

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: Pallava Dynasty [Ancient Indian History Notes For UPSC]

Pallava Dynasty

The rule of the Pallavas witnessed a lot of cultural achievements in southern India. The Pallava kings were great patrons of art and architecture.

Pallava Society and Culture

Society & Culture

- The Pallava society was based on Aryan culture.
- Brahmins were greatly patronised by the kings and they received land and villages. This was called Brahmadeya. The Brahmin status greatly enhanced during this reign. The caste system became rigid.
- The Pallava kings were orthodox Hindus and worshipped Shiva and Vishnu. They were tolerant of Buddhism and Jainism too although both these faiths lost their relevance and popularity.
- Kanchipuram was a great centre of learning. The University of Kanchi played a great part in the propagation of Aryan culture in the South. It can be said that the aryanisation of southern India was completed during the Pallava reign.
- Vatsyayana who wrote Nyaya Bhashya was a teacher at Kanchi University (Ghatika).
- Bharavi and Dandin lived in Pallava courts. Bharavi wrote Kiratarjuneeyam. Dandin composed Dashakumaracharita. Both were masterpieces.
- The Vaishnava and Saiva literature flourished during this period.
- Sanskrit was the chief language among the royals and the scholars.
- Some of the inscriptions are in a mix of Tamil and Sanskrit.
- Vedic traditions were superimposed on the local ones.
- Many Tamil saints belonging to either Saivite (Nayannars) or the Vaishnavite (Alvars) sects lived during the 6th and 7th centuries.

Saivite saints: Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkawasagar.

Vaishnava saint: Andal (the only female Alwar saint). These saints composed hymns in Tamil.

- Dancers were being maintained by all big temples.
- There were three types of places during this time:

1. **Ur:** where the peasants lived and it was headed by a headman who collected and paid the taxes.
 2. **Sabha:** land granted to Brahmins and was also called Agrahara villages. These were tax-free.
 3. **Nagaram:** where merchants and traders resided.
- During the Pallava period, Hindu culture was spread in many places of Southeast Asia as well. Pallava influence is evident from the ancient architecture seen in Cambodia and Java.

Pallava Architecture

Architecture

- The beautiful and grand **Pallava style of architecture** can be divided into four phases or styles:
 1. Mahendra style (600-625 AD)
 2. Mammala style (625-674 AD)
 3. Rajasimha and Nandivarman style (674-800 AD)
 4. Aparajita style (early 9th century)
- The Pallava era witnesses a transition from rock cut to free-standing temples.
- Mahendravarman was a pioneer in rock-cut architecture. Mandagapattu rock-cut temple was the first rock-cut temple built by him.
- Narasimhaverman II also known as Rajasimha built the **Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple** during the late 7th century AD.
- The **Shore Temple** at Mahabalipuram was also built by Narasimhaverman II. It is the oldest structural temple in South India. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1984. It is also called Seven Pagodas.
- The Vaikuntha Perumal at Kanchipuram was built by Nandivarman II.
- The Dravidian style of architecture begins with the Pallava reign.