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REPORT ON CONSERVATION OF SRI DHARMALINGESWARA TEMPLE, DHARUPALAM, PANCHADHARA, VISAKHAPATNAM DISRICT.

History and background:

The Temple is situated 10 kms north of Elamanchili and 50 kms south to the present Visakhapatnam city. The Temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva as the presiding deity, Sri. Dharmalingaswamy.

There is a damaged inscription belonging to the 12th century CA. This old Telugu inscription shows that the temple was well constructed much before 12th Century AD. The temple was frequently expanded and repaired by Elamanchili Chalukyas. Numerous inscriptions in Telugu ranging from 1403 AD onwards are seen inscribed in the temple. There were around 10 such inscriptions mentioning about the periodic maintenance and endowments given to this temple. Vizianagara Kings also patronized this temple and their inscriptions are still intact. These are recorded with Volume SII- 6, from 660 to 670.

There are many mutilated ancient sculptures scattered in the premises and stylistically they have affinity towards the tribal art. The origin of the temple to tribal Heritage cannot be ruled out. It is believed that the eight handed Mahishasuramardhini now placed in the MAHAMANDAPA is the original deity under worship and later the present set of deities were installed and consecrated.

Date of visit: 18th February 2011.

Members present from REACH:

Shri. T Satyamurthy – Founder Trustee, REACH FOUNDATION, Shri. S. Dhandapani – Honorary Engineer REACH, Smt. Srilatha Rao – Honorary Conservation Chemist, REACH (both from ASI) and Shri. J. Chandrasekaran – P.R.O & Secretary, REACH FOUNDATION, Shri. Dhiwakar, REACH member, AP Chapter.

Members present from Endowments Department:

Sri. S. Srinivasa Rao, Dy.E.E,G. Srinivasacharyulu, Asst. Sthapathi, M. Sridhar, Inspector, Elamanchili, N.L.N.Sastry, E.O, Group Temple, Anakapalli. T. Sambasiva Rao, Manager, Group Temples, Elamanchili, P. Ramesh, Technical Assistant, G. Ranganadha Swamy Jr. Assistant R.Srinivasa Rao, Jr. Assistant

And

Members of the BHAGAVATULA CHARITABLE TRUST (BCT), who are the key persons to have initiated the visit of REACH team to these group of temples.

The team's visit and observations.

Dharmalingesvara temple is surrounded by hillocks and poses a picturesque scene of par excellence. In plan it is garbhagriha, ardhamandapa, mahamandapa and a mukhamandapa. There is hypostyle pillared hall in the southern side known as Kalyana mandapa and another mandapa in the northwest corner known as Natyamandapa. The complex is enclosed by stone prakara wall. There are two Mahadwara gateways in eastern and western sides.

The Vimana is constructed with stone blocks up to bhitti level and the superstructure is completely covered with lime of many layers. It is very difficult to even assess the material inside the Vimana. Similarly all the stone pillars and walls are applied with many layers of lime and modern paints.

The maha dvaras have two side aisles on either side and freestanding pillars supported the roof slabs. The roof is water tightened in traditional way and no superstructures were added.

On the northern side of the complex in a lower level, five eternal never drying springs are found to be fitted with a pranala spout. Hence the place is also known as Panchadharakshetra. At the centre of the springs a small Siva's shrine is found to be erected at a later date. Many sculptures and small shrines in the vicinity of the temple indicate the affinity of the worship with the tribal cult.

A modern RCC mandapa with a Ganesa shrine towards the eastern side is found to be added very recently.

➤ **1. Vimana:**

The Vimana is constructed with stone up to the entablature and it is not clear whether the superstructure is constructed with Brick and mortar or stone. It is completely covered with lime wash of many layers and now the thickness may be about 5". Inside the ceiling, stone slabs are laid to cover the sanctum. Water leakage during monsoon is reported and seepage is common during the post rainy days. The moisture inside the Vimana weakens it.

The original features and design of the Vimana needs to be exposed by removing the lime wash and then cracks should be grouted with cement and the gaps should be pointed. Metal sheet over the Sikhara can be removed and proper Kalasa can be reinstalled after water tightening the top. After exposing the Vimana depending upon the nature of the roof a decision can be arrived to re plaster it with lime mortar or leave it in case of stone Vimana.

➤ **2. East and west entrance Mahadwara:**

In the outer aisles on both south and north sides there are uneven settlements and the central beam is found broken. Sometime past additional support to the broken beams were given with iron bars. Due to this settlement floor is sinking in various places. Cracks have developed over the lintel beams and some of the ceiling slabs have broken. Many pillars have leaned and out of plumb.

The weathering course should be dismantled and the entrance should be freed of the bond and weight over the slabs. Wherever the pillars are out of plumb, the slabs can be removed and the pillars brought to plumb. The broken beam and lintel slabs are to be replaced and then water tightened. The floor slabs are to be reset by replacing the broken one with new slabs.

After attending to these processes, it should be water tightened as per original specifications with lime and brick bats. It is very essential to restore the original water chutes over the roof.

➤ **3. Prakara wall**

The core of the Prakara wall has deteriorated. Hence outer veneer stones have fallen at some places.

Prakara wall should be reconstructed as per original design and layout which includes the strengthening the core first, using brick bats and lime mortar. New excavations in the northern outer wall had weakened the Prakara. The outer veneer in this part is to be strengthened and no other mechanical operation is necessary here.

➤ **4. Kalyana Mandapa, Natya Mandapa or Vasanta Mandapa**

The Kalyana mandapa pillars have moved out due to heavy dead weight over the roof. It is also seen that the lower plinth of the mandapa is completely buried in debris and then over it flooring is resorted. Some of the pillars are found to be in out of plumb and due to movement of the pillars two beams and some of the ceiling slabs are broken.

In the Natya or Vasanta Mandapa also the problem is similar. In addition to that the northern side wall over which the weights of the roof slabs are placed is slipping from the wall due to minor movement of the wall blocks.

The dead weight over the roof should be removed by dismantling the weathering course. In the Kalyana mandapa the plinth moldings are to be brought back to original level. The out of plumb pillars are to be brought back to the original level and then the broken beams and slabs can be reset with new ones.

This work can be done with out completely dismantling the mandapa. It can be done on phase wise wherever necessary.

➤ **5. Dwajasthamba**

Near the Dwajasthamba and the pedestals or Balipeedam around, there are some Devanagari scripts in masked and flaked condition. These could be visible or not identified, as they were smeared with soot and oil.

The above inscriptions are yet to be cleaned and estempaged. In the inner Mandapa, and in the Garbhagriha, as well as in adjoining mandapas, many inscriptions are seen, but they need to be cleaned and estempaged for posterity and be deciphered by epigraphists.

➤ **6. Tiles in the sanctum sanctorum:**

Tiles were plastered on the main shrine which would not allow us to observe, if any cracks develop within the original surface.

These should be removed, so that the position of the original walls can be observed, examined and maintained periodically. Many inscriptions would have been buried under these tiles.

➤ **7. Broken sculptures and idols strewn around**

While surveying the temple premises, we could see many sculptures and icons lying around, half buried in soil.

These can be properly excavated and arranged as exhibits, to reveal the antiquity of themselves and the temple.

Other general observations and remarks:

Lime wash is done over the years on the stone surfaces starting from the Mahadwara and the Vimana, the other mandapas. The lime should be scrapped manually, original surface be

exposed and chemically treated. Water tightening of all the structures should be done in traditional manner as prescribed in the conservation manual. Original vimana or ceiling should not be covered with any plaster. Pointing and grouting of wider gaps should be carried out. Further lime wash to these heritage structures should not be allowed at any cost.

On the terraces of all mandapas, the dead materials should be dug out for full depth up to ceiling slab. The broken members should be replaced wherever necessary. Resetting the pillars that are out of plumb and water tightening the terrace properly with average depth not exceeding 25 cm in the centre, with clear slope towards the end, for water to flow into the original water chutes are some of the immediate needs before the onslaught of next monsoon. Water tightening the terrace by laying brick jelly concrete to an average depth of 25 cm to 20 cm. Brick jelly bats, mixed with fine slacked pure lime 1:2 proportion, again using gallnut and jaggery liquor for slurry mixes. The top should be rammed well with wooden rammer, and the top finishing is to be done with 1:1:4 ratio, then top coated with accoproof (water proof compound).

Tree killer chemical should be applied wherever vegetation grows and the roots to be killed permanently, before the relaying of the roof materials. The brickbats that are broken while dismantling the roof themselves can be cleaned, void of dust and lime, then re-used and plastered with lime mortar, which would also cut down the cost of relaying the roof. In the south eastern and southern side the load bearing wall has got ancient mural paintings. While dismantling and relaying of the weathering course care should be taken to see that the traces of murals are not affected by this work.

Other temples in the surroundings:

The Shiva temple on the Southern side of the Main temple, built of Charnockite stone, in Oriyan style, is also affected by the earth movements and is broken in parts. The whole structure needs to be reset after numbering and restoring with pointing and grouting.

The Gopala temple which is famous for its Pancha Dhara water falls is also sinking and the original water inlet and source has to be tapped and restored. The surrounding of this temple is frequented by locals and other visitors and is used as relieving points (lavaratory). Human excreta were shockingly found within the temple premises here, very close to the Dhara wells. This also sadly lacks maintenance and has to be immediately brought under regular cleaning and maintenance.

Simultaneously, a master plan can be prepared to build up an eco friendly environment around these temples.

EXTERNAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE TEMPLE:

1. HEAVY QUARRYING FOR IRON ORE:

It is understood that heavy quarrying for iron ore is happening on this hillock for years together. The vibrations caused due to heavy bombing and quarrying would surely have

adverse effects on heritage structures. That is the main reason why settlement is still an on-going process in this temple. Further the five springs in Panchadahara is getting the water flow from these hillocks only. If the quarries are continued there is every possibility that the resource may be blocked and the water chute choked.

Complete ban on quarrying in and around this hillock should be implemented with consultation with the mining authorities and the district collector.

2. STATE ARCHEAOLGY'S ROLE:

It is understood that this temple and the surrounding temples around this main shrine are under the maintenance of State Archaeology, which has to put in more efforts to attend and preserve this temple.

While discussing with the engineers of the endowments department, they showed immense interest in learning the renovation and conservation practices themselves, if properly guided by a heritage Conservation expert. REACH FOUNDATION is ready to appoint a conservationist on site, for any such projects and teach the engineers all the methodology.

Before the beginning of the works proper photo/drawing documentation of each and every details of the structure should be carried out. Such Photo documentation is necessary during the works in progress also. Detailed drawings of each part should be done in AutoCAD or any suitable design software and retained for posterity and reference whenever necessary. This would enable the department's engineers gain knowledge and confidence, than assigning the work to third parties.

3. Tourism/Pilgrimage centre:

The temple and the village can be developed into a Heritage model village to attract more tourists and pilgrims.

As the BHAGAVATULA CHARITABLE TRUST (BCT), members have been instrumental in developing this tiny village into a green valley, using eco friendly scientific measures, developing the village as well with all basic amenities, it would benefit the State and the visitors to join hands with them in conserving these group of temples.

**Submitted by
REACH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**