

The Someshwara Temple, Kolara-An Overview

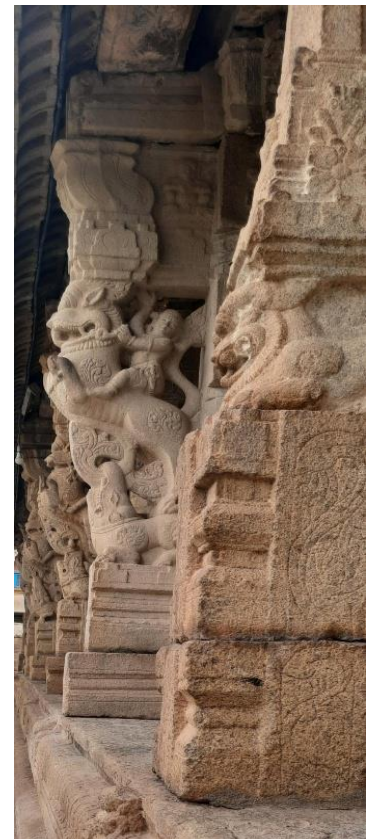
-Shravya K, Bengaluru

Overview:

Someshwara Temple of Kolara was built by the Cholas in the 11th century but were dethroned by the Chalukyas. Later the temple was magnified by the Vijayanagara Empire in the 14th century. It is said that King Achyutaraya gave grants to this temple. This temple shows the splendid beauty of the detailed Dravidian style of architecture.

The main deity worshipped in this beautiful temple is Lord Someshwara Swamy (Lord Shiva). The Someshwara temple is noted for its tall

superstructure (gopuram) over the main entrance. This temple has a Dhvajastamba at the entrance and consists of Vasantha Mantapa, Mukha Mantapa and also a Kalyana Mantapa.



As you enter the Mahadwara, the main part of the whole temple is the Mukha Mantapa which leads you to the Garbhagriha. It is an open mantapa with passages in the centre and surrounded by raised platform. The structures found on the pillars in this mantapa are worth seeing.

The entrance and the outer part that surrounds the Mukha Mantapa consists of Yalis. Yalis are the part animals found in almost all temples.



This is the Sabha Mantapa, meeting hall, where probably discussions among the king and the people would take place. It can be said that the Sabha Mantapa is being a part of Mukha Mantapa. The roof is supported by large pillars and creates a passage towards the Natya Mantapa and the Garbhagriha.

Once we enter the temple, on the right hand side, is a tall four pillared structure called as Vasanta Mantapa. Besides the main temple is a smaller temple which is dedicated to Parvati, Shiva's wife. The structure is simple and well built.

Having done with the main temple, we move on the Kalyana Mantapa, a superbly sculpted mini hall meant for conducting wedding rituals of the Gods. It is found in the South West corner of the main temple. The pillars are carved with every single detail. It is made up of granite and its architecture has a lot of foreign influences. Inside the mantapa is another raised platform which is again surrounded by pillars and are sculpted in a very unique way. It has fourteen pillars, ten outer pillars and four inner pillars.



Detailing of selected sculptures:

Here are some of the common sculptures of Vijayanagara Architecture which are found in Someshwara as well as other temples.



Sculptures of animals and Kubjas are most likely to be at the bottom which are adopted as decoratives surrounding the whole temple. Here are a few pictures found at the bottom of the main temple.



Two elephants doing abhisheka to Shivalinga used as decoratives is a unique thought of the sculptor.

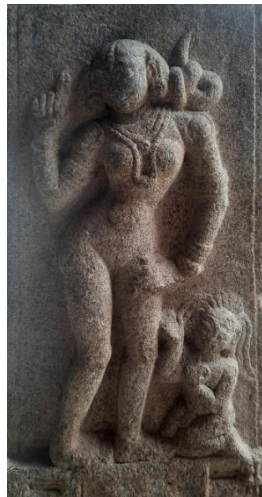


Women playing Kolata and Men playing instruments.

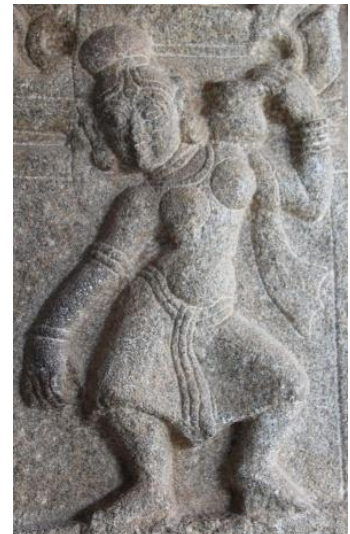


These are a few sculptures found on the outside walls of the main temple which are mostly used as decorative figures. The pillars consist of carvings which mostly depict the society during that era.

Here are a few sculptures found on the pillars of the temple which are commonly found in some of the Vijayanagara Temple.



Some noticeable hairstyle is found in a few figures of the temple. It is a knot kind of hairstyle which can be seen as a bun.



Women doing daily chores.



Kubjas playing instruments

Half elephant and half duck
(Mystic creatures)





Sages/Rishi sculptures are the most found figures in all the temples of Vijayanagara era. They are found with different hand and leg positions, different meditating postures, different hairstyles and different he ad tilting as well.

To conclude, this temple is one of the most important architectural wonders which is of national importance shows culture of the Vijayanagara period.

About the author



Kum. Shravya, is learning the KALAKSHETRA style of Bharayanatyam since the age of 8 from Dr. Dwaritha Viswanatha. She has completed Bharatanatyam Junior and Senior exams conducted by KSEEB and first the six levels of Gandharva exams. As a part of Nirmiti's troupe, Shravya has performed individually and in group in many places. Her choreographic skills has been showcased many times and was well received by the audience. She has also been an avid learner and practitioner of the nattuvangam and is currently teaching this divine artform to the younger batches at Nirmiti. **She is also an Internee in Nrityashilpa Yatra - A temple study programme conducted by Noopurabhramari.**
