

**ICONOGRAPHY OF ELEVEN GANESHA IMAGES OF SAIVA TEMPLES OF THE COASTAL BELT OF ODISHA IN EASTERN INDIA****Dr. Ratnakar Mohapatra<sup>1</sup>**

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*Received: 25.01.2020**Revised: 23.02.2020**Accepted: 28.03.2020***ABSTRACT**

The study of Ganesha images from the Saiva temples of Prachi Valley in the coastal belt of Odisha is one of the interesting aspects of the Saiva art of Odisha in Eastern India. Prachi valley is an integral part of the coastal belt of Odisha and it preserves a good number of Saiva temples of different periods of history. The deity Ganesha is regarded as an earliest Hindu god of India. The veneration of Ganesha is generally popular in Odisha as well as India. Saivism was a popular religion of Odisha in Eastern India. The Ganesha images noticed in the coastal belt of Odisha generally display rosary, broken tusk, a pot of sweet balls (*ladus*) and a long handled *kuthara* (hatchet) in his hands. The sites of surveyed Ganesha images of Saiva temples of Prachi valley in the coastal belt of Odisha are viz; 1. Andha-Kapilesvara at Kapilesvarpur, 2. Gokarnesvara at Kantaparasisana, 3. Belesvara at Bhapur, 4. Ramesvara at Tola-Gopinathpur, 5. Angesvara at Pitapara, 6. Sovanesvara at Nuagaon, 7. Amaresvara at Amaresvara, 8. Somesvara at Samesvar, 9. Siddhesvara at Mudgala, 10. Gramesvara at Nibharana, and 11. Nrityesvara at Nasikesvara. Various types of Ganesha images belonging to different periods are found to be worshipped in the sites of Saiva temples of Prachi valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. The detailed iconographic features of the Ganesha images of the Saiva temples of Prachi valley need a serious study. The aim of current article is to highlight the iconographic features of the extant Ganesha images from the Saiva temples of Prachi valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. Both the primary and secondary sources are methodologically utilized by the author for the writing of this article.

**Key words:** Ganesha, images, iconographic features, Prachi valley, Odisha, India

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The coastal belt of Odisha is famous in India for its historic monuments and religious sanctuaries. In fact, Prachi valley is an important historical place located in the coastal belt of Odisha and it preserves a large number of Saivite images of the Hindu pantheon. The study of Ganesha images is one of the fascinating aspects of the Saiva art of Odisha in Eastern India. Ganesha isn't

always the earliest Hindu gods and is cited within the Aitareya Brahmanas (Das, 1958, p.48). The worship of Ganesha is broadly triumphant within the complete of India and it's taken into consideration to be the most famous deity within the Hindu pantheon (Das, 1958, p.48). In the medieval period, the Ganapatya cult turned famous in Odisha. The Ganesha images of Odisha typically fall beneath 4 classes together with *sthanaka*, *asina*, *nrutya* and *devisahita* (Behera, 1982, p.48). Ganesha usually appears as a *parvadevata* in a Saiva temple and his depiction without mouse seems to be an earlier convention (Behera, 1982, p.48). The region of Prachi valley is one of the important centres of Saivism in the coastal belt of Odisha. Various types of Ganesha images belonging to different periods are found to be worshipped throughout the Prachi valley, where these images are mostly housed in the *parvadevata* niches of the Saivite temples. A good number of Saiva temples and Ganesha images are found in the different parts of the Prachi Valley located in the coastal belt of Odisha. Most of the earlier dilapidated Siva temples of the Prachi Valley have been renovated in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a few in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Among the extant Saiva temples of the Prachi Valley, twelve are locally considered as "Dvadasa Sambhus" (Panda, 1969, pp.77-81 and see Behera & Dhal, 1992, pp. ii-xii). They are such as 1. Andha-Kapilesvara at Kapilesvarpur, 2. Gokarnesvara at Kantaparasasana, 3. Belesvara at Bhapur, 4. Ramesvara at Tola-Gopinathpur, 5. Angesvara at Pitapara, 6. Sovanesvara at Nuagaon, 7. Amaresvara at Amaresvara, 8. Somesvara at Samesvar, 9. Siddhesvara at Mudgala, 10. Gramesvara at Nibharana, 11. Nrityesvara at Nasikesvara and 12. Muktesvara at Daluakani. The last *Sambhu* is not found existed till today. In the field survey, the present author has meticulously documented eleven Ganesha images, which are noticed in the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley. Here, a modest attempt has been taken by the present author to highlight the detailed iconographic features of the Ganesha images from the eleven Saiva temples of Prachi valley in the coastal belt of Odisha in Eastern India.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

In this article, the primary and secondary sources have been equally used by the article. The primary sources had been collected from texts, reports, observations, taking photographs, hearsay accounts of respondents through the interview methods by the author, etc. The site survey had been done by the author for the gathering of data concerning the iconographic features of eleven Ganesha images of the coastal belt of Odisha in India. The collected data from the primary as well as secondary sources are critically analysed with the proper methodological process.

## **III. RESULT ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3. Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu Temples of Prachi Valley**

The extant single Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley give us an idea about the iconography and the typical Odishan mode of representation. The existed four handed Ganesha images of all the Sambhu( Saiva) temples of the Prachi valley generally displays rosary, broken tusk, a pot of sweet balls (*ladus*) and a long handled *kuthara* in his hands. The detailed iconographic features of the Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley of Odisha are being mentioned below.

### 3.1. Ganesha Image of Kapilesvarpur

The temple of Andha-Kapilesvara is an ancient Saiva shrine of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. This temple is situated about seven km from Adaspur, at the village of Kapilesvarpur in the Niali Block of the Cuttack district(Mohapatra,2017, p.134). The temple is considered by the local people as one of the “Dvadasa Sambhus” on the bank of river Prachi. The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of the *vimana* of the Andha-Kapilesvara temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The four handed image of Ganesha is finely carved in standing posture on the double petalled lotus pedestal. Mouse, the conventional mount of the deity is carved on the right of the pedestal. The upper right hand is also broken from the elbow portion, the upper left hand holds a pot of *ladus* and the lower left hand possesses a *kuthara* (hatchet). The background of the head of deity is embellished with trefoil arch; makara head at the bottom and the *kirtimukha* motif on the apex. Flying apsara is carved on each facetpinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha measures 4 feet 5 inches in height and 2 feet 3 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra,2011, p.90).The image Ganesha is made of sand stone. The iconography of the Ganesha image indicates the Odishan classical art of the late medieval period.



### 3.2. Ganesha Image of Kantaparasasana

The temple of Gokarnesvara is one of the Saiva shrines of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is placed on the village Kantaparasasana within the Niali Block of the Cuttack district. The temple is located at the left bank of river Prachi and it's far approximately 1 km from the Kapilamuni Asrama(Mohapatra,2017, p.167). The central niches of the 3 facets of the *bada* of *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the pedestal. But the lower part of the image is damaged and it's far plastered with current cement. The image Ganesha shows damaged tusk in top right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand and *kuthara* (hatchet) in lower left hand respectively(Mohapatra,2017, p.167). Here the deity

Ganesha wears a sacred thread in his body. The image Ganesha is fabricated from sand stone. The fashion and iconography of the Ganesha image endorse the Odishan artwork of the medieval period.

### 3.3. Ganesha Image of Bhapur

The temple of Belesvara is an ancient Saiva shrine of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. This temple is situated about 2 kms from Kapilamuni Asrama on the western bank of river Prachi (Mohapatra, 2017, p.226). It is located at the village Bhapur in the Balipatna Block of the Khurda district. This temple is considered by the local people as one of the “Dvadasa Sambhus” of the Prachi Valley. The site of the temple is variously known as *Antarvedi*, *Manikarnikatirtha* and *Prayaga tirtha* (Behera & Dhal, 1992, p.ix). The primary niches of the 3 sides of the bada of *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. He holds a damaged tusk in his right hand, rosary in his lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in his higher left hand and *kuthara* (hatchet) in his lower left hand. Mouse, the conventional mount of deity is carved on the right of the pedestal. The image Ganesha measures 1 foot 5 inches in height and 1 foot 2 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.229). It is made of chlorite stone. The iconography of this Ganesha image proposes the Odishan classical art of the medieval period.

### 3.4. Ganesha Image of Tola-Gopinathpur

The temple of Ramesvara is one of the important Saiva shrines of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is located on the village Tola-Gopinathpur within the Niali Block of the Cuttack district. The temple is nearly fifty four kms away from Bhubaneswar at the Nakhara-Madhava road (Ray, 1975, p.15). The principal niches of the 3 facets of the bada of *vimana* of the temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. All the aspect deities are housed within the *pidha mundi* niches. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern aspect. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double sectional pedestal. The centre of the front aspect of the pedestal is adorned with a mouse, the traditional mount of deity. The image Ganesha shows a damaged tusk in his higher right hand, japamala (rosary) in his lower left hand, a pot of *ladus* in his higher left hand and *parasu* (hatchet) in his lower left hand respectively. The image Ganesha is fabricated from granite stone. Flower medallion is carved on each aspect pinnacle corners of the slab. He wears a *sarpayajnopavita* in his body. The image Ganesha measures 1 foot 8½ inches in height and 1 foot 2 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.152). The style and iconography of this Ganesha image indicate the Odishan classical art of the modern period.



### 3.5. Ganesha Image of Pitapara

The temple of Angesvara is situated three kms distance from the Amaresvara Chhak, on the village of Pitapara within the Naili Block of the Cuttack district. This temple is likewise placed approximately sixty one kms far from Bhubaneswar at the northern bank of the river Prachi (Ray, 1975, p.12, 56). The principal niches of the 3 facets of the bada of *vimana* of the Angesvara temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern aspect. The 4 handed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. The backside part of the pedestal is embellished with scroll work. Mouse, the traditional mount of the deity is carved at the proper of the pedestal. He shows damaged tusk in top right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand and *kuthara* (hatchet) in lower left hand respectively. The complete blown lotus flower is carved on each aspect pinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha is fabricated from sand stone. The slab of deity measures 2 ft nine inches in top and 1 foot five inches in width (Mohapatra, 2017, p.97). The iconography of the Ganesha images shows the Odishan classical artwork of the Somavamsi period.



### 3.6. Ganesha Image of Nuagaon

The temple of Sovanesvara is one of the crucial Saiva shrines of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is located approximately 1 km from the Niali Bazar within the district of Cuttack. The temple is positioned on the village Nuagaon close to Niali and it's miles approximately 50 kms from Bhubaneswar at the left bank of river Prachi (Ray, 1975, p.11). The primary niches of the 3 facets of the bada of *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Parvati. The image Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern aspect. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. The lower part of the pedestal is embellished with kneeling devotees, sacrificial *yupas* in each facets and lotus bud with stalk. Mouse, the traditional mount of deity is carved at the left of the pedestal. Diminutive attendant discern retaining jack fruit is carved on each facets of the deity. The bottom of the pinnacle of the deity is embellished with trefoil arch; woman discern at the bottom and the *kirtimukha* motif on the apex. Vidyadhara and apsara figures retaining garlands, musical instruments, chamaras are depicted on each aspect pinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha holds damaged tusk in high right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in higher left hand and a *kuthara* (hatchet) in lower



left hand respectively. Ganesha is ornately bejewelled together along with his *yajnaopavita* and anklets being fashioned through serpents. The image Ganesha measures four to five inches in top and a couple of to three inches in width (Mohapatra, 2017, p.122). There is a small stone, which includes an image of Ganesha observed on the proper aspect of the deity (Ganesha). It is likewise taken into consideration because the aspect deity of the temple. This image is fabricated from granite stone. There is a *nisa-garvaka* (shrine) of the *pidha* order erected in the front of the Ganesha picture. The iconography of this Ganesha picture represents the Odishan classical art of the Ganga period.

### 3.7. Ganesha Image of Amaresvara

The Amaresvara temple is one of the historic Saiva monuments of the Prachi Valley in the coastal belt of Odisha. This temple is placed at the right bank of the river Prachi at a distance of 60 kms. from Bhubaneswar. It is likewise approximately three kms from Charichhak at the left aspect of Nimapara-Astaranga road (Mohapatra, 2017, p.89). The central niches of the 3 aspects of the *bada vimana* of Amaresvara temple are housed with the images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Hara-Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern aspect. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in seated posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. He holds a damaged tusk in top right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand, *japamala* in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand respectively. Mouse, the traditional mount of deity is carved at the proper of the pedestal. The again aspect of the top of deity is embellished with trefoil *makara* headed arch. Full blown lotus flower is carved on each aspect pinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha is product of chlorite stone. It measures 1 foot 7 inches in peak and 1 foot and three inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2015, pp.309-318). The iconography of this Ganesha image shows the Odishan classical artwork of the Somavamsi period.



### 3.8. Ganesha Image of Samesvara

The temple of Somesvara is one of the historic Saiva shrines of the Prachi Valley in Odisha. It is located at a distance of 1½ km from Kakatpur within the Puri district (Mohapatra, 2012, p.51). The relevant niches of the 3 aspects of the bada of *vimana* of Somesvara temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Devi Parvati, Kartikeya and Ganesha. All the side deities are carved out of chlorite stone and those are housed within the *pidhamundi* niches. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. The deity Ganesha holds damaged tusk in top right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand and *parasu* (hatchet) in lower left hand respectively. Mouse, the traditional mount of deity is located carved at the proper of the pedestal. Diminutive attendant figures keeping jackfruits are flanked on each aspect of the deity. The bottom of the top of deity is embellished with trefoil arch; makara head at the bottom and the *kirtimukha* motif on the apex. Flying apsara discerning musical gadgets is embellished on each aspect of the pinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha measures 3 feet 3 inches in height and 1 foot 10 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.106). The deity is represented as taking *ladus* with his long and supple trunk from the pot carried in his left upper hand and, as such, he is called the *Unmatta-Uchchhinta Ganapati* (Das, 1958, 49 and see Gopinath Rao, Vol.1; Part-1, 1914, p.52). The 'Uchchhinta Ganapati' is even today worshipped not only by the people of the Prachi Valley but also throughout India to achieve desired objects. In this form the deity Ganesha is considered to be a great giver of boon. A large *naga* figure of the modern cement work is encircled around the *mastaka* of the *pidhamundi*, which houses the image of Ganesha in its niche. The style and iconography of this Ganesha image show the Odishan art of the Somavamsi period.



### 3.9. Ganesha Image of Mudgala

The temple of Siddhesvara is located approximately five kms from Jiunti on a bifurcation far away from the Kakatpur-Astarang road (Donaldson, Vol.II, 1986, p.692). The temple is placed on the village Mudgala within the Astranga Block of the Puri district. Lord Siddhesvara of that shrine is taken into consideration as one of the Dvadasa Sambhus at the bank of river Prachi. The central niches of the 3 facets of the bada of the *vimana* are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern facet. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture at the double petalled lotus pedestal. Mouse, the traditional mount of deity is carved at the right of the pedestal. The backside part of the slab of deity is embellished with scroll work. He possesses damaged tusk in top right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in top left hand and *parasu* in lower left hand respectively. The image Ganesha is

manufactured from chlorite stone. The bottom of the top of deity is embellished with trefoil arch. Apsara figure is depicted on each facet pinnacle corners of the slab. The image Ganesha measures 1 foot 8 inches in height and 11 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.178). Two additional images of Ganesha of modern period are also installed on both sides of the earlier deity. The image Ganesha is housed in the *pidha mundi* niche. The style and iconography of this Ganesha image indicate the Odishan classical art of the Gajapati period.

### 3.10. Ganesha Image of Nibharana-

The temple of Gramesvara is located at the bank of the sacred river Prachi and on the centre of the village Nibharana within the Niali Block of Cuttack district. It is precisely placed at a distance of fifty four kms from Bhubaneswar and five kms from the Nuahat Bus stand (Ray, 1975, p.54). The primary niches of the 3 facets of the *bada* of *vimana* of the Gramesvara temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Kartikeya, Narayani and Ganesha. The image Ganesha is housed as the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in standing posture on a undeniable pedestal. It is manufactured from stone. The deity Ganesha shows damaged tusk in higher right hand, rosary in lower right hand, a pot of *ladus* in higher left hand and *kuthara* in lower left hand respectively. The mount rat is carved at the right of the pedestal. The bottom of the top of the deity is embellished with trefoil arch. The flying Vidyadhar figure protecting garland is depicted on each aspect pinnacle corners of the slab. The deity Ganesha wears a *sarpayajnopavita* in his body. The slab of the Ganesha image measures 2 feet 1.5 inches in peak and 1 foot 1.5 inches in width respectively (Mohapatra, 2017, p.175). The iconography of this Ganesha image encompasses the functions of the Odishan classical artwork of the Somavamsi period.

### 3.11. Ganesha Images of Nasikesvara

The temple of Nrityesvara is situated about 4 kms from the Ananda Bazar Chhak, at the village Nasikesvara in the Kakatpur Block of the Puri district (Mohapatra, 2017, p.147). The central niches of the three sides of the *bada* of *vimana* of the Nrityesvara temple are housed with the *parsvadevata* images of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Devi Parvati. All the aspect deities are housed within the *rekhamundi* niches. Ganesha is the *parsvadevata* of the southern side. The 4 armed image of Ganesha is carved in *ardhaparyanka* pose at the double sectional pedestal. Mouse, the traditional mount of deity is carved at the proper of the pedestal. He holds *ankusa* in higher right hand, damaged tusk in lower right hand, *nagapasa* in higher left hand and a pot of *ladus* in lower left hand respectively. The bottom of the top of deity is adorned with *prabhamandala*. The image Ganesha measures 9½ inches in width and 1 foot 1 inch in height



respectively(Mohapatra,2017, p.148). The deity Ganesha is made of sand stone. The iconography of this Ganesha image contains the character of the medieval art of Odisha.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

We come to realize from the above discussion that the iconography of the Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of Prachi Valley enlighten our concept in regards to the Ganesha art of Odisha in Eastern India. Out of the Twelve Sambhu (Dvadasa Sambhu) temples, the last one (Muktesvara) is submerged withinside the sea. So, the Ganesha photo of the Muktesvara temple of Daluakani isn't always cited withinside the subject. Most of the above cited Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley are carved in standing(*sthanaka*) posture and that they incorporate the inventive functions of the Odishan classical artwork of the medieval and early modern periods. The Ganesha image of Nasikesvara is carved in *ardhaparyanka* pose, that's wonderful from other Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples with the aid of using thinking about its abnormal inventive functions. On the idea of iconographical functions, the dates of the extant Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley were tentatively assigned with the aid of using the existing scholar/author. The Ganesha image of the Ramesvara temple of Tola-Gopinathpur belongs to the modern period. It is known from the above Ganesha images of the Prachi valley that the Odishan artists had attempted at excellent for the improvement of Ganesha art. These Ganesha images of the Prachi valley have been executed by the artists of the Kalingan school of art of Odisha. On the whole, the iconographic features of the Ganesha images of the Dvadasa Sambhu temples of the Prachi valley occupy a unique place in the history of Saiva art of Odisha in Eastern India.

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