

Study notes for History topic - Sangam Age

Hello guys, hope you all are doing great. Today we will study about Sangam Age (300 BC - AD 600). So, let's learn.

Sangam Age (300 BC - AD 600)

The period roughly **between the 3rd century B.C. and 3rd century A.D.** in South India (the area lying to the south of river Krishna and Tungabhadra) is known as Sangam Period. It has been named after the Sangam academies held during that period that flourished under the royal patronage of the Pandya kings of Madurai. The age of the 3 Southern kingdoms Cheras, Pandyas, Cholas known as the Sangam Age. The word 'Sangam' means assem Dly. It was an assembly of Tamil poets and scholars. The **First Sangam**, is believed to be held at **Madurai**, attended by gods and legendary sages. No literary work of this Sangam is available. The **Second Sangam** was held at **Kapadapuram**, only **Tolkappiyam** (Tamil Literature) survived from this. The **Third Sangam** was also held at **Madurai**. A few of these Tamil literary works have survived and are a useful source to reconstruct the history of the Sangam period.

The Pandyas

The Pandyas ruled from Madurai. Korkai was their main port, located near the confluence of Thampraparani with the Bay of Bengal. It was famous for pearl fishery and chank diving. Their emblem was the "Fish". They patronized the Tamil Sangams and facilitated the compilation of the Sangam poems. Their power declined with the invasion of a tribe called the **Kalabhras**. After the Sangam Age, this dynasty lost its significance for more than a century, only to rise once again at the end of the 6th century. Their capital was **Madurai**. The important king was **Nedunjelivan**.

The Cholas

The Cholas controlled the central and northern parts of Tamil Nadu. Their core area of rule was the Kaveri delta, later known as **Cholamandalam**. Their capital was Uraiyur (near Tiruchirapalli town) and **Puhar** or **Kveripattinam** was an alternative royal residence and chief port town. Tiger was the emblem of Cholas. They also maintained an efficient navy. **King Karikala** was a famous king of the Sangam Cholas. **Pattinappalai** portrays his life and military conquests. Many Sangam poems mention the **Battle of Venni** where he defeated the confederacy of Cheras, Pandyas and eleven minor chieftains. Karikala's military achievements made him the overlord of the whole Tamil region of that time. The trade and commerce flourished during his reign. He founded the port city of **Puhar** (identical with Kaveripattinam) and constructed 160 km of embankment along the Kaveri River. The kingdom was called **Cholamandalam** or **Coromandel**. The chief centre was Uraiyur, a place famous for the cotton trade. Capital was Kaveripattanam/Puhar. A Chola king named **Elara** conquered Sri Lanka and ruled it for over 50 years. **Rajaraja Chola I**, the Great, was a Chola emperor who reigned from 985 to 1014 CE. He expanded the Chola Empire to its greatest extent, making it one of the most powerful empires in India. He was a great patron of the arts and sciences, and his reign is considered a golden age in Chola history.

The Cheras



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Their capital was **Vanji** (also called Kerala country). It owed its importance to trade with the **Romans**. The Romans set-up two regiments at Vanji to protect their interests. The greatest king was **Senguttuvan**, the **Red Chera**. He fought against the Cholas about AD 150.

Other aspect of Sangam age

All the gathered information is based on Sangam literature. Sangam was a college or assembly of Tamil poets held probably under Royal patronage(especiallyPandyas). Silappadikaram by Ilango Adigal (story of a married couple) and Manimekalai by Sattar are the famous epics of this time. The Sangam period slowly witnessed its decline towards the end of the 3rd century A.D. The Kalabhras occupied the Tamil country post-sangam period between 300 AD to 600 AD, whose period was called an interregnum or 'dark age' by earlier historians.

This was all about this sangam age. In next blog, we will be talking about Gupta period, Stay tuned.

