

Subject:- History and Civics

Teacher:- Ms Rameet

## Chapter 7 Medieval India - The Cholas

Good Morning Students!

In this lesson we will study about the Cholas who rose to power in the ninth century. This dynasty was founded by Vijayalaya.

First we will study about the sources of information for this dynasty.

Inscriptions:- Hundreds of inscriptions both in Tamil and Sanskrit have been discovered in various parts of the Chola Kingdom. These inscriptions are in the form of Copper plate grants, stone inscriptions and inscriptions made on the walls and pillars of temples. As a source of material for history of the Cholas their significance is as follows

1. Some of the inscriptions supply dates and refer to the conquests of the Kings and the extent of their kingdom.
2. The Brihadeswara Temple inscriptions give measurements of lands gifted to the temple.
3. The inscriptions refer to the deities to whom the temples are dedicated to.
4. Inscriptions tell us about the Chola administration also. The Uttaramerur Inscription contains details about the village administration under the Cholas.
5. Inscriptions on the walls of the temple served the purpose of public registrations such as the



record of sales, mortgages, etc.

2. The Brihadeshwara Temple: The Cholas built majestic palaces and grand temples. One of the masterpieces of Chola architecture is the Brihadeshwara Temple also known as the Rajarajeshwara Temple at Thanjavur. It was dedicated to Lord Shiva. Let us first study about the features of Chola temples.

- i) The gateway of the temple was gopuram.
- ii) The main shrine was known as the garbagriha.
- iii) The mandapa or the audience hall was a place where people gathered for prayers.

Now we will study about the features of the Brihadeshwara temple.

- i) The massive tower (vimana) rises to the height of 140 feet.
- ii) The tower being crowned by a 'massive dome' which is a single block of stone weighing about 80-tonne.
- iii) The garba griha houses the colossal Shiva Lingam nearly nine metres high.
- iv) The outer doorway being flanked by two gigantic dwarpaks.
- v) The inner walls containing fine and bold sculptures of various deities.

### Political History.

Rajaraja I was the most important ruler of the Chola dynasty. He defeated the Cheras and then seized Madurai. Rajaraja annexed



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part of Deccan and overran Vengi. He also took some territories of Mysore, Travancore and Coorg. He invaded the island of Sri Lanka and annexed its northern part. Towards the end of his reign he conquered Maldives. He constructed the Brihadeshwara Temple.

Rajaraja I was succeeded by his son Rajendra I. In about 1017 he annexed the whole of Sri Lanka. His armies marched through the northern region as far as the Ganga Valley. He overpowered Odisha and a portion of Eastern Bengal. To commemorate this event he adopted the title of Gangaikonda and built a new capital called Gangaikonda Cholapuram. Rajendra Chola had sent out a huge navy and defeated the Shrivijaya king.

Let us take a short break. You are requested to write the answers for the following questions in your notebooks.

1. To which god is the Brihadeshwara temple dedicated?
2. Write one important conquest of Rajaraja Chola.
3. What did Rajendra Chola name his capital as?

Answers

1. Shiva
2. Defeated and annexed northern part of Sri Lanka.
3. Gangaikonda Cholapuram.



Administration of the Cholas:

The king was the pivot around which the whole system was based. The king had a group of ministers, each representing a particular department, to advise him on administrative matters. The administration was operated by a large number of officials, some of them holding higher rank were called Perundanam and the lower rank (Sirudanam).

The kingdom was divided into a number of provinces called Mandalams each placed under the charge of a governor, usually a prince of the royal family or belonging to the landed nobility. The provinces were further divided into valanadu and nadu.

A most remarkable feature of Chola administration was the exceptional efficiency of the village institutions. The villages had three types of village assemblies, namely Ur, Sabha and Nagaram.

→ The Ur was the common type of assembly of the villages where the land was held by all classes of people who were therefore members of the local assembly.

→ The Sabha was an exclusively Brahmin assembly of the villages, where all land belonged to the Brahmins.

→ The Nagaram was an assembly of traders and merchants.

The assemblies in the village administered



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justice within the village except that involving serious crimes. They regulated water supply, gathered taxes and administered all charitable institutions. The village assembly carried on its affairs with the help of smaller committees, each looking after specific matters such as tanks, gardens, temples, justice, etc.

The land revenue was fixed at one-sixth of the gross produce. Other important sources of income were the taxes on trade, mines, etc. The main items of expenditure were the maintenance of the royal family, maintenance of the armed forces, construction of towns, temples and works of public utility such as roads, tanks and the irrigation system.

Students, please read the chapter again.

Home assignment

1. Short Answer Questions :- 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12
2. Structured Questions 1(a, b, c); 2(a); 3(b); 4(a, b, c)