



- Ancient Tamil region was denoted by the term Tamilakam or Tamilaham which can be identified with present-day Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Lakshadweep and southern parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- Dominant Tamil kingdoms of the region were Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas during the Sangam age which roughly spans from 300 BCE to 300 CE.

PALLAVAS

- On the ruins of Satavahanas there arose a number of kingdoms.
- The Pallavas were one of them. They were feudatories of Satavahanas who came into power after the downfall of their overlords.
- However, their origin is much debated. Some historians trace their origin with the Pahlavas or Parthians who were a principal political power in ancient Iran, ruling from 247 BCE to 224 CE, while others believe that their origin was indigenous and not foreign; that they were an indigenous tribe or a clan or, maybe, a caste.
- It has been suggested that they were associated with the Vakataka clan
- Another theory looks at the role of matrimonial alliances to explain their origin and propounds that a Pahlava minister of western Kshatrapas through a matrimonial alliance acquired the throne of Kanchi.
- He married the daughter of Sivaskanda-Naga-Shatakarni.
- Some also believe that they were the descendants of a Chola prince & a Naga princess of Manipallavam.
- Their rule can be broadly divide under two main sections:
 - the early Pallavas &
 - the imperial or later Pallavas
- The history of early Pallavas are yet not very clear and more information is available on the history of the imperial Pallavas starting from c. 6th century CE.
- Imperial Pallavas were involved in continuous battles between the Chalukyas of Vatapi or Badami (Bagalkot, Karnataka) & the imperial Pallavas.
- Some scholars believe that Virakurcha was the first important emperor of early Pallavas.
- He is believed to have married a Naga princess who supposedly belonged to Satavahana family.
- When the Satavahana dynasty declined he became independent.
- His grandson Kumara Vishnu occupied Kanchipuram and established a kingdom in about 200 CE and made Kanchipuram his capital.

- During the reign of the last ruler of early Pallavas the Kalabhras invaded the kingdom and defeated him - ended the rule of early Pallavas.
- The Pallavas were able to regain their lost political significance in Tondaimandalam when Simhavishnu (575-590 CE) defeated the Kalabhras and, thus, inaugurated the rule of imperial Pallavas in c. 6th century CE.
- He also fought battles against Cholas & Pandyas.
- He took the birudas (royal titles) of: Avanisimha (lion of the earth), and Simhavishnupattarayan.
- At Mahabalipuram there is a sculptural bas relief in the Adivaraha Mandapa (a cave-temple) which depicts him with his two queens.
- His son Mahendravarman I (590-630 CE), became the ruler after his father's demise.
- Under him the Pallavas became a major political power.
- He is known for his literary works and temple building activities and he was also a skilled veena player.
- He promoted many artistic activities like drama, painting, music
- He took the titles of:
 - Mattavilasa (addicted to pleasures),
 - Chitrakarapuli (tiger among the painters),
 - Lalitankura (charming offspring),
 - Gunabhara (virtuous),
 - Chattakari (temple builder), and
 - Vichitrachitta (curious-minded)
- His reign saw the beginning of Pallava-Chalukya conflicts in which the succeeding rulers of these two dynasties also had to participate and contest one another.
- Pulakesin II, the powerful king of the Chalukyas of Vatapi who had earlier won a crucial battle against the great ruler of Pushyabhuti dynasty – Harshavardhana – defeated Mahendravarman I near Kanchi.
- Afterwards, Pulakesin II marched towards the capital of Pallavas.
- Mahendravarman I in order to save his capital agreed to sign a peace treaty — gave him northern territories of his kingdom.
- Narasimhavarman I (630-668 CE) succeeded his father Mahendravarman I.
- He is considered to be the greatest Pallava ruler. He took the title of Mamalla (great warrior).
- He defeated and killed Chalukya ruler Pulakesin II and destroyed the Chalukyan capital Vatapi.
- He took the title Vatapikonda (conqueror of Vatapi) in order to commemorate this remarkable victory.

- Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas also suffered defeat at his hands.
- He invaded Ceylon (Sri Lanka) twice in order to help Manavamma, an exiled Ceylonese prince who had come to him seeking his support in securing the throne of Ceylon.
- Though Manavamma was successful in getting the throne of Ceylon his success was not long-lasting.
- He asked for help for the second time from the Pallava king.
- Second naval expedition to Ceylon was more successful and the Ceylonese prince was able to secure and sustain his royal power.
- It was during the reign of Narasimhavarman I that the famous Chinese Buddhist traveller Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchipuram in 642 CE
- Mahendravarman II (668-670 CE) was the next ruler. His reign was short.
- Enmity between the Pallavas and Chalukyas caused political disturbance in the Pallava kingdom.
- The Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I, with the help of the western Ganga emperor, defeated and killed Mahendravarman II.
- This time the Pallava capital Kanchipuram was captured and brought under the rule of the Chalukyas of Badami for a brief period of time.
- Parmesvaravarman I (670-690 CE) made several attempts to defeat the Chalukyas in which he was successful in the end.
- To celebrate his victory over the Chalukyas he took the titles of:
 - Ugradanda (ruling with a rod of iron), &
 - “the destroyer of the city of Ranarasika”.
- Ranarasika was the title taken by the Chalukyan emperor Vikramaditya I
- The reign of Narasimhavarman II (695-722 CE) was peaceful as the continuous battles between the two kingdoms came to a halt during his time.
- He sent embassies to China
- Parmesvaravarman II (728-731 CE) had to sign a humiliating peace treaty with the king of the Chalukyas of Vatapi Vikramaditya II when the latter had invaded Kanchipuram.
- He was put to death by the Gangas, the political allies of the Chalukyas.
- After Parmesvaravarman II’s demise, Nandivarman II (731-795 CE) sat on the throne.
- He belonged to the collateral branch of Pallavas i.e. the Kadavas who were the descendants of Bhimavarman, the brother of Simhavishnu, and, thus, started the period of the later Pallavas of the Kadava line.
- Like his predecessor he too had to fight with Vikramaditya II who again invaded the Pallava capital.
- Though the Chalukyan emperor captured Kanchipuram this time the capital city was not

devastated and he decided to retreat to his territory.

- This is the only rare case of leniency seen in the political conflicts between them
- He was also defeated by a Pandya ruler but he was able to defeat the western Gangas.
- He was succeeded by:
 - a) Dantivarman,
 - b) Nandivarman III,
 - c) Nrupatunga, and
 - d) Aparajita.
- Aparajita — the last imperial Pallava — became one of the feudatories of the Cholas.

PANDYAS

- It is difficult to say about the origin of the term ‘Pandya’ with much accuracy.
- There are many different opinions regarding the term.
- We find the names of the Pandyan monarchs mentioned in some important literary works such as:
 - the Sangam literature,
 - the Epics Ramayana and Mahabharata,
 - the Sri Lankan chronicle Mahavamsa,
 - the Arthashastra of Kautilya, and
 - Indica: the account of Megasthenes who was the Greek ambassador to the court of king Chandragupta Maurya of the Mauryan Empire.
- Some historians opine that the term was derived from the label ‘Pandava’.
- Meaning of the word ‘Pandya’ in Tamil it means old country.
- Another speculation is that, it comes from the word ‘Pandi’ which in Tamil means bull and in Tamilaham the bull was considered as a symbol of strength and masculinity – used it in order to represent themselves as powerful sovereigns.
- The first king who took the title of ‘Pandya’ was Kulashekharan.
- His successors continued using this title and this is how it is claimed that the cognomen of ‘Pandya’ became synonymous with the dynasty.
- Pandyan rule can also be categorized into the following sections:
 - 1) early Pandyas,
 - 2) the first Pandyan empire, and
 - 3) the second Pandyan empire.
- The early Pandyas of the Sangam age were contemporaries of the Cheras & the Cholas during the Sangam period.
- These neighbouring powers were engaged in conflicts to establish their own political supremacy.
- The rise of the Kalabhras in the post-Sangam age in the Tamil country & that they brought an end to the rule of the Pallavas
- Likewise the Kalabhras became the cause for the decline of the early Pandyas as well but eventually,

like the Pallavas the Pandyas were successful too in acquiring the political hold in the region.

- The river Kaveri became the border between the Pallavas & the Pandyas.
- The earliest known ruler from the Pandyan dynasty was Palyagasalai Mudukudumi Peruvuludi.
- Nedunchelivan I or Ayyappudai Kandantha Nedunchelivan was the 4th king of this kingdom.
- His royal title Ayyappudai Kandantha means the one who vanquished the Aryans.
- His name is mentioned in the Silappadikaram written by a Chera prince Ilango Adigal.
- According to this work Nedunchelivan failed in his kingly duty of providing fair justice when he, in his anger and without any proper judicial enquiry, ordered the execution of an innocent man named Kovalan who was falsely charged with the stealing of an anklet of the queen.
- Nedunchelivan II was the greatest ruler of early Pandyas.
- He defeated the combined forces of Cholas & Cheras at the battle of Talaiyalanganam.
- This enabled him to acquire much of the Tamil region & expand the territory of the Pandyas.
- After the Sangam age their power declined & the Kalabhras emerged as a dominant political force in the region.
- Kadungon founded the first Pandyan empire after defeating the Kalabhras during c. 6th century.
- After him the rulers of the first Pandyan empire adopted the titles of:
 - Maravarman, and
 - Sadayavarman (worshippers of lord Shiva) or Sadaiyan (the one with dreadlocks)
- Arikesari Maravarman was an important ruler of this empire. Pandyan inscriptions mention he defeated the Cheras a number of times and even imprisoned the reigning Chera ruler.
- During the period of his son & successor Kochadaiyan Ranadhiran the Chalukya-Pandyan conflicts began in which the Chalukyas of Badami were assisted by the western Gangas.
- He died while fighting against the Cholas. His son Maravarman Rajasimha I became the next emperor & he fought many battles with the Pallava ruler Nandivarman II & obtained some portion of the Pallava territory.
- He also defeated the Chalukyas & the Gangas.
- The Chalukyan ruler Kirtivarman II married his daughter to the son of the Pandyan king.
- The last ruler of this empire was Maravarman Rajasimha III. He was defeated by the Chola king Parantaka I.
- The victorious ruler captured the capital of the Pandyas and, thus, took the title of Maduraikonda.
- Gradually, when the Cholas re-emerged in the c. 10th century the power of the Pandyas was eclipsed.

- Aditya Karikala who was the son of Parantaka Chola II defeated the Pandyan monarch Vira Pandya.
- Later in the 13th century the Pandyans again became powerful. Maravarman Sundara Pandyan laid the foundation for the 2nd Pandyan empire when he forced the Chola ruler Kulothunga Chola III to formally submit to the Pandyan authority.
- The most prominent king was Jatavarman Sundara Pandyan.
- During this time the territorial size of the empire was extended to a large extent.
- They successfully captured the Telugu country, Kalinga and also made invasions into Ceylon.
- The Chola kings after Kulothunga Chola III were not very successful in curbing the rising power of the Pandyans.
- Despite assisted by the Hoysalas to check the Pandyan powers they kept losing their territories, prestige and power.
- The Pandyans became the dominant political force in south India.
- Finally, Maravarman Kulashekhara Pandyan I defeated the combined armies of Rajendra Chola III and the reigning Hoysala emperor.
- This brought an end to the Chola empire. However, after the downfall of the Cholas the Pandyans also could not survive for long and the civil war which was the outcome of the war of succession between Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya the two sons of Maravarman Kulashekhara Pandyan I fastened the pace of their political decay

THE PALLAVA-PANDYA CONFLICT

- Conflicts & alliances were outcomes of the political ambition of the rulers to acquire more and more resources for the efficient functioning of their respective governments.
- The Chalukyas of Vatapi & the Pallavas of Kanchi were frequently at war with one another.
- The Pallava monarch Mahendravarman I had expanded the territory of the Pallava dynasty towards the north up to the river Krishna.
- The Vishnukundins became the neighbouring kingdom located to the north of the Pallavas.
- Pulakesin II defeated the Vishnukundins and the territory of the Vishnukundins became the part of Chalukyan dynasty.
- The Chalukyan king made his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana the viceroy of this conquered territory.
- Later, Vishnuvardhana founded the eastern Chalukyan dynasty of Vengi. With the decline of Vishnukundins the Chalukyas became the neighbouring territory of the Pallavas to the north.
- Thus, the expansionist policies of Mahendravarman I and Pulakesin II brought the two emperors together on a battlefield against each other.
- This began the constant conflicts between the two dynasties.

- The Pandyas of Madurai in the Vaigai valley became the third dynasty which played a significant role in this clash
 - These three political powers were contemporaries and rose to prominence at almost the same time. The Pandyas and the Chalukyas were the neighbouring kingdoms of the Pallavas.
 - The Pandyas were eager to take control of the fertile Kaveri delta.
 - They saw it befitting to make the Chalukyas of Vatapi, who were constantly at war with the Pallavas, their political ally to realize their political ambition.
 - Accordingly, Arikesari Parankusa Maravarman I – the Pandyan ruler – made an alliance with the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I & attempted to acquire some portion of the Pallava territory.
 - The Pandyas were also at war with the Cheras in order to extend their territorial boundaries.
 - The battles fought and won were always a matter of pride for the victorious ruler.
 - They would demonstrate it through various means.
 - Jayantavarman (645-70 CE), the son of Maravarman Avanisulamani, adopted the epithet of Vanavan means he had been successful to some extent against the Cheras.
 - The Pandyas also tried to invade Ceylon during the period of the Sinhalese ruler Sena I, devastating the region and carrying away a huge booty.
 - The succeeding Sinhalese emperor Sena II, in order to avenge the Pandyas, invaded the Pandya kingdom & carried away a large sum of booty.
 - The Pandyas also looked for opportunities to interfere in the internecine feuds in the Pallava kingdom.
 - The Pandyan king Maravarman Rajasimha I (735-765 CE) made an alliance with the Chalukya emperor Vikramaditya II & supported Chitramaya for the throne of the Pallava kingdom.
 - The Pandyan ruler defeated the Pallava king Nandivarman II a number of times — he took the title of Pallava Bhanjana (Breaker of the Pallavas).
 - In the end Chitramaya was killed by a military general of Nandivarman II. But this interference of the Pandyas into the political affairs of the Pallavas and their repeated attacks on the Pallavas alarmed Nandivarman II and he wanted to contain the increasing influence of the Pandyas of Madurai
 - During the period of Kirtivarman II Dantidurga a feudatory of the Chalukyas and who had high political ambitions, was attempting to carve out an independent territory.
 - He, in the process, attacked the Pallava monarch Nandivarman II.
 - The latter gave a tough fight to Dantidurga and so, after a negotiation between the two, Dantidurga gave his daughter Reva to Nandivarman II in marriage.
 - Meanwhile, Dantidurga defeated Kirtivarman II and laid the foundation of the Rashtrakuta empire of Manyakheta
 - Just as the Chalukyas in alliance with the western Ganga dynasty fought many battles against the Pallavas, or the Pandyas made the Chalukyas their political ally so as to check the political influence of the Pallavas, likewise Nandivarman II after the matrimonial alliance with Dantidurga wanted to lessen the power of the Pandyas, as the Chalukyas of Vatapi were now displaced by Dantidurga.
 - The Pallava monarch was trying to form a confederacy of rulers to support him against the Pandyas.
 - A kingdom named Kongu located adjacent to the western Ganga dynasty was also one of kingdoms of the confederacy
 - The emperor of Kongu was defeated by the Pandyan ruler and the kingdom was merged into the Pandyan territory.
 - The Pandyas were also able to advance deep into the Pallava territory.
 - The Pallavas failed in their attempt to stop the Pandyan advance. However, despite many battles, defeats and victories, none of the sides could claim any territorial gains for long.
 - There were continuous attacks and counter-attacks and losses and gains.
- INTERREGNUM & DOWNFALL**
- The Pandyas were overthrown by the Kalabhras. This created an interregnum of the Pandyan rule by the Kalabhras and, therefore, this period is known as the Kalabhra interregnum which lasted from c. 3rd to the 6th -7th centuries.
 - The origin of the Kalabhras is not known. It is believed that by the end of the 6th century or in the early 7th century the Pandyas under Kadungon remerged.
 - He restored the Pandyan power in the region.
 - The Pallavas also faced similar fate from the Kalabhras and later, under Simhavishnu they resurfaced.
 - He became the founder of the imperial Pallava dynasty. After the Kalabhra interregnum was over these kingdoms flourished again.
 - The prestige of the Pallavas as an imperial power suffered a setback when the Chalukyan ruler Vikramaditya II invaded the Pallava territory and for a brief period of time captured Kanchipuram.
 - Later, Nandivarman III was defeated by a Pandyan ruler Shrimara Shrivallabha (815-862 CE) near Kumbakonam.
 - After the death of the Pallava king there was a war of succession among his three sons.
 - In this power-struggle one of the royal brothers Nrupatunga lost his life.
 - The Chola king Aditya Chola along with the Pandya emperor Kamavarman defeated another Pallava

brother Aparajita while the 3rd one accepted the overlordship of the imperial Cholas in the beginning of the 10th century.

- Thus, this civil war finally resulted in the breakdown of the rule of imperial Pallavas.
- Besides, the Pallavas had to constantly engage in battles against the Chalukyas who were assisted by the western Gangas.
- The Pandyas, the Rashtrakutas and the Cholas also attacked the kingdom whenever they found the opportunities to do so.
- Similarly, in the Pandyan kingdom also the war of succession created the situation of civil war and finally, it became one of the causes for their downfall.
- In 1311 Malik Kafur – the military general of the sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji – invaded Madurai.
- At this time there was a fight going on between the two brothers Vira Pandya and Sundara Pandya for the throne of the Pandyan kingdom.
- It is said that of all the Deccan and south Indian military campaigns of Kafur — this was materially the most satisfying one, which proves that the Pandyas were a rich kingdom but the invasion weakened their position.
- It also enabled the feudatories of the Pandyas to exercise their power independently.
- The Pandyas lost their northern territory to the Kakatiyas.
- Later, there were two more invasions made from the Delhi Sultanate. The last one was carried out by Ulugh Khan (Muhammad Bin Tughlaq) and this time the Pandyan territory was annexed and merged into the Sultanate.
- But, during the rule of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq (1325-1351) the Sultanate lost its control over Madurai.

KALACHURIS

- The origin of the Kalachuris, also known as the Haihayas, is not very clear. They belonged to a Kshatriya tribe.
- They are mentioned in the Brahmanical epics and the Puranas.
- The early Kalachuris or the Kalachuris of Mahishmati rose in the present-day Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- Some important rulers of this dynasty were:
 - Krishnaraja,
 - Shankaragana, and
 - Buddharaja.
- They ruled from 550-620 CE. The early Kalachuris could not flourish much because of their neighbouring kingdoms viz. the Chalukyas of Vatapi and the Maitrakas of Valabhi.
- These two kingdoms were too dominating political forces for them to expand and finally, their power was undermined.

- Buddharaja during his period had to fight against the Chalukyas twice.
- In the 1st battle he was defeated by Mangalesha and in the 2nd he was defeated by Pulakesin II.
- After these defeats though the Kalachuris were weakened yet they continued to survive.
- They had matrimonial relations with the eastern and western Chalukyas.
- By c. 9th century we come across a number of collateral branches of the Kalachuris. The major ones were: the Kalachuris of Chedi (also known as the Kalachuris of Tripuri), and the Kalachuris of the Deccan.
- There were some other branches of the Kalachuris too, such as:
 - the Kalachuris of Ratanpur,
 - the Kalachuris of south Koshala,
 - the Kalachuris of Gorakhpur,
 - the Kalachuris of Raipur etc.
- The Kalachuri dynasty of Ratanpur was founded by one of the sons of Kokalla I: a Kalachuri ruler of Chedi.
- Initially it was under the subordination of the Kalachuris of Chedi.
- It became independent under Jajjaladeva I in c. 12th century.
- He took the royal titles of: Maharajadhiraja, and Parameshvara
- The Kalachuris of Ratanpur conquered south Koshala.
- Later, another branch erupted from the Ratanpur Kalachuris and it was known as the Kalachuris of Raipur.
- The Kalachuris of Chedi or the Dahala-Mandala rulers ruled from their capital Tripuri which is now a village near Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.
- The first important king of this branch was Kokalla I whose reign began in about 845 C.E. He defeated the Pratihara emperor Bhoja I.
- He had also defeated the Rashtrakuta king Krishna II after whose defeat the Rashtrakutas started having matrimonial relations with the Kalachuris.
- Thus, we see that Kokalla I through his military skills and successes was able to increase the prestige of the Kalachuris.
- He was succeeded by his eldest son Shankaragana.
- After his death Balaharsh came into power, followed by Yuvaraja I.
- The most important political event that took place during his period was the battle between the Rashtrakuta king Krishna III and him, in which he was defeated.
- He lost his territory to Krishna III – But Krishna III could not keep the acquired territory of the Kalachuris for long.
- Yuvaraja I was successful in regaining the lost territory. After him Laksmanaraja, Yuvaraja II and Kokalla II sat on the Kalachuri throne.

- Thereafter, the significant rule of Gangeya Deva began. He is considered as the greatest Kalachuri monarch.
 - During his reign the Kalachuris became an important political power. He took the title of Vikramaditya.
 - He tried to expand his territory by following the expansionist policy
 - He defeated the king of south Koshala – Mahashivagupta Yayati – and took the title of Trikalingadhipati (Lord of Trikalinga).
 - He also defeated the Pala emperor Mahipala I and captured Benaras.
 - He formed an alliance with the rulers of the Paramaras and the Cholas against the Chalukya king Jayasimha but Jayasimha defeated them.
 - Later, the Paramara ruler as well as the Chandella king of Bundelkhand also defeated him.
 - After Gangeyadeva a number of Kalachuri monarchs succeeded one after another.
 - Vijayasimha was the last ruler of the Kalachuris of Chedi.
- The Kalachuris of Kalyani came into existence as a political entity during the 12th century.
 - Their rule was from 1156 to 1181 CE. They ruled over parts of the present-day Karnataka and Maharashtra.
 - Though they ruled for a very brief period of time i.e. for 25 years their rule was not without any significance.
 - Bijjala II was the founder of this dynasty and also the most important ruler of this branch of the Kalachuris.
 - Earlier, he was appointed as a governor of the Chalukyan dynasty.
 - But, he declared his independence during the reign of Taila III.
 - After his death his sons – Someshwara and Sangama – sat on the throne of the Kalachuris of Kalyani but they were not strong enough to sustain the power of the Kalchuris and the Chalukyas were able to recover their lost territory



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