

# Art and Architecture of Kakatiyas Period: A Case Study of Mupparam Mukhyanatha Temple

**Dr. Kolipaka Srinivas**

Associate Professor of History, Pingle Government College for Women (Autonomous), Waddepally, Hanumakonda, 506370

## **Abstract:**

The rise of the Kakatiya dynasty marked a significant phase in the architectural and socio-cultural development of medieval Andhradesa. Kakatiya temples functioned not only as places of worship but also as centers of education, art, and community life. The concept of Saptasantanas highlights the religious merit associated with temple construction. A notable feature of Kakatiya administration was the “Three T’s” policy—Tank, Temple, and Town—which promoted sustainable settlement patterns and economic growth. Architecturally, these temples reflect a synthesis of indigenous innovation and influences from the Western Chalukyas, characterized by structural elegance and technical advancements such as sand cushion foundations and cavity walls. The Mupparam Mukhyanatha Temple, built under Ganapati Deva, exemplifies the Trikotalayam style and stands as an important source for understanding Kakatiya art, architecture, and cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Kakatiya Architecture; Temple Culture; Trikotalayam; Three T’s Policy; Medieval Deccan

## **Introduction:**

The advent of the Kakatiyas into the political scene of medieval Andhradesa witnessed a spurt in temple building activity. The widespread galaxy of the Kakatiya monuments throughout their kingdom provides us an opportunity for the study of the Kakatiya style of Art and Architecture. Temple became a symbolic representation of various socio-cultural activities in medieval history of Deccan. Temple was an institute by itself not only sacred but also a nucleus of the entire community in all its cultural and spiritual aspects. The act of installation of temples in those days was considered as one of the Seven acts of righteousness known as Saptasantanas, namely one's own son, adopted son, literary work, an agrahara, a garden, a tank and a temple.

The Kakatiyas especially gave importance to three “T’s”, i.e., Tank, Temple and Town policy. They constructed a tank wherever they found out the undercurrent of water vein and built a temple there and developed township around it with all amenities to attract the people to come and settle in such townships. As a result of it, many temples can be seen constructed very near to the tanks during the Kakatiya period.

The temples built by the **Kakatiya dynasty** are not just stone structures; they are living stories of devotion, artistry, and community. Each temple reflects the heart of a civilization that believed deeply in the union of the divine and the earthly. Constructed between the 12th and 14th centuries, these temples stand as timeless testaments to the Kakatiyas' vision of a harmonious and spiritually rich society.

These temples were more than places of worship. They were hubs of life—where people gathered to celebrate festivals, learn music and dance, and find solace in faith. The intricate carvings on the walls tell tales of gods and goddesses, of mythical creatures, and of the artisans' unmatched skills.

### General features of Kakatiya Architecture

Temple being the meeting place in those days, its architecture gained considerable prominence and importance. These temples were not only places of worship but also centers of education, dormitories, hospitals and embodiment of fine arts and culture. Hence huge temple complexes were built with a multitude of small temples, mandapas and huge pillared halls. In the construction of temples, the Kakatiya architects adopted wonderful technologies like sand cushions, cavity walls and light porous bricks.

Kakatiyas were ardent lovers of art and pioneers in the field of architecture. As the feudatories of the western Chalukyas in the early political career, they continued the architectural tradition of the Chalukyas<sup>4</sup> to some extent but added indigenous character to it. The architecture of Chalukyas itself was a blend of northern and southern art of India. The Kakatiyas simplified it by avoiding clustered decoration and made it look more vigorous and graceful. The Kakatiya kings and nobles had constructed several magnificent temples. They are found at Warangal, Palampet, Ghanpur, Kondaparti, Katakshapur, Nekkonda, Ainavolu, Jakkaram etc., in Warangal district. These temples serve as treasures of sculpture to know more about the socio-economic, cultural and religious conditions of the Kakatiya period. In this chapter an attempt is made to study the architecture of Kakatiya temples in Warangal district, where we can see the sculptural wealth of the period also.

The principal units of the ground plan of the Kakatiya temples in Warangal district are **garbhagrha**, **antarala**, **mukamandapa** or hall and **sabha or ardhamandapa** or porch.

### Mupparam Mukhyanatha Temple (Thrikutalayam):

Mupparam has a rich history, dating back to the Kakatiya dynasty. The village was an important center of trade and commerce during the Kakatiya period, and it was known for its beautiful temples and architectural monuments. The village was also a significant cultural center, with many scholars and poets residing there. This village is 10 kms away from the district headquarters Hanumakonda and 15 kms from the Kakatiya Dynasty capital Warangal.

The sculptures and ruins of the Shiva Temple of Kakatiya period are evidences to say that Mukhyanatha Temple (Mupparam) was once an important Temple. There is a Shivalayam with Thrikutalayam in this village where Lord Shiva, Lord Vasudeva and Lord Suryadeva. Now we can see only Lord shiva. Remaining Two idols were destroyed by the unknown Persons. Lord Kalabhairava and Subramanya Swamy idol were inside the Temple. Mupparam Temple (Sri Mukyanatha Swamy) is one of them and it was built by Kakatiya King Ganapathi Deva in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Mupparam Temple, dedicated to Sri Mukyanatha Swamy, is a significant example of Kakatiya architecture, built in the 12th century AD by King Ganapathi Deva. Located in Mupparam village, Hanumakonda District, Telangana, this temple exemplifies the unique style and craftsmanship of the Kakatiya dynasty. This study aims to explore the architectural features, cultural significance, and current challenges facing the preservation of the Mupparam Temple, thereby contributing to the broader understanding of Kakatiya heritage. The temple follows a typical Kakatiya plan, with a rectangular

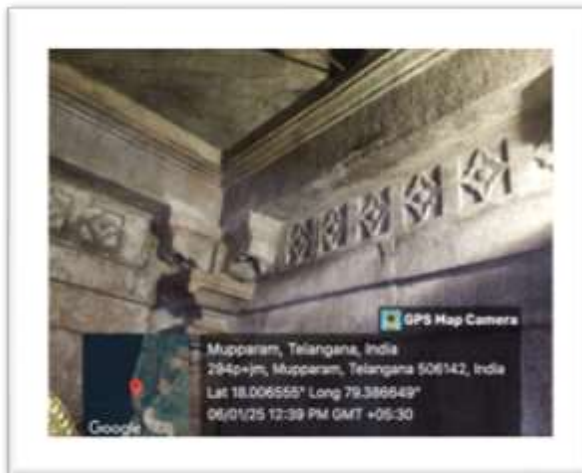
layout and a central shrine. The temple's tower is adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures. The temple's mandapa (hall) features ornate pillars and a beautifully carved ceiling.

### Sculptural Features of Mupparam Temple:

**Shiva Linga:** The temple's central shrine houses a beautifully crafted Shiva Linga.



**Carvings and Sculptures:** The temple's walls, pillars, and ceilings feature intricate carvings and sculptures.



**Paintings and Murals:** The temple's walls and ceilings feature beautiful paintings and murals, depicting scenes from Hindu mythology and everyday life.



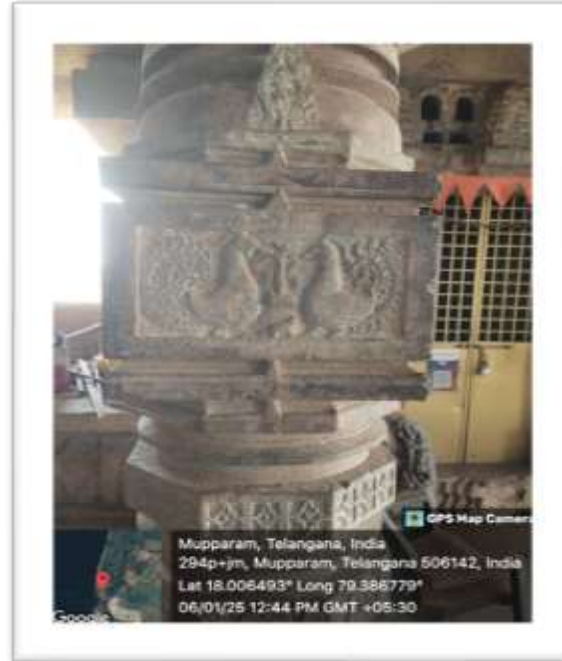
Many Kakatiya temples have a unique star-shaped design, symbolizing cosmic balance and adding to their aesthetic appeal. There is a place called Mukyanathalayam on the bank of Mupparam Tank which is a ruined temple built entirely of stone. The pillars are carved with delicate designs, from floral patterns to mythical creatures, showcasing the artisans' unmatched skill. The towering spires over the sanctum are adorned with intricate sculptures that seem to reach toward the heavens.

**Architectural Analysis:** The Mupparam Temple follows a typical Kakatiya layout, with a rectangular plan and a central shrine dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple's tower, or vimana, is adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures. The mandapa (hall) features ornate pillars and a carved ceiling, illustrating the architectural sophistication of the period. The temple's sanctum houses a beautifully crafted Shiva Linga, central to the worship practices of the temple.



**Sculptural Features:** The temple's walls, pillars, and ceilings display detailed carvings and sculptures depicting various deities and mythological scenes. Additionally, the temple showcases murals and paintings, which enhance its artistic value. Notably, the presence of idols of Lord Vasudeva and Lord Suryadeva, alongside Shiva, indicates the temple's religious and cultural diversity.

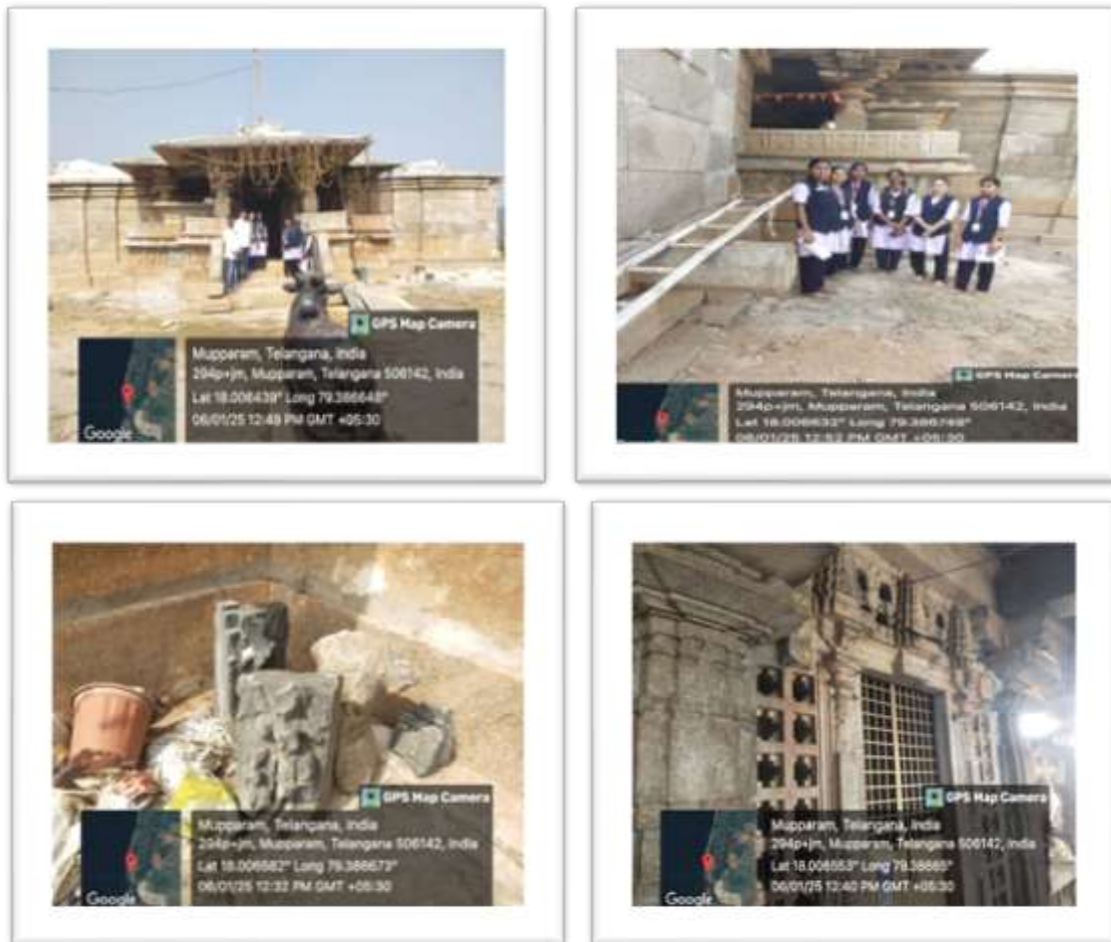




**Cultural and Historical Context:** Mupparam village was a vital trade and cultural hub during the Kakatiya period, with the temple serving as a center for religious and social activities. The inscriptions and ruins provide evidence of the village’s historical importance and its role in the region's cultural landscape. The temple's association with scholars and poets further underscores its significance as a cultural center.



**Challenges and Preservation Efforts:** The Mupparam Temple faces threats from granite mining and other modern developments, which risk damaging the site and its sculptures. Awareness campaigns and preservation initiatives, such as “Mana Ooru Mana Charitra,” are essential to safeguard this heritage. These efforts aim to engage the local community in the conservation of their historical sites.



## Findings & Analysis:

The Kakatiya temple in Mupparam is a beautiful and historic temple located in the village of Mupparam, in the Dharmasagar Mandal of Hanumakonda district, Telangana, India. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and is a fine example of Kakatiya architecture. The sculptures and ruins of the Mukhyanatha Swamy (Lord Shiva) settlement of Kakatiya period such as Lord Shiva, Shiva sculpture, Shiva sculptures on the Pillars of the temple, etc., were found. We also found Kalabhairava, Subramanya Swamy idols in inside the Temple. When we observed near the Mupparam Tank in the village, temple pillars and some idols were found beside the Temple.

## Suggestions:

Preserving historical monuments like the Kakatiya temple in Mupparam requires a united effort from the community, government, and heritage organizations. Awareness among the public is essential. Organizing awareness campaigns, cultural programs, and exhibitions can educate people about the importance of protecting our heritage. Schools and colleges should form heritage clubs and involve students in activities like field visits and history projects to build interest and responsibility in young minds.

Government action is crucial. Authorities must implement strict policies, allocate funds, and set up regional archaeological departments. Scientific methods like chemical treatments and structural repairs should be used to conserve damaged monuments. Proper training of conservation staff is also important.

A strong legal framework is needed to prevent encroachments and destruction due to activities like granite mining. Laws protecting monuments must be strictly enforced with proper penalties.

On an international level, countries should nominate significant sites to UNESCO's World Heritage List. This not only brings global recognition but also encourages international support for conservation.

The Kakatiya temple in Muppam, protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), is currently under restoration. However, continued support from all sectors is vital to ensure its preservation for future generations to appreciate and learn from.

## Conclusion

The study of the Muppam Temple significantly contributes to our understanding of Kakatiya architecture and its regional adaptations. By documenting and analyzing the temple's features, this research underscores the importance of preserving such historical monuments, ensuring the legacy of the Kakatiya dynasty endures for future generations.

It is evident that the Mukhyanatha Temple is one of the most important religious and cultural landmarks from the Kakatiya period. Although constructed during the reign of King Ganapathideva, the temple played a vital role in the spiritual and cultural life of Muppam village. Among the many temples in the region, Muppam stands out as a flourishing center of Shaivism. The village contains numerous sculptures scattered near the Iron Hills and surrounding agricultural lands, suggesting the potential for uncovering further historical treasures through archaeological exploration.

Evidence indicates that Muppam was once a significant center for both trade and Shaivite worship. However, the cultural heritage of this region is under threat, particularly due to granite mining, which has already caused damage to the Mukhyanatha Swamy idol. Preserving these invaluable Kakatiya sites and sculptures is essential. Even small efforts on our part can lead to substantial changes, allowing people from the past, present, and future to take pride in India's rich cultural history.

Overall, the Kakatiya temple in Muppam is a beautiful and historically significant site that should be preserved and promoted as a destination for those interested in history, architecture, and culture. The temples in Muppam village are not only remarkable examples of Kakatiya artistry but also vital cultural assets. Their conservation requires a collaborative effort between the government, heritage organizations, and the local community. Through such collective action, we can ensure the long-term protection of these priceless monuments.

## References:

1. Chakravarti, P.C. : Art of Warfare in Ancient India Delhi, 1941
2. Date, G.T : Art of War in Ancient India, London, 1929
3. Hymavathi. P. : KakatiyaVaibhavaToranalu, Warangal , 2005
4. Iswaradutt, K.: Historical Geography of Andhradesa, Hyd. 1962
5. Krishna Sastry, V.V: Proto and Early Historical Cultures of A.P. Hyderabad, 1983
6. Nilakanthasastry K.A. : Foreign Notices of South India, Madras, 1932
7. Pant, G. N.: Studies in India Weapons and Warfare, Army Educational Stores, N. Delhi, 1975
8. Pratapa Reddy, S : Andhrula Sanghika Caritra, Hyd, 1950
9. Ramanaiah, J: History and Culture of Karimnagar District (A.P) Jagityal 2008
10. Laxmiranjanam, K : Andhrula Caritra-Samsriti, Hyderabad
11. Mahalingam, T.V : Mackenzie Manuscripts, Summaries, Madras, 1976

12. Nagabhushana Rao : Ed. Cultural Heritage of the Kakatiyas, Warangal, 1993
13. Narayana Rao, V. : A Lover's Guide to Warangal, Permanent Black, 2002
14. Oppert Gustav : On the Weapons, Army, Organization and Political Maxims of the ancient Hindus, Higginbothams & Co., London, 1880
15. Sarkar, J.N. : The Art of War in Medieval India, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, Delhi, 1984
16. Sastry, P.V.P. : The kakatiyas, Hyderabad, 1978
17. Satyanarayana. K. : The Study of the History and Culture of the Andhras, Delhi, 1975
18. Ramanaiah, J : History and Culture of Karimnagar District (A.P) Jagityal, 2008
19. P. R. Ramachandra Rao : "Kakatiya Architecture"
20. Sarkar (2015) : "Kakatiya Architecture: A Study of the Temples of Warangal"