

## *Study on Architectural Remains of Tuman: A Forgotten Capital of the Kalachuris*

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### **Abstract**

Tuman is a small village located at 10 km away from Katghora in the Korba District of present day Chhattisgarh, India. This place is considered to be the first capital of the Haihaya or Kalachuri Royal Dynasty of South Kosala. According to its political, social, religio-cultural importance this place gained attention of the researchers. This historic region of Chhattisgarh also gained archaeological importance by owning the 15 ruins of intricately sculptured stones principally of ancient temples. This locality is one of the protected areas in Chhattisgarh declared by the Archaeological Survey of India. The architectural wonders of Tuman not just only attract tourists, but also raise so many vital queries among Historians including Archaeologists and young research scholars as well. Like – when did this small settlement become the centre of the authority of the Kalachuri Dynasty? Are these monuments carrying out one single style of temple architecture or are they showcasing the composite structural pattern? Based on religious perspective, this place can portray a successful picture of communal compatibility as well. This paper intends to focus on how Tuman transformed into the capital of the Kalachuri Dynasty from an elementary stage of a Janapada. This paper would discuss the detailed architectural features of the temples and other monumental remains of that place based on a thorough field study. Lastly, I would also like to highlight how political anxiety and religious harmony went hand in hand to make Tuman a unique ancient archaeological site in India.

Keywords: Kalachuri Dynasty, Haihayavanshi, South Kosala, Archaeological Survey of India, Janapadas

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## **Introduction**

The 'Ancient Dakshin Kosala' region comes under the geographical zone of the newly created Chhattisgarh state at present. Apart from the northern and central part of Chhattisgarh, this particular place is also covering the western part of the Odisha state as well. According to the major Puranas, this particular place is mentioned with Tripuri, Kalinga and Mekala. If we considered one of the major epics of India 'Ramayan' as our primary literary source, we came to know that in 'Uttara-kanda Parva', Rama divided Kosala into two regions – Uttar Kosala was given to Lav and Kosala went to his another son Kush. It is very strange that particular term 'Dakshin Kosla' was not mentioned in any specific texts or inscriptions. This debate is still very popular among researchers though. According to Donald M Stadtner, the present classification of 'Dakshin Kosala' used by historians is just to differentiate it from the region of 'Kosala' in northern India. The art tradition particularly the architectural formation of this region is very rich and unique. The references we are getting from 'Manasara'<sup>1</sup> based on that we can say that the architectural structure of South Kosala is portraying a blended form of Northern Indian monumental style with local genres. Tuman or Tummana (Geo-coordinates Lat. 22° 34' N and 82° 45'E) is a historical place. This settlement situated 10 km away from Katghora, which is 30 km away from district headquarter in the north-west direction. This site is archaeologically very active and from the Ratanpur inscription of Jajjaladeva I of Kalachuri (1114CE), we get to know that this place became the very first capital of the Kalachuris of Dakshin Kosala branch. In Tuman, one can find more than 15 monumental remains and several sculptures of Brahmanical deities. Even Buddhist architectural remains are also there. Among them, one Saiva Temple is very popular and considered to be the only protected historical site by the archaeological survey of India. This paper is an attempt to look into the detailed architectural features of those monuments especially to study that particular Siva Temple which is still maintaining its lost glory. This paper not only focuses the architectural part but also intends to focus on the sculptural development of ancient and early medieval Tuman as well. But before we get into the structural study, we will briefly discuss on the historical identity of South kosala especially Tuman and how the political scenario changed gradually and this janapda became the first mighty capital of the Kalachuris of the South Kosala Branch. Apart from that I would like to discuss the religious perspective behind the making of those outstanding monuments in Tuman.

## **Reviewing the Previous Works and Methodology I Have Used**

To study this particular theme, I went through various first-hand and second-hand sources. Among first-hand sources, I considered examining different inscriptions of the Kalachuri Dynasty and primary literary sources. Apart from these first-hand materials, there are plenty of second-hand literary sources like Books and journals which help us to understand the changing socio, cultural, political scenario of ancient and early medieval Dakshin Kosala especially Tuman. Various works like 'Maha Kosala in Ancient Literature' by K.D. Bajpai, 'The Extent of Capital of Daksina Kosala' by E.V. Havell, 'Sculptures of Dahala and Dakshin Kosala and their Background' by R.N. Mishra, 'A Survey on the History of south Kosala' by N.K. Sahu etc discussed about the full history of Dakshin Kosala emphasising the architectural activity of that place in general as a part of the theme. But according to my primary observation, these works dose not tell us about the full flagged architectural development and how a separate genre had been gradually evolving in South Kosala and how Tuman became the very first

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<sup>1</sup> 'Manasara' is an ancient text on Indian architecture and design. It has 70 chapters and 10,000 slokas. It is a Vastu Shastra or Shilpa Shastra of very old era. It gives detailed guidelines for building temples, sculptures, gardens, tanks etc.

Janapada<sup>2</sup> for the representation of those magnificent architectural remains. Even these secondary works lack information about how the geographical identity of South Kosala<sup>3</sup> was changing with the advent of different royal dynasties in that region and how the political and religious scenarios getting complex slowly and affected the Monument-making activity in that area. To execute my paper I not only just study those primary sources but also try to compare them side by side to readdress the issues chronologically regarding Temple Study of the Kalachuris. I visited Tuman and other places of South Kosala for a detailed field study and to observe those monuments and their sculptural representations minutely to know the hidden history of Architectural development in that Janapada which has always been overshadowed by the popular Dynastic History.

### **The Identity of South Kosala and Tuman**

According to Imperial Gazetteer of India, the term 'Kosala' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Kausala'. It has two meanings. One denotes happiness. It also means that one who is dexterous in plucking Kusa grass which is very useful for religious sacrifices. So it normally appears that the region once used to supply Kusa grass to other regions of the Indian subcontinent. Even today, this geographical part abundantly grows grasses of various types. The word 'Kosala' is a linguistically corrupt form of the Prakrit term Kausala. If we considered both Indian tradition and literary sources, we came to know that this region was known as a famous country in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BCE. This particular information we are getting from 'Anguttaranikaya.' Apart from this Buddhist Scripture, another Buddhist literature 'Avadanasataka' mentions Dakshin Kosala during the life time of Buddha. The term 'Kosala' has been mentioned in Ramayana and Mahabharata as well. Archaeologically, the word 'South' or 'Dakshin Kosala' first time appeared in the Kalachuri records. Generally, Dakshin Kosala suggests the region covering the major north and central part of Chhattisgarh and western portion of Orissa. Tuman is located in modern Chhattisgarh state. Chhattisgarh used to be a part of Madhya Pradesh. But back in the year 2000, Chhattisgarh became individual state. If we trace back the ancient and early medieval historical and political identity of this geographical region, we came to know that this place went through so many changes. Several royal dynasties ruled over South Kosala and stretch out their authority from that place into the neighbouring provinces. Historically, another reference to this particular area can be found as early as circa 200 BCE from an inscription found at Jogimara cave situated at Ramgarh hills of Sarguja District. After that, another wooden inscription discovered in the place called Kirari in Bilaspur District. Both of these inscriptions indirectly mentioned the ancient art tradition of Dakshin Kosala. The active political history of this area came in front when various royal dynasties intended to capture this region between the 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE. After the death of Harisena, ruler of the Vakataka Dynasty, the fate of South Kosala passed into the hands of a regional dynasty popularly known as Rajarsitulyakula. This short lived dynasty was succeeded by another local dynasty named Parvatadvarakas in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE. From Epigraphical sources like the Kesaribeda Charter of Arthapati, Podagarh Inscription of Skandavaraman, The Rajim Stone Inscription of Vilasatunga we came to know that at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century CE or the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century CE, Nalas became prominent power. Soon the administrative system of that area was passed into the hands of the Sarabhapuriyas. After Sarabhapuriya other Royal dynasties

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<sup>2</sup> Janapada term composed of two words. 'Jana' means people and 'Pada' means foot. It literally means the land where the jana set its foot and settled down. During 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE Janapadas and Mahajanapadas became very powerful units.

<sup>3</sup> South Kosala is a historical region of central India. It was located in what is now Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh along with some parts of Western Odisha.

like the Panduvanshis, the Somvanshis, the Kalacuris<sup>4</sup> and the Nagvanshis etc controlled the region. The Kalacuris ruled this region till the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE roughly and made Tuman their first capital. After a couple of years, they shifted their capital to Ratanpur.<sup>5</sup> Geographically the position of South Kosala was very important as it is connecting the North region and the coastal area through the south eastern region. The rout is connecting major areas like Mathura, Prayag, South Kosala and Kalinga. Even one of the famous and earliest routs joined Kausambi to the Southeastern sea coast via Bharhut, Amarkantak, Malhar and Dandakaranya forest. So the cultural, architectural and sculptural currents were freely flowing from north to south-east region as well. For this reason, South Kosala was getting political, religious and cultural attention at that time.

### **The Identity and Short History of the Kalachuris**

Kalachuris ruled in Chhattisgarh not for a very long period and it had a minimum of 12 branches and sub branches and they spread out in different parts of the Indian subcontinent. The term 'Kalachuri' itself is very interesting. 'Kalli' means Long moustache and 'Churi' means sharp knife from which the term has been derived. According to the local legends, in the family of the lunar race a king was born named Soma whose preceptor was Asvatthama. This teacher appears to have protected his disciple from the rage of Parasurama by asking him to grow beard and moustache which covered up his actual identity. It is because of this that Soma had Kallichuri which means a beard and moustache as sharp as a sword and from that moment his family came to be known as Kalachuri. Apart from the mythological identity, we should consider the literary sources and archaeological sources as well. The term has been mentioned in the Epics, Rigveda, Vayu Purana and Vishnu Purana and of course the contemporary Buddhist and Jain Literature. Among archaeological sources, not only inscriptions and coins supply vital information but Monuments and different sculptures also portray the hidden political, religious and cultural story of Kalachuri Dynasty. Based on the Bilhari stone Inscription of Yuvarajadeva II, we get to know that the Kalachuris mentioned as the Haihayas. According to Puranic tradition, the early Kalachuris ruled at Mahishmati and that place has been founded by Haihaya<sup>6</sup> ruler Mahishmanta. Maybe, for this reason, we can associate Kalachuris with the Haihayas. But according to Historian V.V. Mirashi, the Early Kalachuris did not prefer to call themselves Haihayas, they always preferred to be referred to by that name – 'Kalachuris.' Among their various branches, Kalachuris of South Kosala is very unique because in that area they had different capitals which they had established in different times.

Mirashi, Stadtner and Raj Kumar Sharma agree with the fact that the Tummana and Raipur branches of the Kalachuris chronologically first appeared as the Subordinate limbs of the main Kattachuri Dyasty. Between the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, the Tripuri house focused on establishing their new branch in South Kosala. Kalachuri rulers of Tripuri made several attempts to conquer this region. If we minutely read the 'Ratanpur Stone Inscription' of Jajalladeva I (the record was edited, with a translation and lithograph done by Dr. Kielhorn in the Epigraphia Indica, Vol. I, pp. 33 ff.), we find that the ruler was trying to establish his glorifying family genealogy mentioning how Kalingaraja left his original ancestral country

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<sup>4</sup> The Kalachuri Dynasty was the indigenous dynasty ruled in India during ancient and early medieval era. The very first kingdom of the Kalachuri Dynasty was known as Chedi.

<sup>5</sup> Ratanpur was the second historical capital of the Kalachuri Dynasty of South Kosala. It is a town in Bilaspur district.

<sup>6</sup> Haihaya or Heheya was an ancient kingdom which was ruled by Haihayavanshi Kshatriyas of Yaduvamsha of Chandra lineage. Its capital was called Mahishmati which was founded by Haihaya King Mahishmanta.

(probably Tripuri) to conquer South Kosala back 1000 CE with the help of Kokalla II. Kalingaraja selected Tuman as his very first capital. In this janapada, they ruled up to 1225 CE and Pratapamalla was the very last ruler. Based on the Epigraphic references, it can easily say that from the rule of Kalingaraja in Tuman upto Ratnaraja I, the Kalachuris of South Kosala was under the control of the popular Tripuri House. But this political authority of the Tripuri house came to an end during the rule of Prithvideva I who established their new branch at Ratanpur by shifting their capital from Tuman to form the independent Kalachuri line of the South Kosala. Professor Kielhorn also informed us that, during the reign of Kalingaraja to Prithvideva I Tuman experienced vast architectural activities. Various types of Temples are purely dedicated to Lord Siva, Lord Vishnu found from that place. Apart from religious architecture; tanks, gardens and palatial buildings were also there. The brief history of the place and the unique identity of this dynasty will help us to understand the temple-making activity of Tuman and how it helped Ratanpur to transform as the second architecturally beautiful capital of the South Kosala branch of the Kalachuris. But before we talk about the Architectural Remains of Tuman emphasising the detailed features of the one living popular Siva temple in that Janapada we have to understand the religious background and influence and the common architectural style of Dakshin Kosala.

### **Religious Background Behind the Architecture Making Activity in South Kosala, Especially in Tuman**

In Dakshin Kosala especially in Tuman Janapada Brahmanism had gained its popularity from very early times. Here Brahmanism includes different sects like Vaisnavism, Saivism, Sakta cult and other minor cults as well. During the time of Gupta-Vakataka Dynasties Dakshin Kosala went under the heavy influence of Vaisnavism. Temple making activity in Rajim and Sirpur gained huge popularity that time because of these two sites which became important Vaisnavite centres. This tradition had been carried out by the other Dynasties like Sarabhapuriyas and Panduvamsis. But During Kalachuri era in Dakshin Kosala, Saivism got a stronghold and popularity among local inhabitants. But if we tried to look back we can notice that like Vaisnavism, Saivism was also in flourishing condition in South Kosala. Under Nalas, Saivism was nourished and given the status of a State religion. Even in the time of Sarabhapuriyas Saivism was also there and gradually flourishing. But from the time of Panduvamsis religious transformation became very prominent. In the time of the Kalachuris, Saivism became the State religion and temples dedicated to Lord Siva were started building under their royal patronage. Not only the Architecture but also the sculptural activities received royal and non-royal patronage as well in South Kosala especially in Tuman under the Kalachuris. The class of patrons consisted of people of different sections of Society. Like Kings, members of the royal family, women in the royal family like the Queen, the King's mother, State Officials, Ascetics and others as well. Most of the Kalachuri rulers were devotees of Saivism and naturally, they engaged themselves in making numerous structures. They provided financial support to the religious architectures for their long-term maintenance or renovation activities from time to time as and when required. The Kalachuri inscriptions provide us with important information about not only temples but also the allied institutions which were attached to the temples like a hall for study, continuous lines of gardens, tanks, lotus ponds, mango groves etc were built under the royal patronage. Tuman is the place where we are getting a clear picture of these kinds of activities very often. Based on inscriptions and local folklore, we noticed that under Kalachuri rule not only in Tuman but also other places in the Dakshin Kosala, ascetics were given the right to provide patronage to such building-making activities like constructing temples, monasteries, roads for trading networks and linking the religious centres as well. In Tuman, Smarta Upasana or Panchadevopasana got popularity

during Kalachuri Era (10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE). The Smarta originated from the concept of Panchayatana worship where veneration of five Brahmanical Deities (worship of Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Shakti and Ganesha) was its main subject. According to historians like Prabhashankar Pandey and K.D. Bajpai & S.K. Pandey, the main objective of this form of worship in Tuman and other parts of Dakshin Kosala during Kalachuri era was to unify the followers of Vaisnavism and Saivism by avoiding communal feelings. The intention of the historians is visible here. They only focus on the power balance between Vaisnavism and Saivism. But according to my observation, it can easily say that during the Kalachuri era even in the earlier phases; Buddhism got huge popularity in Dakshin Kosala. To break the influence of Buddhism in that area it was necessary to implement Panchayatana worship by uniting the devotees of different Cults of Brahmanical religion where not only Vaisnavism and Saiva cult hold the supreme authority but also on the other hand, Shakta, Surya and Ganapatya Cult played a major role to shape down the religious background of architectural and sculptural activities.



**Figure 1: The Saiva Temple, Tuman**



**Figure 2: The Main Entrance of the Sanctum Cella**

Buddhism was a popular creed in ancient and early medieval South Kosala. Various Buddhist texts mentioned about Buddha's visit to Dakshin Kosala. Nagarjuna who considered being one of the celebrated Buddhist Philosophers was believed to have resided in Dakshin Kosla. Renowned Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang gave a vivid account of the existence of Buddhism during the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> Century CE. This information is further attested by the Archaeological remains found from Tuman, Malhar and Sirpur etc. Apart from Buddhism, Jainism did not make much headway in South Kosala during this particular time. But in a couple of areas apart

from Tuman, like in Malhar<sup>7</sup> two Arghyapattas were discovered where 24 Tirthankars had been depicted which amply attested about the fact of the existence of Jainism in this region. So it can assume that the religious life in Dakshin Kosala reflects a scene of peaceful harmony and co-existence of different religious faiths and beliefs of Brahmanical and non-Brahmanical sects under patronage especially under the Kalachuris. It is really important for the stable political, social and cultural growth of that region and it also helps us to understand the process of Religious architecture-making activities in south Kosala especially in Tuman.

### **Temple Pattern of South Kosala and Detailed Study of Architectural Remains of Tuman**

According to some historical records, the proper architectural evolution in Dakshin Kosala started during the Gupta-Vakataka era and it had a far-reaching impact. During the post-Gupta era, this movement got momentum and it was popularised by the liberal and tolerant patronage of various regional ruling dynasties who ruled over this land between the 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The temple-building activities covered a long period. The monumental and cultural heritage of South Kosala acted as a bridge between North and South. If we observe the detailed architectural styling of Dakshin Kosala especially monuments which were getting a proper shape under Kalachuri era in Tuman, we can see the successful assimilation of Chalukyan and Gupta-Vakataka art style. Even the Kalinga architectural style has been reflected through those magnificent religious and non-religious architectures. These temples have definite local characteristics which provide significant light on the sub-regional manifestation of the Nagara<sup>8</sup> Architectural Style. Maybe the masons and sculptors imitated the classical and traditional idiom in the beginning, grew mannerist with time and ended up producing a unique provincial style. It has always been expected that the Art tradition and building technique had a free flow through the region leaving an impression behind. In the case of architectures in Tuman and other parts of South Kosala during the Kalachuri era, it can say that the builders and artists show their acquaintance with the canonical texts of both North and South India. Based on my detailed observation it can easily say that temples here basically represent the Nagara Architectural Style with certain local features. There is no doubt about the fact that the innovative impulse of the masons of South Kosala rendered an immense contribution to the growth of assimilated Central Indian and Odishan temple architectures.

Rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty of Dakshin Kosala not only provide patronage to art and architecture but undoubtedly they were the great builders as well. The Kalachuri inscriptions mention about constructing different Mandiras, Vyakhyanasalas, Sattras, Gardens, Monasteries and Colleges etc. But irony of the fate is, most of the buildings of their time are no more extant due to the ravages of time. Those architectures suffered from natural calamities and human vandalism. Since the majority of the Kalachuri temples known to date bear no direct epigraphic pieces of evidence, only a closer look at their architectural and sculptural details could help us to understand the development process chronologically. Though most of the temples are in strict conformity with the general characteristics of that era, a few peculiarities too could be noticed here and there. Most of the architectures constructed at that time are built by brick or brick-stone combination or entirely by stone. In Dakshin Kosala, most of the temples are curvilinear type. Tuman is no exception. The temples of the Kalachuri era, in ground plan,

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<sup>7</sup> At present, Malhar is a small town situated in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh, India. This is considered to be one of the most ancient towns of the district. This town is in the list of "Ancient Monuments and archaeological Sites and Remains of National Importance".

<sup>8</sup> Nagara Style of Architecture is a Temple style prevalent in North India especially in UP, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal etc. The Gupta dynasty was the first known patron of the Nagara style.

consist of the Garbhagriha (enshrining the presiding deity) with a plain interior, a vestibule or Kapili or Antarala connecting the pillared hall or Mandapa with the Garbhagriha. But in Tuman whatever architectural remains we get, we didn't find any pillared hall. Temples are mostly built on a high platform on which the axial structures stand. In most cases, we have noticed that the Mandapa or the pillared hall are square or presents a rectangular form being supported with rows of pillars and pilasters. These Mandapas on many occasions have lateral transepts with the provision of Gavaksa.<sup>9</sup> Any kind of architectural formation always depends on proper ground planning following several projections. The temples of Tuman and other places in South Kosala are either having the Triratha or Pancharatha or Saptaratha plan in their chronological sequence. In Tuman we are getting references to the Pancharatha or Saptaratha Shaiva Temple. Based on my detailed fieldwork, it can say that the broken remains of the Brahmanical temples still have the intact 'Upana' part which is revealing the Triratha, Pancharatha and Saptaratha style successfully. Here the Triratha temple is characterised by one offset projection at the centre known as 'Bhadra,' and the corner projection on both sides known as 'Karna.' The Brahmanical architecture in Dakshin Kosala especially in Tuman constructed over a raised platform known as 'Jagati'. They are shaped as square or rectangular. One of the general features of the Nagara Temple architecture is having five vertical divisions from bottom to top. They are 'Vedibandha,' 'Jangha,' 'Baranda,' 'Shikhara' and 'Mastaka.' Jangha has a two-fold division namely Talajangha and Uparjangha being divided by horizontal moulding known as 'Pattika.' The 'Mastaka' above the 'Shikhara' is adorned with finials like a trident or wheel depending on the main residing deity of the Temple. Kalachuri temples of Tuman have all these architectural features.

At the central nerve of the Korba lies the concealed gem Tuman Janapada in Kartala Tehsil. This small village is famous for its artistically magnificent Shiva Temple and other architectural remains. This temple has a rich history dating back centuries and is steeped in cultural significance. This Brahmanical architecture is built of sandstone and is purely dedicated to Lord Shiva, one of the principal Deities in the Brahmanical Pantheon. This magnificent Architecture is situated at the centre of the Tuman janapada. The complex is huge and restored and preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India.<sup>10</sup> The west-facing main temple structure is situated in a big stone-built square compound. Apart from this particular architecture, there we find at least 4 to 5 temple complexes in dilapidated condition. Only the base is still intact. The newly renovated normal entrance gate of the whole complex is in the north direction. There is a tank on the right-hand side of the temple. According to the Ratanpur Inscription of the Kalachuri King Jajalladeva I, architectures in this complex, especially this Saiva temple which was dated Kalachuri Samvat 866 (1114 CE/1116 CE) was constructed by Ratandeva-I. He was a staunch devotee of Siva. Here the Lord Shiva is represented as the God of destruction and yogi as well. According to the local legend, this particular monument is said to be located on the spot where Siva emerged from the Earth in the form of a lingam which considered being a sacred symbol in Brahmanism displaying the God's masculine energy. In one word Tuman Siva Temple is a magnificent example of the hybrid architectural style where we find the Nagara temple art is dominating the local aesthetic sense. Three unique things about this particular monument are considered to be noticed and not mentioned by the previous researchers. The first thing is there is no lavishly ornamented Gateway or Torana in front of the main walled complex and the Shikhara portion of the monument is gone. Another thing is

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<sup>9</sup> Gavaksa is a Sanskrit word which means "bull's or cow's eye". In Brahmanical architectures, their role is envisioned as symbolically radiating the light and splendour of the central icon in its sanctum.

<sup>10</sup> ASI is an Indian government agency that is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural historical monuments in the country. It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director General.



interesting yet odd that is the absence of the other three halls – Bhoga mandira, Nata mandira and Jagamohana which are referred to be the main features of the Nagara style of temple architecture. The area is earthquake-prone. So it can assume that the other parts of this Siva temple and other Monuments inside that compound had been devastated by the natural calamity. But it is also very peculiar that we cannot find the broken portion of the ground plan of those three halls of that Saiva Temple as well. Only the Square Sanctum Cella is still intact with a stretched frontal porch. There is an east-facing Nandi sculpture on the right-hand side of the temple. Temple is standing on ‘Adhithana’ (basement) and there are 10 stairs from ground level to the ‘Jagati’ (raised platform) in front and on the second part we find 4 stairs leading towards the Garbhagriha. This Saptaratha temple has 7 vertical projections. We can observe the two crucial parts of the architecture - Pistha, Bada representing the Kaling flavour of architectural style. But unfortunately, the Gandi and Mastaka portion are gone. Bada part of the Sanctum cella has been divided into five different portions – Pa-bhaga, Tala-jangha, Madhya-bandhana, Upar-jangha and Baranda. Pabhaga continues to have five moulding patterns, carved with different designs. From bottom to top, those mouldings are known as Khura, Kumbha, Pota, Kani and Vasanta. Another unique feature of this temple is the presence of the upper part of the Upar-jangha. It may represent the unique regional style developed under the Kalachuri dynasty of South Kosals. The outer wall especially the backside of the architecture does not have sculptures. Only the figures of the Bhara Bahakas are there and we can observe the chronological presence of pilasters.<sup>11</sup> The frontal outer part of the main temple is decorated with floral and geometrical motifs, diamond designs etc. The presence of the figurines of the lion, marching elephant also attracts attention.

The entrance door of the main chamber is vastly decorated with river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna along with the Saiva Dvarapalas. Both of these River Goddesses are standing in a Tribhanga position on their Vahanas and holding Ghatas and Lotuses (probably). Shiva Dvarapalas are standing in a Dvibhanga position holding Damru and Trident. Their facial expressions are bold. The door guardians stand as fierce beings, placed to guard the holy space from evil spirit. Anyone can observe the presence of the Gandharbas, Vidyadharas or celestial musicians on the lintel and the two sides of the main door frame. Here the presence of Kirtimukha<sup>12</sup> reminds us the Orissan style. In this temple, the door frame or the Lalatabimba<sup>13</sup> was vastly elaborated by the figures of Ganesha, Siva and Vishnu. Even the scene of the famous battle between Rama and Ravana has been depicted stylistically. The borderline of the door frame was widely decorated by small figures of creepers and scroll works and the lotus emblem. In the Garbhagriha, we find the main north facing Shiva Ling. There is no decoration in the inner part of the temple and the Ceiling is kind of an odd conical shaped. Apart from that, we do find the Sculptures of Brahmanical deities, Buddhist deities and the part of the monuments (like Lotus Ceiling, base of the temple, architrave etc) scattered all over that walled compound.

## Conclusion

The structural pattern of this renowned temple of Tumana is considered to be one of the earliest Kalachuri monuments of the South Kosala branch. It not only helps us to understand how rich was the gradual process of regional temple-making activities but also guides us to figure out how stable was the political-cultural-religious unity of that place during the 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>11</sup> Pilaster is a shallow rectangular column that projects slightly beyond the wall into which it is built and conforms precisely to the order or style of the adjacent columns.

<sup>12</sup> Kirtimukha is the name of a swallowing fierce monster face with huge fangs and gaping mouth, very common in the iconography of the Brahmanical temple architecture.

<sup>13</sup> Lalatabimba: In general crest figure, central symbol on door lintel.

CE. Tuman not only represents the famous Saiva pilgrimage site of Korba District but is also identified as one of the rich heritage places in Chhattisgarh.

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