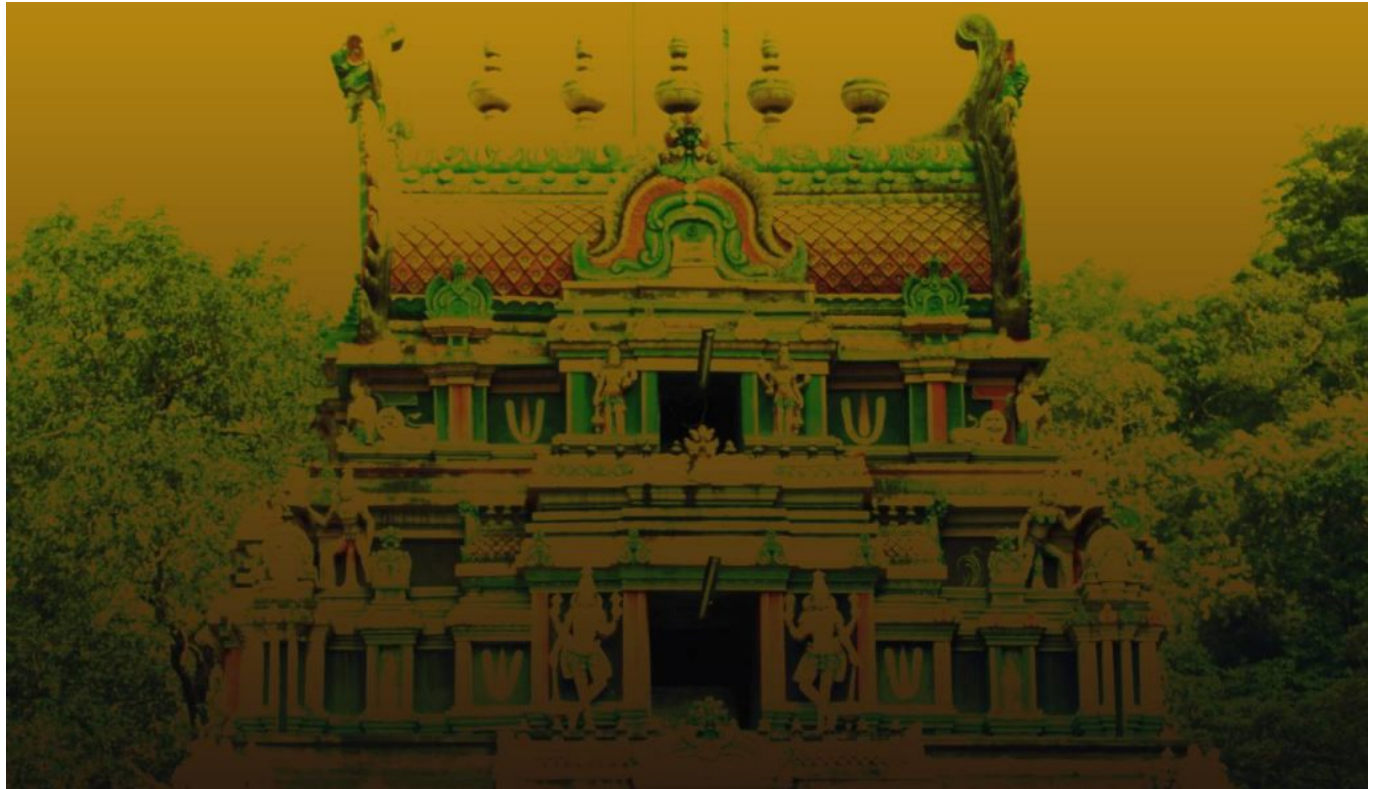


Ahobilam Narasimha Temple

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[GS Paper 1 - Art and Culture, Temple Architecture]

Context - Ahobilam is located in the Nallamala ranges of Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh and is considered to be one of the 108 Vaishnava Divyadesams in the country.

The region is famous for its two beautiful temples located in lower Ahobilam and upper Ahobilam.

Legends behind Ahobilam Temple

- According to legend, this is where Lord Narasimha blessed Prahlada and killed the demon Hiranyakashipu. Ahobilam is one of the ancient Vaishnava shrines of India and it has a matha at Srirangam.
- The idol of the presiding deity Lord Narasimha is shown in a sitting posture with jatagata or matted hair. This is the unique posture of Vishnu and which can only be seen here.
- A rivulet, popularly known as Bhavanasi flows near the temple, which has crystal clear water. It is believed that there is a cave underneath the temple where sits a Swayambhu (self manifested) Narasimha.

Architecture

- The shrine of the Ahobilam temple is situated on the top of the first range and is referred to as Upper Ahobilam and the lower ranges down below are called Lower Ahobilam.
- A huge temple surrounded by a number of buildings can be seen at the Upper Ahobilam.
- The main shrine or the “sanctum sanctorum” at Upper Ahobilam was carved out of a big egg-like rock with mandapams.
- There is a tank here, which supplies water to the residents of the Upper Ahobilam temple. It is mainly for growing flowers for the shrine.
- There is a Lower Ahobilam below which consists of a big temple and enclosures. It was built according to the South Indian style of Temple construction.
- Apart from this, Ahobilam has abundant architectural and epigraphical evidence, chronicled right from the times of the Chalukyas in the eighth century AD.
- Nalayira Divyaprabhandam, Abeethi Stavam, Narayaneeyam, Avanthika Parinayam (the Sanskrit play written by Yateendra Mahadesikan, the seventh Jeer of Ahobila Mutt, about the wedding of Narasimha (Ahobaleshwar) with Mahalakshmi (Chenchu Lakshmi)), Ashtapadi, Karavalamba Stotram, and Annamacharya kritis, are some of the hymns that highlight the different qualities of the deity.
- The Telugu folk songs, (chosen in consultation with Aparna Srikanth), which are used in the production, signifies the importance of the Chenchu tribe in Ahobilam.