

## LAYOUT AND CONSTRUCTION OF ARULMIGU KAYANIRMALESWARAR SWAMY TEMPLE, ATTUR, SALEM

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### **Abstract**

*In sangam literature the temple were variously known as koil, nagaram kottam and ill. After the sangam period the temples formed an important landmark in the monumental history of Tamil Nadu. Therefore temple study is essentially a vehicle of religion built for the fulfillment of the spiritual desires of the people. Primarily the temple was a centre of worship. Religious faith and practices give new dimension of way to life. The present study made by the contribution of religion to the development of temple with special reference to layout and construction of Arulmigu Kayanirmaleswarar Swamy Temple, Attur, salem.*

**Keywords:** Temple-Lord Shiva- Architecture- Layout- Construction-Kayanirmaleswarar- Attur- Salem

### **Introduction**

The basic purpose of Hindu temple is to give shelter for a deity and to facilitate its worship by its devotees<sup>1</sup>. The style and Architecture of a Hindu temple is a symbol of Hindu. The Hindu temple is laid out on an east-west alignment; the temple entrance is on the eastern side and the sanctuary is on the western side. The entire temple complex is placed on a high plinth or platform to symbolize its significance. Vaikanasagamas and the silapashastras stipulate the rules for the selection of the site and construction of the temple buildings. Most of the temple adhere to this rule.<sup>2</sup> The Indian temple architecture also seems to be based on the concept of main shrine as being composed of multiple images of small shrines normally leading up to the building us of towering the super structure. <sup>3</sup>

The chief temple structures (moving from east to west) include:

- Ardha-mandapa. This is a largely open entrance vestibule, entered by passing under a gopuram (arched gateway), symbolic of the passage from the world of the profane to the sacred<sup>4</sup>. Temple-goers ascend stairs, pass under the gopuram to the level of the ardha-man- dapa, and then proceed into the mandapa.
- Mandapa. The mandapa is positioned directly between the entrance vestibule and the garb- ha griha; it is a columned or hypostyle hall, in which devotees assemble (to view the deity in the garbha griha) and ritual dances are performed.<sup>5</sup> Some more advanced temples will have a second mandapa – called the maha mandapa – that is located in between the external mandapa and the garbha griha<sup>6</sup>.
- Garbha griha. The square-shaped garbha griha holds the core sanctuary, cella, or Holy of Holies where the resident deity resides. The vimana, the main tower of the temple, sits directly above the garbha griha<sup>7</sup>.

### Description of Layout and Construction of this Temple

The main entrance faced on east. Two iron pillars present on each side of the entrance. The dvajastamba (In tamil' Kodi maram) was present next to main entrance. Left side of the main entrance Lord of Sun was present. A medium size of Nandhi occurs next to dvajastamba. In front of Nandhi a small Mandapa was present. In this mandaba a vallampuri vinayagar on left side as well as Amman shrine on right side is there. Two Dhuvapalagar sculptures are designed on either side of mandaba entrance.

Next to small mandaba a main mandaba was there. In this mandaba 10 pillars were there. In right side of the main mandaba Natarajar shrine was there. The entrance opposite to Natarajar shrine is the way of outer piragaram. Maga Ganapathy sculpture was present in main mandaba. Sri Balasubramaniam shrine was noted on the left side of the mandaba. At the same time four shrines (Appar, Tirunavkuarasar, Sundarar and Manikavasagar) were shown near to the left side wall of main mandaba.

A sanctum attached to the main mandaba where a main deity Lord Kayanirmaleswarar is there. Two karudalvars were present in the entrance of the sanctum. A small nandhi was present in the main mandaba which also shown opposite to main deity Lord Kayanirmaleswarar.

Newly constructed outer piragaram having very long hall. In this outer piragara 63 nayanmars were present on the left side walls. Sri Ayyappan temple also present in the piragaram. A small well contains holy water was also present. Totally 3 temple cars were there. Right side of the outer piragaram shows Lord Dhakchinamoorthi shrine next to Lord Kumara Subramaiam shrine.

A separate Sri Akilandeswari Amman temple was present in the outer piragaram which was as usual seen in southern Siva temples. The main entrance of the Amman temple had two Lordess which are shown on either side of the entrance.

A number of sculptures such as Sri Brama, Sri Durga and Dhakchinamoorthi were also present on the outer wall of the main temple. A small temple of Lord Sambugeswarar was present opposite to the Amman temple.

Navagiragam sculptures also shown in as usual way. i.e on the left side of the main entrance. Next to Navagiragam a small temple of kalabhiravar was there.

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