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## **REPORT ON CONSERVATION OF SRI DHARMALINGESWARA TEMPLE, DHARUPALAM, PANCHADHARA, VISAKHAPATNAM DISTRICT.**

### **History and background:**

#### **SIMHACHALAM TEMPLE, Visakhapatnam District, Andhra Pradesh.**

The temple is situated on the top of a hill, 15 kms from the present Visakhapatnam City.

The Temple is dedicated to Varaha Narasimhamurthi. The uniqueness of the temple is that it is dedicated to both Varaha and Narasimha Avatar of Vishnu. The Archa Murthy is covered by Sandal Paste and is removed to expose the original icon of Saligrama only during the Akshya Thrithiya Day every year, in the month of Vaikasi.

The earliest lithic records available in the temple are datable to 1087 AD and 1099 AD and both these Tamil inscriptions mention about endowments of ornaments and flowers dedicated to Varaha Narasimha. This was during the control of Chola Emperor Kulottunga-1. Though the region was under the control of Kalingas from the olden days, a war happened between Cholas and Kalingas, which is mentioned in inscriptions from the Draksharama Temple. The same Chola inscription belonging to the same period also mentions about Simhachalam Temple.

Sri Ramanuja has visited the temple and the 'sambradaya system on Pancharatra' was introduced in the temple since 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

There are number of inscriptions on Simhachalam, from 12<sup>th</sup> Century AD onwards mostly in Telugu and some in Oriya language too. The Eastern Ganga Kings, who took the control of this region later, endowed the temple with various gifts. After Gangas, the Gajapathis took over the region and maintained the temple. Even now, the hereditary trustee is descendant of the Gajapathis of Vizianagaram town.

The temple tower was constructed in the Chola and also has various Oriyan characteristics within.

Date of visit: 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

#### **Members present from REACH:**

S/S. T Satyamurthy – Founder Trustee, REACH FOUNDATION, S. Dhandapani – Honry Senior engineer REACH, Smt. Srilatha Rao – Sr. Conservation Chemist, REACH and Shri. J. Chandrasekaran – P.R.O & Secretary, REACH FOUNDATION.

#### **Members present from Endowments Department:**

Sri Premkumar, Regional Joint Commissioner and E.O and his staff.

### **The team's visit and observations:**

The most ancient part of the temple is the garbhagriha, ardhmandapa and a mahamandapa. Located over a high jagati platform, the Vimana is a Stone Vimana from bottom to top. Square in plan it preruns the Jagmohan elevation of Orissa architecture. In side the sanctum the area is spanned by the projecting carbel stones of many layers. The equilibrium of the stone members is balanced by the insertion of the blocks in the core of the wall. The core of the stone wall was more than 3.8 mt wide.

**The superstructure even though stylistically South Indian it has more affiliation with Orissa order. The ardhmandapa and mahamandapa are hypo style pillared halls.**

#### ➤ **1. Vimana:**

The Vimana constructed with stone veneers is having a inner core of brick and mortar. Inside the Vimana no leakage is reported but the concern is that cracks have developed over the Bhatti part of it in south east corner. The intricately carved ornamental members of the outer wall broken in many places and some of them are missing. Many of the load bearing outer blocks have broken and deep cracks could be seen in both east and north side corners of the the sanctum.

**On close examination it is seen that there is a settlement in this part. The roof and weathering course could not be examined.**

**The missing and fallen members are to be restored in the similar manner with ornamental design to match the original and the cracks should be stitched by SS rods as per the specifications in the conservation manual. Then the cracks and voids should be grouted and the pointing should be done in such a way to suit the original.**

#### ➤ **2. Garuda Mandapa (portico Mandapa)**

A major beam in the southern portico has broken. The same has to be mended by inserting I – section girder. (See Conservation Manual of AP Endowments)

#### ➤ **3. Main Mandapa**

It is reported that there are leakages during rainy season. It is due to the additional layer that is made over the original rood and the disintegrated lime mortar is allowing seepage. The dead weathered materials above should be removed to full depth till the original level. Water tightening on the terrace needs to be done with required thickness and maintaining a slope towards the corners and ends as per specifications in the conservation manual . This is to be done after the replacement of the broken beam on the Garuda Mandapa and the broken ceiling slabs.

#### **4. Removal of lime washes over the stone members:**

In many places lime and colour wash is seen over the stone surface. This should be removed and a quote of preservatives should be applied over the surface as per specifications in the conservation manual.

## **5. Covering of the inner Prakara with thatches**

It is seen that to facilitate the devotees to walk during mid days and to have shadow thatches with palm leaves are provided in the inner enclosure. This thatched roof obstructs the view of the Vimana. The ancient grandeur of the Vimana well maintained by the Endowments department should be seen and ancient grandeur is a beauty for ever. This can be removed and to facilitate the Devotees proper foot mats can be provided.

## **6. Digital Documentation**

**At present no proper measured drawing of the Vimana is available for our study. It is very essential to have digital drawings of elevation and plan of these temples.**

### **Other observations:**

This temple needs special mention of its maintenance and clean atmosphere. The original structures have been maintained with rare or minimal changes.

Once the terrace is redone by removal of dead materials and replastered using lime mortar and brickbats and the mending of cracks in the South eastern corner of the main shrine, this temple would probably be the only temple where all original structures are maintained in totality, within AP.

REACH wishes to congratulate the team behind this temple.

**Submitted by**  
**REACH TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**