

Research Article



ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF SOMESHWAR EMPLE AT PIMPRI-DUMALA, PUNE DISRTICT, MAHARASHTRA

Vijay Sarde

Department of Archaeology,

Deccan college Post-Graduate and Research Institute (Demmed to be University), Pune.

Abstract:-

The Somnath or Someswar temple is situated in Pimpri-Dumala. It is 54 km. from Pune city. It bears beautiful sculptures, which is yet to be studied in detail. These sculptures are important sources to know the Socio-religious scenario of the contemporary society of the region. This temple also has some different features than other temple of Maharashtra. It is one of the few known medieval temples in Maharashtra where we come across the rare images of Nath-siddhas along with other cultic images. There are also more than twelve loose images of different gods, placed near the temple. Two beautiful step wells have been constructed along with Someswar and Rameswar temples. Art and architecture of these wells is similar and seems to be contemporary of the Someswar temple.

The present paper deals with whole documentation and art and architectural features of the temple in detail. Further the paper would make an attempt to put forth the iconographic analysis and identification.

Key words: Medieval temple, Art and architecture, Sculptures, Step wells, Nath-Siddhas, Rameswar temple.

Introduction

The Somnath/Someswar temple is situated in Pimpri-Dumala (18° 46' 32.02" N; 74° 13' 13.51" E). Literary meaning of the word *Dumala* is "two-owned village." It is 06 kilometres from the famous Ashtvinayaka site Mahaganapati of Ranjangaon and 54 km from Pune city. There are two temples in the village; Someswar and Rameswar. Now, Rameswar temple is totally ruined. Only some pillars and images are scattered around Someswar temple and near the stepwell No. 2. There is another renovated temple (sometimes in Maratha period) with ruined material of old temple situated beside the step well No. 2. There is one mound near the temple complex.

Someswar temple comparatively is in good condition and lies on the foothill of the hillock. It bears beautiful sculptures, which is yet to be studied in detail. The main shrine is dedicated to Shiva. It has rare sculptures of Nath-Siddhas, Shaiva and Shakti, which are

important source to know the socio-religious scenario of the contemporary society (Fig. 1). This study also reveals the art and architectural features of the temple.

Architecture of the Someshwar Temple

The shrine has a *garbhagraha* (sanctum), *antarala* (vestibule), *gudhmandapa/sabhamandapa* (Assembly hall) and *nandi mandapa* (Fig. 2).

Garbhagriha (sanctum)

The sanctum is square on plan and it is in sub surface level. It is measuring 2.70 m X 2.70 m. It contains a *Shivalinga* with the *yoni* in the centre. There are two benches on the western and the northern walls situated above the floor level. Sanctum is simple in its architecture with four pilasters on each corner and with a plain corbel like ceiling in the centre. The sanctum is devoid of any decorations except of one elephant and flower sculptures on one of the pilasters. There is a large water storage stone jar near the *Shivlinga*. Brass image of later period of Shiva has been kept on the bench of rear wall.

Dvarshakha (Doorways)

Doorway of the sanctum is of *panchshakha* type and consists of one *latashakha*, *vyalshakha*, *stambhashakha*, *narshakha* and *pushpashakha*. The *vyalshakha* is with seven *vyalas*, like *simhavyala*, *shukavyala*, *gajvyala*, *kinnara*, *simhavyala*, *meshvyala* can be seen.

The *pedya* of the *shakha* has *sursundari*, a shaiva *dvarpala* and again a *sursundari* and on the corner is a *chouri* bearer. They are standing with holding different objects like, flowers, *gada* and *phala* etc. The squares *udumbara* of the door has two brackets of flowers on *mandaraka*. The *lalimbimba* has seated down Ganesha. There are five miniature shrines on the *uttaranga* part with depiction of geometrical motifs and floral designs instead of any deities. There should have been *chandrashila* of the temple, but it is now covered with modern tiles (Fig. 3).

There are other three doorways to enter into the *sabhamandapa*. They all are of *panchshakhas* type. They have same *shakha* pattern like doorway of sanctum. Doorway on the northern side missed the *uttaranga* due to renovation of the temple.

Antarala (vestibule)

Antarala is a large closed passage from sanctum to the *gudhamandapa* which is square on plan, measuring 3X3 m. The *antarala* is terminated from the *mandapa* by two pilasters on each side at the entrance. It has two *bhadra* niches on both the walls, which are now empty. There is an image of three hooded serpent between pilaster and northern *bhadra*. The *vitana* of *antarala* is simple. *Antarala* has two pillars on both the sides and to large images of *dwarपालikas/sursundari* depicted on eastern side. Both are remarkably similar in their decoration and ornamentation. They both are adorned with highly ornamented *karandmukuta* and also with other minutely crafted jewellerys and remarkable drapery.

Gudhamandapa (Hall)

The *gudhmanadapa* is square on the plan. Including exterior portion it measures 9.70 X 9.70 meter. It consists of twelve pillars and pilasters. Twelve pillars stand on the square platform. Out of twelve pillars, the four pillars at four corners are bigger than other pillars.

Pillars are square on plan with projections and consist of three prominent parts; *stambhapada*, *stambhamadhya* and *stambhashirsha*. The *stambhapada* are plain, *stambhamadhya* are decorated with the stylish petals and *stambhashirsha* are made up of square and disc like lintel as well as *ghatas*. The four bigger pillars at four corners are decorated with images and *kirtimukhas*; and other pillars are comparatively plain. The *Nagabandha* can be seen on the capital which is a typical feature of Yadava architecture, but there is also possibility that this tradition was continued after the decline of Yadavas. The *nasi* and the upper block are decorated with *kirtimukhas* and narrative panels. The main four pillars and eight pilasters have cobra headed capitals. The pillars contain the images of various *kirtimukhas*, fighting scenes, musicians and dancers, floral designs and other images. The pilasters contain floral and geometrical designs.

The ceiling of the *mandapa* stands on the capital of the main four pillars. The ceiling starts with a square slabs. There are other eight separate *vitana*s to the ceiling (Fig. 4).

EXTERIOR OF THE SHRINE

The exterior part of the shrine consists of *adhithana*, *jangha* and *shikhara*. An important feature of the exterior part of the temple is an arrangement of sculptures on *jangha* (Fig. 5).

Adhithana/Pitha

The *adhithana* of the shrine consists of various mouldings, it starts with a plain slab upon which the *padma* moulding is seen, and on it is sharp *kani* moulding is seen between the two deep receding fillets. It is followed by another *padma* moulding with a sharp tooth like drop-projection. On the top of this, again *padma* moulding is depicted, from which the *pitha* terminates into the *jangha*.

Jangha

The *jangha* of the shrine is a beautiful part of the temple. It is decorated with the pilasters, lozenge rosettes, a band of *kirtimukhas* and other images. *Jangha* bears a variety of sculptures of gods, goddesses, sursundaris and Nath-Siddha ascetics. There are decorated *Devkoshtakas* (bhadraniche) on the three sides of *jangha* portion of main shrine. Three sculptures each have been placed in the niches of the *devkoshtakas*, i.e. Chamunda on the North, Shiva on the West and Bhairava on the South. On the top of the *jangha* an eave with *padma* moulding is seen.

Shikhara (spire)

The original *shikhara* is no longer extant at present. A modern *shikhara* of the bricks had been constructed in the later period on the occasion of renovation in 1977 C.E.

Nandi mandapa

Nandi mandapa is situated in front of the temple. It faces towards the interior of the main shrine. The *mandapa* consists of four pillars on the four corners. Two *nandis* are located in the centre of the *mandapa*, which faces west. The pillars are renovated, only square bases of the pillars are seems original.

Iconography of the Someshwara Temple

There are iconographic representations of various deities such as, Shiva, Shakti and Vishnu, including Nath-Siddhas, *sursundaris* and secular sculptures. There are more than 100 images on the *jangha* portion and pillars of the shrine. The images are documented and described clock-wise along the circumambulatory path. Some of the identified images are mentioned below.

Shaiva deities

Representation of Shiva and his various iconographic forms have been much favoured in the temple, because of its affiliation to the worship of Shiva. The god Shiva is represented in various iconographic forms like Keval Shiva, Bhairava, *linga* form and Adinath.

Keval Shiva

The usual form of Shiva is seen on the western *bhadra* niche of the shrine and he appears in the forty-eighth position from the *pradakshina path*. The four handed Shiva holds a *damaru* in the upper right hand and trident in the upper left hand. The lower right hand is in *abhaymudra* with *akshamala*, whereas the lower left holds a *bijapuraka*. He wears a *karandamukuta*, *karankundala*, *hara*, *udarbandha*, *yajnopavita*, *kativastra*, *valayas* and *nupura*. Nandi is seated as a mound below the Shiva (Fig. 6).

Nataraj

Nataraja is placed in the sixty-fifth position on the *jangha*. There is only one image of this type. The deity is four handed with lower right hand in *abhaya mudra*, upper right hand holds unknown object (*pasha?*), upper left hand holds *agni* and lower left in dancing pose. He is adorned with *kiritmukuta*, *karnakundala*, *hara*, *yajnopavita*, *udarbandha*, *kativastra*, *valayas* and *nupura*. Nandi is depicted seated at the foot of Nataraja (Fig. 7).

Bhairava

Bhairava is one of the most preferential and fierce forms of Shiva. There are four images of Bhairava in the temple and they appear in the first, ninth, thirty fifth, thirty seventh and ninetieth positions. The thirty fifth image of Bhairava from the *pradakshinapath* is in *devakoshtaka*. Hence the four handed nude Bhairava is with a *damaru* in his upper right hand and a *khatvang* in the upper left hand, his lower right and left hands holds dagger and *kapala* respectively. He is ornate with simple *mukuta*, *karnakundala*, *nagahara* (cobra as garland), *valayas*, *wristlets* and *narmundamala*. The image is accompanied by a dog, symbolising his vehicle (Fig. 8).

Another image of Bhairava standing in *dvibhanga* pose, first from the *pradakshina* path is two handed. He is holding a sword in the right hand and the left hand holds *kapala*/begging bowl. He is ornate with a forehead band, *hara*, *karankundala*, *valayas*, *nupura*, *mekhala* and *naramundmala* (Fig. 9). Ninth image is probably of Bhairava. He is depicted nude with right hand holding dagger and *kapala* in his left hand. He is adorned with *karnakundalas*, *nupuras* and *waist band* (Fig. 10). Thirty seventh and ninetieth standing images of Bhairavas are also comparatively in same pattern (Fig. 11).

Harihara (?)

The iconographic presentation of Harihara is unusual as it has not been depicted with four hands and vertical classification; rather it is depicted with the amalgamation of different symbolic presentation by holding the damaru and trident in the upper shouldered hands and with the *abhayamudra* and mace in the lower shouldered hands.

There is only one image of this form in the temple depicted on the northern part of temple on *jangha* and the position of this image is seventy ninth. He is adorned with a *kiritamukuta*, *karnakundala*, *hara*, *valaya*, *kativastra* and *nupuras*. His face is mutilated (Fig. 12).

Bhringi (?)

Bhringi is a great devotee of Shiva. He appears on sixty second position. He is shown in skeleton form with elongated earlobes. He holds dagger in right hand and a bowl in left hand. He is adorned with *kanthahar*, head band and loin cloth (Fig. 13).

Vetala (?)

Vetala is a king of the ghosts and spirits or demons. He appears in position number forty five. He is shown in nude, bulging eyes and skeletal body with phallus. He holds dagger in right hand and bowl in left hand. He is adorning with head gear, *karnakundalas*, wristlets and *nupuras*. His appearance is in terrible form (Fig. 14).

Nath-Siddhas

There are about 26 images belonging to Nath-Siddha yogis. This is the rare phenomena in the iconography of temples elsewhere in Maharashtra. Several images are identified as yogis of the Nath-Siddhas cult, i.e. Gorakshanath, Matsyendranath, Adinath, Ghantapa and Makardhwaja. These images appear in the twentieth, twenty second, twenty fifth, fifty ninth and seventy eighth positions. Some images of Nath-Siddhas have their own symbols; others are difficult to identify. All images are generally adorned with elongated earrings, *yajnopavita* and loin cloths etc.

Vaishnava Deities

There are only two images of Vaishnava depicted on the *jangha* and pillar portion of the temple.

Vishnu (Keshava)

The thirty-ninth image is of Vishnu. He is standing in *sambhanga* with the *shankha* in upper right, *chakra* in upper left, *gada* in lower left and *akshamala* in lower right hand is not clear. He has headdress of *kirtimukuta* and adorned with the earring, necklace, *yajnopavita*, *mekhala*, *udarband*, *valayas*, *kativastra* and *nupuras*. This image is a Keshava form of Vishnu (Fig. 15).

Vidaran Narasimha

Image of Narsimha is seen on the west side of the pillar of *antarala*. The image is in *sthanaka* posture. Narsimha is depicted slaying the stomach of Hiranyakashyapa by taking him on his lap. Narasimha is four handed. Lower two hands are engaged in tearing the stomach of the demon and upper hands are raised without any attributes. He is adorned with the *karandamukuta*, *karnakundalas*, *hara*, *yajnopavita*, *valayas* and *nupuras*. There are two devotees are standing on both sides of the Narsimha. One of them is probably Prahlada (Fig. 16).

Images of Surya

Two standing images of Surya have been found. One image is appearing in the sixty-eighth position. In this image god is in standing position with lotus buds in both the hands. He is wearing *karandmukuta*, *karnakundala*, *yajnopavita* and *kativastra*. He is in standing on the chariot drawn by seven horses (Fig. 17).

Another image appears in the seventeenth position and also holds lotus buds. He is also adorned with the usual ornamentations like, *kiritmukuta*, ear ornaments, necklaces and *kativastra*. He is shown with a yogi.

Ganesh

In Someshwar temple, several images of Ganesha are seen. His images are seen on the *lalatbimba* of all the doorways, on the *janghas*, on the pillar and hero stones placed on exterior wall of the temple. There are all eight images of Ganesh are seated in *ardhaparyankasana* (Gharote 2013). Apart from these, there are another three loose images of Ganesh in the outskirt area of the temple. One of them is largest among from all the eleven images of Ganesha. Unfortunately it is in mutilated condition dumped into the river by the villagers.

One of the images in the southern part (*jangha*) of the *garbhagriha* and he appears in the twenty-ninth position. He has four hands with the *parashu* in upper right and *ankusha* in the upper left hand, *modaka* in lower left hand and lower right hand holding the *bhagna danta* (broken tooth). He is adorned with the *karandamukuta*, *kanthahara*, *valayas*, *nagbandha/udarbandha*, and *nupuras*. He is shown in *lalitasana*. The *antariya* is prominent. The god is associated with his vehicle *mushaka*. His trunk is turned towards his left (Fig. 18).

Other images of Ganesha depicted in almost in same above mention pattern. Images on *jangha* appear in the fifth, seventy fifth and eighty second positions. They all are depicted without mouse. Images on *lalatbimba* are of two handed except image of *lalatbimba* of southern doorway.

Shakti images

Temple has many forms of Shakti images representing both fierce as well as peaceful aspects of the goddess.

Chamunda

Images of Chamunda are seen on the northern *bhadra* niche of the *jangha* portion and on the northern portion of the right pillar of the *antarala*. First image of Chamunda appear in the sixty-first position. The goddess shows her ferocious face. She has been depicted in dancing form with *damaru* in the upper right and *khatvanga* in the upper left hand. The lower left hand holds *kapala* whereas the lower right hand holds a dagger. She is adorned with a *karandamukuta*, *karnakundala*, *hara*, *valaya*, *nagbandha* on breast, *narmundamala*, *mekhala* and *nupuras*. She is looking old lady with dangling breast; her organs are bony. She is dancing on a dead body whose head is kept towards the right side (Fig. 19).

Another image of Chamunda is on pillar of *antarala*. She is also in dancing pose, but in this image dead body not depicted. Two persons on her both sides are shown with dagger. One of them shown in skeletal form that is in left side. One devotee is in seated position shown left side of the Chamunda. The four handed goddess holds attributes in a same manner of earlier image of Chamunda (Fig. 20).

Other Goddesses

There are three images probably belonging to the goddesses. These images appear in the forty first, fifty eighth and eighty first positions. All images generally adorned with *mukuta*, *karnakundala*, *stanhara*, *valaya*, *bahuvalaya*, *kativastra*, *nupura* and *mekhala*. It is difficult to identify them. Forty-first image is depicted with lotus in right hand and mirror in left hand could be of Parvati. She is standing in *dvibhanga* posture (Fig. 21). Fifty eight image depicted with mace and fruit, however eighty first image is with lotus and fruit. Probably these images are of Lakshmi (Figs. 22 & 23) (Gupte 1972).

Sursundaris (Celestial women)

Various types of *sursundaris* have been depicted on the Someshwara temple. They are mainly on the *jangha*. The dominant categories which *sursundari* represent mainly are *Putravallabha*, *Darpana*, woman and monkey, woman and snake, *Marichika*, *Jaya*, *Chamara*, *Chandravali*, *Mridangvadaka*, *Mardala*, *Venuvadaka* and *Padmagandha*. These *sursundaris* have been mention in ancient texts like Shilpa Prakash (Baumer *et al.* 2005) and Kshrirarnava.

These *sursundaris* have adorned and beautified the temple by their beauty and various poses. However, it may be noted here that they follow the same pattern of dresses and adornments and can only be differentiated on the basis of their postures.

There are many conjectures about why *sursundaris* were considered as an essential part of sculptures on temple walls. *Shilpa* texts suggest that *sursundaris* served a decorative function (Kanitkar 2013: 110).

Darpana

The position of this image is eight in the sequence. She is shown holding mirror in the left hand near the shoulder, while her right hand is touching her hairdo. Her right leg is crossing her left one. This sculpture is jewelled with *karnakundala*, *haras*, *stanahara*, *valayas*, *bahuvalayas*, *mekhala* and *nupuras* (Fig. 24). Fiftieth image also resembles with Darpana.

Padmagandha

Padmagandha is placed in the fifteenth position. She is in a standing pose and slightly bent towards her left. She holds a lotus bud in her left hand and a fruit in the right hand. She is wearing *karnakundala*, *stanhara*, *mekhala*, *nupura* and *valaya* (Fig. 25).

Torana (?)

The sculpture appears in the forty fourth positions. She is standing in *dvibhanga* pose (Bunce 1997) with joined hands above the head. A snake is depicted around her thighs. She has worn ornaments like *karnakundala*, *stanhara*, *valaya*, *nupura* and high heeled footwear. She is standing nude (Fig. 26).

Chandravali

The position of the Chandarvali is forty ninth. She is standing straight legged with both the hands in *Namaskarmudra*. She holds *bijaka* in between both hands. She is wearing *karnakundala*, *hara*, *stanhara*, *valaya*, *mekhala*, *kativastra* and *nupura* (Fig. 27).

Woman and Snake

Fifty first standing image is holding snake in her right hand. She is adorned with *valayas*, wristlets, *karnakundalas*, lower garments, necklace and *stanahara* (Fig. 28).

Woman and Monkey

This image is placed in the fifty seventh positions. She is standing in *pratyalidhasana* (Bunce 1997). She raised right hand to chase away the monkey and kept left hand near waist to protect from monkey. A monkey is depicted at her right as snatching the robe. She is adorned with *valayas*, *stanhara*, *wristlets*, *kativastra* and *nupuras* (Fig. 29).

Putravallabha

An image of the Putravallabha appears in the sixty third position. She is standing in *ardhasana* pose and holding a baby in her left arm. She is adorned with *karnakundala*, *haras*, *stanhara*, *valayas*, *mekhala* and *nupuras*. But the affection of the mother for her child is reflecting through it. Baby has also worn *karnakundala*, lower garments, *kamarbandh* and wristlets (Fig. 30).

Jaya

The position of this image is sixty seventh. The image is in standing position, holding lotus bud in the right hand and the pot in her left hand. She is wearing *karnakundalas*, *stanhara*, *valaya*, *mekhala* and *nupuras* (Fig. 31).

Marichika

The position of this image is seventy seventh. She is standing on both legs and slightly bent on waist. She holds bow in left hand and an arrow on folded right hand. She wears *karnakundalas*, *haras*, *stanhara*, *valaya* and *mekhala* (Fig. 32).

Chamara

Chamara is appearing in the eightieth position. She is in standing pose. She is holding *chamara* in her right hand but it is mutilated. A fruit is in her left hand. She is wearing *karnakundala*, *haras*, *stanhara*, *skandamala*, *valaya*, *mekhala* and *nupura* (Fig. 33).

Mridangavadaka Mardala

The sculpture of this image appears in the eighty fourth positions. She is standing in crossed legs. She is carrying *mridanga*. Her right hand is busy in beating *mridanga* and left hand is kept on it. She is wearing ornaments like *karnakundala*, *graiveyaka*, *stanhara*, *valaya*, *mekhala* and *nupura*. A nice hair lock can be seen behind (Fig. 34).

Venuvadaka mardala (?)

The eighty-fifth image is of *venuvadaka mardala*. She is playing flute. Both of her hands are engaged in playing flute. She is adorned with *karnakundala*, *valaya*, *nupura* and *mekhala* (Fig. 35).

Nartaki

An image of Nartaki is seen in the eighty sixth positions. She has lifted her right hand and kept it on head and another hand placed near the chest in mudra. Her legs are crossed. She is adorned with *ear rings, stanhara, valayas, mekhala* and *nupura* (Fig. 36).

Mohini or Vijaya

Mohini or Vijaya is always portrayed in an *alinganmudra* with her male partner (Deglurkar 2004). This sculpture is in the seventh position. Female is adorned with *karnakundalas, stanhara, valayas, mekhala, kativastra* and *nupuras*. Male adorned *karnakundalas* and lower garments (Fig. 37).

Other Sursundaris

There are some miscellaneous *sursundaris* which cannot be categorized as such. Either their hands are mutilated or the objects in them. So they cannot be identified. The ninety fourth and fifty second images could be of Bhavachandra and Shuksarika respectively (Deglurkar 2004). Shuksarika is holding a bunch of mangoes, but here parrot is absent. She is shown with full of ornaments and *kirtimukhas*. It seems that sculptors have taken artistic liberty at some places.

OTHER IMAGES

Child birth (*prasuta*)

Lady is shown delivering child birth on tenth position. She is adorned with *karnakundalas* and *nupuras* (Fig. 38). This could be an image of Mother earth also, because in several temples of Deccan she has shown with snake, crab like creatures instead of a child. These images may be indicates the concept of mother of all living beings of earth. These types of images we found in Mahadev temple at Karjat, Mahadev temple at Umarad-Deshmukh, Mallikarjuna temple at Loni-Bhapkar, Mahalakshmi temple at Jagaji, Bhairavnath temple at Kikali. Sometimes this image is shown beside a man who has tied his phallus. Representation of both images may symbolize fertility and potency. These images also indicate tantric influence or connection.

This type of another scene is to be seen on Kashi Vishwanath temple at Ambajogai in Beed district and Mahadev temple at Narayanpur in Basava kalyan district of Karnataka (Deglurkar 2004).

A man with phallus

This image is appearing in the eleventh position. This depiction of a man who has shown with long phallus tied with rope and allowed in his shoulder with the help of stick. Rope is tied with front portion of the phallus and back portion of the testis (Fig. 39). Same images shown in various temples of Maharashtra like temples of Loni-Bhapkar in Pune district, Jagaji in Osmanabad district and Parali in Satara district. There is another broken image of erected phallus on *jangha* portion. It is appearing in the fourteenth position (Fig. 40). These images are indicating its tantric affiliation.

There is a tradition among some ascetics that they tie their penis with stick and rope. Probably this is the ancient representation of this tradition. Such type of depiction is rarely found elsewhere.

Human image on *pranalaka* bearer

Interestingly there is a human image lower portion of the *pranalaka* and it's placed above the level of *garbhagraha*. It shows could be the different phenomena of the religious practices. An image below the *pranalaka* is shown as bearing load of *pranalaka* (Fig. 41).

DECORATIVE MOTIFS

Vyalas

Various forms of *vyalas* are depicted on the temple. They are seen on the *dvarshakas*. They are in the standing postures. *Kapivyala*, *Simhavyala*, *Gajvyala*, *Rishabhvyala*, *Ajavyala*, *Kharvyala*, *kharvyala* also *Manushya vyala* has been noticed.

Kirtimukhas

A large variation can be seen in the *kirtimukhas* depicted on the pillars and elsewhere. They are decorated with various depictions of deities, animals, birds and other motifs. There are lot of other decorative features which are worth to be considered.

Hero stones

There are three hero stones placed along with the renovated temple. One of them having image of Ganesha with *Shivlinga*. This is the rare example of Ganesha is with *Shivlinga* on the hero stones (Fig. 42). Apart from above images there are several other images on the temple which are not identified due to their mutilated from or unknown iconography.

Step wells

Two beautiful step wells are situated to west side of the village. One is about 10 metre far away from the southern doorway of the *sabhamandapa* of the Someshwar temple. Another step well is located about 100 metre away from the Someshwar temple towards the north side. Step well No.1 is measured 11.70m X 12.15m. There is one opening for well facing to the southern doorway of the *sabhamandapa*. We can see some pilasters and row of diamond shape design in the well (Fig. 43).

Step well No.2 is quite larger than step well No. 1. It is measured 19 m X 19 m and having small pillared shrine towards south. There are two openings to the well facing east and south. *Mandapa* of the renovated shrine measured 3.15m X 4.28m. There is one stone seat located in this *mandapa*, probably for Yajnya varaha. There is same type of seat is in the step well No. 1. Architecture of these wells is similar and seems to be contemporary of the temples (Fig. 44).

Loose images of Pimpri-Dumala

There are more than twelve loose images of different gods, placed near the temple. Amongst these, Images of Vishnu of different forms are important. According to the villagers some images are originally from the ruined temple area of step well No.2, after completion of recent renovation work they carry and kept near the Someshwar temple. Presently all images have been kept near the Step well of Someshwar temple.

Keshava

There are two images of Keshava form of Vishnu in the premises of the temple. One image is kept near the step well No.1 and another is seen north-western corner of the *sabhamandapa*. First image is bigger and more elaborate than other images. Keshava holds conch in upper right, *chakra* in upper left, mace in lower left and lower right hand is in *ashirwad* mudra. He has headdress of *kirtimukuta* and adorned with the earring, necklace, *yajnopavita*, *mekhala*, *valayas* and *nupuras*. Garuda (?) and other devotees are seen respectively right and left side of Keshava. *Dashaavatar* panel is carved on the top border of the image. This image has been kept on decorated platform with human figurines. Recently, it has been renovated partially by the villagers. This image should be belongs to ruined temple of Rameshwara. Another image of Keshava is also same in pattern but smaller than first image and having two attendants of the both side (Fig. 45).

Samkarshana/Vasudev

This image has been placed near the well and near the image of *yajnavaraha*. Holding mace in lower right hand, conch in upper right hand and upper and lower left are totally broken. This image is similar with Samakarshana or Vasudev. He is adorned with *kiritmukuta*, earrings, necklace, *mekhala* and *nupuras*. This image has two attendants of the both sides (Fig. 46).

Adhokshaja/Vishnu

This image is also near the *Yajnavaraha*. It holds conch in upper left, *chakra* in lower left hand upper and lower right hands are broken. Attribute pattern of this image is similar with image of Adhokshaja or Vishnu (Joshi 2013). Vishnu has two attendants and has *kiritmukuta*, earrings, *mekhala* and *nupuras*. This image is bad state of preservation (Fig. 47).

Madhav

This image is being placed near the priest room. It has *chakra* in upper right, conch in upper left and *padma* in lower left hand. Lower right hand is missed. This seriation of attributes belongs to Madhav. This image is adorned with the earrings, necklace, *mekhala* and *valayas*.

Legs of this image are missing.

Apart from these, there were other broken images of Vishnu's, but villagers submerged them into the river. There is also high possibility that twenty four forms of Vishnu's were installed there in *pushkaranis*.

Sheshshayi Vishnu/ Narayana

This form of Vishnu is shown reclined on the coils of seven hooded *Shesha*. The hoods and the right end of the slab are partially broken. The image is highly eroded and at present in a bad state of preservation and therefore many details of the image is unintelligible. The upper portion of the slab is also partially broken.

Vishnu-Narayana is depicted as having four hands. The lower right hand is folded and kept near the heart. The upper right hand is supporting his head. Left hand is holding a discus near his head, and the next left hand is holding a mace with its but towards the feet. The right leg was stretched out and foot is in Lakshmi's lap. The left one folded and kept across the right knee. The ornaments traceable on this much worn out image is the *kirtimukuta*, earrings reaching his shoulders, a necklace, armlets, wristlets and a lower garment. His right leg is in Lakshmi's lap who is two armed and massaging the foot of Narayana. The image of Lakshmi also worn out and

partially mutilated but is to be seen is shown as wearing a necklace. Near the canopy there are three figures of devotees. The upper portion of the slab from right to left side has depiction of *Dashavataras* (Fig. 48). Same image we can see in partially rock cut step well of Nageshwar temple at Pabal in same district.

Yajnavaraha

The legs and the snout of the image are totally mutilated. Depicts the Yajnavaraha is as squatting on his four legs. There are bands on the body of the *varaha*. The three bands on the body and the band around the neck of the *varaha* bear the small images, all are seated in *sukhasana*, four armed, the lower two are in *abhaya* and *varada* poses and the upper two holding some elongated objects. On each ear of *varaha* is carved a deity in similar posture. The snout is partially broken (Fig. 49). These types of quite similar images we can see elsewhere in same district at Mallikarjun temple of Loni-Bhapkar (Dandawate *et al.* 2004), Chakreshwar temple at Chakan and Narsimha temple at Charthan in Parbhani District.

Kurma /Tortoise

There is one broken *kurma* image near the step well. This is actually pedestal or seat on which an icon is seated or standing. It has the face and feet of tortoise (Fig. 50). We can see similar image at Chakreshwar temple at Chakan.

Ganesh

There are two images of Ganesh. One is kept in the *sabhamandapa* of the Someshwar temple. And another image is placed in modern temple in the village. These two images of Ganesh are very identical with the images of Someshwar temple. It seems that these images originally belong to the Someshwar temple only.

Surya

There is one broken image of Surya which is identifiable by the depiction of seven horses which is being placed near the priest room.

Bhairava (?)

This image looks weathered. It is seated in *lalitasana*. With the help of some attributes like *khatvanga* and *kapala*, we can say that, he is Bhairava. It has earrings, necklace and armlets (Fig. 51).

Sculptures of temple (*positions of images are from Pradakshina path*)

01. Bhairava	2. Sursundari	3. Nath-Siddha
4. Nath-Siddha	5. Ganesh	6. Yogi in Gomukhasana/ Devotee of Ganesh
7. Mohini or Vijaya	8. Darpana	9. Bhairava
10. Prasuta	11. A man with phallus	12. Sursundari
13. Nude lady	14. Man with phallus	15. Padmagandha
16. Unidentified	17. Surya and Yogi in <i>pranmudra</i>	18. Yogi in <i>namaskar mudra</i> and <i>ardh-padmasana</i>
19. Kanifnath?	20. Gorakshanath	21. Revannath
22. Matsyendranath	23. Unidentified /Sursundari (?)	24. Udenath (?) Unknown Yogi
25. Adinath	26. Sursundari	27. Nath-Siddha/yogi in niche
28. Unidentified	29. Ganesha	30. Unidentified
31. Nude yogi/ Teerthankar	32. Nath-Siddha/Dressed yogi	33. Unidentified
34. Nath/Siddha (Yogi with Lotus)	35. Bhairava	36. Unidentified/Bhuta (?)
37. Bhairava	38. Unidentified	39. Keshava
40. Nath-Siddha	41. Parvati (?)	42. Unidentified
43. Unidentified	44. Torana (?)	45. Vetal
46. Nath-Siddha with scarf	47. Sursundari	48. Keval Shiva
49. Chandravali	50. Darpana	51. Woman and snake
52. Sursundari/Ambika	53. Unidentified	54. Nath-Siddha (Yogi with staff and animal)
55. Nath-Siddha/Yogi	56. Unidentified	57. Woman and monkey
58. Lakshmi (?)	59. Vajraghantapa	60. Unidentified
61. Chamunda	62. Bhringi?	63. Putrvallabha
64. Bhuta/ <i>Gana</i> (?)	65. Natraj	66. Unidentified
67. Jaya	68. Surya	69. Devotee (?)
70. Yogi in penance	71. Hooded snake	72. Nath-Siddha
73. Nath-Siddha/yogi with pot	74. Nath-Siddha	75. Ganesh
76. Snake	77. Marichika	78. Makardhwaja
79. Harihara (?)	80. Chamara	81. Lakshmi
82. Ganesh	83. Devotee	84. Mridangavadaka mardala
85. Venuvadika mardala (?)	86. Nartaki	87. Lakshmi
88. Nath-Siddha/standing yogi with staff	89. Sursundari	90. Bhairava
91. Sursundari	92. Unidentified	93. Sursundari
94. Sursundari/Bhavachandra (?)	95. Sursundari	96. Unidentified

Discussion

The temple is not attested with any epigraphical record but architectural as well as iconographical studies suggest Someshwar temple seems to be constructed when religio-cultural, economic and political scenario was not stable and favourable. The architectural features such as its ground plan and elevation, iconographical characteristics such as physiognomy, grace, naturalism and fluidity of the icons, geometrical and floral designs appears to be fourteenth-fifteenth century C.E construction. The displacement of three hero stones and the freshness/texture of wall suggest renovation during two or more times.

Shaivite deities have a good share in the iconographic scheme of the temple. Appearance of Ganesha on crucial locations suggests the importance and popularity in his worship. It may also be noted that Mahaganapati temple a famous Ganesh shrine at Ranjangaon is located only five km from the Someshwar temple (Gazetteer of Pune District 1885). Shakti worship was also prevalent in this region as authenticated by numerous sculptures of various goddesses such as Chamunda and Parvati. Among minor deities, seems that the worship of Surya and Narsimha was also quite popular.

Someshwar temple at Pimpri-Dumala also has some different features than other temples of Maharashtra. The *jangha* is full of sculptures including Nath-Siddhas. This is the rare phenomenon of iconography. It is one of the few known medieval temples in Maharashtra where we come across the beautiful and rare images of Nath-Siddhas, which denotes the prevalence of Nath cult in this region. Images of Adinath, Matsyendranath, Gorakshanath and other sculptures of Nath-Siddha yogis indicate that the Nath-Siddhas were honoured ascetics. As mentioned above this temple should have built in 14th-15th century C.E. i.e. Bahamani period. Nath-cult was also popular during Bahamanis in Maharashtra region (Maharashtra state Gazetteers 1972). Few images from Bhuleshwar (about 60 km away from Pimpri-Dumala) temple in same district resembles with iconography of Nath-Siddhas. Thus, there is high possibility that these temples were worshipped by Nath *panthi* ascetics.

There is also possibility of some images among ascetics could be of Kapalikas and Kalamukha-Pashupata traditions. Loose images such as Yajnavaraha, Sheshshayi Vishnu, Kurmavatar and typical pattern of step wells resembles with other temples and step wells of this region and elsewhere in Maharashtra. It shows contemporaneous art and architectural activities in the region. Thus, loose images of Rameshwar temple seem older than Someshwar temple. A great variety of *sursundaris*, *kirtimukhas* and floral geometrical designs make this temple remarkable.

Step wells located near the temple throw the light on water management system and its association with the temples in medieval period.

Acknowledgements

I owe my sincere thanks to Shreekant S. Jadhav, Dr. Abhijit Dandekar and Arjun Rao for their support and valuable suggestions during the research work. I am also grateful to all villagers of Pimpri-Dumala who provided me constant help during the field survey.

References

- 1) Baumer, Bettina Rajendra Prasad Das, Sadananda Das. (Ed). 2005. *Shilpa Prakasha* by Ramachandra Mahapatra Kaula Bhattaraka, Introduction and Translation by Alice Boner and Sadashiva Rath Sharma, New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National centre for the Arts, New Delhi. Association with Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd.
- 2) Bunce, Fredrick W. 1997. *Buddhist and Hindu Iconography*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd.
- 3) Dandwate, P.P, Gajul, B.S. and Joshi, P.S. 2004. Bhumija temples with Brick Shikhara at Loni Bhapkar and Palasdev in *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol. 64/65 (2004-2005), pp.147-15.
- 4) Deglurkar, G. B. 2004. *Sursundari* (In Marathi). Pune: Bharatiy Vidya Bhavan.
- 5) Deglurkar, G.B. 2004. *Portrayal of the Woman in the Art and Literature of the Ancient Deccan*. Jaipur: Publication Scheme.
- 6) Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency. 1885. *Poona*. Bombay: Government Central Press.
- 7) Gupte, R. S. 1972. *Iconography of the Hindus Buddhists and Jains*. Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Private LTD.
- 8) Joshi, N. P. 2013. *Bharatiy Murtishastra* (in Marathi). Pune: Prasad Prakashan.
- 9) Kanitkar, Kumud. 2013. *Ambarnath Shivalaya*. Published by Dileep Kanitkar, Thane.
- 10) Kulkarni, R.P. 2000. *Shilpa Prakasha* (trans.) Mumbai: Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya ani Sanskriti Mandal.
- 11) Kunte, B. G. 1972. *Maharashtra state gazetteers, History-part II-Medieval period*. Bombay: Directorate of Government printing, stationary and publications, Maharashtra state.
- 12) Gharote, Manohar Laxman.2013. *Encyclopadia of Traditional Asanas*. Lonavla: The Lonavla
- 13) Yoga Institute

Fig.1. Someshwar temple



Fig.2.General ground plan of the Someshwar temple (Not to the scale).

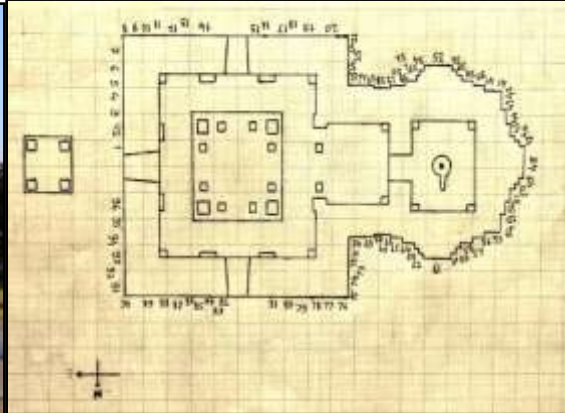


Fig.3. Doorway of the temple



Fig.4.Pillars in sabhamandapa



Fig.5. Elevation of the temple



Fig.6. Keval Shiva



Fig.7. Nataraja



Fig.8. Bhairava



Fig.09. Bhairava



Fig.10. bhairava



Fig.11. Bhairava



Fig.12. Harihara



Fig.13. bhutaBhringi



Fig.14. Vetala



Fig.15. Keshav



Fig.16. Vidarana Narsimha



Fig.17. Surya



Fig.18. Ganesha



Fig.19. Chamunda



Fig.20. Chamunda



Fig.21. Parvati



Fig.22. Lakshmi



Fig.23. Lakshmi



Fig.24. Darpana



Fig.25. Padmagandha



Fig.26. Woman and snake



Fig.27. Chandravali



Fig.28. Woman and snake



Fig.29. Woman and Monkey



Fig.30. Putravallabha



Fig.31. Jaya



Fig.32. Marichika



Fig.33. Chamara



Fig.34. Mridangavadaka Mardala



Fig.35.Venuvadaka Mardala



Fig.36. Nartaki



Fig.37. Mohini or vijaya



Fig.38.Child birth

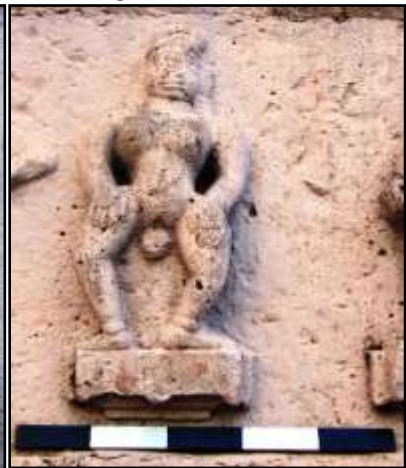


Fig.39. A man with erected phallus



Fig.40. Another image of erected phallus



Fig.41. Pranalaka bearer



Fig.42. Ganesh on Hero stone



Fig.43.step well no.1



Fig.44. Step well No.2



Fig.45. Keshava



Fig.46. Samkarshana or Vasudev



Fig.47. Adhokshaja or Vishnu



Fig.48.Sheshshayi Vishnu



Fig.49.Yajnavaraha



Fig.50.Kurma



Fig.51.Bhairava

