

Ancient Temples and The Legacy of Rulers in India- An Emerging Field of Tourism Industry

Paper id: 15580 Submission: 11/01/2022, Date of Acceptance: 21/01/2022, Date of Publication: 23/01/2022

Abstract

India is a country which is known for its rich art and culture, Since time immemorial people were visiting India for different reasons and most of them were not only attracted towards wealth and prosperity but they were inclined towards the intelligentsia also. India was attracting people right from the beginning of our historical writings. There are many prominent figures who came to India for some specific reasons.

Keywords : Ancient Temples, Art and Culture, Indian Rulers.

Introduction

□ Megasthenes, who came to India in 4th century BC as an ambassador of Selucus Nikator remained in India for five years. He wrote about Indian culture and tradition during the Mauryan age. Fa hien was the first Chinese monk who visited India in search of great Buddhist scriptures. Hiuen Tsang's aim of visiting India was to gain knowledge of Buddhism and collect its religious texts. As he did not get the permission of Chinese Emperor, he slipped away from there and stayed in India for 14 years. He has been described as the prince of Pilgrims. Hiuen Tsang visited to Kashmir, Punjab and proceeded to Kapilvastu, Bodhgaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar, he studied at Nalanda and traveled through almost all parts of India. He left behind a good legacy of knowledge about India. AlBeruni was commissioned by Mahmud of Ghazni, to write monumental commentary on Indian Philosophy and culture. He remained in India for 13 long years

Majority of South Indian rulers whether Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas, Pallavas were having trade relations with far east and hold almost all of the Islands under their subjugation. The Cholas were known for their efficient Navy. Similarly the Pallavas were known for their naval expeditions. Their temple architecture surpasses almost all other dynasties of the world. Such gigantic figures still survive in India that is attracting people from almost all corners of the World. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic tourism industry has received a great loss because it is totally based on human activities. Once upon a time people were mostly interested in leisure tourism but in the recent years much of the interest is shown in destination tourism or heritage tourism. Now days majority of the foreign visitors came to visit ancient temple destinations of India. This gives us ample opportunities to develop these historical sites and temple destinations.

peeping into the history Kalidasa, the great learned poet and dramatist credit the Gupta period with having conquered about twenty one kingdoms of Parasikas, the Hunas, the Kadambas, tribes located in the West and the east Oxus Valley, the Kinnaras, Kiratas and others. The period gave rise to achievement in architecture, sculpture and painting that set standard form and taste determined the whole subsequent course of art not only in India but far beyond her borders.³

Mauryan Empire was the largest political entity that has existed in the Indian Subcontinent extending over 5 million square kilometers at its zenith under Ashoka. The greatest monuments of this period executed in the reign of Chandragupta Maurya, was the old Palace of Pataliputra modern Kumhrar in Patna. The number of columns is 80, each about 7 meters high. Megasthenese said that the palace was constructed of Timber. Kautilya's Arthashastra also gives the method of Palace construction from this period. Ashoka sent Buddhist mission to the West (c.250 BC). Major RE 13 of Ashoka states the conquered territories of Ashoka by means of Dharma. Ashoka's Dharma was based on humanitarian grounds. He expressed everywhere the victory by means of Dharma or compassion. The major Rock edicts of Ashoka mentioned Cholas in the far South.

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Chola dynasty is one of the longest ruling dynasty in the world History. The earliest datable references to the Cholas are found in the Ashokan inscriptions.

Monumental architecture in the form of big temples and sculptures in stone and bronze reached its zenith during the Cholas⁵. The Cholas Conquest of kadamba(Kedah) and Srivijaya, and their continued commercial contacts with the Chinese Empire, enabled them to influence the Local cultures.⁶ Examples of Hindu Cultural influence found today throughout the South east Asia owe much to the legacy of Cholas. For example the great temple complex of Parambaram in Indonesia exhibit a number of similarities with South India architecture.⁷

According to Malay chronicle *Sepera Melaya*, the ruler of Malacca Sultanate claimed to be the descendent of the King of the Chola Empire⁸ Chola rule is remembered in Malaya today as many Prince there have their names ending with Cholan or Chulan, like Raja Chulan, the raja of Perak.⁹ The Cholas made a number of Shiva temples along the banks of River Kaveri. The Chola temple architecture has been appreciated for its magnificent as well as delicate workmanship, ostensibly following the rich tradition of the past. Art Historian James Fergusson says that the Chola artists conceived like Giants and finished like Jewellers.¹⁰ A new Characteristic of the Chola art that characterized the Dravidian architecture in the later times was the addition of a huge gateway called Gopurams to the enclosure of the temple. They influenced the art and architecture of South East Asia. The Brihadeshwara temple, The temples at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram were declared as World Heritage Sites and are declared as great living Chola temple.

Among the existing specimens in Museums around the World and in the temples of South India may be seen many fine figures of Shiva in various forms, Vishnu and Lakshmi and the Shaiva saints.¹¹

Alike Chola, Pallavas are the most noted for their patronage of architecture, the finest example being the Shore temple at Mammalapuram (A UNESCO World heritage site), the Kailashnath temple at Kanchipuram and the Shore temple built by Narsimhavarman II, Rock cut temples of Mahendravadi by Mahendravarman are the fine example of Pallava style of architecture.¹²

A. L. Basham says that "In the chief city of Northern India almost all traces of the architecture of Hindu Period have vanished.¹³ This fact cannot be accepted because most of the temples of Central India are either not known or not being brought to light. Author has explaining few such temples of Central India which are to be considered as the best examples of Indian architecture. The temples at Kadwaya, M.P, Terahi M.P, Surwaya etc are some of the finest example of central Indian architecture. The Jarai Math Baruasagar is a Panchayatana temple with a very beautiful entrance door.



The Fragments of Surwaya temples 9-10 cent A.D



Pillar - Surwaya M.P



Gairaha temple U,P



Dasavtar temple Lalitpur U>P



Jarai Math Barusagar U.P.



Surwaya temple Shivpuri M.P.

Objective of the Study In this paper, author explains a few temples of Central India which are to be considered as the best examples of Indian architecture.

Conclusion There are number of temples which are still unexplored. If a proper documentation of such temples is being made it will help tourism industry to attract tourists to these places also.

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