Episteme: an online interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary & multi-cultural journal

Bharat College of Arts and Commerce, Badlapur, MMR, India

Volume 13, Issue 2 **December 2024**

KONARK SUN TEMPLE- A MAJESTIC STRUCTURE

By Mr. Aniket Kolambekar & Dr. Sonali Chitale

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY :-

The Konark Sun Temple, an awe-inspiring structure from the 13th century AD, is also known as the "Black Pagoda." It showcases advanced knowledge in culture, art, architecture, and astronomy. The temple is renowned for its unique construction using magnets that once uplifted an idol of Lord Surya (Sun) floating in the air. Among the 12 notable Sun temples in India, Konark and Modhera are the oldest, with the list including temples in Kashmir, Gwalior, Ranchi, Assam, Bengaluru, and more. Remarkably, the artisans designed the temple so that sunlight falls on the deity's statue throughout different seasons.

A. Sterling visited Konark in 1825 AD, and James Fergusson prepared its drawings in 1837 AD. The temple's use of magnetic forces, which purportedly dragged nearby ships, has intrigued archaeologists. Currently in ruins, the main temple has largely collapsed except for the Jagmohan. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984, Konark is a testament to an advanced ancient civilization. Despite extensive conservation efforts, issues like structural failure and safety concerns persist, requiring ongoing attention.

KEYWORDS:- Astronomical heritage, magnetic force, Conservation, Safety measures, Sun dial.

INTRODUCTION :

Since the start of civilization, a common string that weaves the cloth of humanity and culture is "worship" and this worship has started with time since memorial through natural resources available in the places where humans stayed and it progressed with time to sculpting it in a human form.

The early stage of civilisation had primarily worshiped natural resources like the sun, moon, thunderstorms, fire and rain. Many of these rituals still are being practiced till date; like the fire god - "*Agni"* which has references to as long as the Vedic period.

As the nomadic life moved to agrarian settlement, the change evolved in gods too as per the locality and the beliefs that they had. Eventually, as man started to protect against the harsh circumstances of nature, god took human form and amongst them all the first human deity to mankind was Indra (the lord heaven and rain). Other gods were Agni, the fire; God Rudra, the earlier form of Lord Shiva and Somu the elexur of God. By around 1500 BCE, objects with representations of cult figures began to appear.[1]

In Hinduism, the Sun and Moon are the only gods visible to the naked eye. The Sun also honors and worships Goddess Gāyatri.[2] Despite the worship of various natural elements like fire as Agni Devta and wind as Varun Devta, the Sun god held a special place in ancient Hindu culture. The Sun god became an integral part of daily life, deeply woven into the fabric of daily routines. The emotional connection with the Sun god was so strong that people performed rituals thrice a day, known as 'teen prahar,' which involved taking a dip in a nearby pond pushkarini (पुष्करणी) and offering water (जल) to the Sun.

This profound reverence for the Sun god led to the construction of Sun temples across all corners of India. These massive temple structures were not only places of worship but also symbols of the dynasty's strength and grandeur. The presence of *Surya Mandirs* (Sun Temples) in various directions of the country reflects the widespread and deep-rooted significance of the Sun in Hindu worship and cultural practices.

One such example is Konark Sun Temple which is a masterpiece of medieval Indian temple architecture, reflecting the zenith of Kalinga architecture. Built in the 13th century by King Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty, the temple is designed as a colossal chariot with

twelve pairs of intricately carved stone wheels, drawn by a set of seven spirited horses. Today, the temple stands in silence with no prayers and devotion being heard in the premises. No faithful devotee makes the daily journey to the temple to offer their respects. Yet, once every year, the ancient temple walls come alive with the sound of chanting voices and the footsteps of countless pilgrims. Like migratory birds instinctively returning home, thousands of devout followers slowly make their way to the Temple of the Sun to honor the deity within. For one full day, the air is filled with the fervor of their prayers. But as the day ends, the Sun-god's brief period of glory fades. Night falls, enveloping the temple and its weary pilgrims. The last pilgrim leaves, and the ancient stones return to their profound silence.[3] This paper examines the historical context, architectural features, cultural importance and preservation and challenges of the Konark Sun Temple, highlighting its status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:-

Construction and Patronage

The Konark Sun Temple was constructed around 1250 CE under the patronage of King Narasimhadeva I. The temple's construction is linked to the rise of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty, which was known for its patronage of the arts and architecture. The temple not only served as a place of worship but also as a demonstration of the kingdom's architectural progress and devotion to Surya.

Limited knowledge of the original planning of the temple largely comes from the records of Abul Fazl Alumi, the court historian of Emperor Akbar. According to his writings, the construction of the unfinished edifice was funded by twelve years' revenue from the province. The construction involved relentless and arduous labor, with 120,000 men working continuously. The immense difficulties of the task often led to frustration and despair. In those days, the annual revenue of Orissa was approximately three crores of rupees, and the temple's construction likely cost nearly thirty-six crores to complete.[4]

In 1904, during the clearance of some debris, Sir John Marshall, who was then the Director-General of Archaeology in India, declared that no other monument in India was as beautifully proportioned or conceptually magnificent as the Black Pagoda. A.Stealing dated the monument to AD 1241, although some authorities, based on the erroneous conclusions of Abul Fazl, suggested it might date back as early as the ninth century. However, more reliable evidence suggests it was likely completed by AD 1278. This is corroborated by a copper-plates inscription from the Ganga dynasty, which states that the temple was built in the eighteenth year of Narasimha Deva I's reign.

When James Fergusson visited the temple in 1837, parts of the great structure, which was never fully completed, were still intact. However, by 1869, these portions had fallen into ruins. The temple's construction, its eventual decline, and the subsequent archaeological interest highlight its historical and cultural significance.[5]

Myths and Legends

Several myths and legends surround the construction of the temple. One popular legend suggests that the temple was built by 1,200 artisans in 12 years, but the construction was left incomplete due to its immense complexity and the mysterious death of its chief architect. These stories add to the temple's mystique and allure.

सपुच्च नरसिंघेन क्ष्मेश्वरे अम्सुमलिनः

प्रसादः क अरितो राजनो सकद्वादसके सते।

(Sapuccha Narasinghena ksmesvare amsumalinah

Prasadah: k arito rajno sakedvadasake sate)

Translation - The tailed king Narasinghadeva built a temple for the ray -

garlanded Sun God in 1200 Shakabda

1200 Shakabda is AD 1278 (AD 1276 as per Behera)

A large amount of war booty was brought back by Anangabhimadeva of the Ganga dynasty. His mother, Kasturi Devi, advised him to construct grand temples at significant locations such as Bhubaneswar, Gada at Jajpur, Padma at Puri, and the Sun temple at Konark. She reasoned that these places were important religious centers known as Shankha Kshetra, Chakra Kshetra, Gada Kshetra, and Padma Kshetra. Despite the importance of Jajpur, famous for the Biraja temple and Dashashwamedh Ghat, Kasturi Devi chose Konark for the Sun temple. This decision was likely influenced by the desire to establish a grand center for Sun worship in Odisha, which already had significant temples at other kshetras.

The construction of the Konark Sun temple began when Narasimhadeva I, the son of Anangabhimadeva, was the crown prince, though actual construction started in the 5th Anka (year) of his reign. This period was used for preparatory works such as drafting plans, selecting artisans, and obtaining materials. Historical texts like the Madala Panji and palm-leaf manuscripts called Baya Chakada, although their authenticity is debated, provide insights into this period.

The Lingaraja temple in Bhubaneswar, erected by the Jajati Keshari of the Keshari dynasty, and other significant religious structures were already established in Odisha. The Sun temple at Konark, therefore, was a strategic addition to highlight Sun worship and glorify the Ganga dynasty's reign.Different scriptures refer to Konark by various names associated with the Sun god, such as Surya Kshetra, Arka Kshetra, and Mitra Vana, emphasizing its longstanding association with Sun worship. Krupasindhu Mishra, in his works, references events from the Brahma Purana and other texts to establish the timeline of the temple's construction.

- Brahma Purana - Konaditya
- Skanda Purana - Surya Kshetra
- Prachi Mahatmya - Arka Kshetra/Ravi Kshetra
- Bhavishya Purana - Mitra vana
- Samba Purana - Maitra vana
- Kapila Sanhita -Ravi Kshetra/Maitreya vana

Despite some scholarly debate about later interpolations in the Samba Purana, the historical significance of the Sun temple at Konark remains well-recognized.[6]

ARCHITECTURAL BRILLIANCE:-

Design and Layout

The temple's layout is ingeniously designed to represent Surya's chariot, pulled by seven horses and mounted on twelve pairs of elaborately carved stone wheels. Each wheel is about 10 feet in diameter, symbolizing the twelve months of the year and the 24 hours of the day. This symbolic representation emphasizes the temple's connection to the sun and its cyclical nature. The entire structure is oriented towards the east, allowing the first rays of the morning sun to illuminate the temple's entrance, highlighting its significance as a solar deity's abode.

Main Structures

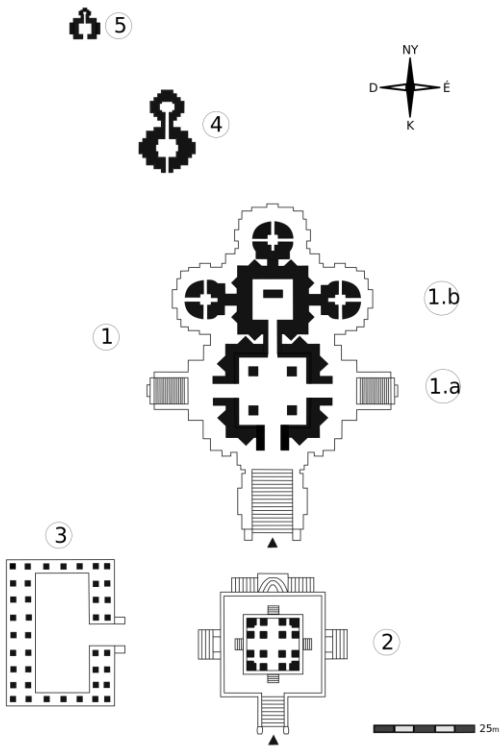

Fig 1- Plan of the Sun Temple, Konark, Orissa, India 1. Main temple complex 1a. AudienceHall (Jagamohana, Pidha Deul) 1b. Main Sanctum (Garbha-Griha, Rekha Deul) 2. Dancing Hall (Nat-Mandap, Nata Mandir) 3. Offering Hall (Bhoga-Mandap, Bhog Mandir) 4. Mayadevi Temple 5. Vaishnava Temple

The temple complex includes three main structures: the Deul (Sanctum Sanctorum), the Jagamohana (Audience Hall), and the Natya Mandir (Dance Hall).

1. **Deul (Sanctum Sanctorum):** The Deul, which originally housed the main deity, now lies in ruins. It was once a towering structure, rising to about 229 feet, making it one of the tallest temples of its time. The sanctum's walls and pillars were

adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures, showcasing various deities and mythological scenes.

2. **Jagamohana (Audience Hall):** The Jagamohana, standing at around 128 feet, is relatively well-preserved. This hall served as the main assembly area for devotees. Its pyramidal roof, supported by exquisitely carved pillars, features detailed sculptural work depicting scenes from Hindu mythology, celestial beings, and floral patterns.

3. Natya Mandir (Dance Hall):

Positioned in front of the Jagamohana, the Natya Mandir was used for performing the classical Odissi dance. The walls of this hall are embellished with carvings of dancers, musicians, and other figures, capturing the cultural essence of the time. The Natamandapa's ground plan is detailed in Drawing no. 17. This structure follows the Pancharatha design and features three plinths, as shown in Drawing no. 18. Notably, no other temple in Odisha has three plinths. The combined height of these plinths is 16 feet 4 inches, which is slightly shorter than the main temple's plinth.Historians believe that the two large Gajasimhas, now positioned at the eastern entrance of the Natamandapa, were initially placed in front of the main temple. Each of these statues weighs approximately 27.48 tons. Stairways on all four sides lead to the top of the second plinth, which is 11 feet 11 inches high. On the west side of the mandapa, facing the Jagamohana, there are two flights of stairs leading north and south.The Natamandapa's ground plan follows the Pancharatha design and features three plinths. Notably, no other temple in Odisha has three plinths. The combined height of these plinths is 16 feet 4 inches, which is slightly shorter than the main temple's plinth. Historians believe that the two large Gajasimhas, now positioned at the eastern entrance of the Natya Mandapa, were initially placed in front of the main temple. Each of these statues weighs approximately 27.48 tons. Stairways on all four sides lead to the top of the second plinth, which is 11 feet 11 inches high. On the west side of the mandapa, facing the Jagamohana, there are two flights of stairs leading north and south.

Architectural and Artistic Elements

The temple's exterior and interior are covered with an array of sculptures and carvings, demonstrating the artisans' extraordinary skill. The walls are adorned with images of deities, celestial beings, animals, and everyday scenes. Erotic sculptures, reflecting the temple's affiliation with Tantric traditions, are also prevalent.

Symbolism and Construction

The chariot design symbolizes the perpetual journey of the Sun God across the sky. The seven horses pulling the chariot represent the days of the week, while the twelve pairs of wheels denote the months of the year. This symbolism underlines the temple's cosmic significance.Constructed primarily from Khondalite rocks, the temple showcases advanced knowledge of stone carving and metallurgy. The use of iron beams and clamps in its construction indicates a high level of technological advancement.

Historical and Cultural Significance

Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Konark Sun Temple stands as a testament to the zenith of Kalinga architecture and the cultural and artistic prowess of medieval India. It not only served as a place of worship but also as a hub of cultural activities, reflecting the social and religious milieu of the time. The temple's ruins continue to attract historians, archaeologists, and tourists, offering a glimpse into the rich heritage of ancient India.

In essence, the Konark Sun Temple is more than just an architectural wonder; it is a symbol of the artistic, religious, and cultural achievements of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty, continuing to evoke wonder and admiration throughout the ages

Fig 2 -*Konark drawn by James Fergusson and lithoed by T C Dibdin*

PRESERVATION AND CHALLENGES:-

The preservation and restoration of historical monuments such as Konark Sun Temple require a meticulous approach to ensure that authenticity and integrity are not compromised. Here's a structured approach to preserving this monument, incorporating modern techniques and adhering to the principles of the Nara Charter (*Lemaire & Stovel, n.d.*):

- **Preservation Techniques**

1. **Documentation and Research**

- **Historical Drawings and Reports:** Utilize historical drawings and reports, such as those by A. Sterling (1825 C.E.), James Ferguson (1837 C.E.), and Ramlal Mitra (1868 C.E.), to understand the original structure and ornamentation of the temple. For instance, the reproduction technique has been employed for the Gaj Kranta (Elephant over Lion), especially for its arch, which is characterized by a multi-foliate pattern and elaborate ornamentation[8].

- **Restoration Work:**

1. Missing portions of the compound wall were restored.
2. To prevent rainwater from collecting and seeping into the terraces of the porch, joints and depressions were filled with concrete mortar.

- Maintenance Changes: The practice of besmearing slabs with vermilion and oil was stopped in the new building.
- Discovery and Efforts:The remaining rear half of the massive navagraha architrave was recently traced, with efforts underway to fix it with the original slab.
- Conservation Work:

1. Major repairs and consolidation of the damaged platform and three staircases on the east, north, and south sides.
2. Widening of the narrow laterite-paved floor around the temple following archaeological norms.

- Additional Measures:

1. Development of a garden around the temple.
2. Periodic chemical treatment of the monument.
3. Vigorous plantation of trees to minimize sand drifts and effects of salt-laden sea winds.

- Relocation:The navagraha architrave found near Temple 2's platform was moved to a new shed beyond the north-east corner of the enclosure[9].

CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF NOTEWORTHY EVENTS:-

1800s

- **1806:** The Marine Board proposes the restoration of the Konark temple to serve as a navigational landmark. The government does not agree to the proposal[7]. If the government would have agreed to the restoration, a part of the tower would have been saved for future generations. The tier was 3m taller than the Jagamohana till 1837 as per Fergusson's

drawing which was blown away by the tornado of 1848[8]. Debala Mitra has presented an account of conservation that was held between the years 1838 and 1953. He being the director - general of ASI from 1900 to 1910 , we can consider his work to be authentic.

- **1838:** Vandalism by the *Khurda king* is stopped by the intervention of the Deputy Governor of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Detailed conservation measures proposed by the society are not acted upon by the British government.
- **1867:** An attempt to shift the fallen Navagraha stone to the Calcutta Museum fails.
- **1881:** Restoration efforts begin under Lieutenant Governor Sir Ashley Eden. Between 1882 and 1883 overgrown trees were removed, and major sculptures such as horses and elephants were brought to the forefront. Although the pedestals were built for them, albeit incorrectly oriented because of lack of proper guidance. Two Gajasinghas were placed on a great mound of sand. The Natya Mandapa came out during later restorations (which was carried years later), and the sculptures were relocated to the current location.
- **1892:** Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles Elliot shows interest in the restoration and proposes a comprehensive conservation plan. Public protest in 1893 prevented the removal of important sculptures along with Navagraha sculptures to the Indian Museum. However, the government shifted 13 sculptures to the museum. Possibly due to the efforts of Elliott, a superintendent engineer from the PWD conducted a survey and made the following recommendations:

1.Stone props should be installed inside the Jagamohana.

2.The removal of tree roots and undergrowth should be a regular maintenance activity.

3.No attempts should be made to clear the rubble from the west side.

- He was concerned that such actions might cause the Jagamohana to collapse. It is clear that the engineers of that time lacked understanding of the fundamental engineering principles

used in Odishan temples. Otherwise, they would not have suggested the risky idea of supporting a corbelled structure from the inside. However, for the first time, maintenance of the ancient structure was handed over to the PWD, and the Puri collector was tasked with ensuring the safety of the artifacts.

- **1900, December:** In December 1900, *Sir John Woodburn*, the then Lieutenant Governor, took decisive steps towards restoration. Within two months, T. Block, the archaeological surveyor of Bengal, submitted a detailed proposal, and work commenced in April 1901. Following the removal of sand from the site, the first artifact to be uncovered was a wheel. As the clearing continued, several smaller and larger structures of the temple complex were gradually revealed. Alongside this excavation, the meticulous task of repairing and restoring damaged images commenced. Efforts were made to return scattered and broken pieces of sculptures to their original positions as accurately as possible.

Early 1900s

- **1905:** Repairs to the Jagamohana were completed, and Natyamandapa was excavated from sand dunes.
- **1906:** Large-scale planting of Casuarina and Polanga trees is initiated to protect the temple from saline sea gales.
- **1909:** Sand dunes were removed, revealing the old Sun temple and a brick temple dedicated to Vishnu was discovered.
- **1910:** Restoration work concludes, having spent nearly a lakh of rupees.

Mid 1900s to 1987

- 1917: The British government sets up a committee to address environmental damage to the stone sculptures.
- 1938: Wax mixed with kerosene is tried for conservation but fails.
- 1939: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) takes over conservation efforts.
- 1950: Independent India's government sets up a committee under Biswanath Das, making several recommendations for preservation.

The following recommendations were made under the chairmanship of Biswanath Das

1. Monitoring the humidity levels within the sealed porch.
2. Ensuring that the monument is completely watertight from the outside.
3. Eliminating waterlogging within the compound.
4. Restoring the compound and elevating it back to its original height.
5. Applying protective chemical treatments to the stone surfaces.
6. Increasing plantation efforts on the southern side.

- 1977: A stone falls from the cornice, highlighting the need for structural investigation.
- 1979: UNESCO sends *Prof. Lemaire* to study the situation at Konark.
- 1980: The Government of India establishes an inter-disciplinary committee and requests further assistance from the UNESCO committee.
- 1980-81: UNESCO experts, *Prof. Lemaire* and *Ms. Tabasso*, visit Konark for 10 days. Along with them Dr. Thapar (director - general of ASI) and Dr. Tandon (director of the monuments laboratory of Dehradun) joined and submitted a report with technical observations.
- 1982: A crack appears on the northern Bada of the Jagamohana.
- 1984: UNESCO confers World Heritage status on Konark.
- 1985: The crack in the northern Bada widens, and ASI undertakes some repair work.
- 1987: UNESCO experts once again send B.M. Fielden and P. Beckman assess the monument, providing several key recommendations for its conservation.

1. Foundation Stability: After initially settling, the foundation of the monument has remained stable for many years. Despite thorough examinations by M.M. Ganguly from 1900 to 1912, no further settling was detected, prompting questions about the evidence for the initial settlement conclusions by experts.
2. Structural Pressure: The pressure exerted on the Jagamohana’s walls is minimal, indicating that the structure will not be endangered even if the sand inside is removed.

3. Sand Filling and Wall Construction: Constructing a stone wall or filling the structure with sand was unnecessary. Historical records show the sand level was 12 feet below the cliff, and the top of the Jagamohana has not collapsed.
4. Weathering of Images: The Khondalite stone images have experienced weathering but not to a critical extent. Chlorite stone images remain largely intact, except for some missing limbs.
5. Deterioration Causes: The main reason for the monument's deterioration is the dry stone masonry construction. Without lime or other binding materials, gaps between the stones allowed saline condensation and dirt to cause faster decay.
6. Restoration Demands: Given Konark's international significance, there is a strong call for restoring the missing limbs and sculptures. Civil society is advocating for a decision based on principles rather than sympathy.
7. Master Plan: A comprehensive master plan for the heritage site is necessary to guide its preservation.

- 1988: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) engages the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) to evaluate the stability of Konark's foundation. Over two decades later, the results remain inconclusive.
- 1990: Scaffolding is erected at the south-east corner of the Jagamohana. This scaffolding eventually expands to cover nearly the entire southern face and becomes a permanent feature.
- 1997: Prof. G. Croci from Italy submits a report titled "Analysis of Deterioration of Jagamohana," recommending the removal of sand for further data collection. ASI opposes this suggestion.

•International experts meet on July 22-23 to discuss Konark, but details of the discussions and decisions are not available.

•In November, UNESCO declared Konark a Project Monument and recommended sand removal. ASI resists, citing dubious repair techniques, and decides to insert a video camera instead. This recommendation is not implemented.

•ASI issues directives for action, including further soil investigations, stone testing, stability measurements, and conservation steps. Despite these directives, no significant actions are taken.

- 1998: On September 19, a two-ton boulder fell from the northeast corner of the temple. Despite public outcry, no investigation or preventative measures are taken.
- 2005: The Government of India organizes another meeting of specialists, but details of the discussions and decisions are unavailable.
- 2006: Consultant firm SIMTEK submits a report, noting the sand level inside has dropped to 16 feet. They emphasize the need for sand removal, a recommendation that has been repeatedly made by various experts.
- 2007: Another group of consultants visit Konark and reiterate the demand for removing the sand.
- 2009:

•Dr. Satya Murty, Director of ASI Eastern Circle, calls a meeting of stakeholders. Prof. Rajendra Prasad Das insists on immediate sand removal, but his advice is ignored.

•On December 5, INTACH held a meeting, unanimously recommending the restoration of lost sculptures and original images, but ASI continues to ignore these recommendations.

- 2010: More pieces of stone fall during the rains, causing knee-deep water inside the compound. A Public Interest Litigation is filed in the Odisha High Court, leading to another international meet on March 20-21. Under pressure, a time-bound action plan is drafted, but significant delays persist. Four sub-committees and two steering committees are formed, but little progress is made in the following years.

- 2014: Some action is visible as the Director-General of ASI and the Culture Secretary of India visit Puri and Konark in January. However, they do not engage with civil society members or INTACH officials. INTACH resorts to RTI inquiries to gather information, revealing that sub-committees and steering committees are not meeting their targets.

CHALLENGES:-

Despite ongoing conservation efforts, the temple faces numerous challenges. The original sanctum, once the tallest structure, has collapsed, and many of the intricate carvings have eroded. Climate change, pollution, and tourism-related wear and tear pose additional threats to this architectural marvel. Ensuring the temple's preservation requires a combination of advanced restoration techniques, sustainable tourism practices, and increased public awareness.

A team of geologists and geophysicists from IIT Kharagpur has identified ongoing tectonic activity in Odisha's coastal region, driven by the reactivation of ancient faults beneath the Mahanadi delta. This tectonic movement results in the subsidence and uplift of basement blocks, which in turn cause changes in the river channels flowing through the coastal region. These geological processes have likely disrupted existing rivers along the fault lines, contributing to the drying up of many river channels, including the ancient Chandrabhaga River that once flowed north of the Konark temple.

The region lies within seismic zones II and III, and the occurrence of low to moderate magnitude earthquakes suggests significant but slow movements along these basement faults, a phenomenon known as tectonic creeps. These movements are most likely a result of the northward movement of the Indian plate. Professor Saibal Gupta from the Department of Geology and Geophysics at IIT Kharagpur posits that the neotectonic activity in this region may have been a factor in the collapse of the Konark Sun Temple.

The findings were published in the ***Journal of Earth System Science***, a peer-reviewed journal by the Indian Academy of Sciences. The research was conducted by a four-member team led by

Mohanty and Gupta, with researchers Subhamoy Jana and Prakash Kumar. Although the exact date and reasons for the temple's collapse remain unclear, and while it is challenging to determine how long the temple endured, there are various speculations regarding the causes of its downfall.[10]

CONCLUSION:-

The Konark Sun Temple stands as a testament to the architectural genius and cultural richness of ancient India. Its intricate design, symbolic representation, and historical significance make it a valuable part of India's heritage. While the temple faces numerous preservation challenges, concerted efforts by conservationists and the government aim to protect and restore this cultural gem. The Konark Sun Temple not only reflects the glorious past of Indian architecture but also continues to inspire future generations, serving as a bridge between history and modernity.

REFERENCES:

[1] Tarun Chopra, *Temples of South India - Abodes of Divine*

[2] Pipariya Ram K, Vedic Mind, *Worship of Sun in ṚGVEDA, Alphonsa Chacko, Research Scholar, Dept.of Sanskrit Sahitya, SSUS, Kalady, Kerala.International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Volume 3, Issue 2,* February 2013.

[3] Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Hindu and Buddhist), fifth edition,* 1965.

[4] Rustom.J Mehta, *Konark The Sun Temple of Love,*1965.

[5] *ibid,*1965.

[6] Anil Dey,*The Sun Temple of Konark,* 2016.

[7] Debala Mitra, *Konark, The Diaries of Streynsham Master (1675 - 1680).*

[8] *ibid*, Debala Mitra, pp. 13,15.

[9] Debala Mitra, *World Heritage Series - Konarak,* pp. 32 -35

[10] *ibid,* Anil Dey, 2016.

[11]*Hindustan times,2022* *https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/possible-neotectonic-activity-behind-collapse-of-konark-temple-iit-researchers-101642337369067.html*

Images

Fig 1 - Plan of the Sun Temple, Konark, Orissa, India
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konark_Sun_Temple

Fig 2 - A tinted lithograph of an image of the Surya Temple at Konarak, Orissa. Drawn by James Fergusson and lithoed by T C Dibdin. From British Museum
https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:James_Fergusson_Konark.jpg#mw-jump-to-license

BIO:-Aniket Kolambekar is a passionate researcher and program coordinator with contribution to the field of history and cultural studies. Currently associated with the Sindhi Cultural Foundation, he had played a pivotal role in curating narratives and designing exhibits or events that highlight Sindh's rich and diverse heritage. Notable achievements include contributing to the Sindh Gallery at Ambedkar university, Delhi, Supporting the establishment of a gallery dedicated to the Sindhi Community's history and legacy. Also associated with India lost and found , he conducted in-depth research on allocated historical sites, contributing to their documentation and preservation. With a deep interest in ancient civilizations, particularly India's regional histories, he bring a meticulous and empathetic approach to documenting and preserving historical narratives.