

FAQ's

1. What is Bakthi movement?

The Bhakti movement refers to the theistic devotional trend that emerged in medieval Hinduism. It originated in the seventh-century Tamil south India (now parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala), and spread northwards.

2. Name the three types of Hindu temples.

The three types of Hindu temples are – Nagara style, Dravidian style and Vesara style.

3. Explain in brief about the impact of the bakthi movement in temple architecture.

- The Bhakti movement refers to the theistic devotional trend that emerged in medieval Hinduism. It originated in the seventh-century Tamil south India (now parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala), and spread northwards.
- Bhakti meant undivided devotion to only one god, the most famous being – Shiva and Vishnu. This movement gained strength during the 7th century, to challenge the rising influence of Jainism and Buddhism.
- The Bhakti movement even spread to the north during late medieval ages, though the north was under the Islamic rule, the Bhakti movement tried to preserve Hinduism.
- The movement has traditionally been considered as an influential social reformation in Hinduism, and provided an individual-focussed alternative path to spirituality regardless of one's caste of birth or gender.
- The movement started with the Saiva Nayanars and the Vaisnava Alvars. Their efforts ultimately help spread *bhakti* poetry and ideas throughout India by the 12th-18th century CE.
- The evolving of this kind of new awareness functionally altered the needs of the temple. Elaborate rituals, modes of worship, ceremonies and celebrations became the part of the temple activities. Daily procession of deities and the chariot festivals brought the temple closer to the people. All

these found their place in the conceptualisation of temple but were directly connected with the execution of the structure.

- After the 9th century the monolithic temple architecture lost its place, as it could not adopt the ritual needs of the medieval concept.
- This period also experienced the shift of the temple from micro to macrocosm in order to depict the worldliness.

4. Explain the features of Pallava rock cut architecture with an example.

- The Pallava architecture shows the transition from the Rock Cut Architecture to the Stone built temples.
- The earliest examples of the Pallava art are the rock cut temples of the 7th century AD, while the later examples are of structural temples built in 8th and 9th century.
- The rock cut reliefs of the Pallavas are the earliest surviving royal portraits after the Kushana images.
- The Pallava Kings are known to be one of the greatest patrons of the art, music, architecture, dance and literature. King Mahendravarman was a poet and a playwright.
- **Pancha Rathas** (also known as **Pandava Rathas**) is a monument complex at Mahabalipuram. Pancha Rathas is an example of monolithic Indian rock-cut architecture. Dating from the late 7th century, it is attributed to the reign of King Mahendravarman I and his son Narasimhavarman I (630–680 AD; also called Mamalla, or "great warrior") of the Pallava Kingdom. An innovation of Narasimhavarman, the structures are without any precedent in Indian architecture.
- The temples which are different in forms, plans and elevations were cautiously cut out from a huge rock, sloping from south to north.
- These individual 'rathas' are named after the Pandava brothers Yudhistara (Dharmaraja), Arjuna, Bhima, Nakula & Sahadeva of the Epic Mahabharata and their wife Draupadi.
- Besides these rathas, the sculptures of an elephant (the vehicle of Indra), lion (the vehicle of Durga) and Nandi bull (the vehicle of Shiva) are structurally displayed.

- Though these temples are named after the Pandava brothers, they are not in any way related to Mahabharata.
- While the Dharmaraja, Arjuna and Draupadi rathas are square on plan, the Bhima ratha is rectangular and Nakula Sahadeva ratha apsidal.
- Facing the west are the Arjuna and Draupadi rathas which are dedicated to Lord Shiva and Durga respectively.
- The **Draupadi ratha** which is the smallest of the lot is a simple single storeyed hut like shrine.
- Goddess Durga is represented on the outside as well as inside walls of the shrine along with her attendants and devotees.
- Above the door there is an arch with the carving of a sea-monster with a crocodile body.
- Inside the shrine below her carved idol, a devotee is seen preparing to cut off his own head as a sacrifice to the goddess while another devotee is seen worshipping her.
- The ratha stand on a platform decorated with sculptures of elephants and lions on its sides.
- **Arjuna ratha** is a pyramidal structure layered with pillars and sculptures and (a dvitala vimana with a mukhamandapa) is topped with an octagonal dome.
- It looks similar to the gateways of South Indian temples.
- Inside the temple is the sculpture of a cross legged Shiva leaning on Nandi, his bull vehicle.
- **Bhima Ratha** is rectangular in plan with a barrel vaulted roof.
- The long four columned porch in the facade has seated lions carved in front of the pillars.
- The lower part of the structure is unfinished.
- **Dharmaraja ratha** which is the largest of the lot is three storeyed (Tritala Vimana) and is square in plan. This unfinished temple, similar to Arjuna Ratha but larger in size, has one more layer to its pyramidal roof. Topped by an octagonal dome with half-figures, faces, false windows, horse- shoe shaped arches and pillars occupying the roof, the entrance of this temple faces the west

- Idols of gods occupy every outside corner of the temple except the west corner of the south wall which is occupied by King Mamalla himself.
- The ratha also contains Pallava Grantha inscriptions recording the titles of Narasimha Varman 1 just above his idol and above the sculpture of Vishnu or Shiva which decorates the east corner of the south wall.
- The relief sculpture of 'Ardhnarishwara' (half man half woman) on the walls of the Dharmaraja ratha with perfectly balanced carvings of the masculine and feminine features is considered to be one of the finest specimen of early Pallava plastic art.
- The **Nakula-Sahadeva ratha** with an apsidal plan and elevation faces south as against all other rathas which faces west.
- The sculpture of the elephant besides the Nakula Sahadeva ratha faces south and its rear part is in line with the ratha. The carved lion stands back to back to the elephant and faces north. The life size sculpture of the Nandi bull facing west is in a seated position on the east side behind Arjuna ratha.