned hall incorporating many small earlier shrines, alters, pavilions and lamp columns. Most noteworthy is the Nandi positioned directly in line with the lingam in the shrine. At the entrance to the inner complex are placed two huge dvarapalas in black stone, now partially covered with white cloth. The Ekambaresvara Temple has a small shrine solely dedicated to pralaya shakti, the protector against destruction. There is also in the first inner corridor on the left hand the linga of 'Pralayakalanathar'. The 'Pralaya shakti' shrine is in acknowledgement of the growing power of the female principle. On the right side of the corridor is the Navagriha sanctum.

The corridor runs around the core structure of the Ekambaresvara Temple built over a slightly raised platform. At the back of the sanctum is the open courtyard of Mavadi- the sacred mango tree. Shiva manifested himself in five elements at five different places in the form of water at Thiruvanaikkaval; as glowing fire at Thiruvannamamai; in the form of air at Thirukalahasti, as representing sky at Chidambaram; and as representing Mother Earth in the form of sand at Kanchipuram.

The Shiv Gangai Tirtham

The Shiv Gangai Tirtham is the large holy tank beyond the large pillared hall. It is a splendid tank with broad steps and its water is believed to be more purifying than that of the Ganges. A pillared corridor surrounds this tank and nearly all the huge gopuras stand reflected in the placid water of the tank.

The Gopuras

The gopuras on the outer wall of this great Shiva Temple are massive structures, but the most impressive is the stupendous gopura built by the Vijayanagara ruler Krishnadevaraya, who was a patron of legendary munificence. The gopuras and mandapas built by Krishnadevaraya in different parts of his kingdom symbolically represent his power and political supremacy over his rival states. His architectural creations far surpass the works of his predecessors and contemporaries in grandeur.

Viewed from a distance the Raya Gopuram appears as the most prominent landmark surrounded as it is by the busiest commercial streets in Kanchipuram. The tower of the gopura is 58.5m in height containing nine storeys. This magnificent structure was built in 1509 CE by Krishnadevaraya.¹⁶ An inscription to this effect appears on the first storey of the gopura. It has been built on a rectangular base in granite over which rises the superstructure of the pyramidal tower culminating in the barrel-vaulted top with eleven stupas on the ridge. The upper portion is particularly impressive for the gigantic kirtimukhas on both the shorter sides of the sala.

The Ekambaresvara has the largest number of subsidiary temple structures "all the requisites of a first class Dravidian temple, but all thrown together as accident". The layout plan of the temple follows no particular design and succeeds in creating a haphazard grouping of grand structures. In fact as James Fergusson Observes, "No two gopurams are opposite one another, no two walls parallel, and there is hardly a right angle about the place. All this creates a picturesqueness of effect seldom surpassed in these temples, but deprives it of that dignity we might expect from such parts if properly arranged".

The section of the huge first enclosure below the Raya Gopuram is now a thriving market place selling flowers and puja articles, cold drinks and memory card etc. In fact the

¹⁶Surendra Sahai, *op. cit.*, pp.91-94.

Ekambaresvara Temple had grown into a strong fortified enclosure when, in 1763 CE, it figured in the Carnataka Wars. The temple precincts were occupied by the British soldiers during Lord Clive's defence of Arcot. The main gopura was hit by cannon balls and the damaged structure had to be immediately repaired.

The Vaikuntha Perumal Temple

The Vaikuntha Perumal Temple is located Uthiramerur, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The temple is constructed in the Dravidian style of architecture. The temple was originally built by Pallavas, with later additions from the Cholas.¹⁷

History of the Temple

As per the inscriptions in the temple, the Pallava king Nandivarman II (Pallavamalla) 730-795 CE established the village around 750 A.D. It is believed that he donated the village to Vedic Brahmins from Srivaishanva community.

Structure of the Temple

The core structure is surrounded by a raised cloistered gallery separated from the vimana by a narrow passage at the ground level. This gallery is a unique feature of this temple. The pillars in this galley are in sandstone like the rest of the temple structure, excepting the lower sections of the adhisthana, which are in granite. Indeed some of the lion – based pillars derived from the glorious heritage of pallava architecture are also two superposed panels provide an illustrated history of the pallava's particularly providing a picturesque documentation of events beginning with their ancestor Brahma up to Nandivarman II's coronation. Only some of these panels have labels of identification. The

¹⁷https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaikunda_Perumal_Temple,_Uthiramerur#:~:text=The%20temple%20is%20constructed%20in,later%20additions%20from%20the%20Chola.

rest of the labels have all disappeared. But the gallery remains the most fascinating section of the Vaikuntha perumal.¹⁸

The architecture of this elegant Vishnu Temple has been inspired by the Dharmraja Ratha at Mamallapuram in the provision of the three sanctums, one over the other, in the interior. The purpose of the rathas has been a matter of speculation among the historians but they have generally been regarded as the rock-cut versions of original models in wood.¹⁹ Here the ground storey and the two upper storeys have sanctums to house three different images of Vishnu, in standing, sitting, and reclining postures. The Vaikuntha Perumal has a very dark interior because of these inner walls. The sanctum on the ground storey is enclosed within two ambulatories, an open one at the upana level and another within the cloister. The second storey also has two ambulatories, one with the within the middle wall and the inner most wall, and the other open one on the terrace behind the hara. The third storey has only one open ambulatory between the wall and the hara. The arrangement of the haras ground storey and of the closed and pillared mukhamandapa comprises large corner kutas and panjaras and prominent salas.

The triple-storeyed structure of the Vaikuntha Perumal gives evidence of a great engineering acumen of the Pallavs, who built three concentric walls forming concentric squares, one inside the other containing the ambulatory passages in between as prescribed in the sandhara mode. The innermost wall rises to the height of the three storeys enclosing the three tiers of cells, the intermediate wall rises to the terrace level of the second storey and the outermost wall rises up to the level of the first storey terrace. There are provisions for flights of steps leading to the top storey. The pyramidal vimana of the Vaikuntha Perumal gives no indication of the intricate but extremely well manipulated interior space. The vimana is

¹⁸ Sharmin Khan, *op. cit.*, pp.99-100.

¹⁹ Revathy Girishi, *op. cit.*, p.149.

square in plan, externally having a side of 47 feet and its sikhara rises to 60 feet from the ground level.

The temple is known for the inscriptions indicating the democratic practices of electing representatives for the village bodies during the regime of Parantaka Chola (907-55CE). The building is declared as a heritage monument and administered by the Archaeological Survey of India. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India was inspired by the system after paying a visit to the temple and insisted on improving Panchayat Raj, India's system of local bodies in villages.

CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

OPEN ART GALLERY

Introduction

The Pallava sculptures are scattered in various places in Tamil Nadu viz, Mandagapattu, Trichirapalli, Siyamangalam, Mamallapuram, Kanchipuram, Tiruttani etc. Most interesting places of sculptural importance are Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram where the Pallava artists deliberately and significantly carved the figures by singular concentration and inspiration. Especially Mamallapuram is a source of Perumal, inspiration to the artists and a place pilgrimage to the art lovers.

A number of sculptures were executed in relief on the Rathas in the caves and Mandapas and also on the boulders. Nearly thirty or thirty five figures are on Dharmaraja Ratha and Arjuna Ratha and others are in caves and the Mandapas ie., Mahishasuramadani Cave, Adivaraha Cave, Trimurti Cave, Krishana Mandapa and the Shore Temple exhibit a number of beautiful figures.

Mandagapattu, Dalvanur, Mamandu, Siyamangalam, Trichirapalli exhibit the early Pallava sculptures. Certain Dvarapala figures, the Gangavatarana scene in Trichirapalli, Durga in Singavaram.¹ Certain later Pallava figures of the Aparajitaha period. The Pallava sculptures started from Mandagapattu, Lakshityatana cave temple where Mahendravarman announced he had constructed without mortar. The Pallava sculptural style was started and developed him.

¹ Archaeological Research, No.67, of 1900; EP. Ind., Vol.VI, p. 320.

Mahendravarman I

Mahendravarman I liberally patronised different arts, as evidenced by his titles vicitrachitta, Cetthakari and Citrakarapuli. He promoted an energetic art movement in his domains. His son Narasimha varman I Mamlla started the novel method of carving out shrines from free-standing monolithic and produced exquisite sculptures like the huge rock-cut open-air representation of the so-called Kiratarjuniya or Descent of the Ganga. Dravida sculpture rest on these solid, creative foundations laid down in the time of the pallavas.²

Pallava sculpture retain the same elongated, slender, pliant and graceful forms seen at Amaravati but the figures have become more sublime and disciplined. The Pallavas lay greater stress on natural simplicity, which gives their carvings an immediate charm. They do not rely on subtleties such as deep mysterious caves with their strong play of light and shade as in the Ellora sculptures of the same period.

Everything is clear and open in these Pallava carvings on the face of rocks and shallow cavities. Everything looks so natural, especially the animal figures which reveal great love and understanding of the different species and a keen observation of the world around, combined with a sense of humour.³

Mimics of the Cat

For instance the cat in the descent of the Ganga mimics the ascetic while the mice frolic around, a monkey cleans his mate's fur while she nurses her young, a stag scratches his nose with his hind foot, elephant calves find shelter between the legs of their elders, and an elegant pair of deer watch the scene from a cave on the other side.

² Edith Tomory, *A History of Fine Arts in India And the West*, Orient Longman Ltd, New Delhi, 1982, p.217.

³ *South Indian Inscription, Vol. I*, p. 341.

The human and divine figures

The human and divine figures show an impersonal, dignified reserve verging on aloofness. Their long, thin, almost tubular limbs make them look even taller. The female figures usually lean on their tall, broad-shouldered partners and look very submissive, whether they are human or goddesses. They are much slighter, with narrow chests and shoulders, and very slender waists. Both their ornaments and clothing are scant.

The earliest individual Pallava statues are found at Mandagapattu, but the first narrative relief is the Gangadhara panel in the upper rock-cut cave at Tiruchirapalli a noble creation of Pallava art. It portrayed the majestic Siva nonchalantly receiving the mighty river on only toe of his locks.

The most famous achievement of Pallava sculpture, belonging to the Mamalla period, is the Kiratarjuniya, known also as the descent of the Ganga at Mamallapuram. It is sculpted out of two huge boulders in the hillside, separated by a narrow vertical cleft. This rock wall, covered with more than a hundred figures, measures twenty-seven meters in length and about nine meters in height.

Kiratarjuniya (Arjuna's Penance)

This so called Kiratarjuniya (Arjuna's Penance) is taken by some to represent a story from the Mahabharata, namely the hero's ascetic practices so that Siva would favour him with the pasupata weapon. Wearing deer skin and emaciated by starvation. Arjuna stood on the tip of one toe with arms joined over his head and gazed into the sun. At the time when this carving was made, this story was very popular and found expression in other forms of art.

The Mamallapuram sculpture, however, does not depict the most important element of the story, namely Arjuna's fight with Siva in the disguise of a hunter. For this reason others believe that the Mamallapuram carving may represent the austerities of Bhagiratha and Siva granting his wish to let the Ganga flow through his locks. The Mamallapuram scene

pictures the river flowing down from the mountain while adoring gods look on ecstatically. For this reason the carving is sometimes called the Descent of the Ganga.

A tank at the bottom of the cleft and a number of channels on the ledge above the cleft prove that at least on festive occasions the cleft was used to let water fall down to a cistern below. Unfortunately the opening of the cleft on top has been filled up with brick and cement because of an erroneous restoration. This fact as well as the similarity of the Mamallapuram carving with the Ganga monument at Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka lends more weight to the belief of several scholars that the scene represents the descent of the Ganga rather than Arjuna's penance.

The central episode of the great carvings is the descent of the celestial stream through the vertical cleft. Water divinities, notably a giant nagaraja and his queen, surge up from the depths, lost in wonder at the world-refreshing event. All creation represented by gods, demons, men and animals, have gathered from both sides to witness the spectacle and to plunge into the stream.

On the lower level to the left, a group of yogis have gathered around an exquisite little Pallava temple. One of them sits at the door in yoga posture with two others a little further away. It is a realistic picture of ascetic life.

Near the top of the cleft, also to the left, the emaciated Bhagiratha stands on one leg in pillar like rigidity with the fingers of both hands interlocked above his head. The gigantic, four armed Siva stands before him with the lower left hand in the varada mudra. A mass of matted hair covers his head. Ganas accompany him.

The remainder of the rock-face is covered with different forms of life: divine titanic, human and animal – all perfectly differentiated and shown in truly typical attitudes of movement or repose. All either hurry to witness the great event or peacefully contemplate it. On the right side of the cleft is a very striking elephant family, with the giant bull followed by

the smaller cow while the calves shelter between their legs as they proceed to the river.⁴ Another rather droll scene shows a wily cat with up-stretched paws pretending to do penance while the unsuspecting mice dance around. Distinct from the rock but associated with the scene is a pair of monkeys in outline but without detail. The skill of Indian sculptures in giving the impression of life is nowhere more evident than in this interesting and beautiful piece of sculpture on the open hillside of Mamallapuram.

Other examples of Pallava sculpture, also belonging to the Mamalla period, can be seen in the rock-cut temples at Mamallapuram, such as the beautiful panels in the Mahisasura mandapa. A large panel showing Durga as Mahisasuramardini occupies the whole of the wall at the northern end of the cave. It shows the most famous exploit of the unconquerable goddess in the mardini of the buffalo demon, thus rescuing the world from his tyranny. The plucky young warrior-goddess, astride on her fierce lion-mount, attacks the wily-looking buffalo demon, much bigger than herself and stronger than all the gods. In the scene the outcome of the battle hangs in the balance. The demon stands ready to strike with his great iron club, as he eyes his opponent waiting for the opportune moment. The umbrella of universal rule still hangs over his giant body and he retains his crown. It seems an uneven battle with the slender diminutive goddess playfully shooting her arrows over the demon's head and not even looking at him as she advances with drawn sword and other weapons in her eight arms. Only the ferocity of her mount and the confident attitude of her attendants, while the demon's followers cringe and flee, indicate the outcome of the battle. With discreet restraint the artist show the superiority of courage and trust in a higher power, as she looks upwards, over cunning and brute strength.

⁴ Edith Tomory, *Ibid.*, p.218.

Pallava artist had a special gift for hinting at the significance of their themes by means of overtones. They never represented their subjects in dramatically decisive scenes.⁵

⁵ Edith Tomory, *Ibid.*, pp.219-220.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The Pallava architecture and sculptures as these two constitute the most brilliant chapter in the history of South Indian art. The Pallava architecture was undoubtedly greatly inspired by the religious revival movement of the age. We have found several styles in Pallava architecture. There was economic prosperity in the country. The Mamallapuram (also Mahabalipuram) town became an important sea port during the days of the Pallavas. They had friendly relation with the Malaysia, Indonesia and Greater India as well. The Dravidian style of temple architecture began with the Pallava rule. It was a gradual evolution starting from the rock cut- cave temples to monolithic rathas which finally culminated in structural temples and they were the pioneers of rock cut architecture in Tamil Nadu.

The Pallavas encouraged the study of art and the construction of cave and structural temples, including monolithic rathas and stone carvings of mythological scenes in Mahabalipuram. Two of the style's forms, the rock-cut and the structural, were created by the Pallavas, who laid the groundwork for it.

Pallava period is an age which enhanced architectural grandeur and beauty. The period is also known as the age of "poetry in stone". The magnificent temple of Kailashnath, which is carved out in stone, bears the testimony of the period. The monolithic seven Pagodas or rathas named after Pandavas are architectural wonders, though sea-erosion has taken its toll. These Pallava structural temples – the Shore temple, the Kailasanatha and the Vaikuntha Perumal were showpieces of imperial strength and royal status. As such, it was planned to have the outer enclosure wall of a lesser height than the first outer wall of the vimana at the ground storey, so that the architectural gradeur of the temples was never obscured from view. The enclosure wall of the Vaikuntha Perumal has its parapet decorated with a hara of kutas and salas and a series of vyalapada pilasters. From a distance, the four-

storeyed vimana looks five-storeyed. The same scheme of a low-rise enclosure wall appears at the two earlier temples.

While the Kailasantha has an openness of setting, the Vaikuntha Perumal suffers from a little 'boxed-in' impression chiefly because of the pillared gallery which, though magnificent, is too close to the vimana. Still, as Percy Brown observes, the Vaikuntha Perumal "has many commendable features, for it displays an economy in the disposal of its parts together with a skillful marshalling of the main elements, so as to produce a unity of conception, which has resulted in a building having considerable architectural merit".

The Shore Temple is not the greatest of the Pallava temples, but it is certainly the most beautiful. "In some ways, the culmination not only of the genius of Rajasimha's times, but also of the entire Pallava epoch discovery of new proportions, and fresh articulation of angas, generates a scintillating attenuation of the tower and remarkably succeeds in transcending the totality of its forms. Nothing of this sort is created again", K.R. Srinivasan, noted scholar features of the Shore Temple, and also, why it is the pride of Pallava art.

The contribution of the pallavas to the Indian Art and Architecture is immense. In fact the history of Dravidian style of Indian Architecture in the south began with the pallavas. It was a gradual evolution starting from the cave temples to the monolithic Rathas and culminated in structural temple. The writings or texts carved on solid objects such as pillars, walls, temples, forts, caves, palaces and stone. It is known as epigraphic information as they provide authentic information about various dynasties and their contribution.

Thus the pallavas rendered invaluable service to the country both within and without as they were one of the torch bearers of Hindu civilization to South East Asia. For more singular is their contribution to architecture transforming the architecture and sculpture from wood to stone.

The Pallava had also contributed to the found in the temples, the 'Open Art Gallery' at Mamallapuram remains an important monument bearing the sculptural beauty of this period. The descent of the Gangas or the penance of Arjuna is called a fresco is called a fresco painting in stone. The minute details as well as the theme of these sculptures such as the figures of lice picketing monkey, elephant, of huge size and the figure of the 'ascetic cat' standing erect remain the proof for the talent of the sculptor.

Pallava sculpture owed more to the Buddhist tradition. On the whole it is more monumental and linear in form, thus avoiding the typical ornamentation of the Deccan sculptures. The free standing temples at Aihole and Badami in the Deccan and the Kanchipuram and Mahabalipuram in the Tamil Country, provided a better background for sculptures than the rock-cut temples. And the Pallava sculpture was monumental and linear in form resembling the Gupta sculpture. The Pallavas style formed the basis for the Dravidian style of architecture. They helped in the developments of Tamil languages. The religious activities are flourishing through temple construction and role of Alwars and Nayanmars.

On 1st February 2023, around 70 foreign delegates who arrived in the city for the G20 education working group meet on 1st Wednesday visited the Pallava – era monuments in Mamallapuram including shore temple, Five Rathas, Arjuna's Penance.

GLOSSARY

Glossary

Dwarapalakas	: Royal door keepers
Sanctum	: A sacred or holy place
Niches	: Decorative recess set into a wall for the purpose of displaying a statue, vase, font, or other object.
Makaratorana	: Gate of Heaven in sacred art
Adhisthana	: The raised base on which a temple stands
Chandrasila	: Moon Rock
Boulders	: Worn rock, especially a large one
Pilasters	: Are shallow decorative pillars attached to a wall
Shafts	: Long vertical passage for example for a lift
vimanas	: Temple sanctum tower
Yali	: Hindu Mythological creature
Shrine	: Place of worship which is associated with a particularly holy person or object
Dwarf	: Used to particular kind of star which is quiet small and not very bright
Cupola	: Is a roof or part of a roof that is shaped like a dome
Monolithic	: Single large block of stone
Cornice	: Strip of plaster, wood or stone which goes along the top of a wall or building
Frieze	: Decoration high up on the walls of a room or just under the roof of a building
Bas relief	: It is a form of sculpture that is carved from a flat two-dimensional plane creating a three-dimensional appearance. The backgrounds are kept shallow from the raised features, usually between a fraction of an inch to a few inches deep.
Gopuras	: A gopuram or gopura is a monumental entrance tower, usually ornate, at the entrance of a Hindu temple

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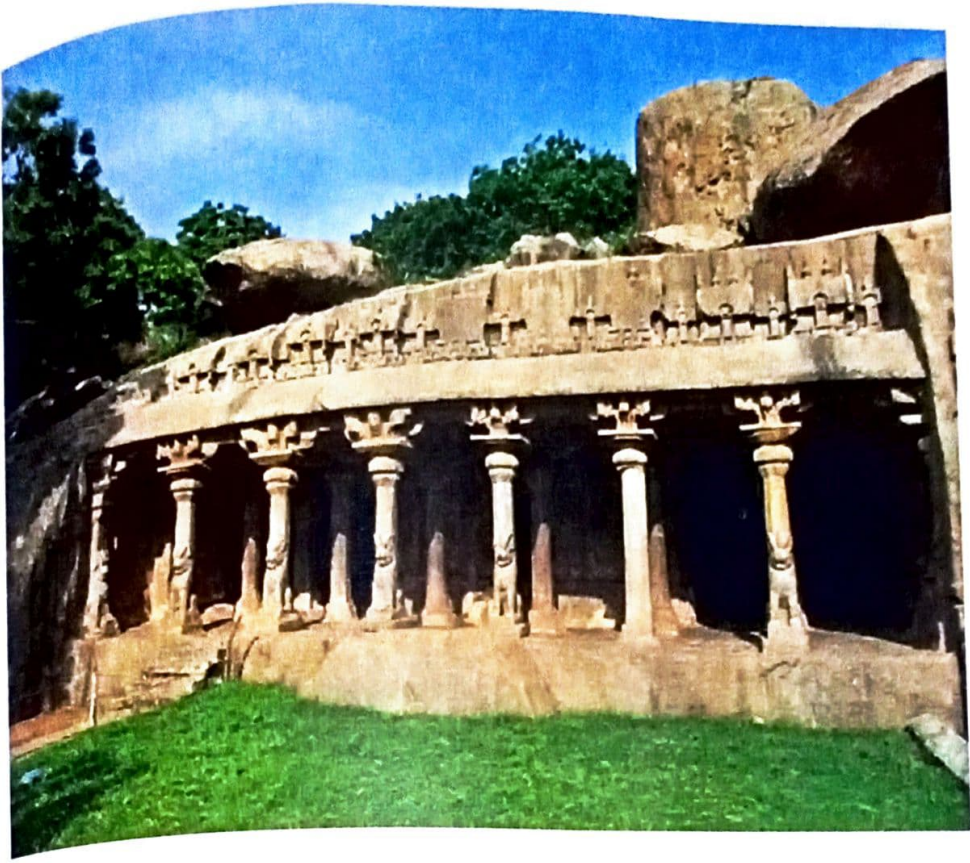
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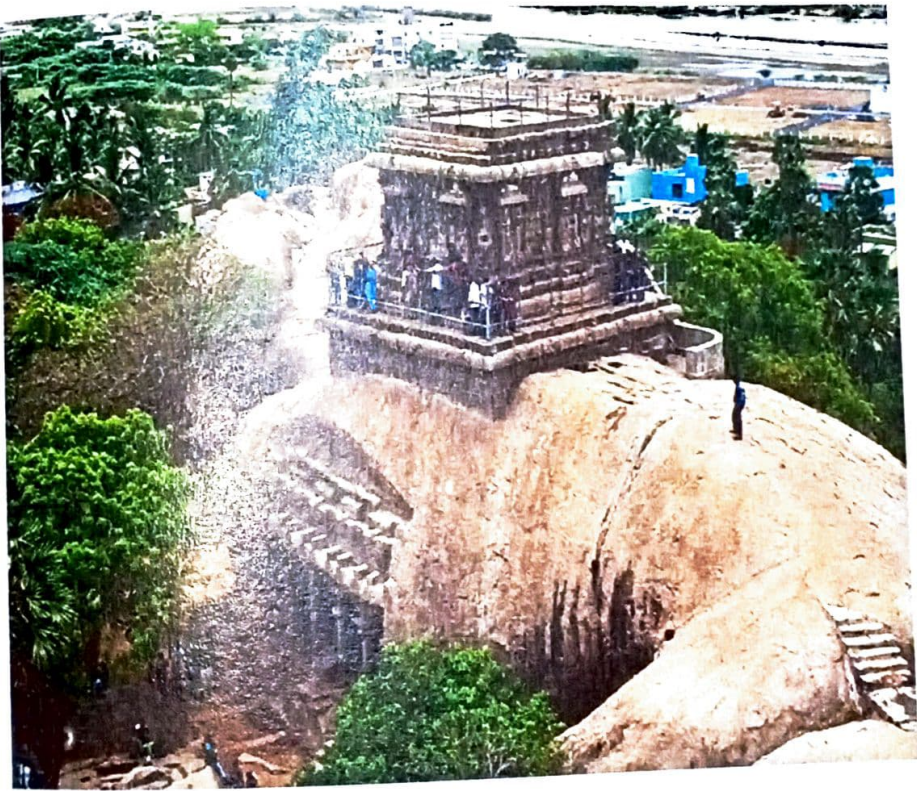
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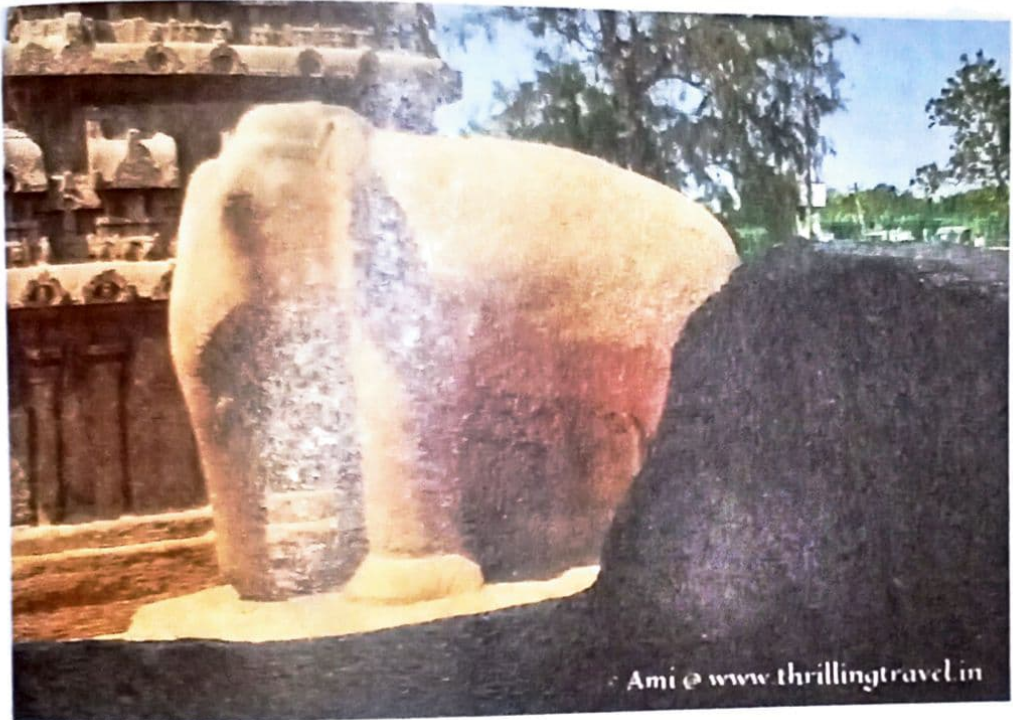
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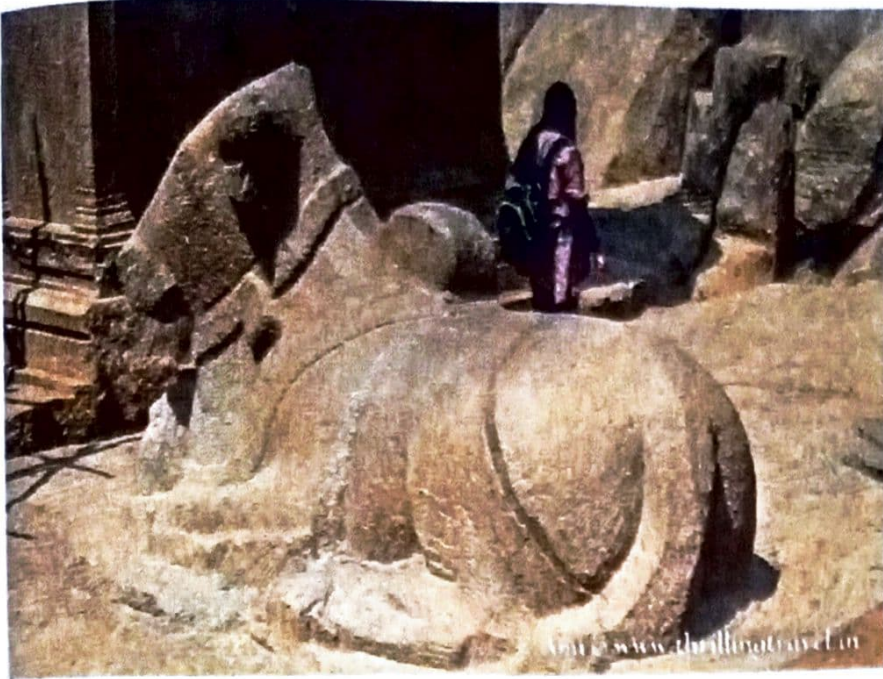
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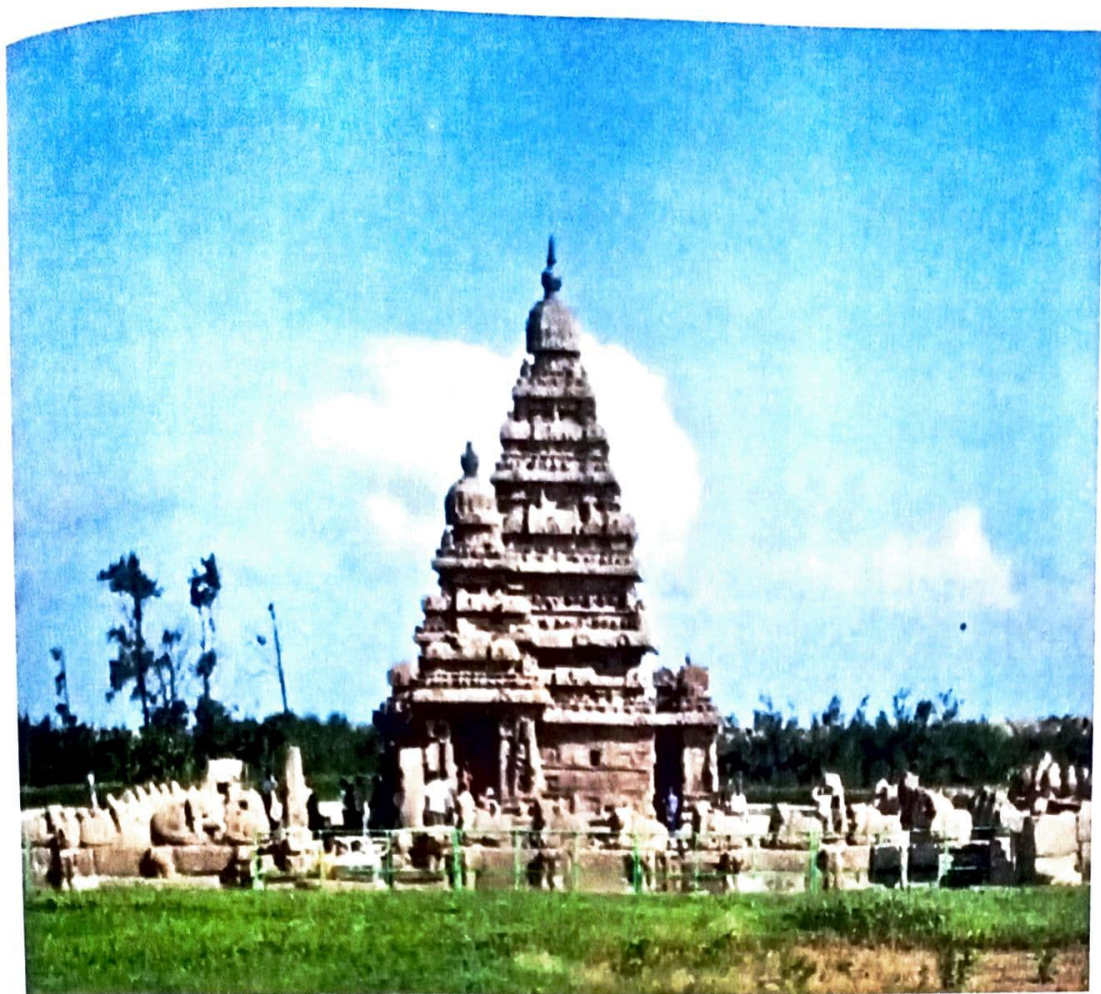
Monolithic rock-cut elephant



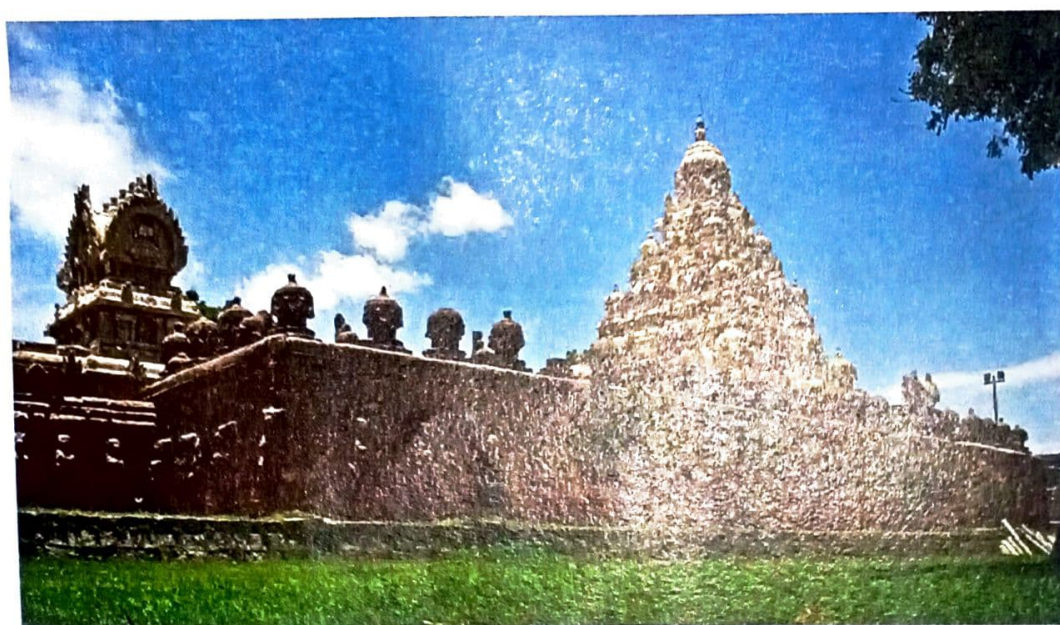
Monolithic Nandi- Mamallapuram



Group of Rathas at Mahabalipuram



Shore Temple - Mahabalipuram



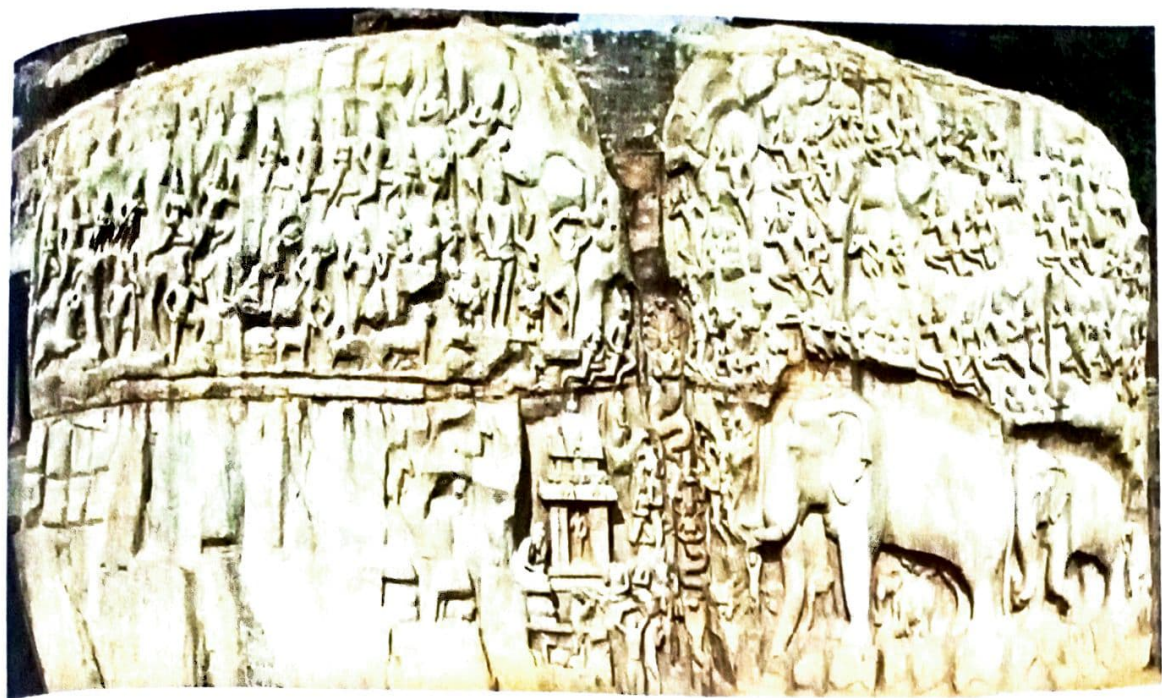
Kailasanatha Temple - Kanchipuram



Vaikuntha Perumal Temple



Ekambareswara Temple



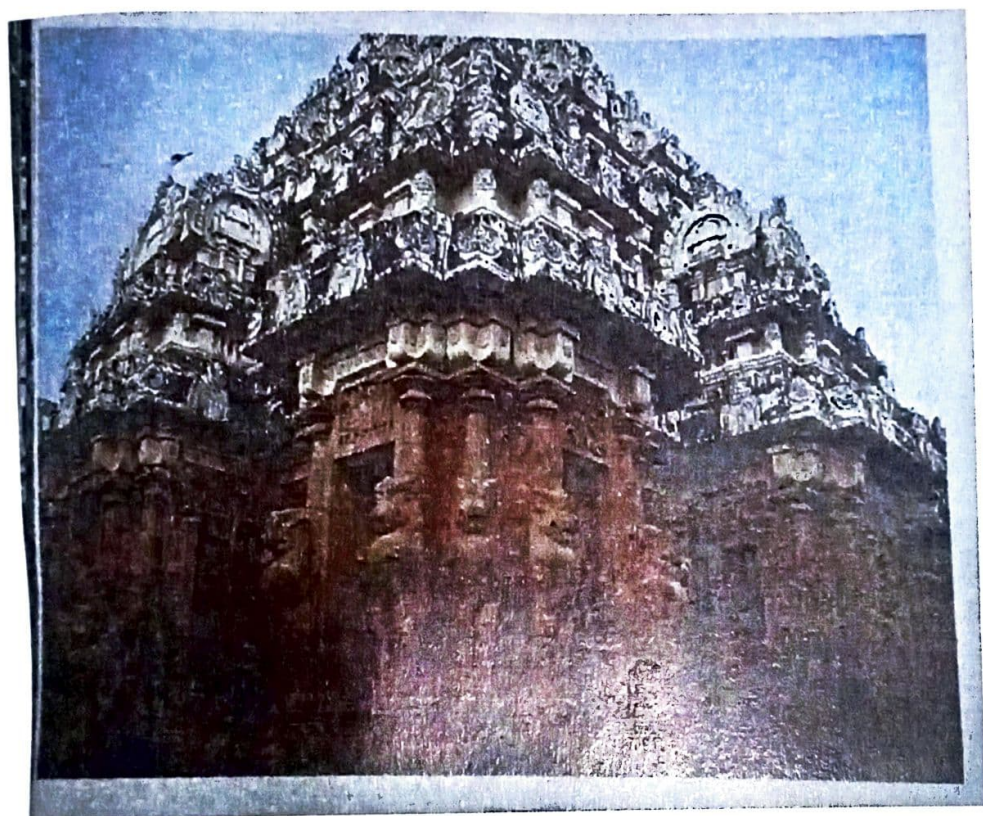
Arjuna's penance



Sacred Mango- at Ekambaraesvara Temple – Courtesy: Surendra Sahai, *Temples of South India*



Tirumurthy Mandapa - Courtesy: Surendra Sahai, *Temples of South India*



Heraldic Lions at the Kailasanatha Temple - Courtesy: Surendra Sahai, *Temples of South India*

THILLAI NATARAJA TEMPLE - ETHEREAL ABODE OF LORD SHIVA

Project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the degree of

Master of Arts in History

By

SARANYA R.

(Reg. No: 21APHI06)



St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Reaccredited with "A⁺" Grade by NAAC
Thoothukudi
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "THILLAI NATARAJA TEMPLE – ETHEREAL ABODE OF LORD SHIVA", submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History and is a work done during the year 2022 – 2023 by Saranya R. a bonafide student of Department of History, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.

S. M. Vimala

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "THILLAI NATARAJA TEMPLE – ETHEREAL ABODE OF LORD SHIVA" submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous) Thoothukudi affiliated to the Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in History, is my original work and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Place: Thoothukudi

Date: 05.04.2023

R. Saranya
Signature of the Candidate

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

India has many places where people worship the Divine. It has more than 2 million Hindu temples recorded during the census, whose number has substantially increased by now. One of the secretive and famous Temple is the one at Chidambaram Temple. The Chidambaram Temple complex proudly boasts of being one of the oldest temple complexes in Southern India. The most unique characteristic of the Nataraja Temple is the bejewelled image of Nataraja.

Chidambaram Temple, in the temple town of Chidambaram, is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is one of the five holiest Shiva temples. This is an historic and ancient temple. Shiva himself is presented as the Nataraja performing the Ananda Tandav (Dance of Delight) in the golden hall of the shrine. The marvelous golden sculptured image as Nataraja in the dance pose is the inspiration for all dancers of the world. It is one of the very few Shiva temples where Shiva is not represented by the lingam.

The Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram, 'Temple of Temples' according to Tamil Literature, portrays the impact of the glories of the various dynasties of the Tamil Country, that are responsible for its growth. It is one of the rare shrines where the archaic from of early Indian Temple Architecture is still retained. Having situated in the heartland of 'Chola Country' it attained considerable strategic importance from the early Chola period on words, up to the modern time.

The celebrated Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram is otherwise called, 'Thillai'. Chidambaram has also other names such as 'Sitambalam, Puliur, Chitrakoota, Perumbarapuliur, Pundareekapuram'. From the early beginning of the origin of the Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram, the most famed of five Southern Temples dedicated to Siva, represent Him as the deity of five elements viz., Earth (Kanchipuram), Water

(Thiruvannaikkal), Fire (Tiruvannamalai), Air (Kalahasthi) and Ether (Chidambaram). At Chidambaram, Shiva is represented as the element of Ether (Akasha).

Chidambaram is the centre of the Saivite cult. The temple complex covers a vast area and is located in the centre of the city. The name is derived from the most important portion of the Nataraja temple, called 'Chit-Ambala' meaning the 'atmosphere of wisdom', or 'Mystic Hall'. This concedes within itself the secret symbol of God. When a veil over a semi-circular doorway in the 'santum sanctorum' is parted, it reveals more 'ethereal space' – symbolic of Shiva in His manifestation of the "Formless Form" in "invisible presence" – a profound indication of a solution to the mystery of life, which is explained in one word – "Nothingness".

The temple is a perfect synthesis of two concepts – Siva as the cosmic dancer and Siva as "Akasha Linga" totally formless – "Chit-Ambalam" literally means the 'Ether of Knowledge'. To a general visitor, the Chidambaram Temple today offers a veritable feast of rare art treasures. The towering 'Gopurams' rising against the tropical azure, the exquisitely carved pillars gleaming here and there, the bas – reliefs and other sculptured pieces lavished almost everywhere.

The Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram surrounded by four towering 'Gopurams', four enclosures under the golden roof of sanctum (Ponnambalam), Lord Siva dances with the whole cosmos as his theatre. The Lord is said to have been worshipped here by seers like Patanjali, Adi Sankarar, Appar and other Saivites. Many structures in the temple which are mentioned in the epigraphical and literary records exist no longer. The scars of battles of the 18th century can still be seen in many parts of the temple. The English and the French armies used the temple as a fortress. Hyder Ali of Mysore also camped in the temple and stationed a

garrison of 3000 soldiers inside the temple enclosure. During that time, the idol of Nataraja was removed for safe custody to Tiruvarur temple and brought back only after several years.

Some parts of the temple were renovated during the last part of the 19th century, by a devotee Pachiappa Mudaliar of Kanchipuram. Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiyar and the Nagarattar community took the work of clearing the wild growth of vegetation within the temple building and performed the Kumbhabhisheka ceremony in 1891.

Chidambaram Temple is a veritable encyclopedia of the art of dancing. There are the bas-reliefs and other sculptured pieces essentially on dance themes executed in seemingly endless friezes which illustrate in startling vividness some of the most subtle aspects of dancing. Equally impressive, but of a different vein, are the Sabhas or Sacred Dance Halls with their inevitable pillars. Once these imposing edifices are entered, one comes upon the temple itself which encompasses the court of Thillai, the Chit Sabha together with the other four sabhas - Raja Sabha, Deva Sabha, Nritta Sabha and Kanaka Sabha. The sacred hall where the Lord of Thillai is stated to have entered into a dancing bout with Goddess Kali, is possibly the oldest among the major structures that have grown around the central sanctum and one that ranks easily among the foremost of its kind today. Of these sabhas, the Nritta Sabha or the Hall of Dance is the most interesting creation and is designed in the form of a chariot with wheels and horses. The hall contains dancing figures more graceful and elegantly executed than any other of their class in South India.

The Chidambaram Temple is longer from North to South while, most temples are longer from East to West. Nataraja is the family deity of the Imperial Cholas, who were the strong followers of Siva and had covered the Sabha with gold, thereby giving the sabha, the name Kanaka Sabha or the Golden Hall and the image of Nataraja – the grant name of Kanaka Sabhapathi and Kanakasabai Tirunatanam. By the side of Lord Nataraja shrine, to the left, is

the sanctum of Goddess Sivakamasundari. To the right is the Chidambara Rahasyam wherein, there is no image or Lingam is found.

Within the innermost enclosure, there is a temple for Vishnu called Govindaraja Perumal, who is said to have witnessed the dance of Siva. In fact, Chidambaram is the sacred place held in high veneration both by the Saivites and Vaishnavites in view of the existence within four walls of the temple of both the famous shrines of Nataraja and Narayana as Govindaraja. It is one of the 108 sacred places where Mahavishnu is worshipped in His manifestations of Archavathara.

Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of Murthi (idol) in Chidambaram and is considered as one of the Pancha Bootha Sthalas. It belongs to the Dravida type of temple architecture.

Aims of the Project

The principle aim of this project is to set before the reader a detailed description of the Nataraja Temple Chronologically. With this maiden attempt, I hope to take up soon the fascinating work of bringing out the role played by this temple in the religious history of the Tamil Country.

The two intended goals of this paper are: a) to study the symbolic meaning of the dancing form of Siva, a form that developed into an emblem of victory among the Chola kings, and consequently became an object of worship in this temple with the status of a main deity, b) to argue how the symbolism of the dancing image of Siva influenced the architecture of the temple in a notable fashion, both at the level of the ground plan, as well as at the level of proportioning of the deities in the temple. The scope of this project is limited to a) the evolution of the dancing image of Siva in the South and its impact on the architecture of the

temple in Chidambaram, b) the significance of the Sabhas (halls) and prakaras (circumambulatory paths) and c) the ritual of the worship of Siva in His Formless state.

Sources of Study

Different sources have been used to trace the 'Thillai Nataraja Temple – Ethereal Abode of Lord Shiva'. Source materials have been classified into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are mainly based on Newspapers, Personal Interviews and Reports. The secondary sources are mainly books, Gazetteers related to virtual treasure trove of Thillai Nataraja Temple. The sources of this study are mainly collected from St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi Library, VOC Port Library and Chidambaram Temple.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this study is analytical and descriptive. The source materials have been critically analyzed and investigated. The descriptive method is used in the presentation of the study in order to make the project understandable to the readers.

Outline of the Chapters

- The first chapter deals with the Historical Background.
- The second chapter analyses the Structure of Thillai Temple.
- The third chapter illustrates Temple Architecture of Chidambaram Temple.
- The fourth chapter describes the Festivals.
- Beside this, the project begins with an Introduction and ends with a Conclusion.

CHAPTER - I

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Chidambaram is one of the most important centres of pilgrimage in South India. It is not only a great Shiva Temple, but it also contains a Vishnu shrine of equal antiquity. It is dedicated to Shiva as Nataraja, the Lord of Dance and existed during the eighth and ninth centuries CE. Most of its structures originating in the Pallava and early Chola period have vanished demolished and rebuild during the 12th and 13th centuries CE. Hence, it is difficult to find out its original lay out plan.

Chidambaram was known for its architectural glory where the Lord performed the 'Anandatandava', the 'dance of victory' celebrating the end of the heretics. In ancient times, this spot was known as Thillai for its forest of Thillai trees where Shiva and Kali are believed to have danced in competition to each other. To the devotees of Vishnu, Chidambaram has been known as 'Tirucitrakutam'. Shrines to both these Gods still stand close to each other at Chidambaram.¹

Etymology

The name of this sacred centre Chidambaram as Harle explains, "Is derived by a combination of Nirukta, a type of etymological interpretation, and of Sanskritisation from 'Cirrambalam'. Chit is invisible, and it is probably on this account that the Akasa Linga is believed to be installed in the temple." The other four elements of the universe – earth, water, fire, and wind are represented as lingas at Kanchipuram (earth), Tiruvannaikkal (water), Tiruvannamalai (fire) and Kalahasti (wind).

Hymns by Shaiva hymnists, devotional verses by the Alvars and Nayanmars, Sthala puranas and Puranic legends have all contributed to the glory of Chidambaram. Appar, one of

¹ Sivaramamurti, C., *Nataraja in Art, Thought and Literature*, New Delhi, 1974, p.147.

the three ancient Shaiva saints and authors of the Tevaram hymns mentions a 'Panduranga' dancer at Thillai.

Shiva's dance at Thillai has been celebrated as the most crucial episode. The Nayanmars in their hymns used terms like 'Ampalakuttan' (Dancer in the Theatre); 'Atavallan' (Able Dancer or Expert in Dance) 'Kuttan' (the dancer); 'Atunkatavul' (Dancing God) etc. The Sanskrit Nataraja was not in use to describe Shiva's dancing prowess. The Alvars used glowing terms to describe Vishnu as a dancer. If Shiva is Atavallan, Vishnu is called Kuttatavallavenko (Kuttu + Atavallan + Ko) which is the equal of Nataraja.²

Legendary Tradition

When Vishnu told his serpent Ananta (shesha) about the splendour of Shiva's dance, the latter wished to also witness the awe - inspiring performance. Ananta took the form of Pantanjali, a semi - human and reached Chidambaram, where he met another Shiva devotee called Vyaghrapada worshipped the linga - Mulasthan and required flowers untouched by honey bees. He prayed to Shiva for tiger's eyes, claws and feet to enable him climb the trees when it was dark. The bees would appear only at dawn. This wish was granted and Vyaghrapada offered flowers at the linga. Then he was joined by Patanjali, both worshipped the Mulasthan linga close to a sacred pond in the forest. Pleased by their devotion and penances, Shiva appeared before them and promised to dance at Thillai. On a full moon night, Shiva performed his Anandatandava in the presence of Shiva's consort, his consort and all other Gods. The place of the dance later became the Sabha or Ambalam and Shiva promised never to stay away from the spot. The traditional image of the Anandatandava symbolizes creation (shrishti), the abhaya mudra of the lower right hand symbolizes hope and assurance, fire in the upper right hand symbolizes destruction (samhara), the lower

² Personal Interview with Narayanaswami Deekshitar, Priest, Chidambaram Temple, 04.02.2023.

left hand pointed toward the raised left foot symbolizes mukti or release from the cycle of life and death, Apasmara symbolizes ignorance.³

According to another tradition, the Chidambaram temple was built by Simhavarman or Hiranyavarman, a Chola prince, King of Gaudadesa or Bengal in the 5th century CE. He was cured of a later terrible disease at the sacred pond where Vyaghrapada worshipped the Mulasthana linga. Simhavarman was cured of the affliction and in gratitude build the temple. He is also believed to have brought back the 3000 Brahmin worshippers called Dikshitaras to Chidambaram to look after the temple worship and rituals. These Dikshitaras had gone to Antarvedi, in North India to attend yajna by Brahma. It is said that when their total number was counted at Chidambaram, it came appeared and asked to be himself counted as the last one to add up to 3000.

In South India, five temples were build for each of the five elements viz., Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. These are the Pancha Bhuta Sthalas and the temples of Lord Shiva. The temple of Thiruvanamalai is Fire - (Shi), Kalahasti Air - (Va), Chidambaram is Space / Ether - (Ya), Kanchipuram is Earth - (Na), Thiruvannaikkal is Water - (Ma). Together they form "Shivaya Nama". Some say that the central line of the earth's magnetic field where there is zero magnetic field, passes through various points along the earth including Chidambaram.

It is also said that the great scholar Thirumoolar in the ancient times, had discovered it back then and that he wanted to construct the abode of the deity in this specific place. Tamil Shaivites believe that Chidambaram is the central loci of the universe. Hence this temple dedicated to Lord Shiva was constructed here.

³ Coomaraswamy, A.K., *The Dance of Siva Fourteen Indian Essays*, New York, 1924, p.67.

Thillai Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram is reportedly 3500 years old build over a 35 acre land in the heart of the city. In Kanda Puranam, an epic authored by Kachiappa Sivachariar of Kanchipuram, the Chidambaram shrine is revered as one of the three foremost Shiva abodes in the world, alongside Koneswaram temple of Sri Lanka and Mound Kailash. But it still remains a mystery as to who built this temple, although it was Thirumoolar, a great thinker of the Sangam period who came up with the idea, knowing all the stories and legends behind this region and the deity. It has been a major shrine since the Sangam classical period dates 300 BC to 1300 AD.

There have been several renovations and offerings to Chidambaram by the Pallava, Chola, Pandya, Vijayanagara and Chera royals in the ancient and pre-medieval periods. The temple as it stands now is mainly of the 12th and 13th centuries. In this temple, the Lord has been depicted in three forms – Nataraja (True form) – Lingam (Indirect depiction – Semi form) – Space (Formless). The shrine is the only Shiva temple to have its main deity represented in this special human form. The consort deity here is Sivakami Amman (form of Amman – Mother Goddess and female energy.)

Two other forms of Lord Shiva are represented close to this in the inner sanctum of the temple – as a crystallized lingam – the most common representation of Lord Shiva in temples.⁴ The other form is the ether space classical element, represented with empty space and a garland of fifty one hanging golden bilvam leaves. This is the only temple to house two major deities next to each other – Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu in the form of Govindaraja Perumal. The temple is the only great temple complex to date mainly from the later Chola period.

⁴ Fritjof Capra, F., *The Tao of Physics – An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*, London, 1976, p.147.

It is also known for the earliest known Amman shrine, Nritta (dance) Mandapa, thousand – pillared Mandapa and even the first giant temple tank. Since this temple is all about forms and human, there are nine gateways in the temple, just like the Nava Dwaras in the human body. There are 4 main Gopuras (4 entrances) facing the cardinal axes. Each is a gigantic masterpiece in itself – about an average height of 250 feet in height, with seven tiers. ‘Chitambalam’, which is the wooden structure housing the Lord Nataraja and his consort Sivakami Sundari, and gave the temple town its name ‘Chidambaram’.

Chidambaram has always been an important temple of the Cholas mentioned in inscriptions as their Kulanayaka. While the centre sacred areas at Chidambaram dates back to a hoary past, the temple was completely rebuilt and expanded in the late Chola period, to reach its present size and shape during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The later Chola monarchs appear to have frequently visited the temple made major contributions towards its expansion and a Chola palace was constructed in the town. The only major addition made in later times was the superstructure of the northern gateway, which was left unfinished at the end of the thirteenth century and completed at the start of the sixteenth century by Vijayanagar ruler Krishnadevaraya. There are also twentieth – century additions made by the Nattukottai Chettis, local influential landowners, but these structures are clearly recognizable as contemporary.⁵

Chidambaram during Cholas

Parantaka I

However, it is credited in favour of Parantaka I (901-953 A.D.) a valorous king who won many wars and utilised the entire wealth of victory to enrich the Chidambaram Shrine.

⁵ Narayanaswami Naidu, B.V., *The Fundamentals of Ancient Hindu Dancing*, Madras, 1936, p.31.

Thiruvallangadu copper plate inscriptions praise him for the act of enroofing the Citrambalam with golden plates. Later the sparkling renaissance during the reign of Raja Raja-I, made the shrine the spiritual centre of popular faith. The name "Adavallan" (one who is able to dance) which was given to one of the chief images in the Raja Rajesvara Temple, also the titles 'Sri Raja Raja' and 'Sivapada Sekhara' were conferred on him to distinguish his religious munificence. His frequent visits to the temple and his devotion to the Lord are depicted in the paintings of the Brihadeeshwara Temple in which the Chit - Sabha with the Nataraja in it are picturesquely painted. Both the inscriptions and structures erected by Raja Raja - I, have disappeared during the renovations and additions done in the period of later Cholas.

Kulottunga - I

From the time of Kulottunga - I (1070-1120 A.D.) the history of the Cholas and the history of Chidambaram became one. When Kulottunga I came to the throne, the Chidambaram Temple consisted of only the central sacred areas, and it was a modest, though most sacred and frequently gilded shrine. Almost every previous Chola monarch claimed to have covered the roof of the shrine with gold. The temple now grew six fold in size, to measure 900 feet square and occupy an area of 40 acres.⁶ Every rise in the kingdom has been noticed by additional structures and renovations in the temple. Kanchipuram inscriptions reveal that Kulottunga - I constructed a palace at Chidambaram.⁷

Vikrama Chola

Vikrama Chola, the son of Kulottunga - I, who followed his father rather made Chidambaram as his second capital. His contributions to the temple are enormous. The first reference to the festivity of the temple occurs in inscriptions pertaining to this period. The car

⁶ Satyamurti, T., *The Nataraja Temple, History, Art and Architecture*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.37-43.

⁷ Nagaswamy, R., *South Indian Bronzes, The Great Tradition- Indian Bronze*, New Delhi, 1988, p.142.

festival of the temple is celebrated with full grandeur. Also all the Vahanas were gold plated and donated to the temple. He erected the first Prakara wall which is known as 'Vikrama Chola Thirumaligai'. Also the second Prakara was constructed during his period and was named as 'Kulottunga Maligai'.

Naraloka Vira

The impetus for the expansion of Chidambaram seems to have been provided by the first two rulers of the new Chalukya - Chola line, Kulottunga I and Vikrama Chola, whose combined rule takes us to the year 1135 AD. Associated with these monarchs, Naralokaviran, served as general and minister for the major force in the temple expansion. Naraloka Vira, a feudatory under Kulottunga - I and Vikrama Chola, was a devotee of Sri Nataraja. He erected a wall around the temple, which was named after him, he erected two towers also probably the tower of Sivakama Sundari Amman Temple. Another valuable information from the inscriptions pertaining to this period is that he enroofed 'Perambalam' with copper plates. Hence Perambalam (Deva Sabha) was completed during this period.⁸

The first enclosure wall, and its two gateways to South and East were set up during the reign of Kulottunga I refer to this wall both as the sacred wall of Kulottunga Chola (Kulottunga-Cholan-Tiru-Maligai) and as the sacred wall of Naralokaviran (Naralokaviran-Tiru-Maligai). Clearly emperor and minister together initiated this work. The second enclosure walls, and its two gateways to West and East, were added during the reign of Vikrama Chola. His undertaking included the contribution of the great Temple Tank known as Siva Ganga to the North of the area thus far enclosed.

Minister Naralokaviran was an ardent devotee of Shiva and an energetic and enthusiastic official who took remarkably active part in the enlargement of the Chidambaram

⁸ Satyamurti, T., *The Nataraja Temple, History, Art and Architecture*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.37-43.

Temple. Apart from being associated with his two monarchs in building the first two enclosure walls, he added several other structures within the Chidambaram complex and left an inscription in the temple that gives us details of his activities. Naralokaviran gilded the roof of the sanctum, once again, and build the flights of stone steps that lead down to the Siva Ganga tank. He was responsible for the construction of two important structures West of the tank. The Hall of a Hundred Pillars, according to the inscription, was constructed for Siva Pasupati and his consort, while the second was an extensive shrine for the child – Saint Sambandar, and installed a metal image within. He constructed a hall for the recitation of the sacred Tevaram hymns of the three major Saiva saints, Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar, and he further had their hymns engraved on copper plates. This must have been quite an undertaking, as these Tevaram hymns number over seven thousand verses.

Naralokaviran also made provisions for the upkeep and maintenance of the temple and for a variety of rituals. His inscription informs us that, he made arrangements for street lamps, for watering the streets on festival days, and for tending flower gardens and groves of areca palm that belonged to the temple. He constructed road from the Chidambaram temple to the sea, some eight miles distance for taking the festival image of Nataraja to the ritual bathing ghat (steps along the waterfront) at Killai - on the sea. At Killai, he builds a pavilion to house the deity and a fresh water tank nearby.

Soon after the time of Naralokaviran, around the year 1150, the Hall of a Thousand Columns was constructed. It stands to the East of the temple tank and is equal in dimensions to the great tank. The pillars of this hall, decorated with relief depictions from Saiva mythology, are identical.⁹

⁹ David, S., *The Dance of Shiva, Religion, Art and Poetry in South India*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp.78-85.

The third enclosure wall beyond, with a double – storied pillared cloister running along it, was build some fifty years later around the year 1200 AD by Emperor Kulottunga III (1178-1218 A.D). The enclosure is known in inscriptions as the Tiru - Maligai of Rajakkal Tambiran, a title assumed by this ruler. Kulottunga III was also responsible for building two chariot halls at Chidambaram, following the tradition introduced by Kulottunga I at the Melakadambur temple and repeated by his successors at several other sites. One of these chariot halls stands within the second enclosure and is known as the Nritta Sabha or Dance Hall.

Vibrant panels of dancing figures enliven the base moldings, and the elaborately carved pillars are typical of this last phase of the Chola period, of around 1200 AD. The second chariot hall is the shrine for the God Subrahmanya, son of Siva, to the northern end of the third enclosure.

Four great gateways known as Gopuras give access to the third enclosure, and these appear to have been constructed over a period of 150 years, between 1150 A.D. and 1300 A.D. All are build of stone along their vertical section up to the main cornice. Crowning the Gopuras is a barrelvaulted structure, topped with thirteen potlike finials. The four Gopuras are roughly similar in size. Their bases measure approximately 100 feet wide and 30 feet deep, and they reach up to a height of 140 feet.

The earliest and also the smallest is the Western Gopuras, which seems to have been constructed around the year 1150 AD. The gateway is the only one at Chidambaram that has inscribed labels identifying each of its sculpted figures. The upper brick levels of Chola gateways were decorated with restrained architectural motifs; surfaces of post - Chola Gopuras were covered with a bewildering array of divine and semi divine figures, some boasting of as many as a thousand stucco sculptures.

Kulottunga - II

Vikrama Chola was succeeded by his son Kulottunga-II surnamed 'Anapaya' and 'Tiruniru Cholan'. These titles are indicative of his devout faith in the Saiva tenents. Sekkilar, who states that he compiled the famous Periyapuranam under the patronage of Anapaya must have done under Kulottunga-II. Kulottunga Chola and Raja Raja Chola by the poet Ottakkuttar give further particulars of the additions done to the temple during this period. Among them consecration of the temple car and the formation of the four main streets are worth mentioning.

Kulottunga-III

Kulottunga III (1178-1216 A.D.) continued the royal patronage after Kulottunga II. In the early part of his reign he was successful in the three wars against the Pandyas, the Ceylonese and Konku Kings. He crowned himself at Chidambaram, being honoured with the title "Tirubhuanesvara Deva". Hence to commemorate the victory, he built the Tribhuanesvara temple at Tribhuvanam. Building of a Gopura and Mukhamantapa for Nataraja Temple and the enclosing cloister of the Sivakami Amman temple are credited to his glory. The third prakara in this temple, were constructed during his time. Hence this enclosure is named as 'Rajakkal Tambiran Thirumaligai', Rajakkal Tambiran being title of Kulottunga III.

Raja Raja III

Raja Raja III, succeeded Kulottunga III and even in the decline of power and calamities in kingdom, the importance of the temple did not diminish in any way. The constructional activities ceased for a short period. The king granted vast of Sala Sikhara. The plinth of the Sabha is buried amongst the surrounding platforms, erected during the

renovation in 19th century A.D. Inscriptions mention that Kulottunga-II enroofed the Perambalam and hence this was completed during this period. The bronzes of this temple adorn this sabha now.¹⁰

Emergence of Nataraja under the Pallavas

The link between dance and the plastic arts can be detected from the earliest art of the Indian subcontinent, such as the Mohenjodaro (circa 2500 BCE) statuette of the dancing girl and an enigmatic slightly twisted stone torso which may suggest the form of a male dancer with left leg lifted, not unlike the Nataraja icon. The interrelation between the fine arts and classical dance traditions of the Natyashastra hitherto, it has generally been believed that the Nataraja icon in bronze was developed by the early Cholas. However an unexpected finding from archaeometallurgical fingerprinting is that two Nataraja images of Shiva with leg extended in Bhujangatrasita karana, which had previously been considered early Chola, actually fitted the lead isotope trends for the Pallava group. Thus, these results indicate that, the famed Nataraja bronze icon was in fact a Pallava innovation, predating its wide-ranging depiction under the Cholas. This is in fact consistent with the idea, that the worship of Nataraja at Chidambaram goes back to at least the 7th century as indicated by the hymns of Sambandhar and Appar who were contemporaries of the Pallava king Mahendra Varman I, and with the Pallava sculpture of Shiva in Bhujangatrasita Karana from Siyamangalam.

Inscriptions during Medieval Pandyas

The rise of the Medieval Pandyas during 1216 A.D, does not in any way diminish the royal patronage to temple. They also considered Chidambaram Temple as the centre of their religious activities and benefactions. Maravarman Sundara Pandya-I (1116-38 A.D.)

¹⁰ Padmanathan, S., *Temples of South India*, Kumaran Pathipagam, Madras, 1997, p.254.

conquered the Chola country but had given it back to Raja Raja III. Maravarman Sundara Pandya II (1239-1251 A.D.) also made frequent visits to this temple and granted flower gardens and conducted the festivals. But it was during the period of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya-I, that the entire Chola kingdom got incorporated into Pandya kingdom. Again structural activities started in full vigour and from that time onwards additions were done in the outer Prakara of this temple as the inner complex had developed into a perpetual structure. Inscriptions credit him with canopying the "Golden Hall" with gold and his other two great contributions are the Western gopura and a Subrahmanya Temple called as 'Pandyanayaka Temple'.

Jatavarman Vira Pandya (1253-1268 A.D.) was crowned at the Hundred Pillared Hall of Chidambaram Temple and was honoured with Vira Abhiseka and Vijaya Abhiseka. Most of his gifts are towards the maintenance of the garden for the flower offerings to the lotus feet of Lord Nataraja. Maravarman Vikrama Pandya (1268-1281 A.D.) was another Pandya king who made several endowments for the supply of flowers and plantains for Lord's worship. Maravarma Kulasekhara Deva-I (1310 A.D.) was the last king of the dynasty who patronised the temple like his predecessors.

Vijayanagar Rule

After the Muslim invasions, the renaissance of Hinduism during Vijayanagar rule witnessed benevolent temple administration throughout South India. In the later part of the fourteenth century during the reign of Kumara Kampana, the first Vijayanagar Viceroy in Tamil country we find the consecration of the Govindaraja shrine. Probably this shrine mentioned in the early literature might have been removed by Kulottunga-II, a staunch Saivite. Another Viceroy Virupana Udaiyar (1377-1400 A.D.) is said to have gilded the vimana of Chidambaram temple with gold. Inscription dated 1428 A.D. available in the

temple shows the continuous patronage of the shrine by the Vijayanagar kings. Among them, the significant benefaction is the construction of the North Gopura in 1560 by Krishnadevaraya Achutta Raya gifted 18 villages for the completion of this Gopura during 1529 A.D. Hence by this time, the Gopura might have been completed.¹¹

Nayaks of Tanjore

Nayaks of Tanjore also made endowments to this temple. An inscription in Tiruverkalam mentions about the gift of a village on 22 Jan' 1567, to the Chidambaram temple for the merit of Tirumala Raya a Vijayanagar king by Achyuta Nayak. Another interesting incident is the visit of father Pimenta to Chidambaram and his meeting with Krishnappa Nayak-II of Gingee, who stayed at Chidambaram renovating the Govindaraja temple during 1598 A.D. During 17th century A.D., we find a reference to Sri Ranga Raya III, contributing additional structures to this temple.

Temple during French

Such being the inspiring spiritual nature of the temple, it, became a place of considerable strategic importance during 18th century A.D. We have specific reference to conclude that the French occupied the temple and utilized it as a Fort in 1753. In 1759 an attack by the English failed. Thus, the temple was used as a Fort during the French wars from 1753 to 1760 A.D. and also during the invasion by Hyder Ali. However Hyder Ali occupied the temple in 1780 A.D, he improved the defences and placed a garrison in the great temple. The stone balls used for the garrison were removed from the hundred pillared hall, very recently. In 1781A.D, Sir Eyre Coote attacked and gained victory. Owing to these wars the

¹¹ Francis, W., *Madras District Gazetteers: South Arcot*, Government Press, Madras, 1906, pp.17-18.

temple suffered much destruction. Most of the destructions were the demolition of many mantapas in the Third Prakara.

During these wars, there is likelihood of the destruction of many valuable inscription. An inscription dated 1773 A.D. mentions that Lord Nataraja's idol was brought back to Cit - Sabha from Tiruvarur in this year. It might have been taken to Tiruvarur during the war period.

After this the remarkable epoch of the temple is noticed during the period of Pachaiyappa Mudaliar an endower of many educational and Charitable endowments in 18th century A.D. The Esatern Gopura was renovated during this period. "The Nattukottai Nagarather" as Fergusson mentioned, 'added a wide cloister round the enclosure in the second Prakara, renovated all the Gopura, cloistered the mandaps of Sivaganga tank and reconstructed all the shrines during 1891 A.D.' This was followed by another renovation with a kumbha Abhiseka in 1955 A.D. (7-8-1955). With all this additions and renovations, we find the reconstruction of the outer most prakara wall at present.¹²

¹² Harle, C.J., *Temple Gateways in South India*, Oxford, 1963, p.40.

CHAPTER - II

CHAPTER II

STRUCTURE OF THILLAI TEMPLE

Chidambaram Temple is also called Thillai. Perhaps the name was derived from the Thillai trees which were found here says that a serpent and a Tiger worshipped Lord Shiva here and continue to enjoy the cosmic Dance of Lord Siva even today. The dancing figure of Lord Nataraja is universally acclaimed to be one of the finest pieces of sculpture, symbolizing, as it does the three principles of creation, Preservation and destruction. The Sthala Puranas give the genesis of the temple, and its growth.

Ananda Tandava of Nataraja

The origin of this dance and the Ananda Tandava of Nataraja at Thillai have given in the inscription the dance poses of Nataraja, which are so common in the temple sculptures here, and in the temples in South India.¹ Nataraja and Sabhapati, in the Hindu Pantheon, are identical in design. Nataraja (the Prince of dancers) is the well-known dancing form of God Shiva. It has four arms and a body besmeared with ashes. The back arm on the right side holds the kettle – drum (Udukai, as it is called in Tamil) while the other presents the raised palm of protection (Abhaya). Of the pair on the left, the upper holds a fire - pot and the lower is bent round across the breast to the right side, its fingers gracefully pointing below, towards the left leg which is raised in a dancing posture. The position of this hand is known as Gaja-Hasta, 'the elephant – trunk'. The ecstatic and violent nature of the dance, described as Ananda-Tandava in the sequel, whirling quickly round on one leg, placed on the back of the demon – Muyalagan or Apasmara, is indicated by the matted hair (Jata) stretching out on both sides of the head in wavy lines one above the other and by the cloth, party tied round the

¹ Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Cosmic Art of India*, Allied Publishers Bombay, 1965, p.120.

waist and partly thrown over the left shoulder also flying in the air. The right hand shows the Abhaya, on its wrist a serpent, which is the usual ornament of Siva and may have 1, 3, 5 or 7 hoods. The Kasyapa - Silpa of the Amsumat - Tantra that a serpent with raised hood is to be shown playing near Apasmara on his left side, the right hand of the demon pointing towards it. The head of Siva wear peacock's feathers, or an ornament fashioned like them, which is a special characteristic of the image. "The images of Nataraja represent Siva Dancing. He has four hands and his braided and jewelled hair whirl as the dances. In his hair may be seen a wreathing cobra, a skull, and the mermaid figure of Ganga on whom rests the Crescent Moon, and a wreath of Cassia leaves. He is adorned with necklaces, armlets, a jewelled belt, anklets and bracelets, finger and toerings. He wears a tiger's skin on His loin, and a scarf flutters about Him and the sacred thread is on His Body". "The essential significance of Shiva's Dances is threefold" says A. K. Coomaraswami: "First, it is the image of his rhythmic play, as the source of all movements within the cosmos - which is represented by the arch or Tiruvaasi.²

Secondly, the purpose of the Dance is to release the countless souls of men from the snare of illusion - and thirdly the place of the dance - Chidambaram - the centre of the Universe, i.e. within the Heart.

Philosophically interpreted, the dance is said to represent the Panchakritya - the five - fold activity of the supreme being, viz., Srishti - Creation or evolution from the drum; Stithi - preservation or continuation from the hand of hope - the Abhaya Hasta; Samhara - destruction from fire; Tirobhava, veiling, illusion or concealment, from the foot held aloft; and Anugraha release - salvation or bestowal of grace from the fourth hand pointing to the lifted foot wherein to seek the refuge of the soul.

² Chandra Sekar, S., *The Nagarathars of South India*, Macmillan Publishers, Madras, 1980, pp.47-49.

These five activities as separably considered are those of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheswara and Sadasiva respectively, and when all these varied activities are blending into one in his dance, the Dance is 'Ananda Tandava' – 'the Dance of Bliss'. It is also said the figure of Nataraja illustrates the Pranava Panchakshara letters of the sacred mantra of the Saivites. In Chidambaram, of course where the worship of Nataraja is the most prominent and where the Sabha- Mandapa (Assembly Hall), is covered with gold plates, the festival is the grandest in the year.³

Chidambaram - the Center of the Universe and the Chit - Sabha - the Center of the Temple

It should be obvious from the evidences drawn from a) the texts including Cilappatikaram (ca. 450 C.E.), b) inscriptions referring to Siva as Adavallan "one who is capable of dancing" in Tanjore Brihadeswarar temple (ca. 9th century A.D.) and c) Tuirumular's references to the formlessness of Shiva in Tirumantiram (ca. 7th century A.D.) that the Lord in his dancing form became an object of importance from the time of Chalukya, ca sixth century A.D.

References to Chidambaram as the center of the universe is found in Puranas. One of the celebrated Puranas called Tiruvilaiyadalpuranam "games of the sacred Lord" composed by Paranjoti Munivar during the 11th century A.D. characterizes the town of Chidambaram being the heart and Madurai being the head of the Man, who is lying on the entire region of the Tamil Nadu. The celebrated dance of Siva is said to have taken place at the Hall of Chit-Sabha i.e., "Hall of consciousness" in the Nataraja's Temple of Chidambaram, an earlier name of which is "Cirrambalam". In one of his verses in Tirumantiram (2770:4), Tirumular explicates the symbolism of the Tamil word "cirru", which is etymologically related to the

³ Sivaramamurthi, C., *Guide to the Archaeological Galleries*, Government Museum Publications, Chennai, 1999, pp.17-19.

words Cit, Cittu "Consciousness" and Cittam 'Conscience'. Tirumular's reference to the center of the pervading energy of shiva is the point that lies between the two eyebrows on the forehead (Bhindu). At this very spot, Shiva is said to have his third eye called netrikkan "the forehead eye". Thus, what is symbolized by the term Chit-Sabha is nothing more than the meaning of the term Chit or the Bhindu on the forehead- a point of union of Shiva and Sakti. The names "Chidambaram" and Cirrambalam" are thus derived from the same root, which is Cit, "the consciousness", which is equivalent to the Sanskrit word cittah meaning 'heart' or 'mind'

Urdhava Tandava

Two main forms of dancing Shiva may be distinguished one with the raised leg as shown in the illustration given above and the other with the same lifted up higher to the level of the head. The latter is called 'Urdhava Tandava' a dance which is locally believed to have been first performed by Siva at Tiruvalangadu near Arakkonam. The origin of this form of dance is as follows. There was once a dispute between Shiva and his consort Kali successfully followed him; till at last, in order to suppress her pride, Shiva lifted up one of his legs to the level of his crown and danced on. Kali was too modest to limitate Siva in this performance and she accepted the superiority of Siva. Images of Nataraja are sometimes also seen with a small antelope prancing on his left side near the foot, the Ganga (Gangas) and the crescent decorating the head, the sages Patanjali (with the serpent body), and Vyaghrapada (with tigers feet) worshipping on either side and the Goddess Parvati standing on the left.

Seven Dancing Postures of Siva

The Agamas speak of seven dancing postures of Shiva, the first, called 'Ananda - Tandava' or the joyous dance, has been described above.

The second is his evening dance 'Sandhya-Tandava'. In this form, the demon Apasmara is absent and the symbols in the two left arms are the peacock – feathers and the pose of wonder called Vismaya.

The third is the 'Uma- Tandava', i.e. dance with his consort Uma. In this, Shiva has two more arms, the additional right hand holding the trident and the three left hands exhibiting skull, Vismaya, and the Gajahasta. The left leg is stretched towards the left, and the Goddess Uma stands on the left side.⁴

The fourth, 'Gauri- Tandava', is almost similar to the first, but in one of the left hands of the God is held a serpent, Nandi stands on the right side and Gauri (Parvati) is on the left.

In the fifth form, called 'Kalika- Tandava', the God has only two eyes, but eight arms. Three of the right arms hold the trident, noose and kettle drum and the corresponding left hold the skull, fire-pot and the bell; the two remaining arms exhibit the Abhaya on the right and Gaja-hasta on the left.

The dance of Lord Shiva, with sixteen arms and as many symbols, having Gauri and Skanda on the left and right sides respectively, receives the name 'Tripura-Tandava'.

The last dance called 'Samhara –Tandava' i.e., "the death- dance" shows the God with three eyes and eight arms. The left leg is placed on Apasmara and the right leg is raised. In the right hands are seen the Abhaya, trident, noose and the kettle – drum; the left hands exhibit the skull and the fire-pot and the postures Vismaya and Gaja-hasta. On the right and left sides respectively are Nandi and Gauri.

⁴ Krishnaswami, A., *The Tamil Country under Vijayanagar*, Annamalai University Publications, 1964, p.280.

Other Agamas refer to 108 dancing forms of Siva, nine of which are said to be celebrated. Of these later the only one that, deserves to be noted is that in which the God has his right leg raised straight up so as to reach the top of the crown.

Rupa and Arupa form of Worship

The dancing image of Siva is a perceivable 'Form', which is called 'rupa' in Sanskrit. This image housed in Chit-Sabha is, the heart of the world and the heart of individual self – Chit means 'consciousness' and Sabha means 'hall' (Hall of consciousness). To the right of Nataraja is an empty space called Rahasya. This space designates the Formless form of Siva, and is called by the term "arupa", an opposite of 'rupa'. Arupa form of Siva is also called Akasa Linga, assuming that "Space" is the other manifestation of Shiva in Chidambaram. The ritual of worshipping "Space" developed a new architectural vocabulary of Chidambaram Rahasya (Secret of Chidambaram).

Evidences for this three-fold worship of Shiva in Chidambaram can be drawn from the ca. 7th century A.D. Saiva work of Tirumantiram, composed by the poet saint Tirumular. In many of his verses Tirumular reinstates the idea that the Lord emerges in Chidambaram as Form (Uru), Formless (Aru), and in all-pervading divine form (Para Rupam).

The textual evidences to substantiate the manifestation of the Lord Siva in these three forms in Chidambaram are also available in the works of the much earlier Saiva hymnists. Appar, Manikkavasakar and Sundarar, whose dates are generally assumed between 7th and 8th century.

Chidambaram Rahasyam

Another distinctive characteristic of the Chidambaram Temple is the ritual by the name of "Chidambaram Rahasya" (Secret of Chidambaram). To the right of the Nataraja is a

space revered as Chidambara Rahasyam – a conception of the nothingness (space) garlanded with golden bilva leaves. The curtain in front of the Chidambara Rahasyam, symbolizing Shiva in His Formless form (Arupa), is unveiled ceremoniously during rituals. This form of Shiva is also called Akasa Linga, which is referred to as the Linga of space. It is in the work of Manikkavasagar (9th century) we find an explicit reference to the “Chidambara Rahasyam” of Chidambaram Nataraja. Other references to this vocabulary of formlessness (Arupa) are available in the verses of Tirumular’s Tirumantiram (ca. 10th to 11th century).

Textual sources from the 7th century along with a handful of inscripational sources offer evidences to the fact that there existed a temple with the principal objects of a) dancing Shiva - referred to as Adavallan (the one who is capable of dancing), b) Chit-Sabha – the hall of consciousness, referred to as Ambalam in verses and c) a space signifying the formless (Arupa) state of Siva, which altogether constitute the temple’s core symbolism. The symbolism being the worship of Siva in three forms: first Rupa (dancing form of Siva) second the Arupa (the space or the Rahasya form) and third the Linga form.

These symbolisms have had their impact on the planning of this temple’s architecture. This is evident from a) the south oriented and centrally located Chit – Sabha with the image of dancing Siva (Rupa), referred to as Adavallan, as the principal deity, b) the ritual of the Space with decorated bilva leaves (bael) signifying the Formless form (Arupa) of Shiva ritually understood as Chidambara Rahasya (Secret of Chidambaram) and c) use of the Sabhas to house the dancing Shiva (called Sabhanayakan – the leader of the Sabhas).

There are no gateways of any particular prominence on these walls. The portions between the first and second enclosure walls have been extensively rebuilt and raised platforms built on the inner side of the second wall.

The third enclosure, mainly the work of the late Cholas considerably enlarged the area of the first two enclosures. The third enclosure was filled with some of the largest and most ornate buildings yet erected in South India containing structures like the Hundred Pillar Hall. The four magnificent Gopuras are the largest of their kind built so far.

Dancing image of Siva and the Origin of the Emblem for Victory

The image of Dancing Shiva is seemed to have gained prominence in the South even earlier by the time of Sangam, a period between ca. B.C. 3rd century and ca. A.D. 5th century. One of the Sangam epics called Silappathikaram composed during ca. A.D. 5th century makes references to the dancing form of Shiva in the context of his celebration of the destruction of demons.

The object of the dancing image of Shiva prevailed from fifth century onwards. However, the earliest statues of the dancing Shiva in Shiva temples, mostly in the niches of the walls, are during the Chalukya period-ca. 6th to 8th century A.D., the Pallava temples – ca. 6th to 8th century A.D. and the Chola (ca. 9th to 12th century A.D.).

The type of dance that is prominent in Chidambaram is understood as 'Ananda Tandava' i.e "Dance of Bliss". The image of dancing Shiva as a symbol for victory among the patron of Chola kings should have been the reason for the evolving practice of placing this image to the status of the main deity in the Nataraja's Temple of Chidambaram during the ca. A.D. 9th to 10th centuries.

Coomaraswamy considers a tripartite view of Siva's dance: "First, it is the image of his Rhythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is represented by the Arch; Secondly, the purpose of his Dance, Chidambaram, the Center of the Universe, is Snare of Illusion; Thirdly the place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the Center of the Universe,

is within the Heart". More explicit account of the view that Chidambaram is the center of the universe and of every human heart can be noticed in Chidambaram Mahatmya -written during ca.12th century A.D.

Other Shrines

Govindaraja Shrine

Within the first enclosure is the Govindaraja shrine, dedicated to Vishnu. It is a unique feature of the Chidambaram Temple that both Shiva and Vishnu shrines stands close to each other. The present structure of the Govindaraja shrine is relatively modern with a rectangular sanctum surmounted by a Sala Sikhara, a common architectural setting when the enshrined image is in a reclining or 'sayana' posture. The Govindaraja shrine witnessed many eventful happenings during the reign of Kulottunga II and Vaishnavas threatened to destroy the fabric of sectarian harmony created by Rajaraja I. Kulottunga II was a fanatic Saiva "who wanted to upset the time-honoured disposition of the images of Siva and Visnu in the great temple of the holiest centre of South Indian Saivism". In the most stunning and shocking move, Kulotunga II had the image of Govindaraja removed from the deep waters and installed the image at Tirupati. Later on, the Vijayanagar ruler Ramaraya had the image of Govindaraja installed in a new shrine built for him at Chidambaram where it stands till today.⁵

Mahalakshmi Temple

Mahalakshmi Temple otherwise known as 'Tayar Sannidhi'. Mahalakshmi Temple, dedicated to the consort of Vishnu, is a small structure with a sanctum, Ardhamandapa and Mukhamandapa. The image of the Goddess shows her in Padmasana with four hands. The

⁵ Personal Interview with Raghavachariar, Priest, Chidambaram Temple, 27.12.2022.

rear two hands holding Padma and the two front hands in Abhaya and Varada pose. The front mandapa contains early Chola capitals.⁶

Tiru – Moolattanesvara Shrine

Between the third wall and the central aisle, there is the Tiru-Moolatanam shrine with a surrounding corridor of double row of pillars and a Chandeswara Sanctum. This ancient sanctum of the swayambu Sivalinga, with the shrine of the Goddess Parvati as Umaiammai in front, faces the south. In the Southern wall of this shrine, there are two niches one for Dakshinamurti and the other for Irattai-Pillayar and Vallabai Vinayaka.

Mukkuruni Vinayaka

This is a shrine of huge Ganesa with a sanctum and Ardhmantapa fronted by a Mukhamantapa. The mantapa consists of four rows of pillars. The two side rows are extended around the sanctum, forming the Pradaksina patha. In contrast with the other sanctum bears the temple which contain plain door lintels, this sanctum bears a figure of Gajalakshmi flanked by Ganesa and Subrahmanya on both sides. The sculpture of Ganesa is a monolithic figure of 7' height, with usual attributes. The outer walls were decorated with plaster and fluted pillars. The super structure is a Dravida Vimana with three pinnacles adorning the vimana. In the Mukhamantapa many noteworthy sculptures are carved on the base of the pillars in good relief. Among them significant sculptures are Heremba Ganapati and Ganesini. This can be taken as contribution of the Nayaks. The Thillai temple ranks high in terms of immense religious significance and rich culture.

⁶ Venkatesa Iyengar, Priest, Chidambaram Temple, 16.01.2023.

Hundred Pillar Hall

The Hundred Pillar Hall stands close to the Minakshi Sundaresvara Temple. It is not a pretentious structure, just a hypostyle hall built over a six feet high plinth, oriented towards the East. There are six rows of simple pillars in width and fifteen rows in length. The rear rows of pillars stand over a platform with a pitha in the centre. This arrangement renders it into a ranga. The radiating arches in brick form the ceiling over the central area, whereas the front and lateral mandapas are roofed with double vaults. A small ornamental Gopura stands on the front side. This Hundred Pillar Hall is arranged to the 12th century CE, the work of Naraloka Vira, a feudatory under Kulottunga I and Vikrama Chola. The Minakshi Sundaresvara Temple stands on the western side of the tank. It is a small structure with a sanctum fronted by an Ardhamandapa and Mukhamandapa. The sanctum is covered with a double-vaulted roof in imitation of the Chit Sabha. It is a late 13th century shrine built by the Pandyas who were the rulers of the territory following the end of the Chola power.

Tiru Kama Kottam

The Tiru Kama Kottam or the temple of Sivakami is beautifully situated on the Northern side of main temple, occupying a large area. This temple has been build by Kulottunga Chola II (1132-1150 A.D.); Inside the temple and the mandapas around it, we find the sannadhi of Goddess Durgai; near it, the temple of Shanmugha also called Pandi Nayakam is situated; build by Maravarman Sundara Pandya (1216-1251 A.D). The pillars in this temple are beautified with fine floral designs. The Moolavar, Lord Arumugha is seen with Valli and Deivanai on either side. Opposite to the Sannadhi, is situated the recently build Navalinga temple. On the West of the Thousand Pillared Mantapa, we find a big tank opposite – Kama Kottam; this is the holy Sivaganga Tirtha. The magnificent Thousand – Pillared Mandapa, is said to have decended from the land of Gods – Deialoga. During Ani

Tirumanjanam and on the Tiruvadira day in Margali, Lord Nataraja is brought to this Mantapa for abishekam and worship.

Sivakama Sundari

The Sivakama Sundari Amman shrine stands next to the Hundred Pillar Hall. It is an independent structure with its own enclosure, built by Naraloka Vira. This East facing shrine is square on plan 25'x25' with a mandapa 25'x25'. The plinth has been partially obliterated from view by the renovation changes in the 19th century. The roof over the sanctum is actually a wooden ceiling covered with copper plates. The style followed has been derived from the Chit Sabha, but with a minor change - instead of nine stupis, it is crowned with three golden stupis.

The pillars at the shrine are covered with sculptural reliefs of immense refinement. One of the reliefs depicts a 16 armed Mahisasuramardini. The ceilings are painted to depict Shiva as Nataraja work of the Nayak period in the 27th century. The front structure with a small superstructure has a splendour of its own, perhaps the work of Kulottunga II. The Sivakama Sundari Amman shrine was built during the late Chola period, when a separate shrine for the consort of the presiding deity had become a necessary architectural entity as seen on the four Temples of the Cholas at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram, imperial Darasuram and Tribhuvanam.⁷

Subrahmanya Temple

The Subrahmanya Temple stands near the northern gopura. It was built during the second half of the 13th century CE. The adjoining hall is elaborately treated, the columns are covered with tiers of miniature facades, Figural panels adorn the brackets. Steps are flanked

⁷ Thomas Maurice, S., *Indian Antiquities or Dissertations of Hinduston*, New Delhi, 1984, pp.13-15.

by balustrades in the characteristic Chola style with yalis and elephants carved in full relief.
The paintings here illustrate the Skanda Purana.

CHAPTER III

TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE

Despite some minor differences in the way, the Hindu mythology, Gods and sculptures are depicted, the Hindu temples of Chola period, in general, demonstrate a common paradigm for the decorative veneers of Gopuras (Superstructure), Mandapas (Halls) Praakaras (circumambulatory paths) and Tanks. An exception to this, however, is the Nataraja's temple of Chidambaram which differs from the other Saiva temples of Chola period both in conceptual terms as well as in architectural terms.

The Sanskrit term Nataraja meaning 'King of Dance' is frequently, referred to in the inscriptions carved on the walls of this temple by the Tamil term Adavallan meaning 'one who is capable of dancing'. Development of mandapas (pavilions) with flat roofs is especially the significant outgrowth of the Chola architecture. Muha Mandapas, Ardhamandapas and Thousand pillar mandapas are some of the components that one can find in most of the Chola temples.

The place where the Chidambaram Temple stands is the claimed center of the earth's magnetic equator. This shows the tremendous engineering, geographical and astrological knowledge of the ancient architectures. The temple as it stands had a pre-Chola existence and the architecture is Dravidian with the sanctum sanctorum closely resembling Kerala or Malabar style structures. Indeed, the royal charters mention the rebuilding of the Sanctum using architects from Kerala. However the golden roof is a striking example of Vesara architecture with its apsidal shape.

The temple has nine gateways among which four of them have Gopuras in the East, West, North and South, The Eastern Gopura pagoda has all the 108 dance postures of

Bharathanatiyam. The South Gopura Sokkaseeyan Thirunilai Ezhugopuram was constructed by Pandya king. This is evident from the sculpted fishes (flag of Pandya king) in the ceiling. The smallest Gopuram is the western Gopuram that was constructed in 1150 A.D; but there is no evidence available to know the construction of this gopuram. However, there are sculptures depicting the Goddess fighting with buffalo demon. The North Gopuram was constructed around 1300 AD with the brick portion constructed by the Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya in the 16th century. The East Gopuram was claimed to have been constructed by the Pallava King, Koperunsingan II.

The roof has been laid with 21,600 golden tiles with the word 'SI VA YA NA MA' inscribed on them representing 21,600 breaths, which represents the number of breaths taken in a 24 hour period. The golden tiles are fixed using 72,000 golden nails that represents the number of nadis existing in the human body. The roof is topped by a set of 9 sacred pots or kalasas, representing the 9 forms of energy.

The temple contains five sabhas – Kanaka Sabha, Chit Sabha, Nritta Sabha, Raja Sabha and Deva Sabha. The main deity, Lord Shiva is enshrined in Chit Sabha, with black screen covering behind Akasa Lingam. The Kanaka Sabha is located in front of Chit Sabha. The daily rituals are conducted here. Nritta Sabha or Natya Sabha is the hall, where Lord Shiva is said to have danced along with Goddess Kali (an incarnation with ferocious energy) to prove his Supremacy. Raja Sabha or 1000 pillared hall represents the yogic chakra of 1000 petalled lotus. Deva Sabha hall houses Pancha Moorthi (five idols) of Lord Ganesha, Lord Muruga, Lord Somaskanda, Lord's consort Sivananda Nayaki and Lord Chandikeswarar. There is also a Govindaraja shrine dedicated to Lord Vishnu and it is one of the 108 holy temples of Lord Vishnu.

The Chidambaram temple is surrounded by several water bodies in and around the temple complex. The names of the connected tanks are Sivaganga tank, Paramanandha Koobham, Kuyya Theertham, Pulimadu, Yagrapatha Theertham, Anantha Theertham, Nagaseri Tank, Brahma Theertham, Shivapriyai Tank and Thiruparkadal.¹

Significance of the Architecture and the Secret of Chidambaram

Pancha Bhuta Sthalas are the five temples in South India, built for each of the five elements viz., Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. Geographically, they are all within the Deccan Plateau- four in Tamil Nadu and one in Andhra Pradesh. The temple for

- Water is in Thiruvanaikaval
- Fire is in Thiruvannamalai
- Air is in Kalahasti
- Earth is in Kanchipuram
- Space is in Chidambaram

Chidambaram is one of the most ancient, historic and culturally significant shrine in India. It is associated with Nataraja or Shiva, doing the Cosmic Dance of Bliss expressing the rhythm and harmony of life, it represents the exuberance of creation, which self-created itself from the eternal stillness. The Cosmic Dance is a symbolic representation of the five-fold activities of God – Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Veiling (Maya) and Blessing.

Significance of the Temple Design

The layout and architecture of the temple is replete with philosophical meanings. The temple architecture is closely linked with the human body. According to the Hindu conceptualization, universe is in the form of Virat Purusha and Chidambaram temple is

¹ Ananda, K., *Introduction to Indian Art*, Delhi, 1969, pp.32-34.

considered His heart. The temple has 9 gateways signifying the 9 orifices (namely 2 eyes, 2 nostrils, 2 ears, mouth, rectum, genitals) in the human body.

Just as the human heart is not at its centre, the Nataraja statue is also slightly shifted to the side. One can notice this, if you view the statue from within the two horns of the Nandikeshvara (Shiva's vehicle). Also, one can notice that the entrance paths to the sanctum sanctorum are not straight as is the case in most of the temples. Instead, entrance paths are through the sides representing the fact that human blood circulates only through the sides of the heart and not straight. The temple sanctum contains a silver sculpture of Shiva in his Ananda- Tandava Nataraja aspect Signifies:

- The demon under Lord Nataraja's feet signifies that ignorance is under His feet
- The fire in his hand (power of destruction) means He is the destroyer of evil.
- The raised hand (Abhaya or Pataka Mudra) signifies that He is the savior of all life forms.
- The art of fire called Thiruvashi or Prabhavati signifies the cosmos and the perpetual motion of the earth.
- The drum in His hand signifies the origin of life forms.
- The lotus pedestal signifies 'Om', the sound of the universe.
- His right eye, left eye and third eye signify the sun, moon and fire/knowledge, respectively.
- His right earring (Makara Kundalam) and left earring (Sthri Kundalam) signify the union of man and woman (right is man, left is woman).
- The crescent moon in His hair signifies benevolence and beauty.

- The flowint of river Ganges through His matted hair signifies eternity of life. The dreading of His hair and drape signify the force of His dance.²

Gopuras

The four seven-storeyed Gopuras on the outer wall of the third enclosure are the finest examples of their class of architecture. These Gopuras are magnificent buildings and follow the same plans, design and style to such an extent that they look like four versions of the same building. Even the minutest details of ornament covering these Gopuras create a remarkable uniformity of design.

The dates of construction are a little problematic particularly in the absence of inscriptions providing precise information in this context. On these Gopuras "the West Gopura was commenced about A.D. 1150 and the East Gopura probably at the same time during the reign of Kulottunga III (A.D.1178-1218). The reason that they were not completed at this time may be that they were not finished at the end of a particular king's reign. Any work not completed was in any case unlikely to be resumed under Chola aegis after A.D.1200 in view of the vicissitudes which befell Kulottunga III during the latter part of his reign and which his successors did not survive. It remained for the powerful and successful Kopperunjinga and possibly the Pandya monarchs to complete the West and East Gopuras around A.D.1250. The South Gopura, was entirely built at some time during the years between A.D.1248 and A.D.1272." The North Gopura was certainly completed, if not begun, by Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagar ruler in the first half of the sixteenth century.

These gigantic structures are the very first seven-storeyed gopuras to have been built. The Gopuras at Darasuram and Tribhuvanam are five-storeyed and the earlier to Gopuras at Thanjavur are three and four-storeyed buildings. The Gopuras at Chidambaram are also

² Michael. W., *Indian Temple Architecture*, New Delhi, 1983, p.78.

important for another reason, these Gopuras dwarf the temple vimana and rise to great height to be observed as landmarks from afar, illustrating the trend of increasing height of Gopuras at each new enclosure. Not much could be done to alter the height of the vimana over the ancient sanctum but the gopuras built long afterwards acquired massive forms in consonance with the builder's pride and prominent location in the last developing pilgrimage centre. The sculptural ornament on these Gopuras is of a uniformly high standard. The structure is built of dressed and carved stone. From the main cornice upward, the upper diminishing storeys are in brick and mortar decorated with stucco.

Despite many changes in the political fortune of the region, the Gopura structures betray little sign of damage and have survived in reasonably well-preserved state to this day. The sculptural images arranged in two superimposed tiers of niches on the outer facades are the most impressive feature of exterior ornament. The niches on the upper tiers are larger in size than the niches on the lower tier. On each Gopura, the number of upper niches is 26; each niche contains an image of Shiva in his various forms. No other deity is represented on these upper tiers, in fact, Brahma, Ganesha, Subrahmanya or Durga are conspicuous by their absence. There is no repetition of images.³

The most remarkable feature of the iconographical programme on all the four Gopuras is the placement of images in a certain order, identical on all the four Gopuras, perhaps, the number of Shiva images on the Chidambaram Gopuras is the largest collection. In comparison, the lower tier has few images of Shiva but those Gods unrepresented on the upper tiers are well represented on the lower tier, hence we have Brahma, Vishnu, Surya, Saraswati, Kama, Durga, Ganesha and Subrahmanya placed in freshness because fashioning such a large number of images gave little scope to originality.

³ Natarajan, B., *The City of Cosmic Dance*, New Delhi, 1974, pp.65-69.

Still it is quite a marvel to see nearly all the forms of Saiva iconography exhibited on the Gopuras and also in such an excellent condition. Besides these images of Shiva, the East and West Gopuras also carry on their inner pilasters, small compartments containing images of female dancers accompanied by two musicians - one set in each compartments containing. These are illustrations of 108 Karanas are labelled in Sanskrit. Chidambaram Temple is justly noted as a great centre of classical dance and Shiva is worshipped here as the Lord of the Dance. The only other temple where panels of classical dance appear prominently is the Rajarajesvara at Thanjavur, where images of four-armed Shiva illustrate specific dance movement, but at Chidambaram, we have female dancers instead.

The North Gopura, besides being the most well preserved gopura at Chidambaram, displays a statue of Krishnadevaraya, the Vijayanagar ruler who completed work on this structure. The Nataraja Temple at Chidambaram has always been one of the most venerated Shiva Temples in the country.

Eastern Gopuram

The Eastern Gopura features the 108 reliefs of Natya Shastra dance postures (22 cm each in a separate niche) and faces the sanctum. The Eastern Gopura is credited to King Kopperunjinga II (1243-1276 A.D.). Subbammal, the mother-in-law of the famous philanthropist Pachaiappa Mudaliar (1754-1794 A.D.) and his wife Iyalammal have been sculpted on the Eastern Gopuram. The Pachaiappa Trust to date has been responsible for various functions in the temple and also maintains the temple car. The Eastern Gopuram is renowned for its complete enumeration of 108 poses of Indian classical dance - Bharathanatyam detailed in small rectangular panels along the passage that leads to the gateway.

Western Gopuram

The earliest and smallest of the four is West Gopuram constructed around 1150 A.D. and there is no reliable evidence on the construction. The earliest built Western Gopuram is the only one with inscriptions below each artwork that identifies what it is. The artwork on it includes Goddess Durga fighting the evil, and Lord Skanda sitting on peacock and dressed up for war. Other artwork found on the Eastern Gopuram include Surya, Ganapati, Vishnu, Sridevi (Lakshmi), Tripurasundari, Brahma, Saraswathi, Varuna, Durga, Agni, several rishis, Yamuna Goddess, Kama and Rati, Buddha, the Vedic sages such as Narada and Agastya, Patanjali, Somaskanda legend, Ardhanarishvara (half Shiva, half Parvati), Harihara (half Vishnu, half Shiva), several forms of dancing Shiva and others.

Northern Gopuram

The North Gopuram was initiated around 1300 A.D. with the brick portion constructed by the Vijayanagar king Krishnadevaraya (1509-1530 A.D.) in the 16th century. The Eastern and Northern Gopura also depicts the wide range of narratives as the Southern and Western Gopuram.

Southern Gopuram

The South Gopuram is called as Sakkaseeyan Thirunilai Ezhugopuram was constructed by a Pandya king identified from the presence of the dynasty's fish emblem sculpted on the ceiling. The Pandyas sculpted two fishes facing each other when they completed Gopurams. Other artwork found on the Southern Gopuram include Chandesha, Ganapati, Vishnu, Sridevi (Lakshmi), several Devis, Brahma, Saraswathi, Surya, Chandra, Durga, Indra, Agni, several rishis, Ganga and Yamuna Goddesses, Kama and Rati, Buddha, the Vedic sages such as Narada, Patanjali, Somaskanda legend, Ardhanarishvara (half Shiva, half Parvati), Harihara

(half Vishnu, half Shiva), several forms of dancing and standing Shiva such as *Pashupata*, *Kirtarjuna* and *Lingodbhava*, as well as others.

Artwork on the Gopuram

Each Gopuram is colourful and unique in its own ways. They narrate stories from various Hindu texts, showing religious and secular scenes from the various Hindu traditions. This art is presented in each Gopuram with anthropomorphic figure panels and about fifty niches with stone sculptures in every Gopuram. The scenes include multiple panels about the legend of Shiva-Parvati wedding with Brahma, Vishnu, Saraswati and Lakshmi attending, dancing Ganesha, Shiva in his various aspects, Durga in the middle of her war with a demon, Skanda ready forwar, seated Nandi, musicians, dancers, farmers, merchants sadhu in namaste posture, dancing dvarapalas near the vertical center line and others.

It is said that the four Saivite Saints entered the temple through the four entrances of the temple, Manickkavasagar through the East, Gnanasambandar from South, Appar from West and Sundarar from the North. This is a temple where Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra grace the devotees together. Saint Arunagirinathar had praised Lord Muruga of this temple in ten of his Tirupugazh hymns.⁴

Alankara – Mandapam

The Alankara – Mandapam is at the end of this prakara. This is the place where the idols are decorated for festival processions which are to give darsan to the devotees in the Car streets. The prakaras and their colossal aisles and pillars have been renovated by the Ve-Sa-family of Kanadukaathan, whose Ishta-Devata is Lord Nataraja. The central aisle has to its

⁴ Aiyer, P.V., *South Indian Shrines*, New Delhi, 1982, pp.201-203.

the Chit Ambalam viz., from where the daily rituals are conducted. This hall has 18 pillars, each depicting a Purana (Vishnu puran , Narada purana.....). There are also 64 rafters in the roof, each depicting an art from (64 Kalaigal).

Successive Chola Kings from, Aditya I (A.D.870-90) and the Pandyas have vied with each other in renewing the roof with gold from, time to time. It is in Kanaka Sabha the daily poojas to the Lord in Chit-Sabha are performed, as well, the six abishekas and arathanas for the Chandramouleesvara Svatika Linga, known as Azhagiya Tiruchitrampala Mudaiyar, and Ratna Sabhapati. Ratna-Sabhapati is an exact replica of Nataraja, carved out of a rose coloured crystal about 6" by 3", and to this image, abisheka and worship is conducted daily once during the second puja of the day at about 10 a.m.

Chit Sabha

Chit-Sabha the sanctum sanctorum of the temple is the common nucleus of the first Prakara. Also this is the place where the archaic form of the early Indian Temple Architecture is still retained. The Chit-Sabha or the Mystic hall is the inner-most portion of the temple. It is the holiest. This Chit Sabha, also known as Chit Ambalam has in turn given its name to the temple, and to the town. Beginning from the core area in the first enclosure in the chit Sabha appears at the centre. This is the sanctum sanctorum of the Nataraja Temple, the stage where all devotional rituals are being performed in a time - honoured system. The Chit Sabha is slightly raised with five steps. It contains 28 wooden pillars. The Sabha is closed on the east, west and northern sides with wooden jail screens. The southern façade has a door opening at the centre. The wooden pillars support a roof with a sala sikhara with a rectangular base and a curvilinear form. The ceiling is decorated with small gold plated copper tiles. The upper portion is similarly gold plated. There are nine stupis on the ridge of the sikhara.

Chit Sabha is the Sanctum- Sanctorum of Nataraja. Here Lord Nataraja is seen dancing, and to his left is the Sanctum of the Goddess Sivakamasundari. To his right, is the Chidambaram rahasayam, wherein there is no image or Linga but a Tiruvaasi - a semi circular arch or prabha with a veil in front. The Prabha is marked by a string of golden bilwa leaves hung over it, the Prabha revealing mere ethereal space-the invisible presence - the symbol of God. It is for the worship of Shiva in His Akasic of Formless form, invisible to human eyes. His worship is also associated with His form as the five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Void.

The stone steps leading to the Chit-Sabha are five in number and are plated with silver. They are said to represent the five mystic letters of the Panchaak Shara Mantra: 'Na, Ma, Ci, Va, Ya'. The door posts are of silver and bear embossed representations of Vyaghrapada and Patanjali on either side figuring as Dwarapalakas.

Nritta Sabha

The Nritta Sabha or the Hall of the Dance is the most interesting and most artistic structure of the temple. It is ascribed to Chola Kulottunga III (A.D.1178-1216). It is possibly the earliest of the splendid edifices in the temple. Here stood the original shrine of the Goddess Kali in the Thillai forest. It is a graceful mandapam of exquisite style, supported by 56 pillars, about 8 feet high and most delicately carved from top to bottom.

It rests on a stylobate, ornamented with graceful dancing figures and with wheels and prancing horses at its sides - the whole representing a chariot on wheels. The Bas Relief of Shiva playing music on a five-mouthed pot Panchamuka vadyam, decorates one of the tiers of sculptures on the front façade of this mandapam; also a graceful statuesque figure of

Kulottunga III, Nataraja as Virbhava Tandava Murti with Kali dancing is being worshipped at this sanctum.⁶

Perambalam (or) Deva Sabha

The Deva Sabha lies outside the central courtyard, and in third prakara to the East of Nataraja's sanctum. Deva Saha is otherwise called as Perambalam. It is a spacious square hall walled on all sides, and bearing within it the icons and artistic treasures of temple. Pujas to the Utsava icons are conducted here, also their Abisheka, Alankara and Arathana are taken out on festival processions. Perambalam is 325 feet squares and its Eastern, Northern and Western sides are enriched with a storeyed cloister. On the raised platform, there are shrines to Nartana Vinayakar, Lingodbhavamurti, Subrahmanyam, the Palliarai of the God, also Kala Samharamurthi, and Bikshaatana on the North and East. This storeyed cloister is found repeated in the Sivakami Temple, as also in the outer most prakaras designed for the purpose of affording shelter to the pilgrims of meditation and temporary stay. The lower tier of the platform is embellished with an admirable panel of embossed sculptuary in alto-relievo, of scenes from the sixty-four sacred spots (Tiruvilaiyadals) of Shiva at Madurai.

To the East of the Golden canopied central structure, there is the shrine of Brahma, Chandeswara. A well on its side is the Paramananda Koopan. It furnishes water of excellent quality used for the abishekas, and which preserve the beauty of the images. The sacred water is much sought after, and the privilege of sprinkling its sacred drops is allowed for the general public on festive days.

⁶ Ramaswami, N.S., *Indian Monuments*, Abhinav Publishers, Madras, 1971, pp.78-80.

Raja Sabha

The Raja Sabha is the Devasiriyā Mandapa of the Thousand Pillared Hall is a magnificent hypo-style hall of immense dimension - 340"x190", standing on a high moulded plinth decorated with reliefs of dancers with drummers. The columns in this hall are 984 in number, 16 feet high and arranged in 24 rows. The internal disposition of columns has been done most thoughtfully creating space in the middle section. The rear half of the hall has been raised to a 4 feet high platform decorated with a series of leogryphs. Brick vaults with radiating arches form the ceiling and the roof has been built in imitation of the Sabha roofs. Within the hall, on the dais are brought the Utsavamurtis on festive occasions, an extension on the South side with sculpted piers and overhanging dates from the Vijayanagar period. The building of the Raja Sabha is generally ascribed to Kulottunga II. It is popularly held that Sekkilar compiled the Periyapurānam and recited it to the Chola ruler in this hall of thousand pillars. The construction of this grand hall was perhaps completed during the reign of Kulottunga III. It is ascribed to Chola Kulottunga III (1178-1246 A.D.) who built it for the purpose of Saint Sekizhar's inaugurating the Tīrut-Tondar-Purānam. Three sculptured reliefs of great artistic, cultural and probably historic interest are pointed to on the granite panels flanking the upper flight of stairs, leading from the South into the Hall of the 1000 pillars. They are three "Chitrardha" sculptures, one representing a young lady in graceful posture, second and third representing her attendants: possibly suggesting Buddhist influence.⁷

Architecture of the Sabhas

In contrast to the general conformity with the other South Indian temple components namely a cella, Ardhamandapa, Mahamandapa and Muhamandapa, the Sabhas take the

⁷ Aruna Ghose, *India*, Penguin Press, 2016, p.78.

prominent role of sanctums in Chidambaram, and the Chit-Sabha is understood to be the sanctum sanctorum of this temple complex. The Chit-Sabha, the holiest shrine in the temple is a wooden structure supported with wooden pillars, with a barrel-vaulted roof, the tiles are made of copper, platted in gold. This hall is oriented toward the south. Chidambaram, today and probably for several centuries back, this south facing Chit-Sabha constitutes the holy of holies, and it is in this hall that the dancing image of Nataraja and Sivakami are housed in front of a set of two curtains, the inner (invisible) one being red in colour, the other one being black in colour.

Chit-Sabha being the center of attention, it is located at the nucleus of the first Prakara. Surrounded by this Prakara are the two other Prakaras consisting of one Sabha each. There are five Sabhas in Nataraja's temple. They are: a) Deva Sabha – Hall of the Gods, b) Raja Sabha – Thousand Pillared hall, c) Nritta Sabha – a chariot like hall, believed to be the place where the dancing contest between the Lord and the Goddess took place. The Lord's anger is revealed in this contest by His leg raised straight in the air – a pose usually called Urdhva-Janu, d) Chit-Sabha – the Mulastana with a magnificent roof thatched with gold coated tiles where the sanctum of the Cosmic Dance took place, and e) Kanaka Sabha – located in front of Chit –Sabha, is where Shiva is worshipped in the form of Crystal Linga, the Chandramaulisvara.

Sabhas are surrounded by Prakaras, which are intended for various forms of Pradiksha. The Garbhagraha here, on the other hand, is not surrounded by its own Prakara, but shares the one with the Nritta and Chit Sabha. This is yet another feature of the Chidambaram temple that distinguishes it from the other Siva temples in the South; and it also suggests that the central deity in this temple is in fact the image of dancing Siva. The other anomalies of this temple include a) the southern alignment of the Chit Sabha, the

hundred-pillared hall, the thousand-pillared hall, Deva Sabha and b) the large Nandi (Siva's bull) and two bali piths (sacrificial pits) opening up to the closed wall.

Temple Tanks

The Chidambaram Temple is well endowed with several water bodies within and around the temple complex.⁸ The Sivaganga Tank figures in every legend related to the Chidambaram Temple.

Sivaganga Tank

- Sivaganga Tank is in the third corridor of the temple opposite to the shrine of Shivagami. It is accessed by flights of stone steps leading from the shrine. It is amongst the oldest sections of the temple, attributed to Hiranyavarman who had, it renovated in the 6th century. But it had also figures, who worshipped the Suyambhu linga near the sacred pond in the Thillai forest. A small shrine - the Jambukesvara shrine with a linga stands on its western side. The Sivaganga Tank is daily visited by hundreds of devotees and the local people who come here for a dip.
- Paramanandha Koobham is the well on the Eastern side of the Chit Sabha hall from which water is drawn for sacred purposes.
- Kuyya Theertham is situated to the North-East of Chidambaram in Killai near the Bay of Bengal and has the shore called Pasamaruthanthurai.
- Pulimadu is situated around a kilometer half to the South of Chidambaram.
- Vyagrapatha Theertham is situated on to the West of the temple opposite to the temple of Ilamai Akkinaar.

⁸ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, New Delhi, 1956, pp.96-98.

- Anantha Theertham is situated to the West of the temple in front of the Anantheswarar temple.
- Nagaseri Tank is situated to the West of the Anantha Thirtham.
- Brahma Theertham is situated to the North - West of the temple at Thirukalaanjeri.
- Underground channels at the shrine, drain excess water in a north - easterly direction to the Shivapriyai temple tank of the Thillai Kali Temple, Chidambaram Due to poor maintenance, it has not been in use.
- Thiruparkadal is the tank to the South - East of the Shivapriyai tank even though the history of the temple goes back to the Prabhandas and Tevaram, that is the Pallava period, the earliest known inscriptions are only that of Rajendra Chola and Kulothunga I followed by Vikrama Chola and other later rulers. The Nataraja temple inscriptions are notable for mentioning a library of manuscripts in temple premises. Two inscriptions dated to the early 13th century mention reorganization of old temple library.

Sculpture

One of the richest source in the entire country of Sculptural representations of dance is believed to be in Chidambaram. The Nataraja temple in Chidambaram has some especially marvelous examples of the depiction of dance in sculpture. It is not just by chance and both the Natyashastra and Shilpashastra use the tala as of measurement in space. Also, both disciplines require a correct and detailed knowledge of the human body, the bone structure joints and their flexibility, the muscular system and the limbs. Our vast architectural heritage dates back to several centuries that are still available to us extensive sculptural treasures in terms of dance documentation. Sculptural imagery of dance is found in stone, wood, metal, terracotta in both classical and regional styles of depiction. Such sculptures have provided an unbroken link for dance and they existed and developed at multiple levels. It is also important

to remember that the tenets prescribed in the Natyashastra (2nd century) and Vishnudharmottara Purana (3rd century) go parallel. The Natyashastra describes 108 Karanas or basic movements which were danced by Lord Siva. In the Eastern and Western gopurams of Chidambaram, the couplets defining the respective Karanas are quoted from Natya Shastra. Similarly, the "Hatas" in Natyashastra are called "Mudras" in Silpashastra. The symmetry of space and filling them up is the common fundamental principle in sculpture and dance.

The temple at Chidambaram of Shiva as the Nataraja is the strongest and most apt example of the height of development of also classical dance style of India, with the statue of Nataraja, the 108 Karanas and numerous dance and dance like sculptures all across the temple on its inner and outer walls, Garbhagriha, Natamandapa and all over the temple. The architecture of the temple represents the link between arts and spirituality.

CHAPTER - IV

CHAPTER IV

FESTIVALS

The most important festivals of Chidambaram Temple are the Tiruvadira festival conducted in Margali and the Tirumanjanam in Ani; On these occasions, Lord Nataraja is taken out of the Sabha to the Thousand Pillared Mantapa. The Brahmotsava takes place as usual for 10 days. On four other days, Abishkas take place six times a year; the Spatika Linga installed at the feet of the Lord, is offered poojas 6 times daily.

Most of the devotees who have attained Mukthi in this Sthala, Manickkavasagar, the author of the famous 'Tiruvasagam' was one. It is said that the saint's songs moved the Lord that He himself appeared before him to take down all his songs and left the Suvadi on the steps of the temple. The next day it reached the hands of devotee who popularized it and the Lord showered His blessing on Saint Manickkavasagar and granted him Sayujya. It was here Nandanar, one of the sixty-three famous Nayanars, born in Pulay (Harijan) Community, attained Mukthi by his ceaseless devotion to Thillai Nataraja. The Thevaram sung by the three Nayanmars, was first kept here before it was discovered by Nambiandar Nambi.

It was here again Tiruneelakanta Nayanar was restored to youth by the grace of Lord Nataraja. The tank that restored the saint to youth is also found along with a separate temple of the Lord in the Western direction. Umapathi Sivachariyar (1290-1340A.D) the great philosopher who popularized Saiva Siddhanta lived here, worshipped the Lord and attained Samadhi at Kotravankudi. The Samadhi is found East of the Railway Station. Sekkilar, the composer of the Periyapurana composed and recited it for the first time here (Arangetram), as requested by Anabaya Chola, It is said that the Lord Himself began the first line of the religious epic, beginning "Ulekelam".

Chidambaram is dedicated to Akaya among the Sthalas of five elements (Pancha Bhuta sthalas). Thousands of pilgrims visit the city from all parts of India to worship Lord Nataraja.¹ There is a belief that Mukthi is attained by birth at Tiruvaroor, by contemplation on Tiruvannamalai, by growth at Kanchipuram, by death at Kasi (Varnasi) or by worship at Tamil Nadu have been entitled "Pon Veinthe Cholas" ever since they renovated the Abode of Lord Nataraja; special mention must be made of Kulottunga II (1133 – 1150 A.D.) who beautified the Perambalam, the great temple Hall, with gold plates, raised the seven-storied tower of the temple, built the temple chariot, excavated the tank and gifted away cows, bulls and elephants to the temple.

Besides, being thus a great religious centre, Chidambaram is also noted as the seat of the Annamalai University, situated at a distance of two miles east of the Sthala at Annamalainagar, named after the great philanthropist Raja Annamalai Chettiar, the founder of the University. In fact, the University itself is situated in a Sthala called 'Tiru Vet Kalam'. The Sthala purana of this place says that it was here that Arjuna received the Pasupada Astra from Lord Siva who appeared before him disguised as hunter. We find also the temple of Pasupada Iswara here.

Large number of pilgrims chooses to stay in the mutts found here. The Prasada or the food offerings to the Lord are also available in the temple at cheap cost. The inscriptions of the temple have been published and they give some valuable information about the later Cholas and Pandyas; they give an account of the Nayanmars associated with the Sthala. Saint Manickavasagar's Tiruvagasam, mostly on this place, is the best religious works noted equally for literary beauty.

¹ Stella, B., *The Superstruture of the Hindu Temple*, Indian Society of Oriental Art, Madras, 1944, pp.33-35.

Forms of Worship

A unique feature of this temple is the bejewelled image of Lord Nataraja as the main deity. It depicts Lord Shiva as the master of Koothu-Bharata Natyam and is one of the few temples where Lord Shiva is represented by an Anthropomorphic Murthi rather than the classic, aniconic Lingam. At Chidambaram, the dancer dominates, not the linga as in other Shiva shrines. The Chit Sabha houses a small sphatika (crystal) linga (Chandramoulisvara), believed to be a piece that fell from the crescent adorning Lord Shiva's head and installed by Adi Shankara. The linga is associated with the intangible fifth element, akasha (ether or space), the eternal infinite expanse where the dance of Lord Shiva takes place, daily puja is offered to the linga and also to a small gem - carved figure of Ratnasabhapati.²

Arudra Darshan

One well - known aspect at Chidambaram is the Arudra Darshan in the Tamil month of Margazhi. Rudra means a roarer, or someone who is very effervescent. Arudra means stable; not the roaring kind but absolutely stable. Rudra also suggests movement and creation. Arudra suggests a certain inertia. It is believed that on the day of the Arudra Darshan or Thiruvaathirai, Lord Shiva is able to see our Earth clearly from another heavenly body and performs the cosmic dance joyfully in a red-flamed light. Lord Shiva's incarnation - Nataraja is said to happen on this day. This Arudra Darshan took place on the full moon night in the Tamil month of Margazhi (December - January) and this is also the longest night in a year.

Natyanjali Festival

A whole year for men is said to be a single day for the Gods. Just as six poojas are performed in a day at the sanctum sanctorum, six anointing ceremonies are performed for the

² Chandra Sekar, *The Nagarathars of South India*, Madras: Macmillan Publishers, 1980, pp. 47-49.

principal deity – Nataraja in a year. They are the Marghazhi Thiruvaadhirai (in December – January) indicating the first puja, the fourteenth day after the new moon (Chaturdashi) of the month of Masi (February – March) indicating the second pooja, the Chittirai Thiruvonam (in April – May), indicating the third pooja or Uchikalam, the Uthiram of Aani (June – July) also called the Aani Thirumanjanam indicating the evening or the fourth puja, the chaturdasi of Aavani (August – September) indicating the fifth puja and the chaturdasi of the month of Purattasi (October – November) indicating the sixth pooja or Arthajama. Of these the Marghazhi Thiruvaadhirai (in December – January) and the Thirumanjanam (in June – July) are the most important. These are conducted as the key festivals with the main deity being brought outside the sanctum sanctorum in a procession that included a temple car procession followed by a long anointing ceremony. Several hundreds and thousands of people flock the temple to see the anointing ceremony and the ritualistic dance of Lord Shiva when he is taken back to the sanctum sanctorum.

Lord Shiva, in his incarnation of Nataraja, is believed to have born on full moon day in the constellation of Arudra, the sixth lunar mansion. Lord Shiva is bathed only 6 times a year, and on the previous night of Arudra, the bath rituals are performed on a grand scale. Pots full of milk, pomegranate juices, coconut water, ghee, oil, sandal paste, curds, holy ashes, and other liquids and solids, considered as sacred offering to the deity are used for the sacred ablution.³

Occasions Celebrated

- Thiruvaathirai or Arudra Darisanam during December – January
- Natyanjali in honour of the deity in February
- Chithirai Thiruvonam during April – May

³ Meena, V., *Temples of South India*, Hari Kumari Arts, Kanyakumari, 2004, p.41.

- Aani Uthiram during August – September
- Aani Thirumanjanam during August – September
- Arthajama during October – November
- Thiruvaathirai and Aani Thirmanjanam are the key festivals.

It is somewhat surprising that a temple so ancient, does not celebrate the annual festival of Brahmothsavam. There seems to be an arrangement with the Dikshitaras (the temple priests) of the Nataraja temple under which this prohibition is in force. All other customary festivals such as Chitra Pournami, Ani Jyesthabhishekam, Adi Pooram, Panguni Uttiram are conducted with grandeur with procession on the main streets of the town. There is a vast sacted tank, adjacent to the Rajasabha, which is called by the Saivites as "Siva Ganga".

Temple Administration

The administration of the temple is also unique; Nataraja temple known as Sabhanayakar Temple is administered by Dikshitaras, who are both priests and trustees of the temple. The temple belongs to the Dikshitaras of the place and others cannot interfere in the administration. Once they numbered three thousands and now there are only about 200 of the community and they function as priests in turn, performing the Poojas according to the Vedic rites. In ancient literary works, the worship was done according to Magudagama rites. There are no properties to the temple. Though all the Dikshitaras have the right of offering Poojas, they strictly follow a time - table assigning the duty to everyone in turn; they meet often to discuss all matters, concerning administration. They are an endogamous clan who are referred to many times in Tamil hymns of 'Devaram' of the 7th Century A.D. Even though many rulers instituted properties for the daily Pujas, at present the worship is conducted by the contributions of the devotees. The collection is made as periodical benefactions of the

numerous devotees. The daily pujas were conducted at 7 A.M., 9 A.M., 11 A.M., 12 Noon, 6 P.M., 8 P.M., and 10 P.M.⁴

Similarly numerous festivals are celebrated from the contributions of various devotees. The festivals can be classified as follows.

- Daily procession of Chandra Sekhara at 9 A.M. around Second Prakara.
- Procession of Sivakami idol on every Friday around Second Prakara.
- Fortnight Festival on 'Pradosa' day (Two days earlier and Thirteen days later to Full - Moon days.)
- Monthly Festival on 'Arudra Nakstra'.
- Two annual ten days festivals in the months of June and December.
- Six Abhishekams to Nataraja in a year during February, April, June, August, September and December.⁵

All these festivals and the Temple administration is managed by a Committee of nine priests headed by a Secretary by election, while the Committee is formed in turn among the priests themselves. The renovations are being done by independent bodies, but subject to the approval by the managing committee.

⁴ Pate, H.R., *Tinnevely District Gazetteer, (Vol.I), Madras, 1911, pp.56-58.*

⁵ Das, R.K., *Temples of Tamil Nadu, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1991, p.196.*

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In India, temples are always considered as a part of life and the people believe that visiting temples and worshipping Gods in a way of life. It is evident that worshipping Gods and meditating in the shrines increase our concentration and peace of mind. Each and every temple in India is unique and has interesting histories behind them. Here, Thillai Nataraja Temple alias Chidambaram Temple history is explored.

Positioned amidst architectural magnificence and temples of bygone era, Chidambaram is a beautiful town of Tamil Nadu. Its mores, Values and pious rituals are potted with artistic exquisiteness and charm.

The temple complex at Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu was the nerve centre of Southern Saivism for nearly a millennium now. In religious history and art, it is difficult to find such an impressive and monumental nucleus anywhere in the country. Notwithstanding its cumulative growth, century after century, from the early Chola period onwards, leaving an earlier, hazy form active stage out of consideration its meaning and over whelming importance was drawn from the conceptual and visual dimensions of the Shiva Nataraja Tattva, in the cosmic Ananda Tandava, and its repercussions were the most widely felt religio artistic phenomena in the history of Tamil Nadu, drawing the elite and the masses alike in a religious participation, unravel led for its emotional integration of the two.

The Nataraja image of Saiva iconography, appearing prominently utmost of the Shiva temple at Chidambaram shows the tremendous appeal of this image and its impact on the religious consciousness of the people. At Chidambaram, the Dikshitaras are a group of Brahma priests drawn from a number of states beyond the Chola kingdom.

Passing through a long course of architectural innovations and accepting to play a
significant role in the economy of the state, the temple in the peninsula appeared as the
centre of both the spiritual and the material world, a link between the world of God and the
world of man.

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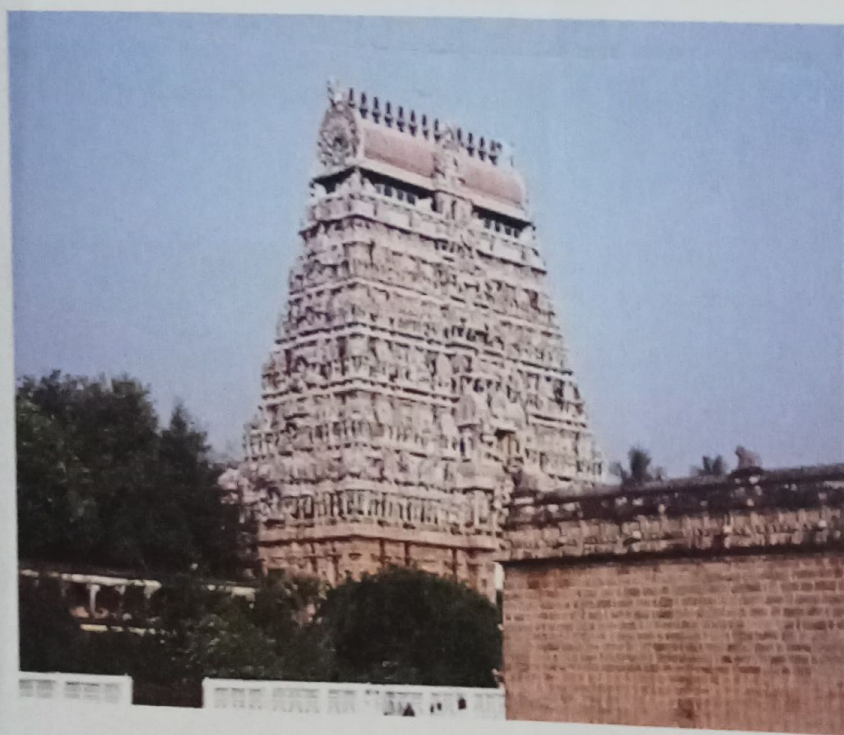
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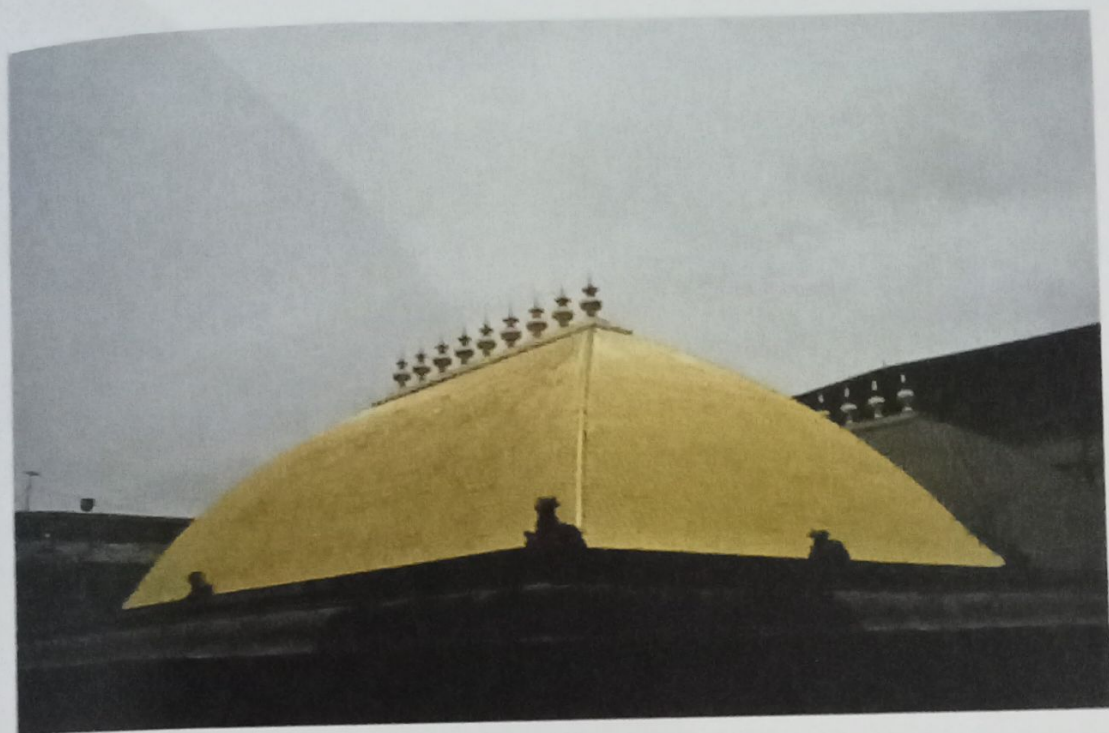
PHOTOGRAPHS



North-side Gopura and Pond of the temple



Main Gopuram of Chidambaram Natarajar Temple



Golden Roof, Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram



Courtyard, Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram

Eastern Gopura wall shows all 108 dance postures from the Natya Shastra



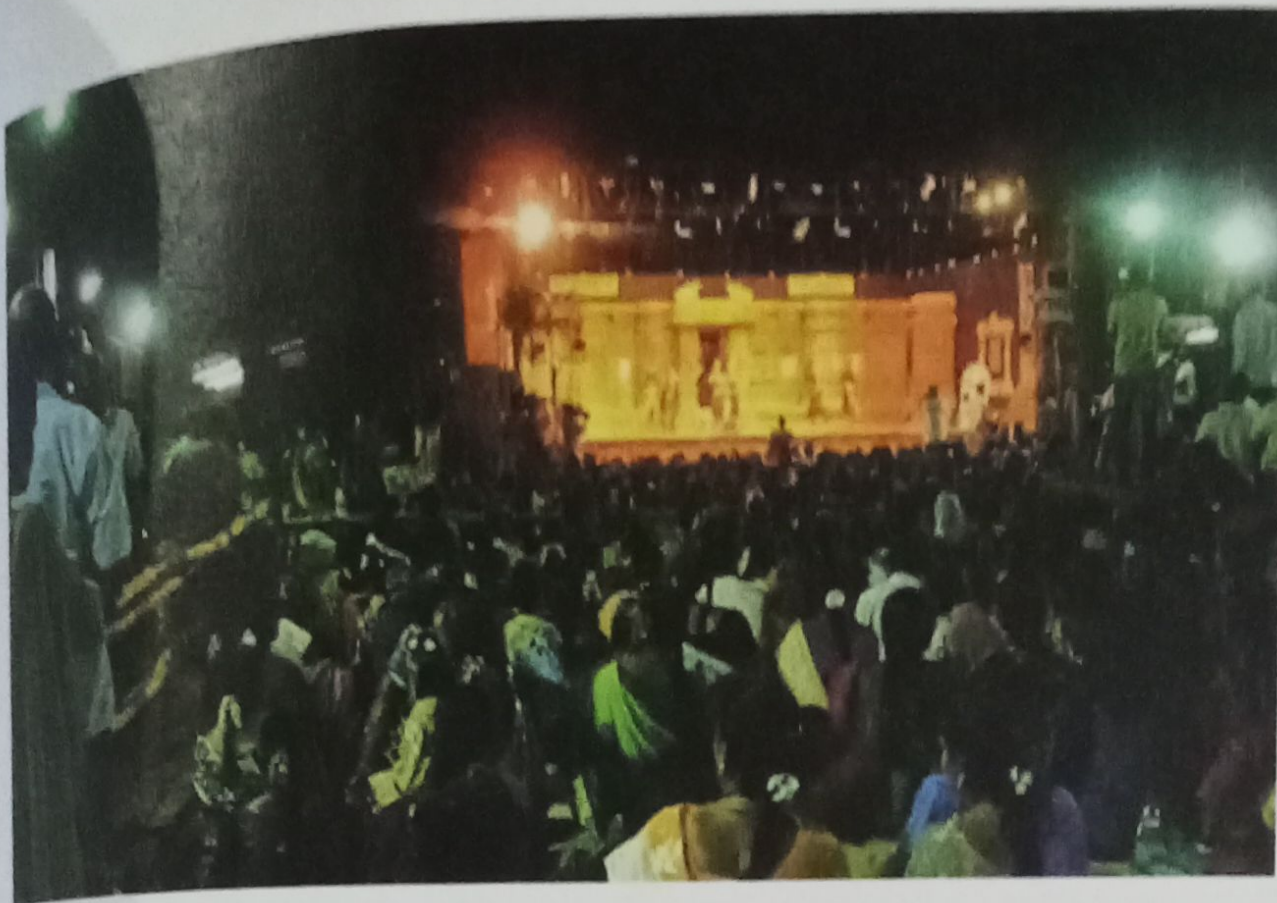
Sacred Pool of the Temple



Goddess Durga - Mahishasuramardini form killing the buffalo demon below her foot



Carved pillars in the Temple hall



Natyanjali Festival in the Temple