

**NEXT IAS**

**HISTORY OF  
MEDIEVAL INDIA**

**CIVIL SERVICES  
EXAMINATION 2027**

*Published by*





**MADE EASY Publications Pvt. Ltd.**

Corporate Office: 44-A/4, Kalu Sarai  
(Near Hauz Khas Metro Station), New Delhi-110016  
Contact: 011-45124660, 8860378007  
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**History of Medieval India**

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First Edition: 2017  
Second Edition: 2018  
Third Edition: 2019  
Revised & Updated: 2020  
Fourth Edition: 2021  
Fifth Edition: 2022  
Sixth Edition: 2023  
Seventh Edition: Nov. 2023  
Eighth Edition: 2025

**Ninth Edition: 2026**

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# Unit

# 1

## Dawn of Medieval India

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# KINGDOMS OF SOUTH INDIA

## 3.1 Introduction

The history of medieval south India has its separate space in the study of political, social, and economic realms of the society. The history of medieval India in north is marred by extreme turmoil due to rising and falling empires. But the history of medieval south is relatively stable. In this section, we are going to study three most important Kingdoms of south, i.e., the Cholas, the Cheras and the Pandyas.

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 like Sangam literature, the records of Greek authors like Megasthenes, Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy, Ashokan inscriptions which mention the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers on the south of the Mauryan empire, Hathigumpha inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga.



Hathigumpha Inscription, Odisha

## 3.2 Cholas

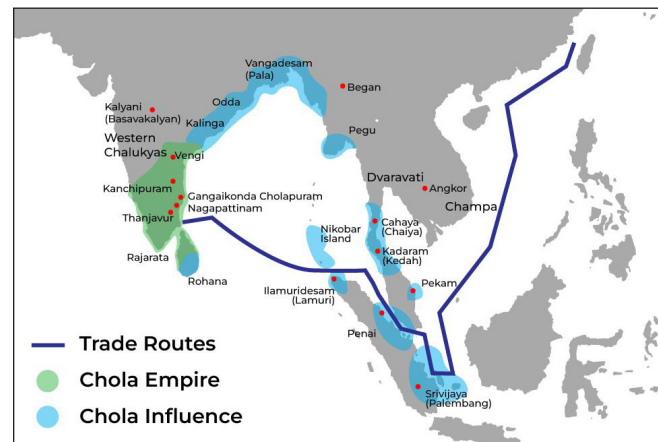
### Introduction

After the end of the Gupta dynasty a little after the fifth Century AD, a process of political fragmentation started in the whole subcontinent. Feudatories and subjugated powers took the opportunity to become independent which led to emergence of small kingdoms. Rise of small Kingdoms increased rivalry and competition to gain political supremacy.

By 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD the Pallavas of Kanchi, Chalukyas of Badami and the Pandyas of Madurai emerged to be the three major states. This phase after the Guptas saw far more expansion of the agrarian economy. We also notice the march of triumphant Brahmanism with the beginning of the construction of stone temples for Shiva and Vishnu in Tamil Nadu under Pallavas and in Karnataka under Chalukyas of Badami.

### Later Cholas

After the end of the Sangam era, the Cholas became feudatories in Uraiyur. They again came into prominence in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD when they established an empire in South India. Tanjore became the capital of Chola Kingdom. Cholas extended their dominance in Sri Lanka and Malay Peninsula. These Cholas colonized the South East Asian Countries and had the most powerful army and navy of the world at that time.



Chola Empire Map

### Important Rulers

#### Vijayalaya Chola (848 – 871 AD)

Vijayalaya Chola was the founder of the Imperial Chola empire. He ruled over the region to the north of the river Kaveri. Vijayalaya took advantage of fight between the Pandyas and Pallavas and rose into prominence by capturing Thanjavur and the surrounding regions from the Elango Muttaraiyars, who was the final ruler of mutharaiyar dynasty. After capturing Thanjavur, Vijayalaya built a temple of Goddess Nishumbhasudini (Durga). He also undertook the renovation of the city of Thanjavur.



Vijayalaya Chola

Shortly after Vijayalaya's capture of Thanjavur, the Pandyan king Varagunavarman II and Pallava King Nandivarman III joined hands to reduce the growing prowess of Chola power under Vijayalaya. Vijayalaya Chola, a veteran of many battles, was getting old and thus handed the control of the army to the crown prince Aditya I. Soon, Aditya I succeeded his father as the emperor after his death in 871 AD. Narttamalai, Pudukkottai has a solesvara temple attributed to vijayalaya.

**Rajaraja Chola I (985 – 1014 AD)**

Rajaraja Chola I, born as Arulmozhi Varman, was one of the greatest emperors of the Chola Empire who ruled between 985 and 1014 AD. In his reign, the Cholas expanded beyond South India stretching from Kalinga in the north to Sri Lanka in the south. Rajaraja I possessed a strong army and a considerable navy. He fought many battles with the Chalukyas in the north and the Pandyas in the south. He followed the Shaivism school of Hinduism but was tolerant towards other faiths. In 1010, Raja Raja built the Brihadesvara temple in Thanjavur dedicated to Lord Shiva. He also helped in the construction of a Buddhist monastery at Nagapattinam.

**Rajaraja Chola I****Brihadesvara Temple, Tanjore**

Rajaraja I was involved in many successful military conquests during his reign. The extent of the Chola Empire under Rajaraja I included the Pandya, Chera and the Tondaimandalam regions of Tamil Nadu, the Gangavadi, Nolambapadi and northern part of Ceylon. Rajaraja's last military achievement was a naval expedition against the Maldives Islands.

Rajaraja Chola I died in 1014 AD and was succeeded by his son Rajendra Chola, who was declared as the crown prince in 1012 AD. The powerful standing army and a great navy organized under Rajaraja Chola-I achieved even greater heights under Rajendra Chola.

**Rajendra Chola-I (1014 – 44 AD)**

Rajendra Chola is considered as one of the greatest rulers and military generals of South India. He succeeded his father Rajaraja Chola I in 1014 AD. Rajendra had demonstrated his military leadership skills during his father's reign. After becoming the ruler, he continued his father's policy of aggressive conquests and expansion. Apart from reaching northwards to river

**Rajendra Chola-I**

Ganga and moving overseas to Maldives and Sri Lanka, he also invaded the Southeast Asian territories of Srivijaya in Malaysia, Indonesia and southern Thailand making the Chola empire one of the most powerful empires of India.

His important conquests are as under:

- When Mahinda V, the King of Sri Lanka attempted to recover the northern part of Sri Lanka from the Cholas, Rajendra defeated him and seized even the southern Sri Lanka, thus taking control of the whole of Sri Lanka.
- He reasserted the Chola authority over the Chera and Pandya countries.
- He defeated Jayasimha II, the Western Chalukya king and consequently, river Tungabhadra was recognized as the boundary between the Cholas and the Chalukyas.
- His most significant military expedition was of North India. The Chola army crossed the Ganges by defeating a number of rulers on its way. Rajendra defeated Mahipala I of Bengal. To commemorate this successful north-Indian campaign, Rajendra founded the city of Gangaikondacholapuram and constructed the famous Rameshwaram temple in the city. He also excavated a large irrigation tank called Cholagangam on the western side of the city.

**Gangaikondacholapuram Temple**

- Another famous venture of Rajendra was his naval expedition to Kadaram or Srivijaya. It is difficult to pin point the real objective of the expedition. The naval expedition was a complete success as the Chola forces occupied a lot of places. But it was only temporary and no permanent annexation of these places was contemplated. He assumed the title Kadaramkondan.

Like his father, Rajendra I also followed Shaivism. He built a temple for Lord Shiva at the new capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram and made liberal endowments to this temple and to the Lord Nataraja temple located in Chidambaram. Rajendra I was tolerant towards other religions and sects including the Vaishnava and Buddhist sects.

**Polity**

The system of governance under Cholas was monarchical. Besides Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Thanjavur, Madurai and Kanchipuram acted as regional capitals under Rajendra I where occasional courts were held. The King was supreme with absolute authority and issued oral commands to officers as and when needed. As there was

no formal legislative process, the fairness of the King's order depended on his intuition, morality and belief.

### Administration

- The Chola kingship was hereditary in nature.
- King was centre of all the power in which all the decision making power was vested, though he was aided and advised by the council of ministers on different matters.
- Chola Empire was divided into provincial, district and local administration.
- There was elaborate administrative machinery comprising various officials called Perundanam and Sirudanam.

### 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 Uttaramerur provide details of the formation and functions of village councils.
- The local administration was vested in village. Village administration was quite powerful and had the power to collect revenue.
- Basically there was two type of villages.
- The first type was called ur. This type of village was consisted of people from different caste. T
- The second type of village was called agrahara. In this type only the caste Brahmins were settled. Most of the land in agrahara was tax free.
- The affairs of the village were managed by executive committees.
- In this committee only educated person owning property were elected by drawing lots or by rotation. These members had to retire every three years.
- There were other committees for helping in the assessment and collection of land revenue for the maintenance of law and order, justice etc.
- One of the important committee was the tank committee which looked after the distribution of water to the fields.
- The mahasabha could settle new lands and exercise ownership rights over them. It could also raise loans for the village and levy taxes.
- The self-government enjoyed by the Chola villages was a well thought out system.

### Military

- The Cholas maintained a regular standing army, of which the King was the supreme commander.
- The military consisted of elephants, cavalry, infantry and navy.
- The Chola army was spread throughout the country and was stationed in local garrisons or military camps called as Kodagams.
- Many war elephants were present in Chola army as they played a vital role in wars.
- The Chola army used weapons such as bows, swords, spears, javelins, and shields which were made up of steel.
- About seventy regiments were mentioned in the inscriptions of which the royal troops were called as Kaikkolaperumpadai.
- The royal troops had personal troops, named Velaikkarakar to defend the King.
- The Cholas paid special attention to their navy, which played a prominent role in the expansion of Chola Empire. The naval achievements of the Tamils reached its peak under the Cholas as they controlled the Malabar and Coromandal coast.

### Revenue

- The revenue department, called as puravuvarithinaikkalam, was well established.
- All lands were surveyed in detail and classified for assessment of revenue.
- The residential land and temple lands were exempted from taxes.
- Besides land revenue, there were tolls and customs on goods moved from one place to another, different kinds of professional taxes, judicial fines and dues levied on ceremonial functions and occasions like marriages.
- The main government expenditures were the expenses on the King and his court, maintenance of army and navy and construction of roads, irrigation tanks and canals.

### Religion

- Cholas were followers of Hinduism.
- They built many temples and offered generous endowments to these temples.
- Both Shaivism 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.
- In addition to number of temples built during this time, Buddhist monasteries like Chudamani vihara at Nagapattinam were also constructed.
- However, despite the presence of different religions, there were no major incidences of violence in the name of god or religion.



Chudamani Vihara

### Economy

- The main source of income for the Chola Empire was revenue from land and trade tax.
- Agriculture remained the principal occupation for the people.
- Uraiyur, the capital city of the early Chola rulers, was a famous cotton textiles centre from where cotton clothes were exported to foreign countries.
- The Chola Kings took great interest in development of weaving industry as weaving earned great amount of revenue for the Chola Kingdom.
- Silk weaving attained a high degree during the Chola rule. Kanchipuram developed into a major silk city and became famous for its high quality silk weaving.
- High degree of excellence made the jewellery and the metal industries prominent.
- The traders organized themselves into guilds.
- The best known of these guilds were the Manigramam and Ayyavole guilds through other guilds such as Anjuvannam and Valanjiyar were also in existence.
- The manufacture of sea-salt was carried on under government supervision and control.

### Society

As caste system was widely practiced, Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges in the society.

The inscriptions of the Chola period classified castes into Valangai and Idangai castes. Despite the division, there was cooperation among various castes and sub-castes in socio-religious life of Chola people.



Devadasi

- The position of women, however, did not improve. Sati, a custom in which a widow immolates herself on her husband's death, was practiced in the royal families. The practice of Devadasi system or dancing girls attached to temples started during this period.
- Farmers occupied one of the highest positions in society as agriculture remained the principal occupation for majority of the people.
- Reclamation of forest lands and the construction and maintenance of irrigation tanks fuelled the agricultural prosperity.

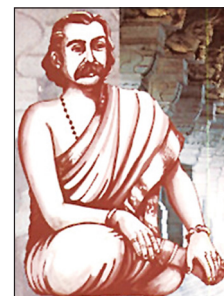
- Trade and commerce prospered with improvements of roads or peruvazhis and merchant guilds.
- The weaving industry, particularly the silk-weaving at Kanchi flourished. During the Chola rule, weavers started to organize themselves into guilds and were able to establish their own residential colonies in towns.
- There were also local organisations of merchants called 'Nagaram' in big centres of trade like Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram.
- The metal works also developed owing to great demand of images for temples and utensils.
- 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.

### Literature

The development of Tamil literature reached its apex during the Chola period.

The Ramayana composed by Kamban and the Periyapuram or Tiruttondar Puranam by Sekkilar are the two master-pieces of this age.

Ottakuttan wrote Kulothunga Cholan Ula, a poem extolling the virtues of the Chola king.



Kamban

- Kalingattupparani, written by Jayamkondar describes the Kalinga war fought by Chola King Kulottunga I.
  - The grammarian Buddhimitra wrote a text on Tamil grammar called Virasoliyam. Jivakachintamani by Tirutakkatevar and Sulamani by Tolamoli are a few notable works by non-Hindu authors.
  - Nannul, a Chola era work on Tamil grammar, discussed all five branches of grammar. It is still considered relevant today and is one of the most distinguished normative grammars of Tamil literature.
  - The Chola Kings took great interest in establishing educational institutions around the temples.
  - The inscription at Ennayiram provides significant details about the colleges that existed in these places.
  - In addition to Vedas and Epics, subjects like mathematics and medicine were also taught in these institutions.
  - Endowments of lands were made to run these institutions. Virarajendra, a Chola King maintained a school in the Jananamandapa within the temple for the study of the Vedas, Shastras, grammar, and Rupavataara.
  - The students were also provided hostels with provision of food.
- ### Art and Architecture
- The Cholas made a significant contribution in the development of Dravidian style of art and architecture.

- They built enormous temples and were appreciated for their magnificent temple architecture as well as delicate workmanship.
- **A famous historian, James Fergusson, once commented, "the Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewelers".**
- Temple building received great momentum from the conquests of Rajaraja Chola and his son Rajendra Chola I.
- A new development in Chola art that characterised the Dravidian architecture in later times was the addition of a huge gateway called gopuram to the enclosure of the temple.



Airavathesvara Temple, Thanjavur

- The Brihadesvara temple at Thanjavur, built by Rajaraja I is an excellent demonstration of South Indian art and architecture.
- It consists of the vimana, ardhmandapa, mahamandapa and a large pavilion in the front known as the Nandimandapa.
- The Shiva temple at Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra I, is another noteworthy contribution by the Cholas.
- The **Airavathesvara temple at Darasuram in Thanjavur** district and the Kampaharesvara temple at Tribhuvanam are examples of later Chola temples.

The Brihadesvara temple, the temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Airavathesvara Temple at Darasuram has been enlisted in the World Heritage Sites by the UNESCO and are called as the Great Living Chola temples.

The Cholas also made notable contributions to the art of sculptures made up of bronze.



Kampaharesvara Temple



Walls of the Chola Temples

The walls of the Chola temples at Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram contain numerous icons of large size with exceptional execution. The bronze statue of Nataraja or dancing Siva was an absolute gem. The Chola paintings were also found on the walls of Narthamalai and Thanjavur temples.



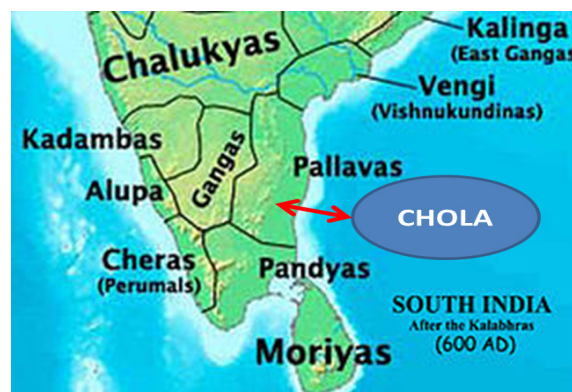
Dancing nataraja

**Literature**

- Kamban flourished during the reign of Kulothunga Chola-III.
- It was the age in which the great telugu poets Tikkana, Ketana, Marana and Somana enriched the literature with their contribution.

**Importance of Dynasty**

The Cholas support in the development of Tamil literature and their passion for temple architecture has resulted in many excellent works in the field of Tamil literature and temple architecture. The Chola rulers envisaged temples not only as the place of worship but also as a centre of economic and educational activities. The Chola school of art spread to south-east Asia and influenced their art and architecture.



Chola, Chera, Pandya Map

**3.3 Cheras**

**Introduction**

The Cheras ruled over parts of modern Kerala during Sangam period. Their capital was Vanji and their important seaports were Tondi and Musiri. The Pugalur inscription of the first century A.D refers to three generations of Chera rulers. Perum Sorru Udhiyan Cheralathan, Imayavaramban Nedum Cheralathan and Chera Senguttuvan were the famous rulers of this dynasty.

Cheran Senguttuvan belonged to 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD 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. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, the Chera power declined and we have little knowledge about its history until the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD

### Later Chera

The Chera Kingdom gained its importance from the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD under King Alvar Kulasekhara Varman, who succeeded his father Thidaviradhan in 800 AD. He established the Second Chera Kingdom from the new capital at Mahodayapuram. Though he established the new kingdom but still his influence was constrained by the pre-existing power of the Aryan-Brahmin settlements across his kingdom and the hereditary chieftains called 'Naduvazhis'.

The second Cheras allied with the Cholas against the Pallavas, and with Pandyas against the Cholas between 8-10<sup>th</sup> Century AD. By the last centuries of their rule, Kulasekharas became an active ally of the Pandyas and Lambakannas of Sri Lanka, against the raising Later Chola power.

### Polity and Administration

- The king was the most important and powerful person in this empire. But still his power was constrained by the presence of council of ministers and learned persons of his court.
- The King held daily durbar to hear the problems of the common men and to redress them on the spot.
- The next important institution was known as manram which functioned in each village of the Chera kingdom. Its meetings were usually held by the village elders under a banyan tree and they helped in the local settlement of disputes.
- The Manrams were the venues for the village festivals as well.
- In the course of the imperial expansion of the Cheras the members of the royal family set up residence at several places of the kingdom (at Vanchi, Karur and Tondi).
- They followed the collateral system of succession according to which the eldest member of the family, wherever he lived, ascended the throne.
- Junior princes and heir-apparents (crown princes) helped the ruling king in the administration.

### Religion

- The Chera population followed the native Dravidian practices of worship.
- The worship of departed heroes was a common practice in the Chera kingdom along with tree worship and other kinds of ancestor worships.
- The people of this kingdom used to assuage the war goddess Kottavai with complex sacrifices and ceremonies.
- The Cheras probably worshiped this mother goddess. Kottavai was later on assimilated into the present day form of goddess Devi.
- A small percentage of the population followed Jainism, Buddhism and Brahmanism.
- These three philosophies came from northern India to the Chera kingdom.
- A small Jewish and Christian population also lived in the Chera territories.

### Economy

- The Chera Kingdom owed its importance to the trade with the Romans.

- The geographical advantages, like the abundance of black pepper and other spices, the navigability of the rivers connecting the high mountains with the Arabian Sea and the discovery of favourable trade winds which carried sailing ships directly from the Arabian coast to Chera Kingdom in less than forty days, combined to produce a veritable boom in Cheras's foreign trade. Muziris, the famous sea port with two Roman regiments, was in the Chera kingdom and throughout the reign of the Cheras, trade continued to bring prosperity to their kingdom, with spices, ivory, timber, pearls and gems being exported to the middle-east and to southern Europe.

### Society

- The Chera population was not divided into castes and communities.
- The Varna system had not taken a clear shape.
- Social exclusiveness and un-approachability were unknown.
- Communities such as the Pana, Kuruva, Paraya and Veta were held in high esteem by the rulers.
- These people educated and enjoyed social freedom and equality.
- Women enjoyed a high status in the Chera realms.
- The royal queen had a very important and privileged status and she took her seat by the side of the king in all religious ceremonies.

### Art and Architecture

The Chera style of architecture is only one of its kind in Dravidian architecture. The Thirunelli Temple, the Vadakkunnathan Temples, Kodungallur Bhagavathy Temple and Kandiyur Siva Temple are its examples.



Thirunelli temple



kodungallur temple

### 3.4 Pandyas

#### Introduction

The Pandyas ruled parts of South India, which now lies in the state of Tamil Nadu. It was one of the three major kingdoms of the ancient Tamil Nadu, along with the other two the Cholas and the Cheras. Majority of information about the early Pandyas comes from available literary sources. The capital of the early Pandyan kingdom was Korkai, a seaport on the southernmost tip of the Indian Peninsula, but the capital was later moved to Kudal (now Madurai). The rule of the medieval Pandya kingdom is well stocked with archaeological evidence.

#### Later Pandyas

The early Pandyas lost their importance after their defeat to the Kalabhras, and fought back to power in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century AD. They were again overwhelmed by the Cholas in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD, but the Pandyas continued to struggle and climbed back to rule again in the twelfth century.

The Pandyas enjoyed diplomatic ties with the Roman Empire, the Greeks, the Chinese and the Egyptians. Marco Polo made mention of the Pandyan kingdom as one of the richest he had ever seen, as did Megasthenes in his work the Indica, and the Chinese traveller Yu Huan. In the fourteenth century, the kingdom met its end after an invasion by the Islamic Delhi sultanate. The invasion shattered the Pandyan Kingdom beyond revival. The Pandyas subsequently became a part of the Vijayanagar Empire.

The word Pandya is derived from the Tamil word, 'Pandi' meaning the 'bull', and considered to be a symbol of masculinity, strength and valour by the early Tamils. The early Pandyas are also said to have participated in the Kurukshetra war, in which they ended on the side of the victorious Pandavas.

#### Political History

The history of the **Pandya rule** in the ancient times has not been clearly written. After the end of the Sangam period, **the first Pandyan Empire** was established by Kadungon in the **6<sup>th</sup> Century AD** by defeating the Kalabhras. Slowly and gradually, the Pandya kingdom grew in stature after defeating the Kalabhras. However, the successors of Kadungon were constantly battling against the neighbouring Cholas and Chera Kings. After the **Cholas conquered Thanjavur** by defeating the Muttarayar, who were part of the Pandya clan, the Pandyas went into a period of obscurity. Parantaka I, a Chola King destroyed the Pandya territories and defeated



Marco Polo



Kadungon

Rajasimha III. However, the Pandyas did not give up and continued their struggle by forging various alliances with the Cheras and the Kings of Sri Lanka in an attempt to free themselves from the Chola dominance.

Under the army leadership of Aditya Karikala, son of Paratanka Chola II, the Cholas defeated Vira Pandya in the battle. Despite being assisted by the Sinhalese forces of Mahinda IV, Pandyas were forced out of the territory and the Pandyas had to seek refuge on the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). This was considered as the beginning of the long period of obscurity for the Pandyas who were replaced by a series of Chola Viceroyes who ruled the Madurai from 1020 AD under the title 'Chola Pandyas'. The 'Chola Yoke' continued till the beginning of the thirteenth Century.

The Pandyan rule was the strongest in the thirteenth century. The foundation for a great rule was laid by Maravarman Sundara Pandyan in the early thirteenth century. The period saw the expansion of Pandya Kingdom under seven major Pandyan emperors who took the title 'Ellarkku Nayanar' meaning 'Lord of All'. The power reached its apex under Jatavaraman Sundara Pandya when the Pandyan Empire expanded from the Telugu regions on the banks of Godavari River to the northern part of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Jatavarman Vira Pandiyan's clan was later called as Kongu Pandiya and he was the first Kongu Pandya King. The strong comeback of the Pandya dynasty was a result of weakening Chola Empire. The successors of Kulothunga Chola II were either weak or incompetent.

However, in 1311 AD, scenario changed when Alauddin Khalji sent military reinforcements to Malik Kafur, after he captured Warangal and defeated Hoysala Empire. Consequently, Madurai came under attack by Malik Kafur for its richness. After looting Madurai, Malik Kafur marched up to Rameshwaram where he erected a mosque. The attack was followed by two more expeditions by Khalji sultanate under the governor generals Khusro Khan and Ulugh Khan in 1314 AD and 1323 AD respectively. These invasions destroyed the Pandya Empire beyond revival. While the previous invasions were content with plunder, Ulugh Khan annexed the former Pandyan dominions to the Delhi Sultanate as the province of Malabar.

#### Polity

- The records of Pandyas do not refer to a council of ministers or a court but they do talk about mantrins and uttarmantrins.
- Uttarmantrins performed the tasks of sandhivigraha and was in-charge of Mandira-olai-nayagam office which verified the written orders regarding grants.
- The Tennavan-apattudavigal were the King's baron having great authority in the Kingdom. They were the companions of honour or the King's bodyguards.
- The army comprised of soldiers who served under a commander.

- However, the King, being the supreme commander of the army, provided direct leadership to the contingents of soldiers on several occasions.
- Matangajadhyaksha was an important officer who supervised the elephants.

### Administration

- The empire was classified into three administrative divisions; Nadu, Kurram and Gramam.
- While Nadu was the larger unit of local administration, the basic unit of local administration was Gramam.
- Land grants were given to the temples and Brahmins.
- The grants consisted of various rights including that of cultivation and administrative rights.
- Inscriptions give us information about village assemblies and their ways of functioning.
- As per the inscriptions, the administrative personnel of the Pandyas comprised of Evi Mudal (keeper of original orders), Vayketri Pantarappottakam (keeper of royal register and adhihari).
- It appears that the records regarding sanction of land grants and other orders were kept in the capital and officers in the localities were directed to implement the King's order.

### Religion

- Pandyas followed the Vedic religion of sacrifice and patronized Brahmin priests. Initially, the Pandyas were devout followers of the Shaivism.
- However, after the Kalabhras invasion, Jainism started gaining popularity.
- Later, during the Bhakti movement, Shaivism and Vaishnavism resurfaced.
- The Pandyas claimed to have descended from Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi.
- Some of the Pandya rulers also performed the ceremonies called Hiranyagarbha, Tulabhara and Gosahasra to legitimize their political authority.

### Economy

- Being located in the coastal region, the Pandyas wielded control over the fisheries and the related trade activities in the region.
- The pearls from the Pandyan kingdom were of great demand in the kingdoms of north India. Consequently, the Pandyas derived great wealth from the pearl trade.
- Even the royal chariots and the horses that dragged them were decked with pearls.
- The empire earned huge revenue through taxation. In addition to the cultivated lands, even the temples were subjected to taxation.
- The looms and shopkeepers also paid taxes to the empire.
- At times, the villagers were harassed by the tax officials and were made to pay high taxes. Due to high taxation, some of the peasants fled from the villages.

### Literature

- The copper plate records of the Pandyas contain inscriptions in Tamil and Sanskrit.
- However, the Tamil inscriptions of the Pandyas contain comprehensive genealogies which suggest that the Pandyas had local moorings.
- The Sangam poem Maduraikkanci by Mankudi Maruthanaar described Madurai and the Pandya Kingdom under the rule of Nedunj Cheliyan III.
- Nakkirar described the King's palace in his work the 'Nedunalvada'. The poems in Purananuru and Agananuru collections of the third century BC praised various Pandyan emperors.

### Art and Architecture



Meenakshi Temple, Madurai

- The Pandyan architecture consisted of the rock-cut as well as structural temples.
- The temples were characterized by the presence of Vimana, Mandapa and Shikhara.
- The Shiva temples have a Nandi in front of the Maha Mandapa. Gopurams, the rectangular entrance and portals of the temples, were developed on Vimanas.
- Gradually, the Gopurams were given more importance than the Shikharas.
- The Meenakshi temple located in Madurai and **Nellaiappar temple in Tirunelveli** were built during the rule of the Pandyas.






Nellaiappar Temple, Tirunelveli

- A few fragmented layers of mural paintings can be seen at the
- Tirumalaipuram caves and Jaina caves at Sittanvassal. The paintings are visible on the ceilings of the shrines, in verandas and on the brackets.

Some of the great poems of ancient times were produced in the Pandya reign.

**Importance of Dynasty**

One of the most ancient dynasties of South India, the Pandyas played a vital role in the development of civilization in South India. They promoted the Brahmanic traditions but remained tolerant towards other religions. Also, the Pandyas made a significant contribution to Tamil literature, especially in Tamil and Sanskrit languages.

| Muvendar | Garland               | Port         | Capital       | Symbols  |
|----------|-----------------------|--------------|---------------|--|
| Cheras   | Palmyra flower        | Muziri/Tondi | Vanchi/Karur  | <br>Bow and arrow |
| Cholas   | Fig (Athi) flower     | Puhar        | Uraiyur/Puhar | <br>Tiger         |
| Pandyas  | Margosa (neem) flower | Korkai       | Madurai       | <br>Two Fish      |

**Kingdoms of South India: Important Facts**

| Places Associated with Chola Rule |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Places                            | Significance   |
| Anuradhapura                      | The Sri Lankan capital which was destroyed by Rajaraja I.  |
| Chidambaram                       | The place where Chola kings were coronated.  |
| Gangaikondacholapuram             | The city which was constructed by Rajendra I after his successful North India campaign.                        |
| Mumidcholamandalam                | The name of the province which Rajaraja I carved out from the Sri Lankan territories.                          |
| Nagapattanam                      | The place where Mahendra V, a Shailendra ruler, constructed a vihara.  |
| Polannaruva                       | The Sri Lankan city annexed by Rajaraja.   |
| Thanjavur or Tanjore              | The Cholan capital where Rajaraja I constructed the Brihadeswara temple.                                       |
| Uttaramerur                       | The place where two 10 <sup>th</sup> Century AD inscriptions relating to Chola administration have been found. |
| Vellur                            | It was the place where Chola king Parantaka I defeated the combined army of the Pandyas and Sri Lanka.         |

| Major Achievements |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Rajaraja           | Conquered Madurai and captured the Pandyan ruler<br>Invaded northern part of Sri Lanka and made it a Chola province<br>Conquered Maldiv islands<br>Emerged as a strong naval power by destroying the strongest naval power of the Chera kingdom.   |
| Rajendra I         | Conquered several trans-Ganga kingdoms and assumed the title of Gangaikonda Chola<br>Founded a new capital called Gangaikonda Cholapuram<br>Conquered the whole of Ceylon or Sri Lanka<br>Indianised several lands of the south-East Asia<br>Defeated the kings of Sumatra in a naval campaign and annexed a part of Sumarata kingdom to his kingdom |

**Chola Empire**

- The founder of the Chola dynasty was Vijayalaya, who was at first a feudatory of the Pallavas. He captured Tanjore in 850 AD.
- The greatest Chola rulers were Rajaraja (985-1014 AD) and his son Rajendra I (1014-44 AD).
- Rajaraja built Brihadeshwar/Rajarajeshwar temple (attributed to Shiva) at Tanjore.
- Rajendra I conquered Orissa, Bengal, Burma and Andaman and Nicobar islands. The Chola dynasty was at its zenith during his reign.
- Rajendra I assumed the title of Gangaikonda Chola and built a city called Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
- The last ruler of Chola dynasty was Rajendra III.
- The king was the head of central authority helped by a council of ministers, but the administration was democratic.
- The Chola empire was divided into Mandalams (Province) and these in turn were divided into Valanadu (Commissionary), Nadu (District) and Kurram (a group of villages).




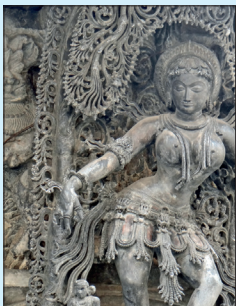
### Chola Empire




- The arrangement of local self-government is regarded as the basic feature of the administration of Cholas.
- Land revenue and trade tax were the main sources of income.
- The style of architecture which came into vogue during this period is called Dravida e.g. Kailashnath temple of Kanchipuram.
- Another aspect was image-making which reached its climax in dancing figure of Shiva called Nataraja.
- Kambana who wrote Ramavataram was one of the greatest figures of Tamil poetry. His Ramayana is also known as Kamba Ramayana.
- Kambana, Kuttana and Pugalendi are considered as 'three gems of Tamil poetry'.
- In the temples, the Vimana or the tall pyramidal tower dominates the whole structure of the shrine and imparts an extraordinary dignity to it.
- Gopuram and Garbhagriha are the other two important structures.
- The best specimens are the temples of Vijayalaya, Choleswara, the Nageshwara temple, the Koranganatha temple and the Muvarakovitha temple.

### Other Kingdoms of South

| Kingdom                            | Capital                  | Founder                    |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Western/Later Chalukyas (973-1200) | Kalyani, Karnataka       | Tailap II                  |
| Kakatiyas (1110-1326)              | Warangal, Andhra Pradesh | Prolaraja II               |
| Yadavas (1187-1312)                | Devagiri, Maharashtra    | Bhillam V                  |
| Hoyasalas (1173-1342)              | Dwarasamudra, Karnataka  | Vittigadev 'Vishnuvardhan' |

**Note:** The temple of Hoyasaleshwara at Dwarasamudra (Modern Halebidu) is the greatest achievement of Hoyasala art.

|                                     |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi</b>   |  | <p><b>Pulakesin II's brother, Kubja Vishnu Vardhan</b> founded a new dynasty with its capital at the ancient city of Vengi. But soon its power was exhausted and in about 10th Century AD they allied with the Cholas but the Chola king did not maintain the alliance and annexed the kingdom in 1076 AD.</p>  |
| <b>Western Chalukyas of Kalyani</b> |  | <p>The kingdom established by Taila II in 973, after defeating Amoghavarsha IV, the last Rashtrakuta ruler, claimed descent from the Chalukyas of Badami. The kingdom was extended upto the southern part of Paramara kingdom of Malwa. Vikramaditya II Tribhuvanmalla (1076-1126) was the greatest ruler of this dynasty and is posed as the hero of Bilhana's Vikramankadevacharita. He is founder of Vikram Samvat era (57 BC).</p>  |
| <b>Cheras</b>                       |  | <p>The ancient name of the Cheras is Keralas. Their Kingdom included the districts of Malabar, Travancore, Cochin etc. The Cheras had trade relations with Rome in the first Century AD. The account of the Cheras of early times is found in the edicts of Ashoka, in which they have been called by the name of Kerala Putras. Sufficient historical material about the history of Keralas is not available.</p>  |
| <b>Hoyasalas</b>                    |  | <p>Their kingdom lay mid-way between the kingdom of the Chalukyas on the North-West and that of the Cholas on south-east. They ruled over modern Mysore and Madras. Their capital was Dwarasamudra. The credit of bringing this dynasty into prominence goes to Vishnu Vardhan. He improved political position of his kingdom by his conquests. The Chennakesava temple built by Vishnuvardhan at Belur in 1117 AD and the Hoyasaleswar temple built in 1150 AD at Halebid are examples of Hoyasala architecture. The last king of this dynasty was Vir Balla III, who was defeated by Malik Kafur, the chief general of Alauddin Khalji, in 1311. He deposed him from the throne and thus this, dynasty came to its end.</p> |

|                             |  |   |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Yadavas</b></p>       |   | <p>The Yadavas were, at first, under the domination of the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas, but at the downfall of the Chalukyas, they became independent and began to gain power. They ruled over the region that stretched from Nasik to Devagiri. Thus, Khandesh territory was under their sway. Their prominent rulers were Bhillama, Simhana Ramachandra etc. Bhillama was the first important king of this dynasty. He reigned from 1187 to 1191 AD. He defeated the Hoyasalas and made Devagiri his capital. The most prominent king of this dynasty was Simhana who vanished several dynasties, such as the Hoyasalas, the Andharas etc. The last king of this dynasty was Ramachandra who dominated the whole region up to the river Narmada.</p> |
| <p><b>The Kakatiyas</b></p> |   | <p>In the beginning, the Kakatiyas were under the control of the Chalukyan dynasty and after their downfall they asserted their independent in the territories of Telangana and Warangal, where they established their own kingdom. Some of the prominent and important kings of this dynasty were Parolaraja, Ganpati Pratap Rudra Dev etc. Ganpati defeated the Cholas, the Yadavas and several other rulers of various families. He was the most important king of Kakatiya dynasty. In his reign, the Kakatiya rule was at the height of its power and progress. Malik Kafur invaded their kingdom in 1309 AD.</p>  |
| <p><b>The Kadambas</b></p>  |  | <p>This dynasty was founded by Brahman Maysurasarman in north Karnataka with his capital at Banavasi after defeating Satvahana. Maysursaraman was a champion of Vedic sacrifices and is reported to have performed 18 Ashvamedha sacrifices. The kingdom was annexed to the Chalukaya kingdom by Pulkesin II.</p>   |

**Chola inscriptions mention several categories of land**

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <p>Vellanvagai</p>                | <p><b>Land of non-Brahmana peasant proprietors</b></p> |
| <p>Brahmadeya</p>                 | <p>Land gifted to Brahmanas</p>                        |
| <p><b>Shalabhoga</b></p>          | <p><b>Land for the maintenance of a school</b></p>     |
| <p>Devadana, Tirunamattukkani</p> | <p>Land gifted to gods/temples</p>                     |
| <p>Pallichchhandam</p>            | <p>Land donated to Jaina institutions</p>              |

**Types of Land Grants**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <p>Agrahara</p>   | <p>Primarily a rent free village in the possession of Brahmanas</p>   |
| <p>Devadana</p>   | <p>Rent free land gifted to brahmanical temples deities. Its Jain and Buddhist counterpart is pallichanda</p> |
| <p>Shasanas</p>   | <p>Land grants, often kara-shasanas, i.e rent paying land grants</p>  |
| <p>Brahmadeya</p> | <p>Land gifted to Brahmanas or groups of Brahmanas</p>  |

**Hathigumpha Inscription**

The Maharneghavahanas were descended from the ancient line of the Chedis. Kharavela, the third ruler of this line, is known from his Hathigumpha inscription which was engraved on the Udayagiri hills near Bhuvaneshwar. The inscription which gives year-wise account of his reign till its thirteenth year shows that Kharavela was a great king with military victories in north India, western India and south India to his credit; he also undertook many public works for his subjects and as a practising jaina, he excavated cave-shelters for jaina monks on the Udayagiri hills.

**Few Important Points**

- The famous Virupaksha temple is located at Hampi. This temple is devoted to Lord Shiva, who is known as Virupaksha there.
- The term Panchayatan refers to a style of temple construction.
- A lot of details regarding the village administration under the Cholas is provided by the inscription at Uttamerur.
- Nataraj is considered to be the world's greatest iconographical creations made by Sthapatis of south India, particularly during the Chola period.
- The Dakshinamurti idol of Shiva depicts him as a mentor (Guru, Teacher).
- The Chola sent goodwill mission of 72 traders to China in the reign of Chola king Kulottunga-I in 1077.
- Rajendra-I converted the Bay of Bengal into a 'Chola Lake'.
- Kulottunga-I gave complete freedom to Sri Lanka and got his daughter married to the Sinhala prince Vijayabahu.
- Tagara trade centre of ancient India was on the trade route connecting kalyana with vengi.
- Kural is considered as the Bible and Laghuvada of Tamil literature. It was written by the famous poet Tiruvalluvar.
- Famous south Indian battle of Takkolam was fought between Chola king Parantaka-I and Rashtrakuta king Krishna-III at Takkolam (949 AD). The Cholas were defeated.
- Chola empire was devastated by Malik Kafur, commander of Allauddin Khalji.
- Vengi river was the lifeline of Pandya state.
- According to the Sangam texts the terms kon, ko and mannan were attributed to king.
- The river Kaveri also known as Ponni (Golden) river, had a special place in the culture of Cholas. The annual floods in the Kaveri marked an occasion for celebration known as Adiperukku, in which whole nation took part.

**TRY SOME MAINS PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS**

1. Discuss the main contributions of Gupta period and Chola period to Indian heritage and culture. (Write in 250 words) **(2022)**