Introduction

The worship of Ganesha is widely prevailing in the whole of India and it is considered to be the most popular deity in the Hindu pantheon. In the medieval period, the Ganapatya cult was popular in Odisha. The Ganesha images of Odisha generally fall under four categories such as sthanaka, asina, nrutya and devi-sahita. These images are mostly appeared as parsvadevatas of the Shaiva temples and in some places are found to be worshipped as presiding deities. Ganesha is not only the god of auspicious but also the Lord of Ganas. Due to the popularity of Ganapatya cult, three temples for god of auspicious are found to be erected inside the Jagannatha temple complex, Puri. The exact geographical location of the temple of Lord Jagannatha is Latitude 19° 18’ 17" North and Longitude 85° 51’ 39” East, about 59 kms to the south-east of Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Odisha. The inhabitants of the kshetra (Puri) were the worshippers of Pancha Devatas namely Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Surya and Ganesha who were enshrined in different parts of the Puri town. The cult of Jagannatha assimilated the essence of all the sects and evolved as a major religion of India. Ganesha shrines of the Jagannatha temple complex have link with various rites and festivals of Lord Jagannatha temple. Ganesha is one of the earliest Hindu gods and is referred to in the Aitareya Brahmanas. The study of Ganesha images and shrines are very interesting for the scholars of art history. From the religious and artistic points of view, the three extant Ganesha temples of the Jagannatha temple complex attract both devotees and scholars. Although the sacredness of these Ganesha shrines are slightly mentioned by earlier scholars, still the artistic features of these temples are not recorded in detail. Hence a modest attempt has been made in this article to highlight the art and architecture along with the religious importance of the three Ganesha temples, which are located inside the Jagannatha temple complex of Puri.

A. Ganesha Temple at the southern side:

The temple of Ganesha is situated in the inner enclosure of the southern side of the Jagannatha temple complex. The temple is a single structure of rekha order. This temple is built in both laterite and sand stones. It faces to south.
Art and Architecture of the temple

Vimana or Deula

The vimana is a pancha ratha rekha order structure and its height is about 35 feet from the surface of the temple complex. It is erected on the plinth or pishta of 2 feet high. The pishta of the structure is decorated by four horizontal mouldings. Base of the bada is square of 16 feet. The bada of the vimana or deula is panchanga type i.e. having five fold divisions such as pabhaga, tala jangha, bandhana, upper jangha and baranda. In the left side frontal face of the pabhaga of the bada contains a slab of Ananta-sayee Vishnu image, which is 3 feet in height. The niches of the tala jangha of bada are decorated with khakhara mundis. The intervening recesses between the pagas of tala jangha are filled with simha-vidalas, gaja-vidalas and nara-vidalas. The bandhana of the bada consists of two horizontal mouldings. The niches of the upper jangha are relieved with pidha mundis. The intervening recesses between the pagas of upper jangha are filled with alasa kanyas, erotic scenes and amorous couples. The baranda of the bada consists of four horizontal mouldings.

The central niches of the three sides of the bada are housed with parshvadevata images of dancing Shiva, Karttikeya and devi Kali. All these side deities are mostly eroded by nature, so the details of the sculptural features are not shown. Dancing Shiva is the parshvadevata of the western side. The two handed image of Lord Shiva has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Most of the parts of the image are eroded by nature. Both the hands of deity are completely broken. Karttikeya is the parshvadevata of the northern side. The four handed image of Karttikeya has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. The image of deity Karttikeya is also mostly eroded by nature. He displays usual attributes in his hands like other Kartikeya images of Odisha. Devi Kali is the parshvadevata of the eastern side. The two armed Kali image has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal. One leg and two hands of devi are completely broken. Two female sakhi figures are carved in standing posture on both sides of the slab.

The bada of the vimana is surmounted by the curvilinear superstructure, which displays five pagas. All the pagas of gandi are completely undecorated. The base of the frontal raha paga of gandi is decorated with an angashikhara, which is surmounted by gaja-kranta motif. Dopichha lions and Deula Charini figures are completely absent in their respective places.

The mastaka of the vimana consists of beki, amalaka shila, khapuri and kalasa. Here the ayudha and dhvaja are missing.

The sanctum preserves an image of eight handed Ganesha as the presiding deity of the temple. The slab of deity measures 6 feet in length and 3 feet in width. It is made of black-chlorite. The image of Ganesha has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal and it is carved in dancing posture. The pedestal of deity is finely decorated with flower devices and a devotee in kneeling posture. Mouse, the traditional mount of Ganesha is also carved on the right of the pedestal. The upper two hands of deity hold snake, the right side three hands possess rosary, broken tusk, one hand lies on his belly and the left three hands display lotus flower, a pot of ladus and abhya mudra respectively. Two female sakhi figures are standing on both sides of the Ganesha image. Rahu head is decorated on the top of the background slab of deity. Two flying apsara figures are carved on the top corners of both sides
of the slab. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the south. Doorjambs of the sanctum are excellently decorated with scroll works, flower designs, creepers with the frolicking boys and perforated jali works. The centre of the doorway lintel is carved with an image of Gaja-Lakshmi. Both sides of the Gaja-Lakshmi image of the lintel are relieved with flowers, flying apsara figures and lotus petalled designs. Navagrahas are carved on the architrave above the doorway lintel. They are all in yogasana posture with usual attributes in hands. Some of them are eroded by nature. Nandi and Bhringi are standing on both sides of the main doorway of the sanctum. They are acting as the dvarapalas of the temple. These two figures are also partially damaged by nature.

**Date of the temple**

There is no authentic evidence with regard to the exact date of the Ganesha temple of southern side. The architectural features of the temple indicate that the temple was built after the construction of the main Jagannatha temple of the site. Considering the iconographic features of side deities, the construction period of the Ganesha temple can be tentatively assigned to the 1st half of the 14th century A.D.

**B. Bata-Ganesha Temple**

The temple of Bata-Ganesha is situated on the inner enclosure of the southern side near the natamandapa of the Jagannatha temple complex. It is a small temple and consists of two components such as vimana and jagamohana. Although Bata-Ganesha temple is a small shrine still it is famous for its religious sanctity. The temple is built in sandstones. It faces to south.

**Art and Architecture of the temple**

**Vimana**

The vimana of the temple is a pidha deula and it is about 15 feet in height. The structure of the vimana is erected on the platform of 2 feet height. The bada of the vimana is completely plain. The bada of the temple is surmounted by the pyramidal superstructure, which consists of two flat shaped pidhas. There is only kalasa found from the top of the upper pidha.

The image of Ganesha is worshipped in the sanctum as the presiding deity of the temple. The four handed deity Ganesha has been installed in seated posture on the plain pedestal. He displays rosary in right upper hand, broken tusk in right lower hand, parashu in left upper hand and a pot of ladus in left lower hand respectively. The backside head of the deity is decorated with trefoil makara headed arch. There is no mouse carved in the pedestal of the deity. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated. The doorway of the sanctum is bereft of ornamentation.

**Mukhashala**

The mukhashala of the temple is an open pidha deula and it is about 12 feet in height. The pyramidal roof of the structure is supported by four pillars and it consists of two flat shaped pidhas. There is a small mastaka installed on the top of the upper pidha. Inner walls of the mukhashala are depicted with paintings of eight armed Durga and four armed Lakshmi. They are noticed in the western and northern sides of the inner wall respectively.

Mouse, the conventional mount of deity is installed on the circular pedestal of 2 ½ feet high and it is noticed in front of the mukhashala.
On the basis of the architectural features, the construction period of the temple can be tentatively assigned to the 16th century A.D.

C. Kanchi Ganesha Temple

The temple of Kanchi Ganesha is situated in the inner enclosure of the western side of the Jagannatha temple complex. It is a very small deula and built in sandstones. This temple consists of three structures such as vimana, jagamohana and natamandapa. All these three structures are thickly plastered with lime mortar and erected on the high platform of 5 feet. The temple faces to east.

Art and Architecture of the temple

Vimana

The vimana of the temple is a pancaratha pidha deula and its height is about 25 feet from the surface of the temple complex. Base of the bada is square of 15 feet. The bada of the vimana is panchanga type i.e. having five fold divisions such as pabhaga, tala jangha, bandhana, upper jangha and baranda. The component parts of the bada are not decorated. Parshvadevatas are absent in their respective places.

The bada of the vimana is surmounted by the pyramidal superstructure, which consists of five pidhas. Dopichha lions and Deula Charini figures are completely absent in their respective places.

The mastaka of the vimana consists of beki, ghanta (bell shaped member) above which there is another beki, amalaka shila, khapuri and kalasa. Here the ayudha of mastaka is missing.

The sanctum preserves an image of Ganesha as presiding deity of the temple. The image is made of black chlorite and its height is about 5 feet. The four handed deity Ganesha has been installed in seated posture on the decorative pedestal. He displays broken tusk in right upper hand, rosary in right lower hand, parashu or hatchet in left upper hand and the left lower hand holds Shridha devi. The trunk or proboscis of the deity is touching the shakti of devi. Mouse, the mount of Ganesha is also carved on the right of the pedestal. People popularly call the deity (image) as Bhandar or Natua Ganesha. On the basis of tradition, Surya Narayana Dash has described that this Ganesha image was brought from Kanchi region by Kanchi expedition of king Purushottama Deva of the Suryavansi ruler of Odisha. After defeating king Salva-Narasingha Deva of Kanchi, Purushottama Deva had taken away this Ganesha image along with the image of Sakhi-Gopal as the trophy of his victory. The iconographic features of the image indicate that it is not made in the traditional art style of Odisha. Most probably, it was brought from Kanchi by Purushottama Deva, the Gajapati ruler of Odisha. The iconographic features of the Ganesha image are not found same in any other Ganesha images of Odisha.

Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated. The sanctum has one doorway towards the jagamohana. The doorway is devoid of decorative ornamentation.

Jagamohana

The jagamohana of the temple is a pidha deula and its height is about 15 feet from the surface of the temple complex. Base of the bada is rectangular and it measures 18 feet in length and 10 feet in width. The bada of the jagamohana is panchanga type i.e. having five fold divisions such as pabhaga, tala jangha, bandhana, upper jangha and baranda. The
body of the bada is undecorated. The gandi of jagamohana is a pyramidal superstructure. There is only kalasa installed on the top of shikhara. Inner walls of the jagamohana are completely plain. It has two doorways; one on the eastern side and another on the western side.

**Natamandapa**

The natamandapa of the temple is an open flat roof structure. Its height is about 12 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The base of the structure is rectangular and it measures 22 feet in length and 8 feet in width. Masonry steps of ascending order are provided for approach towards the natamandapa as well as the sanctum.

Considering the architectural designs, the date of the temple can be tentatively assigned to the 2nd half of the 15th century A.D.

**Conclusion**

Thus, it is known from the above discussion that all the extant Ganesha shrines of the Jagannath temple complex were built in the medieval period. The existence of Ganesha temples proves that the worship of Ganapati cult was also prevalent in Puri. The presiding deities of the southern side Ganesha shrines contain the iconographic features of Odishan art whereas the presiding deity of western side Kanchi Ganesha temple possesses the artistic features of the South Indian art. On the basis of Kanchi-Kaveri episode, the Ganesha image of the Kanchi Ganesha temple was brought from Kanchi by king Purushottama Deva, the Suryavamsi ruler of Odisha. The existence of Ganesha temples along with other temples at Puri proves that the inhabitants of Puri were the worshippers of Pancha Devatas namely Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Surya and Ganesha. Those devotees who visit Lord Jagannatha temple, they also do visit Bata Ganesha, Kanchi Ganesha and southern side another Ganasha shrine of Jagannatha temple complex of Puri. Although the architectural patterns of the above Ganesha temples of the Jagannatha temple complex are not so significance, but from the religious and artistic points of view these three Ganesha shrines are very important in Odisha.

**References :**


Dr. Ratnakar Mohapatra, Lecturer, Department of History, Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar.