

## UNIT-II @ REVISED IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

### Question1: Describe the Sculptures and Temples of Mamallapuram?

**Answer:** Mamallapuram, also known as Mahabalipuram, is a historic coastal town in Tamil Nadu. It was developed during the Pallava dynasty, especially under King Narasimhavarman I (Mamalla). The site is famous for its magnificent sculptures and temples, which showcase the architectural and artistic excellence of ancient Tamils. Today, it is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

#### 1. Rock-Cut Architecture:

One of the unique features of Mamallapuram is its rock-cut architecture. Temples and monuments were carved out of single large rocks.

The Pancha Rathas (Five Rathas) are monolithic structures.

Each ratha is named after the Pandavas (Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva).

These structures resemble chariots and demonstrate different architectural styles.

#### 2. Shore Temple:

The Shore Temple is one of the earliest structural stone temples in South India.

Built near the Bay of Bengal.

Dedicated to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.

Constructed using granite blocks instead of carving from a single rock.

It shows the transition from rock-cut to structural temple architecture.

#### 3. Sculptural Excellence:

Mamallapuram is renowned for its detailed and expressive sculptures.

The famous "Arjuna's Penance" (Descent of Ganga) is a massive open-air rock relief.

It depicts scenes from mythology with gods, sages, animals, and humans.

Sculptures show natural movement, expressions, and fine detailing.

#### 4. Cave Temples (Mandapas):

Several cave temples called Mandapas are found in Mamallapuram.

Examples: Varaha Cave, Mahishasuramardini Cave

These are rock-cut halls with pillars and sculptures.

Used for religious worship and artistic display.

#### 5. Engineering and Artistic Skills:

Sculptors used simple tools but achieved high precision.

Knowledge of proportion, symmetry, and design is clearly visible.

The monuments have withstood weather conditions for centuries.

#### 6. Cultural and Religious Importance:

Temples were centers of religion and culture.

Sculptures depict stories from Hindu mythology.

Reflect devotion, beliefs, and social life of the Pallava period.

The sculptures and temples of Mamallapuram stand as a testimony to the architectural brilliance and artistic mastery of ancient Tamil civilization. They not only represent religious devotion but also highlight the advanced engineering skills of the Pallavas. Even today, Mamallapuram remains an important symbol of India's rich cultural heritage.

### **QUESTION 2: Describe Building Materials and Hero Stones of Sangam Age?**

**ANSWER:** The Sangam Age (300 BCE – 300 CE) represents an important phase in ancient Tamil history, known for its advancements in construction technology and rich cultural traditions. The use of various building materials and the practice of erecting hero stones (Nadukal) reflect both the technological knowledge and social values of the Tamil people.

#### Building Materials in Sangam Age:

The construction practices during the Sangam period were based on the availability of natural resources and environmental conditions.

##### 1. Stone:

Stone was widely used for strong and permanent structures.

It was mainly used in temples, fortifications, and memorials.

Stones were carefully cut and arranged, showing skilled craftsmanship.

## 2. Brick:

Bricks were commonly used for building houses and walls.

Both sun-dried and burnt bricks were used.

Brick structures provided durability and stability.

## 3. Wood:

Wood was used for roofs, doors, pillars, and beams.

Timber from forests was easily available.

Wooden structures allowed flexibility and easy construction.

## 4. Clay and Mud:

Clay was used for plastering walls and making floors.

Mud houses were common among ordinary people.

These materials helped in maintaining cool temperatures inside houses.

## 5. Other Materials:

Bamboo and thatch were used for roofing.

Lime and sand were used as binding materials.

### Hero Stones (Nadukal):

Hero stones, also known as Nadukal, were an important cultural feature of the Sangam Age.

#### 1. Definition:

Hero stones were memorial stones erected in honor of warriors who died bravely in battles.

#### 2. Features:

These stones often contained inscriptions and carvings.

They depicted the heroic deeds of the warriors.

Some stones showed images of the warrior holding weapons.

#### 3. Purpose:

To commemorate bravery and sacrifice.

To inspire future generations.

To preserve the memory of the fallen heroes.

#### 4. Cultural Significance:

Hero stones reflect the importance of valor and honor in Tamil society.

They show the respect given to warriors.

They also provide historical information about wars, society, and traditions.

#### 5. Archaeological Importance:

Many hero stones have been discovered in Tamil Nadu.

They serve as valuable sources for understanding ancient Tamil culture and history.

The building materials used during the Sangam Age demonstrate the practical knowledge and environmental adaptation of ancient Tamils, while hero stones highlight their deep respect for bravery and sacrifice. Together, they provide valuable insights into the technological skills and cultural values of the Sangam society.

### **QUESTION 3: Explain the Great Temples of Cholas and Nayaka Period Temples?**

**Answer:** The temple architecture of Tamil Nadu reached its peak during the Chola and Nayaka periods. These temples are not only places of worship but also represent the advanced engineering skills, artistic excellence, and cultural richness of ancient Tamil society.

#### Chola Period Temples:

The Chola dynasty (9th–13th century CE) is famous for constructing grand stone temples.

##### 1. Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjavur):

Built by Raja Raja Chola I.

One of the largest temples in India.

Constructed entirely of granite.

##### 2. Architectural Features:

Massive Vimana (tower) rising about 216 feet.

Symmetrical and geometrically planned structure.

Strong foundation with precise stone alignment.

### 3. Sculptures and Art:

Intricate carvings of gods, dancers, and daily life.

Bronze sculptures (like Nataraja) show artistic excellence.

### 4. Engineering Skill:

Heavy stones were lifted to great heights without modern machines.

Advanced knowledge of load distribution and balance.

### Nayaka Period Temples:

The Nayaka rulers (16th–18th century CE) expanded and beautified temple complexes.

#### 1. Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple:

A famous example of Nayaka architecture.

Known for its huge gopurams (gateway towers).

#### 2. Architectural Features:

Tall and colorful gopurams with thousands of sculptures.

Large mandapams (halls) for gatherings.

Long corridors with decorated pillars.

#### 3. Artistic Excellence:

Detailed carvings and paintings.

Use of bright colors and decorative elements.

#### 4. Social and Cultural Role:

Temples served as centers of education, art, and administration.

Hosted festivals, dance, and music performances.

### Comparison (Chola vs Nayaka):

Feature

Chola Temples

Nayaka Temples

Main Structure

Vimana (central tower)

Gopuram (entrance tower)

Material

Granite

Stone with plaster & color

Style

Simple, strong, symmetrical

Decorative and elaborate

Focus

Inner sanctum

Outer structures and expansion

The temples of the Chola and Nayaka periods reflect the architectural brilliance and cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu. While the Cholas focused on strength and structural perfection, the Nayakas emphasized decoration and expansion, making these temples timeless masterpieces.

#### **Question 4: Explain Designing and Structural Construction in Sangam Age?**

**ANSWER:**The Sangam Age (300 BCE – 300 CE) is considered a golden period in Tamil history. During this time, Tamils developed advanced knowledge in architecture and construction. Their designing and structural construction techniques reflected scientific planning, environmental awareness, and skilled craftsmanship.

##### **1. Planning and Design of Houses:**

Houses were designed based on climatic conditions.

Proper ventilation and natural lighting were ensured.

Many houses had courtyards (mutram) in the center.

Separate spaces were allotted for cooking, sleeping, and storage.

## 2. Types of Houses:

Common people: Built simple houses using thatch, bamboo, and mud.

Rich people: Constructed large houses with multiple rooms and strong materials.

Houses varied based on social status and occupation.

## 3. Building Materials:

Wood: Used for beams, doors, and roofs.

Clay and mud: Used for walls and plastering.

Bricks: Used in permanent constructions.

Stone: Used in important and long-lasting structures.

All materials were locally available and eco-friendly.

## 4. Structural Features:

Strong foundation ensured durability.

Sloped roofs helped in rainwater drainage.

Houses were constructed to withstand climatic changes.

Emphasis on strength, safety, and comfort.

## 5. Urban Planning:

Cities like Madurai and Puhar were well planned.

Roads were laid systematically.

Proper drainage systems were available.

Markets, residential areas, and public spaces were well organized.

## 6. Environmental Awareness:

Construction methods were eco-friendly.

Use of natural resources without harming the environment.

Houses maintained cool temperature naturally.

Designing and structural construction in the Sangam Age highlight the advanced architectural knowledge of ancient Tamils. Their scientific planning, use of local materials, and environmental awareness make their construction techniques remarkable even today.