



## **Government of Tamilnadu**

### **Department of Employment and Training**

Course : TNPSC Group II Exam  
Subject : History & Culture of India  
Topic : **South Indian History**

#### **© Copyright**

The Department of Employment and Training has prepared the TNPSC Group-II Preliminary and Main Exam study material in the form of e-content for the benefit of Competitive Exam aspirants and it is being uploaded in this Virtual Learning Portal. This e-content study material is the sole property of the Department of Employment and Training. No one (either an individual or an institution) is allowed to make copy or reproduce the matter in any form. The trespassers will be prosecuted under the Indian Copyright Act.

It is a cost-free service provided to the job seekers who are preparing for the Competitive Exams.

**Commissioner,**  
**Department of Employment and Training**



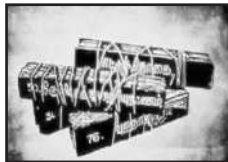
## Sangam Age



The Sangam Age constitutes an important chapter in the history of South India. According to Tamil legends, there existed three Sangams (Academy of Tamil poets) in ancient Tamil Nadu popularly called Muchchangam. These Sangams flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandyas. The first Sangam, held at Then Madurai, was attended by gods and legendary sages but no literary work of this Sangam was available. The second Sangam was held at Kapadapuram but the all the literary works had perished except Tolkappiyam. The third Sangam at Madurai was founded by Mudathirumaran. It was attended by a large number of poets who produced voluminous literature but only a few had survived. These Tamil literary works remain useful sources to reconstruct the history of the Sangam Age.

### Sangam Literature

The corpus of Sangam literature includes Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku,



and the two epics - Silappathigaram and Manimegalai. Tolkappiyam authored by Tolkappiyar is the earliest of the Tamil literature. It is a work on Tamil grammar but it provides information on the political and socio economic conditions of the Sangam period.

The Ettutogai or Eight Anthologies consist of eight works -

- Aingurunooru
- Narrinai
- Aganaooru
- Purananooru
- Kuruntogai
- Kalittogai
- Paripadal and
- Padirruppattu

The Pattuppattu or Ten Idylls consist of ten works -

- Thirumurugarruppadai
- Porunararruppadai
- Sirupanarruppadai
- Perumpanarruppadai
- Mullaippattu
- Nedunalvada
- Maduraikkanji
- Kurinjippattu
- Pattinappalai and
- Malaipadukadam

Both Ettutogai and Pattuppattu were divided into two main groups – Aham (love) and Puram (valour). Pathinenkilkanakku contains eighteen works mostly dealing with ethics and morals. The most important among them is Tirukkural authored by Thiruvalluvar. Silappathigaram written by Elango Adigal and Manimegalai by Sittalai Sattanar also provides valuable information on the Sangam polity and society.

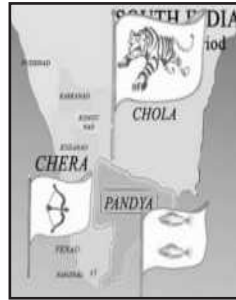
### Sangam Details

In addition to the Sangam literature, the Greek authors like Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy mention the commercial contacts between the West and South India. The Asokan inscriptions mention the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers on the south of the Mauryan empire. The Hathikumbha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga also mentions about Tamil kingdoms. The excavations at Arikkamedu, Poompuhar, Kodumanal and other places reveal the overseas commercial activities of the Tamils.

### Period of Sangam Literature

The chronology of the Sangam literature is still a disputed topic among the scholars. The sheet anchor of Sangam chronology lies in the fact that Gajabahu II of Sri Lanka and Cheran Senguttuvan of the Chera dynasty were contemporaries. This is confirmed by Silappathigaram as well as the Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa. Also the Roman coins issued by Roman emperors of the first century A.D were found in plenty in various places of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the most probable date of the Sangam literature has been fixed between the third century B.C. to third century A.D. on the basis of literary, archaeological and numismatic evidences.

### Political History



The Tamil country was ruled by three dynasties namely the Chera, Chola and Pandyas during the Sangam Age. The political history of these dynasties can be traced from the literary references.

#### Cheras

- The Cheras ruled over parts of modern Kerala.
- Their capital was Vanji and their important seaports were Tondi and Musiri.
- They had the palmyra flowers as their garland.
- The Pugalur inscription of the first century A.D refers to three generations of Chera rulers.
- Padirrupattu also provides information on Chera kings.
- Perum Sorru Udhiyan Cheralathan, Imayavaramban Nedum Cheralathan and Cheran Senguttuvan were the famous rulers of this dynasty.

Cheran Senguttuvan belonged to 2nd century A.D. His younger brother was Elango Adigal, the author of Silappathigaram. Among his military achievements, his expedition to the Himalayas was remarkable. He defeated many north Indian monarchs. Senguttuvan introduced the Pattini cult or the worship of Kannagi as the ideal wife in Tamil Nadu. The stone for making the idol of Kannagi was brought by him after his Himalayan expedition. The consecration ceremony was attended by

many princes including Gajabhagu II from Sri Lanka.

### **Cholas**

- The Chola kingdom of the Sangam period extended from modern Tiruchi district to southern Andhra Pradesh.
- Their capital was first located at Uraiyur and then shifted to Puhar.
- Karikala was a famous king of the Sangam Cholas.
- Pattinappalai portrays his early life and his military conquests.

In the Battle of Venni he defeated the mighty confederacy consisting of the Cheras, Pandyas and eleven minor chieftains. This event is mentioned in many Sangam poems. Vahaipparandalai was another important battle fought by him in which nine enemy chieftains submitted before him. Karikala's military achievements made him the overlord of the whole Tamil country. Trade and commerce flourished during his reign period. He was responsible for the reclamation of forest lands and brought them under cultivation thus adding prosperity to the people. He also built Kallanai across the river Kaveri and also constructed many irrigation tanks.

### **Pandyas**

- The Pandyas ruled over the present day southern Tamil Nadu. Their capital was Madurai.
- The earliest kings of the Pandyan dynasty were Nedyon, Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi and Mudathirumaran.
- There were two Neduncheliyans. The first one was known as Aryappadai Kadantha Neduncheliyan (one who

won victories over the Aryan forces). He was responsible for the execution of Kovalan for which Kannagi burnt Madurai.

- The other was Talaiyalanganattu Cheruvenra (He who won the battle at Talaiyalanganam) Neduncheliyan. He was praised by Nakkirar and Mangudi Maruthanar. He wore this title after defeating his enemies at the Battle of Talaiyalanganam, which is located in the Tanjore district. By this victory Neduncheliyan gained control over the entire Tamil Nadu.
- Maduraikkanji written by Mangudi Maruthanar describes the socio-economic condition of the Pandya country including the flourishing seaport of Korkai.
- The last famous Pandyan king was Uggira Peruvaludhi. The Pandyan rule during the Sangam Age began to decline due to the invasion of the Kalabhras.

### **Minor Chieftains**

The minor chieftains played a significant role in the Sangam period. Among them Pari (Parambu Nadu), Kari (Malaiyan chiefs ruled over the Tirukoyilur area also known as Kovalur), Ori (Kolli Hills), Nalli (Nalli Malai Nadan), Pegan (Palani Hills), Ay (Pothigai Hills) and Adiyaman (Tagadur present day Dharmapuri) were popular for their philanthropy and patronage of Tamil poets. Therefore, they were known as Kadai Yelu Vallalgal. Although they were subordinate to the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers, they were powerful and popular in their respective regions.

### Sangam Polity

Hereditary monarchy was the form of government during the Sangam period. The king had also taken the advice of his minister, court-poet and the imperial court or avai. The Chera kings assumed titles like Vanavaramban, Vanavan, Kuttuvan, Irumporai and Villavar, the Chola kings like Senni, Valavan and Killi and the Pandya kings Thennavar and Minavar. Each of the Sangam dynasties had a royal emblem – carp for the Pandyas, tiger for the Cholas and bow for the Cheras. The imperial court or Avai was attended by a number of chiefs and officials. The king was assisted by a large body of officials who were divided into five councils. They were ministers (amaichar), priests (anthanar), military commanders (senapathi), envoys (thuthar) and spies (orarr). The military administration was also efficiently organized during the Sangam Age. Each ruler had a regular army and their respective Kodimaram (tutelary tree).

Land revenue was the chief source of state's income while custom duty was also imposed on foreign trade. The Pattinappalai refers to the custom officials employed in the seaport of Puhar. Booty captured in wars was also a major income to the royal treasury. Roads and highways were well maintained and guarded night and day to prevent robbery and smuggling.

### Sangam Society

Tolkappiyam refers to the five - fold division of lands,

- Kurinji (hilly tracks)
- Mullai (pastoral)
- Marudam (agricultural)
- Neydal (coastal) and
- Palai (desert)

The people living in these five divisions had their respective chief occupations as well as gods for worship.

- Kurinji – chief deity was Murugan – chief occupation, hunting and honey collection.
- Mullai – chief deity Mayon (Vishnu) – chief occupation, cattle-rearing and dealing with dairy products.
- Marudam – chief deity Indira – chief occupation, agriculture.
- Neydal – chief deity Varunan – chief occupation fishing and salt manufacturing.
- Palai – chief deity Korravai – chief occupation robbery.

Tolkappiyam also refers to four castes namely arasar, anthanar, vanigar and vellalar. The ruling class was called arasar. Anthanars played a significant role in the Sangam polity and religion. Vanigars carried on trade and commerce. The vellalas were agriculturists. Other tribal groups like Parathavar, Panar, Eyinar, Kadambar, Maravar and Pulaiyar were also found in the Sangam society. Ancient primitive tribes like Thodas, Irulas, Nagas and Vedars lived in this period.

### Religion

The primary deity of the Sangam period was Seyon or Murugan, who is hailed as Tamil God. The worship of Murugan was having an ancient origin and the festivals relating to God Murugan was mentioned in the Sangam literature. He was honoured with six abodes known as Arupadai Veedu. Other gods worshipped during the Sangam period were Mayon (Vishnu), Vendan (Indiran), Varunan



and Korravai. The Hero Stone or Nadu Kal worship was significant in the Sangam period. The Hero Stone was erected in memory of the bravery shown by the warrior in battle. Many hero stones with legends inscribed on them were found in different parts of Tamil Nadu. This kind of worshipping the deceased has a great antiquity.

### Position of Women

There is a plenty of information in the Sangam literature to trace the position of women during the Sangam age. Women poets like Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, and Kakkaipadiniyar flourished in this period and contributed to Tamil literature. The courage of women was also appreciated in many poems. Karpu or Chaste life was considered the highest virtue of women. Love marriage was a common practice. Women were allowed to choose their life partners. However, the life of widows was miserable. The practice of Sati was also prevalent in the higher strata of society. The class of dancers was patronized by the kings and nobles.

### Fine Arts

Poetry, music and dancing were popular among the people of the Sangam age. Liberal donations were given to poets by the kings, chieftains and nobles. The royal courts were crowded with singing bards called Panar and Viraliyar. They were experts in folk songs and folk dances. The arts of music and dancing were highly developed. A variety of Yazhs and drums are referred to in the Sangam literature.



Dancing was performed by Kanigaiyar. Koothu was the most popular entertainment of the people.

### Economy of the Sangam Age

Agriculture was the chief occupation. Rice was the common crop. Ragi, Sugarcane, Cotton, Pepper, Ginger, Turmeric, Cinnamon and a variety of fruits were the other crops. Jack fruit and pepper were famous in the Chera country. Paddy was the chief crop in the Chola and Pandya country.

The handicrafts of the Sangam period were popular. They include weaving, metal works and carpentry, ship building and making of ornaments using beads, stones and ivory. There was a great demand for these products, as the internal and external trade was at its peak during the Sangam period. Spinning and weaving of cotton and silk clothes attained a high quality. The poems mention the cotton clothes as thin as a cloud of steam or a slough of a snake. There was a great demand in the western world for the cotton clothes woven at Uraiyur.

Both internal and foreign trade was well organized and briskly carried on in the Sangam Age. The Sangam literature, Greek and Roman accounts and the archaeological evidences provide detailed information on this subject. Merchants carried the goods on the carts and on animal-back from place to place. Internal trade was mostly based on the barter system. External trade was carried between South India and the Greek kingdoms. After the ascendancy of the Roman Empire, the Roman trade assumed importance. The port city of Puhar became an emporium of foreign trade, as big ships entered this port with precious

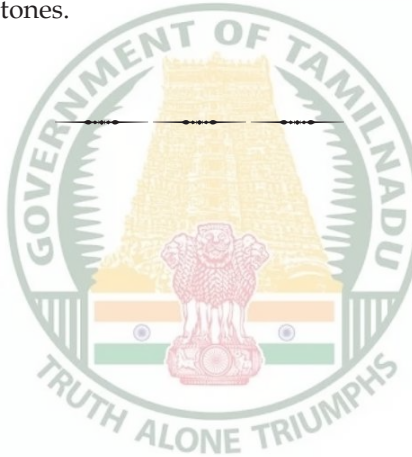
goods. Other ports of commercial activity include Tondi, Musiri, Korkai, Arikamedu and Marakkanam. The author of Periplus provides the most valuable information on foreign trade. Plenty of gold and silver coins issued by the Roman Emperors like Augustus, Tiberius and Nero were found in all parts of Tamil Nadu. They reveal the extent of the trade and the presence of Roman traders in the Tamil country.

The main exports of the Sangam age were Cotton, Fabrics, Spices like Pepper, Ginger, Cardamom, Cinnamon and Turmeric, Ivory products, Pearls and precious stones.

Gold, horses and sweet wine were the chief imports.

### **End of the Sangam Age**

Towards the end of the third century A.D., the Sangam period slowly witnessed its decline. The Kalabhras occupied the Tamil country for about two and a half centuries. We have little information about the Kalabhra rule. Jainism and Buddhism became prominent during this period. The Pallavas in the northern Tamil Nadu and Pandyas in southern Tamil Nadu drove the Kalabhras out of the Tamil country and established their rule.





## Cultural Heritage of Tamil Nadu

In the Pre-Vedic India, a Dravidian Civilization flourished with its nucleus in the Indus Valley. Later with the coming of Aryans the nucleus was shifted to Peninsular India. The Tamil Language and culture are the oldest surviving once in the Dravidian family of civilisations in the ancient Pali and Sanskrit literature the words Dramila and Dravida meant both Tamil and the Southern regions and distinguished these from Sankritised Northern region (Aryavarttha).

The Tamil language and literature are noted for their antiquity. The Sangam poets like Mamulanar belonged to the age of Nandas and Mauryas i.e. 4th century B.C. Thus the present Tamil language has a continuous history of atleast 2500 years. It's antiquity, Versatility and it's distinct qualities have bestowed Tamil with a classical status. Unlike Sanskrit but similar to Chinese, Tamil has become the oldest, surviving, popular language of the Indian subcontinent and the eldest among the Dravidian languages of South India.

The political history of Tamil Nadu from 500 B.C to 1300 A.D is divided into three phases (1) The Sangam age (2) Kalabhra age (3) Age of Tamil Empires.

During the Sangam age the political control of Tamil Nadu was divided between the crowned monarchs and petty chieftains. The Veliers were the petty chieftains ruling over hilly tractse.g. Aay of Podiyil hills, Adhiyaman of Kudhirai hills, Paari of Parambu hills. the fertile plains of river valleys were ruled by three crowned monarchs i.e. the Chera, Chola, and Pandya. The petty chieftains and crowned monarchs patronized scholars and poets. Some of the kings themselves were excellent poets e.g. Ariyapadai Kadantha Nedunchezhan. The rulers were engaged in wars among themselves and with others like Sinhalese, Kadambas, Yavanas and Ariyas. Cheran Senguttuvan, Karikala Cholan, Ariyapadaikadantha Nedunchezhiyan were a few of the prominent monarchs of the Sangam age.

The Kalabhras uprooted the Tamil Kingdoms in the second phase (3rd Century A.D.-6th Century A.D). However the Tamil literacy activities continued during their regime too. A jain monk named Vajranandhi established a Dravida Sangha at Madurai. Achyuta Vikrantha was the most popular Kalabhra ruler who ruled from Uraiyur.

The Kalabhras were replaced by the Pallavas of Kanchi in North Tamil Nadu and the Pandiyas of Madurai in South Tamil Nadu. The Pallavas were Simha Vishnu, Mahendravarman I and Narashimavarman I built a powerful empire by overcoming the challenges from Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Gangas. They became patrons of Saivism and Vaishnavism and built temples for Vaishnavite and saivite deities. In the South, the Pandiyas political unity patronised the Bakthi movement.

The Kalabhras were replaced by the Pallavas of Kanchi in North Tamil Nadu and the Pandiyas of Madurai in South Tamil Nadu. The Pallavas were Simha Vishnu, Mahendravarman I and Narashimavarman I built a powerful empire by overcoming the challenges from Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Gangas. They became patrons of Saivism and Vaishnavite and saivite deities. In the South, the Pandiyas political unity patronised the Bakthi movement.

By the end of 9th century Vijayalaya and Aditya Chola of Tanjore revived the Chola power. Parantaka I, Rajaraja I and Rajendra Chola transformed Chola kingdom in to an empire. They subdued the Vengi Chalukyas, Pandyas, Chera and conquered the Sinhala kingdom. Rajendra sent expeditions to Bengal and Kadaram. The Cholas were ardent saivites who built many magnificent temples for Siva. The Brahadeeswarar temple, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram are noteworthy among them.

Extensive trade contacts were established with far off countries like Sri Vijaya and China. By the end of 13th century the revival

of Pandyas at Madurai and the emergence of Hoysalas of Dwarsamudra led to the decline and fall of the Chola empire.

### **Administrative System**

The Sangam age had monarchical governments with an absolute monarch as the head, who had no checks on his authority. However the king was amenable to the advice of wise men of his court. The king's court known as Avai, Naalavai, Manram etc consisted of ministers, generals, high officials, chief queen, their apparent (Komahan) and junior princes (Ilango). The king had no standing army. Compulsory military service was imposed during the time of war.

The royal army was categorised into four wings

1. Infantry
2. Cavalry
3. War elephant and
4. Chariots.

Naval expeditions were also undertaken by Sangam kings e.g. Chera Senguttuvan against Kadamba pirates and Karikala Chola against Sinhalese. Mandalam, Kottam, Ur were the administrative subdivisions. The village administration was carried on by assembly of elders. There was a regular system of revenue administration. Besides the loot from the wars excise, tolls, duties on salt, periodical gifts and tributes contributed to the revenue of the king. The kings especially the Pandyas and Cholas encourages extension of agriculture by deforestation, embankment of rivers and encouraging agrarian settlement in newly conquered regions.

During the phase of empires, the king's powers and responsibilities increased manifold. The number of ministers and officials increased. A powerful standing army including naval units was developed. A complex system of provincial administration emerged. The empire was divided into Mandalams and Mandalams into Nadus and Nadus into Kottams. Each Kottam consisted of a number of Perurs (large towns) Urs (Villages) Nagarams (market towns) and Pattinams (coastal Towns). Autonomous local bodies like 'ur' or 'urar' for villages and Nattar for Nadus looked after the local administration.

The villages endowed to the Brahmins (Brahmadeyam) were governed by the assemblies of local Brahmins. These Mahasabhas enjoyed complete freedom from external interference and exempted from regular taxes. The Chola age is known as the Golden age of the Mahasabhas. Forced labour was imposed for public works and even for building temples. Innumerable tanks, canals and reservoirs were created to increase food production.

### Society

The 'Porulathikaram' in Tolkappiam describes the social conditions of the Sangam Tamils. The birth based caste and varna systems were absent among the Tamils instead, the land based Tinai divisions were mentioned. The Tamil land was topographically divided into

- Kurinji - hills and hilly region
- Mullai - the Pastoral Slopes
- Marudham - the fertile cultivable plains

➤ Neidal - the coastal or littoral region and

➤ Paalai - the desert region.

The population was accordingly classified as

- Kuravar or Vedar of Kurinji
- Idayar of Mullai
- Uzhavar of Marudham
- Minavar or Parathavar of Neidal
- Kallar of Paalai

In the royal towns of Marudham region the people were classified as Arasar (princes) Anthanar (wisemen), Vanikar (traders) and Vellalar (agriculturists) Panar (bards), Viraliyar (dancers), Kuyavar (potters), Umanar (salt merchants), Vannar (washermen), weavers and other handicraft - men, poets and teachers were also mentioned. Names of women poets were found revealing the access of education to women. Love marriages were approved Chastity was considered the meritorious quality of women. There were very few instances of sati being committed by widows of royal families.

The Caste system received royal recognition during the time of the Pallavas. The Brahmins were now given the highest status in the society. They emerged as religious leaders, political and social advisors and ultimate authority in legal issues. They were given land grants and tax concessions. All other castes were treated as Sudras. Untouchability became a menacing factor, these landless tillers were deprived of education, offices and access to temples. In the last phase of the Chola empire there

emerged two groupings of castes; Valangai and Edangai which led to Social tensions and regular clashes.

However it should be noted that Sangam ethical literature like Naladiyar and Thirukkural did not approve of caste. Sangam Tamils stressed more on ethical conduct than on faith and rituals. During the age of Tamil empires, the Bhakthi movement, the Nayanmars and Alwars accommodated all the communities as Bhakthas.

### Symbolism

Classical Tamil love poetry assigns the human experiences it describes, and in particular the subjective topics that those experiences relate to, specific habitats. Every situation in the poems is described using themes in which the time, the place and the floral symbols of each episode are codified. These codifications are used as symbols to imply a socio-economic order, occupations and behaviour patterns, which, in turn, are symbolized, by specific flora and fauna. Details of secondary aspects are just as rigidly codified - the seasons, the hour a god, musical instruments and, above all, the sentimental connotations of each landscape: lovers' meetings, patient waiting, lovers' quarrels, separation, and the anxiously awaited return.

### Geographical and non-geographical thinais

Under this codification, the inner universe associated with love is divided into seven modes, or thinai, five of which are geographical and associated with specific landscapes, and two of which are non-geographical and not associated with any specific landscape. Four

of the geographical landscapes are described as being landscapes that occur naturally in the Tamil lands. These are: kurinci - mountainous regions, associated with union, mullai - forests, associated with waiting, marutam - cropland, associated with quarreling, and neytal - seashore, associated with pining. The fifth - palai, or desert, associated with separation - is described in the Tolkappiyam as not being a naturally existing landscape.

From these basic associations of landscape and subject, a wide range of specific themes suitable for each landscape were derived. Thus, for example, the commentary on the Iraiyanar Akapporul states that as a result of the association of the kurinci landscape with union, it was also associated with the fear of separation, reassurance, the hero's or heroine's discussions with their friends, their being teased or taunted by their friends, their replies to their friends, the friends' role as intermediary, the meeting of the lovers, grief and doubt, and other similar themes. According to the Tamil nerivilakkam, a 9th-century text on poetry, the love themes described by the five thinais constitute "the Tamil way of life" or "the Tamil way of love." (tamilneri).

The two non-geographical modes - kaikkilai and peruntinai - were seen as dealing with emotions that were non-conforming, and therefore were not associated with any specific landscape. Kaikkilai, dealt with unreciprocated or one-sided love, while peruntinai, dealt with 'improper' love or love against the rules of custom.

Poetic Attributes of the Landscapes

	Kurunji	Mullai	Marudam	Neydhal	Palai
Patient waiting over separation	Lovers' quarrels, wife's irritability (husband accused of visiting a courtesan)	Heroine expresses grief over separation	Elopement	Longest separation	Dangerous journey by the hero
<b>Flower</b>	Kurinji	Mullai (Jasmine)	Marudam	Water lily	Paalai
<b>Landscape</b>	Mountains	Forest, Pasture	Agricultural areas, Plain or valley	Seashore	Parched wasteland, Desert
<b>Time</b>	Midnight	Evening	Shortly before sunrise	Sunset	Noon
<b>Season / Climate</b>	Winter/Cool and moist	Late Summer / Cloudy	Late spring	Early summer	Summer
<b>Animal</b>	Monkey, Elephant, Horse, Bull, Tiger	Deer	Water Buffalo, Fresh water fish	Crocodile; Shark	Fatigued Elephant, Tiger or wolf
<b>Crop / Plant</b>	Jackfruit, bamboo, Venkai	Konrai	Mango	Punnai	Cactus
<b>Water</b>	Waterfall	Rivers	Pond	Well, Sea	Dry wells, Stagnant water
<b>Soil</b>	Red and Black soils with stones and pebbles	Red soil	Alluvial	Sandy, Saline soil	Salt affected soil
<b>Occupation</b>	Hill tribes, gathering honey	Pastoral and agricultural occupations	Farmer	Selling fish, Salt, Fisherfolk	Travellers, bandits
<b>God</b>	Murugan	Maayon	Indra	Varuna	Kottravai



### **The Geographical Thinais**

In Tamil, each of the five geographical thinais are named for a flower that is characteristic of that landscape. In English translation, however, it is customary to use the name of the landscape rather than that of the flower, largely because the flowers lack the cultural association with a specific language in English that they have in Tamil.

#### **Kurinji – Mountainous Region**

The mountain is the scene of the lovers' union at midnight. It is the cold, dewy season. The forest is rich with lakes, waterfalls, teak, bamboo and sandalwood. In this region millet grows and wild bees are a source of honey. Love in this setting is exemplified by Murugan, and one of his wives, Valli, the daughter of a mountain dweller. He wears the sparkling red kantal flower and rides a peacock, the bird of the mountains.

The name of the region, Kurinchi, is also the name of the famous Kurinji flower (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*) from the lofty hills of Tamil country. The *Strobilanthes*, a shrub whose brilliant white flowers blossom for only a few days once every ten or twelve years, blanketing the slopes in radiant whiteness under the sun. This event of jubilation and purity symbolizes the frenzy of a sudden love shared, in concert with the unleashed forces of nature: the amorous dance of peacocks, their echoing cries, the splash of waterfalls, the roar of savage beasts. The lovers hold each other tighter still and forget the dangers of the mountain path.

#### **Mullai – Forests**

Mullai is the land of the forest. The forest is rich with lakes, waterfalls, teak, bamboo

and sandalwood. In this region millet grows and wild bees are a source of honey. Mullai or Jasmine (*Jasminum auriculatum*) is the flower of the forests.

The theme of the forest and of shepherds at play, the image of confident waiting for the loved one, produced an original offshoot; for this is the region of Maayon (Ancient Tamil god), and the love theme it represents symbolizes the devotee waiting in the hope that Maayon will eventually come and fill his soul, thus experiencing the joys of expectation.

#### **Marutham – Cropland**

The plains were the scene of triangular love plots in which the hero's visits to the courtesan oblige the heroine to counter with a mixed show of coquetry and moodiness, tactics whose limits are described in the *Thirukkural* ("Sulking is like flavouring with salt; a little suffices, but it is easy to go too far."). Indra, the god of thunderstorm, is the god of Marutham land.

The Marutam (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*) tree was the characteristic tree of this region.

#### **Neithal – Seashore**

The seashore affords many examples of the compelling charm of Sangam poetry and the extraordinary freshness of its realism. From behind the conventional symbolization of waiting there emerges a picture of the life of the fisherfolk; the nets and boats drawn up on the beach, scuttling crabs and cart wheels bogged down in the sand, the odour of drying fish, cut into thick slices, which attracts the birds, beautiful village girls peering through the *Pandanus* hedges, and the wind blowing through the cracks in the roughly constructed



straw huts at night. Varuna, the water god, is worshiped in Neithal.

Water lily is the characteristic flower of the region.

### **Palai – mixture of Mullai and Kurinci**

In classical Tamil prosody, the palai or wasteland is not seen as being a naturally occurring ecology. Ilampuranar, in his commentary on the Tolkappiyam, explains that instead, the landscape of the wasteland with which the paalai is associated emerges when other landscapes wither under the heat of the burning sun. . Paalai could thus be seen as a mixture of Mullai and Kurinci tracts, rather than as a mere sandy area.

The theme of wasteland and separation occupies half of one of the most famous anthologies, the theme of the mountain being only secondary.

Paalai tree is identified as Wrightia (Wrightiatinctoria).

### **Sangam Literature**

The Sangam Literature, composed by poets belonging to different social segments including women, was secular in character and did not claim divinity. The Sangam literature includes Tolkappiam, (a grammar work) Ettuthogai, Pathupattu, Pathinen Keezh Kanakku and the two great epics Silapadhikaram and Manimegalai. War and love are glorified Ettuthogai and Pathupattu however most of the Pathinen Keezh Kanakku works were on morals. The 18 Minor works, 5 major epics (Silapadhikaram, Manimekalai, Kundalakesi, Valayapathi and Seevagasinthamani) and 5 minor epics (Neelakesi, Sulamani, Udayana Kumara Kaviyam, Yasodhara Kaviyam and Nagakumara Kaviyam) epics and

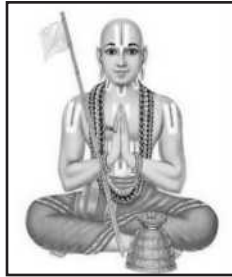
grammatical works (Pingala Nigandu and Yapperumkalam) were produced during the Kalabra period. During the age of empires, Bhakti literature became abundant. Thevaram, Thiruvacakam, Divya Prabandam, Periapuranam Kambaramayanam propagated Saivism and Vaishnavism, Muvarula, Kalingathuprani, Nandikalambakam, Nannul and Veeracholiyam are some of the noteworthy secular works. Tamil studies were supported by the chola grants (Pulavara Mutrool).

Though Sanskrit was the official language during Pallava period and Sanskrit studies received royal patronage only few notable Sanskrit works were produced, for example, Mattavilasaprakasanam, Kirtarjuniyam, Avanti Sundari Katha and Kavyadarsam, However Sanskrit succeeded in being accepted as the language of religious rituals of the temples. Sanskrit learning of the Brahmins were supported by tax free land grants (Bhatta Vritti and Veda Vritti)

### **Religion**

The religious practices during Sangam age were Tinai based. The people were liberal in their religious out look and religion did not dominate socio political activities. Hero stones were worshipped, Seyon, Mayon, Vendan, Varunan, Valiyon and Kotravai were popular deities. Ganesa cult was absent. Singing and dancing (Kuravai and veriyattu) were associated with worship, offering of flowers, grains and animals were made to deities. The Vedic yagnas of Brahmins attracted a few kings but had not become popular with the people. Jainism, Buddhism and Ajivikaism made inroads into Tamil society during Sangam age and became very popular during Kalabhra period.

Bhakthi movement gained momentum during the Pallava period. Nayanmars and Alvars carried on intensive propanganda against Jain and Buddhist. Siva, Thirumal and their consorts



became important deities in the later phase of the Chola period. Murugan cult became popular. The Brahmins replaced local priests in temples and Sanskrit became the religious language. The jains and Buddhists temples were either demolished or converted into Saivite or Vaishnavite temples. The Chola period witnessed Saivaite and Vaishnavite clashes. The Thillai Govindarajan idol was removed from Chidambaram idol was removed from Chidambaram temple, and the Vaishnavite Ramanuja was forced to seek asylum in Karnataka.

Virasaivism and Sri Vaishnavism raised their voice against social segregation. The Tamil Siddhars put a rational and powerful argument against caste discriminations, temple system, superstitions and rituals.

### Art and Architecture

The Sangam Tamils had their own system of music, dance and drama (Pann, Aadal and Koothu). The



Panar and Viraliyar were professional musicians and dancers. String instruments (Yaazh) wind instruments (Kuzhal) and drums

(Muzhauu) were used in such performances. Festivals and worship were also associated with dance and music (Kuravai, Veriyattu). The Pallava inscription at Kudumianmalai refers to a great musician Rudracharya.



The Devaram and Divya Prabandam were set to Ragas. The Puranic themes were enacted in the form of koothu or gaathas. The Devadasis or temple servants were excellent dancers.

In the field of architecture the Sangam age did not produce enduring structures with the advent of the Pallavas a new style in art and architecture appeared in Tamilnadu. At first Mandapams were excavated out of rocks with excellent sculptural representations (Mahisasura Mandapam, varaha mandapam). Then single rocks were converted into ratha like temples (monolithdic rathas at Mahabalipuram). They built structural temples by filling up stone slabs. (Shore temple, Kailasanathar Temple and Vaikuntha Perumal Temple). These Temples were noted for their Vimanas. The imperial Cholas developed this style further. Elaborate campuses, protective walls, Pillared halls, huge towers and multi shrines marked the Chola Temple architecture. The Tanjore Brihadeeswaram, Gangai Konda Cholapuram and Darasuram are

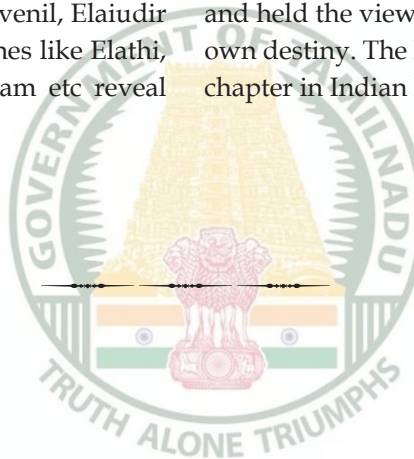
outstanding specimens of Chola architecture. All these temples have excellent sculptural representations. The Sittannavasal caves Kailasanathar Temple and Brihadeeswarar Temple have the best specimens of paintings. The Chola bronze images of Nataraja, Siva, Vishnu and other deities have earned global acclaim.

The Tamil had developed their own system of mathematics time calculation, astronomy, and medicinal systems.

The Sangam literature refers to “Enn” Kanakku Nazhigai Yamam Kaatham and Kol. They also refer to seasons as Elavenil, Elaiudir etc. References to native medicines like Elathi, Tirikadukam, Siru pancha Mulam etc reveal

Tamil’s versatile achievements. Kaniyans were both astronomers and astrologers. The Tamil Siddhas produced excellent treaties on Siddha system of medicine and these treaties elaborate diagnosis, treatment by herbs and chemicals and also provide pharmacological details.

To conclude with, it can be said that the Tamils had excelled in many fields of human activity and philosophically they emphasised on a universal outlook. Their theism did not give too much room for superstitions. Like the Buddhists and Jains, the Tamils opined, that good or bad, nothing comes from others and held the view that man is the maker of his own destiny. The legacy of Tamils is a glorious chapter in Indian history.

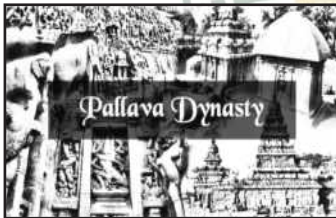


## The Pallavas

After the decline of the Sangam Age in the Tamil country, the Kalabhra rule lasted for about 250 years. 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

There are different views on the origin of the Pallavas. They were equated with the Parthians, the foreigners who ruled western India. Another view was that the Pallavas were a branch of the Brahmin royal dynasty of the Vakatakas of the Deccan. The third view relates the Pallavas with the descendents of the Chola prince and a Naga princess whose native was the island of Manipallavam. But these theories on the origin of the Pallavas were not supported by adequate evidences. Therefore, the view that the Pallavas were the natives of Tondaimandalam itself was widely accepted by scholars. They are also identical with the



Pulindas mentioned in the inscriptions of Asoka. When Tondaimandalam was conquered by the Satavahanas, the Pallavas became their feudatories. After the fall of the Satavahanas in the third century A.D., they became independent. The Pallavas issued their earlier inscriptions in Prakrit and Sanskrit because of their Satavahana connections, and also patronised Brahmanism.

### Political History

The early Pallava rulers from 250 A.D. to 350 A.D. issued their charters in Prakrit. Important among them were Sivaskandavarman and Vijayaskandavarman. The second line of Pallava rulers who ruled between 350 A.D. and 550 A.D. issued their charters in Sanskrit. The most important ruler of this line was Vishnugopal who was defeated by Samudragupta during his South Indian expedition. The rulers of the third line who ruled from 575 A.D. to their ultimate fall in the ninth century issued their charters both in Sanskrit and Tamil. Simhavishnu was the first ruler of this line. He destroyed the Kalabhras and firmly established the Pallava rule in Tondaimandalam. He also defeated the Cholas and extended the Pallava territory up to the river Kaveri. Other great Pallava

rulers of this line were Mahendravarman I, Narasimhavarman I, and Narasimhavarman II.

### **Later Pallavas (570-903 A.D.)**

Simhavishnu was the first ruler of the later Pallava dynasty. he destroyed the Kalabhras and firmly established the Pallava rule in Tondaimandalam with his capital at Kanchi. He seized the regions of the Cholas. His kingdom extended from Andhra Kingdom, Vishnukundin up to the river Cauvery. He assumed the title 'Avanisimha' or the 'Lion of the Earth'.

### **Mahendravarman I (600 – 630 A.D.)**

- The long-drawn Pallava – Chalukya Conflict began during his period. Pulakesin II marched against the Pallavas and captured the northern part of their kingdom. Although a Pallava inscription refers to the victory of Mahendravarman I at Pullalur, he was not able to recover the lost territory.
- Mahendravarman I was a follower of Jainism in the early part of his career. He was converted to Saivism by the influence of the Saiva saint, Thirunavukkarasar alias Appar. He built a Siva temple at Tiruvadi. He assumed a number of titles like Gunabhara, Satyasandha, Chettakari (builder of temples) Chitrakarapuli, Vichitrachitta and Mattavilasa.
- He was a great builder of cave temples. The Mandagappattu inscription hails him as Vichitrachitta who constructed a temple for Brahma, Vishnu and Siva without the use of bricks, timber, metal and mortar. His rock-cut temples

are found in a number of places like Vallam, Mahendravadi, Dalavanur, Pallavaram, Mandagappattu and Tiruchirappalli. He had also authored the Sanskrit work Mattavilasa Prahasanam. His title Chitrakarapuli reveals his talents in painting. He is also regarded as an expert in music. The music inscription at Kudumianmalai is ascribed to him.

### **Narasimhavarman I (630-668 A.D.)**

- Narasimhavarman I was also known as Mamalla, which means 'great wrestler'. He wanted to take revenge the defeat of his father at the hands of Chalukyan ruler Pulakesin II. His victory over Pulakesin II in the Battle of Manimangalam near Kanchi is mentioned in Kuram copper plates. The Pallava army under General Paranjothi pursued the retreating Chalukya army, entered Chalukya territory, captured and destroyed the capital city of Vatapi. Narasimhavarman I assumed the title 'Vatapikonda'. He regained the lost territory. Another notable achievement of Narasimhavarman I was his naval expedition to Sri Lanka. He restored the throne to his friend and Sri Lankan prince Manavarma.
- During his reign, Hiuen Tsang visited the Pallava capital Kanchipuram. His description of Kanchi is vivid. He calls it a big and beautiful city, six miles in circumference. It had 100 Buddhist monasteries in which about 10,000 Buddhist monks lived. According



to his account the people of Kanchi esteemed great learning and the Ghatika at Kanchi served as a great centre of learning. Narasimhavarman I was the founder of Mamallapuram and the monolithic rathas were erected during his reign.

### **Narasimhavarman II or Rajasimha (695 -722 A.D.)**

Narasimhavarman I was succeeded by Mahendravarman II and Parameswarvarman I and the Pallava - Chalukya conflict continued during their reign. Thereafter, Narasimhavarman II became the ruler of the Pallava kingdom. He was also known as Rajasimha. His regime was peaceful and he evinced more interest in developing the art and architecture. The Shore temple at Mamallapuram and the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchipuram were built in this period. He was also a great patron of art and letters. The famous Sanskrit scholar Dandin is said to have adorned his court. He sent embassies to China and the maritime trade flourished during his reign. Rajasimha assumed titles like Sankarabhakta, Vadhyavidyadhara and Agamapriya. He was succeeded by Parameswaravarman II and Nandivarman II. The Pallava rule lasted till the end of the ninth century A.D. The Chola king Aditya I defeated the last Pallava ruler Aparajita and seized the Kanchi region. With this, the rule of Pallava dynasty came to an end.

Parameswaran-II (728-731 A.D.), the son of Narasimhavarman-II came to power in 728 A.D. He was defeated by the Chalukya ruler Vikramaditya-II. He died in a battle with the Gangas. The Simhavishnu line of rule came to an

with the death of Parameswaram-II as his son did not succeed him.

### **Nandivarman-II Pallavamalla**

Nandivarman-II Pallavamalla (731-796 A.D.) was the son of Simhavishnu's brother Hiranyavarman. He was chosen by the Pallava ministers, the members of ghatika (college of learning) and the common people to succeed Parameswaran-II. Nandivarman II was a worshipper of Vishnu. He built the Vaikunta PERumal temple at Kanchi. The great Vaishnava Saint Thirumangai Alwar was his contemporary.

### **Decline of the Pallavas**

The successors of Nandivarman-II were not very strong and powerful. They had to face Pandya aggression. The last Pallava ruler Aparajitha (885-903 A.D.) was defeated by Aditya-I, a Chola ruler. The Pallava rule at Tondaimandalam thus came to an end with his downfall.

### **Administration of the Pallavas**

The Pallavas had a well organized administrative system. 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. He was the fountain of justice. He maintained a well-trained army. He provided land-grants to the temples known as Devadhana and also to the Brahmins 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, oil-pressers 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 land-grants by the kings and nobles. 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.

### **Education and Literature**

The Pallavas were great patrons of learning. Their capital Kanchi was an ancient centre of learning. The Ghatika at Kanchi was popular and it attracted students from all parts of India and abroad. The founder

of the Kadamba dynasty, Mayurasarman studied Vedas at Kanchi. Dinganaga, a Buddhist writer came to study at Kanchi. Dharmapala, who later became the Head of the Nalanada University, belonged to Kanchi. Bharavi, the great Sanskrit scholar lived in the time of Simhavishnu. Dandin, another Sanskrit writer adorned the court of Narasimhavarman II. Mahendravarman I composed the Sanskrit play *Mattavilasaprahasanam*. Tamil literature had also developed. The Nayanmars and Alvars composed religious hymns in Tamil. The *Devaram* composed by Nayanmars and the *Nalayradivyaprabandam* composed by Alvars represent the religious literature of the Pallava period. Perundevanar was patronized by Nandivarman II and he translated the *Mahabharata* as *Bharathavenba* in Tamil. *Nandikkalambagam* was another important work but the name of the author of this work is not known. Music and dance also developed during this period.

### **Pallava Art and Architecture**

It was a great age of temple building. The Pallavas introduced the art of excavating temples from the rock. In fact, the Dravidian style of temple architecture began with the Pallava rule. It was a gradual evolution starting from the cave temples to monolithic rathas and culminated in structural temples. The development of temple architecture under the Pallavas can be seen in four 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

Tirukalukkunram. The second stage of Pallava architecture is represented by the monolithic rathas and Mandapas found at Mamallapuram. Narasimhavarman I took the credit for these wonderful architectural monuments. The five rathas, popularly called as the Panchapanadava rathas, signifies five different styles of temple architecture.



The mandapas contain beautiful sculptures on its walls. The most popular of these mandapas are Mahishasuramardhini Mandapam, Tirumurthi Mandapam and Varaha Madapam.



In the next stage, Rajasimha introduced the structural temples. These temples were built by using the soft sand rocks. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi and the Shore temple at Mamallapuram remain the finest examples of

the early structural temples of the Pallavas. The Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi is the greatest architectural master piece of the Pallava art.

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 architecture. The Pallavas had also contributed to the development of sculpture. Apart from the sculptures found in the temples, the 'Open Art Gallery' at Mamallapuram remains an important monument bearing the sculptural beauty of this period. The Descent of the Ganges or the Penance of Arjuna is called a fresco painting in stone. The minute details as well as the theme of these sculptures such as the figures of

- Lice-picking monkey,
- Elephants of huge size and the figure of the 'ascetic cat' standing erect remain the proof for the talent of the sculptor.

### Fine Arts

Music, dance and painting had also developed under the patronage of the Pallavas. The Mamandur inscription contains a note on the notation of vocal music. The Kudumianmalai inscription referred to musical notes and instruments. The Alvars and Nayanmars composed their hymns in various musical notes. Dance and drama also developed during this period. The sculptures of this period depict many dancing postures. The Sittannavasal paintings belonged to this period. The commentary called Dakshinchitra was compiled during the reign of Mahendravarman I, who had the title Chittirakkarapuli.

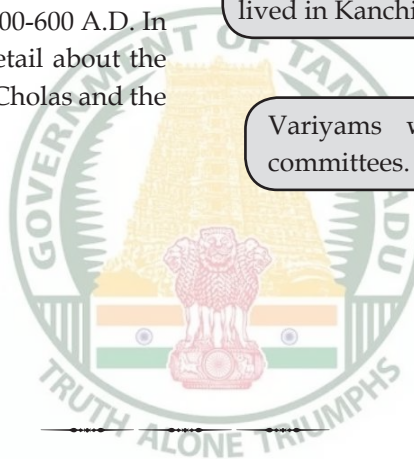


The ancient Tamizhagam was divided into three political units under the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandyas. Their period of existence is known as the Sangam Age. The Kalabhras who rose to power during this period ruled nearly for three centuries from 300-600 A.D. In this chapter we will study in detail about the Later Pallava dynasty, imperial Cholas and the Pandyas.

**Hieun Tsang:** Hieun Tsang visited the Pallava capital Kanchipuram. According to him Kanchi was about 6 miles in circumference. There were more than one hundred Buddhist monasteries and many Jain temples here. Kanchi was the greatest centre of education in the south.

Vatsyayana was a pandit of Kanchi. Dharmapala went from Kanchi to Nalanda. Dandi the author of "Dandi Alangaram" a poet from North India lived in Kanchi.

Variyams were Executive committees.



# The Cholas

## The Cholas

The Cholas were an antique ruling family. References to the Cholas are made in the Mahabharata, the inscriptions of Asoka and the works of Megasthenese and Ptolemy.

During the Sangam Age, the Cholas ruled Tiruchi and Tanjore region. Their capital was Uraiyur. Tiger was their emblem. Their greatest ruler Karikala built Kallanai across the river Cauvery near Trichy.

The Chola rule declined as they became feudatories of the rulers of Uraiyur.

## Later Cholas or Imperial Cholas

The Cholas who emerged to power in the middle of the ninth century were known as later Cholas or Imperial Cholas. They were called as Imperial Cholas because their kingdom extended to a major portion of south India, Srilanka and Kadaram (including Sumatra and Malaya).

Vijayalaya (850-871 A.D) laid the foundation for the rise of later Cholas.

Aditya I (871-907 A.D) son of Vijayalaya became the ruler of Tondaimandalam as well

as Cholamandalam. He defeated Gangas and Kongu country. Parantaka-I, son of Aditya-I defeated the Pandya ruler and took up the title-Madurai-kondan. He was defeated by the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna-III in the battle of Takkolam. Parantaka died in 955 A.D.

### Successors of Parantaka-I

1. Gandaraditya 949-957 A.D.
2. Arinjaya 956-957 A.D.
3. Parantaka-II 956-973 A.D.
4. Aditya 956-966 A.D.
5. Uttama Chola 965-985 A.D.

- The later Cholas were well-versed in maintaining and auditing of accounts.
- Free hospitals called 'Aathular salai' were setup at Thanjavur and many more places.

## Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 A.D.)



It was under Rajaraja I and his son Rajendra I that the Chola power reached its highest point of glory. His military conquests were:

- The defeat of the Chera ruler Bhaskararavivarman in the naval battle of Kandalursalai 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 Polanaruva 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 the Raichur Doab, Banavasi and other places. Hence the Chola power extended up to the river Tungabadhra.
- The restoration of Vengi throne to its rulers Saktivarman and Vimaladitya by defeating the Telugu Cholas. Rajaraja gave his daughter Kundavai in marriage to Vimaladitya.
- Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the Maldiv 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 Maldiv Islands beyond India. Rajaraja assumed a number of titles like Mummidi Chola, Jayankonda 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 the northern part of Ceylon. Rajendra defeated him and seized the 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 Tungabadhra was recognised 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



Rajesvaram 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 pin point 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 in tact. At the death of Rajendra I the extent of the Chola Empire was at its peak. The river Tungabadhra was the northern boundary. The Pandya, Kerala and Mysore regions and also Sri Lanka formed part of the empire. He gave his daughter Ammangadevi 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 Sri Vijaya. Under Kulottunga III the central authority became weak. The rise of the feudatories like the Kadavarayas 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.

### Immediate successors of Rajendra-I

- |    |               |                |
|----|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Rajadhiraja I | 1018-1054 A.D. |
| 2. | Rajendra II   | 1056-1064 A.D. |
| 3. | Rajamahendra  | 1060-1063 A.D. |
| 4. | Virarajendra  | 1063-1070 A.D. |
| 5. | Adirajendra   | 1067-1070 A.D. |

### Kulottunga-I (1071-1122 A.D.)

Kulottunga-I who was born to Ammangadevi, the daughter of Rajendra-I and Rajaraja of Vengi started the Chalukya Chola line of rulers. He united Vengi Kingdom with the Chola Empire.

Kulottunga-I defeated the western Chalukyas. He also captured Kalinga. During his reign Srilanka declared its independence.



He had very close relationship with Srivijaya and sent trade missions to their land in 1077 A.D.

Kulottunga-I was a great administrator. He measured the lands and regulated land revenue. As he removed excise duties he was called as 'Sungam Thavirtha Cholan'. He patronized great literary scholars like Jeyamkondan, Ottakkuthar, Pugazhendi and Kambar.

### **Disintegration of the Cholas**

The Chola Empire began to disintegrate due to the rise of feudatories like the Kadavarayas and the emergence of the Pandya Empire. Rajendra-III (1246-1279 A.D.) was the last Cholas ruler. The Chola Kingdom was annexed to the Pandya Empire with the defeat of Rajendra-III by Jatavarman Sundarapandya-II.

### **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 as puravuvarithinaikkalam. 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 remission 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 Velaikkarakar. 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 Coromandal coasts. In fact, the Bay of Bengal became a Chola lake for sometime.

### **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 mandalams. 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 Uttiramerur 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.
- 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 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 variyams such as samvatsaravariyam, erivariyam, thotta variyam, pancha variyam, pon variyam and puravuvuri variyam to take up six different functions of the village administration. The committee members were called variyapperumakkal. 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.

### Socio-economic Life

Caste system was widely prevalent during the Chola period. Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges. The inscriptions of the later period of the Chola rule mention about two major divisions among the castes – Valangai and Idangai castes. However, there was cooperation among various castes and sub-castes in social and religious life. The position of women did not improve. The practice of 'sati' was prevalent among the royal families. The devadasi system or dancing girls attached to temples emerged during this period.

Both Saivism and Vaishnavism continued to flourish during the Chola period. A number of temples were built with the patronage of Chola kings and queens. The temples remained centres of economic activity during this period. The mathas had great influence during this period. Both agriculture and industry flourished. Reclamation of forest lands and the construction and maintenance of irrigation tanks led to agricultural prosperity. The weaving industry, particularly the silk-weaving at Kanchi flourished. The metal works developed owing to great demand of images for temples and utensils. Commerce and trade were brisk with trunk roads or peruvazhis and merchant guilds.

Gold, silver and copper coins were issued in plenty at various denominations. Commercial contacts between the Chola Empire and China, Sumatra, Java and Arabia were extensively prevalent. Arabian horses were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry.

### Education and Literature

Education was also given importance. Besides the temples and mathas as educational centres, several educational institutions also flourished. The inscription at Ennayiram, Thirumukkudal and Thirubhuvanai provide details of the colleges existed in these places.

Apart from the Vedas and Epics, subjects like mathematics and medicine were taught in these institutions. Endowment of lands was made to run these institutions. The development of Tamil literature reached its peak during the Chola period. Sivakasintamani written by Thiruthakkadevar and Kundalakesi belonged to 10th century. The Ramayana composed by Kamban and the Periyapurana or Tiruttondarpuranam by Sekkilar are the two master-pieces of this age. Jayankondar's Kalingattupparani describes the Kalinga war fought by Kulotunga I. The Moovarula written by Ottakuthar depicts the life of three Chola kings. The Nalavenba was written by Pugalendi. The works on Tamil grammar like Kalladam by Kalladanar, Yapperungalam by Amirthasagarar, a Jain, Nannul by Pavanandhi and Virasoliyam by Buddhimitra were the products of the Chola age.

### 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 master pieces. The Chola paintings were found on the walls of Narthamalai and Tanjore temples.

### Sculpturers

Portraits, icons and decorative sculptures are the main features of Chola sculptures. The portraits are full of grace and beauty. The icons of Rajaraja-I are remarkable. The sculptures of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, eight armed Durga in the Shiva and Vishnu temples are a few examples of Chola sculptures.



The Cholas are also well known for their bronze images. The Nataraja idol in the Nageswara Temple at Kumbakonam is the largest and the finest. The bronze idol of Arthanareeswarar is another important specimen of the Chola period.

### Paintings

The Cholas are known for their paintings all well as fine murals (paintings done directly on walls). The paintings of the Chola period are found at Tanjore, Thirumayam, Kanchi Kailasanatha Temple and Narttamalai Vishnu Temple.

### Music and Dance

Music developed into a fine art under the Cholas. This development provided the basis for the later day Carnatic Music. Bharatanatyam as a fine art also developed during this period.

### Impact of imperial cholas

The Imperial cholas who ruled from 850 A.D. to 1279 A.D. played a significant role in the Tamil country for about 430 years. They have made an impressive impact on Polity, Tamil literature, Temple architecture, music and dance. They were the only imperial power who founded an overseas empire and spread the glories of the Tamil culture far and wide.

**World Heritage Day :** The World Heritage Day is celebrated every year on 18th April. This day is intended to make people aware of their social and cultural Heritage. It also instills the value to care and preserve all the heritage sites.

### Varipotthagam

The Varipotthagam was a book containing all revenue record. During Rajaraja's reign a revenue survey was undertaken in 1001 A.D. by Senathipati Kuravan, a revenue officer.

**World Heritage Sites:** The Brahadeeswara temple at Tanjore, Siva temple at Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Airavatesvara temple at Darasuram have been declared as World Heritage Sites by the UNESCO.

# The Pandyas

## The Pandya Empire

The Pandyas occupied the region comprising of the modern districts of Madurai and Tirunelveli, part of Trichy and sometimes even parts of Travancore. We come to know of the "Pandyas from the writings of Magasthenese, Pliny, the ancient Tamil literary works and the accounts of Hiuen-Tsang and Marco-polo. The history of the Pandyas can be divided as the Early Pandyas, First Pandya Empire and Second Pandya Empire.

### The early Pandyas

The Early Pandyas belonged to the Sangam Age. A remarkable feature of this period was the maintenance of a flourishing Tamil Literary Academy or Sangam at Madurai. The capital of the Pandyas was Madurai and their emblem was fish. With the rise of the kalabhras, the Sangam Age declined.

### First Pandya Empire

The Pandya king Kadungon restored position of the Pandyas in the last quarter of the 6th Century. A.D. by overthrowing the Kalabhras. The dynasty founded by him is generally referred to as the First Pandya Kingdom (550-950 A.D.)

The most important rulers of this period were Arikesari Maravarman, Ranadhiran,

Maravarman, Rajasimha-I, Varaguna-I and Srimara Srivallabha.

The Pandya empire extended to Tanjore, Tiruchirapalli, Coimbatore and Salem.

### The Second Pandya Empire

From the 13th century onwards the Pandyas progressively detached themselves from the Chola rule and reasserted the independence. In the civil war which broke out between Vikrama Pandya and Virapandya, Vikrama Pandya captured power with the support of Kulothunga-III the Chola Emperor.

### Jatavarman Kulasekara-I

Jatavarman Kulasekara-I (1190-1216 A.D.) succeeded his father Vikrama Pandya. He ruled over Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari. He appointed his brother, Maravarman Sundara Pandya as his successor.

### Maravarman Sundara Pandya-I

Maravarman Sundara Pandya-I (1216-1238 A.D.) defeated Kulottunga Chola-III in 1219 A.D. As the Hoysalas came to the support of the Cholas, he restored the throne to the Chola ruler Rajaraja-III and assumed the title 'Sonadu Valangiaruliya Sundara Pandya'.

Maravarman Sundara Pandya-II (1238-1253 A.D.) recovered from the Chola ruler



Rajendra-III some of the territories which he had lost earlier.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandya-I (1253-1268 A.D.) succeeded Maravarman Sundara Pandya-II. He extended the empire from Nellore and Cuddappah districts in the North to cape Comorin in the South. He took up the titles Emmandalamum Kondaruliya Maharajathiraja, Sri Paramesvaran and Ponveintha Perumal.

Jatavarman Sundara Pandya-I's son Maravarman Kulasekaran-I (1268-1308 A.D.) enlarged his kingdom. He invaded Ceylon and captured Kollam in the Chera land. He assumed the title Kollam Konda Pandya. The power of the Pandyas started declining after him.

### **Decline of the Pandyas**

A war of succession broke out between Sundara Pandya and Vira Pandya, the sons of Maravarman Kulasekaran-I. With the help of Ala-ud-din Khilji's commander Malik Kafur, Sundara Pandya ascended the throne.

The Tughluqs who succeeded the Khiljis, extended their hold over South India and declared the Pandya empire as a part of the Tughluq Empire.

The decline of Tughluq power led to the establishment of the Sultans of Madurai which ultimately resulted in the complete decline of the Pandya Empire.

### **Administration**

The Pandya Empire was called as Pandya Mandalam. The Mandalam was divided into Valanadu and further into Urs. The King was assisted by the Ariyans (Ministers) and the Army Chief. Special officers were appointed to collect taxes and maintain accounts.

### **Local self Government**

Village administration was looked after by five Variyams, namely Aranilaya Variyam, Neernilai Variyam, Nanaya Variyam, varithandal Variyam and Needhi Variyam.

### **Occupation**

Agriculture and Trade were the main occupations of the people. The agriculturists were called as Boomiputirar. Many slaves were employed to carry on different tasks. The Pandyas were famous for pearl diving. The pearls of the Pandya empire were famous all over the world. The famous ports of the Pandyas were Korkai and Thondi.

### **Literature**

Manickavasagar's composed Thiruvasagam, Andal's composed Thiruppavai, Nammalvar's composed Thiruppallandu, Villiputhurar wrote Mahabharatha, Adhiv eerarama Pandya wrote Naidadham, Srikaviraya wrote books namely Seyur Murugan ula and Rathingiri ula. Thus the Pandyas contributed greatly to the progress of literature.

### **Art and Architecture**

The Pandya contribution to art and architecture is noteworthy. The special features of the Pandya temple architecture are the Gopuras, Prakaras, Vimanas, Garbagrahas and Gateways.

The Pandya period marked a new awakening in the field of rock-cut temples. More than 50 rock cut temples were excavated in the Pandya Kingdom at several places like Kunnakudi, Annaimalai, Sithannavalai, Thiruparankundram, Kalugumalai, Malaiyadikuruchi, Thiruchirappalli, etc.,



Structural temples were constructed by the Pandya rulers at Kovilpatty, Tiruppathur, Madurai, Srivilliputhur and other places. Kulasekara Pandya built arthamandapa, manimandapa and sannati in every temple of his empire. Public meetings, social gatherings, religious keerthanas, recitals and Katha-Nataka were held in the sabha mandapas of temples.

### **Sculptures**

The Pandya sculptures are beautiful and ornamental. The sculptures of Somaskandar, Durga, Ganapathy, Narasimha and Nataraja are good specimens of this period.

Many sculptures are also found at Kalugumalai, Thiruparankundram, Thirumalaipurm, Narattamalai and Kunnakudi.

### **Paintings**

Among the fine arts, painting was greatly developed by the Pandyas. The mural paintings of Srimaran Srivallabha Pandya of the first Pandya period are seen in the Sithannavasal cave temples. The paintings of lotus, bathing elephants and playing fish are noteworthy.

The Pandya rules have thus left a unique and everlasting impact on the Tamil society and South Indian history.

**Uttaramerur inscriptions:** It laid down the qualifications for those who wished to become a member of the Sabha. He must be honest, a land owner from which land revenue is collected, In the age group 35 and 70 years, having a knowledge of the Vedas and well versed in administrative matters. Members of the village if found guilty were punished severely. They could not take part in the elections.

**The lost wax technique:** The lost wax technique was used by the Chola craftsmen to make bronze statues. First the image was made in wax. Then it was covered in clay and allowed to dry. A tiny hole was made in the clay cover. Next, it was heated and the molten wax was drained out through the hole. Bronze (an alloy of copper and metal) was melted and poured into the clay through the hole. Once the metal was coated and solidified the clay cover was carefully removed and the image was cleaned and polished.

## Vijayanagara Rule

### VIJAYANAGAR EMPIRE

#### Sources

- The history of Vijayanagar Empire constitutes an important chapter in the history of India. Four dynasties – Sangama, Saluva, Tuluva and Aravidu – ruled Vijayanagar from A.D. 1336 to 1672. The sources for the study of Vijayanagar are varied such as literary, archaeological and numismatics. Krishnadevaraya's Amukthamalyada, Gangadevi's Maduravijayam and Allasani Peddanna's Manucharitam are some of the indigenous literature of this period.
- Many foreign travelers visited the Vijayanagar Empire and their accounts are also valuable. The Moroccan traveler, Ibn Battuta, Venetian traveler Nicolo de Conti, Persian traveler Abdur Razzak and the Portuguese traveler Domingo Paes were among them who left valuable accounts on the socio-economic conditions of the Vijayanagar Empire.

- The copper plate inscriptions such as the Srirangam copper plates of Devaraya II provide the genealogy and achievements of Vijayanagar rulers. The Hampi ruins and other monuments of Vijayanagar provide information on the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers. The numerous coins issued by the Vijayanagar rulers contain figures and legends explaining their titles and achievements.

#### Political History

Vijayanagar was founded in 1336 by Harihara and Bukka of the Sangama dynasty. They were originally served under the Kakatiya rulers of Warangal. Then they went to Kampili where they were imprisoned and converted to Islam. Later, they returned to the Hindu fold at the initiative of the saint Vidyaranya. They also proclaimed their independence and founded a new city on the south bank of the Tungabhadra river. It was called Vijayanagar meaning city of victory.

The decline of the Hoysala kingdom enabled Harihara and Bukka to expand their newly founded kingdom. By 1346, they brought the

whole of the Hoysala kingdom under their control. The struggle between Vijayanagar and Sultanate of Madurai lasted for about four decades. Kumarakampana's expedition to Madurai was described in the Maduravijayam. He destroyed the Madurai Sultans and as a result, the Vijayanagar Empire comprised the whole of South India up to Rameswaram.

The conflict between Vijayanagar Empire and the Bahmani kingdom lasted for many years. The dispute over Raichur Doab, the region between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra and also over the fertile areas of Krishna-Godavari delta led to this long-drawn conflict. The greatest ruler of the Sangama dynasty was Deva Raya II. But he could not win any clear victory over the Bahmani Sultans. After his death, Sangama dynasty became weak. The next dynasty, Saluva dynasty founded by Saluva Narasimha reigned only for a brief period (1486-1509).

### **Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529 A.D.)**

Krishnadeva Raya of the Tuluva dynasty was the most famous king of the Vijayanagar Empire.

According to Domingo Paes, a Portuguese traveller, "Krishnadeva Raya was the most feared and perfect king there could possibly be".

#### **Conquests**

Krishnadeva Raya was a great warrior. He conquered Sivasamudram in 1510 A.D., Raichur in 1512 A.D., Orissa and Warangal in

1523 A.D. and a large part of the Deccan. His empire extended from the river Krishna in the north to the river Cauvery in the south and the Arabian Sea in the west to the Bay of Bengal in the east.

#### **Contributions**

Krishnadevaraya was an able administrator. He constructed large tanks and canals for irrigation purposes. He improved the naval power as he understood the importance of overseas trade. He maintained friendly relationship with the Portuguese and Arab traders and increased the revenue of his government.

Krishnadeva Raya was a great scholar. A group of eight scholars called Ashtadiggajas adorned his court. He was a patron of art and architecture. He built beautiful temples and palaces. The Vijaya nagar Empire reached its zenith of glory during Krishnadeva Raya's period.

**The Ashtadiggajas:** Allasani Peddanna, Nandi Thimmana, Tenali Rama, Bhattu Murthy, Puna Vira Bhadra, Dhurjathy, Mallana and Panaji Surana.



#### **Administration**

The administration under the Vijayanagar Empire was well organized. The king enjoyed absolute authority in executive, judicial and legislative matters. He was the highest court of appeal. The succession to the throne was on the principle of hereditary. Sometimes usurpation to the throne took place as Saluva Narasimha came to power by ending the Sangama dynasty. The king was assisted by a council of ministers in his day to day administration.

The Empire was divided into different administrative units called Mandalams, Nadus, sthalas and finally into gramas. The governor of Mandalam was called Mandaleswara or Nayak. Vijayanagar rulers gave full powers to the local authorities in the administration.

Besides land revenue, tributes and gifts from vassals and feudal chiefs, customs collected at the ports, taxes on various professions were other sources of income to the government. Land revenue was fixed generally one sixth of the produce. The expenditure of the government includes personal expenses of king and the charities given by him and military expenditure. In the matter of justice, harsh punishments such as mutilation and throwing to elephants were followed.

The Vijayanagar army was well-organized and efficient. It consisted of the cavalry, infantry, artillery and elephants. High-breed horses were procured from foreign traders. The top-grade officers of the army were known as Nayaks or Poligars. They were granted land in lieu of their services. These lands were called amaram. Soldiers were usually paid in cash.

### **The Glories of the Vijayanagar Empire**

#### **Administration**

- The Vijayanagar rulers had a well organized administrative system. The king was the fountain head of all powers in the state. There was a Council of Ministers to assist the King in the work of administration.
- The Empire was divided into six Provinces. Each Province was under a Governor called Naik. The Provinces were divided into districts which were

further divided into smaller units namely Villages. The Village Assembly carried on the administration of the villages through its hereditary officers like accountants, the weightsmen, watchmen and officers incharge of forced labour. The Central administration maintained contact with the villages through an officer called Mahanayakacharya.

#### **The Army**

The army consisted of the infantry, calvary and elephantry. The commander-in-chief was in charge of the army.

#### **Revenue Administration**

Land revenue was the main source of income. The land was carefully surveyed and taxes were collected based on the fertility of the soil. Great attention was paid to agriculture and the construction of dams and canals.

#### **Judicial Administration**

The king was the supreme judge. The civil cases were decided on the basis of Hindu Law. Severe punishments were inflicted on the guilty. Fines were collected from those who violated the law.

#### **Position of Women**

Women occupied a high position and took an active part in political, social and literary life of the empire. They were educated and trained in werestling. In the use of various weapons of offence and defence, in music and fine arts. Some of them received education of high order. Nuniz writes that the kings had women astrologers, clerks, accountants, guards and wrestlers.

#### **Social Life**

Allasani Peddanna in his Manucharitam refers the existence of four castes – Brahmins,

Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras - in the Vijayanagar society. Foreign travelers left vivid accounts on the splendour of buildings and luxurious social life in the city of Vijayanagar. Silk and cotton clothes were mainly used for dress. Perfumes, flowers and ornaments were used by the people. Paes mentions of the beautiful houses of the rich and the large number of their household servants. Nicolo Conti refers to the prevalence of slavery. Dancing, music, wrestling, gambling and cock-fighting were some of the amusements.

The Sangama rulers were chiefly Saivaites and Virupaksha was their family deity. But other dynasties were Vaishnavites. Srivaishnavism of Ramanuja was very popular. But all kings were tolerant towards other religions. Barbosa referred to the religious freedom enjoyed by everyone. Muslims were employed in the administration and they were freely allowed to build mosques and worship. A large number of temples were built during this period and numerous festivals were celebrated. The Epics and the Puranas were popular among the masses.

The position of women had not improved. However, some of them were learned. Gangadevi, wife of Kumarakampana authored the famous work Maduravijayam. Hannamma and Thirumalamma were famous poets of this period. According to Nuniz, a large number of women were employed in royal palaces as dancers, domestic servants and palanquin bearers. The attachment of dancing girls to temples was in practice. Paes refers to the flourishing devadasi system. Polygamy was prevalent among the royal families. Sati was honoured and Nuniz gives a description of it.

### Economic Condition

According to the accounts of the foreign travelers, the Vijayanagar Empire was one of the wealthiest parts of the world at that time. Agriculture continued to be the chief occupation of the people. The Vijayanagar rulers provided a stimulus to its further growth by providing irrigation facilities. New tanks were built and dams were constructed across the rivers like Tungabadra. Nuniz refers to the excavation of canals.

There were numerous industries and they were organized into guilds. Metal workers and other craftsmen flourished during this period. Diamond mines were located in Kurnool and Anantapur district. Vijayanagar was also a great centre of trade. The chief gold coin was the varaha but weights and measures varied from place to place. Inland, coastal and overseas trade led to the general prosperity. There were a number of seaports on the Malabar coast, the chief being Cannanore. Commercial contacts with Arabia, Persia, South Africa and Portugal on the west and with Burma, Malay peninsula and China on the east flourished. The chief items of exports were cotton and silk clothes, spices, rice, iron, saltpeter and sugar. The imports consisted of horses, pearls, copper, coral, mercury, China silk and velvet clothes. The art of shipbuilding had developed.

The empire of Vijayanagar was very rich and prosperous. The agricultural production was increased by their irrigational policies. Numerous industries such as Textiles, mining, metallurgy and perfumery existed. They had commercial relations with the islands in the Indian Ocean, the Malay Archipelago, Burma,



China, Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal.

The Chief articles exported were spices, cereals, cotton, silk, opium, Indigo, sea pearls, saffron, ginger, sugar, coconuts, etc. The articles imported were horses, elephants, copper, mercury, China silk and velvets. Goa, Diu, Cochin and Quilon were the important ports through which active trade was carried on the Western sea coast of India.

### Cultural Contributions

The temple building activity further gained momentum during the Vijayanagar rule. The chief characteristics of the Vijayanagara architecture were the construction of tall Raya Gopurams or gateways and the Kalyanamandapam with carved pillars in the temple premises. The sculptures on the pillars were carved with distinctive features. The horse was the most common animal found in these pillars. Large mandapams contain one hundred pillars as well as one thousand pillars in some big temples. These mandapams were used for seating the deity on festival occasions. Also, many Amman shrines were added to the already existing temples during this period. The most important temples of the Vijayanagar style were found in the Hampi ruins or the city of Vijayanagar. Vittalaswamy and Hazara Ramaswamy temples were the best examples of this style. The Varadharaja and Ekamparanatha temples at Kanchipuram stand as examples for the magnificence of the Vijayanagara style of temple architecture. The Raya Gopurams at Thiruvannamalai and Chidambaram speak the glorious epoch

of Vijayanagar. They were continued by the Nayak rulers in the later period. The metal images of Krishna Deva Raya and his queens at Tirupati are examples for casting of metal images. Music and dancing were also patronized by the rulers of Vijayanagar. Different languages such as Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada and Tamil flourished in the regions. There was a great development in Sanskrit and Telugu literature. The peak of literary achievement was reached during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya. He himself was a scholar in Sanskrit and Telugu. His famous court poet Allasani Peddanna was distinguished in Telugu literature. Thus the cultural contributions of the Vijayanagar rulers were many-sided and remarkable.

### Battle of Talikota (1565 A.D.)

The successors of Krishnadeva Raya were weak. During the rule of Ramaraya, the combined forces of Ahmednagar,



Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar declared war on Vijayanagar. In the battle of Talikota in 1565 A.D. Ramaraya was defeated. He and his people were mercilessly killed. Vijayanagar was plundered and left in ruins.

### Contribution to Architecture and Literature

The rulers of Vijayanagar were great patrons of art and learning. The Hazara Ramasami



temple and Vittalaswamy temple are fine examples of this period. The bronze image of Krishnadeva Raya is a masterpiece. Many scholars were patronized by the Vijayanagar rulers. Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada literature were developed. Sayana wrote commentaries on vedas. Krishnadevaraya wrote Amuktamalyada in telugu. His Sanskrit works were Usha Parinayam and Jambavathi Kalyanam.

### Decline of the Empire

The rulers of the Aravidu dynasty were weak and incompetent. Taking advantage of their weakness the provincial governors became independent.

The rulers of Bijapur and Golconda annexed some areas of Vijayanagar. The Nayaks became free in the south. Thus by 1614 A.D. Vijayanagar dynasty was declined.

**Vittalaswami Temple:** Vittalaswami Temple was constructed during the reign of Krishna Deva Raya. In the front of the temple is a famous stone chariot of ratha, carved out of a single rock. Another notable feature is the musical pillars. When tapped, these pillars produce music. It is called as 'musical' or 'Sa Re Ga Ma' pillars.



# The Nayak Rule in Tamil Country

The expansion of Vijayanagar Empire finally brought the Nayak rule in Tamil country. The word Nayak means Leader, chief or General. The Nayaks were the agents of the Vijayanagar rulers, who ruled over the territories granted to them. They considered themselves the imperial successors. They ruled from Madurai, Tanjore and Senji (Gingee).

## The Nayaks of Madurai

Madurai formed the part of the southern mandalam of Vijayanagar Empire. Viswanatha Nayak was appointed as the viceroy of Madurai by Krishnadeva Raya in 1529. This date was taken as the date of Nayakship of Madurai.

### Vishwanatha Nayak

Vishwanatha Nayak was the close friend of Krishnadeva Raya. He was sent to Madurai to suppress the rebellion. He came out successful and became the master of Madurai.

Viswanatha Nayak is known for his peaceful effective administration. He introduced new administrative arrangements with the assistance of his minister Ariyanatha, known as "palayakar system". He appointed poligars to maintain peace and security in his empire. They were incharge of military, police and revenue administration. Kaval was the most

important work and the people paid a tax called kaval pitchai as remuneration.

Viswanatha Nayak was succeeded by several rulers. Among them Thirumalai Nayak was the most important ruler.

### Thirumala Nayak

Immediately after the accession of Thirumalai Nayak, the forces of Mysore marched across Madurai. But they were defeated at Dindigul by Thirumalai Nayak. Unni Keralavarman of Travancore refused to pay the tribute. Thirumalai



Nayak sent an army, defeated and made him to pay the tribute regularly. Thirumalai Nayak was mainly responsible for the Muslim attack in Tamil country. When Sri Ranga III, the ruler of Vijayanagar marched against Madurai, Thirumalai Nayak made an alliance with Nayaks of Senji and Tanjore. But he was betrayed by the Nayaks of Tanjore. Thirumalai Nayak sought the help of ruler of Golconda and induced him to invade Vellore and threatened Madurai. So Thirumalai Nayak sought the help of ruler of Mysore. The ruler victory at Sathyamangalam and reached

Dindigul. The Mysore army cut off the noses and the upper lips of their enemies. This barbarous practice alarmed the Madurai people. Thirumalai Nayak attacked Mysore army and practised the same method of cutting the noses of the enemies. This strange event was termed as “war of noses”.

### **Other works of Thirumalai Nayak**

Thirumalai Nayak established an efficient



system of administration. He maintained peace and security. He gave a free hand to the Portuguese and the Dutch. He shifted his capital from Trichy to Madurai. He repaired many temples. The temple administration came under his direct control. He gifted a number of villages for the maintenance of the temples. The Pudhu Mandapam, Mariamman Theppakkulam and Thirumalai Nayak Mahal were constructed during his period. He patronized the renowned Sanskrit scholar Neelakanda Dikshidar.

### **The Regency of Queen Mangammal**

Mangammal was the wife of Chokkanadhar and grandmother of Vijayaranga Chokkanadhar. She became a regent of 3 years old child Vijayaranga Chokkanadhar. The regency of Queen Mangammal was remarkable in the history of Nayaks of Madurai. Diplomatically she saved the kingdom. She encouraged Christian missionaries. She

provided more facilities to pilgrim centres. Roads were made safe. She planted shady trees, built choultries and made journey easy and comfortable. She made rich endowments to temples. She paid more interest on irrigational projects. ‘Uyyakkondan Canal’ speaks about her contribution to irrigation.

### **Meenakshi**

Vijayaranga died without a male issue. His wife Meenakshi became the successor. She adopted Vijaya Kumara and started her rule as a regent. Bangaru, father of Vijayakumara conspired against Meenakshi to occupy the throne. So, Meenakshi sought the help of Chanda Sahib, the Nawab of Carnatic and promised to offer a crore of rupees. Chanda Sahib defeated Bangaru and saved Meenakshi. Later Chanda Sahib showed his true colour and threw off the promises and imprisoned Meenakshi in her own palace at Trichy. The heart-broken Queen took poison and died. Chanda Sahib became the master of the Nayak State to Madurai and thus the Nayak State of Madurai and thus the Nayak rule came to an end in A.D.1736.

### **The Nayaks of Tanjore**

Tanjore formed a part of the Vijayanagar Empire. Thimmappa Nayak was in charge of Tanjore. He was succeeded by his son Sevappa Nayak.

### **Sevappa Nayak**

Sevappa Nayak was the founder of the Independent Nayak kingdom at Tanjore. He paid attention to the maintenance of Hindu temples. He gave permission to the Portuguese to settle at Nagapattinam and gave 10





veli of land to the Mulavur Temple. He repaired Shivaganga Lake. Later it was called "Sevappaneri". He gave grants to Thiruvannamalai and Virudhachalam temples.

### **Achutappa Nayak**

Sevappa was succeeded by his son Achutappa Nayak. He maintained cordial relations with Vijayanagar and helped the Vijayanagara king in the battle of Talikota. He gave a diamond throne to Lord Ranganatha and made endowments to the Rameswaram temple. He completed the tower of Arunachaleswar temple at Thiruvannamalai. He repaired the banks of river Kaveri and improved agriculture.

### **Ragunatha Nayak**

Achutappa was succeeded by his younger son Ragunatha Nayak. He was the most popular among the Nayaks of Senji and Madurai and the Portuguese of Jaffna. He was also a great poet, and wrote the Rukmani Parinayam, Parijata, Pushpakaranam and Ramayanam in Telugu.

### **Vijayaragava Nayak**

Ragunatha was succeeded by his son Vijayaragava Nayak. He was a weak and incompetent ruler and was unable to defend the country. He was the last Nayak ruler of Tanjore. Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai invaded and killed Vijayaragava Nayak and captured Tanjore. Thus, the Nayak rule of Tanjore came to an end in A.D.1673.

### **The Nayaks of Senji (Gingee)**

The region between Palar and Coleroon formed the Nayak kingdom of Senji. The Nayaks of Senji were related to the royal house of Vijayanagar. Their original home was

Maninagapuram in North India and they migrated to the south and settled there. Krishnadevaraya appointed Vyappa



Nayak in charge of Senji. He was succeeded by Krishnappa Nayak II. He was the real founder of the Nayak rule in Senji.

### **Krishnappa Nayak II**

Krishnappa Nayak-II was the most important ruler of Senji. He divided his kingdom into various divisions. Each division was ruled by his officers. He built towns for the settlement of the people. He promoted cultivation. He maintained a powerful army. He erected a town called "Krishnapattinam" on the banks of the river Vellar. He was tolerant towards all religions. He gave grants to Jesuits for building churches. He permitted jains to erect a shrine at Sithamur and saivites to build a temple at Tindivanam. He rebuilt the Govindaraja shrine at Chidambaram. His general Venkata, dug out a large tank called Chennasagaram for promoting irrigation.

The successors of Krishnappa Nayak-II were weak and inefficient. Bijapur Sultan (Ali Adil Shah) sent Mir Jumla to capture Senji in 1648. He captured Senji and appointed Nasir khan as its governor. In 1648, Shivaji captured Senji.

After Shivaji, it came under the Rajput general Swaroop Singh, who acted as a mughal vassal and paid annual tribute. He was succeeded by his son Raja Desingh. Sadat ullah khan, the ruler of Arcot invaded, defeated and killed Raja Desingh and annexed Senji. Raja



Desingh's wife committed sati. As a mark of her remembrance, (Rani) the town of Ranipet was created. Thus the nayak's rule of Senji came to an end.

### **Tamil country under the Nayak rule Administration**

The Nayaks ruled over Madurai, Tanjore and Senji. The Nayaks established an efficient administration. The king was the head of the State. He was assisted by a council of ministers. The empire was divided into provinces, mandalams, simai or makana and villages. Paligar system was followed. Land tax was the main source of income to the state.

### **Social and Economic conditions**

The Nayaks upheld Varnasrama system in society. Caste system remained rigid. Brahmins occupied the high position, valankai and idankai struggle continued. Villagers lived in ignorance and poverty. The Nayaks occupied mostly the dry areas except Kaveri, Vaigai and Thamiraparani areas. Agrarian economy continued. Agriculturists depended in rains. Tanks, wells, canals and rivers were the main source for irrigation.

### **Art and Architecture**

The Nayaks were the great patrons of art and architecture. The Krishnapuram temple and Nellaiappar temples at Thirunelveli, Kasi Viswanatha Temple at Tenkasi, Ramanathapuram temple at Rameswaram and the Big Gopura of Srivilliputhur received the patronage of the Nayaks of Madurai. Krishnappa Nayak rebuilt and renovated Velliambalam, Northern Gopuram, Thousand Pillared Mandapam, Murthiamman Mandapam,

Suriya Mandapam and Virappa Mandapam at Madurai. He also provided golden roof of the Mandapa of the Meenakshi Temple. Thirumalai Nayak built the Pudhumandapam and Nayak's Mahal. Nayak Mahal was built with the help of Italian architect. It is a classical fusion of Dravidan, Islamic and European style. It is considered as one of the wonders in south India. Queen Mangammal built the Mangammal Palace at Madurai.

Sevappa Nayak of Tanjore renovated many temples and built the Sivaganga fort at Tanjore. The Big Mandapam at Thiruvannamalai, Virudachalam etc, were built by him.

Achutappa gave grants to Sri Ranganatha at Srirangam and Siva Temple at Rameswaram. He completed the tower of Arunachaleswarar at Thiruvannamalai.

Achyuta Ramabhadra Nayak of Senji built the enclosing walls as well as the majestic gopuram for Thiruvannamalai Temple. He also built a Vishnu Temple at Tindivanam. He permitted the Jains to construct a Jain Temple (palis) at Sittamur.

### **Literature**

Nayaks made great contribution for the growth of literature. Thirumalai Nayak's Chidambarapuram, Paranjothiar's Chidambarapattial, Haridasa's Irusamaya Vilakkam, Umarupulavar's Seerapuram, Kumaraguruparar's Kandar Kali Venba and Meyngnana Vilakkam by Thiruvengkatam were the most important literary works during the Nayak's period. Thus the Nayak rule occupied an important place in the history of Tamil country.

# The Rule of the Marathas of Thanjavur (A.D. 1676-A.D. 1856)

Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai invaded and captured Thanjavur and appointed his half-brother Alagiri as Governor of Thanjavur. But he quarrelled with Chokkanatha and sought the help of Bijapur Sultan to appoint Sengamaladass as the Nayak of Thanjavur. So the sultan sent Venkaji (Ekoji) to capture Thanjavur. He succeeded and captured Thanjavur and established Maratha rule. They ruled over Thanjavur from 1676 to 1856 A.D.

## **Ekoji alias Venkoji**

Ekoji was the son of Shaji Bhonsle and Tuka Bai. In order to plunder the wealth and to spread Hindu faith in the South, Shivaji led an expedition against the Carnatic region. He captured Golkonda and Senji. He marched towards Thanjavur and demanded his share from Venkoji which ended in failure. So Shivaji as his Viceroy and returned. After his return, Venkoji recaptured all the territories and ruled Thanjavur.

## **Shaji-II**

Shaji-II was son of Venkoji. He was a brilliant and able ruler. He annexed Madurai. He was great patron of scholars. He opened hospitals and invited physicians from Hyderabad and Arabia. He was harsh towards the Christians. He was succeeded by his brother Serfoji-I.

## **Serfoji I**

Serfoji I was a younger son of Venkoji and he ruled from 1712 to 1728. His rule was marked by regular warfare and disputes with the Madurai Nayak.

## **Tukkoji**

Tukkoji, a younger brother of Serfoji I, ruled Thanjavur from 1728 to 1736. His reign witnessed the invasion of Chanda Sahib and he is credited with having repulsed a Muslim invasion of Madurai.

## **Pratapsingh**

A period of anarchy followed the death of Tukkoji and came to an end when Pratapsingh came to the throne in 1739. He ruled until 1763. He allied with Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of the Carnatic, and aided the British East India Company against the French East India Company in the Carnatic Wars and the Seven Years' War. He was the last king to be addressed to be the Directors of the British East India Company as "His Majesty". In 1762, a tripartite treaty was signed between Thanjavur, Carnatic and the British by which he became a vassal of the Nawab of the Carnatic.

## **Tuljaji**

Tuljaji ascended the throne of Thanjavur in 1763. During his rule, boundary disputes started between Ramnad and Thanjavur.

Ramnad sought the help of the Nawab of Arcot. so the Nawab invaded Thanjavur and in 1773 Thanjavur came under the control of the Nawab of Carnatic. When it was brought to the notice of English East India company, the Company Directors, directed the governor of Madras to restore Tuljaji as the king of Thanjavur. Tuljaji was crowned as the ruler of Thanjavur and became a nominee of company and kept an English army to maintain peace at Thanjavur.

### **Amar singh and Serfoji-II**

Tulijaji's adopted son Serfoji-II became the ruler in 1787 A.D. Amar Singh became the regent. He claimed the throne as Serfoji-II was an adopted son which was unlawful. English were in favour of Amar Singh. As a result, Amar Singh became the ruler. He ruled in an arbitrary manner. So the Governor General Cornwallis removed Amar Singh and Serfoji-II was made as the king. But during the time of Wellesley, Serforji-II was reduced as a pensioner. The British controlled the affairs of Thanjavur and Serfoji-II and Amar Singh received pension from the British.

### **Shivaji-II**

Shivaji II was the son of Serfoji-II. His rule lasted till 1855. He had no son. According to the Doctrine of Lapse of Dalhousie, the tributary state without a male successor would lapse to the British. So in 1856 Thanjavur was annexed with the British Empire. Thus the Maratha rule in Thanjavur came to an end.

### **Literature**

The Thanjavur Maratha Rajas favoured Sanskrit and Telugu to such an extent that classical Tamil began to decline. Most of the

plays were in Sanskrit. Venkoji, the first ruler of the Bhonsle dynasty composed a 'Dvipada' Ramayana in Telugu. His son Shahuji was a great patron of learning and of literature. Most of the Thanjavur Maratha literature is from his period. Most of them were versions of the Ramayana or plays and short stories of a historical nature. Sanskrit and Telugu were the languages used in most of these plays while there were some Tamil 'koothu' as well. AdvaitaKirtana is one of the prominent works from this period. Later Thanjavur rulers like Serfoji II and Shivaji immersed themselves in learning and literary pursuits when they were dispossessed of their empire. Serfoji built the SaraswathiMahalLibrary within the precincts of the palace to house his enormous book and manuscript collection. Apart from Indian languages, Serfoji II was proficient in English, French, Dutch, Greek and Latin as well.

### **Administration**

The king was assisted in the administration of his country by a council of ministers. The supreme head of this council of ministers was a Mantri or Dalavoy. The Dalavoy was also the Commander-in-chief of the Army. Next in importance at the court was a Pradhani or Dewan also called DabirPandit. The country was divided into subahs, seemais and maganams in the decreasing order of size and importance. The five subahs of the country were Pattukkottai, Mayavaram, Kumbakonam, Mannargudi and Tiruvadi.

### **Economy**

The ruler collected his taxes from the people through his mirasdars or puttackdars. They were collected right from the village level onwards and were based on the agricultural produce



of the village. Rice was one of the primary crops in the region and the land used for cultivation was owned by big landlords. It was Anatharama Sashty who proposed collecting taxes to improve conditions for the poor. No foreign trade was carried out. The only foreign trade in the country was carried out by European traders who paid a particular amount of money as rent to

the Raja. The currency system used was that of a chakram or pon (1 chakram = one and three-fourths of a British East India Company rupee). Other systems of coinage used were that of pagoda (1 pagoda = three and a half Company rupees), a big panam (one-sixth of a Company rupee) and a small 'panam (one-thirteenth of a Company rupee).

