

# Architecture of Two Vaishnava Temples of the Coastal Belt of Odisha in India

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to highlight the detailed architectural features along with the religious significance of two Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha in India. Vaishnavism might have existed in Odisha from the early medieval period of Indian history. Really, Vaishnavism had deeply influenced the religious life of the people of the Prachi Valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. The Ganga rulers of Odisha had patronized the temple building activities for the spread of Vaishnavism in the coastal-belt of Odisha. As a result of which, some Vaishnava temples had been erected by the native rulers and rich devotees to popularize Vaishnavism in the Prachi Valley of Odisha. Most of the medium size Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have not been dealt by the art historians in detail. Here, two Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have been taken by the author for scholarly discussion. They are such as Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur and Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat respectively. The temple of Varaha-Narasimha is a unique Vaishnava shrine of the coastal-belt of Odisha in Eastern India. Varaha-cult had gained the royal patronage during the Ganga rule of Odisha. This temple is a monumental evidence of the Varaha-Narasimha worship in the coastal-belt of Odisha. The present temple is erected on the ruins of the earlier one (temple), which was destroyed by nature. This temple is well-known in that locality for its presiding deities. The Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat is also another important Vaishnava shrine of the coastal belt of Odisha. The architectural pattern of Madhavananda temple indicates that the temple belongs to the modern period. These two Vaishnava temples represent the *Kalinga style* architecture of Odisha in Eastern India. Methodologically, both the primary and secondary sources are examined and utilized in this article.

**Keywords:** Vaishnava , Varaha-Narasimha, Madhavananda, temple, architecture, Odisha, India.

## INTRODUCTION

The coastal belt of Odisha is well-known in India for its extant Hindu monuments. A good

number of Vaishnava temples of Hindu pantheon are found to be erected in the different places of the Puri and Cuttack districts and they represent the *Kalinga style* of temple architecture of Odisha in Eastern India.

The Ganga rulers of Odisha had patronized the temple building activities for the spread of Vaishnavism in the coastal-belt of Odisha. As a result of which, some Vaishnava temples have been erected by the native rulers and rich devotees to popularize Vaishnavism in the Prachi Valley. Odishan temples form a class by themselves and these Hindu monuments can be conveniently labelled as “Kalinga style” (Behera,1993,p.1). The coastal belt of Odisha was the integral part of the ancient Kalinga territory. The *Kalinga Style* temple architecture of Odisha is divided into four types such as *rekha*, *pidha (bhadra)*, *khakhara* and *Gauriya*(Bose, 1931, p.78). In Odishan temple architecture, each temple type / order and its individual part has been given a distinctive name (Mohapatra, 1982, p.14). Practically, Odishan temples practice the most compacted and standardised architectural set in India (Fergusson, 1875, p.414). Odishan temple architecture with its uniqueness and distinct nomenclature was included in the other types of temples of India such as *Nagara*, *Dravida* and *Veshara* raising their number to four i.e. the *Kalinga style* (Panigrahi,1985, p.371). Vaishnavism might have existed in Odisha from the early medieval period. Really, Vaishnavism lost its royal patronage and its place was occupied by Shaivism in the early medieval period. After the visit of various Vaishnava preachers to Odisha and establishment of different *mathas*, worship of Lord Vishnu in the form of Madhava (Madhavananda), Rama, Narasimha, Krishna, Narayana, Varaha, etc. in the Prachi Valley has been widespread. Vaishnavism had deeply influenced the religious aspect of the people of the Prachi Valley of Odisha. Although the Madhava cult was prevalent in the Sailodbhava period but it became a popular religion of the Prachi Valley during the Ganga rule in Odisha. The temple of Varaha-Narasimha is an important Vaishnava shrine in the coastal-belt of Odisha. It is situated about 37 km from Bhubaneswar on the eastern bank of the river Prachi(Ray,1975, p.7).



This temple is located at the village Adaspur in the Kantapara Block of the Cuttack district of Odisha in Eastern India. The spot of the temple is an important archaeological site of the Prachi Valley and it preserves some old sculptures of the different deities of the Hindu pantheon. A stupendous architectural activity undertaken by one of the Ganga rulers of Odisha is the construction of the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur. It appears that Varaha-cult gained the royal patronage during the Ganga rule in Odisha (Ray,1975, p.67). This temple is a monumental evidence of the Varaha-Narasimha worship in the coastal-belt of Odisha. It is a distinct sacred place of the Prachi valley in Odisha. From the religious point of view, the presiding deities are a unique feature of this temple. The present Varaha-Narasimha temple is erected on the ruins of the earlier one (temple), which was destroyed by nature (Mohapatra,2007,p.326). The temple of Madhavananda is one of the Vaishnava shrines of the Prachi Valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. The image of the presiding deity (Madhavananda) is a fine specimen of the Odishan classical art of the medieval period. All the Vishnu images of the Prachi Valley are locally worshipped as Madhava or Madhavananda. The present article attempts to highlight the detailed art and architecture along with the religious importance of the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur and Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat of the coastal belt of Odisha in India.

#### METHODOLOGY

Both the primary and secondary sources have been used in the writing of the present article. The primary data have been collected through Gazetteers, Texts, unpublished thesis, the practical observation, public opinions, hearsay accounts and interview methods during the period of experimental field survey. The collected data with regard to the art, architecture and religious significance of the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur and Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat of the coastal belt of Odisha are mainly based on practical observations made by the author. The secondary data relating to the present article are Books, Journals, Periodicals, Proceedings, Manuscripts, Antiquities, Records, Reports, and published thesis. The data collected from both the primary and secondary sources are examined and applied in the present article.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULT ANALYSIS

### Two Vaishnava Temples of the Coastal Belt of Odisha

The coastal belt of Odisha is famous for Vaishnavism as evidenced by the presence of a good number of Vaishnava temples of the Hinduism. Out of all the extant Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha, two temples have been taken here by the author for discussion. These two Vaishnava temples are noticed in the Cuttack and Puri districts of Odisha in India. The names and sites of these two Vaishnava temples are such as 1. Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur and 2. Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat. It is known from the practical field study that these two Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha have been renovated. The descriptions of different aspects like art, architecture along with religious significance of the above two Vaishnava temples of the coastal belt of Odisha are briefly discussed below.

#### Varaha-Narasimha Temple of Adaspur

The Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur is well-known in that locality for its presiding deities. Originally, the temple of Varaha-

Narasimha consisted of four structures such as *vimana*, *jagamohana*, *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa*. The last two structures are completely destroyed by nature and the plinths of these two structures are only available at present. This temple is a representative of the *Kalinga style* architecture of the Ganga period. The present temple is completely a renovated temple. On the basis of the architectural features, the present Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur represents *pidha* type of the Kalinga style architecture of Odisha. This temple is built in sand stones and laterite blocks. It faces to east.



The *vimana* of the temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 35 feet from the surface of the temple complex. It has four fold vertical divisions such as *pista*, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. Here the plinth of the original *vimana* is noticed and it is *triratha* in plan. The three sides of the original plinth are being excavated by the Odisha State Archaeology Department at the time of survey of the temple. The excavation reveals the designs of the plinth of the earlier temple. The foundation of *vimana* was built in both the laterite blocks and sand stones. The plinth of the original structure exhibits two horizontal mouldings. The *tala* moulding of the plinth is completely plain while the upper moulding is lavishly decorated with a row of elephants (*gajagamini*), deers, bordered line designs, camels, bull fighting scenes, deer fighting scenes, horse fighting scenes, etc. (Mohapatra,2007,p.327). The *pabhaga* of the original structure is also noticed and it consists of three conventional mouldings of *khura*,



*kumbha* and *patta*. Truncated *pidha mundis* are filled in the intervening recesses between the *pagas* of *pabhaga*. The present renovated temple is built from the *pabhaga* portion of the original temple (Ray,1975, p.7). It is clearly visible by the recent excavation conducted by the Odisha State Archaeology Department. The modern (renovated) temple has four fold vertical divisions such as *pista*, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The base of the *pista* measures 19 feet 8 inches on the eastern and western sides and 19 feet on the northern and southern sides respectively ( Mohapatra,2007,p.327). The *pista* of the newly constructed temple contains 3 horizontal mouldings and it measures 4 feet 7 inches in height. The *bada* of the *vimana* has four component parts such as *pabhaga*, *tala jangha*, *bandhana* and upper *jangha*. It displays five *pagas* or *rathas*. A separate *pidha mudi* containing a royal figure is found in the *raha paga* of the western side *pabhaga* of the *bada*. The northern side base of the *raha paga* of the *pabhaga* is fixed by a *makara* headed gargoyle for the ventilation of washing water of the presiding deity. A series of small stone slabs containing unidentified images are inserted in the northern side *pabhaga* wall of the *bada*. The *raha* and *kanika pagas* of the *pabhaga* of the *bada* are haphazardly built with the broken *navagraha* slabs of the original (earlier) temple. Here the original *navagraha* slab is divided into two parts; one part containing 5 *grahas* has been used as the building material in the *raha paga* of the *bada* and another part containing 4 *grahas* noticed at the *kanika paga* of it respectively. These broken *navagraha* slabs were initially used in the doorway of the original temple. When the earlier temple was renovated at that time these broken *navagraha* slabs have been wrongly used in the northern side *bada* wall. The *tala jangha* of the *bada* is completely plain. The *bandhana* of the *bada* consists of single flat shaped moulding. The upper *jangha* of the *bada* is decorated with *simha vidala* figure, *nayikas*, amorous couples, erotic scenes, standing female figures, female figures in different postures and some broken

*simha vidala* figures(Mohapatra,2007,p.328). These decorative elements were initially used in the original temple of that site.

The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* are completely remained blank. There is no side deity found in its central niches. The *gandi* of the *vimana* is a pyramidal superstructure and it continues the *pancha ratha* plan of the *bada*. The *gandi* consists of six *pidhas* and each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. *Deula Carini* figures and *dopichha* lions are not found in their respective places above the *gandi*. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* consists of *beki*, *ghanta*, above which there is another *beki*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*(Behera,1993,p.5), *kalasa*, *ayudha (chakra)* and *dhvaja*.



The sanctum preserves the images of Varaha and Narasimha as the presiding deities of the temple. Here both the images are combinely worshipped as Varaha-Narasimha. These two deities are installed on the *simhasana* of 2 feet high. The four handed image of Varaha is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the front side of the pedestal. The upper right hand of the deity displays *chakra*, the lower right hand holds the hand of a female figure possibly Lakshmi, the upraised left arm bears the figure of goddess Prithvi and the lower left hand possesses conch. There is a female figure holding *cauri* depicted on the

left of the pedestal. The back side of the head of deity is carved with trefoil arch; *makara* heads at the base and the *kirtimukha* motif at the apex. Flying *apsara* figure holding garland is depicted on both side top corners of the slab. The image Varaha measures 4 feet 1 inch in height and 1 foot 11 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra,2007, pp.328-329). It is made of chlorite stone. Observing the Varaha image of the sanctum, P.K. Ray records that the Prachi valley was fortunate to have the Varaha cult, a form of Vaishnavism (Ray. 1975, p.67). The Varaha cult in Odisha had attained the royal patronage and was able to maintain its high position continually till the late medieval period(Ray. 1975, p.67). An equal size four armed image of Narasimha is also found worshipped together as the presiding deity of the temple. So the presiding deities of the temple are combinedly said as Varaha-Narasimha. It is a shrine whose presiding deities are both Lord Varaha and Narasimha. The four armed image of Narasimha is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the front side of the pedestal.

Diminutive figures of Sridevi and Bhūdevi are flanked on either side of the slab. The back side of the head of deity is decorated with trefoil *makara* headed arch crowned by the *kirtimukha* motif. He displays *chakra* in upper right hand and *gada* in upper left hand. The lower two hands of the deity are engaged to take out the entrails of Hiranya Kashyapu, the demon. Here the deity Narasimha is depicted in *ugra* posture. Flying *apsara* figure is carved on both side top corners of the slab.

The image Narasimha measures 4 feet 1 inch in height and 1 foot 11 inches in width respectively. It is made of chlorite stone. Observing the presiding deities, T.E. Donaldson remarks that these images are the standard iconography of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Donaldson, Vol. II, 1985/86, p.690). Iconographic features of these two images

indicate the Odishan classical art of the Ganga period. Regarding the presiding deities of the earlier temple, the old villagers of Adaspur including Hansanatha Sahoo say that the present temple was initially dedicated to Lord Kunjabihari but the landed property of the temple is in the name of Lord Narasimha. Here G. S. Das also remarks that the Kunjabihari temple of Adaspur is in complete ruins and in its place a new temple has been constructed with the old relics and materials in the later part of the twentieth century(Das, 1958, p.21). Both the images of Varaha-Narasimha were possibly the side deities of the original Vaishnava temple of that site. In the subsequent period, these side deities have been worshipping in the form of presiding deities of the temple. Most probably, the original temple was initially dedicated to Lord Kunjabihari (Krishna).

Images of Lord Krishna and Radha Devi are also found worshipped at the left side of the *simhasana* of the presiding deities. Both the images of Lord Krishna and Radha Devi are made of brass. A small image of Lord Krishna made of black chlorite is found to be worshipped in the sanctum. The local people say that this Krishna image has been worshipping here since 200 years before the present.

Another image of Lord Krishna of the twentieth century is also kept near the old Krishna image. Madhu Sudan Mohapatra, one of the temple priests of Adaspur remarks that the hand of the earlier image (Krishna) was broken by nature. Thereafter, another similar new Krishna image made of black chlorite is kept inside the sanctum for worship. The image Krishna is carved in standing posture with flute in his both hands. The presence of Krishna images in the sanctum suggests that the earlier temple might have been dedicated to Lord Kunjabihari. Inner walls of the sanctum are devoid of decorative elements.



The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana*. The door frame of the sanctum doorway is carved with three vertical sections. The doorway lintel is decorated with scroll work and bordered line designs. The image Gaja-Laksmi is carved on the centre of the doorway lintel. She is depicted in *abhiseka* pose. Elephants are carved pouring water through the jars holding in their upraised proboscis on both sides of the head of goddess Gaja-Laksmi. The northern side *sandhisthala* wall is inserted with an amorous couple scene.

The *jagamohana* of the temple is also a *pidha deula* and its height is about 30 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The plinth of the original structure is noticed in the lower part and it is decorated with same designs like the plinth of the *vimana*. The *jagamohana* is also completely a renovated structure. The present structure of the *jagamohana* is erected on the ruined plinth of the earlier temple. It has four fold vertical divisions such as *pista*, *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The base of the central (*raha*) *paga* of the *pista* on the northern side is fixed with a *makara* headed gargoyle for the ventilation of the washing water of the interior of the *jagamohana*. The *bada* of the *jagamohana* is not built in systematic order. There is no window in the *bada* wall of the *jagamohana*. The front side left doorway wall is decorated with an amorous couple. The *gandi* of the *jagamohana* is a pyramidal superstructure (Behera, 1993, p.4). It consists of two *potalas*; the lower and upper *potalas*, which contain 4

and 2 *pidhas* respectively. Each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. The centre of the lower *potala* is decorated with *pidha mastaka* design in all sides. *Deula Carini* figures and *dopichha* lions are completely absent in their respective places above the *gandi*. The *mastaka* of the *jagamohana* consists of *beki*, *amalakashila*, *ghanta*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri* ( Boner and Rathsarma, 1966, p.149), *kalasa*, *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja*. Inner walls of the *jagamohana* are also devoid of decorative elements.

The left side of the *jagamohana* floor is occupied by a *Sivalinga* within the *Saktipitha*. It is being worshipped in the name of Lord Somanatha Siva. A good number of sculptures of the original temple are also recently preserved inside the *jagamohana*. A stone slab carved with the image of Lord Siva with a *Sivalinga* within the *Saktipitha* is found in the *jagamohana*. An image of Narasimha carved in *ugra* posture is preserved in the *jagamohana*. Now it is found in broken condition. A standing *cauri* bearer female figure, two Krishna images of the modern period are also preserved in the floor of the *jagamohana*. P.K. Ray mentions that a loose sculpture describing a king's discussion with his subjects is placed inside the *jagamohana* (Ray, 1975. p.7).

Besides, some loose sculptures of the original temple of this site are unearthed through the recent excavation conducted by the Odisha State Archaeology Department. Excavation was also being carried on at the time of survey of the temple. Some of the earlier sculptures of both the damaged and perfect stage of condition have been unearthed from the plinth side of the temple through the excavation. The sculptures which are unearthed from the recent excavation are *nayika* figures -2, *mithuna* figures -2, erotic figure-1, female figure holding a baby on her waist, small *dopichha* lions, broken *ashvavidala* figure, Rahu heads, elephants, broken human figures, *risi* figures, etc. (Mohapatra, 2007, p.331). Above the rescued

sculptures, which have been preserved inside the *jagamohana* clearly indicate that the original temple of the site was finely decorated by these detached sculptures. The doorway of the *jagamohana* is built in the twentieth century and it is bereft of decorative embellishments.

Garuda, the conventional mount of the presiding deities (Varaha-Narasimha) is installed in front of the *jagamohana*. The image Garuda is depicted in kneeling posture on the plain pedestal. His head is surmounted by the serpent hood. It is noticed at the centre of the open floor of the *natamandapa*.

Both the structures of *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* are completely ruined at present. Now the plinths of these two structures are only available. Observing the temple site, P.K. Ray says that unlike the Sovaneshvara temple of Nuagaon, the *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* have fallen into ruins as demonstrated by the existence of the portions along with the pillars(Ray, 1975. p.7). A number of well carved pillars originally supporting the roof of the *natamandapa* are lying in the temple complex. The extant plinths indicate that initially the structures of both *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* are constructed. Most probably, the structures of *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* were pillared *mandapas* of the later additions.

Besides, there is an additional open *mandapa* noticed in front of the *bhogamandapa*. All the platforms (plinths) of these three *mandapas* are same design with a single architectural unit and it is about 3½ feet high from the surface of the temple complex. The surface of the temple premises is about 2 feet high from the road level. Masonry steps of the ascending order are provided for approach towards the open *mandapa* as well as the sanctum.

The temple of Varaha-Narasimha once stood within a spacious compound surrounded by high walls. The compound walls had fallen in many places(Mohapatra, Vol. II, 1986, p. 4). Now the boundary wall is completely rebuilt in laterite stones and its height is about 8 feet. The temple complex has only one gateway on the eastern side.

#### **Date of the Temple**

Most of the scholars accept that the original Vaishnava temple of that site was built in the Ganga period. Observing the temple site, G. S. Das mentions that the plan and construction of the original temple may be judged from the old sculptures adorning the new temple that the original one was almost contemporary with the Sun temple of Konarka(Das, 1958, p. 21). T.E. Donaldson has categorized the temple to the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.( Donaldson, Vol. II, 1985/86, p. 690). P.K. Ray remarks that this splendor and gigantic monument was no doubt the achievement of the Ganga rulers of Odisha(Ray, 1975, p.7). Here R.P. Mohapatra is of the view that the construction of this temple complex can be placed in the Ganga period (Mohapatra, Vol. II, 1986, p.4). The local tradition says that the original temple of Varaha-Narasimha is the contemporary of the Sun temple of Konarka. In this connection, Hansanatha Sahoo of Adaspur is of the view that the earlier Vaishnava temple of the site was possibly built in the Ganga period. On the basis of the architectural pattern of the original plinths of *vimana* and *jagamohana*, the construction period of the earlier temple can be tentatively assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D.(Mohapatra,2007,p.332). But the *natamandapa* and *bhogamandapa* were built in the later period of the *vimana* as well as the *jagamohana*.

Now the temple is being managed by a local committee of Adaspur.

#### **Madhavananda Temple of Narasingpurhat**





The temple of Madhavananda is one of the Vaishnava shrines of the Prachi Valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. It is located at the village Narasinghpurhat in the Gop Block of the Puri district. This temple is situated about 8 km from Kakatpur and 1½ km from Nauhat (Mohapatra,2017,p. 170). The architectural pattern indicates that the temple belongs to the modern period. This temple consists of three structures such as *vimana*, *jagamohana* and *natamandapa*. It is built in burnt bricks and sand stones. The temple faces to east. The image of the presiding deity (Madhavananda) is a fine specimen of the Odishan classical art of the medieval period. All the Vishnu images of the Prachi Valley are locally worshipped as Madhava or Madhavananda. Iconographical features of the presiding deity suggest that the image (Madhavananda) is more excellent workmanship than the Vishnu images of the Ganga period. In fact, the site of the temple is a meeting place of both Saivism and Vaishnavism. An additional shrine of Ishaneshvara Siva is also found erected in the temple complex to corroborate the above fact. The local people say that the present temple has been renovated in 1980's by the co-operation of the villagers.

The *vimana* of the temple is a *pancha ratha pidha deula* and its height is about 22 feet from the surface of the temple complex(Mohapatra,2017,p.370). It has three parts such as *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The structure of the *vimana* is thickly plastered with modern cement. The *bada* of the *vimana* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five fold divisions such as *pabhaga*, *tala jangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*. All the

component parts of the *bada* are devoid of decorative element except the *bandhana*, which is decorated with scroll work.

The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of *vimana* are housed with the *parshvadevata* images of Trivikrama, Narasimha and Trivikrama. Trivikrama is the *parshvadevata* of the northern side. The four armed image of Trivikrama is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. The right leg of the deity is firmly installed on the pedestal while the left leg uplifts towards heaven and it touches the Brahma image. He holds lotus bud in upper right hand, *chakra* in lower right hand, *shankha* in upper left hand and *gada* in lower left hand respectively. Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is not found on the pedestal. There is a *Balidana* scene depicted beneath the uplifted leg of the deity. King Bali swears before Lord Vamana to give an auspicious gift to him. Here the saint Shukracharya has raised up his hands with dismay. *Apsara* figure holding garland is depicted on both side top corners of the slab. The image Trivikrama is made of granite stone. The slab of deity measures 1 foot 5½ inches in width and 2 feet 10 inches in height respectively (Mohapatra,2017, p.370). Narasimha is the *parshvadevata* of the western side. The four armed image of Narasimha is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. He holds *gada* in upper left hand, the upper right hand is broken from the elbow portion and the lower two hands are engaged to take out the entrails of Hiranya Kashyapu, the demon. Here the figure Hiranya Kashyapu is completely missing. The deity (Narasimha) wears a garland of wooden flowers in his body. Garuda, the mount of deity is not found depicted on the pedestal. Flower medallion is carved on both side top corners of the slab. The image Narasimha is made of granite stone. The slab of deity measures 1 foot 3 inches in width and 2 feet 8 inches in height respectively(Mohapatra,2017,p.371). Another Trivikrama image is found as the



*parshvadevata* of the southern side. The four armed image of Trivikrama is carved in standing posture on the double sectional pedestal. He holds *gada* in upper right hand, *padma* in lower right hand, *chakra* in upper left hand and *shankha* in lower left hand respectively. Shridevi and Bhudevi figures are carved on either side of the deity. There is a *Balidana* scene depicted beneath the uplifted leg of deity. The right leg of the deity is firmly set up on the pedestal while the left leg uplifts towards heaven and it touches the image of Lord Brahma. The Image Trivikrama is made of granite stone. It measures 1 foot 1 inch in width and 1 foot 11 inches in height respectively (Mohapatra,2017,p.371). Iconographically, these *parshvadevata* images contain the features of the Odishan art of the modern period.

The *gandi* of the *vimana* is a pyramidal superstructure, which continues the *pancha ratha* plan of the *bada*. The pyramidal superstructure consists of 5 flat shaped *pidhas* and each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* and scroll work. The *pidha mastaka* design is found on the *raha paga* of the *gandi* on the eastern side. Above of it is projected out by *jhapasimha* figure. *Dopichha* lions are fixed on the top of the north east and south east corners of the *kanika pagas* while other two corners are completely remained blank. The three cardinal directions of the *beki* except the west are inserted with the figures of Lord Vishnu, Rama and Lord Krishna respectively. The *mastaka* of the *vimana* consists of *beki*, *ghanta*, above which there is another *beki*, *amalakashila*, *amala*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* ( Boner and Rathsarma,1966, p.147), *ayudha* (*chakra*) and *dhvaja*.

### **Sandhisthala**

There is a *sandhisthala* (Boner and Rathsarma,1966, p.158), erected between the *vimana* and the *jagamohana* of the temple. The *sandhisthala* wall niches of the southern side contain the stone images of Lord Narasimha and Mahavir Hanumana. The four armed image of Narasimha is carved in

standing posture on the pedestal. The right leg of the deity is set up on the pedestal while the left leg trodes the body of an *asura*. The upper two hands of the deity display *gada* and *chakra* while the lower two hands are engaged to take out the entrails of Hiranya Kashyapu. The image Narasimha is made of chlorite stone. The slab of deity measures 8 inches in width and 1 foot 3½ inches in height respectively (Mohapatra,2017,p.372). Another stone slab containing an image of Mahavir Hanumana is also inserted in the southern side *bada* wall of the *sandhisthala*. The two armed image of Mahavir Hanumana is carved in kneeling posture on the pedestal. Both the hands of Mahavir are depicted in *aijali mudra* (praying posture). The image Mahavir is made of sand stone. It measures 1 foot in width and 1 foot 5 inches in height respectively.



The sanctum preserves the image of Madhavananda (Vishnu) as the presiding deity of the temple. The four armed image of Madhavananda is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. He displays *chakra* in upper right hand, *varada mudra* with a small lotus mark in lower right hand, *shankha* in upper left hand and *gada* in lower left hand respectively (Mohapatra,2017, p.372). Garuda, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the right of the pedestal. The centre of the bottom part of the pedestal is decorated with scroll work flanked by female devotees depicted in kneeling posture. They are found depicted praying to Lord Vishnu with folded hands. Shridevi and Bhudevi

figures are carved on either side of the deity. *Chauri* bearer figures are carved on both side centres of the slab. The backside of the head of deity is decorated with trefoil arch crowned by the *kirtimukha* motif. Diminutive figures of Brahma and Shiva are carved on either side base of the trefoiled arch. Flying *apsara* figures and *vidyadharas* are found depicted on both sides of the trefoil arch. They are displaying garlands, *cauries*, musical instruments like *mridanga*, cymbal, etc. Observing the presiding deity, Hansanatha Sahu of Adaspur remarks that the Madhavananda image of the shrine belongs to the later Ganga period. From the iconographical point of view, the image Madhavananda represents a best specimen of the Odishan classical art of the late medieval period. The workmanship of the Madhavananda image is found more advanced than the other Vishnu (Madhava) images of the Praci valley. The slab of deity measures 2 feet 9 inches in width and 5 feet 9 inches in height respectively (Mohapatra,2017, p.372). The image Madhavananda is made of black chlorite and it resembles with the Madhavananda image of Balara. The local people including Hansanatha Sahu of Adaspur say that the image of presiding deity was originally rescued from the Ketakivana and subsequently the image has been enshrined in this shrine as the presiding deity. The sanctum also preserves the brass images of Lord Krishna, Radhadevi and Anthua-Gopala for public worship. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely plain.

The sanctum has one doorway towards the *jagamohana*. The doorway is bereft of decorative elements.

The *jagamohana* of the temple is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 17 feet from the surface of the temple complex (Mohapatra,2017, p.373). It has three parts such as *bada*, *gandi* and *mastaka*. The *bada* is *panchanga* type i.e. having five component parts like the *bada* of *vimana*. All the component parts of the *bada* are completely plain. The *baranda* wall of the eastern side is

depicted with rows of elephants and mounted horses. They are made of the modern cement. The southern side *bada* wall has a balustraded window, which contains three balusters. The *gandi* of the *jagamohana* is a pyramidal superstructure. It consists of three flat shaped *pidhas* and each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus* in all sides. The central *pidha* of the eastern side is projected out by *jhapasimha*. There is a *kalasa* installed on the top of the upper *pidha* of the *gandi*. *Ayudha* and *dhvaja* are not found inserted in the *kalasa*.

The northern side inner wall niche of the *jagamohana* is housed with the image of Lord Krishna. The two armed image of Lord Krishna is carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. The image of Lord Krishna is made of sand stone. Two *sakhi* figures are carved on both sides of the deity. The image Krishna is about 1 foot in height.

Garuda, the conventional mount of the presiding deity is found installed on the square sized pillar of 2 feet high. It is noticed at the centre of the *jagamohana* hall. Inner walls of the *jagamohana* are completely plain. The *jagamohana* has one doorway towards the *natamandapa*. It is bereft of decorative embellishments.

The *natamandapa* of the temple is a flat roof structure and it is about 12 feet in height. The roof of the *natamandapa* is supported by the four square sized pillars. It has three doorways. The *natamandapa* is recently built by the co-operation of villagers.

#### **Additional Shrines**

Besides the main temple, there are two additional shrines also noticed in the temple complex. They are the shrines of Ishaneshvara Shiva and *Navagraha*.

#### **Shrine of Ishaneshvara**

The shrine of Ishaneshvara is located on the north-west corner of the *vimana*. The shrine is a *pidha deula* and its height is about 20 feet from the surface of the temple complex. The *bada* has five parts such as *pabhaga*, *tala jangha*, *bandhana*, upper *jangha* and *baranda*.

All the component parts of the *bada* are devoid of decorative elements.

The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of the shrine are housed with the *parshvadevata* images of Ganesha, Trivikrama and Parvati. Devi Parvati is the *parshvadevata* of the northern side. The four armed image of Devi Parvati is carved in standing posture on the pedestal. She holds *chakra* in upper right hand, *padma* in upper left hand, a pot with trident in lower left hand and the lower right hand lies downwards. Diminutive attendant figures are carved on both sides of the deity. The image Ganesha is about 1 foot in height. Trivikrama is the *parshvadevata* of the western side. The four handed image of Trivikrama is carved in standing posture on the pedestal. He holds *chakra* in upper right hand, *gada* in lower right hand, *padma* in upper left hand and *shankha* in lower left hand respectively. The image Trivikrama is made of sand stone. Generally in the Shiva temple or shrine, the image Kartikeya should remain as the *parshvadevata* of the back/western side but here we can find the image Trivikrama instead of Kartikeya. So it is a peculiar feature of this shrine. Ganesha is the *parshvadevata* of the southern side. The four armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture on the pedestal. He displays broken tusk in upper right hand, *varada mudra* in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in upper left hand and *parashu* (hatchet) in lower left hand respectively. Mouse, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the right of the pedestal. The image Ganesha is made of sand stone. It measures 1 foot in width and 1 foot 8½ inches in height respectively. The deity Ganesha wears a *sarpayajjopavita* in his body.

The *gandi* of the additional shrine is a pyramidal superstructure and it consists of 5 flat shaped *pidhas*. Each *pidha* is decorated with *tankus*, scroll work and inverted parrots. The *raha paga* of the eastern side of the *gandi* is decorated with *pidha mastaka* design. The centre of the second *pidha* from the lower is fixed with female

figures holding child noticed on the three sides except the east. The centre of the upper *pidha* is decorated with Shiva-Parvati figures. *Deula Carini* figures are not found inserted in the three side cardinal directions of the *beki* above *rahas*. *Dopichha* lions are fixed on the top of *kanika pagas* of the *gandi*.

The *mastaka* of the shrine consists of *beki*, *ghanta*, above which there is another *beki*, *amalakashila*, *khapuri*, *kalasa* (*kalasa* is encircled with seven hooded serpent and it is flanked by inverted parrots), *ayudha* (trident) and *dhvaja*.

The sanctum of the additional shrine preserves the *Shivalingam* within the *Shaktipitha* as the presiding deity of the shrine. This *Shivalinga* is dedicated to Lord Ishaneshvara Shiva. Brass images of Chadrashekhara and Parvati are also found worshipped in the sanctum.

The sanctum has one doorway, which is bereft of decorative elements. Rahu head is depicted on the architrave above the doorway lintel. The figures of Nandi and Bhringi are housed in either side doorframe niche of the doorway. They are acting as the *dvarapalas* of the shrine.

Three bull figures are installed in front of the shrine. They are being considered as the conventional mounts of the deity. The local people say that the shrine of Ishaneshvara was built at the time of main Madhavananda temple of that site. There is a separate stone slab containing the figures of Astika-Jaratkaru noticed near the additional shrine. This image is locally worshipped as Savitri-Satyavana. Devi Jaratkaru is carved in *lalitasana* pose on the plain pedestal. The right arm of devi Jaratkaru lies on the laps of Astika while the left arm holds the arm of Astika. The image Astika-Jaratkaru is made of sand stone. It measures 1 foot 8 inches in width and 2 feet 1 inch in height respectively (Mohapatra,2017,p.374). The priest of the temple says that the additional shrine was built by Isana Sahu of that village.

#### Shrine of Navagraha

There is another small shrine noticed on the northern side of the *jagamohana*. It is a flat roof shed, which preserves the images of *navagrahas*. Each *graha* is carved out of the separate stone slab. All the *grahas* are depicted in *yogasana* posture with usual attributes in their hands. The *navagraha* shrine has been built in 1990's by the effort of villagers.

There is a *Tulasi Caunra* noticed near the *Navagraha* shrine on the northern side.=

### **Date of the Temple**

There is no authentic evidence with regard to the exact date of the Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat. The temple is undoubtedly constructed in the modern period. The local people say that the present temple is not older than 250 years before the present. The presiding deity (Madhavananda) contains the iconographic features of the Odishan classical art of the late medieval period. Hansanatha Sahu, one of the senior scholars of the Prachi Gaveshana Parisada is of the view that the image Madhavananda of the temple was possibly made after Jayadeva, the celebrated Sanskrit poet of Odisha. On the basis of the architectural pattern, the construction period of the Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat can be tentatively assigned to the 19<sup>th</sup> century A.D. (Mohapatra, 2017, 376).

Now the temple is being managed by a local committee of that village.

### **CONCLUSION**

We can conclude from the above discussion that the temple of Varaha-Narasimha is one of the important Vaishnava shrines of the Cuttack District. The present temple is completely a renovated shrine of that locality. The temple has been reconstructed in 1950's by the cooperation of the villagers. Now the shrine is well known for the Varaha-Narasimha worship in the coastal-belt of Odisha. The images of Varaha and Narasimha worshipped together as the presiding deities are the striking feature of this temple. The existence of separate Krishna images in the

temple traces that the original temple of the site was possibly of Lord Kunjabihari. In the subsequent period, the Varaha-Narasimha images have been installed on the *simhasana* as the presiding deities of the temple. There is no authentic historical record with regard to the exact date of the construction period of the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur. The extant *pista* of the original temple suggests that the earlier temple was initially built during the Ganga rule in Odisha. Both the *vimana* and *jagamohana* of the temple were possibly constructed in the same period whereas the *natamandapa*, *bhogamandapa* and the additional *mandapa* of the temple are of the later addition. The architectural pattern of the present renovated temple is not so important like the earlier (original) one. The available detached sculptures inside the *jagamohana* were certainly used in the original temple. They have been recently unearthed through the excavation conducted by the Odisha State Archaeology Department. The unearthed sculptures through the recent excavation suggest that the earlier temple was possibly decorated with these sculptures. The iconographic features of the presiding deities and the detached sculptures indicate the artistic tradition of the Ganga period. Considering the religious significance, the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur is a unique Vaishnava shrine of the coastal belt of Odisha in Eastern India. It is known from the observation that the Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat is one of the modern Vaishnava shrines of the Prachi valley. Though the temple belongs to the modern period but it preserves a fine workmanship of the image of Madhavananda (Vishnu) belonging to the late medieval period. The image of Madhavananda with different decorative elements reveals a great success of the plastic art in Odisha. Iconographical point of view, this image can be considered as the best among all the extant Madhava images of the Prachi valley of the coastal belt of Odisha. The *parshvadevata* images of the *vimana* possess the artistic features of the Odishan art of the modern



period. The presence of the additional shrine of Lord Ishaneshvara Shiva in the temple complex indicates that the site of the temple is a meeting place of both Vishnavism and Shaivism. It reminds us that a religious synchronization was prevalent in the Prachi valley during the medieval as well as early modern period of Odishan history. Images of Lord Vishnu are popularly known as Madhava or Madhavananda in the Prachi Valley of the coastal belt of Odisha. The Madhava Cult is an offshoot of Vaishnavism and it became more popular in Odisha during 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In fact, the Madhava cult is very popular in the region of Prachi Valley of Odisha. Hence, such type of Vaishnava temples are found to be erected for the spread of Vaishnavism in the Prachi Valley of the costal belt of Odisha. On the whole, the Varaha-Narasimha temple of Adaspur and Madhavananda temple of Narasinghpurhat are the representatives of the *Kalinga style* temple architecture of Odisha in India.

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