“Architecture is that great living creative spirit which from generation to generation, from age to age, proceeds persists, creates, according to nature of man, and his circumstances as they change. That is really architecture.” ... *Frank Lloyd Wright.* Architecture is the matrix of civilization. Each great cultural movement has made its particular contribution to the art of building. The roots of Indian architecture reach deep down to the Harappan culture, the Indus civilization (c. 3000-2000 B.C.) which was in a fairly matured state as early as 3000 B.C. The buildings of the Indus Civilization were plain and merely functional without much more architectural ornamentation. The Indus valley finds include some images supposed to be the objects of worships, but no trace of temple has hitherto been discovered. Sir Mortimer Wheeler believes on fairly convincing grounds that a building in the HR region of Mohenjo-Daro, with an imposing entrance and double stairway leading to a raised platform, was probably a temple.\(^1\) Though it is impossible to know when the worship of a deity embodied in a sculptured image. But mode of worship was prevalent in the civilization of Indus valley.\(^2\)

The earliest form of temple emerged from the huts in which human beings themselves lived, round huts with domical roofs called Kuta and rectangular huts with gable roofs, called Sala, both made of bamboos. With the growth of civilization the system of kingship emerged and along with this institution, the concept of palace architecture developed. The palace is called Prasada, hence very often; the temple is called prasada or palace of God.\(^3\) The early Vedic literature (c. B.C. 1500 - 800) is also silent about temples or any structure of a religious nature. But in the Vedic-age, some references of temples are found in the Rig-Veda but it is not possible for us to ascertain with precision what their architectural forms were.\(^4\) However, architectural edifices are
variedly mentioned in the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Pali literature also dealt with the science of architecture, the Vastu-vijja. The intervening period in the ancient Indian history between the Aryan conquest c 1500 B.C. and the advent of the historical Buddha (566 B.C.–486 B.C.) does not give any architectural evidence on the existence of temple. But it does not mean that there were no temples in India during this period. At that time, perishable and less durable media such as bamboo, wood, kuchchi brick, cloth and clay only were used for constructions, so there are no evidences available. Building permanent temples came into vogue only during the Mauryan period and mainly due to the influence of the Buddhism but no temple of an image of God is referred to during the Mauryan age. History also reveals the existence of palaces- as the one accounted by Megasthenes in 300 B.C. completely made of brick and wood and not of stone. The rise of Buddhism, which owned much to the support of Mauryan Emperor Ashoka (c 269-232 B.C.), found expressive in the construction of three kind of monuments- The Stupa, a sepulchral monument, the Chaityagraha and the Vihara or monastery. These forms came to constitute the basic architectural language of India.

Asoka issued the rock edicts, pillar-edicts and made caves carved out, but no temple was erected. However, during this period some images of semi-divine beings like yakshas and yakshins supposed to be the village deities were carved by the sculptors, which suggest the beginning of the image making or iconography. The first stone architecture in India was rock-cut and executed by Buddhist monks. They were probably preceded as well as accompanied by wooden structures which are destroyed over the time while stone endures. The earliest cave temples include the Bhaja Caves, the Karla Caves, the Bedsa Caves, the Kanheri Caves and some of the Ajanta Caves. Early Buddhist architecture was likely indirectly inspired by that of Egyptians. The Egyptians were probably the first civilization in the world to construct stone architecture, they began with stone build pyramids in the 27th century BCE (Djoser’s Step Pyramid in the Saqqara) and contained with rock-cut tombs in the 16th century BCE (Valley of the Kings in Luxor). There are two types of rock-cut architecture. The first type consists of nothing but internal spaces comprising of vast chambers while other type is carved downwards into a rocky
The caves of Elephanta and temples of Ellora are of the first type and seven Pagodas or rathas sculpted out of the rock at Mamallapuram is the example of the second type and the Kailasa temple at Ellora combines both kinds of rock-cut. Hindu phase of temple building evolved in the period of imperial Gupta from 4th to 6th centuries A.D. Early in the 5th century, at Udayagiri near Vidisha and at Ramgarh in Madhya Pradesh, the Gupta rulers initiated the creation of Brahminical or Hindu cave temples with sculpted panels. There is an overlap of nearly two hundred years when both Hindu and Buddhist structures were built in India from roughly 500 to 700 and Hinduism emerged triumphant over Buddhism and dominated all subsequent Indian architecture. After the serration of rock-cut Hindu architecture was stone built. Figure 5.2 shows the timeline of stone architecture in India. Till about the 6th century A.D., the style of temple architecture was similar both in north as well as in the south. It was only after this date that each began to evolve in its own different direction. The temple of northern India belong to the category called ‘Nagara’, those of south India
are called ‘Dravida’ and those belonging to middle region (Karnataka) and of mixed types (Nagara and Dravida) are called ‘Vesara. Chapter XLIX 1-2, the ‘Kamikagama’ assigns the Nagara temples to the country from the Himalaya to Vindhya, Vesara from the Vindhyा to river Krishna and Dravida from the Krishna to Cape Comorian. These distinct architectural styles occurred in the different parts of India, was result of geographical, climatic, ethnic, racial, historical and linguistic diversities. There is existence of some regional style in West Bengal, Kerala and the Himalayan areas. There is always an intimate relationship between religion and architecture.

The early sources, from the Brhat Samhita onward to the earlier chapters of the Agnipurana classify the temples neither according to Nagara, Dravida and Vesara nor according to their regional distribution. They give the norms of proportionate measure and list 20 possible shapes of prasada which conform to the canons. Here, I explained
only three most basic forms of temples, the Nagara or the Northern style, the Dravida or the southern style and the Vesara or mixed style.

**Nagara Style**

The history of northern style of temples begins with the Gupta and their successors from 5th to 7th century and advanced to early Chalukyas, 7th to 8th century, the Kalingas and Eastern Gangas, 8th to 13th century, the Pratiharas and Chandellas, 8th to 11th century, the Maitrakas and the Solankies, 8th to 13th century and Rajputana, 8th to 12th century. This Nagara style is most prominently seen in the Orissan temples and is widely distributed over a great part of India. Having its centre in Madhyadesa temples were built in the Nagara style, from Himalaya in the north, to the east and west coasts of India and as far south as the river Tungabhadra. Madhyadesa was bounded by the river Saraswati in Kurukshetra, Allahabad, the Himalaya and the Vindhyas.\(^{13}\) James Ferguson prefers the name Indo-Aryan to Nagara. The northern or Indo-Aryan style of architecture covers the whole area once occupied by the Aryans, “Usually designated as Hindustan” to the north of the Tapti and Mahanadi rivers. What is known as the Jain style of architecture in western India is a development or variety of this Indo-Aryan order and was used by the Hindu and Jains alike all over Rajputana, Malwa and Gujarat.\(^{14}\)

The word ‘Nagara’ is derived from Nagar which is a common name for the town and ‘Nagara’ is an adjective therefore it implies something pertaining to Sri Nagar or Pataliputra, the ancient Metropolis of India. Braht Samhita says that temples, conforming to the prescriptions should be built according to the towns.\(^{15}\) Nagara may also be derived from ‘Naga’. The Vastupurasa has the shape of ‘Naga’ and the Vastunaga who is Shesa or Ananta, encircles every site.\(^{16}\) Architecture is the art and science of deigning and erecting building and other physical structure. The Nagara style temple architecture reveals two distinct features. One of the distinctions is in planning and other one is in elevation. The characteristics temple plan of the northern India which was developed in the 5th century contained the basic compartments grabha-gariha surrounded by an ambulatory path, an outer portico with columns in front and a flat roof of stone.
This was the classical of golden period when the art and architecture received strong encouragement. But temples built during this period were simple i.e. temples at Sanchi, Tigawa and Deogarh. The development of shikhara started at the temple of Deogarh in Madhya Pradesh. The temples constructed in the 8th century had smaller
shrine and shikhara become the crowing feature of the temple. The addition of mandapa to the temple started during this period itself. Later on rectangular wall around the temple and addition of subsidiary shrines at each corner was also took place in the same period. Earlier to this period, the temple such as Teli-Ka Mandir, Gwalior and Vaital Deul, Bhubaneswar has only main sanctuary with neither the mandapa nor the portico. Gupta temples had also none. The temple complex of the Chalukya of Badami marks an important phase in the evolution of temple architecture in India. It reveals numerous experiments in stylistic variation.

Here, perhaps was the origin of the classical trichotomous classification of Indian temples into Nagara, Dravida and Vesara. It is said that the word Nagara actually mean squares, Vesara circular and Dravida polygonal (6 to 8 sided). The buildings of Nagara style are quadrangular from base to the top, those of the Dravida are octagonal from the neck to top and those of Vesara style are round from the neck to top. The Nagara style are characterised by a beehive shaped tower, called shikhara made up of layer upon layer of architectural element such as kapota and gavakshas, all toped by a larger round cushion-like element called an amalaka. Nagara style temple developed over a time and one once established it went on changing its style and pattern. The temples of this style can be categorized in the following types—

1. Latina

Early Nagara temples dating from 5th century onward were of Latina mode. Gupta shrine such as those at Sanchi and Tigawa were originally flat roofed or may have superstructures which have since been lost. But it was during the 7th century, the fully developed Latina form appeared with its curved spire with rising to a ribbed amalaka and pot-finial (kalasa). The Latina, curvilinear in outline the type most usually found above the sanctuary. The Latina shikhara is composed of a series of horizontal roof slabs gradually receding towards the top and provided with projections that extend from the base and wall of the temple. The surface of shikhara is covered with vine like tracery composed of diminutive chandrasalas. Above the truncated top (skandha) projects a neck
on which rests a large grooved disk (amalasara) and above it sits a pot with a crowing finial. Each storey is indicated by miniature amalasarakas at the four corners, repeated all the way to the top. So the basic option for a Latina temple concern the number of segments or projections in the wall and usually corresponding in shikhara and number of bhumis (levels) in the shikhara marked by the corner pavilions. This style covers a wide area from Nalanda (Bihar) to Alampur (Andhra Pradesh) and Pattadakal (Karnataka).

Main temple of this type are temples at Deogarh, Stupa at Nalanda, temples in Madhya Pradesh at Amrol, Bateshara, Gwalior, Nareshara, Terali and at Roda, Shamlaji, Modhera in Gujarat and Galaganatha temple at Pattadkal in Karnataka etc.

2. Phamasana

In Phamasana temple, the shikhara is rectilinear in outline and capped by a bell-shaped member and this form more usually found above the mandapa. Certain regions favoured Nagara versions of Phamasana between the 6th and 8th centuries including Karnataka under the early Chalukyas, at Aihole and the Himalayan foothills, at Jogeshvara. It was the principal shrine type in Saurashta during the 7th century, in both its multi-tier and its pent roof (the sloping tier) forms. Mahadeva temple, Bileshvara is an example of Phamasana shrine with aedicule at corners.

3. Valbhi

Valabhi shrine are rectangular, entered through one of the long side and were normally dedicated to goddesses. The term ‘Valabhi’ is probably derived from Vala, a curved rafter, like the ones combined in a Valabh or chassis of the kind that would have supported the tunnel or barrel roof, single or with side-aisles, covering the sort of timber framed structure represented in masonry by this mode. The horseshoe arch form, the hooped gables to the roof ends and dormers, commonly known as the gavaksha (cow-eye) was the inseparable part of this kind of architecture. The Valabhi denotes a pitched roof-having a ridge. Its slopes are on its four sides- it is a hipped roof or on two sides only. On the ridge three Amalasarkas are placed. Attie rooms (grabha) or dormer window
(Chandrasala) are on either side of the ridge.\textsuperscript{21} The Valabhi Prasada is rectangular on plan, its length being thrice its width, with a barrel roofed superstructure running at right angle to the direction of entry to the garbha-gariha. The temple of this group have each one Mekhala, the number of their doors depends upon their length. There are many small chambers (grabha) in its valabhi. Nava-Devi temple in Yagesvar, The Vaital Deul in Bhubaneswar, Teli-ka-mandir in Gwalior are examples of this form.

During the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, the Valabhi concept was extrapolated into complex networks of gavakshas, extending downwards through a proliferation of overlapping motifs rather than through the addition and more readily applicable to niche pediments (udgamas) and to eave-dormers than to full-size valabhi gables, such pattern has a stepped outline and sequences of such gables are created, projecting one from another, as in the earlier detelescoping Valabhi temples, through much transform.\textsuperscript{22} Valabhi is also the form of the antefix or shukha-nasa of the Nagara modes and these forms contained to play its part with changes till the end of 9\textsuperscript{th} century, when it ceased to be used for whole temples, at least in central and western India.

4. Shikhari

The composite shekhari mode was the most important form of Nagara temples from the 10\textsuperscript{th} century onwards in central and western India. The shikhari consists of the central latina spires with one or more rows of half spires added on either side and miniature shikharas clustered along the base and corners. The whole mass of carved masonry recalling a mountain with a cluster of subsidiary peaks. Before the emergence of the shekhari, there were two related type which are ‘Anekandaka’ and ‘proto-shekhari’. These introduced the shekhari-topped pillar form (kuta-stambhah). In the simple type-I of proto-shekhri, a Latina shikhara rises over four corner kuta-stambha with valabhi-crowned bhadras. The type-II is a downward extension of this with an extra tier, still with three projections and the valabhi flowing down and apart into a wide porch-like bhadras.\textsuperscript{23} Sanderi Mata temple, Sander (Gujarat) is the example of this type-II. Adam Hardy has described total five principal types. Type-III, appeared early in the 11\textsuperscript{th}
Fig. 5.4 Nagara Style of Temple

Fig. 5.5 Dravidian Style of Temple

Fig. 5.6 Vesara Style of Temple
century, with five projections in the first-tier, a sequence of three urah-shringas unfurling on each face and the number of kuta-stambha in each quadrant flowing down from one to three to five and with its stepped diamond plan, bringing the corners into a line with adjacent projections. Someshvara temple, Kiradu (Rajasthan), Navalakha temple, Sajakpur Gujarat) are the example of this type. Type-IV and Type-V were established in the 11th and 12th century. Type-IV had three main springing levels in the shikhara and two or three urah-shringas on each face with a stepped diamond plan. Type-V had an additional springing level and two possibilities of up to four urah-shringas. This type-V can be noted in the Kandariya Mahadeva temple, Khajuraho and Samiddheshvara temple, Chittor and Jain temples of Ajitanatha at Taranga etc.

5. Bhumija

This form emerged in the 11th century long after the shekhari. Bhumija variety of northern India shikhara was particularly popular in temples of western India, northern Deccan and Malwa regions. It comprises a central Latina projection, tapering towards the top on all four faces. The quadrant so formed is decorated with miniature spires in horizontal and vertical rows all the way to top. A Bhumija temple is known by the radiating, cascading chaos of slender kuta-stambhas on every angle between its out-thrusting bhadras, with the kuta-stambhas fully exposed in the first-tier and buried to their chests in the serried ranks above. The plan can be orthogonal or stellate. Udayeshvara temple, Udaipur, Devi temple, Ramgarh (Rajasthan), Malavai temple, Alirapur (Madhya Pradesh), Surya temple Jhalarpatan, Chnnekeshava temple, Belur (Karnataka) are the example of such type.
Dravidian style of architecture emerged thousand of years ago in the southern part of the India being developed by the Dravidian peoples. The temples of this style are located in the southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Various dynasties and empires such as the Cholas, Chera, Pandyas, Pallavas, Rashtraakutas, Chalukyas, Hoysalas and Vijyanagara Empire amongst many other have made a substantial contribution to this architecture. Pallavas were pioneers of south Indian architecture. The rock-cut temples dating from 610 to 690 AD and structural temples built from 690 to 900 AD are the earliest examples of this style. The Pallavas rulers lead the way of Dravidian style of temple architecture and they built the temples at Mahabalipuram. They are excavated pillared halls and monolithic shrines known as rathas in Mahabalipuram. Kailasanatha temple or Rajasimha in Kanchipuram is a fine example of Pallava style temple. Earliest developments in Dravida temple can also be traced in the Ravana Phadi cave, Aihole, the alpa vimana (mono-adecular shrine) and upper Shivalaya Badami, the super structure build in early 7th century by early western Chalukyas- the Chalukyas of Vatapi.  

The classical tradition of Dravida style was transmitted by the Pallava dynasty rulers to the Cholas (900-1150 A.D.). The Cholas had built several hundreds of temples. The temple of Koranganatha at Srinivasanlur which has mandapa with attached sanctuary or vimana, is one of the earliest examples of Chola architecture. Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple was constructed with 50 ft high shikhara. The Brihadeshwara temple at Thanjuvur with a height of 60 m has been described as the most beautiful specimen of Tamil architecture and land mark in the evolution of building art in southern India, by Percy Brown. During the Pandyas rule (c1100 – 1350 AD), the south Indian temples were added with the lofty gateways ‘gopurams’ at the entrance with the basic temple composition. The gopurams made the temple elevation attractive and also provided the temples with an enclosure. The gopurams evolved from a rectangular base with a pyramid crowned with a barrel vaulted form. The Sandara Pandya gopuram, added to the temple of Jambukshevara (1250 A.D.) and gopuram of the great temple at Kumbakoman (c.1350 A.D.) are the best examples of gopurams of Pandyas times. The temple of Airavatesavara at Desuram was
also constructed during this region. The temple erected by the Hoysalyas (c.1100 – 1343 A.D.) has a distinctive style of architecture. This Hoysalya architecture style is described as Karnataka Dravida as distinguished from the traditional Dravida and is considered an indifferent architectural tradition with many unique features. The Hoysala temples have complicated plans which may be polygonal or star-shaped with numerous angled projections. The carved surfaces are executed with remarkable precision, usually in Chlorite. The columns are surmounted by a vase-shaped ornament. Pyramidal towers are used to make the temple look like a double or triple temple. The finest examples of their architecture are the Chennakesava temple in Belur, Hoysalesvara temple in Halebidu and the Kesava temple in Somanathapura. The Dravidian style concluded in a series of extended temple cities or townships. The finest example of township is temples at Srirangam and Madurai with several concentric enclosures.

The Structural Components of Dravida Style Temple

A general south Indian or Dravida style temple, commonly called ‘Vimana style’. Vimana means ship or boat, is based upon Agamas and Shilpa and Vastu Shastra. This style of temple is usually made from stone. Its shape may be rectangular, square, star-shaped or octagonal. These temples usually have gate pyramids, gopurams, which are large towers over the entrance, a vimana, which is the tower over the sanctum and large pillared halls and corridors. The sanctum or grabha-gariha contain the pitha where the main deity of the temple is sited. It is usually semi-dark and has no sculptures, except the main deity. There is usually a pradakshina path around the deity. The sanctum is topped by a pyramidal tower several storeys high called vimana or shikhara. It is crowned by a chakra in a lord Vishnu temple and trident in a Lord Shiva temple. The inner sanctum is surrounded by subsidiary shrines, mandapa and pillared corridors. Mandapa means any roofed, open or enclosed pavilion resting on pillars, standing independently or connected to the sanctum and have one or more entrance porches. Like north Indian temple it contains antarala, mahamandapa and mukhmandapa. The subsidiary shrines or altars contain other deities including the consort of the main deity. Many south Indian temples have several halls,
such as ranga-mandapa- a large audience pavilion, Yajna hall- for occasional sacrifices, Nrittya hall- for dance recitals, Vahana-mandapa- place for vehicles, Kalyana-mandapa- marriage hall, Asthana-mandapa- were the processional deity is dressed, Vasanta-mandapa- hall in the middle of the temple tank used for festival and Utsava-mandapa-hall for festival occasions. These temples also have a treasury, a kitchen, store-room and dining hall. In the early 7th century, there exists the Alpa-vimana; the simplest possible Dravida vimana was a kind of primitive hut with just a base, a wall and a roof. So this form of Dravida shrine has a walled sanctum supporting a single pavilion in the superstructure. Alpa vimana are one-tier shrine but conceptually of two storeys- the real grand floor and an imaginary floor to the upper pavilion. But during the 7th – 8th century the simple alpa-vimana took the form of multi-aedicular vimana design, variations on the alpa-vimana form used as the top tier (tala) or upper temple of more complex design, with kapota-panjara aedicule with central projection and kutas on the prati platform, staggered shala aedicule and multi-aedicular. Vijayala-Cholishvara
temple, Narttamalai (mid 9th century) and Agastishvara temple, Kilajur are example of such type. Later on stellate vimana were constructed. Draupadi’s ratha at Mahabalipuram is example of simple Alpa-vimana. Arjuna ratha is an example of step pyramid structure decorated with miniature building. Bhima ratha reproduces the chaiyta-model. The Shore Temple at Mamallapuram (c700 AD) resembles the rathas in having stepped roof-storeys decorated with miniature building and culminating in monolithic octagonal domes.

**Vesara Style**

Vesara is a type of Indian architecture primarily used in temple. It is combination of the ‘Nagara’ and ‘Dravida’ styles. Etymologically, the term ‘Vesara’ has been given three explanations. Firstly, it is deemed to be a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word ‘mishra’ meaning mixed denoting a mixture of two styles. Secondly, it means a ‘mule’ which again is a hybrid of two animals- an issue of heterogeneous parents. Such temples in plan, it is Dravida and in the shape of its details, it is Nagara. It denotes a mixed style. Thirdly, Vesara is believed to have been derived from Sanskrit word ‘Vishra’ meaning an area to talk a long walk. The quarters of Buddhist and Jain monks who left urban area to live in cave temples were called viharas.

In the early Chalukya period hybrids are found mainly in the middle phase. Two examples of this phase are Jambulingesvara, Badami, Durga temple, Aihole. These early temples show a great deal of Buddhist influence. This trend was started by the Chalukyas of Badami (500 – 753 A.D.), refined by the Rashtrakutas of Manyakheta (750 – 983 A.D.) in Ellora, Chalukyas of Kalyani (983 – 1150 A.D.) in Lakkundi, Dambal, Gadag etc. and epitomized by the Hoysala Empire (1000 – 1330 A.D.).\(^{29}\) Many temples in central Indian and Deccan have used the vesara style with regional modifications. The old temple of Papanath (680 A.D.) at Pattadakal shows a curious combination of styles. The body of the temple is Dravidian but the shikharas is a curious approximation to the form of the early northern Hindu or Indo-Aryan order, while in details the temple show a strong banning of Dravidian.\(^{30}\) Vesara probably refers to temples typical from 11th century in Karnataka and elsewhere in the Deccan. Temples built from 11th to 13th century
were basically Dravida, do have Nagara like aspects. A temple such as the Kashivishveshvara, Lakkundi, of later Chalukyas, in its west vimana, centers on a prominent shekhari niche and displays Nagara forms in its intermediate projections and other many features of Dravidian, but it not fully hybrid. It essentially Karnata Dravida rather then mixed. The Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebidu and Somnathpura are the examples of this style. The surface in these Hoysala temple are carved in high relief with detailed repeating patterns of miniature shrine models, distinguishing them also from contemporary temples in other parts of India. The temples of Sirmour, Baijnath, Baroli and Amarkantak are also the examples of this Vesara style.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF KHAJURAHO TEMPLES

The temples of Khajuraho built in central India are marvelous example of Nagara style of architecture. Khajuraho represents the feast of beauty combing art and architecture in a manner, which remains unsurpassed in the history of mankind. According to Benjamin Roland, ‘the culmination of the Indo-Aryan genius in architecture was attained in the extraordinary group of temples erected at Khajuraho in central India.’ A unique feature of the these temples is that, contrary to custom, they are not enclosed within a wall but stand on a high terrace of solid masonry as though to symbolize their elevation above their temporal surroundings. The constituents parts of Khajuraho temples are woven into an organic conception, not always found in the other temples of India.

These temples are affiliated to the Hindu and Jaina faiths. The temples are mainly dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu and Surya and Jaina divinities but in architectural style, form and composition they all are alike and cannot be distinguished form one another easily. The temples of Khajuraho are constructed in a particular style and manner. Most of temples are erected on the east-west axis and consists of essential elements of open plan viz. ardha-mandapa, mandapa, antarala and grabha-gariha. Some larger temples have an inner ambulatory around the sanctum and some temples also subsidiary shrine rendering the structure of a complete panchatayana. These temples or prasadas in the architectural
plans can be categorised into two broad groups. The first group is sandhara prasada where there is a built-in circumambulation path around the grabha-gariha/sanctum. Lakshmana, Vishvanatha and Kandariya Mahadeva temple belonging to the Hindu sect and Jaina sandara prasada- Parshvanatha temple are the examples of this group. All the remaining temple of Khajuraho belong the nirandhara prasada group where the built in ambulatory is absent.35

These temples were built during a time span of about hundred years, from roughly A.D. 950 to the early 11th century. They are therefore not clearly indicative of a progressive development of the architectural movement but represent only a short period in the evolutionary history of Indian temple architecture when the builders and sculptors, in an intense phase of spiritual fervour, where stirred to their best creation efforts to produce religious monuments of extreme magnificence.36 The archaeological analysis of temple architecture includes analysis of the temple plan, the ceiling architecture, construction material and sculptural contents of the temples. Architecture of temples of Khajuraho can be analysed on these grounds.

Material

Strength and durability of any building depends upon the type of material used for its construction. Among the different kinds of materials employed for construction of structures are stones, bricks, lime, sand, cement, mortar, concrete, iron, steel, tiles and often roof cavars etc. Stones are extensively used in the buildings. The mostly used varieties of stones are granite, gneiss, trap, sandstone, literate, slate and limestone. Granite and sandstones are very durable, can withstand great loads and is used for heavy engineering structures. Chandella rulers used granite and sandstone for construction of temples. The fine grained variety of sandstone of varying shades of buff, pink or pale yellow was brought from the quarries of Panna on the east bank of the Ken River. The earliest temple, Chaunsath Yogini (c. 876 – 899 A.D.) was the only temple constructed entirely of granite. Every other temple at Khajuraho is primary constructed of sandstone. The first set of temples including Lalguan Mahadeva and Brahma, constructed c. 900-925
A.D., are made with granite at the base and sandstone at the upper levels of temples. Over time as the larger temples including Lakshmana, Parashvanatha and Ghantai are made with even less granite at base and larger quantities of sandstone above. The shift in construction material from granite to sandstone was because of granite used in coarse, local granite was unsuitable for intricate ornamental work and with the increase in power of Chandella; the temple architectural complexity was also increased with many more sculptural elements.37

Temple Plans

The Khajuraho temples mark the culmination of central Indian building style and reveal certain distinctive peculiarities of plan and elevation. The temples comprise on the plan- a mukhmandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbha-gariha. In the larger temples mandapa is further elaborated by adding the lateral transepts with balconied windows for ventilation and light and thus it take the shape of a mahamandapa. The mahamandapa is a closed hypostyle hall of considerable height and size, the mukhmandapa and the mandapa are low hypostyle compartments, open on the three sides with a continuous stretch of balconied opening of the kakshsana design. The average size of the mandapa at Khajuraho is only 25 sq. feet. The larger temples also have inner ambulatory around the sanctum. The pradakshina passage full of icons chiseled in three successive rows in the temples like Kandariya Mahadeva, Lakshmana, Vishwanatha and Parashwanatha. These temples of five compartments were known as sandahara prasadas in Hindu temple architecture and temples without inner ambulatory are known as nirandhara prashada i.e. Chitragupta, Jagadambi, Vamana, Javeri, Duladeo. The sandhara temples resemble a Latin cross on plan with two principal arms due to two pairs of transepts cutting across the axis while the nirandhara temples show only one-cross arm. Some of the larger temples like Lakshmana, Kandariya and Vashwanatha temple also have subsidiary shrines in the four corners of the platform, rendering the structure a complete panchayatana or five shrine complex. The plan and design wise, these temple cluster manifest perfect homogeneity, the exception being the Varaha and Matangeshvara temples.
**Elevation**

A Hindu temple is also called Vastupurusa i.e. an architectural piece resembling the body of a human being. ‘Human being’ here stands for God or ‘Supreme Being’. Later this concept was developed into the mandapa concept called Vastuprusha mandapa. Generally a nagara style temple stands on a large and high platform, called jagati, representing the feet of the man or God. Over this, there is a smaller platform of stones called pitha. Over the pitha rises a still smaller platform called adhisthana or vedi-bandha the immediate base of the superstructure of the temples. These three parts of the temple represent the ankle, lower feet and upper feet of the human body or the God. Khajuraho temples are erected on a lofty jagati and are not surrounded by the usual enclosure walls. The temples also have high basement i.e. adhisthana consisting of a series of ornamental mouldings called pitha and vedibhandha. Generally these series of mouldings are bhita, jayakumbha, karnika, grasa patti, antarapatra, kapota, khura, madha bhandha, kumbha, kalasa, gagarka, vasanta-pattika, rajsena, vedika, asanpatta and kakshana etc. Figure 5.3 shows these mouldings. This jagati of some of temples of Khajuraho is distinguished from another point of view. The Lakshmana temple, for example is the only one of the group which stands on original jagati.

The jagati of all the other temples are later additions as an attempt to bestow an original look to the restoration efforts. A rich and diverse series of mouldings lighten the substantial proportion of the plinth, the spreading base of which seems to grip firmly the pavement of the terrace, like the roots of a symmetrical and well grown tree. Over this ornate platform, the pillars and walls of the temple are raised. This pillared area of the temple forms the jangha or the thigh of the God. The jangha or central zone is divided both vertical and horizontally. The vertical divisions are called ratha, bhadra, pratiratha, anuradha, karma and pratikarna which affect the plan while horizontal divisions enhance the grandeur and glamour of the temple. The central zone or jangha consist of solid walls alternating with voids of the inner compartments. The balconied windows are canopied by
overhanging eaves and allow the light and air into the interior. The indented exterior, with alternate projections and recesses and the balconied windows, serve to highlight the beauty of light and shade over the sculptural bands, thus transforming the sandstone figures into the most picturesque profiles. On the projections there are human or divine figures, semi-divine figures like gandharvas, kinnaras, surasundaries are also sculpted. The recesses salilantaras are filled up with rampant vyalas with riders and warriors counter-player below resisting its attack on the walls of Parsvanatha and Lakshmana temple. The solid wall spaces are studded with two horizontal bands but in some temples there is also a narrow third band, topping these two consisting of celestial musicians and flying vidyadharas and mithunas, for instance on Prasvanatha temple. Lakshmana temple’s exterior of the inner wall of the sanctum is fully covered with sculptures. Kandariya Mahadeva temples have three rows of horizontal sculptures on the exterior. The bands are divided and separated by decorative scrolls, creepers and stencil like patterns. A perfect sense of balance and equilibrium has been created by symphony of vertical and horizontal plans.

On the gateway, at the level of the jangha is chadya or sunshade, while on the top level of the pillars are the mouldings called varandika. It is from this level the shikhara or spire emerges. Curvilinear spires rise out of wall portions of the four principal units of the temple leading the spectator's eye form the lowest on the entrance porch i.e. to the highest on the main shrine. Each compartment of the temples was distinguished by a separate roof, the smaller and lowest being the mukhmandapa, next is height came the central hall (mandapas), the two sweeping up in line of mass to the tall shape of the tower or shikhara, surmounting the whole a sukanasa is affixed to its façade over the antrala. Unlike the Orissan type which is pyramidal the Khajuraho roofs are domical in contour, but their surface texture in horizontal strata is much the same. The roofs consisting of series of graded peaks variable resemble a mountain range (Meru). These peaks arrayed along the axial line, rise and fall alternatively while maintain their over all upward ascent culminate in the tallest shikhara which is curvilinear in design the whole shouting an uninterrupted lyrical outline. Since there is a series of small shikharas, in the form of pilasters i.e. half
shikharas, placed are above the other along the corners of the shikharas, till the top of entrance shikharas is reached these are called sringa and above ones as uru-sringas. The area beyond the karna and uru-sringa has a series of amalaka, shaped like cogged wheels or amala fruit, called bhumi-amalaka. So all shikha has on kalasa and amalaka and visuparaka as their crowing member. Amalaka is also supported by an amalasaraka in many temples.

In all the well-preserved temples of the developed type, the shikharas rises from the kantha above the varandika of the jangha, admit sringas and ura-sringas which cluster it on all sides, to the central point. Apart from the smaller shrines which have stepped pyramidal roofs, rising tier upon tier towards the highest point and except the shikharas of Jaina temple of Adinath which is ekan amalasaraka chandrika and kalasa invariably accompany it. In all the well preserved temples of the developed types, the shikharas rises from the kantha above the varandika of the jangha, admist sringas and urasringas which cluster it on all sides to the central point. Apart from the smaller shrines which have stepped pyramidal roofs, rising tier upon tier towards the highest point and except the shikharas of Jaina temple of Adinath which is ekandaka and essentially of lative type, the typical Khajuraho shikharas is anekandaka with a cluster of sringas, urasringas and pratyangas. The commercial crowing members of shikharas i.e. amalasaraka chandrika and kalasa invariably accompany it. Gavaksha, sukanasa, tilaka and other ornamental elements are also present. The Khajuraho temple’s shikharas is hollow inside, sometime in multiple storeys and it technically a double shikharas like the double-dome of the Mughal age.42

The Supporting Elements

Ceiling-Vitana

The designs and the execution of the ceiling in temples of Khajuraho present an unrivalled design of artistic skill. The ceiling and the all corresponding arrange architraves are sumptuously embellished parts of these temples. Structurally ceiling may
be classified in three categories namely Samtala, ksipta and uksipta. Temples of Khajuraho have one type or multiple types of ceiling depending on the individual compartment. Samatala is the variety generally used in mukhmandapa and the portions of the sideways other than the central one. Samatala ceilings are flat, ksipta ceiling are thrown in and upkista (sama-ksipta) ceiling are a combination in between. Amar Singh divides the ceilings of the temples of Khajuraho into ten categories based on sculptural elements. The decorative motifs used for categorization are lotus petals (padmasilas), floral cusps (gajatalus) cusps (kolas) and different square arrangements. Each compartment of the interior had its own ceiling. The minor compartments had usually flat (samatala) ceiling, usually relieved by lotus design, the ornate ones- the lantern type made of diminishing intersecting squares and the cusped and coffered type with a number of sub-type.

The simple cusps resemble ribbed tiles while the ornate ones resemble floriated shells with serrated petals often terminating in adoring figures of nagas. The larger ceiling of the main hall of mahamandapa is carried on a square framework of architrave supported on four central pillars, each with an attic section. The square ceiling is first turned octagonal by cutting the corner and finally circular. The circular ceiling consists of a number of concentric courses (nabhichchhanda-vitana) with the outer rings of floral cusps and the inner ones of coffered cusps (kolas). The smaller ornate ceilings over other compartments are of the many varieties and forms, both circular and square with five to nine or even more arranged concentric units and more complex. The ksipta vitana decorated with arranged squares can be attributed to a more complex architectural style than the samatala (flat) ceiling decorated with floral cusps because it has more intricate design and it not flat while ksipta ceiling with nine arranged squares is more complex intricate sculptural elements than the ksipta ceiling made of three diminishing squares and has a larger number of squares that are all different designs. These ceiling are built by the devices of corbelling and interlocking courses which reveal remarkable ingenuity and artistry on the part of the Khajuraho architect. Table 5.1 show the typical ceiling styles of Khajuraho along with dates they were built.
### Table 5.1 Ceiling Architecture Distribution between Temples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorization</th>
<th>Number of Temples with this Ceiling Style</th>
<th>Dating (circa)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samata lā vitana decorated with padmasila</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>A.D. 925-1025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order decorated with kola courses</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>A.D. 950-1075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order decorated with gajatalu courses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A.D. 1000-1110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order in a set of diagonally arranged squares decorated with kola courses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A.D. 1000-1110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order in a set of nine arranged squares decorated with kola courses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A.D. 1000-1110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order in a set of eight circles intersected by a big circle in the center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A.D. 950-970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sama-kśipta vitana decorated with figural groups in the boxes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10th Century A.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karotaka of Sabhmarga order</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A.D. 950-970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kśipta vitana of Nabhicchanda order made of three diminishing squares decorated with kola courses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A.D. 950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Chelsea Gill, Thesis ‘A comparative analysis of the temple of Khajuraho and the ruling Chandellas of India
Figure 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12 are showing the formation of ceiling of mahamandapa of Lakshmana temple.
Fig. 5.13 Mahamandapa ceiling of Lakshmana temple, first ring cups

Fig. 5.14

Fig. 5.15 Mahamandapa ceiling of Lakshmana temple, second ring geometry

Fig. 5.16

Fig. 5.17 Mahamandapa ceiling of Lakshmana temple, second ring cups

Fig. 5.18 Mahamandapa ceiling of Lakshmana temple, first and second ring cups
Pillars

The Hindu temple consists of tall, slender, tree-standing, beam supporting columns, pillars and pilaster. The pillars of Khajuraho temples are carved from top to bottom with decorative designs. Pillar has a base shaft and column. Pillars are composed of identifiable parts arranged in vertical sequence, like the mouldings of temple walls with which these elements are always in dialogue. The Indian texts classify pillars largely in terms of their cross section: Ruchaka means square and in southern terminology, Rudrakanta is circular, Vishnukanta octagonal and Brahmakanta is tetragonal. The pillars forms are too many in Indian temples. The pillars of northern Indian temples are singled out for the greatest attention paid on their carving by the sculptor. Four verities namely ruchaka, bhadraka, misraka and ghatapallava have been popular ones in central India. These varieties share many ornamental motifs in common.

The lotus, scroll, ratha, ardhratha, pedimented niches on middle portion and cruciform capital are mostly discernible. A pillar has a base, shaft and column. The column is also in three parts, the base, the shaft and the capital with distinct proportions for each part. In the Khajuraho temples the pillar capitals are actual pillars supporting roofs. Some times they are squat and base without sculptured brackets. Some are tall and elegant, decorated with beaded, interlacing, half circular garlands, intersected in turn, by bell and chains, dangling from kirtimukhas or mythical faces of glory. Equipped with an
octagonal base and a cylindrical top, they carried bracketed consoles for holding shalabhanjikas (woman supporting with trees), Jain Tirthankaras and other figures mortised in sockets. On the whole pillars are decorated with a variety of geometrical designs and female figures carved in high relief.

The Door-Frames and its decorations

Generally, a Nagara style temple has a highly decorated entrance door-frame, including the threshold, with vertical and horizontal friezes, panels and runners. In the centre of the lintel is placed the image of god and goddess, called lalata-bimba. The door-jambs may have one, three, four or seven parallel vertical shakhas or offsets, called dvara-sakhas, each one decorated with friezes and panels depicting gods and goddesses. At the bottom there may be panels depicting either the dvarapalas or Ganga and Yamuna, the two scared rivers. In the temples of Khajuraho, the sanctum doorway is also decorated with conventional auspicious motifs; mithunas, creepers, dwarfs. It is guarded by door-keeper i.e. dvarapalas and purified by the river goddesses, Ganga and Yamuna in human form. Its door-sill and lintel are also profusely carved. The Lakshmana, Kandariya and Javeri temples still preserve arched gateways or toranas decorated with makaras, mythical aquatic animals. The basic plan of the Khajuraho temples remaining the same, each temple still retains certain distinctions. The jagati of temple is reached by a flight of stairs. Onward, the mukhmandapa, mandapa, mahamandapa, antarala and sanctum have successively higher levels. Sanctum is saptaratha on plan and in elevation and the cubical portion below the shikhara is divided into seven segments showing two series of mouldings of adhishtana and two or three sculptured registers on the jangha separated by two sets of bandhana mouldings. The principal lineaments of elevation directly rise from and basically confirm to those of the plan. The numerous projections and recesses of the elevation, following rhythmically the indentations of the plan, produce an admirable contrast of light and shade, and all of them coverage to the final unity of the shikhara, thus intensifying the plasticity and vertical aspiration of the monument. The developed temples at Khajuraho have fixed and almost uniform elevation proportions. Thus each
temple was erected on elevated platform measuring 2.74 m to 3.34 m which was almost equal in height to the adhishthana comprising upapitha, pitha and vedibandha. Again the jangha up to the ceiling level approximated in proportion to the adhishthana.

The main shikhara (measuring 18.24 m to 27.36 m height above the platform terrace) was 2 - 3 times of the height of the jangha and adhishthana. As regards the ground plan the total length of the temple (15.2 m to 25.84 m) minus the flight of the steps was about the same as the maximum width of the structure. The sanctum (2.44 m to 3.04 m sq.) which was practically cubical was three times the width of its doorway, while the height of the doorway was twice of its own width. Each part of the edifice and its sub part down to the minutest moulding had certain set measures and proportions which were fixed either canonically or traditionally. Thus the Khajuraho architect had a clear concept of well-tested standard ratios and proportions and he built his grand edifice confidently, confirming to these.  

Art of Khajuraho Temples

Architecture in the words of Garbett, the art of well building i.e. the art of giving to a building all the perfection of which it is capable. So architectural ornamentation of building and the adaptation of apt aesthetic detail in their construction is given great importance. The aesthetic sense of the designer has to play a prominent part in selecting the proper figure or form for embodying this motif of architecture. The architect has here to exercise all his best tastes for fine arts, drawing, painting, sculpture and appeal to the higher sentiments and emotions of sublimity, beauty, harmony and the like. So success of an artist depends upon his realisation of the beauty and his ability to communicate it. Sculpture art is generally known as the art of static revealing ones mood and posture only but in case of Khajuraho, it is different. Khajuraho sculpture and figures are dynamic and they appear to be in action and movement. Dynamism in static action and movement in immovable is the unique feature of Khajuraho art. The sculptors of Khajuraho have carved superb sculptures which form a part of the architecture yet are singularly significant. Each one of them is a composition in itself-expressive of particular emotion.
All the figures have a purpose, an idea to convey. There appears an engagement of the devotees in a mass worship, transcendental purpose being sought by the humans of this world. The sincere love towards life in all of them is suggestive of their sincerity towards their mission. In Khajuraho temples architecture and sculpture went hand in hand. The sculptures at Khajuraho can be divided into seven broad categories:

1. **Cult Images**

   The first category comprises cult images of Shiva, Vishnu, Surya, and Jain Tirthankaras and so on installed in sanctum for worship. These figures are fashioned in strict conformity with orthodox formula i.e. in accordance with the canonical rules. Such images are depicted completely in the round. These are formal and generally stand erect and have a large nimbus and a back slab decorated with figures of attendant gods and goddesses. The images of gods and goddesses usually installed in niches below the balcony projections at the back of the temples and sometimes incorporated into the broad bands of sculpture.

2. **Sculptures of Divine Deities**

   The second category of sculpture includes the family, attendants and endorsing divinities besides numerous categories of God and Goddesses. Such sculptures occupy the niches or are shown on the walls of the temple and are executed either in the round or in high or medium relief. Those occurring in the niches are more formal and are executed with minute iconographical qualities as those the cult images. While the other figures of deities including eight dikpalas i.e. guardians of the directions, are less formal and freer. These are figured in lively tribhanga posture and can be easily distinguished by other human figures by their peculiar headdress or attributes or in more than two hands and their vahanas.
3. **Demi-Gods**

The third category comprises of demi-Gods other than the celestial beauties and includes ‘Pramathas’ or Ganas, Kumaras or Dhara-pitrakas (atlantean figures), Gandharvas (celestial musicians) and Vidyadharas’ angels who are also depicted on the Khajuraho temples in large number and with great effect. They are all divine attendants with specific functions and assignments and their positions in the architectural scheme are largely fixed in the art-conversions. i.e. the top row of the jangha representing the celestial world was reserved for the Vidyadharas and Gandharvas.

4. **Celestial Nymphs**

The fourth category of sculpture comprises heavenly fairy-dancer (apsaras), youthful heavenly nymphs (surasundaries), youthful human (nayikas) and women sporting with trees (salabhanjikas). They are figured either in round or in high or medium relief on the outer or inner walls, pillars and ceilings. The sculptures of this category are not only numerous but also known for their quality in the temples of Khajuraho. These sculptures of women of Khajuraho can be further categorized as belonging to the three worlds.

1. **Patal lok (Nether world)**
   a) Nagkanya or serpent girls with cobras’ hood

2. **Mrityu lok (Mortal world)**
   a) Nayika or beautiful lady
   b) Devdasi or temple girl

iii) **Swarag lok (Heaven)**
   a) Apsara or Damsela of God
   b) Surasundaries or celestial nymphs

The surasundaries are invariably depicted as elegant youthful, graceful and charming and are wearing the choicest gems, jewellery and attractive garments. As a
attendant of higher divinities, they are depicted with folded hands in anjali or in some other mudra or as carrying lotus flower, mirror, garland, water-jar, dress, ornaments and other offerings etc. Usually they are shown expressing various human moods, emotions and fancies and are often difficult to distinguish from youthful human nymphs ‘nayikas’. These nayikas are shown as disrobing, yawing, scratching the back, touching the breast, looking into mirror, rinsing water from wet plaits of hair, plucking thorn, fondling a baby, playing with a pet like the parrot or monkey, writing a letter, playing a flute or vina, painting designs or adorning themselves in various ways by painting the feet, applying collybrium or vermillion etc. When any women are figured with trees then she is called women sporting with trees (salabhanjika). The apsaras are usually shown in various dancing postures. The women as Nagkanya is simply a form of procreation to prove that women has developed as a force from darkness to the eternal consciousness and to the concept of Shiva-shakti or cosmic egg in Tantras and probably on the same concept she is depicted in Khajuraho temples. The depiction of these youthful nymphs of whatever type and form they may be is not only ornamental but is with a deeper meaning and symbolism.

5. Animals sculptures

The fifth category consists of sculptures of animals such as sardula or vyala and other mystic animals. Primarily sardula is depicted as a rampant horned loin with an armed human rider on back or warrior attacking it from behind. Several other forms with heads of man, elephant, boar, parrot etc. are shown. These vyalas are normally figured in recesses of jangha but also appears on the sukanasika and in the interior. These mythical and realistic animal figures break the monotony of figurative forms. Some elephant sculptures on the base mouldings of temples (As in Lakshmana temple) are depicted as though they were supporting the building on their backs.
6. Erotic motifs / Mithuna sculptures

The sixth category of sculptures consists of amorous couples engaged in sexual acts in variety of poses and scenes of bestiality. These erotic sculptures also capture the fine nuance of human emotion and sensitivity. It is interesting to note that the erotic figures have invariably been shown in standing poses with the intention that they should merge with the rising surge of the temple, a gesture representing a reaching out to the Absolute. This erotic motif has been given great importance in the sculptural scheme in Khajuraho temples but it about 2 to 5 percent of the total number of sculptures. The erotic sculptures that are available in Khajuraho temples can be broadly grouped into the following categories.54

1. Exhibition of sex organs by women in partial or complete nudity.
2. Simple cheerful couples or couples engaged in romance.
3. Couples in lustful passion enjoying kisses and embraces.
5. Sexual congress in fantastic poses.
6. Coitus of man with animals.
7. Coitus among animals.
8. Sex in military scenes.
9. Eroticism in domestic scenes.
10. Natural scenes and various symbols etc.

7. Secular sculptures

The last category of sculptures include secular sculptures consisting of miscellaneous themes such as domestic scenes, teachers and students, ascetics, musicians, dancers, military men, hunting parties, sculptors at work, warriors marching in procession, court life etc. These sculptures throw a great light on socio-economic condition of life during the medieval times of India. As we inspect the sculptural figures and scenes on panels of
temples of Khajuraho, the life of our forbearers takes form and colour and passion and movement during that of 10th to 11th century.

Moreover geometric and floral motifs are also found on panels, architectural mouldings and pillars and intricate ceiling designs that unfold like lacy flowers and stars from the roofs within the temple halls. Undoubtedly Khajuraho was the most important and famous centre for Chandella art. Like medieval sculpture, Khajuraho sculptures are also encarved on shikhara, jangha, ambulatory, sanctum inner and outer walls of the temples. In the beginning, two bands of sculptures are found but after 950 A.D. on the upper side of the two bands third band also came into existence. In the third band sculptures of Gandharvas, Vidyadharas and Kinnaras were carved.

**Social Life Depicted in Khajuraho temples**

Besides the religious images, devanganas and erotic scenes, the sculptures of Khajuraho portrayed various facets of life, such as love and hatred, happiness and sorrow, customs and mannerism, cosmetics and hair styles, cloths and ornaments, arts and crafts, religion and belief, social life and economic life prevailing at that time. S.K. Mitra eloquently mentioned that the Chandellas artists attempted to be as realistic as possible judging by the standard prevalent in the country during the time. In the bigger temples, like the Kandariya Mahadeva, Vishvanatha and Lakshmana temple, there are two small friezes in the inner and outer pradakshina depicting social scenes. In the inner pradakshina of the Vishvanatha temple and its third frieze all around the mandapa and the pradakshina are exclusively filled with secular scenes in relief. The massive platforms on which the temples are built are ornately carved with depictions of contemporary life. The various facets of life in social and economic life of Chandellas society as depicted by the portraits at Khajuraho can be understood by the following-

1. **Education and Learning**

There are many sculptures in Khajuraho which depict the teacher and student. In one scene of Lakshmana temple, a teacher is seen seated on the floor with a pencil in his right
hand and holding a big board with the left hand. A small boy is standing behind the board and is also seeing what the teacher is writing. There are eight big, four small and two very small boys, scattered in disorder around the teacher trying to see what he has written on the board. In another scene the teacher sitting on slightly raised dais and holding a manuscript in his right hand while the other scene show the teacher seated on cushion with other two pupils sited on cushion -one in front and another at the back writing something on Bhoja-patra and two other persons are standing behind the disciples. In both the scenes the teachers are explaining with uplifted right hand. From the attributes it can be judged that the teachers are probably Brahmins and the teacher-student ratio was smaller as small groups of students are depicted in scenes. Woman education was also at that time, several sculpture shows that both man and women are receiving education.

2. Trades, professions, calling and vocations

Khajuraho sculptures point out the different professions and occupations of the people of the Chandellas society. The main occupation at that time was agriculture. Chandella kings gave due importance to irrigation also. Large number of reservoirs, lakes and wells were dug out at that time i.e. Shiva agar, Khajuraho sagar and Rati tal etc. testimony it. The architects and artisans and sculptors are frequently depicted at Khajuraho temples. In some scenes the senior architects are shown as bearded and are surrounded by an admiring crowd of disciples as seated or standing while in one scene master architect is carved as drawing a design on board with a group of disciples carrying hammer and chisels. Some sculptures depict labourers carrying loads, masons chiseling stones, female servant carrying water, surgeons operating on their patients, physicians feeling the pulse of sick persons and female artisans engaged in landscape paintings etc.

Hunting was an important occupation at that time. Hunters are frequently represented together with men, carrying on poles, hunted animal like boar and deer. In one scene, a boar and a hunting dog with another boar are shown with four horsemen. Another scene shows three hunters, two of whom are armed with bows and arrows and
one has an axe-like weapon on his shoulder. In front of these three men are two wolves facing each other with their front paws uplifted represented as resisting the hunters. A horned deer with his front legs uplifted are shown behind the hunters. Numbers of other hunting scenes are depicted at Khajuraho. Still there are several tribes in Madhya Pradesh who are living on hunting. The hunter probably belonged to the aboriginal class of sabaras or to lower caste such as the meda, mahara or chandala mentioned in the contemporary Chandella inscription.

Sculptures also depicted several scenes of soldiers and civil servant in political scenes. Soldiers are frequently represented together with mahouts, horse-riders and attendants of horses and elephants such as lesikas, standard-bearers, umbrella-bearers and royal servants and attendants. In large number of sculptures professional musicians and dancers are depicted. They are shown as giving performances before the royal personage and public. In many sculptures the dancing girls and devadasis are shown. They are depicted vouching their charms and offering wine to their dupes. Prostitutes formed an allied class and it is also largely shown in the temples. Barbers are also shown, some times as attendant of female figures, carrying a bag on his shoulders and in some scenes they are carrying mirrors or some other article.

3. Military Life

Numbers of scenes on military life showing its every aspect are depicted. Various scenes show the soldiers on foot or on horse or on elephants prove that there were three divisions of military i.e. elephantry, cavalry and infantry. Camels were mostly used as beasts of burden and seem not to constitute a regular arm. The main weapons wielded by army are sword and shield, dagger and lances, gada and the bow and arrow. The dress of soldiers consisted of only tight fitting knickers reaching a little above the knee. Numbers of scenes also depict army on March with or without war band.

The horse and elephants are represented with or without riders and preceded or followed by footmen carrying arms or haversacks containing provisions. Women are also
shown in army. In one scene an armed woman is shown holding a big sword in her left arm and in another scene, a woman is holding an armed soldier, perhaps they accompanied man on wars prove that women took active part in wars at that time. Many panels shows actual fighting scenes face to face and hand to hand fighting, multi-soldiers fighting, fighting on horse back, elephants involved is fighting etc. Few scenes show consultation of kings and army leaders and army ceremonial gaiety.

4. Dance and Music

Friezes on adhishtana and jangha show several dancing scenes. Generally the musicians and drummers are males while the dancers and singers are females. Drums, flute, vina, sahnai, cymbals etc. are the musical instruments. In some cases dancer is male. In a scene depicted on Javeri temple male and female dancers are holding their hands. In one scene a professional male dancer is dancing in front of a dance teacher at Lakshmana temple. Female dancer wear tight short choli or angiya showing contours of breast and upper abdomen is also shown exposed. Dhoti is shown in different forms and some times dupatta is carved on the lower part of the body. Dancers are shown with or without wearing bell-anklets and male dancers are also depicted with ornaments and jewellery. Dance postures are unique in posture as well as in expressions. In Chitragupta temple a man is playing on a flute and a lady is expressing different moods while in Parshvanath temple a lady is listing to the music. In Lakshmana temple musicians are shown in devotional delight and friezes of the Vishvanatha temple show the vocal music and singing was probably an alapa or raga.

5. Domestic Life

The domestic life of the people is also carved in the small friezes around the Khajuraho temples. In some sculptures husband and wife are shown probably discussing some family matters. Various couples are shown sitting together and talking with hands joined held in an explanatory attitude. In the Lakshmana temple a couple is shown in which a women pleases her angry husband and in Devi Jagadambi temple a lady is presenting a
flower. In some scene man is pacifying her angry wife who is standing with a face swollen in anger or with her back turned towards her husband. A woman in Jagadambi temple has put her restraining arm on the man’s right hand to stop him from taking a rash step in anger. A man in Lakshmana temple is shown as pulling his wife holding her plait in his right hand. In the Vishvanatha temple woman is shown as weeping and hiding her tears and is being consoled by man who is trying to remove her hands from the face and in some scenes men are shown as embracing their wives or asking them to forgive with palms joined. In a scene in the Chitragupta temple a lady is shown closing her eyes by putting her hands on them. Probably she is not interested in seeing unexpected things or happenings. Number of scenes of love between men and women are also depicted in Khajuraho.

Several other scenes also exhibit the family life. In one scene in Lakshmana temple, a mother is laying down with her baby resting her head on her palm. She is preparing to suckle the baby who is looking fondly at her. Another scene depict a woman is standing and holding her child on her loins and other scene shows the lady as taking the child from the lap of the servant and also holding a toy in her left hand. Fond mothers are depicted as kissing their babies. Other scene shows the mother sitting on a cushion and child playing besides her. Mothers are also shown as playing with the child have a ball in hand and in some scenes the mothers are depicted as teaching the child- how to move on knees, explaining something written or painting on the wall. Women themselves are also shown as reading and writing, dancing or singing and busy in domestic chores.

Family functions are also depicted in Khajuraho. In one scene men are shown either sitting or standing with bowls in hands and women with jugs are pouring out the liquid of the jugs may be wine on soft drink. While in the Vishvanatha temple frieze men are shown as holding pots on serving the liquid to the women and one of the woman is asking for it with her upraised hand and it seems that at social gathering men and women both drank together. In a sculpture a man riding on a horse is shown going on journey
while his wife is shown bidding him farewell. Armed man are also shown taking leave of their wines before proceeding on the front.

Although in some scenes men are shown as ill treating the women yet it seems that women were free to take part in every walk of life and enjoyed full freedom at that time. Not a single woman is depicted in veil.

6. Game and Amusement

There are several sculptures in Khajuraho which depicts various types of games and amusement i.e. hunting, drinking, man-animal fighting, animal combats, wrestling, acrobating, dance and music and gossiping etc. During the medieval period hunting was an important pastime of the member of the ruling dynasty and other members of the aristocratic society. Several hunting scenes can be noticed on the friezes of platform and basement of temples. A royal hunt is depicted in the Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The bodyguards are going ahead. Two royal horse-riders wearing high boots are shown on the back of horse holding the reins in their left hand, but they carry no arms. In between the hind and forelegs of the second horse there is a small boar and horseman is taking a dagger from the man behind him to kill the boar and in another scene a king wearing a turban and long coat is shown on horse back, looking back and attacking a lion with the double-edged sword held in his right hand while the reins of the horse are in his left hand. The lion has placed his front paws on the loins of the horse as he attacked from the back of the king. In the Lakshmana temple a man is shown kneeling with a bow stretched and aiming a shot at a boar that is in a leaping posture and in another scene two hunters are shown. One hunter is aiming at boar with the bow in his left hand stretched out. The boar has his back toward this hunter while he is attacking the hunter in front who has a big dagger in his right hand and is holding dog by the chain. Hunters are also shown in party and in some scenes trained and tamed animals include the party of hunters. Pig sticking and deer hunting were also popular games. A few scenes of tiger hunting are also shown in which tigers are hunted with javelin from the elephant back. When an animal was killed by hunters, labourers would tie it around a pole and carry it home joyfully.
A man and animal fighting was a very popular form of amusement among Rajputs. Elephant running amuck and trampling men under the feet or tearing or tossing up the unwary with the trunk are very frequently depicted at Khajuraho temples. Such rutting elephants were brought under control by experts with long laces and goad. A fighting scene between an elephant and lion is sculptured in Kandariya Mahadeva temple in which mahout has fallen from back. Scenes depicting man’s commend over the beasts like elephants and horses also depicted and fight between elephants seems to be popular sport as it is also frequently figured at Khajuraho.

Wrestling was a favourite pastime for men at that time. Numbers of wrestling matches being carried on in sitting and standing postures are depicted in Vishvanatha and Chitragupta temples. In Duladeo temple some weighting-lifting scenes are also shown. Several drinking scenes are shown at Khajuraho. Gossiping and story-telling was a common practice both among men and women. Some such scenes showing gossips and enjoying pleasant talk are depicted in the temples.

Numbers of scenes at Khajuraho also depict men and women engaged in different recreations such as playing with the ball, taming birds and monkeys, painting, reading and writing letter etc. In several sculpture ladies are keeping parrots and it seems that they were talking with the birds. A small bird, perhaps a sarika is sitting on the back of the palm of a woman shown in the Jagadambi temple who is carefully flying to shield the bird from the wind with her right hand which is held like a canopy over it. In some sculptures monkeys are shown as pets. In one scene of Vishvanatha temple, a woman is holding a boy in her lap supporting with her left hand while in her right hand she holds a bunch of mangoes. Down below a small monkey is sitting at her right foot holding her chunri as if asking for mangoes. In the Lakshmana temple a monkey is shown with husband and wife.

Ball game (kanduka-krida) was also very popular especially with the women at that time. In majority of sculptures, women are shown throwing ball with the right hand slightly tilted and in some sculpture she is taking care of her slipping down duppata with
left hand. In Lakshmana temple, a woman is shown in a beautiful pose with her back towards the audience. She is in the act of dropping the ball below. She has ball in her right hand which is held overhead to her left side. Such other scenes are also depicted in Jagadambi and Kandariya Mahadeva temple. The sculptors had expected the possibilities of female body to the maximum limit of flexibility by bending, twisting, turning and contorting of the body part as well as the limbs, viewed from the front, from sideways, from the back or combination of all these in such and other similar scenes.

In some scenes the woman is shown painting with a brush on the wall or on the board. Painting seems to be one of the hobbies and form of amusement of women at that time. In a scene in Lakshmana and Vamana temple woman has her back towards the audience and she is looking at the wall with her head backward and painting on the wall. In another scene woman is painting on wall while standing in a dance pose with her right hand painting overhead. Numbers of painting scenes are shown in Kandariya Mahadeva, Vishvanatha and Parshvanath temples.

7. Miscellaneous Scenes

In the Khajuraho, there are several other sculptures depicting scenes which are not covered in any of the above mentioned categories. A number of scenes depicting Rishis and Ascetics engaged in different activities are shown in Khajuraho. In Kandariya Mahadeva temple ascetic figures are seated with twelve men in front facing the onlooker, each of these men has a small bag in one hand while the other is in the santa mudra. They seem to be listening to his talk with offerings in their hands. In some scenes Rishis are giving discourses and men reading out something to seated women. In Vishvanatha temple, some ascetics are seating and listing the sermons given by one of their companions. A king is shown as going in procession to listen to sermons of a Rishi in Lakshmana temple. An ascetic is shown in pranayam pose as pressing his nose with his hand in Shantinath temple. In one scene an ascetic is seated in the centre. The man is standing to the left is holding a chhatra while on the right hand stands with folded hands.
and another scene an ascetic is seated with touching the earth while a male and female attendant on each side are shown.

Kings and royal persons are also shown in several sculptures. In the Shantinath temple, a king is shown seated in a majestic way and a lady is standing before him and it seems to be a count scene. In another scene in Lakshmana temple a bearded man is seated on a cushion with a pen in hand. Two female attendants are standing behind him; one of them holds a chhatra. Before the king, there is a figure of a man holding in one hand the rope which is tied to his waist while the second hand is held in a pose which seems to be explaining and justifying his conduct. Behind the captive stands another man holding the prisoner by the elbow. This is also a judgement scene. In other scenes on the Vishvanatha temple a royal person is sitting majestically and behind him standing a lady attendant. A group of merchants are depicted showing their goods to him. In Chaturbhuj temple a palace scene is depicted in which four royal personage are sitting in a balcony with a pillared railing and roof decorated with beautiful toranas. In Adinath temple a bearded royal personage is shown being attended to while visitors pay their respects to his office or expertise. There are so many other scenes also. The furniture and household articles, dress and ornaments and hair style of both men and women are also notable. All these scenes depict the various facets of life in Khajuraho temples.

8. Dress and ornaments

Both men and women are shown in fine dress and wearing beautiful jewellery. The women and celestial nymphs are shown covering the upper part of the body with a kind of bodice. Sometimes for decoration and covering the upper part of the body a piece of apparel is shown. In some cases of women, the upper garment was fitted as a blouse or jacket showing curves and contours of breasts. In some scenes women are wearing choli. For the lower part, women are shown wearing a short sari with one end draping down their shoulders. Another form of the lower garments was a close fitted pair of trousers folded above the ankles. Men are generally shown wearing dhoti or tunic. Children’s are
shown in knickers. Some figures also wear scared thread yajnopavita on their upper bare body.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF KHAJURAHO TEMPLES

The ornaments worn by men and women in Khajuraho sculptures can be noticed in following categories- i) Head ornaments ii) Ear ornaments iii) Neck ornaments iv) Arm ornaments v) Girdles and vi) Anklets and toe-rings.

Women wore a stud of gold or silver on the forehead in the middle at the end of the parting of the hair. In some sculptures, women are shown having three pendants hanging on the parings of the hair attached securely with hooks and similar to now call the Benda. Head ornaments worn by ladies are known by the names of kesabandha, dhammila and alaka while the head ornaments of men are kirta, jata and karanda-mukuta, chuda and patta. The main ear ornaments are called kundalas- large or small rings, star-shaped or flower-shaped rings or rings with pendants. Men are also seen wearing kundalas which are mostly the chakra- kundalas. The sculptures of both men and women are mostly shown wearing necklaces of different types- small necklace or a gulabandha and a big hara. Armlets and bracelets also seem to have formed an inseparable and essential part of jewellery for both men and women. Sculpture of Khajuraho depicts armlets with a single row of beads and heavy cylindrical ones. Bracelets shown are also beaded with round, cylindrical, broad and elaborate ones. Girdles are also shown in sculptures of both men and women of all classes. Girdles are in the form of ornate belt with central clasp on the waist. In a majority of case girdles shown are simple and made of single string of beads without loops or tassels. Anklets are beaded string and a series of square pendants often depicted in pairs. In same cases anklets consists of two or three rows or beaded strings with or without a boss in front. By keen observations of sculptures we can notice plain or beaded toe rings also.

Why erotic sculptures in the Temples
From the second century B.C. Indian art has incorporated the symbol of loving couples, called mithuna, as most auspicious symbol for the health, wealth and progeny, the three basic desires of human being as spelt in the Vedic literature. This symbol is found depicted on the walls of the shrines of all religious including the so called orthodox religious like Buddhism and Jainism. Medieval Hindu temples all over India are replete with sexual motifs during the period of A.D. 900-1400. Art and religion are interrelated. Temple architecture was conceived of to serve not only the intellectual purpose but to fulfill the spiritual urge and to meet the religious needs of the people in every day life. Art is primarily conceived with the cultivation of beauty through the physical medium. It is needless to say that art and literature are observed with sex. For that matter, even spiritual literature of India itself is full of sex. The erotic sculpture on the temples can, therefore, be regarded not as expression of lust but the expression of non-dual status of higher reality. Sex is not taboo but is the fountainhead of inspiration. Hence, it is inevitable for the artist to derive inspiration from famine beauty for his work. It is possible that the erotic sculptures symbolically represent the union of two opposing forces or energies like, inhalation and exhalation, in a timeless state of non-duality. The erotic art at Khajuraho is considered to be pinnacle of love and passion. Several theories or hypotheses attempt to explain the presence of sensual figures in religious art.

1. Oneness: One theory says that erotic figures represent ‘karma’. The mithunas are symbols of shakti i.e. cosmic union of Purusa and Prakti- both the sexes in one God – representing the ‘oneness’ of God or the magic syllable ‘AUM’. The yoni and linga symbolise the creation of world. Their union represents karma and is to be regarded as symbolic of oneness with the divine. Moreover the following scripture also support this concept

“The matrix of all forms born from all wombs is Nature Prakriti. I, the father, giver of seed.”

2. Bliss: Other hypotheses /theory is that they are representations of supreme bliss – an attempt in earthly terms to convey the meaning of heavenly rapture. The act of love is
chosen to represent that ultimate state where the individual and the universal are no longer separate. According to Hindu view, the final aim of life is salvation, which lies in merging of ‘Atma’ with Parmatma (God). Mulkh Raj Anand says, “As against His joy, the condition of human existence is merely a lack of joy, a form of suffering, which will last as long as men and women do not struggle to emancipate themselves from birth and rebirth, through worship and dedication and merge with the supreme God or Bliss. The sacred act of procreation is to be Valued, as it affords the in tensest movement of joy, we can experience while we strive for ultimate and complete absorption into the Deity.”

The same point is elucidated in Brihadaranyaka Upanishala as “In the embrace of his beloved a men forgets the whole world – everything both within and without, in the very same way, he who embraces the self knows neither within nor without”. Thus the philosophy of Hinduism suggests the illusion of duality should be overcome and moved into union with the self. A temple, which is a monument of manifestation, reflects in its structural symbolism a broad base to a point. Sex forming an important element of the broad base of life is, therefore, aptly depicted in the temple.

3. Temptation: Another probable reason is that these erotic figures have been carved to text the sincerity and concentration of the devotee. This hypothesis of temptation is closely related to theory of ‘cleansing’. Mithunas are generally found on the outside of temples. The devotees should be able to give free vent to his immigration outside the shrine and cast away all lascivious thoughts before entering it. If not, they will yield to their senses and leave the temple without going up to the sanctum. They were designed to test the spiritual strength of the Yogis.

4. Protection: The protective aspects of erotic figures have been recognised by the shilpashastras and other authoritative texts on temple art. They were meant to resist the evil effect of the jealous gaze of observers, to ward off evil spirits that might have desired to possess the building and to protect the structure against natural calamities. Phallic worship was common not only in India but in other countries also as it was
regarded that the Phallus protection us against evil life and bad luck. In the medieval
times, therefore nude female were pictured or carved not only in temples but even on
churches of Europe.

Thus the erotic depictions were motivation of certain religious beliefs and
practices. Therefore, artists during Chandella’s rule boldly carved amorous scenes and
sexual poses in temples.

5. Attraction: Another simple explanation for mithunas is that they were there because
they were particularly amusing to the people and attracted them to the temple. The
spiritual man is no way affected by erotic pictures or descriptions but the common
man fears plain and is attracted by suggestions of sensuous pleasure. To discover
images of this kind in a temple he has to wonder into dark corners and examine it
from plinth to architrave. Moreover during the medieval era there was a common
belief that having erotic sculptures were considered alankaras or decorative motif and
was a sign of happiness, prosperity and auspiciousness.

6. Education: One of the most popular themes is that the mithunas were meant to
provide education about earthly desires. During the medieval era, young boys were
sent to hermitage and practice bramhacharya till reaching maturity. The sculptures
were meant to educate them about grahasthashram.

7. Yoga and Tantra: It is widely suggested by some authorities that the eighty four
postures of yoga, which help to change the subtle centre of the body and to attain
harmony, find their equivalent in the mithunas on the erotic plane. Many sexual
postures depicted on the walls of the temples of Khajuraho are symbolic of yoga. The
word yoga means to join together or to make union. In Tantricism, sexual union is
regarded as the highest form of yoga. When it is practiced alone, an internal marriage
takes place between various complementary parts of the body. Yoga is regarded as the
practice of transcending duality through conscious action. Therefore yoga is
considered to be both physical and metaphysical levels. Tantra is a word popularly
used to describe those sacred scriptures which lay down rules for the worship of sakti, the female aspect of the godhead, through panchatatva. The rules of panchatatva are commonly known as ‘the five M’s– madya (liquor), mansa (meat), matsya (fish), mudra (corn) and mithunas (coition). The burden of the Tantras is to make worship attractive to men. But one of the objects of Tantric rites is said to be the raising of the devotees above all sense of right and wrong, an ideal often emphasized in Hindu mysticism and we know for certain that the Tantric rites of Mahayana Buddhist were attended by much debauchery and exhortation to actions which society considered evil or sinful.61

Moreover the proliferation of feudal chiefs and rulers, their interest in temples-building, the feudalization of temple institution and its growing wealth and power, the degeneration of the devadasi (sacred prostitution) systems are also found to be some of the medieval developments responsible for profuse display of eroticism.

The temples of Khajuraho can be broadly classified into three groups on the basis of treatment of erotic motifs. In the temples of first group- the Lakshmana, Kandariya Mahadeva, Devi Jagadambi, Chitragupta, Vishvanatha and Parshvanatha. Erotic scenes prominently displayed not only on the exterior walls but also in recessed parts of the temple viz. lintels, door-jambs, cornices and some times inside sanctum. In the lower panels of the southern and northern wall of the Lakshmana temple, orgiastic scenes are depicted in which royal persons, ascetics and female attendants are shown. A scene of group sex is sculpted on the platform of this temple in which numerous couples have been shown engaged in a wild orgy. Animal coitus is also depicted on this temple. In the Kandariya Mahadeva and Vishvanatha temples a copulation couple watched by excited attendants and two ascetics in orgiastic poses are shown. The top panel of Vishvanatha temple displays a man copulating with a woman from the rear while on the sanctum wall of Kandariya Mahadeva temple an aristocrat can be seen performing the sexual act while standing on his head. In the temple of Parshvanath which belongs to Jain faith, sexual motifs are depicted but orgiastic scenes are completely absent. The temple portrays divine
pairs such as Narayana-Lakshmi, Shiva-Parvati, Balrama-Revati, Indra with Sachi, Kama with Rati and Ram with Sita etc. In each case, the divinity stands on the right of his consort, encircling her with his arm and touching her left breast. The mild eroticism is due to the magic defensive impact of erotic motifs. So in almost all the temples of the first group, erotic motifs have been profusely represented and there appears a tendency to replace divine figures by erotic ones.

In the second category of temples, there is a difference not only in the treatment of erotic motifs but also in architectural grandeur. These temples were constructed during A.D. 1050 and 1150 and include temple of Javeri, Vamana and Duladeo. The Duladeo temple has numerous copulating couples; some of them exhibit gymnastic posture. The Vamana and Javeri temples also display a few copulating couples. In the third category are included Adinatha and Chaturbhuja temples, in which there is complete absence of erotic motifs.

There are a few other temples at Khajuraho where no sculptures of any type are studded. Even if they are found they are very crude and fragmentary and erotic motifs are not at all sculpted.

**Hindu Temple/ Shrin**

Temple means a building for religious exercises and is a centre for worship. It is the abode of God who is the spirit immanent in the universe. The temple therefore is known by such terms as devalaya, Shivalaya and devayatana. These Hindu temples are commonly known as ‘Mandir’ in Hindi, koil or kovil in Tamil, devasthan in Kannda and devalya in Telgu. The shrine is termed vimana in southern context and ‘prasada’ or mula-prasada in northern. The main forms and styles of the Hindu temple were established during 600 - 800 A.D. It contained the sanctum; the garbha-gariha usually square housed the image of the deity which was approached through a calumniated porch or mandapa. The shrine was roofed with a pyramidal spire known as shikhara. While some early shrines seem to have been flat roofed, a Nagara or Dravida shrine has a superstructure as an integral part. The temple as a whole was raised on a massive plinth and was after
surrounded by subsidiary shrines and by an enclosing wall pierced by one or more gigantic gateway towers or gopurams. The architecture of temple varies across India; however while the basic elements of temple are the same. The Indian temple, prasada or vimana generally consist the following elements-

1. Shikhara- meaning the tower or the spire. It is pyramidal or tapering portion of the temple which represents the mythological ‘Meru’ or the highest mountain peak. The shape and the size of the tower vary from region to region.

2. Grabha-gariha- meaning the wombs chamber. It is nucleus and the inner most chamber of the temple where the image of the deity is placed and is mostly square in plan. It is entered by a doorway on its eastern side.

3. Prakshina-patha- meaning the ambulatory passage for circumambulation. It consists of enclosed corridor carried around the outside of grabha-gariha. The devotee walks around the deity in clock-wise direction as a worship ritual.

4. Mandapa- It is a pillared hall in front of the grabha-gariha for the assembly of the devotees. It is used by the devotees to sit, pray, chant, mediate and waters the priests performing rituals. It is also used dancing where rituals are performed with music and dance. Mandapa may be enclosed by thick walls or open like an extended porch.

5. Antarala- It means the vestibule or the intermediate chamber which unites the sanctum and mandapa.

6. Mukhmadapa- It is the front porch or the main entrance of the temple leading to the mandapa.

7. Pitha- The plinth or the platform of the temple.

8. Toranas- The typical ornate gateway of the temple mostly found in the north India temples.
9. Gopurams- meaning the monumental and ornate tower at the entrance of the temple complex specially found in south India.

10. Amalaka-

11. Gavakshas- The gavakshas is a kind of paradigm for Indian temple architecture as a whole. It is motif (literally ‘cow eye’, alternatively chandrasala) developed as a pattern over time which is visible in the complex udgama, as a jala on the lata of the shikhara and additional pediments around the temple facade.

![Various components of gavaksha (jala)](image_url)
Fig 5.22 Different Patterns Evolving with the use of Full and Half Gavaksha Motives

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