

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of civilization, early Paleolithic man showed his hand-painting on the rocks inside the mountain cave where he lived. This hand painting is visible even to this date. The artistic feeling that rose from his heart made him an artist. The term 'Architecture' is derived from Latin word "architectura", which signifies "superior" or "manufacturer". Architecture is a term to express buildings and other structures. Among them, temples are an expression of architectural technology. Temples are built with more artistic sophistication and traditional construction techniques than houses and palaces. The specialty of temple art lies not only in idols and sculptures, related to the god and goddess but also in the references to the myths and legends related to them in the form of pictures and sculptures, which mesmerise the visitors to the temple. Temple architecture in India is classified into some recognizable styles like Nagara, Dravida and Vesara, based on its plan and appearance. South Indian temples have played a vital role in architecture. Kongu region has a unique place for accommodating the culture and temple architecture in Tamilnadu.

Topography of Kongu Nadu

Tamil Nadu was divided into five major divisions, namely, Chera Mandalam, Chozha Mandalam, Pandiya Mandalam, Thondai Mandalam and Kongu Mandalam, as mentioned in Thirumoolar's Thirumozhi. In mountainous countries, honey is abundant and Kongu means nectar. Hence, it is called Kongu Nadu. The name may have been derived from Kon also, which is a barren land and some scholars believe that the name 'Kongu' may have come from the name of Kongunivarman, the first king of the Upper Ganga Dynasty, who ruled from Talikat in Mysore as the capital.

Boundaries

As the Thanipadal indicates the boundaries of the Chera, Chola and Pandya kingdoms in Tamil Nadu, it also documents the boundaries of the Kongu Nadu. The northern boundary was Mysore Plateau, the plains of Coimbatore and Salem Thalai Hills, Bligirirangan Hills, Madesuvaran Hills, Toppur Hills etc. The southern boundary was the Varaga range followed by the Anaimalai range to the west. The western range included the Velli Malai and the Nilgiris. The eastern boundary was Servarayan Hill, Kalvaraya Hill, Pachai Malai, Kolli Malai etc. Kongu Nadu is a plain land, surrounded by mountains on all four sides. In the middle of it, the river Cauvery runs southeast towards the Chola Nadu. To the west of the Kongu Nadu was the Chera Nadu and to the south was the Pandya Nadu. To the east was the Chola and to the north was the Atiyaman Nadu. Kongu Mandala Sathakam talks about Kongu Nadu. Kongu Nadu is ancient and a unique Nadu of its own.

Divisions

Kongu Nadu was generally divided into two major divisions, North Kongu and South Kongu. Apart from these major divisions, Kongu Nadu was divided into a total of 24 sub-divisions. Names of 24 countries: 1) Poonthurai Nadu, 2) Then Karai Nadu. 3) Kangeya Nadu, 4) Pongalur Nadu, 5) Ara Nadu, 6) Varaka Nadu, 7) Thiruvavinankudi Nadu, 8) Mana Nadu. 9) Thalaya Nadu, 10) Thattaya Nadu 11) Bhuvaniya Nadu 12) Arya Nadu. 13) Oguwanga Nadu, 14) Vadakarai Nadu, 15) Kilangu Nadu, 16) Nalluruka Nadu, 17) Valavanti Nadu. 18) Anda Nadu. 19) Vengala Nadu. 20) Kavadika Nadu. 21) Anaimalai Nadu, 22) Rasipura Nadu, 23) Kanchikoil Nadu, 24) Kuruppu Nadu.

Coimbatore as on 01/11/1956

Coimbatore became the capital of the area, which was conferred the region status in 1866. It was devastated by the Great Famine of 1876 – 78, about reporting 200,000

starvation related fatalities. The initial three years of the Twentieth Century witnessed almost 20,000 plague-related death.

Industrialisation, commenced in 1888, received a boost in 1920s and 1930s because of the downturn of the cotton business in Mumbai. The District performed a critical job in the Indian for freedom movement. Coimbatore has experienced fast development after independence because of industrialization. Coimbatore is located in the extreme west of Tamil Nadu, close to the province of Kerala. It is encompassed by mountains in the west and the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve on the northern side. The eastern side of Coimbatore, including the city, is normally dry. Due to its closeness toward the Western Ghats, the area is wealthy in fauna.

The City of Coimbatore has nine lakes. Valankulam Lake, Krishnampatti Lake, Singanallur Lake, Kuruchi Lake, Muthannan Lake and Seevagasintamani Lake are some of them.

The Coimbatore urban wetlands harbor more than 125 types of occupant and transient winged animals, with August to October being the pinnacle season. Spot-charged Pelican, Painted Stork, Open Billed Stork, Ibis, Spot-charged Duck, Teal, Black Winged Stilt are a portion of the transitory flying creatures, that visit Coimbatore wetlands routinely.

Taluks

Coimbatore District was sub-divided into 10 Taluks. Coimbatore, Palladam, Dharapuram, Bhavani, Erode, Karur, Kollegal, Pollachi, Satyamangalam and Udamalpet.

Administration

Coimbatore District was divided into four sub-divisions, for administrative purposes.

- Coimbatore Sub-Division: Coimbatore and Sathyamangalam Taluks
- Erode Sub-Division: Dharapuram, Bhavani, Erode and Karur Taluks.

- Kollegal Sub-Division: Kollegal Taluk
- Pollachi Sub-Division: Pollachi, Palladam and Udumalpet Taluks

Salem as on 01/11/1956

In the Third Century BC, Jainism and Buddhism entered Salem. A monetarily and socially advanced society in Salem is evident from the disclosure of silver coins of the Roman Emperor, Tiberices Claudices Nero, in Koneripatti of Salem, reported 2000 years ago.

The Pandiyan administration over Salem region is reported from the Second Century A.D. The Fourth Century A.D. witnessed the ascent of the Pallava line in Salem and in the 6th Century the Saivite rule is evident. The Tenth Century recorded the rule by the rule and in the Twelfth Century, the Hoysala Empire governed Salem.

In the Fourteenth Century Salem came under the Vijayanagar Empire. The Fifteenth and the Sixteenth century witnessed the rule by the Chalukyas and the Madurai Nayaks. The Eighteenth Century reported the invasion of Hyder Ali and later his son, Tipu Sultan over Salem. The British East India Company took over Salem from the invaders of Mysore.

Taluks

Salem District was sub-divided into eight Taluks - Salem, Attur, Yercaud, Omalur, Sankari, Tiruchengode, Rasipuram and Namakkal.

Administration

Salem District was divided into four sub-divisions, for administrative reasons.

- Salem Sub-Division: Salem, Salem West, Salem South, Valappadi, Yercaud
- Attur Sub-Division: Attur, Gangavalli, Pethanaickenpalayam
- Mettur Sub-Division: Mettur, Omalur, Kadayampatti
- Sankagiri Sub-Division: Sankagiri, Idappadi

History of Kongu Nadu

Inscriptions, found in the temples and monuments around this region, help us to understand the history of Kongu Nadu.

Stone Age

Stone age artifacts have been found in mountains like Servarayan Hill, Kalvarayan Hill, Kolli Hill in Kongu Nadu. Neolithic tools have been found at Mohanur in Salem District.

Iron Age or Sangam Period

The period when iron was known and used for making iron tools, is called Iron Age by historians. Many symbols, used by people of Iron Age, are found in Kongu Nadu. Burials are found in the towns of Perundurai, Nallambatti near Vijayamangalam, Kaniyamboondi, Natukkal Palayam, Anaimalai. Dolmenoid Cist, Urns and Hero stones have been discovered in this study area. Iron tools, copper vessels, bronze objects, clay figures of male and female, ear rings, beads with colored stones like beryl, carnelian jasper, agate quartz have also been found. References to burials are found in Sangam literature. Later literatures like Kulothungan Cholanula, Vikrama Cholanula, Thakkayakapparani also refer to the burials as 'Karkidai'. These artefacts found in Tamilnadu, date back to the Iron Age of 1000 B.C. to A.D. 500.

Sangam Period

Before the conquest of Kongu by the kings, several dynasties ruled in Kongu. According to Sangam literature. Atiyaman of Tagadur is the most important king among them. There is evidence that Adiyaman's lineage ruled Kongu Nadu till the 8th Century A.D. After the Atiyaman kings, Ori (Kolli Malai), Kaluvul (Kamur), Kumanan (Muthiram) ruled Kongu Nadu. Kongars are mentioned in Sangam literature and their occupation was cattle rearing.

Cheras

Cheras came to the Kongu Nadu, through the Palakkad Pass and captured some towns in the southern part of the Kongu Nadu in the First Century. Udiyan Cheralathan is the first known king from the early history of the Cheras. In Pathitru Patthu, there is a reference to who had Cheras conquered Kongu Nadu. From that period till the period of Kanikkal Irumporai (about A.D. 210), the Kongu Nadu was under the Chera Kings.

Kongu Nadu under Cheras

There are two inscriptions traced to the 9th Century A.D., discovered in Vellalur, Coimbatore District. At Perur, there is a defaced inscription of Ravikandan, son of Kandanravi. It indicated that he gave Nivandam to recite Vedas and Bharata. From this inscription, it is inferred that the Cheras added the name 'Kandan' to their names. In the Vellalur inscription, the surrounding places of Coimbatore were also called "Veerakerala Nallur". From these two inscriptions, it is established that Coimbatore and its surroundings were under the Chera Rule.

Kongu Nadu under Pandyas

Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman (A.D. 710-765)

Maravarman was a contemporary of the Pallava king, Nandivarman. According to the Velvikkudi copper plate, he conquered the Malakongu Nadu and compelled the king to pay tribute to him. He married Poosundari, the daughter of the king of Ganga. When he invaded the Kongu Nadu, he went to Tirupandi Kodumudi, to worship Lord Shiva.

Cholas and Kongu Cholas

Kongu Nadu came under the rule of the Cholas from the late 9th Century A.D. There is a highway in Coimbatore, which was in use till the Sangam Period, must have been renovated during the period of Adithan I (887-907) and renamed as "Rasakesariperu Vazhi". Paranthagan I, son of Adita I, had assumed the title of "Viracholan". As a result,

a part of Kongu Nadu came to be known as Veerachola Mandalam. Paranthakan inscriptions are found in Erode. The first three kings were Veeracholan, Kalimurkan and Kalimurka Vikramacholan. Veerachalan inscriptions are also found in the towns of Valliyerichal and Alatur.

Kalimurkan (A.D. 985-1004)

Kalimurkan is referred to as Veerachola Kalimurkan in the inscriptions. His inscriptions are engraved in Pramiyam and Koduvai. He ruled for twenty-four years.

Vikrama Chola I (A.D. 1004-46)

Vikrama Chola was the son of Kalimurkan. He was one of the longest reigning Cholas of Kongu. His glory is reported in the inscriptions found in Pramiyam, Vallyerichal, Annur and Thingalur. His reign was peaceful and prosperous.

Vikramachola Abhimana Chola (A.D. 1047-1085)

One of the inscriptions, found in Annur Shiva Temple, mentions his name.

Abhimana Chola Rajathirajan (A.D. 1085-1100)

Inscriptions of this king are found in Pramiyam and Thirumuruganpoondi.

Uttamacholan (A.D. 1100-1118)

His inscriptions have been found at Pramiyam, Akhilandapuram, Vijayamangalam and Patali.

Rajathiraja Veeracholan (A.D. 1118-1138)

Inscriptions of this king are available at Vijayamangalam and Pramiyam.

Uttamashola Veeramarayana (A.D. 1138-1149)

His inscriptions have been found in Koilpalayam and Perundhamalaiyur.

Kulothungan I (A.D. 1149-1168)

His inscription has been found at Neruvur near Karuvur.

Veeracholan III (A.D. 1168-1196)

In the third year of his reign, he issued an order to abolish taxes on the temples of the Kongu Nadu. Inscriptions, related to his rule, have been found in Pariyur, Thingalur, Vijayamangalam, Koogalur, Pattilur, Modakur, Kunradur. Thudialur, Kudalur, Idigarai, Amarabhayangapuram and Koilpalayam. During the reign of Veeracholan III, many Devadhanam and Brahmadeyas were created in Kongu Nadu. Many temples were built. During his rule, forests were cleared, and agricultural land expanded.

Kulothungan II (A.D. 1196-1207)

The inscriptions of this king are found in Annur, Vijayamangalam and Avinasi.

Veera Rajendran (A.D. 1207-1256)

After the twenty-fifth year of his reign, a revolt, called the Great Vadugan Revolt broke out. It was the invasion of Bhosalamanna Veerasomesvara and hence no inscriptions, from his 25th to 40th regnal year have been found. Only Veerasomesuvaran inscriptions are available during this period. During Veerarajendran's reign, many areas were converted into agricultural land. Many temples were built construction and ponds were dug out. It facilitated agriculture. His inscriptions are widely available in both North Kongu and South Kongu and the best is the one at Perur.

Vikrama Chola II (A.D. 1256 - 63)

The inscriptions found at Vijayamangalam reveal that during his time, the halls of the Nagesvaraswamy Temple were renovated. Kulothungan II inscriptions and Veerarajendra inscriptions have been engraved in the hall. The old inscriptions were re-engraved when the mandapam was renovated during the period of Vikirama Cholan.

Rajakesari (A.D. 1263 – 73)

A Pandyan king, named Rajakesari Veerapandiyan, is mentioned in Kongu inscriptions.

Vikramacholan III (A.D. 1273 - 1305)

Vikramacholan III was the last king of the Kongu Cholas. His reign was successful. Due to lack of successors after him, Kongu Nadu came under the rule of Pandyas.

Later Pandyas

Later Pandyas gained strength and established their rule from 12th century onwards.

- Sadayavarman Kulasekhara Pandian (A.D. 1162)
- Sadayavarman Sundarapandian I (A.D. 1216 – 1235)
- Sadayavarman Veerapandian (till A.D. 1281)
- Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandyan I (A.D. 1268 – 1311)
- Satayavarman Sundharapandian (A.D. 1276 – 1293)

Kongu Pandyas

Kongu Pandyas ruled Kongu Nadu in the 12th Century. Satayavarman Sundarapandian I appointed Veerapandian, as the representative to the Kongu Nadu, in A.D. 1265. After him, other Pandya representatives ruled until the 14th century A.D.

Veerapandian (A.D. 1265-1285)

Veerapandian was the first Kongu Pandyan to rule. He ruled for 20 years. His inscription are found in the Kariyamanikka Perumal Temple at Vijayamangalam and in the Thondeeswarar Temple in Erode. He renovated the lake in Vijayamangalam and named it “Veerapandiya Pereri”.

Sundara Pandian

Sundara Pandian was the second Kongu Pandya. His inscriptions are found, along with that of Veerapandiyan.

Bosalar

Kongu Nadu was never under a stable government. Many kings invaded Kongu Nadu and Bosalar was one among them. During the reign of Bosalar, Kongunadu, which existed until the 14th century A.D., came under the Vijayanagara Empire.

Vijayanagara and Nayak Dynasty

In A.D. 1344, Bhukan I became the king of Vijayanagara. When he died in A.D. 1376, Harihararayan II came to power. Two of his inscriptions are available in Kongu Nadu. An inscription of his son, Bukkan II, is found on Tirthamalai in Kongu. Inscriptions of Devaraya I are found at Tirthamalai, Kadakathur and Kolinjivadi.

During the rule of Krishnarayan, Achuthan, Sadashivan Venkatapati and Ummattur chiefs, the Kongu Nadu, especially Coimbatore District, was under their control. In the inscriptions, found at Thanayagan Kottai, Sarkarperiyapalayam, Avinasi, Erode Veerananjaraya Udaiyar and his son, Veerasikkarayan, are mentioned. They reveal that they ruled Kongu Nadu till 1527.

Krishna Devarayan (A.D. 1509-1529) conquered Kongu Nadu, Madurai and Thanjavur. Kongu Nadu became a part of Madurai. The Nayaks, sent by the Vijayanagara kings to rule Madurai, ruled the Kongu Nadu from A.D. 1530 to 1700.

Vishwanatha Nayak (A.D. 1529-1564)

Vishwanatha Nayak ruled over the present districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Trichy, Coimbatore and Salem. With the help of Ariyanathan, he administered the vast area through the 'Palayam System'. He appointed a leader for each palayam and they were called "Palayakarar". During the reign of Tirumalai Nayak (A.D.1623-1659), the king of Mysore conquered some parts of Kongu Nadu. During the reign of Sokkanatha Nayakkan (A.D. 1659-1682), the Mysore government occupied

many parts of the Kongu Nadu. In Coimbatore and Salem District, inscriptions, dated A.D. 1670, refer to Devaraya Udaiyar and Chokkadevarayan.

Art

The history of art is the history of any item, made by people, in a visual shape for aesthetical or other purposes, communicating thoughts, feelings or a perspective. In this way, the artistic power, within the human being, has created Sithannavasal and the Periya Kovil paintings of Thanjavur, that are admired by the world. It created eye catching South Indian sculptures and Buddhist sculptures in places like Sanchi, Amaravati etc.

Art of Painting

Silapathikaram states that the metal shields were decorated with eye-catching paintings. Above the stage where Madhavi's dance performance took place, displayed many spectacular paintings. The roof of the stage was called Oviya Vidhanam.

Many mythological stories were depicted as paintings, in the Mandapam of Lord Muruga Temple, at Thiruparangundram, near Madurai. Paripadal refers to those paintings of sun, moon, planets, Rati, Cupid, Indra, Akaligai and Gautama.

A stone, called Nadukal, was erected at the place where the soldiers died in battle or where they were buried or where their ashes were interred. The image of the dead hero was carved on the tomb. Regular pooja was performed at the Nadukal. Tolkappiyam refers to these hero stones. It is customary to draw a picture of the figure before carving it into the stone, which was drawn by descendants of the deceased. With the help of that sketch, the figure was carved on the stone.

Siddhannavasal Paintings

During the post-Sangam Pallava Period (A.D. 300-900), cave temples had paintings on the roof of the rock walls. Many colours were used on the walls of Mamandur Cave Temple, Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple etc. The paintings were

destroyed over time. The paintings of Siddhannavasal are the ones, that live even today, without being destroyed.

In Siddhannavasal of Pudukottai District, there is a cave temple, carved by Mahendra Varman. There are four pillars in the front hall. Two central pillars have figures of dancing goddesses. Their hairstyles, clothing, outfits, the way their hands are placed in a dancing position, reveal the skill of the artist, who made them. The heads of kings and princes are painted on the inside of the right pillar. An elaborately carved crown, with beads, is displayed on the king's head. He has earrings in his ears. There is a large painting on the ceiling. It represents a lotus pond. Even though this painting was executed about 1300 years ago, it is still in a state of excellence.

Among the paintings of the Chola Period, the Periya Kovil paintings of Thanjavur are remarkable. They are on the outer walls of the sanctum sanctorum of the Temple. Later, they were overlaid with Nayaka period paintings. Chola period paintings belonged to the 11th Century A.D. The history of Sundarar, with Lord Shiva, is painted in the Temple of Thanjavur. These paintings reveal the development of painting in the Chola Period. The paintings of Lord Shiva are displayed on the walls in front of the lotus pond.

The paintings in the Chitra Sabha at Thiru Coutralam, are traced to the Nayak Period. The paintings on the ceiling of the hall, in front of Thillai Sivakamiyamman, also belong to the Nayak Period.

Sculpture

Sculpture is the art of creating images, by using clay, wood, brick, stone, metal, ivory, wax, etc. The purpose of sculpture is to express emotions and ideas through expressive images.

Sangam Period Sculptures

Silpadikaram states that there were temples for Shiva, Murugan, Thirumal, Baladeva, Kotravai (Durkai), Sun, Moon and the white elephant of Indra, in Perur. Sampapati Amman Temple is found in ruins in today's Kaveripoompattinam. The figures found in it are made of clay.

Chariot Sculptures

There were chariot streets in big cities like Kanji, Poombukar and Madurai. There were chariots next to the temple and dramatic workmanship in the chariots are the sculptural development, that has been going on for centuries.

Pallava Period Sculptures

Square pillars of the Pallava Period are engraved with various circles, lotus etc. The base of some of the pillars is shaped like a seated lion. Some of the pillars are in the form of a standing lion. The carvings, found on the Panchapandava Chariots at Mamallapuram, are beautiful. The elephant figure and the lion figure are exquisitely carved. The rock carvings, depicting the view of the Ganges indicate the excellence of Sculpture during the Pallava Period. In the Adivaragar temple there are carvings of Simha Vishnu, his wife and Mahendravarman and his wife.

Kanchi Kailasadathar Temple Sculptures can be called sculpture gallery. The Shiva temples in Kanchi have sculptures, depicting the dance forms of Lord Shiva.

The Kanchi-Vaikunta Perumal Temple has sculptures on its walls that depict a large part of Pallava history. The figures of the gatekeepers and other sculptures, in the cave temples built by the Pallavas, at Trichy Malaikottai, were exquisitely executed.

Early Pandya Period Sculptures

Bas reliefs of gods, including Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Parvathi, Subramanya, Ganapathi and Dakshinamoorthy, can be found in Tiruparankundram, Anaimalai, and Kazhugumalai.

Chola Period Sculptures

The works, started by Pallavas, were continued by Cholas. The development of Chola period sculpture can be seen in the temples of Tanjai Periya Kovil built by Rajaraja I, Gangaikonda Cholacharam, built by Rajendra I, Rajarajecharam (Tharasuram), built by Rajaraja II and Tribhuvana Viresvaram, built by Kulothungan III.

Vijayanagara Period Sculptures

The gopura sculptures and the dancing rock sculptures found, on the entrance at Tiruvannamalai, are beautiful. Huge pillars, with various carvings, pillars, with yalis, pillars, with various chimes and compound pillars, belong to this period.

Nayak Period Sculptures

The Nayaks, who ruled Madurai, Thanjavur and Senchi, were subordinate to Vijayanagara kings. The Vijayanagara style of sculpture was well developed during their period. The sculptures in Madurai Menakshi Amman Temple, Rameswaram Temple, Tirunelveli Nellayapar Temple, Krishnapuram Perumal Temple, Thadikkombu near Dindigul, Perur Shiva Temple are the best examples of this period. Pitchadanar image, Mohini image, dancing statue of Kali and dancing statue of Lord Shiva in Meenakshi Amman Temple and Perur Temple display excellent sculptural work.

Casting Art

After man learned to take the metals from the earth, he melted them into vessels and cast the images of the deities he worshipped, with the help of a wooden mould. They were made of metals like copper, bronze, silver and gold.

Sangam Period Sculptures

The Shiva Lingams, found in the temples at Kudimallam and Kudumian Hill, are notable examples of this period.

Chola Period Sculptures

The images of Nayanmars and Alwars were made of metals and worshiped in temples. Every Shiva temple has stone and bronze idols, representing Nayanmars.

Iyanar

Iyanar worship existed during the Pallava Period. The idols of these deities are made of clay, wood, stone and metals. The idols representing the forms of Kali, are fine pieces of Sculpture.

Religious Art

Tamils worshipped the dead, snake and linga. The people of Thinaï land adopted the system of worship, according to their intellectual development and customs. They worshipped gods with the materials available in the lands. The people of Kurinchi land worshipped Muruga, the people of Mullai, Mayon, the people of Marutham, Indra, the people of Neythal, the ocean, and the people of Palai worshipped Kali.

Architecture during the Sangam Period

The phrase, “Suduman Ongiya Nedunilai Kottam” in Sangam text, established the fact that the temples of that time were made of perishable materials like clay, brick and wood.

Architecture during the Middle Age

The Pallava king, Mahendravarman, who lived in the 7th Century A.D., did not build a temple with perishable materials like clay, wood, brick etc, but built stone temples for the gods in an imperishable state. In some temples, the sanctum sanctorum, mandapam and artha mandapam were built with a locked structure, which looked like a

chariot. Temples like Thiruchchaikadu, Melaikkadampur and Thiruvathigai have this type of structure. Tiruvathigai Temple has a chariot like vimana. In Thiruppennakadam Shiva Temple, Vimana is shaped like a sleeping elephant. Some temples have a very short way to enter the artha mandam, but there is also a wide entrance on the side of the temple. These kinds of temples were built by Kochengat Cholas.

Scope of the Thesis

This research focuses on the art and architecture of the structural and cave temples in the Kongu Nadu. This research work explains both the Hindu and Jain temples in the Kongu region of Tamilnadu.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the specific objectives of the present research work:

- To trace the genesis of the temple in western districts of Tamilnadu
- To examine the style of the temple art and architecture in Kongu region
- To illustrate the social integration of temples

Hypotheses of the Study

- The evolution of temple architecture can be studied with the help of inscriptions.
- The socio-economic formation, in and around the temple, can be identified with the help of inscriptions.
- Temples in the Kongu region are examples of social integration.

Research Methodology

The method followed in the study is descriptive. It illustrates the genesis of the temple and explains the style of the temple art and architecture of Kongu region in Tamilnadu. It also describes the social integration of the temples.

Primary and Secondary Sources

This research work was based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included Gazetteer of India (Madras, Coimbatore), Gazetteer of India (Madras, Salem), District Manuals, Census of India 1961 Vol. IX (Temples of Madras State), Statistical Atlas, Inscriptions and Personal Interview. Information was also collected through direct observations of inscriptions, with the help of archaeology department, Coimbatore. By taking photos the beauty of art and architecture, especially the carvings on walls and ceiling of the structural and cave temples, were captured. Secondary sources like books, newspapers, magazines, and encyclopedias were also referred. These sources yielded data of immense value as they threw light on the topic under study.

Review of Literature

In the classic book of *A History of South India: From Prehistoric Times to the Fall of Vijayanagar*, K. A. Nilakanta Sastri offers a compact and comprehensive account of the much-neglected history of South India, which was treated as a single geographical entity, up to the middle of the Seventeenth Century. The author traces the political history, social life, commerce, religion, philosophy, literature, and arts of South India.

Temples of South India, by K. R. Srinivasan, has elaborately described the evolution of various types of temple architectures in South India. The illustrations, given in the book, present a clear picture of the various standard types prevailing in South Indian architecture and the evolution of architectural patterns, which are closely linked with our cultural development. This book provides details of Early Temples, Early Rock Architecture, Later Rock Architecture, Architectural Sculpture, Structural Stone Temples - The Early Phase, Structural Stone Temples - The Middle Phase, and Structural Stone Temples - The Later Phase.

Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu) of Percy Brown explains India's history, both architecturally and culturally, exploring its different styles of buildings and providing interesting insights into their origin and evolution.

In the Chapter on evolution of the temple, the author critically examines the architectural features of the temple such as Gopuram, Ardhamandapa, Maha-Mandapa, Garbhagriha, Vimana, Pradakshina patha and Temple Wall. The author explains the architecture of Kailasanatha Temple at Conjeveram (A.D. 700) and Vaikuntha Perumal Temple at Conjeveram (A.D. 710 – 720), in a detailed manner. Percy Brown classifies the stages of the Dravidian architecture: i. Pallava, 7th and 8th Century A.D., ii. Chola, 11th Century A.D., iii. Pandya, 13th Century A.D., iv. Vijianagar 15th Century A.D., v. Madura 18th Century A.D. He also explains early phases of the Dravidian style: Pallavas (610-900) i. Mamallapuram, A.D. 620, ii. Trichinopoly, A.D. 625, iii. Yamapuri Mandapa, Mamallapuram A.D. 625, iv. Kailasantha Temple, Conjeeveram A.D. 700. The author has examined architecture of the early Chalukyan Phase at Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal (A.D. 600 to 750), and rock architecture: The final phase (A.D. 600 to 900), of the Dravidian style also has been examined, from the Pallavas (cir. A.D. 600 to 900) and Cholas (A.D. 900 to 1150).

The Hindu Temple: An Introduction to its Meaning and Forms, by George Michell, explains the cultural, religious, and architectural significance of the temple. He illustrates his points with profusion of photographs, building plans and drawings of architectural details and Asian civilizations.

Michell's *discussion of the meaning and forms of the temple in Hindu society*, covers the awe-inspiring rock-cut temples at Ellora and Elephanta, the soaring superstructures and extraordinary sculptures at Khajuraho, and the great temple of Angkor Vat. The book deals with *The Temple: Divinity and Man, Temple and Society*,

Material of Construction, Evolution of Architectural Styles, The Concept of Vastupurashamandala, the Structural System of the Hindu temples like Trabeated System, Corbelling System and the construction technology of Hindu temple.

Vijayamangalam, by A. Murugaraj, presents the details about Kongu Nadu. Jain temples and the governments who ruled Kongu Nadu are described in detail. The fact that “Vijayamangalam” was special in the history of Kongunadu has been described through inscriptions and literary evidence.

Thamizhaga Kalaigalum Kalvettukkalum, by Dr. M. Rajamanikkanar, defines art as the energy that fills the human soul and manifests itself without restraint. According to him, types of art can be arranged and displayed as an epic, an eye-catching painting, a sculpture, a beautiful building that attracts the eye and the mind and so on.

A building requires clay, brick, lime, black stone etc. In the same way, to know the history of a country, literature, fossils, inscriptions, ancient buildings are the source materials. Hence the purpose of this book is to realize the importance of these inscriptions, which are a part of source materials to know the political history, religious history and social history of our Tamil Nadu. He examines arts, inscriptions and the level of culture during the Chera, Chola and Pandya periods in detail.

Chapterization

The Researcher has analysed the style of art and architecture of the temples of Kongu in Tamilnadu. This dissertation is spread over three Chapters, excluding Introduction and Conclusion.

- The First Chapter illustrates the genesis and enlightenment of the temple in western districts of Tamilnadu.
- The Second Chapter describes the style of Hindu and Jain temple art and architecture in the Kongu region.
- The Third Chapter explains the social integration of the temples in Tamilnadu.