Chapter - V

ELEMENTS OF INDIAN TEMPLES

Plan:

The earliest architecture in India is that of cottage type. It is a circular, bottle or dome shaped. Mud and Bamboo sticks were used for construction. In the course of evolution number of plans were incorporated in the temple architecture, such as circular plan, square, rectangular, elliptical, upsidal, stellar, etc. A text like Manasāra mentions 32 types of square plans. Plan is essential for any structural temple. Plans of the temples depend upon the number of components that existed within the temple. The simplest plan of the temple consists of a garbhagriha and sabhamandapa or porch. This simple plan does not imply that the structure belonged to the earliest period. The temples constructed in the later period also have simple plans. Construction of a temple depends upon the financial position of the builder. When an antarala is added in-between garbhagriha and mandapa, then the plan of the temple becomes little larger. When a pradakshināpatha (circumambulatory path) is added to garbhagriha and antarala, the plan of the temple becomes wider. Then it is called as ‘Sandhara’ temple. In the course of time, number of components of the temple increased like mandapas, shrines for subsidiary deities; prākaras, etc, and the plan of the temple became large and wider. With the arrival of
Agamas in Hindu religion, the details of architecture became more sophisticated in the temple and reflected the fundamental symbolism of Mandalas.

*The Yoga Tattva Upanishad* speaks about the symbolism in terms of the five fundamental elements that constitute the material basis of the entire cosmos. Earth elements are represented by a ‘Square’, Water with a ‘semi-circle’, fire by a ‘Triangle’, air by a ‘six-angled figure’ and ether (sky) by a circle. The point without dimension dot (bindu) is the focus of all energy. The icon in the sanctum occupies the central position and the temple represents the other necessary forms. The architectural details of a sophisticated temple reflect this fundamental symbolism. The above five forms are represented in a Mandala known as 'Vishva-Karma Mandala,' which is regarded as fundamental to all temple architecture. The four sides of the Mandala symbolize the four main directions and the corners of the square represents four mid-directions and each of the eight quarters is presided over by a deity. The inner circle symbolizes the ‘Creator’ (Brahma), which is symbolic of activity, guarded by the eight directions. The Mandala is symbolic of the entire universe. The ‘all-maker’ (Creator) is also the progenitor. The whole mass of scripture, consisting of manuals of architecture, sculpture and painting collectively are known as Agama. Early temples were reputed to be built by this All-maker.

**Sanctum**

The sanctum is technically known as the *garbhagriha*, the womb house. It is a very important part in the temple proper. Generally the *garbhagrihas* are square in shape. Some *garbhagrihas*, which are longer, and against the principle
axis, also can be seen. *Garbhagriha* used to be very small in the beginning and could admit only one worshipper at a time, though the shrine was meant for public and the basic shrine, sanctum alone constituted the real temple. This type of single cell shrines also can be seen in the present day temple architecture, which are mainly dedicated to the Mother Goddess or *gramadevatha* or *gramapurush*.

The temple should consist of a sanctum in which the icon is to be installed and housed. The structural involvements nearby the temple are also essential for the principal worship and rituals.

Texts like *Sri Prasna* describes that the sanctum is the body of the divinity and the icon is its soul (*Jiva*). Usually it is a stone structure, square in shape and simply plain with some projected slabs in the wall or niches. There should not be any pillars in the sanctum hall. The sanctum should be provided with windows for air and light, which eventually help in preservation of the icon. In olden days, the wooden stucco or clay windows were provided to the sanctum. The sanctum represented then by an empty low platform (*Vedi*) in the dark room. A copper vessel (*kumbha*), a sacrificial fire place (*kunda*) or a sculpted icon (*bimba*) used to be placed on a seat in the dark room to prevent ill effects of weathering besides the mystery of the divine presence in the sanctum. The sanctum was usually built in stone, but constructions in brick are not rare.

*Vishnu Tilaka* mentions that while the stone sanctum is the best, the brick one is the next best. The wooden sanctum however is inferior and the mud sanctum is to be considered the worst.
The sanctum of the temple must be constructed first. Before construction of the sanctum a significant ceremony known as 'impregnating' (Garbha-dana or Garbha-Nyasa) should be performed. This ritual involves letting into the earth a ceremonial copper pot containing nine precious stones, several metals and minerals, herbs and soil (purified earth by ants), symbolizing creation and prosperity. The building that contains the womb is said to be prosperous. After completion of this ritual, a stone slab (Adhara-sila) is placed over the spot. The copper pot here symbolizes the womb and the icon symbolizes the soul. This is the significance of the sanctum, which is called the 'womb-house'.

Texts like Silparatna, Tantra-Samuchchaya and Isana-Shivaguru Paddhati give an elaborate account of this ritual. When the arrangement of the garbhagriha is more than one in some temples, they are called as a Dwikutachala, Trikutachala temples and so on.

In a few temples, projecting slabs and niches are found in the walls of garbhagrihas. (e.g. Tambdi Surla temple has projecting slabs and in Mahadeva Temple at Curdi have niches). The functional aspects of these are for providing space for keeping certain objects used for worship. These niches and projected slabs are provided according to their convenience and orientation of the temple entrance e.g. projected slabs in Mahadeva temple Tambdi Surla were fixed in the western wall of the sanctum (rear wall), while a recessed niche was provided in the Mahadeva Temple at Curdi in the southern wall of the sanctum. Some garbhagrihas will have a stone projection from the rear wall of sanctum touching the image kept at the centre. The images of deities in standing posture are of considerable height. The centre of gravity of such images falls backwards
away from the centre because the weight of the rear portion of the *Prabhavali* is heavier than that of the front portion of the image. Though images are fixed on *pithas* by inserting projecting tenon into the sockets, the possibility of their fall cannot be ruled out. Under these circumstances, the images need support at a higher level from the rear wall (e.g., Temple of Lakshminarayana at Balaganur and Sangameswar at Kurdi in Raichur district of Karnataka) \(^{10}\). Most of the temples in Goa have the main deity at the centre of the sanctum and placed over *pranala*.

**Pradakshināpatha:**

All around the sanctum a passage is kept often narrow, permitting the devotees to pass round the sanctum in the customary act of devotion. This circumambulatory path (*Pradakshināpath* or *bhrama*) subsequently became a structural involvement as the temple grew in size; it was more open naturally, as it was in the early phase. The temple, which has the circumambulatory passage, is known as *Sandhara* temple, e.g. Jain temple at Kudne and the temples of Ponda and Bardez talukas have this feature. The temple, which doesn’t have *pradakshināpatha* is known as *Niradhara temple* e.g. Mahadeva temples of Curdi and Tambdi Surla, Saptakoteswar temple at Opa, Agasthipur temple etc. \(^{11}\).
Sikhara

Sikhara or superstructure is the top member of a shrine. A flat roof stone slab that covers the sanctum is also called as Kapota. Flat roof (Kapota) of the sanctum on which the tower rests and rises is over-laid by a single stone slab, known in the texts as ‘Brahma randra sila’ (the stone). This serves as the base (adhisthana) for the superstructure that rises above the sanctum known as ‘Vimana or Sikhara’, which forms the important part of the temple. In early days, this vertical emphasis was laid on only one tier (prathama tala). Later, number of tiers (talas) were added to this superstructure. It was believed that the entire area, which the vimana or sikhara overlooked was rendered holy and the area covered by this sikhara, would be prosperous. Superstructures of temples of Kalinga type are simple with series of receding courses forming stepped pyramids. Another type of superstructure that is of storyed type contains several talas (storeys).

Archana-Navnita, an old text classified these holy places into five types:
1) Svayam-Vyakta (self-manifest) 2) Daivika (installed by Gods) 3) Arsha (installed by sages) 4) Pauranika (glorified in the Puranas) and 5) Manusha (man made) shrines.

The earliest temples were understandably flat roofed e.g. temple No.17 at Sanchi of Gupta period and Ladkhan temple at Aihole dated 500 AD, etc. After 5th century AD, the sikhara treatment underwent change in temple architecture and a number of features were added to it. The height of the temple sikhara or Vimana increased e.g., Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneswar (125 ft),
Jagananatha temple at Puri (200ft), Brihadeswara temple at Tanjore (58 metres) and Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple (46 metres)\(^\text{15}\).

Texts like *Vishnu Tilaka, Manasara, Mukutagama, Silparatna, Mayamata* and *Isana Shivaguru Paddhati* and *Bhave Prakasana* give broad account of *sikhara* features such as *Nagara, Dravida* and *Vesara*. In addition to these *Nagara, Dravida* and *Vesara* type *sikharas*, *Vishnu Tantra* and *Markhandeya Samhita* grouped the temples into nine and added six more types such as *Sorvadesika, Kalinga, Varata, Mandira, Bhavana* and *yoga*. But *Silpa-prasna* and *Isana Shivaguru Paddhati* referred only three classifications, *Nagar Dravida* and *Vesara*\(^\text{16}\).

**Nagara**: Actually means squarish, cruciform in plan and its *sikhara* has a vertical emphasis.

**Vesara**: Circularly emphasized horizontal aspect shape, like domical or octagonal or in the shape of vaulted roof. Another feature is storeyed towers and tall *gopuras*. It is a combination of *Dravida* and *Nagara* style of *Sikhara* features.

**Dravida**: Polygonal or octagonal (six or eight sided): It is circular in plan or apsidal. General conception is that *Nagara* type of temples prevails in the land between the Himalayas and Vindhyas ranges. *Vesara* type of temples exists inbetween Vindhyas ranges and Krishna river and *Dravida* type of temples prevails inbetween River Krishna and Kanyakumari\(^\text{17}\).
The term *sikhara* meaning ‘Mountain peak’ may indicate that it signified ‘Meru’ meaning mountain or *Kailasa*, so tall and sacred place of Shiva.

The North Indian *Vimana* or *Sikhara* is crowned by a large circular (Wheel shaped) capstone block known as ‘*amalaka*’ (ribbed disc resembling an amalaka fruit, Emblic Myrobalan), while its South Indian counterpart ends in a cupola (*Srnga*) or Wagon roof (*khakra*). The South Indian *vimana* is broader and shorter than the North Indian *vimana*. The North Indian temples rise from a pedestal (*Pitha* or *Jagati*), though the wall (*bara*) and main body (*gandi*) to the head (*mastaka*), which consists of a rib, is surmounted by a ‘skull’ (*khapuri*) on which is installed the *Kalasa* (finial). And on top of finial will be seen the weapon (*āyudha*) of the deity, a trident or a discus flag e.g. Temples in Orissa and Khajuraho. The Jaina temple at Cudne, Goa stands on *Pitha* (*Jagati*) like North Indian temple.

Compared to the North Indian Temple *Sikharas*, in the Dravidian *vimana*, the height is less emphasized. The plan of the *Vimana* could be round or square. It could also be six- sided or eight- sided. It could retain one form uniformly from the base to the top or combine two or more plans at different storeys, sometimes as many as sixteen, but the prevailing style is devoid of such differentiation into storeys. It rises above the sanctum with flat roof of the sanctum (*Bhumika* or *Kapotha*) as its base (*adhishthana*). Sometimes, however it encompasses the area covered by the circumbulatory path round the sanctum as well as the rectangular porch immediately in front of the sanctum. Its mass rests on a square base called support (*adhishthana* or *pitha*) and rises through stylized
treatment of dormer windows in several tiers to a dome shaped tower (Sikhara) surmounted by a cupola (Srnga or Stupi) 19.

Though any temple with sikhara of early period in Goa was not available, the temples of the medieval period show the architectural feature of stepped pyramidal type. Mahadev temples at Tambdi Surla and Curdi are the best examples for this architectural feature. After Curdi and Tambdi Surla temples, the temple sikhara was changed into domical shape and it can be seen at Agapur temple in Ponda Taluka. Finally, after 16th century, the temple sikharas in Goa turned into domical shape with square and octagonal bases (sometimes hexagonal etc.) with top kalasa and slanty tiled roofs for mandapas and other parts of the temple. Exhibited miniature sikhara objects in Old Goa Museum of Bhumija type, Rekhanagara type, and depicted sikhara motifs in the lalatabimba (lintel of a door way) of the temple show the influence of North Indian temple architecture in Goa.

Kalasa

It was an old custom to install a crowing member in the form of a sacrificial ‘Vase (Kalasa)’ made of metal. kalasa denotes a mark of exaltation 20. It occupies the topmost part of the temple below the Ayuda. (Pineal).
Porch

The rectangular porch in front of the Sanctum sanctorium (Mukhamandapa or Mukha-sala) is a pillared hall, allowing the devotees to stand and watch the worship rituals as they are conducted inside the sanctum. When the temple became popular and devotees increased, the sanctum needed additional hall and this porch became merely a vestibule (antarāla). Its main function is to accommodate more devotees of the temple. The porch (vestibule) is structurally connecting the sanctum with the additional hall (assembly hall). Like the antarāla in front of the sanctum, a low raised structure called 'Sukhanasi' crowned antarala. It is erected in front of the Sikhara, which stands on sanctum proper. Unlike the sanctum covered by flat roof stone slabs, antarala is also filled in the similar manner, which serves as the base (adhisthana) for the super structure. Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla is the best example for antarāla with Sukhanasi. Here the flat roof slabs are arranged in lantern type (Kadlikakarna) and two rotative squares (trabeats) placed one after another in receding manner to reduce space for ceiling and covered at the top with beautifully carved lotus stone (Padmasila). This type of ceiling, we can see in the sanctum of the same temple and sanctum and porch of the Mahadev temple at Curdi. Though the Khandepar caves are monolithic up to the height of kapothe, trabeat system was shown in the relief of the ceilings of sanctum and porch, though they are not structural temples.
Door

Door is another important factor in temple architecture. The doors of the temple must always be two panelled and the two are described as mother and daughter.²³

*Brihat-Samahita* prescribes that the door must be located in the middle of the front wall and that it must be in the same direction as the idol. According to *Agnipurana*, the door must always be placed in one of the four directions and never in the corners. *Suprabhedāgama* recommends gateways in all the four directions on the outer wall. Texts mentioned that Devadar wood is best for temple doors. But *Suprabedagama* tells that the door on the eastern side must be made in *Plaksha* wood, the one on the western side must be made in *Udumbara* wood, the door on the south must be made in *svattha* wood and the door on the north side must be in *Nyagrodha* wood.²⁴ Texts prescribe the rules about the several aspects of door like jamb, lintel (*dwara-sakha*), door panels (*kabata*), door joints (*dwara sandhi*), door planks (*phalaka*), bolt (*kila-bhajana*), tower over the door way (*dwara gopura*) and the chamber associated with the door way (*dwara-koshtha*).

*Dwāra-Sakha* (door jamb) is single panelled in early temples without much ornamentation. Ornamentation developed in the later period in the door panels, and it became familiar as *Sakhas* in temple architecture such as *Lata Sakha, Patra Sakha, Pushpa Sakha*, etc. The popular simple form of door
consists of only three sakhas in it. Sometimes the images of Gajalakshmi or Ganesh at the centre of lintel occasionally with Purnakumbhas on either side, Dwārapalas or Ganga, Yamuna or Purnakumbhas at the base also can be seen in the Dwāra Sakhas in the medieval period. Mahadeva temple at Curdi is the best example for tri-sakha dwāra. Tri-sakha dwara also can be seen at Saptakoteswar temple at Opa. During Kalyani Chalukyas period, these dwara sakhas were raised upto nine Sakhas and can be seen in Raichur and Bellary districts in Karnataka. Temples of Ponda, Sattari, Bardez, Tiswadi talukas have saka dwāras, which were made of wood and other modern material.

Pranalas

This signifies the provision architecturally made for discharge of water ('Abhisheka Jala') from garbhagriha to the outside prakara. Prānāla or water chute takes out ablution water from garbhagriha. It passes through garbhagriha wall (generally towards north) and extends to a considerable length away from wall (e.g. Prānālas of Mahadev temple, Curdi and Tambdi Surla were extended up to the adhisthāna mouldings of the temple). Majority of the pranālas are in simple long block with a channel cut into it. Some pranalas are highly decorated and the mouths of the kirtimukhas are crocodile or ox or makara or lion or creeper scroll etc., emerge as channel. Generally main deity used to be placed over the prānāla in almost all the temples in Goa. Some pranālas have beautiful mouldings like as in the Adhisthāna of the temple, e.g., Brahma temple in Sattari Taluka.
Chandrasilās (Moon-Stones)

*Chandrasila* or Moonstones were in the form of semicircular slabs on floor in front of doors forming a step in the beginning or in the main entrance (e.g., in front of the rock cut cave temples at Haravalem). The terminology itself suggests their shape i.e., semi circular 26. Their outline was carved on the floor slabs later (mainly in front of the *garbhagriha* door e.g. Curdi, Tambdi Surla and Opa temples. Subsequently, the semi-circle took leaf shape with a point at the centre and two scrolls on the sides. The Chandrsilās in the Mahadev temple at Curdi, Tambdi Surla and Saptakoteshwar temple at Opa with a pointed tip are shown in relief on the floor slab in front of the *garbhagriha* doors. Three buds spring out front each scroll and the central bud takes the shape of a conch in the *chandrasilās* of both the temples of Curdi and Tambdi Surla.

Jalavatayanas (Windows)

*Jalavatayanas* meant for allowing light and air into temples have provided artists with a space for exhibiting their skill by carving creepers, flowers, figures and several perforations. Some *Jalavatayanas* are decorated with creepers containing circular perforations 27. Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla is the best example for this feature. Here *Jalavatayanas* are shown on either side of the main door with lozenges in its pendants. Whereas in re-assembled doorway of Adilshahi Palace in St. Cajetan Church complex, Old Goa, the circular pendants of perforated door screen ornamented with prominent
symbols taken from the Hindu mythology, such as Tapasvi, Yama with Pasha. Hanuman, Ayudha Purusha and typical variety of swans (Hamsa- the vehicle of Brahma). Perforated door screens were incorporated in temple architecture during Kadamba period. Haltikeswar temple at Halsi in Khanapur taluk in Karnataka is the best example for introduction of perforated door screen in early Kadamba architecture.

Niches

Niches may be classified into three groups, viz. simple niche, niches with pilasters, and niches with doorframes. Simple niche consists of two horizontal courses, moulded like padma, forming base and top, and two plain vertical courses on sides. Some niches contain three courses, viz. padam, lenticular kumuda and another padma at the base forming adhisthana, pilasters on the sides, and kapota surmounted by a turret. Large niche contains doorframes with multiple sakas and pediments similar to those of the garbhagrihas. The main cult deity is worshipped in the garbhagriha and the parivara or associated deities are placed in the devakoshthas or niches formed in the thickness of the sabhamandapa walls. Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla, and temples at Usgao, Kothambi, Mardol, Priol etc., are the best examples for this feature.
Torana (Ornamental arches)

Torana is an interesting feature involved in stylized temples. *Kamikagama* describes the *Chitra torana* of the temple. *Manasara* gives the information regarding the measurement for the temple *torana*. Temples like Mahalasa, Manguesh, Naguesh, etc, have *chitra toranas* in the drooped wall of their *Mandapa* ceilings. Besides *Chitra torana*, the texts mention two other types of *torana* 1) *Patra torana* (fashioned like the lotus leaves) and 2) *Makara torana* (arch with makara). The *Makara torana* enshrined in the temple was suitable for the residence of Brahmins and Kshatriyas while *Chitratoranas* was suitable for Vaisyas and *Patratorana* was useful for Sudras.

Sabhāmandapa or Navaranga or Mahāmandapa

When the temple became very popular and the participants increased in number there was a need for an additional hall of larger dimension to sanctum and *antarāla* to accommodate large assemblies. (e.g. *Navaranga*). This *sabhāmandapa* used to be pillared hall with or without *kakshasana*. These type of larger halls were found more in some places according to the requirements of the temple such as *Natya mandapa, Bhoga mandapa, Kalyana mandapa* etc., and they can be seen mainly in Orissan temple architecture. Mahadeva temple at Tambdi Surla is the best example for its *sabhāmandapa* with *kakshasana*. Modern temples like Mahālsa, Ramnāth etc., have *kakshāsanas* within the large
halls (*Mandapas*) but those are not aesthetic enough like that of Tambdi Surla temple.

The area of the temple comprising of the sanctum and the halls as well as the tanks and gardens came to be enclosed by a wall (*prakara*). But this was a later innovation and can be seen in many of the South Indian temples.

**Walls**

The treatment of walls also depicts a wide range from simple plain to decorated with pilasters, turrets and figures. Some of the *mukhamandapas* and *Sabhamandapas* are open and some are covered with *jalavatayanas* (perforated door screens) niches and figures. Mahadev Temple at Tambdi Surla and temple fragments of Saptakoteshwar temple near St Cajetan Church, Old Goa are the best examples. A projected horizontal band called *bandana* runs in the middle of the wall of sanctum and *antarala* of Tambdi Surla temple with *Kudya stambhas* with regular intervals resembling the features of later Chalukyan period.

**Eaves**

The main function of eave or *chajja* is to protect wall from rainwater. It projects forward from the ceiling level, so that water is thrown away from wall surface. The slightly projecting eaves with curved upper surface to facilitate the flow of water are found in several temples. Especially in Goa, the rainfall is more and it continues for a long period. Hence almost all the structures in Goa require slanty roofs and eaves for easy disposal of rainwater.
Ceilings

Ceilings are different types. 1) Domical ceiling 2) Flat ceiling 3) Rectangular ceiling 4) Square ceiling 5) Circular ceiling 6) Rotated squares ceiling 7) Octagonal ceiling, etc., These ceilings consist of single slab or more than one are supported by beams placed on walls and pillars. The outline of these ceilings is generally square, because the garbhagriha, anarâla and mukhamandapa are square. The entire ceiling space is divided into several ankanas (bays) bordered by beams and walls on four sides. In the case of large sabhāmandapas, the central ankara is a large square and the remaining parts are smaller. Square ceilings are further classified into flat, rotated, circular and octagonal. Flat ceilings are generally found at the corners and on the sides of the central ceiling in the sabhāmandapas. Two rotated squares by placing two squares, one over the other, are called trabeat system (kadalikākarana). Here the upper one is smaller and turned 45 degrees over the lower. The lower square is achieved by placing four triangular slabs over the corners of the ankara formed by beams or walls. Placing smaller triangular slabs over the corners of the lower square forms the upper square. A flat slab is placed at the top for covering the central gap. The space of the ceiling is reduced at the top by creating these squares. The lower square is exactly half of the ankara and the upper square is half of that of the lower. A flat slab one-fourth of the size of the ankara is used at the top. The squares not only reduce the areas but also break the monotony of the comparatively plain interior. This type of ceiling
appeared in the rock cut cave at Khandepar for the first time in Goa where the ceilings of the monolithic rock are cut in the shape of trabeat (lantina type). This system became more sophisticated in the structural temples such as Mahadev temple at Curdi and Tambdi Surla in the later period.

The ceilings of the top slabs are decorated generally with circular lotuses. Such ceilings are found in the rock cut caves at Khandepar, Mahadev temple at Curdi, Mahadev Temple at Tambdi Surla. In the case of Khandepar caves, the ceilings of garbhagrihas and antarala are in square slabs. The lotus decoration is unique in the case of Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla. Here the ceilings of garbhagriha and antarāla were decorated with circular lotus with large petals. Lotus petals are unique in the Nandi mandapa of Tambdi Surla where the lotus petals in the ceiling of western bay near the entrance are small and narrow like Ajanta cave lotus petals. The central bays in the Nandimandapa ceiling is decorated with a surprising variety of circular inverted lotus in the same temple. Here lotus petals were more projected and a lotus bud was shown very prominently in the centre and the star shaped central lotus is encircled with similar type of lotuses. The ceiling slabs of eastern side bay of mandapa are also adorned with the star shaped circular lotuses in it. Similarly, in the later temples like Mahālasa, Manguesh, Nāguesh, Shantadurga, have lotus decoration in the wooden ceilings in the mandapas. These temples generally have domical shape ceilings on the octagonal base for sanctum. The domical ceilings are almost plain and no decorations are found in them.


Pillars

Pillars supporting the corners of garbhagriha and antarala are known as canton pillars. The canton pillars are prominently shown in the rock-cut cave architecture. Rock cut caves at Khandepar is the best example for this feature. Here the canton pillars are chiselled in the monolithic rock in the corners of garbhagriha and antarala. Whereas in Mahadev temple at Curdi, these pillars were prepared in laterite rock and arranged in the corners. In the case of Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla, canton pillars were made out of basalt (volcanic rock). Pillars supporting various mandapas of temples are found in various shapes, such as square pillars, round pillars, projected square pillars, octagonal pillars, sixteen sided pillars, star shaped pillars etc. These pillars consist of a pedestal, shaft, capital, abacus and corbels.

Square Pillars:

Square pillars first appeared in the rock cut cave temples. These pillars are simple massive and plain, and can be seen in the rock cut cave temples at Harvalem, Lāmgaon, Veliguem Surla, Narve, Kusyacherann in Goa.
Round Pillars:

Simple round pillars consist of a lower square block and the remaining circular portion with pot at the top. This type of pillars can be seen in the Nandimandapa of Mahadev temple at Curdi. These pillars have a square base, a rectangular malasthana, an octagonal and a circular shaft with a top pot and a square capital with pothikas on its top. These pillars are simple but kirthimukha and lotus are adorned in it. No circular or octagonal bands are found in it. The classical temples like those of Kalyani Chalukyas, the Hoyasalas and the Yadavas are different. Here, the perfection is achieved in giving regular shape to the round pillars. Shafts of these pillars consist of a lower square block, a series of thin horizontal connecting bands, and upper block in the shape of a bell and the top in the shape of the upper half of a pot. Below each shaft is a base and above is a disc or cushion capital. Square abacus with circular convex base and corbels of scroll or sloping side type also are shown occasionally in it. 31

This type of pillars can be seen in the Nandimandapa of Tambdi Surla temple. It has a square base (homa), a square mālasthana, eight bands of octagonal shaft with base and eight bands of circular shaft with square mālasthana as base and a disc (kalasa), a pot (kumbha), a square capital with kirthimukhās and top corbels of scrolls (pothikās with nāgabandha). Similar type of pillars also can be seen in the mandapa pillars of Bhuvaraha Narasimha temple at Halsi but the columns were made of wood. Though the horizontal connecting bands are less, similar parts of mandapa pillar can be seen in the inserted mandapa column in the wall of Kamaleswar temple at Borim. Parts
like octagonal, circular, square capital etc. can be seen in the wooden *mandapa* pillars of Mahalsa temple, and the temples of Fatorpa, Zarmem, Agastipur and Shiroda.

**Comparison of Mandapa Pillars.** In the case of *Nandimandapa* pillar in the Mahadev temple at Curdi, a square base, a rectangular *malasthana*, an octagonal and circular shaft with *kumbha* and *kalasa* are shown below the square capital without any bands. Whereas in the *Nandimandapa* pillar of Mahadev temple at Tambdi Surla, a square base, a square *mālasthana*, a rectangular shaft with eight bands and a circular shaft with square base and eight bands, a *kumbha* and *kalasa* are shown below the square capital. *Mandapa* pillar at Curdi is simple with required components. Only a *kirthimukha* in the *malasthana* and a lotus motif below *malasthana* are shown as decorative motifs. But in the case of Tambdi Surla *mantapa* pillar, evolutionary and rich skillful work is depicted. Shaft was divided into two parts, circular top and octagonal bottom. Each part was filled with intricate bands with various motifs such as human figures, lozenges, creepervine, *patralata*, *homa* and chain or rope design. This ornamentation in the bands was changed from pillar to pillar. A pot (*kumbha*) and disc shape (*kalasa*) is a typical variety here. Square capital of the pillar adorned with *kirthimukhas* in the corners and *pothikās* has *nāgabandha* in it.
Sukhanāsi

Superstructures of temples contain a projection in the front looking like beak of a parrot called sukhani. Sukhanāsi is essential in Kalinga temple architecture. All the members of the first tala (story) of the stepped pyramidal superstructure project in the centre to form sukhanāsi and it can be seen only in Mahadeva temple at Tambdi Surla.

Kakshāsana

A bench called Kakshāsana providing a sitting place for the devotees usually surrounds the open sabhāmandapas and the mukhamandapas. Most of the South Indian temples have kakshāsana in the adhisthāna itself with an additional slab, set vertically for the backrest. But in Goa the backrest was arranged over the mandapa wall of Tambdi Surla temple as kakshāsana, which was embellished with diamond shaped flowers in its centre. Mandapa walls of Mahālsa, Mungueshi, Nāgueshi, Ramnāthi, Kāmākshi temples also have kakshāsanas with plastered wall as backrest.

Balustrades

Balustrades are guard stones flanking flights of steps with top railing. Most of the modern temples have this type of balustrades in Goa. The rear end of the railing top is of scroll type. Some temples have the feature of elephant balustrades in Goa.
Accessory structures

Very few temples contain accessory structures like Nandi shrine or Nandi *mandapa* separately in front of the temple or otherwise these are attached to the main temple. Some temples have separate shrines for subsidiary deities, *(Parivara-devta or Gramdevta)* on either side of the main temple or backside or in the front of the main temple. Maximum number of accessory structures in Goa belongs to Ravalnath, Sateri, Ganesh and Durga.

Tulasi

Tulasi is the most important plant for Hindus, because Lakshmi’s presence is recognized in the Tulasi plant. Every year on the twelfth day of the bright half of Kartik, *Tulasi Vivah* (marriage) is celebrated. Tulasi or holy basil is worshipped with profound respect everywhere. People keep a Tulasi plant in front of their house on a specially made stand called *Tulasi Vrindavan* and worship with great veneration to keep the environment from bactereous and unwanted prying eyes (*buri nazar*) into their houses. Tulasi has medical properties and it helps in maintaining physical and mental health. There is an interesting story in Hindu mythology, which states that, Jalandhar was a famous warrior. Vrinda was his faithful wife. By defeating the gods, he had made his fellow demons happy, because of Vrinda’s virtue. The gods tried to find a strategy to defeat Jalandhar in the battle. They cheated Vrinda by passing false news that her husband had been killed in the battle. The severed head and body of two monkeys’ were put in front of her and she believing it to be her husbands dead body plunged herself into grief. Then a Sadhu appeared there and by
reciting some Mantras, he joined again the head and the body and Vishnu appeared exactly looking like Jalandhar, stood in front of her. In her excitement believing that it was her resuscitated husband, she embraced him. But soon she realized her mistake. She lost her virtue for having touched the body of alien man. Jalandhar was really killed as soon as Vrinda lost her excellence and blessedness. When Vrinda came to know the truth she was wild and cursed Vishnu stating 'your wife will be taken away from you and you will have to ask monkeys to recover her'. This curse was literally realized when Vishnu took avatar as Rama. Then Vrinda prepared the pyre for her husband and jumped in the fire. Therefore, the practice of a widow burning became popular as “Sati”. (In Goa we have a number of Sati stones and have a temple called Kala Sati at Keri near Keri dam in Sattari taluka). Vishnu was very sorry because as a result of his mischief, the poor woman had committed suicide. Like insane he sat by the side of the pyre. To bring him to his senses, the Gods planted three trees in the cremation ground, a Tulasi (holy basil), an Avala (phyllantus emblika) and a Malti (Jasmine). Among these three, Tulasi became very dear to Vishnu, because like Vrinda she was endowed with all qualities. (Even though by mistake, Vrinda had for an instant believed Vishnu to be her husband). Therefore when Vishnu took avatar as Krishna, Vrinda took an avatar as Rukmini, and on the 12th day of the bright half of Kartik they got married. Hence Tulasi Vrindavan became a part of Vishnu’s temple, as well as in the temples of his avatars.
Rituals

The texts of Indian architecture, which provide us with all the details of measurements and parts of the temple and prescribe the rites of installation and rituals of worship, also indicate the real value of a shrine. Rituals have their God in the fire. Vishnudharmottara Purana mentioned two ritual sacrifices, Rajasurya and Ashvamedha. The rituals were considered essential to please God. It required fire (homa) water (jala) and Balipitha (sacrificial place). In recent discoveries in Nagpur, Naramedha Yagas also came into light. Ashvamedha's sacrificial place in the shape of Garuda can be seen at Jagatgram near Dehradun in Uttarakhand. A Homakunda and a Balipitha are required for sacrificial offerings in the temple complex and it can be seen in present day temple architecture. These rituals are not common in all places. According to the main deity, the function and the importance of the occasion, the ritual practice is changed. But bathing the deity everyday is an important ritual practice in Hindu religion.

Dhvaja-Stambha (FLAG-STAFF):

Hayasirsha – samhita, a Pancharatra text reveals that a building (prasada) without a flag would be in vain. ‘Shiva-sarvasva’ describes the purpose of the flag as indication of the insignia of the deity or of the characteristic vehicle of the icon that is within the sanctum. Ancient texts mentioned that where the flag was hoisted in front of the temple, Gods as well as manes used to be delighted. The text also assigns Vishnu (protector) to the top, Brahma (creator) to the middle and Shiva (destroyer) to the bottom of the
flag-staff. Hosting the flag suggests setting out to conquer. The devotee coming into the temple would have firm resolve to conquer his own baser nature. To look at the flag would be a reminder for him in this regard. The Sanskrit word for the flag or banner *dhvaja* strictly means whatever that is raised. Whatever raises man to a higher level of understanding and activities is a *dhvaja*. It is a call that God is high and above. The characteristic animal and the insignia of the icon on the banner gives a direction to the devotee’s desire and will. When the devotee sees the banner and bows before it, he resolves to rise higher. The benefit of the flag-mast is here said to be “obtainment of all that is desired”. The canonical texts favour wooden or bamboo poles. In course of time, the wooden pole was covered with copper, brass or even with silver. In Goa also we can see the lamp pole of brass at Mahalsa temple at Mardol and other temples like Manguesh, Ravalnath, Santadurga, Saptakoteshwar etc. have the similar lamp poles. Some *Dhvaja stambhās* of Goan temples are very simple and monolithic (stone) like simple stambha at Mahalakshmi temple at Bandoda, Kamaleshwar temple at Borim, either side entrance pillars at Nagueshi temple etc. Lamp *stambhas* in the modern temples are fully ornamented with many arched windows. The worship of a ‘stambha’ in the form of simple pillar also can be seen at Canacona, Kaskonda Surla, and Gulleli near Honda where it is called as a *Stambhadev*.

**Prākāra (Boundary Wall):**

*Suprabhedāgama* gives an account of *prākāra*. The idea involves division of the temple area into five courts, *antarmandala* (innermost area)
antar-nihara (antar-bhara), madyama hāra (madhya-bhāra) prākāra (maryada-bhittika), signifying the limits of the course created ground and mahamaryada (mahamaryada-bhitti), the outermost enclosure containing the doorway and tower (dvara-gopura).

The area of the temple comprising of the sanctum and the halls with water tanks and gardens were enclosed by a wall (prākāra). It looks like within the ramparts of a fort. But the enclosed wall prākāra was a later innovation and became a special feature of South Indian temples. The texts explain that the prākāra contributes security to the shrine, strength, protection, beauty and accommodation for attendant deities. In the South Indian temples, the prākāra walls accommodate a series of pillared halls or pavilions, rooms for storage, resting places for pilgrims and shrines for minor deities apart from their chief purpose — protection of temple property. Although the texts prescribe that each enclosure must have doorways on all four sides, generally the wall (prākāra) facing the sanctum alone has the opening. This door is called maha-dvara and usually it is an huge one, allowing the temple elephant or small chariot to pass through.

Gopura (Tower above the doorway)

The ancient texts such as Vaikhanasagama, Maīya-māta and Isana-Shiva guru-paddhati mention the gateway tower. Gopura literally means cow’s pen and the term was used to denote structure that was erected at the entrance of the cow’s pen. Since 10th century A.D, it has become customary to have a tower above the doorway. The front portion of the prākāra represents the tower like structure in the form of the head or face of an alligator or iguana. During later
Chola period and Vijayanagara period these gopuras were called as Raya Gopura. These Gopuras are highly ornamented and very tall. They are like multi-storeyed pyramids, oblong in plan. The texts permitted as many as 16 storeys and the height of about 200 feet for tall Gopura. These prakara and gopura features are very common in South India, but in North India they are not so important.

**Bali-Pitha (The Dispensing Seat):**

The sanctum, adytum garbhagriha, which is the most important structural detail, is closely associated with the Bali-Pitha that is installed in front of the sanctum directly facing the icon. Actually there will be several 'seats' of this nature, installed in various ritualistically determined positions inside the enclosure and outside the sanctum. However, the one in front of the sanctum is the 'Chief seat'. (Pradhana-pitha). It is a low stone altar, frequently planned in the form of a flat, relatively elaborate form with a base, cornices, wall surface and the top lotus. The canons specify that the real temple should comprise of the sanctum, the tower on top of it, the icon inside it and the dispensing seat in front of it.\(^{39}\)
Water Tank:

Water tank or snanaghat is essential for Hindu temple. Before entering into the temple, the devotee must purify (parishuddh) with taking bath or clean and wash hands and legs and head. Water tank is also necessary for daily requirement of water for deities and cleaning of temple. Providing Snanaghat (bathing ghat or pushkar) on the banks of major rivers near the temple is ancient practice in India. All the 12 major rivers in India have bathing ghats to celebrate 'Pushkar'. The Pushkar celebrations come once in twelve years after rotation at all the major rivers from North to South (e.g., Ganga nadi pushkar, Yamuna nadi pushkar, Godavari nadi pushkar and Krishna nadi Pushkar). In Goa also we have a Pushkar ghat in Khandepar, of which ancient name was Kategrama and present Saptakoteshwar temple at Opa had a well-preserved snanaghat on the banks of River Khandepar that is a tributary of River Mandovi.

Gardens

Maintaining gardens within the temple complex is also an ancient practice in India. Maintaining flower gardens to meet the requirement of the temple and other yielding plantations, fruit gardens were termed very useful to meet the financial expenditure or the maintenance of the temple.
References and Notes:


4. Idem.


6. Ibid. p.60.


8. Idem.

9. Personal visit to the Temple by the researcher.

10.n.1, p.194.

11. Personal visit to the temples by the researcher.

12.n.2, p.61.

13.n.1, p.204.


17. Idem.


22. n.18, p.
23. n.2, p.82.
26. n.1, p.209.
27. Idem.
28. n.1, p.82.
32. n.1, p.204.
33. Ibid, p.199.
36. Ibid, p.95.
37. Ibid, p.72.
38. Ibid, p.73.
39. Ibid, p.76.