Abstract

Present research entitled “A Study of Temples in Erṇākuḷam and Tṛśűr Districts of Kēraḷa up to 1700 AD” is an attempt towards understanding building techniques and the progress of the science of temple architecture (Vāstu Vidya). The spatio-temporal limit of the study is Erṇākuḷam and Tṛśűr districts in Kēraḷa and it covers a period from pre-Kulaśēkhara period to 1700 AD. Objectives of the study are to understand the architecture of Kēraḷa temples, its features, techniques and to figure out what factors formulated the architectural form.

Methodology followed in this study is both descriptive and analytical. Information used is primary data collected from the field by the researcher and published secondary sources. In the thesis textual information is substantiated with photographs and drawings.

The study is presented in six chapters as follows.

Chapter I: Introduction

The introductory chapter deals with Indian temple architecture in general. It also explains research problem, methodology adopted to study the problem, historiographical review of the subject and plan of study.
Chapter II: Political and Cultural Background of Kerala Temples

This chapter deals with the political and cultural background of art activity in Kērāḷa. It explains the emergence of temple architecture and temple institution as a result of chain of social changes connecting social, political, economic, cultural and religious realms.

Chapter III: Introduction to Kērāḻa Temple Architecture

This chapter presents very specific study into architectural character of Kērāḻa temples. For this purpose, different aspects of plan and elevation of Kērāḻa temple are analyzed juxtaposed with Drāviḍa style. The evolution of temple architecture in Kērāḻa is classified under three phases. The study draws a clear picture of Kērāḻa temples within the broad area of Drāviḍa style. The reasons behind formulation of the unique form of architecture which break from monotonous Drāviḍa style are the adaptability to native environment, use of different building materials and techniques employed by builders in accordance with the materials.

Chapter IV: Temple of Erṇākuḷam District

This chapter is narrative of selected temples from Erṇākuḷam district. It includes architectural details and historical background of temples. The selected temples are grouped as cave temples, temples with circular shrines and temples with square shrines. Each group is presented in chronological order within.
Chapter V: Temples of Trissur District

This chapter explains the architectural details with historical background of selected temples from Trissur district. Temples are grouped as cave temples, temples with circular shrines, temples with square shrines and temples with apsidal shrines. Each group is presented in chronological sequence within the group.

Chapter VI: Conclusion

This chapter contain the conclusions drawn from the study. It include summary of chapters I to V and conclusions drawn from it in a nutshell.

A detailed glossary, Bibliography and plates are provided in Appendices are at the end of the work.