

## Gajendra Vardharaja Temple and Sculptures of Dasanapura: An Overview

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### ARTICLE DETAILS

#### Article History

Published Online: 16 Feb 2020

#### Keywords

Karnataka, Chamarajnaragar, Kollegala, Dasanapur, Art, architecture, sculpture, inscriptions, Gajendra Vardharaja, Garbagruha, Navaranga, open mantapa, Adhithana, Bhatti, shikara, sculpture etc.

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### ABSTRACT

Chamarajnaragar District has culturally, historically and religiously been a famous place since ancient times. It is a Taluk Center in the District of such importance. Kollegala, being the biggest one among all the taluks, is located towards the Eastern side of Chamarajnaragar District. Kollegala is abundantly fertile as the river Cauvery flows in the outskirts of both North and east sides of it. The Arasu Dynasties, who ruled Karnataka for ages, governed the place and encouraged the promotion of education in the district.

Chamarajnaragar District has culturally, historically and religiously been a famous place since ancient times. It is a Taluk Center in the District of such importance. Kollegala, being the biggest one among all the taluks, is located towards the Eastern side of Chamarajnaragar District. Kollegala is abundantly fertile as the river Cauvery flows in the outskirts of both North and east sides of it. The Arasu Dynasties, who ruled Karnataka for ages, governed the place and encouraged the promotion of education in the district. Art, architecture, sculpture, inscriptions which were mainly a cultural and literary reflection, is shown in the temples which were built as their Vestiges of the reign. Dasanapur village is among those areas.

The village Dasanapura is situated about 4 km away from Chamarajnaragar district. The village has its own religious and cultural significance since ancient times. Economically, the Village is very prosperous as the river Cauvery flows on the north side of it. The village is religiously and economically very rich and it is where the Gajendra Vardharaja Temple is located. The temple is located on the banks of the river Cauvery in North direction. It is on the north side adjoining the edges of the Cauvery River. It is important in terms of history and culture. An inscription of AD 1359, which was found here, states that Annaban Shetty, the son of Veerupakkanna Veerashetti, has reconstituted it. Careful observation of the temples' art and architectural features makes it clear that the temple was built during the Vijayanagara empires' period.

**Garbagruha/ Sanctum:** It is a square shaped Garbhagriha with 8 feet tall and 8 width. A Bhuvaneshwari idol is been placed on the top of Garbagruha and in the center, a sculpture of Gajendra Varadaraja Swamy, which is about 4 feet is been placed on the Garuda Peeta. The sculpture is surrounded by a halo, on top of which Keerthimukha is situated and each side of the halo is decorated with the flower curls. This statue with quadrilateral can be seen with Shanka, Chakra, and Gade. On the right side of the statue, there is a sculpture of the elephant where Lord Vishnu has placed his right hand on the head it. Aalwas sculptures are also seen on both sides of the sculpture. The entrance of the sanctum is

very simple and does not have any decoration. A Gajalakshmi's mural sculpture is placed on the Lalaatabimba's of the Sanctum. On both sides of the entrance, mural sculptures of the gatekeepers can be seen. The gatekeepers have quadrilateral holding Shanka, Chakra and a Gade standing in Tribhangi pose with a crown on the head, earrings and the jewelry costumes on their ears.

**Navaranga:** This is 25 feet tall and 25 feet wide, with simple architecture. This square shaped Navaranga has 4 pillars in Brahmakanta style. They have Paada, Peeta, Danda, and Bodige respectively. Each of the Pillars has a mural sculpture on it. Adjoining to the Sanctum/ Garbagruha there is a Devakosta on the right part of the Navaranga with no idols on it. Parallel to the four pillars of Navaranga, the roofs are covered with slabs and are flatly placed without any Bhuvaneshwari images. Navaranga is an open mantapa, and we can see walls which are constructed in accordance with the pillars in later days. There are sopanas in front of the temple.

**Exterior Layout:** The temple is built in the Dravidian style and is surrounded by Adhithana, Bhatti, Kapota, and Shikharas.

**Adhithana:** The Adhithana of Temple is simple and is buried in the earth. The only part of it is visible, like a throat. At the top of the throat is a flat strip.

**Bhatti:** The temple is surrounded by pillars and Bhatti has been built according to the pillars in later days. The architecture of this Bhatti is very simple with no Devakostas, Bhattikosta or half pillars. Top of the wall has a Kapotha which is very simple and stretched half of a foot from the wall. At the top, renovated Bhatti has been recently reconstructed by brick and cement.

On the top, there are images of the Shankha and Shakti patterns. The sculpture of Hanuman is placed in its four directions.

**Shikara/ Peak:** Shikara is a Dravidian style peak consisting of three heads. It is built using bricks and cement. It

has a shaala style aeroplane with a kalasa on the Shikara. Buruju and sculpture built by cement are on both sides of the shikara.

**Sculpture:** In this temple, murals can be found on the pillars and also light pillars.

These sculptures are very important from historical point of view.

**Sculpture No. 1: Ugra Narasimha:** This sculpture is located at the foot of the Mukhamantapa's first pillar. It is 1 foot wide and 1 foot tall. It is built by using granite stones. The sculpture is seen with ten hands, holding weapons in eight hands. In the other two hands, he is seen disemboweling the stomach of Hiranyakashipu and killing the demon placing him in his lap. As it is a Vaishnava temple, sculpture of Ugra Narasimha has been carved.

**Sculpture No. 2. Naked Woman:** The sculpture is located at the foot of the ninth pillar, which is in front of the temple. It has been built by using granite stones. The sculpture depicts a woman washing her private part by using a mug of water. She is seen wearing bangles, Tholubandi and earrings. This sculpture is an evidence for the magical work of sculptor.

**Sculpture No. 3. Yoga Narasimha:** The sculpture is located on the south side of the lamp which is next to the temple. It is about 2 feet tall and 2 feet wide. Yoganarasimha is seen with four hands, wearing ornaments, Shanka in the back two hands. He holds the chakra and shanka where his front hands can be seen in Yoga mudra pose. The sculpture resembles the Lakshminarasimha sculpture of Hampi. The sculpture looks like a well-built body. From all these factors, it is proved that it is a sculpture of Yoganarasimha.

**Sculpture no. 4. Gopalakrishna:** This sculpture is located at the east of the foot of the lampstand. It is also carved out of granite stone. The sculpture is 2 feet tall and half a foot wide. Krishna is seen with 4 hands holding Shanka, Chakra in two hands and playing flute in other two hands. A cow mural is also located at the foot of him. He is also seen wearing a crown, karnakundala in ears and decorated costumes in tribhangi pose.

**Sculpture no. 4: Kalinga mardhana:** This sculpture is also found at the foot of the lampstand. It is about one and a half feet tall and half feet wide. Standing in the tribhangi pose, the sculpture is seen holding the tail of the serpent in the left hand, and killing it by placing his leg on the middle of its head. He is seen with a bun style hair, wearing bright costumes & ornaments and also leg chain and belt in his waist.

**Sculpture no. 6: Vishnu Sculpture:** This mural style sculpture with a height of 1 foot is close to the temple and placed on the Peetha. Shanka and chakra are located on both sides of the sculpture. It has been built using granite stone. The sculpture is in parallel pose with four shoulders. Vishnu is seen with 2 hands in which he holds Shanka, chakra in one hand and Gade in right hand. He has worn ornaments and leg chain in leg and tholubandi in hands. Hollow leaves are carved on both sides of the sculpture

**Upasamhara: In general,** the Gajendra Vardhara Temple is a temple mainly built to let the human world know about Vaishnavism. This temple is a result of my findings in order to promote community growth and also development in social, religious and economic point of view.

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## Photographs



Fron view of the Temple



Gajendra Vardaraja Idol



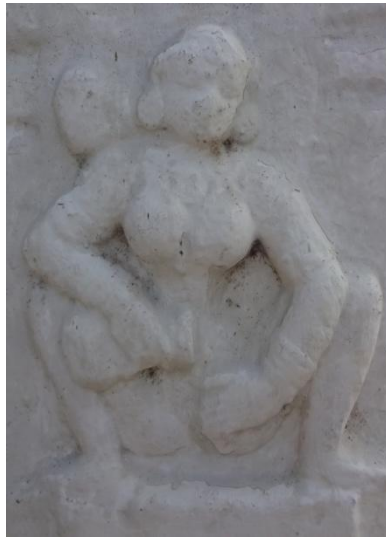
Navaranga



Pillar of Navaranga



Ugra Narasimha



Bare Women



Yoga Narasimha



Gopala Krishna



Kalingamardhana Idol



Vishnu Idol