

Later Pandya Collapsed Architectural Engineering Adinarayana Perumal Temple in Madurai - A Ground Report

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Abstract:- Search and research are the basic ideology of researchers. During the field survey of cultivated paddy land by authors and found a collapsed later Pandya style architectural engineering 'Adi Narayanaperumal' temple at Kovilur village in Alanganallur of Madurai district. This temple was called by the locals 'Otta Kovil' and the temple was constructed with a double stone wall structure in a single beam. Temple's front entrance hall has embossed a Karudalvar and Hanuman standing posture sculpture, Vaishnava symbol, Conch, Chakra, and later Pandya symbol a cendu between the two fishes. The collapsed temple engraved women's fetus structure, pregnant woman various postures, and broken male and female idols. This temple functioned as a medical institution because here found medicare remains pits. 'Adi Narayanaperumal' and 'Alagar' two-word inscriptions are also found. Some evidence sculpture visible that repair/renovation engineering work was done by Nayaka ruler under the supremacy of Vijayanagara rulers. Regarding this new finding, we discuss the succeeding paragraph in detail.

Keywords:- Mandapam, Sculpture, Stone Window, Medicare Pit, Double wall.

I. INTRODUCTION

Madurai kingdom had ancient antiquity and succeeded under Pandyan Kings even from pre - Christian era, with its capital at Madurai. The city Madurai is hailed, as the "Athens of South India" Madurai is considered to be a blessed city with a temple in Tamil Nadu located on the banks of river Vaigai. This city was once upon a time surrounded by Kadamba trees and hence it was called Kadambavanam. This ancient city is described by different names consisting of "Madurai", "Koodal", "Malligai Maanagar", "Naanmadakoodal" and "Thirualavai". Many famous temples are located within the city and are found all around Madurai. The most famous temples were, the Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple, Aalala Vinayakar temple, Mathana Gopalaswamy temple, Inmayil nanmai tharuvur temple, Kallalagar temple at Alagarkovil, Perumal temple at Thirumohur, Siva temple at Thiruvathavur and Subramaniaswamy temple at Tirupparankundram. Temples as places of worship served as the pivot of culture, traditions, art, architecture and created worship for education, recreation, and employment. Madurai enjoyed

the privilege of being the cultural capital of the Pandya country from the Sangam period onward. 'The first Pandyas who ruled Pandya region around 550 to 966 C.E.' and actively engaged in temple construction as equal to Pallava.

At the end of the 12th Century, Kullottunga III defeated Vira Pandya a son of Parakrama Pandya and restored the 2nd Pandyan empire. The later Pandya moved away from Madurai during the establishment of the Madurai Sultanate in 1335 C.E. Kumarakampana the son of Bukka-I disclosed the Madurai Sultanate and established the Vijayanagar rule in Madurai in 1371 C.E. and permanently disclosed Madurai Sultanate in 1378 C.E. Kumarakampana was appointed Governor of Tamil country or as the first Mahamandalesvara and came under the indirect rule of the Vijayanagar rajyas. The great Vijayanagar Emperor, Krishnadeva Raya for his easy and efficient administration, he divided his entire empire into more than 200 Nayakdom. Nayakas were the vassals of the Vijayanagar ruler.

The whole Tamil country was divided into three Nayakships namely Madurai, Senji and Tanjavur instead of rajyas. 'Then the whole Tamil country was brought under the effective control of the Amaranayakas instead of Mahamandalesvara. After the Pandyas, the 'Nayak rulers maintained their development especially in art, culture, unique style of architecture, trade and commerce from 1529 to 1736 C. E'. also spent enormous money on its repair, renovation, administration and construction.

Hindu Religion grew rapidly with the active support of the king through the protection of the temples and donations for enlarging the Hindu religion, tradition and philosophy to reach a larger population. So many temples are in good condition but at the same time, some temples have collapsed due to various reasons. These collapsed temples so many times repair and renovation work were carried out over various time periods by rulers. From the middle of the ancient period onward to the Nayak period the rulers of Tamilnadu mostly constructed temples in Dravidian styles and mandapas, gopuras and other architectural structures by using granite stones. The design of the temple's ground floor plan, sanctum sanatorium i.e the garbhagiragam and around the shrine follows a geometrical construction called vastu-purusha-mandala.

➤ *Aim:-*

- For the preparation of the “Later Pandya Collapsed Architectural Engineering Adinarayana Perumal Temple In Madurai - A Ground Report” , the following main aims are concentrated:
- To find out the exact period of temple construction.
- To find the causes of the destruction of the temple.
- To find out the main deity the temple is centred.
- To find out the purpose of the temple on the basis of the embossed sculpture.

II. METHODOLOGY

This ground report is based on both primary and secondary sources. For this author used both Field Visits and descriptive methods of writing.

➤ *Location of Collapsed Later Pandya Temple:*

During the field survey by the above-mentioned authors of this paper, they found a collapsed temple. The ruined ancient Pandyan Adi Narayana Perumal Temple is located near the Mullai Periyar canal en route right bank at Kovilur village in between Sinna Ilantahikulam and Periya Ilanthaikulam, Alankanallur Taluk, Madurai District. This site is located at 10.05458° Latitude and 78.05231° Longitude, 7 km from Alankanallur; 3 Kms from Sinna Ilantahikulam and Periya Ilanthaikulam and 23 kms from Madurai city. This dilapidated temple is surrounded by Paddy fields. The architectural structure of the Kovilur temple is divided into four sections which are the Garbhagraham, Arthamandapam, Mahamandapam and Front mandapam. This temple was constructed with a double stone wall structure in a single beam around 3 feet wide. Inside and outside of the stone wall is a smooth structure. Between these double walls are filled with a mixture of brick stone, and lime powder mixed with water or sugar cane juice.

➤ *Front Mandapam With Later Pandya Emblem:*

The front Mandapam has a total of six pillar halls. Out of these, four pillars stand in a row at an equal distance of approximately 10 feet each. The remaining two pillars stand in the second row. The roof of the hall is a crumbling stage. In the middle of the roof of the front Mandapam, a large stone was seen falling down. Many embossed sculptures on each pillar in this hall speak of the temple's glory. In the front entrance hall, the right side pillar has a Karudalvar standing posture sculpture embossed and its one leg is bent and worshipping posture. In the front entrance hall left side pillar has embossed a Hanuman sculpture. Both sculptures are in good condition and around four feet high. The right corner of the front hall has a Vaishnava symbol, Conch, and Chakra found in the embossed sculpture. Curved stones are placed to decorate the area around the top of the roof. There are two lions in the carved stone which is placed for decoration like a lion touching and chasing another lion. Such curved stones are found around the roof of the open outer Mandapam. The entire temple is seen descending from its position. According to the people of Kovilur, the temple could be buried in the soil up to a height of 5 feet. A stone in the shape of a cylinder is found buried in the soil near the open outer hall. As the temple is in ruins, the sculptures on

the pillars bear witness to the period of the temple. From the stone pillar that fell from the roof of the open-air hall, it is possible to determine the period of the temple. The presence of a cendu between the two fish confirms that it belongs to the later Pandyan period temple around a thousand years old. Although some renovated Nayakar period sculptures are visible in the temple Mandapam. In this front mandapa found some vital medical care sculptures, Medicare-making pits and Kambaththadi Karuppan ritual places are found.



Fig 1 Later Pandya Emblem



Fig 2 Collapsed Front Mandapam of 'Adi Narayanaperumal' Temple

➤ *Medicare Women Sculptures:*

In this temple front mandapam pillars have been embossed with many sculptures. But very important that some sculptures show women delivery related postures embossed especially a woman taking a baby from another woman's belly, a woman doing penance sitting with a “Padmasana” posture, dancing women, woman with fetus with a child and pregnant women with a various posture are embossed in sculpture. These sculptures show a woman's need to exercise regularly during her pregnancy. A sculpture shows a woman is seen carrying a hot pot on the seats to pay her tribute and also an embossed sculpture woman seeking the Lord to have a child.



Fig 3 Tamil Traditional Cultural Embossed Sculpture

In an embossed sculpture, a bird that looks like a duck is holding a snake. A bird-beating animal can also be seen here. This sculpture says that children are cared for by their parents. Also, a deer with three heads is shown beautifully in the embossed sculpture. The woman is beautifully depicted holding two snakes in both her hands. The embossing of a baby picture in a woman's womb shows that Tamils were aware of the idea of the present advanced technology around thousands of years before.

➤ *Medicine Making Pit:*

There is ample evidence that this temple has been a place of medicine for pregnant women. It is clear that many herbal medicines were brought here from the hill to the north of the temple and given as medicine to pregnant women. The stone pit was used to grind the medicine.



Fig 4 Medicine Making Pit

➤ *Old Ritual in Kambaththadi Karuppan:*

At the front side of the main entrance of the temple, a 'Pali Peedam' with 'kodi maram' structure is found in demolished condition. Now, this setup pooja platform is to have completely lost its status. However, every year in Tamil month Pungkuni the local Kovilur villagers worshiped in front of Kambaththadi Karuppan, before they start the celebration in their village, the first pooja will be provided here.

➤ *Mahamandapam Architecture:*

In the temple, the Maha Mandapam is located between the front mandapa and Ardha Mandapam. It contains four pillars.



Fig 5 A Word Tamil Inscription 'Alagar'



Fig 6 Five Broken Male and Female Idols Were Found at Mahamandapa of the Temple

The Mahamandapam is seen first narrowing and then widening when coming from the Artha Mandapam. In this temple, donation-related or construction-related inscriptions are not inscribed. However, in a 13th-century style, the word Adinarayanaperumal a word inscription is found at the entrance gate of Artha Mandapam. Also, a 16th-century styled inscription the word 'Alagar' is written on the left side of the mahamandapa inner wall. The Maha mandapam is built of double walls and filled with a mixture of brick and limestone. The wall on the north side of the Mahamandapam is slightly broken. Half of the stones on the standing wall of the southern maha mandapam are missing. A stone window is found in the wall on the north side. But the same window stone slab might have been taken away by unknown persons

on the southern sidewall. There are four pillars inside the Mahamandapam. The base of each pillar is buried in the soil. The floor of this hall was also not visible. Statues are found on each pillar. Many of the statues here lie down in a state of disrepair. Upon entering the Mahamandapam, a curved stone is found at the top of the entrance. Stone windows can be seen on the north and south walls of the Mahamandapam. It is clear that the stone window on the south wall has been demolished condition. The stone window is square in shape with nine open spaces inside. Each pillar has several levels when viewed from above. Each pillar is made up of several layers. A decorative rectangular bar is found at the base of the pillar. Above it is found three eight bands. Eight bar is found between the 16 bars. The same pattern as above and below is followed once again. Each pillar has a special feature. Some pillars indicate the period to which the temple belongs and some pillars indicate which deity the temple belongs to later pandya period and renovation work done during Madurai Nayak period under Vijayanagar period. Inside the mahamandapa five in broken conditions male and female idols are found. Two standing posture idols and three seating posture idols are broken into three to four pieces. The seating posture white granite stone is probably a female goddess holding Gadautha. A standing posture idol looks in pure granite. Each contains at least three feet high. Also, a sandalwood grinding stone was also found. This temple was called by locals as 'Otta Kovil' i.e hole temple. The local people say that in between Artha Mandapam and Mahamandapa two Dwarapalar standing posture statues were missing due to the uncareness of the temple.



Fig 7 Badly Damaged Mahamandapa of the 'Adi Narayanaperumal' Temple

➤ Artha Mandapam Architecture:

Artha Mandapam is found between Mahamandapa and Garbhagiragam. The Artha Mandapam is in ruins. The roof of this Mandapam is in a very dilapidated condition and all the stone slabs above are falling down. Although many slab stones were seen falling down from the roof above the Artha Mandapam, many of the slab stones have remained intact. The stones that have fallen from the roof of the Ardha Mandapam are still left untouched by the people. A double stone wall is found in the Ardha Mandapam. It has a small door entrance with a curved stone slab on the top. Letters are written at the top of the inner entrance of the "Artha Mandapam. The condition of the characters is shattered. Only the word Narayana Perumal can be seen written. Through the Inscription, the word could be traced back to the existence of a deity named "Adi Narayanaperumal".



Fig 8 Poorly Damaged Arthamandapa of the 'Adi Narayanaperumal' Temple

➤ *Garbhagiragam Architecture:*

The entire sanctum sanatorium was built with stone which is approximately around 5 feet in length and 5 feet wide. The sanctum sanatorium at present is in a very badly demolished condition. There was no sign of idols inside Garbhagiragam. All the walls around the Garbhagiragam are completely broken and destroyed. A stone has been planted in the middle of the Garbhagiragam. That planted stone was worshipped by people. The north and west walls of the Garbhagiragam are completely absent. Not even could find the double walls. But on the east wall, only the middle wall is seen, not the two side walls. The middle wall is visible as a strong brick with limestone material. The roof of the sanctuary must have been built of stone. Because the building of the whole temple is made only of stone. But no roofing stone was found there. The ground part of the Garbhagiragam could not be visible and was found sandy approximately a depth of two feet from the base. Collapsed side view of the temple is shown as per the picture.

➤ *Reason For The Dilapidations Of Engineering:*

There are many reasons why the temple is in ruins. They are:

- This temple's architectural engineering is surrounded by cultivated paddy fields with black soil. Surrounding land around 25 feet there is no hard sand.
- Water deteriorated in the paddy fields around the ground of temple circumference and not dried. So Garbhagiragam wall fallen
- Due to the overweight of stone structure, the poor soil further went down below the soil.
- Many of the idols in the temple have been smashed due to Muslim invasions and theft by unidentified individuals.
- Due to its remoteness from Kovilur village, the temple was not properly maintained.



Fig 9 Damaged Side View of the 'Adi Narayanaperumal' Temple

➤ *Recommendation For Renovation of Reengineering:*

- The Archaeological Department should look over temple protection.
- The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department of Tamilnadu should take over this temple under its direct control.
- The contribution of donations by the sponsors.
- The Non-Government trust's charitable participation.
- Public full-fledged involvement for temple protection.
- Frequently conduct of awareness programmes for university, college and school students regarding temple sculpture conservation and preservation techniques engineering works near the Museum. This reengineering program may empower the student research attitude and skill development.
- Also frequently conduct general awareness programs about the safety and security of temple sculptures to temple priests, staff and the public through eminent University/College Professors.
- Renovation of the temple structure with similar materials as used initially with the assistance of architectural engineers.

III. CONCLUSION

The temple was constructed in paddy fields and is visible in ruined condition during the Later Pandya style. Embossed sculptures of Narasimha, Karudhazhvar, Anjaneyar, Cunch, and Rama on the pillars show that there must have been a Vishnu temple. The word Adinarayanaperumal and the word 'Alagar' written on the inscription indicate that this temple contained the Narayana Perumal deity. Five broken statues of male and female idols were engraved in white stone which maybe belongs to the first Padyas period (6th to 9th Century) sculpture. Two fishes with Sendu in a pillar shows that this Narayana Perumal temple belongs 1000-year-old later Pandya period. So, this first Pandya temple here first repair/renovation or extension of temple construction work may be implemented by later Pandya rulers. All embossed sculptures related to childbirth show that medication-related advice was provided. The embossed sculpture shows women's pregnancy period carness and easy delivery techniques. It is believed that women came from outside of Madurai city and learned nursing work the delivery techniques and provide advice on childbirth instructions. The stone pit was used to prepare medicine for pregnant women. So this place functions as a medical distribution centre for pregnant women's. There is black soil around the temple. Due to the high-water level in the fields around the temple, the building is seen falling down from its position. The local farmers stated that many idols have been stolen from the temple. Our culture is to preserve the culture of the Tamils who scanned the baby in the woman's womb and gave it as an embossed sculpture a thousand years ago. This temple immediately needed reconstruction work. Also needed conservation preservation process of ancient Tamil sculptures. It is recommended that the Department of Hindu Temples and the Department of Archaeology should fully take over charges and preserve them. Beyond that, public involvement

is one of the most important. If Adinarayana Perumal temple sculptures would be protected, the future generation will express their gratitude to today's historian.

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