

# Preserving the Legacy: The Enduring Influence of Indian Temples in 21st-Century Society

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## Abstract

Indian temples have served as timeless centers of spirituality, cultural expression, and social cohesion, maintaining relevance across generations. These architectural marvels, steeped in religious significance, continue to play a vital role in contemporary Indian society, embodying traditions while adapting to modern needs. This paper examines the enduring legacy and evolving functions of Indian temples through various dimensions: as landmarks symbolizing cultural heritage, as communal gathering spaces, as educational centers preserving ancient knowledge, and as reflections of societal values. Through case studies of iconic temples, such as the Lotus Temple in Delhi, the Shiv Temple at Barmer (Rajasthan), and the Balaji Temple at Nandyal (Andhra Pradesh), the study illustrates how these structures remain integral to social, cultural, and environmental sustainability. The findings highlight that Indian temples are not only spiritual sanctuaries but also beacons of inspiration, guiding society towards unity, environmental consciousness, and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Indian temples, Modern temples, Indian Society, Heritage, Architectural legacy, Temple evolution

## Introduction

The ancient temples of India, enduring symbols of the nation's rich cultural and spiritual legacy, remain profoundly relevant amidst the sweeping transformations of 21st-century society. These architectural wonders, many of which date back thousands of years, have long served as centers for worship, artistic expression, and communal gathering. While rapid globalization and technological advancement have posed challenges to traditional institutions, Indian temples have displayed remarkable resilience, adapting to evolving societal needs while preserving their spiritual significance.

Historically, temples were essential to the structure of Indian society, embodying its cultural, social, and financial essence. Prof. P. Bhaskar Reddy notes that in early Indian civilization, temples emerged as influential architectural forms, functioning as hubs for cultural, economic, and educational pursuits. These sacred spaces not only represented spiritual sanctuaries but also demonstrated remarkable architectural precision, environmental awareness, and ethical ideals, offering models for sustainable living and social cohesion (Reddy, n.d.).

This paper explores the contemporary influence of Indian temples and their contributions to modern Indian society. From preserving traditional arts and crafts to serving as catalysts for local economic growth, these spaces continue to impact the fabric of Indian culture. As repositories of cultural knowledge, temples foster continuity and identity in an increasingly globalized world, standing as enduring symbols of enlightenment, guiding individuals toward peace and progress. By analyzing the interplay between ancient traditions and present-day realities, this study aims to reveal the dynamic, multifaceted role of temples as pillars of spiritual, cultural, and social life in India.

### Theoretical framework

In the past, Indian temples have been the hub of religious and social activity in towns and villages. They continue to play a significant role in communal affairs in the twenty-first century. They serve as significant social institutions and are deeply ingrained in society in addition to their religious roles. (Mukerji & Basu, 2015).

A.K. Singh (2020) mentions the significance of religious structures in India's architectural past and highlights how temples have long been the most enduring, significant, and esteemed constructions on the Indian subcontinent (Singh et al., 2020).

According to Sri Venkateshwara University professor P. Bhaskar Reddy, temples have long been a hub for social, cultural, and educational events and are deeply ingrained in local culture. They made significant contributions to local administration and governance and kept tight ties with territorial and community organizations (Reddy, n.d.). Indian temples are iconic, permanent representations of spiritual significance and cultural identity. They also act as hubs for community social engagement, cultural events, and religious observance. The temple also serves as a knowledge base and offers materials for educational and spiritual study. As a reflection of society, the temple stands for the ideals, convictions, and goals of the communities in which it is located. Additionally, temples serve as a source of inspiration and a model for society, encouraging moral principles, unity, and the welfare of all (Tiwari & Vij, 2024).

Fundamentally, temples are complex organizations that serve as a foundation for communal life and further social, cultural, and educational advancement in addition to their religious functions. Figure 1.

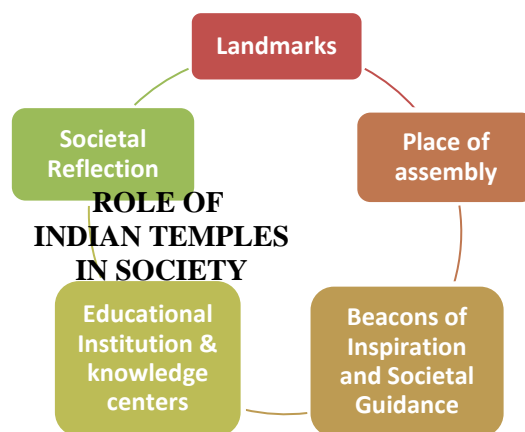


Figure 1 Role of Indian Temples in Society, Source-Author

### The Role of Indian Temples in Society: A Historical Perspective

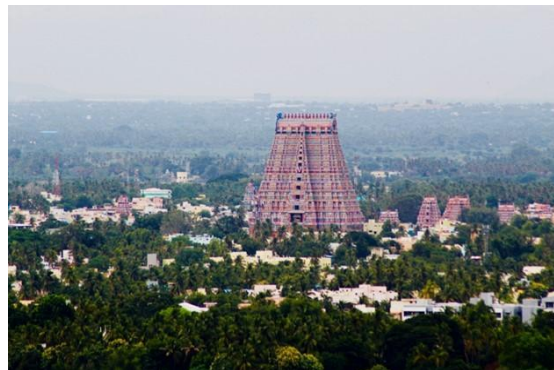
#### i. Temples as landmarks

Hindu temples in India have long held iconic status for their cultural, religious, and architectural importance, serving as centers of worship, community gathering, and cultural heritage. Adorned with soaring spires, intricate sculptures, and vibrant rituals, these temples are powerful symbols of India's spiritual and architectural legacy. Attracting visitors worldwide, they offer more than just a spiritual path for devotees; they stand as enduring landmarks of India's rich heritage and timeless traditions, captivating all who seek to understand their historical and cultural significance. The examples of India's landmark temples can be seen in Figure 2 & Figure 3.



**Figure 2 The Jagannath Temple at Puri, Odisha-As landmark at urban scale,**

Source: Image courtesy- Sangram Keshari Senapat , Retrieved from [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Bird\\_view\\_of\\_Jagannath\\_Temple%2C\\_Puri.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/90/Bird_view_of_Jagannath_Temple%2C_Puri.jpg)



**Figure 3 The Ranganathaswamy Temple, Srirangam in Tamil Nadu,**

Source: Image courtesy-I.Mahesh, Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Aerial\\_view\\_of\\_Sri\\_Rangam\\_temple\\_near\\_Tiruchirapalli\\_1.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Aerial_view_of_Sri_Rangam_temple_near_Tiruchirapalli_1.jpg)

## ii. Temples as place of assembly

According to Prof. Reddy, temples in Indian society serve a broader purpose beyond their religious role. As centers of worship, they bring people together through shared rituals and ceremonies, fostering a sense of spiritual unity. Temples also host cultural events showcasing art, music, and dance, promoting cultural expression and strengthening community bonds. Additionally, they act as venues for meetings and gatherings, facilitating dialogue, association, and unified policymaking within the community (Reddy, n.d.) (Figure 4 & Figure 5).

In the traditional design of Indian temples, mandapas—one or more pavilion-like structures—are integral to the layout, serving as spaces for public gatherings and ritual performances (Figure 6). These temples function as vibrant centers of interaction among religion, culture, and society, fostering a strong sense of community cohesion.



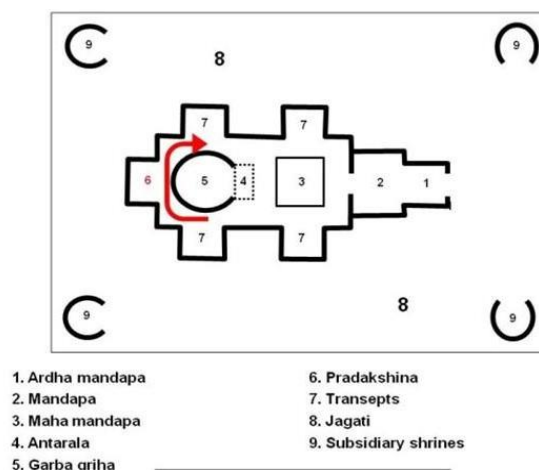
**Figure 4 Devotees at Iskcon Temple, Bangalore,**

Source: Retrieved from- <https://www.iskconbangalore.org/harinam-diksha/>.



**Figure 5 Disciples performing rituals at Golden temple, Amritsar, India,**

Source: Retrieved from <https://files.prokerala.com/news/photos/imgs/1024/sikh-devotees-offer-prayer-at-golden-temple-on-1380817.jpg>



**Figure 6 Schematic Plan of Kandariya Mahadeva Temple, Khajuraho,**

Source: Author-Tangopaso, Retrieved from [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/02/Plan\\_of\\_Kandariya\\_Mahadeva\\_temple.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/02/Plan_of_Kandariya_Mahadeva_temple.jpg)

### iii. Temples as educational Institution & knowledge centers

Professor Reddy emphasizes that Indian temples have historically functioned as hubs for cultural preservation, education, and worship. Temples have served as centers for the study of philosophy, theology, astronomy, medicine, and the arts for ages by housing libraries, manuscripts, and schools. The Gurukul system was frequently founded on temple property, where holy books were kept and transmitted from one generation to the next. Scholars and monks were essential to the interpretation, replication, and preservation of these works. Temples supported



traditional arts, music, dance, and literature in addition to formal schooling. They also hosted cultural events that honored and preserved artistic legacy. Temples have so traditionally served as information hubs in Indian civilization, fostering research, conserving culture, and fostering lifelong learning (Reddy, n.d.).

#### **iv. Temples as Societal Reflection**

The design, social functions, and religious rituals of India's numerous temples demonstrate how these hallowed constructions reflect society. With designs that depict a societal evolution from the Dravidian style in the south to the Nagara style in the north, the elaborate artistry of temples exhibits a variety of styles, regional identities, and historical eras. Historically, temples have served as hubs for worship, festivals, and community activities, where rituals and religious practices upheld social norms and customs. The temples' pantheon of deities illustrates India's spiritual diversity, while mythological depictions offer insights into social values, morality, and cultural heritage (Tiwari & Vij, 2024).

Temples were constructed using local materials, with sculptures that reflect regional craftsmanship, beliefs, and trends (Figure 7). Additionally, water conservation methods demonstrate resourcefulness in areas with limited resources (Figure 8). In essence, Indian temples stand as living symbols of social ethics, cultural consciousness, and heritage, embodying traditions, values, and identity that have been passed down through generations. Their symbolism, meaning, and role remain deeply intertwined with Indian society, sustaining its legacy.



**Figure 7 Religious convictions shown in form of sculptures on the Gopuram of Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai \_A- Goddess Kali (known as destroyer of evil forces, embodiment of female power, and goddess of time and death) in her cosmic form, B- Sadashiva - The highest form of Shiva, C- Guardian deities and Indra (The sky god) on his elephant, D- Shiva as Virabhadra- his 'fierce' avatar,**

**Source: Image courtesy-Rama toshi, Retrieved from <https://ramaarya.blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/madurai-temple-gopura-3.jpg> & <https://ramaarya.blog/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/madurai-temple-gopura-2.jpg>**



**Figure 8** An exemplary water conservation technique at Kund of part of Sun Temple,

*Source: Image courtesy-Kevin Standage, Retrieved from [https://kevinstandagephotography.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ksp\\_8372.jpg](https://kevinstandagephotography.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ksp_8372.jpg)*

#### **v. Temples as Beacons of Inspiration and Societal Guidance**

Indian temples embody values of spirituality, Unity, art, and charity. They guide individuals toward inner peace and enlightenment, fostering a meaningful life rooted in moral principles through rituals, prayers, and meditation. These temples bring together diverse groups, promoting unity, mutual respect, and social cohesion through festivals and cultural activities. In their architecture and landscaping, temples harmonize with nature by using traditional water conservation methods (Figure 9) and incorporating native trees, thus connecting with the local ecosystem. They also stand as masterpieces of art, displaying exceptional craftsmanship and inspiring cultural pride (Figure 10). Ultimately, Indian temples are enduring symbols of spirituality, community strength, and artistic excellence (Tiwari & Vij, 2024).



**Figure 9** Temple complexes with water bodies demonstrating the presence of water as one of the five elements of nature and a tool for water conservation, A-Sivaganga tank at Thillai Nataraja Temple Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, B-Ramkund at Ram Dhun Temple, Bhuj,

*Source: (A)Image courtesy-yaathith, Retrieved from- <https://www.liturgicaltemples.com/chidambaram-thillai-nataraja-temple/> & (B) <https://traveltalesfromindia.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/ramkund-baori.jpg>*



**Figure 10 The Chennakeshava Swamy temple complex in Belur, Karnataka-a piece of art carved in stone, a sensory feast and a living proof of the awe-inspiring times of our ancestors. Surcharged with a fusion of faith, spirituality and scientific knowledge**

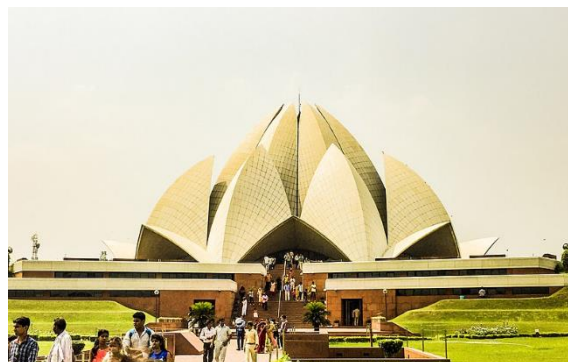
Source: [https://media.assettype.com/outlooktraveller%2F2023-09%2F73d3d0b8-15ac-4e1f-a330-45e6f756a22d%2FDepositphotos\\_98499974\\_DS.jpg?w=640&auto=format%2Ccompress](https://media.assettype.com/outlooktraveller%2F2023-09%2F73d3d0b8-15ac-4e1f-a330-45e6f756a22d%2FDepositphotos_98499974_DS.jpg?w=640&auto=format%2Ccompress)

### **Indian Temples of 21st-Century upholding the Legacy of Traditional Temples**

The three case studies examined based on the aforementioned characteristics of Indian temples yield the following results:

#### **Case Study 1: Lotus Temple, New Delhi**

An architectural marvel known for its stunning architecture and symbolic meaning is the Lotus Temple in New Delhi. Feribó Sahba, an Iranian architect, created the temple, which symbolizes the Bahá'í religion and was finished in 1986. Twenty-seven freestanding marble-clad "petals" are stacked in three layers to create the unique shape of a lotus flower, which seems to be unfolding. In many civilizations, the purity, beauty, and spiritual significance of lotus flowers are symbolized by this distinctive design. (Figure 11).



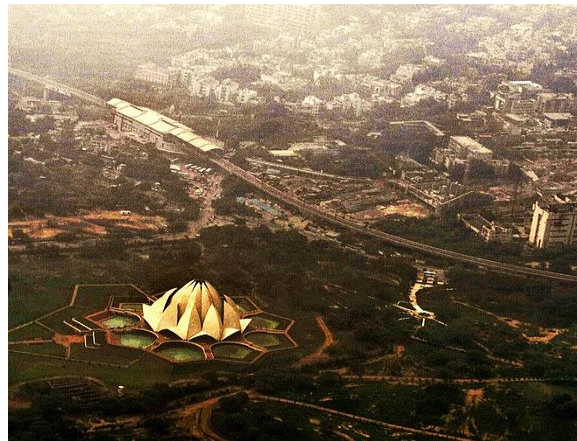
**Figure 11 LOTUS TEMPLE at New Delhi – Inspired from Lotus flower**

Source: Image courtesy- I. Mahesh,.Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An\\_Overview\\_of\\_Lotus\\_Temple.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:An_Overview_of_Lotus_Temple.jpg)

#### **i.As landmarks**

With its unique lotus-inspired design, this landmark captivates all who see it, symbolizing the cultural identity of the city. Its graceful silhouette against the skyline stands as a testament to human imagination and innovation (Figure 11 & Figure 12).





**Figure 12 Lotus temple & its surroundings, New Delhi**

Source: Image Courtesy-Akshatha Inamdar, Retrieved from [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Aerial\\_View\\_-\\_Lotus\\_Temple.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9e/Aerial_View_-_Lotus_Temple.jpg)

## **ii.As place of assembly**

As a gathering space accommodating up to 2,500 people, the temple provides sanctuary for relaxation, meditation, and community assembly (Figure 13). Its tranquil environment fosters harmony and inclusivity, welcoming individuals from all backgrounds to come together in an atmosphere of mutual respect (*Lotus Temple, New Delhi*, n.d.).



**Figure 13 Main gathering hall of Lotus Temple**

Source: Image Courtesy-Bahá'ís of India, Retrieved from- <https://bahairecollections.com/2023/06/30/two-months-at-the-lotus-temple/>

## **iii.Educational Institution & knowledge centers**

Adjacent buildings, including offices, meeting spaces, libraries, and an interesting museum complex that serves as a knowledge center, supplement the main building. This venue holds seminars, exhibitions, and educational events that foster intellectual growth, interfaith understanding, and cultural awareness. By means of these endeavors, the temple promotes knowledge-based study and thought sharing, cultivating enlightenment and tolerance (*Lotus Temple, New Delhi*, n.d.).

## **iv.Societal reflection**

The Lotus Temple, which stands for the ideals of harmony, variety, and social responsibility, reflects the ideals and goals of society. Its commitment to community involvement, environmental responsibility, and inclusivity emphasizes its importance as a force for good in a world that is constantly changing.

## **v.Beacons of Inspiration and Societal Guidance**

The temple offers spiritual advice and sustenance to everyone who enters its hallowed spaces, transcending religious borders. Its calm environment and timeless lessons provide a greater comprehension of the interdependence of all living things, promoting self-reflection, development, and awareness of humanity's



oneness. Designers, architects, and engineers are still motivated to produce equally amazing works by its distinctive style and superb engineering.

The Lotus Temple in New Delhi is a multidimensional source that combines spirituality, architecture, and social ideals.

### **Case Study 2- Shiv Temple at Barmer, Rajasthan**

The Temple of Shiva in Barmer, Rajasthan, conceptualized by Space Matters (Architects Amritha Ballal and Suditya Sinha) in 2016, stands as a testament to the region's rich cultural and religious heritage devoted to Lord Shiva.

While traditional Rajasthani architecture is characterized by intricate sculptures, vibrant colors, and exquisite craftsmanship amid the arid landscape, this temple presents a striking contrast with its clean lines, earthy tones, and minimalist design. Nevertheless, it serves as a cultural symbol that embodies the spirit and traditions of the local community, alongside its religious significance (Figure 14). The temple exemplifies a modern interpretation of temple architecture, harmonizing tradition with innovation while preserving its symbolic importance.



**Figure 14 The Shiv Temple at Barmer, Rajasthan**

**Source:** Image courtesy-Akash Kumar Das, Retrieved from- <https://www.archdaily.com/786983/temple-in-stone-and-light-spacematters>

#### **i.As landmarks**

The Shiv Temple at Barmer (Rajasthan), Rajasthan, is a striking architectural and spiritual monument that symbolizes the region's cultural identity and religious heritage. Its unique silhouette against the desert landscape draws the attention of both pilgrims and tourists, making it a significant point of interest. (Figure 15 & Figure 16).

#### **ii.Place of Assembly**

Beyond its religious roles, the temple serves as a vital public space where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together. It acts as a hub for public gatherings, cultural events, and religious celebrations, fostering unity among devotees and locals. The temple grounds resonate with the sounds of prayers, hymns, and festivities, creating an atmosphere of communal harmony and collective worship.

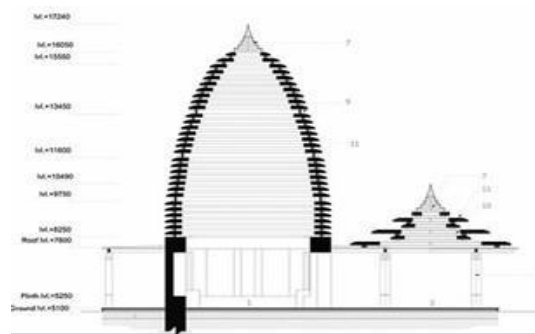
#### **iii.Educational Institution and Knowledge Center**

Ancient customs, such as texts, ceremonies, and oral histories that have been handed down over the ages, are preserved in the Shiv Temple. It provides insights into the divine and acts as a source of enlightenment and spiritual direction. The temple also serves as a living example for architects and engineers by showcasing historic stone construction methods and structural systems. Visitors are given a view of the nexus between innovation and heritage through its creative use of light, which is expertly funneled through the spaces between stone slabs in its shikhars. (*Temple in Stone and Light / SpaceMatters / ArchDaily*, n.d.).(Figure 17 & Figure 18)



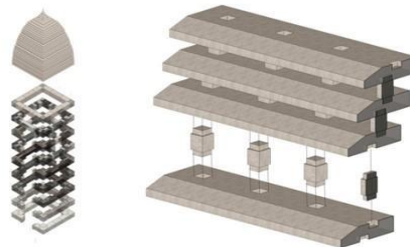
**Figure 15 Layout plan of Shiv Temple at Barmer**

*Source:Retreived from <https://www.spacematters.in/temple-in-stone-and-light>, Edited by-Author*



**Figure 16 Cross section (1-1) of Barmer Shiv temple- Traditional Indian temple forms**

*Source: Retreived from <https://www.spacematters.in/temple-in-stone-and-light>*



**Figure 17 Artistic stone masonry in the Shikhar of Barmer Shiv Temple to permit the natural light in the Garbha Griha**

Source: Retrieve from- <https://www.archdaily.com/786983/temple-in-stone-and-light-spacematters/572d80c6e58ece5296000254-temple-in-stone-and-light-spacematters-detail>

#### iv.Societal Reflection

The Shiv Temple is a symbol of the social cohesion and cultural ethos of Barmer, Rajasthan, embodying the values, beliefs, and sentiments of the local populace. It provides insights into the collective psyche and thoughts of its people through its contemporary architectural design, rituals, and traditions, which reflect the social structures and practices of the society.



**Figure 18 Elongated section (2-2) showing Skyline of temple showing position of water bodies in Barmer Shiv temple**

Source: Retrieved from <https://www.spacematters.in/temple-in-stone-and-light>

#### **v. Beacons of Inspiration and Societal Guidance**

Through its ageless architecture, religious symbolism, and spiritual teachings, the temple inspires believers and deepens their sense of humanity, devotion, and reverence for the divine. With projects like solar energy utilization, LED lighting, and local material procurement, it also demonstrates cost-effective solutions and is a prime example of sustainable development. Its focus on water conservation, energy efficiency, and native tree planting reduces its ecological footprint and encourages environmental care. The temple promotes social solidarity and pride by maintaining cultural heritage and creating community spaces. As a result, the Barmer Temple is a comprehensive example of sustainability, striking a balance between social, environmental, and economic goals and going beyond its function as a house of worship to become more than a cultural, social, and spiritual hub (SPACEMATTERS / *Temple in Stone and Light*, n.d.).

#### **Case Study 3: The Balaji Temple at Nandyal (Andhra Pradesh), Andhra Pradesh**

Located in Bilakalaguduru village in the Nandyal district of Andhra Pradesh is the Balaji Temple at Nandyal. Lord Venkateswara, a manifestation of the Hindu deity Vishnu, is the object of devotion. Sameep Padora and Associates designed the temple, which was finished in 2019.



**Figure 19 Nandyal Balaji temple & its surroundings**

Source: Image Courtesy- Edmund Summer, Retrieved from <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/andhra-pradesh-village-local-landscape-changed-by-jsw-cements-balaji-tirupati-temple-architecture/>

Devotees are inspired by the temple's timeless design, spiritual teachings, and religious symbolism, which heightens their sense of humanity, devotion, and reverence for God. In order to reduce its ecological imprint and encourage environmental stewardship, it places a strong emphasis on energy efficiency, water conservation, and native tree planting. The temple promotes pride and social solidarity by maintaining cultural heritage and offering community spaces. The Barmer Temple is a prime example of holistic sustainability, striking a balance between social, environmental, and economic objectives while going beyond its function as a house of worship to become more than a cultural, social, and spiritual hub.(Figure 19).

#### **i.As Landmarks**

A well-known monument in Andhra Pradesh, India, the Nandyal Balaji Temple draws pilgrims and tourists alike with its distinctive architectural design and spiritual significance. Nestled in tranquil settings, its stepped architecture gives it iconic prominence as a regional symbol of faith and cultural heritage. The temple is a beloved landmark that is the focal point of religious ceremonies and cultural celebrations, embodying the social and spiritual facets of the Nandyal village community (Sameep Padora & Associates, n.d.).

#### **ii.As Places of Assembly**

Worshippers and tourists from many backgrounds come together to participate in religious rites and spiritual contemplation at the temple, which is an essential gathering place. The calm setting and the temple's unusual tiered design, which includes platforms surrounding a large internal assembly hall, provide a common area for cultural activities and promote camaraderie and solidarity among the local population. Whether for social gatherings or religious ceremonies, the temple provides a hallowed space that promotes group worship and shared experiences. (Figure 20 & Figure 21)

#### **iii.Educational Institution and Knowledge Centers**

The Nandyal Balaji Temple serves as a repository of knowledge, committed to the preservation of spiritual teachings and age-old customs. The temple encourages knowledge and comprehension of Hindu philosophy and cultural legacy through texts, educational initiatives, and cultural events. It provides the community with timeless wisdom and direction by serving as a center for religious discussion and intellectual interchange. The temple also advances the evolution of temple architecture by showing how ancient wisdom may guide modern development, encouraging architects and builders to design buildings that respect cultural value and environmental responsibility.

#### **iv.Societal Reflection**

The project represents Andhra Pradesh's spiritual traditions and cultural history, embodying the community's core beliefs and ambitions. Its magnificent architecture and group rituals provide important insights into the social dynamics and collective identity of the local populace. Congregants and tourists alike feel united and proud of the temple, which is a cherished symbol of religion and devotion that embodies social views.

#### **v.Beacons of Inspiration and Societal Guidance**

The Balaji Temples are inspirational landmarks that display architectural genius with their outstanding design and avant-garde elements. Environmentally friendly building techniques are encouraged by their sustainable practices, which include the use of locally produced materials and water collection systems (Figure 21, Figure 22 & Figure 23). (Figure 21, Figure 22, & Figure 23). People are inspired to reflect on deep spiritual truths and find comfort in their faith by the fusion of tradition with advancement. They inspire communities to strive for sustainable development while safeguarding their rich cultural heritage for future generations as symbols of spiritual dedication and cultural heritage (*Temple of Steps\_ArchDaily*, n.d.).





**Figure 20 The temple tower with a purely geometric shape without superfluous ornamentation, surrounded by green bedded steps**

Source: Image Courtesy-Edmund Sumner, Retrieved from- [https://images.adsttc.com/media/images/5f05/9548/b357/655d/4600/022b/slideshow/SP\\_A-TEMPLE%C2%A9Edmund\\_Sumner-078.jpg?1594201393](https://images.adsttc.com/media/images/5f05/9548/b357/655d/4600/022b/slideshow/SP_A-TEMPLE%C2%A9Edmund_Sumner-078.jpg?1594201393)



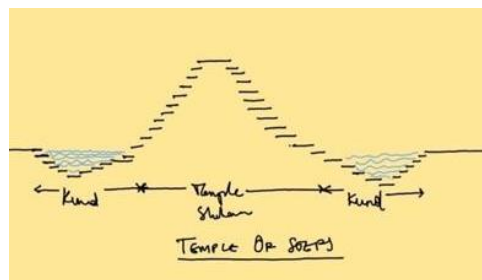
**Figure 21 Stepped platform with green cover and Water bodies around temple building creating cooling effect**

Source: Image Courtesy-Edmund Sumner, Retrieved from- <https://www.archdaily.com/943320/temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates/5f059586b3576588b300035b-temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates-photo>



**Figure 22** Skylight at the top and pyramidal form of Garbha griha shikhar

Source: Retrieved from- [https://www.archdaily.com/943320/temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates/5f0598c9b3576588b300035d-temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates-sketch?next\\_project=no](https://www.archdaily.com/943320/temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates/5f0598c9b3576588b300035d-temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates-sketch?next_project=no)



**Figure 23** Architect's conceptual sketch representing his perception for incorporation of kunds

Source: mage Courtesy-Edmund Sumner, Retrieved from- [https://www.archdaily.com/943320/temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates/5f0595a4b357655d4600022c-temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates-photo?next\\_project=no](https://www.archdaily.com/943320/temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates/5f0595a4b357655d4600022c-temple-of-steps-sameep-padora-and-associates-photo?next_project=no)

#### Summary of characteristics of selected case studies upholding the Legacy of Traditional Temples

| Case studies →<br>Temple as↓ | Lotus Temple at New Delhi   | Shiv Temple at Barmer (Rajasthan)   | Balaji Temple at Nandyal (Andhra Pradesh)   |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Landmark</b>              | Unique Architectural form inspired from a Lotus flower as a main attraction | An impressive architectural form that blends the region's vernacular style with modern influences | Achieves iconic status through its unique architectural style (stepped design) and spiritual significance |

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Place of Assembly</b>                               | 2500 people may gather for spiritual and community assembly  | Gathering place for visitors/devotees, cultural events and religious ceremonies to promote community harmony and collective worship atmosphere  | A distinctive temple building with raised platforms surrounding a large inner assembly hall serves as a venue for cultural activities and fosters a sense of community among the locals   |
| <b>Educational Institution &amp; knowledge centers</b> | Offices, conference halls, auditorium and museum in the same building complex are used for meetings, discussions and information sharing centers   | Preserves ancient traditions of scriptures, rituals, and customs to educate future generations and demonstrates ancient stone masonry techniques and an innovative use of light, creatively channelled through the slits between stone slabs of its shikharas, showcasing a synthesis of tradition and creativity   | Dedicated to preserving ancient traditions, the temple fosters learning and understanding of Hindu philosophy and cultural heritage through sacred scripture, educational programs, and cultural procedures   |
| <b>Societal reflection</b>                             | Reflects the characteristic of Indian society i.e. unity, diversity and community engagement   | Represents the site's cultural ethos and social fabric and reflects the values, beliefs, and opinions of the local community  | As a revered symbol of faith and worship, the temple embodies societal values, fostering cohesion and pride while representing the cultural heritage and spiritual ethnicities of Andhra Pradesh  |
| <b>Beacons of Inspiration and Societal Guidance</b>    | Religious symbolism and spiritual teachings inspire society, promoting messages of devotion and humanity<br><br>Architectural and engineering excellence motivates architects, designers, and engineers to undertake challenging projects. | Timeless architecture, religious symbolism, and spiritual teachings, along with community spaces, cultural heritage conservation, and sustainable practices like solar energy, LED lighting, local materials, water conservation, and native landscaping, establish this temple as a holistic, sustainable structure aligned with economic, environmental, social, and cultural goals | Showcases architectural expertise through innovative design and environmentally conscious construction practices, such as using local materials and water collection systems, while representing cultural heritage and spiritual commitment, encouraging communities to pursue sustainable progress and preserve their cultural legacy for future generations |

## Conclusion

Indian temples exemplify a seamless fusion of spirituality, cultural heritage, and sustainable architecture, representing both historical significance and contemporary relevance. These sacred structures continue to serve as pillars of Indian society, bridging the past with the present by preserving traditional practices while promoting community well-being and social unity. The case studies underscore the temples' role in fostering educational enrichment, promoting environmental sustainability, and inspiring moral and spiritual values. By adapting to modern societal needs, Indian temples offer a model of resilience and continuity, illustrating the power of heritage sites to shape and guide future generations. As Indian temples evolve, they remain not only as centers of worship but as dynamic institutions that enrich, educate, and inspire, affirming their lasting influence in the 21st century.

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