



# HUMAN-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP IN ANCIENT INDIAN TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE : A STUDY OF KHAJURAHO TEMPLES

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## Introduction

Khajuraho, a UNESCO world heritage site located in Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh, is well known in the world for its temple architecture and magnificent sculpture dated 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> century CE built by *Chandela dynasty*. It is believed (*parmalraso*) that there were 85 temples of which 22 temples are still remaining.

## Goal

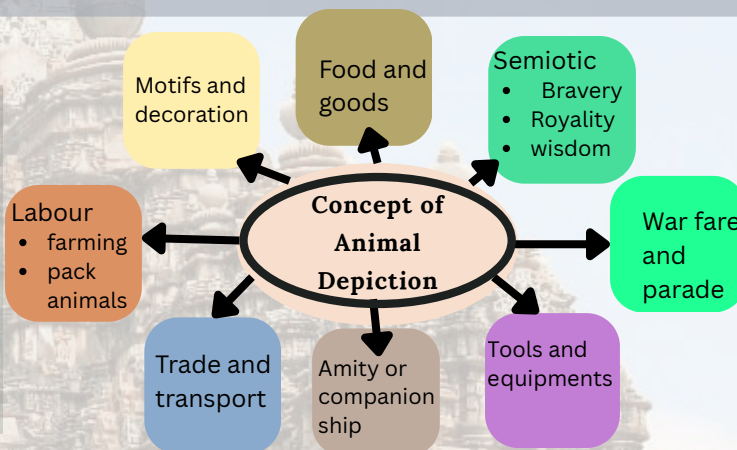
This poster explores :-

- The human-animal relationship themes
- Highlighting their cultural and social context.

## Methodology

This poster is based on first-hand data collection.

- Conducted through extensive on-site visits to temples of Khajuraho.
- Direct observation and comprehensive documentation of the interplay between human and animals as depicted in the monument's unique architectural style



## CLASSIFICATION OF DEPICTIONS OF ANIMAL BASED ON THE CONTENT IN KHAJURAHO TEMPLES

### Socio-culture

- Entertainment
- Procession
- Narrative
- Bestiality

### Function

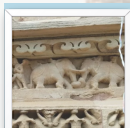
- War
- Farming
- Hunting

### Religious

- *Vahana* of deities
- *Avtara*
- Composite animals

### Symbolic

- Emblem
- Free standing animals
- Architectural feature



### Entertainment

Depiction of elephant fight is located on the northern wall of the *Jagati* of *Vishwanath* temple.

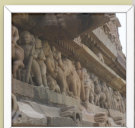


### Vahana of deities

A sculpture of *Nandi* in the *Nandi mandap* made right in front of *Vishwanath* temple

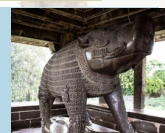
### Procession

Depiction of royal parade on the northern wall of *Jagati* of *Chitragupta* temple (various scenes of march or rally related to rituals, functions and politics are carved on the walls of many temples).



### Avtara

A sculpture of *Varah* in a *Mandap* *Lakshman* temple, fully covered by various *Avtara* of *Vishnu* and other deities.



### Narrative

Sculpture of a monkey in ASI museum of Khajuraho. Monkey & parrot have been used in this type of sculpture (A *Nayika* in the arms of *Nayaka* scared of a money on the southern wall of the *Kandariya* temple.



### Composite animals

Two types of *Vyal* (*Shardul*) usually being depicted on the *Shalilantara* of almost all the temples.

### Bestiality

A scene of intercourse between man and mare depicted on the southern wall of *Jagati* of *Lakshman* temple.



### War

There is a long panel on war scene on the west wall of *Jagati* of *Lakshman* temple.



### Free standing figures

Elephants are depicted besides the southern *Sopan* of *Vishwanath* temple.

### Hunting

A scene of hunting of boars and deer depicted on the west wall of *Jagati* of *Lakshman* temple.



### Architectural feature

Depictions of animals have also been used as architectural features like *Makar toran* shown in the picture, drains and many motifs on the panels of *Adhishtan* and *jagati*.



## Acknowledgement:-

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