

**Title:**

## A UN IDENTIFIED RUINED HINDU TEMPLE COMPLEX AT NANDAPURAM TIRUMALAGIRI MANDAL.

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**Abstract:**

This research article explores an unidentified ruined hindu temple complex located in nandapuram, a village in the tirumalagiri mandal of suryapet district, telangana. The temple complex, found amidst cultivated lands near the tirumalagiri-tatipamula route, includes both shaivite and vaishnavite temples, a kalyanamandapa, a pond, and a prakara wall, all of which are currently in a state of ruin and obscured by dense vegetation.

The identification of the temple's affiliation relies primarily on the dwarapala (guardian) sculptures, as there are no other distinguishing features present. Dating the complex is challenging due to the lack of epigraphical evidence; however, the architectural style suggests a vijayanagara period origin. The shikara (tower) and the pillar capitals, featuring lotus buds, are characteristic of this era, closely resembling the temples in chandragiri.

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**Key words:** Ruined Hindu temples, Vaishnava temple, Shaiva temple, Kalyanamandapa architecture, Vijayanagara temple architecture, Telangana temple ruins, Temple pond (Koneru), Pillar architecture in temples, Trikuta temple layout, Dwarapala sculptures, Prakara wall, Stucco temple sculptures, Chandragiri temple architecture, Cultural heritage preservation

# A UN IDENTIFIED RUINED HINDU TEMPLE COMPLEX AT NANDAPURAM TIRUMALAGIRI MANDAL.

## **Introduction:**

Nandapuram(17°28'34.1"N 79°24'08.4"E) is a village<sup>1</sup> located in the Tirumala Giri Mandal of Surya pet District, Telangana. Situated 6 km from Tirumala Giri and 5 km from Tati Pamula, the village is home to a ruined Hindu temple complex found amidst cultivated lands to the northwest of the village (Plate-I). This complex is situated near the tirumalagiri-tatipamula route and is currently in a state of complete ruin, with dense bushes obscuring the structures. The complex includes Shaivite and vaishnavite temples, a magnificent kalyanamandapa, a pond, and a prakara wall, To the best of our knowledge, this temple has not previously been documented.

## **Temple-1(Vaishnava Temple):**

Temple-1 is a Vaishnava temple (Plate-II, III), located at the southwest corner of the complex, north of the tatipamula-tirumalagiri road. This Trikuta temple faces east and consists of a garbhagriha and other small shrines attached to a small antarala. These smaller shrines are likely dedicated to Alwars and Utsava Murthis. The main entrance is attached to the antarala and leads to a rectangular small mandapa with six pillars.

The adhistana of this temple is completely buried, but the structure from the bhiti to the shikara portion is visible. The bhiti portion is constructed with small granite blocks, followed by a three-storied prastara plastered with stucco. The first and third stories decorated with kutas, while the second story, adorned with stucco sculptures, is significantly damaged. However, a female sculpture playing a musical instrument (drum) and frisky lion sculptures are only still visible. The circular griva, adorned with stucco mithuna sculptures on four sides, supports the shikara, which is circular and plastered with lime. The kalasa, once in fine condition, has collapsed.

## **Temple-2(Shiva temple):**

Temple-2 (Plate-V), dedicated to the shiva cult, is located north of the Vaishnava temple. Although it shares a similar layout with temple-1, this temple lacks a shikara and a rectangular entrance porch, both of which have collapsed, leaving only the bhiti portion intact.

**Kalyanamandapa:**

The Kalyanamandapa (Plate- VI,), situated east of the Vaishnava temple, is divided into upper and lower levels under a common roof. The upper level, used for temple rituals, is constructed with 12 pillars, while the lower level, meant for devotees, is built with 24 pillars. The lower pillars are in good condition, but the upper level's right-side pillars are completely destroyed, likely due to treasure hunters. The north side wall of the upper level remains intact, suggesting the structure served as a pillared auditorium.

**Temple pond (koneru):**

A small rectangular pond(koneru) is located in the northeast corner of the temple complex, with damaged steps partially visible on the south side of the pond.

**Koneti mandapa:**

Situated west of the pond and northeast of the shiva temple, the koneti mandapa is a small structure with a simple adhistana and four pillars supporting a plain roof.

**Small doorway:**

A small, west-entranced doorway (Plate-VII) is constructed between the pond and the Kalyanamandapa. This doorway is completely damaged.

**Pillars:**

The pillars (Plate-VIII) are the only completely surviving elements of the ruined Nandapuram temple complex. These pillars can be found in the porch of the Vaishnavite temple, the Kalyanamandapa, and the Koneti Mandapa. All the pillars share similar features and are structured in three distinct parts: the base, the shaft, and the capital.

In this temple complex, the pillars follow a specific architectural pattern. The base is octagonal and pot-shaped, leading up to an octagonal shaft. Above the shaft is the ghata, which is followed by the mandi attached to the phalaka. The final part of the capital is the Uttara (beam). A notable feature of these pillars is the massive lotus bud. Typically, lotus buds are attached to the podhikas (capitals), and the beam is installed above them. However, in these temple pillars, the massive lotus bud is directly attached to the beam. The lotus buds are presented on the outer side, adding a distinctive characteristic to the temple's architectural style.

### **Identification and dating of the temple:**

The identification of the temple as either shiva or vaishnava relies solely on the dwarapala (guardian) sculptures found at the site. Apart from these sculptures, there are no other distinguishing features to help identify the temple's affiliation.

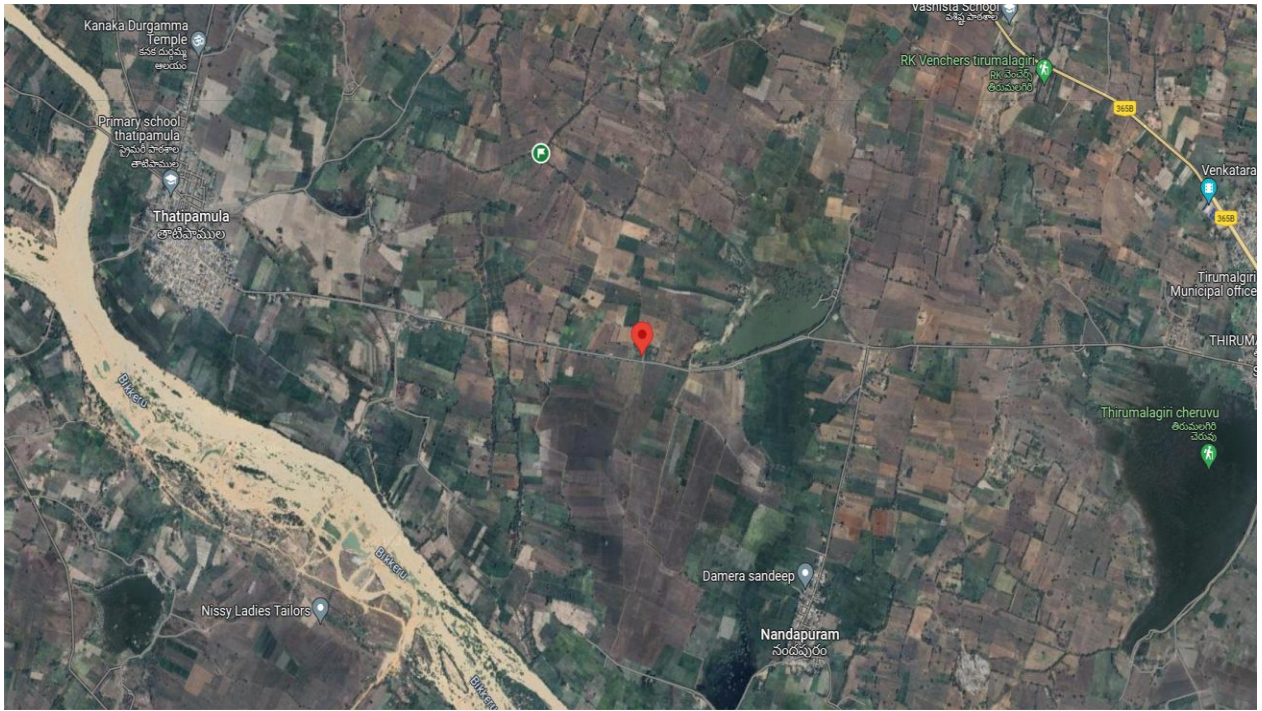
Dating this temple complex is challenging due to the lack of epigraphical evidence. However, based on architectural style, it is likely that this temple dates back to the vijayanagara period. The shikara (tower) of the temple closely resembles those found in the temples of Chandragiri<sup>ii</sup>, particularly the griva (neck) part, which is almost identical to that of Chandragiri temples. Additionally, the style of the pillars in the Nandapuram temple complex is noteworthy. The pillar capitals feature lotus buds, a characteristic element of Vijayanagara temple architecture<sup>iii</sup>.

### **Conclusion:**

The ruined Hindu temple complex at Nandapuram is a significant monument that offers insights into the religious architecture and cultural heritage of the region. Despite its dilapidated condition, the remnants of the Vaishnava and Shiva temples, the kalyanamandapa, and other structures provide valuable information for art historians and archaeologists. Urgent preservation and restoration efforts are needed to protect this historical site from further deterioration.

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(Plate-I) Location Of The Temple Complex



(Plate-II) East view of the Vaishnava Temple



(Plate-IV) West view of the Vaishnava Temple



(Plate-V) East view of the Shiva Temple



(Plate-VI) North view of the Kalyana Mandapa



(PLATE-VII) Small Door Way at the Temple Complex



(Plate- VIII) Pillars at the Kalyana Mandapa

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<sup>i</sup> Census of India people orientation, ANDHRA PRADESH,2001, CENSUS OF INDIA 2001- Nalgonda, P.227, Director of Census Operations.

<sup>ii</sup> Kameswara Rao. V, 1976, Select vijayanagara temples of Rayalaseema, P.34,37, The Government of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad.

<sup>iii</sup> Gupta. S.P, Vijayakumar. S, 2010, Temples in India (Origin and Developmental Stages), P.187, Centre for Research and Training in History, Archaeology, and Palaeo-Environment, New Delhi