

Sangam Period

What is the Sangam Period?

- Sangam Age is the period from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD in south India.
- There were 3 Sangams conducted in ancient South India called Muchchangam, Tamil legends say.
- These Sangams prospered under the royal patronage of the Pandya kings of Madurai.
- Three dynasties ruled during the Sangam Age – the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas.
- The key source of evidence about these kingdoms is outlined from the literary references of the Sangam Period.

Introduction to Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas of Sangam Period

Sangam Period Dynasty	Modern-Day City	Ancient Capital	Important Ruler	Important Ports	Emblem
Cheras	Kerala	Vanji	Cheran Senguttuvan	Musiri, Tondi	Bow and Arrow
Cholas	Tamil Nadu	Uraiyur, Puhar	Karikala	Kaveripattanam	Tiger
Pandyas	Tamil Nadu	Madurai	Neduncheliyan	Muziris (Muchiri), Korkai, Kaveri	Carp

Sangam Literature reflects the earliest literature of South India. It is a group of texts in old Tamil. Aspirants can read more about the [literature in the Sangam Age](#) from the linked article.

Learn about the [ancient history of southern India](#) in the linked article.

Aspirants can read the facts about Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas for [UPSC 2021](#), given below in points:

Cheras

- The Cheras ruled over large parts of modern-day Kerala.
- Vanji was the capital of the Cheras.
- Musiri and Tondi were the important seaports in this period.
- The emblem of Cheras is the 'bow and arrow'.
- The first-century Pugalur inscriptions references to 3 generations of Chera kings.
- Senguttuvan (2nd century CE) was the prominent ruler of the Chera dynasty.

- The military achievements of Senguttuvan have been recorded in the epic Silapathikaram, which talks about his Himalayan expedition where he vanquished many rulers from northern India.
- Senguttuvan introduced in Tamil Nadu the Pattini cult or the worship of Kannagi as the ideal wife.
- He was the first to send an ambassador to China from South India.

Cholas

- The Chola kingdom of the Sangam period stretched across the modern-day Tiruchirapalli District, Tiruvarur District, Nagapattinam District, Ariyalur District, Perambalur district, Pudukkottai district, Thanjavur District in Tamil Nadu and Karaikal District.
- Initially, the capital of the Cholas was Uraiyr. Later it was shifted to Puhar (also called Poompuhar).
- King Karikala was a prominent king of the Sangam Chola dynasty.
- The insignia/emblem of the Cholas was 'tiger'.
- Pattinappalai written by Kadiyalur Uruttirangannanar depicts his life as well as military achievements.
- Various Sangam poems mention the Battle of Venni where he defeated an alliance of the Cheras, Pandyas and 11 smaller chieftains.
- Vahaipparandalai was another important battle fought by Karikala.
- Trade and commerce prospered during his rule.
- He also constructed irrigation tanks near river Kaveri to make available water for reclaimed land from the forest for farming.

Know about the [Chola Temples of Tamil Nadu](#) at the linked article.

Pandyas

- The Pandyas reigned over the Southern region of modern-day Tamil Nadu.
- Madurai was the capital of Pandyas.
- Their emblem was the 'Carp'.
- King Neduncheliyan was also called Aryappadai Kadantha Neduncheliyan.
- According to mythology, the curse of the Kannagi, wife of Kovalan, burnt and destroyed Madurai.
- The socio-economic condition of the seaport of Korkai was mentioned in Maduraikkanji which was written by Mangudi Maruthanar.

Sources of Sangam Age

The following are the sources of Sangam Age:

1. Sangam Literature – It is a major source that mentions about Sangam Age
2. The Greek Authors including Megasthenes, Pliny etc. mentioned the trade contacts between South India and the West.
3. Tamil kingdoms are mentioned in Ashokan edicts.
4. Adhichanallur excavations brought to surface articles depicting the life of the Sangam Period.

