1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Chola Empire has been one of the most powerful and extensive empires of South India. Along with the vassal states, it might be the longest empire to flourish in South India. Its rise in the ninth century brought under its control a large part of the peninsula. The Cholas developed a powerful navy which enabled them to develop India’s sea trade in the Indian Ocean, and to conquer Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Their influence was felt even in the countries of South-East Asia. The Chola dynasty was founded by Vijayalaya around 850 AD apparently by starting off as a vassal of the Pallava king. With the conflict between Pallavas and Pandyas, Vijayalaya occupied Tanjore and made his capital. Their home land was called Cholamandalam which included modern Tanjore, Trichinopoly and the Pudukottai state. Kaveri River was the heartland of the Chola dynasty. Uraiyur, presently known as Tiruchirapalli was one of its oldest capital. They ruled from later half of the 9th century till the beginning of the 13th century.

2.0 THE ORIGINS OF THE CHOLA EMPIRE

Historians have had various views regarding its origin. The most accepted theory is that Cholas is the name of a ruling family or clan of ancient times. The Tamil literature of the Sangam period has information regarding the Cholas of the early period. Cholas have had a mention in the Ashokan pillars too. There are four periods attributed to the history of the Cholas. They are the early Cholas of the Sangam literature, the period between the decline of Sangam Cholas and rise of medieval Cholas, and later Chola dynasty of Kulothunga Chola I. However the most commonly held view is that this is, like Cheras and Pandyas, the name of the ruling family or clan of immemorial antiquity. The annotator Parimelazhagar writes “The charity of people with ancient lineage (such as the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Cheras) are forever generous in spite of their reduced means”. Other names in common use for the Cholas are Killi, Valavan and Sembiyam. Killi perhaps comes from the Tamil kil meaning dig or cleave and conveys the idea of a digger or a worker of the land. This word often forms an integral part of early Chola names like Nedunkilli, Nalankilli and so on, but almost drops out of use in later times. Valavan is most probably connected with ‘valam’ - fertility and means owner or ruler of a fertile country. Sembiyam is generally taken to mean a descendant of Shibi - a legendary hero whose self-sacrifice in saving a dove from the pursuit of a falcon figures among the early Chola legends and forms the subject matter of the Sibi Jataka among the Jataka stories of Buddhism. In Tamil lexicon Chola means Soazhi or Saei denoting a newly formed kingdom, in the lines of Pandya or the old country. Sora or Chozha in Tamil becomes Chola in Sanskrit and Chola in Telugu.
On the history of the early Cholas there is very little authentic written evidence available. Historians during the past 150 years have gleaned a lot of knowledge on the subject from a variety of sources such as ancient Tamil Sangam literature, oral traditions, religious texts, temple and copperplate inscriptions. The main source for the available information of the early Cholas is the early Tamil literature of the Sangam Period. There are also brief notices on the Chola country and its towns, ports and commerce furnished by the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (Periplus Maris Erythraei). Periplus is a work by an anonymous Alexandrian merchant, written in the time of Domitian (81-96) and contains very little information of the Chola country. Writing half a century later, the geographer Ptolemy gives more detail about the Chola country, its port and its inland cities. Mahavamsa, a Buddhist text written down during the 5th century CE, recounts a number of conflicts between the inhabitants of Ceylon and Cholas in the 1st century BCE. Cholas are mentioned in the Pillars of Ashoka (inscribed 273 BCE-232 BCE) inscriptions, where they are mentioned among the kingdoms which, though not subject to Ashoka, were on friendly terms with him.

3.0 POLITICAL HISTORY

Vijayalaya was one of the feudatory of the Pallavas who captured Tanjore from some local chieftains and established a semi-autonomous state. The power of the Pallavas declined considerably soon after, and by the beginning of the 9th Century CE, Vijayalaya's successors managed to break free from the overlordship of the Pallavas. They gave battle to the Pallavas and defeated them. They also defeated the Pandyas of Madurai and extended they sway to most parts of modern day Southern Tamil Nadu.

However, Krishna III, the Rastrakuta king who controlled the northern parts of Tamil Nadu, killed the Chola prince Rajaditya at the battle of Thakkolam in 949 CE. The king Parantaka died the next year, and his second son Gandaraditya ascended the throne. He was more interested in politics than in religion, and as such the empire stagnated. Very soon, he lost the throne to his younger brother Arinjaya, Arinjaya died shortly thereafter and his son Sundara Chola became the king. Sundara Chola was instrumental in rejuvenating the empire.

Following the death of Krishna III in 965, the Rastrakuta Empire started to decline. Sundara Chola seized this opportunity and sent an army under the command of the crown prince Aditya Karikala to fill the void. Aditya was successful in the battle and extended Chola domains in the north up to Tondaimandalam. He also defeated the Pandyas once again and crushed what was left of their power.

However, Uttama Chola, son of the previous king Gandaraditya managed to have Aditya Karikala assassinated, so that he could become the heir apparent. Uttama Chola did become the king, but his reign went largely uneventful. In 985, Rajaraja Chola, another son of Sundara Chola managed to replace him as the king.

3.1 Rajaraja and Rajendra chola

However, the greatest claim to fame for Rajaraja Chola was his expedition to North India in 1022 CE. He is the only South Indian king to have led a successful expedition up the River Ganga. Passing through the Kalinga Region, he crossed the Ganga and annexed those regions to the Chola Empire. He assumed the title "Gangaikonda Chola" or the "conqueror of Ganga", and built a new capital near the mouth of the Cavuery River and called it Gangaikondacholapuram.
Rajaraja had been appointed heir apparent in his father's life-time, and had extensive experience of administration and warfare before his accession to the throne. Rajaraja destroyed the Chera navy at Trivandrum, and attacked Quilon. He then conquered Madurai and captured the Pandyan king. He also invaded Sri Lanka and annexed its northern part to his Empire. These moves were partly motivated by his desire to bring the trade with the South-East Asian countries under his control.

The Coromandal coast and Malabar were the centres for India's trade with the countries of South-East Asia. One of his naval exploits was the conquest of the Maldive Islands.

In the north, Rajaraja annexed the north-western parts of the Ganga region in north-west Karnataka, and overran Vengi.

Rajendra I carried forward the annexationist policy of Raja raja by completely overrunning the Pandya and Chera countries and including them in his Empire. The conquest of Sri Lanka was also completed, with the crown and royal insignia of the king and the queen of Sri Lanka being captured in a battle. Sri Lanka was not able to free herself from the Chola control for another 50 years.

Rajaraja and Rajendra I marked their victories by erecting a number of Shiva and Vishnu temples at various places. The most famous of these was the Rajarajeshwara temple at Tanjore which was completed in AD 1010. The Chola rulers adopted the practice of having long inscriptions written on the walls of these temples, giving a historical narrative of their victories. That is why we know a great deal more about the Cholas than their predecessors.

One of the most remarkable exploits in the reign of Rajendra I was the march across Kalinga to Bengal in which the Chola armies crossed the Ganga, and defeated two local kings. This expedition, which was led by a Chola general, took place in 1022 and followed the same route which the great conqueror Samudragupta had followed. To commemorate this occasion, Rajendra I assumed the title of Gangaikondachola (or 'the Chola conqueror of Ganga'). He built the new capital near the mouth of the Kaveri and called it Gangaikondacholapuram (or 'the city of the Chola conqueror of the Ganga').

An even more remarkable exploit in the time of Rajendra I was the naval expedition against the revived Sri Vijaya Empire. The Sri Vijaya Empire, which had been revived in the 10th century, extended over the Malay peninsula, Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands and controlled the overseas trade route to China. The rulers of the Sailendra dynasty were Buddhists and had cordial relations with the Cholas. The Sailendra ruler had built a Buddhist monastery at Nagapatam and, at his instance, Rajendra I had endowed a village for its upkeep. The cause of the breach between the two apparently was the Chola eagerness to remove obstacles to Indian traders, and to expand Chola trade with China. The expedition led to the conquest of Kadaram or Kedah and a number of other places in the Malay peninsula and Sumatra. The Chola navy was the strongest in the area for some time and the Bay of Bengal was converted into a 'Chola lake'.
Three of Rajendra's sons Rajadhiraja Chola I, Rajendra Chola II and Virarajendra Chola followed him to kingship. All of them continued the Chalukya wars. Rajadhiraja lost his life on the battlefield during one such battles and Rajendra Chola II crowned himself on the battlefield and continued the fight. Finally, Virarajendra managed to split the Chalukya kingdom by convincing the Chalukya prince Vikramaditya IV to an alliance. The Chola - Vikramaditya alliance was successful in the battlefield and Virarajendra crowned Vikramaditya as the king of the Western Chalukya kingdom. He acted as a buffer between the Cholas and the Chalukyas in Kalyani.

Vikramaditya also tried to prevent Rajendra Chalukya, an Eastern Chalukyan prince of Chola descent from ascending the Vengi throne. However when Virarajendra died in 1070 C.E., Rajendra Chalukya struck back and engineered some internal confusion in the Chola kingdom, in which the new Chola king Athirajendra Chola was assassinated. Rajendra Chalukya crowned himself Kulothunga Chola I (1070 C.E.), thereby superseding the Chola dynasty with the Chalukya dynasty.

The Chola rulers also sent a number of embassies to China. A Chola embassy of 70 merchants reached China in 1077 and, according to a Chinese account, received "81,800 strings of copper-cash," that is, more than four lakhs of rupees in return for the articles of tribute comprising "glass-ware, camphor, brocades, rhinoceros horns, ivory, etc." Tribute was the word used by the Chinese for all articles brought for trade.

The Chola rulers fought constantly with the Chalukyas who had succeeded the Rashtrakutas. These are called the later Chalukyas and their capital was at Kalyani. The Cholas and the later Chalukyas clashed for the over lordship of Vengi (Rayalseema), the Tungabhadra doab and the Ganga country in north-west Karnataka. Neither side was able to gain a decisive victory in this contest and ultimately it exhausted both the Empires. It also appears that the wars were becoming harsher during this time.

The Chola rulers sacked and plundered Chalukyan cities including Kalyani, and massacred the people, including brahmanas and children. They adopted a similar policy in the Pandya country settling military colonies to overawe the population. They destroyed Anuradhapur, the ancient capital of the rulers of Sri Lanka, and treated their king and queen harshly. These are blots in the history of the Chola Empire. However, once they had conquered a country, the Cholas tried to set up a sound system of administration in it. One of the remarkable features of the Chola administration was their encouragement to local self-government in the villages all over their Empire.

The Chola Empire continued in a flourishing condition during the twelfth century. But it declined during the early part of thirteenth century. The later Chalukyan Empire in the Maharashtra area had also come to an end during the twelfth century. The place of the Cholas was taken by the Pandyas and the Hoysalas in the south, and of the later Chalukyas by the Yadavas and the Kakatiyas. These states extended patronage to arts and architecture.

Unfortunately, they weakened themselves by continually fighting against each other, sacking the towns and not even sparing the temples. Ultimately, they were destroyed by the Sultans of Delhi in the beginning of the fourteenth century.

### 3.2 Chola Army and Navy

The Cholas maintained a large army consisting of elephants, cavalry and infantry which were called the three limbs of the army. The infantry was generally armed with spears. Most of the kings had bodyguards who were sworn to defend the kings even at the cost of their lives. The Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who visited Kerala in the thirteenth century, says that all the soldiers- in the body-guard burnt themselves in the funeral pyre of the monarch when he died - a statement which may well be an exaggeration. The Cholas also had a strong navy, as we have seen, which dominated the Malabar and Coromandal coast and for some time, the entire Bay of Bengal.

The Chola Navy comprised the naval forces of the Chola Empire along with several other naval-arms of the country. The Chola navy played a vital role in the expansion of the Chola Empire, including the conquest of the Ceylon islands and naval raids on Sri Vijaya (present-day Indonesia). The navy grew both in size and status during the Medieval Cholas reign.
The Chola Admirals commanded much respect and prestige in the society. The navy commanders also acted as diplomats in some instances. From 900 to 1100, the navy had grown from a small backwater entity to that of a potent power projection and diplomatic symbol in all of Asia, but was gradually reduced in significance when the Cholas fought land battles for subjugating the Chalukyas of Andhra-Kannada area in South India.

3.3 Chola Government

The king was the most important person in the Chola administration. All authority rested in his hands, but he had a council of ministers to advise him.

The Chola Empire was divided into mandalams or provinces and these, in turn, were divided into valanadu and nadu. Sometimes, princes of the royal family were appointed governors of provinces. Officials were generally paid by giving them assignments of revenue-bearing lands.

The Chola rulers built a network of royal roads which were useful for trade as well as for the movement of the army. Trade and commerce flourished in the Chola Empire, and there were some gigantic trade guilds which traded with Java and Sumatra.

The Cholas also paid attention to irrigation. The main water resource for this kingdom was the Kaveri river. Many tanks for irrigation were built. Some of the Chola rulers carried out an elaborate survey of land in order to fix the government's share of the land revenue. We do not know what precisely the government's share was.

In addition to land tax, the Chola rulers drew their income from tolls on trade, taxes on professions, and also from the plunder of the neighbouring territories. The Chola rulers were wealthy and could afford to build a number of towns and magnificent monuments.

By a study of various inscriptions some details about village government during the time of Cholas emerge. We hear of two assemblies, called the ur and the sabha or mahasabha. The ur was a general assembly of the village. However, we know more about the working of the mahasabha. This was a gathering of the adult men in the brahmana villages which were called agraharas. These were villages settled by the brahmans in which most of the land was rent-free. These villages enjoyed a large measure of autonomy.

The affairs of the village were managed by an executive committee to which educated persons owning property were elected either by drawing lots or by rotation. These members had to retire every three years. There were other committees for helping in the assessment and collection or land revenue for maintenance of law and order, justice, etc. One of the important committees was the tank committee which looked after the distribution of water to the fields. The mahasabha could settle new lands, and exercise ownership rights over them. It could also raise loans for the village and levy taxes.

4.0 CULTURAL LIFE

The extent and resources of the Chola Empire enabled the rulers to build great-capitals, such as Tanjore, Gangaikondacholapuram, Kanchi, etc. The rulers maintained huge households and large palaces with banquet halls, spacious gardens and terraces. Thus, we learn of seven or five-storeyed houses for their chiefs. Unfortunately none of the palaces of the period have survived. The Chola capital Gangaikondacholapuram is now just a small village near Tanjore. However, descriptions of the magnificent palaces of the rulers and their ministers, and of equally magnificent houses in which the wealthy merchants lived, are to be found in the literature of the period.

4.1 Chola Architecture

Temple architecture in the south attained its climax under the Cholas. The style or architecture which came into vogue during this period is called Dravida, because it was confined largely to sooth India. The main feature of this style was the building of storey upon storey above the chief deity-room (garbagriha). The number of storeys varied from five to seven and they had a typical style which came to be called the vimana. A pillared hall called mandap, with elaborately carved pillars and a flat roof, was generally placed in front of the sanctum. It acted as an audience hall and was a place for various other activities such as ceremonial dances which were performed by the devadasis—the women dedicate to the service of the gods. Sometimes, a passage used to be added around the sanctum so that the devotees could go round it. Images of many other gods could be put in this passage.
This entire structure was enclosed in a courtyard surrounded by high walls, which were pierced by lofty gates called gopurams. In course of time, the vimanas rose higher and higher, the number of courtyards were increased to two or three, and the gopurams also became more and more elaborate. Thus, temple became a miniature city or palace, living-rooms for priests and many others being provided in it. The temples generally enjoyed revenue-free grants of lands of their expenses. They also received grants and rich donations from the wealthy merchants. Some of the temples became so rich that they entered business, lent money, and took part in business enterprises.

An early example of the Dravida style of temple architecture is the Eighth century temple of Kailasanatha at Kanchipuram. One of the finest and most elaborate examples of the style is, however, provided by the Brihadiswara temple at Tanjore built by Rajaraja I. This is also called the Rajaraja temple because the Cholas were in the habit of installing images of kings and queens in the temples, in addition to the deity. The temple at Gangaikondacholapuram, though in a dilapidated condition, is another fine example of temple architecture under the Cholas. A large number of temples were also built at other places in South India. However, it may be well to remember that the proceeds for some of these activities were obtained from the plunder of the population of the neighbouring areas by the Chola rulers.

After the fall of the Cholas, temple building activity continued under the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Hoysalas. The district of Dharwara had the Hoysala capital Halebid which had a large number of temples. The most magnificent of these is the Hoysalesvara temple. It is the best example of what is called the Chalukyan style. Apart from the images of gods and their attendants, both men and women (yaksha and yakshini), the temples contain finely sculptured panels which show a busy panorama of life, including dance, music and scenes of war and love. Thus, life was closely integrated with religion. For the common man, the temple was not merely a place for worship but the hub of social and cultural life as well.

The art of sculpture attained a high standard in South India during this period. One example of this was the giant statue of Gomateswar at Sravana Belgola. Another aspect was image making which reached its climax in the dancing figure of the Shiva called nataraja. The nataraja figures of this period, particularly those in bronze, are considered masterpieces. Many fine examples of this are to be found in museums in India and outside.

### 4.2 Arts and Literature

The rulers of the various dynasties of the Cholas patronized arts and literature. While Sanskrit was regarded as the language of high culture and a number of kings as well as scholars and court poets wrote in it, a remarkable feature of the period was the growth of literature in the language of the areas. A number of popular saints called nayanars and alvars who were devotees of Shiva and Vishnu flourished in the Tamil area between the sixth and the ninth centuries. They composed their works in Tamil and other languages of the area. The writings of these saints, which were collected into eleven volumes under the name Tirumurais in the early part of the twelfth century, are considered sacred and are looked upon as the fifth Veda. The age of Kamban who is placed in the second half of the eleventh and the early part of the twelfth century is regarded as a golden age in Tamil literature. Kamban’s Ramayana is considered a classic in Tamil literature. Kamban is believed to have lived at the court of a Chola king. Many others took their themes from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, thus bringing these classics nearer to the people.

Though younger than Tamil, Kannada also became a literary language during this period. The Rashtrakuta, the Chalukya and the Hoysala rulers patronized Kannada as well as Telugu. The Rashtrakuta king, Amoghavarsha, wrote a book on poetics in Kannada. Many Jain scholars also contributed to the growth of Kannada. Pampa, Ponna and Ranna are regarded as the three gems of Kannada poetry. Although they were under the influence of Jainism, they also wrote on themes taken from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata Nanniah, who lived at the court of a Chalukyan king began the Telugu version of the Mahabharata.
The work begun by him was completed in the thirteenth century by Tikkanna. Like the Tamil Ramayana, the Telugu Mahabharata is a classic which inspired many subsequent writers. Many folk or popular themes are also to be found in these literatures. Popular themes which were not derived from Sanskrit and which reflect popular sentiments and emotions are called desi or rural in Telugu.

5.0 **THE PANDYAS**

The Early Pandyas of the Sangam period were one of the three main kingdoms of the ancient Tamil country, the other two being the Cholas and the Cheras. As with many other kingdoms around this period (earlier than 200 BCE), most of the information about the Early Pandyas come to us mainly through literary sources and some epigraphic, archaeological and numismatic evidence. The capital of the Early Pandyan kingdom was initially Korkai, around 600 BCE, and was later moved to Koodal (now Madurai) during the reign of Nedunj Cheliyan I.

The kings of the Pandyan Dynasty are frequently mentioned in Sangam literature of the third century BCE and onwards, in works such as the Mathuraikkanci and other early Tamil literary works such as Cilapatikaram, which have been used by historians to identify their names and, to some extent, their genealogy.

Nedunj Cheliyan III is referred to as the most popular warrior among the Early Pandyas, winning a battle at Talaiarangam against a coalition of forces from Cholas and Cheras and five other kingdoms. The early Pandyan kingdom extended between Travancore in the west, Vellaru river in the north and all the way to the ocean in the east and the south.

The Early Pandyas had active maritime trade relationships with the west, a fact testified by western classical writers such as Pliny the Elder (1st century CE), Strabo, Ptolemy and the author of the Periplus. The Panydan country was well known for pearl fishery, with Korkai being the principal center of the trade. Some of the exports were pearls, spices, ivory and shells, while the imports included horses, gold, glass and wine.

5.1 **Origin and Sources**

The origin of the word "Pandya" has been a subject of much speculation.

Some scholars believe that it descended from the "Pandavas" of Mahabharata. However some sources claim that the name could be derived from the word "Pandi" the original name of the Tamil country. However the Country of Pandya was already mentioned in Ramayana which is early to the Mahabharat. When Sugriva sends his monkey warriors to search Sita, he mentions Chera, Chola and Pandya of south. Hence "Pandyas" were not from "Pandavas".

All attempts by historians to identify the origins of the Early Pandyan dynasty using several sources have failed to authoritatively establish the exact genealogy of these kings.

Another theory is that the word Pandya is derived from the Tamil word "Pandi" meaning bull. Ancient Tamils considered the bull as a sign of masculinity and valor. Pandya became the epithet of the first Pandyan king of then Madurai, Kulasekharan Pandya as he was built like a bull. It was used as an epitome of masculinity. His son, the second king of Madurai, the legendary Malayadwaja Pandya who sided with the Pandavas and took part in the Kurukshetra is described in Karna Parva (verse 20.25).

Malayadwaja Pandya and his queen Kanchanamala had one daughter Thathagai alias Meenakshi who succeeded her father and reigned the kingdom successfully. The Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple was built after her. The city of Madurai was built around this temple.
Yet another theory suggests that in Sangam Tamil lexicon the word Pandya means old country in contrast with Chola meaning new country, Chera meaning hill country and Pallava meaning branch in Sanskrit. The Chera, Chola and Pandya are the traditional Tamil siblings and together with the Pallavas are the major Kings that ruled ancient Tamilakkam.

Pillaiyarpatti temple is a rock-cut temple located in Thirruppatthur, Sivagangai District. It was built after viewing a hillock by the early Pandiya kings. The image of Pillaiyarpatti Pillaiyar and that of a Siva Lingam were carved out of a stone by a sculptor named Ekkattur Koon Peruparanan who put his signature on a stone inscription, in Tamil Language used between the 2nd and 5th century AD, found even today in the sanctum. It can be concluded that the icon of Pillaiyarpatti Pillaiyar must have been carved around 4th century AD.

5.1.1 Literary sources in Tamil

Several Tamil literary works, such as Iraiyanar Agapporul, mention the legend of three separate Tamil Sangams lasting several centuries before the Christian Era and ascribe their patronage to the Pandyas. The Sangam poem Maduraiikkanci by Mankudi Maruthanaar contains a full-length description of Madurai and the Pandyan country under the rule of Nedunj Cheliyan III. The Nedunalvadai by Nakkirar contains a description of the king's palace. The Purananuru and Agananuru collections of the third century BCE contain poems sung in praise of various Pandyan kings and also poems that were composed by the kings themselves. Kalitokai mentions that many Tamil Naga tribes such as Maravar, Eyinar, Oliar, Oviar, Aruvalur and Parathavar migrated to the Pandyan kingdom and started living there in the Third Tamil Sangam period 2000 years ago.

5.1.2 Literary sources in other languages

The Sinhalese chronicle Mahawamsa claims that the orissa based King Vijaya (c. 543 BCE) married a daughter of the Pandyan king of Madurai, to whom he was sending rich presents every year. Valmiki (400 BCE), refers Pandyan king in several places in Ramayan. Kautilya, in his Arthashastra refers to the "easy to travel" trade route to the South and to the products of the Pandya kingdom. He also mentions the city of Madurai and the city of Tirunelveli and the river Tamirabarani in the Pandya kingdom. The famous Greek traveler Megasthenes (c. 302 BCE) mentions the "Pandae" kingdom and refers to it as "that portion of India which lies to the southward and extends to the sea".

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (c. 60 - 100 CE) describes the riches of a 'Pandian Kingdom'.

5.1.3 Epigraphical sources

The 2nd and 13th rock edicts of Ashoka (273 - 232 BCE) refers to the Pandyas, Cholas, Cheras and the Satyaputras. According to the edicts, these kingdoms lay outside the southern boundary of the Mauryan Empire. The Hathigumpha inscriptions of the Kalinga King, Kharavela (c. 150 BCE) refers to the arrival of a tribute of jewels and elephants from the Pandyan king. The stone inscriptions discovered at Mangulam (a.k.a. Meenakshipuram) mentions the name of Nedunj Cheliyan III and his contemporary and subordinate, Kadalan Vazhuthi. These inscriptions have been used to estimate that Nedunj Cheliyan III ruled in the 2nd century BCE.

5.1.4 Archeological sources

Excavations in Tamil Nadu in the last fifty years or so have yielded remnants of black-and-red pottery ware, normally assigned to the Tamil speaking areas around 300 BCE. Some all-black and Russet coated ware assigned to the same time period have also been found. Rouletted and Amphorae wares, made in the Roman empire and brought by traders, have been excavated in several parts of Tamil Nadu, including the Pandyan country. These imported wares are dated to the early centuries of the Christian Era.

5.1.5 Numismatic sources

The excavations at Algankulam, near Madurai, recovered two copper coins of the early Pandyas along with Northern Black Polished Ware. These coins have been assigned a broad time period ranging from 200 BCE to 200 CE. Several coins issued by the Pandyan king Mudukudumi Peruvudaludi have been recovered in the Madurai area and have been dated to around 200 BCE. Many gold and silver coins of the Roman empire have been found around Madurai: these coins bear the names of emperors ranging from Augustus (27 BCE) to Alexander Severus (235 CE).

6.0 POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE EARLY PANDYAS

Scholars have constructed the political history of the ancient Pandya country based on the classical works such as Purananuru, Pattu paatu and Padirrupattu. Even though these works don't throw much light on the exact timelines of each king and their reign, they are considered trustworthy accounts that present facts as they occurred.
The first Pandyan king who has been mentioned in the Sangam works recovered so far is Nedunj Cheliyan I, who ruled from the coastal town of Korkai, at the mouth of river Tamraparni. During this time, the Tamil country consisted of several small kingdoms ruled over by independent chieftains, in addition to the three monarchies of Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas. In a bid to expand his territory, Nedunj Cheliyan I invaded the kingdom of Kudal (later renamed Madurai), which was under the rule of an independent chieftain, Akutai. He defeated Akutai and moved the capital of Pandyan kingdom to Madurai. This king also defeated an invading army from the Deccan and hence was called Aariyap Padaikadantha Pandyan or the king who conquered the Aryan army. He was succeeded by his son Pudappandiyan, who expanded the kingdom by conquering Ollaiyur (near modern day Pudukkottai) - an act that earned him the name Ollaiyur thantha Pudappandian. Both Pudappandiyan and his predecessor, Nedunj Cheliyan I, were poets themselves who contributed to the Puranamru collection.

The successor of Pudappandiyan was Nedunj Cheliyan II also known as "Pasumpun Pandyan." Immediately after ascending the throne, he marched with his troops to the north of Vaigai and defeated the chieftain Evi II. He then headed west and captured the Aayi territory controlled by another chieftain, Atiyan. Both Evi II and Atiyan were made commanders of the Pandyan army for his battles against Kongu country that was further west. From here he expanded the Pandyan kingdom almost to the western coast, which earned him the title Vidambalamba Ninra Pandyan (the Pandyan whose kingdom was washed by two seas). Since he was responsible for expanding the Pandyan kingdom by annexing several kingdoms, he was also called Pannadu thantha Pandyan (the Pandyan who annexed many lands). His successor, Mudukudumi Peruvaludhi, was also a great warrior and carried the devastation into enemy territories. He performed yagnas with the aid of Brahmin priests, similar to the tradition in northern India at that time.

The next king in the hierarchy was Nedunj Cheliyan III, who is considered the greatest of all the early Pandyan kings. Since the Pandyan kingdom was considerably larger than a few generations ago, he had to defend it against many neighbors invading from various fronts. Not only did he succeed in defending his territory, he also seems to have advanced into the enemy territories - the southern province of Cholas and eastern province of the Cheras.

At one point, it is said that a coalition of his neighbors including the Cheras, Cholas and five other kingdoms, met him at a pitched battle in Talaiyalanganam, in present day Tanjore district. Nedunj Cheliyan emerged victorious in the battle that ensued and ended up annexing several new territories to his kingdom. He thus came to be known as Talaiyalanganathu Seruvendra Pandyan. The genealogy after this king is not very clear but there are at least four other kings who are thought to have ruled in the immediate succeeding generations. Notable among them were, Musiri Mutriya Cheliyan for the fact that he conquered the town of Musiri on the coast of the Arabian Sea and Ukkirap Peruvaludi for the fact that it was in his court that the famous poet Tiruvalluvar submitted his much-acclaimed work Tirukkural.

### 7.0 PANDYAN GOVERNMENT

The head of the Government was the king, a hereditary monarch. His power was restricted by the Aimerunguzhu or the Five Great Assemblies, which consisted of the representatives of the people, priests, physicians, astrologers and the ministers. There was another assembly of officials that served the king called the Enberaayam or the Eight Groups of Attendants. While some scholars believe it consisted of attendants on the king's person like the perfumers, dressing valets, etc., others believe it consisted of more important persons like the people of the capital city, the leaders of the elephant corps and of the cavalry. The principal officers of State were the high priest, the chief astrologer, the ministers and the commanders of the army.

The king divided his territory into a number of administrative units or principalities, each called a Kootram. A Kootram was further divided into provinces called Mandalam, which in turn was divided into many sub-provinces called Nadus, with each Nadu consisting of many villages. A locality inside a town or village was called Ur and each neighborhood inside an Ur was called a Cheri. While the king ruled over his entire territory from the capital, he often placed one or more principalities (Kootram) under the near-sovereign government of some senior member of the royal family or a feudatory. The village was the most fundamental unit of administration under the Pandyas.
The affairs of a village were the responsibility of its elders, who supervised the judicial, administrative and financial functions. Justice was administered free of charge, by special officers appointed as judges and magistrates, but the king was supreme and the final arbiter in all civil and criminal cases. Mortgage, lease, trust property, loans, breach of contract were some common sources of civil litigation, while criminal offences included theft, adultery, forgery and treason. The punishments were very severe and hence crimes were rare: one caught in the act of burglary, adultery or spying was given the death penalty and one giving false testimony would have his tongue cut off. The king was the chief commander of the army and usually led his army in the battlefield.

The military was said to be fourfold: the infantry, the cavalry, the elephantry and the chariotsry. A wide variety of war weapons filled the military arsenal including shields, swords, spears, tridents, maces, bows and arrows. The main sources of royal revenue were taxes, tributes, customs duties and tolls. Land tax, paid in money or in kind, and income tax, equal to one-sixth of an individual’s income, were the major types of taxes collected. Other sources of revenue include tributes paid by feudal subordinates, war booty presents by loyal and visiting subjects, treasure troves besides land revenue, cess and forced gifts. The items incurring expenditure for the king include the military, gifts to poets and temples, maintenance of educational and health services, building infrastructure such as roads and irrigation and the palace household expenses.

8.0 EARLY PANDYAN SOCIETY

The Tamil society during the early Pandyan age had several class distinctions among the people, which were different from the Aryan classification of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

Women were exposed to education, a fact testified by the presence of many women poetesses in the Sangam works - some of them include Avvaiyar, Mudatamakkanniar, Kaakkaippaadiniyaar, Naachchellayaar, Naagaiyaar, Nanmullaiyaar, Ponmudiyar, Ilaveyiniyaar and Nappasaliyaar.

A variety of clothing was used by people during this age, including those made of cotton and silk. People living in hilly and deserted areas wore dresses made of foliage and flowers. Sheaths of grassy weeds (Koral) were used for making dress by the hill and forest area people. Skins of animals and barks of trees were also used. Men of the poorer classes wore only one piece of cloth around the waist. Women covered their upper body with a kind of dress called, kachchu. Among the higher classes, men wore two pieces: one around the waist and the other, the upper cloth, thrown over the shoulders. Women of sophisticated society wore half sarees, made of the finest cotton and silk fabrics, with embroidery. Both men and women sported long tresses of hair. The diet was plain, rice being the staple cereal, with maize, millet, milk, butter and honey being in common use. Meat eating was common - people ate flesh of rams, deer, hare, fowl, porcupines, pigs and boar, fresh and dried fish. The kind of housing was determined by the type of geography of the land and the economic status of the occupants. The rich built their houses with tiled roofs and walls made of burnt bricks and mud, while the poor built their huts with mud and thatched it with grass, coconut leaves or palmyra palm leaves. Both in the huts and houses, the flooring was smeared with cowdung. The affluent had houses with porticoes, many storeys, open terraces and furnished their houses well. The inner walls of their houses were decorated with flowers and paintings, with cottages to protect them from the wind. Cots were in common use - the rich had luxurious beds decked with swan’s feathers and flowers, while the common people had beds woven with the straw of maize and the poorest people used beds made of grass or hay.
1. The term 'Halaimandalam' refers to the
(A) Coromandal coast  (B) Malabar coast  
(C) Pandya coast  (D) Konkan coast

2. Minakshi, the fish eyed goddess of the Pandyas of Madurai, is identified with
(A) Laxmi  (B) Parvati  
(C) Sarasvati  (D) Savitri

3. Which Cambodian ruler sent a chariot as a present to Rajaraja Chola in AD 1012?
(A) Suryavarman I  (B) Suryavarman II  
(C) Anantavarman  (D) Chandravarman

4. Which of the following statements about the Ayyavole, a prominent trade guild of early medieval India, are true?
(A) It dominated the internal trade of Tamil Nadu  
(B) It controlled the internal trade of Deccan 
(C) In the field of external trade it concentrated on trade with west Asia 
(D) Its international connections were mainly with South East Asia
Select the answer from the codes given below:
(A) I and II  (B) II and III  
(C) III and IV  (D) I and IV

5. When did Rajendra Chola I send his famous naval expedition to the Sri Vijaya empire?
(A) 1015  (B) 1020  
(C) 1025  (D) 1035

6. Which one of the following is incorrectly paired?
(A) Rajaraja I – Rajakesari  
(B) Rajendra I – Pandita Chola  
(C) Kulottugma I – Sungam Taviratta 
(D) Rajadhiraja – Ahalanka

7. Which Chola emperor received a letter on golden leaves from the Burmese King, Kyanzittha?
(A) Rajaraja I  (B) Rajendra I  
(C) Kulottunga I  (D) Rajadhiraja

8. Arrange the following administrative units of the Chola period in the descending order.
I. Valanadus  II. Nadu 
III. Mandalams  IV. Kurrams
Choose the answer from the codes given below:
(A) I, III, II, IV  (B) III, I, II, IV  
(C) II, IV, I, III  (D) IV, I, II, III

9. That the bodyguards of the Chola emperors burnt themselves on the funeral pyres of their masters when they died is known to us from
(A) Kamban  (B) Sekkilar  
(C) Marco Polo  (D) Nicolo de Conti

10. Which Chola emperor, as evident from an inscription, intervened in the dynastic struggle of South East Asia in AD 1068-69?
(A) Rajadhira  (B) Virarajendra  
(C) Kulottunga I  (D) Kulottunga II

11. The administration of tankurrams in the Chola period was looked after by
(A) urs  (B) nagarams  
(C) sabhas  (D) mahasabhas

12. Which Chola emperor sent a large mission of 72 merchants to China that removed the wrong impression of the Chinese that the Cholas were tributary princes of the Sri Vijaya empire?
(A) Rajaraja I  (B) Rajendra I  
(C) Kulottunga I  (D) Vikramachola

13. What was the emblem of the imperial Cholas?
(A) Tiger  (B) Lion  
(C) Fish  (D) Horse

14. Which Chola ruler was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king, Krishna III, in the famous battle of Takkolam?
(A) Aditya  (B) Kulottunga I  
(C) Rajadhira  (D) Parantaka I

15. Who among the following Cholas is credited with conquering the Sri Vijaya empire of the Sailendra rulers by sending a naval expedition?
(A) Vijayalaya  (B) Rajaraja I  
(C) Rajendra I  (D) Parantaksh II
16. Which Chola king gave permission to the Sailendra ruler of Sri Vijaya to build a Buddhist vihara at Nagapattinam?
   (A) Rajendra I  (B) Rajaraja I
   (C) Rajendra II  (D) Rajaraja II

17. What were tankurrams of the Chola period?
   (A) Brahmanical educational institutions
   (B) Residences of the devadasis of the temple
   (C) Towns and townships
   (D) Village general assemblies

18. Arrange the following Chola emperors in the correct sequence.
   I. Rajaraja I  II. Parantaka I
   III. Rajendra I  IV. Adityachola
   V. Vijayalaya  VI. Uttamachola
   Select the answer from the codes given below.
   (A) IV, II, I, V, III, VI  (B) II, III, I, VI, IV, V
   (C) V, IV, II, VI, I, III  (D) III, I, II, V, IV, VI

19. What is the ascending order of the following units of administration in the Chola period?
   I. Valanadus  II. Nadus
   III. Mandalams  IV. Kurrams
   Select the answer from the codes given below.
   (A) III, II, I, IV  (B) I, II, III, IV
   (C) IV, I, II, III  (D) IV, II, I, III

20. The eighth-century tripartite power struggle was among which of the following?
   (A) Cholas, Rastrakutas and Yadavas
   (B) Chalukyas, Pallavas and Pandyas
   (C) Cholas, Pandyas and Chalukyas
   (D) Chalukyas, Pallavas and Yadavas

21. Which among the following is the main feature of Dravida Style of Temple architecture?
   (A) Gopuram  (B) Garbha Griha
   (C) Vimana & Shikhara  (D) Manastambha

22. The Varaha temple at Mamallapuram was built by which of the following?
   (A) Singh Vishnu  (B) Mahendra Varmana I
   (C) Narsimhavarmana I  (D) Aditya I

23. The political and cultural centre of the Pandyas was
   (A) Vengi  (B) Madurai
   (C) Kanchipuram  (D) Mahabalipuram

24. Who held the title of Madurai Konda?
   (A) Parantaka I  (B) Vijayaditya
   (C) Vimaladitya  (D) Raja Raja I

25. In which modern Indian state is Madurai located?
   (A) Tamil Nadu  (B) Andhra Pradesh
   (C) Karnataka  (D) Kerala

Please make sure that you mark the answers in this score-sheet with an HB pencil/pen.
The marking of answers must be done in the stipulated time for the test. Do not take extra time over and above the time limit.