

Long Answer Questions

Q.1. How are Puranas an important cultural heritage?

Ans. The Puranas written as early as 1st century BC are the oldest records for the reconstruction of early Indian history. The Puranas are eighteen in number and have five divisions. Out of these, the fifth one is historically important as it contains the traditions about the dynasties of rulers of ancient India. However, all the Puranas, from the historical point of view are not so important as the Vayu, Vishnu and the Matsya Puranas. These Puranas are full of information concerning the Purus, the Nandas, the Mauryas, the Kushanas and the Guptas, etc.

Q.2. How did Sanskrit language enrich Indian literature?

Ans. Good quality of Sanskrit literature was produced in India from the second century AD to the fourth and fifth century AD. The Guptas made Sanskrit their court language. Kalidasa, the greatest poet-dramatist, enriched the Sanskrit language. His plays *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, *Vikramorvashi* and *Malavikagnimitra*, are gems of Sanskrit literature. Some other significant authors of this period were Vishkhadatta who wrote *Mudra Rakshasa* and Shudraka who wrote *Mrichhakatikam*. *Panchatantra*, a wonderful collection of animal fables, was also written during this period.

Q.3. How did Tamil language enrich South Indian literature?

Ans. The literature produced by the ancient Tamil poets, popularly called Sangam literature has also proved to be an important source of history especially for South India. It is believed that much of this literature was produced in three sangams or assemblies of the Tamil poets, which were held between the 1st century AD and 6th century AD. They give detailed account of some important rulers, their commercial activities, administrative set-up and social, economic and religious conditions of that period. Two famous epics, *Silappadikaram* by Illango Adikal and *Manimekalai* by Sattanar also enrich this vast literature.