



The Study of Temple Architecture in Modern History

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Abstract:

This paper undergo the study of historical development of temple architecture. Indian art and architecture underwent several stages of development, including the sophisticated urban planning of the Indus Valley Civilization, the features of rock art and early settlement designs, and inferences from the prehistoric era, historic and modern historic era. Modern temple architecture creates an intriguing link between engineering from the twenty-first century and ancient Vedic traditions. Modern Hindu temples still honor the canons of the classical Shilpa Shastras, despite the general shift in religious architecture around the world toward modernism. While modern rural shrines experiment with concrete and striking geometric forms, monumental projects like the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir rely on traditional stone masonry reinforced with digital mapping. In the twentieth century, Christian and Jewish religious architecture was reshaped by modernism. Most new churches and synagogues today are built in modern styles; almost no new Gothic cathedrals have been built since the nineteenth century. Hindu architecture did not undergo the same process. Temple architecture is governed by ancient canons known as the Shilpa Shastras, which define the classical style of Hindu temple architecture. Many Hindu communities continued to strive for this style in the 20th century, occasionally utilizing contemporary materials due to financial constraints. These communities have tended to follow these Shastras even more closely as they have become wealthier; rather than deviating from architectural tradition, modern affluence has made it possible to embody it more faithfully. These enormous projects, along with extensive international supply chains and remarkable engineering and logistical achievements, constitute the world's leading living tradition of masonry architecture. This paper suggests the development of temple architecture in modern history.

Keywords: Modern history, Temple architecture, shilpa shastras, indian art and architecture etc. . .

Objectives:

To know the historical background of Temple architecture.

To understand the development of temple architecture.

To analyse the temple architecture in modern history.



Methodology:

This study is based on analysis method. History and the development of temple architecture taken into consideration for analysis.

Introduction:

India's artistic and architectural traditions go back thousands of years. The features of rock art and early settlement designs, prehistoric influences, the sophisticated urban planning of the Indus Valley Civilization, stupas and caityas, Chaitya halls, and Viha re halls of primitive Buddhist monasteries, the public and domestic architecture of early Jainism, Gupta architecture and sculpture, the early and medieval period of Hindu temple architecture, and the development of Indo Islamic architecture are just a few of the stages through which Indian art and architecture evolved. Temple architecture typically adheres to the guidelines found in the Shastras, which are architectural treatises written between the fifth and fifteenth centuries. The Shastras serve as exacting algorithms as well as creative guidelines. From the height of the plinth to the curvature of the shikara (the tower or spire), the dimensions of the temple's elements are computed to match the shapes of specific constellations.

Historical Background of Temple architecture:

Prehistoric natural shrines served as the model for temple architecture, which later developed into enormous religious structures. Globally, it reflects the evolution of civilizations, moving from Greek columned sanctuaries and Mesopotamian mud-brick ziggurats to the massive stone pyramids of the Americas and the highly stylized, geographically distinct structures found throughout Asia. Temple architecture in the Indian subcontinent offers a singularly continuous historical chronology. Under dynasties like the Guptas, Chalukyas, Pallavas, and Cholas, it developed from simple wooden shelters and rock-cut caverns into free-standing stone constructions. Traditionally, this development has been divided into three main stylistic and regional genres: Temple architecture deeply incorporates the cosmic order and the path to spiritual awakening, going beyond simple shelter. The deity is housed in the innermost sanctum, the garbhagriha, which is intended to be plain and dark to draw the devotee's attention inward. The tall superstructure above it represents a holy mountain.

The modern Hindu temple is not five millennia old. Early humans did not worship their gods with sculpted images or in enclosed sanctuaries. Rather, the divine was directly experienced in the natural world, where rocks, rivers, mountains, trees, and animals all functioned as sacred forms. It was only around 2,000 years ago that we began to see the first sculptures of Hindu gods in Mathura. Interestingly, images of Shiva, Vishnu, and the Goddess also appear on Kushan coins from the same period, though scholars debate whether these are truly Hindu deities or representations shaped by Zoroastrian and Greek influences.

Even more ambitious projects appear by the eighth century. The Kailasanath Temple at Ellora was carved from a single rock to resemble Shiva's mountain palace. Freestanding



temples, which were constructed stone by stone rather than carved from rock, also emerged during this time. These can be found in Kanchipuram, the location of the well-known Kailasanath Temple, as well as Hampi and Pattadakal in Karnataka. The transition from experimental forms to enduring architectural styles is symbolized by the freestanding temple. The complexity of temple architecture skyrocketed by the tenth century, with pyramidal "vimana" styles in the south and curvilinear "nagara" styles in the north. Built on Tantric mandalas, temples served as both ritual power centers and the homes of gods. Priests used Tantric rituals within them to draw fortune, wealth, and protection. With the fall of the Mughal Empire and the emergence of the Marathas came a new wave of temple building. Hindu temples, particularly those devoted to Rama, were constructed in locations like Nashik, Gwalior, and Kashi by leaders like the Bhosales and the Holkars. As a result, the Hindu temple has evolved over the ages. It has endured many difficulties and philosophical changes while continuously evolving.

Temple architecture in Modern history:

It is necessary to reverse the contemporary idea of a public building in order to comprehend the Hindu temple. A temple is a dwelling place for God, who is revealed on Earth through a consecrated image (mūrti) housed there. It is not an auditorium built primarily for the convenience of a human audience. According to Hinduism, the temple's architecture is meant to honor God's living presence rather than a statue. Together, its size, masonry, and decoration seek to create a home worthy of God's majesty while evoking the tranquility and serenity associated with the divine. Temple architecture typically adheres to the guidelines found in the Shastras, which are architectural treatises written between the fifth and fifteenth centuries. The Shastras serve as exacting algorithms as well as creative guidelines. From the height of the plinth to the curvature of the shikara (the tower or spire), the dimensions of the temple's elements are computed to match the shapes of specific constellations.

In order to foster spiritual inclusivity, universally praised temples that completely depart from traditional regional styles have also emerged in modern history. Ecumenical worship is promoted by buildings such as the expansive Akshardham complexes and the Lotus Temple in New Delhi, a Bahá'í House of Worship, which use global architectural elements and modern engineering. Using ancient texts like the Vastu Shastra as a guide, modern Indian temple architecture combines engineering with age-old customs. By removing steel reinforcements and constructing enormous structures like Swaminarayan Akshardham and the 108-foot Akshardham in Gandhinagar, modern marvels have adapted traditional Nagara and Dravidian styles. While exhibiting unparalleled engineering achievements, devotees and craftspeople discover that contemporary temples preserve the spiritual essence of historic constructions. Hindu temples all over the world make up the awareness of India's cultural heritage and spiritual support. Employs modern technology in construction and a novel style of architecture that is more intricate but adheres to vastu of the past. A fascinating conflict between modern engineering and sacred traditions can be seen in the development of temple



architecture throughout modern history. Sacred spaces have evolved over the past 200 years from local, hand-carved stone constructions to worldwide monuments made possible by cutting-edge technology. In order to express cultural identity, temple architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries placed a strong emphasis on reviving traditional regional styles.

Modern software and environmental friendly structural design are key components of temple architecture. Digital Craftsmanship: Architects use robotic CNC milling machines, structural simulation software, and 3D CAD modeling to precisely carve complex stone panels. Material Innovation: To ensure that the buildings endure for more than a millennium, modern temples use completely iron-free stone interlocking joints, earthquake-resistant geogrid foundations, and high-strength, environmentally friendly concrete mixes. Exemplar: A multi-layered, iron-free stone-interlocking mechanism designed to survive a 2,500-year seismic event is used in the recently opened Grand Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Conclusion:

Thus my paper suggests that In order to emphasize geometric purity, raw materials, and the interaction of light and shadow, modern temple architecture removes bulky, antiquated ornamentation. While elaborate, hand-carved stone was used in traditional temples to represent divinity, modern designs use cutting-edge engineering, local materials, and minimalism to create a spiritual atmosphere. This architectural change reconciles the demands of a fast-paced urban society with traditional spiritual practices (Vastu Shastra or vernacular traditions). Thus Modern temple architecture emphasizes structural adaptability in contemporary religious structures in response to social demands for sustainability and economy.

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