

## Immortal Monuments and Sacred Temples

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**Abstract:** The recent investigations conducted in the Maddur Taluk of Mandya District, Karnataka has revealed rich archaeological vestiges where hero stones and sati stones predominates the other. These memorial stones are either single or to maximum six panels depicting various aspects of war scenes, followed by hero was carried by nymphs in celestial car or by holding him and finally the hero and his associates are shown seated in front of a temple invariable houses a Shiva Linga. A closer look has revealed some curious data where different styles of temples are depicted. The results are illustrated here.

**Keywords:** Memorial stones – Temples – Styles

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## INTRODUCTION

The ancient literary records mention a number of temple forms but a few are authenticated by epigraphical records. The architects who raised these abodes under the royal patronage follows certain vastu-sastras according to the temples they raise. The inscriptions engraved on those temples inadvertently gives the name of the architects, architectural terms and rarely the book they followed. The micro study of the immortal monuments i.e. Hero stones, Sati stones and memorial stones has revealed a number of styles prevalent in Karnataka. This paper deals with such sacred temples found during the recent survey in Karnataka.

## LITERARY RECORDS

The architectural principles of Hindu temples in India are described in Shilpa Shastras and Vastu Sastras which reflects a synthesis of arts, the ideals of dharma, values and the way of life cherished under Hinduism. The ancient Hindu texts on architecture such as Brihatsamhita and other classify temples into five orders based on their typological features – Nagara, Dravida, Vesara, ellipse and rectangle. The plan described for each include square, octagonal and apsidal. Each temple architecture in turn has developed its own vocabulary with terms that overlap but do not necessarily mean exactly the same thing in another style and may apply to a different part of the temple. Of the different style of temple architecture in India, the Nagara architecture of

northern India and the Dravidian architecture of southern India are most common. Surviving texts suggest that several school of Hindu temple architecture had developed in ancient India. The most prominent among them are the Vishvakarma School and the Maya School. The former is related to the Nagara style of architecture, whereas the Maya school with those related to the Dravida style. The style now called Vesara bridges and combines elements of the Nagara and the Dravida style, it probably reflects one of the other extinct schools.

Further, several canonical texts BhuvanaPradipa, Bhuvanapravesa, Silpasastra, Silpasarini, Silpaprakasa, SilparatnaKosa, and Silpipothi also reveal other styles. The Silpasarini makes reference to a number of different temples, including Manjusri, Mrudanga eka bhagika, Vasusri, Mahameru, Kailasa, Ratnasara, Vartularatha Vimana, and Suvamakuta.

## EPIGRAPHICAL RECORDS

Apart from the ancient texts, some of the inscriptions found in Karnataka also mentions about the architecture forms and terms, architects etc. Some of the inscriptions worthy to mention here recorded from Kottisvara temple at Kupputur, Dist. Shimoga (1100 CE), Lakshmidēvi temple at Doddagaddavalli, Dist. Hassan (1113 CE) and Amritesvara temple at Holal, Dist. Bellary (1235 CE).

### Kaitabhesvara (Kotishvara) temple at Kubatur, Dist. Shimoga

The Kaitabhesvara temple at Kubatur is datable to 1100 CE and is one of the early Hoysala temples of the period of Vinayaditya and is known as Kotishvara in inscriptions.

A rare inscription (EC, vol-8: No.275) in this temple refers to major forms of medieval Indian temples which is given below

*‘(Kailasa)driyavisvakarmanebhavang end-oldu  
sad -Bhaktiyolbhadradimkandarisittan- embineg-  
anekadravidam, bhumijampiridumnagaram -emba  
bahuvidhadabhadropetadimkangevaradire  
kottisa -bhavalyamsu-lalitamsaumayam  
Karam susthavam’.*

The above inscription purports to say that ‘(within this village of Kupputur) was built, as if by Visvakarma himself, out of sublime devotion for the lord of the Kailasa mountain, the elegant, equipoised and shapely temple of Kotisa – bhava, freely ornamented with Dravida, Bhumija and Nagara, and, with Bhadra-offsets manipulated in many ways’ (Dhaky 1977: 3).

### Lakshmidēvi temple at Doddagaddavalli, Dist. Hassan

Lakshmidēvi Temple at Doddagaddavalli was constructed by KullahanaRahuta, a merchant and his wife Sahajadevi in 1113 CE during the reign of Hoysala Vishnuvardhana (1106-1142 CE). It is the only example of the chaturskuta (four-shrined) order of temples built during the Hoysala period.

Of many inscriptions inside this temple complex, a particular interest is a 30-line inscription in old Kannada language and script (Narasimhachar 1982:5) which records the construction of the temple and further mentions that

*‘.....srimatuAbhinava-kollapu-  
RavamgeysiSriman-Mahalakshmi-deviyapra-  
SadvamgeydaVisvakarma-nirmita-su-*

*BhasitamappaMalloja-Manoyo-  
 Jange Vijaya-samvat-saradachaitra-suddha 10  
 Brihaspati-vanadanduhiriya-kereya  
 Keelage nalku-salage-gaddeyamsarva-  
 v-agikottaruchandrarka-ta-namasya-  
 rambaramsalvudui-dharmavamkidisida-  
 vamlinga-bhediGangeyatadiyalukavi-  
 leyamBrahmananumam Konda Brahma-ha-  
 tisva-dattam para-dattamvayohareta  
 vasundharamshashtirvaraha-sahasrani vi-  
 shthayamjayatekrimih //  
 vimana sarvatobhadravrishabhanalinika  
 raja Garuda vardhamana-sankha,vrittapushpakagriha-raja svasti'*

The significance of this inscription is that it mentions that MallojaManiyuja, resplendent with the creative skill of Visvakarma has erected the temple of Mahalakshmi and mentions the terms used in the temple such as 'vimana, sarvatobhatra, vrishabha, nalinika, uttunga, vairaja, garuda, vardhamana, sankha, vritta, pushpakaandgriha-raja'.

### **Amritesvara temple at Holal, Dist. Bellary**

Amritesvara Temple at Holal is built by the western Chalukyas around 1235 CE which consist of sanctum, antarala, sabha mandapa and a mukha mandapa. Inscription noticed on one of the pillar of the Mukha-mandapa mentions about the architectural forms and the architect.

*SvastiSamsastasivapadasekharaKaliyuga – Visvakarmma  
 causasthi – kalavidde(dye) -pravinacausasthi -Prasadavi-  
 sarda Nagara – Kalinga – Dravila – Vesaracaturjjati  
 prasadavinirmmitasutradharisogeyapadmo-  
 jarachatraBammojanuBokojanapuramuSrikananama  
 Kambhamgalamadidan -omdomdakkeyalam  
 karasahitagadyana 20 a(m) tinalkukeyum gadyana80 // Sri Sri.*

The above inscription (Dhaky 1977: 2 – 3) purports to say that one Sutradhari, architect by name Bammoja – pupil of Padoja who was verily a Visvakarma of the prevailing Kali-age, a master of 64 arts, an expert on building the 64 varieties of prasadas, sacred buildings, and the one who (had built? could build?) the caturjati, that is four classes of temples (namely) Nagara, Kalinga, Dravida and Vesara – carved the four shikara types of pillars etc.

Even some inscriptions mention different parts of the temple. The inscription dated 1083 CE in the Kallesvara Temple at Ambala recording the construction of the temple, mentions that the temple consisted of panchanga, tribhumi and kalasa. Actually, this temple has only three horizontal divisions, but it has five bhadras (projections) and four antaras (recesses). These five projections have been described as panchangas, whereas here the bhumi appears to denote the meaning of tala (storey) and this temple appears to have had originally three talas (Patil 1992: 62)

However, these inscriptions most probably mention about the decoration of the temple with Dravida, Bhumiya and Nagara which means those types (of pillars) are used for decorating the temple

walls and particularly not the architecture style. Yet, Doddagaddavalli inscriptions mention the terms used in the temple such as '*vimana, sarvatobhatra, vrishabha, nalinika, uttunga, vairaja, garuda, vardhamana, sankha, vritta, pushpaka and griha-raja*'. All these occur as technical terms representing varieties of *prasada* in Sanskrit works on architecture.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS

The survey conducted by the first author in the Maddur Taluk of Dist. Mandya, Karnataka has revealed nearly 134 villages (fig-1) with rich archaeological vestiges in the form of inscribed and un-inscribed hero stones, memorial stones, sati stones, oil pressing stones, inscribed slabs, temples, sluices, bunds, stepped tanks, loose sculptures and architectural members. Nevertheless, our special interest is the depiction of various types and styles of temples in the hero stones, sati stones and memorial stones. These stones are mostly depicting one to three panels and rarely up to six panels. The lower panel depicts hero either in combat or hunting, the second depicts hero in the centre either seated in the celestial chariot flanked by two or four damsels or hero standing and carried by them and the third depicts the hero in the heavenly above where a temple is depicted (Kumaran 2019: 970 – 990).

If it is an inscribed hero stone, then the inscriptions are mostly engraved on the frames in-between the panels.

### Types of Temples

The sacred temples depicted in these immortal stones in different styles starting from earlier stage to gradual developments that prevailed during medieval and late medieval times which are hitherto unknown from other sources.

Macro study of these sacred temples gives some interesting details either in their form or in their styles and probably their development. An illustrated cursory look of those forms is depicted from fig. 2 to fig. 55.

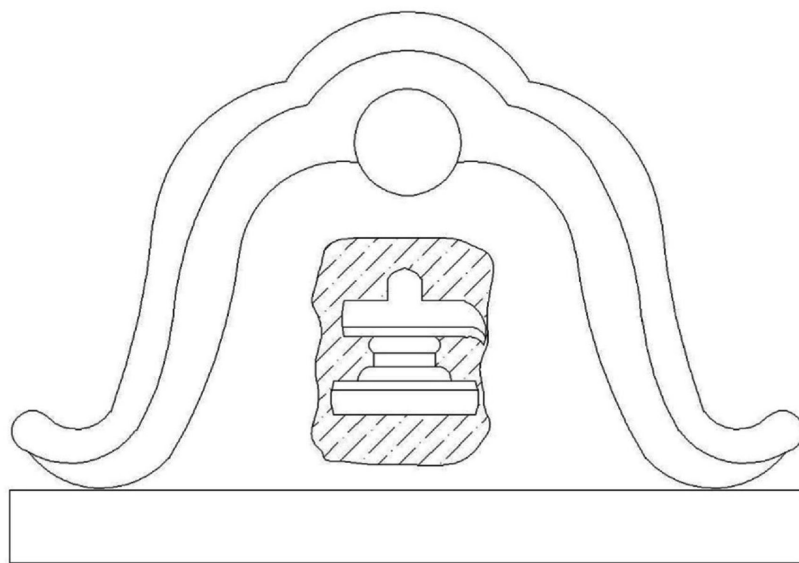
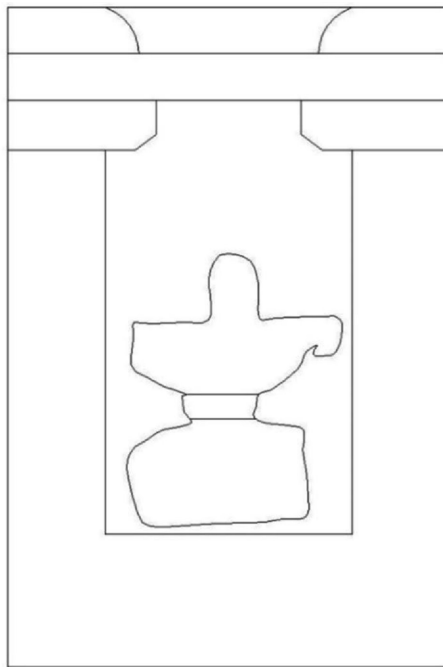
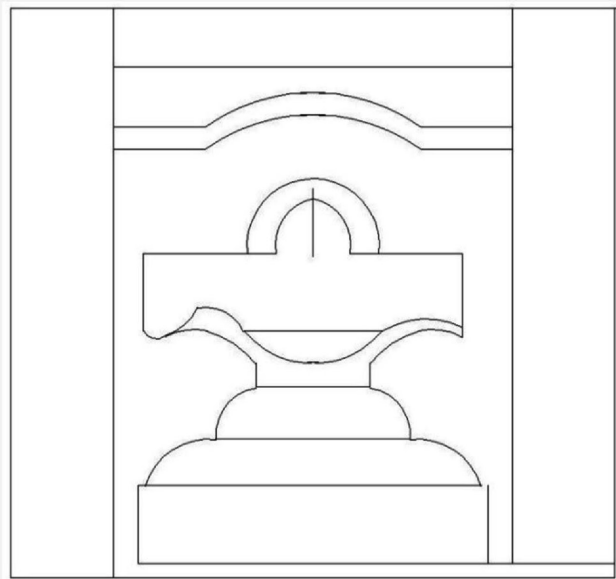


Figure – 2: Aruvanahalli



**Figure – 3: Aruvanahalli**



**Figure – 4: Chottanahalli**



**Figure – 5: Karkahalli**



**Figure – 6: Bylandkere**

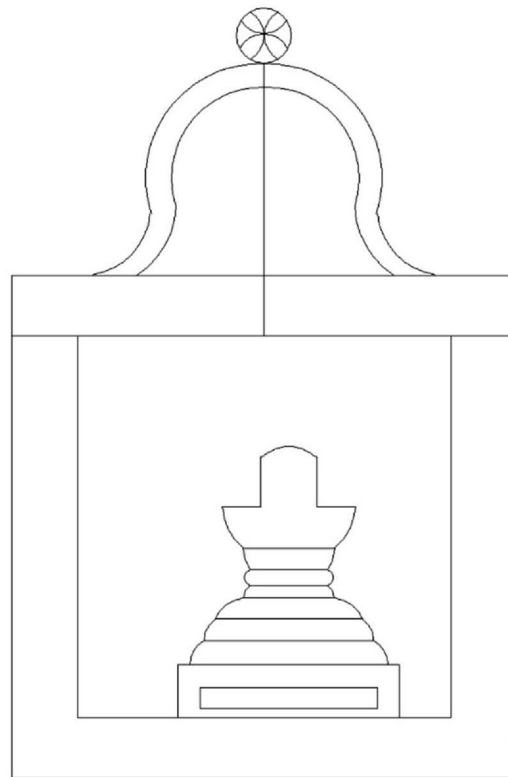


Figure – 7: K.Honnalagere

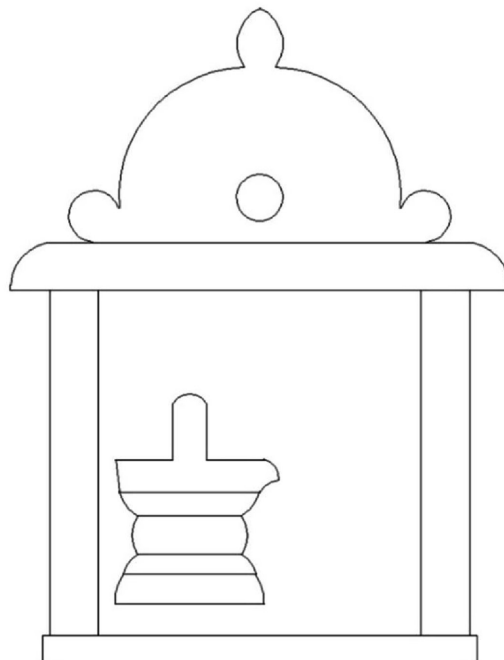


Figure – 8: Valagerehalli

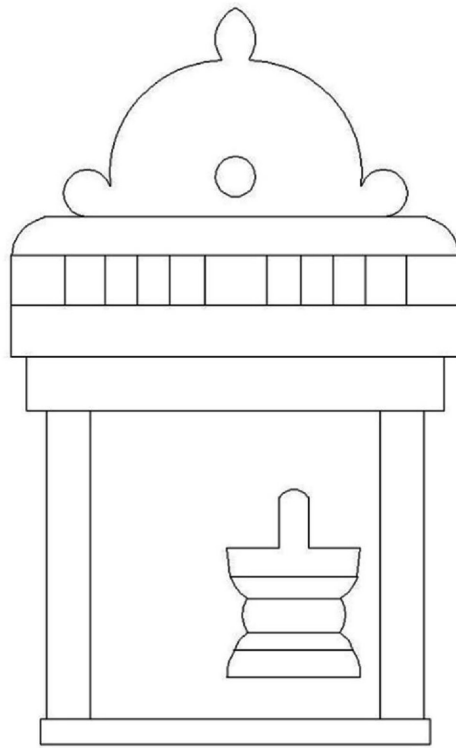


Figure – 9: K.Honnalagere

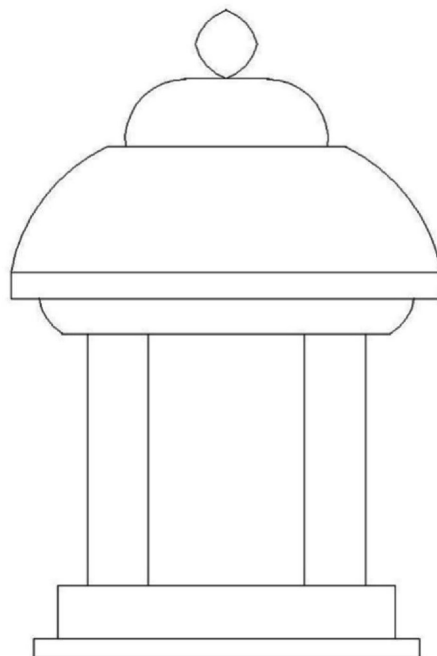


Figure – 10: Aruvanahalli



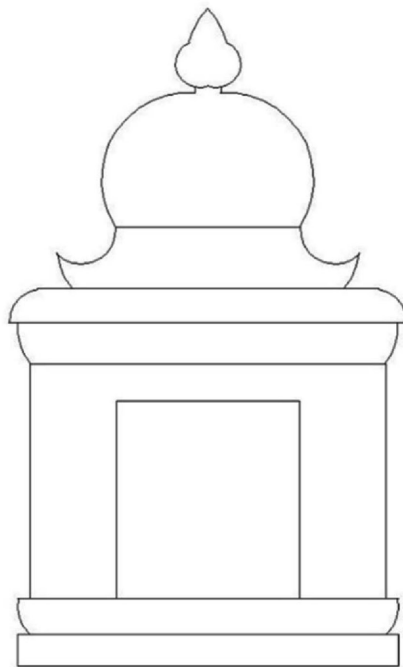


Figure – 11: Aruvanahalli

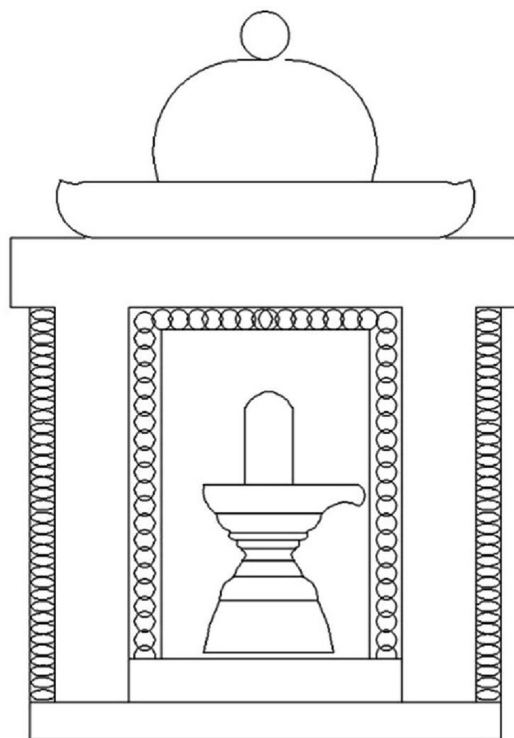


Figure – 12: Singatagere

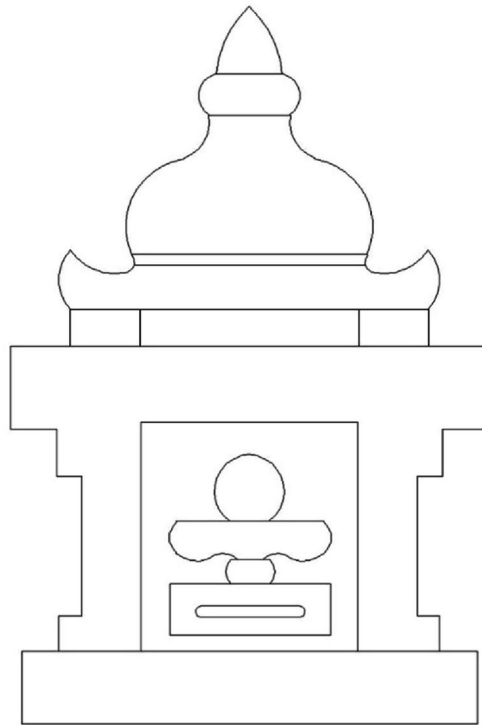


Figure – 13: Gopana halli

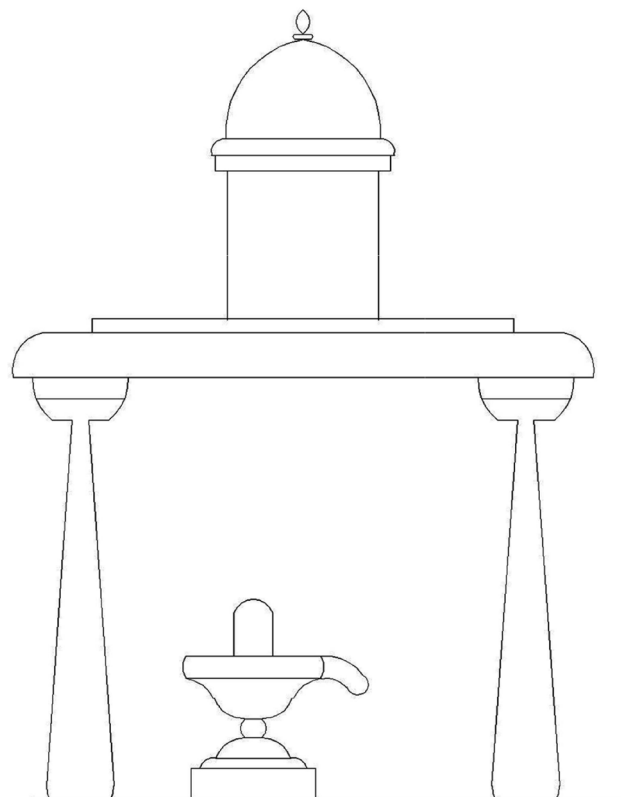


Figure – 14: Hosakere

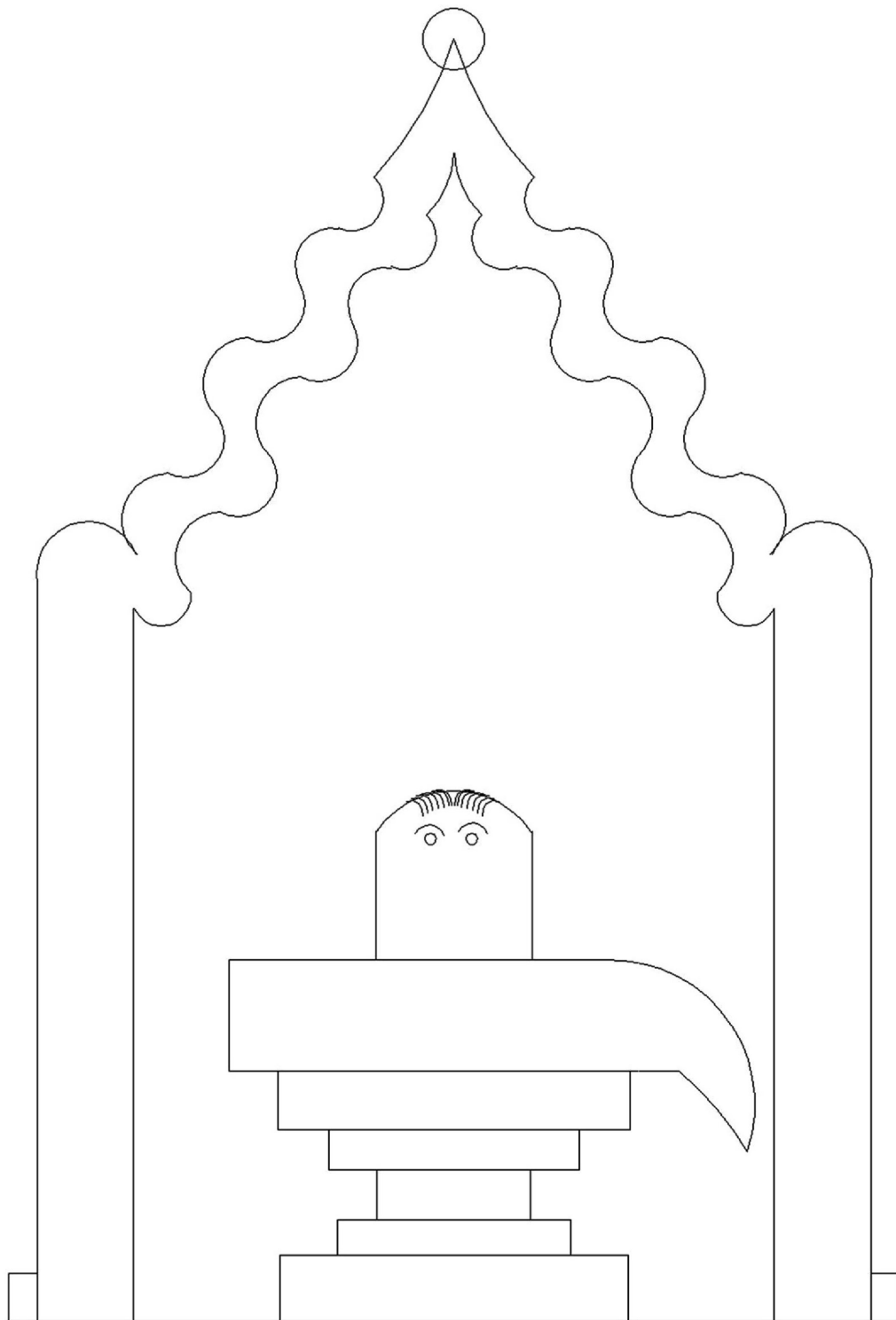


Figure – 15: Kundanakuppe

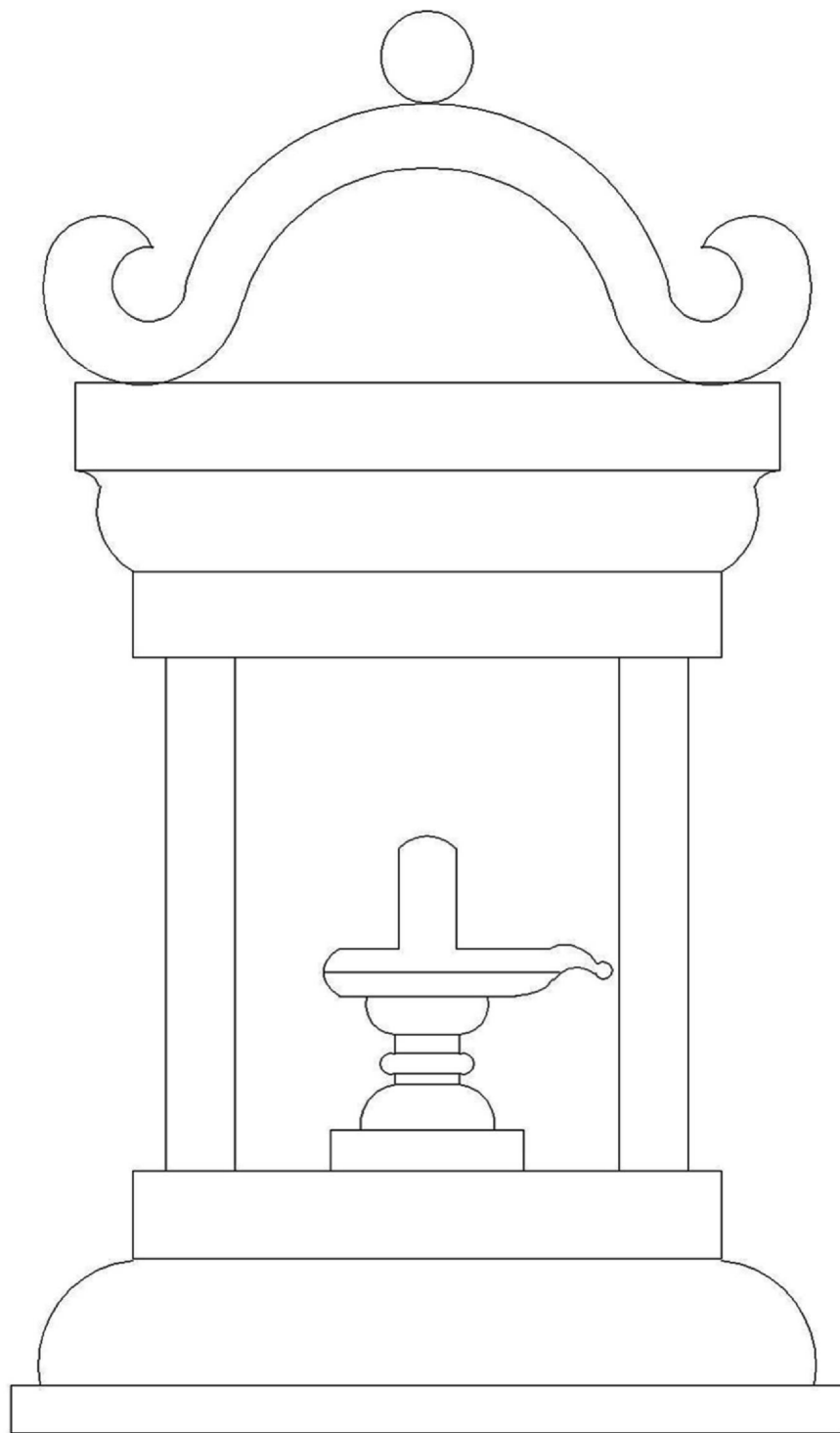


Figure – 16: Chottanahalli

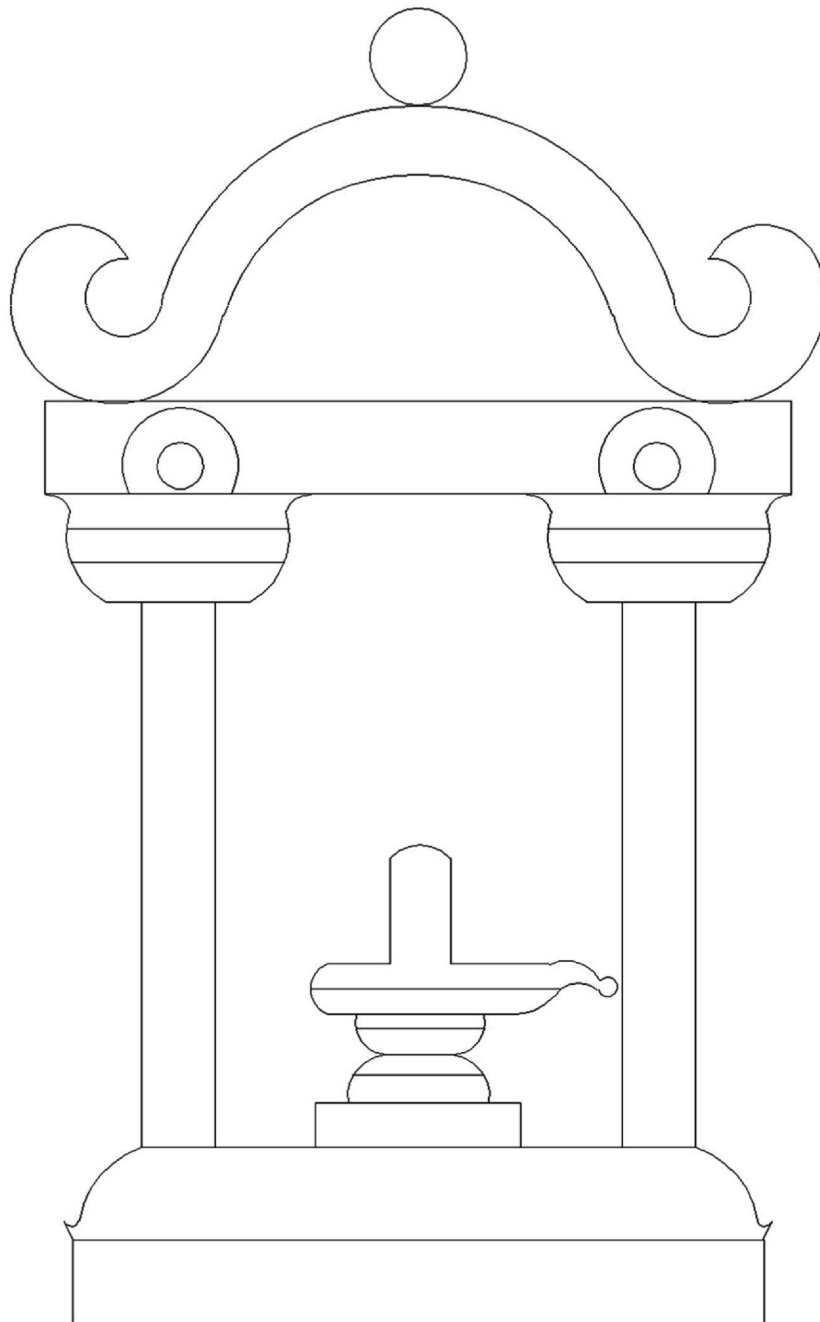


Figure – 17: S.I.Honnalagere

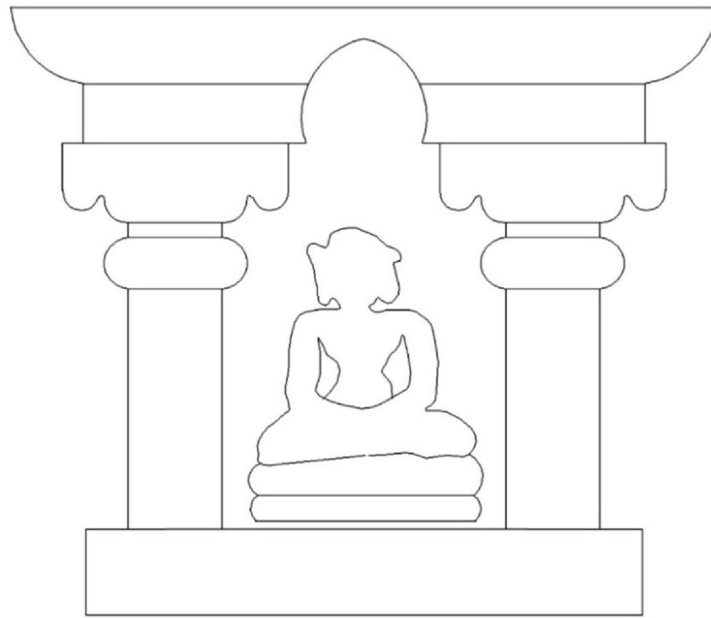


Figure – 18: Mudeenahalli

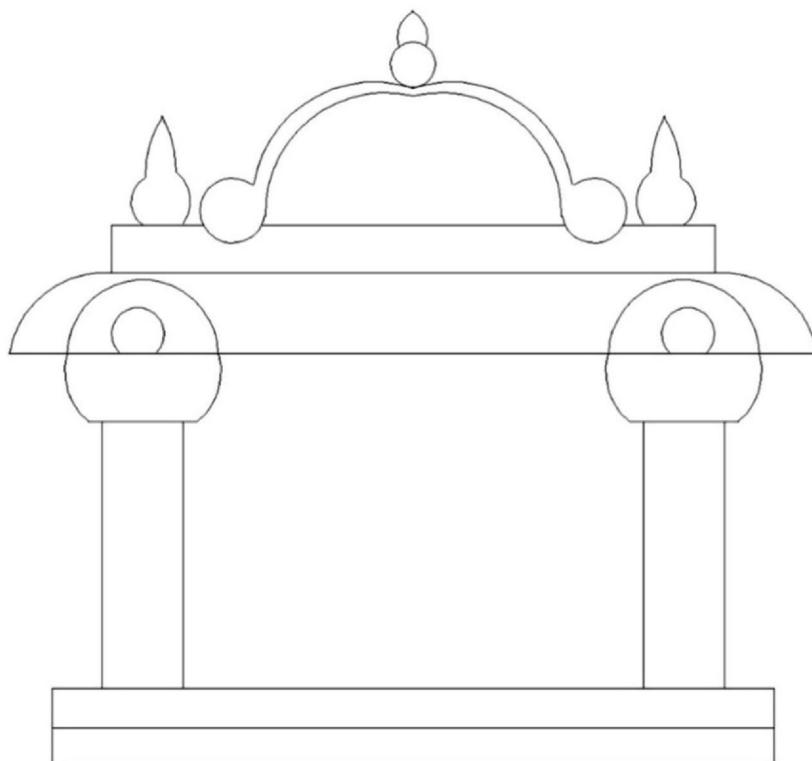
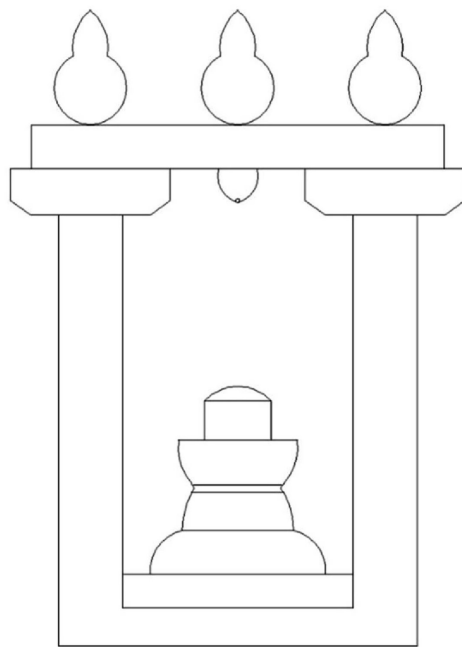
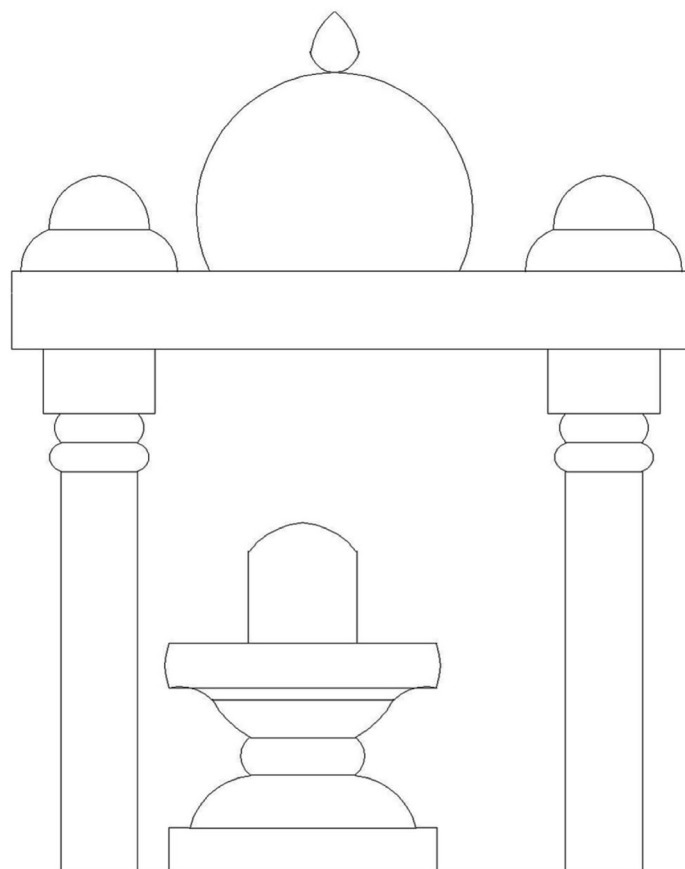


Figure – 19: S.I.Honnalagere



**Figure – 20: Aruvanahalli**



**Figure – 21: Harakanahalli**

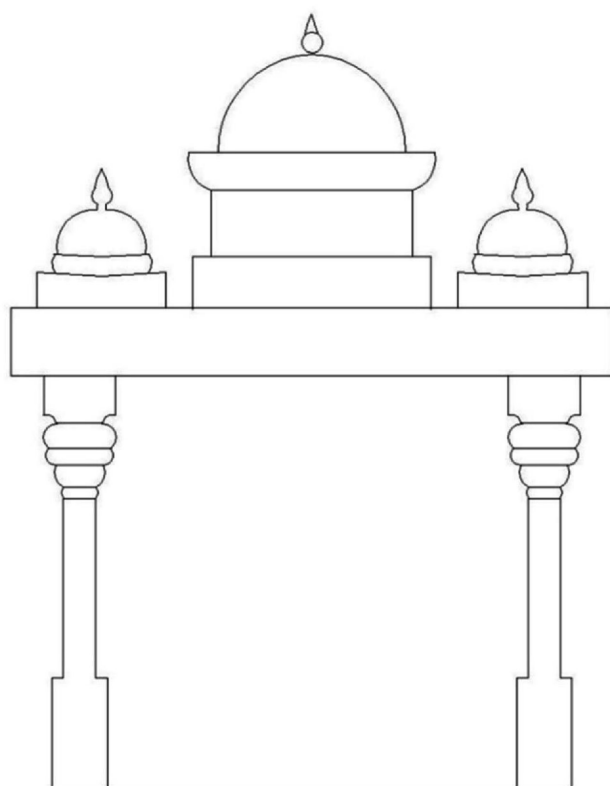


Figure – 22: Nambinayakanahalli

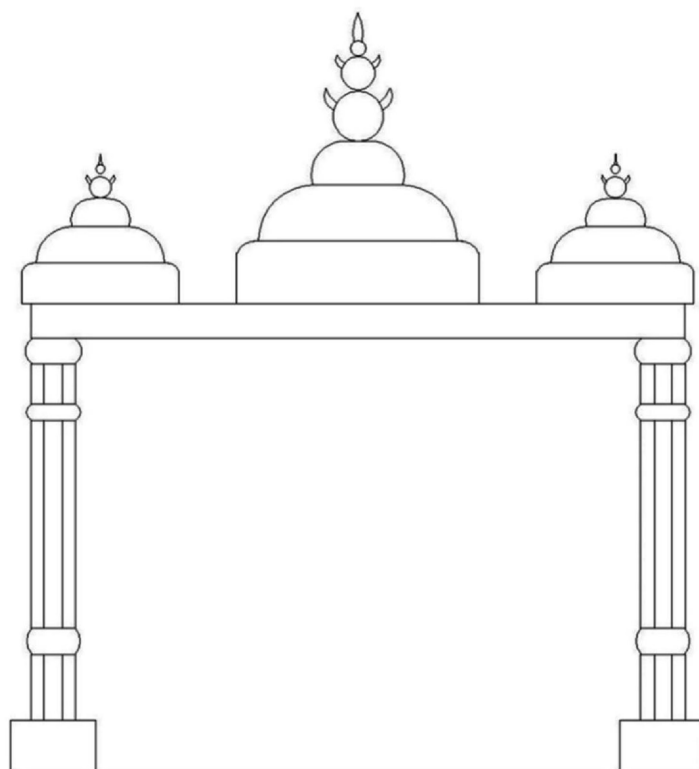


Figure – 23: Aruvanahalli



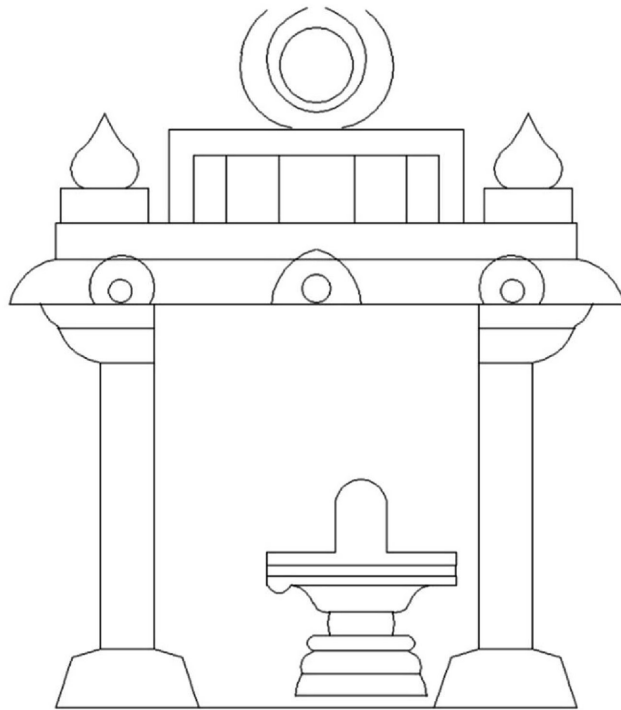


Figure – 24: Kyatagatta

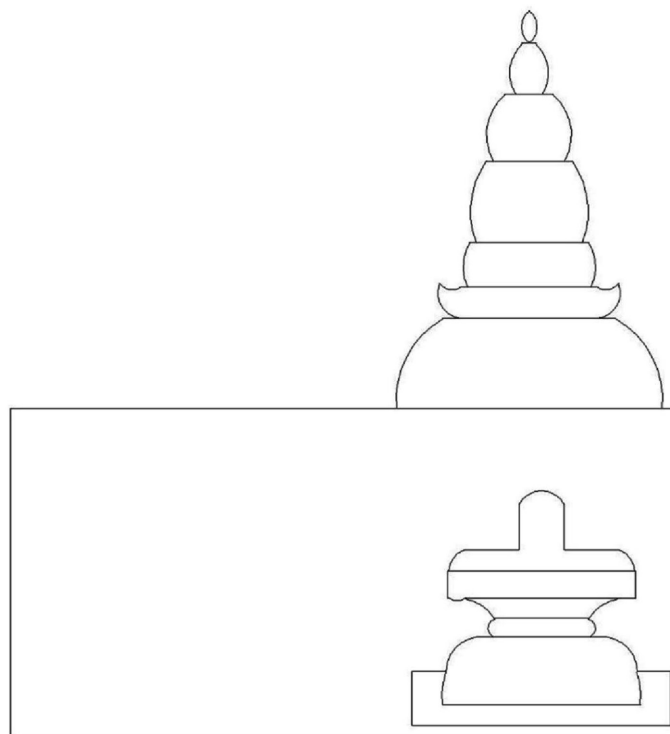


Figure – 25: S.I.Honnalagere

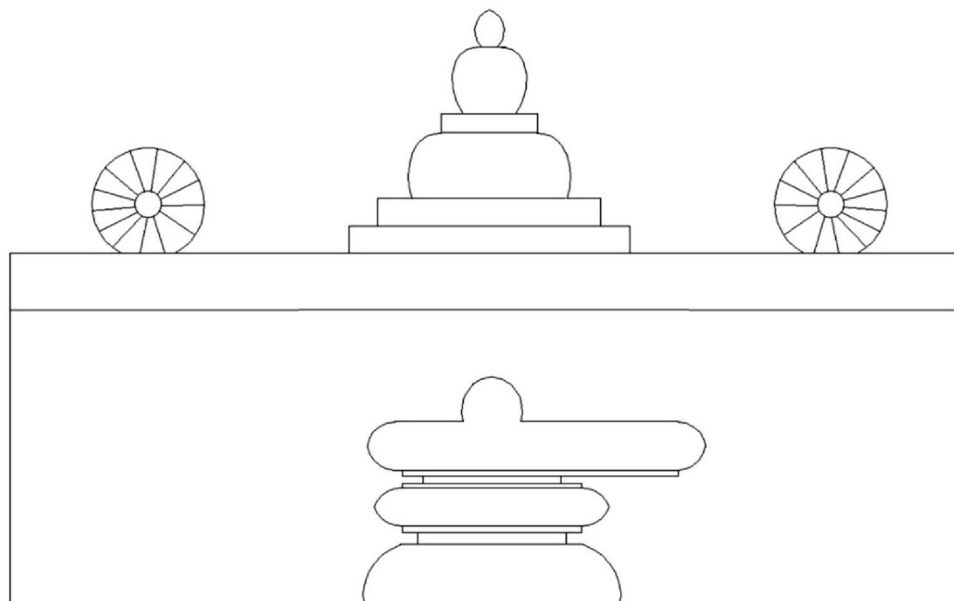


Figure – 26: Bidarkote

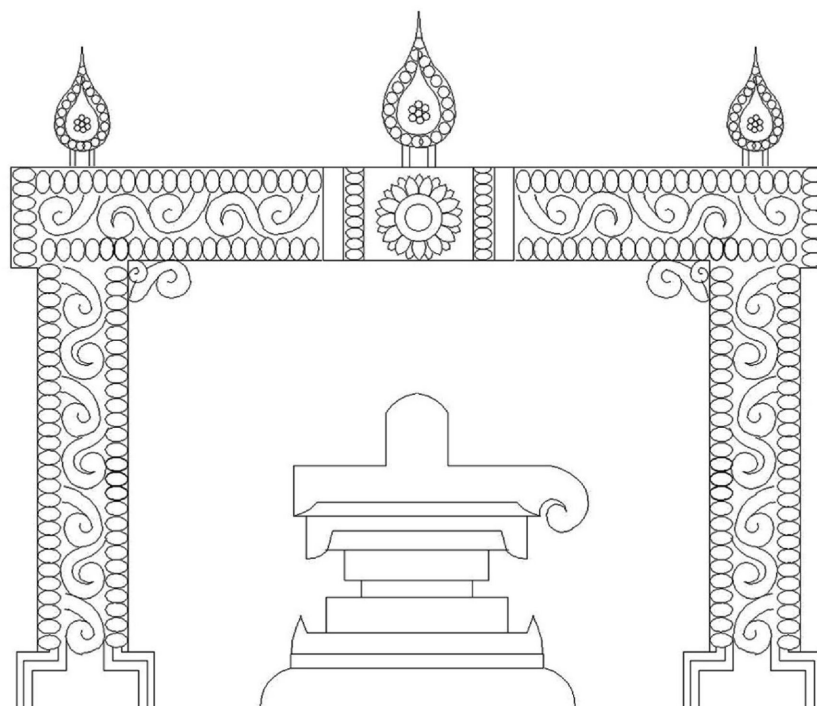


Figure – 27: Bidarkote

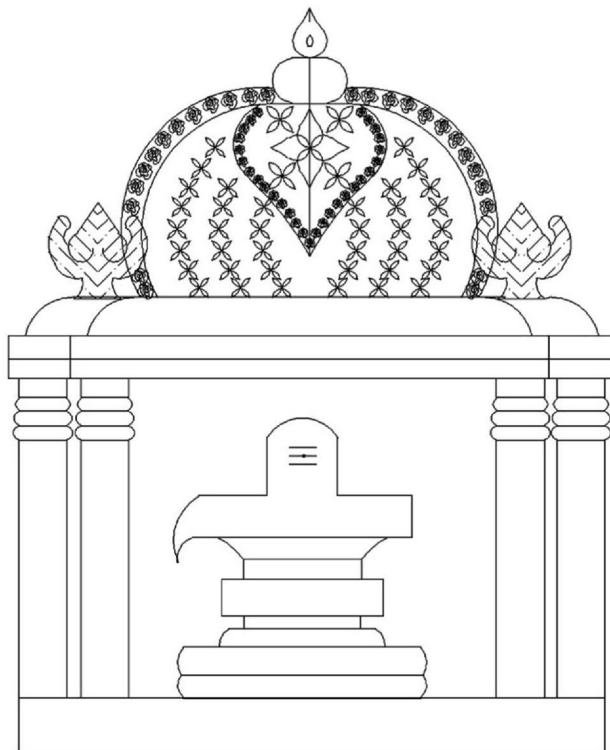


Figure – 28: Manikere

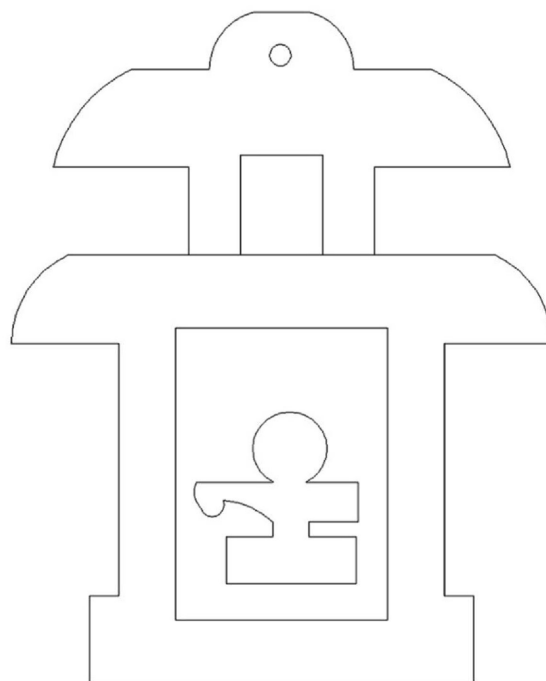


Figure – 29: Kadalavagilu

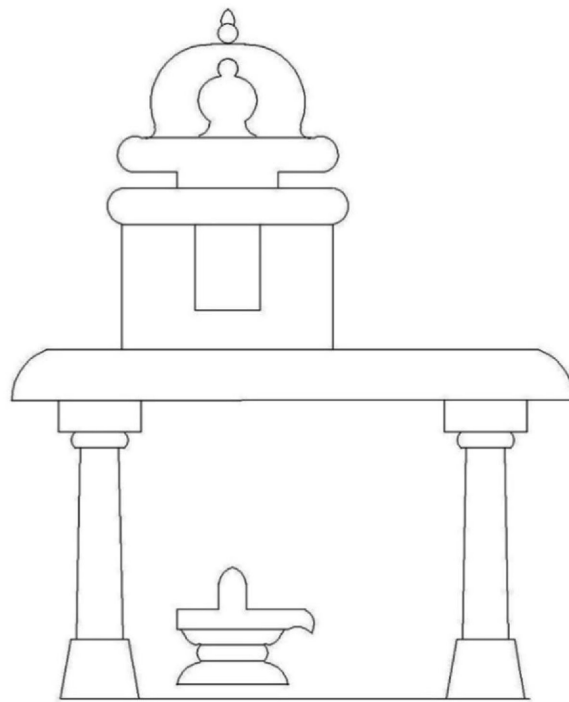


Figure – 30: Thaggahalli

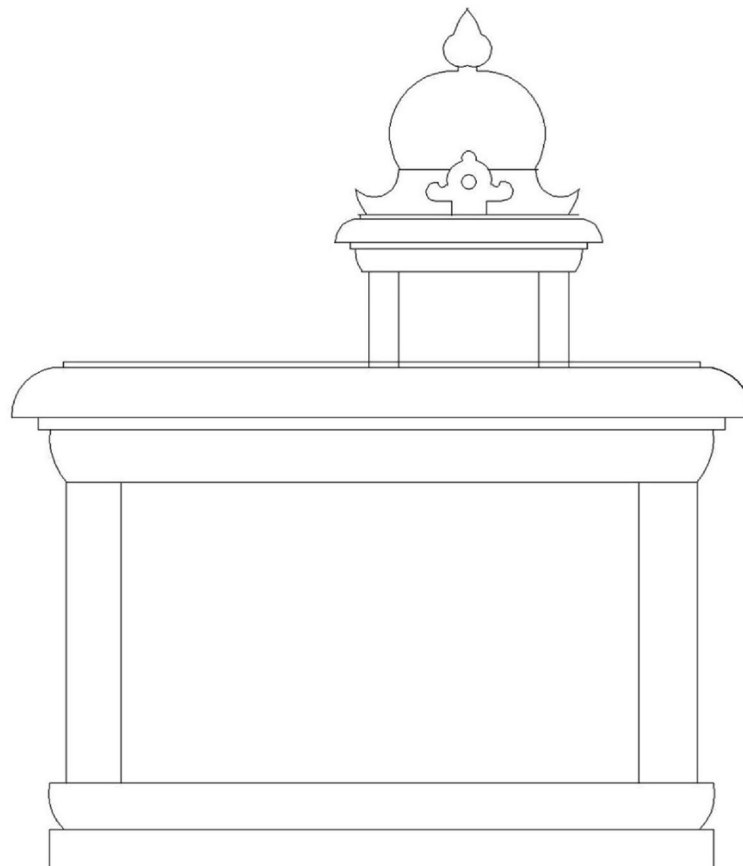


Figure – 31: Bylandakere

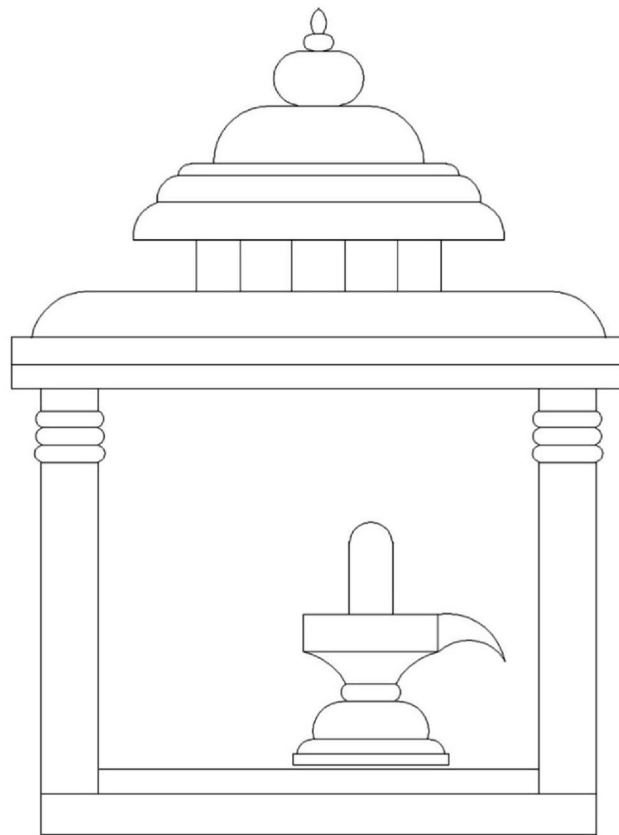


Figure – 32: S.I.Honnalagere

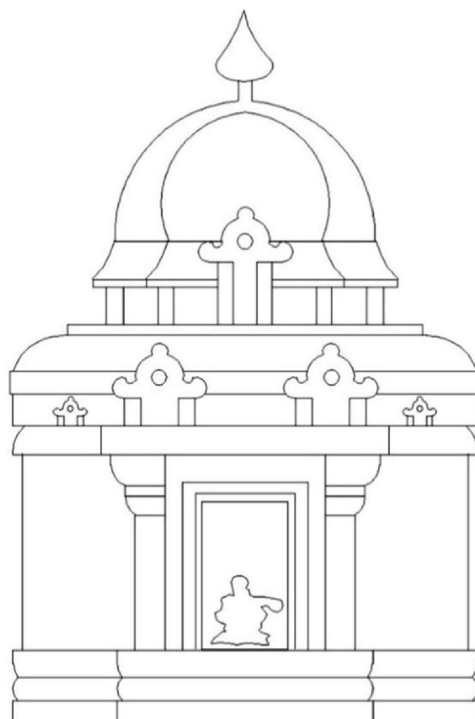


Figure – 33: Aruvanahalli

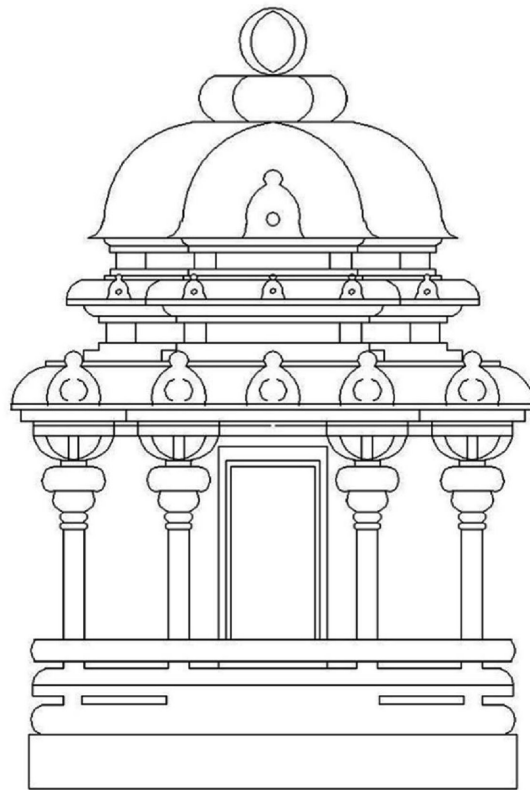


Figure – 34: Kadalavagilu

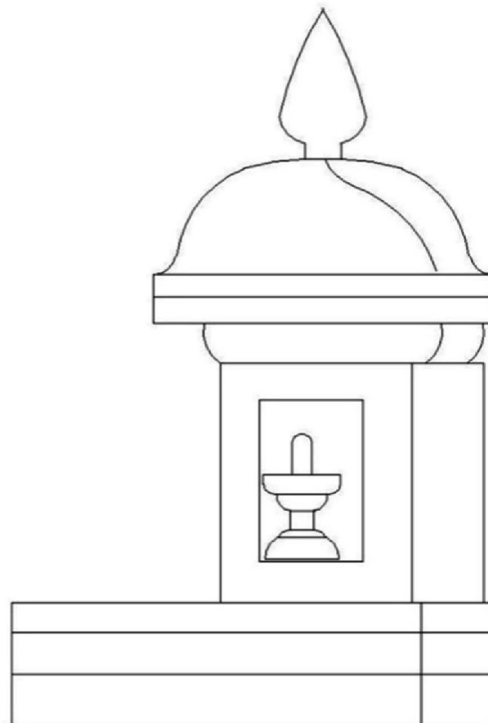


Figure – 35: Aruvahalli

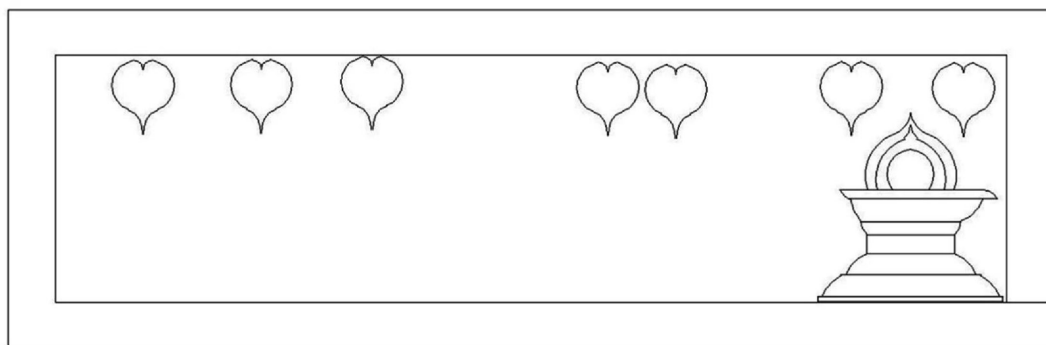


Figure – 36: Alur

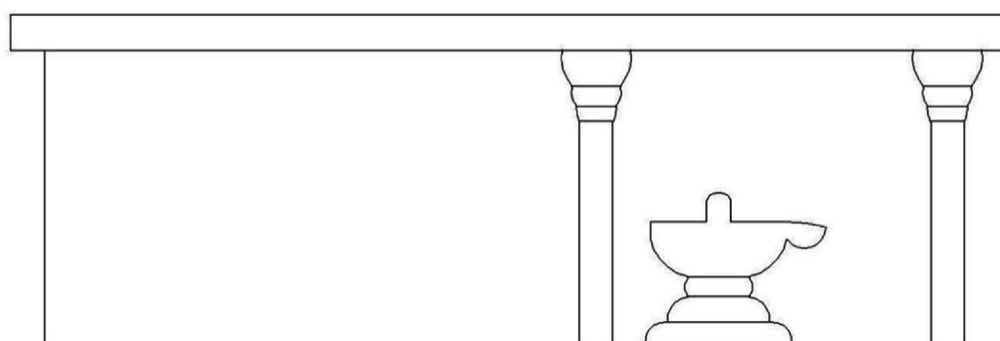


Figure – 37: Belathur

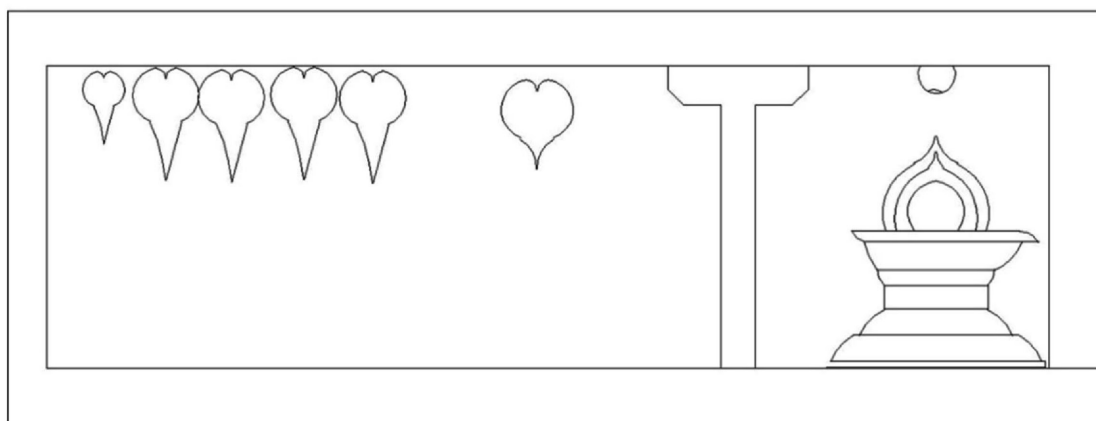


Figure – 38: Alur

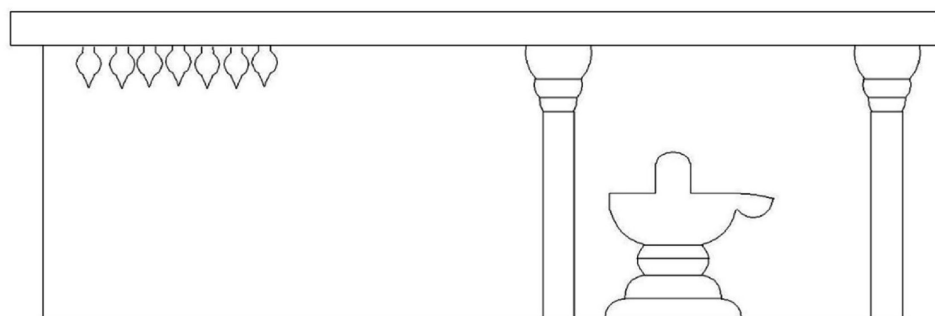


Figure – 39: Harakanahalli

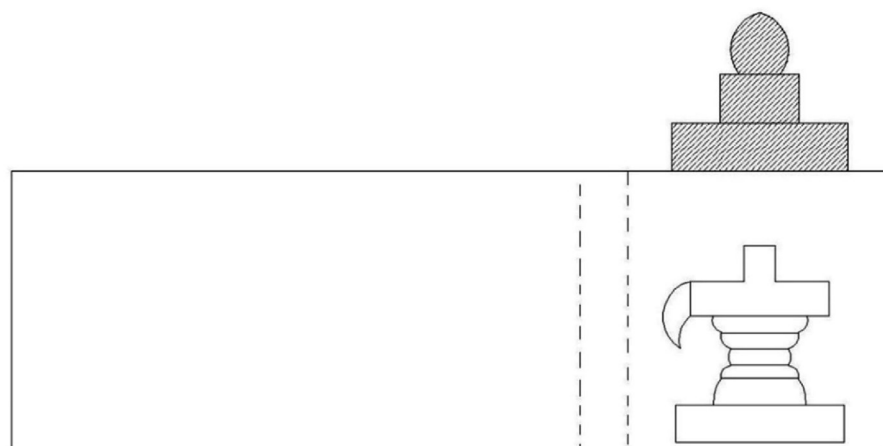


Figure – 40: Deshahalli

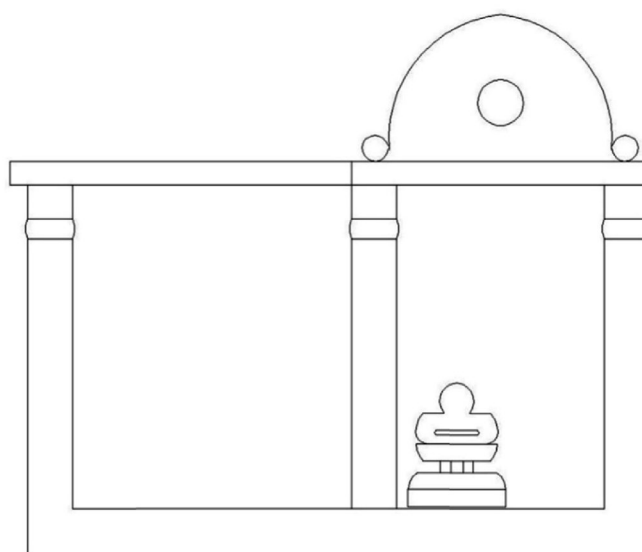


Figure – 41: Ajjahalli



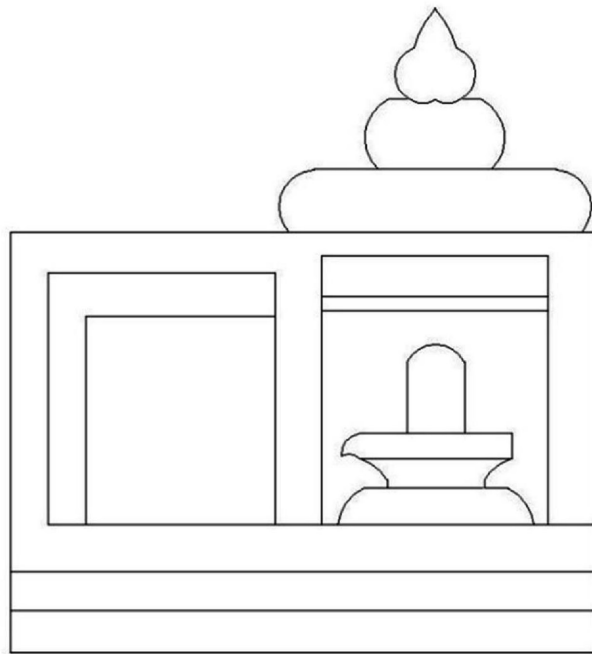


Figure – 42: Tarakere

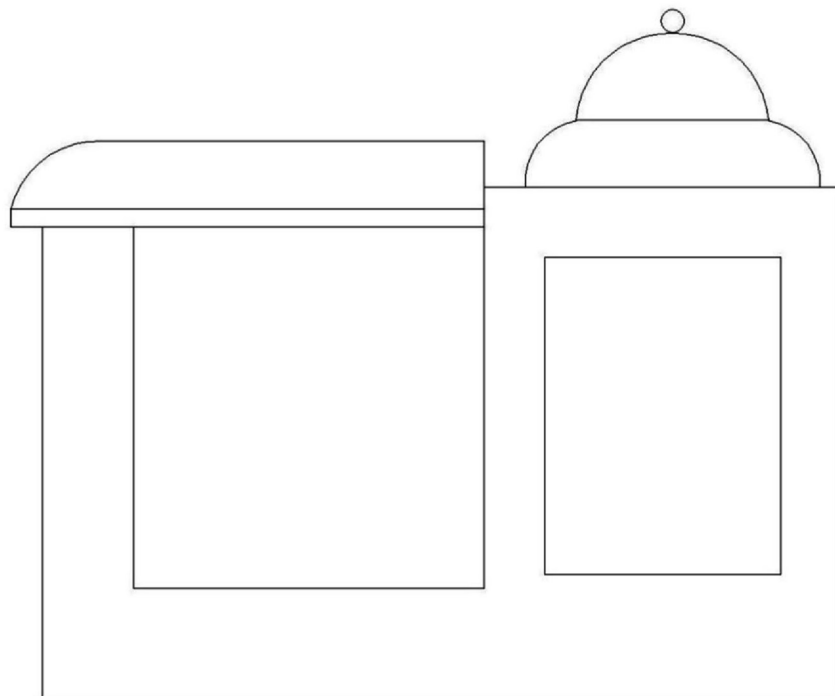


Figure – 43: Maraliga

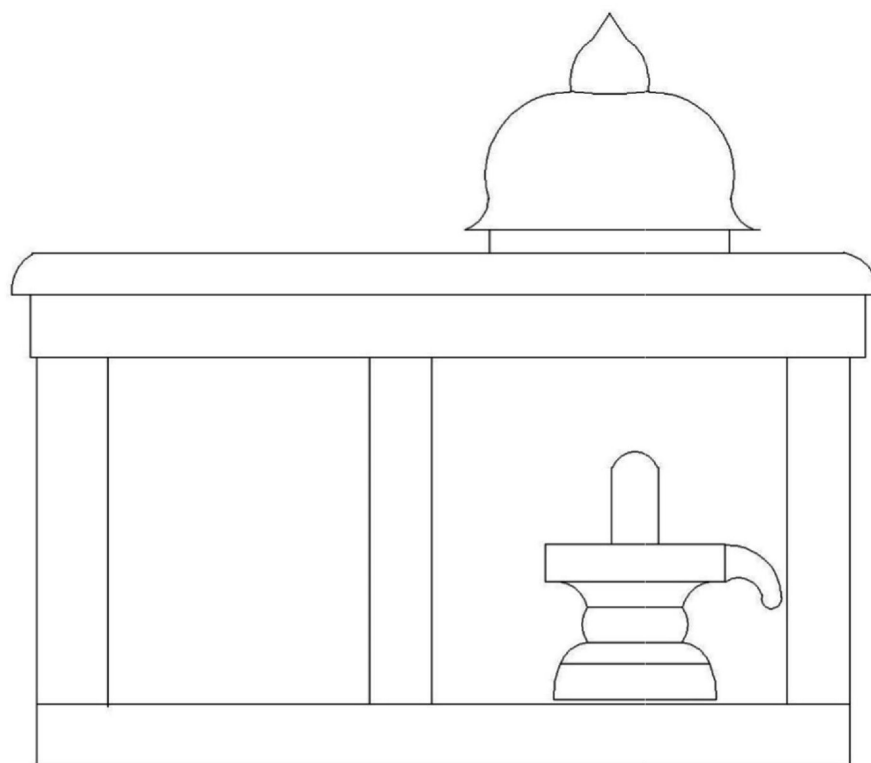


Figure – 44: S.I.Honnalagere

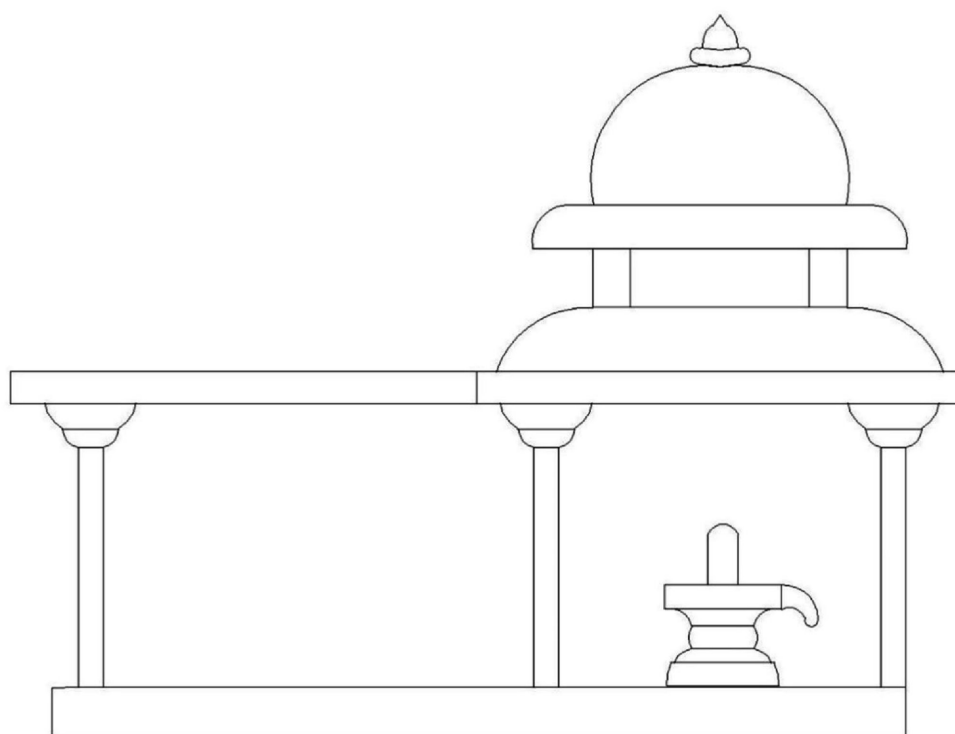


Figure – 45: S.I.Honnalagere

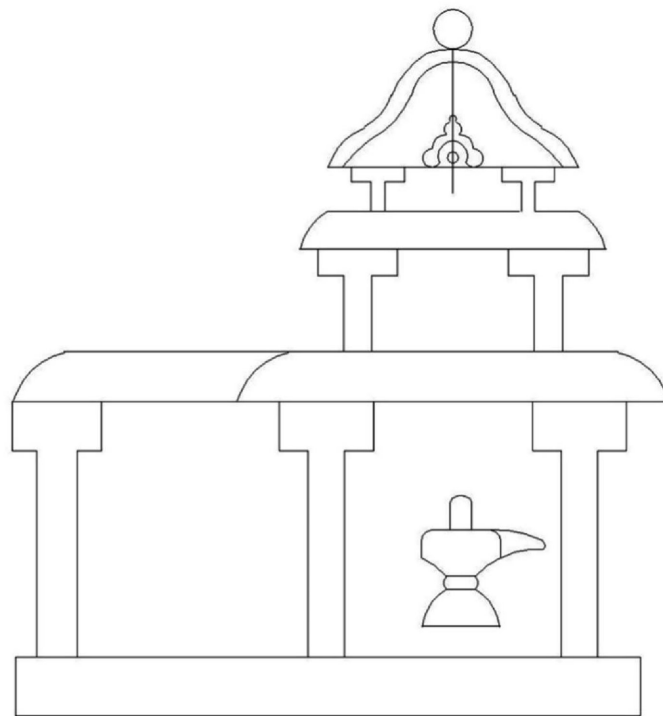


Figure – 46: Banahalli

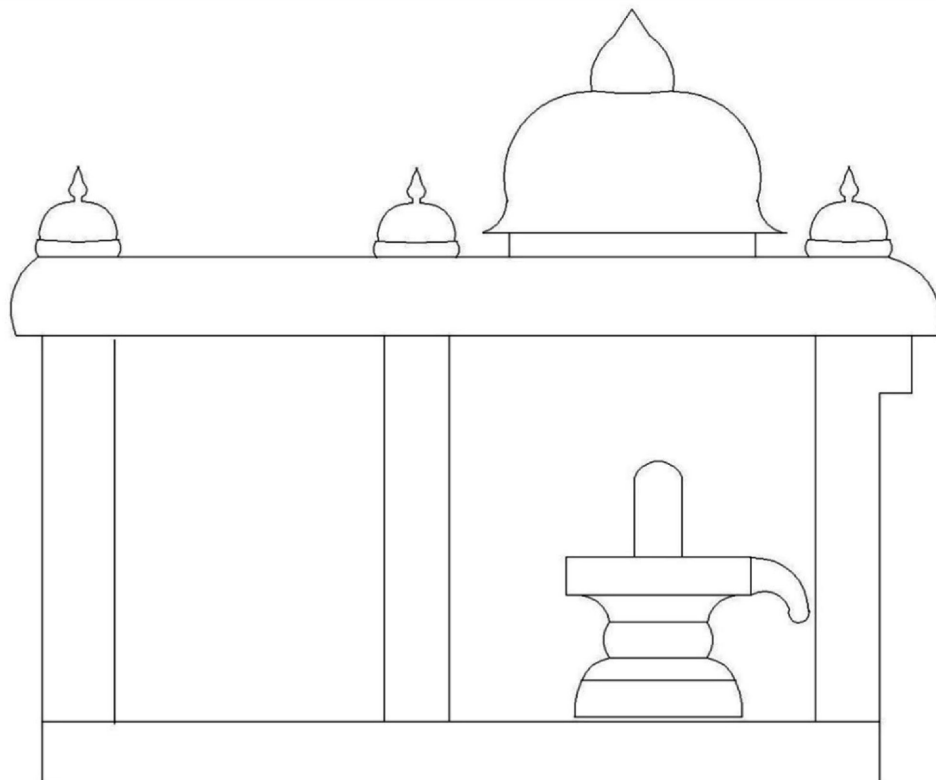


Figure – 47: S.I. Honnalagere

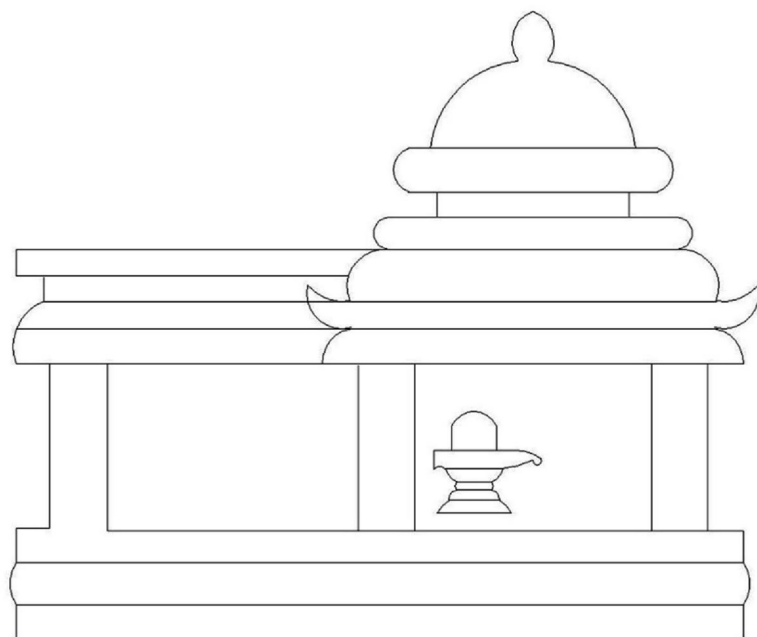


Figure – 48: Hebbaralu

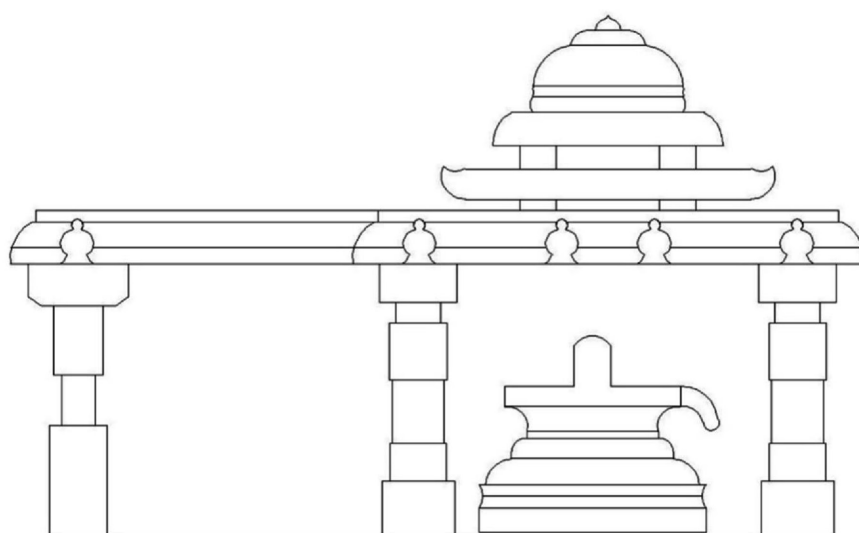


Figure – 49: Madhanayakanahalli

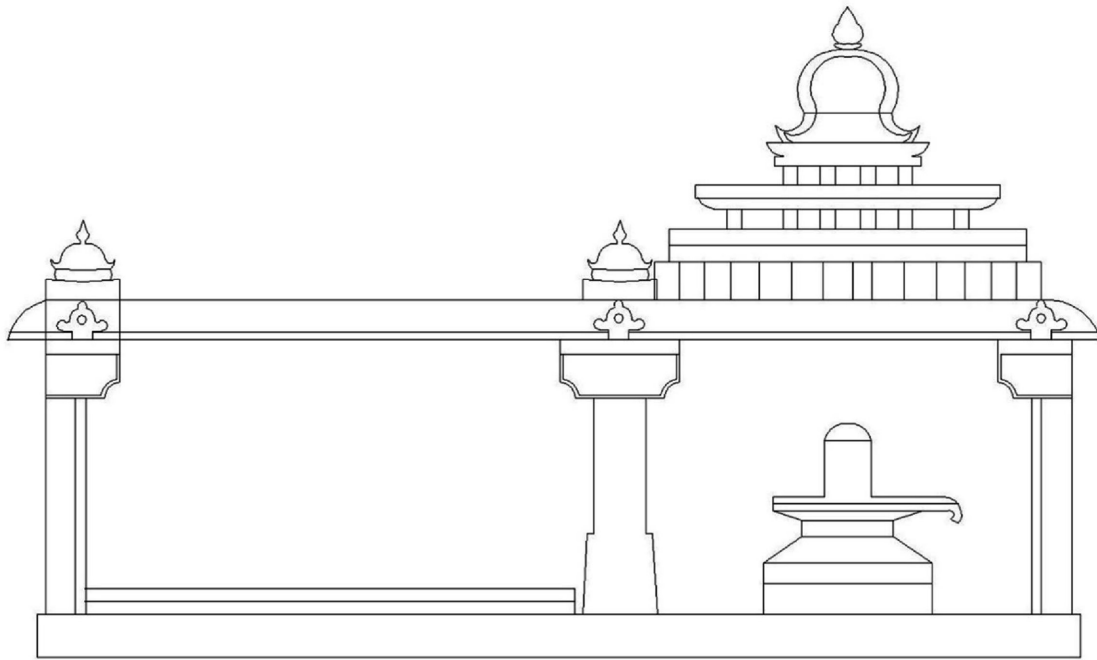


Figure – 50: Aruvanahalli

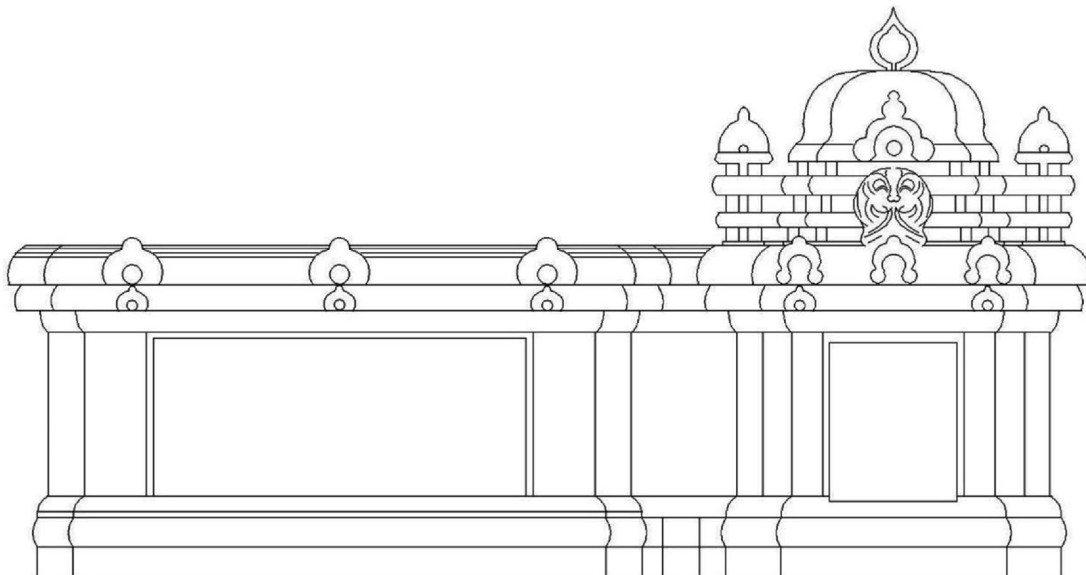


Figure – 51: Aruvanahalli

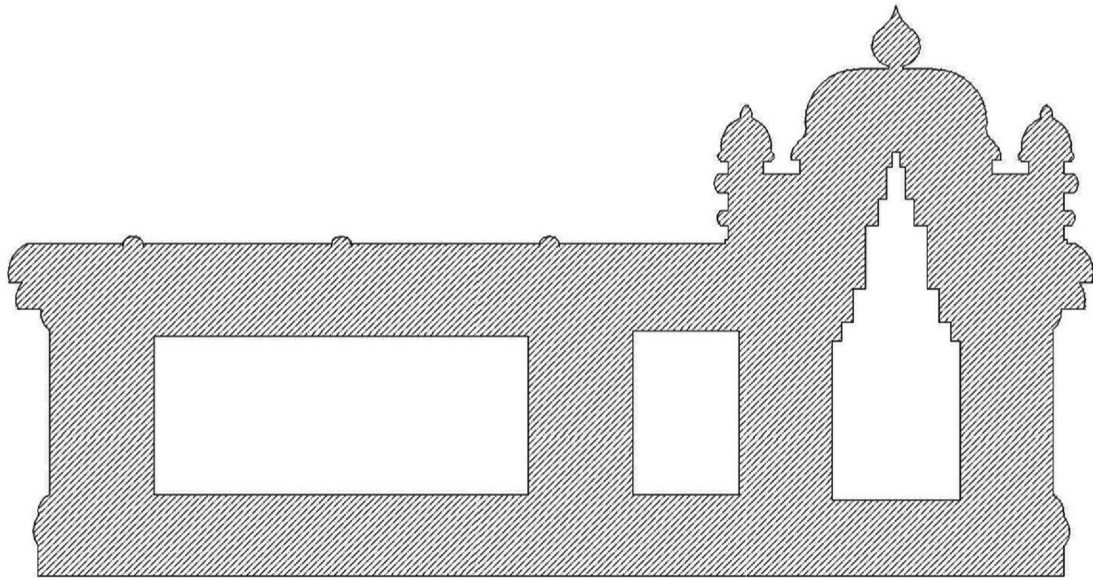


Figure – 52: Section of the above temple, Aruvahalli

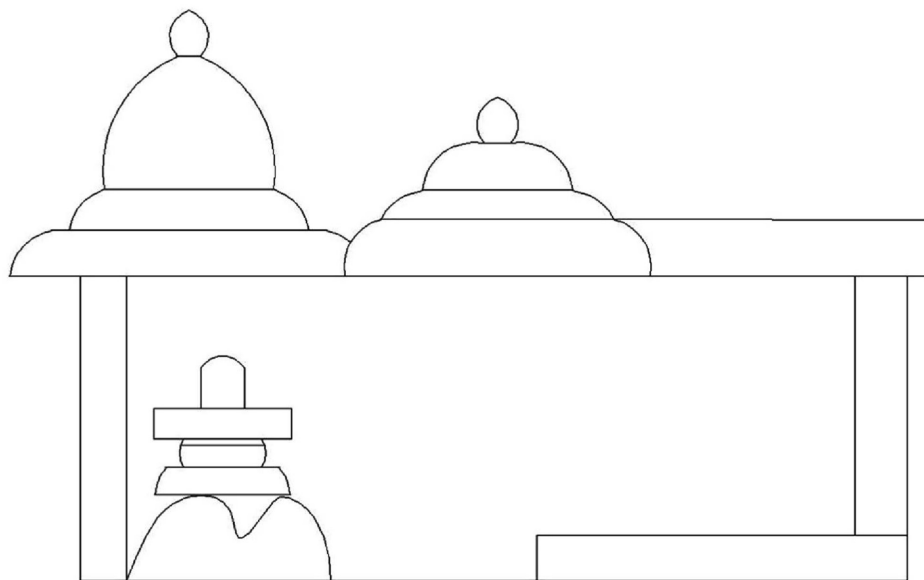


Figure – 53: Haralakere

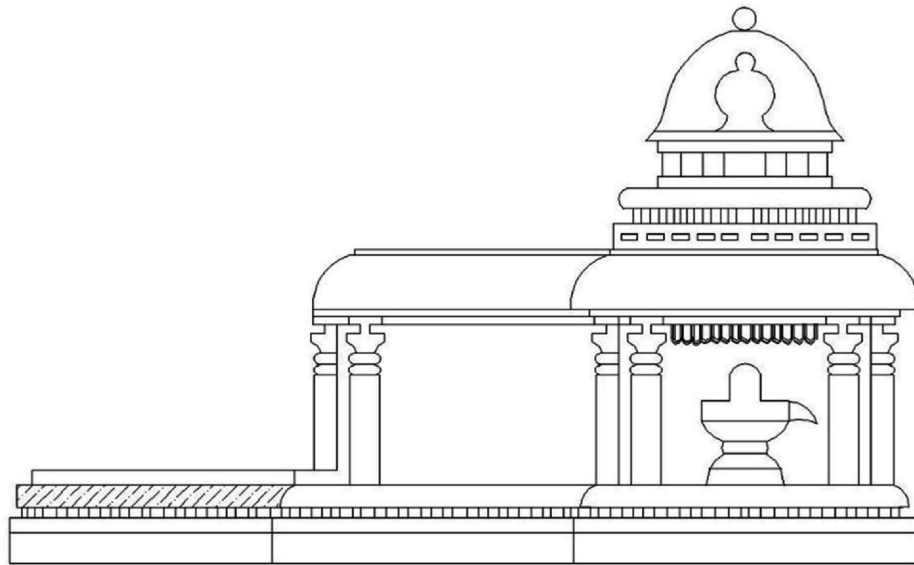


Figure – 54: Yadahanahalli

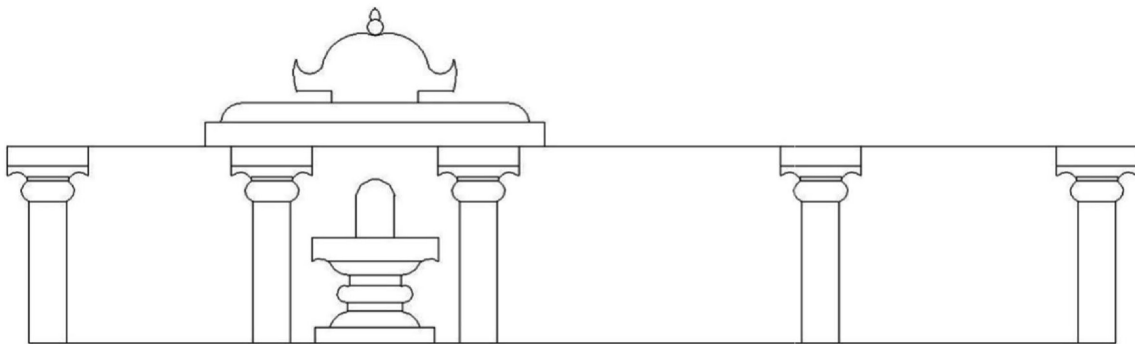


Figure – 55: Madhanayakanahalli

## DISCUSSION

According to Kramisch (1946: 270 – 276), ‘there are 20 temples mentioned in Brhat Samhita viz., Meru, Mandana, Kailasa, Vimanachanda, Nandana, Samudra, Padma, Garuda, Nandivardhana / Nandin, Gaja / Kunjara, Grharaja / Guharaja, Vrsa, Kumbha / Ghata, Sarvatobhadra, Mrgaraja / Simha, Vartula / Vrtta, Caturasra / Vavrksa / Catuskona, Sadasasra and Astasra. These twenty temples form the nucleus of a development of each variety and its ramifications. Some, of these, widely dealt with by the texts, have not survived in actual buildings. So vast is the ‘ocean of the science of architecture’ and so rich in forms that Visvakarman, quoted in the ‘Bhavisya Purana’ (I. CXXX. 36), does not appear to exaggerate when he is said to have spoken of three thousand kinds of temples of various shapes. These proportions however are no longer those of the Twenty Temples but of a different variety of the same type (II). They are known as the Forty-five Temples. The Twenty Temples represent a liberal

assortment of architectural shapes. A selection was made and five basic shapes were to ramify in the several schools of medieval architecture, in forty-five variations and also in different sets of sixty-four shapes each’.

The above micro study clearly shows that the architects medieval Karnataka are well versed with the different forms of temples mentioned in the ancient literatures. Otherwise, it is not possible for them to depict these sacred temples on these Immortal stones. These stones also shows the gradual development of temple architecture.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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