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**2023-24**

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## **SOUTH INDIAN HISTORY**

### **South Indian history:**

(From megalithic to the state polities of Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas)

The beginning of the historical period is marked by the settlements of large scale rural communities which practised agriculture with the help of iron implements, the formation of the state system, the rise of social classes, use of writing, beginnings of written literature, use of metal money and so on. However, all these phenomena did not emerge in a linear fashion in southern India, especially at the tip of the peninsula with the Kaveri delta as the nuclear zone, until about the 2nd century BCE. The Neolithic phase of south India which was marked by the use of polished stone axe and blade tools was succeeded by the **Megalithic phase** (around 1200 BCE - 300 BCE).

- The upper portions of the peninsula were inhabited by people who were called the **Megalith builders**.
- They are not known from their actual settlements which are rare but from their graves.
- These graves are called megaliths because they were encircled by big/mega stone pieces and were in most cases located outside the settlement area.
- They contain not only skeletons of the people who were buried but also pottery, iron objects and grains.
- Black and red ware pottery has been found buried in these megaliths.
- The first iron objects from south India which include arrowheads, spearheads, tridents (associated with

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Page 1

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Shiva), hoes, sickles, etc. have been excavated from these megaliths.

- The number of agricultural tools found at megalithic sites is lesser in comparison to tools meant for hunting and fighting implying that the megalithic people did not practise an advanced type of agriculture.
- The megalithic people produced paddy and ragi, and it seems that the cultivated land was very limited and generally they did not settle on the plains or low lands.
- The megaliths are found in all upland areas of the peninsula but their concentration is more in eastern Andhra and in Tamil Nadu. The Cholas, Pandyas and the Keralaputras (Cheras) mentioned in the Ashokan inscriptions probably belonged to the last phase of Megalithic culture.

Chera, Chola, Pandya **The early three kingdoms - The Pandyas, the Cholas and the Cheras** The southern end of the Indian peninsula situated south of the Krishna river was divided into three kingdoms - Chola, Pandya and Chera (or Kerala).

Kingdom	Capital	Emblem	Premium Port
The Pandyas: Covers modern Tirunelveli, Madurai, Ramnad districts and south Travancore.	Madurai	Fish	Korkai
The Cholas: Covers modern Tanjore and Tiruchirappalli districts of Tamil Nadu.	Uraiyur	Tiger	Puhar (modern Kaveripattanam)
The Cheras: Covers mostly the Kerala coast.	Vanji / Karuvur	Bow	Tondi and Muchiri

## Chola Dynasty :

### Early Cholas

- The most of the information on early Cholas are available in Sangam literature.
- The other information is available in Mahavamsa, Buddhist text of Ceylon, Pillars of Ashoka and Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.
- The most famous king of early Cholas is Karikala Chola. He ruled around 270 BC. He had won the famous battle of Venni in which he decisively defeated Pandyas and Cheras. He is also believed to have won the whole of Ceylon.
- But the most important work of karikala chola which he did as a king was to build world' earliest water-regulator structure in stone at Kallanai on River Cauvery. It was built for agricultural purposes. Later cholas or imperial cholas (900 -1200 AD) These later Cholas are termed as "Imperial Cholas" because they excercised control over Sri Lanka and Malay Peninsula. thousands of inscriptions in

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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

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temples tell about their administration, society, economy and culture.

### **Cholas**

The Chola kingdom was called Cholamandalam or Coromandel and was situated to the north-east of the territory of the Pandyas, between the Pennar and the Velar rivers. Their chief centre of political power and capital Uraiyur was famous for cotton trade. It seems that in the middle of the 2nd century BCE, a Chola king named Elara conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for nearly 50 years. The Cholas also maintained an efficient navy. The main source of wealth of the Cholas was their trade in cotton cloth. Some of the important Chola kings of the era are talked about below.

### **Karikala**

- One of the famous Chola kings who founded Puhar (identified with Kaveripattanam) which was a great centre of trade and commerce and had a large dock.
- Karikala constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri river, which was built with a labour of 12,000 slaves brought as captives from Sri Lanka.
- He defeated a confederacy of Pandyas, Cheras and other allies at the battle of Venni. In Sangam literature, it is mentioned that eleven rulers lost their drums in the field (royal drum was an important insignia of royal power).
- The major victory at Vahaipparandalai was credited to his cap, in which several chieftains lost their umbrellas (according to Sangam literature).

### **Tondaiman Ilandiraiyan**

- He is considered to be another important Chola ruler who was either an independent ruler or a subordinate to Karikala.
- He was a gifted poet and in one of his poems, he says that in order to rule well, a king should possess a strong personal character. Under Karikala's successors, the Chola empire rapidly declined.
- The two neighbouring powers - the Pandyas and the Cheras expanded at the cost of the Cholas. Later, the Pallavas from the north wrested a lot of their territories. From the 4th to 9th century CE, the Cholas played only a marginal role in south Indian history.

### **Vijayalaya Chola (850-871 AD):**

- Founder of Chola Dynasty.
- He captured Tanjore from the Pandyas and made it the capital of the Cholas.
- Vijayalaya built Thanjavur town with temple for Goddess 'Nishumbhsudhini'(Goddess Durga).

### **Aditya I (871-907 AD):**

- Extended the work of Vijayalaya by occupying the territories from the Pallavas.

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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
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Aditya defeated the Pallava king Aparajita and annexed Tondaimandalam

### Parantaka Chola I (907-955 AD):

- Was the first imperial Chola also called as maduraikondan.
- He defeated Pandayas and the ceylonese ruler.
- But he lost the Battle of Tokkolam with Rashtrakutas Krishna III. This loss undermined the glory of the Cholas and they entered a dark phase of thirty years from 955 AD – 985 AD. — Parantaka I built temples, provided golden roof on Vimana of Nataraja temple at Chidambaram.
- The Uttamerur inscription describing village administration under Cholas belong to his reign.
- This loss undermined the glory of the Cholas and they entered a dark phase of thirty years from 955 AD – 985 AD.

### Successors of parantaka I

1. Gandaraditya - 949 -957 AD
2. Arinjaya - 956 -957 AD
3. Parantaka II - 956-973 AD
4. Aditya -956-966 AD
5. Uttama chola - 965 – 985 AD

### Raja Raja Chola I (907-1014 AD):

- ✂ Greatest king in chola reign.Orchestrated the resurgence of the Cholas.
- ✂ He defeated the Pandians and the Cheras.
- ✂ In 993 AD when Cheras sought support from the Sri Lankan rulers, the Cholas captured the northern portion of Sri Lanka and the capitalAnuradhapura was captured and they also raided another capital Polonnaruwa. Northern Sri Lanka was organized in the form of a province.
- ✂ Raja Raja Chola is also said to have captured the Laccadive islands and Maldives Islands.

He also captured a few territories in Mysore from the Gangas and from the Chalukyas of Kalyani, although he maintained friendly relations with Chalukyas of Vengi.

- Raja Raja I developed the naval strength of the Cholas
- He re-organised the administrative system
- In 1000 Ad he began the conduction of a land survey
- He adopted the practice of inscribing the historical inscriptions



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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
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- He began the practice of associating Yuvaraja or crown Prince with the administration
- He assumed the titles Mummudi chola, Jayamkondan and sivapadasekara.
- Raja Rajan conquered Vengi from Sathyasraya who ruled Kalyani and gave the power to sakthivarman
- Raja Rajan gave up his daughter to Shakthivarman's brother Vimaladitya.
- He captured Gangavadi, Adigaipadi, Nolambadi, (Mysore) and Raichur
- He was a follower of Saivism.
- Raja Raja I being a patron of Shaivism constructed the great Raja Rajeshwar temple (Also called as the Brihadeeswarar temple) at Tanjore in 1010.
- During whose rule the Chola Empire reached the peak of fame.
- He completed the conquest of Sri Lanka in 1017 AD and captured the whole of Sri Lanka and made it a part of Chola empire.
- He suppressed the rebellions of a captured portion of the Krishna Tungabhadra doab.
- He maintained friendly relations with Chalukyas of Vengi. His greatest achievement was Conquest of Srivijaya, Nicobar Islands, Kadaram and Malaya He launched on expedition to Orissa and maintained matrimonial relations with the Ganga dynasty of Orissa.
- He then reached Bengal upto Ganga river in 1022 AD and defeated dynasty of Orissa. He then reached Bengal Ganga river in 1022 AD and defeated the Pala ruler of Bengal, Mahipala Rajendra I then assumed the title of Gangaikonda and founded a capital by the name Gangaikondacholapuram on the mouths of the Gangaikondacholapuram.
- His expedition to Bengal along the east coast was undertaken to establish Chola domination over the bay of Bengal that it was called the Chola lake. rulers
- He sent two embassies to China for Promoting trade and commerce. He captured idaidurainadu (raichur Doab), vanavasi (kadamba capital), Kollipakal (areas in hyderabad) and mannai kadakkam (malkhed).

**Kulothunga I (1071 -1122 AD)**

- Kulothunga I was born to Ammangadevi the daughter of rajendran I and rajaraja of vengi started the chalukya chola line of rulers.
- He united vengi with the chola empire.
- He defeated the western chalukyas and captured the Kalinga. During his reign srilaka declared its independence.
- He is also called as sungam thavirtha cholan. He patronized great literar scholars like Jeyamkondan,

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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
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ottakkuthar, pugazhendi and kambar.

### **Chola Administration King:**

- Was the most important person in the Chola administration. All authority rested in his hands.
- He often went on tours in order to keep better touch with the administration.
- The king was aided and advised by a council of ministers who held office at the pleasure of the king.
- Valanadu is the administrative unit of Chola country.
- Temples and matts acts as education centres during Chola period.

### **Military Administration:**

- The Cholas maintained a large army consisting of infantry, cavalry and elephants which were called the three limbs of the army.
- The venetian traveller Marco Polo says that all the bodyguards of the king burnt themselves in the funeral pyre of the dead king.

### **Revenue Administration:**

- ✦ The Cholas paid attention to irrigation and used river such as Kaveri for this purpose.
- ✦ Raja Raja I conducted a land survey during his time in order to fix the governments' share of land revenue. → In addition to land tax, income was derived from tolls on trade, taxes on professionals and also from plunder of the neighbouring territories.
- ✦ Senathipathi Marvan was involved in the Rajaraja chola period for the tax assessment (1001 AD).

### **Provincial Administration:**

The empire was divided into principalities (under vassal chiefs) and mandalams (provinces under viceroys who were mostly royal princes) with further division of the provinces into valanadus(divisions), nadas (districts) and Kurrams (villages).

### **District Administration:**

The provinces were in turn divided into divided districts called Nadus which were about 500 in number and were run by an autonomous assembly called Nattar.

### **Local Administration:**

- Uthiramerur inscription tells us about the village administration of the Cholas.
- Sabha was formed to manage the village administration during the Cholas.
- There were two types of villages at the local in the Chola empire.
- One type of village consisted of people from different caste and the assembly which ran this type of



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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
SRIMAAN**

village was called 'ur'.

- The second type of village was 'agrahara' types of villages which were settled by Brahmins in which most of the land was rent-free.
- The assembly of this agrahara type of village was a gathering of the adult men in brahmana villages called 'Sabha' or 'mahasabha'.
- The affairs of the village were managed by an executive committee to which educated person owning property were elected by drawing lots or by rotation. These members had to retire every three years.
- These members had to retire every three years.
- The mahasabha could settle new lands and exercise ownership rights over them. It could also raise loans for the village and levy taxes.
- The self-government enjoyed by the Chola villages was a very fine system. However, the growth of feudalism tended to restrict their autonomy.

### Chola Society

- Four fold varna system was absent.
- Brahmins had many privileges and were exempted from taxation and had control over religious and economics power. Chola emperors linked themselves to solar and lunar dynasties and claimed Kshatriya status and called themselves as Brahmakshatriyas. Trading communities claimed Vaishya Status and called themselves as kamati, Vanijiya, Chettiar.
- Rest of the society was divided into Sat Sudras (higher) and asat sudras (lower). Sat sudras or higher sudras were consisting of classes like Kaikkolas who were weavers and collected taxes on behalf of temple and also Saliyas who were also weavers and prepared clothes for the royal family. Vellalas who were the dominant peasantry also came under Sat Sudras.
- Asat sudras (lower sudras) comprised of paraiyans and chaklians. Untouchability was prevalent in chola Society. Slavery was prevalent in Chola society and slaves were imported. The position of women was a mixed one with the queens called as devis and were respected and honoured, on the other hand devadasi system prevailed and ganikas (prostitutes) also existed in the society.
- The Chola society was marked by constant tensions between the Brahmins and Vellalas between the higher castes and untouchables, between the kaikkolas and Sollyas between Velangai (rights Handers) and Idangai (Left handers), between Mudali (land owners) and Adimai (slaves) and between Sharivites and Vaishnavites as is evident by the persecution of the vaishnavite Ramanuja by Chola ruler Kulottunga I. Trade and Commerce
- Trade and commerce flourished under the patronage of Chola emperors. The Cholas developed links all over south India.
- They then brought Srilanka, South- East Asia and even China under the network of trade.

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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
SRIMAAN**

- There are references to 72 nagarams and many trade guilds. Most important of these were manigramam, Ayyavolu-500 (Five hundred Lords of Aihole) also called as Ainnuruvar, Nanadesi, Vira Valanjiyar, Vira Balanju and Anjuvannan. Mahablipuram were also known as nagarattars.
- Trading organisations formed fortified settlements called Erivirpattinams on trunk roads and were protected by army cantonments called Nilaippadai.
- Mostly barter system was employed in trade and commerce where even paddy was used as a unit of exchanges of gold coins such as pon, kasu, kalanju were used. Also, silver coins were used.
- Some Chola emperors sent embassies to Indonesia, Cambodia and China.
- The temples in Chola period, apart from religious activity were also centers of development of arts and crafts. Many stone cutters, weavers, potters, oil makers, bronze workers lived in temple complexes.
- Temples became centers of exchange of commodities.
- Temples also collected taxes from craftsmen, traders and peasants.
- Temple received land donations from kings and offerings from religious followers.

#### **Chola Art Music:**

- Cholas contributed to the growth of both vocal and instrumental music. Instruments such as Kudamula, Vina, Flute were used. Devadasis were expert musicians and singers.
- Sakatakkottikal was the chairman of the group of musicians during the Chola period

#### **Dance:**

→ Bharatanatyam acquired its basis from under Chola patronage based on rules of Bharatamuni in Natyasastra, a book on dance.

#### **Drama:**

→ Various plays were enacted in the premises of the temples for the temples for the saka of entertainment of the people.

#### **Paintings:**

- Paintings on the themes of Puranas were painted on the inner walls of the Raja Rajeswara temples and gangaikondacholapuram temple and Nataraja temple at Chidambaram.
- A painting believed to be that of Marco Polo is in the Raj Raja temple (Brihadeeswarar temple) at Tanjore.
- Lord Shiva in cosmic dance from with celestial dancers is also found on the walls of Gangaikondacholapuram temple.

#### **Sculpture:**

→ Bronze images of Nataraja (the dancing Shiva) are described as the cultural epitome of Chola period and

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NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
SRIMAAN**

are the best specimen of Chola art.

## Chola Architecture

Chief features of Chola architecture are:

- ♣ Dravidian feature initiated by the Pallavas acquired the classical forms and features under the Cholas such as gopurams, mandapams and Vimanas.
- ♣ In the beginning, gopuram features was subdued and vimana features dominated but in the later stages, gopurams overshadowed the Vimanas.
- ♣ In the beginning, Vimanas were constructed in the cellular mode as in the Raja Rajeshwar temple (Brihadeewarar temple) at Tanjore where in the Vimana, various storeys were constructed in a graded manner. It had 13 storeys. In the later phase, vimanas began to be constructed in circular concept as in the Nataraj temple at Chidambaram.
- ♣ The Brihadeeswarar temple at Tanjore is surrounded by a rectangular wall protected by 8 vimanas which housed the 8 keepers of directions called Ashtadikpalas. The temple is dedicated to lord Shiva and is known as Dakshimeruvitanakar. An enormous Nandi which is the second largest in India, carved out of a single block of granite guards the entrance of the sanctuary. The Brihadeeswarar temple at Tanjore is the Tallest of all the temples in India in the medieval period.
- ♣ Various public works as cities, roads, irrigation works and artificial tanks were constructed. Rajendra Chola I constructed a city, a water tank and a temple with the same name of Gangaikondacholapuram temple.

## Cholas: Religion and Philosophy :

- With the rise of devotional cults such as Shaivite and Vaishnavite cults from the 6th to 9th centuries A.D Buddhism practically disappeared from tamil country, but Jainism managed to survive.
- The Chola ruler were patrons of Shaivism. Raja Raja I assumed the title of Shivapada Shekhara and built the Raja Rajeswara temple. (Brihadeeswarar temple) at Tanjore and dedicated it to Lord Shiva.
- In the Chola period, Suddashaiva order appeared and the Vellala community supported this order. Kapalikas and Kalamukhas which were shaivaite orders also influenced the people.
- The Chola rulers such as Kulottunga I resented Ramunuja who was a Vaishnavite Saint who propounded the concept of Vishistadvaita. Ramanuja was though, successful in broadening the social base of the Vaishnavite Cults.
- Kampahateswara (Thirubhuvaneswara) temple Thanjavur Subramanya Temple
- Darasuram Airvtesvara Temple were the temples built by later cholas.
- Nageshwara temple is at kumbakonam.
- Koran ganatha temple was built by parantaka I.

**SRIMAAN COACHING CENTRE-TRICHY-TRB-BEO-  
NATIONAL MOVEMENTS & CONSTITUTIONAL-UNIT-V  
(NEW SYLLABUS) -TO CONTACT:8072230063.**

**2023-24  
SRIMAAN**

- Temple for sun god is built by kulothunga cholan I.

## Literature in the Chola Period

- ✿ Though Sanskrit was patronized by the Chola emperor, there were non-significant original works in the Chola period. Most Sanskrit works were commentaries on older works.
- ✿ The language from dravidian root such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada started drawing from Sanskrit and began evolving further.
- ✿ Much work was done in Tamil where Kambana translated the Ramayana from Sanskrit and Began evolving further.
- ✿ Jayangondar composed Kalingattuparani which is an account of Kulottunga-I's kalinga war in detail.
- ✿ Sekkilar composed his famous periya Puranam (Tiruttondar Puranam) during the times of Kulottunga II. Pugalandi wrote Nalavenba (the tragic story of Nala and Damyanti)
- ✿ Seevaka chinthamani- thiruthakkathevar
- ✿ Ramayanam – kambar.Kulothunga chola III gave the title Kavichakravarthi
- ✿ ottakuthar – muvarula, Thakayagaparani, Kulothungan Pillai tamil
- ✿ Conversants has lived in Chola period Parimelazhagar , Ilampuranar , Nachinarkiniyar.

## Satavahanas

- ♣ Satavahanas are referred to as Andhras in the Puranas.
- ♣ The Satavahana kingdom chiefly comprised of modern-day Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra. At times, their rule also included parts of Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.
- ♣ Their capital cities varied at different times. Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amaravati were its capitals.
- ♣ Simuka founded the dynasty.
- ♣ They were the first native Indian rulers to issue their own coins with the portraits of the rulers. This practice was started by Gautamiputra Satakarni who derived the practice from the Western Satraps after defeating them.
- ♣ The coin legends were in Prakrit language. Some reverse coin legends are in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. → They patronised Prakrit more than Sanskrit.
- ♣ They supported both Buddhism and Brahminism although they were Hindus and claimed Brahminical status.
- ♣ They successfully defended their territories against foreign invaders and had many on-going battles with the Sakas (Western Satraps).
- ♣ karshapana and suvarvana coins were in circulation during this period. → Allahabad stupa inscriptions

tells us about the rule of satavahanas

### **Satakarni I (180 BC to 124 BC)**

- Satakarni I was the third Satavahana king.
- Satakarni I was the first Satavahana king to expand his empire by military conquests.
- He conquered Kalinga after the death of Kharavela.
- He also pushed back the Sungas in Pataliputra.
- He also ruled over Madhya Pradesh.
- After annexing the Godaveri Valley, he assumed the title of 'Lord of Dakshinapatha'.
- His queen was Nayanika who wrote the Naneghat inscription which describes the king as Dakshinapathapati.
- He performed Ashvamedha to celebrate the victory over malwa and revived Vedic Brahminism in the Deccan.

### **Gautamiputra Satkarni (Reign 80 -104 AD)**

- ✦ He is considered as the greatest king of the Satavahana dynasty.
- ✦ He defeated the Greeks, Pahlavas (Indo-Parthians) and the Sakas.
- ✦ His kingdom ran from Krishna in the south to Malwa and Saurashtra in the north and from Berar in the east to the Konkan in the west.
- ✦ He defeated Nahapana, an important king of the Western Satraps.
- ✦ He is also called Ekabrahmana.
- ✦ His mother was Gautami Balasri and hence his name Gautamiputra (son of Gautami).
- ✦ He was succeeded by his son Vasisthiputra Sri Pulamavi or Pulamavi II. Decline of satavahanas
- ✦ Pulamavi IV is considered the last king of the main Satavahana line.
- ✦ He ruled until 225 AD. After his death, the empire fragmented into five smaller kingdoms.

### ***Cheras***

The Chera or the Kerala country was situated to the west and north of the land of the Pandya's.

It included the narrow strip of land between the sea and the mountains and covered a portion of modern Kerala state. It was an important and prosperous kingdom owing to its trade with the Romans. The Romans set up two regiments at Muziris (near modern Kochi) to protect their interests and also built there a temple of Augustus.



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### Udiyanjeral

- Earliest known Chera king. **Nedunjeral Adan**
- He is considered to be one of the prominent kings of the Chera dynasty, who probably defeated seven crowned kings and also won the title of 'adhiraja'.
- He fought a war against the Cholas and in this war both the principal adversaries (the Chola king and Nedunjeral) lost their lives.
- One of his sons is also described as an 'adhiraja' who was victorious against Anji (a chieftain of Tagadur).

### Senguttuvan

- He was the son of Nedunjeral Adan and according to Chera poets, was their greatest king. He was also known as the Red Chera or Good Chera.
- Silappadikaram (post-Sangam text) describes his military conquest against Vayalur in the land of Nannan and capture of the Kodukur fortress in Kongu country.
- It is said that he invaded the north and crossed the Ganga. **Kudakko Ilanjeral Irumporai**
- He is believed to be one of the last Chera kings (as is mentioned in the Sangam literature) and had won wars against the Cholas and the Pandyas. After the 2nd century CE, the Chera power declined and not much is known of their history till the 8th century CE.
- The main interest of the political history of the above three kingdoms lies in the continuous wars they fought with one another and also with Sri Lanka. The kingdoms were immensely rich in spices, ivory, pearls,

**Sangam Literature (3rd century BCE - 3rd century CE)** The Sangam age refers to that period in the early history of south India when a large number of poems in Tamil were composed by a number of authors. The term "Sangam" refers to an assembly or meeting together of Tamil poets. According to Tamil legends, there were three Sangams held in ancient south India popularly called **Muchchangam**, under the royal patronage of the Pandya kings of Madurai. The poems were orally transmitted for an indefinite period before they were finally written down by poets who came from both cities and villages, and had various social and professional backgrounds.

- The first Sangam is believed to be held at Madurai, under the chairmanship of Agastya. No literary work of this Sangam is available.

- The second Sangam was held at Kapatapuram, under Agastya and Tolkappiyar - disciple of Agastya, who compiled the authoritative book on Tamil grammar, **Tolkappiyam**.

- The third Sangam was presided over by Nakkirar at Madurai. Most of the surviving literature is from the third Sangam and provides a useful source to reconstruct the history of the Sangam period.

- **The Sangam literature consists of six of the eight anthologies of poems in the Ettutokai (The eight anthologies) and nine of the ten pattus (songs) of the Pattuppattu (The ten songs).**



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- The historical references in the poems suggest that this literature was mostly composed between the 3rd century BCE and the 3rd century CE.
- Around the mid 8th century, they were compiled into anthologies, which were further collected into the super-anthologies - the Ettutokai and the Pattuppattu.
- It is important to mention that the anthologies consist of a total of 1281 poems attributed to 473 poets, out of whom 30 poets were women.

□ **The Sangam literature also includes Tolkappiyam authored by Tolkappiyar and is considered the earliest of Tamil literary works.** Though it is a work on Tamil grammar, it also provides insights into the political and socio-economic conditions of the time.

- Poems within Sangam literature were composed on two broader themes of akam (love) and puram (based on war and included public poetry such as poems on good and evil, community and kingdom).
- The most important feature of Sangam literature is that it gives a clear picture of the contemporary society and culture of Tamilakam and also reveals its peaceful and harmonious relationship with the northern (Aryan) culture.
- **Sangam literature can be divided into two groups - narrative and didactic.**

○ The **narrative texts are called Melkannakku** - 18 major works consisting of eight anthologies and ten idylls. These are considered to be the works of heroic poetry in which heroes are glorified and perpetual wars and cattle raids are frequently mentioned.

○ The **didactic texts are called Kilkanakku** - consisting of 18 minor works. Tiruvalluvar's Tirukkural is an important example of Tamil didactic work, which is a famous work on ethics, philosophy, polity and love, and is considered the fifth Veda of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil epics - Silappadikaram and Manimekalai are also didactic texts (kilkanakku). These didactic texts were written in the period between the 5th and 6th centuries. Silappadikaram deals with the love story of Kovalan, who prefers a courtesan Madhavi of Kaveripattanam to his noble wedded wife Kannagi. Manimekalai is a sequel to Silappadikaram and is called the 'Odyssey of Tamil poetry', which deals with the adventures of the daughter born of the union of Kovalan and Madhavi and her subsequent conversion to Buddhism.

### Administration and Social Life in the Three Early Kingdoms **The Economy in the Sangam Age**

- ★ Tolkappiyam refers to the five-fold division of lands called Tinai in the whole of Tamilakam.
- ★ These were Kurinji (hilly tracks), Mullai (pastoral), Palai (arid zone), Marudam (agricultural land) and Neital (sea coast).
- These land divisions were based on their economic resources.
- The people in different tinai had their own mode of subsistence. For example, in Kurinji it was hunting

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and gathering, in Mullai people practised animal husbandry, in Palai people could hardly produce anything, so they took to raiding and plundering, in Marudam it was agriculture and in Neital people practised fishing and salt making.

- Agriculture was the main occupation and the chief crops were rice, cotton, ragi, sugarcane, pepper, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, etc.
- This region is devoid of perennial rivers, so the agricultural activities were facilitated by building tanks and dams.
- The Chola king, Karikala of the Sangam Age, is credited with constructing a dam on the Kaveri River, which is considered to be the earliest dam in the country.
- Spinning, weaving, ship-building, carpentry, making of ivory products were some of the handicrafts which were widely practised.
- Trade, both inland and foreign, was well established.
- The economy of all the three kingdoms flourished due to large scale local and long-distance trade.
- This helped in the emergence of important towns and craft centres.
- Muziris on the south-west coast was the important port of the Cheras and the Roman ships laden with gold used to land at this port and take along consignments of pepper.
- The capital city of the Pandyas, Madurai, was an important centre of textile and ivory making.
- Korkai - an important Pandya port was famous for its pearls.
- The capital city of the Cholas - Uraiyur was a grand city with huge buildings.
- Kaveripattinam or Puhar was the main Chola port.
- The market places (called avanam), roads and highways were maintained and guarded to prevent robbery and smuggling.
- The flourishing **trade with the Romans** was the most important feature of the Sangam economy.
- The author of "Periplus of the Erythrean sea", gives the most valuable account of the trade between India and the Roman empire.
- Pliny, a Roman writer, in his book "Natural History", complains that the Roman empire was drained of gold on account of her trade with India. Indian items of export to Romans were spices, perfumes, jewels, ivory and fine textiles (muslin), several precious and semi-precious stones like diamond, sapphire, carnelian, pearls, sandalwood, iron, etc.
- Against these items of export, Romans exported gold and silver to India which is authenticated by the recovery of large numbers of Roman gold coins in south India.
- The western traders also brought tin, lead, corals and slave girls to the subcontinent.
- A landmark in the development of communications was the discovery of the monsoon winds by the Greek sailor Hippatus, around 46 - 47 CE.
- This led to an increase in the number of sea voyages for trading purposes.
- Important ports of India on the western coast were Muziris, Bharukachchha (Broach), Sopara, and Kalyana.

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- Through the Red Sea, ships from these ports sailed to the Roman empire.
- The important ports on the eastern coast of India were Tamralipti (West Bengal), Arikamedu (Tamil Nadu coast).
- The chief source of states' income was land revenue while a customs duty was levied on foreign trades. Tributes paid by feudatories and war booty (arai) constituted a considerable part of royal resources.
- ★ The Tamil Brahmi inscriptions mention the kings as Ko and the chieftains as Ko or Kon. The Brahmanas first appeared in Tamil land in the Sangam age. Many Brahmanas functioned as poets and were generously rewarded by the king.
- ★ The Tamil Brahmanas took meat and wine.
- ★ The concept of varna was known in the Sangam age but social classes were not marked by acute caste distinctions in the early Sangam period (caste distinctions became prominent in the later stage).
- ★ The most relevant basis of stratification was Kuti (clan-based descent groups) where there was no restriction on inter-dining and social interactions among Kuti groups.
- ★ The ruling caste was called the arasar, and its members had marriage relations with the vellalas (rich peasants) who constituted the fourth class.
- ★ The vellalas held the bulk of the land and employed labourers (Kadaiyiar - lowest class) to do the manual farm work. There were sharp inequalities in the age of Sangam - the rich lived in houses of brick and mortar while the poor lived in mud houses.
- ★ The class of warriors was an important element in polity and society. Captains of the army were given the title "enadi" at a formal ceremony. The state had a rudimentary army which consisted of chariots drawn by oxen, elephants, cavalry and infantry.
- ★ Elephants played an important part in wars and the horses were imported by sea into the kingdom. The memorial stones called "nadukul" or "virukkal" were very significant in the Sangam period and were erected in honour of those who died while fighting.
- ★ In the domain of religion, the Sangam period witnessed peaceful and close interactions between north India and south Indian traditions. The kings performed Vedic sacrifices. A Pandya ruler named Mudukudomi took the title Palshalai, as he had many sacrificial halls.
- ★ The people mainly worshipped a deity called Murugan, who was also called Subramaniya. There are also references to the presence of Buddhists and Jainas in the Tamil region. The Brahmanas also popularized the worship of Vishnu, Indra and Shiva in south India.
- ★ The megalithic practice of providing for the dead continued in this age and cremation was also introduced.
- ★ As many poems were contributed by the women poets to the corpus of Sangam literature, it testifies the belief that women were educated and also respected in the Sangam age. However, there is also mention about the sati being practised in Tamil society and it was called "tippayadal". Sangam poems also mention "Chevilittai" who were like foster mothers and had a close association with the family members.

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## South Indian kingdoms – Pallavas

### The Pallavas

- After the decline of the Sangam Age in the Tamil country, the Kalabhra rule AD 300 - AD 600.
- Thereafter, the Pallavas established their kingdom in Tondaimandalam with its capital at Kanchipuram. Their rule continued till Tondaimandalam was captured and annexed by the Imperial Cholas in the beginning of the tenth century A.D.

### Origin of the Pallavas

The origins of the Pallavas are shrouded in mystery. There are several theories propounded by historians.

- ♣ Some historians say they are a branch of the Pahlavas of the Parthians who moved to the South.
- ♣ Some say they are an indigenous dynasty that arose within the Southern region and were a mix of various tribes.
- ♣ Some experts believe them to be of Naga origin who first settled around the Tondaimandalam region near Madras.
- ♣ Another theory says that they are descendent from a Chola prince and a Naga princess of Manipallavam (an island off Jaffna, Sri Lanka).
- ♣ Some others are of the opinion that the Pallavas were feudatories of the Satavahanas.
- ♣ The first Pallava kings ruled during the beginning of the 4th century AD. By the 7th century AD, there were three kingdoms in southern India vying for supremacy namely the Chalukyas of Badami, the Pandyas of Madurai and the Pallavas of Kanchipuram. Extent
- ♣ The Pallava capital was Kanchipuram.
- ♣ Their territories at the height of their powers extended from northern part of Andhra Pradesh to River Kaveri in the South.
- ♣ During the seventh century, the Cholas were reduced to a marginal state by the authority of the Pallavas.
- ♣ Vatapi (Badami) was occupied by the Pallava king Narasimhavarman who defeated the Chalukyas.
- ♣ The Kalabhra uprising was crushed by the Pandyas, Chalukyas and the Pallavas jointly. The Kalabhras were protesting against the numerous land grants (Brahmadeya) to Brahmanas made by the Brahmanic rulers of the three dynasties.

### Simhavarman / Simhavishnu (575 AD – 600 AD)

- ★ Was a Buddhist.

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- ✦ Also called as 'Avanisimha'
- ✦ Included Sri Lanka in his kingdom.
- ✦ Defeated the contemporary Tamil ruler. Pallava history assumes a definite character from this ruler onwards.
- ✦ Invaded kalabhras and firmly established the pallava rule in tondaimandalam Mahendravarman (600 AD – 630 AD )
- ✦ Succeeded Simhavishnu who was his father.
- ✦ He was a poet and composed Vichitrachita and Mahavilasa Prahasana.
- ✦ He introduced rock cut temple architecture.
- ✦ Was a Jain who converted to Saivism due to the influence of Appar.
- ✦ Had on-going rivalry and battles with Pulakesin II of Chalukya dynasty.
- ✦ Mahendravarman died in battle with the Chalukyas.

**He was an able and efficient ruler.**

- Mahendravarman I built the two cities of Mahendravadi and Mahendramangalam.
- He has been praised as 'Sithirakarapuli and sankiranavathi'.

**Narasimhavaraman I (630 AD – 668 AD)**

- \* Son and successor of Mahendravarman.
- \* Considered the greatest of the Pallavas. Also called Narasimhavarman Mahamalla/Mamalla (great wrestler).
- \* Defeated and killed Pulakesin II in 642 AD. He took control of Vatapi, the Chalukya capital and assumed the title 'Vatapikonda'.
- \* Also vanquished the Cholas, Cheras and the Pandyas.
- \* He sent a naval expedition to Sri Lanka two times and reinstated the Sinhalese Prince Manivarma.
- \* He founded the city of Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram which is named after him.
- \* Hiuen Tsang visited the Pallava kingdom during his reign in about 640 AD and he describes the people living in his kingdom as happy.
- \* He also says there was an abundance of agricultural products.
- \* Great Nayannar saints like Appar, Tirugnanasambandar and Siruthondar lived during his reign.
- \* Motnolithic rathas in mamallapuram was built by him.



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- \* He was succeeded by his son Mahendravarman II who ruled from 668 to 670 AD.

### **Mahendravarman II (668-700)**

- \* He ruled for a very short period, since he was killed by Chalukya king, Vikramaditya I (son of Pulakesin II). Paramesvaravarman I (670-700)
- \* He had to face the invading forces of Vikramaditya I, but finally succeeded in defeating and driving them back after repeated efforts.

### **Narasimhavarman II (700-728)**

- \* His rule is marked by peace and prosperity, literary activity, and the construction of large and beautiful temples like the Shore temple at Mamallapuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi.
- \* He is also said to have sent embassies to China; and maritime trade flourished during his reign.
- \* Dandi was present in his court and dandi alangaram was written by him in sanskrit.

### **Paramesvaravarman II (AD 728- AD 731)**

- The Pallava kingdom again had to face defeat and humiliation during his reign.
- The Chalukya, Vikramaditya II attacked the Pallava capital and Paramesvaravarman had to conclude a humiliating treaty with him.
- When the Pallava ruler tried to retaliate, he was killed by the Ganga ally of the Chalukyas.

### **Nandivarman II (AD 731- AD 796)**

- The Chalukya, Vikramaditya II again invaded and captured the Pallava capital during his reign, but Vikramaditya showed consideration and restraint in treating the vanquished, the only instance of restraint in the whole of the suicidal Chalukya-Pallava conflict, and withdrew from Kanchi without destroying it.
- Nandi soon strengthened himself and defeated the Chalukya ally, the Gangas. But he had to meet defeat at the hands of the Pandyas. And after this defeat, he concentrated on domestic matters.
- He was a worshipper of Vishnu and a great patron of learning.
- During his reign, several old temples were renovated and new ones like the Vaikuntaperumal temple at Kanchi were constructed.
- Thirumangai alwar belongs to his period.
- Successors of Nandivarman II were Dantivarman (796-847), Nandivarman III (847-69) is also called as tellaru nandivarman , Nripatunga (869-99) and Aparajita (899-903).
- The last nail in the coffin was driven by Aditya Chola by defeating Aparajita Pallava towards the end



of the ninth century AD.

- However, the Pallava chiefs continued to exist till the end of the 13th century AD as feudatories.
- Parameswaravarman was killed by sungas.

## Administration of the Pallavas

- ♣ The Pallavas had a well organized administrative system.
- ♣ Pallava management system is arranged as Rashtram - Vishayas - Nadus - Urs
- ♣ The Pallava state was divided into Kottams.
- ♣ The Kottam was administered by officers appointed by the king.
- ♣ The king was at the centre of administration in which he was assisted by able ministers.
- ♣ The king was the fountain of justice.
- ♣ The king maintained a well-trained army.
- ♣ During the Pallava period, there were civil and criminal courts
- ♣ The king provided land-grants to the temples known as Devadhana and also to the Brahmans known as Brahmadeya.
- ♣ It was also the responsibility of the central government to provide irrigation facilities to the lands. A number of irrigation tanks were dug by the Pallava kings.
- ♣ The irrigation tanks at Mahendravadi and Mamandoor were dug during the reign of Mahendravarman I.
- ♣ Detailed information on the tax system could also be traced from the Pallava inscriptions.
- ♣ Land tax was the primary source of the government revenue.
- ♣ The Brahmadeya and Devadhana lands were exempted from tax.
- ♣ Traders and artisans such as carpenters, goldsmiths, washer-men, oilpressers and weavers paid taxes to the government.
- ♣ The Pallava inscriptions throw much light on the village assemblies called sabhas and their committees.
- ♣ They maintained records of all village lands, looked after local affairs and managed temples. Society under the Pallavas
- ♣ The Tamil society witnessed a great change during the Pallava period.
- ♣ The caste system became rigid.
- ♣ The Brahmins occupied a high place in the society. They were given landgrants by the kings and nobles.

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They were also given the responsibility of looking after the temples.

- ♣ The Pallava period also witnessed the rise of Saivism and Vaishnavism and also the decline of Buddhism and Jainism.
- ♣ The Saiva Nayanmars and the Vaishnava Alvars contributed to the growth of Saivism and Vaishnavism. This is known as the Bakthi Movement. They composed their hymns in the Tamil language. These hymns revealed the importance of devotion or Bakthi. The construction of temples by the Pallava kings paved the way for the spread of these two religions.

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