

## The Twin Siva Temples of Bhukailash: An archaeological and anthropological observation

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### Abstract

A temple is a place of worship for followers of Hinduism and these are the symbols of Hindu religion as well as Temples are important religious aspect of Hindu culture. Temples and classical codes have had their own functional network and these were conditioned by the cultural codes of given time. Temples survive by the conditional cultural codes and mainly by their functional network. The objectives of the present study are to study ancient temples in urban context, specifically to throw light in the study of ancient motif and structure, and finally, to know whether any work of Cultural Resource Managements applied there or not. The methods and techniques as used for data collection in the present study were direct intensive interview (unstructured), questionnaire (open-ended). It is worth mentioning that the questionnaires that were given to the samples covered a wide range of issues like, description of the temples, role and functions of temples, some awareness programmes of the government. The intensive interviews as conducted were unstructured but the context of the interview questions were used as guidelines to give direction to the interviewee.

**Keywords:** temple, ancient motif, architecture, cultural heritage

### Introduction

A temple is a place of worship for followers of Hinduism and these are the symbols of Hindu religion as well as Temples are important religious aspect of Hindu culture. Temples are reflects the social and religious structure of Hindu community. Besides religious value, the temples have a historical importance also because these are old more than 200 years as well as represent a cultural heritage. And in archaeology it is important because of the used materials, structures and cultural aspects. These temples are unfolding the horizons of ancient art form. On the other side anthropologically temple is seen as sacred centers which are spreading the cultural ethos through several cultural performances like different type festivals. Thus the 'sacred complex' concept is highlighting various facets of Hindu spiritual life, source of livelihood to dependent communities, trade, and tourism etc., in India. The identity of a particular sacred complex was being perpetuated by adopting modern innovations in its wider form of adjustment to the ever changing situation through networking the people of Indian culture. Peaceful coexistence of multiple belief systems, traditions, and ways of life at these centers reflects the principle of unity in diversity.

The empirical studies of sacred complex in India began in 1960's by delineating methodological perspectives in understanding complex network of social relations in sacred centers. Based on the analytical concepts of Robert Redfield and Mckim Marriott, Vidyarthi (1961) <sup>[5]</sup> initiated the beginning of systematic study of these centers by using anthropological approaches for the comprehensive understanding of the Indian civilization. Vidyarthi's formulated concept of sacred complex which is a synthesis of sacred geography, sacred performances and sacred specialists, sacred segments, sacred zone, sacred geography attempts to describe social organization of the temple and its people. In

the course of time various anthropological works on these sacred complex has been undertaken by Makhan Jha (1971), Saraswati (1963 & 1975) <sup>[4]</sup>, Sahay (1975), Patnaik (1977), Goswami and Morab (1975), Morab (1978), Behra (2003). These studies empirically analyzed the dynamics of sacred complex of Hindu pilgrim centers by using the theoretical concepts of Vidyarthi. (Prasad, 2013) <sup>[3]</sup>.

Cultural life of any population who belongs to Hinduism, the group of population mainly centers round the temples and the classical codes under-pin the socio-economic life of this population. It appears from the observation that temples have various architectural Hindu religions and culture is temple sheltered which can be called temple culture. So temples and classical codes have had their own functional network and these were conditioned by the cultural codes of given time. Temples survive by the conditional cultural codes and mainly by their functional network. Such institutions exist but how it is possible. Problem lies here. (McCutchion, 1972) <sup>[2]</sup>. The aim of the study is to elicit out this reality. Through this work an attempt has been made to reach nearer to its reality. Through the work, it has been studied; the changing context of folk art regarding style, symbol, function, and purpose and changing world view. For this reason, two Shiva temples in Karl Marx Sarani of Khidirpur in West Bengal have been studied.

### Objectives of the Present Study

The specific objectives of the present study are to:

- Study ancient temples in urban context.
- Study ancient motif and structure.
- Know whether any work of Cultural Resource Managements applied there or not.

### Methodology

The present study was conducted on two Shiva temples in

Karl Marx Sarani of Khidirpur, in West Bengal. The study is basically qualitative one. The methods and techniques as used for data collection in the present study were direct intensive observation and interview (unstructured), questionnaire (open-ended). It is worth mentioning that the questionnaires that were given to the samples covered a wide range of issues like, description of the temples, role and functions of temples, some awareness programmes of the government etc. The intensive interviews as conducted were unstructured but the context of the interview questions were used as guidelines to give direction to the interviewee.

### Major Findings of the Study

#### The Temples-- Its Patterns and Forms

Such institutions are primarily established by the kings. These are distributed over the flood plains of the Brahmaputra River. Each temple represents different traditions of Indian classical codes. These can be regarded as symbol of classical codes in concrete form. It acts and interacts, with the socio-economic institutions of a given time.

Different ethnic groups bearing distinct economy, culture and language are always associated with the temple. There existed and still exists more or less unaltered relationship between the temples and the different ethnic groups around it or from distance. It is observed that temples are regarded as cohesive factor and it has its impact upon the socio-economic life of the people to a variable extent. Some are socioeconomically involved directly and some indirectly at the same time.

Mainly two temples have been studied of the area. These two temples are together known as '*Bhukailash*' Temple. The temples of '*Bhukailash*' are very much important historically, archaeologically and religiously. These two temples are very similar but some difference of their position of situation, the position of idol, the position of doors of the temples etc. so the details descriptions are given below-

#### The *Krishnachandeshwar* Temple

Two temples are situated in face-to-face direction. The temple that is placed in the East side is known as *Krishnachandeshwar*. This is mainly a thatched temple. Maharaja Joynarayan Ghoshal gave the name of this temple "*Krishnachandeshwar*" after his mother's name that is "*Krishnachandeshwari*". All total nine gates are there in this temple. The main temple is surrounded by a raised paved floor, which is mainly used for sitting purpose. Three collapsible gates are placed in front of this temple. Entering into these gates one small paved floor made by marble is placed and two iron-gates are situated in two side of this floor. The main gate of the temple where the *Shiva lingo* is present is made by wood and a collapsible gate is present for protection. Another three wooden gates are there which are used as the ways to enter into the actual place of the *Shiva lingo*, are placed in three sides of the temple. Two stairs are present in two sides of the big paved floor, one is located in the south direction and another is located in the north direction.

#### Architecture of the Temple

This temple is mainly constructed by the Hindu architecture. There is no effect of other religion on the structure of the temple. The type of the temple is '*Aath-Chala*'. In this temple the roof is made by concrete cement and the architecture of

the roof is '*aath-chala*', this means, eight thatched roof which are made by cement. This design is mainly found in Hindu architecture.

#### Outer Condition of the Temple

The outer structure of the temple is very beautiful. It is very clean and good in condition. After seeing this temple, it is clear that the maintenance of this temple is very good. The outer colour of the temple is yellow, orange and violet. Three tridents are placed in top of the temple. The middle trident is biggest than the other two. The main tridents are made by Gunmetal but these were removed for repairing purpose and other trident which is made by brass is placed at present. Many types of designs, known as the work of "*Pankh*", are present in the outer walls of this temple. Three discs like designs are there in every sidewalls of the temple, top of the temple, and top of the every gate. Between the first three gates, two pillars are situated and many types of designs present in the top of the gates. Two stairs are present in two side of the big paved floor. The floor is of by cement.

#### Inner Condition of the Temple

Enter into the first gate, a small floor is situated which is made by marble. After that the main gate is spliced which is the main way to enter into the main temple where the *Shiva lingo* is placed. Many types of designs, which are known as the work of "*Pankh*", are seen on the inner walls of the temple. The walls are sky color, but various colors make the design. A stair which is made by steel, is present back to the *Shiva lingo*, the people to pour water on the head of the *Shiva lingo* mainly use it. Besides this main gate another three wooden gates are present in other three sides. The floor of this main temple where the *Shiva lingo* is located is made by marble.

#### Materials of the Temple

Main materials of this temple are brick, cement, sand, stone chip etc. For coloring of this temple many types of colors, lime also used. The floor is made by marble.

#### Ornamentation

In the outer walls, many types of disc type designs are present. This design is known as the work of "*Pankh*". At the top of the temple three discs are present on each side. In front side a structure of '*Nandy*' is present in the middle disc, other discs are decorated by floral designs. These decorated discs also present in the every walls and the top of the outer gates. This work of "*Pankh*" is very old designs; this is mainly made by sand, cement. These designs are mainly found in Hindu temples.

In the inner walls there are many types of ornamentations are seen, these are, lord *Shiva* sat down on the cow and his followers *Nandy* and *Firingi* stand beside him. Other designs are present in the wall that is many types of floral designs and two horse and many types of temples also present. Red, blue, green, black, yellow every colors are used for decorating these designs.

#### Position of *Shiva Lingo*

The *Shiva lingo* is placed at the center of the main temple. It is made by a single "*Kashti*" stone and it is mounted by marble stone. The "*Gouripat*" (the pedestal symbolizing

Gouri and Shiva) is directed at the right side. A small trident, which is made by brass is placed in front of the Shiva lingo and two metal snake which is made by also brass one is wrapped around the Shiva lingo and other is placed on the head of the Shiva lingo. A pot is hanging by a chain to the top of the Shiva lingo; this is full of water and the water flow through a hole in droop wise to the head of the Shiva lingo.

### Height of the Shiva Lingo

The height of the Shiva lingo is to be seen 6.5ft. If we have to count from the soil, the total height of the idol is 18ft. This is the tallest Shiva lingo of its kind of Asia.

### Measurements of the Temple

#### Height of the Temple

This glorious temple is situated besides the “Shiv-Ganga Talab”. This temple is situated in East side but faces in the West direction. The main door of this temple is faces in the West direction. The height of the temple is 65ft.

#### Other Measurements

- Length of the vestibule: 50ft
- Breadth of the vestibule: 49ft 3inch
- Height of the vestibule: 2ft 7 inch.
- Distance from temple to the edge of vestibule: 9ft 8inch.
- Length of the temple: 34ft 1inch
- Breadth of the temple: 31ft
- At first 3 Iron door is situated front of the temple. The middle door is bigger than the two doors. Measurements are given below:
  - Length of the middle door: 8ft 4 inch
  - Breadth of the middle door: 5ft
  - Length of the other two doors: 8ft
  - Breadth of the other two doors: 4ft 5inch
  - Length of the inner vestibule: 10ft 2inch
  - Breadth of the inner vestibule: 34ft 1inch
  - Length of the inner main door: 7ft 6inch
  - Breadth of the inner main door: 4ft 9inch
  - Length of the other two inner doors: 7ft
  - Breadth of the other two inner doors: 3ft 4inch
  - Length of the backside inner door: 8ft
  - Breadth of the backside inner door: 3ft 9inch
- Two stairs is present in the temple, one is placed in the North direction and one is situated in the South direction. Measurements of this stairs are given below:
  - Length of the stairs: 6ft 5inch
  - Breadth of the stairs: 1ft
  - Height of the stairs: 5.5inch

### The Raktakamleshwar Temple

The other temple, which is situated in the West side, this is known as Raktakamleshwar. This is also a thatched temple. Maharaja Joynarayan Ghoshal had given the name of this temple and that is “Raktakamleshwar” from his Dharma guru’s name that is “Raktakamleshwar”. All total nine gates are present in this temple. The main temple is surrounded by a raised paved floor, which is mainly used for sitting purpose. Three collapsible gates are placed in front of this temple. Enter into this gate one small paved floor which is made by marble is placed and two iron-gates are placed in the two opposite side of this floor. The main gate of the temple, where

the Shiva lingo is seen, and this gate are made by wood and there is also a collapsible gate is present for protection. Another three wooden gates which is the only way to enter into this temple where the Shiva lingo is placed, are situated in three side of this temple. Two stairs are present in two side of the big paved floor; one is located in the south direction and another is located in the north direction.

### Architecture of Temple

This temple is also made by the Hindu architecture. There is no effect of other religion on the structure of the temple. The type of the temple is “Aath-Chala”. In this temple the roof is made by cement and the architecture of the roof is ‘aath-chala’ this means eight thatched roof which made by cement. This design is mainly found in Hindu architecture.

### Outer Condition of the Temple

The outer structure of the temple is very beautiful. It is very clear in condition. To see this temple it is cleared that the maintenance of this temple is very good. This outer color of the temple is yellow, orange and violet. Three tridents are placed in top of the temple. The middle trident is big than the other two. Many types of “Pankh” designs also present in the outer wall of the temple. Three discs like designs are present in every side of the outer walls, top or the temple and top of the gates. Between the first three gates, two pillars are placed in there. Two stairs also present in the two opposite sides of the big paved floor. The floor is made by cement.

### Inner Condition of the Temple

Enter into the first gate, a small floor is situated which is made by marble. After that the main gate is located which is the main way to enter into the main temple where Shiva lingo is placed. In the inner wall, many types of disc like designs are found which is known as the work of “Pankh”. The wall is sky color but the disc designs are made by pink color. A stair which is made by steel is present in the right side of the Shiva Lingo, people to pour water on the head of the Shiva lingo by using it. Beside this main gate another three wooden gates are present in the other three sides. The floor of this main temple where the Shiva lingo is situated is made by marble.

### Materials of the Temple

Main materials of this temple are brick, cement, sand, stone chip etc. For coloring of this temple many types of colors, lime also used. The floor is made by marble.

### Ornamentation

In the outer walls, many types of disc like designs are present. These designs are known as “Pankh”. The top of the temple there is three discs are present of each side. These discs are decorated by floral designs. These decorated discs also present in the every walls and the top of the outer gated. This work of “Pankh” is very old designs; this is mainly made by sand, cement. These designs are mainly found in Hindu temples.

In the inner walls there are also these discs designs is present. All total nine discs designs are present in the inner walls. These discs also decorated in floral designs. These designs are pink color.

### Position of the Shiva Lingo

The Shiva lingo is placed at the center of the main temple. It is made by single “*kasthi*” stone and it is mounted by marble stone. The “*Gouripat*” (the pedestal symbolizing Gouri and Shiva) is directed at the left side. A small trident, which is made by brass, is placed front of this Shiva lingo. Three metal snake which are also made by brass are situated one is on the head and other two are wrapped the Shiva lingo. A pot is hanging by a chain to the top of the *Shiva lingo*; this is full of water and water flow through a hole in drop wise to the head of the Shiva lingo.

### Height of the Shiva Lingo

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- Breadth of the stairs: 1ft
- Height of the stairs: 5.5inch

### Role and Functions of Temples in Urban context:

The main priest of the Bhukailash temples is Amarnath Chakrabarty who worships the lord Shiva in regularly. In morning time “Annavig” and in evening time the priest gives “Shitalvog” to the god. Local people daily come to this temple. In every Monday and Thursday at 3p.m. songs of lord Shiva is presented by the people. They believe the lord Shiva very much. Mrs. Geeta Singh is believed that if a person said “*Om Namah Shivay*” in daily 108 times, he is to be released in every danger. It is a rule of the followers of lord Shiva that they told their beliefs of lord Shiva to the visitors and get

advice to them to follow this rule. This way the visitors became the followers of lord Shiva.

A “Bhajan” song of Lord Shiva is given below-

*“Hey Shiva App Mere Par Daya Kijiyee”.*

*“Shiva Guru Hey”.*

*“Aapane Mahadeb Ke Jagayee Gouradi”.*

*“Lal Piyara Asana Go Esana”.*

[Free Translation: Hey, Lord Siva, kindly Blessing on me. Lord Siva is the Real Master. Our Lord Siva is waked up by Lord Gouradi. Lalpiyara, do not come, do not come.]

Some historical story is present to relate these temples; this is in earlier day, in the Bengali month of “Chaitra”, a big tall pillar is raised from the “Shiva Ganga Talab” in a particular time. The people keep it and put it down to the Bhukailash field and then they worshipped this pillar. After some days, this pillar went to this pond an own self.

There is a very big festival is held on the day of *Shivaratri* as according to the Bengali calender. The people also come from different areas. They pour to water to the head of the idol of Shiva by using steel stair. Women used this stair but men used a wooden table. In Bhukailash field there is a very big fair is held from “Shiva Chaturdashi” for 15 days. At the day of Shivaratri the “Rudra-Avishek” is held after 12 a.m. Three k.g. of Ghee is came from the estate for this purpose. Satya Chakrabarty read the holy book “Geeta”. This way the “Rudra-Avishek” is held. In Bengali month of ‘Shraban’, the door of temples is open for the people in every Monday. People pour to water to the head of the idol of Shiva. After that, “Rudra-Avishek” is held.

At the day of Shivaratri many types of food offer to the god, these are-‘Khir’, ‘Puri’ etc. also many types of fruits like ‘apple’, ‘Banana’ offer to the deity. The “Charak” festival also held in great éclat. ‘Sugar candy’, ‘Momfuli nuts’ is the famous food offer to the lord Shiva. However, the local people worship the ‘Chhat Puja’. After sixth days of this festivals is held. They worship the sun at rising time and setting time. In this way, the people indissolubly linked to these Shiva temples.

### Some Awareness Programmes of the Government

The Bhukailash temples were in a dilapidated condition due to lack of maintenance. The restoration work was very essential. Besides its heritage tag, the fact that it has the tallest single stone Shiva-lingo, in Asia, is a huge selling point to make it a tourist attraction. It is pleasure that Bollywood actress Hema Malini has visited the temple on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2013. She came to the Bhukailash temples and offered prayers at the Lord Shiva and poured water to the idol with her devotion. These temples were recently restored by the State Government. Urban development minister Firhad Hakim who took a personal interest in the renovation.

The restoration cost around two crores Rupees and involved not just the temples but also the surroundings, including a pond. Renovation, restoration and beautification of the pond, the courtyard of the temples and a fair Ground in the Rajbari that houses a fair every Shivaratri is going on a war footing. The efforts by the Urban Development Department to restore the heritage site and invite famous personalities will help to draw the crowds.

## Discussion and Interpretations

At the close of the present study one and the primary area of interact to achieve the aim and objective is The Bhukailash temples are very much important to study because these temples are established in the year 1782 so, when we study about this temples, we are known to the past history of this temples and this way we are known about the history of Khidirpur and also Kolkata.

The study reveals that temples are regarded as cohesive factor and it has its impact upon the socio-religious life of the people to a variable extent. Some are socioeconomically involved directly and some indirectly at the same time. To be specific however the temple height and other measurement of the two temples are more or less same as shown in the tables. During interview it has been known from the priest that the role and function of the temples like a big festival is held at the day of Shivratri. A "Charak" festival also held in the Bengali month of "Chaitra". In Bhukailash field there is a very big fair is held from "Shiva Chaturdashi" for 15 days. In such way, the people indissolubly linked to these Shiva temples.

The role of the Cultural Resource Management or CRM is one of the major issues of the present study. Cultural Resource Management is essentially, a process by which the protection and management of archaeological sites and artifacts as a means of protecting the past. Cultural Resource refers to both human made and natural physical features associated with human activity. They are unique and can include sites, structures and artifacts significant in history or prehistory. The studied Shiva Temple has also spiritual value and the "Pankh" designs are traditional art of our culture. These temples are religious heritage but no work of Cultural Resource Management is carried out here. The two Shiva temples are good condition, but some other restoration process is also want for attraction of the tourists. The furthest South corner was very much damaged in condition. There is a statue of Maharaja Joynarayan Ghoshal is situated. But there is no such of restoration is carried out. Another very poor condition of the Shiva-Ganga Talab, many people used this water for their daily work such as bath, washes cloths etc. This way the water of this pond becomes polluted. There is no such restriction is present. The restoration of the king's palace is very urgent because this is very poor in condition.

Data also depicts that the architecture of the temple in which includes outer conditions and inner conditions of the temples, the ornamentations and materials of the temple. A worth mentioning heritage tag of this temple, the fact that it has the tallest single stone Shiva-lingo, in Asia, is a huge selling point to make it a tourist attraction. During investigation as well as interviews it has been known from the visitors that if a person said 'Om Namaha Shivay' in daily 108 times, he is to be released in every danger. It is a rule of the followers of lord Shiva that they told their beliefs of lord Shiva to the visitors and get advice to them to follow this rule. This way the visitors became the followers of lord Shiva.

It was observed that a great importance is given that is these temples were recently restored by the State Government in the present time. The efforts by the Urban Development Department to restore the heritage site and invite famous personalities will help to draw the crowds. This is one of the complementary initiatives from the government. It is suggested that the increasing number of the visitors and their

accommodation in those festival days like, 'Shivratri'; 'Shiva Chaturdashi'; 'Charak' festival 'Chhat Puja' should be more vigorous.

Therefore it may be concluded and finally suggested that the restoration cost and involvement not just for the temples but also the surroundings, including a pond should be more first and systematic. There are four on which I would like to make some concluding remarks:

1. Renovation, restoration and beautification of the pond.
2. The courtyard of the temples and a fair Ground in the Rajbari should be dirt free and hygienic.
3. The strong focus on religious heritage of the temples and their surrounding areas.
4. Every activity of the temples should be documented and constant monitoring and feedback should be provided to the higher management.

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