

AN INTRODUCTION TO ARTHUNA TEMPLE

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ABSTRACT :

Rajasthan formerly known as Rajputana, total area of 34300 square kilometers and divided by Aravali Range which runs from north east to south west about 688 km . It divides Rajasthan into region Marwar and Mewar. The western part of Aravali called Marwar comprising of dry desert and south western area of Aravali is a rocky terrain known as Mewar drained by seasonal rivers. The state has numerous temples, sculptures and painting. It has got its own individuality. Art and architecture of Rajasthan has long and glorious tradition, produced artistic excellence and superb workmanship. Rajasthan revealed wide range of cultural heritage dating back to

prehistoric times to modern period. It was the Mauryan who were the first imperial power to establish their suzerainty over the state during 3rd cent. B.C Evidence of earliest known structural temple has been obtained from Rajasthan at Bairatha in Jaipur district which belongs to Mauryan period. After that Rajasthan came under influence of Kusahanas, Avalikas and feudatories of imperial Guptas who ruled over upto 6th century A.D. After Huna invasion, Pratiharas founded their kingdom with the beginning of 8th century. Rajasthan was dominated by Rajput clans i.e pratiharas , Guhilas , Chanmanas , and Parmaras . At the end of 8th cent. A.D King Upendera founded Paramara dynasty in Malwa and in in due course they established their subordinate branches in Rajputana.

KEYWORDS : sculptures and painting , structural temple .

INTRODUCTION :

Rajasthan has been a land of warriors and sumptuous builders who were instrumental in constructing a number of important temples, mosques and churches which were built in different part of the state. The present work of researcher shall describe the temple architecture and iconography of group of Arthuna temple Banswara district Rajasthan which belongs to Paramara period. The Parmaras played the most significant role in early medieval history and promoted the Indian culture. They commenced their career from Malwa and in due course established their subordinate branches in Rajasthan viz. at Chandravali, Bhinmal, kiradu and Vagada . The present study will be limited to last named branch of Paramara which included the area of their capital Arthuna in

Banaswara district. Arthuna was the capital of Paramaras of Vagada now it has been reduced to the state of small village .Arthuna is a small village situated 55km from Banaswara district Rajasthan in Gadhi sub-division. There are groups of temple at Arthuna which belongs to Shiva, Jain, Chaustha yogini, Hanuman. The present work will be the detail study of the group of Arthuna temples which deals with the excellent artistic work in terms of architecture and iconography.

Under the patronage of the Parmaras rulers both Shavisim and Jainism, Saktism thrived to a great extent at Arthuna. There are group of temple in Arthuna complex

1. Hanumangarhi complex
2. Jain complex
3. Mandaleswara complex
4. Chausatha yoni temple

Majority of temples are dedicated to Lord Shiva but mostly are not in well preserved state.

The Arthuna temple is amalgamation of two styles, first the continuity of early medieval art and architecture of central India and second attributed to Maha –Maru and Maha – Gurjara style. Maru-Gujara style originated somewhere in 8th century A.D in and around Rajasthan. Maru –Gujara are the mixture of two traditional style of architecture known as Maha-Marua and Maha- Gurjara . Under Solanki style this Maru-Gujara style attained its architectural perfection.

HANUMAN GARHI COMPLEX

This is the most significant temple complex at Arthuna, known as hanuman Garhi after installation of colossal image of hanuman in Shiva temple during the time of Vijayaraja of Parmaras in 1107 A.D.

This complex has four main shrines which are living temple of the Arthuna complex. A) Nilakanta Mahadeva temple B) Kumbhesvara temple C) Temple of hanuman d) Temple of saivacharya.

A) Nilakanta Mahadeva temple

Nilakanta Mahadeva temple of Hanuman Garhi complex is the most beautiful and loftiest and well preserved among all temples. It is the living temple of the Arthuna complex .it is dedicated to Shiva, the temple is assignable to the last quarter of 11th century. The sikhara is of multi-spired variety and the mulamanjari is surrounded by sringas , urah-sringas and karna-sringas. It is raised on a kamad-pitha and has jayayambha, kani, antarapatra, kapotali and grass pati. The shikara above the sanctum bears rathikas which show the figure of Brahma, Mahesvari and Vishnu on the southern , western and northern direction The rathikas of the pyramidal assembly hall show Mahesvari , Vishnu and vray on south , Umavayu in the central and Parvati , Shiva , Indra –Indrani and Lakshmi in the eastern face. The dhvaja–purusha is carved on the main spire of temple.

B) Kumbhesvara temple

Popularly known as Mataji-ka-Mandir , is situated to the south of the Nilakanta Mahadeva temple .It consist of a square sanctum entered through chandrasila , an antarala and sabhamandapa preceded by pillared porch. The figures of laksmi, Brahma, Lakulisa, Vishnuand Mahesvariare cavred on the lintel and *lalatabimba* has Ganesha figure. The temple is dated around 1080 A.D



HANUMAN GARHI COMPLEX

C) Temple of Hanuman was originally a Shiva temple as the door lintel shows the image of Lakulisa flanked by Brahma and Vishnu on either side, image of large Hanuman was installed by Vijayaraja in A.D 1107 and therefore it is known as Hanuman Garhi temple complex.

D) Shrine of Saivacharya is situated in front of Kumbhesvara temple locally known as Kanphada –Sadhu-Ka-Mandir. It is *pancharatha* on plan consist of a *garbhagriha*, *antarala* and followed by a portico. A Lakulisa image is depicted on the *lalatbimba* of the temple assigned to the first quarter of 11th century A.D

JAIN COMPLEX

Under Parmaras Arthuna was also an important center of Jainism. The remnants of a massive temple dedicated to Parashvanatha assignable to 1st quarter of 12th century A.D. has square jinaprasada , gudhamandhapa and trikamandapa in axial plan. The jangha is decorated with the figures of apsaras, ashta- dikpalas and ascetics. Shikara is of multispired variety with rathikas. There are few other jain shrines around the main temple totally broken one of them is in dilapidated condition attached to western wall of the terrace enshrined a large size image of Parsvantha.



Jain temple

MANDALESVARA TEMPLE

The most important temple of the area is known as Mandaleswara temple dedicated to Lord Shiva surrounded by six small shrines. There are four small shrines Gamela talava. One on the north and is in bad condition and remaining 3 shrines are in fair condition dated to early half of 12th century. Stands on undressed stone, consist of square *saptaratha niradhara garbhagriha*, *antarala*, *sabha mandapa*

and a *mukha mandapa* with lateral transepts followed by Nandi- *mandapa*. The *mulaprasada* raised on a *jagati* have plain exterior. The niches of *madovara* are bedecked with the sculptures of Lord Shiva, Natesa, Chamunda on southern, western and northern sides. The sanctum is crowned by multi-spined brick variety *sikhara*. The *garbhagiriha* enshrines a yoni pitha; the door frame is of *panchasaka*.



Mandalesvara temple

CHAUSTHA YOGNI TEMPLE

Located on the east of Jain temple, is most profusely carved and ornamented edifice at Arthuna locally known as Ppiliya Mhadeva Ka Mandir. Stands on a large terrace consist of a *pancharatha garbhagiriha* followed by an *antarala*, *sabhamandapa* with lateral transepts on either sides or an *ardhamandapa*. The *jagati* and *pitha* of the temple is highly decorated with series of niches having yogini figures. The *pitha* of the temple comprises of religious, secular, royal scenes including erotic scenes. The *jangha* and *mandovara* part of temple is also decorated with various brahmanical deities. The temple is datable to 1st quarter of 12th century A.D.



CHAUSTHA YOGNI TEMPLE

Group of Arthuna temple not only in its architectural design or plan but also produced the excellent artistic on walls of the temples, beautiful sculptures on the walls enhance the beauty of the temple and play a very pivotal role in the study of iconography of Arthuna temple. There are beautiful figure of eight armed Nataraja and eight armed Chamunda on Mandaleswara temple. Shikhara also of multiple spired variety .Sculpture of paravati, chamunda and *nritya* Ganesha at Nilakanta Mahadeva temple enhance the beauty of the temple. There are figurines of Godhasiva paravati, Uma-Mahaeswara Andhasuravadha –Shiva on the south of Hanumana Gadhi temple, southern *bhadra* niche, Shiva temple No-2 icon of Nataraja , on western *bhandra* niche of Shiva temple No.3 . There are beautiful depiction of scenes belongs to churning of the ocean, on central ceiling of Mahadalesvara temple, *Simha-vyala* at Mandalesvara temple also beautify the temple complex. There is depiction of Hanumana bringing Himalaya Mountain containing medical herb at yogni temple, Arthuna. A beautiful apsara fighting with lion, on the southern face of Jain temple is the most incredible example of workmanship. An *apasara* looking at mirror on southern face of shrine No.9 Arthuna and *torana* pillar at Shiva temple No.1 also attract the visitor's eyes.

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