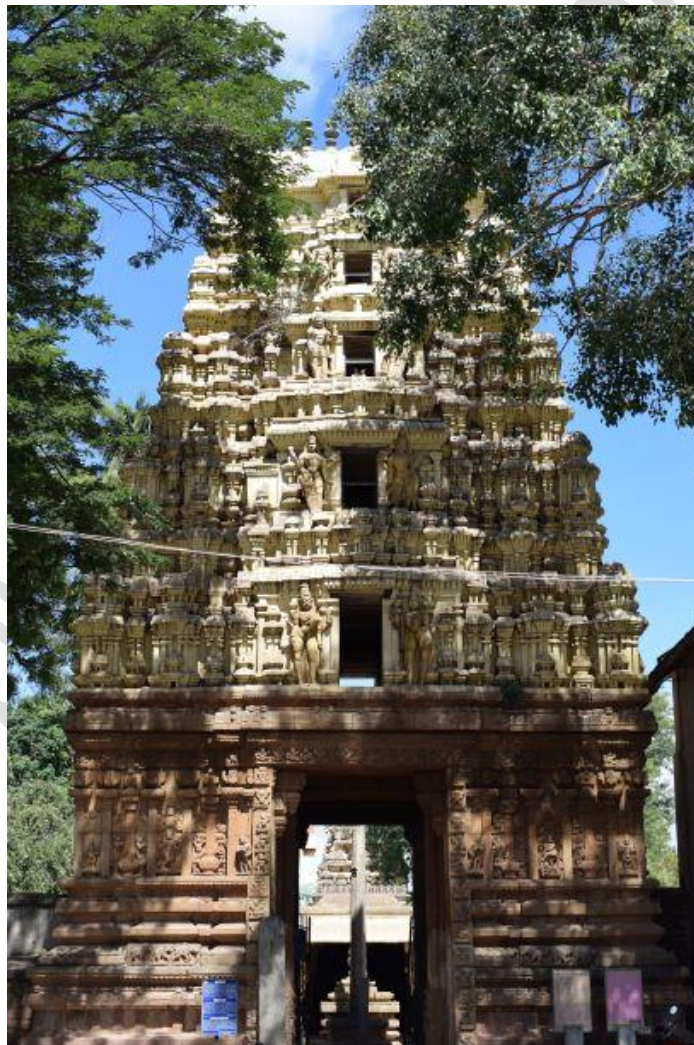


Scintillating Someshavra

– Nagashree Narayan, Bengaluru.

There may be no gold available in KGF today, but Kolar is still very rich when it comes to history, culture and our heritage. It was built and nourished by the Cholas, then the Hoysalas and later by the Vijayanagara Empire. All the three dynasties are known for their contribution towards the field of Architecture.

The Someśvara temple is about 80kms from Bangalore. It is a 14th century temple which was first built by the Cholas and then developed by the Vijayanagara kings. The temple resembles the Ulasuru Someśvara temple in Bangalore, but in a bigger version.



Picture 1: Entrance of Someśvara temple

The temple has a very big Dvāra and a Gōpura. The entrance is in the Vijayanagara style of architecture. The Gōpura is facing east direction.



Picture 2: Śiva with Kapāla



Picture 3: Natarāja with ensemble

The view from the Gōpura is a wide passage, a tall Vijayasthamba. There is a Sabhamantapa.

On the left side of the Dvāra, there is a beautiful sculpture of Śiva with Triśūla, holding the Kapāla with a Sāraṅga. To the right side of the Dvāra, there is a sculpture of Natarāja.



Picture 4 and 5 : Specimen with musical Instruments

There are sculptures of many specimens holding different types of musical instruments. There is one with Kahāḷe, Śaṅkha, Khañjira and so on. All the different types of musical instruments like wind instruments, percussion instruments can be identified here in the picture 4 and 5.

The massive entrance opens to a very big courtyard or Mukhamanṭapa.



Picture 6: Mukhamanṭapa

The Mukhamanṭapa has massive pillars. There are 16 sided pillars with a total of 64 pillars. These pillars depict the local life of the people during those times. In this passage there is Nandi, besides which there is a carving of a couple prostrating to the lord.



Picture 7: Couple prostrating to the lord



Picture 8: Nandi

There are very interesting sculptures on the pillars here. The women's hair style was very unique, where hair tied in buns with different designs can be seen.



Picture 9 and 10: Women with different hair styles.

In the above picture, even the different jewelry patterns can be seen. The jewel design of both men and women in these sculpture is so beautiful and different. The format of the dress worn by the women had was a full length skirt, and other with knee length skirt with a taper cut.



Picture 11: Dancing Women with a pot, wearing a taper cut design skirt.

The full skirt can be observed in Picture 11; who is a dancer.

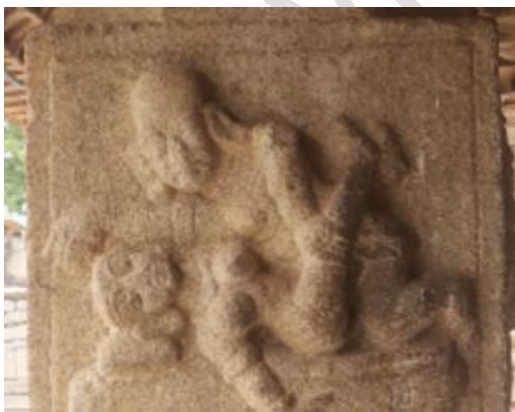


Picture 12: Naṭarāja Picture 13: Hanumanta Picture 14: Viṣṇu Picture 15: Krishna

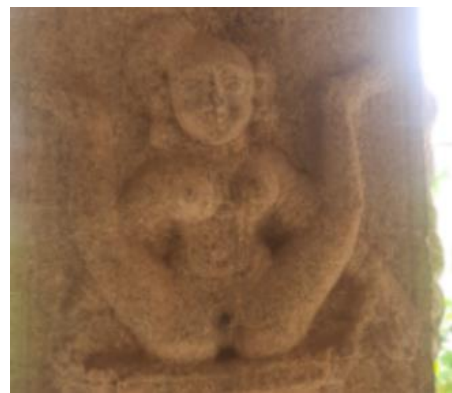
Besides all this, deities like Naṭarāja, Krishna, Hanumantha Viṣṇu can be observed. The pictures 12,13,14,15 depict the same.

Various fat bellied specimens holding different musical instruments can be seen. The four types of instruments like Śaṅkha, Kahāḷe, flute, lute, Maddaḷe and Tamaṭe resembling today's instruments can be seen in various sizes.

Many erotic sculptures where couple making love on a couch can be seen on the pillars of the Mukhamanṭapa. The concept of sex has always been a taboo in this generation. But it was not so in during earlier centuries. There is a profound meaning when it comes to these erotic sculptures. They are related to the aspects and fundamentals of Tantric practices, depicting the ecstatic state as the key of expression rather than mundane pleasure. It can also be understood as the Jīvātma in unison with Paramātmā, the ultimate form of love and goal of life. Picture 16 and 17 represent the same.



Picture 16



Picture 17

The roof of the Maṇṭapa is curved with a sloping edge. There is also a floral pattern of the same.



Picture 18: Roof top having the floral pattern and frog.

There was also a frog in the corner. There is a story which my granny used to narrate, that frogs were indicators of rain.



Picture 19: Navagraha devatā-s on the ceiling

There is the sculpture of the Navagraha devatas on the ceiling of the Garbha gudi.

There is a mesmerising Kalyāṇa Maṇṭapa in the Prākāra. The Kalyana Mantapa is a small structure, but a very beautiful one. It has 14 pillars in total. Ten outer pillars and 4 inner pillars. The outer pillars are reddish in color and the inner pillars are grey. The inner pillar with the stage is in the Hoysala form of architecture. The outer mantapa is in Vijayanagara style. The detailing the complex form of art is so elaborate. One will be loss of words to describe the beauty of the same. The base of the inner Maṇṭapa is held by strong men. A total of 8 character like this. Above these men, there is a kumbha. Then there are devata-s one two sides of each pillar. To one of the left pillar, there is a sculpture of Krisha, holding the flute. The detailing with respect to the jewellery of the devata-s is extraordinary. The projecting roof shade looks almost like wood. The dome of the Maṇṭapa has a beautiful design in a conical shape. Its an octagon. Within the octagon are the concentric circles.



Picture 20: Dome in the shape of concentric circles.



Picture 21: Conical shape design



Picture 22: Sculptures of dancers dancing in the Dome.

It has many specimens holding various types of musical instruments with dancers on all the four sides of the maṇṭapa, as though playing music and dancing for the wedding happening in the Maṇṭapa.



Picture 23: Specimen holding instruments



Picture 24 : Specimen holding instruments

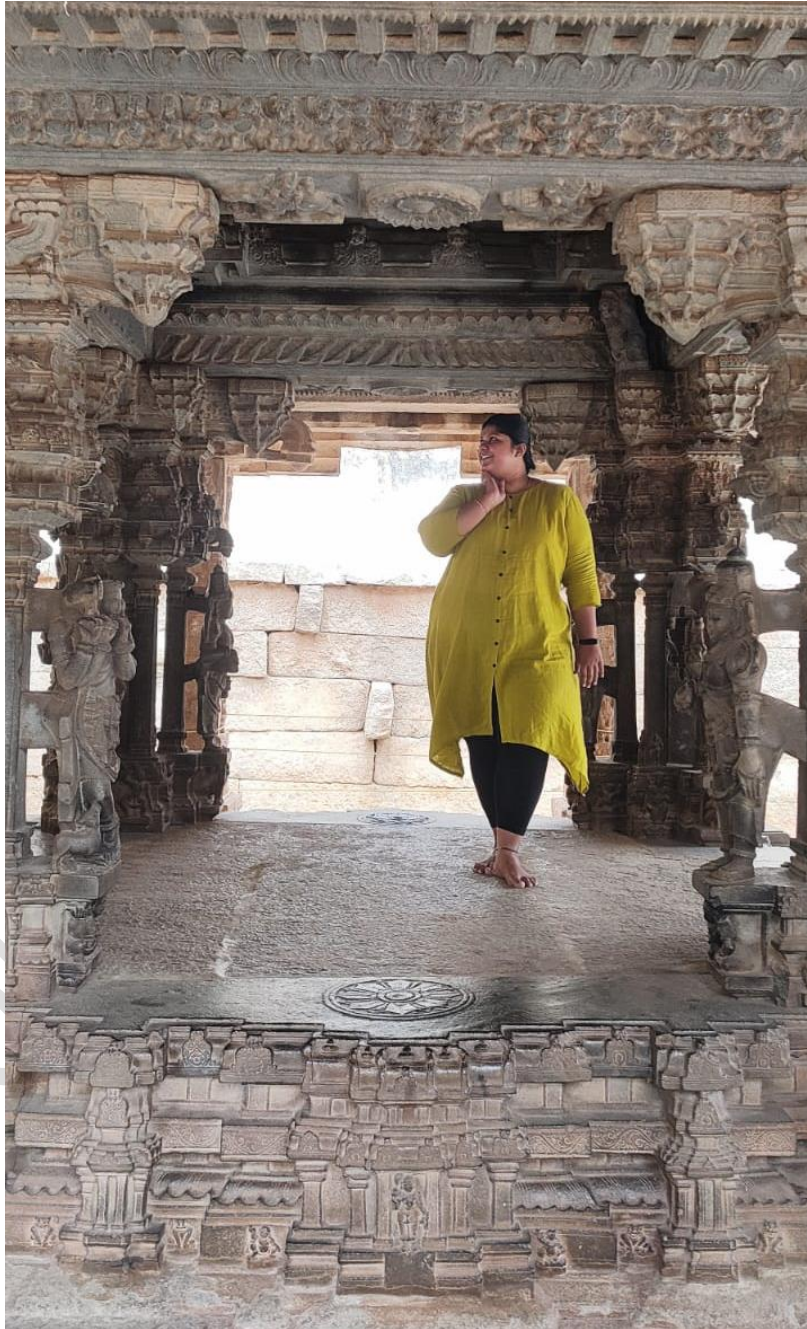


Picture 25:
Padma/Raṅgōli design

The stage has a boundary of a dark colored stone, each side having a floral pattern like a

Padma(Lotus)/Raṅgōli at the mid point. There are sculptures of dancers dancing on the ceiling. There are symmetrical designs of Padma/Raṅgōli as well. The intricate design of the sculpture mesmerised me with the amount of detailing and the skills the sculptors had during those days.

The temple also has a Vasanta Mantapa and Yāga shale. The Vasanta Mantapa is very small and very simple in design compared to that of the Kalyana Mantapa. The entrance to the Yāga shale was closed during our visit to the temple. The visit to this temple was a great experience. Archaeological survey of India has declared it as a protected monument of national importance. Once you are in Kolar, you could visit many other temples, like Kolaramma temple, Virupaksha temple and the most charming, Avani Temple.



This picture of author, is in Kalyāṇa Maṇṭapa of Kolar Someshwara temple clicked during *Nrityashilpayatre* – study visit to the temple.

About the author:

Nagashree Narayan is a Karnataka classical music vocalist and a researcher. Disciple of Karnataka Kalashree Vidwan Tirumale Srinivas. She is a proud Telecommunication Engineer, previously working for IBM India Pvt Ltd. She completed her Masters in Music and M.Phil under the guidance of Dr.Meera Rajaram Pranesh from Jain (Deemed to be University). Apart from performing concerts and teaching, she continues to be involved in research projects and field trips with her Guide. **She is also an Intern in Nrityashilpa Yatra – a temple study programme conducted by Noopurabhramari.**

Photos By : Noopura Bhramari Interns and staff
