

TNPSC Group IV — History & Culture

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A. Quick Revision Notes

Indus Valley Civilisation

Bronze Age Harappan civilisation, c.2500–1900 BCE. Harappa discovered 1921 (Daya Ram Sahni), Mohenjo-daro 1922 (R.D. Banerji). Key sites: Mohenjo-daro (Great Bath, Great Granary), Harappa, Dholavira & Lothal in Gujarat (Lothal = dockyard), Kalibangan (ploughed field), Rakhigarhi (largest). Features: grid-pattern town planning, standardised baked bricks, underground drainage, uniform weights and measures. Script pictographic, undeciphered, written right-to-left (boustrophedon). Trade with Mesopotamia. Worship of Pashupati (proto-Shiva) and Mother Goddess. Chalcolithic (used copper/bronze, no iron). Declined around 1900 BCE.

Vedic Age

c.1500–600 BCE, Indo-Aryans. Four Vedas: Rig (oldest, 1028 hymns, 10 mandalas), Sama, Yajur, Atharva. Early/Rig Vedic (1500–1000 BCE) on Sapta-Sindhu region: pastoral, cattle as wealth, tribal polity, king = rajan, sabha and samiti assemblies. Later Vedic (1000–600 BCE): moved to Ganga plains, iron (krishna ayas), settled agriculture, rigid varna system, larger janapadas. Gayatri mantra (to god Savitri) is in the Rig Veda. 'Satyameva Jayate' is from the Mundaka Upanishad. Upanishads are the philosophical end of the Vedas (Vedanta).

Mauryan & Gupta Empires

Mauryas founded 321 BCE by Chandragupta Maurya, guided by Chanakya/Kautilya (Arthashastra); capital Pataliputra; Megasthenes (Indica) was Greek envoy. Ashoka (268–232 BCE): Kalinga war 261 BCE led him to Buddhism and Dhamma; rock and pillar edicts in Brahmī; Sarnath Lion Capital is India's national emblem. Guptas (c.319–550 CE), the 'Golden Age': Samudragupta (Prayag/Allahabad Prashasti by Harisena), Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (defeated Shakas; Fa-Hien visited). Achievements: Aryabhata (zero, decimal), Kalidasa, Nalanda university, temple architecture.

Sangam Age & Ancient Tamilakam

c.300 BCE–300 CE. Three Tamil dynasties: Chera, Chola, Pandya. Three Sangams (assemblies of poets) held at Madurai under Pandya patronage. Literature: Tolkappiyam (oldest Tamil grammar, by Tolkappiyar), Ettuthogai (Eight Anthologies), Pattupattu (Ten Idylls), Pathinenkilkanakku (includes Thirukkural by Thiruvalluvar). Twin epics: Silappatikaram (Ilango Adigal) and Manimekalai (Sattanar). Society organised into five tinai (landscapes). Ports: Puhar/Kaveripoompattinam, Musiri, Korkai (pearls). Extensive Roman trade (yavanas), attested by coin hoards.

Cholas, Cheras & Pandyas

Imperial Cholas (9th–13th CE) founded by Vijayalaya (850 CE). Rajaraja I (985–1014) built the Brihadisvara (Rajarajeswaram) temple at Thanjavur (UNESCO) and a strong navy. Rajendra I reached the Ganga (Gangaikonda Cholapuram) and led a naval expedition to Srivijaya (SE Asia). Famed for local self-government — the Uttiramerur inscriptions describe kudavolai (election by lot) and Chola bronzes (Nataraja). Pandyas: capital Madurai, Meenakshi temple, pearl trade. Cheras: modern Kerala/Kongu, capital Vanji/Karur, Muziris port.

Delhi Sultanate & Mughals

Delhi Sultanate 1206–1526, five dynasties: Slave/Mamluk (Qutb-ud-din Aibak began Qutb Minar; Iltutmish; Razia Sultana), Khilji (Alauddin — price/market control, Malik Kafur's southern raids), Tughlaq (Muhammad bin Tughlaq — token currency, capital shift to Daulatabad; Firoz Shah), Sayyid, Lodi. First Battle of Panipat 1526: Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi, founding the Mughals. Akbar (Din-i-Ilahi, Mansabdari, abolished jizya), Shah Jahan (Taj Mahal, Red Fort), Aurangzeb (largest extent, reimposed jizya).

Bhakti & Sufi movements

Bhakti stressed personal devotion, rejecting ritual and caste. In Tamil Nadu (6th–9th CE): Alvars (Vaishnava) and Nayanars (Shaiva). Saints: Ramanuja (Vishishtadvaita), Ramananda, Kabir (nirguna, dohas), Guru Nanak (founded Sikhism), Mirabai, Tulsidas (Ramcharitmanas), Chaitanya, Namdev, Tukaram. Sufism = Islamic mysticism through silsilas: Chishti (Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer; Nizamuddin Auliya) and Suhrawardi. Both movements preached love, tolerance and unity of God, and spread through vernacular languages, easing Hindu-Muslim relations.

Advent of Europeans

Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in 1498 (received by the Zamorin). Portuguese came first — Albuquerque captured Goa in 1510. Dutch East India Company formed 1602 (factory at Pulicat, TN). English East India Company chartered 1600 by Elizabeth I; factories at Surat (1613), Madras/Fort St George 1639 (Francis Day), Bombay, Calcutta. French East India Company 1664, base at Pondicherry (1674), Dupleix. Danes at Tranquebar (Tharangambadi). The Anglo-French Carnatic Wars (1746–63) and Battles of Plassey 1757 and Buxar 1764 established British power.

Revolt of 1857

The First War of Independence (Sepoy Mutiny) began 10 May 1857 at Meerut; immediate cause was greased Enfield cartridges (cow/pig fat). Mangal Pandey (Barrackpore, 29 March 1857) was an early spark. Leaders: Bahadur Shah Zafar (Delhi, symbolic head), Nana Saheb and Tantia Tope (Kanpur), Rani Lakshmibai (Jhansi), Begum Hazrat Mahal (Lucknow), Kunwar Singh (Bihar). Suppressed by 1858. Consequences: end of East India Company rule; Government of India Act 1858; direct Crown rule; Queen Victoria's Proclamation. Tamil Nadu was largely unaffected.

Indian National Movement

Indian National Congress founded 1885 by A.O. Hume; first president W.C. Bonnerjee (Bombay). Phases: Moderates (1885–1905; Dadabhai Naoroji's 'drain of wealth', Gokhale), Extremists (Tilak — 'Swaraj is my birthright'; Lal-Bal-Pal), then the Gandhian mass phase. Partition of Bengal 1905 sparked the Swadeshi movement. Home Rule Leagues 1916 (Tilak, Annie Besant); Lucknow Pact 1916. Gandhi: Champaran 1917, Non-Cooperation 1920–22 (ended after Chauri Chaura), Civil Disobedience/Dandi Salt March 1930, Quit India 1942. Independence on 15 August 1947.

Tamil Nadu in the freedom struggle

V.O. Chidambaram Pillai ('Kappalottiya Tamizhan') launched the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906 at Tuticorin to challenge British shipping. Poet Subramania Bharati inspired nationalism ('Vande Mataram' journal). Vanchinathan assassinated Collector Ashe in 1911. Tiruppur Kumaran died holding the national flag (1932). The Salt Satyagraha in TN was led by C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) at Vedaranyam in 1930. Rajaji later became the first Indian Governor-General. Congress in TN was strengthened by Satyamurti and K. Kamaraj.

Social & religious reform movements

Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj (1828) and helped abolish Sati (1829, with Lord Bentinck); called the 'father of the Indian Renaissance'. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar championed widow remarriage. Dayananda Saraswati founded the Arya Samaj (1875), 'back to the Vedas', with Shuddhi. Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission (1897) after his 1893 Chicago address. Jyotiba Phule started the Satyashodhak Samaj. Annie Besant led the Theosophical Society (headquarters at Adyar, Chennai). Sir Syed Ahmad Khan led the Aligarh Movement.

Dravidian & Self-Respect movement

The Justice Party (South Indian Liberal Federation, 1916) led the non-Brahmin movement and brought the first communal Government Order (reservation) in 1921. Periyar E.V. Ramasamy founded the Self-Respect Movement (Suyamariyathai, 1925) after leaving Congress, promoting social equality, anti-caste rationalism, women's rights and self-respect marriages. He formed the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) in 1944. C.N. Annadurai broke away to found the DMK in 1949. The anti-Hindi agitations (1937–40 and 1965) were central to the movement, asserting Tamil identity.

Indian art, architecture & culture

Temple styles: Nagara (North, curvilinear shikhara), Dravida (South, pyramidal vimana with gopurams — Cholas), Vesara (Deccan hybrid — Chalukyas/Hoysalas). Rock-cut art: Ajanta (Buddhist paintings), Ellora (Kailasa temple, Rashtrakutas), Elephanta. Dravidian landmarks: Brihadisvara (Thanjavur), Meenakshi (Madurai), Mahabalipuram (Pallava Shore Temple and rathas, UNESCO). Eight classical dances include Bharatanatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathakali (Kerala), Kathak, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Manipuri. Carnatic music Trinity: Tyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri.

B. Practice MCQs (25)

1. Who is known as the 'Father of the Tamil Renaissance' and founded the Self-Respect Movement in 1925?

- (A) C. Rajagopalachari
- (B) E. V. Ramasamy Periyar
- (C) V. O. Chidambaram Pillai
- (D) Subramania Bharati

- 2. The Chola dynasty reached its greatest extent under which ruler who conquered Sri Lanka and parts of Southeast Asia?**
- (A) Rajaraja Chola I
 - (B) Kulottunga I
 - (C) Rajendra Chola I
 - (D) Vikrama Chola
- 3. The Battle of Plassey (1757) resulted in the defeat of which Nawab of Bengal by Robert Clive?**
- (A) Mir Jafar
 - (B) Siraj ud-Daulah
 - (C) Mir Qasim
 - (D) Alivardi Khan
- 4. Subramania Bharati, the Tamil poet and nationalist, was associated with which newspaper?**
- (A) Swadesamitran
 - (B) India
 - (C) Kudi Arasu
 - (D) Dinamani
- 5. The Pallava dynasty is known for building which famous group of monuments in Tamil Nadu?**
- (A) Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur
 - (B) Meenakshi Amman Temple, Madurai
 - (C) Shore Temple and Rathas at Mahabalipuram
 - (D) Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram
- 6. Who led the Salt Satyagraha (Dandi March) of 1930?**
- (A) Jawaharlal Nehru
 - (B) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
 - (C) Mahatma Gandhi
 - (D) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- 7. The Vellore Mutiny of 1806 was the first major uprising of Indian soldiers against the British. It occurred in which modern-day state?**
- (A) Maharashtra
 - (B) Tamil Nadu
 - (C) Karnataka
 - (D) Andhra Pradesh
- 8. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was the Chairman of which committee that drafted the Indian Constitution?**
- (A) Constituent Assembly
 - (B) Drafting Committee
 - (C) Union Constitution Committee
 - (D) Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights
- 9. The Quit India Movement was launched in which year?**
- (A) 1940
 - (B) 1942
 - (C) 1944
 - (D) 1946
- 10. V. O. Chidambaram Pillai (VOC) is famous in Tamil Nadu history for establishing the:**
- (A) Self-Respect Movement
 - (B) Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company
 - (C) Justice Party
 - (D) Home Rule League

11. Which Chola king built the Brihadeeswarar Temple (Big Temple) at Thanjavur?

- (A) Rajendra Chola I
- (B) Kulottunga Chola I
- (C) Rajaraja Chola I
- (D) Parantaka Chola I

12. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 by:

- (A) Bal Gangadhar Tilak
- (B) Dadabhai Naoroji
- (C) Allan Octavian Hume
- (D) Gopal Krishna Gokhale

13. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place in which year and city?

- (A) 1915, Delhi
- (B) 1919, Amritsar
- (C) 1921, Lahore
- (D) 1917, Calcutta

14. Who founded the Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) party in Tamil Nadu in 1944?

- (A) C. N. Annadurai
- (B) M. Karunanidhi
- (C) E. V. Ramasamy Periyar
- (D) P. Thyagaraja Chetty

15. Sati was abolished in British India in 1829 by Governor-General:

- (A) Lord Dalhousie
- (B) Lord Cornwallis
- (C) Lord William Bentinck
- (D) Lord Canning

16. The Sangam period in Tamil history refers to:

- (A) The period of Pallava rule (600–900 CE)
- (B) An ancient era (300 BCE – 300 CE) of Tamil literary academies and classical poetry
- (C) The Bhakti movement in Tamil Nadu (7th–10th centuries)
- (D) The Vijayanagara Empire's rule over Tamil Nadu

17. The partition of Bengal in 1905 was reversed in which year?

- (A) 1909
- (B) 1911
- (C) 1915
- (D) 1919

18. Who was the first Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu after its reorganisation as a state in 1956?

- (A) C. N. Annadurai
- (B) M. Bhaktavatsalam
- (C) K. Kamaraj
- (D) M. G. Ramachandran

19. The Treaty of Srirangapatna (1792) was signed after which war between the British and Tipu Sultan?

- (A) First Anglo-Mysore War
- (B) Second Anglo-Mysore War
- (C) Third Anglo-Mysore War
- (D) Fourth Anglo-Mysore War

20. Which movement launched by Gandhi gave the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it'?

- (A) Non-Cooperation Movement
- (B) Civil Disobedience Movement
- (C) Quit India Movement
- (D) The slogan was given by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, not Gandhi

21. The Indus Valley Civilisation's town planning is best evidenced by which unique feature found at Mohenjo-daro?

- (A) Grid-pattern streets with a covered drainage system
- (B) Iron smelting furnaces
- (C) Large stone temples
- (D) Sanskrit inscriptions on pillars

22. Which Mauryan emperor issued the Edict at Dhauli (Odisha) expressing remorse after the Kalinga War?

- (A) Ashoka
- (B) Chandragupta Maurya
- (C) Bindusara
- (D) Brihadratha

23. The Gupta period is called the 'Golden Age' primarily because of advances in which field?

- (A) Development of the caste system
- (B) Literature, science, mathematics and art
- (C) Maritime trade with Rome only
- (D) Military conquests and territorial expansion

24. Who founded the Vijayanagara Empire in 1336 CE?

- (A) Krishnadevaraya
- (B) Prataparudra
- (C) Harihara I and Bukka I
- (D) Malik Kafur

25. The Bhakti movement's concept of nirgun bhakti (devotion to a formless God) was most closely associated with which saint?

- (A) Tukaram
- (B) Mirabai
- (C) Kabir
- (D) Ramanuja

C. Answer Key & Explanations

- 1. (B)** E. V. Ramasamy Periyar (Thanthai Periyar) founded the Self-Respect Movement in 1925 to fight caste discrimination and promote rationalism and social equality in Tamil Nadu.
- 2. (C)** Rajendra Chola I (1014–1044 CE) led a naval expedition to Southeast Asia (Kadaram/Kedah), defeated the Srivijaya empire, and earned the title 'Gangaikonda' after a northern military campaign.
- 3. (B)** The Battle of Plassey on 23 June 1757 saw Robert Clive and the British East India Company defeat Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah, largely due to the treachery of Mir Jafar, marking the beginning of British political dominance in India.
- 4. (B)** Subramania Bharati edited and wrote for the Tamil newspaper 'India', published from Pondicherry, which became a powerful platform for nationalist ideas and anti-British sentiment.
- 5. (C)** The Pallava dynasty (7th–9th centuries CE) under kings like Mahendravarman I and Narasimhavarman I created the rock-cut rathas, cave temples, and the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram.
- 6. (C)** Mahatma Gandhi led the 241-mile Dandi March from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi on 12 March 1930 to protest the British salt tax, launching the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- 7. (B)** The Vellore Mutiny of 10 July 1806 took place at Vellore Fort in present-day Tamil Nadu, where Indian sepoys revolted against the British East India Company, predating the 1857 Revolt by over 50 years.
- 8. (B)** Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly on 29 August 1947, and he is regarded as the principal architect of the Indian Constitution.
- 9. (B)** The Quit India Movement (August Movement) was launched by Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress on 8 August 1942 with the slogan 'Do or Die', demanding immediate British withdrawal from India.
- 10. (B)** V. O. Chidambaram Pillai founded the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906 to challenge the monopoly of British shipping companies between Tuticorin and Colombo.
- 11. (C)** Rajaraja Chola I built the Brihadeeswarar Temple (also called Rajarajeswaram) at Thanjavur around 1010 CE, a masterpiece of Dravidian architecture now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- 12. (C)** Allan Octavian Hume, a retired British civil servant, along with Dadabhai Naoroji and Dinshaw Wacha, founded the Indian National Congress in Bombay on 28 December 1885.

- 13. (B)** On 13 April 1919, Brigadier General Reginald Dyer ordered troops to fire on a peaceful gathering at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar, Punjab, killing hundreds of unarmed civilians.
- 14. (C)** E. V. Ramasamy Periyar founded the Dravidar Kazhagam in 1944 after renaming the Justice Party, to work for the social and political emancipation of the Dravidian people.
- 15. (C)** Lord William Bentinck, acting on the persistent advocacy of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, passed Regulation XVII in 1829, abolishing the practice of Sati (widow immolation) in Bengal Presidency.
- 16. (B)** The Sangam period (approximately 300 BCE to 300 CE) is the earliest known era of Tamil literature, marked by the works of poets assembled in three literary academies (Sangams) producing the classical Tamil corpus.
- 17. (B)** The Partition of Bengal ordered by Lord Curzon in 1905 was reversed in 1911 by King George V's announcement at the Delhi Durbar, reuniting Bengal but simultaneously shifting the capital from Calcutta to Delhi.
- 18. (C)** Kumaraswami Kamaraj (K. Kamaraj) served as the Chief Minister of Madras State (later Tamil Nadu) from 1954 to 1963 and was the dominant political figure during the reorganisation of states in 1956.
- 19. (C)** The Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790–92) ended with the Treaty of Srirangapatna in 1792, under which Tipu Sultan ceded half his territory, paid a large indemnity, and gave his two sons as hostages.
- 20. (D)** The slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it' was given by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, not Gandhi. Tilak used this powerful phrase to mobilise Indians for self-rule.
- 21. (A)** Mohenjo-daro and Harappa display grid-planned streets and an advanced underground drainage system, unparalleled in the ancient world.
- 22. (A)** Ashoka's Major Rock Edicts, especially the 13th, describe the horror of the Kalinga War (261 BCE) and his consequent conversion to dhamma.
- 23. (B)** The Gupta era (4th–6th century CE) produced Kalidasa's literature, Aryabhata's mathematics (zero, pi approximation), Varahamihira's astronomy, and Ajanta cave paintings.
- 24. (C)** Brothers Harihara I and Bukka I, formerly commanders in the Hoysala and Kakatiya armies, founded Vijayanagara on the banks of the Tungabhadra in 1336.
- 25. (C)** Kabir (15th–16th century) rejected idol worship, caste distinctions, and external religious ritual, advocating direct love for a formless, nameless divine.