

SOCIO CULTURAL HISTORY OF TAMIL NADU UPTO 1565 CE

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Unit-I

Sources of the History of Tamil Nadu – Ancient Tamil Civilization - Sangam Literature – Concept of Tinai– Social and Economic life –Roman Trade Contacts and their impact – Religious life– Murugan and Korravai – Nadukal

Objectives

- Describe the geographical features of Tamil Nadu
- Examine the archaeological and literary sources of Tamil history

Introduction

In the examination of the past, historians primarily examine two categories of historical sources. These are primary and secondary sources of history. A primary source of history is something that originates from the past. It can be a chronicle, a piece of potter or coin found in an archaeological site, and so on. On the other hand, a secondary source of history is a work that comments on the past. Typically, this is a recently written book that describes past events, often written by a historian or trained scholar familiar about the time period and civilization in question. While examining Tamil history, historians examine literary, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources. The foremost source of ancient Tamil history is the Sangam literature, generally dated to the last centuries BCE to early centuries CE. The unit will examine the various sources of Tamil history in detail.

The sources of history are the focus of discussion in this Unit. It relates to ‘Historical Sources’ that reveal and link historical facts with us for a concise comprehension of the historical happenings during any period of time. Sources are the edifices upon which theories are built by the historians. Facts are corroborated with the proof of evidences. Literature is compared to take cognizance of the discovered tools/weapons/utility items, etc. Sources lead to the logical arranging of the events in the chronological order and line up the historical facts and flow of events in rearranging them chronologically to formulate a conclusive observation on an Era. History gets updated and the scope of study enhances as the additional sources are researched by the ongoing research works of the historians. We have abundant sources that have supported the study of Tamil Nadu History, classified into different portfolios of study:

Archaeological Sources

Archaeological Survey Reports are a great source of historical importance. With these evidences and corroborations, the theories built upon the edifice of certain historic factors get further strengthened in formulating a firm authenticity on the history sheets. Archaeological surveys most of the times result in recovery of important old monuments, lost cities buried under

the soil, old coins, memorials and various tools, implements and above all weapons used for the warfare.

Buried treasures

Excavations make a history when the country's lost history is recovered due to some evidences. These evidences can be excavations of buried treasures, buried cities and towns, buried tools, furniture, household utensils, workmen tools, weapons of the civil and armed life. The pioneering work in the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Survey and excavations, were implemented at the instance of Robert Bruce Foote, a British geologist and archaeologist who conducted geological surveys of prehistoric locations in India for the Geological Survey of India.

Excavation Locations during the Archaeological Surveys

(i) Athirapakkam, Chingleput District:

Athirapakkam is the source of Stone Age Tools and implements belonging to Aculian Technology, which is considered 2 lakh years pre-historic. These were discovered by the experts Bruce Foote, Patterson, and Sangalia. These excavations led to the theory that Tamil History dates back to 2 lakh years prior.

(ii) Baiyampalli at North Arcot District:

Dr. S.R. Rao took up a research work at this location. Sources such as implements and tools, grinding stones, priceless precious stones, lamps and bangles made out of clay, led the historians to conclude that they belong to the Iron Age and Megalithic Age. These sources enable us to learn the lifestyle of the people living in those ages.

(iii) Adichanallur at Tirunelveli District on the banks of River Tharabharani, has provided a great push to the research conclusions on the life and social practices of Ancient Tamils. In this excavations, the sources recovered are swords, axes, bow and arrow, iron weapons, spear, and human skeletons as additional evidences to throw more light on the ancient Tamil History. Besides, a huge pot believed to have been used to bury the dead has been excavated. This is called the 'Mudumakkal Thaazi'; Mudumakkal denotes elders and Thaazi denoting an earthen Pot.

(iv) Thiruthangal near Sivakasi in Virudunagar District:

Sources such as black and red earthen pot tiles and copper pieces were recovered at this location and they are related by the historians to the Pandya King of Sangam Age. There were micro implements and tools of the Palaeolithic age.

(v) Kodu manal excavation and research led to the evidences on trade with Rome as they recovered mud pot tiles and clay dolls. This revealed the history during the Sangam Age.

2. Monuments and Memorials/Stone Inscriptions

Many of the forts, temples and palaces situated in Tamil Nadu and Andhra, remind one of the rich architectural value and heritage of the past. Besides, these monuments are considered as the richest treasures left for posterity. These monuments and memorials carry the evidence of the various sculptures and stone inscriptions as well as artworks displaying the scenes from the Puranas like Ramayana and Mahabharata.

3. Stone Inscriptions

Stone inscriptions play a very prominent role in establishing the theories formulated in confirming the historic facts relating to ancient history of Tamil Nadu. These inscriptions are said to be in Tamil Nadu as well as outside Tamil Nadu. Similarly, they are inscribed in languages such as Tamil, Brahmi, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Kannada.

Copper Plate Records

After the 7th Century AD, usage of copper plates for inscriptions increased. Pandyas, Chalukyas and other kings released copper plate inscriptions. These copper plate records releases give a lot of details on social and political events, religion and wars, etc.

(a) Anbil copper plate records reveal information on Chola King Chenganan.

(b) Pallavas copper plate records were in Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. Narasimhavarman III released Pallan Kovil plate records which indicates that the Jains were patronised during that era.

(c) Cholas' copper plates were very lengthy. Rajaraja Cholan I released Laidan plates; Rajendra Cholan I released Thiruvallangadu, Karandai plates; Veera Rajendran's Sarala plates; all these reveal the Chola History with broader details.

(d) Hariharan I of Vijayanagar Kingdom released Banganapalli copper plates; King Krishna Devaraya released the Amaravathi copper plates; Devaraya II released Srirangam copper records; all these describe the achievements of Vijaya Nagara Kings and the various programmes of their rule.

Coins of Various Eras

It is noteworthy that the coins of any age that is found by archaeological surveys reveal information about the era, territory, economic status, the year of minting and also the ruler by name or by image.

(i) Arikamedu near to Pondicherry: In this location, Martimar Wheeler undertook Archaeological survey and research. A huge quantity of gold coins were recovered in this site. This reveals the trade relations between Tamil Nadu and Rome. These coins belong to the Emperor Augustus Ceaser. As for the Tamil Nadu coins, they were very crude and rough and are

rare to find. Other coins reveal the contemporary levels of the kingdom, trade relations and economic activities including overseas trade. While initially coins were issued in copper with the insignia, later coins circulated in Third Century AD are in gold. They were named as 'PANAM' or 'VARAAGAN' in Tamil.

(ii) Periya Patnam excavation: This work was undertaken by the Tanjore Tamil University. Chinese coins and Chinese earthen pots were recovered at Tanjore, Tirunelveli and Periyakulam. These coins carry Chinese words 'RIUBIN' and 'TANGBO'. This reveals the trade relations between China and Tamil Nadu. Chinese coins also indicate that the trade was spread upto South of Pandya Kingdom. Chinese coins were also found belonging to the MING dynasty of China.

(iii) Pallava coins carry bull on one side and two sail ship images. Swastika and lion images are also found on Pallava Coins.

(iv) Chera, Chola and Pandya age coins were artistic and also better shaped with inscriptions and images. Chera coins sported bow and arrow; Chola coins displayed tiger and the Pandya coins carry fish images; these coins have more or a tell-tale effect by revealing the strength of the economy, the societal development level and also the richness in their lifestyle.

(v) Rajaraja Chola's coins were discovered from Telleswaram on the banks of Godavari River. This indicates that the rule extended up to Godavari banks.

(vi) Besides major research projects, small projects were also undertaken at Korkai, Uraiyyur, Madurai and Amaravathi. These historic evidences confirmed the various theoretical stand on the historical facts as concluded by the historians. In this, excavation, the coins issued by the rulers were recovered.

It is concluded that the coins that were found in excavations open up a window of information on the social, cultural and economic factors of the era and also map the age of the coin with the dynasty in Tamil Nadu, corroborated by the contemporary rulers elsewhere.

Literary Sources

Literature is the main source reflecting the societal development due to literacy supported by the other developments in culture and economic conditions provided by the political will and strength. Besides, literary sources provide a vivid description of the status of the lifestyle; the internal and external cultural norms, taboos, social divisions, casteism, economic activity, poverty, primary vocation etc., Literature with wider ramifications covered not only the King's courts but also the real life structures existed outside the palaces. Learning history and its flow of events are made easy by the Literature with its record of chronological events from various sources of literary contributions such as poems, writings, stories, drama etc.,

Literature that have been the sources of evidence for historians are divided into three major classifications:

- Inland Literary Sources: Literature born from the Indian laureates.
- Foreign Literary Sources: Literature born in foreign lands with a mention on the South Indian Kingdoms and the happenings.
- Foreigner Diary happens to be a special mention notings and travelogues of foreign visitors, scholars and emissaries.
- Apart from these two major authentic literature of Sangam Period, Agathiyam, Tolkappiyam, Pathinenkizkanakku, Silappadigaaram, Manimekalai, Valaiyapathi, Kundalakesi, Seevagachinthamani and Thirukkural literature explain the social, religious status and values and also the superior culture of the Tamils who are also called Dravidians.
- Puranaanooru is a composition of poems that showcases the capacity of the rulers of the small kingdoms and also the kings ruling the country.
- Pathithupatru portrays the Chera Kings' qualities for peace, art, and war tactics.
- All these literature speak volumes about the hospitality, love life, courage and benevolence of the Tamils from Sangam Period.

Literature from Other Languages

- In addition to the numerous literature found in Tamil Language, Tamil History has been discussed in the literature of other languages also with the same authenticity.
- Arthasastra written by Kautilya, in Sanskrit makes references on Madurai City and the pearl produced in the Pandya Country.
- Dandin's Avanisundara Kathachara refers to history of the Pallava Era.
- Mahendravarman's Maththa Vilasa Prakachanam enables us to understand the history of the Pallava Era.
- Literature such as Chola Vamsa Charithai, Kongudesa Rasaakkal Savisthaara Charithai, written in Sanskrit brings a lot of historical evidences and references of the Era.
- Ganga Devi's Madura Vijayam, written in Sanskrit makes a mention about the invasions on Madurai by Kumara Kampana of Vijayanagar. This also describes the victory over the Madurai Sultanate by Kumara Kampana, deployed by the Delhi Sultanate of Tughlaq.
- Pamba's Pamba Bharatham and Ranna's Beema Vijayam, both written in Kannada, provide the traditional information of the society, economy and life, also discuss on Rashtrakoota, Chalukya history in a descriptive manner.

- Another Kannada literature named as Kannada Desa Mahaana Tharangil gives a detailed description of the Vijayanagar Empire and the social life of that era.

Sangam Literature

It is believed that Sangam Literature provided the roadmap for the entire Tamil literature, life and values for the future generations of Tamils. The Sangam Literature was the composition by Tamil Poets belonging to both men and women who were from various professional backgrounds. These compositions were later on collected into various anthologies during 1000 A.D. They went into oblivion soon afterwards until they were rediscovered in the 19th century, by Tamil Scholars like U.V.Swaminatha Iyer, Arumuga Navalar, and C.W.Thamotharampillai. Why the name: The name is after the Sangam Academies constituted with Divine Presence/Sages/Poets as Heads during the period.

Significance:

There were patronized by the Pandya Kings

1. The Primary Sangam (Thalai Sangam) was held at Thenmadurai. Chairman of the Sangam is said to be Sage Agastya. No literary work of Madurai Sangam survived.
2. The Middle Sangam (Idai Sangam) is popular by its literary work Tolkappiyam, authored by Tolkappiyar. Second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram. Initiated by Sage Agastya, it was later taken up by Tolkappiyar, a disciple of Agastya.
3. The Last Sangam (Kadai Sangam): The Last Sangam (Kadai Sangam) was organized at Madurai under Nakkeerar. This Sangam has contributed a large number of literary corpus in Tamil. The founder of this Sangam is Mudathirumaran.

Three Sangams (Muchchangam)

While Early Sangam was founded at the then Madurai, Middle Sangam was functioning from Kapadapuram and the Last Sangam was founded at Madurai. It is learnt that the Early Sangam of Then Madurai (South Madurai) and Middle Sangam of Kapadapuram, submerged due to a deluge and the Third Sangam which is considered the Last Sangam, was established by the Pandya Kings at Madurai. The Sangam and its literature that we learn and understand belong to the Last Sangam of Madurai as other two Sangam's Literary as well as other resources went under the water world of Indian Ocean.

The Sangam Literature is referred to as the ancient Tamil Literature in the ancient South India known as Thamizagam or Tamilagam. Akananooru, Kurunthogai, Natrinai are the classic collections which contained 2381 poems composed by 473 poets of whom 102 were remaining as anonymous.

Sangam Literature

1. Akattiyam
2. Tholkappiyam

The Popular Sangam Literature:

- A. Tolkaapiyam was written by Tolkaapiyar. Though considered as grammar, it encompasses the political and socio-economic scenario of that age.
- B. Ettuthokai (Eight Anthologies) comprises eight works: Eighteen Greater Texts (Pathinenmelkanakku) comprise eight anthologies and ten idylls. Eight anthologies are:
 - Ainkurunuru was compiled by Pulathurai Mutriya Kudalur Kizaar. Consisting of 500 lines, it covers the 5 types of the thinais. Each thinai is dedicated with 100 poems speaks about Pandya Kings of Sangam Age.
 - Akananuru consists of 400 poems of the emotion based inner subjects. Pandya King Ukkira Peruvazudi got this compilation made. References on Maurya's Invasion, Thondai Nadu, Sangam Period local administration, marriage customs are available in this.
 - Purananuru gives information on the Sanga Period Kings and rulers. This exhibits the warfare skills, charity qualities of that Age. It also brings the picture of domination of Aryas in Tamil Nadu.
 - Kalittokai was composed by 5 poets consisting of 250 poems giving a glimpse of the love and emotional life of 5 thinais (land styles).
 - Kurunthokai was compiled by Purikko. This contains 402 lines covering the life and habits of Samanas.
 - Natrinai: Consists of 400 poems narrating the rulers of the smaller kingdoms such as Omu, Pamu, Athigan, Ninnan, Malayan, and Panan. It mentions important places such as Thondi, Korkai, Maruthurpattinam, Punalvayil, Irappaiyur, and Kudanthai. It also presents the lifestyle and social beliefs, food habits and also dressing habits of the people living in the 5 different Thinai (Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Paalai)
 - Paripatal is a resource to understand the religious life of Sangam Age.
 - Patitruppattu is a compilation of poems on the Chera Kings. It also brings out the economic and social status of the Sangam Period. Pathupattu (Ten Idylls) contains ten different literary works:
 - Tirumurugatrupatai was composed by Nakkeeran. This is in praise of Lord Muruga.
 - Kurinchipattu deals with the life style and people of Kurinji
 - Malaipatakam is composed to bringout the akam aspects of life.

- Maaturaikkanci describes the Kingdom of Madurai and the lifestyles. It also gives an account of the Warfare of Pandya King, Thalaiyalanganathanu Cheruvenra Pandiyan.
- Mullaippattu, composed by Nipputhanaar deals with more of Mullai landscape and the people living in that landscape.
- Netunalvatai, authored by Nakkeeran, deals with the Outer Factors such as Valour, Policies, Qualities and life in the Pandyan Kingdom led by Nedunchezian.
- Pattinappalai deals with the life and people of Paalai landscape.
- Perumpanatruppatai was composed by Nallur Kadiyalur Uruthirankannar. This Literature informs on Kanchi King Thondaiman and also description of the sanga period instrument Yal.(musical instrument)
- Pournaratruppatai: was composed by Mudaththaama Kanniyaar. The Literature deals with Scholars getting rewards from the Kings or Philonthrathists for their works. Motivating other Scholars to approach the same Kings for their rewards. More information on King Karikala Chola is discussed in this.
- Sirupanatruppatai, composed by Nallur Naththathanaar, discusses the Charitable Provincial Chieftains holding the title of 'Kadai Ezu Vallalgal'. Many of the poems are consider older than Sangam Age and consist of 269 lines. Pathinenkilkanakku comprises of eighteen works about ethics and morals.

Eighteen Lesser Texts (Pathinenkilkanakku)

Naladiyaar, Nanmanikkatikai, Inna Narpatu, Iniyavai Narpatu, Kar Narpatu, Kalavali Narpatu, Aintinai Aimpatu, Tinaimoli Aimpatu, Ainthinai Elupatu, Tinaimalai Nutru Aimpatu, Tirukkural, Trikatukam, Acharakkovai, Palamoli, Nanuru, Sirupangamulam, Mutumolikkanchi, Elathi, Kainnilai.

The salient features of the ancient Tamil civilization are widely known among the scholars. The geologists, the zoologists and the botanists have stated with evidences and clarity about the existence of the land mass, called Lemuria Continent, beyond the present day Kanyakumari and that Lemuria Continent had submerged under the sea. The Tamil and Sanskrit literature also attest to the fact of the existence of the land mass beyond Kanyakumari in the ancient times. But some historians refuse to accept the Lemurian theory and simply dismiss it as a mere myth, raising three objections. According to some scholars, Atlantic Ocean has also submerged a land mass, called Lemuria Continent. It means that two land masses were submerged by the sea, and both the land masses were called Lemuria Continent. It would be incredible to call two submerged continents by single name-Lemuria Continent. To avoid this

confusion, it would be better to reject the name Lemuria Continent to the land mass sunken by the Indian Ocean and call that land mass by another appropriate name. Since the Kumari hills and Kumari River were there on the sunken land beyond kanyakumari, according to the Tamil literature, that land could be called Kumari Land.

The second objection of the historians is the unbelievable nature of the sea engulfing the whole continent. But, on 26 December 2004, we were the witness to the huge seismic waves, triggered by a massive under-sea earthquake off Sumatra in Indonesia, hitting the coastal areas of half a dozen littoral countries of the Indian Ocean, washing away a number of villages and towns, killing more than three lakhs of people and causing destruction of properties worth several thousand crores of rupees. The titanic tsunami as it was called, was described as the fifth largest earthquake under the sea since the beginning of the 20th century and the biggest in 40 years. Likewise, as described in Tamil and Sanskrit literature, several tsunamis hit the Kumari Land and devoured it completely.

According to the commentary on Iraiyanavar Agapporul, three tsunamis hit and submerged Kumari Land. The first tsunami hit Thenmadurai, the first capital of Pandyas and devoured a part of the Kumari Land; the second tsunami hit Kapatapuram, the second capital of Pandyas and submerged some more parts of the Kumari Land; and the third tsunami hit Manalur and submerged the remaining parts of the Kumari land. The Third objection of the historians is about the vastness of the land mass engulfed by the sea. The theory that the Kumari Continent extended from the present day Kanyakumari to the east coasts of Africa before millions of years may be rejected as there are doubts about the existence of human beings at that time. Further, our period of study starts only from the historic period, at which time the Kumari Land was not as big as a continent, but a compact land mass extending from the present day Kanyakumari. This is also confirmed by SM. Ramasamy in his article Satellite Sensed Landmass

South of Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari). The studies so far carried out by the geosciences of different parts of the world have brought a hierarchy of information that the sea bed is not a plain or a trough, but rather has folded mountains, submarine volcanoes, mid-oceanic ridges, submarine canyons, etc. The studies by the earlier researchers also have brought out many such topographic features below the sea in between Kanyakumari in the north and the Antarctica in the south. SM. Ramasamy informs that the satellite pictures taken over the Indian Ocean had shown mountains lying at a depth of about 4000 meters below the present mean sea level. Hence, there is no possibility to consider these folded and Coiffed Mountains of Kumari Continent, as these are not suitable for human settlements and for human civilization. But a plain sea floor extending

to about 20,000 Sq.Km. between Kanyakumari and the cliffed mountains is found. This widespread land could be the Kumari Land described in Tamil and Sanskrit literature. Successive tsunamis hit the first two ancient capitals of Pandyas

Thenmadurai and Kapatapuram were situated. Synchronizing the information of SM. Ramasamy with the table of deluges provided by S. Gurumurthy and the statement of the commentator of Irayanar Agapporul, it may be assumed that Thenmadurai was engulfed by the sea around 3000 B.C. and Kapatapuram around 1500 B.C. and Manalur at a later date. Therefore, any unbiased historian would accept the rational opinion of the scholars about the then possible existence of Kumari land beyond the present day Kanyakumari and its submersion by the sea. According to SM. Ramasamy, the Coiffed Mountains in the Kumari Land were not suitable for human settlements. Hence, those Kumari Mountains could be considered as the southern boundary of the Kumari Land and thereby the Tamil land. Third conclusion also coincides with Tolkappiyam which demarcates the boundaries of Tamil Lands as Venkata hills in the north and Kumari hills in the south. It was in that Tamil Land, including the Kumari Land and the modern Kerala state, the ancient Tamil civilization flourished.

We have to fix the date of the ancient Tamil civilization Thenmadurai, the first Pandya capital submerged under the sea around 3000 B.C. Adding at least 500 years more to that for the development of civilization in Thenmadurai, it may be stated that civilization had began there around 3500 B.C. According to K. Nedunchezian, around 500 B.C., a new religion Ajvika (acult of Iyanar worship) began to spread in Tamil Land. So, 500 B.C. may be fixed as the closing date of the ancient Tamil civilization flourished in Tamil Land approximately between 3500 B.C. and 500 B.C.

Tolkappiyam was written prior to Rig Veda, which was composed in fourteenth century B.C. Several seals discovered in the Indus valley indicate certain religious traditions mentioned in Tolkappiyam, which prove that Tolkappiyam belonged to the age of the last phase of the Indus valley civilization i.e. 1500 B.C. Almost all Tamil scholars agree that Tolkappiyam belonged to the last phase of the Second Tamil Sangam held at Kapatapuram, which was engulfed by the sea around 1500 B.C. Therefore, we may safely conclude that Tolkappiyam was written in 1500 B.C. So, we may attempt to construct the social and cultural history of the Tamils in the ancient Tamil Land on the basis of the vivid picture on the social and cultural life of the Tamils portrayed in Tolkappiyam and also on the basis of the artifacts and other materials discovered from the megalithic sites in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Tinai Concept The ancient Tamils had divided the Tamil country into five distinct ecological zones, with each zone having its own characteristics. Each zone with its distinct characteristics is called Tinai. The concept of tinai can be compared to the modern ecosystem approach adopted in the study of cultures. The five tinai are

Kurinci - mountainous zone, Mullai - pastoral zone, Marutam - Riverine zone, Neytal - coastal zone; and Palai - arid zone. These zonal classifications were adopted for the composition of poems. Besides, they also more or less reflected the actual ecological systems of Tamil country. However, it should not be considered that the five fold divisions were found as distinct units in reality. They were idealised landscapes. Though such distinct units existed in some areas, quite a few regions had overlapping of various tinais. Tolkappiyam refers to such a situation as tinai mayakkam. Each zone or tinai includes the conduct code ascribed to love situations (akam) and war situations (puram).

The tinais have distinct characteristic features, namely, time, season, fauna, flora, avifauna and occupation. In the composition of poems the poets followed these conventions. While composing a poem on Marutam tinai, the plants, animals and the way of life seen in that zone are incorporated in the poems. While creating these conventions the poets have visualised the way of life they saw in each tinai and created the conventions. In actual life, the subsistence and various aspects of the life in these zones are varied depending upon the landscape patterns. The Akam and puram tinais also reflect the predominant behavioural patterns among the people of each landscape. It can be concluded that these poems more or less reflect the ground reality, though it is quite possible that certain generalisations and exaggerations found their place.

Social and Economic life

The major political units during this period were several small kingdoms ruled by kings. The Chera, Chola, Pandya were the most important powers. The kings had absolute powers and were considered divine rulers. They were responsible for providing security to the people, resolving disputes, and administering justice. The kings belonged to the warrior clan called Kshatriyas. The kingdoms were of different sizes. Major kingdoms like the Cheras, Cholas, and Pandyas ruled larger parts of Tamil Nadu. In addition, many smaller kingdoms were ruled by subordinate kings who owed allegiance to the larger kingdoms. These kingdoms were constantly at war with each other.

Social Classes

Sangam society was divided into different varnas - Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. The Brahmins, who were priests and scholars, occupied the highest position. The

Kshatriyas, or warriors and kings, came next. The Vaishyas were farmers, traders, and artisans, while the Shudras carried out menial jobs. Slaves formed the lowest rung. These social divisions determined the status and duties of different sections of society. Varna means "to classify," "to cover," and "to cover up." The Sanskrit word "Varna" denotes colour. It is denoted in Vedic literature as a class in a modern civilization where people are classified according to their skin colour and occupation. Hindu texts define Varna as dividing individuals into groups according to their characteristics. The Manusmriti and Yajur Vedic writings define and explain the significance of the Varna.

The Varna system is a social system of stratification that divides society into various strata based on social and economic abilities. This hierarchical system was prevalent during the early Vedic period. The earliest reference to the Varna can be found in the Tenth mandala of the Rig Veda.

Unlike the caste system, the Varna was not rigid, i.e., it allowed an individual's social mobility. Under this system, the individuals were classified into four categories, i.e., Brahmins, Kshatriyas, vaishyas, and Shudras. Each Varna had to follow its obligations and adhere to the varna norms.



Evolution of the Varna System

The Varna system, also known as the caste system, has a complex evolution in ancient India. This social structure emerged over time and was based on factors such as occupation, birth, and societal roles. Around 1500 BC, Varna gained prominence in India through the arrival of the Aryans, immigrants from Central Asia who differentiated themselves from the original inhabitants based on skin colour. The Aryans' arrival led to conflicts with the original inhabitants, called Dasas, prompting a division intending to subjugate the Dasas. During the Rig

Vedic period, societal divisions emerged. One group of Aryans claimed intellectual leadership as priests, while another group took on the role of protectors known as Rajanya, leaving the ordinary people. This division influenced occupations. In the later Vedic era, a new Varna, Shudra, appeared, mentioned in the 10th mandala of the Rig Veda. This marked the establishment of the four-fold Varna system. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas, received the dwija (twice-born) status, whereas Shudras were excluded from this status, serving the upper three Varnas.

Economy in Sangam Age

The Sangam age refers to the period between 300 BCE to 200 CE in the history of Tamil Nadu. The economy during this period was mainly based on agriculture, along with trade and commerce. Let us look at the various aspects of the Sangam age economy.

Agriculture

Agriculture was the mainstay of the Sangam age economy. Rice was the main crop grown using irrigation from rivers, lakes, and ponds. Other crops like pulses, groundnut, sugarcane, and coconut were also cultivated. The Sangam texts mention different types of farm tools used, like ploughs, spades, sickles, etc. Bullocks were used to plough the fields, and farmers followed traditional methods of farming. Land was owned by the king, subordinate landlords, and village communities. Farmers paid taxes on the produce to the king and landlords.

Trade and Commerce

Trade and commerce also flourished during this period. Traders exchanged goods within the Tamil region and also carried out external trade with other parts of India and other countries. Sea trade was particularly important, enabled through harbours and ports like Kaveripattinam. Gold, silver, pearls, precious stones, spices, condiments, etc., were imported from foreign lands. Traders formed guilds called 'nannul,' which helped protect their economic interests. Different occupations, like weaving, dyeing, pottery, metal craft, etc., supported the trade. Traders had to pay taxes on their business to the king.

Money and Banking

Gold coins, called 'kanjis,' and silver coins, called 'pana,' were used as money. Cowry shells were also used for smaller transactions. Banking services were provided by traders who acted as money lenders and bankers. They accepted deposits and lent money for interest.

Foreign Trade

Tamil traders had active trade relations with other countries like Rome, Greece, Egypt, and South East Asia. They traded spices, cotton textiles, gems, and pearls with these regions and,

in return, imported luxuries like glassware, cosmetics, ivory, etc. Major ports engaged in foreign trade were Kaveripattinam, Arikamedu, and Puhar. Roman coins and artifacts have been found in these ports, indicating flourishing trade ties.

Other Economic Activity

In addition to farming and trade, other occupations like weaving, metal craft, pottery etc, supported the economy. Artisans formed skilled labour castes and followed family occupations. Handloom weaving of cotton textiles was an important industry that produced clothes as well as export articles. Granaries and warehouses stored food grains and traded articles. Rich merchants and traders constituted an affluent class with significant economic power.

Taxes and State Revenue

Taxes formed the major source of state revenue, along with tribute from subordinate kings. Different types of taxes were levied based on land ownership, trades, and professions. Tax collection was supervised by the treasurer and his subordinates. Taxes supported the administrative and military expenditures of the kingdom. Overall, the economy during the Sangam age was primarily agrarian, with agriculture forming the base. Trade and commerce also flourished, enabled by ports and foreign trade. Occupations like weaving, pottery, and metal craft supported economic activity. Land and taxes provided revenue to the king. While the economy ensured livelihoods for different sections of society, absolute powers in the hands of the king and unfair taxes could lead to the exploitation of the common people.

Roman Trade Contacts and their impact

Archaeological sites

Kaveripattinam

This was a well-known port-town of the Cholas at the mouth of the River Kaveri which is eulogised in the early Tamil literature for its trade with the West and the Malaya coast and also its magnificent harbor, wharfs, and rich merchandise from many countries. Surface exploration and excavations done here have brought to light a vast brick built jetty used for loading and unloading purposes. Quite a number of Rouletted potteries were discovered at many places as also a highly corroded Roman coin.¹⁰ As already pointed out, the presence of Romans here as traders and craftsmen (architects) is mentioned in the Tamil works. The Roman traders came here evidently because they could get the products from several parts of South India. A Tamil work of second century A.D. gives a vivid description of the various goods and articles of trade which came there and their respective places of origin. Mention is made of the horses from across the ocean, products from Malaya coast (Kadaram) and Ceylon (Ilam) pearls from the

southern seas, pepper from the western coast, and semi-precious stones from the northern hills and the products from the Gangetic and Kaveri valleys. It was indeed an international commercial centre and the Roman traders would have certainly taken advantage of it because they could get at one place the products of different regions. Unfortunately, this ancient city was considerably destroyed and partly submerged by the sea depriving us of the vestiges. However, there is scope for further archaeological work including marine exploration here. On the whole, we can say that it was as important, if not more, as the Muzuri on the west coast. The chief product of export was probably the excellent cotton textiles made in places like Uraiyur.

Karaikadu (also called Kudikadu and Nathamedu in South Arcot Dist)

It is on the same coast about 40 km from Arikamedu with which it shares many features. It lies on the back waters of Uppanar which could provide the necessary shelter for the anchorage of boats. It is also an extensive mound rich in antiquities which included numerous sherds of fine Rouletted ware, fragments of imported double handled amphorae, conical jars (Arikamedu Types 74/75), beads of semi-precious stones like crystal, agate, chalcedony in various stages of manufacture, extensive remains of the conchshells cutting industry etc. Limited excavations conducted here in 1966 brought to light the vestiges of glass manufacturing industry here. Excavation done in 1988 by the University of Madras brought to light an impressive brick structure associated with the bead-making workshop. A number of beads of semi-precious stones in different stages of manufacture as well as the raw materials in lumps were found. The associated potteries were the Black and Red ware and fine Rouletted ware. One fragment of the amphorae handle was also found. According to Elizabeth – will it was an import from a locality in Southern Italy. This antiquity of the Roman trade here can also be ascribed to the first century B.C. and A.D.

Vasavasamudram

Mediterranean amphorae fragments have also been found at a coastal place called Vasavasamudram near Mamallapuram, the ancient port-town of the Pallavas and possibly of the earlier times too.

Kanchipuram

Excavations in ancient capital town of Kanchipuram have yielded the Rouletted ware besides a large amount of the conical amphorae-like conical jars (Arikamedu types 74/75 of Wheeler) a few of them kept in a row. They clearly indicate the influence of Roman pottery tradition on the local ceramics.

Alagankulam (Ramanathapuram Dist)

This is also an extensive site at the mouth of the river Vaigai with easy access to the open sea and in close vicinity to Sri Lanka coast. This is now being excavated by Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamilnadu under the direction of Mr. Natana Kasinathan. Here also fragments of imported amphorae, considerable quantities of Roulette ware sherds and two Roman coins of the Byzantine period have been found. The site probably was occupied for a time from 1st century B.C. to the 4th and 5th century A.D. The coin evidence shows that the trade with the Roman world was revived in the Byzantine period after some intervening lull. The site has also yielded a new type of red Rouletted ware. The usual Roulette ware is either grey or black but types found here are bright red somewhat resembling the argentine but certainly different from it. Its exact origin or affiliation is not known. Whether it was indigenous or imported has to be examined.

Arikamedu

This is a well-known Indo-Roman trading station identified with the ancient 'Pouduke' of Ptolemy. It is six km from Pondicherry and located in the mouth of the Ariyankuppam River. The place was excavated initially by the French scholars in 1941; by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1946; and again by the French Archaeologist J. K. Casal in 1956. By far it has yielded the most impressive assemblage of Roman artifacts like the Arretine pottery with stamped letters, Rouletted ware, Mediterranean shipping amphorae Roman intaglios and gems besides buildings used for dyeing muslin clothes which the Romans wanted. Wheeler held that Arikamedu was founded during the time of Augustus and lasted for about two centuries on the basis of the date of the Arretine ware the Rouletted ware and the inscribed shreds found there. Recently, Vimala Begely has put forth the case for reconsidering the chronology of the site and observed that re-assessment of Wheeler's and Casals material suggests that the date of the founding of Arikamedu should be pushed back to the middle of the third century B.C., while its first trade contacts with the Mediterranean world may have been established by the late second century B.C.

Religious life

Hinduism is not a single religion but it comprises of many traditions. The traditions that run in Hinduism may go back several thousand years. In this unit, you will study about the emergence of Bhakti Movement amid different worship patterns prevalent in south India. You will also get to know about the principles and significance of Saivism and Vaishnavism. Besides, the unit also focuses on the doctrines of Vira Shaivism together with the significance of Vadakalai and Thenkalai sects.

Saivism

Those who worshipped Lord Shiva were named as Saivites. Saivite saints were also called poet-saints as they also composed poems in praise of the God and spread the message through these poems as a module to develop followers in smaller groups to take the cult forward. Their basic teachings supported the people living in their own domains without making a penance and taking sanyasa (relinquishment). To prove this, these poet-saints lived amidst the people and followed a lifestyle combined with worship and prayers. In addition, they were also composing poems and visiting and guiding Kings on Religion and other matters.

Their teachings centred-around the principle of realizing the God in every thought, deed and speech, without discrimination and inequalities. As they moved with the people, they imbibed the habit of following ethical and moral values as well as speaking truth and following pure thoughts and righteous actions. This attracted many and the Bhakti concept became prominent in the society and their social customs. Religion became a determining factor of social customs, prayer methods, building temples, worship in temples, singing hymns in the praise of the God. Worship in Temples and visiting Temples and Kshetras became a part of the Bhakti expression. Festivals of temples and standard rituals for the temples were redefined as a part of the Bhakti movement. Temples regained their supremacy and turned into a point of convergence. The Alvar and Nayanmar saints used the Tamil language and not Sanskrit for preaching and composing devotional songs. Thus the movement could acquire a popular base and akin to one's own ethnic sentiment of expression.

Nayanmar (Nayanar)

The Nayanmars were a group of 63 saints or saint poets who were devoted to the Hindu God Shiva in Tamil Nadu. In Saivism, the history of 63 Nayanmars is very notable one. They followed the rituals and the scriptures set out for the Siva Worship. It is important to be noted that Manickavachagar is not counted as a Nayanar but he is considered as one of the four Tamil Samaya Kuravas (Teachers). Of the 63 Nayanmars that are listed, only four of them are popular and at the same time important from the angle of their contributions to the Bhakti Movement and its Renaissance. They are:

1. Thirunavukkarasar (Called as Appar adigal)
2. Thirugnana Sambandar (Sambandar)
3. Sundarar and
4. Manickavachagar

These four Nayanars are considered as Tamil Samaya Acharyas (four Tamil religious Teachers) whose hymns are authentic hymns that pleased Lord Siva himself. In a few cases, the Lord himself has commenced the stanzas and lines. They brought out Thevaram and Thiruvagasam which are the only Tamil prayer songs that are recited in all the Siva Temples, in Tamil Nadu even today. As against Sanskrit Slokas, these hymns have attained supremacy all over Tamil Nadu as an official worship adapted by the Shivites in Tamil Nadu. Though Sanskrit slokas as chanted in Siva Temples, Tevaram and Tiruvagasam are given the prime position in Tamil Nadu temples. In other words, Saiva faith clings on to these two compilations, without which Siva Worship is incomplete.

A brief coverage of their contributions will portray the total magnitude of the contributions made by the Nayanmars (Nayanar) in taking forward the Bhakti Movement all through the ages. The foundation made by the Nayanmars formed the basis of the future growth of Saivism in Tamil Nadu and the temples of South India still chant the hymns composed by the Nayanmars and also the practices that were established by the Nayanmars. Thirumurai is one of the first works in Saivism, one sect of the Hindu religions. It reflects important core values and preserves them literally as well as grammatically. The hymns (songs) contain all the information found in the Vedas.

These holy hymns have been sung by Saivite Saints, poets, in a great spiritual wisdom and in seeking only the truth, having seen the God himself. They have numerous healing powers that make wonders, having staged many miracles such as restructuring bones into a woman and making a dumb person speak. Panniru Thirumurai (12 thirumuraikal) is a collection of 12 holy scriptures sung by 27 devotees in Tamil (from Thirugnanasambandar to Chekkizar) most of whom lived in different times. The songs reflect and teach the ways of present life, after-life and the path to salvation. They help to live life and experience it to its fullest with happiness and prosperity. They are considered panacea with indiscriminate approach to the masses and the elite alike and apply to all in various states and conditions.

One of the Panniru Thirumurai, is Thevaram. Thevaram is a compilation of the hymns on Lord Siva sung by Sundarar, Appar or Tirunavakkarasu, and Tirugnana Sambandar. These hymns are accepted as the prayer songs in praise of the Lord Siva who is pleased by its praise and melody. Of the Panniru Thirumurai, Thevaram is considered as the most important. Thevaram refers to songs (pamaalai) sung in the praise of God. Thiruvagasam in Tamil means 'Sacred Utterances'. This is a compilation of the Tamil Hymns in the praise of Lord Siva by poet Manickavachagar, who is considered as one of the four Saiva Samaya Kuravas (Teachers).

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism is another major tradition of Hinduism like Saivism. The tradition flourished under the Pallavas Regime and Lord Vishnu was worshipped as the presiding deity by the Vaishnavites. Vaishnavite Sages were called as Alvars. These Alvars were dedicated to the cult and they mingled with the devotees and ensured that the faith was growing and the rituals were carried out in a systematic way. They also ensured that they highlighted the supremacy of vaishnavism over all other faiths inclusive of Shaivism. However the arguments amongst the Shiva and Vaishnava cults are co existing.

The alvars, also spelt as alvars are immersed in god'. Tamil poet-saints of South India who espoused bhakti (devotion) to the Hindu god Vishnu or his avatar Krishna in their songs of longing, ecstasy and service. They are venerated especially in Vaishnavism, which regards Vishnu or Krishna as the Supreme Being. According to many modern academics, the Alvars belong to the time bucket of 5th century to 10th century CE, however traditionally the Alvars are considered to have lived between 4200 BCE - 2700 BCE. As per orthodoxy, the number of alvars are ten, though there are other references that include Andal and Madhurakavi Alvar, making the number twelve. Andal is the only female saint-poet in the 12 Alvars.

Together with the contemporary sixty three Shaiva Nayanars, 12 Alvars representing the Vishnu Cult spread the Bhakti Movement in the Era and they are among the most important saints from Tamil Nadu. The devotional outpourings of Alvars, composed during the early medieval period of Tamil history, helped revive the Bhakti Movement, through their hymns of worship to Vishnu and his avatars. They praised the Divya Desams, 108 'abodes' (temples) of these Vaishnava deities.

The poetry of the Alvars echoes bhakti to God through love, and in the ecstasy of such devotions they sang hundreds of songs which embodied both depth of feeling and felicity of expressions. The collection of their hymns is known as 4000 Divya Prabandham. The Bhakti literature that sprang from Alvars has contributed to the establishment and sustenance of a Culture that broke away from the ritual-oriented Vedic religion and rooted itself in devotion as the only path for salvation. In addition they helped to make the Tamil religious life independent of a knowledge of Sanskrit. As part of the legacy of the Alvars, five Vaishnava philosophical traditions (sampradayas) have developed at the later stages.

Vira Shaivism

Vira Shaivism is a firm Shivite faith, prominent in its homeland - Karnataka. It was made popular by the Sri Basaveshvara (1105-67). The movement championed the cause of the

downtrodden and evolved as a revolt against a system which fostered social inequality. Going against the way of the times, it rejected ritualistic caste-based supremacy. It also rejected the system of four stages of life, and also the numerous multiplicity of gods and goddesses; the concepts of karmic destiny, existence of inner worlds, and the duality of Paramathma and Jeevathma.

Temple worship, ritualistic priest-craft, animal sacrifice, and the traditions of ritual purity-pollution were all rejected by this sect of believers. Shiva is the Supreme God, and he is to be worshiped through the Linga not as an image but Shiva himself. Shiva is the linga and the jiva is the anga (part); and the main purpose of this worship is the search for and realization of the devotee's divine oneness with Shiva through the linga. This is technically called the internal penetration into Shiva through the worship and contemplation of the linga. To facilitate this union with and final absorption into the Deity, the devotee takes recourse to 'eight aids to faith', and the practice of the Sat-sthala Siddhanta philosophy.

Diksha which opens the door and admits a person into the fold of Virasaivism, is considered essential and compulsory for attaining the final goal. It is simultaneous with wearing of the linga. Hence they are also called Lingayats (bearers of the linga). Shiva resides in the disciple in the form of consciousness. It is believed that during the initiation Chaithanya, existing in the body of the pupil is extracted by the Guru's spiritual powers and gets placed on the consecrated linga. The linga is worn encased in a pendant around the neck and worshiped throughout life. The linga must on no account be separated from the body, since such separation is equivalent to spiritual death.

Murugan and Korravai

Murugan, the native and indigenous deity had his own form of worship and that worship was prominent in the Tamil country even from the Sangam age onwards. Murugan was treated as a God of Kurinji region. While Tokappiyam the earliest Tamil grammatical extant had referred to this God as Seyon of Maivarai ulagam the Tamil deity was also known as Velan in various Sangam classics. Though he was an identical God equal to northern Skanda Karthikeya, who was known by names such as Skanda, Kumara, Subrahmanya, Devasenapathy, etc., Murugan was an indigenous Tamil God called otherwise as Kadamban, Sevvel, Kumaran, Sendan. While the northern Skanda Karthikeya was a composite God Tamil Murugan was a single God of beauty. Under such circumstances Kachchiyappar, who lived in the later half of the 11th century and in the early half of the 12th century produced his Kandapuramam to revive the glory of the Tamil Murugan which had deteriorated and was in an eclipse stage. He had endeavored to elevate its

status by adopting the Tradition in northern Skandam. Such a treatment of Murugan cult by Kachchiyappar stresses one to have an analysis of Murugan worship as depicted by him in his Kandapurnam. Such a study will enable one to have comparative analysis of the same deities and also the status and worship of the Tamil deity at that time. By citing various reasons he had called Skandan as Kangeyan and Saravanabhavan Karthikeyan and Kandan. Further on par with the features mentioned by Sri Tathuvanidhi Kachchiyappar has assigned importance to the names of Murugan without any deviation from the northern works and had adopted the narrations of north Indian works such as Kumara Tantra.

He was aware of the Somaskanda panel of Murugan, emerged and attained popularity during the Pallava period. The panel attests the value of family of Siva because Murugan is associated with Siva and Parvathi as his paren. In the same way Kachchiyappar had referred to Skanda seated on the lap of his mother Uma who is along with her partner Siva. This panel is available in the Siva temples of Pallava period. It is evident that with the emergence of the Bhakthi Movement, there occurred transformations in the Bhakthi literature. Such aspects widened the scope in describing the qualities of the deity Murugan in various forms. Further Murugan worship offered an opportunity for the Saiva Nayanmars to elevate Saivism. To amalgamate the two deities of identical nature and qualities with each other Kachchiyappar, had called Murugan as Somaskandan in his work. It was mainly to revive gone down the Murugan cult in Tamil Nadu.

In the same way on par with Thanigai Puranam and Kanchipuram, Kachchiyappar has treated Murugan as Bramma Sastha. As pointed out by the Sangam classics and other northern works, Kachchiyappar too had treated Murugan as a war God. He had referred to his wars with Asuras in many places in his work. As pointed out by Nakkirar, Kachchiyappar also had described Murugan as a hunter. He had even portrayed Murugan with his wives Valli and Devaseana in many places. Such descriptions reveal that Kachchiyappar unhesitatingly had utilized the different legendary stories associated with Murugan. As pointed out by Arunagiri at a later date in his Kamdaralangaram, Kachchiyappar even much earlier had attached significance to the philosophic attributes of Murugan. Kumaraguruparar in his Muthu Kumaraswamy Pillai Tamil too had adopted his attribute.

As rightly observed by other scholars, Kachchiyappar, while describing the different appearances of Murugan, had paid attention to the iconographic features. In all his contributions had endeavored to elevate Murugan worship.

While calling Murugan as Kumaravel and the ancient God beyond imagination it is appropriate to estimate that Kachchiyappar had attempted to highlight Murugan as an archaic deity and worth worshipping. Kachchiyappar's descriptions about the different festivals associated with Murugan such as Masimagam, Panguni Uddiram, Kadnda Shasti and Karthigaiassist to note that Kachchiyappar had done an yeoman service in promoting Murugan worship in his own unique way. His efforts had produced indelible impression over the Tamils and the Tamils are adopting these traditions still. His Agattiyapadalam, points out his endeavors to relate the dwarf sage Agastya with Murugan. On par with the northern Sanskrit tradition, when he hails Murugan it is obvious that Murugan worship was bestowed with a fresh dimension during his period.

Nadukal

Sangam literature is one of the most vivid descriptions of the life of the ancient Tamils. Of these, Purananooru is a book that describes the valour, endowments, education, impermanence, and warfare of the ancient Tamils. Purananooru songs are considered by scholars to be the songs of the heroic era. The events of lifting and reinstating cattle have been a symbol of the valour of the ancient Tamils. This event has also been the starting point for the war. This paper describes the context in which "Nadukal" worship was created in honour of the sacrifices of the martyred soldiers in the above events. The ancient Tamils believed that the spirits of those who had been martyred would stay in the Nadukal, or sepulchral stone, and do them well. Therefore, the manner in which the stone is worshipped with flowers, food grains, and peacock feathers is described in this paper. It has been pointed out that the situation in which the worship of Nadukal later developed for the people who gave up their lives by fasting and facing the North was one in which they engaged in emotional and great activities. During the period of Silappathikaram, the context in which the worship of the Nadukal was created for women (Kannagi) and which, in course of time, was transformed into a Minor Deity, has been compared with the conclusions of the researchers and the Nadukal worship in the Purananooru songs.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the inscriptions, literary works, archaeological findings, and other sources contribute to our understanding of the historical developments of Tamil Nadu.
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2. Examine the key features of the ancient Tamil civilization.
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3. Analyze the significance of Sangam literature in understanding the cultural and social aspects of ancient Tamil society.
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4. Discuss the social and economic life of ancient Tamil Nadu as reflected in Sangam literature.
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5. Examine the religious practices and beliefs of the people in ancient Tamil Nadu.
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6. Discuss the significance of deities like Murugan and Korravai in ancient Tamil religious and cultural traditions.
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7. Compare and contrast the information derived from Sangam literature with that obtained from inscriptions.
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UNIT – II

Pallavas: Origin, history and contribution to South Indian culture –Socio-religious condition – Bhakti Movement and the State – Growth of Saiva and Vaishnava Traditions – Institution of Temple – Art and Architecture – Education: Ghatikas – Literature

Objectives

- Understand the background and origin of the Pallavas
- Discuss the history of the popular Pallavas
- Understand the reason behind the Pallavas-Chalukya conflict

Origin of the Pallavas

The original home land of the Pallavas is still shrouded in mystery. The theory of the origin may be broadly divided into 1. Foreign origin and 2. Indigenous origin. The original habitat of the Pallavas is chief among the unsettled problems in our history.

Foreign Origin

Lewis Rice, Venkayya and Jouveau Dubreuil advocated the most fantastic Pahlava origin theory. It is based mainly on “etymological ground”. Venkayya derived the term Pallava from the equation: (Parthia, Parthiva, Parthava) Pahlava-Pahnavia-Pallava. The Parthians or Pahlavas or Palhavas were Persian invaders of India in the first century A.D. From their settlement in the North West they pushed into South India by way of Maharashtra. Under the Satavahanas they sought service as provincial governors. The Junagadh inscription refers to a Pahlava Governor. It is guessed that they migrated further south and during the days of decline of the Satavahanas and carved out an independent principality in Tondaimandalam.

Early Pallavas

History of the early Pallavas “is one of the difficult problems in South Indian History”. Their genealogy and chronology are to a large extent indefinite. For the sake of convenience the history of the Pallavas before Mahendravarman can be divided into two dynasties - One issuing their grants in Prakrit and the other in Sanskrit. Sivaskandavarman belonged to the Prakrit Charters dynasty. He may be assigned to the first half of the 4th century. He is the ablest of the early Pallavas. Under his rule, the kingdom of Kanchi extended. He assumed the title of Dharmamaharaja and performed the asvamedha sacrifice. After the dynasty of the Prakrit charters came the dynasty of Sanskrit Charters. They may be assigned to the period, 350 to 550 A.D. It is due to the incursions of the Kalabhras, the political history of the Pallavas of Sanskrit Charters became very obscure. The names of more than 16 kings are available along with Simhavarman,

Skandavarman and Kumara Vishnu. With the accession of Simhavishnu in A.D.575, chronology and genealogy of the Pallavas became more clear.

Great Pallavas

Simhavishnu was the inaugurator of the Great or Imperial Pallava line. With his accession the history of the Pallavas became more clear and dawned a new era of progress and glory to the Pallavas. He overthrew the Kalabhras. He is said to have defeated the Kings of Chola, Pandya and Ceylon and occupied Cholamandalam. His kingdom extended upto Cauveri. He was a Vaishnavite and assumed the title-Avanisimha. Bharavi, the great author is said to have visited Kanchi. Bas-reliefs of Simhavishnu and his queen can be seen at Mahabalipuram. He was succeeded by his great son Mahendravarman I.

Mahendravarman I (A.D.600-630)

Mahendravarman was the son and successor of Simhavishnu. He was the greatest of the Great Pallavas. His accession marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Tamil Nadu. He is said to have inaugurated the long-drawn Pallava Chalukya hostility. The Aihole Inscription of Pulakesin II claims the defeat of Mahendravarman I who had lost the northern part of his empire to Pulakesin II. But Mahendravarman had successfully resisted Pulakesin II near Kanchi and saved his capital from the Chalukyan invasion. According to the Kasakudi plates it is deduced that Mahendravarman defeated his enemy at Pullalur, near Kanchi. But, it is not known how far it is true. He is said to have extended the southern portions of his kingdom. Though, Mahendravarman was engaged in his conflict with the Western Chalukyas, his fame was established in other spheres of activity.

Mahendravarman was both a warrior and patron of the arts. In the field of art and architecture he occupies a unique place. According to tradition, he was originally a Jaina and persecuted the members of the other religions. Under the influence of Appar (Tirunavukkarasu), he gave up Jainism and adopted Saivism. His conversion to Saivism proved to be a turning point in the history of South Indian Temple Architecture. As a beginner of rock-cut temples and monolithic structures, he constructed temples for Siva and Vishnu. He caused the construction of several rock-cut temples. His cave temples have been discovered at Vallam, Dalavanur, Mamandur, Pallavaram, Mandagapattu, Trichinopoly, Mehndravadi, Singavaram, Tirukalukunram, Undavalli and Bhairavagonda.

He gave up the use of brick and mortar and started the tradition of rock-cut temples or what is known as the Mahendra style. He encouraged music and painting. The paintings at Sittannavasal reveal the development of the art of dancing. The music inscription at Kudimiyamalai is ascribed to him and he is regarded as an expert in music. His titles-Vichitrachitta and Chitrakarappuli-reveals his many-sided activities. His reign synchronised with the growth of Saivism and the religious activities of Appar and Sambandar. There was the steady decline of Buddhism and Jainism. He assumed a number of titles like Gunabhara, Satyasandha, Paramamaheswara, Mahendravikrama, Vichitrachitta, Chetthakari and Mahendravikrama, Vichitrachitta, Chetthakar and Mattavilasa. His empire extended from the Krishna to the Kaveri. He was a poet. He wrote two plays 1. Mattavilasaprahasana and Bhagavadajjuklyu.,

Narasimhavarman I (A.D.630 - 655)

Narasimhavarman ascended the throne, after the death of his father Mahendrarman in A.D.630. He was the greatest of the Pallavas and represented all the virtues of a ruler. His rule is remarkable for (1) the conquest of Vatapi; (2) invasion of Ceylon; (3) the visit of Hiuen-Tsang and (4) The emergence of Mamalla style. Narasimhavarman successfully continued the Pallava-Chalukya conflict started by his father. He defeated Pulakesin II at the battle of Manimangalam. With the help of his commander Paranjoti (later known as Sirutondar) he invaded and sacked Vatapi and killed Pulakesin II in the battle. After scoring this signal victory he assumed the titles of 'Vatapikonda' and 'Mahamalla'. He brought from there the famous Vatapi Ganesa icon. Manavarman the exiled prince of Ceylon was given shelter by Narasimhavarman. In his expeditions to Vatapi, Narasimhavarman was greatly assisted by Manavarman. After the destruction of Vatapi, Narasimhavarman out of gratitude wanted to restore the Sinhalese prince to his ancestral throne.

He sent two naval expeditions from Kanchi and successfully restored Manavarman on the throne. This conquest anticipated the Chola conquest of Ceylon. Hiuen-Tsang, the famous Chinese pilgrim, visited Kanchi in A.D.640. He founded Kanchi as a big city, containing about 100 Buddhist monasteries and was rich in learning and learned men. Like his father, he was a great builder. He was the founder of Mamallapuram. He constructed many mandapas and rathas.

Some of the famous Seven Pagodas like Dharmaraja Ratha are assigned to him. His style of architecture, commonly known as Mamalla style, forms the basis for the Dravidian style. He was a Saivite. During his rule Saiva revivalism continued unabated. He assumed a number of titles like Mamalla, Vatapikonda, Sri Nidhi and Naya Nanguran.

Mahendrarman II (c.A.D.655-660)

Narasimhavarman was succeeded by his inefficient son Mahendravarman II. He ruled for a short period, probably a year, and was insignificant. To wreck vengeance upon the Pallavas, the Chalukyan ruler Vikramaditya (son of Pulakesin II) constantly harassed Mahendravarman II and recovered the lost provinces from the Pallavas.

Parameswaravarman I (c.A.D.660-680)

Mahendravarman II was followed by Parameswaravarman I. During his rule the Pallava-Chalukya conflict continued unabated. Vikramaditya I, the son of Pulakesin II, marched to Kanchi and defeated Parameswaravarman I. In another battle at Vilande, he was again defeated. According to Pallava plates, Parameswaravarman got a complete victory over Vikramaditya at the battle of Peruvalanallur, near Lalgudi. Some scholars are of the opinion that, the initial victories might be of the Chalukyas but the decisive final victory was of Parameswaravarman at Peruvalanallur. His name clearly indicates that he was an ardent worshipper of Siva, to whom a number of temples were dedicated by him. He constructed the famous monolithic Ganesa temple at Mamallapuram and a structural temple of Siva at Kurram (near Kanchi). He dedicated the village Paramesvaramangalam, named after him, to the Siva temple at Kurram. He is said to have assumed titles like Chitramaya, Gunabajana and Sribhara.

Narasimhavarman II (c.A.D.680-700)

Narasimhavarman II was commonly known as Rajasimha. His period is noted for peace characterised by much attention to art.. During this period, the traditional Pallava-Chalukya conflict seem to have enjoyed a cessation. He sent an embassy to China and maintained friendly and commercial relations with the Far Eastern countries. His contribution to Dravidian Architecture is immense and significant. With his reign a new architectural movement began, which was entirely structural. Of the Rajasimha mode there are Six examples. They were the shore temple, Isvara Temple and Mukunda temples at Mamallapuram, a temple at Panamalai and the temples of Kailasanatha and of Vaikuntha Perumal at Kanchipuram. The shore temple is the first Dravidian one to be constructed of dressed stone and it is a proof of its excellent work made. He was a patron of scholars and Sanskrit poets. He was adorned by Dandin. He had titles like Sankarabhakta and Agamapriya.

Nandivarman II (c.A.D.710-775)

Narasimhavarman II was succeeded by his insignificant son Parameswaravarman II. It seems that he ruled for ten years and was killed in the Pallava-Chalukya conflict. After the death of Parameswaravarman II, Nandivarman II, a boy of 12 years ascended to the throne. He was the

son of one Hiranyavarman. He ruled for sixtyfive years and his reign is noted for Pallavas conflict with the Chalukyas, the Pandyas and the Rashtrakutas. Vikramaditya II, the Chalukyan ruler, invaded Tondaimandalam. He defeated Nandivarman II and conquered Kanchi. Vikramaditya's sole aim being to establish supremacy. He left Kanchi without sacking it. Chitramaya who claimed the Pallava throne obtained the support of the Pandyan King Rajasimha and declared war against the Pallavas. This led to a series of battles. Rajasimha besieged Nandivarman in the fort of Nandipura (near Kumbakonam) where he was staying. At this critical juncture Nandivarman was timely rescued by his general Udayachandra. Eventhough the Pandyas won the battle in the beginning, they were finally defeated. The pretender Chitramaya was killed. After the fall of the Chalukyan dynasty, the Rashtrakutas rose to power under Dandidurga. Dandidurga invaded Kanchi, defeated the Pallavas and occupied Kanchi. But he concluded peace with Nandivarman. The peace was strengthened and cemented by Nandivarman's marriage with Reva, the daughter of Dandidurga. Nandivarman II was a Vaishnava. He patronised Tirumangai Alvar, whose writings form a part of the Nalayiraprabandham. He built the Kesavaperumal temple at Kurram and the Muktesvara temple at Kanchi.

Dantivarman (c.A.D.776-825)

Dandivarman (C.A.D.776 - 825) was the son of Nandivarman II by the Rashtrakuta Prince Reva. Inspite of this relationship, Govinda III defeated Dantivarman and occupied Kanchi. By this time Varaguna Pandya occupied the Kaveri region.

Nandivarman III (c.A.D.826-849)

Nandivarman III (c.826-C.849) who succeeded Dantivarman proved to be an able ruler than his father. The Pandyas marched against the Pallavas under Srimara Srivallabha. Nandivarman won a great victory and assumed the tile "Tellaru Erinda Nandivarman". The Pandyas soon recovered and defeated the Pallavas near Kumbakonam. Nandivarman was a religious minded personality and worshipped Siva. He was a great patron of Tamil literature. Perundevanar, author of Bharatavenba was a contemporary of Nandivarman.

Nirupatunga and Aparajita (A.D..849-875)

Nirupatunga, the son of Nandivarman III was the penultimate ruler of the Pallava dynasty. He avenged the defeat of his father by defeating the Pandyas in the battle of Arisil. The Bahur inscription records that Nirupatunga donated three villages for the support of a Vedic College. By this time, the Cholas so far a major force, has emerged as a major force under Vijayalaya In Kanchi, differences developed between Nirupatunga and Aparijitha, his step

brother. To obtain the Pallava throne, Aparajita allied with the Ganga ruler Prithivipati I and the Chola Aditya. Nripatunga succeeded in having the alliance of Varaguna II Pandian. About A.D.880, the two confederacies met in the battle at Sripurambiyam (Tirupurambiyam, near Kumbakonam). In this battle Aparajita won over the Pandyas. Prithivipati was killed and Nripatunga was no more heard of. A decade after the battle of Sripurambiyam, Aditya Chola challenged Aparajita. Aparajita, the last Pallava ruler was defeated and killed by Aditya in A.D 891 and the Main Pallava dynasty came to an end. Minor Pallava chiefs, however, continued to the rule over various parts of the country as feudalities to the Cholas.

Social and Cultural Conditions

The Tamil society was undergoing a thorough change in the dawn of the middle ages. There were four divisions in the society. They were; 1.Brahmanas 2.Shatriyas 3.Vaisyas and 4.Sudras. They followed the principles of Hindu Dharma and Varunashrama Dharma. According to Kuram plates of Parameswaravarman I, it is very obvious that Mahendra Varman III observed the regulations of Varnashrama Dharma. Kasakudi plates of Nandivarman explains the significance of observing the principles of Varnashrama Dharma, by all castes during this period. Besides there were artisans, goldsmiths, carpenters, Idaiyars and farmers.

Brahmanas

In General the Brahmins were educated people in the society, Kasakudi copper plate mentions liberal grant of lands to them. They are called Brahmadeya lands. During the reign of the Pallavas large number of Brahmins migrated from Andhra to Tamil Nadu. They performed many *pujas*. They also conducted yagna like Agnishthoms, Asvamedha, Vajapeya, Hiranyagraha and Thulabara. Brahmins were divided into Siva Brahmins Vaishnava Brahmins and Veda Brahmins. They lived in Agraharas. The Agraharas were established by Pallava rulers. Brahmins were given many titles like *Chaturvetin, Tirivetin, Somayagin, Vasanthayagas* etc. Brahmins wore sacred thread. They were very interested in studying Vedas.

In short they mastered Vedas. They served as ministers during this period. They served as watch and ward of the palace during this time. They looked after the accounts of the empire. They were the members of the committee of selling donating lands. Some Brahmins acted as priests. Some Brahmins served as cook in temples. They looked after the village administration. They were responsible for the publication of several copper plates. To put it in a nutshell and the Brahmins enjoyed high status in the society.

Shatriyas

The Talagunda inscription refers to the Pallavas as Kshatriyas. They were heroic and chivalrous people. They were very fond of war. They enjoyed considerable position in the society.

Vaishyas

Vaishyas were the business community during this period.

Sudras

The lowest strata of society was the sudras. References about the Sudras and the Panchamas are amply found in inscriptions and literature. K.A.N.Sastri also mentions this caste in his "Foreign Notices of South India. Besides there were Vellalas, Dhobis, shepherds, fishermen, hunters, Parayas, Panars, and Pulayars. They were identified by their profession.

Position of Women

Women were highly respected in the society. They showed keen interest in religion and temple affairs. Moreover, they evinced keen interest in commerce as well. Women enjoyed right to own property during this period. We have no idea about the existence of dowry system during the Pallava period. Monogamy was the order of the day. Certain kings had two wives. We know these facts from the scriptures of *Varaha Mandapa* and some literary works. *Sati* was not known to them. Besides serving in the temples, women indulged in spinning, weaving and selling of milk from door to door. The inscriptions of Mukteswara temple state that there were many dancing girls. Among them are Kuthikal, Adikal Mar, Manikattar and Kanigaiyar.

During this period the queens enjoyed special concessions and privileges. They gave gifts to temples. The kings made many matrimonial alliances to gain political advantages. One such was with Kadambars. The others were with Rashtrakutas and Gangas. Reva, the Rashtrakuta princess married Nandivarman II. The Kadamba Princess Akkallamiamathi married Dantavarman. Sanga another Rashtrakuta princess married Nandivarman III.

Queens like Charudevi and others patronised religion. They donated lands to temples. They constructed five temples. They even celebrated many festivals. They had valuable jewels. They were very attractive damsels. They had captivating personality. These facts are inferred from the sculpture of Mahendravarman's wives found in the *Varaha mandapa* at Mamallapuram. The above inscriptions state that they were dancers par excellence. The Aryan culture exercised tremendous influence upon the Tamil culture. We know this from the biographies of Andal and Sundaramurthy Nayanar. Thiruppavai Nombu i.e., fasting was observed by womenfolk during the Pallava period. Saivite and Vaishnavite ladies worshipped Gods daily after bath in early hours.

During this period marriage was conducted with the consent of the parents. Many rituals and ceremonies were observed during the marriage. Homam was performed. The holy thread (*Thali*) was tied to the neck of the bride with the accompaniment of instrumental music and in the presence of friends and relatives. Anuloma marriage (non-Brahmin male marrying Brahmin lady) also existed during this period.

Ornaments

According to the economic status of people, the women folk in particular wore the following ornaments made of different metals and materials. They are: 1.crown-chains, 2.thodu, 3.kundalam, 4.patrakundalam, 5.marakkui, 6.anklets, 7.rings, 8.padagam, 9.kinkini, 10.pathakkam, 11.paghuralai, 12.tholuvalai, 13.valayal, 14.ottiyam, 15.veerachangili. palm-leaves were also used as ear-rings by some ladies. Besides men also wore some jewels.

Dress

Both men and women wore costly dresses. Particularly members of the royal families and ministers wore rich and beautiful dresses. Siraadai and Meladai (lower and upper garments) were used by the ladies. Jains wore washed cloth (Thuvaitha Adai) during the Pallava period. Special type of dresses were used by the Warrior class.

Food and Drinks

During his period people consumed red paddy (sennel). Apart from this they took *Appam*, *Pongal*, curd-rice, ghee-rice, milk, *dhal* and butter and special diets were provided to soldiers. There were both vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

Contribution of Pallavas to Indian Culture

Administration:

The Pallavas had a well organized administrative system. Monarchy was the order of the day. The title „Dharma-Maharaja“ assumed by the kings show that they exercised their rule righteously. The king was the head of the state, the fountain of honour, judge, and leader of the armed forces. The Pallava state was divided into Kottams. The Kottam was administered by officers appointed by the king. The village is the basic unit of administration. Different types of villages like villages with inter caste population, Brahmadeya and Devadana existed during this period. The village administration was run by various local autonomous assemblies. Sabha, Uraar etc., were the most popular assemblies of this period. Every village had got a court of justice, viz. Dharamasasana. Every village was provided with professional servants like potters, weavers, carpenters, smiths etc. It appears that the village acted like self sufficient miniature republics in the Pallava period. Entrusting the administration of a smaller territorial to an assembly or a local

autonomous institution appears to be a very important feature of the Pallava polity. Land revenue was the major source of income. The Pallavas also levied taxes on professions, marriages, manufacture of salt, sugar and textiles, draught cattle etc., It is evident from the testimony of Hiuen Tsang that the people were very hard working and the soil was very fertile, the labourers who did agricultural work were paid in kind.

Religion

The heterodox religions viz. Buddhism and Jainism were still very active in the Pallava kingdom. It is evident from the testimony of Hieun Tsang that there were hundred Buddhist monasteries and 10,000 Buddhist monks and nuns belonging to the Manayana schools of Buddhism at Kanchi. Jainism enjoyed popularity in the beginning. Most of the Pallava kings were the followers of both Vaishnavism and Saivism. The Pallava kings assumed not only the title “Dharma-Maharaja” but also performed the Vedic sacrifices like Agnisthoma, Vajapeya and Asvamedha sacrifices, which were in conformity with the Vedic sacrifices. Thus Buddhism and Jainism lost the royal patronage and mass support. This paved the way for the rise of Vedic religion. Besides the performance of Vedic sacrifices, the worship of gods Brahma, Vishnu and Siva became popular. From the 7th century onwards the Nayanars and Alvars contributed to the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism. This is known Bhakti movement.

The cult of Bhakti began to dominate the religious life of the South Indians, and the Alvars and Nayanars played a great part in propagating it. The Vedic tradition was further reinforced by a movement started by Sankaracharya. This movement was aimed at cleaning the Vedic philosophy of its obscurities and its inconsistencies thereby making it both comprehensible and acceptable to the people at large. Sankaracharya achieved fame by advocating Advaita philosophy.

Education and Literature

The Pallavas were great patrons of learning. The University of Kanchi became the nucleus of learning and intellectualism. It attracted students from different parts of India and abroad. The founder of the Kadamaba dynasty, Mayurasarman, studied Vedas at Kanchi. Dharmapala, who later became the Rector of Nalanda University, belonged to Kanchi. The Ghatikas and Mathas were the other Brahmanical educational institutions attached to the Temples. Sanskrit, the language of privileged, became the recognized medium in the Brahmanical institutions of the period. Several works in Sanskrit were produced during this period. The Kiratarjuniyam of Bharavi, Dasakumaracharita of Dandi and the Mattavilasaprahasana of Mahendravarman I were the best Sanskrit works of the period. The

Tamil literature had also developed under the patronage of the Pallavas. Tiruvelluvar, the author of „kural“ lived during this period. Perundevanar was patronized by Nandivarman II and he translated Mahabharata into Tamil. The „Thevaram“ composed by the Nayanars and „Nalayaradivya Prabhandam“ composed by the Alvars represent the religious literature of the period. The Tamil devotional saints exploited music and dance to realize the ‘concept of compassionate God’. The religious hymns were sung with the accompaniment of music and dance. This became a regular feature in the temple festivals.

Art and Architecture

The religious revival of the period gave an impetus to the architectural activity. The contribution of the Pallavas to the Indian Art and Architecture is immense. In fact the history of Dravidian style of Indian Architecture in the south began with the Pallavas. It was a gradual evolution starting from the cave temples to the monolithic Rathas and culminated in structural temples. The Five Rathas popularly called as the ‘Pancha Pandava Rathas (Rock-cut Rathas)’ at Mamallapuram signifies five different styles of Architecture. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi and Shore temple at Mamallapuram remain the finest examples of early structural temples of the Pallavas. The Kailasanatha temple is the greatest Architectural master piece of Pallava Art. The Pallavas had also contributed to the development of sculpture. The Mandapas contain beautiful sculptures on its walls. The sculpture depicting the „Descent of Ganges or the Penance of Arjuna“ at Mamallapuram is a master piece of classical art. Music, Dance and Painting had also developed under the patronage of the Pallavas. The Paintings at the caves of Sittannavasal belonged to the Pallava period.

Bhakti Movement

The Bakhti Movement, which had spread in South India during Sixth and Seventh centuries A.D., made a tremendous impact in the social and cultural life of the people. The term, Bakti means Devotion to God. True Bakti was considered as more valuable than mererites and rituals. During the Pallava period Alvars and Nayanmars preached the cult of Bakti among the people. There was no caste disparity in the Bakti Movement. Even those who belonged to low-caste had also become Bakti Saints. For example, Nandhanaar, Kaalathi Nayanar

Thiruppaanazhalvar belonged to lower caste. Yet, they were treated and respected as saints. Therefore, all castes and communities had equally followed Bakti or devotion to god. There were two important aims for the Bakti Movement one was “to meet the challenges posed by Buddhism and Jainism” and second was “to spread Saivism and Vaishnavism.

Saivism and Nayanmars

- Saiva Nayanmars are sixty three in number. The early Nayanmars like Thirunavukkarasar, Thirugnana Sambandar, Sundraramurthy and Manikavasagar belonged to the age of the Pallavas composed many devotional hymns and sung them in temples.
- Lord Siva was worshipped both in the human and Linga forms. People began to worship Siva in varied forms – Lingotbava Moorthy, Somaskantha Moorthy and Gangadhara Moorthy. The Periapuranam helped the people to know about the lives of Nayanmars, the Saiva saints.
- Saivism began to grow during the Chola period. The Chola rulers following Vijayalaya were the devotees of Lord Siva. They built temples for Lord Siva. It is believed that it was for the first time that Tevaram and Thiruvasham were sung in the temples. Nambi Andar Nambi saved the hymns during his time and compiled them. These hymns were the base on which Saivism had built its superstructure in Tamilnadu. Sekilar wrote Thiruthondar Puranam which consists of biographies of 63 Nayanmars (Saiva saints).

Thirunavukkarasar

- Tirunavukkarasar was born at Tiruvamur. He belonged to Vellala community. He was learned in Tamil and Sanskrit.
- He was also called Appar. He embraced Jainism first and then turned to Saivite.
- He had sung 3066 stanzas in praise of Lord Siva in the Thevaram work.
- His approach to God is known as chariya marga or dasa marga, where the relationship between God and devotee is that of a master to a slave.

Thirugnana Sambandar

- He was born at Sirkazhi and he belonged to Brahmin community. He lived only 16 years.
- He was a contemporary of Appar. He sang 4158 verses in the Thevaram. His devotional songs are embellished with rare similes, beauty and sweetness.
- Arikesari Parangusa Maravarman alias Kun Pandian was converted to Saivism by the efforts of Thirugnanasambandar.
- Sambandar followed the kriya marga or sat-putra marga where the relationship between the God and devotee is that of a father to son.

Sundaramurthy

- He was born at Navalur. He belonged to Adisaiva community. The marriage of Sundarar at Tiruvennainallur was prevented by Lord Siva and later he married two ladies (Paravai and Sankili).
- He became the friend of God and was known as Tambiran Tholan.
- His approach to God is known as yoga marga or Sakha Marga, where the relationship between God and devotee is that a friend to friend. He was the author of the seventh Tirumarai.
- Mahendravarman I changed his religion from Jainism to Saivism. He persecuted the Jains. Rawilson says, “he is said to have turned a great Jaina temple into a shrine dedicated to Siva.
- The Saiva and Vaishnava saints who flourished in the Pallava period led the powerful forces of Hindu regeneration and established the twin glittering edifices of Saivism and Vaisnavism in the South on firm Foundations. The great Saiva saints were the contemporaries of Narasimhavarman I.

Manikavasagar

- Manikavasagar, the great saiva saint, was a minister to a Pandyan King.
- According to the tradition saint Manikavasagar, got his initiation at the foot of Kurundha tree from a master who was none other than Lord Siva.
- He approach to God is a famous one in the Tiruvilaiadal Puranam. His approach to God is called Gnanamarga .
- His works are Tiruvasagam and Tiruchirrabalkovai.
- The traditional belief is that these two works of the Saint were copied by Lord Natarajar at Chidambaram in the shape of a Brahmin youth.

Philosophy of Saivism

- The Saivism believed in Pathi, Pasu and Pasam which means God, Soul and bondage. It believes in (Mupporul Vunmai) God, soul and matter (world). Man is under the influence of passion and when he liberates from this state he would attain Mukti or liberation.
- Meykandar says: “The Veda is the cow, its milk is true Agama; the Tamil sung by the Four is the ghee extracted from it; and the virtue of Tamil work of Meykandar of the celebrated vennai is the fine taste of ghee.”

- Tiruvundiyar and Tirukkalirrupadiyar are meant to present main aspects of Saiva doctrine and practice. Siva-Nana-Bodam, written in the first half of the 13th century A.D. is the first attempt at a systematic statement of the tenets of Tamil Saivism.

Saivite Works

- ❖ The devotional hymns of Sambandar, Appar and Sundarar were compiled by Nambi during the time of Rajaraja I into seven Tirumarai (Divine literature).
- ❖ The first three thirumarai were that of Sambandar the next three were that of Appar and the seventh was that of Sundarar. They were i.e all these seven tirumarais called Tevaram.
- ❖ Thiruvacakam written by Manickavasagar was eighth Tirumarai.
- ❖ The ninth tirumarai consists of the hymns of nine saints.
- ❖ Tirumular's Tirumantiram was as tenth Tirumarai.
- ❖ The Eleventh Tirumarai consists of the hymns of many poets.
- ❖ Periapuranam written by Sekkilar was the Twelfth Tirumarai. This work deals with the biographies of 63 Nayanmars(Saiva Saints). This epic was written in the 12th century A.D. and Sekkilar was a Chola minister. The Periapuranam has influenced the lives and thoughts of the Tamil Saiva population.
- ❖ Nilakanda satri says that in every way it is a composition that worthily commemorates the great age of the Imperial Cholas and their sustained devotion to Saivism. The Kalladum was composed by Kalladanar. He refers to the miracles wrought by Siva on account of Manikkavasagar, Idaikadar and others. It is believed that it belonged to 10th century A.D.

Vaishnavism and Alvars

- The saints of Vaishnavism are twelve in number. They are Poikai Alwar, Poothathalwar, Peyalwar, Thirumalisai Alwar, Thondaradi Podi Alwar, Nammalwar, Periyalwar and Madhurakavi Alwar.
- Of them Poikai Alwar, Poothathalwar and Peyalwar were earlier Alvars.
- Poygai, Bhudam and Pey Alvars met in a Vishnu temple at Tirukkivilur on a rainy day. While sleeping they felt the divine presence of Lord Vishnu on their mortal bodies and commanded them to sing His praise. Their works are free from sectarian bias.

- Nalayira Divyaprabhandham is the compilation of poems composed by twelve Alvars. The hymns of these Alvars were compiled by Nathamuni. Nathamuni promoted Vaishnavism in the country.
- The first thousand poems of Nalayira Divyaprabhandam contain the poems of Periyalwar, Andal, Kulasekara Alwar, Tirumalisai Alwar, Thondaradi Podi Alwar, Tirupanalwar and Madhura Kavi Alwar.
- The next thousand poems of the same contains Tirumangai Alwar's poems, the third thousand poems are of poems composed by Tirumalisai Alwar, Nammalwar and Tirumangai Alwar.
- The fourth thousand poems are of the poems of Namalwar.
- The Vadakalai a section of Vaishnavism was founded by Vedanta Deshikar in the 13th century A.D. He insisted that one should attach to God very closely to attain the feet of God (Vishnu). Another sect of Vaishnavism the Thenkalai, was founded by Logacharya. While the former put U symbol and the latter used V symbol on their foreheads.
- The Vaishnavism spread in Tamil country. The rulers like Vishugopal, Simhavishnu, Narasimhavarman, Nandivarman II and Tirumangai patronized the Vaishnavism.

Vaishnavite works

- ❖ The hymns of twelve Alvars were compiled by Nathamuni into Nalayira Tivya Prabandham. Early three Alvars namely Pei, Poykai and Pudam belonged to the pre-Pallava period. Their hymns of Andal Tiruppavai spread in South East Asia.
- ❖ Ramanuja the great Vaishnavite scholar and expounder of Visistatvaiddam wrote commentaries on the Vedas.
- ❖ Kambar wrote the Ramayana which is a masterpiece in Tamil literature. It was composed in the twelfth century A.D.

Literature

Sanskrit was the official language of the Pallavas and Kanchi, the Pallava capital, was a great centre of Sanskrit learning. Both Bharavi and Dandin, the authors of Kiratarjuniyamand Dasakumarcharitam respectively, lived in the Pallava court. Dandin was also the author of the text "Avanti Sundari Kathasara". Pallavas were orthodox Brahmanical Hindus and their patronage was responsible for the great reformation of the medieval ages. Most of the Pallavakings were devotees of Siva, the exceptions being Simhavishnu and Nandivarman who were worshippers of Vishnu.

Pallava Architecture and art

The unique Pallava Architecture flourished under the reign of the mighty Chola dynasty. One of the greatest sculptors of those times was Akshara. The rock cut phase and the structural phase are the two phases of Pallava Architecture. Primarily worshipers of Shiva Bhagwan and Vishnu, Pallavas were tolerant of both Jainism and Buddhism as well. However, both Jainism and Buddhism never flourished in this region unlike Hinduism. In fact, the Pallavas are credited with the construction of South India's first stone and mortar temples. It followed the brick and timber prototype which preceded Pallava Architecture style. Between 610 C.E. and 668 C.E., the rock cut phase dominated the Pallava Architectural Style.

Mamalla Style

Mamalla group of temples were built between 630 C.E. and 668 C.E. What makes Mamalla group of temples unique were the massive monolithic shrines and other free standing structures such as elephants, Nandi Bull etc. These rathas or chariots were often accompanied by spacious halls with multiple pillars. The pillars have small carvings of their own. Some of the finest examples of Mahendra group of temples include the famous Arjuna's Penance and Pancha Rathas, both in Mahabalipuram.

Mahendra Style

As the name suggests, Mahendra group of temple were commissioned during the rule of Mahendravarman I who reined between 610 C.E. and 630 C.E. He was the pioneer in rock cut temple architecture. Some of the features of Mahendra group of temples include pillared mandapas or halls. This Pallava architecture style stands out. These impressive structures which were carved out of mountain faces also resemble the architectural style of Jain temples of that era. Some finest examples of Mahendra group of temples include the ancient cave temples of Mamandur, Mandagapattu and Pallavaram, all of them in South India of course. The temple at Mandagapattu was the first rock cut temple commissioned by Mahendravarman.

Rajasimha and Nandivarman Style

This Pallava architecture style lasted between 674 C.E. and 800 C.E. One of the examples includes the Vaikuntha Perumal at Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu. Vaikuntha Perumal was built by Nandivarman II. Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple, also in Kanchipuram, was built by Rajasimha aka Narasimhaverman in late 7th century C.E. Aparajita architectural style. This Pallava architecture style dominated in early ninth century C.E.

During the reign of Pallava Dynasty in South India, art and architecture flourished. We are lucky that we are still able to visit some of the best places where Pallavas left a mark through their skilled craftsmanship. These are some of the best places to see in South India and you must not miss them. Pallava temple architecture is one of the best in all of India.

Pallava Art

Four distinct stages of architecture can be gleaned from the Pallava temples. The first is the Mahendra style. The influence of the cave style of architecture is to be seen in an ancient pillar engraved in the Ekambaranatha (Kanchipuram) temple. The second is the Mamalla style. The seven Pagodas are small temples, each of which is hewn out of a single rock boulder. They lie near Mahabalipura Mahabalipuram, founded by Narasimhavarman. These monolithic temples are complete with all the details of an ordinary temples and stand as an undying testimony to the superb quality of the Pallava art. The third is the Rajasimha style. The most famous temple of this style is the Kailasha style. The most famous temple of this style is the Kailasha temple of Kanchi. It has a pyramidal tower; a flat-roofed mandapam and a series of cells surround it resembling rathas. This style is a very elaborate one foreshadowing the ornate Chola architecture. The fourth is the Aparajita style. This is more ornate resembling the Chola architecture. A few temples built in the style are found at Dalavanur. The noteworthy feature of some shrines is that they are adorned by beautiful life-like images of Pallava kings and their queens. All told they are unique in the history of temple architecture.

Pallava sculpture owed more to the Buddhist tradition. On the whole it is more monumental and linear in form, thus avoiding the typical ornamentation of the Deccan sculpture. The free standing temples at Aithole and Badami in the Deccan and the Kanchipuram and Mahabalipuram in the Tamil country provided a better background for sculpture than the rock-cut temples. And the Pallava sculpture was monumental and linear in form resembling the Gupta sculpture. Although the basic form was derived from the older tradition, the end result clearly reflected its local genius. Now for literature it has been recently proved that Bharavi and Dandin lived in the Pallava court. Bharavi's Kiratarjuniyam and Dandin's Dashakumaracharita were the two masterpieces. One of Dandin's poems was written with such skill that when read normally it gives the story of the Ramayana; and when read in reverse, the story of Mahabharata. Dandin was the author of a standard work on poetics. Till the eighth century Pallava influence was predominant in Cambodia. Saivism was the official form of worship. And the Pallava type of sikhara is to be found in the temples of Java, Cambodia and Annam. This dissemination of Hindu culture proves that it was dynamic till 1,000 A.D in southern India.

Thus, the Pallavas rendered invaluable service to the country both within and without as they were one of the torch bearers of Hindu civilization to south-east Asia. Far more singular is their contribution to architecture-transforming the architecture and sculpture from wood to stone.

Self Assesment Questions

1. Discuss the origin and historical development of the Pallava dynasty in South India.
.....
2. Examine the socio-religious conditions prevailing during the Pallava period.
.....
3. Explore the relationship between the Bhakti Movement and the Pallava state
.....
4. Analyze the growth and development of Saiva and Vaishnava traditions during the Pallava rule.
.....
5. Examine the distinctive features of Pallava art and architecture.
.....
6. Discuss the literary achievements of the Pallavas.
.....
7. Compare and contrast the contributions of the Pallavas with those of other South Indian dynasties, such as the Cholas and Cheras.
.....

UNIT III

Imperial Cholas: Socio- religious condition – Local Self Government and Village Autonomy – Landholding System and Society – Economic Life – Art and Architecture – Overseas expansion and cultural impact.

Objectives

- Prepare an overview of Cholas Socio- Religious conditions
- Discuss the contribution of Cholas Art and Architecture
- Discuss some of the Culture impact

The Cholas

The founder of the Chola Empire was Vijayalaya, who was first feudatory of the Pallavas of Kanchi. He captured Tanjore in 850 A.D. He established a temple of goddess Nishumbhasudini (Durga) there.

Aditya I succeeded Vijayalaya. Aditya helped his overlord the Pallava king Aparajita against the Pandyas but soon defeated him and annexed the whole of the Pallava kingdom. By the end of the ninth century, the Cholas had defeated the Pallavas completely and weakened the Pandyas capturing the Tamil country (Tondamandala) and including it under their domination He then became a sovereign ruler. The Rashtrakuta king, Krishna II gave his daughter in marriage to Aditya.

He erected many Shiva temples. He was succeeded in 907 A.D. by Parantaka I, the first important ruler of the Cholas. Parantaka I was an ambitious ruler and engaged himself in wars of conquest from the beginning of his reign. He conquered Madurai from the Pandya ruler Rajasimha II. He assumed the title of Maduraikonda (captor of Madurai).

He, however, lost to the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna III at the battle of Tokkolam in 949 A. D. The Cholas had to cede Tondamandalam to the adversary. At that point of time the Chola kingdom almost ceased to exist. It was a serious setback to the rising Chola power. The revival of Chola power began from the accession of Parantaka II who recovered Tondamandalam to re-establish dominance of the dynasty.

The climax in Chola power was achieved under the successor of Parantaka II, Arumolivarman, who crowned himself as Rajaraja I in 985 A D the next thirty years of his rule formed the formative period of Chola imperialism.

The Chola kingdom grew under him into an extensive and well-knit empire, efficiently organized and administered and possessing a powerful standing army and navy. Rajaraja began his conquests by attacking the confederation between the rulers of the Pandya and Kerala kingdoms and of Ceylon. Polonnaruva became the capital of Chola province in North Ceylon after the defeat of Mahinda V, the Ceylonese king.

He also annexed the Maldives. Elsewhere, several parts of modern Mysore were conquered and annexed which intensified their rivalry with the Chalukyas. Rajaraja built the magnificent Shiva temple of Brihadeshwara or Rajaraja temple at Thanjavur which was completed in 1010. It is considered a remarkable piece of architecture in South Indian style.

Rajaraja I also encouraged Sri Mara Vijayottungavarman, the Sailendra ruler of Sri Vijaya to build a Buddhist Vihara at Negapatam. This vihara was called 'Chudamani Vihara' after the father of Sri Mara. Rajaraja was succeeded by his son Rajendra I in 1014 A.D. He ruled jointly with his father for a few years. He also followed a policy of conquest and annexation adopted by his father and further raised the power and prestige of the Cholas. He followed the expansionist policy and made extensive conquests in Ceylon.

The Pandya and Kerala country after being conquered was constituted as a viceroyalty under the Chola king with the title of Chola-Pandya. Madurai was its headquarters. Proceeding through Kalinga, Rajendra I attacked Bengal and defeated the Pala ruler Mahipala in 1022 A.D. But he annexed no territory in north India. To commemorate the occasion, Rajendra I assumed the title of Gangaikondachola (the Chola conqueror of Ganga). He built the new capital near the mouth of the Kaveri and called it Gangaikondacholapuram (the city of the Chola conqueror of the Ganga).

With his naval forces, he invaded Malaya Peninsula and Srivijaya Empire that extended over Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands and controlled the overseas trade route to China. He sent two diplomatic missions to China for political as well as commercial purposes. Rajendra was succeeded by his son Rajadhiraja I in 1044 A.D. He was also an able ruler. He put down the hostile forces in Ceylon and suppressed the rebellious Pandyas and subjugated their territory. He celebrated his victory by performing Virabhisheka (coronation of the victor) at Kalyani after sacking Kalyani and assumed the title of Vijayarajendra. He lost his life in the battle with the Chalukyan king Someswara I at Koppam. His brother Rajendra II succeeded him. He continued his struggle against Someswara.

He defeated Someswara in the battle of Kudal Sangamam. Next came Virarajendra I, he too defeated the Chalukyas and erected a pillar of victory on the banks of Tungabhadra.

Virarajendra died in 1070 A.D. He was succeeded by Kulottunga I (1070-1122 A.D.) the great-grandson of Rajaraja I. He was the son of Rajendra Narendra of Vengi and Chola princess Ammangadevi (daughter of Rajendra Chola I). Thus Kulottunga I united the two kingdoms of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Cholas of Thanjavur.

The most important reforms carried out by him in the internal administration was the re-surveyal of land for taxation and revenue purposes. He was also titled Sungam tavittra (he who abolished tolls). The Chola authority in Ceylon was overthrown by Vijayabahu, the monarch of Ceylon during Kulottunga's reign. He sent a large embassy of 72 merchants to China and also maintained cordial relations with Sri Vijaya.

He defeated the rulers of the Pandya kingdom and that of Kerala. The Chola Empire continued for more than a century after him. Weak rulers succeeded him. The Cholas and the later Chalukyas clashed for the overlordship of Vengi, the Tungabhadra doab and the Ganga country.

The Chola Empire continued in a flourishing condition during the twelfth century but declined by the end of the thirteenth century. The Pandyan king Sundara rendered the final blow by seizing Kanchi in 1297 A.D. The place of the Cholas was taken over by the Pandyas and the Hoysalas. This marked the end of the Chola power.

Imperial Cholas

Vijayalaya was the founder of the Imperial Chola dynasty which was the beginning of one of the most splendid empires in Indian history. Vijayalaya, possibly a feudatory of the Pallava dynasty, took an opportunity arising out of a conflict between the Pandya dynasty and Pallava dynasty in c. 850, captured Thanjavur from Muttarayar, and established the imperial line of the medieval Chola Dynasty. Thanjavur became the capital of the Imperial Chola Dynasty.

The Chola dynasty was at the peak of its influence and power during the medieval period. Through their leadership and vision, Chola kings expanded their territory and influence. The second Chola King, Aditya I, caused the demise of the Pallava dynasty and defeated the Pandyan dynasty of Madurai in 885, occupied large parts of the Kannada country, and had marital ties with the Western Ganga dynasty. In 925, his son Parantaka I conquered Sri Lanka (known as Ilangai). Parantaka I also defeated the Rashtrakuta dynasty under Krishna II in the battle of Vallala.

Rajaraja Chola I and Rajendra Chola I were the greatest rulers of the Chola dynasty, extending it beyond the traditional limits of a Tamil kingdom. At its peak, the Chola Empire stretched from the island of Sri Lanka in the south to the Godavari-Krishnariver basin in the

north, up to the Konkan coast in Bhatkal, the entire Malabar Coast in addition to Lakshadweep, Maldives, and vast areas of Chera country. Rajaraja Chola I was a ruler with inexhaustible energy, and he applied himself to the task of governance with the same zeal that he had shown in waging wars. He integrated his empire into a tight administrative grid under royal control, and at the same time strengthened local self-government. Therefore, he conducted a land survey in 1000 CE to effectively marshal the resources of his empire. He also built the Brihadeeswarar Temple in 1010 CE.

Rajendra Chola I conquered Odisha and his armies continued to march further north and defeated the forces of the Pala Dynasty of Bengal and reached the Ganges river in north India. Rajendra Chola I built a new capital called Gangaikonda Cholapuram to celebrate his victories in northern India. Rajendra Chola I successfully invaded the Srivijaya kingdom in Southeast Asia which led to the decline of the empire there. This expedition had such a great impression to the Malay people of the medieval period that his name was mentioned in the corrupted form as Raja Chulan in the medieval Malay chronicle *Sejarah Melayu*. He also completed the conquest of the island of Sri Lanka and took the Sinhala king Mahinda V as a prisoner, in addition to his conquests of Rattapadi (territories of the Rashtrakutas, Chalukya country, Talakkad, and Kolar, where the Kolaramma temple still has his portrait statue) in Kannada country. Rajendra's territories included the area falling on the Ganges-Hooghly-Damodar basin, as well as Sri Lanka and Maldives. The kingdoms along the east coast of India up to the river Ganges acknowledged Chola suzerainty. Three diplomatic missions were sent to China in 1016, 1033, and 1077.

The Western Chalukya Empire under Satyashraya and Someshvara I tried to wriggle out of Chola domination from time to time, primarily due to the Chola influence in the Vengi kingdom. The Western Chalukyas mounted several unsuccessful attempts to engage the Chola emperors in war, and except for a brief occupation of Vengi territories between 1118–1126, all their other attempts ended in failure with successive Chola emperors routing the armies of the Chalukyas at various places in many wars. Virarajendra Chola defeated Someshvara II of the Western Chalukya Empire and made an alliance with Prince Vikramaditya VI. Cholas always successfully controlled the Chalukyas in the western Deccan by defeating them in war and levying tribute on them. Even under the emperors of the Cholas like Kulothunga I and Vikrama Chola, the wars against the Chalukyas were mainly fought in Chalukya territories in Karnataka or in the Telugu country like Vengi, Kakinada, Anantapur, or Gutti. Then the former feudatories like the Hoysalas, Yadvas, and Kakatiyas steadily increased their power and finally replaced the Chalukyas. With the occupation of Dharwar in North Central Karnataka by

the Hoysalas under Vishnuvardhana, where he based himself with his son Narasimha I in-charge at the Hoysala capital Dwarasamudra around 1149, and with the Kalachuris occupying the Chalukyan capital for over 35 years from around 1150–1151, the Chalukya kingdom was already starting to dissolve.

The Cholas under Kulothunga Chola III collaborated to herald the dissolution of the Chalukyas by aiding Hoysalas under Veera Ballala II, the son-in-law of the Chola monarch, and defeated the Western Chalukyas in a series of wars with Someshvara IV between 1185–1190. The last Chalukya king's territories did not even include the erstwhile Chalukyan capitals Badami, Manyakheta or Kalyani. That was the final dissolution of Chalukyan power though the Chalukyas existed only in name since 1135–1140. But the Cholas remained stable until 1215, were absorbed by the Pandyan empire and ceased to exist by 1279.

On the other hand, throughout the period from 1150–1280, the staunchest opponents of the Cholas were Pandya princes who tried to win independence for their traditional territories. This period saw constant warfare between the Cholas and the Pandyas. The Cholas also fought regular wars with the Eastern Gangas of Kalinga, protected Vengi though it remained largely independent under Chola control, and had domination of the entire eastern coast with their feudatories the Telugu Cholas, Velananti Cholas, Renandu Cholas etc. who also always aided the Cholas in their successful campaigns against the Chalukyas and levying tribute on the Kannada kingdoms and fought constantly with the Sinhalas, who attempted to overthrow the Chola occupation of Lanka, but until the time of the Later Chola king Kulottunga I the Cholas had firm control over Lanka. A Later Chola king, Rajadhiraja Chola II, was strong enough to prevail over a confederation of five Pandya princes who were aided by their traditional friend, the king of Lanka, this once again gave control of Lanka to the Cholas despite the fact that they were not strong under the resolute Rajadhiraja Chola II. However, his successor, the last great Chola monarch Kulottunga Chola III reinforced the hold of the Cholas by quelling rebellion and disturbances in Lanka and Madurai, defeated Hoysala generals under Veera Ballala II in Karuvur, in addition to holding on to his traditional territories in Tamil country, Eastern Gangavadi, Draksharama, Vengi and Kalinga. After this, he entered into a marital alliance with Veera Ballala II (with Ballala's marriage to a Chola princess) and his relationship with Hoysalas seems to have become friendlier.

Social Condition

Society was based upon Varnaashramdharma, but different Varnas or castes lived peacefully with each other. Inter-caste marriages were permitted and it had led to the formation

of different sub-castes. The position of women was good. They were free from many restrictions which came to be imposed on them by the Hindu society later on. There was no purdah system and women participated freely in all social and religious functions. They inherited and owned property in their own right. There were stray cases of Sati but it was not a widely practiced system. Normally, monogamy was the prevalent rule but the kings, the Samantas and the rich people kept several wives. The Devadasi system was also in vogue and there were prostitutes in cities. The slave system was also prevalent.

Religious Condition

Chola kings were saivites and they worshiped Lord Siva. They built many Siva temples. Parantaka I, Rajaraja I, Rajendra King Gandraditya and his queen Sembiyan Madevi contributed more for the development of Saivism and Bhakthi literature. Parantaka I covered the Siva temple with gold at Chidambaram. King Rajaraja I built the Brahadeeswarar temple (big temple) at Tanjore. Rajendra-I constructed the Siva temple at Polonaaruva in Ceylon and Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Lands, jewels and vessels were donated to these temples. Chola Kings were tolerant towards other religions. Along with Lord Shiva, they also worshipped Lord Vishnu. Thiruvalluvar copper plates, Karanthai plates and Anbil plates talk about the religious conditions of the Chola period. Masimaham Mahamaham, Karthigai, Thaipusam Sivarathri, Chithiraivizha, Aipasivizha were important festivals celebrated during the Chola period. Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Avudaiyarkoil, Kalahasti Tirukadaiyur and Kanchipuram were important temple cities.

Local Self Government

- Local Government Corporate assemblies at various levels Nadu - Assembly of landholding peasants
- Unit of revenue collection for the state
- Brahmadeya and Vellanvagai settlements Brahmadeya - Sabha and Mahasabha
- Functioning through 'Variyams'
- Membership of sabha/mahasabha – Qualifications.
- Sabha - Agent of tax collection – Dharmasana – Reference to officials -Karnattan (accountant), Madhyastha (record of all proceedings – Management of temple complex
- Ur - Non - Brahmadeya village assembly – Tandal (tax collector), Niyayattar (policing)
- Nagram - Assembly of traders of nadu – Control of Market operations - Nagarakkanakku (accountant of nagaram).
- Village administration through Sabha

- Election to the Sabha membership - Qualifications for contesting – Property ownership – Knowledge of Vedas – Integrity of character – Selection by lot.
- Elected for 3 years + not eligible for immediate re-election
- Different committees - Tank committee, Gold committee, Annual committee.
- A highlight of Chola administration was the functioning of many relatively autonomous local organisations such as Urar, Sabhaiyar, Nagarattar and Nattar.
- **Nattar:** A group of Ur composed a Nadu. However, they excluded brahmadeyas formed around irrigation sources such as canals and tanks. Nattar were the assembly of landholders of Urs in Nadu. Nattar discharged many administrative, fiscal and judicial functions.
- **Urar:** Peasant (Vellvangai) settlements were called as Ur. Landholders of Ur (peasant village) acted as members of assembly Urar. Urar were entrusted with upkeep of temples, maintenance of tanks and managing water and oversaw administrative functions like collection of revenue, maintenance of law & order etc.
- **Sabhaiyaar:** Local assembly that looked affairs of Brahmadeya (Brahmin) settlement. It was responsible for maintaining irrigation tanks attached to temple lands and other similar functions as Urar.
- **Nagarattar:** Urban centre and settlement of traders and skilled artisans. Nagarattar was assembly of residents of nagarams and regulated their association with temples. During the reign of Rajaraja I, Mamallapuram was administrated by a body called Maanagaram.

Village autonomy

- The system of village autonomy with sabhas and their committees developed through the ages and reached its culmination during the Chola rule.
- **Sources: Uttamerur inscription** provides details of the formation and functions of village councils.
- **Ur:** It was a general assembly of the village
- **Urar:** They were the landholders in the village entrusted with the upkeep of temples and maintenance of the tanks.
- **Agraharams:** It was the gathering of adult men in Brahmin villages.
- **Village council:** Each village was divided into thirty wards, and each was to nominate its members to the village council.
- **The qualifications to become a ward member were:**
- Ownership of at least one-fourth veli of the land. Own residence.

- Above thirty years and below seventy years of age.
- Knowledge of Vedas.
- However, certain norms of disqualification were also mentioned in the inscriptions. They were:
 - Had been members of the committee for the past three years.
 - failed to submit accounts as committee members.
 - Committed sins
 - stolen the property of others.
 - **Kudavolai system** was the system of nominating the persons for each ward for a year.
 - **Division of wards into six variyams:** samvatsaravariyam, erivariyam, thotta variyam, pancha variyam, pon variyam and puravuvuri variyam.
 - **Variyapperumakkal:** They were the committee members who usually met in the temple or under a tree and passed resolutions.

Landholding System

For the purposes of assessing tax, the Cholas undertook extensive land surveys and revenue settlements. Rajaraja I (1001), Kulotunga I (1086) and Kulotunga III (1226) appointed people for land survey so that the land could be classified and assessed for the purposes of taxation.

Like other functionaries of the state, the surveyors of the land called naduvagaiseykira too hailed from the landholding communities. Various units of the land measurement such as kuli, ma, veli, patti, padagam, etc. are known, with local variations. Generally, taxes were collected in different forms. The taxes collected included irai, kanikadan, iraikattina-kanikadan and kadami. An important category of tax was kudimai. Kudimai was paid by the cultivating tenants to the government and to the landlords, the bearers of honorific titles such as udaiyan, araiyan and kilavar. The tax rates were fixed depending on the fertility of the soil and the status of the landholder. Opati were levied and collected by the king and local chiefs. Temples and Brahmins were exempted from paying the taxes. The tax paid in kind was referred to as iraikattina-nellu. All these were mostly realised from the Kavery delta but not widely in the outskirts of the kingdom. At the ur (village) level, urar (village assembly) were responsible for collecting the taxes and remitting them to the government. At the nadu level, the nattar were responsible for remitting taxes.

Economic Life

Agriculture

Agriculture was the main occupation of the country. The heart of the Chola country lay in the Kaveri delta, Kaveri delta was highly responsible for the progress of the people. The lands of the Chola period can be broadly divided into three divisions on the basis of the property rights. (I) Vellan Vagai (ii) Eleemosynary tenure (iii) service tenure. Vellan Vagai lands are enjoyed by the people who had hereditary right over the lands and were professional agriculturists. They paid tax to the state. Under eleemosynary tenure the following items of lands were brought under cultivation.

Brahmadeyam : Lands given to the Brahmins

Devadanam : Lands donated to the Siva temples

Salabhogam : Lands given to Brahmin Sivayogin

Pallichantam : Lands donated to Jain and Buddhist shrines

Madapuram : Lands given to the Mathas

During the time of Rajaraja I Brahmadeyam lands were given liberally. There were 240 Brahmadeyas in the Chola country during his reign. In some places the entire village given to the Brahmins. It was called

Ekabhoga Brahmadeya. The above mentioned lands were mostly tax-free lands. Land given for meritorious service of public servants is called service tenure. They were ***Jivitam, puram, patti, parru, bhogam, vritti*** and ***kani***.

Jivitham is a kind of land which were given to the officers instead of monthly salary. After the death of a particular officer it was redistributed to his wife and children. Lands like ***Puram, patti*** and ***Parru*** were given mostly to the menials of the temples for their service. ***Bhogam*** is another kind which was given to the Brahmins who performed ***Archanas*** or ***pujas*** in the Siva temples. The lands given to the Brahmin for their teaching are called ***Bharata Vritti, purana vritti*** and ***veda vritti***. The lands were granted to dance masters drummers and music masters. During the medieval Tamizhagam, agriculture was not only the main occupation, but also spinning and weaving the cotton and perhaps also silk formed an important subsidiary occupation of both men and women. The weavers played an important role in improving the economic condition of the medieval Tamil Nadu. Spinning and weaving formed a major industry which occupied a considerable number of guilds of weavers who were generally in a flourishing condition and took an active part in many local concerns. Kanchipuram was very famous in weaving the silk cloths and sarees. The monarchy also gave special privileges to these weavers. In the field of industries handloom industry, metal work and jewellery occupied a prominent place under the Cholas.

Society:

Social structure:

- ❖ **Prevalence of Varnashrama system:** Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sutras.
- ❖ **Valangai and Idangai castes** were two major divisions among the castes.
- ❖ Landholding was the **prime determinant of social status** and hierarchy.
- ❖ **Hierarchy according to landownership:** Brahmadeya-kilavars > landholders of vellanvagai villages > Ulukudi
- ❖ **Brahmadeya-kilavars:** They were the Brahmin landholders at the top brahmadeya settlements with tax exemption, displacing the local peasants.
- ❖ **Ulukudi:** They were the tenants who could not own land but had to cultivate the lands of Brahmins and holders of vellanvagai villages.
- ❖ **Melvaram:** significant share in harvest retained by landholders and **kizh varam:** lower share of harvest retained by Ulukudi.
- ❖ **Labourers (paniceymakkal) and slaves (adimaigal)** stayed at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Women

There was no improvement in the position of women.

- ❖ The **practice of 'sati'** was prevalent among the royal families.
- ❖ The **devadasi system**, or dancing girls attached to temples, emerged during this period.

Art and Architecture

The Dravidian style of art and architecture reached its perfection under the Cholas. They built enormous temples. The chief feature of the Chola temple is the vimana. The early Chola temples were found at Narthamalai and Kodumbalur in Pudukottai district and at Srinivasanallur in Tiruchirappalli district. The Big Temple at Tanjore built by Rajaraja I is a master-piece of South Indian art and architecture. It consists of the Vimana, Ardhamandapa, Mahamandapa and a large pavilion in the front known as the Nandimandapa. Another notable contribution made by the Cholas to temple architecture is the Siva temple at Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra I. The Airavathesvara temple at Darasuram in Tanjore District and the Kampaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam are examples of later Chola temples. The Cholas also made rich contributions to the art of sculpture. The walls of the Chola temples such as the Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples contain numerous icons of large size with fine execution. The bronzes of the Chola period are world-famous. The bronze statues of Nataraja or dancing Siva

are masterpieces. The Chola paintings were found on the walls of Narthamalai and Tanjore temples.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Examine the socio-religious conditions prevailing during the Imperial Chola period.
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2. Discuss the system of local self-government and village autonomy implemented by the Imperial Cholas.
.....
3. Explore the economic life of the Imperial Chola Empire.
.....
4. Examine the distinctive features of art and architecture under the Imperial Cholas.
.....
5. Discuss the religious patronage extended by the Imperial Cholas and its reflection in the construction of monuments.
.....
6. Assess the lasting legacy of the Imperial Cholas.
.....

UNIT - IV

Pandyas of Madurai: Social Classes –Religion: Saivism and Vaishnavism – Art and Architecture: Later Pandyas, Marco Polo's Account – Society: Valangai and Idangai– Religion – Art and Architecture: Madurai Meenakshi Temple – Religion: Mathas – Saivasiddhantam and Virsaivism.

Objectives

- Explain the background of later Pandyans
- Discuss the contribution of later Pandyans
- Analyse the impact that the later Pandyans had on successive generations

Madurai pandyas

The Pandya Kingdom, the Madurai Pandyas, was a historic Tamil dynasty in South India. It was a prehistoric Tamil nation in what is now South India. The Pandya dynasty time-period was from 12th to 14th century CE. The Pandyas were one of three ancient Tamil dynasties that reigned intermittently in southern India since the 4th century BCE. The Pandyas were one of the three ancient Tamil kingdoms that controlled the Tamil nation from prehistoric times to the end of the 15th century. Initially ruling from the seaport of Korkai, which is located on the southernmost tip of the Indian peninsula, they subsequently relocated to Madurai.

Origin of the Pandya Dynasty

The name "Pandya," which the early Tamils considered to be a symbol of manhood, power, and courage, comes from the Tamil term "Pandi," which means "the bull." It is also claimed that the early Pandyas supported the winning Pandavas in the battle of Kurukshetra. The Greeks, Chinese, Ptolemaic Egyptians, the Roman Republic, and the Empire were all allies of the Pandyas diplomatically.



Pandya Dynasty Map

The Pandya Kingdom coexisted with other dynasties like the Cholas, Cheras, Pallavas, etc., in the southern Indian regions now part of Tamil Nadu. Up to their resurgence in the sixth century AD, the Kalabhras had driven the early Pandyas into oblivion. In the ninth century, the Cholas defeated them again, but in the twelfth century, they once more rose to power.

Sources for the History of the Pandya Empire

- Greek and Roman texts from this time period and Sangam Literature all refer to Pandyas.
- During the Kalabhra invasion, the early Pandya Kingdom dynasty of the Sangam literature was forgotten.
- In the first half of the sixth century, the dynasty was reestablished by Kadungon and reigned from Madurai after driving the Kalabhras from the Tamil nation.
- The literary gatherings known as Sangam were organized by the Pandya Kingdom kings.
- While the Mauryans ruled northern India, the Pandya Kingdom kingdom maintained its independence and maintained amicable relations with them.
- Along with Megasthenes in his book, the Indika, and the Chinese traveler Yu Huan, Marco Polo described the Pandya Kingdom as one of the wealthiest he had ever seen.

Sangam Literature

Numerous poetry in Sangam Literature refers to several Pandya kings. The Netunalvatai (in the Pattupattu collection) and Mahuraikkanci (in the Pattupattu collection), two important works, provide a glimpse into the social and economic life of the Pandya Kingdom during the Sangam era.

Epigraphy

The earliest Pandya to be mentioned in an epigraph is Nedunjelivan. He is mentioned in the Meenakshipuram record. He lived between the second and first centuries BCE. In the Pandya nation, coins with punch markings from the same time period have also been found. The report describes a Jain ascetic receiving granite beds as a gift.

Foreign Sources

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea depicts the wealth of a Pandyan Kingdom. The Chinese historian Yu Huan refers to the Kingdom of Pandya in a document from the third century. Julian, the Roman emperor, accepted a Pandya Kingdom embassy. A Roman trading post existed on the Pandya Kingdom's coastline. Through Egypt, the Pandyas had trade connections with Rome by the first century and China by the third century.

Major Rulers of Pandya Kingdom

Here is a list of Pāṇḍya rulers with their names, reign periods, and their significant contributions in a table with three columns:

Ruler Name	Reign Period	Contribution
Nedunjelivan I	180 AD	Mentioned in Silappadikaram and lived during the time of Chera king Senguttuvan.
Nedunjelivan II	210 AD	Defeated a Chola and Chera confederacy, extending Pāṇḍya rule over a significant part of the Tamil region. Described in Maduraikkanci.
Kadungon	590-620 AD	Earned the title 'Pandiyadhiraja' and ended the Kalabhra rule, marking a new era in the Tamil-speaking region.
Maravarman Avani Culamani	620-640 AD	Assumed the title of Maravarman and was celebrated in inscriptions for becoming the sole owner of the earth and marrying the goddess of prosperity.
Jyantavarman	640-670 AD	Known as Seliyan Sendan and contributed to the Pandya dynasty.
Arikesari Maravarman	670-710 AD	Also known as Arikesari Parankusa. He performed significant religious rites.
Kochadaiyan Ranadhiran	710-735 AD	Asserted Pāṇḍya's dominance over Cheras and Cholas in Mangalapuram.
Maravarman Rajasimha I	735-765 AD	Son of Kochadaiyan Ranadhiran continued his father's legacy and defended Pāṇḍya's influence.
Srimara Srivallabha	815-862 AD	Built numerous tanks, canals, and reservoirs, including Sri Vallabha Pereri, a significant water resource.
Varagunavarman II	862-880 AD	Contemporary of Saivite saint Manickavasagar and contributed to Tamil literature.
Maravarman Rajasimha III	900-920 AD	The last Pāṇḍya emperor was known for his military conflicts and eventual retreat to Kerala.

Religion

The religious condition of the Pandyas is richly available from the various sources of the period. Particularly the soul-stirring and solace giving hymns of Andal and the heart breaking

accounts of Gangadevi's Madhuravijayam are considered as rich products of religion of those days. Many among the Alvars and Nayanmars hailed from the far south. Among the Nayanmars, Nairasir Nedumaran (Arikesari Maravarman), Kulachirai (Arikesari's minister) and Mangaiyarkkarasi are noted figures. It was at the request of Mangaiyarkkarasi that Saint Tirugnanasambandar went to Madurai and put an end to the Jain dominance. Kun Pandya is said to have persecuted thousands of Jains. Saint Manickavasagar was a great Saivite mystic. He was the author of Tiruvachagam. Among the Alvars Madhurakavi, Nammalvar, Periyalvar and Kodai hailed from the Pandya country. Periyalvar was the guru to Srimara Srivallabha. His Tiruppallandu and the Tiruppavai of Andal are the most sublime among the religious literatures of India. In later days, there were some sectarian conflicts among the various creeds. Added to this the Muslims worsened the situation by confiscating the devadana and brahmadeya lands. Anyhow, relief came through Kumara Kampana.

During this period mutts of the various sects continued to encourage arts and education. Tiruppattur, Tirupparankundram, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Tirupati, Srirangam, Kanchi, etc. were the centres of Hindu mutts. At Alagarkoil, the Tirunadudaiyar mutt flourished. They were the centres of charity and the seats of intellectual pursuits like the medieval abbeys and monasteries in Europe.

Religious Beliefs of Pandyas

- For a brief moment in history, the Pandya emperors practiced Jainism.
- Even though the Pandya dynasty's founding leaders were mostly Jains, its successors were ardent Shaivites, which explains why the Madurai Meenakshi temple and the Tirunelveli Nellaippar temple were built during this time.
- Hinduism was resurrected once the Kalabhra dynasty fell, but Buddhism and Jainism started to wane. The Pandyan kings supported Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Jainism.
- Nevertheless, succeeding Pandya kings began converting to Vaishnavism, and it is widely known that Pandyan Nedunchezhiyan was a fervent follower of Lord Vishnu.

Saivism and Vaishnavism

Saivism and Vaishnavism are the very popular forms of Hindu faith with large number of followers. Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are worshiped as Supreme Being respectively in these religious traditions. However, in popular Hinduism Siva is one of the Trinity and carries on the function of Annihilation, while Brahma and Vishnu are said to be the Gods of creation and sustenance respectively. Both Saivism and Vaishnavism have diversified religious beliefs and practices. Various sects of them are found all over India. They are considered to be very ancient

faiths in India. There are few direct and indirect references to these gods in the Vedas too. Nevertheless Vedic understanding of Siva and Vishnu was not very much developed as to regard them as Supreme Being. As a result of medieval bhakti movements these religious traditions have witnessed a development both in religious sphere and in philosophical sphere. Let us enumerate various aspects of these developments both in Saivite and Vaishnavite religion and philosophy.

Vaishnavism

Sources of origin of Vaishnava religious tradition are varied. Some scholars trace it in the Vedic tradition itself. Diverse concept of Supreme Vishnu as found in various concepts of God in different vaishnava sects are relied upon in speaking of its origin. They are from the concept of Visnu (god with three strides) as found in the veda; the concept of Narayana (the cosmic and philosophic god); the concept of Vasudeva (the historical god); and the concept of krisna (the pastoral god). While some view that Vaishnavism had its origin from Visnu as mentioned in Vedas, others consider that it appeared after bhagavatam arose. With regard to South Indian Vaishnavism, some consider that Krishna cult in the south started with Yadavas in Madurai who were said to be a section of the Vrsni people that colonized the pandya country. Yet another view holds that Vishnu cult from the ancient Tamil period would have been from the mullai region whose god is said to be perumal. Vaishnavism is also known by the name bhāgavata, meaning the cult of bhagavat, the lord. It draws inspiration for its beliefs from bhāgavata purāṇa, gita and narayaṇiya a section of Mahabharata. Pāñcarātra and Vaikānasa āgamas are certain religious literatures that are regarded as canonical in Vaishnavism. Pāñcarātra are texts of ritual worship, which deals with, the knowledge of God, the method of mental concentration, yoga, the construction of temples and the installation of images there in, kriya, and the observance of daily rites and the celebration of festivals, carya. In vaikānasa āgamas, detailed instructions are given for construction of temples and moulding of images.

Vishnu resides in His abode is called vaikuṅṭha. There He sits enthroned beside his consort, the goddess lakṣmi or śrī. She is considered as patroness of good fortune and temporal blessing. Five forms of Visnu are the transcendent (para), the grouped (vuṃha), the incarnated (vibhava), the immanent (antaryāmin) and the idol (arcā). God as the transcendent posses six attributes, namely knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility, and splendour. The grouped forms of god are four; they are vāsudeva, saṃkarṣaṇa, pradyumna, aniruddha. There is a

distinctive function assigned to each of those vyuhas in cosmic creation as well as in the act of redeeming souls.

The incarnated forms are avatāras. Out of His own concern for the world, He descends from time to time in the form of an incarnation, avatāra. According to Vaishnavite tradition, there have been only nine such incarnations; there is one yet to come. God descended to earth when the world was in danger of chaos or of perishing by wickedness. The incarnations as fish, tortoise, boar, etc. are popular legends, yet have very little religious value at the present day. In these forms, God appeared in the form of an animal to save the world from floods. Narasimha (man-lion), and Vamana (the dwarf) are the incarnations in which he saved the world from destruction by demons. Parasurama is His incarnation as a human hero to destroy the aggressive and arrogant warrior class and to establish the supremacy of the Brāhmanas.

Rama and Krishna incarnations are more important ones as Vishnu is worshipped in these forms chiefly in North India. Two great Epics describe the legends in detail. The ninth form is added only in the middle ages, Buddha, which is a surprising one. Different notions are said about the purpose of this incarnation such as, to put an end to animal sacrifice, but later as to lead wicked men to deny the Vedas and thus to ensure their destruction. The final incarnation known as kalki, is yet to come. At the end of this dark age, Visnu is believed to descend once more to destroy the wicked and restore the age of gold, the kṛta yuga.

The idol, arcā is the most concrete of God's forms. Vaishnavism regards the image of Vishnu, arcā, as one of the real forms of the Lord. The belief is that God descends into the idol and makes it divinely alive, so that he may be easily accessible to his devotees. More stress is laid on service to the arcā as the primary duty of the devotee.

Arts and Architecture

The earliest cave temples of the Pandyas are found at Pillaiyarpatti, Malaiyidaikurichi, Anaimalai and Aivarmalai. Some cases are found in Tirumayam, Tiruchendur, Kunrakkal, Tirumalaipuram, Sittannaval and Kalugumalai. The Vettuvan Koil of Kalugumalai is modelled on the Pallava ratha type and lodges the finest specimen of Pandyan sculpture. The Tirupparankunram caves are hidden behind the outer-structure of later day temple of Subramanya. The Vishnu, Durga and Ganesa Caves are not able among them. Some of the pieces of Pandyan sculpture are found here.

According to Hermann Goetz, "the period witnessed a renaissance of sculpture as at Tirupparankunram near Madurai and Narthamalai in Ramnad district". The Sittannaval monuments contain the best specimen of Tamil mural paintings assigned to the Pandyas now and

some time ago to the Pallavas. The Pandyan was period characterised by the development of the great gateways, with a lower storey of stone and super-structure of brick, covered with brick stucco images plastered and painted. They have the aspect of varitable sky-scrapers and completely dwarf the main shrine”, says Percy Brown. Best products of Pandyan gopuras are found in the great temples at Madurai, Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Jambukesavaram, Tiruvannamalai, Sirvaikuntam, Srirangam, etc.

During these periods along with *Gopuras* the outer *Prakaras* and *Mandapas* were also developed. The tall and multi-faceted Pandyan pillars are adorned with a thick ornamentation of animal forms, columns, and figures of rampant horses and leographs. According to A.L.Basham, the zenith of Pandyan architecture is the Meenakshi Temple at Madurai and the Sri Ranganatha Temple at Srirangam. The former was a great wonder of Tamil art traditions, destroyed by the Muslim vandals and rebuilt by the Nayaks of Madurai. The Sri Ranganatha Temple at Srirangam with six inner wails in concentric square is a grand product of Dravidian workmanship. Thus architecture reached its culmination under the Pandyas.

Many structural temples were built during this period. The Vatapatrasayi temple at Srivilliputtur, Varagunisvara temple at Radhapuram, Siva temple at Ambasamudram, Tiruttalivara temple at Tiruppattur, Vijayanarayana temple at Nanguneri, Tiruvalluvar temple, Erichchaudaiyar, Lakshminarayana temple at Sinnamannur, Tirunarayana temple at Attur etc. are few among them. During this period the Vishnu temple at Alagarkoil (near Madurai), the Kudal Alagar Temple at Madurai were renovated. Some of the best products of later Pandyas are the Nellaiyapper Temple at Tirunelveli and the temples at Tenkasi and Courtralam. It is true the South Indian architecture reached its watermark under the Pandyas.

Later Pandyas

Pandyan Empire

The First Pandyan Empire which came to an end during the regime of Vira Pandya was revived in the 13th century. Under the Chola, they occupied a subordinate position and paid tribute to them. But, after the death of Kulottunga I, the Pandyas step by step and never reconciled themselves to the rule of the Cholas. The gradual disappearance of the Cholas of Kulottunga III made the Pandyas, later on, to throw off the Chola yoke and proclaimed their independence. Though, the steady growth to Pandya power was paralysed by the outbreak of a civil war in Madurai, yet the Pandya power reached its zenith during the 13th century. The installation of Jatavarman Kulasekhara I on the Pandya throne by Kulottunga III marked the beginning of the new Pandyan imperialism.

Jatavarman Kulasekhara I (A.D.1190-1216)

He was the son of Vikrama Pandya. He was installed by Kulottunga III on the Pandya throne. He remained as a feudatory to Kulottunga III. His accession brought the Pandyan civil war to an end. Before his death he nominated Maravarman Sundara Pandya as his successor.

Maravarman Sundara Pandya I (A.D.1216-1238)

He was nominated by Jatavarman Sundarapandya and the relationships between them are not known. He was the real reviver of the Pandyan kingdom. He invaded the Chola country, burnt Tanjore and Uraiyur and defeated Rajaraja III. He annexed a part of the Chola kingdom and forced Rajaraja to pay tribute. After performing the Virabishekara, he crowned himself as the king of Chola Mandalam.

By this time of Hoysala king Ballala II and his son Virapanthaga Narashima had a matrimonial alliance with the Cholas. In order to get the upper hand in Tamilnadu Ballala II and his son were willing to help Rajaraja III against the Pandyas. Realising the danger, Maravarman Sundara Pandya reinstated Rajaraja III, when Rajaraja III failed to submit the promised tribute, Sundara Pandya invaded the Cholas. Rajaraja was defeated by him for the second time. Sundara Pandya annexed southern Chola mandalam. He was a liberal patron of art and architecture and made endowments to temples. He is said to have nominated Jatavarman Kulasekhara II as crown Prince only to pre decessate him.

Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II (A.D.1238-51)

During his time the tripartite relations among the Pandyas the Cholas and the Hoysalas got momentum. The influence of Hoysala power also increased. His contemporary Rajendra III invaded the Pandyan kingdom and forced Sundara Pandya to pay tribute thanks to the timely intervention of the Hoysala king.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan I (A.D. 1251-68)

He was the great conquer and the most distinguished member of the second Pandyan Empire. Under him the empire, extended from Nellore in the north and Kanyakumari in the south “under him the Pandyan empire reached the zenith of glory both in political conquest and administrative achievements”.

His first military achievement was the defeat of the Chera king Viraravi Udaya Marthandavarman. He defeated the Hoysalas in the battle of Kannanur and killed many Hoysala commanders. His great achievement was the defeat of Rajendra III, the Chola ruler. He was compelled to pay tribute and with him the Chola Empire came to an end. He acted Sendamangalam and its ruler Kadava Kopperunjinga was made subordinate. He conquered

Kongu country and captured Kanchi and Nellore. The Kakatiya Ganapati and the ruler of Ceylon agreed to pay tribute. All these conquests, made him to be the ablest and the greatest monarch of the Pandyan Empire. Consequently, he assumed the titles of Emmandalamum Kondarulia and Ellam Talaiyana.

He munificently endowed the temples of Chidambaram and Srirangam. He provided golden roof to the Nataraja shrine in Chidambaram and the Ranganatha Shrine in Srirangam and assumed the title "Ponveynta Perumal". He also performed many abhisekhas and Tulabhras. He had five co-regents. Jatavarman Virapandya and Jatavarman Vikrama Pandya, two of his co-regents, also ruled certain parts of the kingdom.

Maravarman Kulasekhara I (A.D.1268-1311)

He was the last great Pandyan ruler. He invaded and conquered Kollam (Quilon) from the Cheras and assumed the title of "Kollam Konda". Taking advantage of the internal dissension, his army led by Aryachakkaravarti invaded Ceylon. The Pandyas brought immense booty along with a tooth relic of the Buddha. It was during his period that the venetian traveller Marco Polo and the Muslim historian Wassaf, visited the Pandyan Kingdom and left a valuable account of the political and social conditions. It seems that Maravarman Kulasekhara was assassinated by his own son.

Marco - Polo

Marco - Polo was the prince among the medieval travellers. He presents a spot-study of the Pandyan society. He refers to the people as going naked including the King. There were no tailors. Even soldiers went naked to the battle field. Cow was a sacred animal and no one ate beef. Houses were smeared with cowdung. Prisoners were permitted to kill themselves before their favourite deity as a religious rite. Debtor was given severe punishment for his failure to repay the amount. The belief of the people in astrology, sorcery and magic are noted by him. Pearl-fishing is described in a picturesque way. Some information given by Marco-Polo are unbelievable and false statements (For eg. people went on naked). But for such isolated defects, Marco-Polo is an authority on medieval social history.

Society

The society was caste-based. Many people from Andhra and Karnataka migrated towards Madurai for their livelihood. The communities namely Brahmins, Chettiars, Vellala, Kaikolar, Kammalar, Parayas, Pallars and Chemmars etc lived in the country. The Brahmin communities held high position and prestige in the society. They served as Dalavay and Pradhani in the Government.

Vada Kalai and Then Kalai

The two sects namely Vadakalai and Thenkalai started spreading in the Tamil country. Both of them belonged to Vaishnavism but they clashed with each other. It was Vedanta Deshikar who founded Vadakalai. Manavala mamuni was the founder of Thenkalai. The people who followed these sects wore different symbols in their forehead- while the Vadakalai used the Namam without the feet the Thenkalai used the Namam with the feet.

Valangai and Idangai

There were two major sections or faction in the society – Valangai and Idangai. Each had 98 sub-castes. T.W.Ellis mentions that those engaged in agriculture were called Valangai and those who did commercial activities were called Idangai. A large number of migrants from the neighbouring states settled in Pollachi, Tirupur and Udumalai Pettai. They were Kammavar, Devangar, and Nayakkar. They spoke in their mother tongue – Kannada, Andhra, Gujarati and Marati. Besides, there were other communities like Vellalas. Mudaliyars and Maravars. There was clash between various communities. Parathavars had racial discrimination with Moors the Muslims.

Religion

The religious condition of the Pandyas is richly available from the various sources of the period. Particularly the soul-stirring and solace giving hymns of Andal and the heart breaking accounts of Gangadevi's Madhuravijayam are considered as rich products of religion of those days. Many among the Alvars and Nayanmars hailed from the far south. Among the Nayanmars, Nairasir Nedumaran (Arikesari Maravarman), Kulachirai (Arikesari's minister) and Mangaiyarkkarasi are noted figures. It was at the request of Mangaiyarkkarasi that Saint Tirugnanasambandar went to

Madurai and put an end to the Jain dominance. Kun Pandya is said to have persecuted thousands of Jains. Saint Manickavasagar was a great Saivite mystic. He was the author of Tiruvachagam. Among the Alvars Madhurakavi, Nammalvar, Periyalvar and Kodai hailed from the Pandya country.

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Arts and Architecture

During the rule of the Pandyas, they tried to introduce their own ideas; that resulted in the construction of Gopura in diminishing storeys at an angle of 25°. The Prakara received attention in this period. Due to this Gopura, the temple took a different form Huge halls were built. The temple was surrounded by huge walls. The The Vimana, sanctum and sanctorum lost their importance Both the interior and exterior have platforms, provided very near to the wall, which are meant for soldiers. So temple became an important institution by giving protection to people. The Vimana's last tier (top) might be octagonal or four faced. So it has one kalasa But Gopura is rectangular and so it has seven or nine Kalasas. It is oblong structure with number of tiers. The top of the tower is carved like chaitya halls. Basement of the structure is stone. Gopuras provide entrance and niches where a number of sculptures of gods, goddesses and ganas are found. The architecture of the Pandya period may broadly be divisions, viz Cave temples (Early Pandyas) divided into two and Structural temples (Early and Later Pandyas) A.L. Basham says, "The Zenith of Pandyan architecture are the Minakshi temple at Madurai and Vaishnava temple at Srirangam The Minakshi temple was the wonder of Tamil art traditions, destroyed by the Muslim vandals and rebuilt by the Nayaks of Madurai. The Ranganatha temple at Srirangam with six inner walls inconcentric square is a grand product of Dravidian workmanship.

The Cave temples

1. Malaiyadi-k-Kurichi in the Tinnelveli district would appear to be the earliest known Pandya cave-temple of the mandapa-type with a single shrine cell on the rear. Built by Maran-sendan.
2. Narasimha cave temple at Anaimalai (770 A D) is nearer to Madurai. This was built by Maran Sadaiyan the minister of Nedunjadaiya Parantaka. Subramaniya temple at Tirupparankundram, the fourshrined temple was built by Sattan Ganapathi, another minister of Nedunjadaiya Parantaka. Vishnu, Subramaniya, Durga, Ganapathi and Siva are found in separate shrines.
3. Sculptures of Gajalakshmi and Bhuvaneshvari are also found, The Sittannavasal cave temple is a typical Pandya version of a Mahendra style cave-temple with the facade pillars Carrying aranga

corbels. Satyagirisvara temple at Tirumayam, the Southern cave-temple at Malayakkovil. the Siva temple at Tirtumalpuram* cave temple at Trichy etc are other examples.

4. Kalugumalai:

The oldest surviving early Pandya shrine is the rock cut temple of Siva at Kalugumalai. The temple is unfinished. It is a dvitala vimana temple with richly carved art.

5. A Jain cave temple at Sittannavasal:

It is in Pudukkottai district. it has Bas relief Jain Tirtankars sculptures on the hind wall of the shrine and in the niches on the lateral walls of the mandapa in front. The facade Pillars carrying taranga corbels is a typical Pallava style. These cave temples, like the Pallava temples, are excavated into the hard local rocks and essentially similar to the Mahendra style excavations in plan and design. but they have their own design in respect of their sculptural make up and iconography.

The simple cave temples of the Pandyas consist of a the Pillared verandah with shrine cell or cells cut into either depending on rear or the side walls of the verandah or hall, which way the main facade of the verandah or Mandapa faced. They are essentially mandapa type of temples. They have massive Pillars on the facades, essentially square in section at the base and top, with an octagonal middle section, carrying heavy Potikas or Corbels, usually there with a straight bevel. There are some examples with Pillars of other types and corbels with a curved profile and taranga moulding. All the cave temples lack a well-defined Kirtimukha in the architrave over their mandapa facades, Some of the caves are merely shrine-cells scooped directly into the rock-face, without a rock-cut mandaps in front.

History of Meenakshi Temple

Structure is covered in more than 1500 sculptures of divine and demonic figures displaying thousands of mythological stories. The figures of gods and goddesses are repaired and repainted. The history of Meenakshi Temple dates back to the 1st century C.E. It is said that Kulasekhar Pandyan, a king who ruled over the Pandyan dynasty, built the temple as per the instructions given in his dream by Lord Shiva. The temple was rebuilt throughout the 16th century as it was destroyed by the Muslim invaders. During the 14th century C.E, Malik Kafur, a commander of Delhi Sultanate, looted the temple.

The temple was rebuilt and reopened after the Vijayanagar Empire defeated the Muslim Sultanate. The temple was further expanded during the late 16th century and early 17th century by Vishwanatha Nayakar, a king of the Nayaka dynasty. According to researchers, while

rebuilding the temple, the rulers of Nayaka dynasty followed the architectural style of ‘Silpa Shastras’ (a set of architectural laws found in the ancient texts).

The temple was once again expanded by Thirumalai Nayak, during his reign from 1623 to 1655, many ‘Mandapams’ (pillared halls) were built. They also enlarged the complex and redesigned the surrounding streets in accordance with the sacred tradition of the Vastu Shastra. But once again during the British rule the temple was once again degraded and parts of it were destroyed.

Dravidian Architecture

The Meenakshi Temple is a prime example of Dravidian architecture - common in the southern states of India. Characteristics of Dravidian architecture often include covered porches on temples, tall entry gate towers on two or more sides, many- pillared halls, and a water tank or reservoir for ritual bathing.

Gopura, Meenakshi Temple

The temple has four main towering gateways (gopurams) that look identical to each other. The word gopura may be derived from the Tamil words ko meaning “king,” and puram meaning “exterior or gateway”; or from the Sanskrit go meaning “cow” and puram meaning “town.” Gopuras are actually entry gates to a number of shrines, marked on the plan above as black rectangles.

The temple has a total of 14 towering gateways more than fifteen stories tall, the tallest one rises to approximately 170 feet. Here, these fourteen gopuras are roughly oriented to the cardinal directions and flanking either the temple of Meenakshi or Sundareshwara, or the entire walled compound acting as symbolic markers for the sacred space into which they lead. They generally increase in height as the further away or outer most ones from the center of the complex were continually added to by a succession of rulers, who commissioned ever grander towers as a sign of their power and devotion.

Each one of them is a multi-storey in vibrant colors every 12 years. The major ‘gopurams’ of the temple are listed below:

Sundaeswarar Shrine Gopuram – This is the oldest ‘gopuram’ of the temple, serves as a gateway to the Sundaeswarar (Lord Shiva) shrine and was built by Kulasekara Pandya.

Kadaka Gopuram – The gateway was rebuilt by Tumpichi Nayakkar during the mid-16th century and leads to the main shrine that houses Goddess Meenakshi. The ‘gopuram’ has five storeys.

Chitra Gopuram – Built by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II, the gopuram depicts the religious and secular essence of Hinduism.

Nadukkattu Gopuram – Also called as the ‘Idaikattu Gopuram,’ this gateway leads to the Ganesha shrine. The gateway is placed right in between the two main shrines.

Mottai Gopuram – This ‘gopuram’ has fewer stucco images when compared to the other gateways. Interestingly, ‘Mottai gopuram’ had no roof for nearly three centuries.

Nayaka Gopuram – This ‘gopuram’ was built by Visvappa Nayakkar around 1530. The ‘gopuram’ is astonishingly similar to another gateway called ‘Palahai Gopuram.’

Porthamarai Kulam

At the south end of the temple also has a consecrated pond named ‘Porthamarai Kulam.’ The term ‘Potramarai Kulam’ is a literal translation of ‘pond with a golden lotus.’ The structure of a golden lotus is placed at the center of the pond. It is said that Lord Shiva blessed this pond and declared that no marine life would grow in it. This is used by believers for ritual bathing before they enter the sanctuaries of Meenakshi and Sundareshwara.

Mandapams

The temple also has vast ornate pillared halls called ‘Mandapams’ (a pillared, porch-like structure) that pilgrims must pass through as they make their way to the garbagriha (the innermost sacred areas of the sanctuary). The stone pillars carved in high or low relief depict gods, demons, and divine animals. Originally this space was likely used for religious dancing and musical performances as well as a place to gain an audience with the king.

Some of the most important ‘mandapams’ are given below:

Ayirakkal Mandapam – It literally translates to ‘hall with thousand pillars.’ The hall, which was built by Ariyanatha Mudaliar, is a true spectacle as it is supported by 985 pillars. Each and every pillar is sculpted magnificently and has images of Yali, a mythological creature.

Kilikoondu Mandapam – This ‘mandapam’ was originally built to house hundreds of parrots. The parrots that were kept there in cages were trained to say ‘Meenakshi’. The hall, which is next to the Meenakshi shrine, has sculptures of characters from Mahabharata.

Ashta Shakthi Mandapam – This hall houses the sculptures of eight goddesses. Built by two queens, the hall is placed in between the main ‘gopuram’ and the gateway that leads to the Meenakshi shrine.

Nayaka Mandapam – ‘Nayaka Mandapam’ was built by Chinnappa Nayakkar. The hall is supported by 100 pillars and houses a Nataraja statue. Today the Thousand Pillar Hall functions

primarily as a museum, with exhibitions of bronze sculptures, paintings, and objects from the temple's history.

Mathas

Maṭha (monastery) appears in Tamil inscriptions from the early ninth century and appears with increasing frequency from the eleventh century. This increase seems to have been brought about by an influx of Śaiva ascetics from North India. At the same time, *maṭhas* were closely related to the *bhakti* movement in South India during the Pallava and Pandyan period and played an important role during the Chola and Later Pandyan period in localising and Tamilising the Brahmanical orthodoxy brought by these North Indian ascetics. This process is well attested by changes in the activities of Gōḷaki-maṭha originating in the North and the establishment of Śaivasiddhānta philosophy in the Tamil country in the thirteenth century. This transformation was caused by the participation of non-Brāhmaṇas, including people of the lower social strata such as cultivators, merchants and artisans, in *maṭha* activities, which explain the great increase in *maṭha* inscriptions in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The examination of *maṭha* inscriptions in this study elucidates the important role played by *maṭhas* in developing and spreading new religious ideas among common people and reveals the connections between new religious ideas and the social changes that took place from twelfth to fourteenth centuries in Tamil Nadu.

Origin and Development of Saivism

Saivism is said to be the oldest and pre-historic religion in India, perhaps in the world. Saivism is commendable not because it is the oldest religion, but because it is still a living religion practiced by multitudes. It is a religion which holds Siva as the supreme Lord. Scholars try to trace the origin of Saivism to the pre-vedic period. From the excavations in Mohenjadaroharappa sites, Sir John Marshall says: "Side by side with this Earth or Mother Goddess, there appears at Mohenjadaroharappa a male god, who is recognizable at once as a prototype of the historic Siva." He further goes on to state that Saivism has a history going back to Chalcolithic Age and the most ancient living faith in the world. There is a difference of opinions among scholars whether Saivism is Vedic or non-Vedic. Scholars like Sir John Marshall, G.U. Pope, G. Slater, Maraimalai Adigal are of the opinion that Saivism is pre-Aryan and pre-Vedic. They try to trace its origin as the indigenous Dravidian tradition, as opposed to Vedic tradition. Scholars like K.A. Nilakanta Sastri have a counter-opinion and they advocate the Vedic origin of Saivism.'

One of the minor deities of the Vedic period, Rudra is said to be associated with Siva. The qualities of Rudra, as in Rg veda, reveal that he was an atmospheric god, quite fierce,

destructive and physically attractive. He is the lord of animal sacrifices and is associated with the destructive powers of nature such as the storms, lightning and forest fires. The evolution of Siva is found in Yajurveda where one hundred names are attributed to him. Among these names, paśupati (God of animals), Nīlagrīva (blue-necked), and Sitikaṇṭha (white-throated) are notable. The omnipotent and omniscient aspects of Siva are also mentioned here. Further in Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, Siva is referred to as Hara, Mahādeva, Īśa, Īśāna, Maheśvara and Bhagavat. He is mentioned as ‘dweller in the mountains,’ ‘Lord of the mountains,’ ‘the thousand-eyed’ and ‘one who stands alone, steadfast.’ The Epic Mahābhārata refers to one thousand and eight names of Siva and gives the mythical account of marriage of Siva with Uma, the daughter of Himalayan mountain king, Himavān. In Rāmāyaṇa, Siva is associated with origin of Gaṅgā. The celestial Gaṅgā was made to descend from heaven by Bhagīratha and Siva trapped her in His matted locks to control her turbulence and force, before allowing her to flow on the earth. Later in puranic literatures such as Siva, Linga and Padma Puranas, Siva is described as Ardhanārīśvara, mixture of male and female principles. Siva is also presented as a teacher of truth and as a silent yogic who meditates in peace. In this position facing south, he is known as Dakṣiṇāmūrti. It has been claimed that the origin of such form could be from Proto-historic period, from Indus valley civilization. Siva is also known by the names of mahāyogin, mahātapah, yati, taponitya and yogīśvara.

The epics and puranas contain a multitude of anecdotes pertaining to the annihilation of evil persons like asuras. Siva is thus came to be understood as God of destruction or annihilation and is known as saṁhāramūrti. The purāṇic literature contains reference to several other epithets of Śiva. His description found in the Mahābhārata as a God clad in animal skin (deer or tiger), with matted hair and crescent on His head, bearing serpents, carrying a trident (triśūla) and having a bull for His ensign, becomes a distinguishing feature of Siva. The third eye of Siva on his forehead symbolizes his wisdom. Siva’s arms hold the fire, the axe and the drum. The crematorium is said to be his dwelling place and his body is smeared with ash. Siva as a Dancing Lord is an another powerful representation. Siva has been referred to and described in great detail in Tamil literature. The reference to Siva in ancient Sangam literature onwards is a witness to his prowess and popularity in Tamil country. Siva performed sixty four divine sports which are well described in Tamil devotional literature. Various epithets, forms, deeds, assets, weapons, As noted above, Siva was known even in the epoch of the Indus Valley civilization. A fusion came about when the Vedic Rudra became identified with the indigenous Siva. By the time of Svetesvatara upanisad Siva was absorbed in the Vedic pantheon and was given a lofty position as

mahadeva. The earliest specific mention of Siva by a foreigner is traceable to Megasthenes. In the age of the Guptas the worship of Siva assumed a considerable importance. But a bhakti movement of saivism is only traceable to south India and reached a great height.

Origin and Development of Vaishnavism

Sources of origin of Vaishnava religious tradition are varied. Some scholars trace it in the Vedic tradition itself. Diverse concept of Supreme Vishnu as found in various concepts of God in different vaishnava sects are relied upon in speaking of its origin. They are from the concept of Visnu (god with three strides) as found in the veda; the concept of Narayana (the cosmic and philosophic god); the concept of Vasudeva (the historical god); and the concept of krisna (the pastoral god). While some view that Vaishnavism had its origin from Visnu as mentioned in Vedas, others consider that it appeared after bhagavatam arose. With regard to South Indian Vaishnavism, some consider that Krishna cult in the south started with Yadavas in Madurai who were said to be a section of the Vrsni people that colonized the pandya country. Yet another view holds that Vishnu cult from the ancient Tamil period would have been from the mullai region whose god is said to be perumal. Vaishnavism is also known by the name bhāgavata, meaning the cult of bhagavat, the lord. It draws inspiration for its beliefs from bhāgavata purāṇa, gīta and nārayaṇīya a section of Mahabharata. Pāñcarātra and Vaikānasa āgamas are certain religious literatures that are regarded as canonical in Vaishnavism. Pāñcarātra are texts of ritual worship, which deals with, the knowledge of God, the method of mental concentration, yoga, the construction of temples and the installation of images there in, kriya, and the observance of daily rites and the celebration of festivals, carya. In vaikānasa āgamas, detailed instructions are given for construction of temples and moulding of images.

Vishnu resides in His abode is called vaikunṭha. There He sits enthroned beside his consort, the goddess lakṣmi or śrī. She is considered as patroness of good fortune and temporal blessing. Five forms of Visnu are the transcendent (para), the grouped (vūyha), the incarnated (vibhava), the immanent (antaryāmin) and the idol (arcā). God as the transcendent posses six attributes, namely knowledge, lordship, potency, strength, virility, and splendour. The grouped forms of god are four; they are vāsudeva, saṁkarṣaṇa, pradyumma, aniruddha. There is a distinctive function assigned to each of those vyuhās in cosmic creation as well as in the act of redeeming souls.

The incarnated forms are avatāras. Out of His own concern for the world, He descends from time to time in the form of an incarnation, avatāra. According to Vaishnavite tradition, there have been only nine such incarnations; there is one yet to come. God descended to earth

when the world was in danger of chaos or of perishing by wickedness. The incarnations as fish, tortoise, boar, etc. are popular legends, yet have very little religious value at the present day. In these forms, God appeared in the form of an animal to save the world from floods. Narasimha (man-lion), and Vamana (the dwarf) are the incarnations in which he saved the world from destruction by demons. Parasurama is His incarnation as a human hero to destroy the aggressive and arrogant warrior class and to establish the supremacy of the Brāhmanas. Rama and Krishna incarnations are more important ones as Vishnu is worshipped in these forms chiefly in North India. Two great Epics describe the legends in detail. The ninth form is added only in the middle ages, Buddha, which is a surprising one. Different notions are said about the purpose of this incarnation such as, to put an end to animal sacrifice, but later as to lead wicked men to deny the Vedas and thus to ensure their destruction. The final incarnation known as kalki, is yet to come. At the end of this dark age, Visnu is believed to descend once more to destroy the wicked and restore the age of gold, the kṛta yuga.

Self Assesment Questions

1. Discuss the social classes that existed during the rule of the Pandyas in Madurai.
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2. Examine the religious landscape during the Pandya rule, focusing on the prevalence and influence of Saivism and Vaishnavism.
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3. Explore the art and architecture patronized by the Later Pandyas, with reference to Marco Polo's account.
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4. Analyze the philosophical and religious principles of Saivasiddhantam and Virasaivism during the Pandya period.
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5. Compare and contrast the art and architecture of the Pandyas with that of other Dravidian dynasties, such as the Cholas and Cheras.
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UNIT - V

Society and Culture under the Madurai Sultanate – Vijayanagar Empire – Krishnadeva Raya – Royal Patronage of Literature, Art and Architecture – Social Life – Position of Women

Objectives

- Discuss the details of sultanate history
- Describe the formation of Madurai Sultanate
- Analyse the socio-economic and cultural conditions during the Madurai Sultanate

Society and Culture under the Madurai Sultanate

Jalaluddin began to rule Madurai from 1335 A.D. The Sultan of Delhi personally advanced against the rebellion via Daulatabad and Warrangal. Meanwhile famine broke out in Delhi and therefore he gave up the idea of subduing Jalaluddin and returned to Delhi. Mabar became independent and Jalaluddin started ruling Mabar with title of Jalaluddin Ahsan Shah. He struck gold and silver coins in his name. He was killed in 1340 and Alauddin Udaji, one of the amirs of Jalaluddin, became the sultan of Madurai. Ibn Batutah who had married Jalaluddin's daughter, simply says that Jalal was killed after the reign of five years and succeeded by his amir namely Ala-ud-din Udaji. Udaji in his one year rule engaged in the war against the infidels. He met with an accidental death. His tomb is located at Goripalayam on the northern bank of the Vaigai in Madurai. He was succeeded by Kutb-ud-din Firuz. But he was murdered after a reign of forty days. Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad Shah Damaghani became the Sultan. He was cruel and treacherous. He indulged in wholesale massacre of the Hindus. Ibn Batutah describes Ghiyasuddin, "A large number of Hindu prisoners were massacred; the men were impaled on stakes; the women were strangled and tied to the stakes by the hair and the infants were butchered on the breasts of their mothers." Ghiyasuddin died in 1344 A.D. Nasir-ud-din, one of the relatives of Ghiyasuddin became Sultan. Since Ibn Batutah went to China, no definite information is available regarding the reign of Nasir-ud-din. He was succeeded by Qurbat Hassan Kangu. People revolted against him because he acted more like a buffoon. Bukka I, Raja of Vijayanagar invaded Mabar and defeated Qurbat Hassan. The victory was short lived one and the withdrawal of Vijayanagar forces revived the Muslim rule.

The Sultanate was ruled under Adil Shah and Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah who ruled from 1359 to 1371 A.D. In 1371 Kumara Kampana invaded Mabar and killed Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah in the war. In 1378 A.D. Bukka II invaded Madurai and defeated Alauddin Sikkandar. Thus

the Sultanate of Madurai came to an end after the existence of nearly 40 years. After the victory of Kumara Kampana the Pandya country was annexed with the Vijayanagar Empire.

Krishnadevarayar

After the death of Narasa Nayakar in 1503, Veera Narasimhan established the Thuluva Dynasty in Vijayanagara Empire. After him, the younger brother, Krishnadevarayar succeeded in 1509. Krishnadevarayar is considered the most popular king of the Vijayanagara Empire. During his regime, he appointed Veera Narasimha Nayakkar as the Supreme Mandal Chief of Tamil Nadu in 1510. Krishnadevarayar's administration, political outlook and stable rule and warfare are considered the best by the historians. A literature named 'Karnataka Rasargal Savusuttaara saritham' describes the victory of Krishnadevaraya in Tamil Nadu. During his rule, the Vaishnava Cult was flourishing. He constructed the Northern Gopura of Chidambaram Temple and gained a lot of popularity for the same.

Literature

Education was given importance. Kings respected the educated and also the learned individuals. Foreign visitors have made a mention of the education system in Vijayanagara Empire.

A. **Education:** In the village level, the traditional educational system prevailed. Primary Education was taken up by 'Vaathi' (Teacher). They were paid money and also the foodgrains. Temples, Choultries and also tree shades were used as class rooms. Teaching was through oral methodology. Religious Teachings were carried out from temples. Vedas were also taught by the Brahmins. Madurai was the centre of such education. Missionary Schools were also commenced at Madurai and Chennai.

B. Literature

Vijayanagara Kings did not show any passion to promote Tamil Literature. At the same time, they did not deter the growth of the Tamil Literature also. During this period, due to the renaissance of the Bhakti Movement, Tamil Literature grew on its own. Most of these are Sangam Period Literature.

- I. Vedanta Desigar is the Disciple of Ramanujar. He is believed to have authored 25 Tamil books. The compilation is called Desiga Prabantham.
- II. Srivilliputhurar's literature is on Vyasa's Mahabaratha, in Tamil. It is considered a valuable literature of this time.
- III. Arunagirinathar who lived during Devarayar II, authored Thiruppugaz on Lord Murugan.

- IV. During Krishnadevarayar's Rule, Harinathar authored a book on saiva and vaishnava cults titled as 'iru samaya vilakkam'. kachiyappa sivachariyaar wrote Kanda Puranam on Lord Subramanya. Thirumalainathar wrote Sokkanathar Ula and Sithampara Puranam. His son Paranjothiyaar wrote Thiruvilaiyaadalpuranam and Chithamparap paattiyal.
- V. Nirambavalagiya desigar wrote Sethu Puranam. A Territorial Chief Athiveeraraama Pandiyan wrote Nidatham, Kaasi, Kandam, koorma puranam Linga puranam. Vamana picchaariyar wrote Merumanthirapuranam.
- VI. Kaalamegam was a notable poet in Vijayanagara Empire. He was a Tamil Laurate and he wrote 'Thiruvanaikka Ula'.
- VII. Two poets IlamSooriyan and MuthuSuriyan (one was blind and the other was lame). They composed Ekambaranathar Ula and also two Kalambam literature.

Art and Architecture

Many temples were rebuilt and renovated during this regime. They also built new temples with a unique architectural value and also the artistic minute designs and decorations. Their temples with the Mandapam and sculptures speak volumes of artistic nature of the Vijayanagara architectural and building technology.

A. **Mantapams (Temple Halls):** Vijayanagara Empire's artistic value is displayed by the various monuments that they have left behind for the posterity in the form of temples, mantaps, sculptures and artifact.

1. Thiruvannamalai Temple Mantap
2. Madurai Meenakshi Amman Temple Mantap
3. Vellore Jalagandeswarar Temple Mantap
4. Varadaraja Perumal Temple, Kancheepuram –Sculptures and Stone
5. Chains

B. **Gopuras (Temple Tower):**

1. Kancheepuram Ekambaranatheswara Temple
2. Thiruvannamalai Arunachaleswarar Temple
3. Chidambaram Nataraja Temple North Tower
4. Kalahasthi Temple

Speciality

Vijayanagar Style Gopuras are made with the base of Rock Stones and above them is built up with the Bricks sporting many small sculptures and art works. At the entrance we may

also observe the Flag Girls. On the ceiling also we find a few sculptures which are artistic and beautiful.

C. **Sculptures:** During this reign, the art of sculpture also developed. Many styles and dimensions have been followed. We may observe real size soldier sculptures as well as the speeding war horse making people admire. Besides, we also find many temples sport Kings and Queens Images beautifully installed. Bronze metal works are also found in the art gallery of Tanjore. All these establish the artistic excellence of Vijayanagara Empires' artists and the kings who supported the art and architecture.

D. **Arts:** Paintings are also well appreciated during this Vijayanagara Regime. Many types of paintings are art works are found in and around the Temples as powerful interiors revealing the Purana Stories. They are looking colourful and also simple with the white lime mixed in colour, revealing the ethnic culture and heritage at that time.

1. Thiruparuthikunram (Kancheepuram)- Mahaveera's Life History – Pictures.
2. Thiruvellarai- Thirumaal's Dasavathaaram; Ramayana Scenes and other exciting and enchanting pictures from the Epic Ramayana.
3. Srirangam Sri Ranganathar Temple- Lord Krishna dancing scene, surrounded by the cattle and also the young gopikas.
4. Thiruvannamalai- Lord Shiva appearing as Kalyanasundarar.
5. Meenakshi Sundaeswarar Temple-Madurai- paintings.
6. Alagarkovil Outer Mantap – paintings

E. Other Arts

Apart from these, dance and music was considered the best during the Vijayanagara Regime. Festivals were celebrated with dances. Besides, the ethnic dances with hand sticks (kolattam) and Bommalattam (dances with dolls) were very enchanting and also popular. The Kings used to honour the artists with Grants and Prizes. Thus Vijayanagara Empire developed Art and Culture at Tamil Nadu during their rule. The Social and Economic Development is a reflection of a stable and judicious Rule with an abundant Religious tolerance and human values.

Social Life

South India consisted more of villages and more people living in villages. Over a period of time, the growth of towns and cities emerged. The growth of economy, trade and commerce necessitated development of villages into tiny towns. Some kings themselves created new towns

and townships, in commemoration of their victory or to improve the status of the segment. In Tamil Nadu the following towns were growing prominently.

I. Social Divisions

Caste system was very much spelt during the Vijayanagaram Regime. The Kings were following the Varnashrama system and they were encouraging the caste distinctions.

II. Brahmins

Brahmins, in the words of Foreign traveller Barbosa, 'were found happy eating the food and were not found getting involved in physical labour.' Brahmins enjoyed the top notch concessions and respect from the Kings. They were given valuable grants and positions including special privileges. Some functioned as Adviser to the Kings and some were in Agriculture and also in Commerce.

III. Kammalas

These subjects formed the second layer in the society. Five types of kammalas were found: (i) Kammar (Iron Smith) (ii) Por kollar (Gold Smith) (iii) Pithalaikkalam maker (Brass Vessel makers) (iv) Carpenters (v) Sculptor (Artists making Statues and Sculptures). They were called 'panchalogar'. They were found demanding special privileges all through.

IV. Kaikolargal

This strata was found working in the temples and very powerful with status. They lived around the temples. They had privileges to serve the Army. They were engaged in Weaving. Due to the nearness to the Kingdom they enjoyed various privileges.

V. Islamiyar (Muslims)

Due to the Islamic invasions, the Muslim inhabitants increased. They were by and large engaged in trade and commerce. Those who lived on the sea shore and engaged in trade and commerce were addressed as Tamil Maraikairs. It is observed that they blended with the other community and lived peacefully.

VI. Other Castes

Many migrants from Deccan Region, Gujarat (sowrashtra) were found to occupy reasonable social status. There were many castebased on the avocation of the people. Untouchability and inequalities based on caste system were prevalent and many social movements emerged. Disturbances and caste struggles were found to be more.

Status of Women

Women enjoyed highest status in the society. Women were educated and some were found to occupy many positions in the King's court. Women followed superstitious practices. They believed in older systems and orthodox practices. Women were also found to be contributing to the literature. Kumara Kampana's wife Gangadevi authored a book called Madura Vijayam. Thirumaalambaal a poetess authored a book called Varadambika Parinayam. Marriages were different from caste to caste. However, Kannikadhana system was followed as a traditional system. Child marriages and also dowry system was prevalent. Higher caste men were found to follow the polygamy system. Sati system was prevalent. Prostitution was legalized in those days. Some women sold themselves to the temples and were called as Devadasis.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the socio-cultural aspects of the Madurai Sultanate.
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2. Examine the role of royal patronage under the Vijayanagar Empire in the promotion of literature, art, and architecture.
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3. Assess the contributions of Krishnadeva Raya to literature, art, and architecture during the Vijayanagar Empire.
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4. Examine the social life and customs prevalent during the Vijayanagar Empire.
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5. Discuss the position and roles of women in Vijayanagar society.
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6. Assess the lasting legacy of the Vijayanagar Empire on South Indian culture and society.
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