

Chola Administration- History in Detail

Special class

Chola dynasty overview

1. Geographical extent:

- Chola mandalam: the region roughly between the pennar and vellaru rivers along the eastern coast.
- Major political centers:
 - Kaveripattinam,
 - Uraiyur,
 - Thanjavur (tanjore),
 - Kanchipuram,
 - Gangaikonda cholapuram.
- **Most important cities-** kanchipuram and gangaikonda cholapuram
- **Primary capital** - Gangaikonda cholapuram

2. Historical References:

- First mention of the Cholas in 'Vartika' by Katyayana (4th century BCE).
- Mentioned in the Mahabharata and Megasthenes' Indica.
- Kanchipuram served as a secondary capital throughout the Chola reign.

3. Names and Titles:

- Other names for the Cholas: Killi, Valavan (king of fertile land), and Sembiyan (descendant of Sibi).
- Tamil lexicon meaning of Chola (Solai): "New kingdom."

4. Ashoka's Edicts:

- Chola, Chera, and Pandya in Ashoka's 13th rock edict.
- A vast empire with Thanjavur as the capital.

Sources of Chola History

1. Literary Sources:

- **Sangam Literature (100-250 CE):** Provides information about the early Chola ruler **Karikala**
- **Notable Works:**
 - **'Kalingattup Parani'** by Jayamkondar
 - **'Ula'** by **Ottakuttan** (focused on the romantic lives of Vikrama Chola, Kulothunga II, and Rajaraja II)
 - **'Periyapuranam'** by Sekkizhar
 - Grammar text **'Virasoliyam'** by Buddhimitra

2. Sinhalese Buddhist Texts:

- **Mahavamsa:** Details the Pandya conquest by Parantaka I and the conquest of Lanka by Rajendra I.

3. Archaeological Sources:

- **Epigraphs:** The most authentic sources of Chola history, written in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Kannada.
 - Rajaraja I initiated the compilation of the history of his ancestors through inscriptions, known as **'Tiru Mani Valar'** in Tamil.
 - **Key Inscriptions:**
 - **Leyden Grant** of Rajaraja I
 - Inscriptions in the **Thanjavur Temple**
 - **'Tiruvalangadu'** and **'Karandai'** grants of Rajendra I
 - **'Tiruvennipuram'** Inscription of Rajaraja III, detailing the rise of the Chola dynasty and gratitude towards the Hoysala rulers.
 - **'Manimangalam Inscription'** of Rajadhiraja I, mentioning his conquest of Lanka and Ashwamedha sacrifice.

4. Numismatic Sources:

- Coins discovered in various parts of South India confirm the Chola dominance.
- A treasure of gold coins was found in **Dhavaleswaram.**

- Coins of Rajadhiraja I were found in Lanka, confirming his rule there.

5. Foreign Accounts:

- **Periplus and Ptolemy's Works:** Mention the Chola dynasty in the early centuries CE.
- **Chinese Traveler:**
 - Chau Ju-Kua's (1225 CE) work 'Chu-fan-chi' provides insights into the Chola administrative system.

Vijayalaya (850 - 871 CE) - Founder of the Chola Empire

1. Foundation of the Chola Empire:

- Around 850 CE, under the leadership of Vijayalaya, the revival of Chola power began.
- Initially, Vijayalaya was a feudatory of the Pallavas, ruling over the region of Uraiyur (Trichinopoly).
- Uraiyur was the ancient residence of the Cholas.

2. Expansion and Titles:

- Vijayalaya took advantage of the weakened Pandya power and captured Thanjavur, which was previously under the control of the Muttaraiyar dynasty, vassals of the Pandyas.
- He assumed the titles 'Tanjai Konda' (Conqueror of Thanjavur) and 'Narkesari'.

3. Religious Contributions:

- Vijayalaya built a temple dedicated to Goddess Durga (Nishumbhasudini) in Thanjavur.
- The conquest of Thanjavur is described in the 'Tirukoyilur' inscription.

4. Capital Establishment:

- He made Thanjavur the capital of the Chola kingdom, replacing Uraiyur (Uraipur).

Aditya I (871-907 CE)

1. Initial Position:

- Initially, Aditya I was a vassal of the Pallava king Aparajita.
- He assisted Aparajita against the Pandyas in the Battle of Sripurambiyam.

2. Rise to Power:

- Aditya I was an ambitious ruler who soon declared complete independence from the Pallavas.
- In 890 CE, he attacked Tondamandalam, defeated, and killed the last Pallava ruler, Aparajita.
- He assumed the title 'Tondainadu' (Conqueror of Tondamandalam), as mentioned in the 'Tiruvallangadu inscription'.

3. Diplomatic Relations:

- Established marital alliances with contemporary dynasties like the Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, and Cheras.

4. Conquests:

- Attacked the Pandya king Parantaka Veera Narayanan and seized the Kongu region (area of Coimbatore and Salem districts).
- His successes forced the Ganga dynasty to accept his suzerainty.

5. Religious Contributions:

- Personally a devotee of Lord Shiva.
- Constructed numerous stone Shiva temples along both banks of the Kaveri River.

6. Titles and Achievements:

- Known by titles such as 'Rajakesari' and 'Kodandarama' (in celebration of his victory over the Pallavas, mentioned in the Kanyakumari inscription).

7. Death:

- He died in Tondaimandalam (near Kalahasti).

Parantaka I (907-955 CE)

1. Major Achievement:

- His greatest accomplishment was the annexation of the Pandya kingdom.
- With the help of the Western Gangas, Kodumbalur chieftains, and the Chera ruler, he defeated the combined forces of the Pandya ruler Rajasingha II and the Sinhalese (Sri Lankan) ruler Kassapa V in the Battle of Vellore in 915 CE.
- Assumed the title 'Sangramaraghava' following this victory.
- Captured Madurai and took the titles 'Maduraikonda' (Conqueror of Madurai) and 'Maduraantaka'.

Chola-Rashtrakuta Conflict

1. Initial Conflict with Krishna II:

- Upon ascending the throne, Parantaka I **faced** the **wrath** of **the Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna II**.
- The conflict was triggered by Krishna II's **attempt to place his grandson Kannara Deva**, Parantaka's stepbrother, on the Chola throne.
- In 910-11 CE, Krishna II, with the support of his **vassals (Bana and Vaidumba)**, attacked the Chola kingdom.
- **Parantaka I defeated Krishna II** in a fierce battle in the **Vallam region** and assumed the title **'Virachola'**.

2. Renewed Conflict with Krishna III:

- The **Chola-Rashtrakuta conflict reignited** during the reign of **Krishna III**.
- With the **support** of the **Ganga ruler Butuga II**, Krishna III decisively **defeated Parantaka I** in the **Battle of Takkolam (949 CE)**.
- As a result, Krishna III **captured the Chola-ruled Tondamandalam region**.
- In this battle, the **Chola crown prince Rajaditya was killed** while fighting.

3. Other Endeavors:

- Parantaka I also made an **unsuccessful attempt** to **invade Sri Lanka**.
- He established **marital alliances** with the **rulers of Kerala**, leading to **significant migration of Malayali people into the Chola territory**.

4. Local Self-Governance:

- Detailed descriptions of Chola local self-governance are found in the 'Uttaramerur inscriptions' published in 919 CE and 921 CE.
- Promoted agricultural development by constructing numerous canals throughout the kingdom.

5. Religious and Cultural Contributions:

- Conducted 'Hemagarbha' and 'Tulabhara' sacrifices.
- Known by the title 'Uttama Chola'.
- Renovated the roof of the 'Maharaja Temple' in Chidambaram with gold.
- Contemporary of the famous Sanskrit scholar 'Venkata Madhava', who wrote a commentary on the Rigveda.
- A follower of Shaivism, he constructed the 'Dabhrasabha' for Shiva worship.

6. Post-Parantaka I Period:

- After his death, the Chola dynasty experienced 30 years of turbulence from 955 CE to 985 CE.
- Successive rulers during this period were:
 1. Gandaraditya (955-957 CE)
 2. Arinjaya (957 CE)
 3. Parantaka II (957-973 CE), also known as Sundara Chola, who defeated the Pandya ruler Veera Pandya in the Battle of Chevur and assumed the title 'Maduraikonda Rajakesari'.
 4. Uttama Chola (973-985 CE)

7. Military Campaigns:

- Parantaka II made an unsuccessful attempt to invade Sri Lanka.
- During his reign, the tradition of writing epigraphic eulogies began.

8. Achievements of Uttama Chola:

- By Uttama Chola's reign, the Cholas had regained the Tondamandalam region from the Rashtrakutas.
- He was the first Chola ruler to issue gold coins.

Rajaraja I (985-1014 CE): The True Founder of the Chola Empire

1. Accession and Background:

- Rajaraja I, originally named Arimoli Varman, was the son of Parantaka II and Vanavan Mahadevi.
- Ascended the Chola throne in 985 CE.
- Known as the greatest ruler of the Chola dynasty due to his numerous military successes and effective administrative reforms.

2. Transformation of the Chola Kingdom:

- Inherited a small and weak Chola state and transformed it into a vast, prosperous, and powerful empire.
- Following his ancestor Parantaka I's policy of "blood and iron," he assumed the title 'Rajaraja'.

3. Era of Creativity and Expansion:

- Historian Nilakanta Sastri considered Rajaraja's reign the most creative period of the Chola Empire.
- Strengthened internal administration before embarking on military campaigns in the 9th year of his reign.
- Detailed records of his military campaigns are found in the Thanjavur inscription issued in the 29th year of his reign.
- The Tiruvallangadu inscription mentions his conquests of the Pandya and Chera territories.

Military Achievements of Rajaraja I

Conquests of Pandya, Kerala, and Sri Lanka

1. United Front Against Rajaraja:

- The Pandya, Kerala, and Sri Lankan states formed a united front against Rajaraja I.

2. Battle of Kandalur (Trivandrum):

- Rajaraja first attacked Kerala and **defeated** the **Chera ruler Bhaskara Ravi Varman**.
- Assumed the titles **'Keralantaka'** and **'Kandalur Salai Kalamarutta'** following this victory.

Pandya Conquest

1. Attack on the Pandya Kingdom:

- Rajaraja attacked the Pandya kingdom, **captured its ruler Amarabhujanga, and devastated the city of Madurai**.
- Defeated the Pandya vassals **Kollam** and **Kodungallur**, capturing forts in **Malaynadu**, **Kandalur**, and **Vilinjam**.
- Assumed the title **'Jayangonda'** to commemorate his victory over the Pandyas.

Sri Lanka Campaign

1. Naval Invasion:

- The Sinhalese ruler **Mahinda V assisted the Pandyas and Cheras** against Rajaraja.
- Rajaraja launched a **naval invasion of Sri Lanka**, capturing its northern parts and **destroying the capital, Anuradhapura**.
- Detailed descriptions of this conquest are found in the **Tiruvallangadu copper plates**, which liken **Rajaraja's victory to the legendary deeds of Lord Rama**.
- Assumed the title **'Singhalantaka'** to mark his conquest of Sri Lanka.

2. Administrative and Cultural Impact:

- **Annexed** the **entire northern Sri Lanka** into the Chola Empire, renaming it **'Mummudi Cholamandalam'**.
- Established the city of **Polonnaruwa** as the new capital, renaming it **'Jananathamangalam'**.
- Commissioned inscriptions (e.g., **Thirumangal**) and **constructed grand Shiva temples in the Dravidian architectural style** in Sri Lanka, **similar to the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur**.

Western Ganga Conquest

1. Victory over the Western Gangas:

- After the **initial victories**, Rajaraja **defeated the Western Gangas** in the Mysore region.
- Captured the territories of **Gangavadi**, **Nolambavadi**, and **Tadigaivadi**.
- Assumed the title **'Cholanarayanan'**.

War with the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani

1. Conflict with the Chalukyas:

- The emerging powers of the **Western Chalukyas under Satyashraya** and the Cholas under Rajaraja began competing for dominance over the **Vengi region**.
- Rajaraja made a significant strategic shift by sending a massive army of **900,000 soldiers led by his crown prince Rajendra Chola** to attack the Chalukyas of Kalyani.

2. Campaign and Results:

- According to the **Hotter inscription of 1007-08**, the vast Chola army ravaged regions like Santalinge and Banavasi, establishing a **base camp at Donur**.
- Chola generals **engaged in widespread looting and committed atrocities** against the local population, including Brahmins, women, and children.
- The **wealth acquired** from these campaigns was **used in the construction of the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur**.
- The **northern boundary** of the Chola Empire now **extended** up to the **Tungabhadra River**.

Rajaraja I's Intervention in the Eastern Chalukya Kingdom of Vengi

1. Conflict in Vengi:

- Two Chalukya princes of Vengi, Shaktivarman and Vimaladitya, sought refuge at the court of Rajaraja I against the Vengi ruler Chodabheem.

2. Military Action:

- Rajaraja I attacked Vengi, captured Chodabheem, and installed Shaktivarman as the ruler of Vengi.
- Vengi thus became a protected state under the Chola Empire.

3. Marital Alliance:

- Rajaraja I strengthened his ties with Vengi by marrying his daughter Kundava Devi to Vimaladitya

4. Protection from Western Chalukyas:

- Rajaraja I successfully defended Vengi from the attacks of the Western Chalukya ruler Satyashraya.

5. Conquest of Kalinga:

- After securing Vengi, Rajaraja I invaded and annexed the Kalinga kingdom.
- He assumed the title 'Tailang Kulantaka' following this conquest.

Final Conquest of Rajaraja I: The Maldives

1. Victory over the Maldives:

- The final **conquest** of **Rajaraja I** was the **Maldives**, an archipelago of 12,000 islands referred to as '**Sandimantivu**' in Purana texts.
- Arab traders settled along the **western coast and integrated into the local societies of Malabar and Konkan.**

2. Extent of the Empire:

- By the end of Rajaraja I's reign, his empire included:
 1. The entire South Indian region south of the Tungabhadra River.
 2. The far Deccan regions.
 3. Northern Sri Lanka.
 4. Kalinga.
 5. The Maldives.

3. Titles and Honors:

- To signify his greatness, Rajaraja I assumed numerous prestigious titles, including:
 - 'Chola Martanda'
 - 'Rajasraya'
 - 'Rajamartanda'
 - 'Arimoli'
 - 'Cholendrasimha'
 - 'Mummudi Choladeva'
 - 'Kshatriyashikhamani'
 - 'Ravikulamanikya'
 - 'Nityavinoda'
 - 'Nigarillashola'
- One of his titles, '**Ulakalantha Perumal**' (the great person **who measured the earth**), indicates both his **comparison to Lord Vishnu and his efforts in land surveying.**

Cultural Achievements of Rajaraja I

1. Land Survey and Classification:

- In 1000 CE, Rajaraja I conducted a comprehensive survey and measurement of all lands within the empire.
- Implemented a new classification system for different types of lands.
- He introduced new types of taxes.
- Enforced tax collection strictly, evicting those who failed to pay from their lands.

2. Administrative Reforms:

- Appointed state officials to regulate the administration of temples.
- Ensured proper oversight of village assemblies' accounts and records.

3. Inscriptions and Historical Records:

- Before Rajaraja I, inscriptions typically began with a brief introduction to the activities of the ruler's ancestors.
- Rajaraja I innovated by prioritizing the detailed account of his own contemporary achievements at the beginning of the inscriptions, which served as historical prologues.

4. Military Organization:

- Rajaraja I was the first Chola ruler to establish a permanent standing army.
- Formed a large and powerful navy, which played a crucial role in his military campaigns and conquests.

Cultural Achievements of Rajaraja I

1. Diplomatic and Trade Relations:

- In 1015 CE, Rajaraja I **sent an embassy to China**, initiating friendly and trade relations with the Chinese court.

2. Regional Administration and Coinage:

- Renamed various regions incorporating his titles and appointed capable officials to govern them.
- Introduced **gold, silver, and copper coins**, and ensured they were inscribed with **Nagari script**.
- Issued the **first coins in South India depicting seated figures**.

3. Devotion to Shiva:

- As a devout follower of Shiva, he adopted the title **'Shivapada Shekhara'**.
- Constructed the **'Brihadeeswarar Temple'** or **'Rajarajeswara Temple'** in **Thanjavur**, considered the pinnacle of South Indian temple architecture.
- **The temple features include:**
 - Magnificent murals and paintings from the Chola period.
 - High boundary walls, setting a precedent for South Indian temples.
 - Structures like the vimana, ardhamandapa, mahamandapa, and nandimandapa aligned in a straight line.
- Honored his **elder sister Kundavai** by **inscribing her name** on the **inner walls** of the **temple sanctum**, while inscriptions of other queens and officials were placed on the outer walls.

4. Religious Tolerance and Contributions:

- Constructed a **Vishnu temple in Nagapattinam**, demonstrating his tolerance towards all religions.
- **Supported Jainism and Buddhism**.

- At the request of the Shailendra ruler of Srivijaya, **Sri Mara Vijayottungavarman**, Rajaraja I encouraged the construction of the **'Chudamani Buddhist Vihara' in Nagapattinam** in 1006 CE and donated the village of **Anayimangalam** for its maintenance.
- The donation was later **reaffirmed during** the reigns of **Rajendra I** and **Kulothunga I**.

5. Personal and Cultural Contributions:

- Performed the **'Tulabhara'** and **'Hiranyagarbha'** sacrifices with his chief queen **Lokamahadevi** at the **Thiruvallarjuli Temple**.
- His reign marked the zenith of the Chola dynasty in both political and cultural spheres.

6. Foreign Relations:

- In 1012 CE, the **Khmer ruler** of **Cambodia**, **Suryavarman I**, sent a **chariot as a gift** to Rajaraja I, signifying diplomatic ties.

Rajendra I (1014-15 CE - 1044 CE) –

'Singhalantaka, Madurantaka, Keralantaka'

1. Succession and Training:

- In 1012 CE, Rajaraja I appointed his son Rajendra I as the 'Yuvaraja' (crown prince), training him to be the future emperor.
- Rajendra I ascended the Chola throne in 1014 CE.

2. Military Campaigns and Empire Expansion:

Conquest of Kerala and Pandya Kingdoms:

- **Kerala:**
 - Rajendra I first suppressed a powerful rebellion in Kerala in 1018 CE, rendering the region powerless.
- **Pandya Kingdom:**
 - In the same year, his general Dandanatha invaded the Pandya kingdom with a large army and conquered it.
 - Rajendra I appointed one of his sons with the title 'Cholapandya' as the viceroys of these regions, establishing Madurai as the headquarters.
 - The Tiruvallangadu inscription details these conquests.

Conquest of Sri Lanka:

- Building on his father's initial conquest of northern Sri Lanka, Rajendra I conquered the entire island.
- Captured the Sinhalese king Mahinda V, who was brought to the Chola kingdom and remained imprisoned for 12 years until his death in 1029 CE.
- Recovered the 'Indra's necklace', a prized possession held by the Pandya king and given as a token to the Sinhalese king.
- The Mahavamsa Tika and the Karandai copper plates describe his conquest of Sri Lanka.

Conflict with the Western Chalukyas:

- According to historian Nilakanta Sastri, Rajendra I's first battle was against the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani.
- During the succession conflict in Vengi, Rajendra supported Rajaraja, while the Kalyani Chalukya ruler Jayasimha II supported Vijayaditya VII.
- Rajendra I defeated Jayasimha II and took control of the Tungabhadra-Raichur Doab.

Ganga Valley Expedition

1. Prelude: Conquest of Kalinga:

- Rajendra I first defeated the Eastern Ganga ruler of Kalinga, Madhukamarnava, as a show of strength before embarking on the Ganga Valley campaign.

2. Leadership and Forces:

- Rajendra I sent his son, Vikramachola, along with the Chola general Dandanatha and the formidable 'Hasti Pradhan Shadang Chola' (an elephant-centered sixfold army) to lead the expedition to the Ganga Valley.

3. Path of Conquest:

- **Conquered Regions:**
 - Kalinga
 - Bastar
 - Indraratha
 - Southern Kosala
- The campaign advanced northward, targeting several northeastern Indian states.
 - **Defeated rulers:**
 - Dharmapala of Dandabhukti
 - Ranashura of South Radha
 - Govindachandra of East Bengal
 - Mahipala I of the Pala dynasty in Bengal

4. Symbolic Bath and Objective:

- Vikramachola and his victorious Chola army bathed in the sacred waters of the Ganges River.
- The primary objective of this northern campaign was to bring the sacred Ganga water back to the Chola Empire.

5. Title and New Capital:

- Rajendra I assumed the title 'Gangai Kondan' (the conqueror of the Ganga region) after the campaign's success.
- Established a new capital named 'Gangaikonda Cholapuram' in the Trichinopoly district.

6. Cultural Impact and Settlements:

- Unintended outcomes included the migration of several South Indian groups, especially Brahma-Kshatriyas, to Bengal.
- These migrants included Brahmins from Karnataka, who later adopted warrior roles and were known as 'Brahma-Kshatra'.
- A descendant of these settlers, Samanta Sena, founded the Sena dynasty in Bengal.

7. Religious and Cultural Unity:

- Rajendra I aimed to strengthen Indian cultural unity and integrate the revered Ganga and its associated Aryan culture into South India.
- Collected the holy Ganga water in a tank named 'Cholaganga' at Gangaikonda Cholapuram.
- Erected a victory pillar consecrated with Ganga water.
- The expedition and the establishment of Gangaikonda Cholapuram are documented in the Tiruvallangadu copper plates.

8. Promotion of Shaivism:

- Rajendra I brought eminent Shaiva-Brahmins from the north to establish Shaiva traditions in Kanchipuram, as noted in Trilochana Shivacharya's commentary on 'Siddhanta Saravali'.

Conquest of Southeast Asia by Rajendra Chola

1. Naval Expedition:

- Naval expedition to conquer the Srivijaya kingdom in Southeast Asia.
- Srivijaya included regions such as Malaya, Java, Sumatra, and other islands.

2. Conquest of Kadaram (Kedah):

- The Tamil inscriptions refer to the port city of Kadaram, located on the Malay Peninsula, known today as Kedah.
- The Thirukkadaiyur inscription from Rajendra's 15th regnal year (1027 CE), found in the Amruteswar Temple in Tanjavur district, details the military campaign against Kadaram.
- The Tiruvallangadu copper plates describe how Rajendra, with the help of his vast navy, conquered the Kadaram state and 12 other islands, establishing control over the Srivijaya capital.

3. Capture and Release of Sangrama Vijayatungavarman:

- Rajendra captured the contemporary Shailendra ruler Sangrama Vijayatungavarman.
- After a plea for mercy, Rajendra released him and made him a subordinate vassal ruler.
- This victory is also mentioned in the Karandai copper plates from Rajendra's 8th regnal year (1023 CE).

4. Titles and Final Victory:

- In commemoration of his victory, Rajendra assumed the titles 'Kadaramkondan' (Conqueror of Kadaram) and 'Katahadhipati' (Lord of Kataha).
- The conquest of Kadaram was Rajendra's final and most significant victory.

5. Expansion in the Indian Ocean:

- During this campaign, Rajendra Chola also conquered Manakkawaram (Andaman and Nicobar Islands), Malaiyur, Arakan, and Pegu (Burma).
- His dominance over these regions transformed the Bay of Bengal into a "Chola lake."

6. Strategic and Economic Motives:

- According to K. R. Hall, the primary objective of Rajendra Chola's conquest was to maintain uninterrupted trade relations between the South Indian Cholas and China.
- K. G. Krishnan suggests that the Khmer ruler of Cambodia perceived the rising power of Srivijaya as a threat and sought Rajendra's assistance by offering gifts and requesting the conquest of Srivijaya.
- Historians Nilakanta Sastri and R. C. Majumdar argue that the main cause of this conflict was the trade blockade imposed by Srivijaya, hindering the growing commercial ties between the Cholas and China as well as Southeast Asian countries. Rajendra's campaign aimed to eliminate this trade obstruction.

7. Cultural and Trade Impact:

- Nagapattinam, a major port under Chola control, served as a crucial hub for trade in the region.
- As a result of these conquests, Indian culture spread extensively throughout the island regions, significantly strengthening and enhancing trade and commercial relations.

Suppression of Rebellions by Rajendra I

1. Rebellion of Kerala, Pandya, and Sinhalese Rulers:

- While Rajendra I was engaged in his Southeast Asian conquests, a rebellion erupted led by **Sundara Pandya**, along with the rulers of Kerala and Sri Lanka.
- Rajendra I dispatched his crown prince, **Rajadhiraja I, to suppress these rebellions.**

2. Pandya and Kerala Rebellions:

- **Rajadhiraja I** successfully quelled the rebellions in Kerala and the Pandya kingdom.
- His decisive actions **restored Chola authority in these regions.**

3. Sinhalese Rebellion:

- In 1014 CE, **Kassapa**, the son of the former Sinhalese king Mahinda V, **declared himself independent** under the name **Vikrama Bahu I.**
- Rajadhiraja I **defeated and killed Kassapa in battle,** effectively crushing the rebellion in Sri Lanka.

4. Final Conflict with the Chalukyas:

- Towards the end of his reign, Rajendra I had to **confront the Western Chalukyas again.**
- The Chalukya ruler **Someshvara I attacked Vengi,** challenging Chola authority.
- After an indecisive **battle** at **'Kalidindi'**, the Chola forces achieved victory in the **battle of 'Dhannada'** (**Dhanakataka** or **Dharanikota**).

Other Achievements of Rajendra Chola I

1. Patronage of Education and Scholars:

- Rajendra Chola was a great patron of education and scholars.
- In 1025 CE, he established a **Vedic school at Ennayiram with 14 teachers for teaching the Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, grammar, and logic.**
- He took the titles '**Mudikondachola**' (indicating his conquests of Pandya, Kerala, and Sri Lanka) and '**Panditachola**' to signify his scholarship.
- Other titles included '**Veera Rajendra**' and '**Parakesarivarman**'.

2. New Capital and Architectural Contributions:

- Founded the **new capital 'Gangaikonda Cholapuram'** and constructed the grand '**Brihadeeswarar Temple**' there, known for its artistic excellence.
- The **Tiruvallangadu inscription** refers to this new capital as '**Gangapuri**'.
- Unfortunately, the city and temple are now in ruins and covered in vegetation.
- Built a vast **26-kilometer-long tank for irrigation** by damming the **Kolenu** and **Veddar rivers** in his new capital.

3. Diplomatic Missions:

- Following his father's foreign policy, **Rajendra Chola sent two embassies to China in 1015 CE and 1033 CE** to maintain diplomatic and trade relations.

4. Comparison with Great Historical Figures:

- Historian **Nilakanta Sastri** compared Rajaraja I and Rajendra I to **Philip of Macedonia and his son Alexander the Great**, highlighting their significant contributions and conquests.

Rajadhiraja I (1044-1052 CE)

1. Continuing Expansionist Policies:

- Upon becoming the ruler in 1044 CE, Rajadhiraja I continued his father's expansionist policies.

2. Campaigns Against the Western Chalukyas:

- In 1046 CE, the Manimangalam inscription records that Rajadhiraja I attacked Someshvara I of the Western Chalukyas and captured Kampili.
- Destroyed the grand Chalukya palace at Kampili and advanced to Kalyani, where he conducted his 'Virabhisheka' (victory coronation) and assumed the title 'Vijayarajendra'.
- He brought a statue of the doorkeeper from Kalyani and installed it in Darasuram near Thanjavur.
- Defeated Someshvara I in the battles of Dhanyakataka and Pundur, setting up his camp at Yedagiri (Yadagir) and erecting a victory pillar with a tiger statue.
- However, in 1050 CE, Someshvara I managed to expel the Chola forces from his territory.

3. Victory in Vengi:

- Achieved victory in Vengi and his son assumed the title 'Vengipurandhara'. *Vengipurameshwar*

4. Battle of Koppam (1052 CE):

- Rajadhiraja I was killed in the Battle of Koppam while fighting against Someshvara I of the Western Chalukyas.

5. Support for Vedic Education:

- Continued his father's patronage of Vedic education.

- Donated land to the Vedic school at Tribhuvan.

6. Titles and Honors:

- Known as 'Ashwamedha Yajna Karta' (performer of the Ashwamedha sacrifice).
- Honored in inscriptions as the ruler who met his death 'on the back of an elephant'.

Rajendra II (1052-1064 CE)

1. Ascension to the Throne:

- Rajadhiraja I appointed his younger brother Rajendra II as the Yuvaraja (crown prince) instead of his own sons.
- After Rajadhiraja I's death in the Battle of Koppam, Rajendra II was coronated on the battlefield itself.

2. Victory at the Battle of Koppam:

- Rajendra II demonstrated his valor and military skills, securing a victory for the Cholas in the Battle of Koppam.
- The Chalukya army fled the battlefield in panic, abandoning their women, horses, camels, and elephants.
- Advanced to Kolhapur and erected a victory pillar there.

3. Conflict in Vengi:

- After the death of the Chola-supported ruler Rajaraja in 1056 CE, the Chalukya ruler Someshvara I intervened in Vengi.
- Installed his supporter, Shaktivarman II, as the ruler of Vengi and appointed his general Chamundaraja for his protection.
- Chola forces attacked and killed both Shaktivarman II and Chamundaraja.

4. Battle of Kudal Sangamam (1062 CE):

- Rajendra II defeated Someshvara I in the Battle of Kudal Sangamam, located at the confluence of the Tungabhadra and Bhadra rivers.

5. Suppression of Revolts in Sri Lanka:

- Rajendra II quelled the revolts in Sri Lanka and integrated most of its territory into the Chola Empire.

6. Titles and Honors:

- Assumed the title 'Prakesari' following his military successes.

Virarajendra (1064-1070 CE)

1. Battle of Kudal Sangamam (1066 CE):

- Fought against the Chalukya ruler Someshvara I at Kudal Sangamam.
- The Chalukya army was decisively defeated in this battle.
- Someshvara I did not participate in the battle and later committed suicide by drowning in the Tungabhadra River.
- Virarajendra erected a victory pillar on the banks of the Tungabhadra to commemorate this victory.

2. Conquest and Expansion:

- Launched another Chalukya campaign, advancing to Kapilnagar and capturing territories up to Karadigalgam (in Raichur district).
- Established a victory pillar in Karadigalgam.

3. Chalukya Succession Conflict:

- After Someshvara I's death, a succession struggle ensued between Someshvara II and Vikramaditya VI.
- Virarajendra supported Vikramaditya VI, even marrying his daughter to him to solidify their alliance.

4. Suppression of the Sinhalese Revolt:

- Suppressed the revolt led by the Sinhalese king Vijayabahu.
- Asserted Chola dominance over Sri Lanka.

5. Claim to Kadaram:

- According to the Perumbur inscription (from the 7th year of his reign), Virarajendra claimed to have conquered and burned Kadaram (Kedah) and forced the Shailendra ruler to submit to him by performing foot worship.

6. Intervention in Vengi:

- Continued the Chola tradition of intervening in Vengi's Chalukya rule.
- Supported Vijayaditya VII as the ruler of Vengi over the legitimate heir, Rajendra II.

Athirajendra (1068-1070 CE)

1. Rebellion in Vengi:

- Rajendra II, the legitimate heir of Vengi, openly rebelled against Chola authority.
- This rebellion created an atmosphere of chaos and unrest within the Chola kingdom during the reign of Athirajendra.

2. Crisis and Death:

- The widespread unrest and rebellion led to significant turmoil in the Chola state.
- A furious mob, incited by the rebellion, eventually killed Athirajendra.
- His death marked the end of the line of the original Chola rulers from Gangaikondacholapuram.

Kulottunga I (1070-1120 CE)

1. Background:

- Born as Rajendra II, a Chalukya prince of Vengi, with a significant Chola lineage (75% Chola blood).
- His mother, Amangai Devi, was the daughter of the great Chola ruler Rajendra I, and his father, Rajaraja I of Eastern Chalukya, was the son of Rajaraja I of Chola's daughter Kundavai.
- Kulottunga I married Madhurantaki, the daughter of Chola ruler Rajendra II.

2. Accession to the Throne:

- After the death of Athirajendra, Kulottunga I capitalized on the ensuing chaos and ascended the Chola throne.
- He was coronated as 'Kulottunga I', marking the union of the Chola and Eastern Chalukya dynasties.

3. Chola-Chalukya Conflict:

- The Kalyani Chalukya kingdom was divided between Someshvara II and Vikramaditya VI.

- Someshvara II allied with Kulottunga I, and together they defeated Vikramaditya VI at Nangili, securing control over Gangavadi.
 - This conflict is documented in the Jain text 'Kalingattupparani' and Bilhana's 'Vikramankadeva Charita'.
- 4. Victory over the Kalachuris:**
- In 1075-76 CE, Kulottunga I defeated the Kalachuri ruler Yasahkarna and liberated Vengi from Kalachuri control.
 - Conducted successful campaigns against Gangavadi, Singanam, and Kalinga.
- 5. Conquest of Kalinga:**
- Faced a rebellion in Kalinga and sent his general, Karunakara Tondaiman, to suppress it.
 - Defeated the ruler Chodaganga Anantavarman.
 - Detailed accounts of his lineage and Kalinga campaign are found in Jayamkondar's 'Kalingattupparani'.
- 6. Relations with Sri Lanka:**
- The Sinhalese ruler Vijayabahu declared independence from the Chola Empire after Kulottunga I's accession.
 - Ultimately, Kulottunga I recognized Sri Lankan independence and established friendly relations, marrying his daughter to a Sinhalese prince, Virapperumal.
 - These events are recorded in the 'Mahavamsa Tika'.
- 7. Succession and Administration:**
- In 1118 CE, Kulottunga I summoned his son Vikrama Chola from Vengi and appointed him as the crown prince (Yuvaraja).
 - Following Vikrama Chola's departure, Chalukya Vikramaditya VI seized most of Vengi, exploiting the ensuing disorder.
 - Inscriptions from his 49th year, found in Draksharama (Vengi), mark the last records of his reign.
- 8. Conflicts with Hoysalas and Other States:**
- The final phase of Kulottunga I's reign saw the decline of the Chola Empire.
 - Hoysala ruler Vishnuvardhana took advantage of Kulottunga I's old age, invading and capturing Gangavadi and Nolambavadi.
 - Vishnuvardhana also conquered Rameswaram and the Talakad region, assuming the title 'Talakadukonda'.
 - In 1117 CE, Kakatiya ruler Prola declared independence from Chola suzerainty.

- Faced with revolts from the Pandyas and Kerala rulers, Kulottunga I delegated the administration of these regions to local chieftains.

9. Legacy:

- Reigned for nearly 52 years, the longest of any Chola ruler.
- Considered a capable and valiant ruler, despite the decline in the latter part of his reign

Other Achievements of Kulottunga I

1. Diplomatic Missions to China:

- In 1077 CE, Kulottunga I sent an embassy of 72 merchants to China.
- They brought gifts such as glassware, camphor, brocade, rhinoceros horns, and ivory, which the Chinese court considered as tribute.
- In return, the delegation received 61,800 copper coins.
- They donated 600,000 gold coins to a Buddhist monastery in Canton.

2. Coinage and Titles:

- Kulottunga I introduced new gold coins of the same weight as those issued by his grandfather Rajaraja I.
- Coins were inscribed with titles such as 'Kadaikonda Chola' and 'Malayandukoonda Chola'.

3. Relations with Srivijaya:

- In 1090 CE, the ruler of Srivijaya sent an embassy to Kulottunga I, led by Rajavidyadhara Srimanta and Abhimanyatungasamanta.
- At their request, Kulottunga I exempted the Chudamani Vihara in Nagapattinam from taxes.
- A Tamil inscription from 1088 CE found in Lobotoa (Sumatra) indicates the presence of Tamil merchant guilds, confirming friendly relations with Srivijaya.
- The claim in the 'Kalingattupparani' that he destroyed Kadaram appears to be fictional.

4. Relations with Burma and Internal States:

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- The Burmese king Kyanzittha established friendly relations with Kulottunga I by sending a gold-inscribed letter.
 - Friendly relations with internal Indian states, including the Gahadavalas, are documented.
 - An inscription from his 41st regnal year (1110-11 CE) in Gangaikondacholapuram praises the Gahadavala ruler Govindachandra, indicating strong ties. (Sun worship)
- 5. Trade and Economic Policies:**
- Kulottunga I abolished internal tolls and port duties, earning him the title 'Shungam Tavirtta Chola' (the Chola who removed tolls and taxes).
 - Conducted land surveys in 1086 CE and 1110 CE, ensuring accurate tax assessment and land records.
 - Notably, 1086 CE was also the year of the Domesday Book survey in England.
- 6. Titles and Devotion:**
- Titles included 'Kulashekara Pandya Kulanthaka', 'Tribhuvanachakravarti', 'Sarvalokashraya', 'Vishnuvardhana', and 'Jayadhara'.
 - He was a follower of Shaivism and contributed to the enhancement of the Chidambaram Temple and the Srirangam Temple.
 - His devotion to Shaivism led to Vaishnava reformer Ramanuja fleeing to the Hoysala ruler Vishnuvardhana for protection.
- 7. Cultural Contributions:**
- During his reign, Adiyarkunallar wrote a commentary on the Tamil epic 'Silappadikaram'.
 - Appointed numerous officials with titles like Dandanayaka and Mahadandanayaka, expanding their authority and jurisdiction.

Kulottunga III: The Last Great Ruler of the Chola Dynasty

1. Suppression of Kongu Rebellions:

- Kulottunga III's first and foremost achievement was quelling the rebellions in the Kongu region and establishing control over it.

2. Pandya Civil War:

- During his reign, a severe civil war broke out in the Pandya kingdom between Veera Pandya and Vikrama Pandya.
 - Kulottunga III supported Vikrama Pandya and defeated the combined forces of Veera Pandya and the Sinhalese army.
 - Established a victory pillar in the Pandya capital, Madurai, to commemorate this victory.
- 3. Conquests and Subjugation:**
- Conquered and forced submission from several states, including the Hoysalas, Bana, Chera, Ganga, Kadava, and Malayaman.
- 4. Famine Relief:**
- In 1201-02 CE, a severe famine struck the Chola Empire.
 - Kulottunga III provided substantial financial aid from the royal treasury to help the people.
- 5. Patronage of Arts and Architecture:**
- Kulottunga III was a great builder, literature enthusiast, and art lover.
 - Constructed the famous Kampattareeswarar (Tribhuvanaveereshwarar) Temple at Tribhuvanam in Tanjavur district.
 - His reign saw the construction of many grand and artistic palaces, mandapas, gopurams, and prakara walls, showcasing his love for art and architecture.
 - Tamil poet Kamban composed the Tamil epic 'Kamba Ramayanam' or 'Ramavataram' under his patronage.
- 6. Decline of the Chola Empire:**
- After Kulottunga III's reign, the Chola Empire began to decline.
 - Emerging powers such as the Pandyas, Hoysalas, Kakatiyas, Telugu Cholas, and the Yadavas of Devagiri started becoming independent states.
 - The Chola ruler Rajaraja III suffered significant loss of power and prestige in his conflict with the Pandya ruler Sundara Pandya.
 - Sundara Pandya captured Rajaraja III, but he was later freed by Hoysala ruler Narasimha II, who assumed the title 'Chaul Rajya Pratishthapanacharya' (Restorer of the Chola Kingdom).
 - Narasimha II established Kannur near Srirangam as his secondary capital to protect the Chola kingdom.

Rajendra III – Last Ruler and defeated by Jatavarman Sundarpandya (Pandya Ruler)

Chola Administration and Culture

Central Administration:

1. King and Central Control:

- The king was the hereditary sovereign and the central figure in administration.
- Titles - 'Ko' (King), 'Perumal', 'Peruman Adigal' (Great One), 'Chakravartigal' (Emperor), 'Triloka Samrat' (Emperor of the Three Worlds), 'Udaiyar', 'Rajadhiraja' (King of Kings), and 'Ko-Ko-Nonmai-Kindan' (The Supreme King).

2. Deification:

- The king was considered divine, akin to the Kushanas who also worshipped deceased rulers and built temples as their memorials.
- The Chola state religion prominently featured the worship of Shiva in his Nataraja form, and the 'Periyapuranam' was a revered text.
- Rajaraja I was referred to as 'Ulkalantha Perumal' (the king who measured the earth), while Rajaraja II and Kulottunga II were praised as 'Tamil Deva'.

3. Mythological Lineage:

- The Cholas claimed descent from the Solar dynasty (Suryavanshi), as seen in the narratives of Virarajendra's long lineage described in the Charla plates, Kanyakumari inscription, and Enbil Karnadai copper plates.

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4. Chinese Observations:

- Chinese writer **Chau Ju-Kua** described the royal feast, noting that the king and his four ministers stood during the feast as a form of respect. The king did not drink alcohol but did eat meat and had thousands of dancing girls as guards.

Chola Administration and Culture

Vedic Rituals and Shaivism

1. Vedic Rituals:

- Most South Indian rulers, including the Cholas, believed in performing Vedic rituals, with the Ashvamedha (horse sacrifice) being the most prominent.
- Chola rulers were primarily followers of Shaivism.

2. Royal Gurus:

- Chola kings often appointed Shaiva Acharyas as their royal gurus.
- Rajaraja I and Rajendra I had royal gurus named Ishanasivadeva and Sarvashiva, respectively.

Central Administration

1. Role of the King:

- The king was the central figure in administration, responsible for issuing royal decrees.
- The king's verbal orders were called 'Tiruvaykelvi'.

2. Administrative Process:

- An official known as 'Olai' drafted the initial orders.
- The 'Olenayakam' or chief secretary reviewed these drafts and forwarded them to relevant central or local authorities.
- These orders were often inscribed on temple walls.
- 'Olenayakam' is also referred to as 'Tirumandira Olai' in 'Kalingattupparani'.
- Orders given to local institutions by the king were called 'Shrimukha'.

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Succession and the Role of the Crown Prince

1. Crown Prince (Yuvaraja):

- An example is Rajendra I appointing his younger son, Rajadhiraja I, as crown prince.

Local Autonomy and Governance

1. Local Governance:

- Despite strong central control, the Chola administration **allowed substantial local autonomy.**
- Village assemblies (**sabhas**) and local administrative units (**nadus**) played crucial roles in governance.

2. Ministerial Councils and Advisors:

- Unlike the Mauryan 'Amatya Parishad', Chola inscriptions **do not mention a formal council of ministers.**
- Kings were **not autocrats**; they **consulted learned Brahmins** for governance and administrative decisions.
- For example, the **Anbil copper plates** during Sundara Chola's reign mention **land grants** to a Brahmin secretary, Aniruddha, honored with the title **'Brahmadhiraja'**.

Chola Bureaucracy and Administrative Officers

Instead of cash salaries, Chola officials were given service lands known as **'jeevitam'**.

Some of the key positions in the Chola bureaucracy included:

1. Perundaram:

- High-ranking officials who were the principal employees in central administration.

2. Sirudaram / Serutaram:

- Lower-ranking officials.

3. Udankuttam:

- Known as the '***Always Present Group***', these were high-ranking officials who acted as the king's personal assistants and were always available to execute royal orders.

4. Vidaiyadhikarin:

- Officers responsible for forwarding orders.

5. Kakani:

- Central officers appointed to audit the accounts department.

6. Naduvirukkai:

- who acted as intermediaries between the king and the people.

7. Aanatti:

- Officers responsible for transmitting the king's orders.

8. Karumi:

- Scribes who documented royal orders onto official records.

9. Mugavetti and Pattol:

- Minor officials in the revenue department.

10. **Tirundaram:**

- Principal employees.

11. **Vadaikkar / Velekkar:**

- Personal bodyguards of the king.

12. **Vallabha:**

- Servants of the royal palace.

Hereditary Nature and Military-Civilian Overlap

- Many official positions became hereditary over time.
- There was no clear distinction between civil and military officials, both of whom were referred to as 'Adigarigal'.

Titles and Honors

- **Araiyar:** A title given to administrative officers.
- **Udaiyan, Velan, Murvettavelan:** Titles conferred on officials associated with the court.

Autonomy and Revenue

- Unlike the Rashtrakutas, the Chola lords were not subservient to the Chola kings.
- Chola villages enjoyed a high degree of autonomy, with local governance primarily focused on collecting the king's share of revenue

Administrative Units of the Chola Empire

The Chola Empire was one of the largest empires in South India, divided into several administrative units for efficient governance.

Provinces (Mandalam)

1. Mandalam:

- The empire was divided into large provinces known as 'Mandalam'.
- During Rajaraja I's reign, there were **8 or 9 mandalams**.
- Each mandalam was often named after the victorious Chola ruler

1. Mummudicholamandalam for Sri Lanka,
2. Mudikondacholamandalam for Gangavadi,
3. Nigillisolamandalam for Nolambavadi,
4. Cholamandalam for Trichinopoly,
5. Tanjore,
6. southern Arcot,
7. Malainadu for Kerala,

2. Governance of Mandalams:

- Provinces were generally administered by Chola princes with titles like Dandanayaka and Mahadandanayaka.

3. Restructuring of Units:

- Rajaraja I reorganized units like 'Valanadu'.
- Mandalam was subdivided into 'Kottam' or 'Valanadu' (similar to modern-day commissioners).
- Each Valanadu was divided by **natural boundaries** such as rivers and further divided into 'Nadu' (districts).

Districts (Nadu)

1. Nadu:

- The fundamental administrative unit, essential for revenue administration.
- Local assemblies, known as 'Nattar', managed Nadus.

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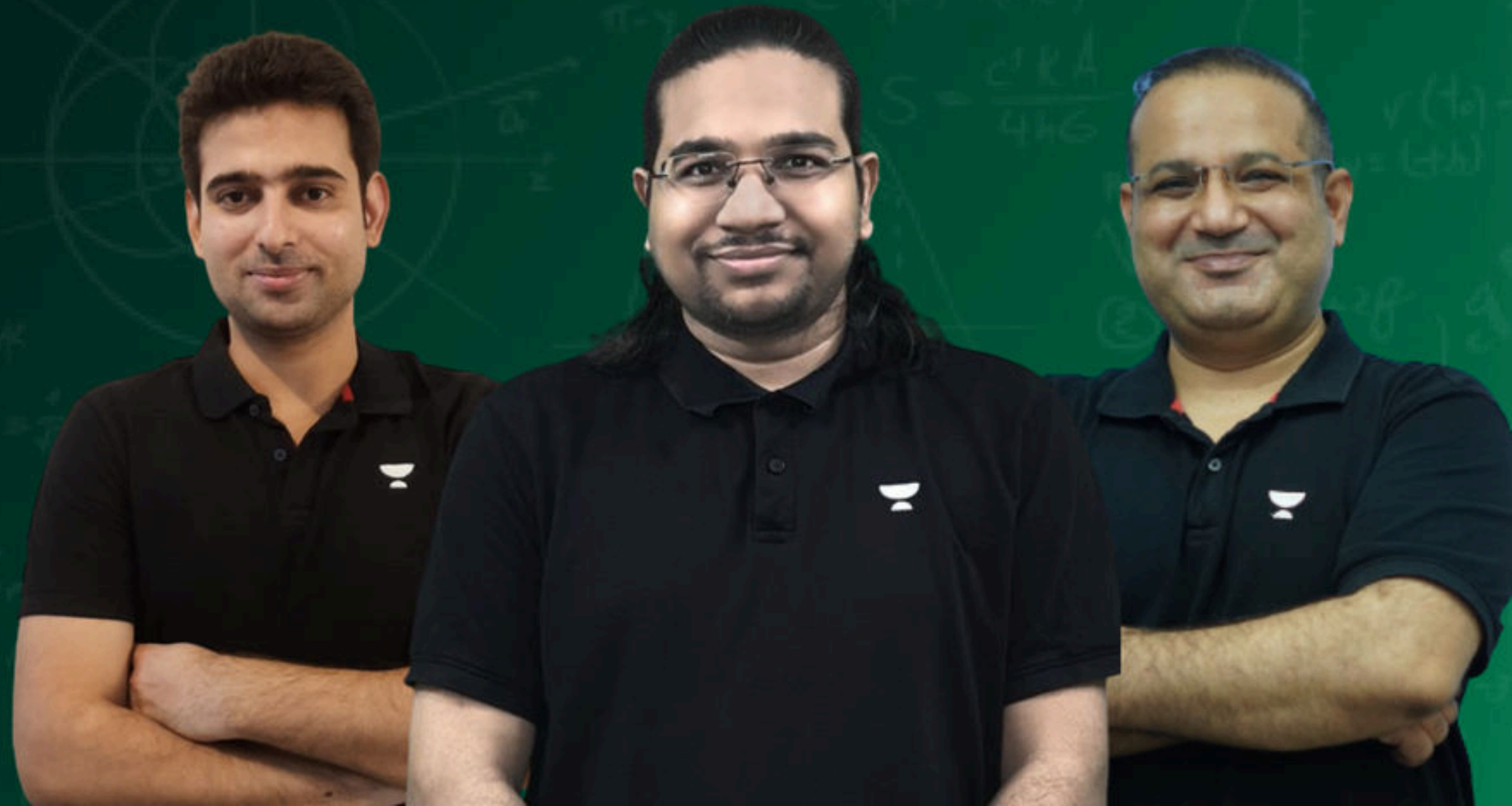
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- Responsibilities of Nattar included land classification, revenue assessment, tax exemptions, justice administration, managing endowments, and sometimes temple administration.
- Nattuk-kanakku oversaw revenue administration.

2. Number of Nadus:

- According to Subbarayalu, there were 140 Nadus in Cholamandalam and 651 Nadus to the north. The number of Nadus increased over time.
- Nadus were more significant than villages in medieval South India, being both rural and urban units.

3. Administration within Nadus:

- Each Nadu had officials like Nadu-Vagai, Nadu-Kakani-Nayakam, Badu-Kuru, and Kottam.
- **Hereditary positions** were common among these officials.

Sub-Districts (Kurram)

1. Kurram:

- Nadus were further divided into **'Kurram'**, consisting of groups of villages and towns.
- Large towns within a Kurram were known as **'Taniyur'** or **'Tankurram'**.
- Typically, a Kurram comprised about **50 villages**.

2. Urban and Rural Integration:

- Kurrams integrated **both rural and urban settlements** for better administration.

Local Assemblies and Guilds

1. Local Assemblies:

- Town assemblies were known as 'Nagaram' for trade towns, 'Shreni' for business guilds, and 'Puga' for artisan guilds.
- The assembly of townspeople was called 'Nagattars'.

2. Comparisons:

- Nilakanta Sastri compared Chola towns to those in the Roman Empire in terms of organization and function.

Semi-Autonomous Territories

1. Feudal Lords:

- Several semi-autonomous territories were governed by feudal lords with titles like 'Nayaka', 'Mandaleshvara', and 'Udaiyar'.
- These lords had the privilege to enter the royal court with 'Panchamahasabda' (the five types of instruments).

2. Integration into the Empire:

- These feudal territories were integrated into the larger administrative structure of the Chola Empire, ensuring loyalty and efficient governance.

Chola Local Self-Governance: The Golden Age of Local Administration

Introduction to Local Self-Governance

- **Agrarian Society:** Burton Stein described the early medieval South Indian society, particularly under the Cholas, as an agrarian society.
- **Significance:** The most important contribution of the Cholas was the establishment and promotion of local self-governance.
- **Reforms:** The administrative reforms were significantly advanced during the reign of Parantaka I, who held two major assemblies in Uttiramerur to enhance local governance.

Sources of Information

- **Uttiramerur Inscriptions:** The primary source of detailed information about the structure, functions, and procedures of local self-governance are the two inscriptions from 919 CE and 921 CE found in the Vaikuntha Perumal Temple at Uttiramerur.

Historical Context

- **Sangam Literature:** The origins of the village assembly can be traced back to the ancient Sangam literature, which mentions various assemblies such as Nagarams, Manigramams, Valanjiyars, Manrams (a common gathering place, often under a large banyan tree), and Podials.
- **Types of Assemblies:** Chola inscriptions mention three types of local institutions: Nagarams, Urs, and Sabhas.

Structure of Local Institutions

1. Nagaram:

- Urban assemblies composed primarily of traders and merchants.
- Played a crucial role in managing urban affairs and trade activities.

2. Ur:

- Village assemblies found in non-Brahmin settlements.
- Included representatives from the local population responsible for various administrative tasks.

3. Sabha:

- Assemblies in Brahmin settlements (agraharas).
- Comprised learned Brahmins who managed the affairs of the Brahmin villages.

Nagaram: Urbanization and Trade in the Chola Period

1. Nagaram:

- An administrative institution of commercial and trading communities.
- Often referred to both the market and the commercial institution itself.
- The collective body of merchants within a Nagaram was known as 'Nagarttar'.
- Supported by land grants called 'Nagarkani', which funded its expenses.

2. Independent Administrative Unit:

- A Chidambaram inscription distinguishes Nagaram from village assemblies as a separate administrative unit.
- The Rajarajeshwar temple inscription mentions four Nagaram administrative units and marketplaces (Angadi).

3. Officials:

- **Nagakaranatar:** Clerks responsible for maintaining necessary records and documents.

- **Nagakkannavakku:** Chief accountants overseeing financial records.

Economic Activities and Responsibilities

1. Revenue Collection:

- Nagarams were responsible for collecting taxes from various economic activities, including:
 - **Handlooms:** Developed textile industries.
 - **Mills (Chekkirai):** Processing industries.
 - **Salt Manufacturing (Uppayam):** Production and sale of salt.
 - **Market Establishments (Angadipattam):** Commercial shops and trading centers.
 - **Weights and Measures (Idaivari):** Ensuring standardized measurements.
 - **Goldsmiths (Tattopattam):** Jewelry making and trading.

Specialized Nagaram Institutions

1. **Saliya Nagaram and Satum Parishat Nagaram:**
 - Organizations related to the textile trade.
2. **Shankarappadi Nagaram:**
 - Guilds of ghee and oil suppliers.
3. **Paraga Nagaram:**
 - Associations of maritime traders.
4. **Vaniya Nagaram:**
 - A powerful guild of oil traders.

Local Institutions in Chola Villages: Ur and Sabha/Mahasabha

In Chola villages, two primary types of institutions played crucial roles in local governance and administration: **Ur** and **Sabha/Mahasabha**.

1. Ur (ஊர்)

Definition and Structure

- **Meaning:** The term 'Ur' is derived from the word 'Pur,' meaning town or village. It refers to the village assembly that included all the residents of the village.
- **Inclusivity:** This assembly was prevalent in non-Brahmin villages, known as Velanvagai or non-Brahmadeya villages, where the population of Brahmins was minimal or nonexistent.
- **Basic Unit:** Ur was the fundamental unit of rural society in the Chola period.

Governance and Functions

- **Alughanam or Ganam:** The executive committee or working body of the Ur was called 'Alughanam' or 'Ganam'.
- **Responsibilities:**
 - Management of agricultural land.
 - Oversight of residential areas.
 - Maintenance of water sources for drinking and irrigation.
 - Supervision of grazing grounds and cremation sites.

Residential Areas

- **Ur-Nattam/Ur-Irukkai:** Residential areas for landowners.
- **Kamman Cheri:** Residential areas for artisans.
- **Paraicheri:** Residential areas for agricultural laborers.

Sabha/Mahasabha: The Brahmin Administrative Assembly

The **Sabha** or **Mahasabha** was a significant institution in Chola administration, particularly active around the Kanchi region. It primarily governed the **Brahmin settlements** or **agraharas** (land granted to Brahmins).

Structure and Composition

1. Agraharas:

- Villages donated to Brahmins, where learned Brahmins resided.
- Governed by an assembly known as **Mahajan** or **Mahasabha**.

2. Membership:

- Composed of representatives from the Brahmin community.
- Included scholars and respected elders who managed village affairs.

3. Documentation:

- Detailed descriptions of **Sabha/Mahasabha** are found in inscriptions from Chola period **Tondaimandalam**.

Functions and Responsibilities

1. Land and Revenue Administration:

- Oversaw the management of agricultural land and the collection of land revenue.
- Handled land grants and maintained records of donations and endowments.

2. Judicial Functions:

- Acted as a court for resolving disputes within the village.
- Ensured justice and maintained law and order.

3. Religious and Social Functions:

- Managed temples and religious institutions.
- Organized and supervised religious ceremonies and festivals.
- Provided for the upkeep of community welfare.

Coexistence with Ur

1. Dual Governance:

- In some villages, both **Sabha** and **Ur** (non-Brahmin assembly) coexisted.
- **Mangalam**: Villages where both Brahmins and non-Brahmins resided were known as Mangalam. Brahmins often bought land from existing non-Brahmin residents, leading to the presence of both Sabha and Ur.

2. Parallel Institutions:

- Occasionally, a village had parallel Ur institutions. For instance, in 1227 CE, in Satyamangalam, there were two Ur's based on donations given to Hindu and Jain deities.

3. Term and Tenure:

- The term of office for Sabha members was typically three years

Organization and Constitution of Sabha/Mahasabha

Terminology and Structure

1. Peruguri and Perumakkal:

- **Peruguri**: Refers to the Sabha/Mahasabha itself.
- **Perumakkal**: The members of the Sabha/Mahasabha.

2. Warrior:

- A person appointed by the Sabha for a specific duty was called a **Warrior**.

Executive Committee: Wariam

1. Wariam:

- The executive committee of the Sabha was known as **Wariam**.

- The Tamil word **Wariam** translates to "income" or "finance," reflecting the committee's role in managing economic and administrative functions.

2. Variaperumakkal:

- Members of the Wariam (executive committee) were called **Variaperumakkal**.
- These members were responsible for executing the decisions and policies of the Sabha.

Administration:

- The Wariam handled various administrative tasks, including revenue collection, land management, and local governance.
- Ensured the proper implementation of the Sabha's decisions.

Election Qualifications for Wariam Members: Insights from Parantaka I's Uttiramerur Inscription (919 CE)

1. Age Requirement:

- Candidates must be between 35 and 70 years of age.

2. Property Ownership:

- Must be a taxpayer owning at least 1/4 nilam (velli) of land (approximately 1.5 acres).

3. Residential Requirement:

- Must have a house on their own land.

4. Educational Qualification:

- Must be knowledgeable in one Veda and its associated commentary.

5. Previous Service:

- Should not have been selected for any Wariam in the previous three years.

6. Conflict of Interest:

- No close relative of the candidate should be a member of any other subcommittee

Disqualifications and Additional Selection Criteria for Wariam Members

The Uttiramerur inscription not only outlines the qualifications for Wariam members but also specifies certain disqualifications -

Disqualifications

1. **Criminals:**
 - Individuals with a criminal record were disqualified from membership.
2. **People of Bad Character:**
 - Those known for immoral behavior or character were not eligible.
3. **Financial Misconduct:**
 - Persons involved in fraud or embezzlement in the committee's income and expenses were disqualified.
4. **Association with Lower Castes:**
 - Individuals deemed tainted by contact with Shudras (lower castes) were not allowed to become members.

Special Considerations for Scholars

- **Relaxation of Criteria:**
 - For those proficient in Vedas, Smritis, and their commentaries, the eligibility criteria were relaxed. Such individuals had their qualification standards reduced by half, recognizing their scholarly contributions and knowledge.

Selection Process for Wariam Members

1. **Division into Wards:**
 - Each village was divided into 30 wards, known as **Kudumbam** or **Seri**.

Election of Members: Kudavolai System

The **Kudavolai System** was a unique and democratic method employed by the Chola administration to elect members to the committees. This system involved a lottery-like process to ensure fairness and impartiality in the selection.

Term and Accountability

1. Term of Office:

- Committee members served for a term of 360 days, roughly equivalent to one year.
- At the end of the term, the members had five days to present and settle their accounts.

2. Re-election:

- After the one-year term, new members were elected using the same Kudavolai system.

Remuneration

• Service without Salary:

- Members did not receive any remuneration for their service, emphasizing the voluntary nature of their duties.

Gram Sabha (Wariam)

The Gram Sabha in the Chola period had several important committees, known as 'Wariam,' each responsible for specific administrative functions. Here are the major committees and their roles:

1. Tottavariam (उद्यान समिति):

- **Function:** Management of gardens and orchards.
- **Number of Members:** 12

2. Erivariyam (तालाब समिति):

- **Function:** Maintenance and repair of tanks and reservoirs.
- **Regular Tax:** A regular tax called 'Eriyam' was collected for this purpose.

- **Number of Members:** 6
- 3. **Ponvariyam (स्वर्ण समिति):**
 - **Function:** Regulation of currency and financial matters.
- 4. **Samvatsara Wariam (वार्षिक समिति):**
 - **Function:** Supervision of the activities of various committees over the year.
 - **Number of Members:** 12
- 5. **Udasin Wariam (उदासीन समिति):**
 - **Function:** Oversight of foreigners or travelers. Some scholars believe this committee was responsible for managing ascetics and monks.
- 6. **Nyayattar Wariam (न्याय समिति):**
 - **Function:** Dispute resolution and justice administration.
- 7. **Koilvuriyam (मन्दिर प्रबन्धन समिति):**
 - **Function:** Management and maintenance of temples.
- 8. **Ganavariyam (ग्राम कार्य समिति):**
 - **Function:** General administration and management of village affairs.
- 9. **Panchavara Wariam (पञ्चवार समिति):**
 - **Function:** Inspection of the activities of the five main committees. Some scholars believe this committee was also involved in the collection of land taxes.

Functions and Jurisdiction of the Gram Sabha

Revenue Collection and Administration

1. **Tax Collection and Payment:**
 - Imposed, collected, and deposited taxes in the royal treasury.
 - Managed corvée labor (Vetti).
2. **Land Management:**
 - Main responsibility was the management of village lands and payment of annual taxes to the central government.

Democratic Nature and Limitations

1. Elite Participation:

- While the Gram Sabha had democratic elements, it primarily represented the interests of the elite classes, such as learned Brahmins and the upper Vellala class.
- Participation of women and Shudras was minimal, reflecting the feudal nature of these institutions.

2. Central Government Interaction:

- Typically, the central administration did not interfere with the Gram Sabha's functioning.
- However, in later Chola periods, instances of central intervention increased.
- Central officials periodically inspected the Gram Sabha's income and expenditures.

Special Officials and Large Assemblies

1. Madhyasthas:

- Salaried employees called 'Madhyasthas' implemented the decisions of the Gram Sabha.

2. Aiyagars:

- Central government-appointed officials, known as 'Aiyagars,' assisted the Gram Sabha in its tasks.

3. Approval of Rules:

- Any new rule affecting a village required the Gram Sabha's approval before implementation.

4. Large Assemblies:

- Inscriptions from the 11th and 12th centuries mention large assemblies with member counts ranging from 300 to 12,000.
- Some Brahmin assemblies had direct relations with the Chola court.
- The Uttiramerur inscription indicates that the formation of a Sabha could involve a specially appointed officer by the king.
- Certain prominent Sabhas were granted the status of 'Taniyur' (autonomous village groups)

Religious State of the Cholas

During the reign of the Chola kings, there was a significant revival and popularization of Shaivism and Vaishnavism in South India. The Chola rulers were ardent followers of Shaivism, and their contributions to the religion were profound.

Shaivism

1. Aditya I:

- Constructed large Shiva temples on both banks of the Kaveri River.

2. Parantaka I:

- Built the 'Dabhra Sabha' in devotion to Shiva.
- Adorned the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram with gold ornaments.

3. Rajaraja I:

- Took the title 'Shivapada Shekhara' to emphasize his devotion to Shaivism.
- Completed the Rajarajeshwara Temple (Brihadeeswarar Temple) in Thanjavur.

4. Rajendra Chola:

- Brought numerous Shaiva saints from the Ganges region to his empire.
- Promoted Shaivism as the most popular religion in South India.
- His period saw the completion of the Rajarajeshwara Temple started by his father.

5. Virarajendra:

- Established Vedic schools throughout his empire to revive Vedic and Puranic education.

6. Vikramachola:

- Spent a significant amount of money enhancing the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram.
- During his reign, Vaishnava Acharya Ramanuja returned to Kanchi after a long stay away.

7. Kulottunga II:

- Removed the statue of Govindaraja Vishnu from the Chidambaram Temple and threw it into the sea, emphasizing Shaivite supremacy.

8. Rajagurus:

- The royal preceptors during Rajaraja I and Rajendra Chola were Ishanasiva and Sarvasiva, respectively.
- Rajendra Chola donated food to Shaiva monasteries established in Aryadesa, Gadya, and Gauda regions.

9. Shaiva Texts:

- Nambi Andar Nambi, a contemporary of Rajaraja and Rajendra Chola, harmonized the northern and southern Shaiva doctrines.
- Sekkilar wrote the 'Periya Puranam' (Tiruttondar Puranam) and Shaiva Acharya Umapati composed 'Tiruvilayadal Puranam'.

Vaishnavism

1. Acharya Tradition:

- Provided a philosophical foundation for Vaishnavism during the Chola period.
- Nathamuni, the disciple of the last Alvar Madhurakavi, wrote 'Nyayatattva' and compiled 4000 devotional hymns, initiating the worship tradition at the Srirangam Temple.

2. Yamunacharya (Alavandar):

- Elevated the importance of Agamas, equating them with the Vedas.

3. Nimbarkacharya:

- Established the doctrine of self-surrender and founded the Sanaka tradition.
- Authored the 'Siddhantaratra'.

Buddhism and Jainism

1. Buddhist Viharas:

- Nagapattinam, Kanchi, and Srimulavas had significant Buddhist viharas during the Chola period.
- Rajaraja I donated the village of Anaimangalam for the construction of the Chudamani Vihara at Nagapattinam.

2. Jainism:

- Kulottunga I provided additional endowments for the Nagapattinam Vihara.

Cultural Contributions

1. Temple Arts:

- The Chola rulers promoted dance and music within temples.

- Rajaraja Chola's inscriptions mention land grants to actors and dancers for performing in temple mandapas.

2. Drama and Performance:

- Actors performed seven-act plays based on Puranic stories.
- Rajendra Chola's records indicate land grants to dancers who performed special dances during festivals.
- The 'Rajarajesvara Natakam' was performed in temple mandapas during Rajendra Chola's reign.
- Kulottunga Chola built a 'Nanavidhanatyashala' (multi-purpose theater)

Chola Literature

The Chola period witnessed a significant flourishing of Tamil literature, with notable contributions from various poets and scholars. Here are some of the most prominent literary works and their authors from the Chola era:

Key Literary Figures and Their Works

1. Jayamkondar:

- **Work:** 'Kalingattupparani'
- **Role:** Court poet of Kulothunga I
- **Significance:** The poem narrates the Kalinga war and is an important historical and literary document of the Chola period.

2. Kamban:

- **Work:** 'Ramavataram' (Tamil Ramayana)
- **Era:** Kulothunga III
- **Significance:** Considered a masterpiece of Tamil literature, this epic retells the Ramayana in Tamil and is revered for its poetic and narrative excellence.

3. Sekkizhar:

- **Work:** 'Periya Puranam'
- **Significance:** This work is a hagiography of the Nayanars, the Shaivite saints, and is an important text in Tamil Shaivism.

4. Pugalendi:

- **Work:** 'Nalavenba' (Nala Venba)

- **Significance:** A poetic rendition of the story of Nala and Damayanti, an important work in Tamil literature.

5. Tiruttakkadevar:

- **Work:** 'Jivaka Chintamani'
- **Significance:** A Jain epic that narrates the story of Jivaka and is known for its literary merit and philosophical depth.

6. Tolamoli:

- **Work:** 'Sulamani'
- **Significance:** Another significant work from the Chola period, though less is known about its contents compared to others.

Patronage of Jain and Buddhist Scholars

The Chola rulers were also known for their support of Jain and Buddhist scholars, contributing to the richness of the literary landscape.

1. Amritasagara:

- **Works:** 'Yapparungalam' and 'Yapparungalakkarigai'
- **Significance:** These are seminal works on prosody, detailing the metrical rules of Tamil poetry.

2. Buddhamitra:

- **Work:** 'Virasoliyam'
- **Significance:** A comprehensive grammar book, regarded as an important contribution to Tamil linguistic studies. Buddhamitra praised the Chola ruler Veerarajendra as a great Tamil scholar.

Notable inscriptions made by Chola kings

| King | Inscription | Location | Significance |
|---------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Vijayalaya | Tirukoilur Inscription | Tirukoilur | Details his conquest of Thanjavur |
| Aditya I | Tiruvalangadu Inscription | Tiruvalangadu | Mentions his conquest of Tondainadu |
| Parantaka I | Uttiramerur Inscription | Uttiramerur | Details on village self-administration |
| Parantaka I | Tiruvalangadu Plates | Tiruvalangadu | Celebrates his victories over Pandyas |
| Rajaraja I | Thanjavur Brihadeeswarar Temple Inscriptions | Thanjavur | Details on his conquests and temple endowments |
| Rajaraja I | Leyden Grant | Leyden (Netherlands) | Mentions his conquests and genealogy |
| Rajaraja I | Anbil Plates | Anbil | Genealogy and temple grants |
| Rajendra I | Tiruvalangadu Copper Plates | Tiruvalangadu | Detailed genealogy and conquests |
| Rajendra I | Karandai Copper Plates | Karandai | Details on Ganga and Southeast Asian campaigns |
| Rajendra I | Tirukkodikaval Inscription | Tirukkodikaval | Details on his military campaigns |
| Rajadhiraja I | Manimangalam Inscription | Manimangalam | Mentions his victories over Western Chalukyas |
| Rajendra II | Kudal Sangam Inscription | Kudal Sangam | Celebrates victory over Western Chalukyas |
| Virarajendra | Kudal Sangam Inscription | Kudal Sangam | Marks his victory over Western Chalukyas |

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|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Kulottunga I | Draksharama Inscription | Draksharama | Mentions his conquests and governance |
| Kulottunga I | Anbil Plates | Anbil | Details on his administration and grants |
| Kulottunga I | Punganur Inscription | Punganur | Mentions land grants and temple endowments |
| Kulottunga III | Tribhuvanam Inscription | Tribhuvanam | Mentions his conquests and temple construction |
| Kulottunga III | Srirangam Temple Inscriptions | Srirangam | Details on temple renovations and grants |
| Kulottunga III | Thiruvannamalai Inscription | Thiruvannamalai | Details his victories and contributions to temples |

Battles fought by Chola kings

| King | Battle/Campaign | Opponents/Allies | Outcome/Significance | Title Adopted |
|------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Vijayalaya | Conquest of Thanjavur | Muttarayar (Pandya feudatories) | Established Chola rule in Thanjavur | Tanjai Kondar, Narkesari |
| Aditya I | Battle of Shripurambiyam | Pandyas and their allies | Defeated Pandyas, strengthened Chola power | Tondainadu Kondar |

| King | Battle/Campaign | Opponents/Allies | Outcome/Significance | Title Adopted |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Parantaka I | Battle of Vellore | Pandyas and Sinhalese | Conquered Madurai and Sri Lanka | Sangrama Raghava, Maduraikondar, Madurantaka |
| Parantaka I | Battle against Rashtrakutas (Vallala) | Rashtrakutas | Victory over Rashtrakutas | Virachola |
| Rajaraja I | Battle of Kandalur (Trivandrum) | Cheras | Defeated Cheras | Keralantaka, Kandalur Salai Kalamarutta |
| Rajaraja I | Pandya Conquest | Pandyas | Conquered Pandya territories | Jayangonda |
| Rajaraja I | Sri Lanka Campaign | Sinhalese | Captured northern Sri Lanka | Singhalantaka |
| Rajaraja I | Western Ganga Victory | Western Gangas | Subjugated Western Gangas | Cholanarayana |
| Rajaraja I | Eastern Chalukya (Vengi) Intervention | Eastern Chalukyas | Installed a loyal ruler | - |
| Rajaraja I | Kalinga Campaign | Kalingas | Conquered Kalinga territories | Tailangkula Antaka |
| Rajaraja I | Maldives Campaign | Maldives | Conquered Maldives | - |
| Rajendra I | Kerala and Pandya Conquests | Kerala and Pandyas | Suppressed rebellions | - |
| Rajendra I | Complete Conquest of Sri Lanka | Sinhalese | Captured the entire island | Gangaikondachola |
| Rajendra I | Ganga Valley Campaign | Various North Indian rulers | Reached the Ganges | Gangaikondachola |
| Rajendra I | Southeast Asia (Srivijaya) Campaign | Srivijaya empire | Established Chola dominance | Kadarangkondachola, Katahadhipati |

| King | Battle/Campaign | Opponents/Allies | Outcome/Significance | Title Adopted |
|---------------|--|-------------------|--|----------------|
| Rajendra I | Subjugation of Kalinga | Kalingas | Strengthened eastern frontier | - |
| Rajadhiraja I | Kampili Campaign | Kampili | Defeated Kampili | Vijayarajendra |
| Rajadhiraja I | Various Battles Against Western Chalukyas | Western Chalukyas | Consolidated Chola power in the Deccan | - |
| Rajendra II | Battle of Koppam | Western Chalukyas | Victory against Chalukyas | - |
| Rajendra II | Battle of Kudal Sangamam | Western Chalukyas | Further victory over Chalukyas | - |
| Virarajendra | Second Battle of Kudal Sangamam | Western Chalukyas | Decisive victory | - |
| Virarajendra | Sri Lanka Campaign (Suppression of Uprising) | Sinhalese rebels | Reestablished control | - |
| Kulottunga I | Battle against Someshvara II and Vikramaditya VI | Western Chalukyas | Subjugated Chalukyas | - |
| Kulottunga I | Victory over Kalachuri and Vengi | Kalachuri, Vengi | Reasserted control | - |
| Kulottunga I | Second Campaign against Kalinga | Kalingas | Reestablished authority | - |

| King | Battle/Campaign | Opponents/Allies | Outcome/Significance | Title Adopted |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------|
| Kulottunga III | Pandya Campaign | Pandyas and Sinhalese | Defeated Pandya and Sinhalese alliance | - |
| Kulottunga III | Various Campaigns Against Hoysalas, Banas, Cheras, Ganga, Kadava, Malayaman | Various South Indian powers | Maintained Chola supremacy | - |

Important cities and port cities

| City/Port City | Description |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Thanjavur | Capital city during the reign of Rajaraja I; known for the Brihadeeswarar Temple (Rajarajeswaram). It was a cultural and political center of the Chola Empire. |
| Gangaikonda Cholapuram | Founded by Rajendra I after his Ganges expedition; served as the capital city; known for the Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple and its grand architecture. |
| Kanchipuram | An important city for both political and religious activities; known for its temples and as a center of learning and culture. |
| Uraiyur | An ancient Chola capital before Thanjavur; significant for trade and politics. |
| Madurai | Conquered from the Pandyas; known for the Meenakshi Temple; served as an important administrative and religious center. |
| Chidambaram | Famous for the Nataraja Temple; a major religious center for Shaivism. |

| City/Port City | Description |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Nagapattinam | A major port city and center for trade with Southeast Asia; known for the Chudamani Vihara, a Buddhist monastery built by the Srivijaya king. |
| Kaveripattinam (Puhar) | An ancient port city; played a crucial role in maritime trade and commerce; featured in Tamil literature and Sangam poetry. |
| Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram) | Known for its rock-cut temples and sculptures; an important port city for trade and religious activities. |
| Kollam | A significant port city on the western coast; known for trade with Arab and Chinese merchants. |
| Tiruchirappalli | Another important city in the Chola Empire; served as a political and administrative center. |
| Tharangambadi (Tranquebar) | An important port city for trade with European merchants; known for its fort and trade activities. |
| Velur (Vellore) | Known for its strategic location and fort; played a role in various military campaigns. |
| Tiruvarur | Famous for the Thyagaraja Temple; an important religious and cultural center. |
| Kumbakonam | Known for its temples and educational institutions; a significant center for learning and religion. |

Rituals performed by Chola kings

| King | Ritual | Description and Significance |
|-------------|-------------------|--|
| Vijayalaya | - | - |
| Aditya I | - | - |
| Parantaka I | Tulabhara | A ritual where the king donates wealth equivalent to his own weight; symbolizes the king's generosity and piety. |
| Parantaka I | Hemagarbha | A ritual involving the consecration of gold in a sacrificial fire; represents the |

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| | | king's dedication to prosperity and abundance. |
| Rajaraja I | Ashtabandhana Mahakumbhabhishekam | A major temple consecration ceremony; symbolizes the king's devotion to Shaivism and commitment to temple-building. |
| Rajendra I | Tulabhara | Performed the Tulabhara ritual like his predecessor, indicating continuity of royal generosity and religious commitment. |
| Rajendra I | Ganga Pooja | Brought holy water from the Ganges and performed rituals, emphasizing his conquests and religious devotion. |
| Virarajendra | Ashtabandhana Mahakumbhabhishekam | Re-consecration of major temples, ensuring religious activities and temple maintenance. |
| Rajadhiraja I | Asvamedha Yajna | A horse sacrifice ritual symbolizing the king's supremacy and conquest over rival territories. |
| Kulottunga I | Tulabhara | Continued the tradition of performing Tulabhara, demonstrating the king's piety and support for religious institutions. |
| Kulottunga I | Vajapeya Yajna | A Vedic sacrifice indicating royal power and prosperity; involved elaborate rituals and offerings. |
| Kulottunga III | Asvamedha Yajna | Re-performed the horse sacrifice to reassert dominance and divine sanction of his rule. |
| Kulottunga III | Tulabhara | Reiterated the ritual of Tulabhara, reinforcing the king's image as a benefactor and pious ruler. |

Chola administration:

| Administrative Unit | Description |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Central Administration | The king was the supreme authority and central figure in administration. |
| King | Referred to as 'Ko' (Rajin), 'Perumal,' 'Peruman Adigal'; held titles like 'Chakravartigal,' 'Trilokya Samrat.' |
| Rajaguru | The royal preceptor; often Shaivite priests who held significant influence over the king and religious activities. |
| Amatya | Council of ministers advising the king, though not explicitly mentioned like in Mauryan administration. |
| Yuvraja | The crown prince; appointed while the king was alive to ensure smooth succession and stability. |
| Key Administrative Officials | |
| Perundaram | High-ranking officials in central administration. |
| Siruntaram/Sirutaram | Lower-ranking officials. |
| Udankuttam | Senior officers who served as the king's personal assistants and were always present for royal orders. |
| Vidaiyadhikari | Officers responsible for dispatching royal orders. |
| Kakani | Central officers in charge of auditing and accounting. |
| Naduvirukkai | Liaison officers between the king and the people. |
| Anatti | Officials who conveyed the king's orders. |
| Karumi | Officers who documented royal decrees. |
| Mugavetti and Pattol | Lower-level revenue department employees. |
| Tirundanam | Senior clerks. |
| Valaikkarars | Personal bodyguards of the king. |
| Vallabha | Palace servants. |
| Provincial Administration | |
| Mandalam | Provinces governed by Chola princes or high-ranking officials, often named after victorious kings. |
| Valanadu/Kottam | Divisions within Mandalam, analogous to districts. |
| Nadu | Basic revenue administrative unit within Valanadu; managed land revenue and local disputes. |
| Kuram | Clusters of villages; smallest administrative unit. |
| Tanier/Tankuram | Large urban areas within Kuram. |

| Local Governance | |
|--|--|
| Gram Sabha (Village Assembly) | Local village councils with significant autonomy, including revenue collection and local administration. |
| Ur | Assembly of non-Brahmin villages; handled local issues, agriculture, and tax collection. |
| Mahasabha/Sabha | Assembly of Brahmin villages (Agrahara villages); managed temples, land grants, and local administration. |
| Alunganam/Ganam | Executive committee of the Ur. |
| Perumakkal | Members of the Mahasabha/Sabha. |
| Waraiyams | Committees within the Mahasabha responsible for various administrative functions such as gardens (Tottawariyam), tanks (Eriwaraiyam), annual accounts (Samvatsarwaraiyam), and more. |
| Key Functions of Local Assemblies | |
| Revenue Collection | Imposed and collected taxes; managed local resources. |
| Judicial Functions | Resolved local disputes, land ownership issues, and minor criminal cases. |
| Public Works | Managed irrigation, agricultural improvements, road construction, and public buildings. |
| Temple Administration | Managed temple affairs, including endowments, festivals, and maintenance. |
| Education and Welfare | Established schools, hospitals, and other welfare institutions. |

Religious aspects of the Chola Empire:

| Religious Influence | The Chola kings were devout Shaivites, with strong influences of Shaivism and Vaishnavism. |
|--|--|
| Prominent Chola Kings Religious Contributions and Practices | |
| Vijayalaya | Built the Nishumbhasudini (Durga) Temple in Thanjavur. |
| Aditya I | Constructed numerous Shiva temples along the banks of the Kaveri River. |
| Parantaka I | Built the Dabhra Sabha and adorned the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple with gold. |

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| Rajaraja I | Constructed the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur and adopted the title 'Shivapada Shekhara.' |
| Rajendra I | Brought Shaiva saints from the Ganges region; completed the Rajarajeshwara Temple; adopted the title 'Gangaikondachola.' |
| Virarajendra | Established Vedic schools and re-consecrated major temples. |
| Vikramachola | Expanded the Chidambaram Nataraja Temple; Vaishnava Acharya Ramanuja returned during his reign. |
| Kulottunga I | Supported various religious institutions; donated villages for Buddhist Viharas in Nagapattinam. |
| Kulottunga II | Removed the Govindaraja statue from Chidambaram Temple, emphasizing Shaivite supremacy. |
| Kulottunga III | Patronized temple construction and renovation; supported both Shaivism and Vaishnavism. |
| Key Temples and Monuments | |
| Brihadeeswarar Temple (Thanjavur) | Built by Rajaraja I, a grand example of Dravidian architecture dedicated to Lord Shiva. |
| Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple | Constructed by Rajendra I, similar in style to the Brihadeeswarar Temple, symbolizing his conquests. |
| Chidambaram Nataraja Temple | Enhanced by several Chola kings, a major center of Shaivism dedicated to Lord Shiva as Nataraja. |
| Thanjavur Temple Complex | Multiple temples and monuments built over time, showcasing Chola architectural and religious advancements. |
| Rajendra Chola's Temples in Sri Lanka | Built temples in Polonnaruwa similar to South Indian styles, promoting Shaivism in Sri Lanka. |
| Religious Texts and Scholars | |
| Nambi Andar Nambi | Coordinated the compilation of Shaiva texts and rituals; contributed to the religious literature. |
| Sekkizhar | Authored 'Periya Puranam,' detailing the lives of the 63 Nayanars (Shaivite saints). |
| Kamban | Wrote 'Ramavataram' (Tamil Ramayana), a significant Vaishnavite literary work. |
| Nathamuni | Compiled the works of Alvars and established the foundation of Srivaishnavism. |

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| Yamunacharya | Expanded on Vaishnavite philosophy and religious practices. |
| Nimbarkacharya | Promoted the concept of self-surrender in Vaishnavism and authored 'Siddhantaratra'. |
| Buddhamitra | Authored 'Virasoliyam,' a grammar book; praised the Chola ruler as a great Tamil scholar. |
| Religious Endowments | |
| Temple Donations | Chola kings donated land and wealth to temples, ensuring their maintenance and prosperity. |
| Vedic Schools | Established and supported Vedic schools for the promotion of Vedic studies and rituals. |
| Buddhist Viharas | Endowments for the construction and maintenance of Buddhist monasteries, especially in Nagapattinam. |
| Shaiva and Vaishnava Temples | Support for the construction and maintenance of temples dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu |

Significant literary works from the Chola Empire:-

| Literary Work | Author | Description |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Kalingattupparani | Jayamkondar | An epic poem celebrating the Chola conquest of Kalinga, written during the reign of Kulottunga I. |
| Ramavataram (Tamil Ramayana) | Kamban | A retelling of the Ramayana in Tamil, considered one of the greatest works in Tamil literature. |
| Periya Puranam | Sekkizhar | A hagiographical work detailing the lives of the 63 Nayanars, the Shaivite saints. |
| Nalavenba (Nalavenba) | Pugalendi | A poetic work narrating the story of Nala and Damayanti, known for its literary excellence. |
| Jivaka Chintamani | Tiruttakkadevar | A Jain epic that narrates the story of Jivaka, highlighting moral and philosophical themes. |
| Sulamani | Tolamoli | A lesser-known but significant work from the Chola period. |

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Yapperungalam | Amritasagara | A treatise on Tamil prosody, detailing the metrical rules for Tamil poetry. |
| Yapperungalakkarigai | Amritasagara | A companion work to Yapperungalam, further elaborating on Tamil prosody. |
| Virasoliyam | Buddhamitra | A comprehensive grammar book, important for the study of Tamil language and literature. |
| Nannul | Pavananthi Munivar | A Tamil grammar book that remains a standard reference for Tamil grammar. |
| Tirukkural | Thiruvalluvar | While predating the Chola period, it was highly revered and studied during the Chola era. |
| Siddhanta Saravali | Trilochana Sivacharya | A Shaiva Siddhanta text explaining Shaiva philosophies and practices. |
| Nannul | Pavananthi Munivar | A Tamil grammar book used as a standard for understanding Tamil linguistic structure. |
| Tolkappiyam | Tolkappiyar | An ancient Tamil grammar text, foundational for Tamil literary studies, revered during the Chola period. |
| Thiruppavai | Andal | A collection of Tamil devotional hymns dedicated to Lord Vishnu, reflecting the religious fervor of the time. |
| Divya Prabandham | Alvars | A collection of 4,000 Tamil verses dedicated to Vishnu, forming the core of Tamil Vaishnavism. |
| Nalayira Divya Prabandham | Nathamuni | Compiled the hymns of the Alvars, establishing the foundation of the Srivaishnava tradition. |
| Periyazhwar Tirumozhi | Periyazhwar | Devotional hymns in praise of Vishnu, highlighting the devotional aspect of Tamil literature. |

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| Thiruvvasagam | Manikkavacakar | A collection of Tamil hymns expressing deep devotion to Lord Shiva, celebrated in Shaivism. |
| Koyil Puranam | Umapathi Sivacharya | Describes the origins and significance of various Shaiva temples, emphasizing their spiritual importance. |

Numismatics during the Chola Empire

| Type of Coin | Description | Notable Features |
|---|--|--|
| Gold Coins (Kasu) | High-value coins used for large transactions and trade. | Often featured the image of the king, divine symbols, or deities. |
| Silver Coins | Used for medium to large transactions; less common than gold coins. | Typically featured royal insignia and sometimes images of temples. |
| Copper Coins | Widely used for everyday transactions; most common type of Chola currency. | Often depicted a seated king or deity, with inscriptions on the reverse. |
| Lead Coins | Rare, usually used for small transactions in local markets. | Simple designs with minimal inscriptions. |
| Sri Rajaraja Kasu | Issued during the reign of Rajaraja I; gold coins. | Featured the image of a standing king on one side and the seated goddess on the other. |
| Rajendra Chola Coins | Issued by Rajendra I; gold, silver, and copper coins. | Often depicted the king seated with a legend in Nagari script. |
| Kulottunga I Coins | Gold and copper coins issued during his reign. | Featured the image of the king or symbols like the tiger emblem. |
| Kulottunga III Coins | Continued the tradition of issuing gold and copper coins. | Featured detailed inscriptions and images of deities or the king. |
| Udaiyar Sri Rajendra Chola Devar | Issued by Rajendra I; gold coins. | Featured the image of the king and inscriptions glorifying his reign. |

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| Nigarili Chola Coins | Issued by Rajaraja I; copper coins. | Depicted a standing king on one side and a seated figure on the other. |
| Standing King Type Coins | Common design featuring a king standing with a bow or spear. | Often found in copper, used for everyday transactions. |
| Seated King Type Coins | Featured the king seated, often with legends around the image. | Found in gold, silver, and copper; used for various transactions. |
| Elephant Type Coins | Featured an elephant, symbolizing strength and royalty. | Typically issued in copper, used in local markets. |
| Tiger Emblem Coins | Featured the tiger emblem, representing the Chola dynasty. | Found in gold and copper, signifying royal authority. |
| Fish Emblem Coins | Rare coins featuring the fish emblem, symbolizing the Pandya alliance or conquest. | Typically issued in copper. |

Village assemblies (Sabhas) of the Chola Empire:

| Aspect | Description |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Village Autonomy | The system of village autonomy reached its peak during the Chola rule, with sabhas and their committees. |
| Formation of Village Councils | Description |
| Wards | The village was divided into thirty wards, each nominating members to the village council. |
| Nomination Qualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership of at least one fourth veli of land. • Own residence • Age above thirty and below seventy years. • Knowledge of Vedas. |
| Disqualification Norms | Description |

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|--|---|
| Disqualifications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| Selection Process | Description |
| Kudavolai System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the duly nominated persons, one was chosen for each ward by the kudavolai (lottery) system for a year. • Names were written on palm leaves and put into a pot. • A young boy or girl would draw out thirty names, one for each ward. |
| Committees (Variyams) | Description |
| Samvatsaravariyam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual committee responsible for various yearly functions. |
| Erivariyam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee in charge of tanks and water management. |
| Thottavariyam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden committee overseeing horticulture and gardens. |
| Panchavariyam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee handling various miscellaneous functions. |
| Ponvariya | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold committee responsible for financial matters. |
| Puravuvarivaiyam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee responsible for revenue collection and management. |
| Committee Members | Description |
| Variyapperumakkal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee members responsible for specific functions within the village administration. |
| Meeting Places | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually met in the temple or under a tree to pass resolutions. |
| Number of Committees and Ward Members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied from village to village. |

Socio-economic Life Description

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| Caste System | Brahmins and Kshatriyas enjoyed special privileges, with two major divisions: Valangai and Idangai. Cooperation existed among various castes and sub-castes. |
| Position of Women | The position of women did not improve; practices such as 'sati' and the devadasi system were prevalent. |
| Religions | Both Saivism and Vaishnavism flourished, with many temples built by Chola kings and queens. Mathas had great influence. |
| Agriculture | Reclamation of forest lands and construction and maintenance of irrigation tanks led to agricultural prosperity. |
| Industry | Weaving industry, particularly silk-weaving at Kanchi, and metal works flourished. |
| Commerce and Trade | Commerce and trade were brisk, with extensive commercial contacts between the Chola Empire and China, Sumatra, Java, and Arabia. |
| Currency | Gold, silver, and copper coins were issued in various denominations. |
| Imports | Arabian horses were imported in large numbers to strengthen the cavalry. |

Art and architecture during the Chola Empire:

| Aspect | Description |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Art and Architecture | The Dravidian style of art and architecture reached its perfection under the Cholas. They built enormous temples, with the chief feature being the vimana. |
| Early Chola Temples | Description |
| Narthamalai, Kodumbalur | Located in Pudukottai district, examples of early Chola temples. |
| Srinivasanallur | Located in Tiruchirappalli district, another early Chola temple site. |
| Notable Temples | Description |
| Big Temple at Tanjore | Built by Rajaraja I, a masterpiece of South Indian art and architecture, consists of the vimana, ardhmandapa, mahamandapa, and Nandimandapa. |

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| Siva Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram | Built by Rajendra I, a notable contribution to temple architecture. |
| Airavathesvara Temple | Located at Darasuram in Tanjore District, an example of later Chola temples. |
| Kampaharesvara Temple | Located at Tribhuvanam, another example of later Chola temples. |
| Sculpture | Description |
| Temple Walls | Contain numerous icons of large size with fine execution, such as those at Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram temples. |
| Bronze Statues | World-famous bronzes of the Chola period, including the master pieces of Nataraja (dancing Siva). |
| Painting | Description |
| Chola Paintings | Found on the walls of Narthamalai and Tanjore temples. |

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