Lord Ganesha in Temples of Bhubaneswar

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Abstract

Pursuits of all men are directed towards achieving their goal. But very often people find that in spite of the best efforts, they do not achieve their goals. It is then their minds turn towards God. But in the path of devotion, the devotee's mind is changed to and engaged in the pleasure pursuit of the fascinating world. So, it is essential to wean away his mind from all its continuous engagements. Since our mind cannot conceive the truth, the contemplative sages have given us a number of symbolic representations of that higher being in form of deities. And thus, gave rise to different religion that is formed expression of collective experience. They take definite shape in the most highly developed and the most sensitive minds which capable of taking part in super individual life of humanity. India, which the anthropologists believe to be the strains of the Austric and proto Australoid race bringing in new culture, that came in contact with other pre-existing culture that form a synthesized culture that was essentially local. This culture became most pronounce in India gave rise to different religion which lasted long at different time period as the dynasties that ruled the area were all long lived and strongly maintained the integrity of this geographical unity. Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism, Shaktisim, Vaisnavism etc and other religious cults with their belief, iconography, cultural traditions made its impact on the land from the very beginning and spread all over the country. And, Odisha otherwise known as Utkala, Odra etc was no less profoundly influenced by all these religions and contributed the finest cultural heritage in field of art and architecture. With the growth and development of Brahmanical religion in Orissa, number of temples grew throughout the land. Odisha has rich heritage in the form of beautiful temples which are notable alike for their wealth of architectural

excellent workmanship of their carving. In my proposed study, an attempt has been made to trace the development of Odissan architecture, with special reference to Lord Ganesh as seen in the iconography in temples of Bhubaneswar. My subject will also try to context the various manifestation of the origin of Lord Ganesha with its mythological stories as mentioned in four maha puranas. And a modest attempt has been made to highlight the religious importance of Ganesha cult that prevailed beyond Bhubaneswar in a place where Vaishnavism has metamorphosed into the state.

Key Words: synthesized culture, excellent workmanship, iconography.

Introduction

Hemmed at west by the thick clad of jungle and mountainous ranges and by sea at the east, the eastern part of India forms an ideal ground for a unique history. The original inhabitants of this area which the anthropologists believe to be the strains of Austric and proto Austroid races, came in contact with the pre-existing races that formed a synthesized culture that was essentially local. This culture became most pronounce in India giving rise to different religion which lasted long at different time period as the dynasties that ruled the area where all long lived and strongly maintained the integrity of this geographical unity. Buddhism, Jainism, Saivaism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism etc. and religious cults with their belief, iconography and cultural traditions made its impact on this land. This area is known as Utkala or Odisha. Odisha profoundly influenced by all these religions had contributed the finest cultural heritage in field of art and architecture.

Although the pre-historic stone implements and copper celts that was discovered in different places of Odisha, the historic phase of Odishan art begins with Ashoka's conquest on this land in 3rd century B.C. Eminent archaeologist Dr. K.C. Panigrahi has rightly observed that the "Odishan art and architecture is co-eval with her dated history, which started from 261 B.C i.e. when Ashoka conquered this country, then known as Kalinga. Not only that, this Kalinga war formed a turning point, and it was difficult to determine as to how much of Odishan's culture if she had any at that period survived after this Great War, but it is definite that Ashoka's occupation of Odisha gave a start to Odishan art and culture" (Pradhan,1996:5-6)

After the Ashokan age the architectural specimens which survived witnessed a simultaneous growth of Mahayana Budhism and Saivaism, though Buddhist architecture probably did not develop beyond 9th century A.D. Unhampered by the foreign rule, Odisha is fortunate enough to retain her artistic remains of different phases of history in a continuous

development till 3rd quarter of 16th century A.D. resulting in the emergence of an independent school of temple architecture. However, the temple architecture in India had its humble beginning right from the Aryan period that blossomed during the Gupta period.

The Indian architecture generally falls into two styles-Dravida and Nagara. The Dravida style developed in South India and the Nagara style in North India. In the Dravidian style the Sikhara (i.e Spire) of the temple is marked by a succession of gradually receding storeys. The Nagara style of temple architecture is characterized by curvilinear Sikharas. The Odishan temple architecture appears to have been a product of the Nagara style of temple architecture. But it has also some distinctive characteristics of its own. Some scholars, therefore, hold that an independent style of view is supported by the fact that the Amriteswar temple inscription (situated at Holal in the Bellary district of Tamilnadu) mentions Kalinga style as one of the four styles of temple architecture, the other being Nagara, Dravida and Besara style. Pratistha Lakhsyanasara samu chaya by Vaivochana a silpa text of 11/12th century A.D. mentioned Kalinga temple as of rekha order. Other text like Bhubana Pradipa, Silpa Prkasha, Silpa Ratkakosha etc. deals with exclusively of Kalinga style.

Like the Nagara temples of North India, the Odishan temples have curvilinear Sikharas (spires). But in the North Indian temples, the main Sikhara is supported by a number of miniature Sikharas, whereas in Odishan temples the main Sikhara which rises in a vertical manner rest on its own strength. In North Indian temples the miniature Sikharas support, dominate and adorn the main Sikhara. But in case of Odishan temples, the miniature Sikhara which form parts of the wall of the temple decorate but do not dominate the main Sikhara. In case of the North Indian temples, the superstructures of the frontal hall (Mandap) "prepare and defer the climax of the spire, surmounting the sanctum (main temple)", but in the Odishan temples the frontal hall (jagamohan) is subordinate to the main temple.

These temples were constructed as per the direction contend in the sastras. The Silpa text in the Odisha mentions three types of temples i.e., Rekha deul, Pidha deul, Kakhra deul. The outstanting feature of the Rekha temples is a curvilininear spire (or a super structure). The Pidha temple which is characterized by curvilinear tower known as the Jagamohana or the front porch (mukhasala) is actually the frontal hall of the Rekha temple i.e., main temple. Jagamohana is also called as vadra deul where the devotee assembled. In a pidha deul, the roof of which is made of pidha or horizontal stages. Built on a common platform both the structures are square internally. It is surmounted by a pyramidal roof of receding steps.

In earlier phase, there was no pidha deul or the Jagamohana or the frontal hall had a flat roof. In course of time to meet the growing need of ritual two more structures are added namely natyamandapa (dancing hall) and bhoga mandapa (offering hall) during Ganga period i.e.,

around 12th century A.D. All the four components are arranged in one axial alignment and often the temple complex is enclosed by the boundary wall (Pradhan,1996:147).

Khakhara temples are exceptions. The khakra order is noted by a semi cylindrical baulted roof that looks like an inverted boat or pumpkin gourd. The temples of this order are usually meant for shakti worship. In general, most of the temples are of Rekha type.

A Rekha temple has three major portions-bada (perpendicular wall), gandi (curvilinear spire) and the mastaka (apex or head). The bada consists of three parts- pabhaga, jangha and baranda. The horizontal mouldings at the base of the temple are called pabhaga. The vertical wall between pabhaga and baranda is called jangha. The upper set of mouldings in the bada which separate the bada from the gandi is called baranda. The wall of the bada has some vertical projections, called ratha. The badas of the earlier temples were trirathas (i.e., having three vertical projections) and those of the later temples were pancharathas or sapatarathas (i.e., having five or seven vertical projection).

The gandi of a Rekha temple is curvilinear and that of a jagamohan is pyramidal. The gandi of a Rekha temple like bada, also has vertical projections which are called pagas. The pagas, five in number on each side, have a central paga which is called raha paga. The pagas in the corner are known as Kanikka pagas. The pagas end with bisama (the topmost course of the gandi) in a gradual convex curve.

The Mastaka or head of the temple has five parts- beki (cylindrical neck above bisama), amalak (ribbed disc), Khapuri (skull), akasalinga or Sivalinga, ayudha (sacred weapon).

The earliest temples of Odisha which belong to the Gupta period do not bear the above typical characteristics of the Kalinga school of temple architecture. The remnants of temples, belonging to this period, have been found in Jajpur of the cuttack district and the Mahendra mountain of the Ganjam district. The small temple of Bhima, existing on the Mahendra mountain belongs to the early Gupta period. This temple has a flat roof.

Odishan temples constructed a sub style of Nagara style of north Indian temple. These temples style was in full vigor in the wake of vast religious and cultural resurgence that took place when Sailodbhavas ruled from middle of 6th century A.D. till the 1st quarter of 8th century A.D. The temple building activities gained momentum under the Bhaumakaras (736 to 950 AD) and Somavamsis (950 to 1112 AD) and reached the climax during the Ganga period (1112 to 1435 AD). These activities however continued under the Suryavansis Gajapati (1435 to 1542 AD) though on a very small, improvised scale (Pradhan,1996:147).

The building activities of Kalingan style that continued from 6th century till 16th century AD in an unbroken line made Odisha rich in cultural heritage in the form of beautiful temples which are notable alike for their wealth of architectural and sculptural motives and excellent workmanship of carving. And Bhubaneswar the ancient Shaiva kshetra served as an experimental ground of these temple building activities.

With the emergence of typical Kalingan style of temple architecture in the 7th century AD, the Odishan sculpture got a vast and new field for experiment in iconography. The figures of gods (such as parsva-devatas), demi god (such as Gandharva and yaksha), decorative female figure (Alasa-Kanyas), erotic sculpture,flora, fauna and geometry design decorated in the body of the temple beside the main deity. The acolyte or subordinate deity (pasva-devatas) occupies the niches of the temples and Bhubaneswar being filled with saiva temples are occupied with parsha-devatas like Ganesha in the southern niches, Kartikeya in the east or in west niches and Devi on the northern niches.

Iconography is a concrete science, and it helps us to determine the identity of a particular deity with their symbolic representation. Symbol is the shortest form for a whole set of ideas and feeling. Each deity in the Hindu temple is represented with their symbol that bestow life lesson and evolved in the spirituality and positive progression for a normal human being.

Lord Ganesha who is one of the enigmatic deities in the hindu pantheon, perhaps the most popular deity among all deities, known by various names such as Vinayaka, Vigneswara, Gajanana, Vakra tunda and many more is rich in symbolism and used as a spiritual guide to all human being. Each symbol associated with the elephant headed lord is a reminder to manifest the powers held within us. A Ganesha statue can be of many postures i.e., seated, standing or dancing forms holding various symbolic object. His elephant head symbolizes calmness, majesty, wisdom and strength. His grotesque body is a symbol of illusion and duality. His small eyes denote of concentration. His large ears and broken tusk denote supernatural auditory powers and skill in action respectively. While his large belly symbolizes completeness, contentment and fulfillment. His curve of the trunk significance special meaning like: - if the trunk turns left, it signifies blessing of wealth, success and pleasure and if it is right, it represents Moksha (take the path achieving bliss), his cracked tusk held in the right-hand states strength and demonstrate that we must finish what we start. The rosary in his hand suggests that the pursuit of knowledge should be continuous. The most popular symbol is bowl full of sweets or Modaka patra which symbolizes reward of Sadhana. His rope is to pull you nearer to the highest goal while his axe symbolizes of cutting of all bonds of attachment. Finally, his vahana or vehicle who is a mouse and is always in his control symbolizes that he is the controller of one's desire.

With the rise of brahaminical religion in Odisha, saivaism gained momentum so also Ganesha worshiped though not the principal deity but as a subordinate deity (parsha-devata). Ganesha is probably a non-Aryan deity worshipped by the ancient tribes in India. During the vedic period the four vedas do not mentioned the worship of Ganesha. Most probably Ganesha was introduced to the brahminical pantheon in the later period. The story of manifestation of Lord Ganesha appear in four mahapuranas i.e., Linga, Padma, shiva, Brahmaviabarta purana. There are several stories of origin of Ganesha mentioned in this puranas that are acceptable to his devotees because of the truth that under lies each narration. The stories of Vinayaka or Ganesha from various puranas are as follows: -

Linga Purana: -

All Gods were very desperate in heaven. The problem was that whatever good work they wanted to do were constantly met with obstacles from all sides but whatever unholy acts the demons performed were always met with success. To get out of such situation all Gods gathered together and invoked the almighty Shiva. On behalf of the Devatas, Brihaspati their preceptor (Chinmayananda,2018:12) spoke to the lord: "O Merciful One!" Thou art so kind and great that thou bestowed all the boons which the Asuras (demons) ask for, and the devas are put to great trouble by the sinful acts of their evil-minded cousins, the demons. So, we entreat thee to be merciful to us and create obstacles in all the evil schemes of the demons. The lord said: 'Be it so!' and glanced at his divine consort, Uma and manifested a divine child whose face was of an elephant, holding a trident in one hand and a rope in the other. As soon as the divine child manifested, the hearts of the Devas were filled with joy and serenity, and they prostrated at his feet. Shiva then taking the child on his lap, embraced him and said: "you have incarnated to fulfill the desires of devas and to bring destruction to the evil-minded devils. Wherever you find that organisers of collective endeavor (yagnas) do not properly reward the performers, please see to it that their efforts do not bear any fruit. Those who wish to propitiate me or my all-powerful aspects like Vishnu, Brahma or Indra to get their desires fulfilled shall have first invoke your grace by offering worship to you the very beginning. Those who worship other gods without first invoking your blessings, will meet with failure in their efforts". Thus, this divine child 'Bala Ganapathy' thereafter created the "Vighna Ganas" and together with them prostrated at the feet of the lord and took His position by the side of the father.

Padma Purana: -

Goddess Parvati and Lord Shiva after their marriage spent their days together. Parvati's deep devotion for Shiva was reciprocated by the Lord's deep attachment for His Divine consort.

One day while absorbed ecstatic bliss mother Parvati anointed Her body with fragrant oil and powder and with the perspiration that came off her body, she created a male form with an elephant's head. She took this creation of hers and playfully lowered it into the water of the celestial river Ganga, the second Divine consort of Lord Shiva. The moment it was immersed the

form became alive and grew into a big and powerful being, extremely handsome and resplendent with spiritual glory.

Then mother Parvati addressed him as "My Son!", Ganga also called the newborn as her son. The Gods and Rishis paid their obeisance to the elephant faced deity and addressed Him as "Gangeya" the son of Ganga. Lord Brahma the creator bestowed on him lordship over the Ganas and consecrated Him as Ganapathy and he became worshipful by everyone in all the three worlds.

Mother Parvati the embodiment of the universal mind. Parvati means parva-vathy, one having the three parvas or aspects. The three parvas i.e, knowledge, will and action. She is the universal mother who has created all that are seen and experienced by us, meaning all creations take place when the three factors of knowledge, will (or desire) and action combine together harmoniously. These three factors however, by themselves cannot mingle together and create anything unless the fourth factor, namely consciousness or chit enlivens then. So, Parvati is wedded to Lord Shiva, the chit Swaroopa. Thereafter she moves about with her Lord, and soon she is lost in the divine ecstatic Bliss of consciousness, the Bliss of Meditation, when the finite is absorbed in infinite.

Thus, Ganesha is born, the very replica of the Lord of the Universal Mother's heart. He is naturally the most auspicious representation of the supreme, at once a symbol of immaculate spiritual experience and an altar of perfection to be invoked for all success.

Shiva Purana: -

The origin of Lord Ganesha described in Shiva Purana is more or less the same manner as in Padma Purana, but imaginatively enlarged to include some more aspects. The story goes thus:

Once Jaya and Vijaya the two divinely beautiful maidens attending Mother Parvati approached her and told that all the ganas are more loyal to Lord Shiva than to her. Though they are not neglected but they wanted to have a very powerful gana for themselves, who will be implicitly loyal to her. Parvati heard them but kept silent.

Mount Kailasa, the abode of Lord Shiva and Parvati was a pilgrimage for all devas, rishis, ganas and others. They in their hordes there, to worship and to sing praises of the Lord in order fulfillment of their desires. They used to spread all over the place, setting their camps in the vast open space in Kailasa.

One-day Mother Parvati wanted to refresh Herself by taking a cool bath in the large bathing pool in Kailasa. She summoned Nandi, the chief of ganas and told him to guard the entrance of the bathing pool, so that no one would wander into that area and disturb her. So, Nandi stood guarding the entrance of the mother as she began her bath. A little while after, Lord Shiva Himself came there. Nandi told him in all reverence about the Mother's instructions, but the lord brushed it aside and went straight to the pool. Parvati was abashed to see the lord in front of her. Then she recollected the prompting of her attendants Jaya and Vijaya and decided to create a gana who would be absolutely loyal to her.

Another day when Mother Parvati went to bath, she rolled out of her body some dust and created a handsome and powerful male and said to him "you are my son", and extremely dear to me. Please stand guard to me at the entrance of the bathing pond and allow none whomsoever to come in without my permission. She gave me a stout stick and endowed him with her powers. At that moment, Lord Shiva came that way. The guard stopped Him and refused permission to go in. Thus, Lord Shiva lost his temper and beheaded the guard. Mother Parvati came out only to see her dear son lying headless. Overcome by anger and sorrow, she went about destroying everything that came her way. The Gods and rishis shuddered with fear and confusion and requested Lord Shiva to calm her down. So, Shiva pacified her and instructed his followers to bring the head of the first living being which is seen lying with its head pointing towards north. During their search, they found a baby elephant. They thus cut off its head and placed it on the body of Parvati's son and breathed life into him. The son of Parvati was given the name Ganesha by Shiva and also made him the Lord of the Ganas, who shall be worshipped first among all Gods. This explains Ganesha's mystical creations, its popularity and his omnipresence in most of the Hindu temples. (Chinmayananda,2018:30)

Brahmavaivarta Purana: -

The story of the origin of Ganesha is narrated in Brahmavaivarta purana is more fascinating. The story goes thus:

One day after the marriage, Mother Parvati asked Lord shiva to have a noble son. The lord thought for a while and then said to Parvati to observe a vow named 'Punyaka' for one full year. He then gave a detailed instruction in which the vow was to be observed. An auspicious day was fixed for the commencement of the vow. Hearing this all God's, Goddess and rishis all came to Kailash to offer them good wishes. In the meantime, Lord Vishnu arrived to bless them. The celestial sage Sanat Kumar offered his services as the presiding priest and thus the auspicious moment started.

After completing of a long year Parvati was happy that everything went well. At the time of offering Dakshina (reward) to the presiding priest Sanat Kumar made an unexpected demand: he wanted Lord Shiva himself to be given away in Dakshina. Hearing this Goddess Parvati was aghast at this impossible demand and thus she tried her to please him by giving him number of valuable articles, but it was all in vain. Now Parvati was in great trouble. At that moment Lord Vishnu arrived and consoled her and asked her to give away Lord Shiva at first and then take him back by offering him one lakh of cows. On the advice of Lord Vishnu, Parvati gave away Her Lord but when she offered Sanat Kumar one lakh cows in exchange of Lord, he refused the offer. Thus, situation became very tensed. Seeing Goddess Parvati in such a situation all God and Goddess started persuading Sanat Kumar to hand over Lord Shiva back to Mother Parvati. Ultimately the presiding priest Sanat Kumar handed over Lord Shiva without any resistance. Goddess Parvati became very happy and rewarded lavishly to those who came to attend the ceremony. At that time, she suddenly heard a heavenly voice "Mother of the Universe, please go

and look into your bed, your son is already born". On hearing this the mother rushed to her room and found a divinely beautiful son lying on the bed. There was no limit to her happiness.

One by one all the God and Goddess came to have a look at the new baby, among them who came to pay their obeisance was Saturn who was the son of Sun God but He himself is generally regarded as the Lord of miseries. After paying his respects he stood with his face turned away from Parvati and his son. Seeing this Parvati asked him the cause of not looking at the child. Saturn replied that he had a curse on him that whomever he looks upon will have his head cut off by the mere look. Since then, he (Saturn) uses to avoid looking at any living being directly for fear of destruction. Mother Parvati heard this and said "well, the whole world moves according to the will of the Lord. Don't you worry. Please look at me and my son".

Saturn had to obey Mother's command. He, therefore avoided the Mother from his sight and by the corner of his left eye looked at the divine child. Immediately the child's head was cut off and fell far away. Saturn was overcome by remorse and stood silently with his head cast down.

Mother Parvati fainted with sorrow and there was a big commotion at Kailash. Lord Vishnu reached there quickly sized up the situation and rushed in the northern direction. He saw a family of elephant sleeping on the bank of river Pushpabhadra and among them was a baby elephant whose head was pointed to the north. The lord cut its head and brought it to Kailash and placed it on the head less child who sprang up to life. There was a great joy among all.

Seeing Saturn standing silently with his head down, Mother Parvati thought that he should better remain in a disembodied state to avoid recurrence of such disaster in the world, so turning to him, she pronounced a curse "May you remain hereafter in a disembodied state".

Soon after Lord Shiva gathered all Gods, Goddess, rishis and others to offer a ceremonial worship to the divine child and gave Him eight names such as Vighnesa, Ganesha, Heramba, Gajanana, Lambodara, Ekadanta, Soorpakarna and Vinayaka- and said: "you have been worshiped by me, and hence you deserve to be offered the first worship by everybody in all rituals and ceremonies".

In Mahapurana, the stories of the birth of Ganesha have been described while Upapuranas describes his different incarnations redeeming the world from the pitiable conditions to which the demonic forces have reduced them. (Chinmayananda,2018:36)

The worship of the deified form of female energy, which is called Shakti in our religious terminology, is traced back in the Indian history to the pre-vedic Indus Valley Civilization. In Odishan context, some scholars trace the worship of Sakti in form of Vraja at Jajpur to the pre-Christian era on the basis of certain reference to this deity in Mahabharat, Harivamsa and Vayupurana. But Shakti worship at Viraja, the ancient place name of Jajpur, overshadowed by the predominance of Buddhism for some centuries, preceding the Gupta era (Pradhan,1996:192). With the efflorescence of the Brahmanical religion in the Gupta period, the Shakti worship

assumed new importance. While during the Sailodbhava and Bhaumakara periods the deification of female energy was conceived and executed in various ways. The image of Siva was accompanied by that of his consort Parvati. Deification of female energy was also introduced within the framework of Saivism, because Siva was conceived as Ardhanariswar (half male and half female). The most important factor contributing to the popularity of the worship of mother goddess during these periods was the growth of Tantrism that flourished from 7th century A.D onwards which continued to dominate Buddhism and Brahmanical religion. The Somavamsis who succeeded the Bhaumakaras were Saivites. During their rule the worship of Shakti or Tantrism still continued that extended till the Gangas who showed no interest in Tantrik cult, yet worship of Shakti did not disappear.

Thus, with the growing influence of the Tantras and popularity of Saktism in India, Ganesha iconography was found in company with his female counterpart whom he was represented holding with his left arm, either besides him or on his left thigh. The devi as a rule, had her arm around his neck, while in the left, as we have said above, often held the bowl of modakas. Saktism was particularly practiced by a powerful sect who adopted Ganesha their special deity and established his worship to the exclusion of practically every other Hindu God.

In mudgala purana, Ganesha is given 32 different names, as follows:- Sri Bala Genesha, Sri Taruna Ganesha, Sri Veera Ganesha, Sri Sakti Ganesha, Sri Dwija Ganesha, Sri Siddhi Ganesha, Sri Ucchishta Ganesha, SriVighna Ganesha, Sri Kshipra Ganesha, Sri Heramba Ganesha, Sri Laxmi Ganesha, Sri Maha Ganesha, Sri Vijaya Ganesha, Sri Nritta Ganesha, Sri Udva Ganesha, Sri Ekakshara Ganesha, Sri Vara Ganesha, Sri Tryksha Ganesha, Sri Kshipraprasada Ganesha, Sri Haridra Ganesha, Sri Ekadanta Ganesha, Sri Srushti Ganesha, SriUddanda Ganesha, Sri Rnamochaaka Ganesha, Sri Dhundi Ganesha, Sri Dwimukha Ganesha, Sri Trimukha Ganesha, Sri Simha Ganesha, Sri Yoga Ganesha, Sri Durga Ganesha and Sri Sankashta Ganesha (Chinmayananda,2018:50).

We all know that the importance given to image worship and belief in personal God led to the creation of temples. As discussed earlier that with the growth and development of Brahminical religion in Odisha led to the growth and of temples throughout the land. Odisha has a rich heritage in form of beautiful temples which are notable alike for their wealth of architectural and sculptural motifs, and excellent workmanship of their carvings. There are many temples in Odisha which signifies its rich heritage. And Bhubaneswar which is otherwise traditionally known as Saiva Kshetra, art and architecture are intimately associated with religion consequently and temples form the most illuminating commentary on the religion and religious practices of the people. The temples of Bhubaneswar are of absorbing interest, as its images of the divinities throw light on the gradual changes in iconographic features of the images, leading to the fabrication of the myths. In that all of the extent the early temples of Bhubaneswar that includes Parasuramesvara, Sisiresvara, Bharatesvara, Svarnnajalesvara, Markandesvara and Vahiranyesvara temples are dedicated to Lord Shiva. With few exceptions (like Vaital and Mohini temples which are Shakti temples), the Parsava-devatas housed in the raha niches of the

early Shiva temples are Ganesha on the south, Karttikeya on the back (east or west) and the Devi on the north. Ganesha when not serving as parsavadevatas or on later temples (that includes Muktesvara, Brahmesvara, Kedaraesvara, Meghesvara, Lingaraj, Siddhesvara, Vaskesvara etc.) with a two-storey design and a more complex iconographic program, these deities may also serve as a varanadevatas in the subsidiary paga niches. Ganesha may in addition accompany the matrkas where his role as a teacher is stressed. This role, as patron of letters and scribes, is also stressed when appears with Saraswati on lintels above niches housing siksadana motifs. He also appears in the center of the lintel over doorways of early temples (Donalson and Behera, 1998).

Lord Ganesha who is considered as the remover of obstacles occupies his iconographical position in the temple of Odisha towards 6th century AD. T.E Donalson in his book "Hindu Temple art of Orissa" states that the images of Ganesha in Odisha can be grouped into three broad modes, with variation in each, according to his pose-seated, standing & dancing (Donalson,2001).

In a temples of Bhubaneswar Lord Ganesha images are appropriately placed on the southern side, so as to be the first image perceived in the prdakshina (circumabulation), when the temple faces east. Ganapati images in many places has four arms, mostly in seated and standing mode while the dancing form images, he has eight arms. In four armed images his attributes are standardized with the only major change, aside from the placement of the Kuthara(hatchet), the broken tusk which replaces the radish seen on early images. On early temples the seated pose is most popular while the standing or dancing pose is seen on later temples.Though found in different pose in temples in Odisha, it is observed that the numerous images of Ganesha found in temples of Bhubaneswar are of two types because of the presence or abscence of the mouse the characteristic mount of the god, the first type occurred on the early temples of Parasuramesvara (Fig-1), Vaital, Sisiresvara (fig-2), Bharatesvara, Svarnnajalesvara, Markandesvara, Mohini and Vahiranyesvara temples. And also, it is found in some later temples like Uttaresvara, Lingaraja and Yamesvara and also in the inner walls of the Ganesha Gumpha at Udayagiri. Apart from this characteristic feature it has been observed that a variant feature by the proboscis turning to left or to the right in early as well as later temples respectively. The second type with the mouse as the distinctive feature occurs in the later temples like Muktesvara, Brahmesvara, Meghesvara, Lingaraj (fig-3), Kedaraesvara (fig-4), Siddhesvara, Vaskesvara etc.

Fig-1 Parasuramesvara temple parsvadevata

Fig- 2 Sisireswar temple: Ganesha (as parsvadevata)

Fig- 3 Lingaraj temple Siddhivinayaka at entrance gate.

Ganesha when seated is usually assumes the ardhaparyarika pose with the right knee up lifted, frequently held in place by a yoga patta, except when accompanying the matrkas or embracing his shakti, in which case he is in lalitasana with one leg pendent. The left invariably holds a modak patra from which his proboscis (elephant trunk) is plucking sweet. The uplifted back left hand generally holds the kuthar. The right hand holds a rosary and radish or broken tusk. When Ganesha seated in ardhaparyarika the left-hand rest on the uplifted knee whereas seated in lalitasana it is extended in varada. In the earlier images the coiffure (style of hair dressing) of Ganesha is generally flat in treatment, however towards 8th & 9th century A.D. the coiffure found was arranged in a Karanda-mukuta, resembling an inverted jar, consisting of tightly coiled curls neatly aligned in a Jata mukuta with jatas fanning out on either side of centre diadem (crown) frequently ornamented with a kirtimukha mask. There is generally a crescent moon in the coiffure and facetoons (chain of flower or leaves) of pearl decorated on the upper forehead. A tussle hangs from each ear while bells usually ornament his necklace and anklets. On early images snakes were used as belts and the sacred thread while in the later images a snake was used only as a sacred thread. In earlier images the pedestal is seen with fruits and offerings, and on outward facing lion in each corner. The images of 8th century A.D represented by lions that were replaced with jackfruit. While towards 9th century the jack fruit on either side is seen carried out by rodent like figure of a mouse is generally added by the tripod from which it is stealing sweet (fig. 5). By 10th century AD the tripod and jack fruit disappear from the pedestal with only the mouse remains the decorative figure. Attendants figure generally confine to the niche jam or to the pedestal. Thus, an iconographical change is observed from the early to the later phase temples which may be due to socio cultural change that was brought by the various dynastic rule since the ancient times.

Fig 4 Kedareswara Temple: Ganesha (as parsavadebata)

Fig- 5.   Seated Ganesha worshiped at Gauri Sankar temple,
(Located in the northern side of Lingaraj temple)
Decorated with jack fruit on either side of the tripod.

The standing image of Ganesha are less varied in iconography because most of them date after the 10th century by which time cult images became fairly standardize. In few surviving early images Ganesha generally faces to his left and his proboscis is curled up placing a sweet in his mouth. He holds the standard attribute in his four hands with the Kuthar or the Axe uplifted as on seated images. Towards 10th century AD, the standing pose was replaced by the seated pose where he assumes more hieratic frontal pose rather than facing to one side. He invariably plucks sweet with his proboscis from modak patra held in his major left hand. The lower left-hand rest on the handle on the Kuthara which is placed in the lower corner with the blade end down. The right hand holds a rosary and a broken tusk. Attendants generally occupies the lower corner of the niche and mouse peers up from the lower right (fig 6). (Panigrahi,1981: 126).

Fig- 6 Lingaraja Temple: Ganesha as
parsvadevata of the main temple.

Another remarkable Ganesha iconography, the Natya or dancing Ganesha appears to Odishan temples prior to 10th-11th century A.D., while in Bhubaneswar it was not a popular figure. Natya Ganesha generally has 6-8 arms with the upper set of hands stretching a serpent over his head. The proboscis plucks sweets from a modaka patra held in one of the left hands.

The major right or left hand crosses the body in Gajahasta, the hand holding a rosary on six armed images, while one of the hands on the opposite side is held in Kataka hasta. The remaining eight hands hold a rosary and broken tusk while the other left hand usually holds the Kuthara. The feet are generally in the lalita or Catura mode with one uplifted slightly, only the heel raised, so that there is only a slight deviation in the bend of the knees. He is frequently accompanied by a dancing attendant on either side while the mouse and devotees are carved on the pedestal. In a few small examples he is depicted on the back of his mount. Apart from the iconographic representation of lord Ganesha, He occupies a prominent place in independent sculpture either made of bronze or clay. Few of it is now well preserved in the state museum at Bhubaneswar (fig-7) and (fig-8)

Fig- 7 Nrtta Ganesha of bronze dated 19th century at Odisha state museum

Fig- 8 Standing Ganesha of bronze (from Paralakhemundi) at Odisha state museum

The pattchitra tradition of Odisha claims a distinct place of its own because of it exquisite workmanship. Pasting together the different layer of cloth with the help of tamarind glue, the chitrakar or painter first prepare the canvas and then does the painting. These earliest indigenous paintings from Odisha mostly deal with Jagannath cult, Krishnalila, Ramayana and other pauranik stories and popular legends. However, a finest piece of photo painting showing five headed Ganesha at the center and its above and below circle depict various events of His life is well preserved in state museum at Bhubaneswar (fig 9).
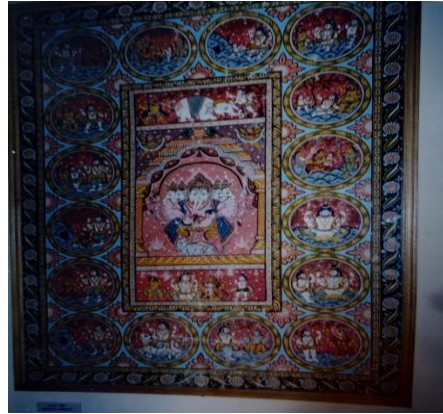
Fig- 9 Modern Pata-Painting representing the story
Of Ganesha in Odisha State Museum.

Lord Ganesha is the most enigmatic deity in Hindu pantheon. This elephant headed God, has an important role in the system of Hindu worship. His puja precedes the puja of all other Gods and Goddess for which he is given an epithet "Agrapuja" (Singh,1993:25). Hindus worship him at the beginning of any religious ceremony and on special occasions. Being called by various names he is found mention not only in Brahmanical puranas but also in Buddhist text. However, Ganesha, though not worshipped as principal deity in the temples of Bhubaneswar the iconographic representation of Lord Ganesha is found in all most all the early as well as later temples. The iconographic representation either in temples or as an individual sculptural motives or in canvas is profound and multilayered. This clearly shows that Ganesha was one of the most revered deity among all deities in Bhubaneswar. Now some irresistible question arises: that, due to the presence of numerous Saivite temples at Bhubaneswar (which was also known as Saiva Kshetra) belonging to different period, we get evidence of large number of cult images of Lord Ganesha or is it a fact that Ganapatya cult was popular all over Odisha as it is at Bhubanewar? Question may also arise that with the evolution of temple architecture at Bhubaneswar, does the Ganesha iconography found at Bhubaneswar temples showed similarity with other Ganesha iconography if so, found in temples outside Bhubaneswar in an age when the basic doctrine of Vaishnavism has become metamorphosed into a state? All these can only be answered if one explores few more temples outside Bhubaneswar.

Cuttack and Bhubaneswar are called as the twin city. Cuttack one of the oldest cities of India and the temples of this place are that older. The temple of Lord Ganesha in Jauliapatti near Chaudhary bazaar market, Cuttack is a famous temple though not a big temple, but the most interesting feature of this temple is that Lord Ganesha here is worshipped as the main deity and not as Parsavadebata, while the iconographic feature of Ganesha of this temple possess all the features of sculptural representation found in the latter group of temples of Bhubaneswar. Another 300-year-old temple of Lord Ganesha was discovered from Rani Pokhari (pond), near the famous Barabati fort. Legend says that this 5feet high standing idol is made of single black

polished stone, which was once thrown to the Rani Pokhari a pond inside Barabati fort apparently to save it from the wrath of invaders. Later some washer men found it and installed it near Kanika chhak. During the British regime at around 1800 A.D the idol was shifted to Badhei Sahi where it is now worshipped. This idol also possesses all the features of sculptural representation belonging to the latter group of temples of Bhubaneswar and is worshipped as the main deity of the temple. A few kilometers from the city of Cuttack the famous Dhabaleswar temple is located on the top of a small hill named Dhaulagiri. A 14th century A.D temple built by the Ganga rulers this Dhabaleswar temple enshrines Shiva Linga named as "Dhabaleswar" and Ganesha (seated figure), Kartikeya and eight armed Durga are found around the main shrine. Similarly, another Mahavinayak temple situated in Chandikhole in Jajpur district, is one of the oldest Ganesha temples of the state, where Lord Ganesha is worshipped as one deity in a single Garbhagriha or Sanctum along with Shiva, Vishnu, Durga and Sun God. 150 Kms away from Baripada, Mayurbhanj district we find one of the most beautiful temple of Goddess Kichakeswari or Chamunda. Several images of Goddess bear the evidence of the popularity of Shaktism. The temple, made of chlorite, is architecturally brilliant and well carved from its outer surface and is one of the most impressive temple of Kalinga architecture. The style of the temple is contemporary of Brahmeshwara and Lingaraj temples of Bhubaneswar. The exterior of temple is highly decorated with magnificent sculptors that include a dancing figure of Ganesa (fig 10.).

Fig-10 Dancing figure of Ganesha as parasvadevata
At Kishakeshwari Temple

Another interesting figure of Ganesha can be seen at Charda-Kapileswar temple, at Sonepur district' where he his worshiped as parsavadevata and is seen riding on his mount (mouse).one rare piece of sculpture (fig-11)

Fig-11 Ganesha as Parsavadevata riding on his Mount

Gramesvara temple of Ghoda Tikili village on Phulnakhra road, is a Shiva temple belonging to Bhauma period and a contemporary of Markandesvara temple of Bhubaneswar. The temple possess Ganesha in the southern niche is four handed and holds a rosary, a broken tooth, a sweetmeat ball to which his trunk is applied and a battle-axe. The mouse is present at his right foot. The other two niches are empty.

One of the oldest temples at Amanakuda 3 miles from Niali of Puri district, the famous Valunkesvara Shiva temple is situated. Here we find a Seated Ganesha as parsavadevata having four hands, the trunk unusually directed to the right side and has no sweet balls in the left rather his left hands hold a battle axe(lower) and a staff(upper) respectively, while in his right hands he holds a rosary(upper) and another object resembling like a sugarcane. (Tripathy,1987:264).

The famous Dakshinesvara temple of Bagalapur situated on the Phulnakhra-Adaspur road in the village Bagalapur which evidently bears the name after the queen Baghalla Devi, wife of the king Anangabhima Deva. This temple contains a Shiva Linga along with a Varahi image. Below the seat of Varahi image is a panel which is divided into three compartments, or is triratha in conception. The middle one contains a buffalo which is her mount and left one a lady devotee offering worship and the right one a four handed Ganesha. The Goddess Varahi has been incorporated into Buddhist pantheons but her associate with Ganesha which in this case, seems to be more a Brahmanical deity and then a Buddhist one, completely preludes the chance of any Goddess of Varahi belonging to the Buddhist pantheon as some writers have taken for, rather they prove the vpopularity of Varahi worship as a Matrika. (Tripathy,1987:249).

From the above discussion we can conclude that Ganesha is also associated with Buddhist Pantheon. Professor and Head, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Utkal University in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Dr. Sanjay Acharya said that "Buddhism and Jainism were rebel children of Hinduism. Buddhism split into Hinayana and Mahayana, with the latter eventually bringing in idol worship. Interestingly, it was in protest against the ritualistic practices

which had crept into Hinduism that the new religion Buddhism had come up. "Odisha is believed to be the land where Tantrism evolved, he said. Esoteric Buddhism, in its different forms like Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalachakrayana were practiced in Odisha. "Art and architecture were never a monopoly of any one religion. Religion too has gone through a process of acculturation,". Satyen Mohapatra an eminent writer, writes in his article "Japan's Lord Ganesha Has an Odisha Connection!" that the changes which Lord Ganesha undergoes may be many but with his distinctive elephant head, he remains the ever wise and remover of all obstacles.

The popularity of Ganesha, as the bestowed of success was not confined to the Brahman cult, for his adoration was taken over by the Buddhists. In the Tantric Age of Buddhism, he was included into the Buddhist Pantheon and has given a unique position and forms in their rites and ceremonies. In fact, Ganesha of Tantric Buddhism has mysterious and dignified position. It is not known how the cult of Ganesha came into the Vajrayana Buddhism, but Ganesha rose to unbelievable heights defeating even the Hindu trinity and other Buddhist deities. The cult of Ganesha entered into Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan and many other Buddhist countries of Asia, and even identified as the Bodhisattava Avalokitesvara and represented in the pose of a Buddha. (Singh,1993:26).

From the above discussion we can conclude that Ganesha cult was widely prevalent not only in India but also outside India and it is considered to be the most popular deity in Hindu as well as Buddhist Pantheon. In the medieval period, the Ganapatya cult was also popular in Odisha. The Ganesha images mostly appeared as parsvadevatas of the Shaiva temples and in some places are found to be worshipped as presiding deities. Puri which is known as Shri Khetra and the inhabitants of this place were the worshippers of Pancha Devatas namely Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Surya and Ganesha who are enshrined in different parts of the Puri town. The cult of Jagannatha assimilated the essence of all the sects and evolved as a major religion of India. Ganesha shrines of the Jagannatha temple complex have link with various rites and festivals of Lord Jagannatha temple. Due to the popularity of Ganapatya cult, three temples are found to be erected inside the Jagannatha temple complex. (Behera,1982 : 48-49).

The first temple of Ganesha is situated in the inner enclosure of the southern side of the Jagannatha temple complex. The temple is a single structure of rekha order. This temple is built in both laterite and sand stones. It faces to south. Ganesha as the presiding deity of the temple. The slab of deity measures 6 feet in length and 3 feet in width. It is made of black chlorite. The image of Ganesha has been installed on the double petalled lotus pedestal and it is carved in dancing posture. The pedestal of deity is finely decorated with flower devices and a devotee in kneeling posture. Mouse, the traditional mount of Ganesha is also carved on the right of the pedestal. The upper two hands of deity hold snake, the right side three hands possess rosary,

broken tusk, one hand lies on his belly and the left three hands display lotus flower, a pot of ladus and abhaya mudra respectively. Two female sakhi figures are standing on both sides of the Ganesha image. Rahu head is decorated on the top of the background slab of deity. Two flying apsara figures are carved on the top corners of both sides of the slab. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated. (Tripathy,1996: 31).

The second Temple famous as Bata-Ganesha is situated on the inner enclosure of the southern side near the natamandapa of the Jagannatha temple complex. It is a small temple and consists of two components such as vimana and jagamohana.

Although Bata-Ganesha temple is a small shrine still it is famous for its religious sanctity. The temple is built in sandstones. It faces to south. The image of Ganesha is worshipped in the sanctum as the presiding deity of the temple. The four handed deity Ganesha has been installed in seated posture on the plain pedestal. Hedisplays rosary in right upper hand, broken tusk in right lower hand, parashu in left upper hand and a pot of ladus in left lower hand respectively. The backside head of the deity is decorated with trefoil makara headed arch. There is no mouse carved in the pedestal of the deity. Inner walls of the sanctum are completely undecorated. The doorway of the sanctum is bereft of ornamentation.

The third temple is the temple of Kanchi Ganesha is situated in the inner enclosure of the western side of the Jagannatha temple complex. It has Ganesha as presiding deity of the temple. The image is made of black chlorite and its height is about 5 feet. The four handed deity Ganesha has been installed in seated posture on the decorative pedestal. He displays broken tusk in right upper hand, rosary in right lower hand, parashu or hatchet in left upper hand and the left lower hand holds Shridha devi. The trunk or proboscis of the deity is touching the shakti of devi. Mouse, the mount of Ganesha is also carved on the right of the pedestal. People popularly call the deity (image) as Bhanda or Natua Ganesha. On the basis of tradition, Surya Narayana Dash has described that this Ganesha image was brought from Kanchi region by Kanchi expedition of king Purushottama Deva of the Suryavansi ruler of Odisha. (Das,1966:163). After defeating king Salva-Narasingha Deva of Kanchi, Purushottama Deva had taken away this Ganesha image along with the image of Sakhi-Gopal as the trophy of his victory. (Panigrahi, 1985:216-17 & Mohapatra 1989:31-32). The iconographic features of the Ganesha image indicate that it is not made in the traditional art style of Odisha. Most probably, it was brought from Kanchi by Purushottama Deva, the Gajapati ruler of Odisha. The iconographic features of this Ganesha image are not found same in any other Ganesha images of Odisha.

Built in the medieval period, the existence of Ganesha temples proves that the worship of Ganapati cult was also prevalent in Puri. Although the architectural patterns of the above Ganesha temples of the Jagannatha temple complex are not so significance, but from the religious and artistic points of view these three Ganesha shrines are very important in Odisha.

Saivism and Vaishnavism had always co-existed in Odisha. The co-existence of these two religious cults was demonstrated by the worship of the conjoint deity of Hari (Vishnu) and

Hara (Shiva) in temple of Linjaraja. Although the Gangas were great Saivites prior to the establishment of their rule over Odisha, they afterwards espoused Vaishnavism and the Jagannath cult which had assimilated Vaishnavism. Therefore, during the Ganga rule, Saivism lost its place of Prominence which it had enjoyed during the Somavamsi Rule. Jagannath cult exercises deep influence over the socio-religious-political life of Odisha. It (Jagannath cult) is an amalgam of diverse religious cults like tribal religion, Brahmanical religion, Buddhism, Saivism, Shaktism, Tantrism and above all Vaishnavism. However, from the above discussion we can conclude that although Odisha had witnessed different religious cults since ancient times, Ganesha cult was popular in all ages throughout Odisha. Ganesha, the elephant headed God is one of the most enigmatic deity in Hindu pantheon and is found to be worshipped in almost all the temples of Bhubaneswar and beyond, somewhere as the main deity, but mostly as pasavadevata. All most all the temples here have images of Genesha in various forms (that includes sculptural as well as art form) which clearly shows that Ganesha was one of the most revered deity among all deities.

Thus, with the presence of numerous temples at Bhubaneswar, belonging to different period, that provides us with a large number of cult images helped us to explore and study the cultural traits of the ages and evolution in iconography of these images.

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