

HISTORY OF TAMIL NADU UP TO 1363 CE

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| Sl.No | Unit | Content | Page No |
|--------------|-------------|---|----------------|
| 1. | I | Geography – Sources for the study of History of Tamil Nadu – Pre & Proto history of Tamil Nadu – Ancient Tamil Civilization | 1-21 |
| 2. | II | Geography – Sources for the study of History of Tamil Nadu – Pre & Proto history of Tamil Nadu – Ancient Tamil Civilization | 22-42 |
| 3. | III | The Pallavas – Origin: Early Pallavas – Later Pallavas – Political, Social and Economic Conditions – Growth of Literature and Education – Art and Architecture – Sculpture – Paintings & Fine arts – Early Bakthi Movement - The First Pandyan Empire – Sources – Triangular conflict between Pallavas, Pandyas and Western Chalukyas – Administration – Art and Architecture | 43-76 |
| 4. | IV | Later Cholas:Raja RajaChola I - RajendraChola I – Overseas Expansion – Kulothunga – Chalukya-Chola relations – Administrative System – Land Grants and Temple Administration – Social and Economic life – Maritime Trade & Commerce – Religion – Literature – Art and Architecture – Bronze Sculptures. | 77-103 |
| 5. | V | The Second Pandyan Empire (1190-1312 CE) – Triangular conflict among Cholas, Pandyas and Hoysalas – Social and Economic Life – Malik Kafur’s Invasion | 104-110 |
| 6. | Annexure | References | 111 |

HISTORY OF TAMIL NADU UP TO 1363 CE

Unit-I

Geography – Sources for the study of History of Tamil Nadu – Pre & Proto history of Tamil Nadu – Ancient Tamil Civilization

Objectives

After going through this unit you should be able to explain the fertility of the soil, the regularity of the monsoons the rich quality of minerals that lead to great-prosperity in the context of the geographical features of the Tamil Country.

Introduction

Tamizhagam is named after the name of the people who speak Tamil language. The Indian Ocean in the South, the Bay of Bengal on the east, the Arabian Sea on the West and Venkatam hills on the north are the limits of Tamil Nadu. The rivers, soils, minerals and climate lead the country to great prosperity.

Geographical Features of the Tamil Country

It is a general conception that geography and physical features influence the course of human history. Geography governs the social and economic aspects of history. The geographical features of a country like its mountains and rivers, its climate and natural resources determine in a large measure the nature of the social and economic life of its people. The choice of occupations on the part of individuals, their physical and mental efficiency, their standard of life as well as their social customs and institutions bear the imprint of the geographical features of the land in which they live. The distinctive characteristics of people are themselves products of accumulated geographical influences extending over a vast span of time. Extraneous factors like religion and achievements of great personalities from time to time as well as fortuitous circumstances like wars and famines, are prone to leave their impress on the progress of a people. The share of each of these factors in shaping the life of a people might vary from country to country. But the history of a place and man is certainly dominated by geographical features and on all account man is largely subjected to it. For instance, the sea-faring tendency of the Tamils was largely the product of geographical influences.

Tamizhagam, the land of the Tamil language, is the southernmost part of the Indian

sub-continent. Tamizhagam, as a geographical unit, lies to the south of 15 Latitude. Nakkirar in his commentary on *Iraiyana Ahapporul* states that Tamizhagam at the time of the first Tamil Sangam extended to the south and east than to the present confines of Tamil Nadu and comprised forty nine major divisions. The statement that “Vada Venkadam. Tenkumari Ayidait Tamil Kuru Nallulagathu” indicates the southern and northern limits of Tamizhagam of the Sangam Age. It is bound on the south by the Indian Ocean, on the northwest by the Mysore plateau. The Tamils divided this land into Kudapulam, Kunapulam and Thenpulam. Venkadam area itself consisted of impenetrable forests which lay beyond the territories of Pulli. At Cape Comorin, where the three seas merge it symbolises the unity of waters. It is a place of pilgrimage. Pilgrims appear to have kept up the link between the North and Southern India.

The people who lived north of Venkadam were called Vadukar. Close to the north of Tamizhagam above the Ghats were Tulunad, Coorg and Konkanam. Sri Lanka situated like a foot rest to the southeast of peninsular India. It is a geographical and cultural continuation of Tamil Nadu, though it has been generally politically independent. Between Ceylon and India was the island of Manipallavam which was at a distance of thirty *yajanas*, south of Puhar, the ancient sea-port at the mouth of the Kaveri. A ship sailing from the coast of Madurai to Java touched Manipallavam. To the west of Ceylon were the islands inhabited by a naked, nomad race called the Nagas. The land stretching south from the Konkan along the coast, now comprising the Kerala state was a part and parcel of Tamizhagam, throughout the early period of South Indian History. After the 9th century A.D.,

Tamizhagam came to be divided into Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Malayalam, the mother tongue of the Kertalites, evolved from *konduntamil*. Tamizhagam was divided into twelve Nadus or Provinces as Pandi Nadu, Kutta Nadu, Kuda Nadu, Karka Nadu, Venadu, Puli Nadu, Panri Nadu, Aruva Nadu, and North Aruva Nadu, sita Nadu, Mal Nadu, and Punal Nadu. These *nadus* can be summed up into forming the Pandynad, the Cheranad, the Cholanad, the Kongunadu and the Velirnadu. The Pandu Nadu corresponded to the land stretching south of Kaveri, and comprised the modern districts of Madurai, Ramnad, and Tirunelveli. It was the land south of the river Vellar, north of Cape Comorin, east of Peruveli and west of the sea. It had many Kurrans or sub-divisions. Chaste Tamil or *Sentamil* was then spoken there. The capital and the chief inland town of Pandynad was Madurai which is situated on the banks of the river Vaigai. It was a fortified city having towers. Hence the name “Nan-Madak-Kudal” the Tamil

poets used the title “Thakkana-Madurai” or Southern Madurai only to distinguish it from the Mathura of Northern India. Korkai on the mouth of the river Tamiraparani was the harbour of Pandynad. Pearl-fishing was the main occupation of the people of Korkai. Villinam and Saliyur, other sea-ports were always busy in the export and import trades.

The Cheranad corresponded to the modern districts of Tiruvanandrum, Cochin, Coimbatore and a part of Salem. It had twelve sub-divisions. It was bound on the north by the Palani hills and on the south by the sea. The capital city of Cheranad was Thiruvanchikkalam which was situated on the banks of the river Periyar. The town was strongly fortified. The most conspicuous buildings of the capital were a temple of Vishnu, a Buddhist Chaitya and a Nigrantha monastery. Near the mouth of the river, Periyar, was Musiri, an important seaport. Thondi was another flourishing sea-port on the western coast.

Beyond Panrinad, was Punalnad or the Chola kingdom. The name Punalnad signifies the land of floods. It is the land east of Kottaikkarai, west of the sea, and north of Vellar. The Chola capital was Uraiyur which was situated on the southern bank of the river Kaveri. Puhar or Kaveripattinam, which stood at the mouth of the river was a great emporium of trade. Puhar was divided into two parts-Maruvurp-pakkam and Pattinap-pakkam. The capital had many palatial buildings.

The land east of Pavalamalai, south of Venkada hills, was Kancheepuram. It was ruled by Tiraiyans. Later, the Pallavas occupied that territory and extended their sway over the whole of the Chola kingdom.

The Kongunad was bounded on the north by Thalaimalai, on the south by Vaihavoor or Palani, and on the West by Velliangiri. Originally it included Coimbatore and the southern parts of Salem.

The seven Velir chiefs had their separate kingdoms and capitals. viz; Parambunad, Thagadur, Kovalur, Aykudi, Nanjilnad, Mohoor, Kuthiraimalai, and Chenkanama were the important chieftaincies.

Sources of Tamil Nadu History

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 reveals 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:

I. Archaeological Sources of Evidences

- Excavations of buried societal evidences, buildings etc.
- Monumental Evidences such as temples, stone inscriptions, etc.
- Evidences of copper plate.
- Coins in circulation

Literary Sources of Evidences

- ❖ Inland Literature
- ❖ Foreign Literature

Foreign Accounts

- Travelers Accounts

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 counters 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

- Athirapakkam, Chingleput District: Athirapakkam is the source of Stone Age Tools and implements belonging to Aculian Technology, which is considered.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 these 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.
- 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,

- 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.

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.

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. 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.

Locations

- Stone Inscriptions were initially found at Rameswaram, Brahmagiri, and Maski. Western Deccan sports a variety of stone inscriptions on the temple walls. They are located at Kanheri and Nasik. These inscriptions are in Bruhui letters of Prakrit language. Pallavas, Sungas and Kadambas have released their stone inscriptions in Sanskrit language.
- Emperor Asoka's rock inscriptions found in Siddapuram, Brahmagiri, and Errakudi, speak volumes about the Chera, Chola and Pandya Kingdoms. These inscriptions are not in Tamil.
- Kalinga King Karavelar's Hadigumba stone inscriptions inform us about the syndication of the Tamil Kings highlighting the synergised approach of the Tamil Kings in those eras.
- Samudra Gupta's inscriptions on Allahabad Pillar provide information on the rule of Kanchi Vishnugopan, a Pallava King.
- Aikol Inscriptions of Pulikeshin II, the most popular Chalukya King, reveal the details of the wars between the Chalukyas under Pulikeshin II and the Pallavas under Mahendra Varman.
- Cholas stone inscriptions are innumerable and they are special. These stone inscriptions provide the store of historical evidences on the Chola History.
- Malpadi inscriptions and Raja Rajeswaran Temple inscriptions of Rajendra Chola I

provide information on the Chola period.

- Tirumukkudal stone inscriptions of Veera Rajendra Cholan reveal the donations and support to the welfare activities such as study centres and hospitals.
- Thiruvudipuram stone inscriptions of Rajendra Chola III are a masterpiece of historic evidence recorded in the past.
- Velvikudi grant of Paranthaka Nedunchadayan, Pandya King of Sangam Period, describes the rededication and return of the village Velvikudi to the descendants of the Vedic scholars who were donated Velvikudi by the earlier Pandya King Palyagasalai Mudukudumiyan Peruvazudhi.
- Pallava King Mahendra Varman's inscriptions at Kudumiyanmalai near Pudukottai inform on the developments in music and art during the Pallava Rule.

Copper Plate Records

After the 7th Century AD, usage of copper plates for inscriptions increased. Pandyas, Chalukyas and other kings released copper plate inscriptions. 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 indicate that the Jains were patronized 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.

Numismatics

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.

- A. Arikamedu near to Pondicherry: In this location, Martimar Wheeler undertook Archaeological survey and research. A huge quantity of gold coins was 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.
- B. 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.
- C. Pallava coins carry bull on one side and two sail ship images. Swastika and lion images are also found on Pallava Coins.
- D. 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.
- E. Rajaraja Chola“s coins were discovered from Telleswaram on the banks of Godavari River. This indicates that the rule extended up to Godavari banks.
- F. Besides major research projects, small projects were also undertaken at Korkai, Uraiyur, Madurai and Amaravathi. These historic evidences confirmed the various theoretical stands 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 has 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 Accounts happens to be a special mention notings and travelogues of foreign visitors, scholars and emissaries.

Pre and Proto History of Tamil Nadu

Introduction

One of the main sources for the reconstruction of the earlier phases of history of Tamil Nadu is archaeology. As a result of the excavations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India, University of Madras and the Archaeological Department of Tamil Nadu, we have a volume of archaeological data for the study of the pre-historic and early historic civilizations of Tamil Nadu. How the world originated, and how inhabitation and Vegetarian could be preserved, and how the man mastered the nature etc make a very interesting study. The entire solar system was a flaming mass of gas revolving very fast and after millions of years of cooling, it broke up into belts and became many planets. The earth is one among them. So it is many million years old. Before the earth cooled down there were Ice ages. Secondly the origin of life on earth is also very complex and complicated. In the beginning Soft Jelly like substance evolved. Then fish worms and other creatures began to live on the surface. Many animals came into existence and monkey was one among them in the later stage. Man was originated from the monkey, tail disappeared and head became bigger. He started to protect himself from surrounding animals

where he lived. Thus started the Paleolithic age or the Old Stone Age.

Pre and Proto History of Tamil Nadu

The prehistoric period in the history of any people relates to the pre- documented period. History begins with man's conscious creation of documents relating to his life and achievements. Pre-literate man, however, produced primitive structures and drew simple figures and made plain tools some of which have survived. With the help of these relics, it is possible to reconstruct the ancient past of man to some extent. The pre-historic period is usually divided into the *palaeolithic, neolithic, chalcolithic, and early metal ages*. The uniformity in the size and shape of primitive tools employed by ancient man helps archaeologists determine at least roughly, the ages to which these people belonged. Pottery is another important material for fixing cultural ages. Skeletal remains are also of use in analysing the racial composition of contemporary and local populations.

We have no means of determining the nature of the people who inhabited Tamilnad in the *palaeolithic* period except with the help of the stone tools used by them. Around Madras we get certain hand axes which are collectively called the Madras industry which bear some resemblance to Sohan industry in North West India. Following the *palaeolithic*, we have a short period during which tiny lithic tools were used and this is called *microlithic age* or small Stone Age. The next age, the *neolithic* or the new stone age is related to finds as far south as the Tinnevelly district i.e., around Tinnevelly and Tuticorin. This age could well be a millennium before 6000 B.C.

The next stage in the evolution of man in Tamil Nadu is marked by the occurrence of *megaliths*. Some ancient people buried the remains of the dead in pots (either exposed on surface or imbedded beneath the surface) and raised a circumscribing tomb consisting of large stone slabs. This is called the *megalithic system of burial*. These megaliths occur mostly in the Chingleput district though the earliest megaliths were discovered in Tinnevelly. Simultaneously with this occur another complex which helps dating and that is Black and Red ware pottery alongside iron implements. Nilakanta Sastri is of the opinion that this was perhaps the beginning of rice cultivation in South India. Most scholars are of the view that this culture was introduced by an iron-using people from the extreme south and that this would have occurred sometime between 300 B.C. and A.D.100. Megaliths do occur in North India in the Gangetic Valley too. The spread of this culture from the West to India could have been along two routes-land and sea.

The corners of South Indian megalithic culture must have arrived by sea by the beginning of the 1st millennium B.C.

The next most interesting Pre-historic remains were discovered at Adichchanallur near Tirunelvely. One comes across a series of urn burials here without the surrounding megaliths. But, they seem to be related to the megalithic complex since in both cases iron implements Black and Red ware occur, but surprisingly, the pottery at Adichchanallur is more primitive. Bronze articles, gold diadems and mouthpieces, tridents and spears have been discovered here. The occurrence of small metallic representations of the Vel (trident) and a wild fowl suggest the possibility of Murugan worship being as old as Adichchanallur at least. It is difficult to say, how this iron- using culture, can be derived from the earlier neolithic and it looks like being culturally isolated. That rice cultivation was known to the inhabitants of Adichchanallur is proved by the availability of bronze vessels containing grains of rice.

The megalithic burial sites can help us connect them with particular races of people only if sufficient numbers of skulls and other skeletal remains are available. At Brahmagiri such remains are available and therefore racial connections have been deposited. But, in Tamil Nadu skeletal remains rarely occur and so the racial composition of the makers of this culture remains unknown.

The dawn of Tamil history is indicated by references to Tamil Nadu in early foreign literature especially Sanskrit and Pali. Panini and his predecessors seem to have been unaware of the land to the south of the Vindhya and the Dandakaranya. Among grammarians, the earliest reference to the Tamil country kingdoms occurs in *Patanjali* and *Katyayana* who came later. If Kautilya was a contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya he was the first writer in Sanskrit to refer to the Pandyan kingdom. Megasthenes, an undoubted contemporary of Chandragupta Maurya refers to the Pandyan kingdom though he embellishes his account with a lot of pleasant fiction. The first series, first hand and historical reference to the Tamil kingdoms occur in the rock-edicts of Asoka. The *Hathi-gumpha inscription* of Kharavela mentions, a confederacy of the Tamils which he claims to have broken. These references suggest that the Tamil kingdom was not only warlike and capable of defending themselves but had reached an advanced stage of civilization, agricultural as well as commercial.

Dim references to Tamil Nadu especially Kumari, Madurai and Ramesvaram occur in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The uncertain date of these epics makes any reference

unreliable. Anyhow the Mahabharata has a reference to Manalur while the Ramayana speaks of Pandyakavataka and are all deemed to be memories of proto-historic events of ancient India. But, even this seems to be mere romantic reconstruction by the imaginative poet of bits of hearsay information.

There are certain legends which are inextricably associated with the proto- history of the Tamils. Agastya is the central figure of this tradition. The Tamils adopted Agastya as almost their patron saint and deemed him as the father of Tamil languages and literature. While, there is a fundamental difference of opinion in regard to the historicity of Agastya, some scholars assign a vedic origin to him and still others a non-Aryan origin. But, Tamil legends beginning with the commentary on the Iraiyanar Kalaviyal make him the chief poet of the first Tamil Sangam.

The original homeland of the Tamils has been a matter of considerable controversy. Some hold tenaciously, the view that the Tamils are autochthons and had never a homeland outside Tamil Nadu. If traces of Tamil language and culture are seen outside India, it is argued that they must be attributed to the Tamils who left Tamil Nadu and settled in those places. The occurrence of Brahui, a Dravidian language in Baluchistan is capable of two opposite interpretations. It is possible to consider this as an island of Dravidian speech left behind by people speaking Dravidian languages either on their way into India from an external homeland or on their way out from the Southern Peninsula. But, a more careful look into the available sources almost at once reveals the need to recognize an external homeland for the Tamils. Archaeological, linguistic and cultural proof is forthcoming to establish a Middle Eastern home, land for the Tamils. Labovary's linguistic analysis of the Dravidian speech almost proves that the original Dravidian speech has to be traced back to the Eastern- Mediterranean region. The idea of a temple which is a very important Dravidian social institution i.e., a 'tower like' structure for enshrining a deity reminds us of the Ziggurat of the Sumerians.

The worship of the Mother-goddess either in her benign or malignant form is common to both lands. The marriage of the goddess 'Lady of the Mountain' (comparable to Parvati) with the Moon god of Ur reminds us of a corresponding religious festival in Tamil Nadu. The word 'Ur' itself is reminiscent of the Tamil word which means town. Sacrifice of animal flesh to god was also a common feature. The practice of endowing religious centres with slaves of both sexes which was prevalent in Sumeria is reflected in the institution of 'devadasis' in Tamil Nadu. There is a growing feeling among some scholars that Murugan worship was itself derived from

Middle Eastern religious traditions though this still remains a matter of controversy. But scholars who consider the matter in its entirety are convinced of the need to accept an external homeland for the Dravidians to locate it in the Middle East.

Ancient Tamil Civilization

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 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 Pandya sand 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 at rough, 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 coiffed 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 Tolappiyam 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

The Western and Eastern Ghats

“Mountains, hills, forests, jungles, rivers and cultivated plains with infertile land interspersed offer a geographical variety suggestive of economic self-sufficiency.” The Western Ghats and the Eastern Ghats run parallel to the west and east coasts of the peninsula. The Western Ghats form an excellent natural frontier or gigantic sea-wall; from Kasargod in the north to Aramboli in the south, where they abruptly end. They are a steep and rugged mass of hills; little more than 2,000 feet about the Eastern Ghats meet the Western Ghats after making a sweep from the other side of the peninsula. “The Nilgiri plateau receives abundant rainfall, and it is famous for its luxurious vegetation and excellent scenery.” Between these mountain ranges there are extensive plain lands where rich civilizations flourished.

The Western Ghats is pierced by numerous passes. Though the Palghat Gap is twenty-four miles wide, on account of its rugged terrain and impenetrable forests were infested by wild animals and snakes, this affords access from the Carnatic to the Malabar. This easy road into the Carnatic from Cochin and Calicut and other ports on the west has played an important role all through history. As the Palghat gap was dangerous, the highway of traffic between Kerala and her eastern neighbours was the Shencottah and Aramboli routes. Countless had been the raids and inroads through Aramboli route and numberless had been the battles fought in this region. For this reason, it has been called the cockpit of Kerala.

The Palani, Kodai, Sabari, Podiyil and Anamalai hills are important points on the southern stretch of this mountain chain. The Anamalai hills consist of peaks rising to over 8,000 feet. The vegetation includes the dense forests of valuable teak, rose-wood, and the wild-bamboo, coffee and cardamom. They have been the dwelling places of the tribal people like Kadas, Irulas and Pulaiyans even today.

The Eastern Ghats possess little of the magnificence gained by the regular structure of the Western Ghats. They are scattered, broken, and of much lower altitude. Geologically they seem to be distinctly older than the Western Ghats; they are different in productivity and scenery. They are a series of detached and discontinuous hills. Beginning in Orissa, they run parallel to the eastern coast. But, at Madras, they strike south-westwards to form the southern edge in the Deccan Plateau. Isolated masses of hills like the Palani and the Shervaroy hills, in and near Salem district, branch off from the main range. Most of the major rivers of Tamizhagam rise on the crest of the western ghats and course down all the way to the Bay of Bengal, cutting across

down all the way to the Bay of Bengal, cutting across the Eastern Ghats. So, free- intercourse was possible between the plateau and the coastal plain.

Tamizhagam of the past was triangular in shape, with its apex towards the south. The two ranges of the Ghats provided a basic unity to the plains of Tamizhagam, down to Nilgiris. Thereafter, the general unity has been seriously affected. The spurts and hillocks jutting into the interior have been responsible for a division of the country into several small units of territory. This was primarily responsible for the absence of political unity in the past. Therefore, it was possible for the Cheras, Cholas, Pandyas, Tiraiyars and the Velir chiefs to carve out independent kingdoms for themselves. Political unity in Tamizhagam was achieved only during the reign of able monarchs like Karikalan, Senguttuvan, Nedunjelian, Rajaraja I and Rajendra I. Differing customs and manners too led to social isolation. The hilly region, forest country, agricultural land, coastal area, desert region developed distinct characteristics suited to and influenced by environment. This isolation was gradually broken with the layout of trunk roads and the construction of railways these days.

Rivers

Tamizhagam is fortunate, in having rivers like the Kaveri, the Palar, the Vaigai, the Pennar, the Velar, the Tamiraparani, the Paraliyar, the Bharathappuzha and the Periyar. Though, they are short and less in number they supply a substantial amount of water needed for cultivation. The rivers except the Bharathappuzha and the Periyar, rise in the crest of the Western Ghats and flow through the present Tamil Nadu into the Bay of Bengal. The two rivers in the Western Ghats flow through the Kerala State into the Arabian Sea.

The Kaveri, is the most prominent river which was celebrated in Tamil literature and history. The river, 475 miles long, takes its course at Coorg or Kudagu. It runs, smoothly through sacred spots like Srirangapatnam and Sivasamudram in the Mysore states and Srirangam in Tamizhagam. About nine miles west of Tiruchirapalli, it bifurcates into two branches-Kollidam and Kaveri. Before it reaches the sea, it splits up into many branches and covers the entire delta with a vast network of irrigation canals. Nineteen centuries ago, Karikalan controlled the frequent floods which wrought much damage in Punalnad. He raised high banks along both sides of the river and constructed the Kallanai. Because of this river, Tanjore has come to be called "the rice bowl of Tamizhagam."

It runs through the North Acrot District and falls into the Bay of Bengal. The towns of

Vaniyambodi, Vellore, Acrot and Chingleput are situated on its banks. It irrigates a limited area. The Pennar rises in Chennanarayanapettai in Mysore. It passes through Bangalore and Salem. It reaches the sea to the north of Cuddalore. It irrigates the land of its terminus.

The Vaigai commences from the Palani hills, flows through the town of Madurai and falls into the Bay of Bengal. Now-a-days, it is almost dry. The Vaigai dam constructed on it waters a limited area including Sholavandan.

The Tamiraparani is the river mentioned in the *Indica* of Megasthenes. This has its origin in the wooded hills of the Southern part of the Western Ghats (Podiyil). It flows through Tirunelveli District. The South-west monsoon waters it. It falls into the Bay of Bengal creating a large delta at its mouth. Here was situated the famous sea-port, Korkai. The Bharathappuzha is the longest river (156 miles) in the Kerala State. On its banks stand Chittor, Palghat., Thirunavay and Ponnani. The Periyar (146 miles) rises in the Ayiramalai, sacred to Goddess Korraivai. It flows through Kaladi and Always. One of its branches flows through Kodunagallur, the capital of the Chera kings. Of the many rivers which flow through South Travancore, mention is made of Paraliyaru or Pahruli river. It takes its course at Mahendragiri, passes through Nanjilnad and falls into the Manakkudi estuary. In our memory of the Pandyan rulers, the Pandyan Anai was constructed in it.

The coastal strip of short rivers is for the most part covered with low-level laetrile, red-gravel and clay. Therefore, it is not very productive. The delta country is a regular granary of rice and produces many other valuable crops like tobacco, cotton and sugarcane, one of the songs of Avvaiyar in *Purananuru* states that the ancestors of Adigaman Neduman Anji of Thagadur introduced sugarcane into Tamizhagam.

Generally, the courses of the rivers influence for civilizations. River valleys provide the people with the necessities of life. There is scope for fishing and cultivation. In the deltas of the Kaveri, the Palar and the Periyar, all the great historical kingdoms of Tamizhagam had their capitals and the unnumbered temples of indigenous arts and of almost pre-historic industries could be found there.

Soils and Minerals

The soils of Tamizhagam vary in their nature and fertility. It has the fertile alluvial soil of the deltoid region, the back cotton soil of the plain and the red-ferruginous soil of the central regions. The black cotton soil infertile and is employed in the cultivation of paddy,

millet, pulses etc. The red soil is rarely fit for cultivation. Open treeless plains with isolated hills and masses of rock scattered in the plains constitute the red soil regions. These regions are dry and have hot climates. Large-scale cultivation is possible in reverie lands.

The mineral wealth and mineral industries of Tamizhagam are poor when compared with those of north India. A number of contributory materials like magnesite, chromite, quartz, bauxite, limestone and dolomite, besides iron-ores are available in Salem district. A considerable quantity of gypsum in sedimentary rocks and a less quantity of iron-ores are found in and around Tiruchirappalli. In the tertiary rocks near Pondicherry and Vriddhachalam, we have lignite the 'mother of industries'. In the dry beds of streams and in the beach sands of the Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts, we have monazite, which provides the raw material for the production of thorium nitrate and fertilizer.

Gneiss rocks, found in Pallavaram, South Arcot, Tirunelveli and Nanjilnadu, are used in the construction of temples and other massive buildings. Therefore, the art of stone carving developed tremendously in ancient Tamizhagam. Sandstone, widely quarried near Satyavedu, Nagalapuram and Kancheepuram, is used as good building and decorative material. Crystalline limestone, found in the vicinity of Sankaridurg and in Talaiyuthu near Tirunelveli, is utilized in the cement factory and in the manufacture of bleaching powder.

Rainfall, Irrigation and Agriculture

"Tamizhagam has been one of the most thirsty regions in the south. She has looked up to the heavens rather literally for survival. The monsoons are normally punctual. Sometimes they fail for many years leading to drought and famine. Kerala including a small area in the Kanyakumari district receives the largest amount of rainfall, mostly from the south-west monsoon (June to October). The North-East Monsoon (October to mid December) provides the heaviest rainfall for Tamizhagam as a whole.

The source of all water is no doubt, rainfall. Modern devices for the conservation of water resources depend largely on monsoons. Artificial irrigation is employed wherever possible in order to make amends for the inadequacy of rainfall. Wells, canals, lift-irrigation and artesian springs are the most successful methods of irrigation in Tamil Nadu. Though, these methods need quite a good amount of money, the government of Tamil Nadu implements them with the aid of modern machines.

The Tamils had a four-fold division of their land according to rainfall at the time of

Tholkappiyam. They are hilly tracts, pasture land, cultivable land and the literal land. But at the time of Ilango Adigal, the Tamils included one more division with the four-the desert land. These divisions had their separate people, god and occupation.

Agriculture was the main occupation of a good number of people in Tamizhagam. In the chapter on '*Uzhavu*' Tiruvalluvar had elaborately dealt with the importance of cultivation Rice, Cholam, Kambu, Ragi, Varagu are cultivated in large quantities. Commercial crops like groundnut, cotton, and sugar cane are also grown up. Apart from cereals, oilseeds, and groundnuts, gingelly, ginger, and castor are grown in different parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Pulses or grams of different varieties like Red gram, black gram and green gram are grown in various parts of the land. Besides these, the cultivation of coconuts, arecanuts, mangoes, chillies and tobacco, plantains, betel and vegetables is widespread. Coconuts, mangoes, jack- fruits and plantains have wide markets in Tamil Nadu. Pepper, pearls, ivory, cloves, sandalwood, teak, rosewood and cardamom, some unique natural products are in great demand in foreign countries. There are references to the export of rice to Mesopotamia, pearl to Rome and spices, timber andcoir to Europe.

Maritime Trade

The unbroken western and eastern coasts of Tamilnadu had affected its economy. Storms and erosions also caused the destruction of several coastal areas. Hence, Tamil Nadu was fortunate to have large natural harbours. But it possessed harbours suitable for the small vessels. Musiri and Tondi on the west and Kavirippumpattinam and Korkai on the east were the important ports of this period. These ports enabled the Tamils to maintain maritime and colonial contact with the east and the west. The maritime activities of Tamil Nadu with Java, Sumatra, China, Persia, Ceylon, Babylonia, Greece and Rome contributed to the economic and social development of the Tamils.

Climate and Winds

South India lies near the Equator and the entire region of Tamizhagam lies within the Tropical Zone. Cape Comorin lies hardly 8° above the Equator. Therefore, we have fairly a high temperature throughout the year. During April, May and June, the worst part of the year, Tamizhagam experiences the hottest climate, 85° F and above. In November, December and January the temperature is below 80° F. Charged with moist or dry, hot or cool vapour dependent on the varying conditions of the places in their tract, the winds play an important

part in determining the climate of the different localities. Generally the surface winds blowing near the hilly tracts have a high velocity. They are violent and stormy in and near the gaps of Palghat, Shenkottah and Aramboli. In the western part of Tamizhagam, by and large, the wind is fairly strong during the months of July and August. Owing to the general reversal of the wind system that occurs on the eve of the North-East Monsoon, the velocity of the wind becomes very low in October and it dries down in September.

Tamizhagam was famous for her handicrafts like textiles which were highly popular in foreign countries. Potteries and urns excavated in the south go to prove that the artistic skill of the artisans of ancient Tamizhagam. The mint unearthed in Arikkamedu near Pondicherry indicates that extensive trade between Tamizhagam and the west was a regular feature. The Roman coins found in Tamizhagam are testimonies to the seafaring activities of both the countries.

All the factors have given the Tamils a distinct existence and helped to develop a culture of their own. The situation of Tamizhagam in the extreme south of the peninsula has to a greater extent reduced the exotic cultural and political influences thrust of north India. Ancient literature, indigenous as well as foreign, eludes abundant references to the glorious past of the Tamilian culture. The flushing maritime activities of the residents of Kaveripattanam, Korkai and Thondi are described in glowing terms by the Greek, Egyptian, and Roman writers. The history of any culture reveals that it has developed from slavery, passed through barbarism and reached the stage. This holds good to Tamizhagam also.

Summary

Tamizhagam was not affected by any major invasion from the north while the north suffered from various expeditions. The geographical conditions of Tamil Nadu have left their mark on the societal conditions to an extent.

Self Assesment Questions

1. Examine the Archaeological Evidence that Sheds Light on the Prehistory of Tamil Nadu.
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2. Analyze the Cultural and Socio-Economic Developments that Characterized this Period, with a Focus on Significant Archaeological Findings.
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3. Evaluate the significance of sangam literature as a source for reconstructing the history of ancient Tamil Nadu.
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4. Explain the social structure of ancient Tamil society, focusing on varna and jati divisions, as well as the roles of different social groups.
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5. Compare and contrast the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of different phases in the pre- and proto-history of Tamil nadu.
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UNIT II

Sangam Age – Historicity – Early Cholas – Karikala – Cheras – Senguttuvan – Pandyas – Nedunchezian – Polity – Society – Economy – Foreign Trade – Religion – Literature – Kalabhara Interregnum – Impact of their rule

Objectives

- Understand the background of the culture of Tamil Nadu
- Explain the Foreign trade in Tamil Nadu
- Evaluate the distinct features of Kalabhara Interregnum.

The Age of Sangam

Introduction

The age of the Sangam is the age to which Sangam literature belonged and the Sangam literature is the body of writings which reflect conditions of social and political life which existed, when Pandyan kings patronised the Sangam. The word Sangam refers to an association of monks. There were three Sangams. Scholars have different views to fix the date of the Sangam age. The ancient Tamizhagam was ruled by the three powerful monarchs called Chera, Chola and Pandya.

The History of Sangam Age

The history of the Tamils begins with the Sangam age. It is true that the Sangam age itself has been so differently delimited by different scholars it is deemed to begin either in the 6th century B.C. or A.D. Began in the 1st century and to end by the middle of A.D. 3rd century or in the 5th century after Christ. This estimate is not likely to be agreed to by most historians today, since it treats the entire history of the Tamils prior to the advent of Simhavishnu (A.D. 6th century) as relating to the Sangam age. They would rather share the view that the first three centuries of the Christian era alone represent the Sangam age. But, this estimate of the Sangam period maybe true only in a limited and a narrow sense. Hence, a more reasonable definition of the age seems to be required.

In fact, the first mention of the word Sangam occurs in the 7th century in the *Tevaram* hymns of Tirunavukkarasu; and this word is repeatedly mentioned in the commentary on the Iraiyanar *Ahapporul* of the 8th century A.D. A study of the commentary on the first *Sutram* of the Iraiyanar *Ahapporul* which gives a succinct, but, somewhat incredible account of the origin, growth and decline of the three Sangams, makes some scholars doubt the veracity of the

narrative and consider the institution of the Sangam a myth.

This commentary on the *Ahapporul*, is said to have been composed by Nakkirar, the famous Sangam poet. These are illustrative verses from one literature called the *Pandikkovai* which was composed not earlier than the 7th century A.D. It lauds the achievements of the Pandyan king *Ninrasir Nedumaran*. This is explained as the core of the commentary and was written by Nakkirar. But his students who learnt it by word of mouth from generation to generation give it its definite and present form and the one who did it was Nilakantan of Musiri. So, in spite of obvious historical improbabilities and a few impossibilities in the account of the Sangam provided by that commentary, it will be permissible to hold that there were three Sangams and the first was instituted by Pandyan Makiritti and the third was presided over last by Pandyan Ugrapperuvaludi, Makiritti, it seems, held court in the Madurai of the south, to the south even of the present Cape Comorin, started the first Sangam called the Mudal Sangam and that the southern sea eroded the southern part of the Pandyan Kingdom and obliged the king to seek a new capital.

The hapless king did not learn by experience and chose to make another coastal town (Kapatapuram on the east coast near Korkai perhaps) his new capital where he instituted and patronised the second Sangam called *Idai Sangam*. His descendants paid for his folly and this town also was engulfed by the sea. The capital was shifted, then to Madurai on the Vaigai, where it functioned as the third Sangam or the Kadai Sangam. There is nothing inherently incredible, in this account, for loss of territory consequent on marine erosion was not an unusual phenomenon on the southern and eastern coasts. Possibly there is an element of exaggeration in the extent of territory lost, number of years the Sangam functioned, the number of poets who flourished then, and so on. But, these exaggerations are natural to ancient literature particularly Indian and must be overlooked. A fair appraisal of the Sangam age based on an acceptance of the three Sangams as historical will be to assign the 4th century B.C. as the early limit and 3rd century A.D. as the later limit for the Sangam age. The *Tolkappiyam* which is the earliest extant Tamil work can be dated to the 4th or 3rd century B.C. though there are critics who will date that work to at least six centuries later.

There are two major clues for the determination of the age of Sangam in general. The *Silappadikaram* probably the earliest epic in Tamil refers to one *Kayavahu* (evidently Gajurahu) in two places as attended the consecration ceremony of the idol of Kannagi in a

temple built by Senguttuvan Cheran. We hear of two Gajabahas in the Mahavamsa which gives a credible and dependable account of the political history of Ceylon of ancient times. The Gajabahu who visited India as mentioned in the *Silappadikaram* could have been only the first Gajabahu. According to Geiger, 'his reign has been fixed at A.D. 173-191'. This would mean that Senguttuvan ruled in the fourth quarter of the 2nd century A.D. This synchronism suggested by an early Tamil literary work - a kind of political synchronism rather unusual in Indian sources is called the sheet-anchor of Sangam chronology.

The whole body of Tamil Sangam literature accepted by all as such i.e. Ptolemy and the anonymous author of the Periplus refer to Damirike in terms which clearly echo the references in the *Pattinappalai* etc. This will naturally fix the age of the Sangam to that of these classical writers which is the first two or three centuries of the Christian era. The Sangam literature itself being the most considerable source for the history of the age, attempts have been made to fix internal chronology of that literature, but, generally with markedly different results. We do not lack conservative scholars who generally equate virtue with antiquity and therefore try to ascribe as high an antiquity to early Tamil literature as their imagination permits. There are others who would ascribe very late dates even to genuinely ancient texts on supposedly scientific bases like linguistics, internal criticism etc., e.g. the *Tolkappiyam* which has clearly built into it, a certain amount of extraneous material must be capable of being divided into the original core and the interpolation. The earliest phase of the existing Sangam literature cannot be older than the *Tolkappiyam*.

The Iraiyanar *Ahapporul* ascription of a very early date to the *Tolkappiyam* is therefore to be accepted. The narrowest definition of Sangam literature is to mean only some of the eight anthologies and a few of the Ten Tens and grudgingly show the *Tirukkural* to belong to the Sangam age. The most liberal view of the content of this literature is to include the *Ettutogai*, the Ten Tens, the Eighteen Kilkanakku works and the two epics. The eight anthologies are surely not of the same age not only because the anthologies themselves were made in different times but the individual verses in these anthologies were necessarily written at different times by different poets as the colophons reveal. These colophons give the names of writers of these verses, as well as the chieftains they were addressed to. This in a way provides a certain chronological framework which does not seem to exceed two or three centuries at most.

In the Satavahana period which started with the death of Asoka, there was a spurt of

expansionism in the Deccan and since the days of Simuka the Satavahana Empire tried to expand eastward and southward. These movements were directed against Kalinga, in the east and Tamizhagam in the south. The proof for the eastward expansion is in the *Hathigumpha inscription* of Kharavela. Kharavela boasts in that inscription that he resisted and threw back Satakarni's eastern thrust. The southern expansionism has no positive proof, but can easily be guessed. If there be any connection between the Satavahana court and the Dravidian country, Satavahana cultural expansionism at least is assured. This may generally indicate Satavahana interest in the Tamil country. The *Silappadikaram* in its Vanjikkandam makes Cheran Senguttuvan claim the Nuruvar Kannar of the Deccan as his friends and allies. It is stated that, it was with the help of these allies that Senguttuvan overwhelmed and defeated certain North Indian princes on the banks of the Ganges. An interesting and plausible guess is that the Nuruvar Kannar is Satakarnis. If this equation be accepted Senguttuvan who ruled in the fourth quarter of the 2nd century A.D. should have been a contemporary of a Satakarni, probably Yajnasri Satakarni.

Anyhow this friendship between the Satakarnis and Cheran Senguttuvan seems to have materialized after a long period of hostility. It is but natural to expect that the Satavahanas should have tried to invade and occupy parts of Northern Tamizhagam especially in the Karnataka region. These attempts would have been resisted by the Tamil chieftains in the north. These chieftains ruling parts of the Kongu country were at least theoretically subordinates of the Chera king. These clashes can be deemed to be the second phase of northern incursions into the Tamil country the first being Bindusara's invasion.

The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela praises his own valour and achievements and includes among the latter the destruction of a confederacy of Tamil powers which according to him was formed 115 years before the inscription. It is reasonable, to suppose that Kharavela ruled Kalinga in the first half of the 2nd century B.C. If it be so, we can suppose that the inscription was drawn up in 175 B.C., If the confederacy was 113 years old in c.175 B.C. it must have been formed in 288 B.C. which falls within the reign of Bindusara. So, our earliest assumption that, it was Bindusara who attempted an invasion of the extreme south turns out to be correct. Thus, we see the north-south political relationship in historical times started with a Mauryan invasion in 288 B.C. followed by a Satavahana Tamil conflict, perhaps in the last quarter of the 3rd century B.C. or early in the first quarter of the 2nd century B.C. again followed

by a Kalinga Tamil conflict ending in the destruction of the confederacy.

The political history of the Tamils extends from the 3rd century B.C. (formation of the Tamil confederacy) to the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. (Ugrapperuvaludi) which we consider is the true Sangam period.

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. Polonnaruwa 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.

Sangam: Cholas

The Chola country, also known as Punal nadu, was bound by the northern and southern Vellalars. Its capital was Urayur, Puhar or Kaveripatnam being an alternative royal residence and chief port. They adopted the tiger as their crest and the same animal figured on their banner also. Their origins are lost in pre-history. The earliest Chola kings are those mentioned in the Sangam literature. The Cholas were looked upon as having descended from the Sun. The earliest kings - Sembian, Kakantan, Karaiadal-kondavan and Manu Nithi Cholan-seem to be mythical. The earliest reference to Chola is found in the Edicts of Asoka. *Milindapanha*, *Periplus* and *Mahavamsa* also mention the Cholas. Karikala: Karikala was the greatest ruler of this dynasty.

He was the son of Ilanjecenni, the first significant ruler of the Sangam Cholas. Karikalan means the 'Black leg' man with the charred leg' and the name perpetuated the memory of a fire-accident in the early years of his life. He ascended the throne as a young boy and was greatly assisted by his uncle Irumbidartalai, in the administration of the state Karikala's first battle and his foremost achievement was the defeat of the Cherra-Pandya confederates, backed up by as many as eleven chieftains at Venni. Venni has been identified with Koil Venni, a village near Tanjore.

Though the causes of the battle were not known it proved to be a turning point in

Karikala's life. As a result of this victory he assumed the over lordship among the 'three crowned monarchs' of the Tamil land. Unable to bear the disgrace the Chera king committed suicide by *Vadakkirutal* (facing north).

After the battle of Venni, Karikala defeated a confederacy of nine minor chieftains in a battle at Vakaipparandalai. Karikala had a powerful navy and conquered Ceylon. Having established his rule in Ceylon he brought a large number of prisoners of war. He is said to have defeated the Oliyars. There is no historical basis for the story of his expedition to the Himalayas. His victories have been celebrated by poets, but his kingdom does not seem to have extended much beyond the Kaveri delta. Of Karikal's personal life we hear next to nothing. He had two sons and a daughter, Adimandi. She was married to a Chera prince. He espoused the cause of Brahmanism and had a lamented death. Successors of Karikala: After the demise of Karikala, the history of the Cholas becomes confused and no connected history is available owing to a succession dispute between the Puhar and Uraiur branches of the royal family. The succession dispute between Nedunkilli and Nalankilli resulted in the battle of Kariyaru in which Nedunkilli was killed. Nalankilli, the hero of Kariyaru, fought on behalf of his brother Killivalavan. Killivalavan, both strong and generous, ruled with Uraiur as his capital.

He was celebrated by many poets and was himself a great poet. He married a Naga princess by name Pilivalai. Another famous king of the time was Kopperunjolan who also ruled from Uraiur. Like Killivalavan, he was also a poet. It seems that he was once defeated by the Chera king, Ilancheral Irumporai. Koccenganan, also known as Senganan, was the last great among the early Cholas. Like Karikala, he was another hero of legend. He is credited with a victory over Kanaikkal Irumporai. He defeated and made captive the Chera king Kanaikkal Irumporai in the battle of Kalumalam. He was an ardent saivite. His fame rests mainly on his construction of about seventy Siva temples. According to *Periyapuranam*, he was one among the Sixty three Saiva Nayanmars.

Grand Anicut

- Karikala fought in other battles after the battle of Venni. In the battle of Vakaipparandalai, he defeated a confederacy of nine minor chieftains.
- He was one of the few Tamil kings to rule over the entire island of Ceylon (modern Srilanka).
- Ceylon was ruled by the Sinhalese kingdom at the time.

- After defeating the Sinhalese, he decided to build an Anicut along the banks of the Kaveri River. He built Anicut with the help of Sinhalese war prisoners.
- They are used to transport massive blocks of rock from the mountains to the Kaveri River's bank.
- The Grand Anicut is now known as the Kallanai dam, an ancient dam built across the Kaveri River in Trichy district, Tamil Nadu.
- It is regarded as one of the world's oldest water diversion or water regulator structures that is still in use.
- Karikala Chola will be remembered for his efforts to divert river water to agricultural fields for irrigation.

Perur Patteeswarar Temple

- ❖ Karikala returned to Tamil land after defeating the Northern kingdoms of Vatsa, Magadha, and Avantika, and worshipped Lord Shiva at the Perur Pateeswarar Temple on the banks of the river Noyyal.
- ❖ Karikala was a devout follower of Lord Shiva. He is said to have performed the temple's Kumbhabhishekam (sanctification ritual) using a hundred golden vessels.
- ❖ Kachiyappa Munivar wrote a famous Tamil text called Perur Puranam about the temple's origins.

Karikala Chola was a great ruler of the Chola dynasty. He ruled during the Sangam period as an early Chola king. Karikala's story weaves together legend and anecdotal information from Sangam literature. Karikala's reign has left no authentic records in history. The only sources we had were the numerous references in Sangam poetry. The existing Sangam literature has been difficult to date with any degree of certainty, casting doubt on the time period.

Cheran Senguttuvan

- ❖ Cheran Senguttuvan was a popular king in the line of Chera rulers from the Sangam Age.
- ❖ Two important Sangam Age literary works, 'Padirupattu' and 'Ahananuru,' contain a wealth of information about him.
- ❖ Cheran's military exploits are also detailed in the Tamil epic 'Silappadikaram.'
- ❖ According to this work, he led an expedition to the Himalayan Mountains, defeated his enemies across the Ganges, and raised the Chera flag on the Himalayas.

- ❖ In the fifth decade of Patitruvattu of the Ettutokai anthology, Paranar eulogises the kuttuvan.
- ❖ Purananuru 343 refers to Cenkuttuvan's hill and sea products, primarily pearls, as well as Yavana gold brought ashore by boats.
- ❖ He apparently also brought back stones from there and built a temple in Kannagi's honour.

Cheran Senguttuvan – Reign

- ❖ Senguttuvan, the great Chera king, ruled his kingdom during the 2nd century AD and was a popular king during the ancient period.
- ❖ He was the great king Cheralathan's son.
- ❖ During his reign, his kingdom was expanded all the way to Kerala, and due to his great valour, the kings in his neighbouring kingdom showed him proper respect and moved with him in a friendly manner.
- ❖ He ruled his empire for more than 50 years and was also the ruler of modern-day Coimbatore.
- ❖ His famous brother, Ilanko Adigal, had become a Jain monk and was the author of Silappatikaram.
- ❖ Silappatikaram, an ancient Tamil work, mentions his accomplishments.
- ❖ Senguttuvan had established business in foreign countries and conducted his trade via ships.
- ❖ Everyone in this world praised Senguttuvan, and his name and fame spread throughout the world.
- ❖ Senguttuvan was a noble king who established many food and resting places throughout his kingdom to alleviate the hunger of tired travellers.

Cheran Senguttuvan - Military Conquests

- The Kadambas, aided by the Yavanas (possibly Greek or Roman mariners), launched a sea attack on the Kuttuvan, but the Cera ruler destroyed their fleet.
- He is said to have defeated the Kongu people as well as the warrior Mokur Mannan.
- Chera territory included Kollimalai near Karur Vanci in the east and Tondi and Mantai on the western coast during his reign (Kerala).
- Kerala's Kuttanad is named after him.

- Senguttavan's military achievements are described, albeit exaggeratedly, in the mediaeval Tamil epic poem Silappatikaram.
- Cheran Senguttuvan warriors used bull-hide shields to protect themselves from enemy darts.
- Cheran Senguttuvan successfully intervened in the Cola territory succession dispute and installed his relative (brother-in-law) Killi on the Chola throne.).
- The Cheran Senguttuvan's arch enemies are described as the Kadambas. The kuttuvan defeated them in the battle of Idumbil, Valayur (Viyalur).
- The "fort" of Kotukur, where the Kadamba warriors had taken refuge, was stormed.
- Later, the Kadambas (aided by the Yavanas) launched a sea attack on Kuttuvan, but the Cera ruler destroyed their fleet.

Cheran Senguttuvan and Silappatikaram

1. Silappatikaram is traditionally attributed to prince Ilanko Atikal (literally the Junior Prince), who appears in the work as Cheran Senguttuvan's younger brother.
2. The third section of Silappatikaram (the Vanci Kantham) is about Cheran Senguttuvan's expedition to the Himalayas to bring the virakkallu for an idol of Kannaki/Pattini.
3. The royal astrologer at the court of Chera king predicted that (the younger prince) Ilanko would succeed the king, which enraged the elder prince Senguttuvan, according to the patikam of Silappatikaram.
4. Ilanko immediately chose to renounce his throne claims and live the life of a Jain ascetic.
5. He moved to a monastery on the outskirts of Vanci and wrote the epic Silappatikaram.

Senguttuvan, the great Chera king, ruled his kingdom in the 2nd century AD and was a popular ruler at the time. Chera, also known as Katal Pirakottiya Vel Kezhu Kuttuvan in early historic South India and Kerala, was the most famous ruler of the Chera dynasty. 'Padirupattu' and 'Ahananuru', two important Sangam Age literary works contain a wealth of information about him. The Tamil epic 'Silappatikaram' also details Cheran's military exploits.

Pandya Nedunchezian

Nedunchadaiyan Paranthagan (765-790 AD)

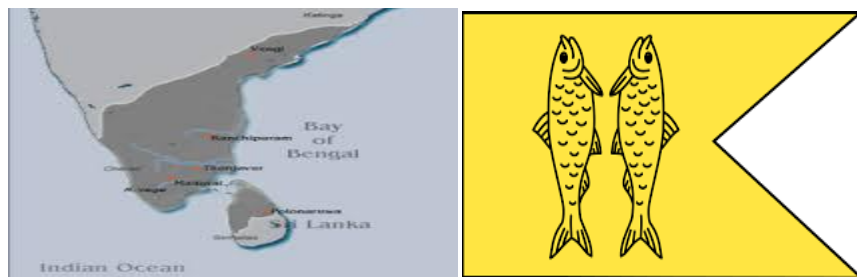
He was a very powerful King who annexed more territories like the earlier kings.

- ❖ He defeated the Pallava King Nandivarman at Pennadagam and restored control.

- ❖ He fought with the Kongu kings and annexed Kongu nadu.
- ❖ He won the Venad territory and brought in a lot of plundered wealth into Pandya Kingdom.
- ❖ He also defeated the Mutharaiyar and Velir Chieftain Aai.
- ❖ Nedunchadaiyan Paranthagan was a Vaishnavite and he is rated as the most powerful Pandya King who annexed more territories during his rule to the Pandya Kingdom.
- ❖ He built a Vaishnavite Temple at Kongu Nadu.
- ❖ He Built a Temple in Anamalai for Vishnu.
- ❖ He donated to Vaishnavite temples and patronized them.

In the history of humankind, the first crowned monarch ever may have been the Pandya monarch. Purana depicts Lord Shiva as one of the Pandyas, and is often referred as *Thenaadudaiya Sivane*, meaning Lord Shiva the possessor of the southern country. Legend says the first Tamil Sangam was patronized by the Pandya Monarchs at the lost continent of the Tamil in the Indian Ocean. The first Sangam period corresponds to 10 000 BC to 5000 BC and was continuously patronized by the successive Pandya kings. Lord Shiva himself was seated as one of the first Tamil Sangam scholars, and referred to as *Thirupuram Eretha Virisadai Kadavul* meaning “Scattered Braided God” who had burned the three confluences. You will find literary evidence to support this claim in Silapathikaram and in Iraiyanar Kalaviyal. Both were written by Ilango Adigal and Nakkeerar respectively.

Legendary Pandya Genealogy



In Pandya genealogy, Thalaiyaalanganathu Seruvendra Pandyan Nedunchelzhian appeared in 200 to 400 BC and ruled the ancient Tamil country from Madurai. He is considered one of the greatest Pandya kings in history. Mysteriously, King Pandya I and King Pandya II appear in Greek History as the contemporary of Thalaiyaalanganathu Seruvendra Pandyan Nedunchelzhian. He is also considered one of the most important kings in Pandya genealogy, often riddled with both mystery and history.

The word *Pandya* in Tamil means “very ancient” and denotes the time period of prehistory similar to the word *paleo* in English, which has its root in Greek. The Greek root for “paleo” is *Palaio*, which I firmly believe is a loan word from Tamil - *Palaia* means old/ancient in ordinary terms, whereas the word *Pandya* is a synonym and poetically a better word to denote pre-history. *Pandya* also means several other things, mostly related to prehistoric milestones achieved by Tamil civilization. It denotes the bull (as the first race to domesticate the wild bull). Lord Shiva is often referred to as a *Pandyan* and associated with the bull.

Agriculture is also denoted as *Pandyam/Paandithuvam* in the ancient Tamil world. The cart and wagon is called *Paandi* and become *Vandi* later on. Mechanized agricultural practice was a *Pandya* invention. *Pandyas* were the first *pandits* (scholars). The *Pandu* and *Pandavas* of *Mahabharata* share the same legendary *Pandya* genealogy. Some historians claim the *Panyu* people of the Chinese province of *Guangzhou* have a historical and cultural relationship with the *Pandyas*.

Pandian Nedunchezhan II



In *Pandya* genealogy, at least three different *Nedunchezhan* seem to have appeared at different times. He who conquered the enmity at *Thalaiyaalanganam* is noted as *Nedunchelzhan II* by most historians, while others call him *Nedunchelzhan III*. He lost his parents at a very young age and become the crowned king of the *Pandya* Kingdom at the age of 15. He appears to have been tall and is named as *Nedunchelzhan*, meaning *The Enhanced*, who appears tall. He ruled the *Pandya* kingdom from *Madurai*, the capital city, and his chief trading port was *Korkai*,

likely modern day Thoothukudi. The chief commodity Nedunchelzhian traded with the Chinese to the East and Romans and Athenians to the West was sea conch pearls. The other commodities he traded were cotton, ivory, pepper and sandel. In return, he received gold and gems.

His court was adorned with the Chief Bard Maangudi Maruthanaar, who sung his valor after his victory at the Thalaiyaalangaanam. Considering the numerous battles he fought, there is compelling reason to believe that he had indeed wanted to control maritime trade and its commodities. This notion is convincing to most Pandya historians and anthropologists alike.

Throughout his career, he engaged in numerous battles and emerged a victor. At least twenty Bards from the Sangam period have sung his valor. The most famous ones are the Chief Bard Mangudi Maruthan, Nakeerar and Paranar. He recorded a poem in the Sangam Tamil collections, and it is listed in Agananooru. It is classified under Venchinam Mozhithal meaning “Vociferate to Resolve”.

His poem expresses his resolve to destroy his enemies who had made fun of his ascendancy to the crown at an early age due to his parent’s early demise. He expressed in his poem that, if he had not destroyed his enemies and their pride, let the chief Bard Mangudi Maruthanaar abstain from singing about him, Let the citizen of my country reprimand me, also let the incurable poverty reach me so as not able to give those who seeks him and those who patronize him will dwell in to extreme insecurity. This is the way he vocalized his resolve to quell his enemies. It reflects his Tamil ethical affinity, called *Aram*.

Many historians and anthropologists, including myself, have engaged in debates and speculation about the behavior of Nedunchelzhian. One of the two main reasons could be his ascendancy to the throne at a young age. All the leaders surrounding his country questioned his authority and ability to run the kingdom. This leads to a compelling reason for Nedunchezhan to emerge as a perpetual war leader to silence enemy kings. This is very clearly explained in his “Vociferate to Resolve” poem compiled under Agananooru (Number 72). This poem very clearly expresses his concern for both scholars and citizens who had the right to criticize his actions if deemed unjust.

The second reason for his warring behavior could be to control the maritime trading commodities complexes with the Pandiya hereditary obligation of the southern concourse protection (a Pandya family destiny). It is referred as Thenpula Kaaval in Tamil literature, and it

is the duty of the Pandya king to ensure the safety of the southern concourse from foreign invasion.

Social and Political Aspects of the Pandya Kingdom

There are references to three powerful kingdoms in the Sangam works, viz. the Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas. Their innumerable vassals added to their power and glory. The achievements of the kings were praised by the poets and many kinds of myths and legends were associated with one another to praise their patrons who actually did not have the position of the provincial governors of the Mauryas or the Guptas. It is difficult to say which out of the three kingdoms mentioned above was the earliest. It may be presumed that their origin was not later than the third century BC.

The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras made up the traditional four divisions of society that existed under the Pandyas. Other occupations-based communities, such as Vellala, Ayar, Idaiyar, etc., also existed. The caste system was flexible, though.

- People were often regarded according to their profession rather than their caste.
- Even though there were caste differences and political anarchy throughout the Pandyan era, the populace felt united.
- Silk clothing was popular among the wealthy—the average person dressed in cotton. Rich individuals also enjoyed decorating themselves with numerous gems and accessories.
- The Pandyan Kings had shown a great deal of interest in Tamil. Madurai, the capital of Pandyas, remained the epicenter of Tamil literature.
- Beautiful Tamil poetry was written by the Vaishnavite saints Nammaazhwar, Periyaazhwar, and Andal in adoration of Lord Vishnu.
- The Pandyan kings had shown a particular interest in enhancing education. Both the temples and the Mutts played a significant role in education. Grants of land and other resources were made to advance literacy and education.
- Women were typically treated as equal to males in the Pandyan empire. Along with men, they were permitted to own property and participate in public events. Royal family ladies had better possibilities to further their education. During this time, the illustrious Vaishnavite Alwar, Andal, resided in the Pandyan Empire and earned fame.

- Married women typically focused more on taking care of their home and kids. The men folk had also received assistance from them for farm work.

Economy and Trade in the Pandya Kingdom

Agriculture was the main occupation in this Age. Rice was mostly grown by the people. Some other crops grown included ragi, sugarcane, cotton, pepper, ginger, turmeric and different fruits. Handicrafts were famous during this Age which included making of ornaments such as beads, stones and ivory, metal works and carpentry, weaving, stones and ivory. These products were in great demand as trade both internal and external was flourishing well in the Sangam Age. Merchants carried the goods on carts and on animals back and forth. However, internal trade was conducted through the barter system.

- ❖ The Pandya kingdom's economy was based on agriculture, trade, and industry.
- ❖ Agriculture was a significant component. Rice, millet, sugarcane, cotton, fruits, and vegetables were the main agricultural products.
- ❖ The Pandya kingdom served as a major trading center. It established trade relations with countries like Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and China.
- ❖ The kingdom exported goods such as pearls, spices, textiles, and ivory. It imported items like gold, silver, horses, and silk.
- ❖ The Pandya kingdom had a thriving industry. It specialized in the production of textiles, pottery, metalware, and shipbuilding.
- ❖ Trade in the Pandya kingdom primarily took place through sea routes. It utilized ports such as Korkai, Kayalpattinam, and Manigramam.
- ❖ The trade activities of the Pandya kingdom played a crucial role in its economy. It generated wealth and contributed to an improved standard of living for its people.

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 Nallaiappar 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.

Kalabhras

The Third Century reign from 250CE to 690CE is also called as the Interregnum. It is interpreted as the interval when the normal administration or government is suspended and the period falls in between two successive reigns or regimes. Though branded by a few as a 'Black Age', few other historians certainly uphold the rule as a stable rule and the zenith period for the spread of Jainism and the wider usage of Prakrit language in Tamil Nadu.

Kalabhras' Aggression

Kalabhras are depicted in the history as the invaders from Karnataka, who ruled entire Tamil Nadu, with Kaveripattinam as their capital. Kalabhras displaced the ancient Chola, Pandya and Chera dynasties, who by virtue of lack of strong successors had to submit to the force. Traditional powers in Tamil Nadu surrendered to the Kalabhra Authority. Kalabhras subdued powers of Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras – bought them under a common authority. Their flag incorporated all the three insignia of Chera, Chola and Pandya.

The Duration of the Rule of Kalabhra Dynasty

The reign of Kalabhras is claimed to be between 3rd and the 7th century C.E. The Kalabhras were at their peak for nearly 75 years in the 7th century CE. This resulted the Kalabhra Dynasty. Though historians do express their difference of opinions in the Kalabhra rule and the duration, it is widely accepted by a majority of the historians that the rule lasted for Third centuries. Except a few sources, there are no historical evidences of sources establishing the factual positions of the history.

The capture of Thondai Nadu (Thondai Mandalam)

Driven out of their own native country by the Kadamba King, the earliest Kalabhra Pulli made an exit from Northern Venkata Hills towards Thondai Nadu, where Pallavas were the rulers. During the two invasions, Kalabhras could not succeed due to the strong Pallava King Pappadevan and also during the Rule of Pallava King Sivaskanda Varman. Due to the political uncertainties in the Thondai Nadu, Kalabhras captured Thondai Nadu in the 3rd and 4th century CE. This king is mentioned as Kuutruva Nayanaar in Thiruthonda thogai, as published in Periya Puranam.

Sources on Kalabhras Rule

There are no artefacts or monuments or inscriptions that are found to have been left by the Kalabhras dynasty. Scattered informations are available in certain Buddhist and Jain Literature which are the sole sources of information on Kalabhra rule. By design, they did not leave any artefacts or monuments as in the case of the other dynasties. According to this literature, Achyuta Vikranta of Kalavr Kula (Kalabras ruler) kept many Chola, Chera, Pandyas kings imprisoned. These prisoner kings were ordered to compose Navalar Charithai in praise of Kalabras. Text from early Cholas mentions about King Achyuta Vikranta of the Kalabharakula, who ruled the Chola country from Kaveripumpattinam. He followed Buddhism. The Karnataka inscription refers to Kali Deva and Velvikudi grant refers to Kali arasan (meaning wicked king of Kalabras)

a. Literary Sources

1. According to Poygai Alvar, the Vengadam hill was the habitat of elephants, in which the 'Kuravars' or 'Kurbas' lived. He observes that, the Tamil term 'Kuravar' used by the early Alvars is corruption of 'Kuraba', who were residents of this area and also of Kurnool, Mysore, Salem, Coimbatore and the Nilgiris. He mentions the names of Kurubalakota, Kurubalpatti, Kuruba Nagalapuram, Kurumba Palayam, Kurumbapatti, Kurumbharhalli etc. in various areas. He says Kurabas or Kuravar were a verile people, who were in possession of Tirupathi Hills and surrounding area before Pallavas conquered it. Kalabhras are claimed to be from Karnataka.

2. Tamil Navalar Charithai poems number 154-157 (four) mention about Kalabhras. The note further informs that Achutha Kalappaalan, Kalabhra King, who ruled from Nandi Hills was ruling the entire Tamil Nadu from the Chola Country. This note further confirms that Chera, Chola and Pandya kings were subordinated to Kalabhras under a single rule.

3. Kootruva Nayanar mentioned in the Periya Puranam belongs to Kalabhras Tribe. Being one of the 63 Nayanmars he is mentioned as Kalappaalan by Nambiyandaar Nambi.

4. In the 5th Century Buddadattar, a Tamil Buddhist wrote a book called Vinayavinichayam in the language of Pali. Achyuta Vikrantan, Kalabhra King, who ruled from the Chola Kingdom, is praised in this book as Kalabagulanandan. Aganaanuuru and kalladam literature too mentions about Kalabhras.

5. Buddadatar composed another literary work called Abidammavataram, when Vikranthan (kalabhra) was very popular.

b. Grants and Inscriptions

1. Velvikkudi grants (of Pandya King Parandaga Nedunjadayan) mention and confirm the defeat of Kalabhras at the hands of Kadungon who is also called as Maa Kadungon.

2. Kuram grants (of King Parameswarar I) have confirmed the victory of Kalabhras by the Pallavas. Simha Vishnu retrieved Chola Country from the Kalabhras.

3. In the Vaikunda Perumal Inscriptions at Kanchi, it is shown that one Mutharaiyan attended the Coronation Ceremony of Pallava King Nandi Varma Pallava. Some historians believe that Muttaraiyar (Mudirajas) are the descendants of Kalabhras, who lived in the uplands of Karnataka (Hampi Region), and Tirupati (Vengadam) Hills. The areas of Hampi and Tirupati hills were part of Dandakaaranya in Deccan India.

4. Senthalaithun Inscriptions describe one Big Bidugu Mutharaiyan KalvarKalvan is from the Kalabhras.

5. Thirupugalur Inscriptions mention one Nerkunram Kilar, a Kalabhra King.

6. Kotra Mangalam and Vinayadithya's Hariharar grants refer to Kalabhras

7. Kalabhras, karabhras. Kurabhras, kurabaskurabars, kuravarskurubas kurubas kurubas

8. Kurubas are a major community in Karnataka, who are also present in large number in western districts of Tamil Nadu. The community speaks Kannada dialect.

Historians' Views on the Kalabhra's origin

Spread of Jainism and Buddhism in Tamilagam

The Kalabhras were both Jains and Buddhists in their religious practices. Early Kalabhras were Buddhist and later Kalabhras were Jains who made Kanchi centre of Buddhism and Madurai centre of Jainism. Buddhist viharas and Jain monasteries were built in large numbers. The spread of Jainism and Buddhism, into Tamil Nadu was more spelt, after the invasion of Kalabhras from Karnataka which has its origin and long history there.

Historians portray Kalabhras rule as a dark period in the history of Thamizhagam this could be due to the fact that Jain culture was a challenge to the Brahmin culture during Kalabra era. Buddhism also grew in Kalabhras era from Kanchi, thereby suppressing the Brahmins and the spread of Brahminism. Besides, Brahmins were reduced in their positions and possessions. Grants were not continued as before. During Chera, Chola and Pandya reign, in the age of Brahmanism, the kings used to grant vast lands to the Brahmins of the temples.

The Brahmins became rich and often mistreated the people belonging to lower caste. This was the main reason for the Kalabhras to revolt and attack the Brahmins, dethrone the king and

establish their own rule. When they came into power they executed Brahmins on large scale, and put ban on custom of granting lands to the Brahmins, collection of taxes from villages to run the temple affairs. The Kalabhras were called 'Evil people' by the citizens of Chola, Pandyan kingdoms because of their barbaric attitude towards Brahmins and nobles of Royal family.

Legacy of the Kalabhras

- Best of the legacy left by Kalabhras could be the streams of Jainism and
- Buddhism in the religious framework.
- Kalabhras also established the stability in their rule and dispelled the instability in the governance as well as the internal chaos and intolerance.
- The administrative system of Kalabhras also displays a sense of consistency and a definite system of governance.
- Kalabhras' pattern of administration was identical and followed in the same way throughout the Kalabhras period.
- During their administration, there was not much development in society, but few steps of development were seen under them in few fields of society, including Literature and Administration.
- For administration purpose, the country was divided into large provinces, namely Naadu, Mangalams/Kurams, Urs.
- Literature growth is also attributed to them as the immortal great works in Tamil were written in Kalabhras Era.
- The three Kings of Chera, Chola and Pandya were brought under a single umbrella of command and a common flag was adopted keeping the three insignias together.
- Prakrit, a northern language was widely used in Tamil Nadu and benefitted in general.
- Trade and Commerce, Maritime activities were also thriving during Kalabhras' reign.
- Port City was filled with activities and development.

Literature

Jaina Sangam founded by Kalabhras encouraged the growth of Tamil literature. The immortal great works of Kalabhras age include: Kural, Silapadigaram and Manimegalai. The authors of these classics were themselves Jains and Buddhists. Downfall of Kalabhras - The Kalabhras kept on invading territories belonging to the Cheras Cholas, Pallavas. To put an end to this anarchy, the three kingdoms of South Tamil region came together. King Simhavishnu son of

Simhavarman II, the Pallava king defeated the Kalabhras. Similarly, Pandyan king Kadungon ended the Kalabhra rule in a coalition with Pallava Simhavishnu. He is credited for the triumph of Brahmanism over the evil Kalabhras. The Chola Pallava and Pandyas regained their powers in South India. Kalabhras were displaced in the 7th Century CE by the revival of Pandya and Pallava Powers in Tamil Nadu.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the historicity of the sangam age and the challenges faced by historians in reconstructing this period.
.....
2. Analyze the political structure of the cheras during the sangam age, with a focus on the reign of senguttuvan.
.....
3. Discuss the socio-economic and cultural advancements associated with the pandyas and their interactions with other dynasties.
.....
4. Examine the political, social, and economic aspects of the sangam age, emphasizing the nature of the polity, societal structure, and economic activities.
.....
5. Analyze the kalabhara interregnum and its impact on the political and cultural landscape of Tamil nadu.
.....
6. Discuss how the political, social, and economic developments of sangam period shaped the cultural identity of the region.
.....

UNIT - III

The Pallavas – Origin: Early Pallavas – Later Pallavas – Political, Social and Economic Conditions – Growth of Literature and Education – Art and Architecture – Sculpture – Paintings & Fine arts – Early Bakthi Movement - The First Pandyan Empire – Sources – Triangular conflict between Pallavas, Pandyas and Western Chalukyas – Administration – Art and Architecture

Objective

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

Introduction

The decline of the Kalabhra power in the middle of the sixth century heralded the beginning of a new wave of classical civilization in the history of the Tamils. That was the age of the Pallavas. Their kingdom was better known as Tondaimandalam with Kanchi as their metropolis. Their boundaries extended from Nellore in the north to Cauvery in the South. They played a predominant role in the history and culture of the South India. Their period of reign was between the 3rd and 8th centuries A.D.

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

- Foreign origin and
- Indigenous origin. The original habitat of the Pallavas is chief among the unsettled problems in our history.

A. 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.

Simhavishnu (575 - 590 CE)

Simhavishnu was the first ruler of this line. Simhavishnu defeated the Kalabhras and laid foundation for the establishment of the “Age of the Imperial Pallavas”. He also defeated the rulers of Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdoms. He was the master of the entire region between the Krishna and the Kaveri. He was a worshiper of Vishnu and had the title Avanishimha (lion of the earth). According to a literary tradition, great poet Bharavi visited his court.

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, Mehdnravadi, 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 Sittannaval reveal the development of the art of dancing. The music inscription at Kudimiyanmalai is ascribed to him and he is regarded as an expert in music. 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 Mattavilasaprahasana and Bhagavadajjuklyu,.

Narasimhavarman I (A.D.630 - 655)

Narasimhavarman ascended the throne, after the death of his father Mahendravarman 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*. (iii) **Mahendravarman 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 (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 (A.D.680-700)

Narasimhavarman II was commonly known as Rajasimha. His period is noted for peace characterized by much attention to art. During this period, the traditional Pallava-Chalukya conflict seems 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 Paramesvaravarman II. It seems that he ruled for ten years and was killed in the Pallava-Chalukya conflict. After the death of Paramesvaravarman 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)

Dantivarman (C.A.D.776 - 825) was the son of Nandivarman II by the Rashtrakuta Prince Reva. In spite 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 title "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 Aparajitha, his step brother. To obtain the Pallava throne, Aparajita allied with the Ganga ruler Prithivipati I and the Chola Aditya. Nirupatunga 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 Nirupatunga 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.

Summary

At the end of the 6th century A.D., the Kalabhra rulers were overpowered by the Pallava rulers of the Tamil country. During the rule of the Pallava kings, namely, Simha Vishnu, Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I, Mahendravarman II, Parameswaravarman; Narashimavarman II, Parameswaravarman II, Nandivarman Pallavamallan, Nandivarman Nandivarman III and others who ruled till 909 A.D. the Tamil Country remained powerful.

Later Pallavas

The Pallava rule had witnessed a drastic change in the social and economic life of the people. The emergence of the Bakthi Movement had significantly changed their way of life. It was further stimulated by the temple-building activity of the Pallava kings. There was also a remarkable growth of economy during this period. In general, there was a tremendous change in the society and culture during the Pallava rule. The Pallava rule had witnessed a drastic change in the social and economic life of the people. The emergence of the Bakthi Movement had significantly changed their way of life. It was further stimulated by the temple-building activity of the Pallava kings. There was also a remarkable growth of economy during this period. In general, there was a tremendous change in the society and culture during the Pallava rule. The Pallava rule had witnessed a drastic change in the social and economic life of the people.

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Political Condition

The Pallavas had followed the system of monarchy. The king was the head of the kingdom. Hereditary succession to the throne had been in practice. Normally, the eldest son would be the next ruler. The Pallava kings had considered themselves as the representatives of God. They had assumed many titles like Maharaja, Maharajathi Raja and Dharma Rajathiraja. These titles indicate the imperial power of the Pallava kings. The Pallava kings had also claimed a divine origin. Council of Ministers There was an efficient Council of Ministers in the Pallava kingdom. The Ministers were known as Amatyas. They were given titles such as Uthamaseelan, Brahmarajan and Peraraiyan. The Minister carried out the orders of the king. They had also rendered their co-operation and service to the king in all matters of administration. Besides the Council of Ministers, there were many officials to look after each department of the Pallava administration.

The society under the Pallavas was chiefly divided into four, namely, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras. Besides the four-fold division, there were also other sub castes in the society based on their occupation. The Brahmins occupied the first place in the society. They were the learned and the most respected in the society. They had lived in a separate place called Agraharam. They had recited Vedas and performed pooja in the temples. The Pallava kings had made extensive land grants to them. These land grants were known as Brahmadeyas. The

Brahmins helped the kings in performing sacrifices. They had also enjoyed higher position in the government. The society under the Pailavas was chiefly divided into four, namely, Brahmins, Kshatryas, Vaisyas and Sudras. Besides the four-fold division, there were also other sub castes in the society based on their occupation.

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Status of women

The women from royal and rich families had enjoyed high status in the society. They were also given property rights. They remained pious and religious and granted liberal donations to the temples and Brahmins. Chastity was their noble virtue. However, other women in the middle and lower strata of the society had to work hard to earn their livelihood. They indulged in spinning, weaving and other similar works. There were also separate dancing girls in the society.

They were employed in the temples because of their talent in music and dance.

Food, Dress and Ornaments

Rice was the staple food of the people during the Pallava period. They had also consumed milk, ghee, and curd. Generally, people wore simple dress made of cotton. The rich people were fond of wearing silk garments. The sculptures of this period indicate several types of ornaments used by the people. They include earrings, bangles, necklaces and anklets.

Education

Much importance was given to the Sanskrit education during the Pallava period. The Mutts had remained as important educational centers. The kings and nobles made land grants to them. The temples had also functioned as educational centers. The Buddhist Kadigai in Kanchipuram was a famous educational centre. The Chinese traveler Hiuen-Tsang stayed there and studied. Another Buddhist scholar Dharmapala was also an alumnus of the Kanchi Kadigai. The Jain pallis had also been functioning in Kanchi. Literature, Grammar, Astrology, Medicine and Painting were some of the important subjects taught in these institutions

Economic Life in Pallavas

The Pallava rule had witnessed a drastic change in the social and economic life of the people. The emergence of the Bakthi Movement had significantly changed their way of life. It was further stimulated by the temple-building activity of the Pallava kings. There was also a remarkable growth of economy during this period. In general, there was a tremendous change in the society and culture during the Pallava rule. The creation of the Brahmadeya villages had started during the Pallava period. The Brahmins began to settle in these villages and they were exempted from paying taxes. The lands denoted to the temples were called as Devadhan. The number of villages had increased during the Pallava rule. Arid lands were reclaimed and cultivated. The Pallava kings had cut several irrigation tanks. For example, Mahendravarman I cut the Mamandur tank. It was called Chithra Mega Tadakam. A number of such tanks were constructed during the Pallava period and they facilitated to the growth of agriculture. In turn, the economy flourished.

Crafts

The crafts of the Pallava period include weaving, stone cutting, pottery, carpentry, ivory works, etc. Cotton clothes were exported to China, Babylonia and Egypt. Kanchipuram had

remained an important centre for silk weaving.

Internal Trade

The increase in production and the expanding economy under the Pallavas led to the growth of trade and commerce. Both internal and external trade flourished during this period. There was a remarkable growth in the internal trade. The regular markets had gradually become urban centers. Various commodities were brought from villages to these markets for sale. There were excellent highways to transport goods from one place to another. The capital city, Kanchipuram had remained an important trading centre. The merchants of the Pallava period had to obtain license to keep shops and they were also asked to pay taxes. The barter system of trade was generally prevalent. Later, the Pallavas had issued gold and silver coins, which had resulted in the expansion of commerce. The merchants had also formed their own organizations called Manigramam.

Foreign Trade

We have already studied about the overseas commerce between South India and the West during the Sangam period. It had declined after the Sangam Age. During the Pallava rule trade with foreign countries had been revived. Spices, cotton textiles, precious stones and medicinal plants were exported to the countries like Java, Sumatra, Kadaram, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, China and Burma. The foreign merchants were known as Nanadesi. Mamallapuram, Vasavasamudram and Mylapore were the important seaports of the Pallavas.

Weights and Measures

Lands were measured with the units called Uzhavu, Nivarthanam or Pattiga. The term Hala also refers to a unit of land. Plough was used for measuring the land Paddy and rice were measured by Chudunazhi. The other units such as Vidai, Vidugu and Uzhakku were also used for measurement. Pidi was the smallest unit. The units such as Aazhakku, Uzhakku, Uri and Nazhi were used to measure items like milk, ghee and oil. Gold was measured by the units called Kazhanju and Manjaadi.

The Pallava Administration

A well-organized administration had existed in the Pallava kingdom. We get a lot of information from the literature and inscriptions to know the various aspects of the Pallava administration. The Pallava kings had introduced several administrative institutions in the Tamil country. Mostly, they had adopted the Mauryan system of administration and suitably modified

it. It can be said that generally there was peace and order in the Pallava kingdom due to their efficient administrative system.

Administrative Divisions

The Pallavas had a vast empire. It had extended up to the Nellore district in the North and up to the river South Pennar in the South. On the west, it had extended up to the Western Ghats and on the east up to the Bay of Bengal. It was very difficult to have administrative control over such a vast empire. Therefore, the Pallavas had divided the empire into several administrative units. They were called as Mandalam, Kottam, Nadu and Ur. These administrative divisions may be compared with the modern administrative units, namely province, district, taluk and village.

Mandalam

The biggest unit of the Pallava Empire was Mandalam or Rashtra. It had remained almost an autonomous unit. The Pallava king had appointed a prince or Yuvaraja as the governor of a Mandalam. This was done to have direct central control over the provinces.

Kottam

Each Mandalam was divided into several Kottams or Vishayas. The number of Kottams varied according to the size of the Mandalam. For example, the Thondai Mandalam was divided into twenty-four Kottams. Officials were appointed by the king to administer each Kottam.

Nadu

The next administrative unit was called Nadu. It was bigger than Oor or Village. There were several villages in each Nadu. A council called Naattavai was in charge of the administration of Nadu. The council members were called as Naattars.

Oor

The Oor or village was the smallest unit of the Pallava administration. It was also under the control of the village committees called Sabhas, The village Sabha remained almost autonomous in looking after the day-to-day administration of the village.

Monarchy

The Pallavas had followed the system of monarchy. The king was the head of the kingdom. Hereditary succession to the throne had been in practice. Normally, the eldest son would be the next ruler. The Pallava kings had considered themselves as the representatives of God. They had assumed many titles like Maharaja, Maharajathi Raja and Dharma Rajathiraja. These titles indicate the imperial power of the Pallava kings. The Pallava kings had also claimed

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Judiciary

There were three types of courts in the Pallava kingdom. The highest judicial organization was called Dharmasena. The king acted as its head. The courts in the towns were known as Adikarnas. The village courts were called as Karnas. The village Sabhas also acted as courts in settling the civil disputes in the villages. Punishments were not cruel and harsh. Fines were also imposed along with punishment.

Army

The Pallavas had possessed a strong and big army. There were four divisions in the army. They were infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariots. The cavalry played a vital role in the wars. The Pallavas also had a Navy. We have already noted that Narasimhavarman I had sent two naval expeditions to Sri Lanka.

Revenue

Land tax was the main source of income to the government. There were also other taxes. The copperplates and inscriptions of the Pallavas mention eighteen kinds of taxes. The number of lakes, tanks, wells, rivers and trees were counted for the purposes of taxation. Taxes were known by different names such as Kaanam, Irai, Paatam, and Poochi. For example, the term Kusakaanam refers to the tax on potters and Than Irai to the tax on weavers. Taxes were also levied on oil-pressers, toddy-tapers, washer men, goldsmiths and cattle-breeders. The chief items of expenditure of the government were the royal court, public works and temple grants. An officer called as Kumaranpandaram managed the royal palace.

Local administration

The existence and the functioning of the local bodies constitute an important aspect of the Pallava administration. Already mention is made about the administrative units called Nadu and Oor. The respective committees had administered these divisions. The committee of Nadu was

known as Naattavai. They carried out the king's orders and looked after the administration of Nadu. The Sabha or Committee in each Oor or Village was in charge of the village administration. The members of Oor Sabha were known as Perumakkal. Each Sabha was divided into separate committees called Vaariyams. Each Vaariyams had looked after the administration of temple, irrigation tanks and village gardens. Thus, the village administration was well organized during the Pallava rule. It can be said that the Pallavas had laid the foundation for the future expansion of village administration during the Later Cholas.

Art and Architecture under the Pallavas

The glory of the Pallavas still remains in their contribution to the art and architecture. They were the pioneers of South Indian art and architecture. They had introduced the stone.

The Pallava dynasty was an Indian dynasty that existed from 275 CE to 897 CE, ruling a portion of southern India. They gained prominence after the eclipse of the Satavahana dynasty, in which the Pallavas served as feudatories. Pallavas became a major power during the reign of Mahendravarman I (571 – 630 CE) and Narasimhavarman I (630 – 668 CE) and dominated the Telugu and northern parts of the Tamil region for about 600 years until the end of the 9th century. Pallavas are most noted for their patronage of architecture, the finest example being the Shore Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Mahabalipuram. The Pallavas, who left behind magnificent sculptures and temples, established the foundations of medieval South Indian architecture.

Pallava art and architecture represent an early stage of Dravidian art and architecture which blossomed to its fullest extent under the Chola Dynasty. The first stone and mortar temples of South India were constructed during Pallava rule and were based on earlier brick and timber prototypes. Starting with rock cut temples, built between 695 and 722, and archaeological excavations dated to the 6th century and earlier. Pallava sculptors later graduated to free-standing structural shrines which inspired Chola temples of a later age. Some of the best examples of Pallava art and architecture are the Kailasanathar Temple at Kanchipuram, the Shore Temple and the Pancha Rathas of Mahabalipuram. Akshara was the greatest sculptor of their time.

Pallava Architecture

History

Pallava architecture can be sub-divided into two phases - the rock cut phase and the structural phase. The Rock Cut Phase the rock cut phase lasted from the 610 to 668 AD and

consisted of two groups of monuments - the Mahendra group and the Mamalla group. The Mahendra group is the name given to monuments constructed during the reign of Mahendravarman I (610 - 630 AD). The monuments of this group are invariably pillared halls hewn out of mountain faces. These pillared halls or mandapas follow the prototype of Jain temples of the period. The best examples of Mahendra group of monuments are the cave temples at Mandagapattu, Pallavaram and Mamandur. The second groups of rock cut monuments belong to the Mamalla group in 630 to 668 AD. During this period free-standing monolithic shrines called rathas were constructed alongside pillared halls. Some of the best examples of this style are the Pancha Rathas and Arjuna's Penance at Mahabalipuram.

The structural phase was when free-standing shrines were constructed with stone and mortar brought in for the purpose. Monuments of this phase are of two groups - the Rajasimha group (690 to 800 AD) and the Nandivarman group (800 to 900 AD).[9] The Rajasimha group encompasses the early structural temples of the Pallavas when a lot of experimentation was carried out. The best examples of this period are the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram and the Kanchi Kailasanathar Temple at Kanchipuram both constructed by Narasimhavarman II who was known as Rajasimha. The best example of the Nandivarman group of monuments is the Vaikunta Perumal Temple at Kanchipuram. During this period, Pallava architecture attained full maturity and provided the models upon which the massive Brihadeeswarar Temple of the Cholas at Thanjavur and Gangaikonda Cholapuram and various other architectural works of note were constructed.

Pallava Sculpture and Architecture Styles

The Pallavas sculptors had a lot of passion and the slender skills of the artists in the carving of the sculptures can be seen. Pallava dynasty was a famous dynasty in South India. The Pallava kings played a patron role to flourish art and architecture in their kingdom. The present Pallava art and sculptures are dated back to the 610 AD to 690 AD. Probably the rock cut caves also came into existence during the period of Pallavas. The kings of Pallavas encouraged the artists to construct the temples and replaced the old temples with innovative rock sculptures and architecture.

Pallavas and their Style of Sculptures

During the rule of Pallavas, the artists improved their skills of excavating temples from the rocks. There were special institutions to teach the techniques of carving the architecture.

They brought the Dravidian style of art and introduced in the temple construction. The development of temple and architecture changed from one king to another. They brought the cave based constructing temples to structural temples. The Pallavas constructed many monuments around the temples. According to the Historians, the temple construction styles changed in four stages. The great Mahendravarma I encouraged the rock cut temples, we can see them at Mahendravadi, Mamandur, Dalavanm, Vallan and some other places in Tamilnadu. We can see the second stage of Pallava style of temples at Mamallapuram. Here the temple's architecture constructed by Monolithic rathas and Mandapas. Narasimhavarman constructed the temples with magnificent architectural monuments. The mandapas in the temples had the decorations with stunning sculptures, which were narrating the stories of Hindu epics.

Characteristics of Pallava Architecture The Pallava dynasty maintained its varying forms of architecture for some three centuries, from A.D. 600 to 900, and its productions are classified themselves into two phases, the first of these occupying the seventh century, and the second the eighth and ninth centuries. In the former the examples were entirely rock cut, in the latter they, were entirely structural. There were four principal rulers during the period of their power, and the works of each phase had been divided into two groups, comprising four groups in all, each of which is named after the king who was ruling at the time. 1st Phase, Mahendra Group, A.D. 610 to 640, Mamalla Group, A.D. 640 to 690. 2nd Phase, Rajasimha Group, A.D. 690 to 800, Nandivarman Group, c. A.D. 800 to c. 900.

Mahendra's Rock Architecture

Rock temples have but one external facade; in those of Mahendra it consists of a row of pillars which are comparatively short and massive and without the clear demarcation of the various parts of a pillar which the shastras prescribe. Their plain archaic shape with straight outlines has a certain similarity to Buddhist pillars or railing post which may have served as a model. It is in strange contrast to other contemporary pillars, for example, those of the Chalukyas at Badami or the Vakatakas of Ellora which are not only elaborately shaped, but also, have a rich ornamental and figural decor. Mahendra's pillars have two large, almost cubical parts at the base and the top, with an intervening part which is leveled off at the corners and has thus, an octagonal shape. The cubical parts on top and bottom are called sadurams, while the octagonal section in between is the kattu. In later times, lotus medallions are found on top and bottom sadurams which resemble the typical Buddhist lotus motif. The corbel sits on the upper saduram

and has curved, rarely angular arms, proportionate in size to the massiveness of the pillar. In later cave temples they are decorated with roll mouldings called taranga. The shrine cells are either cut behind the mandapa, facing the facade of the temple or else into one of its side walls. They are excavated on a higher level than that of the hall and entered by one or several rock cut steps. In Mandagapattu, Mahendra's first excavation, the level difference is just a small step of about three inches; in later cave temples it would grow higher until it would provide the space for a moulded adisthana (base) running along the front wall of the shrines, interrupted only by the rocksteps at their entrance.

The shrine chambers are plain and bare of any ornamentation; they contain neither a relief sculpture of the deity nor a rock cut linga. Non- monolithic lingas of black polished stone and uncertain age are often found inserted into a socket hole which was cut into the floor at a later time. Another noteworthy feature is the absence of any water outlet (pranala) from the sanctuary. The abhisheka (ceremonial bath) consisting of liquids like coconut water, milk, honey, ghee etc., was obviously received in a vessel inside the sanctum itself. A rock-cut pedestal or platform is often found at the rear wall of the shrine, suggesting that an image of the deity was placed upon it. Such images were formed of painted stucco or wood or brick with stucco.

The tradition of shaping the deity of the shrine in these materials has been preserved to the present day where wooden or stucco mulasthanas are found in South Indian temples. Remnants of paint on the rear wall of some shrines may indicate that the figure of the god was painted there over a thin coat of plaster. This is confirmed by references in the Sangam literature where temples are described as having their deity painted on the hind wall of the shrine. Outstanding features of Mahendra cave temples, which are otherwise bare of any sculptures, are the doorkeepers or dvarapalas. They represent the guardian figures of the threshold, a very ancient symbol frequently met with in legend and occult literature. There, they have a frightful, sometimes nonhuman appearance, to test the intrepidity of the seeker before they let him pass and continue his quest. Indian temples too, whether monolithic or structural, early or late, have a guardian of the threshold, and very often, they are the most expressive figures in a temple. They are regarded as semi divine beings, sometimes emanations of the god inside the shrine.

The Pallava P Aintings

Kanjeevaram, the ancient Pallava capital, is situated 45 miles west-south-west of Madras on the South Indian Railway. It is rich in temples and shrines. Of them the most important are the

Kailasanatha and the Vaikunthaperumal temples, which contain ancient wall paintings. In the Kailasanatha temple, which was built during the time of the Pallava king, Narasimhavarman n alias Rajasimha (680-722 A.D.), there are paintings of the 7th - 8th Centuries A.D. on the inner walls of the narrow cells lining the outer walls of the courtyard. They depict scenes from Hindu mythology. But most of the paintings have faded or disappeared through the vicissitudes of time and elements. The few that have survived were covered with lime wash during recent times.

Nandivarman II alias Pallavamalla (725-790 A.D.) 2 constructed the Vaikunthaperumal temple. The paintings in this temple, probably dating from the 8th-9th centuries A.D., have almost disappeared but for a miniature head under one of the eaves of the central tower or the Vimana. But there are traces of paint everywhere under the eaves and in the niches of the central tower. These Pallava paintings are on the classical or Ajanta style, and represent some of the best specimens of Hindu mural art. In order to reconstruct the methods and materials used in these paintings, one has to study and experiment on the carrier, the ground, the pigments and the binding medium. Investigations were carried out on some damaged fragments of the painted stuccoes which were collected from the two temples.

The painted stuccoes consisted of rough plaster of lime, which had been applied to the wall, with two successive coats of fine plaster and of paint applied one over the other. Some of the stuccoes in the Kailasanatha temple were very thin. They had no rough plaster, being made up of a layer of lime wash or fine plaster supporting the layer of paint. The methods of production of the paintings in the two temples are so similar, that a common discussion of their experimental results will suffice. The inner walls of the cells in the courtyard of the Kailasanatha temple, and the eaves and the walls of the niches of the Vimana of the Vaikunthaperumal temple serve as the mechanical foundation of the paintings directly supporting the ground.

They are of sandstone, which are mechanically firm and durable. Their rough surface holds the plaster fast. Their material, being hard and compact, eliminates any possibility of efflorescence occurring on the surface of the paintings. In the Vaikunthaperumal temple, the ground and the paint have fallen down in several places. The carrier has thus become exposed to the elements resulting in further damage to the paintings. The following pigments were identified in the Kailasanatha and Vaikunthaperumal temples. Yellow ochre, Red ochre, Terre verte Carbon, Lime. Thus only a limited number of pigments have been employed by the Pallava artists. This might be due to two causes. Firstly, in the fresco process such as is adopted here--

and this will be proved presently--pigments which are sensitive to alkalies should not be used with lime. Secondly, the artists might have employed the locally available pigments, which were probably few in number.

The Pallava Paintings at Kailasanatha temple

Though the sculptures of the Rajasimha are fairly well preserved, its paintings have almost vanished. It is said that the walls of the pradakshina -patha of the Kailasanatha temple were once covered with paintings of brilliant colours. But most of that has turned into faint traces. None of the surviving paintings at Kailasanatha is complete; only fragments have remained. The problem of aging was exacerbated by the coat of white wash applied by the temple authorities on the ancient murals. The conservation work, to rescue the underlying paintings, was taken up during 1936-40 by Shri S.Paramasivan, an archaeological chemist, who was a curator at the Madras museum. And; he encountered a number of serious problems in restoring the paintings in the cells of the Kailasanatha temple. He remarked said, "Since mechanical removal is the only possible means of removing the whitewash, it had to be done with great patience, not just skill". Thanks to the efforts of Shri Paramasivan a few fragments of paintings at Chittannavasal, Thanjavur and Kailasanatha, Kanchipuram, have survived.

The fragments at Kailasanatha along with the remnants at Talagishwara temple at Panamalai are however quite significant, because, these are the only two surviving examples of the Pallava mural paintings. Further, they represent an important stage in the history of development of South Indian paintings. Benoy K. Behl, the scholar and art historian remarked, "The fragments at Kailasanatha reveal the tenderness and grace that come from the tradition of Ajanta; as well as the glory of great kings. The theme of the family of Siva is also, at another plane, a representation of the royal family.

There is an impressive quality in the crowns and in the painted figures, which are not seen in the earlier gentle beings of Ajanta. The idiom, which begins to develop here, is seen to blossom later into a grand imperial style of painting under the Cholas. The ancient Indian murals were also the foundation of the later manuscript paintings and Indian miniatures. Here we see the high quality of painting of the classical Indian style, with a beautiful rendering of form and volume." With reference to the technique of Pallava murals, the painting surface consists two layers of plaster. The first layer was a rough layer of lime and sand. Over this a thin lime plaster was applied and this stuck on to the first layer firmly.

Then the plaster ground was given a gentle polish with a trowel or stone. The Pallava plaster – fresco –technique was superior. The plaster from Kanchipuram was 2 to 3 mm in thickness and the two layers of plasters adhered to each other firmly. Because of the high degree of purity in the lime used, gypsum content was negligible and there was no efflorescence on the surface of the painting.

Pallava Sculptures

Pallava sculptures came into being from the 4th to 9th centuries. It was during the Pallava reign that the rock cut architecture flourished. The earliest specimens of Pallava art and architecture dated back to the 610 to 690 AD. The other temples, on the other hand, were constructed from 690 to 900 AD. In fact, the rock cut caves also came into trend during the Pallava Empire. For the first time the, a predominant feature of the South Indian temples, were fast replaced by the innovative rock architecture and sculptures.

History of Pallava sculptures

Sangam Period's traditional Manimekalai, features the beginning of the first Pallava King from a connection between the daughter of Naga king of Manipallava, named Pilli Valai with a Chola king Killivalavan. One more description states that "Pallava" was born from the union of the Brahmin Ashvatthama with a Naga Princess also supposedly supported in the sixth verse of the Bahur plates. The Pallavas themselves claimed to move down from Brahma and Ashvatthama. Although to the Manimekalai posits, Ilam Tiriyan as a Chola, not a Pallava, the Velurpalaiyam plates dated to 852, do not bring up the Cholas.

Various Pallava Sculptures

The Pallavas initiated the skill of excavating temples from the rock. In fact, the Dravidian style of temple architecture began with the Pallava rule. It was a regular development starting from the cave temples to monumental rathas and concluded in structural temples. The growth of temple architecture under the Pallavas can be seen in 4 stages. Mahendravarman I introduced the rock-cut temples. This style of Pallava temples are seen at places like Mandagappattu, Mahendravadi, Mamandur, Dalavanur, Tiruchirappalli, Vallam, Siyamangalam and Tirukalukunram pallava art. The second stage of Pallava architecture is represented by the monolithic rathas and Mandapas found at Mamallapuram. Narasimhavarman I took the recognition for these magnificent architectural monuments. The five rathas, generally called as the Panchapanadava rathas signifies five diverse styles of temple architecture. The mandapas

enclose stunning sculptures on its walls.

The last stage of the Pallava art is also represented by structural temples built by the later Pallavas. The Vaikundaperumal temple, Muktheeswara temple and Matagenswara temples at Kanchipuram belong to this stage of structural design. The Pallavas were involved in the evolution from rock-cut architecture to stone temples. The earliest examples of Pallava constructions are rock-cut temples dating from 610 to 690 and structural temples between 690 to 900. A number of rock-cut cave temples bear the message of the Pallava king, Mahendravarman I and his descendants. The Kailasanatha temple in Kanchipuram and the Shore Temple built by Narasimhavarman II, rock cut temple in Mahendravadi by Mahendravarman are fine examples of the Pallava style temples.

Pallava Literature

The contribution of the Pallavas to the cultural development was significant. They had also encouraged the growth of Tamil and Sanskrit literature. The Pallavas had earned name and fame through their magnificent art and architecture. We know that Mamallapuram finds a prominent place in the tourist map of the world. Even today, their temples and sculptures stand testimony to the cultural achievements of the Pallavas. The Pallava kings were patrons of Sanskrit language and literature. Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas, was a centre of Sanskrit studies. Poet Bharavi, the author of Kiratarjuniyam, was the court poet of Pallava King Singhabahu or Singhavishnu. Sanskrit scholar Dandin was the greatest litterateur of that period. Pallava King Mahendravarma was himself a great man of letters.

Growth of Literature

The Pallavas had remained great patrons of both Sanskrit and Tamil languages. Their capital Kanchi had remained a great centre for Sanskrit learning. The Pallava monarch, Mahendravarman I himself wrote the Maththavilasa Prakasanam and Bagavatha Ajikkiyam in Sanskrit. Dhandin was a great Sanskrit scholar who lived during the Pallava rule. He wrote Kavyadharsha. Another Sanskrit scholar Bharavi had visited Kanchipuram during the Pallava period. Tamil literature had also developed during this period. We have studied that the Nayanmars and Alvars had composed their hymns in Tamil. Their contribution to the growth of Tamil literature during the Pallava period was significant. Their devotional songs constitute important religious literature of the Pallava period. Another Tamil scholar, Perundevanar wrote Bharathavenba during this period. Kalladanar had composed a grammar hook called Kalladam.

Another work Nandikalambakam describes the rule of Nandivarman III but its author is not known. Thus, the Pallava rule had witnessed the growth of both Sanskrit and Tamil literature.

Origin of Bhakti Movement

Some scholars believe that the rise of the Bhakti movement was a reaction against feudal oppression and against Rajput-Brahmin domination. • Another group of scholars believe that the socio-economic changes in the early medieval period led to the emergence of this movement. During the 13th and 14th centuries, the demand for goods increased which led to the migration of artisans into cities. The Bhakti movement gained support from these classes of society as they were not satisfied with the low status given to them by the Brahmanical system and hence, they turned towards Bhakti since it focussed on equality. Though there is no single opinion about the origin of the Bhakti movement, there is unanimity of thought over the fact that the Bhakti movement was based on equality and devotional surrender to a personally conceived supreme God. Saguna and Nirguna are the two different ideological streams of the Bhakti movement.

| Saguna | Nirguna |
|--|--|
| Saguna represented those poet-saints who composed verses extolling a god with attributes or form. | Nirguna represented those poet-saints who extolled god without and beyond all attributes or form. They are also known as Monotheistic Bhakti saints. |
| Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Surdas and Meera were the main proponents of Saguna. | Nanak and Kabir were the main proponents of Nirguna. |
| The Saguna poets were in favour of the dominance of Brahmins and supported the caste system. • They preached a religion of surrender and simple faith in a personal god while also supporting idol worship | The Nirguna poet-saints rejected the supremacy of the Brahmins and all conventions based on caste distinctions along with the practice of idolatry. They gave importance to the personal experience with god and even though they called their god using different names and titles, yet their god was formless, eternal, nonincarnate and ineffable. • It seemed that their ideas were a synthesis of the three traditions; the Vaishnava concept of Bhakti, the Nanpanthi movement and Sufism. Thus, though they had adopted the notion of Bhakti from Vaishnavism, they |

The Bhakti movement in South India

The development of the popular Bhakti movement took place in south India between the 7th and 12th centuries CE. It was based on religious equality and broad-based social participation. The Shivaite Nayannars and the Vaishnavite Alvars, who preached the Bhakti cult under the Pallavas, Pandyas and Cholas disregarded the austerities preached by the Jains and the Buddhists. They preached personal devotion to God as a means of salvation. They disregarded the rigidities of the caste system and carried the message of love and personal devotion to God to various parts of South India with the help of local languages.

Shankaracharya (c. 788 - 820 CE)

- One of the mystic Bhakti poet-saint leaders who gave a new orientation to Hinduism.
- He was born in Kaladi in Kerala. He propounded the Advaita (Monism) philosophy and the idea of Nirgunabrahman (god without attributes).
- In Advaita, the reality of the world is denied and Brahman is considered the only reality. It is only Brahman at its base that gives it its reality.
- His famous quotes include, ‘Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya Jivo Brahmatra Naparaha’ meaning, “The Absolute Spirit is the reality, the world of appearance is Maya” and ‘Ekameva Adviteeyam Brahma’ meaning, “The absolute is one alone, not two”.
- He laid emphasis on knowledge (gyan) as that can alone lead to salvation.
- Upadesahasri, Vivekachudamani, Bhaja Govindum Stotra are some of the works authored by Shankaracharya. He also wrote commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahma Sutra and the Upanishads. He set up mathas at Dwarka, Puri, Sringeri and Badrinath.

Ramanuja (c. 1017 - 1137 CE)

In the 12th century, Ramanuja, who was born at Sriperumbudur near modern Chennai, preached Vishista Advaitavada (qualified monism). According to him, God is Saguna Brahman (with attributes) and the creative process including all the objects in creation are real and not illusory as was held by Shankaracharya. Therefore, according to Ramanuja, God, soul, and matter are real. However, God is the inner substance and the rest are his attributes.

- ❖ In Vishista Advaitavada, the universe and Brahman are considered two equally real

entities, as in dualism, but here the universe are not separate from Brahman but is formed out of Brahman. The Brahman is considered as a personal god with omniscient qualities who has created the world out of his own self. Thus, the world bears to Brahman the relation of the part to the whole, or the relation of a 'qualified effect' to the base (hence qualified monism).

- ❖ The famous analogy given for this is the sea and wave - Brahman is the sea and the objects of the world, both living and nonliving are the waves upon this sea.
- ❖ According to Ramanuja, Brahman is an entirely personal god and is considered to be Vishnu or one of his avatars. He believed that Vishnu has created the world out of his love for humans, and he also controls the world at every step. He also held that Vishnu has all the qualities of a personal god - omniscient, omnipotence, etc.
- ❖ The difference between Dualism and Vishista Advaita is that "mankind enjoys higher status than in pure dualistic worship and is nearer to God". In Vishista Advaita, both the world and Brahman are considered equally real; they are not considered to be two separate entities as in Dualism.
- ❖ Ramanuja advocated prabattimarga or the path of self-surrender to God. He invited downtrodden people to Vaishnavism and advocated salvation by Bhakti.
- ❖ He authored Sribhashya, Vedanta Dipa, Gita Bhasya and Vedantasara.

Madhavacharya (c. 1238 - 1317 CE)

- Madhava from Kannada preached Dvaita or the dualism of Jivatma and Paramatma. According to his philosophy, the world is not an illusion but a reality and full of real distinction.
- God, soul and matter are unique in nature, and are irreducible to each other.
- He founded the Brahma Sampradaya.
- He considered Brahman and the universe to be two equally real entities that are not related in any way. The God of dualism is Vishnu who has created the universe, and the universe is separate from God and in an inferior position to God with no link between the two. Vishnu controls all worldly affairs and to worship and pray to God is the duty of all persons.

Pandyas

It is difficult to say about the origin of the term 'Pandya' with much accuracy. There are

many different opinions regarding the term. We find the names of the Pandyan monarchs mentioned in some important literary works such as:

The Sangam literature, the Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata, the Sri Lankan chronicle Mahavamsa, the Arthashastra of Kautilya, and Indica: the account of Megasthenes who was the Greek ambassador to the court of king Chandragupta Maurya of the Mauryan Empire. Some historians opine that the term was derived from the label 'Pandava'. It has also been suggested that if we look at the meaning of the word 'Pandya' in Tamil it means old country. Another speculation made in order to interpret its origin is that it comes from the word 'Pandi' which in Tamil means bull and in Tamilaham the bull was considered as a symbol of strength and masculinity. Thus, it is argued that the Pandyan rulers used it in order to represent themselves as powerful sovereigns. The first king who took the title of 'Pandya' was Kulashekharan. His successors continued using this title and this is how it is claimed that the cognomen of 'Pandya' became synonymous with the dynasty.

As in the case with Pallavas the Pandyan rule can also be categorized into the following sections: I. Early Pandyas, II. The first Pandyan Empire, III. The Second Pandyan Empire. The early Pandyas or Pandyas of the Sangam age were contemporaries of the Cheras and the Cholas during the Sangam period. These neighbouring powers were engaged in conflicts to establish their own political supremacy. And as we read earlier about the rise of the Kalabhras in the post-Sangam age in the Tamil country and that they brought an end to the rule of the Pallavas, likewise the Kalabhras became the cause for the decline of the early Pandyas as well but eventually, like the Pallavas the Pandyas were successful too in acquiring the political hold in the region. The river Kaveri became the border between the Pallavas and the Pandyas.

The earliest known ruler from the Pandyan dynasty was Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludi. Nedunchelian I or Ayyappudai Kadantha Nedunchelian was the 4th king of this kingdom. His royal title Ayyappudai Kadantha means the one who vanquished the Aryans. His name is mentioned in a significant Tamil literary piece: the Silapaddikaram written by a Chera prince Ilango Adigal. According to this work Nedunchelian failed in his kingly duty of providing fair justice when he, in his anger and without any proper judicial enquiry, ordered the execution of an innocent man named Kovalan who was falsely charged with the stealing of an anklet of the queen. Nedunchelian II was the greatest ruler of early Pandyas. He defeated the combined forces of Cholas and Cheras at the battle of Talaiyalanganam. This enabled him to acquire much of the

Tamil region and expand the territory of the Pandyas. After the Sangam age their power declined and the Kalabhras emerged as a dominant political force in the region. Kadungon founded the first Pandyan Empire after defeating the Kalabhras during c. 6th century. After him the rulers of the first Pandyan Empire adopted the titles of:

Maravarman, and Sadayavarman (Worshippers of lord Shiva) or Sadaiyan (the one with dreadlocks).

Arikesari Maravarman was an important ruler of this empire. From the Pandyan inscriptions we get to know that he defeated the Cheras a number of times and even imprisoned the reigning Chera ruler. During the period of his son and successor Kochadaiyan Ranadhiran the Chalukya-Pandyan conflicts began in which the Chalukyas of Badami were assisted by the western Gangas. He died while fighting against the Cholas. His son Maravarman Rajasimha I became the next emperor and he fought many battles with the Pallava ruler Nandivarman II and obtained some portion of the Pallava territory. He also defeated the Chalukyas and the Gangas. The Chalukyan ruler Kirtivarman II married his daughter to the son of the Pandyan king. The last ruler of this empire was Maravarman Rajasimha III. He was defeated by the Chola king Parantaka I. The victorious ruler captured the capital of the Pandyan and, thus, took the title of Maduraikonda. Gradually, when the Cholas re-emerged in the c. 10th century the power of the Pandyan was eclipsed. Aditya Karikala who was the son of Parantaka Chola II defeated the Pandyan monarch Vira Pandya.

Later in the 13th century the Pandyan again became powerful. Maravarman Sundara Pandyan laid the foundation for the 2nd Pandyan Empire when he forced the Chola ruler Kulothunga Chola III to formally submit to the Pandyan authority. The most prominent king was Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan. During this time the territorial size of the empire was extended to a large extent. They successfully captured the Telugu country, Kalinga (in present-day Odisha) and also made invasions into Ceylon. The Chola kings after Kulothunga Chola III were not very successful in curbing the rising power of the Pandyan. Despite the fact that the Cholas were assisted by the Hoysalas to check the Pandyan powers they kept losing their territories, prestige and power. The Pandyan became the dominant political force in south India. Finally, Maravarman Kulasekhara Pandyan I defeated the combined armies of Rajendra Chola III and the reigning Hoysala emperor. This brought an end to the Chola Empire. However, after the downfall of the Cholas the Pandyan also could not survive for long and the civil war which was

the outcome of the war of succession between Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya the two sons of Maravarman Kulashekhara Pandyan I fastened the pace of their political decay.

Triangular conflict between Pallavas, Pandyas

Conflicts and alliances were outcomes of the political ambition of the rulers to acquire more and more resources for the efficient functioning of their respective governments. The Chalukyas of Vatapi and the Pallavas of Kanchi were frequently at war with one another. The Pallava monarch Mahendravarman I had expanded the territory of the Pallava dynasty towards the north up to the river Krishna. The Vishnukundins became the neighbouring kingdom located to the north of the Pallavas. Pulakesin II defeated the Vishnukundins and the territory of the Vishnukundins became the part of Chalukyan dynasty. The Chalukyan king made his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana the viceroy of this conquered territory. Later, Vishnuvardhana founded the eastern Chalukyan dynasty or the Chalukyan kingdom of Vengi. With the decline of Vishnukundins the Chalukyas became the neighbouring territory of the Pallavas to the north. Thus, the expansionist policies of Mahendravarman I and Pulakesin II brought the two emperors together on a battlefield against each other. This began the constant conflicts between the two dynasties.

The third important dynasty which played a significant role in this clash was the Pandyas of Madurai in the Vaigai valley. These three political powers were contemporaries and rose to prominence at almost the same time. The Pandyas and the Chalukyas were the neighbouring kingdoms of the Pallavas. Each wanted to extend their territorial boundaries at the expense of the other. The Pandyas were eager to take control of the fertile Kaveri delta. They saw it befitting to make the Chalukyas of Vatapi, who were constantly at war with the Pallavas, their political ally to realize their political ambition. Accordingly, Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman I – the Pandyan ruler – made an alliance with the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I and attempted to acquire some portion of the Pallava territory. The Pandyas were also at war with the other neighbouring dynasty the Cheras in order to extend their territorial boundaries. The battles fought and won were always a matter of pride for the victorious ruler. They would demonstrate it through various means. Jayantavarman (645-70 CE), the son of Maravarman Avanisulamani, adopted the epithet of Vanavan which tells us that he had been successful to some extent against the Cheras. The Pandyas also tried to invade Ceylon during the period of the Sinhalese ruler Sena I, devastating the region and carrying away a huge booty. The succeeding Sinhalese

emperor Sena II, in order to avenge the Pandyas, invaded the Pandya kingdom and carried away a large sum of booty.

The Pandyas also looked for opportunities to interfere in the internecine feuds in the Pallava kingdom. The Pandyan king Maravarman Rajasimha I (735-765 CE) made an alliance with the Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II and supported Chitramaya for the throne of the Pallava kingdom. The Pandyan ruler defeated the Pallava king Nandivarman II a number of times. In order to highlight this achievement he took the title of Pallava Bhanjana (Breaker of the Pallavas). In the end Chitramaya was killed by a military general of Nandivarman II. But this interference of the Pandyas into the political affairs of the Pallavas and their repeated attacks on the Pallavas alarmed Nandivarman II and he wanted to contain the increasing influence of the Pandyas of Madurai.

During the period of Kirtivarman II Dantidurga a feudatory of the Chalukyas and who had high political ambitions, was attempting to carve out an independent territory. He, in the process, attacked the Pallava monarch Nandivarman II. The latter gave a tough fight to Dantidurga and so, after a negotiation between the two; Dantidurga gave his daughter Reva to Nandivarman II in marriage. Meanwhile, Dantidurga defeated Kirtivarman II and laid the foundation of the Rashtrakuta Empire of Manyakheta. Just as the Chalukyas in alliance with the western Ganga dynasty fought many battles against the Pallavas, or the Pandyas made the Chalukyas their political ally so as to check the political influence of the Pallavas, likewise Nandivarman II after the matrimonial alliance with Dantidurga wanted to lessen the power of the Pandyas, as the Chalukyas of Vatapi were now displaced by Dantidurga. The Pallava monarch was trying to form a confederacy of rulers to support him against the Pandyas. A kingdom named Kongu located adjacent to the western Ganga dynasty was also one of kingdoms of the confederacy. The emperor of Kongu was defeated by the Pandyan ruler and the kingdom was merged into the Pandyan territory. The Pandyas were also able to advance deep into the Pallava territory. The Pallavas failed in their attempt to stop the Pandyan advance. However, despite many battles, defeats and victories, none of the sides could claim any territorial gains for long. There were continuous attacks and counter-attacks and losses and gains.

Westrn Chalukyas

Between the tenth and twelfth centuries, the **Western Chalukya Empire** rose to power. They ruled the majority of the **Western Deccan region** of South India. This Kannadiga line is

also known as the **Kalyani Chalukya** after its magnificent **Capital at Kalyani**. During the reign of **Vikramaditya VI**, in the late 11th and early 12th centuries, the Western Chalukyas were successful against the Cholas, reaching a peak of dominance over most of the Deccan, between the Narmada River in the north and the Kaveri River in the south. This article will explain to you the Western Chalukyas.

Western Chalukyas – Background

- The **Western Chalukya** Empire is also known as the **Kalyani Chalukya** Empire.
- After **Dantidurga** destroyed the Chalukyas of Badami, they resurrected two centuries later, around 972-73AD.
- This was known as the Chalukyas of Kalyani and is said to have the same ancestry as the previous mighty Chalukyas (though this is disputed).
- **Tailapa-II**, who was a feudatory of the **Rashtrakuta**, established this dynasty.
- For 200 years, they were at odds with the Cholas as well as the eastern Chalukyas of **Vengi**.
- The two empires of Southern India, the **Western Chalukyas** and the **Chola dynasty** of Tanjore, fought many bloody battles for control of the fertile Vengi region.
- The other major Deccan ruling families, the Hoysalas, the Seuna Yadavas of Devagiri, the Kakatiya dynasty, and the Southern Kalachuris of Kalyani, were subordinates to the Western Chalukyas during this period.
- They gained independence only when the Chalukyas' power waned in the latter half of the 12th century.
- In the 12th century, the **Hoysala Empire** finally destroyed them.
- This empire made significant contributions to modern **Kannada and Sanskrit** literature.

Rulers of Western Chalukyas

Tailapa II

- ❖ Tailapa-II was the founder of Western Chalukyas, he was one of the Rastrakutas' feudatories.
- ❖ Tailapa reigned for 24 years and was able to reclaim his race's ancient territory, with the exception of the Gujarat region.

- ❖ He supported **Ranna**, a **Kannada poet** who was among the first to write in the Kannada language.
- ❖ **Ranna, Adikavi Pampa, and Sri Ponna** are regarded as Kannada literature's "**three gems.**"
- ❖ Tailapa II spent the majority of his time-fighting **Munja**, the **Paramara king** of Dhara.
- ❖ Munja was eventually captured and most likely killed in captivity. This occurred in 995 AD.
- ❖ Tailapa died two years later, and his throne was passed down to his son **Satyasraya**.

Satyasraya

- Satyasraya's reign lasted from 997 to 1008 AD.
- To begin with, he followed his father's aggressive policy and was at odds with the **Eastern Chalukyas and Cholas**.
- His 11-year reign was disrupted by a war with the great **Chola Rajaraja-I**, who overran the Chalukya country and looted and killed a large number of men, women, and children.

Someshwara I

- Someshwara I, also known as **Ahavamalla or Trilokamalla**, ruled from 1042 to 1068 AD.
- Someshwara I established **Kalyani** as its capital.
- He was attacked by **Rajadhiraja I** of Chola dynasty, who overran the Chalukyan capital and demolished the forts and erected pillars as a memento of the victories, but a Chalukyan counterattack forced them out.
- The Chalukya army raided the Chola capital Kanchipuram under Someshwara-I, but was repelled back.
- Rajadhiraja Chola was finally killed in the battle of **Koppam**. His younger brother, however, took command and drove the Chalukyas back.
- Brother of Someshwara was killed in this attack. Someshwara I's reign is remembered for numerous wars.

Vikramaditya VI

- ❖ Vikramaditya VI ascended to the throne in 1076 AD, ushering in the Chalukya-Vikram era.
- ❖ Vikramaditya VI was one of the Western Chalukyan Empire's most capable rulers.

- ❖ He is the hero of a historical poem (**Vikramankadevacharita**) by **Bilhana**, a Kashmir poet, and reigned in tolerable peace for about a half-century.
- ❖ Vikramaditya VI captured Kanchi in his career and engaged in serious battles with Vishnu, the Hoysala King of **Dorsamudra**.
- ❖ During the reign of Vikramaditya VI, a celebrated jurist from the 12th century named Vijnivevara lived in the capital Kalyani.
- ❖ **Vijnevara** wrote a treatise on inheritance that is considered to be one of the most influential legal treatises in Hindu law outside of Bengal.

Administration

Administration of Western Chalukyas

- The Western Chalukya kingship was **hereditary** but If the king did not have a male heir then the kingship passed to the king's brother.
- The administration was highly decentralised and feudatory clans such as the **Alupas, Hoysalas, Kakatiya, Seuna**, southern Kalachuri, and others were permitted to rule their autonomous provinces while paying an annual tribute to the Chalukya emperor.
- Titles such as **Mahapradhana** (Chief Minister), **Sandhivigrahika**, and **Dharmadhikari** (chief justice) were taken up.
- The kingdom was divided into provinces such as Banavasi-12000, Nolambavadi-32000, and Gangavadi, 96000, with each name indicating the number of villages under its control.
- The large provinces were known as **Mandalas**, under which there were **Nadu**, and Nadu was further subdivided into **Kampanas** (groups of villages) and finally a **Bada** (village).
- Women from the royal family were also in charge of Nadus and Kampanas.

Religion of Western Chalukyas

- Western Chalukyas were the followers of **Virashaivism**.
- Virashaivism, also known as **Lingayatism**, is a Hindu sect based on Shaivism.
- The rise of Virashaivism in Chalukya territory coincided with a general decline in interest in Jainism, though Chalukyas remained religiously tolerant.
- With the spread of Adi Shankara's Advaita philosophy in the 8th century, the decline of Buddhism in South India began.

- During the Western Chalukya rule, the only places of Buddhist worship that remained were **Dambal and Balligavi**.
- There is no mention of religious conflict in the period's writings and inscriptions, implying that the religious transition was smooth.

Literature during Western Chalukyas

- The Western Chalukya period saw a lot of literary activity in **Kannada and Sanskrit**.
- This is a golden age of Kannada literature. Jain scholars wrote about the lives of Tirthankaras, and Virashaiva poets expressed their devotion to God in short poems called **Vachanas**.
- Almost 300 contemporary **Vachanakaras** (Vachana poets), including thirty women poets, have been documented during this time.
- Early works by Brahmin writers focused on the epics Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata, Puranas, and Vedas.
- **Ranna, grammarian Nagavarma II, minister Durgasimha, and the Virashaiva saint** and social reformer **Basavanna** were among the most notable Kannada scholars.
- Ranna, who was patronised by King Tailapa II and Satyashraya, is one of Kannada literature's "three gems."

Pandya Empire Administration

- The territory of Pandyas is called Pandymandalam, Thenmandalam or Pandynadu, which lay in the rocky, hilly regions and mountain ranges except the areas fed by the rivers Vaigai and Tamiraparni
- Pandya kings preferred Madurai as their capital
- As for political division, Pandya Mandalam or Pandya Nadu consisted of many valanadus, which, in turn, were divided into many *nadus* and *kurrams* (meaning group of villages)
- Kings and local chiefs created Brahmin settlements called Mangalam or Chaturvedimangalam with irrigation facilities. These settlements were given royal names and names of the deities
- Royal officials were called by different names:
- The prime minister was called Uttaramantri
- The royal secretariat was known as Eluttu Mandapam

- The titles of military commanders were Palli Velan, Parantakan Pallivelan, Maran Adittan and Tennavan Tamizhavel.

Pandya Art and Architecture

- The Pandyan dynasty had their own unique temple style that followed on from the chola style temples between 1000 and 1250 AD. The architectural features of Pandyan temples reflected the kingdoms wealth and social position in respect to other dynasties of southern India at the time. They were mostly stone buildings with distinctive qualities such as rectangular ground floors leading into pyramidal floors higher up with gilded roofs above. Surrounding the temples there were various important Hindu mythological figures sculpted into the rock and various animals carved into the pillars.
- Key features of Pandyan architecture include the vimanas, mandapas, and the gopuras. The vimana is the structure above and around the main shrine and is the area where the deities are present. The vimana can be single or multi storied, depending on how many deities the temple contains. The mandapa is a pillared hallway or room that ancient Indian dynasties used for religious dancing, music and ceremonies. Larger temples can have more than one mandapa placed to the sides of the main structures. The gopura is another predominant feature of Pandyan architecture and it is the entranceway into the temple. It is a storied structure commonly made of stone, and there can be multiple built around the sides of the temple.
- Dravidian style architecture is commonly seen throughout Pandyan temples and it is a southern Indian architectural style. The predominant features of Dravidian architecture are the main tower, referred to as the vimana, and the entrance gateway referred to as the gopuram. The vimana is notable in Dravidian architecture as it is structured as a tiered pyramid that rises up to the sky. This is different to the main tower structures in northern India, which curve up to a point.
- There are few standing architectural monuments left from Pandyan ruling and no temples surviving in Madurai, Pandya's capital, preceding the sixteenth century. The temples that do remain depict the notable features attributed to the rule of the Pandyan kings.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Examine the origin and early history of the pallavas.
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2. Analyze the political, social, and economic conditions during the rule of the early pallavas.
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3. Discuss the evolution of pallava art and architecture, emphasizing the distinctive features of pallava temples and sculptures.
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4. Discuss the cultural and religious significance of pallava sculptures and their influence on later art forms.
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5. Discuss the political and cultural achievements of the pandyan rulers and their interactions with other contemporary dynasties.
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6. Analyze the triangular conflict between the pallavas, pandyas, and western chalukyas.
.....
7. Examine the evolution of art and architecture under the later pallavas.
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Unit – IV

Later Cholas: Raja Raja Chola I - Rajendra Chola I – Overseas Expansion – Kulothunga – Chalukya-Chola relations – Administrative System – Land Grants and Temple Administration – Social and Economic life – Maritime Trade & Commerce – Religion – Literature – Art and Architecture – Bronze Sculptures.

Objectives

- Describe the emergence of Chola Empire in South India
- Discuss the achievements of the various rulers of the Chola Empire
- Explain the socio-economic and religious conditions during the Cholas reign
- Evaluate the art and architecture of the state under the supervision of Cholas

Later Cholas

The Chola Empire which arose in the Ninth Century. They developed a powerful navy which enabled them to conquer Sri Lanka and the Maldives too. Its impact was felt even by the countries of Southeast Asia. The rise of Chola empire actually changed the political scenario of south India. During 400 years of its rule, Chola power extended over a large area of south India comprising the whole of the modern state of Tamil Nadu and contiguous areas of southern Karnataka and southern Andhra. Emerging from their heartland in the locality of Uraiyur along the banks of the river Kaveri in the mid 9th century, they soon controlled the entire Tamilspeaking area.

After the decline of the Sangam period, the Cholas became feudatories in Uraiyur. They became prominent in the ninth century and established an empire comprising the major portion of South India. Their capital was Tanjore. They also extended their way in Sri Lanka and the Malaya Peninsula. Therefore, they are called the Imperial Cholas. Thousands of inscriptions found in the temples provide detailed information regarding the administration, society, economy and culture of the Chola period. The founder of the Imperial Chola line was Vijayalaya. He captured Tanjore from Muttaraiyars in 815 A.D and built a temple for Durga. His son Aditya put an end to the Pallava kingdom by defeating Aparajita and annexed Tondaimandalam. Parantaka I was one of the important early Chola rulers. He defeated the Pandyas and the ruler of Ceylon. But he suffered a defeat at the hands of the Rashtrakutas in the famous battle of Takkolam. Parantaka I was a great builder of temples. He also provided the vimana of the famous Nataraja

temple at Chidambaram with a golden roof. The two famous Uttiramerur inscriptions that give a detailed account of the village administration under the Cholas belong to his reign. After a gap of thirty years, the Cholas regained their supremacy under Rajaraja I.

Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 A.D.)

Under Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I that the Chola power reached its highest point of glory. His military conquests the defeat of the Chera ruler Bhaskara Ravivarman in the naval battle of Kandalur Salai and the destruction of the Chera navy. The defeat of the Pandya ruler, Amarabhujanga and establishment of Chola authority in the Pandya country. The conquest of Gangavadi, Tadigaipadi and Nolambapadi located in the Mysore region. The invasion of Sri Lanka which was entrusted to his son Rajendra I. As the Sri Lankan king Mahinda V fled away from his country, the Cholas annexed the northern Sri Lanka. The capital was shifted from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa where a Shiva temple was built. The Chola victory over the growing power of the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani. Satyasraya was defeated and Rajaraja I captured Raichur Doab, Banavasi and other places. Hence the Chola power extended up to the river Tungabhadra. The restoration of Vengi throne to its rulers Saktivarman and Vimaladitya by defeating the Telugu Chodas. Rajaraja gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimaladitya. Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the Maldivian Islands which were conquered.

By these conquests, the extent of the Chola empire under Rajaraja I included the Pandya, Chera and the Tondaimandalam regions of Tamil Nadu and the Gangavadi, Nolambapadi and the Telugu Choda territories in the Deccan and the northern part of Ceylon and the Maldivian Islands beyond India. Rajaraja assumed a number of titles like Mummidi Chola, Jayankondam and Sivapadasekara. He was a devout follower of Saivism. He completed the construction of the famous Rajarajeswara temple or Brihadeeswara temple at Tanjore in 1010 A.D. He also helped in the construction of a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam.

Rajendra I (1012-1044 A.D.)

Rajendra had demonstrated his military ability by participating in his father's campaigns. He continued his father's policy of aggressive conquests and expansion. His important wars were Mahinda V, the king of Sri Lanka attempted to recover from the Cholas in the northern part

of Ceylon. Rajendra defeated him and seized southern Sri Lanka. Thus, the whole of Sri Lanka was made part of the Chola Empire. He reasserted the Chola authority over the Chera and Pandya countries. He defeated Jayasimha II, the Western Chalukya king and the river Tungabhadra was recognized as the boundary between the Cholas and Chalukyas. His most famous military enterprise was his expedition to north India. The Chola army crossed the Ganges by defeating a number of rulers on its way. Rajendra defeated Mahipala I of Bengal. To commemorate this successful north-Indian campaign Rajendra founded the city of Gangaikondacholapuram and constructed the famous Rameshwaram temple in that city. He also excavated a large irrigation tank called Cholagangam on the western side of the city.

Another famous venture of Rajendra was his naval expedition to Kadaram or Sri Vijaya. It is difficult to pinpoint the real object of the expedition. Whatever its objects were, the naval expedition was a complete success. A number of places were occupied by Chola forces. But it was only temporary and no permanent annexation of these places was contemplated. He assumed the title Kadaramkondan. Rajendra, I had put down all rebellions and kept his empire intact. At the death of Rajendra, I the extent of the Chola Empire was at its peak. The river Tungabhadra was the northern boundary. The Pandya, Kerala and Mysore regions and also Sri Lanka formed part of the empire. He gave his daughter Mangareva to the Vengi Chalukya prince and further continued the matrimonial alliance initiated by his father. Rajendra, I assumed a number of titles, the most famous being Mudikondan, Gangaikondan, Kadaram Kondan and Pandita Cholan.

Like his father he was also a devout Saiva and built a temple for that god at the new capital Gangaikondacholapuram. He made liberal endowments to this temple and to the Lord Nataraja temple at Chidambaram. He was also tolerant towards the Vaishnava and Buddhist sects. After Rajendra I, the greatness of the Chola power was preserved by rulers like Kulottunga I and Kulottunga III. Kulottunga I was the grandson of Rajendra I through his daughter Ammangadevi. He succeeded the Chola throne and thus united the Vengi kingdom with the Chola Empire. During his reign Sri Lanka became independent. Subsequently, Vengi and the Mysore region were captured by the western Chalukyas. Kulottunga I sent a large embassy of 72 merchants to China and maintained cordial relations with the kingdom of SriVijaya. Under Kulottunga III the central authority became weak. The rise of the feudatories like the Kadavar Mayas and the emergence of the Pandya power as a challenge to Chola supremacy contributed to the ultimate downfall of the Chola Empire. Rajendra III was the last Chola king who was

defeated by Jatavarman Sundarapandya II. The Chola country was absorbed into the Pandya Empire.

Kulottunga I

Kulottunga I was a Chola king who reigned from 1070 to 1122 A.D. He was not a legal member of the Imperial Cholas founded by Vijayalaya Chola. He was none other than Rajendra Chalukya, prince of the Eastern Chalukyas. He did not belong to the main line of cholas but was rather a prince of the eastern chalukya dynasty. His mother Ammangaidevi, was a chola Princess and the daughter of emperor Rajendra Chola I. His father was king Rajaraja Narendra of the Eastern Chalukya dynasty who was the nephew of Rajendra chola I and maternal grandson of Rajaraja Chola I. In this article, we will discuss the Rulers of Cholas Kulottunga I (1070-1122).

Kulottunga I was a Chola Emperor who ruled for 52 years in the 11th century. He also succeeded his father, Rajaraja Narendra, as the Eastern Chalukya Emperor.

- He was one of the sovereigns who bore the title "Kulottunga," which literally means "the exalter of his race" in Tamil, succeeding his cousin Athirajindra.
- He is related to the Chola dynasty through his mother's side and the Eastern Chalukyas through his father's side.
- His accession signalled the beginning of a new era, ushering in a period of internal peace and benevolent administration.
- Kulottunga maintained diplomatic relations with the north Indian city of Kanauj, as well as with countries as far away as Cambodia, Srivijaya, Khmer, Pagan (Burma), and China. He established Chola rule over the Malay Peninsula's Srivijayan province of Kedah.
- In 1079 CE, an inscription in a Taoist temple in Guangzhou declares Kulottunga, King of Chulien (Chola), to be the supreme chief of the Land of San-fo-tsi (Srivijaya).
- Tan Yeok Seong, the inscription's editor, claims that Kulottunga ruled both the Chola and Srivijayan kingdoms. The king of Kadaram (Srivijaya) is mentioned as a vassal of Kulottunga in the small Leyden grant dated 1090 CE.
- Kulottunga, like his predecessors, was a patron of the arts and literature, and the well-known Tamil poem Kalingattuparani, attributed to poet Jayamkondar, was written during his reign.

- His records also attest to a well-organized fiscal and local administration system. During his reign, Kulottunga conducted a massive land survey, which served as the foundation for taxation.
- According to historian Nilakanta Sastri, Kulottunga avoided unnecessary wars and genuinely cared about his subjects' well-being.
- He had a long and prosperous reign marked by unparalleled success that laid the groundwork for the empire's well-being for the next 150 years.
- Under Kulottunga's 45th regnal year, the Chola kingdom remained formidable (c. 1115 CE). Except for a tenuous hold on Lanka, the rest of the empire remained intact.
- The Tungabhadra River served as the dividing line between the Cholas and the Western Chalukyas.
- The Cholas had a firm grip on Vengi, as well as Dakkina Kosala (south-west Kalinga) and parts of Kalinga (proper), including the capital Kalinganagara, the modern Mukhalingam in the Srikakulam district.
- Prince Vikrama Chola reclaimed Port Quilon on the Malabar Coast sometime between c. 1102 and c. 1118 CE.
- When Kulottunga's son Vikrama Chola, the viceroy of Vengi, left south for the latter's coronation near the end of his reign, the northern half of the Vengi kingdom appears to have slipped from his grasp and gone to the Western Chalukyan empire under Vikramaditya VI.
- According to some historians, Kulottunga also lost the province of Gangavadi, the province of the Western Gangas, to Hoysala Vishnuvardhana during this period.
- The latter appears to have attacked and defeated the Chola Viceroy, Adigaiman, who ruled over Kongu and Kannada.

Kulottunga I - Military Conquest

Kulottunga spent the first few years of his reign fighting the various wars and rebellions that had erupted throughout the empire. Apart from the remnants of Athirajendra's rebellion, there was trouble in Lanka, where the southern provinces had declared independence. Kulottunga also had to contend with the Chalukya Vikramaditya, who was never satisfied with Kulottunga's accession to the Chola throne. Kulottunga spent the first few years of his reign dealing with these problems and preparing for war.

Kalinga Wars

- Kulottunga's records contain descriptions of two Kalinga wars. We can deduce from the brief description of the first war that it took place during Kulottunga's youth.
- The second and later invasion occurred after Kulottunga's fortieth regnal year and was the subject of the celebrated Tamil text *Kalingathupparani* by the poet Jayangondar.
- The first Kalinga war appears to have been precipitated by Kalinga aggression against Vengi. The Chola kingdom annexed the southern part of Kalinga as a result of the war.
- The second invasion occurred around 1110 CE and is detailed in Kulottunga's records. The reason for the war is described in the Tamil text *Kalingathupparani* as a response to Kalinga's failure to pay annual tributes to Kulottunga.
- The second invasion of Kalinga was led by his general Karunakara Tondaiman, who defeated Anantavarman Chodaganga of Orissa, who was related to the Chola family, ruler of the Eastern Ganga dynasty.
- Anantavarman Chodaganga had to flee for safety, and the Chola army returned from the Kalinga campaign with vast spoils.

War with Chalukya Vikramaditya VI

- ❖ Kulottunga I was given the title '**Viruduraja Bhayankara,**' which means "reason for the fear of Viruduraja (Vikramaditya VI), the Chalukyan prince."
- ❖ For the majority of his reign, he was successful in maintaining the Cholas' victories over the Chalukyas.
- ❖ Vengi was only temporarily lost to Vikramaditya VI in 1118 when Kulottunga I became ill and recalled his third son Vikrama Chola, a favourite of his, for appointing him as heir to the Chola throne.
- ❖ When Vikrama Chola left for Gangaikonda Cholapuram from Vengi, of which he was the ruler under Kulottunga I, Chalukyan armies invaded Vengi, taking advantage of the Cholas being busy with Vikrama Chola's coronation preparations, and Vengi passed to the Chalukyas for about 4 years.
- ❖ However, after succeeding his father Kulottunga I, Vikrama Chola quickly consolidated his position, and he, too, benefited because by 1125–26, Chalukya Vikramaditya VI himself was old, ailing, and on the verge of death.

- ❖ As a result, the first foe to be dealt with was the Western Chalukya Vikramaditya VI, who discovered that Kulottunga was standing in the way of his ambitions to unite his kingdom with the Vengi kingdom.
- ❖ The two kingdoms had become more closely united than ever before with Kulottunga's accession to the Chola throne. In 1075 CE, Vikramaditya led an expedition against Kulottunga.

Sri Lanka Wars

- While the wars with Vikramaditya were still going on, the Sinhala leader, Vijayabahu, declared him ruler of the entire island.
- In 1070 CE, he attacked and defeated Chola forces from his enclave in the Rohana district.
- The territories near Anuradhapura were then occupied by Vijayabahu.
- Kulottunga sent reinforcements, and a bloody battle near Anuradhapura repulsed Vijayabahu.

Pandyan Conflicts

- Kulottunga turned his attention to the south after concluding his wars with Vikramaditya VI.
- The Pandya kingdom never accepted Chola rule, and its rulers were a constant source of contention for the Chola emperors.
- Pandya took advantage of the turmoil in the Chola country during Kulottunga's controversial accession to reassert their independence.
- Kulottunga could not afford to take this situation lightly, as the loss of the Pandya territories posed a serious threat to the Chola kingdom's very existence.
- As soon as the Chalukyan war ended, Kulottunga devoted all of his energy to putting down revolts in the Pandya and Kerala territories.

Vengi

- While Kulottunga was in Lanka, the Tripura ruler, Yakshakanaradeva, raided the Vengi kingdom. This, however, was a raid for booty rather than an invasion for territorial gains.

- The intruders were quickly repulsed by Vijayaditya, the Vengi king. Kulottunga delegated Vengi administration to Vijayaditya.
- In 1076 CE, after the death of Vijayaditya, Kulottunga took over the administration of Vengi under direct Chola rule and appointed his son Rajaraja Mummudi Chola viceroy of the province.
- Vira Choda, his younger brother, was appointed Viceroy until 1084 CE. Vira Choda was succeeded by another son of Kulottunga, Rajaraja Chodaganga, who ruled as Vengi Viceroy between 1084 and 1089.
- As Viceroy, he was succeeded by Vikrama Chola.

Kulottunga I - Administration

- **Gangaikondacholapuram** served as the capital of Kulottunga. Kanchi was the next most important city, with a palace and an "abhisheka mandapam" (royal bathing hall) from which the king issued many charters.
- According to the king's inscriptions, fiscal and local administration was highly organised. He conducted a large-scale land survey, which served as the foundation for taxation.
- He promoted free trade by eliminating tolls and transit fees, earning him the moniker "**Sungamtavirrtton**," which translates as "one who abolished tolls."
- Kulottunga abolished the previous system of appointing Chola-Pandya viceroys to the southern territories.
- Instead, the king established military cantonments to protect his interests and collect tribute, but he did not interfere with the internal administration of conquered territories, which he delegated to native chiefs and feudatories.

Kulottunga I - Religious

- Kulottunga's empire was secular in nature, and the king promoted both Saivism and Vaishnavism. The king and his family members continued to make donations to the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram.
- He was tolerant of other religions, such as Buddhism, and renewed grants to the Chulamani Vihanra, a Buddhist monastery in Nagapattinam.
- Historians disagree on the identification of Krimikanta Chola, the persecutor of Vaishnavite acharya Ramanuja, with Kulottunga.

- One reason for this disagreement is that Ramanuja is said to have returned to the Chola kingdom from Hoysala Vishnuvardhana's court after a 12-year exile (upon the death of the Chola king), whereas Kulottunga ruled for 52 years.
- According to some scholars, Kulottunga was secular during his early and middle years and persecuted Vaishnavites near the end of his reign, succumbing to Saivite pressure.
- There is reason to believe that the king encouraged Vaishnavism in his later years, as his records show him donating to Vishnu shrines.
- In the 40th year of his reign, for example, he visited the Ulagalandaperumal temple in Kanchipuram with his two queens, Tribuhavanamudaiyal and Solakulavalli, and made benefactions.

Kulottunga I - Art and Architecture

- ❖ Kulottunga was an arts and architecture patron. Jayamkondar, the poet-laureate, is said to have adorned his court. He is credited with writing the famous poem Kalingattuparani.
- ❖ Some scholars believe that the poet Kambar was a contemporary of Kulottunga I, and that the Ramavataram was written during his reign. Others date him to Kulottunga Chola II or III's reign.
- ❖ Similarly, some believe Ottakoothar, the author of the three Ulas, the Kulothunga Cholan Ula, the Vikraman Chola Ula, and the Rajaraja Cholan Ula, lived during his reign, while others believe he lived during the reigns of his successors, Vikrama Chola, Kulottunga II, and Rajaraja II.
- ❖ Kulottunga I and his son quadrupled the size of the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple.
- ❖ The Amritaghateswarar Shiva temple in Melakadambur was also built during the reign of Kulottunga Chola I. It is known as Karakkoil, and it is thought to be the first shrine built in the shape of a chariot with wheels drawn by spirited horses.
- ❖ The temple contains a king's inscription from the 43rd year of his reign, which corresponds to 1113 CE.
- ❖ Kulottunga Chozhapuram, now known as Thungapuram, was a hive of religious activity during his reign. Because the city's streets are laid out in the shape of Madurai (square), it is known as Siru (small) Madurai.

- ❖ Kulottunga built two temples in Siru Madurai, one for Lord Siva called Sokkanathar temple and the other for Lord Vishnu called Lord Vinava Perumal Temple or Varadaraja perumal temple.
- ❖ Kulottunga also had cordial relations with the Gahadval kings of central India, who worshipped Lord Surya as their tutelary deity.
- ❖ Later, influenced by his visits to the Gahadvala kingdom, Kulottunga constructed several temples dedicated to the Sun God, most notably the Suryanar temples at Pudukkottai and Nagapattinam.

Kulottunga I – Inscriptions

- The majority of Kulottunga's inscriptions begin with the phrase "pugal madu vilanga" or "pugal sulnda punari."
- The former details his conquest of the Cheras, Pandyas, and Vikramaditya VI, while the latter is even more detailed and includes details of his early life, such as his heroics in Chakrakotta and Vayiragram, and how he came to wear the excellent Chola country crown of jewels.
- Pushya is mentioned as his birth star in an inscription from Kanchi that begins with the introduction "Pugal madu."
- Another inscription from the Tripurantakesvara temple in Chingleput district mentions the resale of some lands purchased in Virarajendra Chola's second year.
- During his early years, the king went by the name Rajakesarivarman alias Rajendracholadeva. We have an inscription from the second year of the reign of King Kolar. He is known as Rajakesarivarman alias Rajendra Chola deva, and his exploits are recounted in Sakkarakottam and Vayiragram.

Chalukya – Chola Relations

With the death of Adhirajendra in 1071 the Chola Empire was left without a lineal successor in the Vijayalaya line. The circumstances under which the last of the Cholas of the Vijayalaya line died have been a matter of controversy. Whether he died a victim of some local rebellion the cause of which cannot be precisely determined or not, political confusion overtook the Chola country.

There were forces outside the Chola kingdom, for example Vikramaditya VI, which would willingly interfere to inflame the condition there. But such a situation was not allowed

to develop by the intrepid action of Rajendra II of Vengi. This Rajendra II, as we have seen above, had married Madurantaki, daughter of the Chola emperor Rajendra II. His father Rajarajanarendra had married Ammangadevi, daughter of the Chola Rajendra I. His father Vimaladitya had married Kundavai, daughter of Rajaraja I Chola.

Thus for three generations the Eastern Chalukyan princes had married in the Imperial Chola family and they came to feel that they belonged as much, to the Chola family as to the Eastern Chalukyan. Further Rajendra II of Vengi, according to the Kalingattupparani, spent his childhood days in Gangaikondacholapuram and was a familiar favourite to the princes and the people of the Chola country.

It is under these circumstances that Rajendra II moved into the political vacuum created by the death of Adhirajendra. It will not be wrong, however, to call his accession to the Chola throne an usurpation for he did not belong to the Chola family nor did he conquer the country; since, illegal though peaceful takeover is also an usurpation.

His Early Activities

There are interesting questions raised regarding the activities of Rajendra II of Vengi before his accession to the Chola throne. He was perhaps born in 1040 and could not have been more than 20 or 22 years old when his father passed away and the Vengi throne was seized by his uncle Vijayaditya VII. From about AD 1062 therefore to AD 1071 when he became the Chola emperor his whereabouts and other activities are not fully accounted for. His own inscriptions say that depending only on his personal strength he confounded the enemies, defeated Daravarsha of Chakrakuta etc.

The Kalingattupparani says that he was made crown prince by Vira Rajendra and that he conquered Vayirakaram and Chakkarakkottam. Basing himself on these references Nilakanta Sastri concludes that Rajendra II of Vengi spent the best part of the period AD 1063 to AD 1070 in the region of the modern Bastar state.

There is also a reference in one of his inscriptions to his spending his time in conquests in the Purvadesa. The Purvadesa must be sought for in the east. Virarajendra claims that he reconquered Sri Vijaya and we know that he had practically adopted the prince of Vengi in the Chola family.

So it is reasonable to suppose that Rajendra II of Vengi was busy beyond the Bay of Bengal reconquering Sri Vijaya on behalf of the Chola emperor and that he returned to the

Tamil country apprehending a confused political situation, and possibly to make capital out of it. He was in time to capture the Chola throne.

It has been generally held by historians so far that Adhirajendra died in 1070 and that the accession of Kulottunga I must also have been in 1070. But inscriptions recently discovered show that Kulottunga's accession must be dated after May 1071.

Kulottunga I ruled from AD 1071 to AD 1122. It is claimed by certain scholars who have recently discovered a hero stone inscription that according to that epigraph the last year of Kulottunga's reign will be c.1127. In any case he ruled for more than half a century.

The Chola and the Chalukya

Though Kulottunga I succeeded in gaining the Chola throne easily and could also stabilise himself there he remembered that he left behind in Vengi a hostile situation and that in the Western Chalukyan kingdom the man in power was his natural enemy Vikramaditya VI. These kings were more or less equally matched in ability and in opportunity.

Kulottunga had acquired a vast and overgrown kingdom but also a traditional hostility between the Cholas and the Western Chalukyas. Vikramaditya VI was, it may be remembered, the son-in-law of Virarajendra and he had taken steps to instal his brother-in-law Adhirajendra safely on the Chola throne.

He had also interfered in the affairs of Vengi in support of Vijayaditya. Now that Kulottunga had disappointed Vikramaditya VI in respect of both of his expectations, it was natural that the Chalukyan king should constantly conspire to baulk the progress of the Chola emperor. Vikramaditya VI was a competent and cunning man given equally to open conquest and conspiracy. He had attempted these with success against his own elder brother and usurped the throne of Kalyani.

To make his position safe he had befriended Virarajendra and had been involved in Chola politics. The accession of Kulottunga at one stroke frustrated Vikramaditya's plans. So the Chalukyan king made warlike preparations against him. Kulottunga did not underestimate the capacity of his Chalukyan foe. So he secured the friendship and military alliance of Somesvara II in order to bring pressure to bear upon Vikramaditya from the north as well as from the south.

The Chalukya was not slow to note the developments. He prepared to deal with both foes at once. In the first engagement between the Chalukya and the Chola the sources of the

two sides give different accounts of what happened. Bilhana, the chronicler of Vikramaditya, credits him with total victory, while the Chola inscriptions say that Kulottunga obliged 'Vikki' to turn his back again and again on many days.

The battle was fought about AD 1076 and this resulted surely in the continued Chola occupation of Gangavadi. The war in its first round did not alter the original picture. Both contestants improved their strength, the Chola expansion in the west and the Chalukyan expansion in the north augmenting the strength of the two parties. The Kalingattupparani and the Vikrama Cholan Ula claim victories for the Chola in the west.

Now Vikramaditya VI had appointed his younger brother Jayasimha as the governor of Banavasi which lay to the north of Gangavadi and in the borderland between Chola and Chalukyan territories. Jayasimha oppressed by his brother's dictatorial ways tried to conspire against him with the help of the Chola. Since Kulottunga was not interested in the Chalukyan civil war, Vikramaditya had no difficulty in controlling Jayasimha.

Having settled matters with the Chalukya more or less satisfactorily, Kulottunga began to mend matters in the south. Chola supremacy in the Pandyan country began with Parantaka I, was consolidated by Rajaraja I and was made into a viceroyalty by Rajendra I.

The Chola grip over the Pandyan country perhaps relaxed during the political confusion in the Chola country consequent on the death of Adhirajendra. So Kulottunga I had needed to tighten his hold over the Pandyas. So far as the Cholas were concerned the Pandyan country included Kerala. Within five years of his coronation he was campaigning in the south. We hear of five Pandya kings being defeated in the fortress of Kottaru which was reduced and set fire to; the Keralas also were subdued. 'He seized the pearl fisheries and controlled the Podiyil Mountains'. Vilinam and Salai were again conquered. None of the sources helps us to identify his enemies.

At a later period Kulottunga undertook a campaign in the south in the course of which a Chola general by name Naralokavira who bore the title Kalingaraya helped the king to restore order in a land which had become constant' rebellious. But the Pandya country could never be completely conquered and settled. It is said that Kulottunga was not over-anxious to fight for the restoration of lost territory" which ultimately were only conquered territories, since his main preoccupation was to look after the welfare of his subjects in Cholamandalam.

His policy in regard to the conquest of fresh territories seems to have been somewhat different from that of his immediate predecessors upto Rajaraja I. It was perhaps a voluntary reversal of a forward policy of imperialism but did not amount to withdrawal from the imperial outposts under pressure or out of weakness which characterised the Cholas who came after Kulottunga III.

Chola Administration

Central Government

The Cholas had an excellent system of administration. The emperor or king was at the top of the administration. The extent and resources of the Chola Empire increased the power and prestige of monarchy. The big capital cities like Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram, the large royal courts and extensive grants to the temples reveal the authority of the king. They undertook royal tours to increase the efficiency of the administration. There was elaborate administrative machinery comprising various officials called perundanam and sirudanam.

Revenue

The land revenue department was well organized. It was called puravubarithinaikkalam. All lands were carefully surveyed and classified for assessment of revenue. The residential portion of the village was called Ur nattam. These and other lands such as the lands belonging to temples were exempted from tax. Besides land revenue, there were tolls and customs on goods taken from one place to another, various kinds of professional taxes, dues levied on ceremonial occasions like marriages and judicial fines. During the hard times, there were remissions of taxes and Kulottunga I became famous by abolishing tolls and earned the title Sungam Tavirtta Cholan. The main items of government expenditure were the king and his court, army and navy, roads, irrigation tanks and canals.

Military Administration

The Cholas maintained a regular standing army consisting of elephants, cavalry, infantry and navy. About seventy regiments were mentioned in the inscriptions. The royal troops were called Kaikkolaperumpadai. Within this there was a personal troop to defend the king known as Velaikkarar. Attention was given to the training of the army and military cantonments called kadagams existed. The Cholas paid special attention to their navy. The naval achievements of the

Tamils reached its climax under the Cholas. They controlled the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. In fact, the Bay of Bengal became a Chola lake for some time.

Provincial Administration

The Chola Empire was divided into mandalams and each mandalam into valanadus and nadus. In each nadu there were a number of autonomous villages. The royal princes or officers were in charge of mandals. The valanadu was under periyannattar and nadu under nattar. The town was known as nagaram and it was under the administration of a council called nagarattar.

Village Assemblies

The system of village autonomy with sabhas and their committees developed through the ages and reached its culmination during the Chola rule. Two inscriptions belonging to the period of Parantaka I found at Uthiramerur provide details of the formation and functions of village councils. That 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 land,
- Own residence, above thirty years and below seventy years of age and
- Knowledge of Vedas.

However, certain norms of disqualification were also mentioned in the inscriptions. They were those who had been members of the committees for the past three years.

- ❖ Those who had failed to submit accounts as committee members.
- ❖ Those who had committed sins.
- ❖ Those who had stolen the property of others.

From the persons duly nominated, one was to be chosen for each ward by the kudavolai system for a year. The names of eligible persons were written on palm-leaves and put into a pot. A young boy or girl would take out thirty names each for one ward. They were divided into six variyamas such as samvatsara variyam, erivariyam, thotta variyam, pancha variyam, pon variyam and puravuvari variyam to take up six different functions of the village administration. The committee members were called variya perumakkal. They usually met in the temple or under a tree and passed resolutions. The number of committees and ward members varied from village to village.

Land Grants and Temple Administration

Temple served as a powerful social and economic entity and a source of religious inspiration to the people. They possessed fortresses, treasuries, court-houses, parks, fairs, exhibition sheds and hail of learning and assessment. Temples in addition to secular activities, maintained dose touch with the economic life of the people. Temples were constructed on a large scale. It appointed various categories of artists to perform religious functions and officials for temple administration.

The inscription of this period mentioned the appointment of dancing girls, dancing masters, singers, pipers, drummers, flute players, toilers, potters, barbars, astrologers, accountants etc. Temples provided salaries to them. Probably, they were paid by grants of lands. The Brahmins conducted prayers and sacrifices in the temples. The appointment of these posts was hereditary in nature. Besides permanent posts, the temple appointed temporary servants, to carry out repair works in the temples. A house-site and a particular area of land was given to them as remuneration. If land was not given as wages, a specific quantity of paddy or a portion of daily food prepared.in the temple was given as wages. Sometimes, land, house-site and food were given as full wage. For certain jobs, a specific quantity of paddy every day and a fixed number of gold coins per year were given as wages. The wages of the servants vary from temple to temple and persons to person based on the nature of jobs. The appointed servants of the temple frequently washed the idols and, cloths of the idols with holy waters. The temple fixed speical salaries for them.

The washermen supplied cotton rags for torches. He was also utilised to carry the torch in front of the goddess. The servants maintained close touch with the temples and even laid down their life for them. Temples in the Chola kingdom determined the economic condition of the people by providing job opportunities. The temple constructed during the period of study showed the involvement of the ruler in Hindu religion and his attitude towards fine arts. It also reflected the economic background of the ruler. The temples constructed by Rajaraja and Rajendra at Tanjore and Gangaikonda Cholapuram were the best examples and they served as historical monuments even today. Certain temples possessed enormous wealth in the form of fertile lands donated by kings and nobles. Various offerings from the well-wishers for specific purposes accumulated in the temples. These temple lands or devedana villages or lands were fully exempted from taxation. For example, Rajaraja I donated a number of villages to Tanjore temple. Thus temples acted as landlords. The lands were either cultivated by the servants of the temples

permit on lease. The buildings which belonged to the temple were also given to the servants for rent. The supervisors of the temples collected the rents regularly. The rents, the income from the land and the regular offerings were the common income of the temples. Some temples had a large income, whereas others had limited revenue. Temples too owned gardens. It grew flowers and fruits. Arrangements were made for the disposal of fruits.

Flowers were mainly used for religious purposes. The temples acted as a centre for relief to the poor. This was another meritorious service of the temple. It collected endowments for feeding, clothing and imparting education to the poor. The endowed property for this purpose was amalgamated with that of the temple. Some temples also had large educational establishments. An inscription of 1122 A.D. mentioned a gift of 44 villages at Kurnool by the Chola ruler. The weavers, who made handicrafts, were permitted to colonise these villages. The Ennayiram inscription mentioned the grant of 45 Velis of land for similar purposes. The surplus income of certain important temples was also used for charitable purposes. In certain temples, the surplus amount was utilised. These articles were kept in the temple as reserve fund. Temples acted as an owner of house property. They had separate rules for the construction and occupation of the houses.

Mainly, these houses were allotted to the houseless temple servants for rents. The rent collected from these houses was utilised to look after their repairs and maintenance. The coconut trees planted in the house premises supplied oil to the temple. As part of encouraging intensive cultivation, the waste lands of the temples were leased for reclamation. The lessee was directed to cultivate plantain, sugarcane, turmeric, ginger, areca and coconut. A minimum tax was collected from these lands. The tax was paid as gold or in grain. This was an important economic service of the temple. These reclaimed areas were utilised to inhabit additional Brahmin families. For example, Rajaraja I ordered to inhabit 25 Brahmin families in Tiruvalangadu temple land. This settlement was called as Rajendra Choiappadi. In turn, the new settlers were entrusted to maintain fifteen lamps of the temple. The attitude of the temple towards tenants was liberal and humane. The temple lent money to the servants from its treasury to meet their urgent requirements. It also provided loans to the tenants for cultivation and maintenance of the lands, when they were in distress. The temple also lent money to the parents to arrange marriage for their daughters. This help consoled the poor parents. The temple too sold a portion of its land for the repair of the breached village tank, if the treasury was empty.

On certain occasions, the temple lent money to the village assemblies to purchase lands for house sites. As the people had great confidence on the safety of the temples, they deposited their wealth in the temples. In this capacity, it served as a safe locker. The temple also served as a consumer. The inscription of this period mentioned that the servants in the temple used to purchase coconuts, sandal, rice, turmeric, incense, leaves, flowers, lights, gee, salt, pepper, arecaunt and betal nuts in addition to oil mustard, pulse, sugar, plantains, curds, and firewoods produced in the temple lands. The temple servants also had fascination towards spices like rosewater, musk, camphor and European saffron. Due importance was given to the cultivation of temple lands. Priority was given to the supply of water from village tanks and channels to the temple lands. At the same time, the public were not permitted to use the water from temple tank, mainly reserved for it. The persecutors were excommunicated from the religious group. Likewise, the cows and sheep which belonged to the temple were not restricted to graze on certain lands in the villages. The property which belonged to a person, who died without issue, was amalgamated with Devadhanam land. Again, the villagers were asked to set apart a certain amount of money to the temple on marriage occasions by private agreement. The temple goods were also exempted from petty tolls at the time of its conveyance.

The villalge assembly provided amble street lights at the time of the processions- of gods on village streets. The accumulated wealth in the temple was a permanent menace as its safety was threatered. The Tanjore inscription presented a list of articles such as bells, Jewells, copper and gold and other offerings in various forms donated to the temple as gifts. On certain occasions certain articles of the temple were sold in auction due to its difficulty to protect them from robbers. No wonder, the wealth of the temple was an attraction to the invaders. In 1310 A.D. Malikkafur carried away 192000 kilos of gold estimated at a hundred million sterling of English money. Barbose also testified to the existence of great wealth in the temples.

Socio-Economic Life

Caste system was widely prevalent during the Chola period. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoy special privileges. The inscriptions of the later period of the Chola rule mention about two major divisions among the castes.

The Chola rulers were Hindus. They followed the tradition of the Pallavas and enforced the Vamasiramadharmam in their country. To enforce this, they constructed temples throughout their empire. They constructed temples based on agamas. Almost all the rulers since Vijayalaya,

considered the construction of the temples as part of their administration and donated wealth in the form of money or land. They considered it as a service to god and religion. The land donated to the temple was known as Devadhanam. In the temples, Brahmins were appointed to conduct regular religious ceremonies. The rulers spent the major portion of state income for the construction of temples. Moreover, they were provided with endowments for the regular functioning of the temple. It possessed huge wealth in the form of gold, gold ornaments, precious stones, vessels, idols etc.

The revenue of the temple and temple lands was kept preserved in it. Thus, it acted as a landlord and treasury. As temples developed, the position of the Brahmins became stronger. When the activities of the temple increased, it required the service of more Brahmins. So Brahmin families were invited from northern part of India to settle permanently in the Chola kingdom. As a result, Brahmins from Telugu, Kannada, Mysore, Gujarat etc. regions came and settled in different parts of the kingdom. Special grants were awarded for their settlement. These grants were called Brahmadanam lands. The villages inhabited by the Brahmins were called Chadurvedimangalam. It was known by various names such as Mangalam, Agaram, Brahmapuram, Agraharam, Agra -Brahmadeya, Agra-Brahmadesa, Brahmadesam and Brahmamangalam. They were provided with all facilities. These lands were exempted from taxation. Separate force was deployed for their protection. Brahmins were also provided with food on certain important occasions at the expense of the temple. An inscription of Kulothunga I mentioned an endowment for feeding the Brahmins on new moon day. Most of these settlements existed in and around the temples. They received royal favours then and there of and consolidated their position. They were treated as highcaste in the society.

The Brahmins were respected and honoured. They fully involved themselves in religious activities and interpreted Vedas, puranas and Upanishads. Epic stories were also narrated to the common men. They also acted as Rajaguru to the kings. These highly educated and diplomatic Brahmins grabbed the favour of the ruler and served under him as advisors and administrators. Most of the Chief Ministers and Commanders in Chief of the army were the Brahmins. King appointed them as juries in the court. They got recognition for their posts and received several concessions and grants from the rulers. The temples were closely associated with the society. It gave employment opportunities to the people. People worked in the temple as artist and labourers in the temple lands. The temples also accommodated potters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths and

washermen in the temple premises to purchase articles required for them. The employment potentiality and capacity available in his temple provided material Comforts to hundreds of persons. Thus the temple provided the means of livelihood for a considerable number of people in the society.

The Tanjore and Tiruvorriyur temples inscriptions gave a clear account of the servants who worked in the temple and their remunerations. The temples provided accommodation, to the houseless servants. The houses constructed to the temple premises were distributed among them for a minimum rate of rent. The temple also rendered meritorious services to the people by providing food and cloth. Much attention was given to the education of the illiterate in the society. The local temple was utilised to impart religious education to them, it also rendered medical aid to the public. As a debtor, the temple lent money to the tenants of the village for cultivation and maintenance of their lands. Thus the temple encouraged cultivation in society. The commodities produced in the land related to the temple solved to some extent, the food scarcity. The temples also solved local problems. Thus it maintained close touch with the people, the consumer items produced in the Devadana and Brahmadana lands had great demand from the public. The temple also served a centre of music and entertainment. Various performances of the artists, including dance were held in temples and madams. It enlightened the local population. Thus the temple acted as an agent for the development of cultural, economic and social life of the people.

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Likewise, the development, of the villages and the towns were closely associated with the temples. The temple was the nucleus around which, a town, in course of time grew. It attracted a large number of the population, because, cities and villages were closely connected with the deities in the temple. As temples were the only recognised institution, people gave due respect and importance to them. The political and economic situation that prevailed in this period compelled the people to depend more on temples. People began to settle very close to the Devadana and Brahmadana lands and considered temple as their guide and saviour. Most of the temples exploited the situation and brought them under their control and guidance. Thus the temple oriented society developed. The enforcement of Varnasiramadharman confirmed the domination and status of Brahmin in religion and society. They began to interfere in the affairs of the village and regularised its activities. They even acted as landlords and collected taxes from lands, houses and articles in the name of temple and government. The privileged high caste Brahmins treated the economically backward and, low natives as untouchables and slaves. Their legitimate rights were denied. Hence, the unprivileged Idangai sects, protested against the inhuman activities of the privileged Valangai groups.

As temples were mainly responsible for the dominance of Valankai, the common people turned against the temples. The Idangai people destroyed temples and looted the Pandarams.

People even opposed the feudal society and refused to pay taxes. In 1071 A.D. the Chadurvedimangalam of the Brahmins were burnt.

The inscriptions of this period mentioned such social unrests. Thus the negative attitude of the temples and high castes created unrest in society. Valangai and Idangai groups the broad division of the population of the Chola country into valangai or right - land and Idangai or left - hand highlighted the social inequality that existed in society. The origin of this division is unknown. It was equated with an incident in the royal court of Karikaia. On one occasion, two sections, of the people laid their disputes before Karikaia, the sangam ruler. At that time, one group stood on the right hand side of the ruler and the other on the left hand side. Legend says, the group that stood on the right side of the monarch was Vaiangai sects and the group that stood on the left side as Indangai. The puranic evidences attributed that there were 98 tribes each in Valangai and Idangai groups. But the chola inscriptions mentioned them as two inimical groups. Later, these groups flourished and had influence in politics, society and even in military. Several regiments of the Chola army were counted as of the Valangai in the reign of Rajaraja I. People even used these divisions to highlight their status. Generally, the high caste wealthy people in the Vaiangai division treated the unprivileged agriculturist and other tax payers as Indangai divisions.

Thus in the Chola period these divisions attained social colours and quarreled each other as enemies. The Vaiangai groups enjoyed political, social, economic and religious benefits. They were treated as low castes and prohibited to get education, government jobs, protection, land rights, temple entry and other civic rights. Disparity was shown in temples. These divisions affected even in the class of courtesans and dancing girls. Thus the Idangai was in an awkward position. The deep-seated antagonism between these two sections often burst into, open hostilities and resulted in unlawful activities against the government and highcastes.

Religion

The temple and the matha were the two great gifts of mediaeval Hinduism to South India. These two institutions expanded gradually and consolidated their position, in Tamilnadu. To a large scale, religion and temple controlled and regularised the activities of the people. The Chola period witnessed the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism, the two branches of Hinduism and the development of various religious philosophies. The Chola period was the age of South Indian Saivism and Vaishnavism. The Chola rulers patronized Saivism and constructed a number of

temples. Most of these temples were, dedicated to Siva. The queens of the royal family also showed keen interest towards Hinduism. They even constructed temples and granted endowments. The contribution of Sembian Mahadevi, Vanavan Mahadevi etc., to Saivism was noteworthy. Likewise, the Saiva saints Nayanmars dedicated their life to Saivism. To pay homage to them, their images were installed and worshipped in most of the Siva temples. Festivals were even conducted in their names. Their images were also taken in procession on festival days. In the name of Nayanmars, mathas were also established at important places like Kanchi, Valivalam and Tiruvaligai.

The hymns of the saints were sung in the temples. As the hymns were written in the language of common people it penetrated into their hearts without much strain. The Saivites of Tamilnadu maintained cordial relation with the saivites of North India. It enabled them to intensify religious activities in the Chola kingdom. The Saiva saint Nambiyandar nambi, the contemporary of Rajaraja I and Rajendra I, compiled the twelve thirumaris of Saivism. Again, Saivasiddhanta philosophies developed on the principles of Appar, Sambandar, Sundarar and Manikkavasagar.

Saints, who belonged to Sanghara charriyar groups, interpreted the philosophies of this religion for the convenient understanding of the people. Among them, Meykandar, Aral Nandi, Maraiganar, and Umapathy were important. References were also made to Siva followers like Kapalika and Kalamukar. Vaishnavism and Saivism were the two eyes of Hinduism. But in the Chola period equal treatment was not given to Saivism. It had only limited temples. Still, this religion flourished due to the dedication of certain saints and scholars. Among them, Nadamuni was noteworthy. Vaishnavism faced various vicissitudes of fortune under Cholas.

Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy

Meykandar, Arulnandi, Umapati and Manavasagam were prominent in evolving the Saiva Siddhanta philosophers. Meykandar was the son of one Achyuta Kalappaia of Pennadam in South Arcot district. He was a student of Paranjothi and learnt the essentials of Saiva Siddhantar. He was called as Meykandar. His masterpiece was Sivagnanabodham. He belonged to the period of Rajaraja III. Arulnandi was a native of Tirutturaiyur near Villupuram. He was a student of Meykandar. He was the author of Unmaivilakkam. The next Saiva Siddhanta' philosophers were Manavasagam and Umapathi. The Saiva siddhanta philosophical system was based on the three essential fundamentals of Pali, Pasu (Soul) and Pasam.

Vira Saivism

Vira Saivism had its origin in the Karnataka region. Then it spread to Andhara and Tamilnadu regions. They worshipped Siva in the form of Linga and rejected the authority of the Vedas. They had no faith in the doctrine of rebirth. They opposed child marriage and recognised the remarriage of widows. It stood against the interest of the Brahmins. This religious philosophical movement became popular at the expense of Jainism and Buddhism in the Kannada region. It also led to the enrichment of Kannada literature.

Saiva-Vaishnava Conflict

The Saiva and Vaishnava relations were cordial in the early part of Chola history. In certain places, the Saiva and Vaishnava temples were constructed very closely. We can see this at Chidambaram. Again, the habit of installing the Vaishnava image in Siva temples and Siva images in Vaishnava temple was common tradition in the Chola period. Likewise, the stories of Devarams, Thiruvagasam and Nalayiradivya Prabandam were depicted in all Vaishnava and Siva temples. These instances revealed that religious toleration existed among them. But later, these religions abused each other and acted as enemies. Each religion reacted strongly to the other. During the reign of Vikrama Chola, he removed the idol of Govindaraja for Nadaraja in Chidambaram temple. This was extended even in other temples located at Tirumaiyan, Pudukkottai etc.

The Vaishnava and Siva saints also quarrelled each other in certain places. Due to dispute, the temples in certain places were suspended. Savites were instructed not to mingle with Vaishnavites in certain places. Severe punishments were given to those who violated this instruction. With a view to maintaining discipline in the state, the government adopted severe measures. The revolutionaries were persecuted and others were driven out of the kingdom. Still then, the Chola rulers never forgot to extend their assistance to the Vaishnava temples. The Madams Besides the temples, the Chola rulers erected madams through out the country for religious purposes. Religious meetings and conferences were held in madams. Madams were also used for educational purposes. They taught grammar, medicine and religion. They provided food for the Brahmins and Saints. Like temples, madams also possessed landed endowments. On certain occasions, it supplied salt, drinking water and light freely to the travellers. Medical assistance was given to the patients.

Buddhism and Jainism

The revival in Hinduism caused the decline of Jainism and Buddhism in Tamilnadu. The Chola rulers paid equal treatment to all religions. The Inscription of this period showed the donations of the Chola rulers to the Jain temples. Though Buddhism and Jainism declined, they maintained their control in certain centres in Tamilnadu. The Nagamman temple at Nagercoil was a Jain centre till 11th century. At Tanjore, a Jain shrine was constructed with the assistance of Kulottunga I. Generally, the Chola rulers never adopted negative attitude against the Jains. But in certain places, Jain areas were converted into Hindu centres. Even at the time of its decline, Jainism rendered meritorious services to the growth of Tamil language. Thiruthakkadevar was a Jain who composed Sivaga chindamani Perumkathai also belonged to this period. Unlike Jainism, Buddhism declined rapidly in this period. Though it declined, its contribution to Tamil literature and society cannot be underestimated. Amman worship was not a new innovation of the Chola period. The Tamils were very familiar with Ammai since the sangam period. It was revived in the Chola period and they constructed a number of temples known as Thirukamakottam for this deity. The habit of constructing temples for this deity became popular since Rajaraja I. Separate places were provided for Ammai in Saiva and Vaishna temples in Tamil Nadu. People worshipped this deity to get protection from evils. Vinayaka Worship Vinayaka was new to Tamils. It was not found in the list of gods of Dravidians.

The Aryans who invaded the Tamils also disliked it. It was introduced into Tamilnadu during the reign of Narasimhavarman I, the Pallava. He brought this deity from Vatapi as a monument of his success in the war against Pulakesin II. Vinayaka was not permitted in any of the temples in Tamilnadu, till the reign of Rajasimha. Since then, it was given due importance in Hindu temples. The temples at Pangkudi, Thruppanthalur and Thirukkattalai gave importance to this deity by providing separate place to it. Now it is a popular deity in Tamilnadu.

Navagraha Worship

Navagraha worship became prominent in Tamilnadu during the Chola period. The Chola rulers had the practice of conducting festivals on their birthdays. In similar manner, the Navagraha worship was also practised in the chola kingdom. When it became popular, separate temples were constructed for the worship of Sun. Kulottunga I provided facilities for the arrangements of a festival of this deity Provisions were also made to conduct festivals at the time of solar eclipse. This Chola period witnessed the domination of various religions in Tamilnadu.

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, ardhmandapa, 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.

After defeating the Kalabhras the First Pandyan period ruler ruled between 550 AD to 950 AD. And after the fall of Pallavas and Chollas, Once again Pandyan ruled this period was referred as Second Pandyan Empire starting from 1190 AD to 1310 AD. Thiruvandipuram inscription explains about the warfare of Maravarman Sundara Pandya.

Sculpture and Bronze

Airavateswara temple at Darasuram is a classic example of Chola art and architecture. It has heavily adorned pillars and richly sculpted walls. In addition to architecture, the Chola period is also considered remarkable for its sculptures and bronzes. Many of the sculptures of Chola period can be found in various museums of the world and in the temples of South India. Some of the examples of its remarkable sculptures are figures of Siva in a variety of forms, Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi, and Siva saints. Though iconographic conventions were formed by the long tradition of the period but it is believed that the sculptors worked in great freedom in the 11th and the 12th centuries. Classic grace and grandeur were the features of sculptures and bronzes of this period. The best illustration of this sculpture can be seen in the image of Nataraja-the Divine Dancer.

Purpose of the Icons

Though the stone sculptures and the inner image placed in sanctum remained fixed, changing religious concepts, especially during the 10th century, insisted that the deities take part in public functions. Large detailed bronze images of deities were created to meet the demand of the people. These were taken out of the temple during daily rituals, processions and festivals. The holes and round lugs which were found on the bases of these sculptures were perhaps made to carry the heavy images on the poles. A number of bronze images of the period show that bronze was considered an important metal in the Chola period. During worship, these images used to be covered in silk cloths garlands as well as jewels. The tradition of decorating the bronze images is at least a thousand years old.

Self Assessment Questions

1. Examine the reign of raja raja chola i, highlighting his contributions to the political and cultural landscape of the chola empire.
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2. Analyze the overseas expansion under rajendra chola.
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3. Discuss the chalukya-chola relations during the later chola period, focusing on the military conflicts and diplomatic engagements between the two powerful south indian dynasties.
.....
4. Examine the administrative system of the later cholas, emphasizing the structure of governance, revenue administration, and the role of local governance in maintaining imperial control.
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5. Explore the role of land grants and temple administration in the socio-economic life of the later chola period.
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6. Discuss the impact of chola patronage on the growth of temples, the management of resources, and the integration of religious institutions into the administrative framework.
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UNIT - V

The Second Pandyan Empire (1190-1312 CE) – Triangular conflict among Cholas, Pandyas and Hoysalas – Social and Economic Life – Malik Kafur's Invasion

Second Pandyan Empire

Objectives

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

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 relationship between them is 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 Virabhishekara, 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 decease 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. Parakramabahu the king of Ceylon surrendered. 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.

Civil War

The murder of Kulasekhara was followed by a severe civil war among the sons which proved to be fatal to the Pandyan kingdom. Maravarman Kulasekhara had two sons namely; Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya. Of these Sundara Pandya was his son by his queen whereas Vira Pandya was also his son not by his queen but by a mistress. Kulasekhara I arranged for the succession of Vira Pandya. The infuriated and the rightful heir to the throne Sundara Pandya invaded Madurai and ascended the throne. As Vira Pandya being shrewd, he challenged his brother and drove out of the country. Sundara Pandya sought the help of Malik Kafur. Taking advantage of the royal rift, Malik Kafur, the general of Ala-ud-din Khilji invaded Madurai in 1311. Thus, the Civil war ended with a foreign invasion and paved the way for the downfall of the second Pandyan Empire. The invasion of Malik Kafur was followed by the invasion of Khusru. Ravivarman Kulasekhara Tiruvadi of Venad also invaded and conquered Tamil Nadu. Finally Ulugh Khan invaded Madurai in 1323 and paved the way for the establishment of the Sultanate of Madurai. The Pandyas, however, continued as local potentates from Tirunelveli and Tenkasi till the 16th century when their line died out.

Triangular Conflict among the Cholas, Pandyas and Hoysalas

Conflicts and alliances were outcomes of the political ambition of the rulers to acquire more and more resources for the efficient functioning of their respective governments. The Chalukyas of Vatapi and the Pallavas of Kanchi were frequently at war with one another. The Pallava monarch Mahendravarman I had expanded the territory of the Pallava dynasty towards the north up to the river Krishna. The Vishnukundins became the neighbouring kingdom located to the north of the Pallavas. Pulakesin II defeated the Vishnukundins and the territory of the Vishnukundins became the part of Chalukyan dynasty. The Chalukyan king made his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana the viceroy of this conquered territory. Later, Vishnuvardhana founded the eastern Chalukyan dynasty or the Chalukyan kingdom of Vengi. With the decline of Vishnukundins the Chalukyans became the neighbouring territory of the Pallavas to the north.

Thus, the expansionist policies of Mahendravarman I and Pulakesin II brought the two emperors together on a battlefield against each other.

This began the constant conflicts between the two dynasties. The third important dynasty which played a significant role in this clash was the Pandyas of Madurai in the Vaigai valley. These three political powers were contemporaries and rose to prominence at almost the same time. The Pandyas and the Chalukyas were the neighbouring kingdoms of the Pallavas. Each wanted to extend their territorial boundaries at the expense of the other. The Pandyas were eager to take control of the fertile Kaveri delta. They saw it befitting to make the Chalukyas of Vatapi, who were constantly at war with the Pallavas, their political ally to realize their political ambition. Accordingly, Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman I - the Pandyan ruler – made an alliance with the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I and attempted to acquire some portion of the Pallava territory. The Pandyas were also at war with the other neighbouring dynasty the Cheras in order to extend their territorial boundaries.

The battles fought and won were always a matter of pride for the victorious ruler. They would demonstrate it through various means. Jayantavarman (645-70 CE), the son of Maravarman Avanisulamani, adopted the epithet of Vanavan which tells us that he had been successful to some extent against the Cheras. The Pandyas also tried to invade Ceylon during the period of the Sinhalese ruler Sena I, devastating the region and carrying away a huge booty. The succeeding Sinhalese emperor Sena II, in order to avenge the Pandyas, invaded the Pandya kingdom and carried away a large sum of booty. The Pandyas also looked for opportunities to interfere in the internecine feuds in the Pallava kingdom.

The Pandyan king Maravarman Rajasimha I (735-765 CE) made an alliance with the Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II and supported Chitramaya for the throne of the Pallava kingdom. The Pandyan ruler defeated the Pallava king Nandivarman II a number of times. In order to highlight this achievement he took the title of Pallava Bhanjana (Breaker of the Pallavas). In the end Chitramaya was killed by a military general of Nandivarman II. But this interference of the Pandyas into the political affairs of the Pallavas and their repeated attacks on the Pallavas alarmed Nandivarman II and he wanted to contain the increasing influence of the Pandyas of Madurai. During the period of Kirtivarman II Dantidurga a feudatory of the Chalukyas and who had high political ambitions, was attempting to carve out an independent territory. He, in the process, attacked the Pallava monarch Nandivarman II. The latter gave a

tough fight to Dantidurga and so, after a negotiation between the two, Dantidurga gave his daughter Reva to Nandivarman II in marriage.

Meanwhile, Dantidurga defeated Kirtivarman II and laid the foundation of the Rashtrakuta empire of Manyakheta. Just as the Chalukyas in alliance with the western Ganga dynasty fought many battles against the Pallavas, or the Pandyas made the Chalukyas their political ally so as to check the political influence of the Pallavas, likewise Nandivarman II after the matrimonial alliance with Dantidurga wanted to lessen the power of the Pandyas, as the Chalukyas of Vatapi were now displaced by Dantidurga. The Pallava monarch was trying to form a confederacy of rulers to support him against the Pandyas.

A kingdom named Kongu located adjacent to the western Ganga dynasty was also one of kingdoms of the confederacy. The emperor of Kongu was defeated by the Pandyan ruler and the kingdom was merged into the Pandyan territory. The Pandyas were also able to advance deep into the Pallava territory. The Pallavas failed in their attempt to stop the Pandyan advance. However, despite many battles, defeats and victories, none of the sides could claim any territorial gains for long. There were continuous attacks and counter-attacks and losses and gains.

Malik Kafur's Invasions

Muslim conquests in the Indian subcontinent mainly took place from the 12th to the 16th centuries. Alauddin Khalji became the Sultan of Delhi in 1296. By the end of 1305, practically the whole of Northern India came under his control following which he concentrated on the conquest of the Deccan. It was his dream to conquer Deccan ever since he secured the crown. His campaigns in the South had both political and economic motives. The glorious wealth of the Deccan attracted his attention. His dream to establish his control over the South which had not until then been conquered by the Muslims, must have led Alauddin to think of conquering South India. At that time, there were four dynasties/ kingdoms in that region the Yadavas of Devagiri under Ramachandra Deva, Kakatiya Dynasty with its capital at Warangal under Prataparudra I and the Hoysalas with its capital at Dwarasamudra under Veera Ballala III. The Pandya kingdom of Madura was ruled by Maravarman Kulasekara. The Hindu rulers of the South were fighting among themselves and therefore they were not in a position to unite against the Muslim invader. Alauddin Khalji called back spare contingents of soldiers from the northwestern frontier and constituted them into an army of the Deccan under the command of General Malik Kafur. He was destined to conquer the whole of the South India under the direction of Sultan Alauddin Khalji. This unit will discuss the history of Muslim invasions in

South India and the conquest of the Pandya Kingdom. Malik Kafur led invasions will also be described.

Social and Economic Condition

Muslim Invasion did affect the pattern of economy and its growth at Madurai. But once the invasion happens, there used to be plunder and demolishing of Hindu temples and merciless killing of Hindus on iron spikes Segment wise when we analyse the changes in Madurai after it was declared Madurai Sultanate as a Sultanate of Madurai in the year 1335 AD, we arrive at an overall picture of the net loss to the Madurai Empire and also the damages to the sentiments of the subjects of Madurai Sultanate, after the extinction of Pandyan Empire. The damage control commenced only after the invasion of Kumara Kampana of the Vijayanagara Empire.

Kafur's Expedition to the Pandya Territory

Malik Kafur commenced his march towards the Pandya territory (called Ma"bar by Muslim chroniclers) from Dwarasamudra on 10 March 1311 and reached the Pandya frontier in five days. Amir Khusrau mentions that, during this march, the army of Delhi Sultanate covered a difficult terrain, where sharp stones tore horse hoofs, and the soldiers had to sleep on ground more uneven than a camel's back.

According to Abdul Malik Isami, the 14th Muslim Invasions century Indian historian and court poet, the defeated Hoysala King Ballala guided the Sultanate's army during the plunder of the Pandya territories. However, historian Banarsi Prasad Saksena expressed his doubts over this claim, as it is not mentioned in the contemporary writings of Khusrau. Isami states that the Delhi army relied on a survey unit to explore the Pandya territory. This unit comprised the leading generals such as Bahram Kara, Mahmud Sartiha, Katla Nihang and Abachi. Every day, one of these generals would lead the survey party to visit an area of the Pandya territory, accompanied by a few people who were well-versed with the local language. As per Amir Khusrau's accounts, the Pandya territory was protected by a high mountain, but there were two passes, namely, Tarmali and Tabar, on either side of the mountain. These can be identified with Tharamangalam and Thoppur. The Delhi army marched through these passes, and then encamped on the banks of Kaveri River. Next, the army captured a fort, which Khusrau calls „Mardi" and massacred its inhabitants.

The Madurai Sultanate was proclaimed in 1335 when the then viceroy of Madurai, Jalaluddin Ahsan Shah declared his independence from the Delhi Sultanate, ruled by Thuglaq

Ahsan Shah and his descendants ruled Madurai and surrounding territories until 1378 when the last sultan, Ala-ud-Din Sikandar Shah fell in battle against the forces of the Vijayanagara Empire led by Kumara Kampana. In this short reign of 43 years, the Sultanate had eight different rulers. By then, the Madurai Sultanate had caused enough damage to the Madurai citizens and also Madurai's pride; Hinduism was crushed and many were persecuted and executed as the rulers were found barbaric and unkind to their own subjects and their sentiments. The Sultanate had eight different rulers in 43 years, a few of them for a very short tenure of even 40 days and a few others for a longer tenure of over four years at the maximum. A common observation on these Sultans was that their only aim was to spread Islam and to destroy Hindus and Hinduism. The basic principles of hatred oppression, sadism and cruelty were found to be equally common with all these eight sultans.

- Sultan Jalaluddin Ashan Shah (1335-1340) (b) Allauddin Udaji (1340)
- Giyasuddin Damagan Shah (1341-1342)
- Sultan Naziruddin (1334)
- From 1335 to 1356, there was a break in the sultanate history details
- Sultan Adil Shah (1356-1361)
- Fakruddin Mubharak Shah (1361-1370)
- Allauddin Sikkandar Shah (1370-1378)

It was after the Vijayanagara Empire uprooted the evil Sultanate, that Madurai regained its pride and reinstated its lost paradise.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the political and military dynamics of the triangular conflict among the cholas, pandyas, and hoysalas during the second pandyan empire.
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2. Examine the social and economic life of the second pandyan empire.
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3. Explore the invasion of malik kafur and its impact on the second pandyan empire.
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