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## SANGAM AGE

Three states, namely, Cholas, Cheras, and Pandya emerged in south India. Sangam literature believes that the dynasties of Chola, Chera, and Pandya belong to immemorial antiquity.

### Chola Dynasty

- The Cholas have occupied the region of Kaveri delta and the adjoining area. The region of Kanchi was also part of the Cholas kingdom.
- The Kingdom was situated towards the north-east of Pandya kingdom and it was also called as Cholamandalam in early medieval times.
- In the beginning, its capital was Uraiyyur in Tiruchirapalli, but subsequently shifted to Kaveripattanam. It was called as 'Puhar' at that time.
- A Chola king, known as **Elara**, conquered Sri Lanka and ruled over it for about 50 years during the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.
- **Karikala** was a famous Chola king of the early time. He was credited because of his two achievements –
  - He had defeated the joint forces of Chera and Pandya kings and
  - He successful invaded Sri Lanka and ruled there.
- Karikala was defeated in a great battle at Venni near Tanjore by a confederacy of (about) a dozen rulers headed by Chera and Pandya kings.
- Karikala maintained a powerful navy and conquered Sri Lanka.
- Karikala built big irrigation channels and embankment about a 160 km along the river Kaveri.
- Karikala fortified the town and the famous sea part of Puhar at the mouth of the Kaveri.
- Karikala was a great patron of literature and education.
- He was a follower of Vedic religion and performed many Vedic sacrifices.
- The successors of Karikala were quite weak and family members squabbled for power and position therefore the Chola kingdom faced confusion and chaos after Karikala.
- Illanjetcenni was the only king after Karikala who is known. He had captured two fortresses from the Cheras. However, after Karikala, the Chola empire declined and the Cheras and Pandyas extended their territories.
- The Cholas were reduced to a small ruling family from about the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

### Pandya Dynasty

- The Pandya kingdom was the second important kingdom in south India during this period. It occupied the region of modern districts of Tirunelveli, Ramnad, and Madurai in Tamil Nadu.

- The capital of Pandya kingdom was Madurai. The Pandyan kingdom was very wealthy and prosperous.
- The Sangam literature gives information and names of a few kings.
- Nedunjelivan was a great Pandya king. He defeated the combined forces of Chera, Chola, and five other minor states in a war against him at Madurai.
- The Pandyan kings assembled literary assemblies called as 'Sangam'.
- Nedunjelivan had performed several Vedic sacrifices. He may be taken to have ruled around A. D. 210.
- The capital Madurai and the port city Korkai were the great centres of trade and commerce during the Pandyas' reign.
- The traders profited from trade with the Roman Empire.
- Pandya kings even sent embassies to the Roman emperor Augustus and Trojan.

## Chera Dynasty

- The Cheras were also known as '**Keralaputras**' in the history. The Chera kingdom occupied the region of a narrow strip between the sea and the mountains of Konkan range.
- The Chera rulers also occupied high position in the history of south India. Nedunjeral Adan was a famous Chera king. He conquered Kadambas with his capital at Vanavasi (near Goa). He also defeated the Yavanas.
- Nedunjeral Adan had a good relation with the Greeks and Romans who came in large numbers as traders and set up large colonies in south India.
- Nedunjeral Adan fought a battle with the father of the Chola king Karikala. In this battle, both the kings were killed.
- Nedunjeral Adan was called as Imayavaramban. The literary meaning of the term Imayavaramban is "one who had the Himalaya Mountains as the boundary of his kingdom." However, it seems to be mere exaggeration.
- Sengutturan was the greatest king of the Chera dynasty as mentioned in the Chera tradition. He had defeated the Chola and the Pandya kings.
- The Chera power declined at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. They again acquired power in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.
- The important facts about the three early kingdoms of south India are –
  - They constantly fought with each other;
  - They made new alliances against the ones who became powerful; and
  - They also fought regularly with Sri Lanka and ruled there at some point of time.



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