

Unit -3

Emergence of New Kingdoms in South India: Later Cholas and Pandyas



Learning Objectives

- ❖ To trace the origin of the later Cholas and the later Pandyas
- ❖ To know about the prominent rulers of both the kingdoms
- ❖ To acquaint with their administrative system
- ❖ To understand the social, economic and cultural development during their reign



I. The Later Cholas

Introduction

The Cholas are one among the popular and well-known Tamil monarchs in the history of South India. The elaborate state structure, the extensive irrigation network, the vast number of temples they built, their great contributions to art and architecture and their overseas exploits have given them a pre-eminent position in history.

Revival of the Chola Rule

The ancient Chola kingdom reigned supreme with the Kaveri delta forming the core area of its rule and with Uraiyur (*present-day Tiruchirappalli*) as its capital. It rose to prominence during the reign of Karikala but gradually declined under his successors.

In the 9th century Vijayalaya, ruling over a small territory lying north of the Kaveri, revived the Chola Dynasty. He conquered Thanjavur and made it his capital. Later Rajendra I and his successors ruled the empire from Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the newly built capital.

Rajaraja I (A.D. (CE) 985 - 1014) was the most powerful ruler of Chola empire and also grew popular beyond his times. He established Chola authority over large parts of South India. His much-acclaimed naval expeditions led to the expansion of Cholas into the West Coast and Sri Lanka. He built the famous Rajarajeswaram (Brihadeshwara) Temple in Thanjavur. His son and successor, Rajendra Chola I (A.D. (CE) 1014 - 1044, matched his father in his ability to expand the empire. The Chola empire remained a powerful force in South India during his reign.



After his accession, his striking military expedition was to northern India, capturing much territory there. He proclaimed himself the Gangaikondan (conqueror of the Gangai region). The Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple was built to commemorate his victories in North India. The navy of Rajendra Chola enabled him to conquer the kingdom of Srivijaya (southern Sumatra). Cholas' control over the seas facilitated a flourishing overseas trade.

Decline of the Chola Empire

Rajendra Chola's three successors were not capable rulers. The third successor Veerarajendra's son Athirajendra was killed in civil unrest. With his death ended the Vijayalaya line of Chola rule.



Ruins of Gangaikonda Cholapuram

Matrimonial alliances between the Cholas and the Eastern Chalukyas began during the reign of Rajaraja I. His daughter Kundavai was married to Chalukya prince Vimaladitya. Their son was Rajaraja Narendra who married the daughter of Rajendra Chola named Ammangadevi. Their son was Kulothunga I.

On hearing the death of Athirajendra, the Eastern Chalukya prince Rajendra Chalukya seized the Chola throne and began the rule of Chalukya-Chola dynasty as Kulothunga I.

Kulothunga established himself firmly on the Chola throne soon eliminating all the threats to the Chola Empire. He avoided unnecessary wars and earned the goodwill of his subjects. But Kulothunga lost the territories in Ceylon. The Pandya territory also began to slip out of Chola control. Kanchipuram was lost to the Telugu Cholas. The year 1279 marks the end of Chola dynasty when King Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I defeated the last king Rajendra Chola III and established the rule of the Pandyas in present-day Tamil Nadu.

Administration

The central administration was in the hands of king. As the head of the state, the king enjoyed enormous powers. The king's orders were written down in palm leaves by his officials or inscribed on the temple walls. The kingship was hereditary in nature. The ruler selected his eldest son as the heir apparent. He was known as Yuvaraja. The Yuvarajas were appointed as Governors in the provinces mainly for administrative training.

The Chola rulers established a well-organised system of administration. The empire, for administrative convenience, was divided into provinces or *mandalams*. Each mandalam was sub-divided into *naadus*. Within each naadu, there were many *kurrams* (groups of villages). The lowest unit was the *gramam* (village).

Local Governance

Local administration worked through various bodies such as Urar, Sabhaiyar, Nagarattar and Nattar. With the expansion of agriculture, numerous peasant settlements came up on the countryside. They were known as Ur. The Urar, who were landholders acted as



spokesmen in the Ur. Sabhaiyar in Brahman villages also functioned in carrying out administrative, financial and judicial functions. Nagarattar administered the settlement of traders. However, skilled artisans like masons, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, weavers and potters also lived in Nagaram. Nattar functioned as an assembly of Nadu and decided all the disputes and issues pertaining to Nadu.

The assemblies in Ur, Sabha, Nagaram and Nadu worked through various committees. The committees took care of irrigation, roads, temples, gardens, collection of revenue and conduct of religious festivals.

Uttiramerur Inscriptions



Uttiramerur Inscriptions

Uttiramerur presently in Kanchipuram district was a Brahmadeya village (land grants given to Brahmins). There is a detailed description of how members were elected to the committees of the village sabha in the inscriptions found there. One member was to be elected from each ward. There were 30 wards in total. The eligibility to contest was to men in the age group of 35–70, well-versed in vedic texts and scriptures, and also owned land and house. The process of election was as follows: The names



of qualified candidates from each ward were written on the palm-leaf slips and put into a pot. The eldest of the assembly would engage a boy to pull out one slip and declare his name. Various committees were decided in this way.

Revenue

The revenue of the Chola state came mainly from the land. The land tax was known as Kanikadan. The Chola rulers carried out an elaborate survey of land in order to fix the government's share of the land revenue. One-third of produce was collected as land tax. It was collected mostly in kind. In addition to land tax, there were taxes on profession and tolls on trade.

Social Structure Based on Land Relations

The Chola rulers gifted tax-free lands to royal officials, Brahmins, temples (devadana villages) and religious institutions. Land granted to Jain institutions was called *pallichchandam*. There were also of *vellanvagai* land and the holders of this land were called Vellalars. *Ulu-kudi*, a sub-section of Vellalar, could not own land but had to cultivate *Brahmadeya* and *vellanvagai* lands. The holders of *vellanvagai* land retained *melvaram* (major share in harvest). The ulu-kudi got *kil-varam* (lower share). *Adimai* (slaves) and *panicey-makkal* (labourers) occupied the lowest rung of society. In the intermediate section came the armed men and traders.

Irrigation

Cholas gave importance to irrigation. The 16-mile long embankment built by Rajendra Chola in Gangaikonda Cholapuram is an illustrious example. *Vati-vaykkal*, a criss-cross

channel, is a traditional type of harnessing rain water in the Cauvery delta. *Vati* is a drainage channel and a *vaykkal* is the supply channel. The commonly owned village channel was called *ur-vaykkal*. The nadu level *vaykkal* is referred to as *nadu-vaykkal*. The turn-system was in practice in distributing the water.

Religion

Chola rulers were ardent Saivites. Hymns, in praise of the deeds of Lord Siva, were composed by the Saiva saints, the Nayanmars. NambiyandarNambi codified them, which came to be known as the *Thirumurai*.

Temples

The Chola period witnessed an extensive construction of temples. The temples in Thanjavur, Gangaikonda Cholapuram and Darasuram are the repository of architecture, sculpture, paintings and iconography of the Chola art. Temples during the Chola period were not merely places of worship. They were the largest landholders. Temples promoted education, and devotional forms of art such as dance, music and drama. The staff of the temples included temple officials, dancing girls, musicians, singers, players of musical instruments and the priests.



Big Temple Thanjavur

Cholas as Patrons of Learning

Chola kings were great patrons of learning. Rajendra I established a Vedic college at Ennayiram (now in Villupuram District). There were 340 students learning the Vedas, grammar and Upanishads under 14 teachers. This example was later followed by his successors and as a result two more such colleges had been founded, at Tirubuvanai near present-day Puducherry and Tirumukkoodal in present-day Chengalpattu district, in 1048 and 1067 respectively. The great literary works *Periyapuramam* and *Kamba Ramayanam* belong to this period.

Trade

There was a flourishing trade during the Chola period. Trade was carried out by two guild-like groups: *anju-vannattar* and *mani-gramattar*. *Anju-vannattar* comprised West Asians, Arabs, Jews, Christians and Muslims. They were maritime traders and settled on the port towns all along the West Coast. It is said that *mani-gramattar* were the traders engaged in inland trade. In due course, both groups merged under the banner of *ai-nutruvar* and *disai-ayirattu-ai-nutruvar* functioning through the head guild in Ayyavole, Karnataka. This *ai-nutruvar* guild operated the maritime trade covering South-East Asian countries.



Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple



Through overseas trade with South-East Asian countries elephant tusks, coral, transparent glass, betel nuts, cardamom, opaque glass, cotton stuff with coloured silk threads were imported. The items exported from here were sandalwood, ebony, condiments, precious gems, pepper, oil, paddy, grains and salt.

II. The Later Pandyas

Introduction

Pandyas were one of the three ancient Tamil dynasties that ruled southern India since the 4th century B.C. (BCE) but intermittently. Korkai, associated with pearl fisheries, is believed to have been their early capital and port. They moved to Madurai later, as many early Tamil inscriptions of Pandyas have been unearthed in Madurai and its surroundings. Under the Pandya kings of the Sangam Age, Madurai was a great centre of culture. Poets and writers of Tamil language gathered there and contributed to the development of Tamil Classics. The Pandyas had re-established their strong position in south Tamil Nadu by the end of the 6th century A.D. (CE), after eliminating the rule of Kalabhras. But they could not resist the rising power of the later Cholas who ruled South India from 9th to 13th century. Thereafter taking advantage of the decline of Chola power, the later Pandyas re-established their authority. Their rule continued until 16th century.

Revival of Pandya Kingdom (A.D. (CE) 600 - 920)

Kadunkon recovered Pandya territory from the Kalabhras towards the close of 6th century. He was succeeded by two others. Arikesari Maravarman was the first strong Pandya ruler who ascended the throne in A.D. (CE) 642. He was a contemporary of Mahendravarman I and

Narsimhavarman I. Inscriptions and copper plates praise his victory over his counterparts: Cheras, Cholas, Pallavas and Sinhalese. Arikesari Maravarman is identified with the Kun Pandian, the persecutor of Jains.

Saivite saint Thirugnanasambandar converted Arikesari from Jainism to Saivism. On his conversion, Arikesari is alleged to have impaled around 8000 Jains on stakes. Though the number is an exaggerated one, the anti-Jain attitude of Arikesari after his conversion to Saivism cannot be doubted.

After Arikesari, the greatest of the dynasty was Jatila Parantaka Nedunjadayan (Varaguna I) (756-815), the donor of the Velvikkudi plates. Nedunjadayan expanded the Pandya territory to include Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Coimbatore districts. Nedunjadayan's successors Srimara Srivallabha and Varaguna II, were successively defeated by Pallavas. Later they could not face the rising Chola dynasty under Parantaka I. Parantaka I defeated the Pandya king Rajasimha II who fled the country in 920. Thus ended the Pandya rule revived by Kadungon.

Rise of Later Pandyas (1190 - 1310)

The Chola viceroyalty became weak in Pandya country after the death of Adhirajendra (the last king of Vijayalaya line). Eventually the Pandya kingdom could emerge as the only leading Tamil dynasty in the 13th century. Madurai continued to be their capital. Now Kayal was their great port. Marco Polo, a famous traveller from Venice, visited Kayal twice, in 1288 and 1293. He tells us that this port town was full of ships from Arabia and China and bustling with business activities.



Marco Polo hailed the Pandyan Kingdom as 'the richest and the most splendid province in the world'. Together with Ceylon, he added, it 'produced most of the gems and pearls that are found in the world'. In his travel account he recorded the incidents of *sati* and the polygamy practiced by the kings.

Sadaiyavarman Sundarapandyan

The illustrious ruler of the second Pandya Kingdom was Sadaiyavarman (Jatavarman) Sundarapandyan (1251 to 1268). He brought the entire Tamil Nadu under his rule, which extended up to Nellore in Andhra. He held the Hoysalas in check. The Chera ruler, the chief of *Malanadu*, accepted his feudatory position and paid tribute to Sundarapandyan. Emboldened by the decline of the Chola state, the Boja King of Malwa region Vira Someswara challenged Sundarapandyan. In a war at Kannanur, Sundarapandyan defeated Someswara. Sundarapandyan succeeded in establishing his authority over the chieftains of Cuddalore, Kanchipuram in northern Tamil Nadu, Arcot and Salem in the western region.



Coin of Pandya Kingdom

There were two or three co-regents who ruled simultaneously along with Sundarapandyan: VikramaPandyan and ViraPandyan. After Sundarapandyan, Maravarman Kulasekaran ruled successfully for a period of 40 years, giving the country peace and prosperity. He had two sons. The king's appointment of ViraPandyan as a co-regent provoked the other son Sundara Pandyan who killed his father Maravarman Kulasekaran. In the civil war that ensued, ViraPandyan won and became firmly established in his kingdom. The defeated Sundara Pandyan fled to Delhi and took refuge under the protection of Ala-ud-din Khalji. This provided the opening for the invasion of Malik Kafur.

After Malik Kafur's invasion, the Pandyan Kingdom came to be divided among a number of kings from the main ruling Pandya's family. In Madurai, a Muslim State subordinate to the Delhi Sultan came to be established.

Polity and Society

State

Pandya kings preferred Madurai as their capital. Madurai has been popularly venerated as *Koodal*. The kings are traditionally revered as *Koodal-kon*, *Koodal Nagar Kavalan*. The Pandyas derived military advantage over their neighbours by means of their horses. They imported these horses through Arabs with whom they had commercial and cultural contact.

The king claimed that he was ruling according to Manu Sastra. This doctrine supported the social hierarchy in the society. Kings and local chiefs created Brahmin settlements called *Mangalam* or *Chatur-vedi-mangalam* with irrigation facilities.



The actual landowning groups are described as the *Bumiputtirar*, otherwise called the *vellalar*. Historically they were locals and hence they were referred to as *nattu-makkal*. The communal assembly of this group is *Cittira Meli Periyannattar*.

Royal Officials

A band of officials executed the royal orders. The prime minister was *uttara-mantri*. The historical personalities like Manickavasagar, Kulaciraiyar and Marankari worked as ministers. The royal secretariat was known as *eluttu-mandapam*. The most respected officials were *maran-eyinan*, *sattan-ganapathy*, *enathi-sattan*, *tira-tiran*, *murthi-eyinan* and others. The titles of military commanders were *palli-velan*, *parantakan-palli-velan*, *maran-adittan* and *tennavan-tamilvel*.

Administrative Divisions

Pandy nadu, as in Chola state, consisted of many provinces known as *vala-nadus*, which, in turn, were divided into many *nadus* and *kurrams*. The administrative authorities of nadus were the *nattars*. Nadu and Kurram contained settlements, viz. *mangalam*, *nagaram*, *ur* and *kudi*, where different social groups inhabited.

Village Administration

An inscription from Manur (Tirunelveli district) dated A.D. (CE) 800 provides an account of village administration. It looks similar to Chola's local governance that included village assemblies and committees. Both civil and military powers seem to have been vested in the same person.

Irrigation

The Pandya rulers created a number of irrigation sources. On either side of the rivers

Vaigai and *Tamiraparani*, channels leading to the irrigation tanks were built. In southern Tamilnadu, like the Cholas, Pandyas introduced the new irrigation technology. Irrigation works were done by local administrative bodies, local chiefs and officials. Repairs were mostly undertaken by local bodies. Sometimes, traders also dug out tanks for irrigation.

Religion

Pandyas extended patronage to vedic practices. *Velvikkudi* copper plates as well as inscriptional sources mention the rituals like *Asvamedha yaga*, *Hiranya garbha* and *Vajapeya yaga*, conducted by every great Pandya king. The impartiality of rulers towards both Saivism and Vaishnavism is also made known in the invocatory portions of the inscriptions. Temples of both sects were patronised through land grant, tax-exemption and renovation.

The great Saiva and Vaishnava saints (Nayanmaras and Alvars) combined contributed to the growth of Tamil literature and spiritual enlightenment. The period was marked by intense religious conflict. The Bhakti movement of the time prompted the heterodox scholars for a debate. Many instances of the defeat of Buddhists and Jains in such debates are mentioned in Bhakti literature. The Pandya kings of the period supported and promoted Tamil and Sanskrit.

Temples

Medieval Pandyas and later Pandyas did not build any new temples but maintained the existing temples, enlarging them with the addition of *gopuras*, and *mandapas*. The monolithic mega size ornamented pillars are the unique feature of the medieval Pandya style. The sculptures of Siva, Vishnu, Kotravai, Ganesa

and Subramanyar are the best specimens in these temples. Pandyas specially patronised the historic Meenakshi temple at Madurai and kept expanding its premises by adding gopuras and mandapas.



Meenakshi Temple, Madurai

Trade

Arab settlements on the west coast of southern India, from 7th century, had led to the expansion of their trade connection to the east coast because the governments of the east coast pursued a more liberal and enlightened policy towards overseas traders. Their charters exempted traders from various types

of port dues and tolls. In Kayal, there was an agency established by an Arab chieftain by name Malik-ul-Islam Jamal-ud-din. This agency facilitated availability of horses to Pandya kings.

In 13th and 14th centuries, horse trade became brisk. Marco Polo and Wassaff state that the kings invested in horses as there was a need of horse for ceremonial purposes as well as for fighting wars. Those who were trading in horses were called *kudirai chetties*. They were active in maritime trade also. The busiest port town under the Pandyas was *Kayal Pattinam* (now in Thoothukudi district) on the east coast. Gold coins were in circulation as the trade was carried through the medium of gold. It was variously called *kasu*, *kalanchu* and *pon*.

The vast trade in horses of that time has been recorded by Wassaff. He writes: '...as many as 10,000 horses were imported into Kayal and other ports of India of which 1,400 were to be of Jamal-ud-din's own breed. The average cost of each horse was 220 dinars of 'red gold'.

Summary

- ❖ The Cholas and Pandyas are well known Tamil monarchs.
- ❖ Vijayalaya revived the Chola dynasty.
- ❖ The prominent Chola rulers are Rajaraja I and Rajendra I.
- ❖ Uttiramerur inscriptions provide details of village administration.
- ❖ Kodunkon recovered Pandya territory from Kalabhras. Arikesari Maravavarman and Parantaka Nedunjadayan were his two prominent successors.
- ❖ The illustrious rulers of later Pandya kingdom were Sadaayavarman Sundarapandyan and Maravarman Kulasekaran.
- ❖ Maritime trade during Pandyas is highlighted by Marco Polo and Wassaff.

Glossary

Matrimonial alliances	political alliances through marriages	திருமண உறவுகள் மூலம் அரசியல் கூட்டு
Embankment	a wall or stone structure built to prevent a river flooding an area as well as to store its water	தடுப்பணை
Ardent	passionate	தீவிரமான
Feudatory	a subordinate to another sovereign/ruler	அரசருக்குக் கட்டுப்பட்ட குறுநில மன்னர்
Refuge	shelter	புகலிடம்
Repository	place in which things are stored	கருவூலம்



Evaluation

I. Choose the Correct answer

1. Who revived the later Chola dynasty?

a) Vijayalaya
b) Rajaraja I
c) Rajendra I
d) Athirajendra



2. Who among the following Pandya rulers is known for ending the Kalabhra rule?

a) Kadunkon b) ViraPandyan
c) Kun Pandyan d) Varaguna

3. Which of the following was the lowest unit of Chola administration?

a) Mandalam b) Nadu
c) Kurram d) Ur

4. Who was the last ruler Vijayalaya line of Chola dyanasty?

a) VeeraRajendra b) Rajadhiraja
c) AthiRajendra d) Rajaraja II

5. An example of Chola architecture can be seen at_____.

a) Kannayiram b) Uraiyr
c) Kanchipuram d) Thanjavur

6. To which of the following, Marco Polo went in the last decade of 13th century in India?

a) Chola mandalam
b) Pandya country
c) Kongu region
d) Malainadu

II Fill in the blanks

- _____ built the famous Brihadeshwara Temple at Thanjavur.
- _____ established a Vedic college at Ennayiram.
- _____ was the donor of Velvikudi copper plates.
- The royal secretariat of Pandya kingdom was known as _____.



III Match the Following

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Madurai | Inland traders |
| 2. Gangaikonda Cholaपुरम | Maritime traders |
| 3. Anju- Vannattar | Capital of Cholas |
| 4. Mani- gramattar | Capital of Pandyas |

IV. True or False

1. A Muslim state subordinate to Delhi Sultan was in Madurai.
2. Koodal – nagar Kavalan was the title of a Pandya king.
3. Chola kingdom was situated in Vaigai delta.
4. Kulothunga I belonged to Chalukya – Chola dynasty.
5. The elder son of the Chola king was called Yuvaraja.

V Consider the following statements. Tick (✓) the appropriate answer.

1. Which of the following statements about Later Cholas are correct?
 1. They had a system of Local self government.
 2. They maintained a strong navy.
 3. They were the followers of Buddhism.
 4. They built big temples.

a) 1,2 and 3 b) 2,3 and 4
c) 1,2 and 4 d) 1,3 and 4
2. Which of the following statements are true with regard to Rajendra Chola?
 1. He assumed the title Gangaikonda Chola.
 2. He conquered Southern Sumatra.
 3. He is credited with consolidating the Chola power.
 4. His naval power enabled him to conquer Srivijaya.

- a) 1 and 2 b) 3 and 4
c) 1,2 and 4 d) All the above
3. **Assertion:-** The Yuvarajas were appointed Governors in the provinces.
Reason:- This was done for their training in administration.
a) R is the correct explanation of A.
b) R is not the correct explanation of A.
c) A is wrong and R is correct.
d) A and R are wrong.
 4. Arrange the following administration divisions in descending order.
1. Nadu 2. Mandalam
3. Ur 4. Kurram
 5. Arrange the events in chronological order.
1. Maravarman appointed Virapandyan as co – regent.
2. Civil war broke out.
3. A Muslim State was established in Madurai.
4. MaravarmanKulasekaran had two sons – Virapandyan and Sundrapandyan
5. SundraPandyan sought help from Ala-ud-din Khalji.
6. Malik Kafur invaded Madurai.
 6. Find out

Brahmadeya	
Devadana	
Pallichchandam	
Vellanvagai	

VI Answer in one or two sentences

1. What were the items exported during the later Chola period?

- What was called Chatur-vedi-mangalam?
- Write about Kanikadan.

VII Answer the following in detail

- Highlight any five aspects of Cholas' legacy.


VIII HOTs

- Chola kings were great patrons of learning: Support the statement with details.

IX Students activity

Who am I?

- I was responsible for Malik Kafur invasion.
- I built 16-mile embankment-lake in Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
- I am a water supply channel.
- I codified Thirumurai.
- I was a great port. Marco Polo visited me twice.

Who is he?	Why is this person so important?
	
What are his observations about Pandya Kingdoms?	Why do you think his observations are so important?

X Answer Grid

1. Name the two literary works of Chola period. Ans:	2. Which port is associated with pearl fishery? Ans:
3. What do <i>kasu</i> , <i>kalanchu</i> and <i>pon</i> refer to? Ans:	4. In which district is Kayal -Pattinam located? Ans:
5. Who was the Pandya king, defeated by Parantaka I? Ans:	6. Where is the famous Meenakshi temple located? Ans:



XI Field trip

1. Visit any one temple built during Chola or Pandya period and see its magnificence.

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